Democracy and Jutification of War: British Parliamentarians' Legitimization of Falklands War

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MA International Relations Thesis

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of Falklands War's Chronology

On 2 April 1982, the Argentine armed forces invaded the Falkland Islands. The Falkland Islands had been administered by Britain since the 19th Century, and the vast majority of the islands' residents identified themselves as British subjects (Freedman, 1997, p. 243). On the opposite side of the South Atlantic Ocean stood Argentina, which had contended for the territoriality of the Falklands Islands since the time of its independence in 1816. Though Britain and Argentina had been engaging in negotiatory talks to resolve their territorial disputes almost once in every year since 1965, the British public's awareness of the controversy surrounding the Falkland Islands was dim (Lebow, 2007, p. 71). The same rule applied to cabinet ministers and high-ranking officials; Lord Peter Carrington, who was incumbent Foreign Secretary of Britain when Argentina invaded the Falklands Islands, testified that the Falkland Islands ranked no higher than 242nd in his scale of priorities when he assumed his office in 1979 (Little, 1984, p. 297). Notwithstanding, the Argentine military government's determination to settle its claim for the territoriality of the Falkland Islands by force posited these "ice cold bunch of land down there" – as then US President Ronald Reagan put it – to the center of global politics (UKE Washington, 1982).

To thwart Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands, the Conservative government of Britain led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher decided to dispatch a naval task force to the South Atlantic Ocean on the evening of 2 April (Freedman & Gamba-Stonehouse, p. 124). By the end of April, US Secretary of State Alexander Haig's mediatory effort as an interlocutor between Britain and Argentina had come to a stalemate. Britain took the initiative for the next step of the escalation by launching an airstrike mission on the Falkland Islands' main airport on 1 May. On 2 May British nuclear-power submarine HMS *Conqueror* torpedoed Argentine cruiser ARA *General Belgrano.* Two days after the incident, the British naval task force sustained its first major casualty when the Argentine air force struck and sank HMS *Sheffield.* After another round of negotiation – this time presided by the UN – came to an end with a failure, the British Amphibious Task Group reinvaded the Falkland Islands on 21 May. Though the British administration of the Falkland Islands was restored after the Argentine occupation forces' surrender on 14 June 1982, Argentina has not relinquished its claims over the Falkland

Islands to this day.

1.2 Literature Review

The Falklands War has sparked extensive scholarly discussion from military studies (Carey, 1996; Pruitt, 1984; Smith, 1986), international law (Bluth, 1987; Coll & Arend, 1985), media studies (Badsey, 2004; Harvard, 2016), and post-colonial studies (Krepp, 2017; Paranzino 023). As for the field of political science, divining the cause of the Falklands War's escalation has been a lingering topic for academics to explore as it was deemed highly relevant for the accountability of the authorities involved in the war (Freedman, 2004a, p. 188). For Argentina's rationale for its decision to invade the Falkland Islands, the diversionary theory has received publicity for its explanatory power. The diversionary theory has averred that the need felt by the Argentine military government to divert the public's attention from the deterioration of the economy – which had come to be an existential threat to the survival of the regime – dictated Argentina to invade the Falkland Islands (Paul, 1994; Levy, 1988). Accordingly, Amy Oakes explicated that other policy options, such as reforms of governance structure and intensification of political repression, were deemed by the Argentine military government to be more detrimental to the survival of their regime (Oakes, 2006, p. 435).

From Britain's side of the discourse, political scientists have delineated the British government's failure to predict and deter Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands. Collision of misperception theory has suggested that British decision-makers pressed for three contradictory policies – continuation of negotiations with Argentina, acknowledgment of Falkland Islanders' demand to remain as British subjects, and retrenchment of Britain's military asset in the South Atlantic Ocean – until Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands took them by surprise (Bratton & Thies, 2011; Lebow, 2007). Proponents of the misperception theory have argued that incoherence in Britain's policy left a fateful impression on Argentina that Britain was neither committed to the transfer of the Falkland Islands' sovereignty nor its defense (Bratton & Theis, 2011, p. 3).

Lebow (2007) drew on Janis and Mann (1977)'s defensive avoidance model to explain the British government's rationale for its multifaceted approach to the sovereignty dispute surrounding the Falkland Islands. The defensive avoidance model asserts that decision-makers emphasize the remoteness of their policies' consequences when they identify risk in their

current course of action and are unable to ascertain viable alternatives. Pertinent to this premise, Lebow (2007) maintained that the British government kept its diplomatic channel with Argentina alive despite its lack of faith in the negotiation's possibility of success. The British decision-makers carried on their negotiations in the hopes that their successors would bear the cost of their passivity, as it was expected that Argentina lacked the will to embark on a full-scale invasion of the Falkland Islands in the foreseeable future (Livingstone, 2018, p. 236). On the contrary, the British government was unable to bear the political backlash that its relinquishment of the Falkland Islands' sovereignty would bring about, let alone burden themselves with excessive defense spending on the Falkland Islands (Bratton & Theis, 2011, p.3).

Furthermore, divide government theory has contended that inconsistency in Britain's policy stemmed from the discord within its government (Fehrs, 2014; Bratton & Theis 2011). The proponents of Divided Government Theory have asserted that each agency in the British government competed with one another for their own priorities and failed to coordinate their course of action. Though Thatcher gave her reluctant support to the Foreign Office's negotiation with Argentina, parliamentary opposition compelled her to reject its plan to launch an education campaign to moderate the Falkland Islanders' view on the transfer of sovereignty (Fehrs, 2014, p. 234). The Ministry of Defense sought to scrap HMS Endurance – which held a significant symbolism for Britain's commitment to the defense of the Falkland Islands – to balance its budget, despite the Foreign Office's concern for the political implication of the retrenchment (Fehrs, 2014, p. 235). Bratton and Thies (2011) postulated that the feud within the British government persisted after Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands. In defiance of Thatcher's opinion, Francis Pym – who succeeded Carrington's office on 6 April 1982 – frequently alluded to the primacy of the diplomatic solution to the crisis over the military one. Bratton and Thies (2011, pp. 17, 27) surmised that Pym made his remarks as a leverage for his political career in case Britain was to emerge unsuccessful in its attempts to regain the Falkland Islands by force.

On the other hand, Britain's motive for its forceful response to Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands has been an elusive subject for scholars to elucidate as Britain's economic and security interest in the region was tenuous (Boyce, 2005, p. 4). The volume of Britain's trade with the Falkland Islands was worth only a fraction of that with Argentina (Freedman, 2004a,

p. 42). Moreover, the Falkland Islands no longer rendered the geostrategic importance that it had entailed to Britain when access to the Drake Passage was paramount to the security of Britain's interests overseas (Parson, 2015, p. 60).[1] Against this backdrop, scholars have conceived that ideational factors held stronger explanatory power for Britain's behavior, as opposed to the material gains that the Falkland Islands would offer to Britain. Studies pertaining to this topic have unraveled how British decision-makers' construction of national identity and role conception in the international context toughened their stance on Argentina during the Falklands War.[2] The above studies have highlighted that British decision-makers ascribed two distinct identities to Britain when they were deliberating their response to Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands.

Firstly, Dolan (2015) and Grandpeirron (2017) exclaimed that the British decision-makers identified Britain as a "great power" whose reach of power projection extended far beyond its home region. As Mercau (2019) pointed out in her study, identity affirmation as a great power was intrinsic to Britain's political culture as a corollary of its imperial history. According to Dolan (2015) and Grandpeirron (2017), British decision-makers assumed that Britain's reputation as a great power warranted deterrence from foreign powers' aggression. For this reason, the British elites found it especially humiliating to face their failure to prevent Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands; the Argentine aggression implied that Britain no longer maintained its reputation as a great power at the international arena (Dolan, 2015, p. 549). Moreover, the decline in Britain's political influence that the British elites had experienced after World War II prompted them to demonstrate to the world their willingness to assert Britain's hard power far away from its home region (Grandpierron, 2017, p. 145).

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[1] Scholars like Livingstone (2018) put forth revisionist critique on conventional scholarship's assessment of Britain's strategic and economic interest in the region at the time. Livingstone (2018) averred that oil reserves in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands and access to Antarctica that the islands had provided weighed more importance to the British government than previously conceived by past studies (p. 25).

[2] Though role and identity are often used interchangeably in the scholarship, pertinent studies tend to define "identity" as a word that conveys the meaning of "who" the agent is whereas "role" refers to the meaning of an action that the agent's identity incurs.

For further information, see: Cantir & Kaarbo (2016).

Secondly, McCourt (2011) and Lisińska (2023) emphasized British parliamentarians' conceptualization of Britain's national role as a status quo power whose interest lay in the preservation of the international order. McCourt (2011) and Lisińska (2023) argued that British parliamentarians – regardless of their factions – found it imperative for Britain to commit itself to two fundamental pillars of international law: the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity. From the British decision makers' point of view, Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands was not only an outright violation of Britain's sovereignty but also a grave defiance of the security of the international order. Consequently, the British decision-makers felt compelled to retake the Falkland Islands, as Argentina's success would set a detrimental precedent for the conduct of international relations in the future (McCourt, 2011, p. 1616). The association of Britain's identity with status quo power also held political value for Britain in that it countered Argentina's attempts to frame the Falklands War as a colonial war (Paranzino2023, p. 108). Argentina's potential allies on this issue in the Global South had based the legitimacy of their governance on the rights of self-determination. In so doing, Britain secured assistance from other states in the West that identified themselves as status quo power and weakened the Global South's support for Argentina (McCourt, 2011, p. 1612).

Above studies have shed light on national identity as a primary determinant of British decision makers' rationale for the reinvasion of the Falkland Islands. Notwithstanding, previous scholarship had underexplored British decision makers' identification of Britain as a liberal democracy and its instrumentality for the vindication of their forceful response to Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands. Critiques of democratic peace theory have long held democratic states' belligerency towards authoritarian states as their field of interest (Geis & Wagener, 2008; Hobson, 2011; Mellow 2014). As opposed to the teachings of the monadic theory of democratic peace, which propounds that peaceful culture of domestic governance intrinsic to liberal democracy is translated into democratic states' conduct of foreign affairs, scholars like Riess (1995) and Geis (2006) observed that shared norms corollary to the collective identity of liberal democracy – such as preservation human rights and political pluralism – render democratic states to be militant towards authoritarian regimes. Though academic endeavors to explicate British political elites' appeals to the principles of democracy for the legitimization of their adamant disposition throughout the Falklands War have not been entirely absent, there has been a notable lack of analytical framework in past scholarship. For example, Freedman (1997) incorporated democratic peace theory's presumptions in his studies

to conceptualize the Falklands War as a conflict between a democratic state and a dictatorship. While Freedman concluded that British decision-makers conceived of Argentina as a warlike polity based on the Argentine regime's authoritarian nature, his work was more descriptive than interpretive.

1.3 Research Question

Mindful of past scholarship's neglect of democratic values as a guiding principle for British decision-makers' resolute stance on Argentina during the Falklands War, this thesis will address: **how did the British parliamentarians invoke Britain's national identity as a democracy to legitimize their government's initiative to reclaim its control over the Falkland Islands?** Theories of democratic war – studies put forth by the critiques of democratic peace theory to investigate democratic states' behavioral mechanism in their interaction with dictatorships – will provide the theoretical framework for this thesis.

Parliamentary debates will be the main subject of inquiry for this thesis. Parliamentary debates, where its members articulate and defend their understanding of the issue at hand, are profitable source of material that provide valuable insights into the interplay between a democratic state's foreign policy culture and its political elites' conceptualization of national identity (Mello 2014, pp. 25-26). Moreover, parliamentary debate is a site of political contestations where elite opinions and public opinions converge, providing an opportunity for its researchers to infer the collectivized values of decisions-makers and their electorates in a democratic state (Gaskarth, 2016, p. 107). Further information about the source material of this thesis will be articulated in the theoretical framework & methodology chapter.

This thesis will incorporate the methodological framework of discourse analysis to uncover the discursive construction of British parliamentarians' conception of democracy, as well as of the legitimation strategies that their argumentation conveyed. Past studies (Altameemi, 2019; Berg-Eriksen, 2013; Boucher, 2009; Gaskarth, 2016; Ni, 2022) have extensively utilized discourse analysis for their inquiries on the justification of war in parliamentary democracies. In conjunction with Jackson (2005)'s definition of political discourse as a non-neutral construction of reality through the mediation of language, this thesis views British parliamentarians' gestation of democracy as a discursive representation of reality, a congregation of "socially conditioned" and "socially constitutive" meanings (Bogain, 2017,

p. 479). Mindful of Suchman (1995)'s definition of legitimation as a form of discourse that divines the appropriateness of the concerned agents' action from a "socially constructed system" of beliefs, discourse analysis will provide a fruitful insight for the research question of this thesis (p. 574). Among many strands of discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is chosen as the framework of methodology for this thesis, as CDA's focus on ideology and its relevance to the "grammar of legitimation" are deemed germane to this thesis (Bogain, 2017, p. 480). The theoretical framework & methodology chapter will present further information about the CDA and the methodology of this thesis.

2. Theoretical Framework & Methodology

A couple of sub-questions must be addressed before this thesis proceeds to the analysis of the source material. What is the meaning of "democracy" and "democratic values?" Which political and social mechanisms drive democracies' behavioral patterns when they interact with dictatorships? Do democratic values prompt democracies to antagonize non-democracies? If so, what mechanisms drive democracies to behave in such a way when they interact with dictatorships? How was "democracy" discursively constructed in Britain's political culture? What was the political context of Britain in the wake of the Falklands War? Answers to these questions will provide preliminary information quintessential for the clarity of the analysis of the research question.

2.1 Democracy and Democratic War

2.1.1. Defining Democracy

First and foremost, the word "democracy" and "democratic values" must be clarified to contextualize what "democracy" means in the context of this thesis. Cole (2006) noted that democracy is one of "the most overworked and debased concept in politics" (p. xii). The word "democracy" transcends borders and political spectrums in its utilization. Throughout modern history, a diverse range of leading political parties – from the communist party of China to the Conservative Party of Britain – have proclaimed democracy as their cherished heritage (Cole, 2006, p. xii). Scholarly debate to delimit the definition of democracy has spanned from the basic requirements of a democratic state, like a peaceful transfer of executive power through a fair election or the percentage of enfranchised citizens in the state's population, to whether or not the binary definition of authoritarian and democratic regime is even tenable (Doyle, 1983; Gleditsch, 1995; Small & Singer, 1976). If democracy is conceptualized as a discursive construction of collectivized values, Doyle (1983)'s definition of liberal democracy as a "threefold set of rights" may be profitable for setting the epistemological framework of democracy in this thesis (pp. 206-207).

According to Doyle (1983), liberal democracy encompasses "negative freedom," "positive freedom," and "democratic participation of representation" as its core tenet (pp. 206-207). Negative freedom – which includes freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, property rights, habeas corpus, and legal equality – preserves the fundamental rights of

citizens from state authorities' intervention. Positive freedom assures social and economic rights like equal educational opportunities, access to healthcare, and safety of employment, which are deemed critical for the meaningful manifestation of self-expression and political participation. Democratic representation ensures that legislation aligns with the general will of citizens. On top of these principles, Cole (2006, p. 16) surmised that the rule of law defends the rights of minorities from the wishes of a hostile majority. Cole (2006, p. 15) further argued that the three sets of rights mentioned above are not strictly complementary, and that each tradition of thought competes with one another to distinguish their conception of democracy at the expense of other systems of beliefs. If the political spectrum of democracies is simplified into "left" and "right" on a linear scale, left-wing parties tend to expand on the construction of the welfare state while right-wing parties accentuate the paramountcy of business rights (Mello, 2014, p. 37).

2.1.2 Democratic War

As Risse-Kappen (1995, p. 492) pointed out, democracy is Janus faced. Democracies may not be inclined to fight each other, but cases where they engage in warfare with non-democracies are many. While Chojnacki (2006, p. 20)'s findings suggest that democracies are less likely to be involved in inter-state warfare when compared to non-democracies, he also pointed out that democracies are more likely to be involved in militarized conflicts abroad. Causal mechanisms that hold explanatory power for democracies' conflict behavior can be broadly categorized into institutional and normative theories.

Institutional Explanations: Institutional explanations for democratic war posit that a democratic system of governance may fail to control – or under certain circumstances, entice – democracies' belligerency vis-à-vis non-democracies. While fair and free elections may constrain democratic leaders from leading their country into an unpopular war, democratic governments may be incentivized to utilize inter-state violence to divert the public's attention from domestic affairs (Ostrom & Job, 1986; Mintz & Gezam 1993). In such a case, wars may incite a "rally around the flag effect" to the public and result in a favorable outcome for the incumbent government in the upcoming election (Daae, 2006, p. 77). Similar observations apply to checks and balances intrinsic to a democratic system of governance. Parliaments in democratic states are provided with a set of legal authorities – budget control, parliamentary hearings, and judicial review – to interfere in their governments' planning and execution of

warfare. Mello (2014, p. 33) postulated that such parliamentary "veto power" moderates democratic states' behavior when they are faced with the possibility of war. For instance, Dieterich, Hummel, and Marschall (2015)'s empirical analysis indicated that European democracies with stronger parliamentary veto power were less committed to deploying their military assets in the Iraq War. Conversely, a small group of political elites dominate the decision-making process of democratic states when constitutional restraint on the executive branch is limited in crisis situations. Without proper accountability, decision-makers in a closed circle may deliver a misguided evaluation of the risks of war (Daase, 2006, p. 78).

Normative Explanations: normative explanations assert that the universalism of democratic values serves as a strong motivational factor for democratic wars. According to Owen (1994), democratic values as perceived by Western democracies are inherently cosmopolitan; all individuals, regardless of the regime type of the state they belong to, are endowed with inalienable rights (1994, p. 94). Such a universalistic worldview may facilitate bipartisan support for war in democracies. Past studies (Palmer, Regan & London, 2004, p. 16; Schuster and Maier, 2006, 233–235; Hofmann 2013) on political partisanships have postulated that democratic states' security policies have diverged in accordance with the ideological underpinning of their ruling parties. For example, Palmer, Regan, and London's findings suggested that right-wing governments in Western Democracies were more conducive to inter-state conflict during the Cold War in comparison to the left-wing governments (2004, p. 16). Notwithstanding, Rathbun (2004, p. 81; 2007, pp. 397-403)'s analysis revealed that left-wing parties had been more accommodative to wars when military actions were justified on the grounds of humanitarian reasons while right-wing parties perceived human rights as being placed outside of the scope of national interest in their conception of foreign policy. Against this backdrop, democracies separate dictatorial regimes from their population as distinct entities in their discourse to bolster their logic of justification for wars: They direct their denunciations towards their adversaries' state apparatus and refute the existence of hostility between them and their adversaries' citizens (Daase, 2006, p. 83).

In a similar light, Müller and Wolff (2006) construe the political culture of democracies as a dialectic between a "militant" and a "pacifist" pole (p.62). The militant variant deems it imperative to employ military coercion when such action is expected to bring about freedom for people who are subjected to dictatorships. On the other hand, the pacifist variant rules out

the use of force except for reasons of self-defense as military coercion inevitably results in the loss of innocent lives. While these two ends of the political spectrum can coexist in democracies where pluralism is sustained, the political culture of some democracies may be more militant than others (Müller and Wolff, 2006, p. 64). Furthermore, if democratic war is a "war of necessity" – cases like self-defense wherein no reasonable alternative for war is available – rather than a "war of choice" – wherein commencement of military action is one of many political options – contestation over the legitimacy of war may become less pronounced among the parliamentary caucuses (Haas, 2009, p. 9).

In addition, in-group and out-group dynamics are strongly in play when democracies interact with non-democracies. Scholars like Risse-Kappen (1995), Kahl (1999), and Owen (1997) argued that democracies perceive other democracies as cooperative based on their shared values of democratic principles and peaceful mechanisms for domestic conflict resolution. On the contrary, democracies assume that non-democracies' foreign policy reflects their authoritarian and unpredictable culture of internal governance (Müller & Wolff, 2006, p. 47). Such presumption incurs democracies to be skeptical of their authoritarian adversaries' credibility in crisis situations. Furthermore, the out-group distinctions that democratic values entail serve as a powerful instrument for democratic states to mobilize popular support when war is imminent (Geis, 2006, p. 158). Mindful of the dichotomy inherent in their public's cognizance of democracy and authoritarianism, democratic states strive to frame dictatorships "in the strongest of terms" possible to portray them as a legitimate target for military actions (Geis, 2006, p. 158). Consequently, democratic values have provided internal justification for democratic states to engage in inter-state warfare when they are confronted with an authoritarian regime that neglects the fundamental rights of their citizens and the international rule of law (Brock, Geis & Müller, 2006 p. 196).

Institutional Factors	Normative Factors
• Electoral incentives • Parliamentary veto power	• Left/right partisanship • War of necessity/ war of choice • Militant/pacific pole • In-group/out-group dynamics

Table 1: potential causal mechanisms of democratic wars

2.2 Falklands War as a Democratic War – Political and Cultural Context of Britain in the Wake of the Falklands War

2.2.1 Democracy in Britain

Democracy is firmly entrenched in Britain's national identity as a central component of its political culture. Despite the absence of a codified constitution, Britain's democratic system of governance derives its customs and legitimacy from an amalgamation of statute law and convention that has evolved in the country over the centuries (Fey, 2013, p. 89). The doctrine of Parliamentary Sovereignty, which stipulates that the Parliament – dominated by the popularly elected House of Commons, alongside the House of Lords and the King – is endowed with the supreme legal authority to enact and repeal any law, has been conceived as the foundation of Britain's political institution. (Marshall, 2004, p, 42; Cole, 2006, p. 81). Topoi like Magna Carta and English common law are invoked by British politicians to illustrate the longevity of "ancient liberties" intrinsic to Britain's political heritage (Pilkington, 1997, p 17).

Britain's construction of its "self" as a democracy reinforced its conceptualization of the "others." Throughout its history, Britain's relationship with the rest of Europe has been symbolized as "a free England defying an unfree continent" (Wallace, 1991, p. 70). Such world view is deeply enrooted into the fabric of Britain's political culture, dating back to the times of the Anglo-Spanish War when Protestant Britain was defending itself against the "Catholic absolutism" of Hapsburg Spain (Wallace, 1991, p. 70). World War II further distinguished Britain's identity from continental Europe for its exceptionalism, characterized by its unhindered continuation of democratic governance and its role as a beacon of freedom for occupied Europe. (Fey, 2013, p. 91-92). The events that led up to World War II had a profound impact on British policymakers' presumptions on the behavioral pattern of dictatorships as well. The policy of appeasement that the British government had pursued in the 1930s proved ineffective in moderating Nazi Germany's militancy. "the lesson of Munich" – named after the Munich Agreement of 1938 wherein the British government gave its consent to Nazi Germany's annexation of Sudentenland in Czechoslovakia - corroborated the analogy that giving a blank cheque on aggression only invites more aggression from dictatorships (Latawski, 2004, p. 227).

2.2.2 British Parliament in the Wake of the Falklands War

Britain witnessed a tectonic shift in its political landscape throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s. Consensus-based politics, which had dominated Post-World War II Britain, gave way to the ideological polarization of the Conservative Party to the right and the Labour Party to the left (Pearce & Stewart, 2013, pp, 507-508). Thatcher, who had taken over the Conservative leadership in 1975 and led herself to the premiership in 1979, sought to rectify the deteriorating state of Britain's economy through her market-based reforms (Pearce & Stewart, 2013, p. 517). Though the tension within the Conservative Party in regards to Thatcher's leadership did not evolve into an open revolt, the repercussions of her reforms – namely the retrenchment of military spending and rising unemployment – attracted criticism from her supporters and adversaries in her party (Bruni, 2018, pp. 4-5). While the opinion polling observed an upward trend in Thatcher's popularity in the first months of 1982, the sustainability of Thatcher's leadership in her party and the government remained uncertain (Bruni, 2018, p. 5).

The division within the Labour Party was far more commanding than that of the Conservative Party. After the defeat of the 1979 general election, the Left-wing factions of the Labour Party adopted a series of contentious programs: nationalization of the economy, withdrawal from the European Community, and unilateral nuclear disarmament (Shaw, 1994, p. 16). After the election of Michale Foot – who had close affiliations with leftist policies and prominent nuclear disarmament NGOs – to the Labour leadership, centrist memberships seceded from the party to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP) (Häkkinen, 2014, p. 85). The new-born SPD would establish an alliance with the Liberal Party, whose popularity in the first quarter of 1982 surpassed that of the Labour Party and Conservative Party when averaged from the national polls (Crewe & King, 1995, p. 522). Remaining members of parliament (MP) in the Labour Party were engulfed by an internal strife surrounding the reduction of the Parliamentary Labour Party's autonomy from the wider membership of the party, with Tony Benn leading the anti-establishment (Bruni, 2018, pp. 6-8).

Against the backdrop of this context, the Falklands War struck the MPs like a bolt from the blue. In comparison to other Western democracies, the British Parliament's veto power to exert pressure on their government's conduct of warfare had been limited (Dieterich, Hummel, & Marschall, 2015, p. 94, 96). The Royal Prerogative had granted the British government the legal impetus to deploy its military assets overseas without the approval of the Parliament (Fey, 2013, pp. 89-90 & Häkkinen, 2014, p. 12 & & Strong, 2015, p. 1124). This does not imply that

Parliament's role during the Falklands War was negligible, though. As in other cases of parliamentary democracies, the British Parliament's mandate to scrutinize and review the workings of the government played an indispensable role in the decision-making process in Britain (Häkkinen, 2014, p. 11). As such, Parliamentary debates were decisive in setting the general tone of the British government's policy during the Falklands War (Freedman, 1997, p. 248). Major decision-makers like Thatcher herself frequently cited Parliamentary opinion as a constraint that tied their scope of mobility (10 Downing Street, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1982d).

Throughout the debates in the House of Commons, Thatcher drew on the principles of self-determination and the sanctity of international rule of law to justify her adamant stance towards Argentina (Bruni, 2018, pp. 159-160). Rather than actively protesting against Thatcher's lines of argument to assume a moderator's role as assumed by institutional explanations of democratic war, both the Labour Party and the SDP-Liberal Alliance's leaderships gave their consent to the dispatchment of the naval task force to the South Atlantic Ocean (Freedman, 1997, p. 249). Prominent opposition MPs like Owen willingly accepted the government's reasoning of self-defense as a legitimate response to Argentina's invasion of the Falkland Islands (Häkkinen, 2014, p. 86; Bruni, 2018, p. 168). Though Labour MPs and bulk of Conservative MPs favored a diplomatic solution to the crisis and viewed the naval task force as a means to support Britain's position in the negotiation process, arguments for the use of force prevailed in the end (Harvard, 2016, pp. 49, 52; Bruni, 2018, pp. 164-165). On May 20 – when the British armed forces' amphibious landing on the Falkland Islands was imminent – dissident Labour MPs called for an adjournment vote in the House, which ended with the government's victory by 296 to 33 (Freedman, 2004b, p. 389). Following the adjournment vote, the British amphibious task group carried on its operation as planned (Häkkinen, 2014, p. 97).

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Given the multidisciplinary nature of discourse analysis, the term "discourse" entails different denotations to different fields of studies (E. Hamilton, Schiffrin & Tannen, 2015, p. 1). In CDA's context, Fairclough (2012)'s definition of discourse as "a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective" holds its ground (p. 11). For example,

the historical analogy that appeasement only invites more aggression from dictatorships – a popular maxim for Western democracies to justify their military action – can be construed as a democratic discourse of war (Aster, 2008, pp. 465-466). Simultaneously, discourse is a "social practice" in the sense that discourses preserve or transform social realities (Wodak, 2011, p. 303). The core tenet of CDA departs from the notion that social reality is "conceptually mediated;" all social events stem from the conceptualization and representation of existing ideas or theories of those social events (Fairclough, 2012, p. 9). CDA privileges discourse as its primary subject of inquiry for its interpretation of social realities, as those theories and ideas that presuppose social events are manifested in a particular framework of discourse (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 79).

CDA is distinguished from other strands of discourse analysis for its emphasis on the inequality and asymmetry of power relations inherent in the social context of discourses (Van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). In the light of Van Dijk (2015)'s definition of power as a particular social group's capability to control other groups' system of thoughts and behavior, CDA sees political legitimation as a substantive element of political power (p. 469). Political legitimation is also a form of discourse that divines the appropriateness of a social event from the concerned agents' "socially constructed system" of beliefs. Accordingly, CDA seeks to uncover how social institutions posit a certain set of practices as a justified and normalized code of conduct (Bogain, 2017, p. 479). While CDA does not offer a unitary guideline for its methodology, CDA-oriented studies have been especially fruitful in identifying the discursive strategies that social actors employ to legitimize their argumentations and how such strategies reflect the value systems of their agents (Bogain, 2017, p. 480; Van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). This thesis will incorporate Reyes (2011)' proposal of five strategies of political legitimization - which builds on Van Leeuwen (2008)'s earlier work on the discursive construction of legitimation - as its analytical framework.

2.3.2 Five Strategies of Political Legitimation

1. Legitimization through emotions

Political actors appeal to emotion to opinionate their audience's perception of the issue at hand. Appeals to emotions externalize the moral evaluations that the political actors had internalized in the linguistic choices of their speeches. (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999, p. 92). Through

portraying certain groups of social actors in a negative light, political actors align themselves with the audience to formalize the "positive self," and alienate the "negative others" from "us" (Reyes, 2011, p. 785). Politicians achieve this through employing emotionally charged words to describe what their adversaries "are" and what they "do." (Reyes, 2011, p. 792). In turn, the dichotomy of "us" and "them" attributesc a sense of morality to potentially contentious political agendas (Bogain, 2017, p. 490).

2. Legitimization through hypothetical future

Political actors draw on their past experiences and historical analogies to make predictions about future events. Based on their conjecture of future events, political actors warn of the consequences of their actions or inaction to legitimate their argumentation (Reyes, 2011, p. 786). In so doing, hypothetical future is presented as a site of ideological contestations where political actors dominate its discursive construction (Dunmire, 2007, p. 19). Hypothetical scenarios often convey conditional sentences in their linguistic structures: if + present simple verb→ modal verb with future meaning (shall/should/will/would/can/could/may/might) or if + past simple verb → modal verb with future-in-the-past meaning (should/would/might/could) (Reyes, 2011, p. 786).

3. Legitimization through rationality

Political actors draw on the shared norms of their society to legitimize their policies as a rational course of action, a "right thing to do" (Reyes, 2011, p. 798). Based on Van Leeuwen (2008)'s concepts of "theoretical rationality," Reyes (2011) construed rationality as a social construct reflective of the morals and values embedded within the social groups with which its audiences are associated. For example, the idea that self-defense is justifiable is grounded on a preconceived notion of social truth, "the way things are"; it is considered a rational response for a nation to project violence towards their adversaries if they were attacked first, as that is the "natural" order of things (Leeuwen, p. 116, 2008).

4. Legitimization through expertise

Political actors draw on the expertise of authoritative figures and institutions to substantiate the validity of their claims. Legitimization through expertise stems from Van Leeuwen (2008)'s conceptualization of "authorization," wherein political actors present their argument as being consistent with the dictums of respected figures or established traditions within the relevant

field (pp. 106-109). Speeches that incorporate direct quotations from historical role models – figures like Dwight Eisenhower in the USA's case – serve as an easily identifiable linguistic strategy that politicians employ to leverage their arguments through authorization (Reys, 2011, p. 801).

5. Legitimation through altruism

Political actors ensure that their policies are not perceived as being motivated by their personal interests. Politicians argue that their cause serves a common good for the social group to which the politicians and their audiences belong (Rojo & Van Dijk, 1997, 528). In other cases, politicians legitimize their actions on the grounds that they are simply responding to the demands of their constituencies (Reys, 2011, p. 787). When intervention into distant communities requires justification, politicians emphasize their concern for the well-being of their far-away neighbors (Reys, 2011, p. 802).

2.3.2 Research Design

As the research of this thesis pertains to the British parliamentarians' discourse on democracy and its application in their pro-war rhetoric during the Falklands Crisis, the following analysis scrutinized *Hansard* transcripts of the House of Commons debates that took place between 3 April – the day after the Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands – and 20 May – when the debate concerning the British government's military operation was convened for the last time during the Falklands War. Though the Falklands War was a topic of discussion in the House of Lords as well, the debates that took place in the House of Commons were deemed more relevant to this thesis; the participation of prominent government ministers like Foreign Secretary Francis Pym, Defense Secretary John Nott, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher attested to the political weight of the House of Commons debates. Based on the source material available online on the UK parliament's website, a corpus of 11 documents with a total of 272,866 words was assembled. The selection of documents can be found in the appendix. The corpus was uploaded to text analysis software Sketch Engine to ease the quantitative analysis of the source material.[3] The next stage of the research involved deductive thematic

[3] Sketch engine is a corpus manger software developed by Lexical Computing. For further information, see: (Sketch Engine, 2024)

analysis. The entire corpus was read to identify the rhetorical topics that were in match with the legitimization strategies delineated above.

https://www.sketchengine.eu/

3. Analysis

3.1 Legitimation through Emotions

Emotions distort their agents' cognitive conceptualization of reality. As such, politicians in democracies use the "strongest terms possible" to construct an enemy image of their authoritarian adversary when the escalation of conflict is deemed imminent (Geis, 2006, p. 157). Based on Wodak (2002)'s earlier work on political discourse, Reyes (2011) averred that political actors exploit nomination strategy – how the negative "others" are named and referred to – and argumentative strategy – how the actions of the negative "others" are represented – when they instrumentalize emotions to elicit "in-group" and "out-group" dynamics. Debates that took place in the House of Commons during the Falklands War demonstrate how the MPs utilized these two strategies to ascribe a negative quality to Argentina and its system of governance.

As Silverstein noted, the feedback effect of semantic nuances evokes emotions to its audience in any given speech. For instance, the word "fascist" evokes a series of nuances in the listeners' minds, which are emotionally connected to the cultural context of the listener. In the same light, the nomination strategy that the MPs had employed in their linguistic choices internalized their normative evaluation of the governing structure of Argentina. While the MPs used "government" as a more general terminology for their nomination of the governing institution of Argentina, terms that conveyed authoritarian quality in their meanings like Argentine "regime," "junta," and were used as hyponyms – terminology subordinate to a broader description of an object – of Argentine "government" (Gao & Xu, 2013, pp. 2031-2032).[4]

Nouns modified by "Argentine" (947)
Government (128)
Junta (33)
Regime (18)

Table 2: nomination of Argentina's governing institution in the MPs' speeches. The numbers inside the

[4] While the word "*régime* originates from value-neutral term regime, oxford dictionary defines "regime" as "a particular ruling group, government or administration, esp. an authoritarian one" and has "negative connotation." See: Oxford Dictionary, 2024.

parentheses indicate the frequency of the occurrence in the corpus.

As excerpt 1,2 and 3 illustrate, MPs used "regime" and "junta" interchangeably with "government" in their speeches.

> Excerpt 1: the **Argentine Government** cannot be allowed to set preconditions on the outcome of the negotiations. (Healey, 13 May 1982, col. 962)

> Excerpt 2: I wish I could say that the **Argentine junta** had been working in a similar spirit. (Pym, 7 May 1982, col. 395)

> Excerpt 3: if there is loss of life, let there be no doubt that the responsibility lies squarely and wholly on the **Argentine regime.** (Jay, 14 April 1982, col. 1197)

Modifiers of "dictatorship" (52)	Modifiers of "regime" (85)	Modifiers of "junta" (126)
Military (10)	Argentine (21)	Argentine (36)
Fascist (9)	Fascist (10)	Fascist (15)
Brutal (4)	Totalitarian (5)	Military (11)
Rotten (3)	Military (2)	Disgusting (1)
Argentine (2)	Bankrupt (1)	Trigger-happy (1)
South American (1)	Oppressive (1)	Desperate (1)
Despotic (1)	Shaky (1)	Undemocratic (1)
squalid (1)	Authoritarian (1)	Unelected (1)
Anti-communist (1)	Evil (1)	Self-appointed (1)
Unprincipled (1)	Vicious (1)	Jumped-up (1)
Peronist (1)	Corrupt (1)	Same (1)
Unpredictable (1)	Nasty (1)	Many (1)

Table 3: modifiers of "dictatorship," "regime," and "junta" in the MPs' speeches. The numbers inside the parentheses indicate the frequency of the occurrence in the corpus.

The adjectives that the MPs collocated in their speeches screened a starker imagery of the MPs' moral evaluations of Argentina's structure of governance. Table 3 presents the list of adjectives that the MPs used for their description of the terms "dictatorship," "regime," and "junta" in the parliamentary debates. Modifiers of these three nouns highlighted the Argentine government's immorality ("vicious," "evil," "nasty," "corrupt"), illegitimacy ("unelected,"

"self-appointed"), authoritarianism ("totalitarian," "despotic"), incompetence ("shaky," "bankrupt"), volatility ("unprincipled," "desperate," "unpredictable"), and bellicosity ("military," "trigger-happy"). Above all, "fascist" was the most frequently chosen adjective for the description of the three nouns after "military" or "Argentine." As commentators like George Orwell (1944) noted, the term "fascist" had assumed a sense of malignancy that garnered bipartisan consensus in Britain, making it one of the most overused pejorative epithets for the vilification of political adversaries in the country. Conservative MPs and Labor MPs alike used "fascist" as a derogatory term for the Argentine government, as excerpt 4 and 5 show.

> Excerpt 4: … we are all agreed that the Argentine Government are a particularly brutal and nasty **fascist** regime… (Hart, 14 April 1982, col. 1160)

> Excerpt 5: there must be no doubt in Buenos Aires and in Washington about the determination of the British Parliament and nation to free our people from **fascist** rule. (Churchill, 7 April 1982, col. 1022)

A closer look into the narrative of the parliamentary debates demonstrates how the nomination strategy drew a strict binary in the MPs' definition of "dictatorship" and "democracy," and allocated these two identities to the center of the discursive construction of "self" (Britain) and the "other" (Argentina).

> Excerpt 6: we are dealing here not with a **democratic** country that has some claim to the Falkland Islands–with which the matter could be thrashed out in a **civilised** way–but with a **Fascist, corrupt and cruel regime.** (Braine, 3 April 1982 col. 659)

Here Conservative MP Bernard Braine warned his peers that Britain's adversary was not a democratic country like themselves, but a "fascist, corrupt and cruel" dictatorship. Due to the immorality and brutality of Argentina's character of governance, it is impossible for Britain to resolve the Falklands Crisis "in a civilized way" as can be done with other democratic states. Braine exclaimed that there exists a fundamental divide in the conduct of international relations among democracies and democracies vis-à-vis non-democracies, and that non-democracies lack the civility that democracies like Britain are endowed with. Such divide implied that it

was erroneous for the British government to expect a "civilized" resolution of the crisis as Labour MP Michael English exclaimed in excerpt 7.

> Excerpt 7: It is almost inconceivable to us that there can be circumstances in which crooks rule… They (the British government) fell into the problem of being honest, decent English gentlemen… They did not realize that they were dealing with the sort of office – not a gentleman – who literally is capable in some cases of **putting an electric soldering iron up the anus of a fellow citizen and switching it on to extract information**… that sort of person cannot be dealt with by applying the standards of an English officer and gentleman. We should remember that we are not dealing with law-abiding people. (English, 7 April 1982, col. 1022-1023).

English's narrative exemplifies an argumentative strategy, as his characterization of Argentina hinges on an appalling visualization of the Argentine authorities' past actions. As in excerpt 6, English contrasted the authoritarian nature of the Argentine government with the sophisticated system of governance intrinsic to Britain's political culture. In English's view, the possibility of a democratic state like Britain being ruled by "crooks" like the Argentine junta was "inconceivable." English personified Britain as a "gentleman" whose behavioral norms were characterized by its honesty, decency, and rule of law. Furthermore, English's analogy provided the British government with a mandate to be uncompromising in its negotiation with Argentina and stay alert for Argentina's dubious intentions. Because the Argentine authorities were the "sort" of people whose brutality defied the fundamental norms of human rights, Argentina could not be "dealt with by applying the standards" of Britain's honesty and decency.

3.2. Legitimization through Hypothetical Future

Political actors present the negative consequences of their audience's passivity to lead their social group to act in accordance with the political agenda that they pursue. Even though the fearful scenarios that the political actors display to their audience are a set of unverifiable presuppositions, the repetitive pattern in which these predictions are delivered creates a shared belief in the inevitability of those events (Beasley, 2004, p. 156). The shared belief "naturalizes"

the policies proposed by the political actors in a sense that they are represented as a "non-ideological common sense" (Fairclough, 1985 p. 739). Once those policies are "naturalized," alternatives are ruled out. For instance, Conservative MP Kieth Best portrayed the conflagration of war as a matter of certainty. In Best's perspective, it was imperative for the British government to brace itself for a war – instead of putting its faith in the success of its negotiation with Argentina – because "any withdrawal leads to a sense of military defeat" for dictatorships.

> Excerpt 8: The Argentine Government are a military dictatorship. When such a Government put soldiers on the top of a hill any withdrawal leads to a sense of military defeat. We are not negotiating with another democracy. Therefore, it is likely that the islands will have to be retaken by force of arms. (Best, 13 May 1982, col. 1012)

As illustrated in excerpt 9 and 10, the MPs called on the British government to be unyielding in its negotiation with Argentina based on their predictions that: a) a dictatorship like Argentina would not back down unless Britain shows its determination to restore its control over the Falkland Islands, and b) giving a blank cheque on Argentina's aggression would motivate other dictatorships to resolve their territorial disputes through force. The MPs' conceptualization of the hypothetical future was constituted by their presumptions on the behavioral norms of dictatorships. Conservative MP Maurice Macmillan expected that a "despot" like Argentina would view Britain's "reasonableness" as a sign of weakness. Likewise, Defense Secretary John Nott averred that other potential aggressors would follow Argentina's lead if its misconduct went unpunished.

> Excerpt 9: … in negotiating with despots reasonableness can easily be mistaken for weakness, and even the smallest hint of weakness is dangerous. (Macmillan, 7 April 1982, col. 1010)

> Excerpt 10: If these dictators can get away with this today, as has been said already, it will be someone else's turn tomorrow. (Nott, 7 April 1982, col. 1050)

The legacy of World War II, which had played an indispensable role in the construction of enemy images of dictatorships in post-war Britain, came as an irrefutable reference point for the MPs' arguments (Fey, 2013, p.93). In excerpt 11, Macmillan drew the "lesson of Munich" to refute former Conservative Prime Minister Michael Heath's logic.

> Excerpt 11: my right hon. Friend the Member for Sidcup (Michael Heath) referred to defending interests… it was a Conservative Prime Minister who negotiated a peaceful diplomatic solution that he believed would bring peace with honor as well as peace in our time. In fact, he achieved neither–only the last of what were many acts of appeasement of an aggressor who could have been stopped earlier. In their anxiety to get the Falkland Islands problem settled as quickly and as peacefully as possible the Government must not lose sight of other British interests in the world and British credibility at home and abroad. (Macmillan, 13 May 1982, col. 984).

Before Macmillan took the floor in the debate, Heath implored Foreign Secretary Francis Pym to consider the harm that the reinvasion of the Falkland Islands would do to Britain's relationship with Latin America and to demonstrate flexibility in his negotiation (Heath, 13 May 1982, col. 967-968). Macmillan equated Heath with Nevil Chamberlain – another former Conservative Prime Minister who signed the Munich Agreement with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini – thereby ruling out the possibility of the conciliation's success; compromise would neither "bring peace with honour" nor "peace in our time." For those MPs who found parallelism in Argentina's territorial ambition with that of Nazi Germany, the lesson was clear: a democratic state like Britain cannot show its weakness in the face of aggression. Not only was appeasement dangerous because it would be counterproductive for the restoration of Britain's control over the Falkland Islands, but also because it would have a spill-over effect on other democracies across the world:

> Excerpt 12: if we allow the Argentines to get away with their ill-gotten gains, many people will be in danger, as will democracy itself. Democracy and democracies will be

> regarded as weak-kneed arrangements that will give in at the first whiff of gunfire. (Stoddart, 13 May 1982b, col. 994)

Other MPs drew more recent historical analogies to recontextualize the lesson of Munich. In excerpt 9 and 10, Stoddart and du Cann each referred to the establishment of the white-minority state in present-day Zimbabwe and the USSR's instigation of communist states in its sphere of influence to make their case for the hypothetical future that the policy of appeasement would bring about; in the long-run, Britain – as well as other states in the world – would have to pay the cost of its passivity if no decisive action is taken.

> Excerpt 13: would the Argentine withdraw? I very much doubt it. Appeasement never pays. I remember the appeasement of Ian Smith in Rhodesia. He was every bit as much of a Fascist as Galtieri… I remember that we said that we would not use force against Mr. Smith. It did not deter him from declaring UDI (unilateral declaration of independence. (Stoddart, 13 May 1982a, col. 991)

> Excerpt 14: every day now is crucial, for every day that the fait accompli is accepted, the harder it will be to remove it: ask the peoples of Afghanistan, Hungary or Poland about that. The world must face the fact that if one tolerates a single act of aggression, one connives at them all. (du Cann, 3 April 1982, col. 643)

Consequently, the lessons of the past and the expected obstinance of the Argentine government provided a powerful rationale for opposition MPs to endorse the British government's dispatchment of the naval task force to the South Atlantic Ocean. While Labour MPs like Tony Benn opposed the dispatchment of the naval task force on the grounds that its presence in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands would render its employment irresistible, Michael Foot – who was himself an avid critic of the policy of appeasement in the 1930s – gave his support to the British government's position (Bruni, 2018, p. 167; Aster, 2008, p. 445). From Foot's point of view, the prospect of the negotiation's success was narrower without the presence of the naval task force in the region as Britain was facing a dictatorship as its

counterpart:

> Excerpt 15: if there were no task force, I do not believe that there would have been any prospect of negotiations with the junta in the Argentine. If any of my hon. Friends… were to say that this is not the case, I would say that I think they put too great a store on General Galtieri's good nature. (Foot, 14 April 1982, col. 1152)

3.2 Legitimization through Rationality

The legitimization strategy of "theoretical rationalization" stems from the morals and values perceived as the "natural order of things" in its agents' social group. (Bogain, 2017, p. 481). In attributing legitimacy to their political agenda, political actors display their policies as a rational course of action grounded in a discursive construction of social truth. For example, an axiom like "transition is a necessary stage in the young child's experience" corroborates the rationality of school systems; compulsory education is legitimate because it provides those "transitions" essential for young children's growth (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 116). In a similar light, the parliamentary debates that took place during the Falklands War demonstrate that British parliamentarians posited their democratic values as a kind of social truth. As Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher remarked, it was imperative for Britain to reclaim its control over the Falkland Islands because "liberty and justice" was the "only one thing that is more important than peace" in Britain's political ethos. (Thatcher, 29 April 1982, col. 969).

Politicians who incorporate theoretical rationality into their speeches typically follow a standardized logical formula: it is right to do x in order to achieve y because y is "the way things have to be" (Van Leeuwen, 2008, pp. 114, 116). Thatcher incorporated this argumentation format in her speech to insist on the British government's obligation to restore its administration of the Falkland Islands:

> Excerpt 16: **negotiations do not close any military options**… Difficult days lie ahead, but Britain will face them in the conviction that **our cause is just**… The principles that we are defending are fundamental to everything that this Parliament and this country stand for. They are the principles of **democracy** and the rule of law (Thatcher, 20 May

1982, col. 483)

Thatcher's discourse is a commonplace example of theoretical rationality. The British government had to consider a military option (it is right to do x) in order to defend the "principles of democracy and the rule of law" (to achieve y) because her "conviction" was that such cause was "just" (the way things have to be).

The discursive construction of "self" plays a key role in theoretical rationality. Politicians associate themselves and their audience with a specific identity to portray their policy advice as being "appropriate to the nature" of their social group (Leeuwen, p. 116, 2008). As English's comment in excerpt 17 demonstrates, the premise that Britain has the moral responsibility to defend the principles of democracy becomes a social truth once democracy is established as Britain's national identity.

> Excerpt 17: As honest democratic citizens… Can we not stand up and defend democracy? (English, April 7 1982, col. 1024)

In other cases, the discursive construction of Britain's "self" rationalized its disregard of the voices of authoritarian "others":

> Excerpt 18: I regard a hierarchy of diplomatic support as important. I regard the opinions of the great Western democracies as being of the utmost importance because they think as we do and have our values and our principles… I go down from that hierarchy, in the United Nations no less, to the other 87 states which have authoritarian regime of one type or another. My concern with their international opinion is of a wholly different order and will remain, ever and anon. When I say that we should carry international opinion with us, I must ask whether it is the opinion of free men whose judgement I value and respect, or the opinion of those for whose judgement I have no respect. (Lloyd, 20 May 1982, col. 540)

Throughout the Falklands War, international opinion was largely divided into European Economic Community (EEC) countries which had sided with Britain's position and Latin

American countries which had supported Argentina's claims over the Falkland Islands (Paranzino, 2023, p. 128). Rallying-around-the-flag was observed in Latin America wherein socialist states like Cuba and Nicaragua gave their support to an anti-communist regime's cause (Paranzino, 2023, p. 121). From Lloyd's perspective, Britain's national identity as a democracy served as an axiom that delegitimized the opinions of Latin American states. It was reasonable for Britain to give weight to the opinions of "great Western democracies" because they shared Britain's norms and values. On the other hand, Lloyd had "no respect" for the judgements of Argentina's supporters because they were dictatorships who belonged at the bottom of the international order's hierarchy. In parallel with other examples of theoretical rationalization, it was "appropriate to the nature" of Britain to disavow dictatorships like Nicaragua and Cuba's opposition to the British armed forces' initiative to reinvade the Falkland Islands.

Another rationale forwarded by the MPs to justify the British armed forces' military operation was that Britain had the responsibility to protect the basic rights of its subjects. In the modern world, the legitimacy of state institutions stems from their mandate to defend the security of their citizens from external threats (Geis, p. 155, 2006). As a parliamentarian of a representative democracy, Labour MP John Silkin attributed special meaning to such a mandate:

> Excerpt 19: as British citizens in a British Parliament, we are concerned to rescue our fellow British subjects from the domination of a cruel dictator (Silkin, 7 April 1982, col. 1014).

Because Silkin himself was a British citizen who was acting on behalf of his constituency as their deputy in the Parliament, it was appropriate to the nature of his identity to be "concerned to rescue" other fellow British citizens whose way of life was threatened by the "domination of a cruel dictator."

The next stage in the MPs' legitimization strategy equated Falkland Islanders to British subjects, as excerpt 20 illustrates.

> Excerpt 20: These were the people… who had saved money during the last war to provide 10 Spitfires for the defense of freedom and the defense of our country… They are British and they are extremely loyal. They are now under the rule of a dictator. No

> longer have they the guaranteed freedom of a British citizen… We have embarked on a major military operation to regain our territory and to save 1,800 British subjects. We are right to do so. We would be wrong not to. (Crouch, 7 April 1982, col. 1035)

Through referring to a critical moment in Britain's history, Conservative MP David Crouch displayed Falkland Islanders as loyal British citizens who were in need of their metropole's help. The Falkland Islanders – despite their modest circumstances – contributed to Britain's war effort during World War II and proved themselves worthy of British citizenship. Now that the Falkland Islanders' freedom was violated by "the rule of a dictator," it was right for Britain to embark on "a major military operation" to save their citizens from the perils beset on them; Britain had a responsibility to be there for Falkland Islanders' freedom, as the Falkland Islanders were there for their homeland.

3.4 Legitimization through Expertise

Politicians rely on the expertise of esteemed officials and long-standing institutions to portray their policy advice as being balanced and authoritative. For example, direct quotations from respected figures serve as a powerful means for politicians to bolster the credibility of their arguments (Reyes, 2001, p. 801). Bernard Braine cited Lord Caradon – a British diplomat who had served as his country's permanent representative to the UN – to stress the paramountcy of Falkland Islanders' self-determination from the perspective of popular sovereignty (Brock, 2006, p. 111). Not only were the interests of the Falkland Islanders had to be protected, but also their freedom to express their wishes had to be safeguarded.

> Excerpt 22: I remind the House of what was stated by Lord Caradon at the United Nations in 1968… There are two basic principles we cannot betray; the principle that the interests of the people must be paramount and, second, that the people have the right freely to express their own wishes as to their future". The tragedy is that the policies never matched the words. (Braine, 20 May 1982 col. 533)

Tradition was another component of political legitimation that the MPs incorporated into their speeches to lend authority to their arguments. As Van Leeuwen (2008) stated, politicians

address the legitimacy of their political agenda by portryaing their policies as being closely affiliated with the customs that their social groups "have always adhered to" (p. 108).

Excerpt 23: this Parliament, with its traditions–valued by so many Members on both sides of the House–of legality and freedom would not be worthy of its great history if it did not back what the Government are doing to restore the rule of law. (Buck, 7 April 1982, col. 1012)

Conservative MP Anthony Buck averred that his peers had to strive for the preservation of "legality and freedom" because their predecessors had always cherished these two principles as the core tenet of their institution's tradition. If the Parliament had not backed the government's initiative to reclaim the Falkland Islands with bipartisan support, his peers would have failed to live up to the standards of the Parliament's "great history."

3.5 Legitimization through Altruism

Political actors see to it that their policies are not viewed by their audience as self-serving. Politicians argue that their policies are driven by selfless motivations and that the beneficiary of their initiative are their community as a whole or marginalized others who are in need of intervention. In the same light, the legitimacy of the arguments made by the MPs who supported the reinvasion of the Falkland Islands hinged on altruistic motives. Those MPs who urged the British government to restore its control over the Falkland Islands time and again expressed their disinterest in the material gains that the Falkland Islands would offer to Britain, as can be observed in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 24: This dispute is not about land. There may be oil on the outskirts of the islands–I do not know. There are certainly fish. The dispute is about people. One hon. Member asked about human rights. The human rights of the Falkland Islanders are the most important issue of all. (Ennals, 7 April 1982, col. 1028)

Since the 1970s, the potential oil reserves in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands have attracted a keen interest from British oil corporations and government officials (Livingston, 2018, p. 161). In defending the morality of his argument, Labour MP David Ennals dismissed the importance of the potential revenues from oil excavations as a moving factor behind Britain's decision to defend its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands; what was at stake were

not the profits that the Falkland Islands would bring about, but rather the basic rights of British subjects living there. In turn, that altruistic motive provided the MPs with the moral grounds to give their support to the British government's military action without taking into consideration its costs:

Excerpt 25: The sort of view he (MP Raymond Whitney) put echoed in a strange way what I found, to my horror, in the editorial in The Guardian today. I shall quote it : Reality number two is that the Falkland Islands do not represent any strategic or commercial British interest worth fighting over… It is shocking that in a great newspaper such as The Guardian the view should be put that the only things worth fighting over are commercial matters and not the rights and freedoms of individual people. (Johnston, 3 April 1982, col. 655)

Liberal MP Russel Johnston criticized the opinions of The Guardian and his Conservative peer Raymond Whitney – who advised the government to show caution in its approach to the issue at hand – side by side. Because the fundamental rights and freedoms of British citizens were at stake, the British government had the moral responsibility to engage in warfare even though Britain's strategic and commercial interests in the region were not "worth fighting over" for Britain.

The altruism in Britain's motivation for its military operation also implied that Britain had no interest in extracting material gains from Argentina or doing harm to the Argentine people. Consequently, the MPs frequently drew a strict boundary between the Argentine government and its citizens as excerpt 26, 27, and 28 illustrate.

Excerpt 26: We have no quarrel with the **Argentine people**. There is no sense of false patriotism in the attitude of those of us who want to stand up to a brutal dictatorship. (Braine, 20 May 1982, col. 535)

Excerpt 27: We shall have freed the islanders from an oppressive regime which is in no way representative of the **Argentine people**, who should be our friends, not our enemies. (Steel, 13 May 1982, col. 971)

> Excerpt 28: we are defending, amongst other things, the **Argentine people** themselves. (English, 7 April 1982, col. 1024)

Britain's enemy was a dictatorship which was "in no way representative of the Argentine people," not its citizens. Despite the popularity of the war among the Argentine public, hostility did not exist between Britain and Argentina's citizenry according to the MPs' speeches (Rodriguez, 2021, p. 117). War with Argentina was justifiable because Britain was "defending… the Argentine people themselves" from their oppressive regime, even though the majority of the Argentine occupation forces in the Falkland Islands were conscripts who were drafted from ordinary citizenry (Freedman, 2004b, p. 66).

4. Conclusion

This thesis revealed that the British MPs' pro-war rhetoric during the Falklands War was founded on their discursive construction of Britain's national identity as a democracy. The MPs incorporated into their speeches five legitimization strategies – emotion, hypothetical future, rationality, expertise, and altruism – to expand on Britain's responsibility to reclaim its control over the Falkland Islands. The legitimization strategies that the MPs had employed were grounded in their conceptualization of Britain's "self" as a democracy and Argentina as an authoritarian "other." The MPs – the Conservatives and Labours alike – framed the conflict as a clash between British democratic values and Argentine oppression, portraying the Argentine government as an illegitimate and brutal dictatorship in stark contrast to Britain's democratic politics. In turn, the dichotomy that the MPs had accentuated served as a social truth in the MPs' logic. For the MPs who favored the military solution to the conflict, it was legitimate for Britain to engage in military action because Argentina was a dictatorship - a system of governance that defied the fundamental norms of human rights and found weakness in their adversary's appeasement. In the same light, it was legitimate for Britain to reinvade the Falkland Islands despite its costs because Britain was a democracy – a system of governance that prioritizes the basic rights of its subjects and does not seek material gains in its conduct of warfare.

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Appendix: Selection of Documents in the Corpus

Date	Document	Hyperlink
3 April 1982	House of Commons Debate	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/apr/03/falkland-islands
7 April 1982	House of Commons Debate	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/apr/07/falkland-islands
14 April 1982	House of Commons Debate	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/apr/14/falkland-islands
29 April 1982	House of Commons Debate	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/apr/29/falkland-islands
4 May 1982	House of Commons Statement	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/may/04/falkland-islands-1
4 May 1982	House of Commons Further Statement	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/may/04/falkland-islands-2
5 May 1982	House of Commons Statement	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/may/05/falkland-islands-1
5 May 1982	House of Commons Further Statement	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/may/05/falkland-islands-2
7 May 1982	House of Commons Statement	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/may/07/falkland-islands
13 May 1982	House of Commons Debate	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/may/13/falkland-islands-1

20 May 1982	House of Commons Debate	https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1982/may/20/falkland-islands