

A Point of Principle:
The Role of Moral Language in International Bargaining

Abigail S. Post*

This draft: March 2022

*Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow, RAND Corporation. Previously Assistant Professor of Political Science and National Security, Department of History and Political Science, Anderson University (abigailspost@gmail.com).

Abstract

How does moral language affect international bargaining? In this paper, I argue that when countries rely on moral language to frame a disputed issue, they decrease the probability of peaceful compromise and increase the probability of the dispute escalating with military action. This language operates through two pathways. First, moral language prejudices domestic audiences against compromise over the disputed issue, thereby limiting the options available to negotiators during bargaining. Second, the moral language prompts the dispute opponent to also utilize moral arguments to defend its position. The ensuing moral debate moralizes both sets of domestic audiences, consequently reducing opportunities for compromise and narrowing the bargaining range. Negotiated concessions then frustrate the bargaining opponent as insufficient and elicit accusations of hypocrisy from domestic audiences for compromising the principle at stake. This backlash triggers crises and pressures the government to stand firm on its previously principled (and uncompromising) position, increasing the probability of military escalation. The paper examines the effects of moral language on negotiation breakdown and dispute escalation in a series of case studies of the Falklands/Malvinas dispute from 1964-1982.

How does moral language impact international bargaining? In his 2002 State of the Union address, U.S. President George W. Bush labelled Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as part of an “axis of evil.” To be specific, “States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.”¹ While rationalist theories of bargaining dismiss such moral language as “cheap talk”, the accused nations took this speech more seriously. I show that principled rhetoric like this has important impacts on the dynamics of international bargaining. The example of Bush’s “axis of evil” illustrates this point.

For one, the North Korean government interpreted the “axis of evil” speech as an explicit threat, claiming, “It is again the United States which is threatening the Korean people with nuclear weapons.”² North Korea reciprocated this language through state-run news agencies, denouncing “U.S. imperialists” and threatening to “resolutely wipe out the aggressors and reduce them to a forlorn wandering spirit.”³ To materially deflect this threat, North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and began to obtain more advanced materials for nuclear weapons development.⁴

Second, Iran was more or less ambivalent toward the United States before the “axis of evil” speech, but it veered away after being included in the axis. According to a follow-up survey of Iranian citizens, Iranians said that Bush’s speech blocked the opening of Iranian society to globalization. It unified the nation under conservatives and ultra-conservatives against “The Great Satan.” In that year, Iran disclosed that it had made progress with a previously secret uranium-enrichment program.⁵

Finally, within a year, the United States and Iraq were at war. During this time, Bush framed the “War on Terror” to encapsulate the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq as a moral crusade.⁶ Indeed, Bush later came to rue his rhetoric as possibly inflammatory: “I think that in retrospect I could have used a different tone, a different rhetoric,” Bush told the *Times*

¹Bush (2002)

²CNN (January 30, 2002)

³Lev (2003)

⁴Kessler and Baker (2006)

⁵For an overview of what this metaphor did to relations between the U.S. and Iran, see Heradstveit and Bonham (2007).

⁶See, as just a few of many examples: Gershkoff and Kushner (2005); Hodges (2011); Krebs (2015); Liberman (2006).

as he flew across the Atlantic on Air Force One in June 2008.⁷

This example illustrates the motivating puzzle of this paper: How does principled rhetoric like that of Bush’s affect international bargaining? Does such language have the long-term effects implied by the responses of the “axis of evil”? Despite instinctual reactions to the moral language of our leaders, we have little in the way of a theoretical framework to understand the impact of such language on international bargaining. In this paper, I examine the effect of moral language or *principled rhetoric* on international bargaining.⁸ Principled rhetoric is that language appealing to standards of right and wrong, with these standards often embodied in some higher authority such as international law, norms, religion, or nationalist ideals. This language is tinged by absolutism, portraying the world in black and white. I argue that as a government increasingly relies on principled rhetoric to frame a disputed issue, it decreases the likelihood of peaceful compromise during bargaining.

My theory of principled rhetoric and international bargaining relies on political models of moralized attitudes—intuitions about right and wrong which reorient behavior from maximizing gains to adhering to rules. Research demonstrates that principled rhetoric links moral attitudes with preferences for specific policy; the resulting moralized preferences effect a shift in cognition, emotion, and consequently behavior. Those with moralized attitudes see the issue differently, as something that is indivisible and not subject to cost-benefit analysis. Accordingly, people with moralized attitudes toward an issue are more likely to oppose compromise over the issue, prefer aggressive bargaining strategies during negotiations, and support violence to resolve the disagreement. Principled rhetoric thus affects international bargaining differently than other language in three important ways. First, it connects abstract foreign policy issues with people’s preexisting moralized attitudes, increasing their opposition to compromise and support for violence over the framed issue.⁹ Second, it sets up leaders to face opposition from moralized domestic audiences should the government negotiate any concessions. Third, it prompts principled positions from the bargaining oppo-

⁷*The Guardian* (June 10, 2008)

⁸I used the terms “framing,” “rhetoric,” “communication,” and “language” interchangeably throughout this paper to indicate speech. I also equate principled rhetoric with moral language.

⁹Regarding moral language and domestic policy, see Clifford et al. (2015); Ryan (2014).

ment, activating uncompromising preferences and potential domestic backlash on their side as well.¹⁰

In the early stages of the dispute, the principled debate increases resistance to compromise from domestic audiences on both sides. After this occurs, negotiations cannot move forward on the principle at stake. However, the negotiating parties may still attempt to resolve the issue through various agreements in order to defuse tensions, despite the preferences of domestic audiences. This, however, generates crises if domestic audiences view the negotiations as compromising on principle or if the bargaining opponent believes that the proposed solution violates the principle at stake.¹¹ Leaders navigating this new, public crisis face pressure to continue using principled rhetoric to frame the dispute—to persuade newly aware domestic audiences, to counter their opponent’s principled position, and to remain consistent with previous principled stances. As more of the general public comes to view the issue in a moral manner, the government faces increasing pressure from moralized domestic audiences to use force to resolve the dispute.¹²

In what follows, I describe my theory of principled rhetoric and international bargaining. Then, I assess the theory in a series of case studies examining negotiations between Great Britain and Argentina over the status of the Falklands/Malvinas Islands. This historical example provides a long-term view of the role of principled rhetoric in bargaining. Beginning with the post-WWII negotiations, I show how Argentina’s principled stance prompted Great Britain’s principled position, which set the stage for a long, unsatisfactory negotiation process in which neither side could compromise on the essentials. In this paper, I look at this language in the context of negotiations between states with opposing interests bargaining over sovereign territory. However, this theory can apply to other distributional conflicts over contested goods, such as coercion efforts to deter nuclear proliferation and bargaining within war in an effort to end hostilities.¹³ This paper provides an initial framework for

¹⁰See Haidt (2012) and Tetlock et al. (2000).

¹¹Atran and Axelrod (2008); Tetlock (2003).

¹²To develop this argument, I draw on the ideas of “sacred rhetoric” in American politics (Marinetta 2012), “moralized attitudes” in political psychology (Skitka 2010) “sacred values” in psychology and conflict resolution (Atran and Axelrod 2008; Tetlock et al. 2000), and “moral conflict” in communication theory (Pearce and Littlejohn 1997).

¹³Michaels (2013)

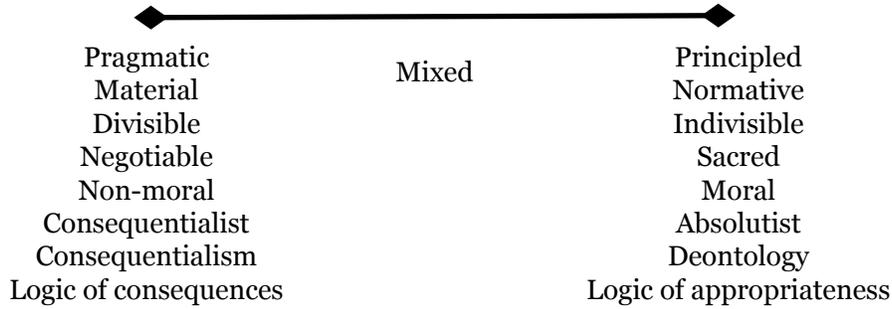


Figure 1. *Different Conceptions of Morality in Politics*

understanding the role of principled rhetoric during international bargaining and a new perspective on how negotiations over the Falklands/Malvinas Islands escalated to war.

Moralized Attitudes in Politics

Foundational to this theory is the idea of moralized attitudes in politics. A burgeoning literature surrounds the idea that there is a line to be drawn between moral and nonmoral issues in politics (e.g., Mooney 2001; Tatalovich and Daynes 2011). The terms used to refer to this distinction vary. Linda Skitka (2010) and Timothy Ryan (2014) refer to moral conviction and moralized attitudes, Philip Tetlock (2003) and Scott Atran (2008) to sacred values, and theories of comparative politics (Tavits 2007) to principled issues (Figure 1). The central idea, however, is that actors will use cost-benefit analysis to make decisions regarding material or instrumental values but that moral beliefs drive behavior in ways disconnected from material success. This also parallels the distinction between consequentialist reasoning, in which decisions are made based on expected utility calculations, and deontological reasoning, in which decisions are based on moral rules independent of expected outcomes or predicted success (Ginges and Atran 2011). In short, moralized attitudes subordinate material interests to principled ideals.

At face value, international interactions rely on a number of moral principles. For one, the moral superiority of democracy to dictatorship is a well-established global ideal that emerged strongly during the Cold War. Relatedly, the right to self-determination has become

embodied in international law since WWII (e.g., Freeman 1999). The right of a nation to defend itself from attack may be the closest thing we have to an inalienable right in international relations; even Just War Theory establishes self-defense as one of the few instances in which a state is morally justified in waging war (e.g., Walzer 1997). Additionally, regardless of the strategic advantages and disadvantages of nuclear possession, nuclear first-use is viewed as “taboo”, an international norm with strongly moral overtones (e.g., Tannenwald 2007). These principles can and have changed over time. At one point, the principle of sovereignty protected states from foreign intervention, even when they committed genocide against their own people. Now, the responsibility to protect compels state actors to intervene when human rights abuses occur (e.g., Bellamy 2008).

However, moral and nonmoral issues do not exist independent of people’s perceptions in politics. Recent research in political psychology shows that interpretation of an issue as moral (at the aggregate level) varies by *and* within issues. That is, there is evidence that some actors perceive even distinctly economic issues such as oil in the international political economy or migration along the border in strongly moral ways (Ryan 2014). There are others who approach moral issues such as abortion or democratic freedom with purely material, cost-benefit analysis. In other words, what one considers a pragmatic/material issue (i.e., the economy, oil, military capabilities) may actually be a matter of principle for some; principled/moral issues (i.e., abortion, regime type, nuclear first-use) may be viewed as nonmoral by others.

Someone who views a political issue in a moral manner is said to have moral conviction or a *moralized attitude*—in short, an attitude associated with one’s fundamental sense of right or wrong. This “moral conviction refers to a strong and absolute belief that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral” (Skitka, Bauman, and Sargis 2005, 896). Despite the strength of moralized attitudes, research has shown that such attitudes are often intuitive and instinctual, almost a “gut reaction” (Schnall et al. 2008, 1096-1097). People may spend considerable time reasoning through these instinctual feelings, but moral reasoning often follows rather than precedes moral judgment. For example, while it may or may not be morally wrong to eat roadkill or commit incest, people’s horror at these actions often con-

stitutes moral judgment. While most democratic citizens may not be able to define what a democracy is, they instinctually view democracy as a morally superior and desirable form of government. These immediate, almost visceral reactions strongly influence moral judgments, even though people struggle to explain why they view them in a moral manner (Haidt 2001). These strong, moralized attitudes produce an emotional attachment to the issue that converts the political attitude to a “sacred” preference (Atran and Ginges 2012; Ginges et al. 2011). In sum, moralized attitudes are strong, instinctual, and fundamental to a person’s identity.

Moralized attitudes affect cognition and emotions in ways that reduce preferences for compromise on the moralized issue (Marietta 2012). For one, “moralized attitudes are associated with a distinctive cognitive processing style” that “reorient[s] behavior from maximizing gains to adhering to rules” (Ryan 2017). People who have a moralized attitude rely on a deontological processing style, which resists cost/benefit frameworks to analyze the issue (Ryan 2019). This cognitive shift precedes an increased emotional attachment to the issue. According to a psychological study conducted by Garrett (2019), moral conviction produces unique physiological responses in subjects; the object of a moralized attitude elicits stronger emotions. Other, more material considerations then become subordinate to the moral imperatives of the moralized issue.

This cognitive rejection of cost-benefit analysis and the emotional attachment this process generates leads people to oppose compromise over the moralized issue (Ryan 2017). Since the issue no longer lends itself to cost-benefit analysis, the person views the issue as something nonnegotiable. A principled issue cannot be divided up; it must be kept fully intact. Furthermore, any proposed compromises provoke anger. For example, Tetlock’s work on sacred values and taboo trade-offs shows that moral values are treated as indivisible—and people express moral outrage at the mere consideration of compromising those immutable values (Tetlock et al. 2000). To put it differently, studies in political psychology note, “Moral conviction activates a rule-bound mindset that makes it difficult to offer concessions” (Delton, DeScioli, and Ryan 2020). Moralized attitudes are different from material or instrumental attitudes in that they cause both a cognitive shift and emotional attachment that makes

people resistant to compromise.

Moral attitudes also motivate people to become more involved in the political process than other strong attitudes. Moral conviction over a political issue increases “participatory zeal” (Ryan 2014), intolerance toward those who do not ascribe to the same values (Garrett and Bankert 2020), and anger toward outcomes that do not coincide with their moral point of view (Mullen and Skitka 2006). Establishing this connection, Mazzoni, van Zomeren, and Cicognani (2015) find that moralized attitudes increase civic action, and Skitka and Bauman (2008) find that it increases voting. Thus, moralized attitudes affect cognition and emotion in ways that directly shape political behavior.

Principled Rhetoric and Domestic Audiences

Moralized attitudes toward foreign policy exist among domestic audiences, but principled rhetoric connects those attitudes toward specific policy. While people’s moral values strongly shape broader foreign policy attitudes (Kertzer et al. 2014) toward issues such as nuclear first-use, self-determination, and democracy, people do not automatically connect those attitudes with Iranian nuclear proliferation, Russia’s invasion of an Eastern European country, or the rigging of an election in Venezuela. Domestic audiences face an informational deficit in the area of foreign policy as this area is an information-scarce environment for the average citizen (Converse 1964; Key 1961). As such, domestic audiences (and in particular, the public) heavily rely on cues emanating from elite figures¹⁴ as a heuristic to guide their views on specific policies. For example, when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, President Obama emphasized the right of self-determination for Ukraine: The U.S. would “support Ukraine, its sovereignty, its territorial integrity, its right to determine its own destiny...”¹⁵ In this example, Obama’s rhetoric connected a moral principle (self-determination) with a specific event (the annexation of Crimea by Russia).¹⁶ People’s moral convictions exist; politicians

¹⁴Converse (1964); Zaller (1992); Berinsky (2009); Brody (1991)

¹⁵Obama (2014)

¹⁶Both domestic and international audiences expressed disapproval at Obama’s handling of the Ukraine crisis, possibly because he was seen as compromising on principle (Dutton et al. 2014; *Pew Research Center* 2015).

must convince audiences that those moral convictions apply to a particular policy.

Another way to think about this is through the lens of schemas. The literature on cognitive biases has found evidence that situations of ambiguous information cause individuals to deploy schemas—essentially cognitive shortcuts—to process information (Dovidio and Gaertner 2000; Fiske 2002). Elites can activate moral schemas by framing the crisis or event in a moral/principled manner, causing domestic audiences to view the event as a moral one.¹⁷ For example, while it took some time for a majority of Americans to view slavery as immoral, today the majority does so regardless of government rhetoric. A U.S. president can choose to equate government repression with modern-day slavery, thus activating this moral schema.

Additionally, moral language is one of the most effective forms of persuasion because of its strong effect on cognition and emotion (Kodapanakkal et al. 2022). Moral and emotional content is more likely to capture the attention of one’s audience (Brady et al. 2017; Brady, Gantman, and Van Bavel 2020). Clifford et al. (2015) finds that moral language links a person’s moral foundations with their political attitudes and is more persuasive than nonmoral language. Other studies have found some evidence for the persuasiveness of moral appeals in shaping public opinion (e.g., McGraw 1998; McGraw, Schwartz, and Tetlock 2011). While rhetoric in general informs about key attributes of a policy, frames information in new ways, and persuades audiences of the various costs and benefits of that given policy (e.g., Bullock 2011; Chong and Druckman 2007; Druckman 2004), moral language has even stronger effects on these processes because it connects political attitudes with the moralization process.

One of the primary reasons elites initially utilize moral arguments publicly is to persuade domestic audiences to support government policy.¹⁸ However, moral framing comes with unintended side effects. Yes, it persuades; but it also moralizes people further and lowers their willingness to compromise.¹⁹ Through these cognitive and emotional pathways, moral

¹⁷See Graham and Haidt (2012) for a discussion of how moral foundations provide an excellent “hook” for ideological narratives.

¹⁸According to existing studies, governments use moral and legal language for a host of reasons—to mobilize international opinion (Hurd 2005; Seymour 2014), establish the interests at stake, (Freedman 2005*a*) and self-justify positions (Morgenthau 1985; Stein 2000). I focus on the effects of moral language on a government, its domestic audiences, and an opposing government and its domestic audiences in a bargaining situation.

¹⁹Kodapanakkal et al. (2022) demonstrate this through a series of laboratory experiments.

language creates more intense political attitudes (Marietta 2008). By connecting the policy with people’s “core moral beliefs and convictions” (Skitka, Bauman, and Sargis 2005, 899), the language increases the intensity of people’s political preferences and their willingness to take action to see those preferences implemented. The intensity of moralized attitudes leads people to punish a politician who compromises on an issue of principle (Ryan 2017, 409). Delton, DeScioli, and Ryan (2020, 17) find that “participants who had stronger moral convictions (and more extreme attitudes) about a particular issue were more aggressive when bargaining on that issue.” Those audiences with moralized attitudes also prefer more aggressive bargaining behavior from their leaders.

These side effects change the bargaining calculus. Moral language generates potential *hypocrisy costs*—domestic punishment of the leader who compromises on the espoused principle. As such, the language affects the international bargaining process because these principled positions make it more difficult for the government to compromise during negotiations. According to Finnemore (2009, 73-75): “Hypocrisy involves deeds that are inconsistent with particular kinds of words—proclamations of moral value and virtue. . . . When their actions do not match their rhetoric, states. . . . may get off lightly and be seen only as incompetent. But when others doubt the intent and sincerity of these actors, accusations escalate from mere incompetence to deceit and hypocrisy.”²⁰ Thus, leaders who employ moral language find it hard to back away from commitments because they fear being accused of and punished for hypocrisy by domestic audiences.²¹ While in theory a leader can reframe the issue, once audiences view an issue as “moralized” or “sacred” they are more likely to reject arguments that emphasize the costs and benefits of particular policies, and they do not moderate their opinions in response to disconfirming information.²² In this way, principled arguments are “sticky”; once leaders have effectively utilized them to persuade an audience, they find themselves constrained by their principled position.

²⁰For an excellent overview of the role of hypocrisy costs in coercion, see Greenhill (2010).

²¹This part of the argument connects theories of moral conviction with existing theories of domestic audience costs. According to a substantial body of research in International Relations, leaders can set themselves up to incur “audience costs” during bargaining, specifically international crisis bargaining (e.g., Fearon 1994; Levendusky and Horowitz 2012; Tomz 2007; Trager and Vavreck 2011; Weeks 2008).

²²Atran and Axelrod (2008); Ginges et al. (2007); Ryan (2019); Tetlock (2003)

Crucial to my theory is the scope of the domestic audience and the pervasiveness of the principled rhetoric. On balance, elites are most likely to face domestic hypocrisy costs from a broad swath of their domestic audience after they rely heavily moral language to frame the issue—once the language has come to permeate the dispute. However, even one-off statements of principle can set up the leader for punishment from smaller segments of domestic audiences, which then snowball to influence the general public. For example, President Bill Clinton faced strong hypocrisy costs during the lead-up to his decision to overthrow the military junta in Haiti in 1994. Following an increase in human rights abuses, Haitians sought refuge in the U.S., traveling to the mainland on makeshift boats. Democratic candidate Bill Clinton criticized Bush for playing “racial politics” with Haitian refugees, especially since the U.S. admitted white Cubans as political refugees. “I wouldn’t be sending those people back,” he insisted. He further denounced Bush’s policies in Haiti as “a blow to America’s moral authority in defending the rights of refugees.”²³ Despite this rhetorical moralizing, Clinton continued Bush’s policies once in office, and his language came back to haunt him. During this period, several U.S. domestic audiences accused Clinton of hypocrisy. The more liberal members of Congress began to pressure for a shift in the administration’s position. Randall Robinson, executive director of the Trans-Africa Lobby, wrote a letter to the *New York Times* (with more than one hundred prominent Americans) criticizing Clinton and announced a hunger strike until the Clinton administration shifted tack. The Congressional Black Caucus introduced legislation reiterating this demand. Finally, a core contingency of African Americans, one of the President’s key bases of support, mobilized as a pro-migrant group against the Clinton administration’s policy. This domestic mobilization brought the issue to the forefront of the country’s mind and pressured Clinton to act. This is but one example of a leader making a brief statement of principle that has unintended effects on multiple audiences. I further discuss how these unintended consequences affect international bargaining in the next two sections.

²³Quoted in Greenhill (2010, 192).

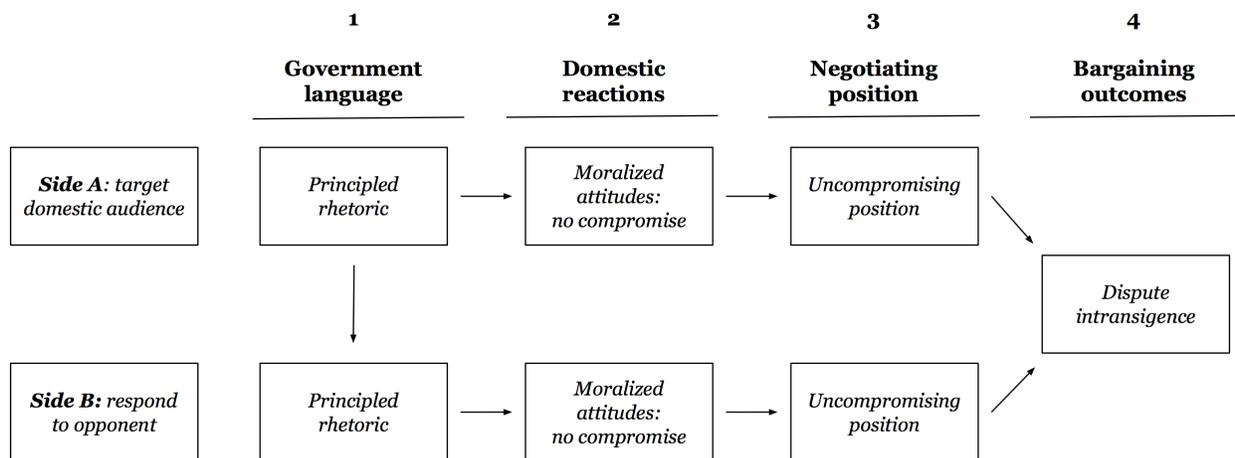


Figure 2. *Principled Rhetoric and Dispute Intransigence*

Principled Positions and Dispute Intransigence

At the outset, one government utilizes principled rhetoric to gain domestic support for its bargaining position. As a result, the government enters negotiations with a strong, uncompromising stance to convince the opponent of the rightness of their policy and induce concessions. Communication theorists argue that when disputing actors realize a difference exists, they begin by trying to persuade one another and “assume that their visions and rhetorical standards are compatible. They believe... that both sides will appeal to the same values and standards of judgment.”²⁴ To have any chance of success, negotiations assume some basic level of shared normative standards exist.²⁵ Hence, the first side presents its principled position as the “correct” or “right” position to work around during negotiations.

I argue, however, that principled arguments, instead of persuading, provoke a similar response from an opponent with conflicting interests. Principled language portrays an issue as indivisible and leaves little leftover for the opponent at the bargaining table. The first state’s principled position prompts the second state to defend its own position in similar

²⁴Pearce and Littlejohn (1997, 117)

²⁵This assumption parallels literature in constructivism that emphasizes the importance of legitimation (Jackson 2006) and persuasion (Crawford 2000) during international interactions and identity formation. Discourse constructs predominant norms (Payne 2001), but legitimation must consequently fit within the existing normative environment to resonate. On this point and for a more thorough discussion of this literature, please see Goddard (2008/09) and Trager (2010).

terms in order to also gain as much as possible during bargaining. Thus, the introduction of principle creates a moral framing debate at the elite level (Haidt 2012; Krebs and Jackson 2007; Tetlock et al. 2000).

Scholars of American politics find a similar dynamic when elites use moral language to debate issues in the domestic arena. Clifford and Jerit (2013, 661) argue “that once elites on one side of the issue introduce moral considerations, elites on the other side have to as well. Nonmoral arguments will be ineffective and may even backfire . . . [so] elites will counter the other side’s moral claims with moral language of their own.” In international bargaining, the second state uses moral language in order to effectively counter the moral claims of the opponent, as the opponent’s principled rhetoric stakes a claim to all of the disputed issue. This principled rebuttal not only contradicts the first state’s moral position but also moralizes some of the second state’s domestic audiences. The level of audience moralization depends on the extent to which leader relies on this language during public statements on the issue. The affected domestic audiences can include segments of the broader public, key members of the legislature, interest groups, etc. As moralized attitudes increase political participation, these newly moralized domestic audiences will be highly likely hold their leaders accountable for these principled statements.²⁶

Since the two bargaining opponents present their own version of the “truth” in order to gain a larger portion of the disputed issues, their positions are incompatible.²⁷ In addition to this, both sides have persuaded domestic audiences to view the issue in a moral manner, setting strict limits on what can be negotiated. Thus, principled rhetoric on both sides increases the likelihood of dispute intransigence: a dispute characterized by mutual inflexible positions, with both sides demanding the entirety of the issue at stake, refusing to compromise or unable to abandon their principled positions. Principled rhetoric, by framing the issue as indivisible, considerably narrows the bargaining range (Figure 2).

In other words: Side A’s elites adopt principled rhetoric to garner bargaining leverage through domestic hand-tying. Side A’s negotiators then present an uncompromising position

²⁶Mazzoni, van Zomeren, and Cicognani (2015); Skitka and Bauman (2008)

²⁷According to Pearce and Littlejohn (1997, 118), “[a]t some point, the parties and public become aware the conflicting moral orders . . . are incompatible.”

in negotiations, framed by principle at the elite level. This pushes Side B's government to adopt a principled stance to effectively counter their opponent's demands. Even if this principled position was not intended for broader domestic consumption, Side B exposes itself to accusations of hypocrisy from the influenced domestic actors. With both sides locked into a moral debate and in fear of hypocrisy costs, we get an intransigent dispute.

Principled Rhetoric and Crisis Escalation

Dispute intransigence does not mean that negotiations cease, only that they are unlikely to produce any satisfactory division of the issue. Peaceful negotiations, framed by principled rhetoric, have created a new context for negotiations: a principled issue.²⁸ Research demonstrates that compromise and material concessions over principled issues are more likely to elicit backlash because of the cognitive and emotional attachment these issues produce among audiences.²⁹ Material divisions are seen as hypocritical by domestic audiences and inadequate or even offensive to dispute opponents that have also framed the issue as principled.

Atran and Axelrod (2008, 223) offer an explanation for this backlash. They find that offering to provide material benefits in exchange for giving up a sacred value (i.e., a principled issue) actually makes peaceful settlement more difficult because people see the material offering as an insult. The obstacle to these sacred trade-offs is not that they are costly; it is that they preclude considering cost. To seriously contemplate them is to "think the unthinkable," provoking moral outrage (Tetlock 2003, 320). This moral outrage has "cognitive, affective and behavioural components: harsh trait attributions to norm violators, anger and contempt, and enthusiastic support for norm and meta-norm enforcement..." (Tetlock 2003, 321). Thus, principled issues are especially susceptible to crises because of this moral backlash trigger.

Given the precarious nature of the situation, why then do negotiations continue? I argue

²⁸Note that I am not arguing that the issue is inherently principled. Rather, domestic audiences view it as such, effectively rendering it so for bargaining purposes.

²⁹See Hassner (2003); Toft (2005); Walter (1997); Goddard (2010).

that governments choose to restart negotiations to resolve the contested issue with new proposals that they hope can circumvent the moral nature of the dispute. Both sides still desire the contested good—and at the most basic level, both sides still seek a settlement short of war.³⁰ However, because principled language connects moralized attitudes—core moral beliefs and convictions—with policy issues, the lock-in effects of moral arguments are long-term and shape incentives far into the future. Indeed, as I demonstrate through the case study, moral language ties the hands of the leader and commits *future* governments as well. Governments find themselves unable to change bargaining tactics if the current leader or former governments effectively framed the issue as principled. Thus, at its core, this language provides short-term political gain at the possible risk of long-term political loss.³¹ The language effectively motivates audiences and counters the opponent’s principled position so is attractive in the present, but crises materialize when changes in government interests dictate a different approach that violates the principle at stake.

Crises triggered by material concessions are especially prone to escalation because of the emotional content of the issue (Ginges et al. 2007). Once the situation escalates, the previous principled stances of the elites sets boundaries on crisis negotiations and their ability to avoid war. The hypocrisy of the proposed compromise, which is what triggered the crisis, prompts the leader to revert to the established principled arguments. A crisis also suggests that the dispute has now become more public, creating an intense framing debate with new, additional audiences (Fearon 1994). Even more than before, government elites utilize principled rhetoric to simultaneously target domestic audiences and counter their opponent’s language. Finally, because of its effects on emotion and cognition, principled language during crisis bargaining overwhelms other signaling efforts and messages further unwillingness to compromise.

As in the early stages of the dispute (leading up to dispute intransigence), leaders utilize principled language during international crises to mobilize domestic audience in support of the policy. However, given that the language generates a principled dispute, they also use it to avoid further hypocrisy costs. And during a crisis in particular, the rhetoric of the

³⁰There is in theory some way to divide up the disputed good through side payments or sharing (Fearon 1995).

³¹(Finnemore 2009, 74)

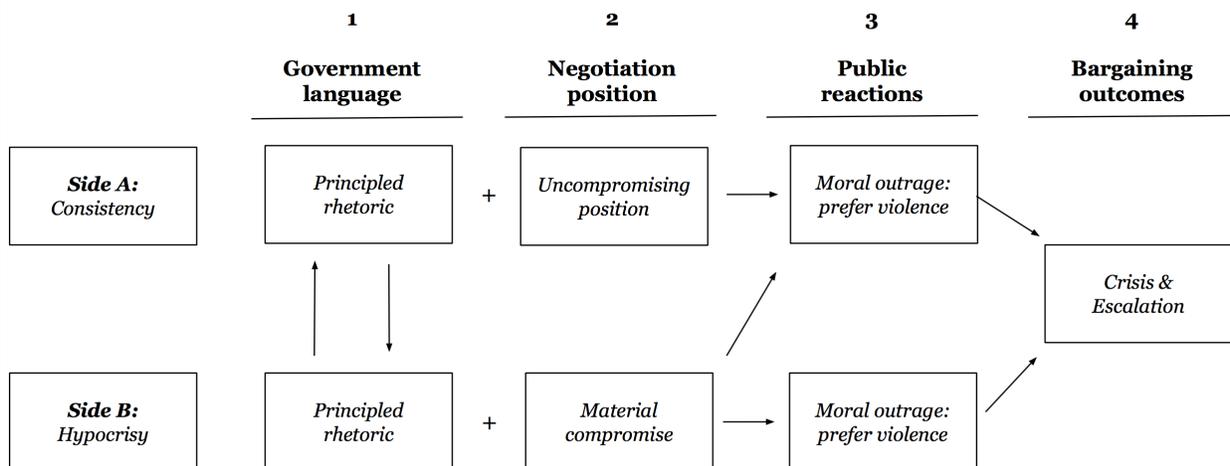


Figure 3. *Principled Rhetoric and Dispute Escalation*

dispute opponent can influence the other’s domestic audiences,³² so the dispute opponent is forced to take measures to remediate the damage or anticipate the problems caused by their opponent’s rhetoric. As principled debate further encompasses the dispute, it causes further issue moralization among the broader public. The crisis progresses and principled rhetoric permeates the issue; domestic audiences get angry at compromise solutions (Mullen and Skitka 2006; Ryan 2014) and become more likely to agitate for a decisive, even violent, resolution to the crisis, regardless of the costs.³³

As the crisis escalates, the language also creates an “us versus them” mentality between the bargaining opponents. Cole Wright, Cullum, and Schwab (2008) find that moral beliefs interact with emotional intensity to increase intolerance toward dissimilar others. Reifen Tagar et al. (2014) finds that moralized attitudes increase people’s willingness to accept collateral damage and support retributive policies. This further effect most often happens when one disputant turns the argument of the other against them. The interaction escalates as they condemn each other for abandoning the rules. Such language creates an

³²Quek and Johnston (2017) find that American threats can provoke Chinese domestic audiences to punish the Chinese government for backing down from its threats during a territorial dispute with Japan. Gottfried and Trager (2016, 243) found that “aggressive rhetoric by a foreign leader increases domestic leaders’ expected approval from war, decreases the value of compromise, and provides them with powerful incentives to fight harder.”

³³According to Skitka and Morgan (2014, 107), moralized attitudes “motivate people’s willingness to fight for a more just and humane society, even when it is costly to do so.”

adversarial image of the other (Jervis 1976), targeting the audience’s moralized attitudes at a clear enemy.³⁴ This then increases preferences for military force against the other state.

The emotional and cognitive effects of moral language on domestic audiences and its subsequent effects on the country’s bargaining position overwhelm other signaling efforts. Recent research shows that moral messages, due to their emotional content, capture the attention of one’s audience more effectively (Brady et al. 2017; Brady, Gantman, and Van Bavel 2020). The principled language surrounding the dispute signals a strict unwillingness to compromise—even if other signals indicate a desire to peacefully resolve the dispute. This effect is similar to the effects of other inflammatory language, such as insults,³⁵ provocative threats,³⁶ humiliating demands,³⁷ symbols,³⁸ and apologies³⁹, which have also been shown to provoke the opponent, frustrate attempts at compromise, and increase the likelihood of military escalation through similar pathways.⁴⁰ Even if the country seeks a peaceful resolution to the crisis, its principled rhetoric signals otherwise.

I have described this as a linear process: Both sides maintain a public principled stance over the intransigent issue. Side B offers a compromise, which Side A and Side B’s domestic audiences reject. This triggers hypocrisy costs and preferences for violence. To remediate their own hypocrisy and counter Side A’s rhetoric, Side B doubles down on its principled position. The resulting moral debate, which leads to further moralization of domestic audiences, pushes the disputing parties to the brink of war. However, as I demonstrate in the case studies, real-life disputes do not necessarily proceed in a linear fashion. There is a lot of movement back and forth. But moral debate and dispute intransigence; attempted compromises over principled issues and the resulting moral outrage—all shape the progress

³⁴Such language “is a type of dehumanization of the opposition, which can make violence seem like a natural and appropriate response” (Pearce and Littlejohn 1997, 119). See also Graham and Haidt (2012) for how two sides with opposing moralities can lead to violence.

³⁵O’Neill (1999, ch 9)

³⁶Jervis (1976, ch 3); Lebow and Stein (1989)

³⁷Jervis (1976); Kurizaki (2007); Gottfried and Trager (2016); McDermott, Cowden, and Rosen (2008)

³⁸O’Neill (1999)

³⁹Lind (2011)

⁴⁰Indeed, these studies imply that accusing someone of being “wrong” or insisting that one is “right” prompts the other side to dig in their heels and defend their position (Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus 2011). Philosopher Blaise Pascal made a similar observation in the seventeenth century.

of the dispute escalation.

Research Design & Scope Conditions

I test my theory of rhetoric and compromise in a series of case studies that examine negotiations between Argentina and Great Britain over the Falklands/Malvinas from 1964–1982.⁴¹ This theory is a theory of the long-term hand-tying effects of principled rhetoric. Moral language is not something that immediately prompts audiences to respond; it is the long-term (weeks, months, and in this case, years) framing that shapes the dispute into an intransigent one. Additionally, while we often see moral language cropping up in international crises, the crises usually have some underlying disagreement that may or may not have been shaped by moral language. Thus, a historical case study can best trace how principled rhetoric generated the intransigent issue and created the context for dispute intransigence and crisis escalation.

I conceptualize my theory to apply to situations of dyadic bargaining, in which there is a divisible good that states are bargaining over. Thus, my theory does not apply to situations in which principled rhetoric is used to facilitate collective action. Consider Jennifer Mitzen’s work, which “highlights talk in interstate forums as the mechanism for pulling state behavior toward common goals and realizing collective intentions.”⁴² Works like this demonstrate how states can appeal to principle to achieve some common goal. My theory requires a pre-existing dispute that states with opposing interests are attempting to resolve in a peaceful manner to avoid the costs of war.⁴³

Given the dyadic nature of my theory, the initial source of principled rhetoric is twofold. A leader may open with principled rhetoric to persuade domestic audiences or respond to and

⁴¹The internal documents for the Falklands War were recently released at The National Archives (London). This archive includes internal government minutes, conversations between British and Argentine negotiators, and government assessments of the situation, along with a host of other materials. I accessed the physical archive in January 2016, although a number of documents are now available online.

⁴²Mitzen (2013, 225). I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this point.

⁴³Fearon (1995)

counter-mobilize against the dispute opponent's principled position. In the first, the language directly targets domestic audiences to draw their attention to the issue and mobilize them in support of a policy. In the second, the language directly targets the dispute opponent to counter the demands inherent to their principled position. In this latter situation, the language still activates domestic audiences but often to a lesser extent in the early stages of the dispute, because the second state may not wish to activate domestic audiences more broadly.

Relatedly, I assume that every government faces multiple domestic audiences, not a monolithic domestic audience or public.⁴⁴ In order for negotiations to break down and dispute intransigence to occur, the domestic audience imposing hypocrisy costs can be one or several domestic actors, whether this be a narrow group of the public, key members of a parliament or congress, interest groups, the leader's core advisors, or other influential political actors. In order to influence crisis escalation, however, the broader public must be involved. Thus, principled rhetoric produces dispute intransigence by setting the government up for hypocrisy costs from key domestic political actors but creates military escalation by broadly increasing issue moralization within the general public. It is only once the language permeates the crisis that the language motivates the public to push for more aggressive, violent bargaining strategies from their government.

For this case in particular, each stage in the dispute highlights a particular aspect of the theory. At its most basic level, Argentina repeatedly demanded that Great Britain cede sovereignty of the Falklands/Malvinas. In the background section, I discuss how Argentina's principled language framing its demands prompted Great Britain's principled response. Stage 1 highlights how British domestic audiences (the Falklands lobby and the Falkland Islanders) threatened hypocrisy costs to cajole the British government into maintaining this principled stance. The principled rhetoric of both sides, with the resulting domestic moralization, led to the initial dispute intransigence. Stage 2 shows how attempts at material compromise backfired on Great Britain by offending Argentina and making the Falkland Islanders worry that Britain was backtracking on its principled commitments to

⁴⁴See Kertzer and Brutger (2016) for evidence that there are, at a minimum, different preferences among audiences.

their British kin. It was during this time too that the Argentine junta came to power, further prejudicing domestic audiences against a transfer. Stage 3 aptly shows how negotiations generated complete dispute intransigence when British and Argentine negotiators repeatedly emphasized principle based on developments in Stage 2. It is at this stage that Argentina realized that Great Britain was unlikely to ever concede full sovereignty to Argentina without military force. Finally, Stage 4 illustrates how rhetoric further moralized domestic audiences, in particular the British public, after the Argentine invasion. British public mobilization locked Great Britain into its principled stance and signaled to Argentina that it was unlikely to make significant concessions during crisis negotiations, prompting further military escalation.

I perform careful process tracing in each case—outlining the pathway between the language and the associated behavior of the concerned actors.⁴⁵ While I cannot analyze the psychology of the actors involved, clear behavioral patterns emerge that match the predictions of my theory. We see domestic audiences angered by the hypocrisy of their government; negotiators frustrated by how principled arguments tie their hands; and public, moral language locking the sides into their positions. I should note too that I neither find nor do I expect to find the British public heavily involved in the early stages of the dispute. It is only when the dispute escalates with the Argentine invasion of 1982 that the broader British public became thoroughly aware of the situation. The British government's strong reliance on principled arguments to condemn the invasion quickly moralized the broader populace, prompting them to both oppose compromise and prefer a military response. In the lead up to the crisis, the Falkland Islanders and the Falklands lobby used the latent threat of British public opinion to influence parliamentary positions on the issue.

When choosing a case to probe my theory, I looked into cases where the language could hypothetically vary. The case of Falklands/Malvinas dispute provides an excellent test because principled rhetoric was never predetermined. Indeed, I show several instances in which the British attempted to move away from principled rhetoric. They continued principled arguments not because the other arguments were inferior but because of Argentina's principled

⁴⁵Bennett and Checkel (2015); Collier (2011).

position and the stickiness of their own previous principled arguments. Although I discuss the negotiations from the sides of both Great Britain and Argentina, the analysis here focuses primarily on British decisionmaking due in part to space constraints and the availability of sources.

Background: A Principled Debate

The Falkland Islands (*Islas Malvinas* in Argentina) have been a point of disagreement between Great Britain and Argentina since the early nineteenth century. There is no consensus as to who actually owns the islands per international law. However, Argentina consistently pressed the principle of sovereignty based on territorial integrity regarding the islands from the start.⁴⁶ Immediately after the initial British seizure of the Islands in 1833, Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas⁴⁷ condemned British banditry and demanded that Britain return the Malvinas in his annual addresses to the domestic legislature. The Argentines maintain that Juan Mestivier ruled as governor in 1832⁴⁸ and that Great Britain stole the islands by force.

Regardless of statements to the contrary, the possibly illegal and forceful aspect of the British occupation produced some unease in the British Foreign Office (Hoffmann and Hoffmann 1984).⁴⁹ John Troutbeck⁵⁰ explained why in 1936: “The difficulty of the position is that our seizure of the Falkland Islands in 1833 was so arbitrary a procedure as judged by the ideology of the present day. It is therefore not easy to explain our possession without showing ourselves up as international bandits.”⁵¹ British government legal experts rested their confidence on the right of prescription—“the fact that, from 1833, British rule and occupation were continuous. . .”⁵² In this view, even if the Falkland Islands might belong to Argentina by historical right, the British keep them because the memory of Argentinian rule

⁴⁶Gamba-Stonehouse (1992)

⁴⁷Rosas was in power from 1829-1832 and again from 1835-1852.

⁴⁸Gibran (1998, 29)

⁴⁹For a complete discussion of British uncertainty, see Beck (1988).

⁵⁰Head of the American Department, British Foreign Office

⁵¹*The Sunday Times* of London Insight Team (1982: 40). Quoted in Hoffmann and Hoffmann (1984, 84).

⁵²Moore (2013, 657)

has been erased over time.

Argentina reactivated their claims after World War II because of shifts in the international system—the end of the war established the United Nations (UN) and heralded a new era of decolonization.⁵³ Argentina used this structural shift to reaffirm its rights to the Malvinas and other surrounding territories. The Argentine stance was clear: Argentina possessed the Islas Malvinas based on historical right, and British colonialism was illegally encroaching on its sovereign territory. According to scholars of the dispute, “After the overthrow of [Juan Domingo] Perón in 1955, Argentina never wavered from this stand. Every government... has stood firm on this position.”⁵⁴ Argentina consistently promoted its principled position throughout the decades following.

In turn, the era of decolonization also provided a new rhetorical defense for Great Britain. It responded to Argentina’s claims with rhetoric surrounding the principle of *self-determination*. According to the principle of self-determination, the Falkland Islanders determined their own allegiances. A thorough analysis of this era in Falklands/Malvinas history by González (2013) reveals that Great Britain appealed to this principle to deal with multiple decolonization disputes—Rhodesia, the Falklands, and Gibraltar to name but a few. While Rhodesia utilized this principle to declare independence from Great Britain in 1965, the Falklands and Gibraltar declared allegiance to Great Britain. The language of self-determination was a perfect fit for countering Argentine and Spanish demands, respectively. The principled language mobilized the domestic opinion of the affected territories and ensured parliamentary support, thereby providing Great Britain with an effective bargaining tactic. Also, by choosing an internationally recognized principle, it kept international actors such as the UN on its side. However, because Great Britain appealed to the broader principle of self-determination to apply to multiple audiences—Gibraltar, the Falklands, etc.—it opened itself up to accusations of hypocrisy if it took different approaches to the different

⁵³Donaghy (2014), Hoffmann and Hoffmann (1984, 87–93)

⁵⁴Hoffmann and Hoffmann (1984, 100). Categorizing the term *sovereignty* as principled or strategic is difficult to do *ex ante*, but Argentine and even British rhetoric at the time framed it as such. According to one scholar who analyzes state sovereignty, “the reliance on this idea of sovereignty as a nonbreakable concept has been used as a political instrument in the harangues of many leaders because of the emotionalism it stirs” (Gibran 1998, 31).

territories. By the 1960s, Britain was looking rid itself of the Falklands but keep Gibraltar.

Stage 1: Hypocrisy Costs & Initial Dispute Intransigence (1964-1968)

The early 1960s witnessed a *public* revival in both Argentine and British concern about the Falkland Islands. Argentine President Illia presented sovereignty claims over the Islands at the UN in 1963. In conjunction, June 10 of that year “witnessed the creation of Malvinas Day in Argentina, a Malvinas museum, and organised demonstrations on the streets. School books were re-written, as a generation were imbued with a new sense of national pride.”⁵⁵ Argentine society was thoroughly committed to their country’s claim to sovereignty over the *Islas Malvinas*. The United Nations passed UN Resolution 2065 on December 16, 1965, pressing the disputing parties to negotiate a peaceful solution, keeping the “interests” of the Falkland Islanders in mind.⁵⁶ Great Britain and Argentina accordingly held talks beginning in 1966 to reach a political settlement that involved the transfer of the Islands from British to Argentine control. Argentina pressed its right to sovereignty, and Great Britain expressed a willingness to negotiate a transfer of the unprofitable islands.⁵⁷

However, these initial negotiations got hung up on an issue of principle. The negotiations stalled because Great Britain privately touted the “interests” of the islanders but had publicly promised to abide by the “wishes” of the islanders, in line with the principle of self-determination.⁵⁸ While paying lip-service to the principle of self-determination, the British only requested Argentine guarantees that they would carefully safeguard Islander interests after the transition of ownership.⁵⁹ What happened to produce this disconnect? In essence, the British attempted to re-interpret the principle of self-determination in a way that would

⁵⁵Donaghy 2014, 10. See also Kinney (1989, 48), Beck (1988, 96), and TNA PREM 19/643, “Analysis of Argentine Government and Press Attitudes During Previous Crisis.” <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/falklands-PREM19.asp>.

⁵⁶TNA PREM 13/2613, “Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly, 1398th Plenary Meeting.” December 16, 1965. See also Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse (1990, 8).

⁵⁷The island population of the Falklands declined from a high 2,392 British settlers in 1931 to 1,813 by 1980 (Donaghy 2014, 14). What little success the Islands met during times of economic surplus was siphoned away by absent investors (Gibran 1998, 18).

⁵⁸Laver (2001). Yarhi-Milo’s (2013) theory provides a good explanation for why Britain kept negotiations secret. It feared public disapproval. However, the irony is that Argentina did not seem to realize the bargaining leverage potential exposure would give.

⁵⁹Gamba-Stonehouse (1987, 91)

allow them to transfer the Falklands to Argentina. The hope was that by showing that the transfer was in the islander’s interests, they could convince the islanders to “wish correctly.”⁶⁰ In doing so, British policy would be consistent with the principle of self-determination.

During one meeting on June 23, 1967, Costa Mendez (Argentina)⁶¹ and George Brown (Great Britain)⁶² discussed their countries’ respective positions. Mendez stressed that “to make the transfer of sovereignty dependent on the wishes of the inhabitants would not be acceptable to Argentine public opinion.” Brown in turn warned that “he could not defend any transfer of sovereignty before parliamentary and public opinion if it disregarded the wishes of the islanders.” Based on this articulation, the goal thereon was for Britain to maintain its point of principle in a way that was acceptable to Argentina and the islanders.⁶³ Future delegations would have to make clear that they could not consider “any alteration in HMG’s basic position that sovereignty could not be transferred unless this was acceptable to the islanders...” This was the line that ministers towed publicly, both in parliament and at the UN.⁶⁴ The Labor government wanted to persuade the islanders that uniting with Argentina was in their best interests, thereby remaining consistent with the principle of self-determination. Beyond that, HMG feared that transferring the Falklands against the islanders’ will would appear inconsistent with its Gibraltar policy and would therefore elicit demands from other claimants.⁶⁵

Shortly after the initial, secret negotiations ended on November 23, 1968, Lord Chalfont⁶⁶ embarked on a mission to Port Howard to explain that Britain intended to eventually recognize Argentine sovereignty—and it was for the good of the islanders. It completely backfired. During a town hall meeting, he was met by chants from the islanders, “No sell-out!” and “Keep the Falklands British.” When Chalfont returned from the Falklands, he recognized a number of “irreconcilables” and advised that “unless sovereignty is seriously

⁶⁰González (2013, 181)

⁶¹Argentine Foreign Minister starting in 1966

⁶²Of the British Foreign Office

⁶³This discussion can be found quoted in (González 2013, 188).

⁶⁴González (2013, 191).

⁶⁵See González (2013) for a thorough analysis of how British government felt constrained over the Falklands due to its Gibraltar policy.

⁶⁶Alun Chalfont was a minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 1964-1970. He conducted the first set of negotiations, with minimal input from the Prime Minister.

negotiated and ceded in the long term, we are likely to end up in an armed conflict with Argentina.”⁶⁷ The Falkland Islands lobby formed after domestic audiences caught wind of the substance of the negotiations.⁶⁸ The Falklands lobby reminded other domestic audiences (especially the House of Commons but also parts of the broader domestic public) that Great Britain defended its claim to the Islands with the principle of self-determination.⁶⁹ Rumors of a “sell-out” reached London. *The Daily Telegraph* declared, “Britain Ready to Surrender Falklands.”⁷⁰ After “criticism of the government policy mounted... [p]arliamentary opinion swung overwhelmingly in favor of the islander position” (Donaghy 2014, 5-6).⁷¹ By December 1968, the British House of Commons had re-committed to the idea that “islander wishes are paramount,” giving the island population right of veto over the sovereignty issue.

The British government had initially used the principle of self-determination to elicit domestic support, which would help during bargaining. However, once it tried to change tactics over the Falklands when its interests there declined, it faced intense backlash from the islanders, who fought against any negotiated compromise that sacrificed their British heritage. Principled rhetoric opened the government up to accusations of hypocrisy. The British had viewed islander opinion as more malleable than it was,⁷² not anticipating how principled language would lock it into its stance on self-determination. In an interview after the Falklands War, Lord Chalfont emphasized, “*The ‘interests’ of the islanders’ was the key phrase.* At that stage we all realized, or thought we realized, that *we* were the people who could decide upon the interests of the islanders, not so much the islanders themselves.”⁷³ However, the “domestic dimension involved the British government’s need to

⁶⁷Quoted in Beck (1985, 657).

⁶⁸As almost every scholar on the Falkland Islands notes, the Falklands lobby appears unique “for its success in transforming a low priority topic into a significant and sensitive political issue, its excellent sources of information, its totally uncompromising attitude and ability to frustrate policy, and its motivation by an amalgam of... factors” (Beck 1988, 105). This powerful interest group was a key domestic player in holding HMG accountable for its commitments to self-determination regarding the Falkland Islands. Rhetoric laid the foundation for negotiation deadlock; the lobby reactivated this process. The role of interest groups remains an important avenue for future research. See Ellerby (1992) for more detail.

⁶⁹Laver (2001, 133–4); Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse (1990, 8)

⁷⁰*The Daily Telegraph*, 28 November 1968.

⁷¹See also *The Guardian*, 29 November 1968.

⁷²González (2013, 181)

⁷³Quoted in Charlton (1989, 19), emphasis added.

reconcile parliamentary, press and islander opinion, while the rival Argentine claim meant that it had to be dealt with simultaneously as an international question.”⁷⁴ The dispute had become of principled concern to multiple domestic audiences, further hamstringing the ability of the British government to negotiate.

On the Argentine side, the emotional and symbolic significance of the *Islas Malvinas* cannot be overstated; this historical moment allowed the country a chance to recover their national honor.⁷⁵ Argentina consistently invoked the principled of territorial integrity to support their sovereignty claims, and Argentine domestic audiences held moralized attitudes towards the issue. Indeed, because of how strong these moral preferences were, the threat of military escalation undergirded the initial negotiations. On September 28, 1966, a group of young Argentine “nationalist” commandos hijacked an Argentine plane and ordered it to fly to and reclaim the Malvinas. While only a secondary event at the time, such a move nearly precipitated a dangerous military confrontation.⁷⁶ Following the Condor Incident, as this came to be called, the islanders became worried about an Argentine assault or unofficial landings. This led to a deployment and subsequent increase in British marines present on the islands and the dispatch of frigate *HMS Puma* from Cape Town. The threat also led to the establishment of a British naval presence in the wider South Atlantic region.⁷⁷

Stage 2: Moral Outrage and Crisis Management (1969-1979)

The first set of negotiations had stalled after the British leadership found themselves trapped in their own principled stance, as the islanders refused to consider a transfer of sovereignty. Aware of the difficulties with the existing principled position, the Labour Government under Harold Wilson (1964-1970 and 1974-1976) and the Conservative Government under Edward Heath (1971-1974) tried to focus discussions on more pragmatic, economic issues that could be more easily negotiated.⁷⁸ The Argentines did not drop their sovereignty claims during

⁷⁴Beck (1988, 107)

⁷⁵Calvert (1992)

⁷⁶Hoffmann and Hoffmann (1984, 105)

⁷⁷Beck (1988, 98–99)

⁷⁸Charlton (1989)

this period but agreed to focus on practical economic policies to win islander support⁷⁹ as part of a “hearts and minds” campaign.⁸⁰ In theory, such an approach was practical. If the islanders could be persuaded to join Argentina, it would ensure British adherence to the principle of self-determination *and* appease Argentine sovereignty claims. However, this compromise approach eventually backfired, angering both the islanders and the Argentines and provoking a crisis over the nearby islands of Southern Thule.

The Labour government under Harold Wilson preferred condominium, that is, joint administration of the Islands. The Argentines agreed to consider condominium but only to “facilitate the gradual integration of the population of the Islands into the political, social and institutional life of the Argentine Republic.”⁸¹ Foreign Secretary Callaghan⁸² knew that proposing a full transfer of sovereignty would provoke resistance from British domestic audiences: “If the foreign minister and president Péron insist on including recognition of Argentine sovereignty in the basis for initiating talks, the islanders will refuse to take part; and we cannot move forward without them.”⁸³ The governor of the Falkland Islands reported that the Falklands lobby was re-igniting public opinion with a “Keep the Falklands British” campaign (Donaghy 2014), which was kept active during this period. There was a sense, even then, that, “We cannot carry parliamentary or public opinion if the islanders are not with us...”⁸⁴ As negotiations deadlocked and tensions rose, the Wilson government fixated on economic dimensions of the Islands, which they believed could circumvent the sovereignty issue.⁸⁵ Prime Minister Wilson encouraged the Foreign Office to “play the oil card” to divert attention from the issue at hand.⁸⁶

From 1974 to 1979 the Foreign Office facilitated diplomacy to manage the rising Anglo-Argentine tensions. According to Callaghan, the possibility of invasion from Argentina during

⁷⁹Hastings and Jenkins (1983, 36–7); Charlton (1989, 33)

⁸⁰Freedman (2005*a*, 28)

⁸¹TNA FCO 7/2699, “Hopson to Callaghan and Lewis.” June 20, 1974.

⁸²James Callaghan became Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in March 1974. In this position, he became the primary player regarding the Falklands negotiations.

⁸³TNA FCO 7/2700, “Callaghan to Hopson and Lewis.” June 20, 1974.

⁸⁴TNA FCO 7/2700, Callaghan to Hopson: Message from Lord Goronwy-Roberts, August 14, 1974.

⁸⁵TNA FCO 7/2949, “Wright to Barrett: Meeting between Callaghan, Wilson and Ennals.” April 16, 1975.

⁸⁶TNA PREM 16/743, “Wright to Barrett.” May 15, 1975.

this time was “never constant but rather waxed and waned according to the composition of Argentine governments, the degree of their domestic difficulties, and the adventurism of the armed forces.”⁸⁷ A recent study shows that Argentine military expenditures greatly increased after 1976 and that “from the mid-1970s the Argentine government had begun to regularly use the threat of invasion as part of their diplomatic strategy to regain sovereignty over the islands.”⁸⁸ It was during this time that the Argentine armed forces began to regularly consider plans for the occupation of the Malvinas. To keep the peace, the Labour government approved a scientific expedition, the Shackleton mission via HMS *Endurance*, to establish the economic unfeasibility of the Islands and demonstrate the reality of the situation to domestic audiences: the Islands were not worth the effort. This maneuver backfired on several levels, angering both the islanders and the Argentines.

For one, the British approved the expedition in hopes of demonstrating to the islanders their need for Argentine economic assistance.⁸⁹ Indeed, Callaghan encouraged Lord Shackleton to persuade the islanders of the importance of closer ties with Argentina.⁹⁰ This effort made the islanders feel like the “abandoned Britons” as Great Britain attempted to fob them off on Argentina.⁹¹ Indeed, the *Times* ran several articles labeling the mission as a “sell-out.” The islanders worried that the mission intended “to convince British public opinion that the Islands are not economically viable and that it is in the islanders’ best interests to integrate with Argentina” (an accurate assessment).⁹² Argentina’s power transition of 1976 further elicited resistance. The March 24, 1976 Argentine coup d’état brought to power a military junta,⁹³ which initiated six years of brutal repression and human rights abuses.⁹⁴

⁸⁷Callaghan (1987, 372)

⁸⁸See Schenoni, Braniff, and Battaglino (2020), especially page 44.

⁸⁹Freedman (2005*a*, 43), Donaghy (2014, 80). Hugh Carless headed the Latin America department of the Foreign Office from 1973 to 1977, before his ministerial appointment as chargé d’affaires in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 1977 until 1980.

⁹⁰TNA FCO 7/2963, “Record of meeting between Callaghan and Lord Shackleton.” December 18, 1975. Instead, Shackleton returned with a recommendation of increased British investment, rather than increased cooperation with Argentina. TNA FCO 7/3231, “A Summary of Lord Shackleton’s report.” December 21, 1976. See also Hastings and Jenkins (1983, 43) and Donaghy (2014, 105–9).

⁹¹Donaghy (2014)

⁹²“Business Diary: Falklands Factors”, *The Times*, 22 January 1976.

⁹³This was headed by Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla, Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera and Brigadier-General Orlando Ramón Agosti.

⁹⁴The 1970s also heralded the Helsinki Accords, which included a commitment to basic human

The islanders would not hear of being transferred to such a regime; the British parliament was also uncomfortable with the idea.⁹⁵

For another, the Argentines misinterpreted the Shackleton expedition as a piratic reassertion of British sovereignty over the Islands and an “insult to the nation”⁹⁶—rather than a step toward Anglo-Argentine economic cooperation. Argentine ambassador Manuel de Anchorena noted before the mission commenced, “Lord Shackleton’s mission has become the symbol of our ancient dispute over the Islands, concentrating years of resentment and frustrated patriotism.”⁹⁷ The Argentine press vigorously protested the Shackleton mission on the eve of its departure. By early January, both Argentine senators and public opinion favored severing all diplomatic relations with Great Britain. Argentina took out its fury against the British scientific research ship, RRS *Shackleton* (unconnected with the Shackleton mission, although possibly misidentified as linked). An Argentine destroyer (*Almirante Storni*) intercepted the *Shackleton* on February 4, 1976, some 87 miles south of Cape Bembroke and even shot three warning shots across the bow.⁹⁸ Relations soured further when on December 29, 1976, a helicopter accompanying HMS *Endurance* discovered an illegal Argentine station in Southern Thule. HMG kept this discovery secret for fear of activating domestic opinion. Low-key talks continued, HMG trying to string things along.⁹⁹

This period reflected a situation of rising tensions as Great Britain juggled public, parliamentary, island, and Argentine opinion. Although the “sovereignty question” was technically tabled during this period, it underscored the reactions at the time. According to Charlton (1989, 52), “[t]he materialist approach, which sought to circumvent the passions over sovereignty, the central issue, had been greeted by Argentina with unreserved hostility.” And not just Argentina—British domestic opinion also balked at the approach. After the

rights, and U.S. President Jimmy Carter’s value-based foreign policy. Not only does language based on humanitarian principles strongly impact domestic opinion (Maxey 2019), it can set up regimes for further accusations of hypocrisy (Finnemore 2009; Greenhill 2010).

⁹⁵TNA FCO 76/1616, Burrow to Buxton, 7 July 1977. See also Donaghy (2014). I want to thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this to my attention.

⁹⁶TNA FCO 7/3208, Carless to Edmonds 14 January 1976

⁹⁷TNA FCO 7/2954, Ashe to Callaghan, 23 November 1975.

⁹⁸TNA FCO 58/989, “French to Callaghan and Shakespeare: RRS *Shackleton* Incident.” February 5, 1976.

⁹⁹Ted Rowlands. Charlton (1989, 51–2)

Shackleton mission backfired, the Labour government achieved a “policy of deterrence and engagement” throughout 1977 and 1978 by keeping exchanges private and out of the public eye.¹⁰⁰ However, the continued focus on materialist factors was a dangerous one, as domestic audiences saw them as compromising on the avowed principle of self-determination, and the Argentines saw these actions as an encroachment on the principle of sovereignty.

Stage 3: Dispute Intransigence and Negotiation Breakdown (1979-1981)

The third stage of the dispute (1979-1981) highlights how the government’s previous principled positions deadlocked negotiations. In September 1979, Lord Carrington¹⁰¹ presented Prime Minister Thatcher with three policy options regarding the status of the Falkland Islands, favoring leaseback (which had been considered at earlier stages of the disagreement). Under leaseback, British administration would continue for a set period of time with eventual admission of Argentine sovereignty over the territory. According to Lord Carrington, “[Thatcher] takes the view that we cannot rush a decision of principle on our approach to the problem. . . .”¹⁰² and proposed a postponement of the discussion until after the Rhodesian issue had been settled.¹⁰³ On the Argentine side, “The transfer of sovereignty [was] consistently. . . the essential aim in negotiations” between 1970 and 1982.¹⁰⁴

The disputing sides resumed stalled talks in New York from April 28-29, 1980. They negotiated oil, fishing rights, and other pragmatic issues related to future cooperation between the Islands and Argentina but primarily skirted the issue of sovereignty during these dis-

¹⁰⁰TNA FCO 7/3375, “Report on Southern Thule (‘Dispute over the Falklands—Argentine Presence on the South Sandwich Island Dependencies’).” November 21, 1977. For a full discussion of this period, see Donaghy (2014).

¹⁰¹Peter Carrington became Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in 1979 under the Thatcher Government.

¹⁰²TNA PREM 19/612 f55, “FCO to UKMIS New York (‘Argentina and the Falkland Islands’).” September 25, 1979. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/121928>.

¹⁰³TNA PREM 19/656 f102, “FCO letter to No.10 (‘Falkland Islands’).” October 12, 1979. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122461>.

¹⁰⁴TNA FCO 58/2798, “Memorandum by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with contributions from the Department of Trade and the Ministry of Defence.” October 13, 1982.

cussions.¹⁰⁵ In November 1980, the OD Committee authorized Nicholas Ridley¹⁰⁶ to pursue talks regarding “the surrender of sovereignty and simultaneous leaseback.”¹⁰⁷ However, when Ridley proposed leaseback to the British House of Commons on December 2, 1980, the body shouted him down, effectively destroying all hope of leaseback.¹⁰⁸ Ridley also faced ambivalence and even outright hostility from the islanders toward this approach.¹⁰⁹ When Ridley wavered on “whether the principle of paramountcy of the islanders’ wishes still applied,”¹¹⁰ the Falklands lobby struck back hard in its public criticism.

During private negotiations held in New York City during February 1981, Ridley towed the “new” government line and insisted to the Argentine negotiators that “the British Government had no doubt at all of the legality and strength of their title to the Islands. He had always said to the islanders that the legal position was not in doubt. It would indeed be possible to go on resting on that position for all time.” Argentine negotiator Comodoro Cavandoli, frustrated by this position, noted his own principled position: “But he could not understand or accept that Argentina’s one requirement, sovereignty, should be ignored permanently. The British side has said that Islander wishes had to be taken into account; why could not Argentine wishes be taken into account?”¹¹¹ The language of principle had prejudiced audiences against compromise in the decades past and was now tying the hands of the negotiators, significantly narrowing the bargaining range.

British documents reveal that they realized Argentine frustration as early as May 1979: “Over recent months the Argentines have been fully aware that we have been dragging

¹⁰⁵TNA PREM 19/612 f28. “FCO record of Anglo-Argentine Ministerial talks on the Falkland Islands: New York, 28-29 April 1980 (Nick Ridley-Cavandoli).” April 28, 1980. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/121932>.

¹⁰⁶Nicholas Ridley became the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during Thatcher’s government. He was a key negotiator during 1980 and 1981.

¹⁰⁷TNA PREM 19/656 f76, “Armstrong briefing for MT (‘Falkland Islands (OD(80) 66’).” November 6, 1980. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122467>.

¹⁰⁸TNA PREM 19/656 f56, “Sanders minute to MT (‘Falkland Islands: Mr Ridley’s statement’).” December 2, 1980. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122469>.

¹⁰⁹TNA PREM 19/656 f43, “Armstrong briefing for MT (‘Falkland Islands (OD(81) 2’).” January 28, 1981. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122471>. See also Beck (1988, 121).

¹¹⁰Freedman (2005a, 15)

¹¹¹TNA PREM 19/0612 f8, “FCO record of Anglo-Argentine Ministerial talks on the Falkland Islands: New York, 23/24 February 1980.” February 23-24, 1981. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/121934>.

our feel on these negotiations.”¹¹² Members of HMG recognized that principled language had locked them into an untenable position, and Argentine patience was wearing thin. On Army Day in Argentina (May 29, 1981), General Galtieri¹¹³ made a speech emphasizing Argentina’s rights to the Malvinas.¹¹⁴ Carrington expressed concern in a memo to the Prime Minister on September 14, 1981, that Britain “might ultimately become involved in a military confrontation with Argentina,” as he could not reconcile Islander wishes with Argentine demands.¹¹⁵ Carrington met with the Argentine Foreign Minister on September 23, 1981. “Islander opinion is even more strongly opposed to any ‘deal’ with the Argentines over sovereignty. We have reiterated that the wishes of the islanders are paramount. We therefore have little room for maneuver, but it is in our interests to keep the dialogue going in order to avoid the economic consequences of breakdown.” He admits that their focus on the wishes of the islanders had decreased the possibility for compromise but expressed hope that Britain could avoid further stalemate by focusing on the “scope for economic cooperation.”¹¹⁶

As discussions dragged on, Falklands Governor Rex Hunt noted to Lord Carrington the next year: “As for a settlement of the main issue, as long as the Argentines continue to insist on sovereignty first and we continue to maintain that islander wishes are paramount, I see no way ahead in future talks.”¹¹⁷ Argentina felt the same: “So long as this question is unresolved the dispute will continue. Consequently neither must it nor can it be ignored, because the Argentine Republic, however much time may pass, will never abandon its claim nor relax its determination until this has been satisfied.”¹¹⁸ Argentina concluded shortly thereafter to resort to force.

¹¹²ALW 040/325/1 Part B, “Ure minute for Nick Ridley (‘Falkland Islands’).” May 10, 1979. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/121824>.

¹¹³Galtieri was head of the Argentine army and later the president of Argentina when Argentina invaded the islands.

¹¹⁴Hoffmann and Hoffmann (1984, 139)

¹¹⁵TNA PREM 19/656 f29, “Carrington minute to MT (‘Falkland Islands’).” September 14, 1981. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122474>.

¹¹⁶TNA PREM 19/656 f14, “Carrington minute to MT (‘Falkland Islands’).” December 2, 1981. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122478>.

¹¹⁷TNA PREM 19/0613, “Hunt to Carrington.” January 19, 1982.

¹¹⁸ALW 014/1, “UKE Buenos Aires to FCO (‘Argentine Position’).” January 28, 1982. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/118359>.

Stage 4: Dispute Escalation (1982)

The previous three sections have outlined how this issue became a “tinder box” in international affairs. In the end, Britain’s principled stance prompted Argentina to conclude that Britain would never cede sovereignty of the Islands during peacetime. As Lawrence Freedman notes: “Britain had managed to convey the impression of intransigence in negotiations on the principle of sovereignty but no real interest in holding the islands.”¹¹⁹ The junta began planning for an invasion in a key meeting on January 5, 1982. An Argentine task force then began meeting regularly starting on January 12 to discuss military plans. From the meetings, the junta approved National Security Directive (DEMIL 1); Schenoni, Braniff, and Battaglino (2020) find that the document advised planning “the use of military power for the achievement of the political objective.”¹²⁰ In a related document (DEMIL 1/82), the committee admitted that “to reach successful negotiations with Britain it would be necessary to use military power”¹²¹ in order to “impose on Great Britain the acceptance of a de facto situation which will in turn lead to the full exercise of Argentine sovereignty in the Malvinas Islands.”¹²² Dispute intransigence had convinced Argentina that only violence could persuade Great Britain to transfer sovereignty.

Argentina expedited its plans to invade after the Davidoff incident. Mr. Constantino Davidoff, a private contractor, established a commercial base on South Georgia, visiting once in December 1981 and again in March 1982. The British viewed this as an attempt to establish a permanent and illegal presence on South Georgia¹²³ and dispatched British naval power to evict them.¹²⁴ Worried about a potential British buildup of forces in the area, Argentina accelerated their timeline and quickly occupied the Falklands to preempt a British arrival.¹²⁵ The recovery of the *Islas Malvina* was a hugely popular foreign policy

¹¹⁹Freedman (1988, 33)

¹²⁰Argentine Government, DEMIL 1/82. Directiva de estrategia militar 1/82 (Buenos Aires: Comité Militar del Estado Mayor Conjunto, 1982), 2/5.

¹²¹Declarations to the Commission for the Analysis and Evaluation of the Responsibilities in the South Atlantic Conflict (CAERCAS), Informe Final, 58.

¹²²CAERCAS, Informe Final, 147.

¹²³Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse (1990, 49)

¹²⁴Gamba-Stonehouse (1987, 120)

¹²⁵Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse (1990, 78-83); Beck (1988, 128-9)

goal, “supported by all sectors of Argentine society, including the junta’s most avid critics.”¹²⁶ After 17 years of negotiations, Argentina resorted to military force on April 2, 1982.

According to interviews of the junta after the war, “Members of the Junta and other key officials concur that the main reasons for their action was their perception that Argentina was losing the possibility to assert its sovereignty over the islands as the British began to freeze the negotiations.”¹²⁷ The British inability to compromise convinced Argentina that the only way to move forward was through force. Leading up to the invasion, Jesus Iglesias Rouco, a well-known journalist of *La Prensa*,¹²⁸ published articles pushing for the invasion. In one particularly prescient article on February 18, 1982, he argues: “After decades of fruitless negotiations, Argentina has good cause to know that Great Britain will not give up the Malvinas voluntarily or via any agreement that would mean losing administrative power in the islands.” The article goes on to note the pressing nature of the issue, “with room left for maneuver already small enough, and is decreasing day by day” and denotes that “the regime would assuredly gain from the psychological and patriotic repercussion of such an undertaking. . . .”¹²⁹

Even after approving a new task force to respond to the Argentine invasion, the British government had approximately three weeks to negotiate a solution short of war with Argentina. Great Britain and Argentina discussed alternate solutions through three sets of negotiations: the Haig Negotiations mediated by U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig (April 6–29); the Peruvian Initiative or the Belaunde Mediation which effectively ended with the sinking of the *Belgrano* (April 30–May 6); and the UN Mediation (May 7–May 19), which is viewed by many as a final attempt by both sides to avoid military escalation. Despite some arguments to the contrary, official histories¹³⁰ and recently de-classified documents¹³¹ reveal that HMG—with Thatcher at the helm—seriously attempted to negotiate

¹²⁶Oakes (2006, 460)

¹²⁷Schenoni, Braniff, and Battaglini (2020)

¹²⁸Indeed, British reports call him “the usually well-informed journalist Iglesias Rouco”. FCO12/384 f90. FCO minute to UKE Buenos Aires (“Falklands: Article in La Prensa”). February 3, 1982. <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/231610>. See also Makin (1983).

¹²⁹LW 040/325/3. UKE Buenos Aires translation of *La Prensa* newspaper article (“The Malvinas: A Necessity”) <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/118386>.

¹³⁰Freedman (2005b)

¹³¹TNA PREM 19/617 f76 No.10 record of telephone conversation (MT-Haig) April 14, 1982

a peaceful settlement due to U.S. pressure. However, the British government was unable to make concessions that satisfied both Argentine demands and British domestic preferences.

Evidence suggests that the mutual commitment to principle was what undercut the negotiations. The slogans for both sides were that, “Sovereignty is not negotiable.”¹³² The British took a three-pronged principled defense that focused on the *sovereignty* of British territory, the need to defend British honor against *aggression* by a *dictatorship*, and the principle of *self-determination* as it applied to the islanders. Throughout her speeches during the crisis, Thatcher cited the ideals of “democracy,” “liberty,” the “rule of law,” and other items of “principle” set up against “brute force” and “naked aggression” by a “dictatorship” with a poor human rights record. As an example, in one speech to the House of Commons on April 14, she emphasized these principles: “. . . wherever naked aggression occurs it must be overcome. The cost now, however high, must be set against the cost we would one day have to pay if this principle went by default, and that is why through diplomatic, economic and if necessary through military means we shall persevere until freedom and democracy are restored to the people of the Falkland Islands.”¹³³ Great Britain was committed to preserve democratic principles, which precluded any serious concessions on sovereignty. The junta (notably Costa Mendez) paid attention to public statements like this, inferring that Great Britain had no intention of making the necessary concessions (Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse 1990, 192).

The Argentine authorities adopted an all-or-nothing approach to negotiations and backed up their position with emotional rhetoric. In a speech on April 19, a few days before British warships arrived, Galtieri noted, “we felt the certainty that there was no other way of recovering our unrenounceable sovereignty than by acting as we did.”¹³⁴ While at face value the various settlements proposed throughout negotiations were preferable to (a foreseeable?) military defeat, professions of principle had locked Argentina into battle. They could accept nothing less than a full transfer of sovereignty. According to MP Stan Thorn, “the negotia-

<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/121991>.

¹³²See Gustafson (1988, 120-121)

¹³³“Excerpts from Mrs. Thatcher’s Talk. *New York Times*. April 15, 1982. <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/04/15/world/excerpts-from-mrs-thatcher-s-talk.html>.

¹³⁴PREM19/646 f15. : Excerpts of speech by Galtieri (“Persist Until Victory”). <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/124148>

tions between Argentina and Britain... [had] been doomed from the beginning. Both sides in the dispute [had] made it clear that... sovereignty [was] not negotiable.”¹³⁵

Alexander Haig, the American negotiator, noted the problem with the principled stance to the Thatcher administration: “The formulation on self-determination would be no less difficult for the Argentines to accept than it would be for you—or us—to accept a flat assurance of eventual sovereignty.”¹³⁶ In the final attempts at agreement around May 17, the Prime Minister made it clear “that the British offer had been a sincere attempt to reach agreement which would avert further bloodshed...”¹³⁷ Argentina dismissed these offers: Great Britain’s principled language echoed past intransigence, and Great Britain’s offers did not satisfy Argentina’s uncompromising demands for sovereignty. Another speech by Thatcher on May 20, coming after the last set of rejected proposals, again emphasized the role of self-determination in guiding the British response.¹³⁸

According to Gamba-Stonehouse (1987, 162), “Argentine public opinion had as an objective to force the military junta to *retain* the islands by force; the public opinion in London had as an objective to *demand military violence* in the recovery of the islands.” Although the avowed devotion to principle deadlocked negotiations, it helped both sides maintain public support during the crisis. For Great Britain, the language garnered international support, solicited U.S. assistance, and effectively mobilized public opinion.¹³⁹ Domestic satisfaction with the British Government’s handling of the crisis soared between April 14 and late June (Ipsos MORI 1982). This support translated into voting benefits, as voting intentions for Thatcher’s Conservative party shifted from a 33% minority to a 51% majority in this time frame. Public preferences strongly opposed compromise in favor of military action. On April 14, 63% of respondents opposed the idea of leaseback. By June 1982, this number had soared to 86%. Even at the early stages of the crisis, a majority supported sending a naval task

¹³⁵Quoted in Gustafson (1988, 121)

¹³⁶TNA CAB 164/1620/1, Pym to Haig. May 5, 1982.

¹³⁷CAB 148/211 f136, “Minutes of OD Sub-Committee on South Atlantic and the Falkland Islands.” May 17, 1982. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122341>.

¹³⁸Document 22. “The breakdown of negotiations: Speech by Mrs. Margaret Thatcher opening the House of Commons’ sixth debate on the Falklands crisis on 20 May 1982.” In *Britain and the Falklands Crisis: A Documentary Record*, 1982.

¹³⁹Franck (1985, 31-2). This paper necessarily brackets the effect of this language on international opinion, but the effect is considerable—a truly remarkable feat.

force, sinking Argentine ships, and landing troops on the Falklands. Many (44% in mid-April and 62% at the end of May) even declared that they thought “that retaining British sovereignty over the Falklands is important enough to justify the loss of British service men’s lives.” It is clear from polls at the time that any significant compromise could have come back to haunt Thatcher’s administration.

On the Argentine side, support for the junta soared after the invasion. According to some sources, the junta chose to strike just when its popularity had tanked to its lowest point since the 1976 coup.¹⁴⁰ Argentine support for repossessing the Malvinas had always been high, and the junta used a popular issue to gain support for the regime.¹⁴¹ Although objective assessments of Argentine public opinion during the time are difficult to come by, the consensus is that the actual act of retaking the islands produced a fervor of support. Hundreds of thousands of Argentine citizens rallied in Plazo De Mayo on April 10 to cheer on Lieutenant General Leopoldo Galtieri.¹⁴² A Gallup poll showed that 90 percent of Argentines favored a war to keep control of the Malvinas.¹⁴³ News reports state that the regime faced overwhelming popularity if it succeeded and inevitable removal from office if it failed.¹⁴⁴ In sum, Argentine agitation against compromise went back decades; the crisis ensured that preference for military force matched their opposition to compromise.¹⁴⁵

To illustrate the popularity of the war in Argentina, take note of this quotation, drawn from an interview with Ernesto Sábato, a staunch opponent of the junta (*not* a supporter):

In Argentina it is not a military dictatorship that is fighting. It is the whole people, her women, her children, her old people regardless of political persuasion. Opponents to the regime like myself are fighting for our dignity, fighting to extricate the last vestiges of colonialism. Don’t be mistaken, Europe; it is not a

¹⁴⁰Gibran (1998, 70)

¹⁴¹See Oakes (2006) for an excellent overview of Argentina’s decision to invade.

¹⁴²Calvert (1982, 93). Markham, James M. “In Argentina, No Sense of a War in the Making,” *The New York Times* (13 April 1982). www.nytimes.com/1982/04/13/world/in-argentina-no-sense-of-a-war-in-the-making.html.

¹⁴³Gustafson (1988, 175)

¹⁴⁴Oakland Ross, “A Mixture of Contradiction and Pride,” *The Globe and Mail* (22 Apr. 1982); Chris Hedges, “Latin Regimes Face Dread Possibility of Argentine Defeat,” *The Globe and Mail* (16 Apr. 1982).

¹⁴⁵Donaghy (2014, 10)

dictatorship that is fighting for the ‘Malvinas’; it is the whole nation.¹⁴⁶

Finally, Dr Raúl Ricardes, Counsellor of the Argentine Mission to the United Nations,¹⁴⁷ noted in an interview that the sovereignty issue was the only issue that could have marshaled the support necessary to prosecute the war. Any other justification would have been incredible to the people of Argentina, indicating the stickiness of previous principled framings.¹⁴⁸ Clearly, in this case, both the leaders and the citizenry held the principle of sovereignty to be paramount. The Argentine government had long framed the issue as one of principle; the people and leaders now, in turn, supported efforts to defend that principle. This devotion to principle continues to this day.¹⁴⁹

Aftermath

After negotiations stalled, British forces landed on the Falklands mainland on May 21. By June 14, the Argentine garrison had surrendered. The war itself lasted 74 days and claimed the lives of around 1000 people on both sides: 255 British military personnel, 649 Argentinians, and three Falkland Islanders. Great Britain decisively defeated Argentina. Margaret Thatcher’s approval rating soared, and her party won the general election with 42.4% of the popular vote and 397 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons—a clear majority. In Argentina, Leopoldo Galtieri quickly lost power on June 17, 1982—a mere four days after the Falklands’ capital, Stanley, was retaken by British forces.

The British government realized that the principled rhetoric throughout the dispute committed them to an uncompromising position that increased the likelihood of a costly war. After the war, the Research Department lamented the language of principle:

The apparently unhesitating, blanket commitment on our part to the principle of self-determination for colonies, with its consequent emphasis on the wishes of the people was not only—as it turned out—ill advised (because of the resulting inflexibility of the British position), but also odd... careful wording could have

¹⁴⁶Quoted in Welch (1993, 175)

¹⁴⁷He was part of the Argentine government, although not of the Galtieri regime.

¹⁴⁸Reginald and Elliot (1983, 124, 177)

¹⁴⁹Benwell and Dodds (2011)

provided a much more flexible framework for dealing with territories such as the Falklands, Gibraltar, and Hong Kong.¹⁵⁰

Today, opinion on both sides of the Atlantic remain intransigent. According to a Guardian/ICM poll conducted between March 16 and 18, 2012, 61% of British voters say that Britain should protect Falkland Islands “at all costs.”¹⁵¹ Results of an extensive survey jointly conducted by YouGov and Ibarómetro reveal little room for compromise.¹⁵² In Britain 62% believe that the UK’s claims to the islands are legitimate, while 89% of Argentines believe that Argentina’s claims are legitimate. While Argentina supports opening discussions over sovereignty, only 37% of Britons do. That being said, a majority of Argentine respondents oppose military action to settle the Falklands situation (59% oppose), although Britons remain somewhat ready to use military force to retain the islands (42% support). In sum, the situation remains a powder keg, ready to explode, but Argentine ambitions simply do not match their capabilities.

Conclusion

In this paper, I argue that principled rhetoric connects moralized attitudes with foreign policy issues. This rhetorical connection induces domestic audiences to oppose compromise over the foreign policy event that has been framed as an issue of principle, as principled issues are something inherently resistant to division or compromise. The preferences of the domestic audiences then constrain the ability of negotiators to compromise during negotiations. This principled rhetoric and associated uncompromising position within negotiations directly impacts the dispute opponent’s negotiating strategy as well. It shifts the elite discussion over the disputed issue to a debate over right and wrong, pushing the opposing state to also resist compromise, leading to mutual intransigence.

As governments continue to bargain, they find themselves locked into their principled stances. A crisis can emerge when negotiators offer concessions that appear to compromise

¹⁵⁰TNA FCO 58/2798, “Self-determination, Falklands/Gibraltar/Hong Kong.” November 24, 1982.

¹⁵¹*The Guardian* (March 20, 2012)

¹⁵²*YouGov* (April 10, 2012)

the principle at stake. This materialist approach elicits accusations of hypocrisy from domestic audiences and frustrates the opponent, who views the offer as inadequate to satisfy their principled position. To handle the resulting crisis, governments then return to principled rhetoric to persuade the broader public of its policy, counter their opponent's principled position, and avoid further accusations of hypocrisy from domestic audiences. The moral debate at the elite level and increased issue moralization at the domestic level further narrows the bargaining range, increasing the likelihood of military escalation.

This paper highlights the role of moral language in an in-depth case study of the Falklands/Malvinas dispute. Most international relations research focuses on the crisis stage of the Falklands dispute, framing it as a diversionary war (Levy and Vakili 1992; Oakes 2006) that in part resulted due to poor British signaling and Argentine misperceptions (Lebow 1983). However, the language shaped the dynamics of this crisis far earlier than the 1982 invasion. In taking a longer view, this paper puts the crisis in context, showing how moral language from previous governments set boundaries on the crisis negotiations. This paper also offers an explanation for why this issue remains intransigent and prone to escalation. Although this theory broadly applies to international bargaining, the case of the Falklands/Malvinas speaks powerfully to work on longstanding territorial disputes (Hensel and Mitchell 2005; Wiegand 2011), territorial disputes that emerge from enduring rivalries (Diehl 1998; Huth 1996), and indivisible territory (Goddard 2010; Hassner 2003).

This project utilizes insights from psychology, American politics, and communication theory to build the theory. It bridges one of the divides between rationalist bargaining theory and rhetorical theories of constructivism by showing how dispute opponents respond to each other's rhetoric. Much of the existing literature focuses on how rhetoric either mobilizes support or demobilizes opposition. As the evidence demonstrates, appeals to principled language spark principled counter-claims from the other side, setting off an escalatory cycle. This case study also reveals the importance of international audiences in this process, although my theory does not account for these audiences. I am not the first to propose that international or third-party audiences are important. Several constructivist (e.g., Seymour 2014; Stephen 2015) and rationalist authors (e.g., Brown 2014*a,b*) have highlighted their im-

portance, but rarely do studies look at the intertwined role of domestic audiences, the dispute opponent, and third-party audiences. Statements of principle focusing on internationally-recognized rights that concomitantly appeal to domestic ideals are particularly suited to mobilizing both domestic and international audiences. As a future extension of this project, one could examine how governments juggles these multiple audiences during international bargaining.

This research yields new insights on the determinants of successful international bargaining. The language that leaders use has a long-term impact on the bargaining process, with effects that reverberate for decades following. Although it may be tempting to dismiss moral language as cheap talk with no real impact on behavior or outcomes, this paper shows that there are reasons to be skeptical of this dismissal. Because of its long-term effects, principled rhetoric may appear epiphenomenal to behavior during an isolated event. However, a historical perspective shows how it can send leaders down a long process of unsatisfactory negotiations, rejected compromise, and military escalation. The Falklands/Malvinas War acts as a cautionary tale of the long-term impact of principled commitments during international bargaining.

References

- Atran, Scott, and Jeremy Ginges. 2012. "Religious and Sacred Imperatives in Human Conflict." *Science* 336(6083): 855–857.
- Atran, Scott, and Robert Axelrod. 2008. "Reframing Sacred Values." *Negotiation Journal* 24(3): 221–246.
- Beck, Peter J. 1985. "The Future of the Falkland Islands: a Solution Made in Hong Kong?" *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 61(4): 643–660.
- Beck, Peter J. 1988. *The Falkland Islands as an International Problem*. New York: Routledge.
- Bellamy, Alex J. 2008. "The Responsibility to Protect and the Problem of Military Intervention." *International Affairs* 84(4): 615–639.
- Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T Checkel. 2015. *Process Tracing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Benwell, Matthew C., and Klaus Dodds. 2011. "Argentine Territorial Nationalism Revisited: The Malvinas/Falklands Dispute and Geographies of Everyday Nationalism." *Political Geography* 30(8): 441–449.
- Berinsky, Adam J. 2009. *In Time of War: Understanding American Public Opinion from World War II to Iraq*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brady, William J, Ana P Gantman, and Jay J Van Bavel. 2020. "Attentional Capture Helps Explain Why Moral and Emotional Content Go Viral." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 149(4): 746.
- Brady, William J, Julian A Wills, John T Jost, Joshua A Tucker, and Jay J Van Bavel. 2017. "Emotion Shapes the Diffusion of Moralized Content in Social Networks." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114(28): 7313–7318.
- Brecher, Michael, and Hemda Ben Yehuda. 1985. "System and Crisis in International Politics." *Review of International Studies* 11(1): 17–36.
- "Britain should protect Falkland Islands 'at all costs', say 61% of voters. 2012. *The Guardian*.
- Brody, Richard. 1991. *Assessing the President: The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Brown, Jonathan N. 2014a. "Immovable Positions: Public Acknowledgment and Bargaining in Military Basing Negotiations." *Security Studies* 23(2): 258–292.
- Brown, Jonathan N. 2014b. "The Sound of Silence: Power, Secrecy, and International Audiences in US Military Basing Negotiations." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 31(4): 406–431.
- Bullock, John G. 2011. "Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate." *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 496–515.
- "Bush voices regret for macho rhetoric in run-up to Iraq war". 2008. *The Guardian*.
- Callaghan, James. 1987. *Time and Chance*. London: Harper Collins.
- Calvert, Peter. 1982. *The Falklands Crisis: The Rights and the Wrongs*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Calvert, Peter. 1992. "The Malvinas as a Factor in Argentine Politics." In *International Perspectives on the Falklands Conflict*, ed. Alex Danchev. London: Springer pp. 47–66.
- Charlton, Michael. 1989. *The Little Platoon: Diplomacy and the Falklands Dispute*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 101(4): 637–655.
- Clifford, Scott, and Jennifer Jerit. 2013. "How Words Do the Work of Politics: Moral Foundations Theory and the Debate over Stem Cell Research." *The Journal of Politics*

- 75(3): 659–671.
- Clifford, Scott, Jennifer Jerit, Carlisle Rainey, and Matt Motyl. 2015. “Moral Concerns and Policy Attitudes: Investigating the Influence of Elite Rhetoric.” *Political Communication* 32(2): 229–248.
- Cole Wright, Jennifer, Jerry Cullum, and Nicholas Schwab. 2008. “The Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Moral Conviction: Implications for Attitudinal and Behavioral Measures of Interpersonal Tolerance.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 34(11): 1461–1476.
- Collier, David. 2011. “Understanding Process Tracing.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44(4): 823–830.
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” In *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David E. Apter. New York: Free Press pp. 206–61.
- Crawford, Neta C. 2000. “The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships.” *International Security* 24(4): 116–156.
- Delton, Andrew W., Peter DeScioli, and Timothy J. Ryan. 2020. “Moral Obstnacy in Political Negotiations.” *Political Psychology* 41(1): 3–20.
- Deutsch, Morton, Peter T. Coleman, and Eric C. Marcus. 2011. *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
- Diehl, Paul Francis. 1998. *The Dynamics of Enduring Rivalries*. University of Illinois Press.
- Donaghy, Aaron. 2014. *The British Government and the Falkland Islands, 1974–79*. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.
- Dovidio, John F., and Samuel L. Gaertner. 2000. “Aversive Racism and Selection Decisions: 1989 and 1999.” *Psychological Science* 11(4): 315–319.
- Druckman, James N. 2004. “Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects.” *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 671–86.
- Dutton, Sarah, Jennifer De Pinto, Anthony Salvanto, and Fred Backus. 2014. “Americans disapprove of Obama’s handling of Ukraine crisis”. *CBS News*.
- Ellerby, Clive. 1992. “The Role of the Falkland Lobby, 1968–1990.” In *International Perspectives on the Falklands Conflict*, ed. Alex Danchev. London: Springer pp. 85–108.
- Pew Research Center. 2015. “America’s Global Image”. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2015/06/23/1-americas-global-image/>.
- “Fact sheet: Bush’s ‘axis of evil’”. 2002. CNN.com.
- Fearon, James D. 1994. “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes.” *American Political Science Review* 88(3): 577–592.
- Fearon, James D. 1995. “Rationalist Explanations for War.” *International Organization* 49(3): 379–414.
- Finnemore, Martha. 2009. “Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity.” *World Politics* 61(1): 58–85.
- Fiske, Susan T. 2002. “What We Know Now about Bias and Intergroup Conflict, the Problem of the Century.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 11(4): 123–128.
- Franck, Thomas M. 1985. “The Strategic Role of Legal Principles.” In *The Falklands War: Lessons for Strategy, Diplomacy, and International Law*, ed. Alberto R. Coll, and Anthony C. Arend. Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin pp. 81–105.
- Freedman, Lawrence. 1988. *Britain and the Falklands War*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Freedman, Lawrence. 2005a. *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Volume 1: The Origins of the Falklands War*. New York: Routledge.
- Freedman, Lawrence. 2005b. *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Volume 2: The Origins of the Falklands War*. New York: Routledge.

- Freedman, Lawrence, and Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse. 1990. *Signals of War: the Falklands Conflict of 1982*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Freeman, Michael. 1999. "The Right to Self-determination in International Politics: Six Theories in Search of a Policy." *Review of International Studies* 25(3): 355–370.
- Gamba-Stonehouse, Virginia. 1987. *The Falklands/Malvinas War: A Model for North-South Crisis Prevention*. Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin, Inc.
- Gamba-Stonehouse, Virginia. 1992. "International and Inter-Agency Misperceptions in the Conflict." In *International Perspectives on the Falklands Conflict*, ed. Alex Danchev. Springer pp. 109–126.
- Garrett, Kristin N. 2019. "Fired Up by Morality: The Unique Physiological Response tied to Moral Conviction in Politics." *Political Psychology* 40(3): 543–563.
- Garrett, Kristin N, and Alexa Bankert. 2020. "The Moral Roots of Partisan Division: How Moral Conviction Heightens Affective Polarization." *British Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 621–640.
- Gershkoff, Amy, and Shana Kushner. 2005. "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric." *Perspectives on Politics* 3(3): 525–537.
- Gibran, Daniel K. 1998. *The Falklands War: Britain Versus the Past in the South Atlantic*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Ginges, Jeremy, and Scott Atran. 2011. "War as a Moral Imperative (Not Just Practical Politics by Other Means)." *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 278(1720): 2930–2938.
- Ginges, Jeremy, Scott Atran, Douglas Medin, and Khalil Shikaki. 2007. "Sacred Bounds on Rational Resolution of Violent Political Conflict." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104(18): 7357–7360.
- Ginges, Jeremy, Scott Atran, Sonya Sachdeva, and Douglas Medin. 2011. "Psychology Out of the Laboratory: The Challenge of Violent Extremism." *American Psychologist* 66(6): 507.
- Goddard, Stacie E. 2008/09. "When Right Makes Might: How Prussia Overturned the European Balance of Power." *International Security* 33(3): 110–142.
- Goddard, Stacie E. 2010. *Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy: Jerusalem and Northern Ireland*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- González, Martín Abel. 2013. *The Genesis of the Falklands (Malvinas) Conflict: Argentina, Britain and the Failed Negotiations of the 1960s*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gottfried, Matthew S, and Robert F. Trager. 2016. "A Preference for War: How Fairness and Rhetoric Influence Leadership Incentives in Crises." *International Studies Quarterly* 60(2): 243–257.
- Graham, Jesse, and Jonathan Haidt. 2012. "Sacred Values and Evil Adversaries: A Moral Foundations Approach." In *The Social Psychology of Morality: Exploring the Causes of Good and Evil*, ed. Mario Mikulincer, and Philip R. Shaver. American Psychological Association pp. 11–31.
- Greenhill, Kelly M. 2010. *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Gustafson, Lowell S. 1988. *The Sovereignty Dispute over the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haidt, Jonathan. 2001. "The Emotional Dog and its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment." *Psychological Review* 108(4): 814.
- Haidt, Jonathan. 2012. *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*. New York: Vintage Books.

- Hassner, Ron E. 2003. “‘To Halve and to Hold’: Conflicts Over Sacred Space and the Problem of Indivisibility.” *Security Studies* 12(4): 1–33.
- Hastings, Max, and Simon Jenkins. 1983. *The Battle for the Falklands*. London: Pan Books.
- Hensel, Paul R, and Sara McLaughlin Mitchell. 2005. “Issue indivisibility and territorial claims.” *GeoJournal* 64(4): 275–285.
- Heradstveit, Daniel, and Matthew G. Bonham. 2007. “What the Axis of Evil Metaphor Did to Iran.” *The Middle East Journal* 61(3): 421–440.
- Hodges, Adam. 2011. *The ‘War on Terror’ Narrative: Discourse and Intertextuality in the Construction and Contestation of Sociopolitical Reality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hoffmann, Fritz Leo, and Olga Mingo Hoffmann. 1984. *Sovereignty in Dispute: the Falklands/Malvinas, 1493-1982*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Hurd, Ian. 2005. “The Strategic Use of Liberal Internationalism: Libya and the UN Sanctions, 1992-2003.” *International Organization* 59(3): 495–526.
- Huth, Paul K. 1996. “Enduring Rivalries and Territorial Disputes, 1950-1990.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15(1): 7–41.
- Ipsos MORI. 1982. *The Falklands War - Trends*. <https://ems.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oItemId=47&view=wide>.
- Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2006. *Civilizing the Enemy: German Reconstruction and the Invention of the West*. University of Michigan Press.
- Jervis, Robert. 1976. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kertzer, Joshua D., and Ryan Brutger. 2016. “Decomposing Audience Costs: Bringing the Audience Back into Audience Cost Theory.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1): 234–249.
- Kertzer, Joshua D., Kathleen E. Powers, Brian C. Rathbun, and Ravi Iyer. 2014. “Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes.” *The Journal of Politics* 76(3): 825–840.
- Kessler, Glenn and Baker, Peter. 2006. “Bush’s ‘Axis of Evil’ Comes Back to Haunt United States”. *The Washington Post*.
- Key, V. O. 1961. *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Kinney, Douglas. 1989. *National Interest, National Honor: The Diplomacy of the Falklands Crisis*. New York: Praeger Publishers.
- Kodapanakkal, Rabia I., Mark J. Brandt, Christoph Kogler, and Ilja van Beest. 2022. “Moral Frames Persuade and Moralize, Non-moral Frames Persuade and Demoralize.” *Psychological Science* Forthcoming.
- Krebs, Ronald R. 2015. *Narrative and the Making of US National Security*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Krebs, Ronald R., and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson. 2007. “Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric.” *European Journal of International Relations* 13(1): 35–66.
- Kurizaki, Shuhei. 2007. “Efficient Secrecy: Public versus Private Threats in Crisis Diplomacy.” *American Political Science Review* 101(3): 543–558.
- Laver, Roberto C. 2001. *The Falklands/Malvinas Case: Breaking the Deadlock in the Anglo-Argentine Sovereignty Dispute*. Cambridge, MA: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Lebow, Richard Ned. 1983. “Miscalculation in the South Atlantic: The Origins of the Falkland War.” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 6(1): 5–35.
- Lebow, Richard Ned, and Janice Gross Stein. 1989. “Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think,

- Therefore I Deter.” *World Politics* 41(2): 208–224.
- Lev, Michael A. 2003. “Embracing the rhetoric of Armageddon”. *Chicago Tribune*.
- Levendusky, Matthew S., and Michael C. Horowitz. 2012. “When Backing Down Is the Right Decision: Partisanship, New Information, and Audience Costs.” *Journal of Politics* 74(2): 323–38.
- Levy, Jack S., and Lily I. Vakili. 1992. “Diversionary Action by Authoritarian Regimes: Argentina in the Falklands/Malvinas Case.” In *The Internationalization of Communal Strife*, ed. Manus Midlarsky. New York: Routledge pp. 118–46.
- Lieberman, Peter. 2006. “An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War Against Evildoers.” *International Organization* 60(3): 687–722.
- Lind, Jennifer. 2011. *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Makin, Guillermo A. 1983. “Argentine Approaches to the Falklands/Malvinas: Was the Resort to Violence Foreseeable?” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 59(3): 391–403.
- Marietta, Morgan. 2008. “From My Cold, Dead Hands: Democratic Consequences of Sacred Rhetoric.” *The Journal of Politics* 70(3): 767–779.
- Marietta, Morgan. 2012. *The Politics of Sacred Rhetoric*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- Maxey, Sarah. 2019. “The Power of Humanitarian Narratives: A Domestic Coalition Theory of Justifications for Military Action.” *Political Research Quarterly* pp. 1–16.
- Mazzoni, Davide, Martijn van Zomeren, and Elvira Cicognani. 2015. “The Motivating Role of Perceived Right violation and Efficacy Beliefs in Identification with the Italian Water Movement.” *Political Psychology* 36(3): 315–330.
- McDermott, Rose, Jonathan A. Cowden, and Stephen Rosen. 2008. “The Role of Hostile Communications in a Crisis Simulation Game.” *Peace and Conflict* 14(2): 151–168.
- McGraw, Kathleen M. 1998. “Manipulating Public Opinion with Moral Justification.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 560(1): 129–142.
- McGraw, Peter A., Janet A. Schwartz, and Philip E. Tetlock. 2011. “From the Commercial to the Communal: Reframing Taboo Trade-offs in Religious and Pharmaceutical Marketing.” *Journal of Consumer Research* 39(1): 157–173.
- Michaels, Jeffrey. 2013. *The Discourse Trap and the US military: From the War on Terror to the Surge*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mitzen, Jennifer. 2013. *Power in Concert*. University of Chicago Press.
- Mooney, Christopher Z. 2001. *The Public Clash of Private Values: The Politics of Morality Policy*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Moore, Charles. 2013. *Margaret Thatcher: From Grantham to the Falklands*. New York: Random House.
- Morgenthau, Hans, J. 1985. *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 6th ed. Boston: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Mullen, Elizabeth, and Linda J Skitka. 2006. “Exploring the Psychological Underpinnings of the Moral Mandate effect: Motivated Reasoning, Group Differentiation, or Anger?” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90(4): 629.
- Oakes, Amy. 2006. “Diversionary War and Argentina’s Invasion of the Falkland Islands.” *Security Studies* 15(3): 431–463.
- Obama, Barack. 2014. “Statement by the President on Ukraine”. *The White House*.
- Office, London: Her Majesty’s Stationary. 1982. *Britain and the Falklands Crisis: A Documentary Record*.

- O'Neill, Barry. 1999. *Honor, Symbols, and War*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Payne, Rodger A. 2001. "Persuasion, Frames and Norm Construction." *European Journal of International Relations* 7(1): 37–61.
- Pearce, W. Barnett, and Stephen W. Littlejohn. 1997. *Moral Conflict: When Social Worlds Collide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Quek, Kai, and Alastair Iain Johnston. 2017. "Can China Back Down? Crisis Deescalation in the Shadow of Popular Opposition." *International Security* 42(3): 7–36.
- Reginald, Robert, and Jeffrey M. Elliot. 1983. *Tempest in a Teapot: the Falkland Islands War*. San Bernadino, Calif.: Borgo Press.
- Reifen Tagar, Michal, G Scott Morgan, Eran Halperin, and Linda J Skitka. 2014. "When Ideology Matters: Moral Conviction and the Association between Ideology and Policy Preferences in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 44(2): 117–125.
- Ryan, Timothy J. 2014. "Reconsidering Moral Issues in Politics." *The Journal of Politics* 76(2): 380–397.
- Ryan, Timothy J. 2017. "No Compromise: Political Consequences of Moralized Attitudes." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(2): 409–423.
- Ryan, Timothy J. 2019. "Actions versus Consequences in Political Arguments: Insights from Moral Psychology." *The Journal of Politics* 81(2): 426–440.
- Schenoni, Luis L, Sean Braniff, and Jorge Battagliano. 2020. "Was the Malvinas/Falklands a Diiversionary War? A Prospect-Theory Reinterpretation of Argentina?s Decline." *Security Studies* 29(1): 34–63.
- Schnall, Simone, Jonathan Haidt, Gerald L. Clore, and Alexander H. Jordan. 2008. "Disgust as Embodied Moral Judgment." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 34(8): 1096–1109.
- Seymour, Lee J.M. 2014. "Let's Bullshit! Arguing, Bargaining and Dissembling over Darfur." *European Journal of International Relations* 20(3): 571–595.
- Skitka, Linda J. 2010. "The Psychology of Moral Conviction." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 4(4): 267–81.
- Skitka, Linda J, and Christopher W Bauman. 2008. "Moral Conviction and Political Engagement." *Political Psychology* 29(1): 29–54.
- Skitka, Linda J, and G Scott Morgan. 2014. "The Social and Political Implications of Moral Conviction." *Political Psychology* 35: 95–110.
- Skitka, Linda J., Christopher W. Bauman, and Edward G. Sargis. 2005. "Moral Conviction: Another Contributor to Attitude Strength or Something More?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88(6): 895.
- Stein, Arthur A. 2000. "The Justifying State: Why Anarchy Doesn't Mean No Excuses." In *Peace, Prosperity, and Politics*, ed. J. Mueller. Bolder, CO: Westview pp. 235–55.
- Stephen, Matthew D. 2015. "'Can You Pass the Salt?' The Legitimacy of International Institutions and Indirect Speech." *European Journal of International Relations* 21(4): 768–792.
- Tannenwald, Nina. 2007. *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Nonuse of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tatalovich, Raymond, and Byron W. Daynes. 2011. *Moral Controversies in American Politics*. 2 ed. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe.
- Tavits, Margit. 2007. "Principle vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 151–165.

- Tetlock, Philip E. 2003. "Thinking the Unthinkable: Sacred Values and Taboo Cognitions." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7(7): 320–324.
- Tetlock, Philip E., Orié V. Kristel, S. Beth Elson, Melanie C. Green, and Jennifer S. Lerner. 2000. "The Psychology of the Unthinkable: Taboo Trade-offs, Forbidden Base Rates, and Heretical Counterfactuals." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78(5): 853.
- The White House. 2002. "President Delivers State of the Union Address". <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.
- Toft, Monica Duffy. 2005. *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tomz, Michael. 2007. "Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach." *International Organization* 61(4): 821–840.
- Trager, Robert F. 2010. "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Communication Matters." *American Political Science Review* 104(2): 347–368.
- Trager, Robert F., and Lynn Vavreck. 2011. "The Political Costs of Crisis Bargaining: Presidential Rhetoric and the Role of Party." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3): 526–45.
- Walter, Barbara F. 1997. "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement." *International Organization* 51(3): 335–364.
- Walzer, Michael. 1997. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. New York: Basic Books.
- Weeks, Jessica L. 2008. "Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve." *International Organization* 62(1): 35–64.
- Welch, David A. 1993. *Justice and the Genesis of War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wiegand, Krista E. 2011. *Enduring Territorial Disputes: Strategies of Bargaining, Coercive Diplomacy, and Settlement*. Athens, Georgia: University of George Press.
- Yarhi-Milo, Keren. 2013. "Tying Hands Behind Closed Doors: the Logic and Practice of Secret Reassurance." *Security Studies* 22(3): 405–435.
- YouGov. 2012. *Falklands War: Britain and Argentina*. <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2012/04/10/falklands-war-britain-and-argentina/>.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. New York: Cambridge University Press.