

Master Thesis

Escalation and de-escalation in Irregular War

A Clausewitzian Case Study

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Abstract

In this thesis, the author observes the puzzle of escalation and de-escalation in irregular war, accounting for both the strong and weak actor, using a Strategic Theory (i.e. Clausewitzian logic) narrative. He focuses on two arguments: (1) domestic politics cause friction for both actors, (2) international pressure (from state and non-state actors) causes friction for both actors. This international pressure also includes image. Using a variety of observation techniques and limited quantitative analysis, the author finds that (1) domestic political rivalry facilitates escalation for the strong and the weak actor and has no bearing on de-escalation; escalation erodes and diminishes domestic political rivalry. (2) International pressure and image facilitates de-escalation on both sides in order to maintain a positive image. (3) The weak actor must start de-escalating in response to the strong actor's de-escalation; else it may very well damage its own capacity to achieve its political objectives.

He then discusses the policy implications that this conclusion has, most notably (1) the way that policy-makers may change their behavior in order to improve their own image, or the image of the actor they represent. (2) They may or may not be more cautious when dealing with domestic rivalry, as they may seek to avoid escalating, and would rather tackle the actual cause of domestic rivalry.

Opportunities for future research in the thesis. Most notable opportunities for future research include (1) the relationship between strong actor de-escalation and weak actor de-escalation and the way the former enables the latter. (2) The effect of the situation on the ground, rather than on the purely political level, on each actor's decision to de-escalate.

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Background

What is Irregular War?

It is obvious that not all wars are amongst equals: there are countless examples thereof. There are strong actors and weak actors. These actors can be states, organizations, militias and even individuals. It is the most basic assumption that actors are rational – they act in a rational way. The rationale may appear twisted and wrong to some, but it is a rationale.

When does a war become “regular” and when does it become “irregular”? The distinction between these two kinds is a nuance that must first be made explicit in order to be able to study the phenomenon that is irregular warfare. Let me be clear – this is not a study of war doctrine, but rather of facilitating factors for escalation (as in: increased violence) and de-escalation (as in: decreased violence) in irregular warfare, which come from outside the battlefield.

First, one must understand what war is, as a whole. When Clausewitz wrote *On War*, he defined what war is: an iteration of policy, given physical form and implemented through violent means (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 75). When is war “regular” or “irregular”? How is it different from “asymmetrical” war? “Regular” war is the classic example of inter-state war. When the Soviet Union fought the United States and when the United States military fought China’s military in Korea, the war was regular; two regular armies (i.e. regulated armed forces), roughly of the same scale, fight. This does not mean that they meet on the battlefield – only that the armies are used as instruments in policies that oppose one another.

This definition of “regular” war implies what “irregular” war is and also helps us define “asymmetric” war. We speak of “asymmetrical” war when two rivaling states use regular armies (i.e. regulated armed forces). In asymmetrical war, one state has the capacity to

completely devastate the other with relative ease, and yet it does not use its full capacity. When Russia invaded Georgia in 2008, the war was “asymmetrical”: Georgia had its own regular army and so did Russia. The Russian military had the capacity to relatively easily devastate the Georgian military, yet it did not.

By following the logic of regular armed forces and power scales, we can arrive at the definition of “irregular” war: it is armed conflict (as a result of opposing policies) between a regular army (i.e. a state’s regulated armed forces) and a non-state actor (e.g. an organization), where one actor has the capacity to devastate the other one with relative ease and yet chooses not to do so. This definition implies a puzzle that is all too familiar to irregular war, which I shall illustrate by an example.

The Case and Research Question

On November 14, 2012, Israel launched the first air strike of its latest operation, named *Pillar of Defense*. The operation escalated quickly – hundreds of rockets and air strikes were fired each day, some reaching the suburbs of Tel-Aviv. By November 16, Israel called in 75,000 reservists and mobilized troops in addition to several mechanized divisions. A ground invasion seemed all but certain. On November 21, a ceasefire was declared by both sides (brokered by Egypt).

The above is an example of the implied puzzle in irregular war. Israel had clear material superiority and the capacity to devastate Hamas and bomb the Gaza Strip back to the Stone Age, yet it did not; it even agreed to de-escalate. Hamas lacks any navy or air force – yet it escalated and attacked this Goliath which had the capacity to devastate it in a most convincing way. This is not an isolated incident – the IRA escalated violence during its conflict with the

English military, knowing that the English have the capacity to wipe Belfast off the map and destroy all operational capacity of the IRA. Yet it did not happen. It seems irrational for a weak actor, so severely outgunned, to escalate violence in order to achieve its political aims. It seems irrational for the weaker actor to attack where the stronger actor is at its strongest. In order to solve this puzzle, I will use *Operation Pillar of Defense* as a case study.

This thesis attempts to answer two questions that rise: (1) Why did Hamas escalate violence, knowing that Israel can devastate it? (2) Why did both sides de-escalate violence?

By answering these questions, we address a larger, more general one: why do weak actors attack strong actors, and why do hostilities end without devastation of either side? By testing existing theories in the context of the two questions (i.e. the questions regarding the specific conflict), one can generalize the results and contribute to existing literature in the field of irregular war and strategic theory.

Research Question: why did Israel and Hamas escalate and de-escalate violence during the November 2012 Gaza conflict?

This question, while it focuses on the specific case study, will provide an answer to (at least) a part of the puzzle that is irregular war. By answering this research question, we also answer another question: why do weak actors and strong actors de-escalate in irregular war? Why does the weak actor attack the Goliath that could easily devastate it, and why does the strong actor not obliterate the weak actor?

Research design

Theoretical Framework

When approaching a puzzle such as this and formulating hypotheses, it is important to make any underlying assumptions explicit, both for the author and the reader, in order to keep these assumptions in mind.

In my thesis, I aim on using **Strategic Theory**. The most basic idea of it is that it focuses on the ends (i.e. goals) and means (both material and immaterial) of actors (Harris, 2006, pp. 540-541). This theory includes seven basic assumptions (Smith, *Strategic Theory: What it is...and just as importantly, what it isn't*, 2011), which I will use in order to observe the actions taken during *Operation Pillar of Defense*.

(1) The study of ends and means: these means are not necessarily tangible factors, but rather any factor – tangible or intangible – that influences any decision-maker (ibid.). (2) The political actor is the central unit of analysis: this means that the political actor can be a state, an organization, a social grouping, or anything in between. (3) We seek to understand the political actor's values and preferences: this allows us to better understand why a political actor did something. (4) Any actor's interest will be influenced by the wider, strategic environment: in other words, the actor is not necessarily in a state of isolation; it is influenced by its surroundings. (5) The actors behave rationally in pursuit of its aims: this does not mean that all rational decisions are good decisions, but rather that an actor decides after a cost-benefit analysis (ibid). (6) Interests may clash: the individual actor rarely ever performs in solitude; rather, it is part of an environment, composed out of various different actors. This means that the capacity of specific actors to achieve their ends also depends on the interests and ends of other actors, which leaves room for clashes of interest (ibid.). (7) Moral

neutrality: Strategic Theory does not attempt to decide who is right and who is wrong; rather, it evaluates how effective actors' means are in achieving their ends (ibid.). Clausewitz summarized these seven assumptions in one key sentence: "Strategic theory, therefore, deals with planning; or rather, it attempts to shed light on the components of war and their interrelationships, stressing those few principles or rules that can be demonstrated" (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 177).

A single term appears in nearly all seven assumptions: "political". For clarity's sake, I will define political: "of relating to government, a government or the conduct or government" (Merriam-Webster, 2013). This applies both to Israel and Hamas, as both have governments or (in Hamas' case) are the governments.

Strategic Theory is based on Clausewitz's work, *On War*. There are a couple of concepts of strategic theory that will be predominant in this thesis. (1) Friction (Clausewitz, 1984, pp. 119-121); armies are not inexhaustible – in the same way a traveler is faced with many small perils along his journey that may exhaust him, so can armies lose their fervor and the decision makes (i.e. governments) may decide to stop committing the army to a cause because of the friction. (2) strategy (ibid., pp. 127-128); Clausewitz wrote that war, in addition to being rivaling policies given physical form (ibid., p. 75), is a series of engagements. He differentiates between strategy and tactics: tactics refers to the way engagements are fought (e.g. precision air-strikes, artillery strikes, etc.), while strategy refers to a higher level of war: it is not part of a specific engagement, but influences multiple engagements, both directly and indirectly.

It is clear that Strategic Theory can help me address the puzzle of *Operation Pillar of Defense*. The seven basic assumptions effectively are an application of Occam's razor: the simplest explanations are often the best (Merriam-Webster, 2013). Though it focuses on the

actors who actually (though not necessarily directly) influence the situation (i.e. political actors), it does not ignore non-state actor. This is especially attractive due to Hamas' nature; it is an organization that also behaves as a government, rather than a state.

Literature Review

One must first look at Hamas – why did it escalate, knowing that Israel has the capacity to devastate it? One possible answer is the success of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the United Nations; the UN was going to vote on upgrading the PA's status to a “non-member observer state” on November 30, possibly delegitimizing Hamas in the eyes of the Palestinians of Gaza, as the two organizations' relationship deteriorated since the rather violent takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas in 2006. Thus, it is possible that in order to legitimize itself in the eyes of the Palestinians of Gaza, Hamas escalated violence against Israel, hoping that its new Fajr-5 missiles will cause sufficient damage to Israeli civilians. This relies on the conclusions of *Escalation and de-escalation of violence in insurgencies: Insights from Northeast India* (Goswami, 2013) that popular support is a major variable when a party decides to escalate or de-escalate. Goswami mentions a few specific resources that are influenced by popular support (ibid, p.35): recruits, funding, bases of operations, intelligence networks and food supplies.

A second possible reason is based on the so-called “Arab Spring”: following the fall of Mubarak in Egypt and the unstable summer of the Muslim Brotherhood's (which happens to be Hamas' father organization) rule, it is possible that Hamas' leadership and the Muslim Brotherhood orchestrated the escalation, in order to portray Mohammed Morsi as the new, legitimate and moderate leader of the Arab world, by having Egypt mediate negotiations. At the same time, Hamas could demonstrate its prowess and scare any possible opponents and protesters in the Gaza Strip, using its new Fajr-5 missiles. This is probably impossible to

prove without sounding like a conspiracy theorist. It is still worth noting that despite this theory's far-fetched nature, it does fit within Clausewitz's view of war; Clausewitz said that war is actually policy, implemented with other (i.e. violent) means (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 75). He even went as far as saying that war will never be independent from policy (ibid., p. 87). Therefore, if Egyptian policy was aiming at portraying Mohammed Morsi as a moderate and responsible Arab leader, in contrast to the extremist Hamas (this is the part that will prove difficult – if not impossible – to empirically prove), it would be perfectly within reason for Hamas to start a small war with Israel.

A third possible reason for Hamas' escalation can be derived from *Escalation in Irregular War* (Smith, *Escalation in Irregular War: Using Strategic Theory to Examine from First Principles*, 2012): Smith notes that a weaker side may choose to escalate violence if it believes that it may eventually destroy the enemy's (i.e. stronger actor) will to fight, cause enough material damage to level to playing field, or scare the enemy's civilians so badly by targeting them, that the enemy's civilian population will demand an end to the war, even if it means defeat (ibid., pp. 621-622). Hamas is infamous for its targeting of civilians. Smith also notes that widening the scope of violence (and thus inevitably targeting softer targets, i.e. civilians) is a way for the materially weaker side (i.e. weaker actor) to gain an edge over the stronger party (ibid., p.623). Therefore, Hamas' targeting of civilians could be seen as a form of escalation, which serves another terror – gaining an advantage over the enemy (i.e. Israel and its military) by targeting civilians, thus destroying its will to fight and scaring the enemy's civilian population through the use of terror.

On the Israeli side, one could claim that escalation was a completely rational reaction to rocket fire against its civilians since October. Being the stronger actor, it was rational for it to escalate, in order to re-establish deterrence and possibly cripple Hamas. This is supported by

Smith's theory (ibid., pp. 624-625): he states that the stronger actor is faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, the strong actor is under attack, and no response might be perceived as weakness by the strong actor's own population and by the assailing, weaker actor, thus encouraging further (one-sided) escalation. On the other hand, if the strong actor would use its full capacity in order to devastate the weaker actor, the stronger actor's image (both internationally and internally) could be severely damaged. This demonstrates a key challenge of stronger actors who escalate in irregular wars: the perception of the conflict must remain manageable in the eyes of the strong actor's population (ibid.). In the end, Smith says, this choice of the strong actor – to not devastate the weak actor – is influenced by politics. Smith defines politics as “those intangible factors involving the calculation of the relative importance of goals and values that impact on decisions about how much effort should be devoted to the attainment of particular objectives” (ibid., p. 625). This could apply very easily to the Israeli case – one could argue that Israel found it important to re-establish deterrence, but found the wiping out of Hamas in the Gaza Strip to be unimportant and too resource-consuming, especially with elections being a few months away.

It is also important to look at the reasons for de-escalation. This is especially true in the case of *Operation Pillar of Defense* – why did Israel and Hamas de-escalate so suddenly, when a ground invasion seemed all but certain? 75,000 reservists were called up by Israel, Hamas hit Tel-Aviv for the first time in many years with its new Fajr-5 missiles, and yet on November 21, a ceasefire was reached, mediated by Egypt (Reuters, 2012). This puzzles the mind – why would a strong actor which has the capability to completely devastate the other side, after calling in so many reservists, agree to a ceasefire so suddenly?

In *Escalation and the War on Terror* (Stone, 2012), Stone brings up an interesting point regarding de-escalation. He claims that “...popular impressions of how well the Western use

of force manage to stay below this same threshold” (ibid. p.655) is an important factor in the stronger actor’s to de-escalate. He specifically refers to the threshold in the combatant to non-combatant casualty rate.

This touches upon an interesting, underlying factor: popular support. Stone claims that the any actor’s ability to reach its objectives – be it weak or strong – is going to (partially) depend on the combatant to non-combatant ratio (ibid, p. 658). This can be one reason for de-escalation for both Hamas and Israel, in this specific case: both can judge the combatant to non-combatant casualty ratio to be too low (as in: too many non-combatant casualties), which will erode their popular legitimacy, thus giving sufficient reason for de-escalation the stronger actor’s behalf.

Another possible reason for strong actor de-escalation is touched upon by Clausewitz: friction. .When Clausewitz wrote of friction, he referred to obstacles to armed forces, both logistical and physical (Clausewitz, 1984, pp. 119-121), not dissimilar to a traveler who pushes himself to his limit; he tires and otherwise insignificant obstacles become significant. One of the major key components of Strategic Theory is the application of Clausewitzian logic to actors that may not necessarily be armed forces. With elections around the corner, it could be hypothesized that Benjamin Netanyahu (the Israeli Prime Minister at the time) did not want to get dragged into a war of attrition with Hamas, despite the obvious military advantage of the Israeli army. With the expected rise of two new parties – one being Yesh Atid and the other being Habayit Hayehudi, it is possible that Netanyahu was seeking to solidify his image as a “tough guy” who wins wars quickly, without endangering ground troops by sending them into the Gaza Strip. In other words – he saw future friction (elections and the upcoming new parties), and decided to avoid it.

A possible factor that facilitated the weak actor's de-escalation is fear for an all-out Israeli assault; in *The Terrorism Reader*, an interesting conclusion is reached regarding escalation from the weak actor's perspective – whenever the weaker side escalates, it must do so with incredible caution and dexterity, as heavy counter-escalation by the strong actor is likely to impede the weaker actor's capacity to reach its aims (Laqueur, 1978, p. 264): weaker actors succeed only when the stronger actor does not use its full capacity. This means that if the weaker actor escalates too heavily, the stronger actor is more likely to be incentivized to use its full capacity, devastating the weaker actor. This could easily apply to Hamas – Israel has already recalled 75,000 troops by November 16, and it is possible that Hamas' leadership saw an Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip as an impediment to its political goals; Israeli presence on the ground naturally means that Israel has greater control over the Gaza Strip and whatever goods that go in and out of it, which would limit Hamas' capabilities.

A second possible factor for the weak actor's de-escalation has been touched upon earlier, when discussing the factors for escalation: popular support, as demonstrated by Goswami (2013, pp. 35-36). If Hamas' leadership believed that escalating against Israel would lead to a loss of popular support it would de-escalate. There are several factors that are indicative of loss of popular support: (1) civilian deaths on the weaker actor's side (2) the civilian population is less intimidated (3) rise of rival organizations (ibid.). It could be hypothesized that Hamas' leadership decided to de-escalate following a predicted loss in popular support should it continue hostilities.

A third reason for the weak actor to de-escalate would come from the civilian population of Israel: Hamas routinely targets civilians, probably hoping to scare the civilian population (Smith, 2012, p. 623), which has been touched upon earlier in this list of relevant factors. However, what if attacking the civilian population no longer causes any fear? What if the

civilian population has gotten used to being fired upon, and is no longer affected by these attacks, thus leaving Israel's popular support as undamaged? That would be reason for de-escalation. In other words: it can be hypothesized that increased civilian resilience to violence incentivizes the weaker actor to de-escalate.

Another possible factor in facilitating de-escalation, on both sides, is international influence – while the UN and the US explicitly stated their support of Israel, so did Iran, Turkey and Egypt explicitly stated their support of Hamas. It is possible that sufficient pressure was applied on both Israel and Hamas to de-escalate as quickly as they did.

A final possible factor for escalation and de-escalation on both sides is (international) image: it has become anything but uncommon for nations to apply “nation branding” strategies (Hudson, 2007). Hudson mentions foreign investment, tourism and trade as some incentives for this branding. Essentially, nation branding is a new form of public diplomacy (that is: “public diplomacy seeks to promote national interest through understanding, informing and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad” (Public Diplomacy Alumni Association, 2013)). Nation branding is a separate concept, rather than a section of public diplomacy. This is demonstrated in *Nation Branding Explained* (Hudson, 2007): (1) brand is treated as an asset which holds value for the state; (2) it focuses on the behavioral side of a nation. That is: the image is created more by actions than by propaganda (for lack of a better word); nations who seek to portray themselves in a certain way need to also act that way, rather than only use public diplomacy campaigns without changing their behavior. It can therefore be hypothesized that both the weak (Hamas) and the strong (Israel) actor decided to escalate in order to portray a certain image, and to de-escalate when either (1) further escalation would damage the actors' image

(for example: Israel wanted to portray itself as the stable actor of the middle-east who does not tolerate any attack) or (2) de-escalation would improve either party's image.

This aspect of nation branding synergizes well with one conclusion of *Escalation and de-escalation of violence in insurgencies: Insights from Northeast India* (Goswami, 2013): that popular support influences the weaker side's willingness to escalate and de-escalate. It is obvious that image and popular support are closely intertwined.

Hypotheses

Having formulated several possible factors in escalation and de-escalation, I have come up with three hypotheses:

H1: domestic political rivalry facilitates both escalation and de-escalation.

H1 relies on Clausewitz's notes regarding friction (Clausewitz, 1984, pp. 119-121). In this specific case study, it controls for the option that Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas wanted to solidify their position as the ruling party, because of the (projected) success of rival parties (Fatah for Hams, Yesh Atid and Habayit Hayehudi for Netanyahu's Likud party). This hypothesis relies on two theories: (1) behavioral change in order to create another image (in the same spirit of nation branding, as in: trying to portray oneself as a stable or strong actor through action); (2) friction as a factor that incentivizes de-escalation (as in a prolonged conflict damaging an actor's capacity and ability to achieve goals).

H2: a low combatant to non-combatant casualty ratio (as in: more non-combatants died than actual combatants) incentivizes de-escalation of the strong actor.

This hypothesis relies on Stone's conclusions (Stone, 2012, p. 655), that the strong actor's actions must be perceived in such a way that the amount of non-combatant casualties is below

a certain threshold. It also correlates with the theory of nation branding; a country's image is affected by its actions, rather than purely by PR campaigns.

H3: International image and pressure facilitates de-escalation for both sides.

This hypothesis is based on two theories mentioned earlier: friction and nation branding being applied by using action in lieu of public relations campaigns. This hypothesis controls for two factors: official international (super-) governmental pressure (e.g. UN or a particularly powerful state condemnation or explicit support of either side) and also for the effects of non-state actors (such as reporters and NGOs) on nation branding.

Methodology

In order to be able to test the hypotheses, one must be able to understand how one actually measures escalation and de-escalation.

Considering the nature of both actors (that is: governmental and/or military), getting qualitative data from decision-makers in order to understand their thought process is probably impossible. However, a quantitative analysis may still be useful to this case study

In order to test **H1**, I will look into the presence of domestic (political) rivalries using **Factiva** – a database created by Down Jones to allow researchers to filter and select news articles. I will examine all news clippings regarding Israel and the area, starting at three months before the first day of the operation. In order to account for and avoid possible bias from one source, I will use four sources: British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Reuters, The Telegraph and Agence France-Presse (AFP).

When one searches through a news database, one is bound to find an ample supply of irrelevant data: not all news is relevant news. In order to compensate for that, I will apply the following filters: (1) subject: not Commodity/Financial Market News, not Corporate/Industrial news, not Economic News, not Sports/Recreation. (2) Region: Israel or Gaza Strip. (3) Language: English. (4) Subject: International Relations, Military Actions. Source: BBC – All sources, The Telegraph, AFP, Reuters.

I will code the findings into SPSS, by separating (1) the article's subject (escalation, de-escalation, regional (de-)stabilization and domestic rivalry of either actor), (2) its publishing date (any date between July 13 2012 and November 13 2012) and (3) the agency that published it. If an increase in the amount of articles covering political rivalry (for both Hamas

and Israel) will be observed. This will allow me to see when there is a spike in any subject over a given period of time and correlate it with either escalation or de-escalation.

I will conduct the same research in order to control for correlation for both parties, only that I will change the time period of the articles to the entire duration of *Operation Pillar of Defense* (November 14-21). I will add one additional subject that I will use to sort the article type: International Reaction. This will include reactions from both other states (e.g. Egypt or the United States) and non-state actors (e.g. United Nations Security Council and the Arab League). This international reaction will have two sub-categories: (1) stating support or condemnation of either actor, (2) a call for ending all hostilities. All in all, I will have ten different subjects: (1) strong actor escalation, (2) strong actor de-escalation, (3) weak actor escalation, (4) weak actor de-escalation, (5) regional instability, (6) international condemnation of strong/support of weak actor, (7) international condemnation of weak/support of strong actor, (8) international call to end all violence, (9) domestic rivalry of the strong actor, (10) domestic rivalry of the weak actor.

H2 will be tested by looking at official UN estimates, regarding the amount of Palestinian militants and civilians killed during the 8 days-long operation. Should the combatant-to-civilian ratio prove equal to or less than 1:1 (1 combatant per 1 civilian or less), then this hypothesis may be rejected. If the ratio is greater, then this hypothesis may be confirmed. In order to account for bias, I will also use figures of the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center – an independent research organization based in Israel. I write of bias because certain institutions of the United Nations – most notably its Human Rights Council – have a track record of strong bias against Israel, which could distort the numbers. If both estimates on the ratio are significantly different, a calculation of the mean will assume to be the actual ratio. I choose to calculate the mean because it is beyond my statistical capacity to quantify each

source's reliability. This method relies on the concept of nation branding, where a nation's actions influence its image to a far greater extent than exclusively using PR campaigns.

If the (calculated) ratio proves to be less than 1, it will mean that fewer combatants than non-combatants died and the hypothesis may be tested further. I will observe articles that were published during and after the operation - controlling for reports of disproportional damage to noncombatants. I will then check for correspondence with the article's date and observed reports of strong actor de-escalation.

H3 will be tested by using documentary data (ibid., pp. 227-245) regarding the portrayal of *Operation Pillar of Defense* by (1) international and supranational actors, such as the UN and the United States. It is important to understand what one is exactly looking for when analyzing documentary data from international and supranational actors: it will be probably impossible to obtain the meeting notes from the United States President's briefing on the operation. However, one can observe how different nations reacted to the operation in their press releases and other official statements. This is what I will do. In order to increase accuracy of the findings, I will control for both initial and a second response.

There is still the issue of bias – one can be all but certain that the Iranian response would be vastly different to the American response, due to the different relationships. Therefore, I will analyze responses from Egypt, the United Nations, the United Nations Security Council, Iran, the European Union, the Arab League and individual permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council. I chose these specific parties due to their power: a UNSC permanent member state will naturally have more power than a non-permanent member state, due to its ability to veto. Egypt, due to its physical proximity and close relationship with the weak actor (i.e. Hamas) also has significant power on the region, and Iran's growing nuclear capabilities can undoubtedly help it project power onto the conflict. One can also

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easily understand how the UN, UNSC, the Arab League and the EU have some power in the region: they are organizations that form a union of countries, and their actions to isolate or support any actor are bound to have an impact on the situation. Once I have compiled the data, I will check for correspondence with specific international reactions and de-escalation and will attempt to establish a logical connection, if any exists.

In order to make the data more quantifiable, I will also use the data that I will collect while analyzing **H1**. In other words – I will analyze news reports of international actors' responses during the operation, rather than only official documentation of responses.

An overview of Pillar of Defense – what happened?

In order to be able to test the hypotheses, one must first know the facts: what happened in *Operation Pillar of Defense*, regardless of the theories of escalation, de-escalation and the nature of (irregular) war? In other words – what are the facts that set the background for this case study?

As stated in the introduction, on November 14 2012, Israel launched the operation with the assassination of Ahmed Jabari, a high-ranking Hamas official. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that the operation was launched in response the latest round of escalation on November 10, when an anti-tank missile hit an IDF jeep (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). *Operation Pillar of Defense* was the first full-fledged operation of Israel in the Gaza Strip since the Gaza War (also known as *Operation Cast Lead*), which lasted for 22 days in 2007-2008. In a very notable fashion, the United States Department of State released a press release, condemning Hamas and expressing support of Israel (US Department of State, 2012).

On November 15, violence escalated on both sides. While Israel did not put “boots on the ground” (i.e. a ground invasion), the frequency of its air strikes increased. It is notable that on November 15, Hamas managed to launch rockets into Tel-Aviv’s suburbs. This was the first time the Tel-Aviv area was hit by any missile since the first Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein launched Scud missiles at the area (The Times of Israel, 2012). From that day until the end of the operation, missile fire aimed at Tel-Aviv became a regular occurrence. A condemnation of Israel’s strikes was received from Egypt, calling the UN to intervene and stop the violence (The Guardian, 2012).

On November 16, a short cease-fire was negotiated for the visit of the Egyptian prime minister. This was short-lived, as both sides escalated and blamed each other for the initial violation of the cease-fire (The Telegraph, 2012). Later that evening, the Israeli parliament

approved calling up 75,000 reservists, raising the regular reservist cap (i.e. the amount of citizens that may be called up for reservist service) by 45,000 (The Jerusalem Post, 2012). Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Avigdor Lieberman, claimed that Israel was *not* considering overthrowing the government in Gaza, which is led by Hamas. On the same day, EU foreign policy chief – Catherine Ashton – expressed the EU's support of Israel (The Jerusalem Post, 2012).

On November 17, Israel escalated violence by also targeting Hamas government sites (The New York Times, 2012). In contrast to Lieberman's words on November 16, Eli Yishai – minister of Interior – claimed that the aim of the operation was to “Bomb Gaza back to the Stone Age” (The Independent, 2012). Hamas continued firing rockets into Israel. By the end of the day, Israel mobilized some of its tanks in a move that seemed to indicate a coming invasion (CNN, 2012). Turkey's president, Erdogan, condemned Israel's action in the Gaza Strip and praised Egypt's decision to recall its ambassador (Reuters, 2012).

November 18 was marked by further escalation on the Israeli side, as Israel introduced naval shelling to the situation (IDF, 2012). During the day, the IDF struck a communications tower – which marked the first time during the operation it has actively targeted media infrastructure (Sky News, 2012). This caused a strong condemnation from Reporters Without Borders – a non-governmental organization that focuses on issues regarding press freedom (The Associated Press, 2012). On Hamas' side, escalation continued in the form of firing missiles at Israeli towns and cities. By the end of the day, Benjamin Netanyahu – the Israeli Prime Minister – spoke to the cabinet and said that the IDF was ready for a “significant expansion of the operation” (The Guardian, 2012), while the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary – William Hague – warned Israel against a ground invasion, which he claimed would erode much of Israel's international support (The Telegraph, 2012).

On November 19, Israeli air strikes and Hamas missile attacks resumed. There were no special cases of escalation, de-escalation or noteworthy international responses.

On November 20, the building housing AFP's office in the Gaza Strip was hit by an Israeli air strike (Huffington Post, 2012). Later that day, the United States Secretary of State – Hillary Clinton – traveled to the area to promote a ceasefire between the two actors (The Washington Post, 2012). She did not speak with Hamas, as the United States has designated it as a terrorist organization (FOX News, 2012). While Egypt's president declared that a deal would be made that very day (Huffington Post, 2012), negotiations failed and violence resumed. Hamas made a move to de-escalate violence when one of its spokespersons stated that a deal for ceasefire was not far away (CNN, 2012).

November 21, the final day of the operation, saw an initial increase in the amount of rocket attacks from Gaza. Israeli air strikes also escalated, damaging Al Jazeera's office and the Associated Press's offices in Gaza in a single air strike (Ma'an News Agency, 2012). AFP's building was attacked again (The Huffington Post, 2012). On 21:00 (Israel time), the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect (Haaretz, 2012).

The ceasefire

It is naturally important to look at the final compromise of the ceasefire – it can tell us about both actors' objectives and – to a limited extent – when they would be met to a sufficient enough degree to make a cease-fire both possible and plausible. The ceasefire includes seven conditions (ibid.).

“(1a) Israel shall stop all hostilities in the Gaza Strip land, sea and air including incursions and targeting of individuals. (1b) All Palestinian factions shall stop all hostilities from the Gaza Strip against Israel including rocket attacks, and all attacks along the border. (1c) Opening the

crossings and facilitating the movements of people and transfer of goods, and refraining from restricting residents' free movements, and targeting residents in border areas and procedures of implementation shall be dealt with after 24 hours from the start of the ceasefire. (1d) Other matters as may be requested shall be addressed.” The sections following focus on the implementation of the ceasefire (ibid.) “(2a) Setting up the zero hour for the Ceasefire Understanding to enter into effect. (2b) Egypt shall receive assurances from each party that the party commits to what was agreed upon. (2c) Each party shall commit itself not to perform any acts that would breach this understanding. In case of any observations, Egypt – as the sponsor of this understanding – shall be informed to follow up.” (ibid.).

After the ceasefire went into effect, both actors claimed victory. What this ceasefire achieved on paper was, essentially, two things: (1) granting both actors more room to maneuver; Israel’s civilians would not be targeted by rocket fire any more, while the Gaza Strip will be granted more freedom (e.g. no more (aerial) bombardments and re-opening supply lines). (2) It depicts Egypt as a stabilizing force in the region. This was reflected in the press release by the United States’ Hillary Clinton – Secretary of State – when the ceasefire was announced, as she said: “Egypt’s new government is assuming the responsibility and leadership that has long made this country a cornerstone of regional stability and peace” (US Department of State, 2012).

The Analysis

Strong actor escalation – domestic rivalry

In this section, I will cover one of the factors which I hypothesized provide an incentive for escalation for the strong actor. The first one I noted was projected friction from domestic rivalry; it is our most basic assumption that actors behave in a rational matter. It is completely rational for any actor to avoid friction. In this section I strive to show the connection between escalating (thus increasing friction in the short-term, as one escalates violence) in order to avoid future friction. Tables 3-8 (see Appendix 2: Figures and Tables) show that domestic rivalry for the strong actor was reported on only before the operation.

The next page features a crosstab created after filtering out all articles but those with the subject of domestic rivalry for the stronger actor, without filtering out any specific dates:

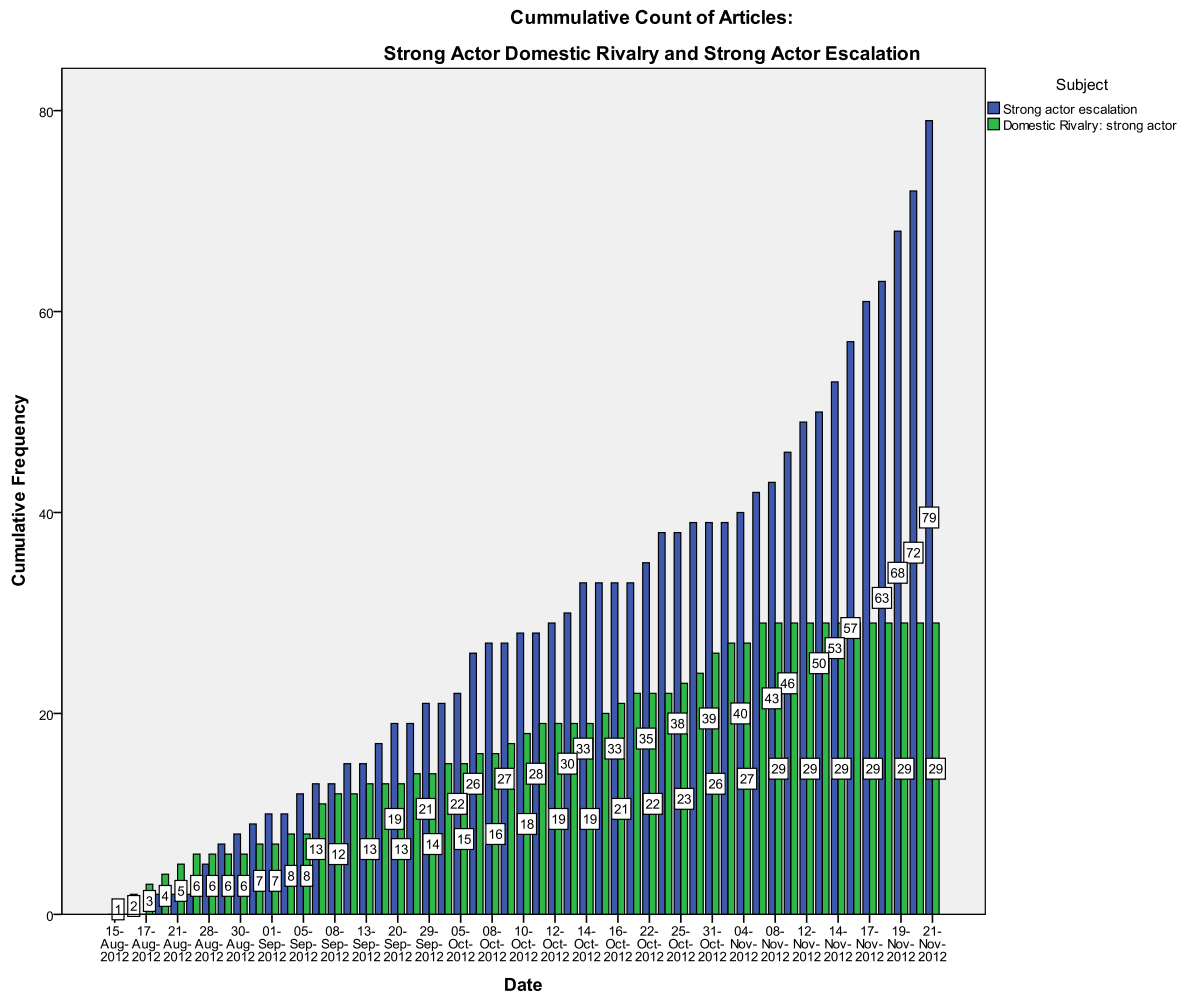
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Table 1: Date * Subject (Domestic Rivalry: strong actor) Crosstabulation

		Article Subject	
		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	Total
Date	15-Aug-2012	1	1
	16-Aug-2012	1	1
	17-Aug-2012	1	1
	20-Aug-2012	1	1
	21-Aug-2012	1	1
	24-Aug-2012	1	1
	31-Aug-2012	1	1
	04-Sep-2012	1	1
	06-Sep-2012	3	3
	08-Sep-2012	1	1
	13-Sep-2012	1	1
	25-Sep-2012	1	1
	04-Oct-2012	1	1
	07-Oct-2012	1	1
	09-Oct-2012	1	1
	10-Oct-2012	1	1
	11-Oct-2012	1	1
	15-Oct-2012	1	1
	16-Oct-2012	1	1
	21-Oct-2012	1	1
	25-Oct-2012	1	1
	29-Oct-2012	1	1
	31-Oct-2012	2	2
	02-Nov-2012	1	1
	05-Nov-2012	2	2
Total		29	29

It is noteworthy that literally no reports of domestic rivalry were recorded during the operation by any of the four sources used. This suggests that those who would normally be considered rivals for the strong actor (i.e. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister) – most notably competing domestic parties – considered it rational to not provide any friction during the operation, but rather before it. It is also noteworthy that out of the 29 observations of the friction caused by domestic rivalry, 12 were observed in the month of October – that is 41% of all reports in one month. November had 3 observations, September 7 and August saw 7, as well. This leads one to the logical conclusion that the strong actor (Netanyahu in this case) observed a (projected) increase in domestic friction over time and acted in order to reduce it in the future. It is not beyond reason that the elections coming January 2013 helped the strong actor make that decision. It is even possible – if one takes the concept of nation branding (see Literature Review) to heart – that the stronger actor escalated in order to create an internal image of a “tough guy”. This is also supported by the fact that a few days before the elections, Chuck Norris was seen starring in an Israeli pre-elections TV-advertisement, supporting Benjamin Netanyahu's bid to continue his term as Prime Minister (Ynet News, 2013). The next page has a bar chart which visualizes the difference in the amount of time strong actor escalation versus domestic rivalry for the strong actor was reported:

Figure 1: Cumulative Count of Articles: Strong Actor Domestic Rivalry and Strong Actor Escalation



From this figure, we can see that as soon as no more reports of strong actor domestic rivalry were observed (i.e. November 5), reports of strong actor escalation rose from a total of 42 to 53 by the start of the operation. By the end of the operation (November 21) a total of 79 reports of strong actor escalation were observed. This means that there was a 26% increase in the total amount of reports on strong actor escalation between November 5 and November 14, in addition to a 49% increase in the total amount of reports on strong actor escalation from the operation’s beginning until its end, while observed reports on strong actor domestic rivalry grew by exactly 0%.

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Did escalation cause reduced friction later? The evidence provided certainly suggests so.

There is one additional fact that truly connects the different pieces in a logical way – the rise of two new parties: Habayit Hayehudi and Yesh Atid. It is blindingly obvious that when new parties arise and challenge the currently ruling party, friction is only a matter of time. The evidence I provided supports the logic that by escalating violence in November, the ruling party (i.e. Netanyahu's Likud) reduced domestic friction during the operation to zero. This confirms one part of **H1** – friction led to strong actor escalation.

Weak actor escalation – domestic rivalry

One of the reasons that I chose Strategic Theory over the Political Realism approach is Political Realism’s nearly exclusive focus on states as the most important actors (Daub, 2010). In irregular war, one of the actors – usually the weak actor – is *per definition* a non-state actor. Thus, regarding it as a less important actor is probably not a good idea in the case of irregular war. In this section, I will control for friction from domestic rivalry the same way I did for Israel, only for the weak actor – Hamas. This means that I will start by filtering out all articles except for those that discuss domestic rivalry for the weak actor, which produces the following crosstab:

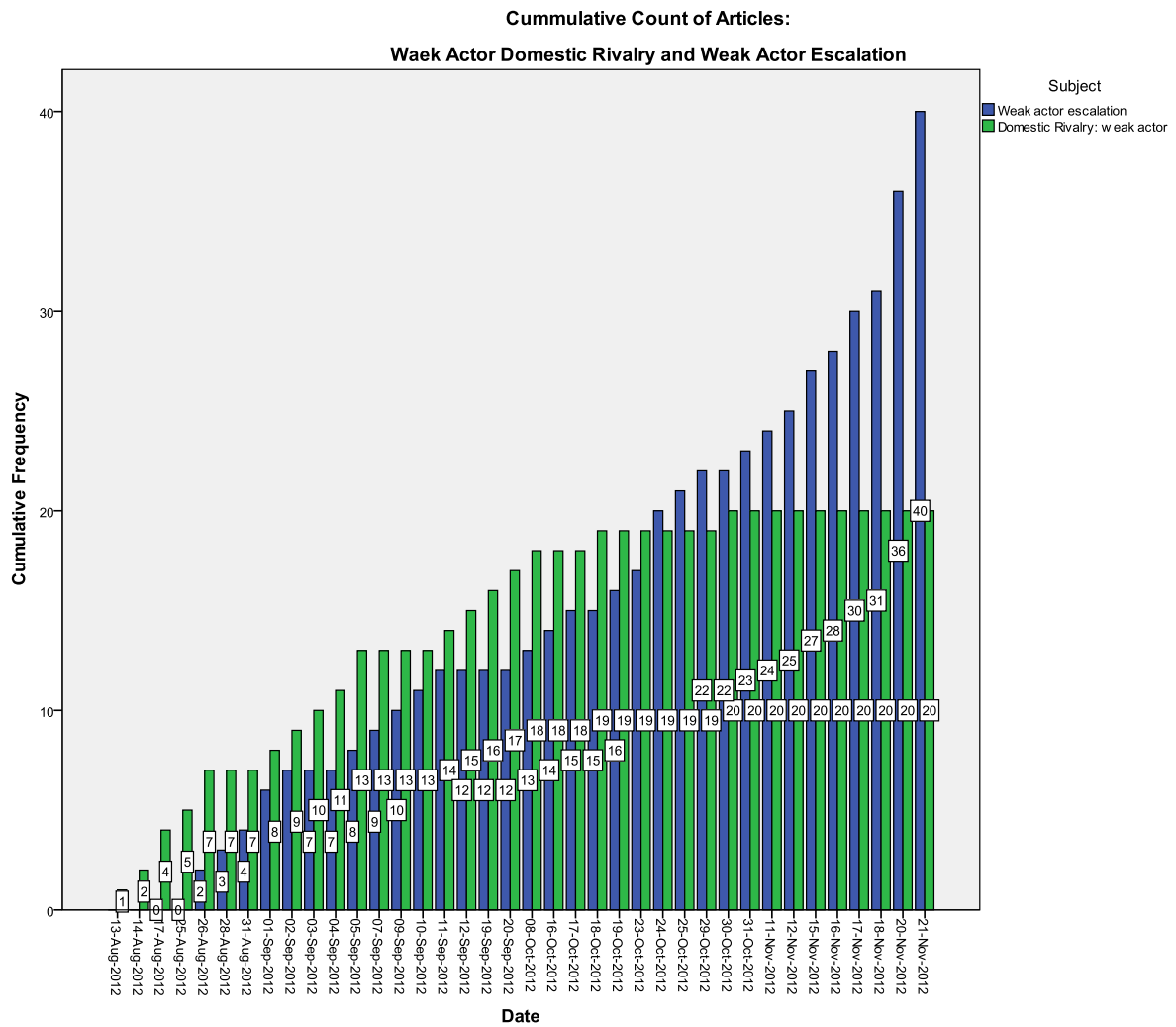
Table 2: Date * Subject (Domestic Rivalry: weak actor) Crosstabulation

		Article Subject
		Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
Date	13-Aug-2012	1
	14-Aug-2012	1
	17-Aug-2012	2
	25-Aug-2012	1
	26-Aug-2012	2
	01-Sep-2012	1
	02-Sep-2012	1
	03-Sep-2012	1
	04-Sep-2012	1
	05-Sep-2012	2
	11-Sep-2012	1
	12-Sep-2012	1
	19-Sep-2012	1
	20-Sep-2012	1
	08-Oct-2012	1
	18-Oct-2012	1
	30-Oct-2012	1
Total		20

It is noteworthy that while August saw 7 observed reports of domestic rivalry for the weaker actor, September saw 10 reports, while October saw only 3 and November saw literally no observed reports of domestic rivalry for Hamas.

The logical conclusion in this case is the same as in the strong actor's case: increased domestic rivalry in September (50% of the reports) caused the weaker actor to perceive an increase in future friction. Thus, it decided to escalate. It is not unthinkable that the Palestinian Authority's upcoming appeal to the UN was perceived as a threat and it would be logical for Hamas to do something in order to re-establish its position in the Gaza Strip as the dominant party inside the Gaza Strip. This also works well with the concept of nation branding – actors' reputation is affected by their actions, rather than by pure PR campaigns. The next page has a bar chart which visualizes the difference in the amount of time weak actor escalation versus domestic rivalry for the weak actor was reported:

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While the numbers differ, the graph bears a striking resemblance to the strong actor’s graph: as soon as both actors clash openly (i.e. the operation is launched), domestic rivalry is virtually nonexistent. It is also noteworthy that in the month October, when the weaker actor started escalating heavily, there were barely any reports of domestic rivalries.

This evidence suggests the same conclusion for both the weak actor and the strong actor: increased domestic rivalry (as is observed) leads is followed by an escalation of violence (as observed), which is followed by a complete stop of observed domestic rivalry. All in all, I believe that it is safe to say that this proves positive for **H1** – domestic (political) rivalry

facilitates escalation for the weak actor and for the strong actor. They were both faced with the same kind of friction, and both reacted to it similarly.

Strong actor de-escalation – domestic rivalry

When Clausewitz wrote on friction, he was referring to occurrences that made the general's job (i.e. winning the war) difficult in the most mundane ways. Those obstacles were both external and internal. I have observed the way actors deal with friction by escalating – but how do they deal with it after the major escalation takes place?

When I discussed the effect of domestic rivalry on friction and escalation, it was noteworthy that no domestic rivalry was reported on after November 5 for the strong actor, while 41% of the cases of domestic rivalry of the strong actor were observed in October. In the next page one can find crosstab of the observed reports on domestic resistance for the strong actor.

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Table 3: Date * Subject (Domestic Rivalry: strong actor) Crosstabulation

		Article Subject	
		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	Total
Date	15-Aug-2012	1	1
	16-Aug-2012	1	1
	17-Aug-2012	1	1
	20-Aug-2012	1	1
	21-Aug-2012	1	1
	24-Aug-2012	1	1
	31-Aug-2012	1	1
	04-Sep-2012	1	1
	06-Sep-2012	3	3
	08-Sep-2012	1	1
	13-Sep-2012	1	1
	25-Sep-2012	1	1
	04-Oct-2012	1	1
	07-Oct-2012	1	1
	09-Oct-2012	1	1
	10-Oct-2012	1	1
	11-Oct-2012	1	1
	15-Oct-2012	1	1
	16-Oct-2012	1	1
	21-Oct-2012	1	1
	25-Oct-2012	1	1
	29-Oct-2012	1	1
	31-Oct-2012	2	2
	02-Nov-2012	1	1
	05-Nov-2012	2	2
Total		29	29

The findings of the research – no observed reports on domestic rivalry during the operation – provide one with an interesting conclusion to **H1** regarding domestic rivalry and de-escalation on the strong actor's behalf: it does not exist and thus has no bearing on the strong actor's decision to de-escalate. This part of **H1** can be safely ruled out as a negative.

There is logic to these findings –domestic rivalry caused the actor to be portrayed in a more negative light prior to the launch of the operation. Thus, the strong actor escalated against what it one could consider a common enemy: the weak actor. The evidence suggests that this works. In Israel's specific case, one can also observe this: Yair Lapid, Naftali Bennett and Tzipi Livni – political leaders in Israel who would be commonly considered political opponents of Netanyahu – applauded the operation as soon as it was launched (The Jerusalem Post, 2012).

To summarize – the evidence suggests that escalation of the stronger actor causes domestic rivalry to diminish. This means that domestic political rivalry does not have any effect on the actor's choice to de-escalate and serves *only* as a catalyst for escalation on the strong actor's side.

Weak actor de-escalation – domestic rivalry

In the very same fashion as with the strong actor, domestic rivalry causes friction to the weak actor. As stated earlier, the evidence suggests that domestic rivalry is a catalyst for later escalation. While this is not the case for strong actor de-escalation, one must also observe and conclude how domestic rivalry affects the weaker actor’s choice to de-escalate. Hereunder is a crosstab of all observed reports of weak actor domestic rivalry.

Table 4: Date * Subject (Domestic Rivalry: weak actor) Crosstabulation

		Article Subject
		Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
Date	13-Aug-2012	1
	14-Aug-2012	1
	17-Aug-2012	2
	25-Aug-2012	1
	26-Aug-2012	2
	01-Sep-2012	1
	02-Sep-2012	1
	03-Sep-2012	1
	04-Sep-2012	1
	05-Sep-2012	2
	11-Sep-2012	1
	12-Sep-2012	1
	19-Sep-2012	1
	20-Sep-2012	1
	08-Oct-2012	1
	18-Oct-2012	1
	30-Oct-2012	1
Total		20

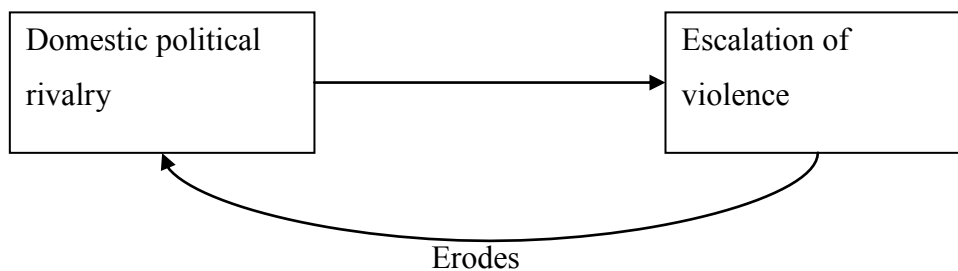
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Exactly like the strong actor, weak actor domestic rivalry diminishes as soon as heavy escalation takes place. The logic behind this is not different than the stronger actor's: when a common enemy is escalated on (Israel for Hamas' case), the otherwise opposing factions unite in order to take on their common enemy, thus eroding (and possibly even eliminating for a while) domestic rivalry. The evidence thus suggests that this part of **H1** has been disproved.

Summary – domestic rivalry: escalation and de-escalation for both actors

The evidence portrays a practically identical pattern for both actors. Domestic rivalry is followed by escalation (roughly a month later). When the escalation takes place, domestic rivalry is no longer observed - it is not beyond the realms of reason that the escalation creates a “greater evil” for both domestic rivals, thus eliminating rivalry until escalation is done. In other words, a common foe is created, and if “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” is true, then it is only rational for the actors that would otherwise be rivals to become allies in order to tackle this common enemy. Hereunder is a flowchart of the process:

Figure 2: the observed relationship between domestic political rivalry and escalation



In conclusion, **H1** (“domestic political rivalry facilitates both escalation and de-escalation”) is exactly half-true and half-false; the evidence strongly suggests that domestic political rivalry facilitates escalation, but not de-escalation.

Strong actor de-escalation – casualty ratio as part of reputation and nation branding

Having covered the issue of domestic political rivalry, I will now move to the second hypothesis: a low combatant to non-combatant casualty ratio (as in: more non-combatants died than actual combatants) incentivizes de-escalation of the strong actor. The UN has released a report (UN, 2013) regarding the operation and so did the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC, 2012). According to the United Nations’ report, 174 Palestinians were killed, including 101 civilians (UN, 2013, p. 4). The ITIC report claims that 178 Palestinians were killed, out of which 101 were combatants.

Table 5: Palestinian casualties and ratio per source

		Ratio		Total
		.73	1.42	
Source	ITIC	0	1	1
	UNHRC	1	0	1
Total		1	1	2

Table 6: descriptive statistics of ratios

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ratio	2	.73	1.42	1.08	.48790

These ratios are obviously significantly different (standard deviation is 0.49). As described in the Methodology section, I will use the mean in order to make up for this.

This final calculated ratio of 1.08 means that per each single non-combatant, 1.08 combatants died. This falsifies **H2**: if more combatants than non-combatants were killed and thus the de-escalatory effect I mentioned when justifying **H2** is impossible to measure and is therefore a null hypothesis.

Strong actor de-escalation – international image and pressure as part of reputation and nation branding

In order to test **H3**, I will start by checking for variety in international reactions. The research I conducted provides the following results for official international responses:

Table 7: case summary of International Reactions

Reacting party	Reaction	Secondary Reaction
UN	Call to end all violence	None
UNSC	Call to end all violence	None
Arab League	Support of weak actor/condemnation of strong actor	None
US	Support of strong actor/condemnation of weak actor	Urge weak actor to de-escalate/show restraint
UK	Support of strong actor/condemnation of weak actor	Urge strong actor to de-escalate/show restraint
Russia	Call to end all violence	Urge both actors to de-

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		escalate/show restraint
France	Call to end all violence	Urge strong actor to de- escalate/show restraint
Egypt	Support of weak actor/condemna tion of strong actor	Appeal to International Community to sanction strong actor
Iran	Support of weak actor/condemna tion of strong actor	Appeal to International Community to sanction strong actor
NATO	Support of strong actor/condemna tion of weak actor	Urge strong actor to de- escalate/show restraint
EU	Support of strong actor/condemna tion of weak actor	Urge strong actor to de- escalate/show restraint
China	Call to end all violence	Urge both actors to de- escalate/show restraint

Table 8: frequency of initial and secondary reactions

		Initial Reaction			Total
		Support of strong actor/condemnation of weak actor	Support of weak actor/condemnation of strong actor	Call to end all violence	
Secondary Reaction	None	0	1	2	3
	Urge strong actor to de-escalate/show restraint	3	0	1	4
	Urge weak actor to de-escalate/show restraint	1	0	0	1
	Urge both actors to de-escalate/show restraint	0	0	2	2
	Appeal to International Community to sanction strong actor	0	2	0	2
Total		4	3	5	12

Tables 7 and 8 initially show 4 observed occasions of support of the strong actor by an international actor, 3 observed occasions of support of the weak actor and 5 observed occasions of a call to end all violence, in general. Out of the 9 secondary reactions, 4 were calls for the strong actor to de-escalate, one call for the weak actor to de-escalate, 2 calls for both actors to de-escalate and 2 appeals to the international community to sanction the strong actor. It is noteworthy that the three cases where no secondary reaction was observed, at all, were all from supranational organizations: the UN, UNSC and the Arab League.

The initial results are not surprising – it would make sense for states that are traditionally considered enemies or allies of either actor to condemn or support a particular party; the Arab League’s condemnation of Israel is a perfect example thereof. However, the fact that 4 out of 9 secondary responses called for strong actor de-escalation is definitely noteworthy, especially when 3 out of those 4 reactions came from a party that initially expressed its

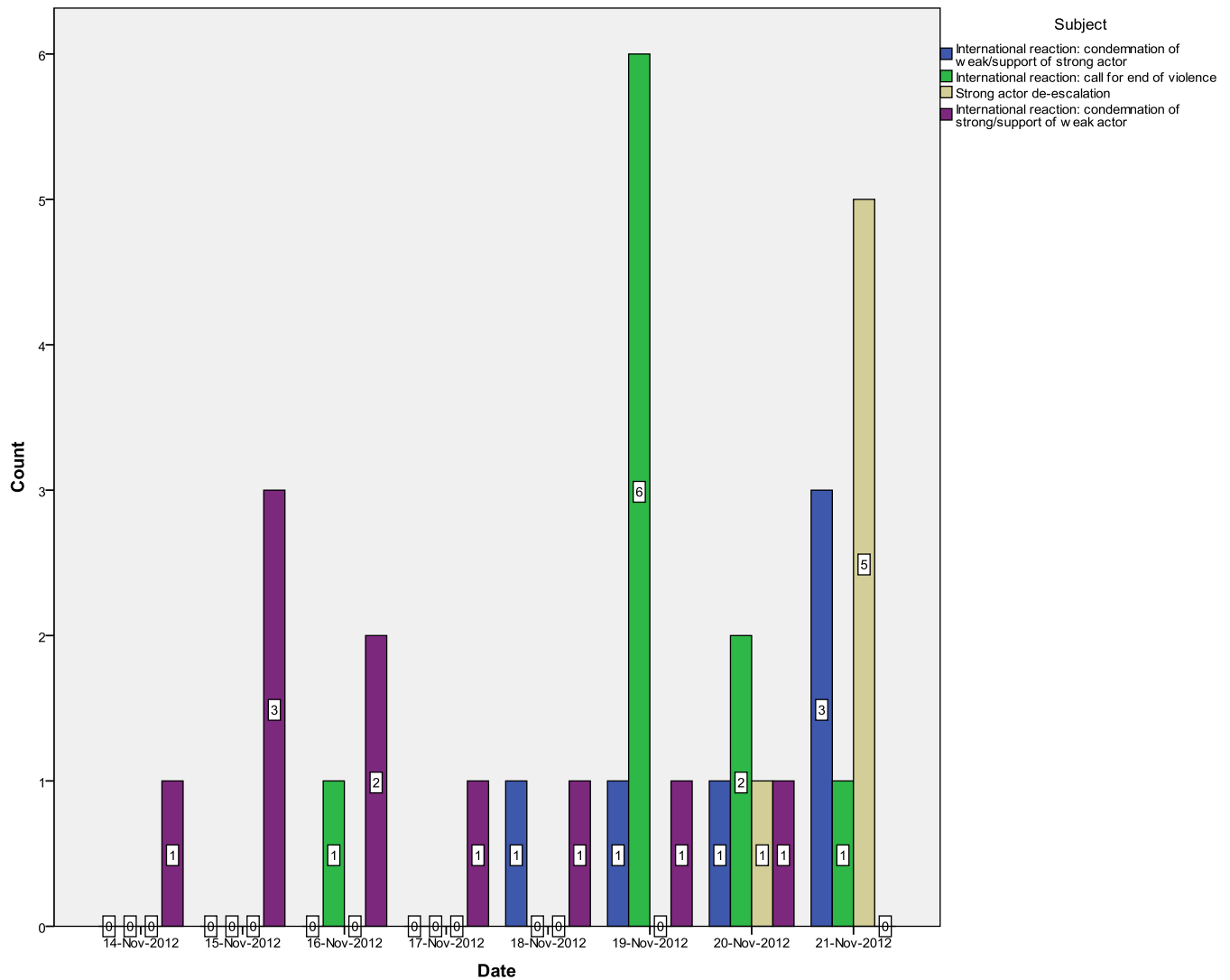
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support of the strong actor. One must keep that in mind as one continues to observe cases of strong actor de-escalation during the operation:

Table 9: Reported international reaction and strong actor de-escalation during the operation

		Subject				Total
		International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor	International reaction: call for end of violence	Strong actor de-escalation	International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
Date	14-Nov-2012	0	0	0	1	1
	15-Nov-2012	0	0	0	3	3
	16-Nov-2012	0	1	0	2	3
	17-Nov-2012	0	0	0	1	1
	18-Nov-2012	1	0	0	1	2
	19-Nov-2012	1	6	0	1	8
	20-Nov-2012	1	2	1	1	5
	21-Nov-2012	3	1	5	0	9
Total		6	10	6	10	32

Figure 3: strong actor de-escalation and international reactions during the operation



One may wonder why there are more recorded instances of international reactions in the above figure 3 and table 9 than in tables 7 and 8. This happened because I did not discriminate between reacting parties when analyzing the press, unlike tables 7 and 8. I chose not to discriminate between the different reacting parties in order to obtain a more complete picture of the general international response, rather than that of particularly powerful actors.

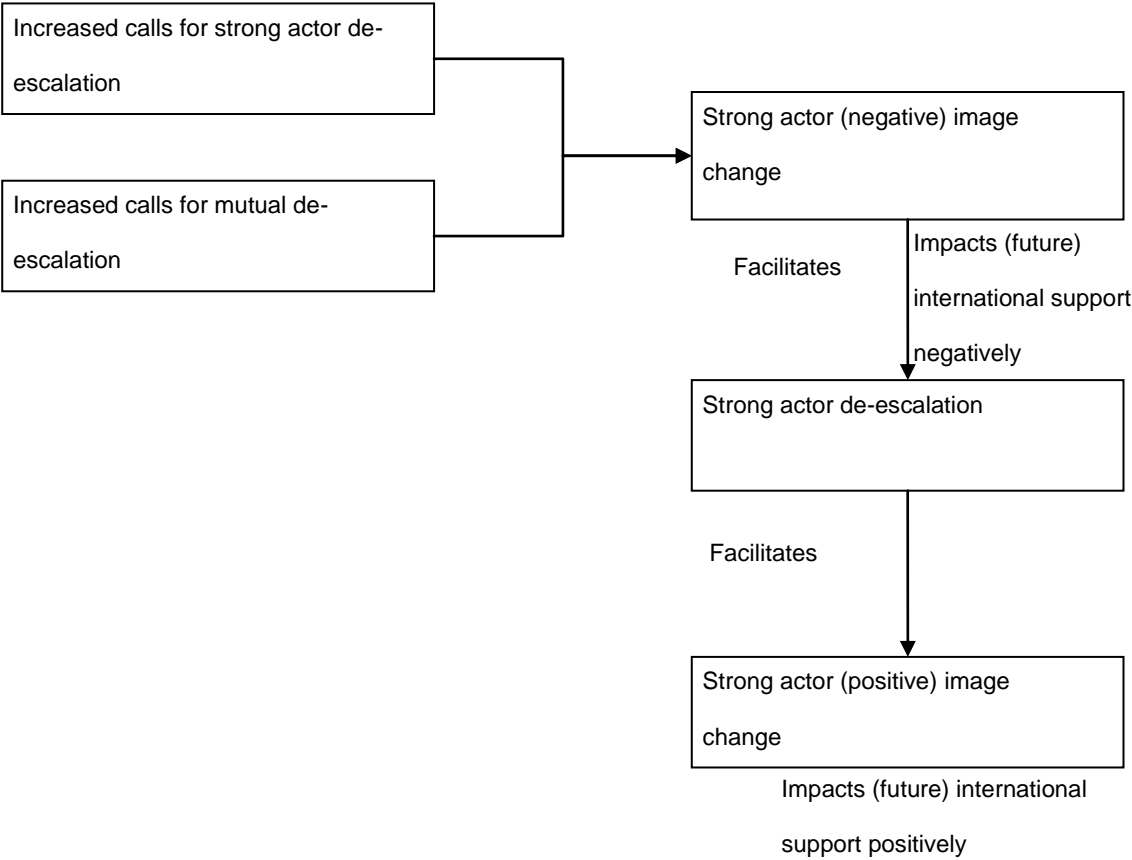
Two patterns seem to be prevalent: (1) immediate condemnation of the strong actor by international actors does not facilitate de-escalation. International actors showed their support

of the weak actor/condemned the strong actor since literally day 1 of the operation, yet no signs of de-escalation were seen immediately. Strong actor de-escalation was reported on first on November 20, six days into the operation. (2) Calls to end all hostilities, on the other hand, seem to be followed by strong actor de-escalation. This is supported by some of the findings in table 7 and 8: international actors who express their support of the strong actor had a secondary reaction, where they called for both parties to de-escalate. Out of the five recorded international organizations who called on both parties to de-escalate, two reiterated the same message, one changed its message and called upon the strong actor to de-escalate and two did not have a secondary reaction. It is also noteworthy that November 19 saw six different calls to end all violence – 60% of the total calls to end all violence during the operation – and that strong actor de-escalation occurred the day after.

There is logic to these findings, of course. The logic rests upon the theory of nation branding (see Literature Review), where a nation's reputation is affected by its deeds, rather than purely via PR campaign. Stone's research (see Literature Review) speaks of the strong actor's interest in maintaining an image of some moral superiority to the weak actor. In other words – the strong actor cares about its image and it serves as a factor for de-escalation.

There is, of course, a meaning to these findings in addition to the theoretical logic. What these findings essentially do is confirm a part of **H3** – international image, which influences international support, facilitates de-escalation for the stronger actor. This is observed in table 9 and figure 3, where the international call for both sides and for the strong actor to de-escalate was observed more frequently than anything else.

Figure 4: the effects of image and international pressure on strong actor de-escalation

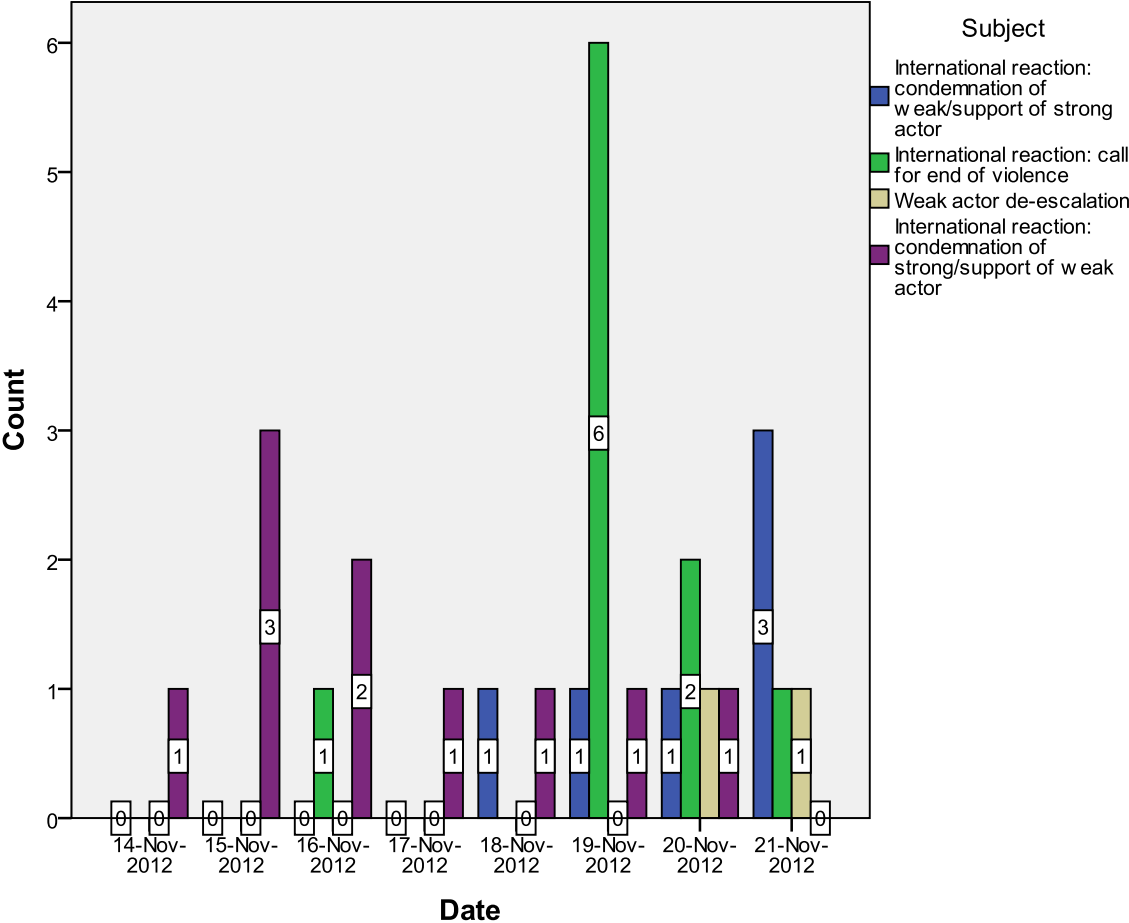


Weak actor de-escalation – international image and pressure as part of reputation and nation branding

When Stone wrote of de-escalation he wrote mostly of strong actor de-escalation and credited most weak him: if an organization actor de-escalation to fear of heavy counter-escalation. I find it odd that he credited international image (and thus pressure) only to the stronger actor's interest in de-escalating. It makes sense for the weak actor to be at least as concerned regarding its image as the strong actor – it has the tendency to attack soft targets (i.e. civilians), which is probably frowned upon by most nations and supranational organizations such as the UN, EU, UNSC and NATO. If the weak actor seeks to obtain its political goals through violence, it should try to do so while not appearing as an organization that targets soft targets too often, else it will lose all form of international support, which will certainly harm its cause – as a weak actor, it makes sense for it to need international connections in order to fight the strong actor; supplies and money must be had. Therefore, I will analyze the weaker actor's process of de-escalation in the same way I have analyzed the strong actor's in the previous section.

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Figure 5: weak actor de-escalation and international reactions during the operation



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Table 10: weak actor de-escalation and international reaction case summary

			Date	
Subject	International reaction:	1	18-Nov-2012	
	condemnation of	2	19-Nov-2012	
	weak/support of strong actor	3	20-Nov-2012	
		4	21-Nov-2012	
		5	21-Nov-2012	
		6	21-Nov-2012	
		Total	N	6
	International reaction: call	1	16-Nov-2012	
	for end of violence	2	19-Nov-2012	
		3	19-Nov-2012	
	4	19-Nov-2012		
	5	19-Nov-2012		
	6	19-Nov-2012		
	7	19-Nov-2012		
	8	20-Nov-2012		
	9	20-Nov-2012		
	10	21-Nov-2012		
	Total	N	10	
	Weak actor de-escalation	1	20-Nov-2012	
		2	21-Nov-2012	
	Total	N	2	
	International reaction:	1	14-Nov-2012	
	condemnation of	2	15-Nov-2012	
	strong/support of weak actor	3	15-Nov-2012	
		4	15-Nov-2012	
		5	16-Nov-2012	
		6	16-Nov-2012	
		7	17-Nov-2012	
		8	18-Nov-2012	
		9	19-Nov-2012	
		10	20-Nov-2012	
	Total	N	10	
	Total	N	28	

Table 10 and figure 5 demonstrate a pattern very similar to the strong actor's reaction to international pressure and possible change in image. At the beginning of the operation, more

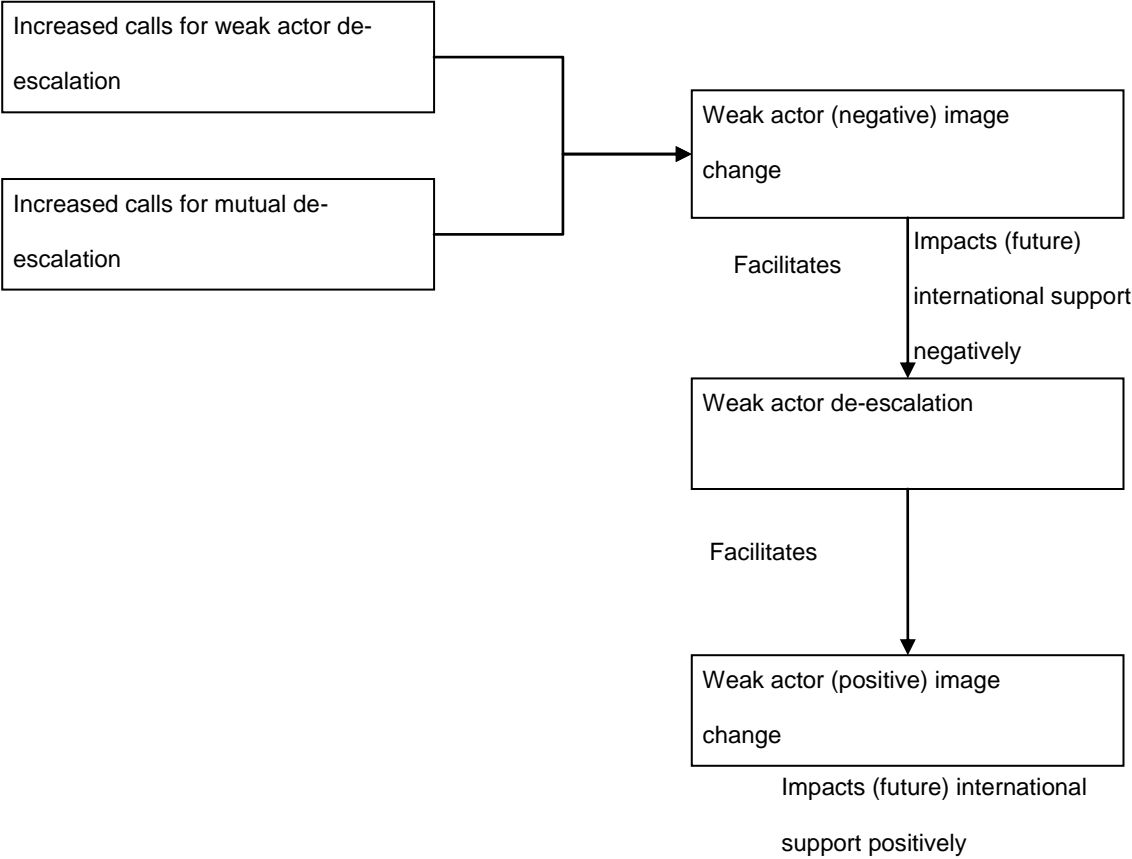
reports of support of the weak actor/condemnation of the strong actor were observed. However, as the operation went on, support of the strong actor and calls to end all violence were observed. It is also noteworthy that weak actor de-escalation is first observed on November 20; the same day that the first report on strong actor de-escalation was observed (see figure 3).

What that these findings suggest is that the weak actor and strong actor share the same logic, when de-escalation is concerned. It seems that the weak actor is also concerned with its international reputation: when one takes the concept of nation branding into account, it reputation nearly becomes a commodity; it brings investment and encourages international support when the reputation is positive, while it discourages foreigners and encourages support of the opponent when the reputation is negative.

It is therefore not beyond the realm of reason to deduce that the weaker party's logic was the following: it escalated when international support was prevalent. When the weaker actor saw the reported observed calls for mutual de-escalation and that the weaker actor also de-escalated, it also de-escalated, in order to avoid damaging its reputation.

There is one important factor in this logic that I must shed more light on: the weaker actor decided to de-escalate after the strong actor decided to de-escalate. This specific order of action is important, as it dictates the relationship between the strong and weak actor: while weak actor escalation and strong actor escalation was observed before the operation, initial escalation was from the weak actor's side, as if it was saying "Your move" in a game of chess or cards. The operation's launch was the same "Your move" from the strong actor, which was met by counter-escalation from the weak actor. This hints at a relationship, a series of turns between the two actors, which I will also discuss in the next segment. Before that, I will illustrate the weak actor's behavioral process in de-escalation:

Figure 6: the effects of image and international pressure on weak actor de-escalation



Summary: weak and strong actor de-escalation: international image and pressure as part of nation branding

The research's findings suggest that international pressure, derived from image and the effects of nation branding (i.e. image is affected by actions, rather than pure PR campaigns), affects both actors in nearly identical ways: they both de-escalated in order to protect their image, which was affected by international pressure.

When I discussed the way the weak actor de-escalated, I briefly covered the timing of the weak actor's decision to de-escalate: it did so only after the strong actor decided to de-escalate. I will elaborate on that now:

The weak actor escalates first. This way, the weak actor essentially starts a game of chess or cards with the strong actor; it was basically saying "Your move" once it has escalated. The strong actor escalated, there was plenty of counter-escalation from both sides, until the full operation was launched and both actors found themselves in the state of irregular warfare.

Once the operation was launched, in the specific case of *Operation Pillar of Defense*, international actors got involved; some urged for either side to de-escalate, some condemned, some showed support, but most encouraged both sides to de-escalate.

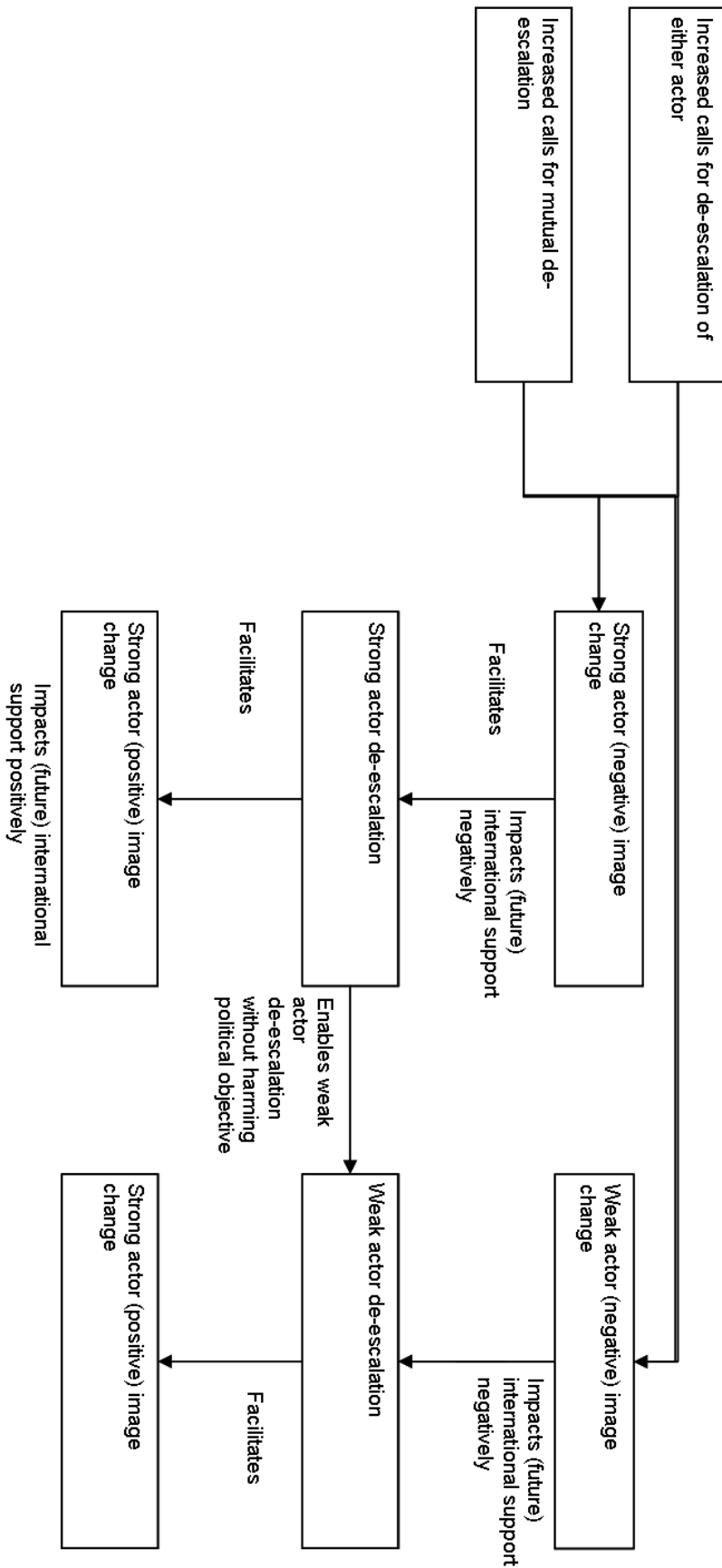
If the weak actor were to initiate de-escalation process before the strong actor, while it would probably help it improve its reputation, it would risk ruining all it has been working to achieve; its political goals. The weak actor is the actor who has everything to lose, as the strong actor has the capacity to wipe it off of the face of the planet. By de-escalating first, it risks getting back to the proverbial square one. Thus, once the weak actor has initiated violence, it must wait for the strong actor to show willingness to de-escalate, which relies on the strong actor caring about the damage heavy escalation will cause it, should it choose to

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continue escalating. The next page features the visualization of the complete relationship between strong and weak actor de-escalation, as part of international image and pressure in accordance to nation branding:

pressure:

Figure 7: the relationship between strong and weak actor de-escalation



The results of the research conducted, in addition to the model, strongly suggest that **H3** is completely true; international image and pressure facilitate de-escalation on both sides. However, one must always be aware that the strong actor must de-escalate first, as it is irrational for the weak actor to de-escalate first: it will harm its own ability to achieve its political objectives; the weak actor escalated in order to achieve its political objectives, in the first place. It must play the escalation and waiting-for-the-strong-actor-to-de-escalate game in order to have room to maneuver and achieve its political objectives.

Conclusion

Concluding the hypotheses

The research's results are all but indecisive. The three hypotheses have clear answers:

H1: domestic political rivalry facilitates both escalation and de-escalation

The answer to this hypothesis is both “yes” and “no”. Domestic rivalry was followed by escalation for both actors in a nearly identical fashion. However, once a side escalated, domestic rivalry was no longer reported on – the parties that were each other's opponents had a new, common enemy: the opposing actor, be it weak or strong.

H2: a low combatant to non-combatant casualty ratio (as in: more non-combatants died than actual combatants) incentivizes de-escalation of the strong actor.

This hypothesis was a null hypothesis for this specific case study: it was impossible to measure, as the combatant to non-combatant casualty rate was higher than 1, and thus could not have had the hypothesis' effect on the strong actor.

H3: International image and pressure facilitates de-escalation for both sides.

This hypothesis was a clear positive: the evidence strongly suggests that escalation's negative effect on international image facilitated both actors' decisions to de-escalate. The relationship between the two actors' decisions to de-escalate was most noteworthy: the weak actor must wait for the strong actor to de-escalate first, as de-escalating before that hampers the weak actor's ability to achieve its political objectives.

Implications

Nothing exists in a vacuum in the realm of international relations, especially cases of irregular warfare; we see the conflicts on our televisions, read about the latest dead in an air strike in the newspaper and read about the latest developments online. Information is everywhere and is at our fingertips. How does that work with these conclusions?

I wrote of international image and the way it acts in order to facilitate de-escalation. We already see pictures shared by our more opinionated friends on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms. As technology advances, this kind of technology will become more and more commonplace and faster. Eventually, one may be able to even send live reports of battles, using their social network.

For policy makers, these developments have a serious implication regarding how they ought to act. PR campaigns, as the concept of nation branding proved time and time, are no longer sufficient in order to keep an actor's reputation and image positive. The actor must also behave in a good fashion. If one were optimistic and aiming for world peace, one would say that this encourages policy makers to behave in a more responsible ways and escalate violence less often.

However, if one were to be a pessimist, one could also see how this leads to misinformation (as in: spreading false information). Anyone can get a profile on social media, anyone can upload a video to YouTube, no matter how poorly edited. There is no quality, accuracy or authenticity control on a lot of the information that we find on our fingertips. Why would policy makers not spread false information, in order to discredit the opposing actor? "Look," they would say, "they are massacring civilians!" when, in fact, it was not the case. "Smear campaigns" would become the norm.

In reality, things are never entirely black or white. What we may probably see arise is a combination of the optimist and pessimist view: policy makers no longer count on pure PR campaigns that exaggerate any particular actor's "good" side, but rather behave in a way that the actor's "good" side is reflected. However, misinformation and "smear campaigns" will still be issues – it will be the challenge for policy makers to find a way to maintain international support, despite misinformation and the campaigns.

Another interesting perspective for implications is the conclusion regarding the role of domestic rivalry as a catalyst for escalation. Once again, these implications depend on whether one is an optimist or a pessimist, as far as human nature and peace are concerned. If one would be a pessimist, one could see how policy makers who wish to avoid friction would escalate violence against the opposing actor, in order to (temporarily) eliminate rivalry and the friction it has caused. One could also imagine the implications for policy makers with nefarious intentions; they may encourage domestic rivalry for either actor, in order to cause an escalation of violence and profit from it.

If one would be an optimist, one could see how these findings imply that policy makers may behave more cautiously when faced with domestic rivalry – rather than escalate against the other actor, they may avoid the escalation and actually tackle the cause of the domestic rivalry.

Future research

There are many more factors of escalation and de-escalation in irregular war. When I analyzed **H2**, I honestly did not expect to find no good data. It is important to continue research on the extent to which a negative combatant to non-combatant casualty ratio by the strong actor facilitates strong actor de-escalation.

When I discussed **H3**, I noted that there was interaction between the weak and strong actor's de-escalation: the weak actor seems to only de-escalate after the strong actor has de-escalated in order to not damage its capacity to achieve its political objectives. To which extent is that true? Are there limits and factors that influence the extent to which this is true?

This research focused on two aspects of escalation and de-escalation: domestic and international aspects. It is blindingly obvious that certain tactical situations affect escalation and de-escalation; what are they? This, also, is an interesting perspective to research in the future.

Another interesting perspective for future research is in the conclusion of **H1** – to which extent does escalation erode domestic political rivalry? It is possible that domestic political rivalry is only pushed to the sidelines in order to deal with the common foe, rather than eroded. Once both parties have de-escalated, does domestic rivalry re-appear? If it does, is it as intense?

The puzzle that is irregular war is still not fully solved – but it is my sincerest belief that this thesis has shed some light on the factors that facilitate escalation and de-escalation.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Acronyms

EU: European Union

IDF: Israeli Defense Forces

ITIC: Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center

UN: United Nations

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

US: United States

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Appendix 2: Tables and Figures

Table 11: Factiva News Filter Used

Filter	Subject	Region	Language	Source
	Not Commodity/Financial Market News, Not Corporate/Industrial News, Not Economic News, Not Sports/Recreation. Subjects are International Relations and Military Action	Israel Or Gaza Strip	English	BBC – All Sources, Reuters, AFP, The Telegraph

Table 12: Total Frequency of Article Subject

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strong actor escalation	79	23.0	23.0	23.0
Weak actor escalation	40	11.6	11.6	34.6
Regional (in)stability	131	38.1	38.1	72.7
Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	29	8.4	8.4	81.1
International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor	6	1.7	1.7	82.8
International reaction: call for end of violence	10	2.9	2.9	85.8
Strong actor de-escalation	13	3.8	3.8	89.5
Weak actor de-escalation	4	1.2	1.2	90.7
Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	20	5.8	5.8	96.5
International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	12	3.5	3.5	100.0
Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Table 13: Total Frequency of Article Subject per Source

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Reuters: Strong actor escalation	14	4.1	4.1	4.1
Reuters: Weak actor escalation	7	2.0	2.0	6.1
Reuters: Regional (in)stability	32	9.3	9.3	15.4
Reuters: Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	9	2.6	2.6	18.0
Reuters: International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor	3	.9	.9	18.9
Reuters: International reaction: call for end of violence	3	.9	.9	19.8
Reuters: Strong actor de-escalation	1	.3	.3	20.1
Reuters: Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	3	.9	.9	20.9
Reuters: International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	5	1.5	1.5	22.4
BBC: Strong actor escalation	21	6.1	6.1	28.5
BBC: Weak actor escalation	13	3.8	3.8	32.3
BBC: Regional (in)stability	44	12.8	12.8	45.1
BBC: Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	12	3.5	3.5	48.5
BBC: Strong actor de-escalation	5	1.5	1.5	50.0
BBC: Weak actor de-	1	.3	.3	50.3

escalation				
BBC: Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	15	4.4	4.4	54.7
BBC: International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	4	1.2	1.2	55.8
AFP: Strong actor escalation	34	9.9	9.9	65.7
AFP: Weak actor escalation	18	5.2	5.2	70.9
AFP: Regional (in)stability	43	12.5	12.5	83.4
AFP: Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	5	1.5	1.5	84.9
AFP: International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor	2	.6	.6	85.5
AFP: International reaction: call for end of violence	5	1.5	1.5	86.9
AFP: Strong actor de-escalation	3	.9	.9	87.8
AFP: Weak actor de-escalation	2	.6	.6	88.4
AFP: Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	2	.6	.6	89.0
AFP: International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	3	.9	.9	89.8
The Telegraph: Strong actor escalation	10	2.9	2.9	92.7
The Telegraph: Weak actor escalation	2	.6	.6	93.3
The Telegraph: Regional (in)stability	12	3.5	3.5	96.8
The Telegraph: Domestic Rivalry:	3	.9	.9	97.7

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strong actor				
The Telegraph: International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor	1	.3	.3	98.0
The Telegraph: International reaction: call for end of violence	2	.6	.6	98.5
The Telegraph: Strong actor de-escalation	4	1.2	1.2	99.7
The Telegraph: Weak actor de-escalation	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	344	100.0	100.0	

Table 14: Article Subject Frequency per Source: August 13-31

					Subject
date	13-Aug-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability
				2	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
			Total	N	2
		BBC		1	Regional (in)stability
			Total	N	1
			AFP	1	Regional (in)stability
Total		Total	N	1	
		Total	N	4	
14-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
		Total	N	2	
	AFP		1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N	1	

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15-Aug-2012	Source	Total	N		3	
		Reuters	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
			2		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
16-Aug-2012	Source		Total	N	2	
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		Total	N		4	
		Reuters	1		Regional (in)stability	
16-Aug-2012	Source		Total	N	1	
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
			2		Regional (in)stability	
			3		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		3
17-Aug-2012	Source	The Telegraph	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			Total	N		1
		Total	N		5	
		Reuters	1		Regional (in)stability	
			2		Regional (in)stability	
17-Aug-2012	Source		Total	N	2	
		BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
			2		Regional (in)stability	
			3		Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
			Total	N		3

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		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
			2		Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
			Total	N		2
		The Telegraph	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			Total	N		1
		Total	N			8
18-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		Total	N			1
19-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1		Strong actor de-escalation	
			Total	N		1
		Total	N			1
20-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Strong actor escalation	
			3		Regional (in)stability	
			4		Regional (in)stability	
			5		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			Total	N		5
		Total	N			5
21-Aug-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		BBC	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			Total	N		1
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
			2		Regional (in)stability	

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			Total	N		2
			Total	N		4
22-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
			Total	N		1
23-Aug-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
			Total	N		2
24-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
			2		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			3		Weak actor de-escalation	
			Total	N		3
			Total	N		3
25-Aug-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
			Total	N		1
			Total	N		1
26-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1		Weak actor escalation	
			2		Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
			3		Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
			Total	N		3
		AFP	1		Weak actor escalation	
			2		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		2
			Total	N		5
28-Aug-	Source	Reuters	1		Strong actor	

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2012			2		escalation	
				Total	Weak actor escalation	2
		BBC	1		Strong actor escalation	
				Total		1
		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
				Total		1
		The Telegraph	1		Regional (in)stability	
				Total		1
		Total	N			5
29-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Strong actor escalation	
			Total	N		
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
				Total		1
		Total	N			3
30-Aug-2012	Source	BBC	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
				Total		1
		Total	N			3
31-Aug-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
				Total		1
		BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
				Total		1
		AFP	1		Strong actor	

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			2	escalation	
				Weak actor	
				escalation	
		Total	N		2
		Total	N		4
Total	N				62

Table 15: Article Subject Frequency per Source: September 1-15

					Subject
Date	01-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability
				Total	N
					1
			BBC	1	Strong actor escalation
				2	Weak actor escalation
				3	Weak actor escalation
				4	Regional (in)stability
				5	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
				Total	N
			Total	N	5
					6
	02-Sep-2012	Source	BBC	1	Weak actor escalation
				2	Regional (in)stability
				3	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
				Total	N
			The Telegraph	1	Regional (in)stability
				Total	N
			Total	N	1
					4
	03-Sep-2012	Source	BBC	1	Regional (in)stability

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			2	Regional (in)stability
			3	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
		Total	N	3
		Total	N	3
04-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability
			Total	N
				1
		BBC	1	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor
			2	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
		Total	N	2
		Total	N	3
05-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Strong actor escalation
			2	Regional (in)stability
			3	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
		Total	N	3
		BBC	1	Weak actor escalation
			2	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
		Total	N	2
		AFP	1	Strong actor escalation
			2	Strong actor de-escalation
		Total	N	2
		Total	N	7
06-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Strong actor escalation
			Total	N
				1
		BBC	1	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor
			2	Domestic Rivalry:

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				3	strong actor	
				4	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
				Total	Strong actor de-escalation	4
				N		5
07-Sep-2012	Source	BBC		1	Regional (in)stability	
				2	International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
				Total		2
				N		
		AFP		1	Weak actor escalation	
				Total		1
				N		3
08-Sep-2012	Source	BBC		1	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
				Total		1
				N		
		AFP		1	Regional (in)stability	
				Total		1
				N		2
09-Sep-2012	Source	BBC		1	Weak actor escalation	
				2	Regional (in)stability	
				Total		2
				N		2
10-Sep-2012	Source	BBC		1	Strong actor escalation	
				2	International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	

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		Total	N	2
		AFP	1	Strong actor escalation
			2	Weak actor escalation
		Total	N	2
		Total	N	4
11-Sep-2012	Source	BBC	1	Regional (in)stability
			2	Regional (in)stability
			3	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
		Total	N	3
		AFP	1	Weak actor escalation
		Total	N	1
		Total	N	4
12-Sep-2012	Source	BBC	1	Regional (in)stability
			2	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
		Total	N	2
		Total	N	2
13-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor
		Total	N	1
		BBC	1	Regional (in)stability
			2	Regional (in)stability
		Total	N	2
		Total	N	3
15-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability
		Total	N	1
		BBC	1	Regional (in)stability
		Total	N	1

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		Total	N		2
Total	N				50

Table 16: Article Subject Frequency per Source: September 16-30

					Subject
Date	16-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability
				Total	N
					1
			BBC	1	Regional (in)stability
				Total	N
					1
			Total	N	2
18-Sep-2012	Source	AFP	1		Regional (in)stability
				Total	N
					1
			Total	N	1
19-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Strong actor escalation
				2	Regional (in)stability
				Total	N
					2
			BBC	1	Regional (in)stability
				2	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
				Total	N
					2
			AFP	1	Strong actor escalation
				Total	N
					1
			Total	N	5
20-Sep-2012	Source	BBC	1		Regional (in)stability
				2	Strong actor de-escalation
				Total	N
					2
			AFP	1	Strong actor escalation

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			2	Strong actor escalation	
			3	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
		Total	N		3
		Total	N		5
21-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		1
		BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		1
		AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Regional (in)stability	
			3	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		3
		Total	N		5
22-Sep-2012	Source	The Telegraph	1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		1
		Total	N		1
23-Sep-2012	Source	BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		1
		AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		1
		Total	N		2
24-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		1
		Total	N		1
25-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Regional (in)stability	

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			Total	N	2
		BBC	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor
			Total	N	1
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability
			2		Regional (in)stability
			Total	N	2
		Total	N		5
26-Sep-2012	Source	AFP	1		Regional (in)stability
			Total	N	1
		Total	N		1
27-Sep-2012	Source	The Telegraph	1		Regional (in)stability
			Total	N	1
		Total	N		1
29-Sep-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Strong actor escalation
			Total	N	1
		BBC	1		Regional (in)stability
			Total	N	1
		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation
			Total	N	1
		Total	N		3
Total	N				32

Table 17: Article Subject Frequency per Source: October 1-15

					Subject
Date	02-Oct- 2012	Source	AFP	1	Regional (in)stability
			Total	N	1
		Total	N		1
04-Oct-	Source	BBC	1		Regional

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2012			2	(in)stability	
			Total	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	2
			N		2
05-Oct-2012	Source	BBC	1	Strong actor escalation	
			Total		1
			N		1
06-Oct-2012	Source	AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Regional (in)stability	
			Total		2
			N		2
07-Oct-2012	Source	BBC	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			Total		2
			N		2
		AFP	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Strong actor escalation	
			Total		2
			N		2
		The Telegraph	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Regional (in)stability	
			Total		2
			N		6
08-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total		1
		BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
			Total		2
			N		2

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		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Weak actor escalation	
		Total	N			2
		Total	N			5
09-Oct-2012	Source	BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N			1
		AFP	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
		Total	N			1
		The Telegraph	1		Strong actor de-escalation	
		Total	N			1
		Total	N			3
10-Oct-2012	Source	AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
		Total	N			2
		Total	N			2
11-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
		Total	N			1
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N			1
		The Telegraph	1		Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N			1
		Total	N			3
12-Oct-2012	Source	BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N			1
		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
		Total	N			1
		Total	N			2

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13-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Strong actor escalation	
			Total	N		1
		Total		N		1
14-Oct-2012	Source	BBC	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Regional (in)stability	
			3		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		3
		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Strong actor escalation	
			3		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		3
		The Telegraph	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		Total		N		7
15-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			Total	N		1
		Total		N		1
Total		N				36

Table 18: Article Subject Frequency per Source: October 16-31

					Subject
Date	16-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor
			Total	N	1
		AFP	1		Weak actor escalation
			Total	N	1
		Total		N	2

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17-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Strong actor de-escalation	
	Total		N		2
		BBC	1	Weak actor escalation	
Total		N		1	
				3	
18-Oct-2012	Source	BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Domestic Rivalry: weak actor	
	Total		N		2
		AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
Total		N		2	
				4	
19-Oct-2012	Source	AFP	1	Weak actor escalation	
Total		N		1	
				1	
21-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
	Total		N		1
		AFP	1	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
Total		N		1	
				2	
22-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Strong actor escalation	
	Total		N		1
		AFP	1	Strong actor escalation	
Total		N		1	
				2	
Total		N		2	
				2	

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		Total	N		3
23-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		2
		AFP	1	Weak actor escalation	
		Total	N		1
24-Oct-2012	Source	BBC	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Weak actor escalation	
		Total	N		2
		AFP	1	Weak actor escalation	
		Total	N		1
		The Telegraph	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Strong actor escalation	
			3	Weak actor escalation	
		Total	N		3
25-Oct-2012	Source	BBC	1	Weak actor escalation	
			1	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
		Total	N		1
		AFP	1	Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
		Total	N		1
26-Oct-2012	Source	AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
			1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		2
		AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N		1
27-Oct-2012	Source	The Telegraph	1	Regional (in)stability	
			1	Regional (in)stability	

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			Total	N	1
			Total	N	1
29-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Weak actor escalation
			2		Regional (in)stability
			3		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor
			Total	N	3
		BBC	1		Strong actor escalation
			Total	N	1
			Total	N	4
30-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Regional (in)stability
			Total	N	1
		BBC	1		Regional (in)stability
			2		Domestic Rivalry: weak actor
			Total	N	2
			Total	N	3
31-Oct-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor
			Total	N	1
		BBC	1		Weak actor escalation
			Total	N	1
		AFP	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor
			Total	N	1
			Total	N	3
Total			Total	N	38

Table 19: Article Subject Frequency per Source: November 1-13

					Subject
Date	02-Nov-	Source	Reuters	1	Domestic Rivalry:

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2012			Total	N	strong actor	1
			Total	N		1
03-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
			Total	N		1
04-Nov-2012	Source	BBC	1		Strong actor de-escalation	
			Total	N		1
		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
			Total	N		1
			Total	N		2
05-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			Total	N		2
		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Regional (in)stability	
			3		Regional (in)stability	
			4		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		4
		The Telegraph	1		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	
			Total	N		1
			Total	N		7
06-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		Total	N			2

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08-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	1
		BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	1
		AFP	1	Strong actor escalation	
		Total	N	3	
09-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	1
		BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	1
		AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N	3	
10-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	1
		BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	1
			Total	N	2
11-Nov-2012	Source	BBC	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Strong actor escalation	
			Total	N	2
		AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Regional (in)stability	
		Total	N	2	
		The Telegraph	1	Strong actor escalation	

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			2	Weak actor escalation	
		Total	N		2
		Source			
	12-Nov-2012	Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	6
			Total	N	1
		BBC	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Strong actor escalation	
			3	Weak actor escalation	
			Total	N	3
		AFP	1	Regional (in)stability	
			2	Weak actor de-escalation	
			Total	N	2
		The Telegraph	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Regional (in)stability	
			3	Regional (in)stability	
			4	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	4
		Total	N		10
	13-Nov-2012	Source			
		BBC	1	Strong actor escalation	
			Total	N	1
		Reuters	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	1
		Total	N		2
Total	N				39

Table 20: Article Subject Frequency per Source: November 14-21

				Subject	
14-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Strong actor escalation	
			3	Strong actor escalation	
			4	Regional (in)stability	
			5	International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
		Total	N	5	
	Source	BBC	1	Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N	1
			1	Regional (in)stability	
	Source	The Telegraph	1	Regional (in)stability	
Total			N	1	
Total			N	8	
15-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1	Weak actor escalation	
			2	Weak actor escalation	
			3	International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
			4	International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of	

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			Total	N	weak actor	4
		BBC	1		Regional (in)stability	
			2		International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
			Total	N		2
		AFP	1		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		1
		Total	N			7
16-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		International reaction: call for end of violence	
			Total	N		2
		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Strong actor escalation	
			3		Weak actor escalation	
			4		Regional (in)stability	
			5		International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
			Total	N		5
		The Telegraph	1		Strong actor escalation	
			Total	N		1
		BBC	1		International reaction: condemnation of	

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					strong/support of weak actor	
			Total	N		1
			Total	N		9
17-Nov-2012	Source	Reuters	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Weak actor escalation	
			Total	N		2
		AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Strong actor escalation	
			3		Strong actor escalation	
			4		Weak actor escalation	
			5		International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
			Total	N		5
			Total	N		7
18-Nov-2012	Source	AFP	1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Strong actor escalation	
			3		Regional (in)stability	
			Total	N		3
		Reuters	1		Weak actor escalation	
			2		International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
			Total	N		2
		The	1		International	

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		Telegraph	Total	N	reaction:
					condemnation of weak/support of strong actor
			Total	N	1
19-Nov-2012	Source	AFP	1		Strong actor escalation
			2		Strong actor escalation
			3		International reaction: call for end of violence
			4		International reaction: call for end of violence
			5		International reaction: call for end of violence
			Total	N	5
		The Telegraph	1		Strong actor escalation
			2		Strong actor escalation
			3		Strong actor escalation
			4		International reaction: call for end of violence
			Total	N	4
		Reuters	1		International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor
			2		International reaction: call for end of violence
			3		International reaction: call for

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			4	end of violence	
				International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
			Total	N	4
		Total	N		13
20-Nov-2012	Source	BBC	1	Strong actor escalation	
			Total	N	1
		AFP	1	Strong actor escalation	
			2	Strong actor escalation	
			3	Strong actor escalation	
			4	Weak actor escalation	
			5	Weak actor escalation	
			6	Weak actor escalation	
			7	Weak actor escalation	
			8	Weak actor escalation	
			9	International reaction: call for end of violence	
			10	International reaction: condemnation of strong/support of weak actor	
			Total	N	10
		Reuters	1	International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of	

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			Total	N	strong actor	1
		The Telegraph	1		International reaction: call for end of violence	
			2		Strong actor de-escalation	
			3		Weak actor de-escalation	
		Total	Total	N		3
		Source Reuters	N			15
21-Nov-2012			1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Weak actor escalation	
			3		International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor	
		BBC	Total	N		3
			1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Strong actor escalation	
			3		Weak actor escalation	
			4		Weak actor escalation	
			5		Strong actor de-escalation	
		AFP	Total	N		5
			1		Strong actor escalation	
			2		Strong actor escalation	
			3		Strong actor escalation	
			4		Weak actor escalation	

		5	Regional (in)stability
		6	International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor
		7	International reaction: call for end of violence
		8	Strong actor de-escalation
		9	Strong actor de-escalation
		10	Weak actor de-escalation
		11	International reaction: condemnation of weak/support of strong actor
		Total	N 11
	The Telegraph	1	Strong actor escalation
		2	Strong actor de-escalation
		3	Strong actor de-escalation
		Total	N 3
	Total	N	22
Total	N		87

Table 21: International parties' initial and secondary responses

Reacting Party	Reaction	Secondary Reaction
UN	Call to end all violence	None
UNSC	Call to end all violence	None
Arab League	Support of weak actor/condemnation	None

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US	of strong actor Support of strong actor/condemnation of weak actor	Urge weak actor to de-escalate/show restraint
UK	Support of strong actor/condemnation of weak actor	Urge strong actor to de-escalate/show restraint
Russia	Call to end all violence	Urge both actors to de-escalate/show restraint
France	Call to end all violence	Urge strong actor to de-escalate/show restraint
Egypt	Support of weak actor/condemnation of strong actor	Appeal to International Community to sanction strong actor
Iran	Support of weak actor/condemnation of strong actor	Appeal to International Community to sanction strong actor
NATO	Support of strong actor/condemnation of weak actor	Urge strong actor to de-escalate/show restraint
EU	Support of strong actor/condemnation of weak actor	Urge strong actor to de-escalate/show restraint
China	Call to end all violence	Urge both actors to de-escalate/show restraint

Table 22: Date * Subject (Domestic Rivalry: strong actor) Crosstabulation

		Count	
		Subject	Total
		Domestic Rivalry: strong actor	Total
Date	15-Aug-2012	1	1
	16-Aug-2012	1	1
	17-Aug-2012	1	1
	20-Aug-2012	1	1
	21-Aug-2012	1	1
	24-Aug-2012	1	1
	31-Aug-2012	1	1

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04-Sep-2012	1	1
06-Sep-2012	3	3
08-Sep-2012	1	1
13-Sep-2012	1	1
25-Sep-2012	1	1
04-Oct-2012	1	1
07-Oct-2012	1	1
09-Oct-2012	1	1
10-Oct-2012	1	1
11-Oct-2012	1	1
15-Oct-2012	1	1
16-Oct-2012	1	1
21-Oct-2012	1	1
25-Oct-2012	1	1
29-Oct-2012	1	1
31-Oct-2012	2	2
02-Nov-2012	1	1
05-Nov-2012	2	2
Total	29	29

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