

**Bread and Sheep:  
Argentina's Falklands Crisis  
in Comparative Perspective**

A thesis presented

by

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*Be it thy course to busy giddy minds/ With foreign quarrels...*  
*Henry IV, part 2*

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In all, over 1005 Argentine and British troops died in the Falklands War, a struggle Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges described as “a fight between two bald men over a comb.”<sup>1</sup> The comb in contention was a territory described by a 20<sup>th</sup> century visitor as “a land without form or expression...entirely desolate and solitary.”<sup>2</sup> The relative strategic and material unimportance of this small group of barren islands has been well documented; sheep are more populous, and better suited to the harsh climate, than are human inhabitants. What, then, describes the incredible carnage and rage expended over them in the 1982 war, and the Argentine government’s unrelenting attempts to claim the territory preceding and succeeding that conflict?

If one were to examine the historical record, one would find a number of acts of foreign policy aggression which seem inexplicable according to normal patterns of international relations. These acts of aggression appear all over the world and consistently throughout history. There are acts of hostility against apparently benign foreign entities, wars over what seem to the casual observer to be nothing more than symbolic rocks. These are events which, considering the great cost of war to their initiator in terms of collateral damage, resource expenditure, opportunity and reputation costs, and the ever-present danger of the loss of such conflicts to that initiator, seem to be, in a word, irrational. The cited object of the dispute does not appear to warrant such risk. A dearth of immediately apparent

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<sup>1</sup>Jorge Luis Borges. "On the Falklands War." *Time* (1983).

<sup>2</sup>J. C. J. Metford, "Falkland or Malvinas? The Background to the Dispute," in *The Struggle for the Falkland Islands: A Study in Legal and Diplomatic History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 1.

answers or externally-motivated reasons for these conflicts pushes the questioner to look away from the contended object towards the disputers and their particular motivations for engaging in otherwise incomprehensible hostilities, and to an examination of domestic politics as a possible basis for conflict initiation.

The influence of domestic politics on a government's foreign policy decisions has been well documented.<sup>3</sup> Diversionary war theory explains this circumstance in accord with a realist view of international relations, which would assert that the possibility of interstate cooperation is limited by each state's overwhelming preoccupation with ensuring its own security in a highly anarchic and chaotic global world.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the government of each state is most concerned with maintaining its own grasp on power, and makes policy decisions with that goal as its utmost end.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars have cited conflicts as diverse as the 1904 Russo – Japanese War and the United States' Operation Infinite Reach in 1998 to be real-world applications of the diversionary hypothesis. The Russo – Japanese War is asserted to have been initiated in order to counteract the internal instability precipitated by numerous workers' strikes, and it has been suggested that then-President Clinton's decision to carry out air strikes against Afghanistan and Sudan was an attempt to distract the American public from the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal so embarrassing to his administration. The Sino-Japanese sovereignty

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<sup>3</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Spread and Origin of Nationalism*, Revised ed. (London: Verso, 2006), Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), Lewis A. Coser, "Conflict with out-Groups and Group Structure," in *Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics*, ed. Jonathan Wilkenfeld (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973), George W. and David M. Rockefeller, *Optimal Imperfection? Domestic Uncertainty and Institutions in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). &etc.

<sup>4</sup> Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002). &etc.

<sup>5</sup> The primary divergence between the diversionary theory of war and realism is realism's typical disregard for the domestic concerns upon which the former theory predicates its assertions. However, the assumptions made regarding government interest, political survival, and the importance of power to the operation of the international universe are shared by both theoretical approaches.

dispute over the Diaoyu/ Senkaku Islands has remained unresolved for hundreds of years and still has the potential to escalate into a military conflict despite their relative strategic and material unimportance. The diversionary war theory has the potential to explain why.

Jack Levy, the eminence grise of diversionary war theorists, explains diversionary war theory as “the idea that political elites often embark on adventurous foreign policies or even resort to war in order to distract popular attention away from internal social and economic problems and consolidate their own domestic political support.”<sup>6</sup> In order for a diversionary conflict to be defined as such, two main conditions must be present. First, government must perceive the presence of considerable political crisis. This crisis must pose a significant enough threat to the government that it feels compelled to act in such a way that will minimize the potential of that crisis to diminish or extinguish its hold on power. The government will not take any action it does not feel to be necessary to its self interest. If it does perceive risk, it will appeal to those sectors which determine the selection of the ruling elite. The identity of those sectors depends on the type of government in the country, although popular opinion is usually relevant to a varying degree in both authoritarian and democratic systems. Diversionary theories assume this relevance.

The second main condition which must be met is the presence of something in the target audience upon which a sufficiently strong diversion may be made. For example, the public dissatisfaction that was engendered by the economic poverty of the Roman mob was diverted by ruling elites through the strategic provision of bread and circuses, which, although it did not resolve Roman economic problems to any lasting or sustainable degree, was sufficient to temporarily prevent the overthrow of the government. The mob’s

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<sup>6</sup> Jack S. Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique," in *Handbook of War Studies*, ed. Manus I. Midlarsky (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 259.

enjoyment of vicious sport and momentary satiation would be the diversionary factor which the government was able to identify and exploit in the population. The theory of diversionary war posits that war can serve as the same sort of distraction for the population so that they will focus more on their nation's foreign exploits than their own reasons for feeling discontent with the incumbent government. In addition to needing the capability to know what to exploit and how to efficiently exploit it, government must also possess the resources necessary to create a satisfactory distraction. In most cases, distraction is chosen as the less costly option, where government either cannot or does not want to expend the resources to resolve the root causes of the crisis which threatens it. This paper will place special emphasis on nationalism and nationalistically salient issues as the manipulated diversionary foundation.

It is necessary here to clarify what may be somewhat of a misnomer. "Diversionary war" is, for our purposes and in much of the literature, not necessarily an event which can be considered to embody the characteristics or degree of actual war as defined by the terms of international relations. Rather, any conflict directed at a foreign government which has the potential to elicit a serious reaction from that government may be considered to fit the bill. It is the initiation of conflict, not its escalation, which is at issue here.

### *Brief Overview of the Falklands Problem*

The Falkland Islands, or Las Islas Malvinas as they are known in Argentina, have been the subject of a claim to sovereignty by that country since the re-establishment of British rule in the territory in 1833.<sup>7</sup> The invasion of the islands in 1982 initiated the two-

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<sup>7</sup> I will generally refer to the territory in question as "the Falklands" for convenience's sake, and as that is the name by which most of the world knows these islands. Reference to the territory as "Las Malvinas" will,

month long undeclared Falklands war between Argentina and the United Kingdom; defeated by the British task force, Argentina withdrew but did not renounce her claim to the territory. Indeed, the fact that the 1982 event was preceded by numerous losses on the same grounds and in much the same way, and followed by still more defeated claims or claims that were not accorded much credence by international spectators, paints the issue as one which seems to be pursued against a government's rational self-interest.

Despite the unshakeable and persistent determination of Argentina's claim to sovereignty over the Falklands territory, there is no immediate external reason why the Argentine government should have so suddenly decided to invade the contested area in 1982. The risk of international reaction is a strong deterrent to the initiation of conflict, and the government, though run by a military authoritarian regime, had no extraordinary reason to believe itself capable of successfully absorbing either British or other international reaction. It is therefore necessary to look to domestic conditions for an explanation of the reasons for the 1982 invasion.

Most studies which investigate the 1982 war as an example of diversionary action by the government fail to look at the logical unobserved implications of that explanation as they are manifested in other episodes of Argentine history. They fail to cite or investigate similar instances of aggression preceding and succeeding the 1982 made on the same claim to the Falklands territory. If the 1982 war is a diversionary one, why might not others be as well? Wouldn't it strengthen the case for asserting the 1982 war to be an instance of governmental scapegoating if it were shown that similar circumstances produced similar outcomes? Examples of similar action, such as the Argentine hostilities towards the British-held

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however, be replicated in cases where the islands are called such by Argentine entities, as the continued use of that name is essential in emphasizing the Argentine attitude of ownership towards them.



Falklands in 1977 and just as significant non-action, such as the government's reaction to the 1966 Condors hijacking, beg the closer attention which has the potential to greatly increase our understanding of the dynamics of diversion and government exploitation or manipulation of nationalism and its effects on government foreign policy behavior.

It becomes even more necessary to search for an answer to the conundrum presented by Argentina's persistent yet unsuccessful active claims to the Falklands territory when one considers that such continued demonstration of ineffectiveness undermines Argentina's status in the international community, which makes the accomplishment of both this and other foreign policy goals less likely.

### *Research Methodology*

My model, in the realist tradition of the international relations literature, assumes the government to be a rational actor which acts for the preservation of its own self interests. My explanation is as follows: that this seemingly irrational foreign policy behavior can be explained by examining domestic political goals of the government – namely, that most basic – survival in office. This explanation differs from those of traditional realism in that it asserts government's primary goal to be *self*-preservation, as opposed to the *national* preservation assumed by realist models. Specifically, I argue that governments seek to divert the public's attention from pressing domestic concerns and hope to benefit from a "rally around the flag" effect that becomes available through the government's successful priming of nationalist sentiments amongst citizens. This hypothesis is concordant with those of diversionary war theory.

We gain confidence in the utility of our explanation by attempting, but failing, to falsify its implications. In order to examine the relationship between a government's domestic concerns and its initiation of international conflict, it behooves the investigator to widen the query to the larger universe of nation-states. The existence of a positive relationship between these two variables in the larger sample would strengthen the case for the utility of diversionary war as an explanation for the Argentine phenomenon. At the same time, a more comprehensive examination of the particular ought to provide us with a clearer sense of the operation of the greater trend and the dynamics involved therein, thereby fleshing out our understanding of why and how domestic concerns contribute to the initiation of foreign conflict.

In order to establish whether or not the exercise of conflict for diversionary purposes occurs as a significant pattern in the universe of nation-states, this investigation will look at the historical record of conflicts initiated by countries over time. Leo Hazelwood asserts that social protest, as the measurable discontent of a domestic population, is the best indicator of the initiation of foreign conflict.<sup>8</sup> This study will therefore seek to establish whether or not a correlation exists between forms of social protests in a country and that country's initiation of foreign conflict.

The decision to focus a study of the diversionary war theory on Argentina in particular has been made due to the peculiar characteristics of that country's record. The most important actor in diversionary war is the government of the foreign-conflict-initiating nation state: it is by this institution's perceptions and actions and in this institution's interest that action is driven. It is therefore essential to center any analysis of the diversionary war theory around government. If – and we do—assume each of these governments to be rational

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<sup>8</sup> Levy, 276.

actors, Argentina's documented behavior as regarding the Falkland Islands is especially in need of explanation. Each of that country's governments seems to have proven itself unable to learn from its predecessors, repeating the same futile gestures and ending up with the same empty (or worse) outcomes. They seem, in their unyielding pursuit of what seems consistently to be demonstrated to be a lost cause, to be un-teachable. As we are unwilling to cite irrationality as the cause, we must look to a more complicated explanation, and it is that of diversionary war theory which seems most compelling.

All of the standard components of diversionary war theory seem to be present in the case of Argentina: an active, vocal participatory constituency, a history of inequality and economic fluctuations, a tradition of weak governments which sooner or later find themselves threatened by political survival, and, in the issue of the unredeemed Falkland Islands, a collective national grievance which has proven over time to hold an extremely strong emotive sway over the Argentine population. The Falklands War is cited in numerous instances in the diversionary war canon as the quintessential example of such an occurrence. However, we must look at other instances in which the same circumstances did or did not produce the same result in order to evaluate the utility of the diversionary war hypothesis as an explanation for this war. Thus the decision to expand the scope of observation beyond the 1982 case to a more chronologically complete sample, and one meaningful to the examination by the very fact of its existence – the record of relevant instances of Argentina's active pursuit of the Falklands territory from 1946 until 2001.

In order to test whether or not the diversionary theory of war applies to Argentina's foreign conflict record, a quantitative examination will be conducted among the same lines as

the global inquiry, although constricted to the record of Argentine-initiated foreign conflict and corresponding instances of social unrest.

### *Importance of the Study*

The importance of conducting this study, of investigating the possibility and the mechanics of a relationship between the two variables of domestic strife and government decisions to relocate the area of that strife beyond national borders, is clear. The potential contribution of war and peace studies – to which this investigator hopes to add in a modest way – is not limited to debate in an ivory tower. Rather, the applied significance of our greater knowledge regarding the underlying causes and motives of war is vital in the deepest sense of the word, holding as it does the possibility of reducing the occurrence of violent conflicts and all of their attendant ills – the numbers of war dead, ravaged families, collateral damage, and etc.

This study is also important in the ways in which it differs from others which have previously investigated the same subject. It is better, in evaluating a model, to test the truth of its derivations than the truth of its assumptions.<sup>9</sup> If the diversionary war theory is accurate, it should hold true for actions which do not escalate all the way into war, and should operating in the same way for various levels of degree. This study uses a database which documents a vast amount of foreign policy events, not simply those which produce the body count requisite to be labeled as war. This brings the emphasis on testing the theory back to where the tenets of diversionary war indicate it should be, to the motivations and perceptions of the government which initiates the foreign policy.

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<sup>9</sup> Charles A. Lave and James G. March, *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993).

A comprehensive examination of the theory devotes an appropriate amount of attention to each of its elements. Most studies which have been conducted acknowledge the importance of the distraction itself but give it superficial and perfunctory treatment. This study devotes more attention to the grounds for and nature of the distraction itself over time by focusing on the repeated use of the particular example provided by the Argentine pursuit of the Falklands. The greater attention given the nationalism which enables the efficacy of this issue in diverting the public raises issues about the way in which repeated governmental use of distraction can ultimately limit the options of that and succeeding governments. This broadens the significance of the study by introducing a new explanation of government behavior as a phenomenon which is brought about by over-use of distraction, and detailing how nationalism operates in that circumstance.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

There are various limitations of this study which need to be acknowledged and which have the potential to make it less comprehensive or accurate than might be desired.

Availability of data is one of the most profound; datasets which address the time period and type of data required are scarce and, when found, often incompatible. While investigator's access to quantitative data is limited, qualitative data also poses some difficulties.

Particularly information on the Argentine pursuit of ownership of the Falkland Islands and the country's attempts to pursue it is influenced by the authors' own opinions and beliefs regarding the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the claim. As the nationalism that fuels the popular response and produces much of the available primary literature is often emotionally relevant to its author, the investigator must be aware to look for the possibility of bias.

There are also limitations which accompany the assumptions made by the model. Time and resource constraints demand that the nature of the considered actors be simplified; therefore, the government and the populace are considered each as a unit. This reduces the complexity of each entity in a potentially problematic way – the agency of each actor is subsumed into the identity of a greater whole. The possible effects of hierarchy, infighting, decision-making processes, and individual agendas are not taken into account in the analysis.

When one acknowledges the limitations of accepting a simplified actor in the population and in the government, one must take into account the complications in analysis that arise even when that actor is viewed as a single entity. In this study, where motivation for the initiation of foreign conflict is examined, ascertaining government's perceptions of the domestic situation and the nature of threat it poses is obviously crucial. The examination of that dynamic is crucial to understanding how the diversionary hypothesis may work in real life; thus, the reason for the study's focus on the case of Argentina and not just a superficial overview of that same trend in the larger universe of nation- states. Yet our access to such information is limited to recorded events. This makes it extremely difficult to accurately assess causality even where we suspect that domestic motivations are in play.

It may be easy enough to judge if a government is reactive by following the guidelines of the research methodology, where the occurrence of domestic strife precedes the initiation of foreign conflict. But the absence of documented domestic strife does not negate the possibility of its occurrence, or of the government's anticipation thereof. Indeed, domestic strife is in itself unable to produce such a reaction from the government. The government must also evaluate the situation to be hostile to its continued survival. Whether or not such an evaluation is accurate is ultimately unimportant for our purposes: what matters

is the government's particular interpretation of the situation. Therefore, anticipated riots are equally as important as actual riots.

How, then, are we to evaluate a scenario such as the following: the government institutes an economic policy which it has reason to believe will meet with an extremely unfriendly reception by the populace. Unable to refrain from the publication of that policy, yet feeling itself in danger from public outrage, and finding its options limited, the government decides to simultaneously launch an attack on a country for which the entire nation harbors a violent grudge. The ploy goes off with nary a hitch, and all that enters the history books is an account of the initiating nation's glorious victory against their old enemy and a small footnote on a largely ignored harsh economic policy. There are no recorded examples of protests against that policy which would have provoked such outrage under normal circumstances. A classic, though simplified example of the use of diversionary war, but who is to be aware of it as such? How are we to identify a government which acts preemptively or proactively, or distinguish it as such? This complication will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

#### *How the Thesis Will Proceed*

This study proceeds in four parts. First, it assesses the current state of the literature regarding diversionary war and scholarship on the relationship between the domestic situation and government initiation of foreign conflict. Second, a model will be introduced in Chapter 3 detailing the methodology for attempting to ascertain the existence of a causal relationship between domestic unrest and government's subsequent initiation of diversionary foreign conflict in the world of nation-states; the findings from this model will be evaluated

in the second part of this chapter. Chapter 4 will introduce a quantitative assessment of the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy in Argentina, as well as a qualitative assessment of successive Argentine governments' motivations in the consistent pursuit of the recovery of Falklands sovereignty. This study continues in Chapter 5 with a caution to governments against the use of diversionary tactics for the subsequent effect so doing might have in constricting the latitude of their options. Chapter 6 concludes the study with a discussion of policy perspectives on diversionary war and prospects for further study of the relationship between domestic and international conflict.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Many prominent scholars deny domestic concerns a significant place in government decision making. Practically speaking, during the allocated span of a government regime, government elites take on the onus of decision-making without soliciting the advice of the citizenry. This holds true for both democratically elected and more authoritarian regimes – in democracies, decisions are most often made by elected representatives as opposed to direct participation, and the interest of those represented is considered secondary to the representative's opinion thereof; in authoritarian regimes, elites may assert themselves to be speaking for some undefined mass of their constituency but such an assertion is usually barely more than nominal or rhetorical.

One might therefore question the effect of public protest on the governments towards which it is directed. Are protesters optimistically deluded to feel that their words can make a change, and are those who consider public dissatisfaction able to exert any real pressure on the target government exaggerating the power of what is merely ineffectual flailing against an unmoved institution? Or do those protestors have the power to motivate their government's leaders to specific foreign policy decisions, even to war?

### *The Theory of Diversionary Conflict*

Despite the significant research and attention that has been directed towards the diversionary war theory, scholars have yet to reach a consensus about whether it is an accurate explanation for events in the real world. Theories about its utility and its operation vary from study to study, and empirical investigations have produced results that are mixed at best. The definitive review of diversionary war theory remains that written by Jack Levy

in his 1989 critique. This study will therefore draw heavily on the findings of that article to explain the essential points of the theory and their relevance to this investigation; more recent scholarship will also be considered insofar as much as it contributes to our greater understanding of the subject at hand.

Levy succinctly defines diversionary war theory as “the pursuit of a belligerent foreign policy by political elites in order to deflect popular attention away from internal socioeconomic and political problems, unify the nation against an external threat, and thereby increase their own domestic political support.”<sup>10</sup> The theory has its intellectual heritage in a claim about the nature of the individual as a member of a human community – namely, that there exist in society an “in- group” and an “out-group.” The existence of the out-group negatively defines the in-group - it is what the other is not. The cohesion of the in-group, then, is enabled by its constant self-comparison to and assertion of superiority over the other. Anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn explains the behavioral effect of this asserted “innate human instinct” in society in his suggestion that “if aggressive impulses within a society are sufficiently strong and disruptive, that society may attempt to preserve its cohesion by initiating an external war to displace that aggressiveness.”<sup>11</sup>

There are two sides of the in-group/ out-group coin which might produce much the same effect in society. Wright asserts that “war or fear of war has often been used to integrate states.”<sup>12</sup> The inhabitants of a state may draw together out of both aggression directed at others to assert their own dominance and out of the fear of aggression directed towards them by another state or people. An audience familiar with George Orwell’s

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<sup>10</sup> Jack S. Levy and Lily Vakili, "Diversionary Action by Authoritarian Regimes: Argentina in the Falklands/ Malvinas Case," in *The Internationalization of Communal Strife*, ed. Manus I. Midlarsky (Oxford: Routledge, 1992), 118.

<sup>11</sup> Kluckhohn (1960) in Levy, 261.

<sup>12</sup> Wright (1965) in Levy. Ibid.

Nineteen Eighty-Four will recognize that both sentiments could be a plausible creation of government policy, and indeed, fear is a significant element in the shared response.

However, this thesis will attempt to focus its attention on those states which are more or less explicitly responsible for the initiation of foreign conflict, not those which attempt to distract their population through the objectively unsubstantiated fear of an external aggressor.<sup>13</sup>

No matter the ultimate effect of conflict initiated for diversionary means, it is fairly evident that there is a high risk to the government which embroils itself in the pursuit of such a course. One of the first theorists to treat the subject, Georg Simmel, asserts that “war with the outside is sometimes the last chance for a state ridden with inner antagonisms to overcome these antagonisms, or else to break up definitely.”<sup>14</sup> While it seems more likely that it is the government of the state which is at greater risk than the state itself, it is that government as the arbiter of policy that has the most to lose. Simmel writes that the risk of dis cohesion is present since war “appeals to those energies which are common to the discordant elements of the community... [War] might either cause domestic quarrels to be forgotten, or might on the contrary aggravate them beyond reconciliation.”<sup>15</sup>

Yet a greater risk than that posed by fractious elements in society is that of the loss of the war initiated by diversion – a government which loses such a war is not likely to maintain popular support, and a government which has found itself in a position where such war is the rational option is most likely lacking in the resources essential to maintain itself in power despite popular antagonism towards it. At any rate, even a successful diversionary war does

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<sup>13</sup> This may be easier said than done, as it is understood that states may initiate preemptive conflict based on either sincere or insincere charges of expected attack. However, it is the aim of this investigation to examine conflicts which cannot be so easily justified by historians as based on the sincere desire of the government to repulse expected external attack. Nor will this study examine cases in which fear-mongering is propagated without the more substantial investment of the government in supplementing such rhetoric with observable foreign policy action.

<sup>14</sup> Simmel (1898) in Levy, 260.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

not solve the inherent problems which necessitated its initiation – the structural problems are still there despite the public’s temporary distraction from the source of their original discontent. Diversionary conflict is at best a short-term solution. How many distractions can a government truly support before its inevitable collapse?

What, then, drives a government to the decision that diversionary war is the most attractive option to sustain itself in power? A convincing theory is that it has very few options left to employ in distraction’s stead. The attenuation of a government’s resources leads to a reduction in the feasibility of other policy options. The drawbacks of the use of diversionary war do not seem to indicate the negation of its use by desperate governments. Indeed, the great risks of exercising such an option illustrate the extent to which a government perceives itself to be in danger of political survival; a healthy, stable, and confident government would never choose to initiate diversionary conflict, because the loss of such conflict would have such an effect on the population towards which it was directed that it would effectively constitute an act of political suicide. Only those governments which find themselves with no other options choose to initiate a conflict their effective prosecution of which is not a foregone conclusion.

One of the most important determinants of a government’s policy decisions is the economic resources available to it. A government with greater access to more substantial resources has accordingly greater latitude in decision-making, and would not be forced to choose any policy which could ultimately threaten to harm its initiator. Indeed, the social unrest which forms the assumption of a government’s perception of its potential insecurity would be much less likely to occur in a state where the government is able to provide its constituency with the resources that could satiate them. One need only to note the extreme

difference in social and political unrest between a country such as Sweden, with its provision of extensive welfare benefits,<sup>16</sup> and that in a state such as Myanmar, which has a weak welfare state and provides much less resources to its citizens.<sup>17</sup> We would expect to see a greater initial occurrence of domestic unrest in states where the government is unable to supply basic care to its population, but the same scarcity of government resources also determines that government's ability to effectively respond to already-existing domestic unrest.<sup>18</sup>

Economic resources, though incredibly important to a state's management of domestic unrest, are however not determinative in the success of such endeavors. This relationship is determined by resources beyond those which are directly economic. A recent study by Crag Jenkins and Doug Bond articulates a further aspect of such a relationship in an investigation of state conflict-carrying capacity (CCC), which the authors define as "the ability of political systems to regulate intense internal conflicts. CCC is indexed by the multiplicative interaction between the proportions of civil contention, state repression, and violence."<sup>19</sup> The underlying assumption of this study is that the capacity of the state to regulate and absorb domestic conflict decreases as the above three factors increase. Though a state's CCC is often ultimately dependent on the economic resources available to it, Jenkins and Bond also stress the importance of political behavior. They write that,

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<sup>16</sup> "The Cia World Factbook," (2009).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that a wealthy or even moderately endowed government will necessarily provide for its citizens. Instances of political corruption and embezzlement are all too common; unfortunately, many impoverished constituents never see the benefits of state wealth regardless of the condition of a country's coffers. However, this paper's supposition of states as rational actors assumes that a government would value its own survival enough that it would not withhold resources to the point that interest in personal enrichment would endanger such survival. After all, the goose that lays the golden egg is only profitable to its keeper so long as that goose is alive.

<sup>19</sup> J. Craig Jenkins and Doug Bond, "Conflict-Carrying Capacity, Political Crisis, and Reconstruction: A Framework for the Early Warning of Political System Vulnerability," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 3 (2001).

Administrative, technical, and fiscal capacities facilitate stronger political capacities by providing the ability to allocate resources and thus satisfy political demands, but political capacity is a distinct factor bearing on questions of political representation, channels for societal demand making, and routine conflict resolution.<sup>20</sup>

It therefore appears reasonable to assert that those states which resort to the use of diversionary conflict may have reached that point of desperation due to the inability to mediate domestic concerns through effective political channels which is incumbent on their political success and long-term political survival.

It is worthwhile to consider some of the other variables which have been cited as having an influence on the likelihood of a government's deciding to initiate foreign conflict in a diversionary capacity. One of the foremost of these is, of course, the political system under which such a government operates. Indeed, the nature of a government's political system is often thought to be determinant of the effective political capacity whose importance is noted by Jenkins and Bond. An obvious and instructive distinction is that made between democratic and authoritarian regime types. It is often argued that democratic regimes are more likely to initiate a diversionary conflict, as its leaders depend more directly on public approval in order to stay in office via re-election. Leaders in authoritarian systems are much less susceptible to the pressures of public disfavor, as their political survival does not directly rest on the caprice of the populace. Moreover, demonstration of public disfavor is much less likely to occur in authoritarian systems, where potential participants might fear that the expression of their concerns will go ignored or lead to their possible persecution by the government.<sup>21</sup> However, international relations theorists tend to assert in general that democracies are less likely to pursue aggressive foreign policy than are their authoritarian

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<sup>20</sup> Jenkins, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Stuart Hill and Donald Rothchild, "The Impact of Regime on the Diffusion of Political Conflict," in *The Internationalization of Communal Strife*, ed. Manus I. Midlarsky, *Studies in International Conflict* (London: Routledge, 1993).

counterparts. And, in their examination of Ostrom and Job's 1986 argument that U.S. Cold War policy occurred more as a response to fluctuations in domestic approval ratings than as a response to international imperatives, Moore and Lanoue find that international politics were the greater determinant of foreign policy, though they uphold the idea that politicians' primary goal is to retain office for themselves and their party.<sup>22</sup>

Once an incumbent government finds itself in a position it perceives to be unsupportable to its continued political survival and decides to employ diversionary war in order to restore itself to a more tolerable state, it must choose the foreign target at which it will direct its aggression. The inherent risks of diversionary tactics to the governments which use them have been previously addressed. The rational state actor will choose to pursue only those policies in which the possibility and degree of the potential reward is perceived to outweigh the possibility of the potential risk. It is a commonly-held maxim in political science theory that even a stable government which endures diplomatic or military humiliation will be shaken by a loss of popular confidence in that government's capacity to prosecute the national interest.<sup>23</sup> It is also recognized that the outcome of foreign policy is most often subject to a variety of factors out of the prosecuting government's control and that the ultimate result is therefore largely unpredictable by that government. Success in contentious foreign policy is not only not guaranteed, but is often a possibility so slight as to make its pursuit highly dangerous to the initiating government.

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<sup>22</sup> Will H. Moore and David J. Lanoue, "Domestic Politics and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Study of Cold War Conflict Behavior," *The Journal of Politics* 65, no. 2 (2003), 376.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Boehmer, "The Effects of Economic Crisis, Domestic Discord, and State Efficacy on the Decision to Initiate Interstate Conflict," *Politics & Policy* 35, no. 4 (2007). Boehmer finds that "the risk of regime change increases rapidly relative to involvement in an interstate conflict for states affected by high levels of domestic conflict, suggesting that any diversionary strategies are a risky gambit that have a high chance of failure."

The government which has already chosen diversionary war as its saving grace will choose a target according to the expected facility of its defeat and impact thereof on the population for whose benefit the show is enacted. Conventional wisdom asserts a weak target as the most likely choice for a government which has embarked on diversionary war, as a weaker opponent reduces the risk of the tactic's failure. An alternative viewpoint presented by Ahmer Tarar posits that the relatively inconsistent findings in the empirical research on diversionary war may be explained by a model in which states must choose stronger targets in order to sufficiently impress their constituency. He explains,

“if the leader undertakes an aggressive foreign policy *and is successful in it*, then the voters may reassess the competence of their leader...However, *this only occurs if the target of the diversionary policy is sufficiently strong*, because even success against a weak foe does not demonstrate competence...and the leader would be deposed anyway.<sup>24</sup>

Tarar's analysis seems mostly to emphasize the motivations of diversionary war in democratic systems whose governments suffer from the loss of popular confidence that results from a weak economy. He views diversionary war as a tactic which is assumed by the governments which employ it as a way to shore up their popular support, to gain benefits, or to enhance leaders' chances of re-election. His model does not sufficiently emphasize diversionary war in its capacity as a last-ditch attempt by desperate regimes to live out another day in public office. Nor does it address one of the most significant determinants of target choice, a lack which is reflected in the larger corpus of diversionary war literature: the government's awareness of their state's nationalist flashpoints and willingness to manipulate those issues to their own benefit. Government desire divert popular dissatisfaction with the realization of a solution to a national grievance throws the issue of the target's strength or

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<sup>24</sup> Ahmer Tarar, "A Formal Analysis of Diversionary War Incentives" (Texas A&M University, 2004), 3. The italics are Tarar's.



weakness into relative unimportance with the strength of the nationalist sentiment traditionally felt against that target by the people.

### *Nationalism and Diversionary Conflict*

Nationalism, though a phenomenon applicable to and experienced by virtually every nation-state, is a dynamic best discussed in terms of a specific example. To that effect, and considering this paper's particular focus on Argentina, nationalism will be here discussed in the context of a specific Argentine nationalism; the specific example of the Falkland Islands will be used as an issue characteristically representative of similar nationalisms around the world. The focus on a specific issue and government awareness thereof will moreover be relevant to later discussions of the larger implications of such an emphasis, one whose effects may reasonably be extrapolated as a possible explanation for other cases.

Much of the literature on diversionary theory assumes the significance of nationalism as a factor to which a diversionary appeal can successfully be made (though the importance thereof and specific operation of the variable is largely glossed over). In order for such an assertion to be credible, it is necessary to establish the power of nationalism as an influence on the national consciousness. In the interests of this study, and its focus on the importance of the attachment of the Argentine public to the idea of Argentine sovereignty over the Falklands territory, consideration of nationalism will focus especially on the relevance of conceptions of territorial nationalism. This section will focus on the construction of territorial nationalism in order to emphasize the idea that, as something originally constructed, it is thus more susceptible to manipulation, as well as to emphasize government awareness of it as something to be exploited.

Political scientists have long asserted the significant role which national geographies play in the construction and maintenance of a popular sense of national identity. Many citizens cherish, consciously or not, an idealized and romantic vision of the particular landscapes which have formed an integral part of their conception of their nations, and subsequently of their own self-conception as member of that nation. Even if the vision which citizens carry with them in their heads is not exactly commensurate with their nation's physical reality, it is often supported at least in part by other evidence or assertions, such as cartography and popular claim. There seems to be a physical underpinning to the mythicized ideal, the existence of which in some form is essential to the continued vision of the nation as it has been conceived for its people.

Theories of nationalism have traditionally privileged geography as a determinative factor of national identity. Though the conception of the nation as primordial has lost favor among most current scholars, it is apparent that a popular belief in "the existence of an essential, underlying national *ser* or essence with which [it might be possible for] Argentines to [be] in danger of losing touch" still exists today, albeit with less explicit prominence.<sup>25</sup>

Modern nationalism theories have retained the significance of territory to the conception of a nation, although relocating the process and nature whereby their importance exists.<sup>26</sup> Hobsbawm reflects the beliefs of most modern scholars when he asserts that he does not "regard the 'nation' as a primary nor as an unchanging social entity...I would stress the element of artifact, invention and social engineering which enters into the making [and, maintenance] of nations...In short, for the purposes of analysis nationalism comes before

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<sup>25</sup> Jean H. Delaney, "Imagining 'El Ser Argentino': Cultural Nationalism and Romantic Concepts of Nationhood in Early Twentieth-Century Argentina," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, no. 3 (2002), 636.

<sup>26</sup> Sima Godfrey and Frank Unger, ed., *The Shifting Foundations of Modern Nation-States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), H. Gottman, *The Significance of Territory* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 1973).

nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way around.”<sup>27</sup> In this theory, geography is not an essential factor but an instrumental one. The nation is created and sustained by political efforts to arouse national sentiment in the hearts of the people. It is when people conceive of themselves as members of a nation that that nation exists as a relevant and strong political unit (much as Renan asserted the nation to be a “daily plebiscite”).<sup>28</sup> Smith deviates slightly from this argument by declaring that though the nation is modern, it is based on a pre-modern *ethnie* – a historical cultural community possessed of a durable stock of myths, symbols, and other bonds. His perennialist theory emphasizes continuity between past and present.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, Hobsbawm’s theory of the constructed nation is more convincing, for the simple fact that these connections seem to be so easily and so often constructed – ancient history is often fabricated and altered in modern times to justify various claims, and many modern nations do not seem to be linked to an ancient *ethnie*. These claims are essential to bolstering national activity in the international as well as domestic spheres, supplying them with political legitimacy.

Benedict Anderson’s assertion of the nation as an “imagined political community” places its creation squarely in the realm of construction. His is the idea that the modern nation came into being only as a result of the advent of print-capitalism, creating a community by enabling people to relate themselves to others in ways not possible before through the perception of belonging to a common people, sharing common customs and speaking a common language. He denies an organic reality to this community; however, though it is not originally “real,” its effect is powerful enough to simulate a reality that

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<sup>27</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10.

<sup>28</sup> Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?,” in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Ronald Grigor and Geoff Eley Suny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> A. Smith, *National Identity* (Oxford: Penguin, 1991).

motivates the nation, giving it the power to act as if it were: “fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations.”<sup>30</sup> National myths, songs, pictures, anthems, poetry are created, and the dissemination of those bonds often creates in the hearts of the people the feeling that they are part of a nation, and together form one.<sup>31</sup>

Though these theories posit it as more of an instrument for constituting a nation than a constitutive force in itself, geography, as the setting and the context for the life of the nation’s citizens, is nevertheless an essential element in the construction of the nation and therefore its citizens’ understanding of themselves as a part of it. As Williams and Smith observe, “Whatever else it may be, nationalism is always a struggle for control of land; whatever else the nation may be, it is nothing if not a mode of constructing and interpreting social space.”<sup>32</sup> The common observation of the idealized nature of national territory is an added testament to the argument that they exist mainly as construction. “The politics...that seek a national audience must project a national geography; to be broadly useful that geography must, inevitably, be generalized and it is often romantic. It is therefore frequently misleading and imprecise.”<sup>33</sup> Such justifications are also echoed by Alonso, Gruffudd, and others. An understanding of the landscape must be framed in the context of its creation.

The national myth is central to that nation’s legitimacy. Yet, to be relevant not only to the past, it must be attached to a people and a place. Thus it is that landscapes are imbued

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<sup>30</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Spread and Origin of Nationalism.*, 36.

<sup>31</sup> Ana Maria Alonso, "The Politics of Space, Time, and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism, and Ethnicity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994), O. J. Dwyer & S. Hoelscher Alderman, "Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship," *Social and Cultural Geography* 5 (2004), Prys Gruffudd, "Remaking Wales: Nation-Building and the Geographical Imagination, 1925-50," *Political Geography* 14, no. 3 (1995).

<sup>32</sup> C.H. Williams and A. D. Smith, ""The National Construction of Social Space.," *Progress in Human Geography* 7 (1983)., 502

<sup>33</sup> Barry Lopez, "The American Geographies," in *About This Life* (Vintage, 1999).

with sentiments and meanings that go beyond their obvious materiality. A field upon which a battle has been fought for one's country is not just a field; it is a battlefield, a site of memorial for the lives lost for the glorious national cause. Legg posits a geography of memory and forgetting; particular myths are associated with a place so that collective memory cannot separate the landscape from the national value it represents. The representation of these landscapes is instilled in the popular consciousness until it is more real to them than the experience of the place itself, or if the place itself is visited, it cannot be experienced objectively but through the selective filter and influence of the national meaning that has been placed upon it.<sup>34</sup>

If the national identity is negotiated and formed in large part through the envisioned ideal of land and landscape, how will it be affected by change? The threat of external encroachment threatens the cartographic integrity of Argentina and the value it holds for Argentineans, and its recovery promises national redemption; it is therefore extremely evocative to the citizen, and perfectly appropriate as a basis on which the threatened government may employ a distraction.

### *Quantitative and Qualitative Research: The Disparity in Findings*

Scholars find numerous historical instances where diversionary war seems the most plausible explanation for the initiation of foreign conflict. The explanation for conflict initiation as diversionary war in many case studies is very persuasive: the example of the Falkland Islands is but one example, though one which seems to fit particularly well within the assumptions and assertions of the theory. However, empirical research has produced

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<sup>34</sup>Stephen Legg, "Reviewing Geographies of Memory/ Forgetting," *Environment and Planning A* 39 (2007).; L. M. Costa, "Politics, Desire and Memory in the Construction of Landscape in the Argentine Pampas," *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 5, no. 1 & 2 (2006).

mixed and contradictory results. Rudolph Rummel's 1963 study on the domestic-foreign conflict relationship, a cross-sectional investigation of 77 states between 1955 and 1957 which utilized 9 measures of domestic conflict and 13 indicators of foreign conflict (including a frequency-of-war indicator), found that there was generally no correlation.<sup>35</sup> Following studies based on the same general model confirmed these results. Levy points out, however, that most of these studies were generally "bivariate in nature... and made no attempt to incorporate the effects of other variables which might affect the relationship between foreign and domestic conflict."<sup>36</sup> Other, later studies, such as those by Wilkenfeld and Zinnes, did find a relationship when variables such as regime type were controlled for.<sup>37</sup>

Levy posits that widely varying methodological approaches are the reason for the lack of concordance between the majority of quantitative and qualitative research. He finds this result to be confusing and disturbing, writing further that

The failure of quantitative empirical research to uncover any indication of a strong relationship between the internal and external conflict behavior of states... is in contrast with the empirical findings ...which provide considerable evidence as to the conflict-cohesion hypothesis for small groups... The gap between these quantitative empirical findings and the theoretical literature is of greater concern...as Hazelwood notes... 'in no other instance do the arguments present in international relations theory and the results recorded through systematic empirical analysis diverge so widely as in the domestic conflict – foreign conflict studies.'<sup>38</sup>

The utilization of both quantitative and qualitative (case study) methods of analysis in this study, and the dual focus on global patterns and a particular country, is an attempt to effect a more comprehensive overall study of the diversionary war phenomenon and to consider the reasons behind the divergences in the existing literature.

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<sup>35</sup> R. J. Rummel, "Dimensions of Conflict Behavior within and between Nations," in *Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics*, ed. Jonathan Wilkenfeld (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973).

<sup>36</sup> Levy, 262.

<sup>37</sup> Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Dina A. Zinnes, "A Linkage Model of Domestic Conflict Behavior," in *Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics*, ed. Jonathan Wilkenfeld (New York: David McKay Co., 1973).

<sup>38</sup> Levy, 263.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology & Results: the Global Sample**

#### *Introduction*

This study will perform two discrete types of analysis in order to evaluate the likelihood that domestic strife, perceived by an incumbent government regime as threatening to its own survival, might play a role in the initiation of foreign conflict by that government. The first of these analyses is a two-part quantitative investigation; the second, a qualitative examination that will focus in greater depth on the dynamics of diversionary war in a specific country, here Argentina. This chapter will focus on the quantitative aspect of the study, ascertaining the existence and nature of a relationship between domestic strife and initiation of aggressive foreign action. This relationship will be examined in both a global sample of 156 nation states and in Argentina, over a period of thirty-four years. Evaluation of the former sample will attempt to establish an understanding of the operation of this relationship in the general universe, and the latter to examine more closely the way in which global patterns are applicable to specific countries. The data for the latter sample will be taken directly from the former, but evaluated in isolation. The results of the latter will be examined in Chapter 4.

Leo Hazelwood's 1975 research on whether the intensity of domestic strife might affect the likelihood of external conflict suggests that "Mass protests...are the best indicator of foreign conflict."<sup>39</sup> This study will test such an assertion by determining whether or not a positive correlation exists between social protest and government initiation of international conflict. Statistical analysis of the two variables – specifically, logistic regressions– will be performed using Stata statistical software. If the initiation of foreign conflict seems to be in

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<sup>39</sup> Levy, 276

many cases preceded by significant social conflict, such a result will indicate that mass protest is indeed a factor in the initiation of external conflict, and strengthen the explanation that domestic concerns play a role in international relations.

### *Sources*

In order to determine the existence of a positive correlation between domestic unrest and government initiation of dramatic foreign policy, this study will utilize both international and domestic conflict data. Sources for these data are the Militarized Interstate Dispute database, version 3.0, and the World Handbook of Social and Political Indicators, version 3, respectively. This study will examine disputes occurring in the thirty-four year period from 1948 until 1982 (inclusive).

The Militarized Interstate Dispute data set is a product of the Correlates of War project currently located at Pennsylvania State University. A MID is defined as a conflict between states that does not involve a full-scale war in that it causes fewer than 1000 deaths though some military force is threatened or used. There need be no deaths resultant from military force for the conflict to be classified as a MID.<sup>40</sup> This data set measures interstate disputes from 1816 until 2001 (inclusive) in the world.

The choice to use the data available from the Militarized Interstate Dispute databank (hereafter, MIDS) was made in order to account for the smaller-scale foreign actions that are similarly meaningful to the examination of diversionary war, though not as extensively studied as those which may be technically considered to be “wars.” This study attempts to confront the assumptions resultant from the term, “diversionary war,” and look at conflicts

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<sup>40</sup> Stuart Bremer Jones, and J. David Singer, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816–1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, no. 2 (1996), 163.



which may not necessarily reach that level of violence, in order to emphasize that the value of the theory is not constricted to explaining the occurrence of some wars, but also to other acts of foreign aggression. The theory's importance lies in its provision of an explanation for the possible domestic concerns which may motivate governments to behave as they do in the international arena. This is not to say that the set does not include the events of foreign aggression which ultimately escalated to the status of wars.

Investigations of the suitability of the diversionary war hypothesis for explaining government initiation of international conflict have heretofore been largely limited to examination of large-scale conflicts, particularly wars. However, the implications of the theory are far broader than such a focus recognizes and apply in theory as an explanation for a greater range of government decisions; a more fine-grained analysis is needed to see if the theory holds as an explanation for smaller-scale dramatic foreign policy actions. If diversionary war theory is shown to be applicable to a range of foreign policy actions, the results will demonstrate the initiating government's awareness of distraction as a political instrument, and domestic issues as an influence on foreign policy decisions. To that end, the only MIDS events that were included in the statistical analysis were those which were originated by the nation under consideration.

Domestic conflict data is taken from the World Handbook of Social and Political Indicators (hereafter WPSI), version 3, which covers the 1948-1982 period.<sup>41</sup> These data were made available in part by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, and were originally collected by Charles Lewis Taylor. The events included in the dataset are those which indicate the daily occurrence of political protest, government sanction, and institutional change in 156 countries for the abovementioned period. As the

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authors of the dataset explain it, "Each of the daily event records includes a field for recording the number of events which occurred on a single day of a single type. Multiple events were recorded only if all of the reported attributes were identical; otherwise, separate records were required."<sup>42</sup>

In order to fit the parameters of this study, specific measures of political protest were isolated as relevant indicators of domestic unrest. It was important that event types not deemed potentially threatening to an incumbent government be excised so as not to falsely indicate the presence of domestic unrest.<sup>43</sup> Those protest events which were retained to represent real or imagined domestic unrest (by the government; in this relationship, where government perception is of paramount importance, both are equally pertinent) include: protest demonstrations, peaceful demonstrations met by police violence, demonstrations that turned into riots of their own accord, armed attacks by government and military forces against the population,<sup>44</sup> armed attacks undertaken by insurgents, a generic armed attack

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<sup>42</sup> Charles Lewis Taylor and David A. Jodice, "World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators Iii: 1948-1982 [Computer File]. 2nd Icpsr Ed.," (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1986). Codebook, 4.

<sup>43</sup> For example: governments in Argentina, as in other countries, often organize demonstrations to counter those that they anticipate will be made against them. Word of an imminent protest motivates government agents to bring in poorer people from outlying regions of Buenos Aires, who come lured by government promises of a free meal and token sum of pesos, to agitate in support of the government other citizens are denouncing. Interestingly, the rabble that comprises the pro-government rallies is usually more violent and destructive than the anti-government protestors; the former rioting for payment, the latter for sincere beliefs and a desire for change. It is necessary to eliminate such pro-government protests from the analysis so as not to confound the results.

Pro-government demonstrations usually correspond to anti-government demonstrations, and should not in theory occur without the initiating presence of the latter. This is why one cant use the absence of pro-government demonstrations to demonstrate less political support for the government; as well as that people are more likely to use voice in order to try and initiate a change rather than to support the status quo. See EVL game; William Roberts Clark, Sona Nadenichek Golder and Matt Golder, *Principles of Comparative Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc. , 2008).

<sup>44</sup> This type of event is problematic, complicated as it is by the obscuring effects of government assertions which declare the necessity of subduing domestic insurgents and subversives, etc. Argentina's so-called Dirty War is illustrative of this phenomenon: apparently (and, it often appears, genuinely) innocent citizens were victimized by the government under that entity's justification that they were leftist subversives and terrorists. In any case, this event serves to indicate a perceived need on the part of the government to repress the population in order to anticipate or subdue potentially threatening domestic unrest.

code, political assassination of a government target, unsuccessful assassination attempts of a government target, political strikes involving workers, and political strikes involving students.

### *Research Question*

H (1): The probability of an international event (y) in the presence of a domestic event (x) is greater than the probability of an international event in the absence of a domestic event.

H (null): The probability of an international event (y) in the presence of a domestic event (x) is lesser than or equal to the probability of an international event in the absence of a domestic event.

If the results of the data analysis confirm the former hypothesis, we will have reason to believe that there is a significant positive relationship between the occurrence of domestic unrest and the initiation of foreign policy action by the government experiencing the unrest.

### *Methods*

The MIDS and WPSI events were ordered in a time-series dataset that was created to map the two originally disparate banks onto a common timeline. The total number of observations was slightly less than two million. The absence of any event, international or domestic, was given a value of zero.

This study uses logistic regressions as its primary method of quantitative analysis. This function produces an odds ratio which measures the effect of the strength of association

or non-independence between the independent variable (the occurrence of domestic unrest) and the dependent variable (the initiation of foreign conflict).

In order to control for the possibly confounding effects of variables which correlate with both the independent and dependent variable, a number of additional regressions were run with alternative specifications. An examination of the robustness of the results after accounting for possible confounding variables will determine the confidence we may expect to have in the model for the proposed relationship between the variables. Subjecting the model to more stringent tests will increase the confidence we can assert in the utility of its results.

The independence of the variables makes it more difficult to have confidence in the validity of a strong association between them. In order to control for the possibility of the time-related effect of covariance, time lags will be imposed on the data for seven periods, in which each period is equivalent to one day. If results are still significant even after controlling for prior period events, we will have more confidence in a result that states that the occurrence of domestic events makes the initiation of international events more likely.

The possible influence of country-specific and temporal-specific issues on the results of the data analysis necessitated the creation of country and year dummy variables to offset their influence on the analytical result. The insertion of these dummy variables allows us to control for country- or temporal-unique variance which cannot be seen as a variable and which is readily obvious upon observing the data set. The production of a significant result after running regressions which account for the specific characteristics of specific countries or time periods lets us be confident that the results' validity are not compromised by the effect of these variables.

Quantitative estimates of the effect of domestic events on the initiation of international events will be illustrated in the results of four specific logistic regressions: the first, unmediated; the second, with a lag for seven periods; the third, both un-lagged and lagged results mediated by the insertion of a country dummy variable; and fourthly, the same as the previous, though mediated by the insertion of a year dummy variable as opposed to a country dummy variable.

#### *Results of global analysis*

A simple logistic regression between the independent and dependent variables revealed that the log-odds of an international dispute happening is 5.27 times as high in the presence of a domestic dispute. This result is statistically significant at 1% – indeed,  $(p) = 0.00$  – so it appears highly unlikely that this effect was generated by randomness. (See Table A., Appendix A) As these results indicate that there is evidence to say that the number of domestic disputes positively increases the occurrence of international disputes on the same day, we reject the null hypothesis.

#### *Results of global analysis with time lag*

After imposing a time lag on the data, it was found that there is still a statistically significant positive relationship between the presence of domestic unrest events from one to seven days later and the initiation of a foreign conflict. The occurrence of a domestic event one day prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 3.86 times more likely. The occurrence of a domestic event two days prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 3.23 times more likely. The occurrence of a domestic event three days prior

to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 2.93 times more likely. The occurrence of a domestic event four days prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 2.56 times more likely. The occurrence of a domestic event five days prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 2.30 times more likely to occur. A six-day time lag makes the initiation of foreign conflict 2.29 times more likely. A seven-day time lag makes the initiation of foreign conflict 2.09 times more likely. All reported results are statistically significant at 1%.

These results proffer evidence to support the claim that domestic events make international events more likely even after controlling for prior period events. They also suggest to us that domestic events continue to be significant in influencing the possibility of the initiation of foreign conflict even if they occur a week prior to the international-conflict initiation. As time lags are added to the model, the effect of the current day's events on the possible initiation of foreign conflict gets smaller. This suggests that the original logistic regression model, in which only the current day's domestic events are accounted for, overstates the effect of that day's events on international events. As the current day's domestic events are correlated with domestic events occurring in preceding days, the coefficient on the domestic event in models that omit previous days' events confounds the effect of the current day's events with the effect of previous days' events. (See Table B, Appendix A).

The time period between that experience and the government initiation of aggressive foreign policy action might also signal the government's capacity for absorbing domestic unrest. Perhaps those governments which initiate sooner rather than later perceive themselves to be forced to such action, while those which wait are possibly less likely to

initiate because they are strong enough to weather popular discontent without finding it necessary to initiate diversionary action. Further research would, of course, be necessary to lend empirical credence to such a hypothesis.

*Country fixed effect results & country fixed results with lagged values*

The results of the logistic regression conducted with the inclusion of country dummy variables are notably different from the results in which the possibly confounding effects of country-specific characteristics are not accounted for. Where the logistic regression without time lags before indicated that the likelihood of an international dispute is 5.27 times as high in the presence of domestic disputes than in their absence, the same value here with the imposition of a country dummy variable is only 1.23, and is not statistically significant. This means that the presence of domestic disturbance makes the initiation of a foreign conflict on that day only .23 times more likely. The values of the time-lagged data are similarly affected; while the same general pattern is evident in terms of the change in likelihood according to time, the odds ratios are significantly reduced, with the average odds ratio only 1.18. Though they are all positive, none of the values produced here are at all significant. (See Table C, Appendix A).

These results indicate that country-specific characteristics have a noteworthy influence on the results of the logistic regression. This suggests that there may be a stronger relationship between domestic and international events in some countries, according to specific characteristics of those places which have not been considered in the quantitative analysis. Such a result suggests the need for a more in-depth analysis of the operation of the relationship between these variables in certain countries. While the in-depth comparison of

this relationship in different countries would be of great empirical value, the scope of this study does not extend that far. This leads the investigator to propose the above as an area in which further research would be beneficial to the study of the subjects investigated herein.

*Year fixed effect results & year fixed results with lagged values*

The results of the logistic regression analysis conducted with the insertion of a year dummy variable seem to indicate that temporal-specific issues have only a slight impact in affecting the production of a statistically significant model of the relationship between the occurrence of domestic disturbances and a government's initiation of foreign conflict.

Where the logistic regression without time lags before indicated that the likelihood of an international dispute is 5.27 times as high in the presence of domestic disputes than in their absence, the same value here with the imposition of a year dummy variable is 5.031; a very small difference. This value is, moreover, significant at 1%.

After including lagged values of our main variable of interest (domestic event), it was found that there is a positive relationship between the presence of domestic unrest events from one to seven days later and the initiation of a foreign conflict, even with the inclusion of year dummies. These results are almost all statistically significant at 1%. The occurrence of a domestic event one day prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 3.72 times more likely than in the absence of domestic dispute. The occurrence of a domestic event two days prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 3.14 times more likely. The occurrence of a domestic event three days prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 2.86 times more likely. The occurrence of a domestic event four days prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 2.50 times more likely. The



occurrence of a domestic event five days prior to the initiation of a foreign conflict makes the latter 2.24 times more likely to occur. A six-day time lag makes the initiation of foreign conflict 2.23 times more likely. A seven-day time lag makes the initiation of foreign conflict 2.04 times more likely. Only this last value is not statistically significant at 1%, though it is significant at 5%.

### *Limitations*

The diversionary war theory does not specify the expected time elapsed between the occurrence of domestic events and the initiation of foreign conflicts. This study observes the effect of the elapsed time between domestic and international events for a period of seven days, but such a determination is largely arbitrary. The initiation of a foreign conflict could occur after domestic events happening weeks, even months prior; it is not unlikely, moreover, that the effect could be produced by the governmental memory of domestic disturbances happening far earlier. It is not unreasonable to presume that some governments respond to domestic disturbance much more slowly than do others. Nevertheless, the results of this study find a considerable link between domestic and international events regardless of such considerations.

The domestic events variable, from the World Handbook of Social and Political Events v.3, was found upon further examination to be slightly flawed. It was found in some cases to be inconsistent with the representation of the number of events that occurred. For example, if one looks at the record for May 4, 1965, one finds that there are 1004 instances of event type 713 listed as having occurred in the Dominican Republic. Event type 713 is found to be “deaths from domestic group violence;” however, this report of deaths is coded as a daily event. Therefore, one expecting to understand that 1004 instances of an event has

occurred will be disappointed in realizing that they are not 1004 events, but 1004 deaths that have occurred. The codebook for the dataset explains a later shift in deciding to code number the number of events as “an attribute of other specific events such as riots, armed attacks, and assassinations,” but the appearance of a “deaths” count in the place of a “number of events count” is found in the final dataset. Though this does not pose a problem for our model (which looked not at number of events but whether or not an event occurred) this sort of irregularity in the dataset erodes our confidence in general in the dataset’s ability to predict reliable patterns in the world.

### *Conclusion*

This study finds mathematical evidence for a positive, statistically significant relationship between the occurrence of domestic events and the government initiation of foreign conflict. The gradual application of different controls to our results revealed them to be robust even under closer scrutiny. The imposition of time lags indicates that autocorrelation does not appear to be influencing the original result, and the results of logistic regressions run with year dummies suggest that the original results were still positive and significant when controlling for possibly confounding variables. Only the model with the country values produced anomalous results (ones which, though positive, were not statistically significant).

## **Chapter 4: Argentina**

### *Introduction*

Though the quantitative results of the global sample discussed in the previous chapter is valuable in suggesting a positive and significant relationship between the occurrence of domestic protest events and the initiation of international conflict, bivariate analysis is necessarily limited in what it can do. It cannot illuminate causal mechanisms; it cannot indicate the way in which self-interested political elites act to divert the populace when they are most worried about their own survival in office. The quantitative data is able only to indicate a correlation between two events. This begs the need for a more in-depth, qualitative analysis of the way in which the historical episodes of a particular country – Argentina – illustrate the circumstances and operation in and by which diversionary conflict occurs.

The qualitative analysis which will be discussed below has been termed “case-study analysis,” but it is important to note that these “cases” cannot be considered cases as they are usually understood in statistical analysis. Ordinary least squares regression assumes that the cases are not affecting each other; that they represent discrete events. That assumption is no longer applicable in the qualitative realm, especially in an examination of historical events in Argentina. While causality is limited to acting in only one direction – an event can only be influenced by those events which precede it – these events are not independent of each other. For example, one international conflict that occurs in 1950 is very likely to determine the means and possibly the occurrence of one which takes place in 1955, due to historical precedent and the influence of prior events on the perceptions of decision-makers. The

qualitative analysis assumes the truth of the idea that one often not only learns, but acts on the lessons that one learns from history.

### *Why study Argentina?*

The decision to study diversionary war with a special focus on Argentina was made for a number of reasons. First, the 1982 Falklands War is often cited by scholars of diversionary war theory as the classic case illustrating the hypothesis' utility as an explanation for the initiation of foreign conflict in the real world. No serious examination of diversionary war theory is complete without at least a reference to that case, and a more in-depth analysis of the extent to which it offers a chance to test the tenets of the theory is valuable to gauge its potential as an explanation for events in the real world.

Second, the historical record of Argentina as a nation is also especially conducive for testing many of the assertions and assumptions made by proponents of the diversionary war theory. As the country has experienced a range of regime types and economic circumstances, the investigator may examine the various different effects on the possible use of diversionary war that may be produced by the context of those circumstances, while their shared history is a constant back-story for each event. The national obsession with the Falkland Islands is longstanding, and as such provides an opportunity to examine the government treatment of the issue over time – to what extent and at what times the government's emphasis of the issue is apparently unrelated to external stimulus, and therefore needing of alternative explanation.

Argentina is further a good country to study because it is a state in which the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the people is readily observable. Argentines are traditionally very vocal about the extent to which they feel the government is successfully caring for the popular interest, taking to the streets of Buenos Aires in protest when they feel compelled to

express their discontent. This is a feature of Argentine culture that makes one feel more secure in using observational data to make conclusions. It is, of course, easier to study diversionary war in a democratic rather than an authoritarian political system, and the period under review in this chapter is one in which Argentina was ruled by an authoritarian regime.

Authoritarian regimes are much less likely to be tolerant of public protest, and more likely to pre-empt its escalation (with actions such as, for example, repression, reformation (which is rather more unlikely, as it usually leads to power being taken out of the hands of the regime), or, perhaps, diversionary war).<sup>45</sup> Yet, in Argentina, public protest still took place in varying degrees of size and intensity under the junta. It is true that this is partly a function of that entity's intermittent liberalization of controls over the population. However, it is nevertheless significant that "in the street" protests occurred during the era of state violence, which lasted the entire incumbency of the juntas. The high incidence of political protest in Argentina over time, for the most part despite changes in regime type and the change in characteristics (i.e., repressiveness, tolerance, etc.) of specific regimes indicates that the expression of popular discontent is more or less constant. (See Graph A.) We therefore feel confident in our ability to observe Argentine public discontent as a measurable phenomenon.

The longstanding history of disputes between Argentina and Great Britain as regards which nation is legitimately sovereign over the Falkland Islands is an especially choice candidate for the study of diversionary war because such disputes appear not to be justified

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<sup>45</sup> Indeed, one sees almost no expression of public discontent in nations such as the pre-Gorbachev Soviet Union, where potential protesters were dissuaded from such action by the high likelihood that such action would lead to gulag imprisonment or to death. Political repression is an obvious deterrent to popular protest. However, political repression is also usually fairly apparent to outsiders, and it is usually true that where political repression is exercised on the population, that the government perceives the existence of popular discontent in need of suppression. We may make the same assumption. The absence of popular protest does not by any means imply the absence of popular discontent.

by the standards of rational state behavior in international relations. As historian J.C.J. Metford writes, “It is...incredible that...the disputed possession of the islands should have embittered relations between Britain and Argentina, two islands which, traditionally, and for the most cogent of economic reasons, should be firm friends.”<sup>46</sup> The opportunity costs engendered by such disputes are not only those directly incurred in the prosecution of the actual conflicts stemming from the dispute – resources, troops, and the like. The traditional concord between the two nations, as evidenced by the significant number of Argentine citizens descended from English emigrants and cultural similarities between the two states, has also been embittered by the Argentine resentment of what he or she sees as English imperialism and trickery and the English impatience at the persistence of the Argentine claim to the islands. An economic relationship which would be beneficial to both countries has been retarded by their inability to come to a conclusion about – and in many cases, even discuss – the issue of Falklands sovereignty in a way that would be mutually acceptable. These costs extend further to the detriment of these countries’ unrelated international goals: disagreement over these strategically and materially unimportant islands also means the loss of an ally in each other (and therefore less available international support in the pursuit of unrelated foreign policy aims). Reputation costs are incurred as well, primarily by Argentina, whose persistently unsuccessful attempts to ‘recover’ the islands make the nation and its representatives look impotent to the international community.<sup>47</sup>

### *A brief history of the Falklands dispute*

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<sup>46</sup> Metford, 463.

<sup>47</sup> Argentina is especially harmed by the discordant nature of its relationship with Great Britain, as it enjoys a significantly lesser standing in the international community and international organizations than does the latter nation. It would therefore be much more advantageous for the Latin American country to court Britain’s favor than to antagonize it, making her behavior as regards the Falklands even more seemingly irrational if one is to understand it in the traditional sense of international relations exchanges.

The Falkland (Malvinas) Islands are located in the South Atlantic Ocean, approximately four hundred and eighty miles northeast of Cape Horn; they constitute two large islands surrounded by two hundred small islands and inlets. They are inhabited by 1800 persons, the majority of whom are descendants of the British settlers who settled there after the British occupied the (at that time, unoccupied) territory in 1833. They are located approximately eight thousand miles away from Great Britain proper and eight hundred miles away from the Argentine mainland. The truth of the facts cited by each side to support their sovereignty claim lies muddled by history. Essentially, Argentines assert that the Falklands belong to them by virtue of their independence from Spain, which administered the islands from Buenos Aires when Argentina was a territory of the Spanish crown. The English claim them from prior and consistent occupation. The British ownership is highly resented by Argentines and has been seen as a continuing insult and affront to their dignity since 1833. Legal scholars have been unable to come to a conclusion as to which country's claim has greater legitimacy, and indeed officials from each country have acknowledged the validity of the opposing claim.<sup>48</sup>

Consideration of the strength and pervasiveness of Argentine nationalism (established in the second chapter) makes it tempting to attribute the behavior of each successive Argentine government towards the Falklands issue to that phenomenon. Perhaps the ubiquity

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<sup>48</sup> Julius Goebel, *The Struggle for the Falkland Islands: A Study in Legal and Diplomatic History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). Goebel himself, whose study on the legality of the contending sovereignty claims is the authoritative text on that subject, asserts that Argentina's claim to ownership of the Islands is the more persuasive one on legal grounds. He writes, "...it is obvious that the British notion that the Argentine Confederation could not have an interest in a cause settled between England and Spain is totally without legal foundation. The right of the Argentine nation to stand in the place of Spain with reference to the sovereignty over the Falklands was established by the successful revolution, and by the assertion and maintenance of sovereignty over the Falklands as against Spain." 468. However, the continuous administration of the Islands by Britain and the general ambivalence of the international community towards the murky historical details and the legal claims cited by Argentina have essentially established Britain as rightful possessor in the eyes of the rest of the world.

of the belief of Argentina's rightful sovereignty in every part of the country, including the offices of the political elite, is reason enough to justify such behavior. After all, nationalism has been asserted by many scholars to be the organizing and legitimizing force behind a nation's establishment and continued existence.<sup>49</sup> There are, however, several reasons why nationalism, though a necessary condition for Argentina's aggressive foreign policy actions in the Falklands, is not sufficient to explain them. The timing and circumstances of the prosecution of such a claim do much to contradict those who would cite nationalism as the main factor in such behavior; the sovereignty issue seems to be emphasized at particular moments when so doing might be advantageous to the incumbent regime and suppressed when it would present an inconvenience. This particular facet of the subject will be broached further in the following chapter.

*Results of the quantitative investigation of the relationship between Argentine domestic events and international events*

We were unable to produce any results from logistic regression analysis in the subset of the global sample that focused exclusively on events occurring in Argentina from 1948 until 1982; the model exhibited perfect collinearity and it was demonstrated that there was not enough variance in the independent variable to produce results that would be of any value. This might be a possible consequence of the dataset's being dominated by zeroes, in which case there might not have been enough other values or events for sufficient variance.

This result, though disappointing, makes a strong case for the need for alternative methods of analysis, and further justifies the decision to perform qualitative case-study analysis for events occurring in Argentina. However, a graph of the temporal distribution of

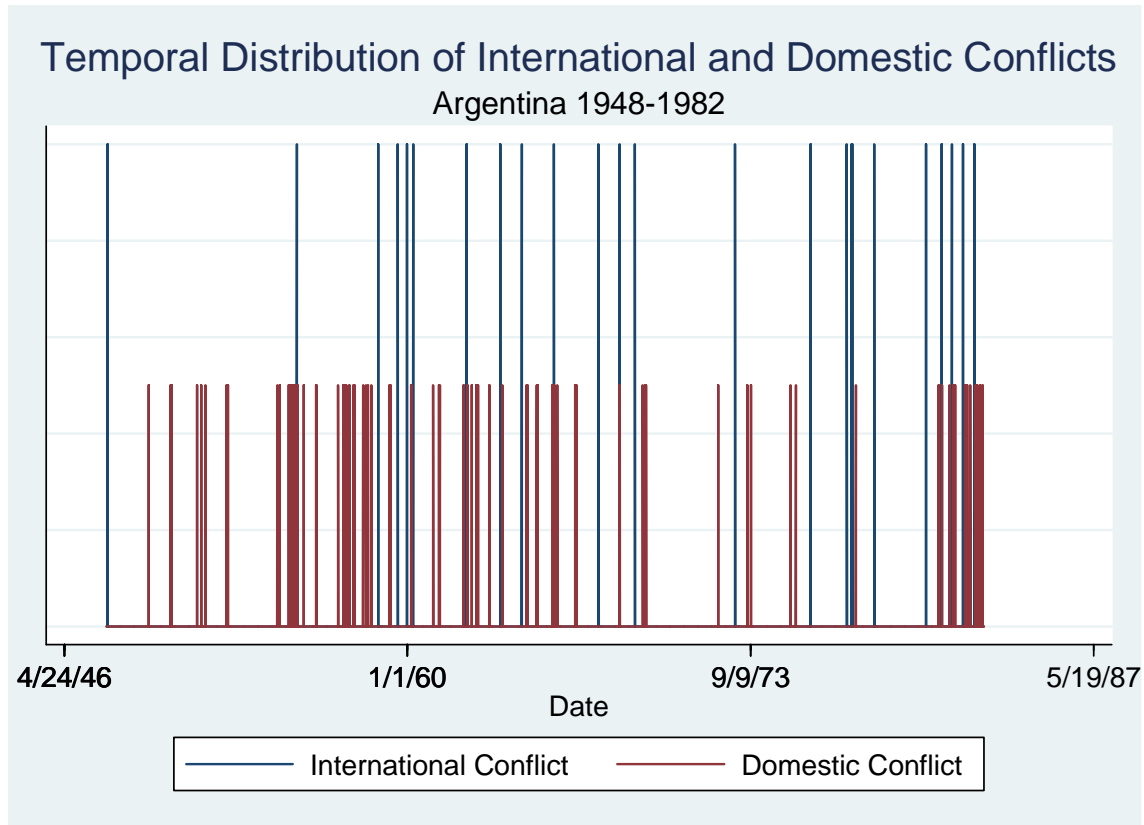
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<sup>49</sup> Terry H. Pickett, *Inventing Nations: Justifications of Authority in the Modern World* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996).



international and domestic events in Argentina can be produced, and is instructive in illuminating the nature of the correlative relationship set out in the preceding chapter.

Graph A.



This graph shows a number of instances in which it would appear that domestic events preceded the initiation of international conflict. It also demonstrates the continuous incidence of Argentine political protest events over the time period addressed in this study.

The longstanding nature of the dispute over the islands offers a number of instances whose further examination would be beneficial to our understanding of the potential for their explanation. Though the time period that is examined should have little to no impact on the operation of diversionary war if it is, as has been asserted, a universally applicable concept, examining episodes which took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are chosen for ease of comparison. Keeping the context in which such events occurred as similar as possible across cases limits

the possibility of confounded results by eliminating variables that could arise from historic difference. Moreover, all of the conflicts which took place over the Falkland Islands occurred primarily between Argentina and Great Britain, so the actors remain constant as well.<sup>50</sup>

A series of successive Argentine governments have considered taking military action in the Falklands. Nora Femenia asserts that, in contemporary history, “There is evidence about concrete plans for a military takeover [as far back as] 1942 and again in 1945, by officers of the elite military academy in Buenos Aires who received instructions from the government to study the feasibility of an invasion of the Islands.”<sup>51</sup> However, the circumstances under which these and other such following instructions were issued, and the corresponding conclusions which may be drawn about the reasons for such issuance, must be considered in more depth in order to assert that they in any way support the utility of the diversionary war hypothesis.

The two cases that will be examined here in considerable depth, and analyzed in terms of the evidence they offer to support or contradict the diversionary theory of war, are the 1982 Falklands war and a conflict which occurred in 1976/ 1977, the characteristics of whose initiation appear to be similar to the latter conflict but which didn’t escalate to the point of full-blown war. These cases were selected for the similarities they bear to each other and the essential consistency of the characteristics of the Argentine governments which

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<sup>50</sup> One might argue that the difference in regime type and government composition across time means that the actors under consideration are essentially different as well, that the government of the same country at two different points in time is essentially two distinct actors. This may well be; however, operating under the unitary rational actor assumption, we assume that the interests of both governments would be basically similar, especially as the fundamental characteristics of the nation and government constitution remain somewhat constant despite regime change (though it seems that this would be more true for Great Britain (which retained the same regime type and political system despite changes in party predominance) than Argentina, which experienced more changes in the identity of ruling elites – populist to military to civil, & etc.)

<sup>51</sup> Nora Femenia, *National Identity in Times of Crisis: The Scripts of the Falklands-Malvinas War* (Commack, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 1996), 2

initiated them, both of which were military regimes presiding over a poorly performing economy and experiencing significant resistance from the population. Both of these governments were also fundamentally authoritarian and had suspended those parts of the Constitution they found inconvenient,<sup>52</sup> and both of the conflicts which will be discussed below were initiated in prosecution of the Argentine claim to sovereignty of the Falklands. If the 1982 conflict appears to have been initiated primarily as a tactic to distract the domestic population from their dissatisfaction with government performance, a case will have been strengthened for the argument that governments initiate foreign conflicts as an attempt to appease those domestic situations which are perceived as discouraging to their continued political survival.

*The war that didn't happen five years earlier: the Southern Thule Expedition*<sup>53</sup>

The failure of Isabel Peron's government led to its replacement by a military junta in March 1976. The dictatorship immediately proceeded to implement ineffectual economic reforms and subdue the population through state terror in the aforementioned "Dirty War." The GDP fell 20% in 1976 from where it had been in 1974; inflation sky-rocketed, as did unemployment.<sup>54</sup> Although evidence of popular protest is scarce for this time, considering the effects of the Argentine state terror (the Process) in virtually negating mass anti-government expression, the very fact, intensity, and breadth of the Process indicates the

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<sup>52</sup> Luis Alberto Romero, *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, trans. James P. Brennan (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

<sup>53</sup> It is important to note here that there is very little information available for this episode, let alone scholarship. The three main sources of information I use are a history of Argentina's foreign relations during the military junta by Carlos Escude, and two newspaper articles which were published in 2008 when documentation of Operation Journeyman, the British response to the Argentine expedition to Southern Thule, became declassified. Unfortunately, I was unable to gain access to the Journeyman documentation and have to rely on excerpts of it cited in my sources.

<sup>54</sup> Romero, 228

government's perception that organized opposition would threaten the regime unless potential protesters were subdued.

There is not much information available from either Argentine or British sources about Argentina's 1976 invasion of Southern Thule. Classified evidence of Operation Journeyman, the British reaction to the Argentine encroachment, was only released in 2005. However, the basic facts are clear: on November 6<sup>th</sup>, engineers of the Argentine Navy landed on the smaller Morell Island, part of the group of islands known as Southern Thule, part of the South Sandwich Islands and at that time part of the Falkland Islands dependency (and, therefore, a legal possession of the British crown). They began to construct "Corbeta Uruguay," a military base that would ostensibly be a station for scientific research. A weather station, radio station, and a flagpole from which the Argentine Flag flew were set up at the base. Construction lasted four months, and the station was officially inaugurated on March 18, 1977, complete with barracks and a concrete helicopter landing pad, to be occupied by 50 "scientists." These operations occurred during a period of diplomatic negotiations between Argentine and British officials regarding possible economic agreements over Falklands commerce, in which the British consistently resisted Argentine demands to address the issue of the islands' sovereignty. No information of the Argentine activities on Morell were released to the Argentine public at this time.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> It is interesting to note how these activities are understood in Argentina today. Although Escude and Cisneros indicate that this base was, in fact, more intended to establish a military presence than a scientific one, a Clarin article (one of the foremost newspapers published in Argentina) asserts that Operation Journeyman consisted of a flotilla, including a nuclear submarine, which had orders to attack the Argentine *scientists* should it appear to become necessary to protect British sovereignty over the Falklands. Moreover, the article asserts that the British plans to go through with such an attack upon notice of the base's establishment were interrupted when Prime Minister James Callaghan finally decided *not to violate international laws*. (Italics mine). It seems ironic that the Argentines should attribute illegality to the British when it was their arbitrary and unilateral decision to set up a base on contested territory which initiated this particular suit. Natasha Niebieskikwiat, "Declaracion De Documentos En Londres. Malvinas: Revelan Que Gran Bretana Estuvo a Punto De Atacar En 1977," *Clarín* 2005., 2.

The Argentine presence on Morell, and the Argentine failure to ask permission of the British for the base's installation or even to give them a priori notification of such plans, might have been an attempt to break the ongoing diplomatic negotiations over the Falklands and force the issue.<sup>56</sup> After all, the Argentines were fully aware of the contentious nature of the dispute, and would have understood that the establishment of any sort of base without asking permission would not be seen as benign activity by the Islands' administrators. The unilateral decision to establish Corbeta Uruguay would have been seen as a challenge or at least an insult by the British, and the Argentines did nothing to dispel that impression. Indeed, they seem to have encouraged such an impression of their intentions through other aggressive signals made around the same time. The Argentine Navy also concurrently cut off the fuel supply to the Falklands' only airport on the main island of Port Stanley and stated that they would no longer fly the Red Ensign (the Falklands' British-based flag; ships in waters belonging to a foreign country traditionally fly that country's maritime flag as a courtesy). Moreover, a contingency plan was set up in order to counter possible British resistance to the base's establishment. On one view, this plan entailed military action: British attempts to dismantle the base would be met with reprisals against the British Antarctic investigation group in the South Georgia Islands and the situation would then be escalated into a full-out occupation of the Falklands proper in an operation that would be supported by the Argentine Air Force and diplomatic action at the United Nations.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps the Argentines wanted to indicate to UN negotiators in New York that they took the issue seriously; perhaps they were tired of waiting for a result that didn't seem to be forthcoming

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<sup>56</sup> Carlos Escude and Andres Cisneros, "Las Relaciones Exteriores De La Argentina Subordinada: La Diplomacia De Malvinas, 1945-1989," in *Historia De Las Relaciones Exteriores Argentinas* (Buenos Aires: Consejo Argentino para las Relaciones Internacionales (CARI), GEL/Nuevohacer, 2000).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

from diplomatic channels. The lack of any concrete evidence as to the intentions behind the encroachment in Southern Thule and the hostile signs in the South Atlantic makes any such hypotheses largely speculative.

When the British became aware of the Argentine encroachment in December 1976, they issued formal protests and secretly dispatched a nuclear submarine and two frigates to the area. Through the forum of the UN negotiations going on in New York at that time, the Argentine government was informed by the British of the flotilla sent to the South Atlantic. Upon this notice, the Argentines removed the “scientists” and the occupancy of Morell returned to the status quo.<sup>58</sup>

Although no military action ultimately came of the occupation, it is possible to speculate on the intentions the junta had in establishing the base in defiance of British claims over that territory. The junta was at that time occupied with what it perceived to be the necessary repression of the Argentine population; it scarcely had a surplus of financial or political credit to its name. The diplomatic negotiations that had been occurring intermittently since the 1833 British occupation of the territory and the Argentine protestation thereof had been proceeding much as usual, with some indication of progress as regards economic collaboration.<sup>59</sup> What would have possessed the junta to make a move that could have the potential to force the British hand to military conflict at such a juncture? Again, domestic considerations here offer a possible explanation for such behavior: perhaps the junta expected that this move might be the first of more energetic maneuvers, the eventual objective of which would be the recovery of Las Malvinas. Perhaps they envisioned a spike in their political stock which might have occurred with that recovery and which might

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<sup>58</sup> Niebieskikwiat, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

have been able to produce a population which would have been voluntarily compliant instead of brutally repressed. However, there is no evidence to bolster these speculations. What can be seen is that the Argentines backed down from their aggressive stance and removed their presence from the contested territory upon learning of the substantial British naval force sent to the area. This seems to indicate that the junta had not anticipated a strong response from the British, and that they were unwilling to escalate the situation to military conflict at this time; that the possible benefits of such a conflict, and the expected outcome in Argentina's favor, were not strong enough to outweigh the probable costs.

This episode seems at first glance to be one which ought not to be categorized as diversionary war. Firstly, it was not a war, and there was never any military engagement between the opposing powers. The secrecy surrounding the Argentine military's actions in Southern Thule in 1976 and 1977 furthermore indicate that this episode is no diversionary conflict: failure to make the conflict public negates the possibility of its being able to produce any diversionary effect on the populace.<sup>60</sup> If the Argentine maneuvers in the South Atlantic were indeed meant to force a conflict with the British, then, to what purpose? Why would the Argentine government have engaged in behaviors likely to elicit a hostile reaction from the British, if not in an attempt to address domestic discontent? It is instructive to note the circumstances under which the government perceived the threat of domestic discontent at this juncture. This episode occurred in 1976, at the very beginning of the program of repression, before any liberalization of its controls on the population. The junta felt popular

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<sup>60</sup> It might seem unlikely that Argentina would be able to keep these maneuvers in Southern Thule secret from Argentine citizens. However, it is important to remember that these islands are at least 800 miles from Argentina, that these particular islands in the Falklands territory are isolated and remote, and that few media organizations would have any reason to believe that anything out of the ordinary was occurring there at all unless they were informed to that effect by the Argentine government. Indeed, the military junta made a special point of publicizing the conflict themselves, and promoting the conflict in the media, on the eve of the 1982 invasion and as circumstances led up to war.

repression to be necessary, but had the material resources to finance it. Circumstances being what they are, governments have less reason to engage in risky, costly behaviors if their political stability seems assured.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps they saw no reason to inform the public of their move because they saw no immediate need of public support for their administration. Perhaps they felt no need to escalate because they evaluated the potential costs to outweigh the benefits of public support for such a conflict, and felt that their administration could live another day without immediate threat from their constituency.

Access to information on this episode is highly limited, and as such all posited theories are largely speculative; however, the junta which initiated these actions might have seen the popular discontent in its future and have been trying to hedge its bets if the eventuality of a diversionary war were to have become a reality – as, in fact, it did, only five years later. This suggests that this Southern Thule maneuvers may not in fact be inconsistent with or contradictory to the tenets of diversionary war. The establishment of a military base in the Falkland dependencies may have been an instance of planning for future conflict, a trial run to evaluate British reaction to Argentine encroachment of Falklands territory. Further research is necessary, but it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that this same episode may have escalated to international conflict had the junta felt itself to be in a position where popular diversion would have been necessary for self-preservation, and had not removed its presence from Morell in the face of the British military response to it. This also

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<sup>61</sup> It is interesting, though somewhat beyond the scope of this study, to think about how the degree of the conflict initiation signal made by the government impacts upon its effectiveness as a means of domestic political distraction. This issue is, of course, complicated by the fact that governments usually do not have a monopoly on the dissemination of news; other media organizations, popular communication, &etc. all play a role in determining the degree to which an event is emphasized in the public consciousness. Related questions one might ask include: If a conflict doesn't reach maturity, how do we know the degree to which the publicization of that conflict impacts its effectiveness as a diversion? Does the awareness of the population grow with their increased perception of the increased degree of foreign hostility? What, exactly, is the government extent of control over this process, and how does it operate those controls?



offers a possible explanation for the reasons behind the lack of information available to the public about this episode – the government which did not initially publicize its activities in Morell to reap the benefits of public support would be highly unlikely to publicize its submission to the British in the Falklands after the fact.

*The classic case: the 1982 Falklands War*

The Falklands War, so bizarre to the casual observer, has been asserted by many political scientists to be the premier historical support for the utility of the diversionary war theory. The classic elements are present – a beleaguered government dealing with poor economic performance and domestic unrest, its perceived political stock low and its resources insufficient to preserve itself in power through rewards or repression of the population, decides to redeem itself by through a glorious military victory and deliverance of a solution to the nation’s longstanding irredentist gripe.

The Argentine military junta’s ill-advised management of the economy had resulted in a decline in real income by 1980. Historians recount that, “Beginning in 1981, the inflationary crisis and the recession caused both employment and real wages to drop dramatically.”<sup>62</sup> The economy collapsed nearly completely around this time, when a catastrophic devaluation prompted capital flight.<sup>63</sup> The junta had infamously harshly repressed citizens’ natural response to this and other policy failures in a years-long campaign of terror known as “The Process” and the “Dirty War,” in which upwards of 30, 000 people were killed by the state. The disorganized and seemingly arbitrary patterns of the tortures, disappearances, and arrests indicate that the terror was not designed to repress any specific

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<sup>62</sup> Romero, 228

<sup>63</sup> "Country Briefings: Argentina," in *The Economist* (2005).

group but to impress upon the entire population the inadvisability of resisting or criticizing the government.<sup>64</sup> However, repression of popular discontent is costly and only possible as long as the government has the material capacity to finance it.<sup>65</sup> Mounting resource deficiencies had led the government to relax its controls on the population by the early 1980s. Historian Luis Alberto Romero explains the gradual resurgence of anti-government protest,

In April 1979, by which time the repression had eased somewhat, the combative sector [of the Argentine union movement] undertook a general protest strike...that ended in violent repression and imprisonment for the majority of the leaders who headed the strike. In late 1980, the most-combative union leaders re-established the CGT [General Confederation of Labor]...In 1981, taking advantage of the government's greater tolerance, the CGT launched another general strike, with consequences similar to those of 1979. In November of the same year, it led a march of workers to the cathedral of San Cayetano – the patron saint of the unemployed – demanding 'bread, peace, and work.' Around this time, their complaints merged with those of other sectors, such as the students and some regional business groups. Partial strikes were undertaken with greater frequency and intensity. On March 30, 1982, the CGT convoked, for the first time since 1975, a demonstration in the Plaza de Mayo, which the government violently repressed. Two thousand were arrested in Buenos Aires, and there was one death in Mendoza.<sup>66</sup>

Less than a week later, on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1982, a contingent of Argentine troops under the command of the military junta invaded the Falkland Islands and subdued the weak British task force stationed there in an exercise known as Operation Rosario.

In a perfect dictatorship, there would be no need to instill fear in the subjected population, because people would already be too scared to resist. The Argentine dictatorship, which had relied for so long on terror to repress the public, must have recognized itself to be

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<sup>64</sup>“ International human rights offices were flooded weekly with reports of the abductions, murders and disappearances of a diverse mixture of citizens: teachers, scientists, workers, clergy, professionals, even housewives and children...moreover, most of the victims had never engaged in any political activity, let alone activity of a clandestine, violent, or radical nature. The guerilla forces, which had posed a security problem, were firmly rebuked by the end of 1975 and could only commit sporadic and futile acts of urban terror by early 1976...The state-inflicted human rights abuses were scattered and, with a kind of Orwellian logic, the agents of the military government seemed to strike arbitrarily, unpredictably, and nearly everywhere against the alleged 'enemies of the state.'” David Pion-Berlin and George A. Lopez, "Of Victims and Executioners: Argentine State Terror, 1975-1979," *International Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1991), 64

<sup>65</sup> Ironically, diversionary war may be one of the few tactics as ineffective as a long-term solution as attempts to subdue the population without addressing the fundamental concerns which form the basis of its discontent (if the government finds itself under duress caused by lack of resources; otherwise, a government with the resources to repress its population can stay in power indefinitely).

<sup>66</sup> Romero, 237

unable to absorb the costs of continued repression. Resource attrition in the government, as well as government elites' understanding that alternative policies were necessary to maintain their political survival, seem to have inspired the decision to use diversionary war as an alternative means to stay in power.

The invasion, and the government which had ordered it, was lauded by the Argentine population, virtually all previous dissatisfactions overshadowed. At this point, and for a short time at least, it appeared that the government's initiation of a foreign conflict had not only successfully appeased a previously fractious constituency, but inspired that constituency to praise the government against which it had rioted only days prior.

The military government had obtained a complete political victory on identifying itself with a deeply felt popular demand nourished by the country's nationalist and anti-imperialist political culture. The Process appeared to have consigned that nationalism to the archives, but it reappeared with a vengeance.<sup>67</sup> Indeed ...virtually no one questioned the legality of the takeover...The country ...rejoiced in having won a battle... If triumphant, the military believed it would have paid its debt to society, at the small price of allowing greater freedom for unfettered voices. Nonetheless, when dissenters departed from the official script and demanded such things as an abandonment of liberal economic policies or protested the declaration of a 'war economy,' they were easily ignored.<sup>68</sup>

However, the rosy days of military success were numbered. The unexpectedly hawkish response of Margaret Thatcher's Britain in sending troops to counter the Argentine invasion resulted in Argentina's defeat and the junta's abject humiliation in surrender on June 14<sup>th</sup>.<sup>69</sup> More significantly, that humiliation completely eroded any confidence the population still felt in the government; the people called for free elections in October and were successful in

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<sup>67</sup> The latency of Argentine nationalism, a phenomenon extremely important to the operation and dynamic of diversionary war as executed in Argentina, and its resurrection by the administration, will be addressed in depth in Chapter 5.

<sup>68</sup> Romero, 243

<sup>69</sup> The junta surrendered but did not renege on Argentina's claim to sovereignty over the islands.

December in gaining a government the opposite of that which had been defeated in war – a democratic administration under civilian leadership.<sup>70</sup>

### *Alternative explanations*

Though the logic of diversionary war theory seems intuitive, scholars who disagree with it point out the inadvisability of a financially and politically beleaguered government's going to war. War is an enormous risk to the government of the initiating state – a military government especially, though perhaps by nature more hawkish and more confident (deservedly or not) in its abilities to successfully prosecute military conflicts, is especially at risk of continued political survival if its force were ultimately to be defeated. As was illustrated in the aftermath of the 1982 war, popular dissatisfaction with an impotent military government can be powerful enough to lead to its ousting, and the government would have had to be aware of the possibility and indeed high risk of such an eventuality. Yet it is the very fact of the initiating government's desperation that leads it to make such a choice in the first place: domestic unrest, strong enough that it is perceived by the regime to pose a threat to its continued political survival if it is not addressed, is a necessary precondition for a government to make a decision that can be termed diversionary war. Moreover, a government is likely to choose diversionary action as its response only if it finds itself unable to successfully implement other options, such as reform or repression.<sup>71</sup> Other possible counterarguments against diversionary war theory will be enumerated below.

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<sup>70</sup> This government, though popularly supported, was still under the influence of the departing military establishment; indicative of the remaining issue with internal sovereignty is the fact that the incoming government felt itself too threatened by the military to prosecute the offenders of the Dirty War.

<sup>71</sup> Amy Oakes, "Diversionary War and Argentina's Invasion of the Falkland Islands," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2006).

It can be argued that diversionary war cannot be considered as such if planning for foreign conflict took place prior to the domestic conflict that is thought to cause the international conflict. There is evidence that Argentine plans for invasion of the Falklands and its dependencies have been drawn up at various points since the British occupation of 1833,<sup>72</sup> and one might assert that the subsequent proof that invasion plans were not necessarily predicated on allaying domestic unrest and that the performance of such plans cannot be considered diversionary accordingly. However, such an argument would not consider the simple fact that governments draw up numerous plans which are *never* enacted, that all responsible governments have invasion plans that are never utilized. It is not the plan itself that is at issue, but the government's decision to implement that plan, and the circumstances surrounding such an initiation which are important to the explanation of government initiation of foreign conflict.

The source of the impetus for the initiation of foreign conflict is clearly of extreme significance to the diversionary argument. If it is revealed that conflict was externally motivated, this would cast doubt on the applicability of the diversionary argument (with its predication of initiation on domestic concerns) in this case. One might cite the longstanding though intermittent negotiations between Argentina and Great Britain as regards commercial and sovereignty issues of the Falkland Islands as a possible ground for the initiation of foreign dispute – perhaps the Argentine maneuvers were made in response to deteriorating diplomatic situations between the two countries, as an attempt to force Great Britain's hand or see how much the junior nation could get away with. Lack of access to the transcripts of these meetings makes it difficult to deny the possibility that this may have been the factor in the Argentine invasions. However, evidence that Great Britain was startled at the unilateral

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<sup>72</sup> Femenia, 2.

nature of the invasions does much to weaken the plausibility of that explanation. Indeed, the British reaction to the 1982 occupation was initially one of utter bafflement.<sup>73</sup> There is certainly evidence that the Argentine side was unhappy with the pace and results of the negotiations. However, such discontent with diplomatic results had been the status quo for the Argentine negotiators for practically the entire length of the decades-long proceedings;<sup>74</sup> there is no evidence of any particular catalyzing event in the diplomatic sphere which would have motivated the Argentines to make the decision to invade at this particular time.

Realist scholars might suggest that Argentina's suit for the Falklands is based on a need to control the Islands for geo-strategic reasons. It is, indeed, true that Argentina has made claims to territory in Antarctica. The occupation of the Falklands would make any eventual prosecution of that claim easier, perhaps by providing a staging ground for territorial acquisition there. The Islands have also been asserted to be located near the site of oil and mineral reserves, but there is little documentation to support this.<sup>75</sup> It appears that, as the Argentine takeover of Antarctica is a highly unlikely possibility, even for Argentine governments, and as small fishery and sheep industries do not tend to be lucrative enough to justify the initiation of international conflict, this argument is largely unconvincing.

One of the more plausible counterarguments to diversionary war theory emphasizes the ubiquity of nationalist sentiments in even the highest offices of the nation. Relaxation of

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<sup>73</sup> British leaders were almost unanimously shocked. It is also interesting, considering the enormous popular nationalist sentiment which was produced by the British campaign to justify going to war for the Falklands, the initial reaction of the British citizen. This diary entry typifies such a reaction: "Woke my father up to tell him Argentina has invaded the Falklands. He shot out of bed because he thought the Falklands lay off the coast of Scotland. When I pointed out that they were eight thousand miles away he got back into bed and pulled the covers over his head." (Townsend, 1982; 186) in Kevin Foster, *Fighting Fictions: War, Narrative, and National Identity* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 22.

<sup>74</sup> Lawrence Freedman writes that, as early as the late 1970s, "the Argentine side grumbled that they were appearing to their own public opinion as 'one of those delegations sent to the imperial court of Byzantium and which stayed there years consuming its energies in discussing methodological problems and semantics, while real negotiations made no progress at all.'" Lawrence Freedman, "War - Official!," *History Today* (2005), 38.

<sup>75</sup> "Natural Resources around the Falklands," (Brisbane, Australia: Queensland University of Technology).

the unitary rational actor assumption offers the possibility that the elites who made the decision to initiate the conflicts did so out of a sincere nationalist desire to regain the Falklands territory and restore national territorial integrity. This viewpoint is especially attractive from a humanist perspective: endowing government leadership with the capacity for rational action while painting the population beneath them as easily-manipulated, sheep-like masses seems uncomfortably elitist. One could even cite the possibility of a semi-unconscious nationalist urge to assert the predominance of one's own nation as the motivation behind the decisions of the ruling elites. After all, the rigor of the nationalistic curriculum in Argentine educational institutions has been well-documented.<sup>76</sup> However, the occasion on which each of these decisions has been perpetuated appears to weaken the case that leaders initiate<sup>77</sup> these conflicts based on their sincere personal nationalist doctrines. It seems evident that leaders initiate such conflicts, disseminate nationalist propaganda, and attempt to raise nationalist fervor in the population when so doing seems advantageous to preserving their own political standing.

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<sup>76</sup> M. Escolar, S. Quintero, C. Reboratti, "Geography, Identity and Patriotism in Argentina," in *Geography and National Identity*, ed. D. Hooson (London: Blackwell, 1992).

<sup>77</sup> Initiation here is of the utmost importance. Government reaction to events that they don't initiate may take the same form, but does not hold the same import in terms of strict diversionary war theory. This will be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Constricted Options: the inherent dangers of sustained governmental use of diversionary conflict on nationalist grounds**

### *Introduction*

Despite the risks that may directly accrue to that government which employs the tactic of diversionary war, there appear to be other, more long-term risks which also are incurred by the use of foreign conflict to distract a constituency from its dissatisfaction with domestic conditions. In this chapter, I propose not only that domestic conditions influence foreign policy behavior, but that the subsequent effect of such a relationship conditions government decision-making in both the domestic and international spheres by the establishment of a pattern of use. This phenomenon seems to be related to government exploitation of nationalist sentiment as an opportunity on which to base the diversion.

Once a government has established a national issue as something essential to the national interest, successfully encouraged emotional investment in the issue by the constituency and has established itself as the protector of that national interest, two effects are produced. Firstly, the government gains an advantage over its constituency – having established an emotional flashpoint, it may exploit and manipulate the issue for its own interest. Secondly, however, by binding itself so closely with the issue, that government and those succeeding it are made a prisoner to the role the government has created for itself. Governments may exploit nationalism, but they are also subject to it, and by emphasizing its importance they thereby put themselves at risk of appearing impotent or unwilling in protecting the national interest should they fail to adequately address issues that arise outside of government initiative in their promotion.

*The risk: the inherent vagaries of nationalism*



An especially illustrative description of the character and effect of nationalism on a people is offered by Russell Farnen:

Nationalism helps to create a political consciousness, mobilizes the citizenry behind the leadership, and unifies and integrates the populace behind a common ideology. It is emotional, thrives on sacrifice, and resembles a religion in terms of its followers' fanatical fervor. It creates a sense of organic community, requires allegiance and patriotism, and gives the citizen some higher meaning for his political life. Since nationalism promotes a consciousness of national superiority, the potential for war thereby produced makes it the only religion that still demands human sacrifices.<sup>78</sup>

The powerful emotive effect of nationalist appeals is twofold in its effects on those governments which try to exploit it to their own interests: Firstly, it is potent and appealing to the vast majority of citizens, and as such is strong enough to overwhelm other concerns of the population; secondly, it is an emotive and as such less rationally experienced force in the population which may swell out of government's reins on it, and the government does not necessarily have a monopoly over its manipulation. The examination of the potency and government treatment of the Falkland Islands issue, the longstanding irredentist<sup>79</sup> thorn in the side of the Argentine people, does much to illustrate the operation of this phenomenon: its creation and its consequence.

*Nationalism and place: the influence of the idea of territorial integrity*

Many studies have been done on the actual accumulation and boundary drawing of Argentine territory;<sup>80</sup> the study of its representation remains lacking. Those studies, however, remain relevant for the way in which they explain the process of attachment by the

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<sup>78</sup> Russell Francis Farnen, *Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity: Cross National and Comparative Perspectives* (Transaction Publishers, 2004), 51.

<sup>79</sup> Irredentism is an emphasized advocacy of annexation by one state of territories administered by another. This stance is often justified by an assertion that those territories in question are the rightful possession of the former state due to shared ethnicity or prior historical possession.

<sup>80</sup> Klaus-John Dodds, "Geography, Identity, and the Creation of the Argentine State," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 12, no. 3 (1993), Cisneros, "Las Relaciones Exteriores De La Argentina Subordinada: La Diplomacia De Malvinas, 1945-1989."

public to a conception of space – and the way in which that conception is created in the first place. After production by cartographers, explorers, and national geographical institutes, the territory which is accepted to form the material basis of the nation becomes, rather than solely physical, an object of symbolic and of discourse as well.<sup>81</sup> The state is constructed, not only through legal appropriation, settlement, and conquest, but in the mind as well. The space is re-interpreted and asserted to be something “naturally and atemporally” Argentine. Considered through the lens of modern political scientists, it is a movement which supports the theory of nation as constructed – Argentine soil is not inherently Argentine, as a Romantic Nationalist would assert; rather, it is that the assertion of such has created that belief. Escude, Floria, Dodds, and others argue that that belief is made permanent and meaningful in the life of the nation’s citizens through a consistent and unrelenting educational program. Indoctrinating Argentines in the convictions of romantic nationalist ideas – in which geography was particularly emphasized – was seen as “an instrument capable of engendering the unity of Argentines.”<sup>82</sup> This unity is significantly important to the health of the nation; as Gellner illustrates through historical examples, political units in which the state and culture do not have a 1-1 relationship experience remarkable, and possibly destructive, national tension.<sup>83</sup>

This indoctrination does not necessarily produce ideals consistent with truth. Notable is Escude’s discovery of the fact that every map in Argentina, by force of law, must designate as Argentine territories which overlap with British and Chilean claims. Contestation as to whom these territories belong is not taught; Argentines therefore become accustomed to

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<sup>81</sup> Delaney; Escolar; Pedro Navarro Floria, "Landscapes of an Uncertain Progress: Northern Patagonia in Argentine Scientific Journals (1876-1909)," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007).

<sup>82</sup> Dodds

<sup>83</sup> Gellner

believing as Argentine areas which no one else believes to be so.<sup>84</sup> In light of evidence such as this, it is easy to accept Alonso's claim that the representation and organization of space is an instrument which mediates the identity of people and heritage.<sup>85</sup> It is similarly consistent with the claims of Gellner, Hobsbawm, and Anderson as to the constructed formation of nations; Anderson would describe it as a generated collective consciousness of occupying the same space. Place, then, is one of the strongest links whereby the imagined community is formed.

*The state's conscious creation of a particular nationalist irredentism*

There is concrete evidence of various Argentine governments' efforts to maintain the relevance of the national grievance over the "loss" of the Falkland (Malvinas) territory in the constituency. Nora Femenia asserts the creation of "a script of national identity so entrenched into the domestic images of self that almost every citizen would accept and identify with it," and traces the development of these "doctrinaire tenets of dogmatic nationalism" back to the 1940s, though she cites a nationalist 1898 text as representative of these same values; its author cries:

When in the future, the law of evolution can show England's decline and Argentina's great power, we will recover, by the right of law, the Malvinas so unjustly taken from us. Meanwhile, let's teach our younger generations to maintain a perpetual protest against usurpation, and to uphold that Argentina has never, nor will, renounce her rights over the Malvinas, that we will see our flag waving on her.<sup>86</sup>

Femenia affirms that this tendency, as pervasive today as in the early days of its establishment, may be attributed to the state institutionalization of a reactive educational

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<sup>84</sup> Escude 1988

<sup>85</sup> Alonso 1994

<sup>86</sup> Femenia, 3 citing J.M. Espora, 1898: 251

system as a means for transmitting nationalistic values to the Argentine population in the period following the Second World War.<sup>87</sup>

Metford cites similar action taken by the Argentine government to institute the same agenda:

In January 1966, the Argentine Government created the *Instituto y Museo Nacional de las Islas Malvinas y Adyacencias* (Falkland Islands and Dependencies Institute and National Museum) to be housed in a building under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The object of the Institute was 'to stimulate the national conscience' to demand the return of the Islands to Argentina, and to collect and disseminate information about this question. Arrangements were made for the establishment of a specialist library, and for propaganda talks and films throughout the nation.<sup>88</sup>

The obstinacy of the Argentine government in asserting the nation's claim to rightful sovereignty over the Falkland Islands left no stone unturned; another writer details how the claim was manifested in every conceivable legal, political, and cultural way:

[By] the first half of the twentieth century, virtually all Argentines had become convinced these Islands were rightfully theirs. The cause of the return of 'Las Malvinas' had become firmly rooted in numerous facets of Argentine society. A generation of school children had been taught that the Malvinas were Argentine. Postage stamps proclaimed that the Islands were a part of the Argentine Republic. Argentine maps labeled the Islands as 'occupied territory.' The Islanders were counted in the Argentine census and by Argentine law male Islanders could technically be drafted into Argentine military service.<sup>89</sup>

Acting as if Argentine ownership of the Falkland Islands has already been established *de facto* despite the lack of international recognition of the same appears as folly or empty boasting to the outside world,<sup>90</sup> but has become an essential component of the Argentinean self-conception; the constant repetition of the claim's legitimacy creates a uniting national grievance that is constantly in the consciousness of the population. The issue has become a reliable touchstone for government manipulation of popular sentiment.

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<sup>87</sup> Femenia, 3.

<sup>88</sup> Metford, 463.

<sup>89</sup> Richard. USN Chenette, "The Argentine Seizure of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands: History and Diplomacy," (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1987),.3

<sup>90</sup> Ironically enough, a quote from the British Prime Minister who defeated the Argentines in the 1982 war provides an excellent commentary on one's reaction to such grandstanding: "Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you are not." In Clark, *Principles of Comparative Politics...*, 55

### *Effectiveness of diversionary war on nationalist grounding*

Diversionsary war can be so effective that it can produce a temporary amnesia in the population at which it is directed. The 1982 war came on the heels of the campaign of state terror prosecuted against the people by succeeding government administrations comprised of military juntas. However, the reaction of the people towards this government on the invasion of the Falklands in April of 1982 was overwhelmingly positive. The Argentine Armed Forces and military regime were lauded as “the true guardians of ‘our national dignity,’” by even such a one as Jose Iglesias Ruoco, a columnist for *La Prensa*, an anti-Peronist newspaper, who had himself been charged in July 1981 with “endangering national peace and security” by the military junta for publishing secret documents relating to the Beagle Channel Dispute.<sup>91</sup> Similar reactions were observed in the press and populace as Great Britain quickly replaced the national government as the popular enemy: “The May issue of *El Porteno* showed Mrs. Thatcher with eye-patch, skull and crossbones on her hat, wielding a cutlass,”<sup>92</sup> and it was declared that the invasion was not only a victory for Argentina but a death blow to the last vestiges of colonialism and imperialism.<sup>93</sup>

### *The risks and repercussions of nationalism- based diversionary war*

Once a government has attempted to confer legitimacy upon itself by defining itself in a particular fashion, the occurrence of anything which indicates that definition to be false

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<sup>91</sup> Nick Caistor, "Whose War Is It Anyway? The Argentine Press During the South Atlantic Conflict," in *Framing the Falklands War: Nationhood, Culture and Identity*, ed. James Aulich (Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1992). 51, 52.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 55. It is ironic that it appears to be Argentina who is now assuming the role of a colonizer. The Islanders have asserted time and time again and in the strongest possible terms that they wish to remain British subjects; Argentina persists in attempts to confer upon them a citizenry that they do not want.

consequently proves the government in question to be illegitimate. That such a result occurs is clear in the Argentine case of the 1982 war: the junta's attempt to emphasize itself as the rightful and capable protector of Argentine national interest in the strongest way possible, by taking actual military action, backfired and exposed its inherent incapacity. Not only had the military government failed to protect the people (taking, indeed, the opposite role, of their victimizer) and their economic interests,<sup>94</sup> it had proved militarily incompetent against Great Britain, and unable to deliver the promises it had delivered for redemption of the national grievance. By building up the issue to such great importance, the government disillusioned the people as to their capability that much more. However, the same pattern holds true for the larger picture: by stressing the importance of the Falklands to Argentine territorial integrity to the extent that they did, successive Argentine governments ensured that any perceived failure to adequately preserve that interest would essentially constitute a death knell to the political survival of the government from the people who felt betrayed by it.

The successful deployment of diversionary war necessitates that the constituency of a government find the issue exploited as distraction to be sufficiently important to overwhelm other pressing concerns. The 1982 Falklands war was touted as an event whose success would constitute a national redemption. It was to be purification by fire, by which the images of the Dirty War and subversives from within would be replaced by images of national glory, heroism, and a united Argentina.<sup>95</sup> The need to satisfy the high hopes that had thus been created prolonged the conflict even after it was clear that Argentina would

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<sup>94</sup> "On the eve of its exit from power, the military government could not show any significant accomplishments in economic policy." Romero, 228.

<sup>95</sup> Caistor, 54.; Even were it to have been successful, the war's recovery of the Falklands territory would have only constituted a short-term solution, at best buying time for the government to remain in power. However, the power of perception cannot be underrated here; perception is what drove the use of diversionary war, and what ended the government at that tactic's failure.

emerge defeated, making the regime responsible for the war's initiation further responsible for the deaths of soldiers in a military embarrassment. Proposed solutions to the dispute in

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...were acceptable to the Argentine government if a British commitment to a future recognition of Argentine sovereignty over the islands was added. Such a stipulation was unacceptable to the British. The military government was prepared to make concessions on any other matter, but could not appear to accept the very thing it had proclaimed to be its fundamental objective. Only in this way could the operation be presented as a victory to society and to the crowds in the Plaza de Mayo, whose magic the military government had now experienced. Thus, the government became a prisoner of the patriotic mobilization that it had unleashed, and more cautious individuals were forced to give way to more extreme voices.<sup>96</sup>

All things considered, it could only have been expected that not only the incumbent junta, but the entire military establishment be removed, at least nominally, from the leadership of the country and be replaced by a democratic civilian administration.

The risks of the use of diversionary war, however, include repercussions that are significant for more than simply the government regime which chooses to use it. The consistent use of diversionary war, and the consistent assertion of a nationalist agenda, can have serious consequences in restricting the latitude of even those governments which feel no threat of political removal from their constituency. The traditional identification of the government as the protector of the national interest with the Falklands as an issue of supreme national interest forces the government to assume a defensive attitude whenever that issue is brought up, even if its emphasis is not of government doing. Moreover, the government has no monopoly over the manipulation of nationalism; it may be the entity best equipped to disseminate its agenda among the populace, but other agents may attempt and succeed at the same goal, for different aims. The characteristics attributed to nationalism as well – an emotive, deeply felt, even irrational urge – are not necessarily controllable by government

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<sup>96</sup> Romero, 245.

agency. Despite the origin of each particular emphasis on the issue, the government must act as accords its role as national defender, no matter how inconvenient or conflicting the behavior appropriate to that role may be to other policy aims or resource allotment.

The government's reaction to the Condors hijackings in 1966 is a particularly good example not only of how a government must deal with an inconvenient nationalism, but one which weakens the counterargument to diversionary war and the rational unitary actor assumption discussed late in the last chapter – that national leaders undertake the initiation of foreign conflict based on a sincere personal investment in the national sentiment of their state as opposed to the desire for political survival.

On September 28, 1966, eighteen young militant nationalists hijacked a plane and flew it to the Falkland Islands, where they crash-landed on a racetrack. They then proceeded to take hostage a small group of Falklanders who had rushed to assist the plane, plant seven Argentine flags in the peat, rename Port Stanley “Puerto Rivero,” and distribute leaflets in English and Spanish explaining their mission. They invited the governor to surrender, asserting that they were in (Argentine) national jurisdiction and that the British were the usurpers; they then asserted that they would not leave their posts until the British recognized Argentine sovereignty over the Islands. The hijackers declared that they would not surrender, but gave themselves up 24 hours later.<sup>97</sup> The British government repatriated the prisoners to Argentina.<sup>98</sup>

In November of 1968, representatives of various independent Argentine newspapers hired Miguel Fitzgerald (a man who had crash-landed in a 1964 nationalist stunt) and one of

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<sup>97</sup> Island police broke down the hijackers' resistance using sleep deprivation techniques: they played Country-Western music at full volume.

<sup>98</sup> Rosana Guber, "Um Gaucho E Dezoito Condors Nas Ilhas Malvinas: Identidade Politica E Nacao Sob O Autoritarismo Argentine," *MANA* 6, no. 2 (2000), 100.



the 1966 hijackers to try and land on the racecourse as had been done previously. However, the Islanders had placed obstacles following the 1966 hijacking, and the plane crash-landed on a different road.<sup>99</sup>

Both of these stunts were ultimately deleterious to simultaneously occurring efforts by the Argentine government to achieve a diplomatic solution to the sovereignty issue. The prior incident occurred during a bout of diplomatic negotiations at the United Nations, while the latter ended an agreement made between Argentina and Great Britain to discuss Islands sovereignty pending acquiescence by the Islanders and helped to establish a Falklands lobby in Britain that was vehemently opposed to such a solution at the Islanders' expense.<sup>100</sup>

Though the Argentine government would of course be unable to condemn the above actions given the militant stance of virtually all governments towards "redemption" of the Islands' sovereignty, they were not expressly condoned. In the case of the Operation Condor<sup>101</sup> hijackings, the trial of the eighteen youths was placed by the government in remote Ushuaia, the capital of the Argentine province of Tierra del Fuego. Though officials asserted that this decision was made in keeping with the fact that the Falklands would be under the jurisdiction of that province were the islands not illegally in the keeping of the British,<sup>102</sup> it is more likely that the real reason was to suppress the outcry of public support that would have erupted in Buenos Aires had the trial been held in the populous capital. The nationalist momentum here would have been more disadvantageous than advantageous to a government which had not initiated it (and which therefore would not have been recipient of

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<sup>99</sup> Escude, "Relaciones Exteriores." (2000)

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> The name, "Operation Condor," might be confusing to those familiar with Latin American history in the last century; it also refers to a campaign of state-led political repressions in the Southern Cone implemented in 1975 to ostensibly eradicate left-wing and socialist influences deemed potentially threatening to the region's predominantly conservative governments. The two "operations" are not related. Escude; Romero.

<sup>102</sup> Escude.

popular support) and whose international dealings might be disrupted by the actions of rogue agents. It seems evident that the government was critically aware of both the effect of the issue on the popular consciousness and the need to do as much as possible to control it.

If the above incidents had happened in 1982, would the government in power at that time have tried to suppress the popular reaction to the events, or co-opted the initiators into their own political agenda, emphasizing perhaps the 1966 and 1968 perpetrators' heroism in enacting such a risky stunt for the glory and benefit of their nation? Would they have used it to propel the war, rather than, as they did do, suppress it in favor of a possible diplomatic solution? Perhaps, feeling no immediate threat to political survival, government leaders were here able to recognize the risks of war and setting such dangerous precedents, and forwent the possible rewards that may have accrued to their support of these stunts on the basis of informed and careful reasoning on the likelihood of the results each would bring. The answers to such questions accentuate the importance of political environment to government decision-making.

*Further side-effects: the assumption of a defensive posture*

Political leaders' actions are constricted by the circumstances in which they operate. In this case, those circumstances are a product of government's own creation: the government which emphasizes national irredentist fervor for the Falklands territory restricts its and succeeding administrations' latitude in decision-making. After conditioning the populace to react in a certain way when the proper buttons are pushed by the government, it must deal with the fact that similar effects can occur outside of initiation by government agency. The institutionalization of this nationalism in the popular consciousness forces the

government not only to control for the eventuality of its awakening by others, but also forces it to assume a defensive posture towards the Islands so that it may maintain the corollary role it has created for itself as the defender of Argentine national interests, a role at this point perceived as equal to that of defender of the Argentine claim to the Falklands.

As the press and public are quick to grasp any indication that the government may not be fulfilling its obligations to the nation as regards the national interest in the Falklands, it must constantly be on its toes to anticipate and counter any possible allegations. One particularly pertinent and costly recent example of this is the recent dismissal of the Minister of Education in the Argentinean province of Salta for the widespread publication of a cartographic misprint which labeled the disputed territory as “Falklands” instead of the Argentine name, “Las Malvinas,” and which attributed the ownership of those islands to Great Britain. The mistake cost the provincial government just over two million USD<sup>103</sup> and the censure of the National Ministry of Defense, under whose auspices operates the Military Geographic Institute, an institution which must approve all maps of Argentina before their publication. The extent of public outcry and government disapproval over what might seem to be a simple misprint might astound the casual observer, which only goes to show the extreme investment of the public in the matter and awareness of the government thereof.<sup>104</sup>

The influence and constructive nature of maps and cartographical assertions is particularly apparent to consider in this context. The repetition of geographical claims, printed and disseminated in maps under the auspices of political entities of some authority, would naturally have a legitimizing effect on those claims, at least in the popular

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<sup>103</sup> 6,900,000 Argentine Peso = 2,174,598.17 US Dollar. Using an exchange rate of 1 ARS = 0.3152 USD for 25 April 2008. <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter?amt=1&from=USD&to=ARS&submit=Convert#from=ARS;to=USD;amt=6900000>

<sup>104</sup> Jesus Rodriguez, "Salta: Un Manual Oficial Incluye a Las Malvinas Como Inglesas," *Clarín* 2008.

consciousness. As Valerie Kivelson asserts of cartography, “Maps not only establish divisions of territory that can later be enforced but can also transform the way that viewers understand and experience space, place and power.”<sup>105</sup> They are one of the most efficient means of doing so in a Foucaultian sense because, as Henri Lefebvre explains in The Production of Space, maps are presented with a surface of scientific neutrality. “Maps effectively mask their own power as tools of state building, political domination, and social control.”<sup>106</sup> Nothing is simple or easy where nationalism is concerned.

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<sup>105</sup> Valerie Kivelson, *Cartographies of Tsardom: The Land and Its Meanings in Seventeenth-Century Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 6.

<sup>106</sup> Lefebvre in Kivelson, 5.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### *Introduction*

The apparently inexplicable decision of an embattled government to pick a fight with a significantly more powerful nation over an isolated group of rocks in the South Atlantic, the puzzle which initiated this inquiry, is explained quite persuasively by the application of diversionary war theory. The use of both quantitative and qualitative empirical investigative methods to determine the utility of this intuitive explanation produces a comprehensive result in which we may feel fairly confident.

Quantitative findings offer strong support for a relationship between domestic unrest and government initiation of aggressive foreign policy. However, a different result is obtained from focused analysis of particular cases. Indeed, the indication of the quantitative results that country-specific characteristics play a role in determining the strength of the relationship between domestic unrest and government initiation of aggressive foreign policy suggest that we ought to look to specific nations to investigate the possibility and operation of diversionary war.

### *Summary of the quantitative and qualitative findings*

The analysis of the global sample from 1948 – 1982 illustrate a positive, statistically significant relationship between the occurrence of domestic events and the government initiation of foreign conflict, results which remained robust even after the inclusion of time lags and year dummies. The results produced with the inclusion of time lags indicates that autocorrelation does not appear to be influencing the original result, and the un-lagged and lagged results of logistic regressions run with year dummies suggest continued statistical significance even when controlling for the possibly confounding effect of temporal-specific

characteristics. Therefore, the quantitative results support the hypothesis that international disputes are more likely to occur in the presence of domestic events than in their absence.

The examined historical episodes suggest not only that governments use of foreign policy to distract a dissatisfied constituency from domestic concerns, but a possible unintended side effect that accompanies the government creation and exploitation of the nationalist issue on which diversionary action is based. Government use of diversionary war may be impelled by a perceived lack of alternative options, but the emphasis of the issue on which the diversion is made binds that and succeeding governments to a certain attitude and corresponding treatment of that issue. Self-exaggeration by the government of its role as protector of the national interest and definition thereby on a particular issue necessitates that government act in potentially inconvenient ways to avoid criticism that it has failed the people. It is of course significant that serving the national interest by aggressive action in foreign policy may be a temporary palliative for the failure of the national interest in terms of the adequate maintenance of constituent welfare.

#### *Normative implications*

The findings of this study lead the researcher to contemplate the implications of the existence of diversionary war in an era of rapid globalization. It appears that governments may have not only a moral, but a rational, interest in increased humanitarian efforts. The effects of a depressed economy in one nation are not limited to national borders; the ever-increasing integration of the world economy means that an economic collapse which affects one, may just as easily affect all nations. The correspondence of a depressed national economy to a shrinking national welfare state may mean increased domestic dissatisfaction, increasingly desperate governments, and an increasing possibility of the outbreak of foreign

conflict. Those nations which can afford to give aid to especially impoverished nations may be doing themselves a service by preempting those nations' initiation of diversionary war and decreasing the occurrence of conflict in the international sphere.

One of the greatest problems with diversionary war is that the distraction it provides to the government offers only short-term relief to the government's plight. It does absolutely nothing to solve the domestic problems that have sparked domestic unrest in the first place; it is unable to provide either substantive or long-term solutions. This study moreover reveals the way in which those political systems which enable its use encourage short-term thinking about political survival in their leaders. The over-use of diversionary war ultimately weakens the effectiveness of the system by constricting leaders' options, so that they may be forced, for example, to enter a nationalist-sensitive conflict which could be inconvenient or possibly destructive to the regime and to the nation. The use of diversionary war is beneficial to leaders only in the short term, both in terms of their own incumbency (for how long can they rely on public support in one area to stay in power, without additional cards to play?) and in terms of the political survival of succeeding governments.

If the government were successful in providing the basic needs and rights of the constituency, the public would have no need to riot and the government would therefore have no reason to feel threatened by the people it is pledged to protect. Diversionary war theory's acknowledgment of the power of popular discontent to threaten an incumbent regime and remove it from political office suggests a possible institutional design for good government. Yet the people should not be placated by nationalist adventure, by the asserted superiority of their nation over another, but by a decent standard of living. Perhaps an efficient good government, one that provides for its constituency, is one in which such provision also

ensures the incumbent regime's continued political survival. Leaders must fear the people – and, asserts diversionary war theory, do – if they do not, the safety of the populace cannot be guaranteed. If self-interest and popular interest are aligned, the one achieved by the achievement of the other, leaders will be incentivized to care for the people as they would care for themselves.

### *Implications on the study of international relations*

The realist assertion that international relations are determined by the interactions between states as they compete for power in the international sphere denies domestic concerns a significant role in determining states' foreign policy behavior.<sup>107</sup> The assumptions of diversionary war assert the opposite; the theory has as its driving tenet the presumption that domestic unrest can indicate or cause the initiation of aggressive foreign policy by the state which feels itself threatened thereby. Power is, of course, still very much important: leaders who employ diversionary tactics attempt to assert the dominance of the state in its interactions to others, though more for the benefit of their domestic audience than for their potential rivals in the international arena.

By emphasizing an issue as distraction that is not only unrelated to the concerns that have motivated domestic discontent, but which occurs in an entirely different sphere and has an entirely different cast of characters, the threatened leader tries to convince his constituency that whatever domestic grievances it might have had against him are trivial in the face of the power play between nations and the possibility of his nation's star rising on the world stage. The example of the Falklands is here characteristic of such an assertion, the

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<sup>107</sup> Alastair Smith Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005).



possibility of national redemption hinged on the “re”- acquisition of a historically coveted territory, and the symbolic vanquishing of colonialism indicated by the victory of Argentina against the Goliath-like Great Britain. A victory in the Falklands, it was asserted, would make Argentina a force to be reckoned with. It is ironic, then, that leaders who utilize diversionary war essentially do so by the employment of a realist discourse; such a phenomenon, however, contradicts the tenets of realism by its very occurrence and by so doing suggests that such a discourse may be over simplistic.

#### *Discussion of possible policy recommendations*

It seems unjust that governments which are experiencing domestic unrest should choose to preserve themselves in office by relocating the target of discontent to a possibly innocent external target. The resulting institutionalization of national grievance, when diversion is hinged off nationalism, creates a problem of international significance with no end in sight if the involved countries fail to come to mutually acceptable conclusions. The establishment of fora for the resolution of international disputes, specifically the establishment of the United Nations, would appear to offer an opportunity to decrease the incidence of wars where nationalism is at fault even when the event is not the result of an attempt to employ diversionary war. However, for such a solution to be effective, the United Nations would have to be endowed with much more power than it currently enjoys.

The example of the ongoing conflict with the Falklands is here characteristic of the problem. The UN has repeatedly issued resolutions calling for a solution to the Falklands sovereignty dispute, to no avail. These resolutions are largely symbolic, indicative of a nation’s or body of nations’ displeasure, but with no actual power to effectively resolve the

problem.<sup>108</sup> The problem of the UN's lack of enforcement capabilities is endemic. The institution basically has three options open to it in such a circumstance: the passing of resolutions, the imposition of sanctions, and the dispatch of military forces. The latter two options are highly constricted by resource availability. The UN, then, is expected to enforce decisions which are very possibly highly distasteful to some of its member institutions despite it's having no teeth.

It would appear to be beneficial to the entire international community were the UN and similar organizations to be given the capacity to take the tools of diversionary war out of the hands of survival-obsessed governments. Endowing the UN with a greater resource allotment and the power to impose institutional constraints on the foreign policy actions of crumbling governments might decrease the occurrence of wars and other aggressive foreign behaviors as attempts to pacify unruly domestic constituencies. It would seem that a more powerful UN, with preemptive powers on land disputes and greater powers of arbitration, could contribute in a significant way to the greater realization of international peace and cooperation. Nations are already able to pick fights with the UN in order to create diversions, but if the UN were more powerful, it would be better able to stop diversionary conflicts from escalating into the wars which have potential to be highly destructive to international peace. Raising the costs a nation would face in initiating international conflict would lessen the occurrence of that conflict. The question whose answer must be reserved

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<sup>108</sup> In his history of Argentina, Romero writes that upon the 1982 invasion of the Falklands, "Great Britain quickly obtained...the support of the United Nations Security Council, which passed a resolution declaring Argentina the aggressor nation and demanding an end to the hostilities and withdrawal of the Argentine troops" (244). The resolution referenced here is UN Resolution 502. The resolution, of course, did nothing to end the hostilities or even to make a difference in the way the war was conducted. Great Britain triumphed because of superior manpower and resources, illustrating once again that demonstrated power is the main determinant of military outcomes.

for further study is, of course, the ways by which the entities which control the UN could be incentivized to make these institutional changes.

The occurrence of the above seems highly unlikely. It seems implausible to assert that the above recommendations might be implemented in the real world. Governments and nation states guard their sovereignty jealously; why would the leadership of a nation vote for or support greater institutional checks that might limit their latitude in decision-making? Politicians have no overwhelming incentive to support international laws or institutions that could constrain their or their nations' primacy; to do so is naturally distasteful to an independent autonomous nation. If, as has been asserted, the greatest interest of a government is political survival, the idea that they would advocate policy that would deprive them of the option to use diversionary war and enhance their chances of survival, however artificially, appears improbable.

#### *Limitations and opportunities for further research*

The data utilized in this study focused on data collected more than twenty years ago. It would be especially interesting to examine the relationship between domestic factors and the initiation of foreign conflict with more current data to observe how that relationship has changed in today's more globalized world. More current and complete qualitative data would also enhance the comprehensiveness of the study. The paucity of accessible information for the Argentine activities in Southern Thule and the corresponding Operation Journeyman are a specific instance of limitation, but information about other episodes in Argentine history would be illuminating as well. For instance, evidence of ruling elites' intentions in initiating foreign conflict from private diaries, scripts of private government meetings, interviews of leaders once they have left office, interviews which detail the

reaction of government opposition to such policies and similar sources would doubtless be extremely valuable in determining motivation and intention, and in evaluating the utility of the diversionary war theory in explaining the relationship between domestic and international conflict.

This study would be more complete were it to investigate in greater depth the correlation between domestic discontent and initiation of foreign conflict that has been done here, and the conflict carrying capacity of the government of each country. Greater insight into how a government's economic status determines how secure or insecure they perceive themselves to be would clarify the relationship between governments' desperation and their decision to initiate a diversionary war.

Lastly, although this study focused primarily on the motivations behind a government's decision to initiate foreign conflict, it would also be interesting to determine the nature of the success rate of diversionary war. Is it ever successful in maintaining the incumbent government in power, both in cases where the conflict achieves its desired effect on the population and where it does not? And for how long? Can we determine any sort of causal relationship here?

## Appendix A: Quantitative Results Tables

Table A.

### *Results of Basic Logistic Regression*

Logistic regression	Number of obs	=	<b>1989151</b>
	LR chi2(1)	=	<b>48.99</b>
	Prob > chi2	=	<b>0.0000</b>
Log likelihood = <b>-15002.984</b>	Pseudo R2	=	<b>0.0016</b>

intl_event	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
dom_event	<b>5.26744</b>	<b>.9881386</b>	<b>8.86</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>3.646863 7.60816</b>

Table B.

*Results of Logistic Regression with Imposed Time Lags (7 periods)*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	Intl_ event
Dom.	5.267	5.233	3.855	3.234	2.934	2.556	2.301	2.286	2.088
	(8.86)* *	(8.82)* *	(6.72)* *	(5.65)* *	(5.07)* *	(4.36)* *	(3.83)* *	(3.78)* *	(3.30)* *
L. Intl		2.631	3.860	3.089	2.805	2.410	2.156	2.146	2.097
		(2.16)*	(6.73)* *	(5.34)* *	(4.79)* *	(4.01)* *	(3.47)* *	(3.43)* *	(3.32)* *
L. Dom.			2.521	3.068	2.678	2.302	2.029	2.020	1.961
			(2.06)*	(5.30)* *	(4.50)* *	(3.75)* *	(3.14)* *	(3.10)* *	(2.96)* *
L2. Dom.				2.452	2.215	1.759	1.534	1.528	1.483
				(1.99)*	(3.44)* *	(2.37)*	(1.77)	(1.75)	(1.62)
L3. Dom.					2.442	3.346	2.786	2.634	2.552
					(1.99)*	(6.03)* *	(4.95)* *	(4.58)* *	(4.41)* *
L4. Dom.						2.471	3.021	2.992	2.736
						(2.01)*	(5.48)* *	(5.34)* *	(4.80)* *
L5. Dom.							2.366	1.168	1.079
							(1.91)	(0.59)	(0.28)
L6. Dom.								2.361	1.822
								(1.90)	(2.57)*
L7. Dom.									2.382
									(1.92)
Observations	19891 51	19835 30	19835 30	19780 65	19726 00	19671 35	19616 70	19562 05	19507 40
Absolute value of z-statistics in parentheses * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%									

Table C.

*Results of Logistic Regression with Time Lags (7 periods) with Country Dummy Variable*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event
Dom	1.232 (1.07)	1.202 (0.93)	1.190 (0.88)	1.196 (0.90)	1.166 (0.77)	1.140 (0.65)	1.169 (0.78)	1.137 (0.63)
L. Intl.	0.720 (0.73)	0.719 (0.74)	0.719 (0.73)	0.721 (0.73)	0.724 (0.72)	0.727 (0.71)	0.735 (0.69)	0.739 (0.67)
L. Dom		1.199 (0.92)	1.182 (0.84)	1.189 (0.87)	1.155 (0.71)	1.130 (0.61)	1.157 (0.72)	1.177 (0.81)
L2. Dom			1.135 (0.63)	1.144 (0.66)	1.113 (0.52)	1.083 (0.39)	1.111 (0.51)	1.127 (0.58)
L3. Dom				0.945 (0.26)	0.905 (0.45)	0.883 (0.57)	0.909 (0.43)	0.923 (0.36)
L4. Dom					1.432 (1.92)	1.380 (1.71)	1.365 (1.63)	1.388 (1.71)
L5. Dom						1.432 (1.94)	1.492 (2.15)*	1.460 (2.00)*
L6. Dom							0.690 (1.53)	0.702 (1.45)
L7. Dom								0.998 (0.01)
Observations	156393 5	156393 5	155962 5	155531 5	155100 5	154669 5	154238 5	153807 5
Absolute value of z-statistics in parentheses * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1% Model included country dummy variables (not reported)								

Table D.

*Results of Logistic Regression with Time Lags (7 periods) with Year Dummy Variable*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event	intl_ event
Dom	5.031	5.006	3.720	3.135	2.855	2.496	2.244	2.233	2.041
	(8.60) **	(8.57) **	(6.55) **	(5.50) **	(4.95) **	(4.26) **	(3.72) **	(3.68) **	(3.20) **
L. Intl.		2.475	3.722	3.001	2.734	2.358	2.117	2.108	2.064
		(2.02) *	(6.55) **	(5.22) **	(4.68) **	(3.93) **	(3.40) **	(3.36) **	(3.26) **
L. Dom.			2.372	2.971	2.609	2.248	1.988	1.982	1.926
			(1.92)	(5.16) **	(4.39) **	(3.65) **	(3.06) **	(3.03) **	(2.89) **
L2. Dom.				2.303	2.157	1.726	1.511	1.508	1.466
				(1.85)	(3.33) **	(2.30) *	(1.72)	(1.70)	(1.58)
L3. Dom					2.299	3.258	2.726	2.582	2.509
					(1.85)	(5.91) **	(4.86) **	(4.51) **	(4.35) **
L4. Dom						2.326	2.949	2.928	2.683
						(1.88)	(5.37) **	(5.25) **	(4.72) **
L5. Dom							2.226	1.148	1.065
							(1.78)	(0.52)	(0.23)
L6. Dom								2.220	1.784
								(1.77)	(2.48) *
L7. Dom									2.244
									(1.79)
Observations	19891 51	19835 30	19835 30	19780 65	19726 00	19671 35	19616 70	19562 05	19507 40
Absolute value of z-statistics in parentheses * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1% Model included year dummy variables (not reported)									



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