

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta pedagogická

Bakalářská práce

VÁLKA O FALKLANDY

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Plzeň 2014

University of West Bohemia

Faculty of Education

Undergraduate Thesis

FALKLANDS WAR

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Plzeň 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like thank the supervisor of my undergraduate thesis, Bc. et Mgr. Andrew Tollet, M.Litt., for his patience and guidance of my work.

ABSTRACT

Sláma Vojtěch. University of West Bohemia. April, 2014. Falklands War. Supervisor: Bc. et Mgr. Andrew Tollet, M.Litt.

This undergraduate thesis has the ambition to describe the Falklands War, its causes and consequences. It was the first significant international conflict Great Britain had participated in since the Suez Crisis. The thesis is divided into four main parts. At the beginning, general facts about the Islands are discussed. The history part is focused on the roots of the conflict and their development. The political and economic situation section should provide a reader with sufficient information about the background of the conflict. The war section displays the timeline of the conflict and in the aftermath a reader finds out the consequences of the war. The thesis includes a research which reveals how current British people think about the conflict.

Keywords: Falklands War, Argentina, South Atlantic, Great Britain

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1. INTRODUCTION

The object of this undergraduate thesis is to analyse the causes and demonstrate the consequences of the Falklands War, and to find a connection between the domestic political situation and political acts abroad. The thesis starts with general information about the Falkland Islands such as geography and population which provides the reader with an idea of the international and economic importance of the islands. In the following section this thesis traces the history of the Falkland Islands from the first claims of glimpsing them to approximately a decade before the war. The section also emphasizes a different view on the issue. In the fourth section the work demonstrates the situation in Great Britain from the end of the Second World War to the last days before the Falklands Conflict. The importance of this section lies in both historical facts and development of national identity of Great Britain. The situation in Argentina and preferences of their citizens are described as well. The war section covers some of the battles and the negotiations between Great Britain and the United States of America during the war. In the aftermath section this thesis analyses consequences of the conflict with a focus on the following general elections in Great Britain. The section “research” creates hypotheses about the Falklands War and its aftermath. In the conclusion the thesis discusses the legality and legitimacy of the war.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

In one way, most of us found that sodden island comfordingly familiar, like Dartmoor or the Hebrides. But the icy cold and wet, the need for thousands of troops, carrying heavy loads to walk, to “yomp”, as Marines put it, imposed a huge strain on every man. – A British soldier (Barnwell, 2012)

The Falkland Islands consist of two main islands – West and East Falklands – and approximately 200 small islands. They are located about 150 miles east of the Argentine borders and some 8,000 miles from The United Kingdom of Great Britain. The world factbook describes its terrain as rocky, hilly, and mountainous with some boggy, undulating plains and the climate as quite hostile which basically means cold, windy and covered with occasional snow all year. Its strong winds are even described as a “natural hazard”. (“The Falkland Islands”, 2014) The Falkland Islands therefore cannot be imagined as a seaside resort or a place where a majority of people would like to live or even spend their holiday. Life on the Islands was even described as monotonous in terms of food with almost no entertainment possibilities except drunkenness and adultery. (Phipps, 1977) Although reports about economic profitability and appearance of natural resources, including oil, had been made, its value for Great Britain must be found somewhere else. (Freedman, 2005)

Population

According to a census in 1980, the number of people living in Falkland Islands was 1,813, more than half of whom lived in the capital city, Stanley. The fact that there were more than 600,000 sheep in the area determined profession of many citizens there. Sheep farming was, and still remains, the most important industry in the area. The export of wool and hides exceeded costs for its maintenance by almost one third. (Smith, 2009) According to Shackelton (1982) the fact that sheep farming has formed the economic base since the 1870s, and that the few attempts to diversify have either failed or been short-lived, is striking.

Colin Phipps (1977) was surprised by the remarkable ability of such a small community to sustain the infrastructure of modern society. The area was profitable but in comparison to the state budget it still represented just a marginal and unimportant part. However, almost each of the islanders wanted to stay British which had been one of the reasons Great Britain had not left the islands before the Falklands Conflict.

History

Even history tends to look very subjective in this case. The interpretations of Argentina and Great Britain differ radically. The origin of *Getting it right: the real history of the Falklands/Malvinas*, in which Graham Pascoe and Peter Pepper reply to a seminar entitled *Argentine Rights and Sovereignty* which was held at the London School of Economics, supports the claim about subjectivity of history.

Although no signs of noticing the Falkland Islands came from the 15th century, the roots of dispute lie in that time period. Pope Alexander VI divided the unknown world and according to this distribution of undiscovered places, the Falkland Islands would become Spanish. The universal belief is that they were discovered later, at least by Europeans. The first alleged claim of discovering comes from 1522 when a Portuguese captain employed by Spain, Estevão Gomes, deserted from an expedition led by a Portuguese explorer. Consequently islands near to the 50th parallel appeared in a chart by Pedro Reinel, the *Circulus Antarcticus*. However, this claim was published and first internationally used in 1765, during the colonization period when the French and British started to occupy the Falkland Islands, which makes the claim suspicious. (Lonton, 2012)

Prior to that, in 1690, Captain John Strong sighted the islands from a ship. He sailed through the passage between the main Islands and named it "Fawlkland Channel". In 1722 the name "Les Iles Malouines" was given to this group of islands on a new French map. In 1764 Frenchmen build a first colony at Port St. Louis. A year later in 1765 a British Royal Navy officer discovered the west part of Falkland Islands and, unaware of the French presence on the opposite part of the islands, he claimed them as British. The same year, the Court in Madrid demanded that France relinquish their claim to the Les Iles Malouines.

France was, therefore, forced to leave Falkland Islands because Spain claimed its possession. The Spaniards urged also British people to leave in 1770 but they did not answer the calling. For the first time in history, they showed their unwillingness to leave this piece of land. Captain Anthony Hunt responded to Spanish claims by sending a letter in which he refused the Spanish demands. Both sides claimed their possession over the Islands. Spanish forces attacked Port Egmond and expelled the British garrison. According to Pasce and Proper “Britain and Spain came close to war over the islands, which was eventually averted by an agreement made in January 1771 in which Port Egmond was restored to Britain.” (2008, p.7) However, Great Britain did leave the Falkland Islands only a few years later – in 1774. The growing economic pressures which led from preparations for the American War of independence, made the British government to decide that they would withdraw their presence from many overseas settlements in 1774, including Falkland Islands. (Lonton, 2012) (Pasce & Proper, 2008) The British left the Falkland Islands; however, they left a plaque there which demonstrated their continuing sovereignty over the islands stating:

Know all the Nations, the Falkland Islands, with its ports, warehouses, landings, natural harbours, land and coves belonging thereto, are of exclusive rights and ownership of his most sacred Majesty George III, King of Great Britain. In testimony whereof, placed this plate and the colours of his British Majesty left flying as a sign of possession by S.W.Clayton, official Commander of the Falkland Islands. 1774 A.D. (Lonton, 2012, p.37)

In 1780 the Spanish fully destroyed the British colony. In 1811, also Spanish citizens left the Falkland Islands. Like the British, they also left a plaque there claiming their right to own the islands. In 1816 a government in Buenos Aires claimed to be independent from Spain. The first recorded Argentinian settlement on the islands dates to 1828 when Caudillo, an Argentine warlord, sent a garrison there. These were forcefully sent back to Argentina in 1833 by the British without bloodshed.

This act made the Argentines leave the islands but it did not silence them for almost 150 years.

Spanish and British repeated ownership of the Falkland Islands made the situation unclear. Great Britain argued with a nation's right of self-determination, an argument which has never been accepted by Argentina. Dr. José María Ruda argued that the application of self-determination would disrupt Argentina's national unity and territorial integrity. He believed that the Malvinas, as the Argentinians call these islands, belonged to Argentine Republic in 1833 and that they were expelled by violence. The population of British origin, therefore, should be temporal and could not use the principle of self-determination. (Freedman, 2005)

Disputes over ownership were continuing. Great Britain has controlled the Falkland Islands since 1833 and different British governments have insisted that this is right but an independent international court has never tested this opinion and Argentina was against it. In 1960s Argentina tried to gain support through various international organisations. Argentinian politicians contacted United Nations and the Organisation of American States. They described the islanders as colonists and for that reason they, according to Argentina, could not use the right of independence through self-determination. The United Nations General Assembly mentioned the Falkland Islands and the Dependencies in Resolution 2065. The resolution invited both sides to find a peaceful solution. Two possible options were considered by both countries. A condominium which would mean that administration on the Islands would be both British and Argentinean or a lease-back option which would transfer the sovereignty to Argentina. Nevertheless, in the latter option, which sounded more promising to Argentinian politicians, Great Britain would require a long lease allowing them to continue their administration. The Argentine goal was to achieve transferring the sovereignty with a promise to protect the islanders' rights and way of life. Voices from London did not evaluate this promise as a guarantee of islanders' wealth and continued offering different proposals. The suspicion of the islanders with all the possible schemes made the negotiations harder. Among other things, they feared Argentine settlement. (Freedman, 2005)

Great Britain had made a number of economic reports examining the economic profitability of the area before but for at least two reasons the best known report at this time was Shackleton's report. The first reason was the name of Lord Shackleton who delivered a guarantee of quality. And quality itself was the second reason.

Lord Shackleton's report was much more comprehensive than previous ones. One of the tasks of Lord Shackleton was to comment on the possibility of leasing the Falkland Islands to Argentina. The assumption in the Foreign Office in the mid-1970s was that the Falkland Islands represented a burden on the British economy and therefore it would be economically convenient to hand them to Argentina but Lord Shackleton stated the opposite in his report. Having taken into account defence costs, subsidies and grants. Shackleton believed that the Falkland Islands had made a £4M profit between 1950 and 1970. Shackleton then stated that Britain had a moral responsibility to the Islanders. ("The Shackleton Reports", 1982)

Argentina had repeatedly raised a requirement for the possession of the Falkland Islands but it had always been neglected. On one hand the Islands were close to their territory; on the other hand Argentina had previously never possessed the Falkland Islands. Before Great Britain only France and Spain had reigned there. But after 1833 no country, except Great Britain, owned them. Great Britain also declared this area their Crown colony in 1892. Although national psychology is neither the most popular nor fully accepted by psychologists, there certainly are differences in values and characteristics among citizens of individual countries. Nowadays, British people are often referred to as people who do not surrender and Great Britain is seen by many people as a proud country.

3. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN GREAT BRITAIN AND ARGENTINA

As Hastings explains (Barnwell, 2012), many people of his generation, those who were growing up in the aftermath of the Second World War, “were invited to rejoice and kept rejoicing” in the triumph over Germany. One of the means of this process were war movies where Britons were described as heroic soldiers. Those movies, among other publicity materials, were boosting the confidence of British people and made them able to call themselves a proud, independent and fearless nation. In 1950, the Royal Navy launched the biggest ship in its history – Ark Royal. According to Hastings, the ship symbolized British naval and military power around the world. British people continued fighting participating in military operations in Kenya, Cyprus, Korea or Malaya. But then came the Suez Crisis which was the last British big military operation before the Falklands War. Also because the United States of America did not wish to participate, the task force of Great Britain and France were forced to leave the battlefields sooner than expected, which might have surprised the British public and it definitely left scars on their warrior-morale. According to Hastings “Suez Crisis became the foremost symbol of Britain’s decline and retreat from empire.” (Barnwell, 2012)

Signs of this unpopular phenomenon had from time to time been fuelled by a speech or a statement made abroad. This was the case with the always outspoken Americans. In a speech to West Point cadets in 1962, then Secretary of State, Dean Acheson said: “Great Britain has lost an Empire and has not yet found a role.” (Wheatcroft, 2013). But not only politicians from abroad rubbed salt into the British wound; also British people themselves noticed the gradual loss of empire status. Roy Jenkins, the Chancellor of the Exchequer 1967-1970, regarded the withdrawing on television as quick and added that the savings in defensive expenditure had been immense which, on the other hand, had made them unable to call themselves a superpower. As winners of the Second World War, the British might have felt entitled to keep an empire and according to Hastings and Jenkins (1983) they tried to keep it with more 750,000 soldiers but this speech made it clear they could no longer afford it. Hastings claims that it seemed like if Great Britain was totally and forever leaving its position.

As part of a series of 1960s defence cuts plans to replace the striker carriers Eagle and Ark Royal were branded unaffordable and cancelled. In less than a decade, both ships would be decommissioned, leaving Britain without a big carrier to project power, and support so-called “out-of-area operations”. (Freedman, 2005)

The BBC’s James Cameron saw the end of the east of Suez era.

There goes the last of the gunboats. She’ll almost certainly never come back. We’ll never come back. Not in the way we used to think of ourselves. But nobody seems to have decided what sort of a future Britain wants. (Barnwell, 2012)

At that time, the Falkland Islands were not a huge topic in Great Britain. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office probably considered leaving them to Argentina where the question of possessing the Malvinas was much more up-to-date. The islanders themselves have always wanted to stay British despite their strong sense of autonomy. In this case, the principle of self-determination had always played an important role in Great Britain and they continued to regard it as a paramount rule. However, the opinion on the principle of self-determination of both the Argentinian public and politicians had always been different. For the British it meant a divine rule. For the Argentinians it was just an interest of a small number of citizens which might be taken into account but has not much relevance. Nevertheless, issues of Great Britain did not let the Falkland question play the key role in state policy and therefore the application of the principle of self-determination was uncertain in that case. (Gibran, 2008)

The economic situation in Great Britain made the islanders of the Falkland Islands an even heavier burden. Their rigid attitude to stay British citizens hardened negotiations for the disposal of the islands. The idea that the islands could be economically profitable was almost inconceivable in 1976. Then British government was trying to find a way to persuade the islanders to change their collective will; therefore, then Prime Minister James Callaghan decided to send there an impartial observer, Lord Shackleton, who had the opportunity to be respected by the islanders and whose word would be heard among them because his father, the great explorer, was buried in South Georgia.

Shackleton had the goal of compiling a comprehensive report on current and potential economic profitability for Great Britain. The secondary aim was to improve relations with Argentina; politicians were planning to show good will in sending a judge to the area. Callaghan urged Shackleton to convince the citizens of the Falkland Islands to believe the thought that is convenient for them to have some form of associations with Argentina. (Freedman, 2005)

In 1975, Margaret Thatcher was elected leader of the Conservative Party succeeding Edward Heath. She would later gain appellations such as the Iron Lady due to her strictness, intransigence and strong right wing focus. Before the 1979 general elections she brilliantly used the poor situation in Great Britain and raised interest among Conservative Party voters by speeches which touched their collective confidence and provided the speeches with solutions and visions. Her choice of patriotic sentences worked effectively with the public. The Conservative party won the General Elections in 1979 and Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister.

During the first days in office she expressed an intention not to become the first woman Prime Minister of a mediocre and declining Britain. But even Thatcher, the Prime Minister with visions of British greatness, was determined to save money by imposing further reductions on the armed forces. The Royal Navy was about to lose 20% of its budget. The cuts devastated the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Henry Leach. The carrier *Invincible* was to be sold to Australians at this time. For Leach the preparations of sale of the carrier was the ultimate betrayal. (Freedman, 2005)

Not only the *Invincible* was at stake; other ships were also endangered by cuts in Royal Navy. Pressures from the Labour opposition suggested selling even HMS (Her Majesty Ship) *Endurance* which had operated in the South Atlantic, a suggestion the Tories had refused several times. When the then Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, ascertained the news of selling HMS *Endurance* he immediately expressed worries. In his view, this reduction of military power would be interpreted as a reduction of commitment to the Islands and will to defend them by both the islanders and the Argentines. Citizens of Great Britain who supported the islanders would be very critical as well. Nevertheless, the Secretary of State for Defence, John Nott, soon confirmed the ship's withdrawal from both the South Atlantic and the Royal Navy.

He also stated that there had been no plans of replacing the ship. The reaction from the islanders was brisk. They protested and also expressed their deepest worries about the situation having feared that such a withdrawal would indicate further loss of British sovereignty in the Falkland Islands. The islanders insisted on securing a reversal of the decision. (Freedman, 2005)

They had again shown a unique will to stay British. Even taking into account the extraordinary circumstances it is hard to imagine another group of 2000 people (e.g. a small town) as politically active as the citizens of the Falkland Islands. From their quick reactions in which they had repeatedly and strongly denied almost any cooperation with Argentina and any loosening of their bonds with Great Britain one can assume that they really feared both British withdrawal from the Islands and Argentine arrival.

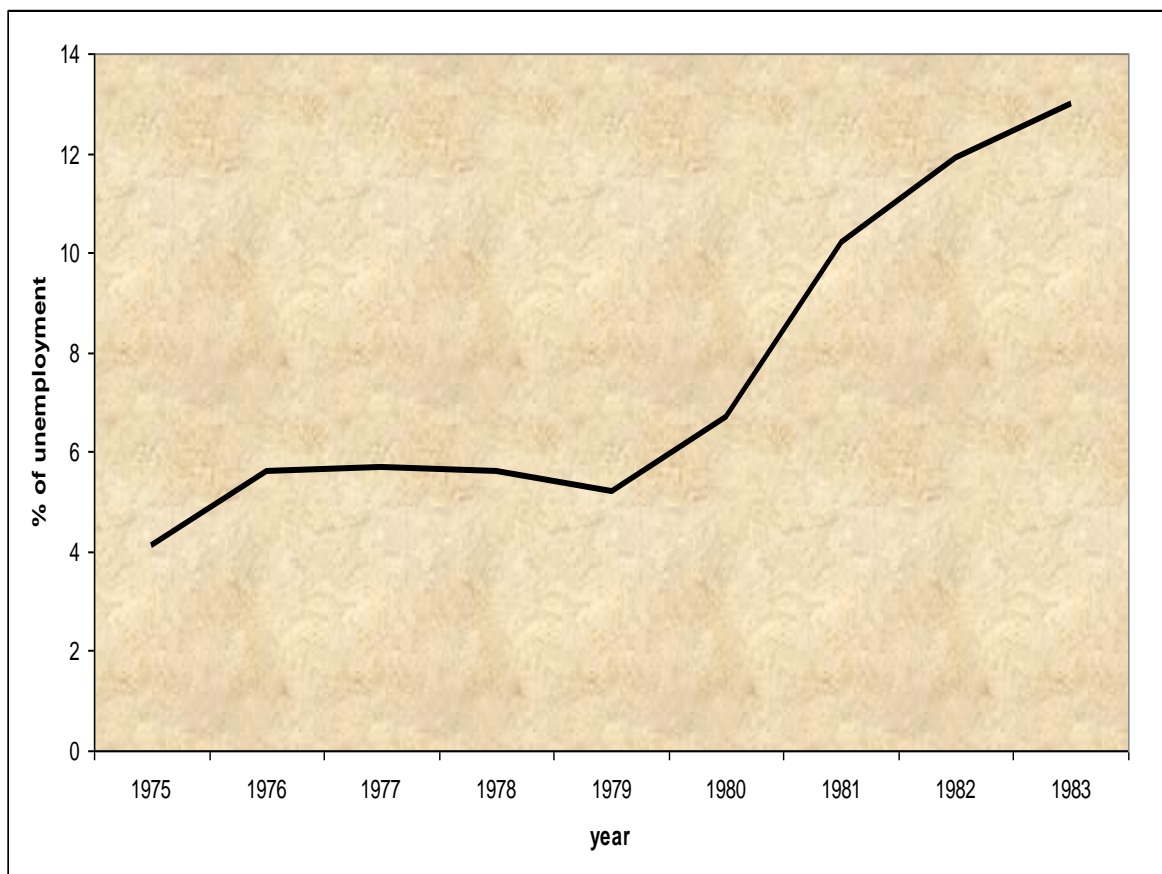
Rear Admiral Chris Parry and his companions had a radical view on the situation in the Royal Navy and Great Britain and its suitable solution.

Everybody was bemoaning what that would mean for the Navy and also for our carriers. And then somebody said, what we need is a war against somebody to prove to the public and the government how useful the Navy is. And so, amid a couple of pints, we started discussing who might be a suitable opponent. You know, not too difficult, not too easy. And we eventually settled on the country we thought was just about right. And the real surprise was it was Argentina. (Barnwell, 2012)

Their pub chat became reality just months later. In April 1982, after decades in which budgets were lowered and both the Royal Navy and Great Britain felt the pressure of a lack of fortune, an unexpected glimmer of hope was delivered to the Admirals. A way to save carriers was found but not from the Thatcher government but from the military junta in Buenos Aires. Soon after Henry Leach heard that Argentina was planning to invade the Falkland Islands, he visited the House of Commons where he talked with the Prime Minister, Leach's intervention in which he mentioned the need to act not only saved some warships, it also might have determined Thatcher to fight.

The importance of his intervention might be discussed but it is clear that it did not discourage Thatcher from fighting. Saving of the carriers later played an important role in the result of the conflict. Sea Harriers were responsible for the destruction of most of the Argentine aircraft. (Hastings & Jenkins, 1983) (Anderson, 2002)

Margaret Thatcher was not only struggling with the Royal Navy. Her cuts in budgets affected almost every area. Cuts were for her a useful weapon to fight inflation but they also had a negative outcome as the unemployment rate rose considerably during her Prime Minister years. In comparison with the Falkland Islands question, the unemployment was affecting the British in much more visible way.



Mrs Thatcher was determined to reverse the political humiliation which some thought would break her government. (Hastings & Jenkins, 1983)

At the beginning of 1980s, Great Britain was in crisis. One of the reasons was the fact that coal started losing its price and stopped playing a key role in Great Britain's energy reserves. That was one of the reasons for a miners' strike which was, however, unsuccessful for the miners. They lacked the power to force government to any concessions. An administrative workers' strike and public services strike followed the previous one. Education was in a critical state (Morgan, 1997). Margaret Thatcher's long term economic plans might have been vital and her visions might have been right but she and her government even intensified the issues of 1980s by representing the most right-wing government which had occurred in Great Britain so far. At this time, Margaret Thatcher was the least popular Prime Minister in British history since opinion polls began recording such data.

Even if the political, social and economical situation in Britain was not favourable, it was still very good in comparison to Argentina. A military junta had led the country since 1976 when right-wing military junta overthrew the then elected government. The junta governed the country in four periods. The main figures changed in each of these periods. In 1981 Lieutenant General Leopoldo Galtieri, the commander in chief of the so called Third Junta, succeeded Lieutenant General Roberto Viola, the commander in chief of the Second Junta. Leopoldo Galtieri led Argentina into the Falklands War where Argentina wanted to apply its alleged claim for the Falkland Islands. They had tried several times before but their efforts had always been vain mainly due to islanders' will to stay British. The islanders even tried to trade with other countries because they were aware of a potential risk of good relations with Argentina. They did not intend to become Argentinians. At times both the islanders and the Argentines suspected that Great Britain had an economic interest especially in oil. That was a relief for the islanders because it would mean that Great Britain would not abandon the Islands whatever the political costs. There were moments in the 1970s when the continental shelf of the Falkland Islands, seemed to offer sufficiently attractive goods. However, these claims were later denied. (Freedman, 2005)

Freedman (2005) explains that Argentina had tried but had not managed to persuade any of the British governments to transfer the Falkland Islands to Argentina.

Different British governments understood well that the situation was not sustainable for a long period of time but they acted in a very passive way leaving the following government to solve it for good. Attempts to find a suitable solution for both countries did not work either because the demands of the participating sides varied so dramatically or because the third side, the islanders, made their plans more difficult to execute. Neither Great Britain nor Argentina considered the Falkland question solved. In Argentina “this was an issue that no government could ever settle .This was more than a matter of legal title: it was bound up with a sense of national identity. (p. 14)

4. WAR

On 2nd April 1982 a BBC morning news bulletin announced:

The Falkland Islands – the British colony in the South Atlantic – has fallen. That’s what Argentina says. They claim its marines went to shore early this morning to capture key targets including the capital Port Stanley. (Chapman, 2007)

The Islands were protected by only 69 war marines. Argentinians surrounded the Government House, demanding the surrender of the Falkland Islands. Local governor, Rex Hunt, sent this message to the local radio station: “they’ve got us well and truly pinned down. But they’re not trying to attack. I’m not surrendering to the bloody Argies, certainly not.” (Chapman, 2007) He showed courage, pride and an unwillingness to surrender – characteristics which British people are well-known for and characteristics which Great Britain, at least according to some Conservative politicians, had not been showing during the years before the Falklands War. Later that day he sent another message to the citizens of the Falkland Islands, having used the radio station to deliver it. The characteristics mentioned above can be recognized in this message as well: “It’s probably the last message I’ll be able to give you and I wish you all best of luck and, er, rest assured the British will be back.” (Chapman, 2007) The characteristics mentioned in this paragraph also made the following conflict inevitable. A courageous and proud country just could not afford to succumb. Nevertheless, Rex Hunt was forced to surrender despite his strong words. The Argentine commander, Menendez, succeeded him the same day.

The very next day, Argentine forces attacked South Georgia in the battle for Grytviken. Despite attempts to defend Grytviken 22 marines and 13 civilians were forced to surrender and then imprisoned. (Smith, 2009) Meanwhile in Argentina, 200 000 Argentinians gathered in the Main Square in Buenos Aires to celebrate the huge success of capturing the Malvinas. The Argentinian junta believed that their foreign policy would distract people from the problems at home. (Anderson, 2002) The junta expected a response from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the response was very positive for Argentina. The Ministry basically approved their entitlement to Falkland Islands. Argentina was a justified owner of this area for several hours. (Thatcher, 1993)

Later the day it became clear that a conflict was close. Margaret Thatcher summoned the Parliament and made a speech in which she not only denied the attitude of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, stated that Great Britain would not leave Falkland Islands under Argentine possession but also announced that British troops would sail towards the Falkland Islands. (Regan, 1996) In her speech she proclaimed that a foreign country has invaded a British sovereign territory for the first time in many years and revealed details about the British answer. She also compared the Argentine attack to the Falkland Islands to an army aggression in London. (Thatcher, 1993) Margaret Thatcher, once again, correctly assessed the mood of the British people and raised a wave of support among the population. Great Britain consolidated its position as a strong independent and proud country by having decided to defend their territory and Margaret Thatcher demonstrated why she was often nicknamed the Iron Lady. It was obvious that the Argentine junta had tried to distract attention from their domestic issues by this military conflict.

Negotiations between Great Britain and the United States of America commenced. The then American President, Ronald Reagan, tried initially to act neutrally and to persuade both countries involved to find a diplomatic solution. Reagan found the situation difficult; he regarded both countries as friends for the United States. Reagan was told by key advisers that a Falklands War might damage Washington's South American clients. UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick was also acting in a not very supportive manner towards Margaret Thatcher and Great Britain.

Although she did not openly support the junta, she might have been accused of a kind of slight bias. Her argumentation did not affirm the British claim that they own the islands. She also did not disprove the Argentine alleged right to them. (Freedman, 2005) (Thatcher, 1993)

By the end of April there were 13,000 Argentine troops on the Falkland Islands. 10,000 of them were situated either in Stanley or in the hills which surrounded the city. The majority of Argentine soldiers were young conscripts. The conflict was militarily relatively simple. If British soldiers could take the islands' capital, Port Stanley, where most of the enemy soldiers were situated, they would most likely have won. On April 17th a British task force sailed to the Ascension, which was a British base, 3,500 miles away from the Falkland Islands. Ships from there sailed in two groups. (Smith, 2009)

The British soldiers were better trained and it was likely British ground forces would have a huge advantage. The first air clash happened on May 1st. Argentina had a numerical advantage in the air but British aircraft managed to minimize Argentine air advantage due to better quality of their pilots. The British submarine *Conqueror* sunk the Argentine warship *Belgrano*. The Argentinians bought 5 exocet rockets from France which represented a huge threat for British ships. On 4th May, two Argentine aircraft with exocet missiles destroyed *HMS Sheffield* which became the first British ship to be destroyed by enemy action since the Second World War. (Hastings & Jenkins, 1983)

On 18th May, a second group of British ships arrived at San Carlos Bay which was 50 miles from Port Stanley. The soldiers had to march this distance on foot. On 21st May 3000 Troops headed for the landing. 5 warships were hit and one HMS sunk. Exocet rocket missiles destroyed them. (Smith, 2009)

The majority of British troops were marching towards Port Stanley while 500 of them headed toward Goose Green to deliver a “quick morale boost”. (Hastings & Jenkins, 1983) The battle over Goose Green had a similar effect for the Falklands War as the Falklands War itself for Great Britain; it was to ensure a quick morale boost for soldiers marching towards Port Stanley. Those soldiers would ensure improvement of national confidence among people in Great Britain.

According to Hastings, the British underestimated the number of Argentine troops there. After 14 hours of fighting British officers decided to outsmart the Argentinians by sending a letter demanding an immediate surrender and threatening them with using bombs if they did not accept the proposal. The Argentinians surrendered. (Adkin, 1992) (Middlebrook, 1985)

As British troops prepared to make their final step for Port Stanley, Kirkpatrick urged Reagan to persuade Thatcher to withdraw from a possible defeat of Argentina on the battlefield. (Hastings, 1993) On the same day, President Reagan personally telephoned Margaret Thatcher to urge her to accept a diplomatic compromise rather than inflict outright military defeat on Argentina in the Falkland Islands. His administration believed that such an outcome threatened American interests and the balance in South America would be endangered because Argentina represented a right-wing country which was unique for this region.

The Prime Minister rejected the President with strong directness, having said that it was her duty to finish the war quickly and that losing some of the ships and human lives would mean nothing if they did not finish the military operation successfully. She also mentioned that the final attack of British troops was sensible for democracy. (Thatcher, 1993)

British troops decided to attack the hills surrounding Port Stanley during two following nights. On 14th June Menendez and his men surrendered. Great Britain won the military conflict despite having an enormous disadvantage in location which made their warships vulnerable. Argentina did not use this advantage. The number of casualties was not high in terms of a war. There were 258 British casualties including 3 civilians and 649 Argentine dead bodies.

During the war a wave of protests demanding peace appeared even in Argentina. Human rights were being constantly contravening by Argentine police and these protests were suppressed by violence which even meant shooting into Argentinians by their own police. People in unmarked cars were kidnapping journalists from democratic states and were hiding them for long periods of time.

This process usually ended by an official excuse but some the kidnapped journalists were either left naked in the streets of Buenos Aires or tried by Argentine courts. (Best, 2012)

It may be that the main reason for the British triumph was the stronger power of their military forces. The islanders could play an important part in the British retaking the islands due to their loyalty to their origin, intransigence and political activity. As the western world was becoming more and more democratic the principle of self-determination was gaining weight in political discussions before and during the conflict and became even more significant after it ended. The conflict had consequences not only for Great Britain and Argentina but also for other countries. (Freedman, 2005)

5. AFTERMATH

Hastings thinks that the British troops left a fairly demoralised, depressed and downbeat country. When they came back in July they returned to a country that was confident again, looking forward to the future. Their arrival home sparked extraordinary British celebrations of a kind unseen since 1945. Many men returning from the South Atlantic felt that they landed in a different Britain than they left. (Barnwell, 2012)

The Falklands merged, almost seamlessly, into Britain's cherished legend of the Second World War. Victory in the South Atlantic inspired a revival of British historic enthusiasm for seeing themselves as a warrior nation. Even Margaret Thatcher emphasized the significance of the Falklands War for both Britain's self-confidence and position in the world. She also explains that the triumph in the South Atlantic amazed other nations and it contributed to relations between East and West. Russians thought that Great Britain would not fight and if they fought they would lose. (Thatcher, 1993)

Hastings has a similar view on the situation stating that the Russians were absolutely astounded. They were full of admiration, and also worried because they suddenly realised that a NATO country and not the United States of America but a European NATO country, would fight for a principle.

Falklands War victory secured Great Britain words of admiration not only from Russians but also from the United States of America, a country which politicians openly talked about Great Britain as a then-empire or a country losing its status before the war.

(Barnwell, 2012)

Peter Barrington described the war experience to several thousand American Marines.

I gave them a company commander's view of what had happened to the Falklands. The audience was totally quiet, for the period I was speaking, and when I stopped to give them questions, the whole cinema just stood up, and started to applaud. It was a standing ovation by these guys. It was quite overwhelming. (Barnwell, 2012)

Great Britain was no longer a country which had lost an Empire and not yet found a role for Americans. Great Britain was restored a proud country again. A country which would fight anywhere in the world for the safety of its citizens and also other countries like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic or the United States of America felt that.

Hastings and Jenkins (1983) explain that here, at a critical moment in Great Britain's fortunes, was evidence of just how roughly the United States could treat Great Britain, exposing the limitations of the so-called "special relationship" at moments when those two countries' strategic interests diverged. He claims that Great Britain could thank to the United States Defence Secretary, Casper Weinberger, for securing of weapons intelligence and logistic support. And that British policy-makers learnt their lesson from that experience that they better fight their future wars with the Americans or not at all. (Freedman, 2005)

Following elections

In May 1982, a short time after the Falklands War, Conservative Member of Parliament, Sir Ronald Bell died; therefore by-election in Beaconsfield was held.

Tim Smith, the Tory candidate, wanted to deliver a message from Mrs Thatcher proclaiming that the by-election was really a referendum on the Government's conduct of the South Atlantic crisis. Tony Blair, the Labour candidate, adopted an opposite "anti-war" attitude. He insisted that the wishes of the islanders could not dictate British policy. The Conservatives won the Beaconsfield by-election with more than 60% of the votes. Tony Blair ended third with only 10%. It became his only election loss in his political career which lasted 25 years. Tony Blair later acknowledged that he learnt from the Beaconsfield by-election that wars make prime ministers popular. He modified his anti-war attitude and twenty-five years later even admitted to an interviewer that, as national leader, he would have responded to the Argentine invasion just as Mrs Thatcher did. Weeks before the 1997 election, Tony Blair delivered a speech in which he enfolded himself in the Union Jack in a fashion that came naturally to Mrs Thatcher, but then seemed amazing in a Labour leader. (Barnwell, 2012)

I am a British patriot, and I am proud of being a British patriot. The Britain in my vision is not a Britain turning its back on the world - narrow, shy, uncertain. It is a Britain confident of its place in the world, sure of itself, able to engage with the world and provide leadership in the world precisely because we are confident of our own place in the world. (Steve Boggan, 1997, para. 2)

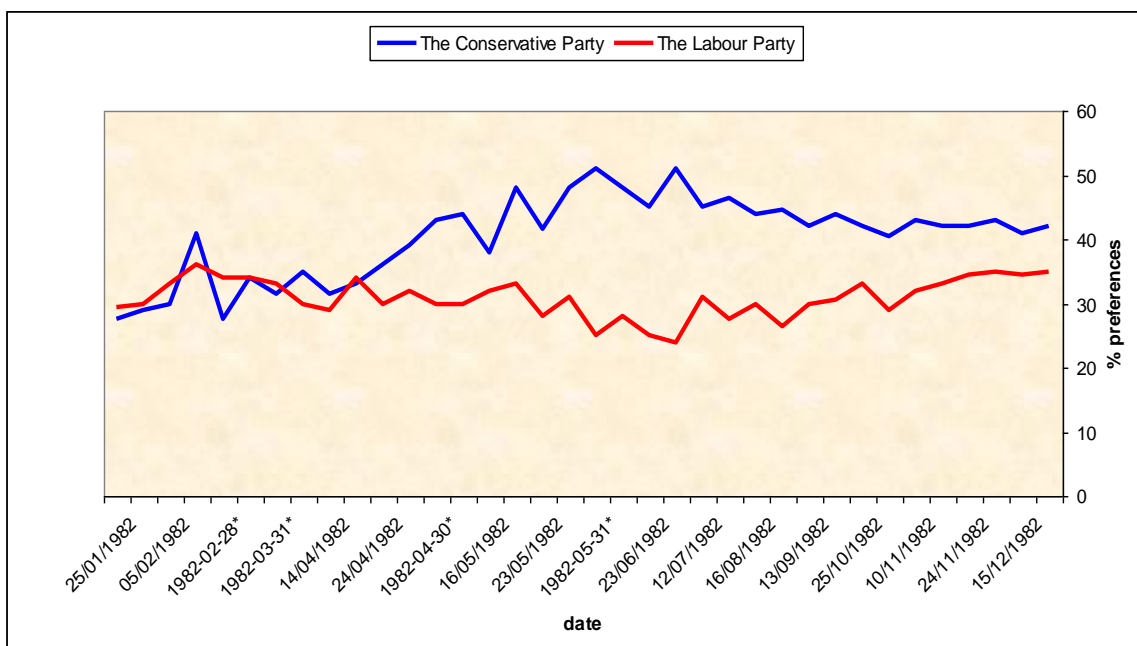
Without context this speech might be interchangeable with the speeches given by Margaret Thatcher before the 1983 general election. Therefore, it might be said that Tony Blair learnt that patriotic speeches might be useful in any kind of elections, regardless of which political party one is representing.

Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party used the victory over Argentina in the general elections in 1983. There is the question of how much impact the Falklands War made on the election. The BBC journalist covering the elections, Michael Cockerell, thought that the impact was crucial and decisive. According to him the whole Conservative campaign was influenced by patriotic sentiment. He claims to remember a Conservative agent saying that no political campaign was required because the whole campaign had already been done by the Ministry of Defence. (Barnwell, 2012)

Suddenly, public opinion on Margaret Thatcher improved radically. Before the Falklands War Margaret Thatcher was the most unpopular prime minister in British history since opinion polling began. After its end, almost 50% of respondents said that the military success had boosted their opinion of her. The Conservative Party used the victory over Argentina in the election campaign; in a section of their manifesto entitled “what we have achieved” they stated it was their credit that people lived in free and just country and they did not forget to mention how the image of Great Britain improved abroad thanks to the glorious victory over Argentina. (“The Labour Party’s manifesto”, 1983)

The Conservatives managed to win the 1983 general election. Some people may think that the main reason was a weak election campaign by the Labour Party; others might claim that Margaret Thatcher’s reforms had just started to function, but the main reason for this clear victory was the triumph of the Royal Navy in the South Atlantic, which started a revival of British national self-confidence. Nevertheless, the other two factors mentioned above should not be undervalued. The progression of preferences is seen in the graph below. The preferences of the Conservative Party considerably rose during and after the Falklands War. However, they reached their peak in June, almost a year before the general elections.

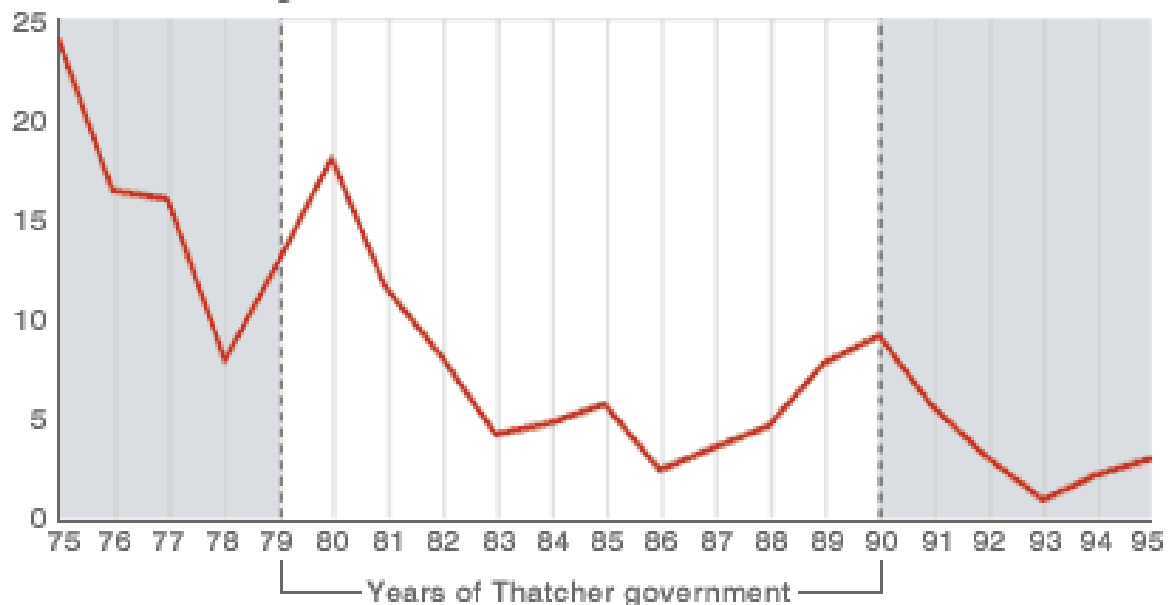
Preferences in 1982



. The progression of the preferences in 1983 was not as dramatic as the year before. The lead of the Conservative Party was undisputable in every time period before the general elections. Until April 1982, the Tories were behind the Labour Party. By July, they were by 19 percent ahead. If there had been no Falklands War the Labour Party would have won the general election in 1983. Public opinion does not appreciate long and inconclusive wars. But it appreciates a quick victory. The fact that Margaret Thatcher and her government managed to stop the hyperinflation played a significant role as well. (Wegs & Ladrech, 1996)

INFLATION

RPI annual % change



SOURCE : ONS

Other consequences

According to Professor Hew Strachan war became a usable instrument after the Falklands Conflict. It helped people to overcome the presumption that war is something horrific. He regarded the loss of lives in the Falkland Islands acceptable in exchange for the long-term foreign policy effect. The Falklands War also created an expectation of short, sharp and decisive conflicts. Great Britain participated in several conflicts, for example in the Iraq War and the war over Kosovo in 1999, which conformed to the Falklands expectation in terms of not great loss of lives.

The difference with the Falklands War was that in the latter conflicts Great Britain did not fight only for itself. (“Short, victorious war”, 2012)

Neither the triumph in the South Atlantic in 1982, nor time silenced Argentine politicians. The Falklands question still remains, as it has always been, a huge topic for every Foreign Ministry. (Pasce & Proper, 2008) The conflict harmed the international relation between involved countries for decades. The rivalry between Great Britain and Argentina could be seen not only on political level but also in other spheres of live. The example of an “Argentine revenge” was a goal scored by Diego Maradona during the football World Cup in 1986. He scored with his hand and the referee did not see it. He himself called the goal revenge for the Falkland Islands.

The British government is still flexible in potential passing the Falkland Islands to Argentina but is very rigid in terms of the principle of self-determination. In 2012 the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, declared his intention to follow the will of the islanders by proclaiming:

The absolutely vital point is that we are clear that the future of the Falkland Islands is a matter for the people themselves. As long as they want to remain part of the United Kingdom and be British, they should be able to do so... The key point is that we support the Falkland Islanders’ right to self-determination. I would argue that what the Argentinians have said recently is far more like colonialism, as these people want to remain British and the Argentinians want them to do something else. (Gardiner, 2012, para. 3)

By this speech he followed Margaret Thatcher’s will to let the islanders decide about their own future. A referendum on political status with the possibility to transfer the islands to Argentina was held in 2013. 1513 out of 1516 voting citizens of the Falkland Islands voted in favour to retain their current political status as the Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom. Argentinians are still using similar arguments as they were using in early-1980s and they did not leave the idea that the Falkland Islands belonged to them. (Harriet, 2014)

It may still seem illogical and logistically very difficult to administer an area of 2,000 people which is 8,000 away. This makes the future development of the situation unpredictable and dangerous. A repetition of the conflict is not excluded, potential risk remains and the worse the economic situations are in both countries, the higher the possibility of another international conflict.

6. RESEARCH

A survey was created as a part of this undergraduate thesis in order to discover knowledge and opinions of British people about the Falklands war. The survey was made as an online questionnaire. An online survey creator was used as a tool. A link with the questionnaire was sent to the participants and their answers were visible for me. The questionnaire consisted of five questions with one correct answer, two opinion questions about war as such and the Falklands War, one question about their political preferences and an optional open question. Insufficient funds to secure both a high number of participants and their random selection basically determined it as a qualitative research. Nevertheless, if the number of participants had been considerably higher the first 8 questions could have been applied even for a quantitative research. The 9th question was optional and it was an open question. Participants were recruited from several sources. Seven of them were from “conversation exchange” sites. Four people were living in the Czech Republic but they had the British origin. The rest was their friends or people from a social site. 13 women and 7 men participated in the survey. Ages of the respondents were between 22 and 46 but there were only two respondents older than 28 years and four respondents older than 25 years. I assured all the respondents that they would be anonymous unless they did not want to. I chose this precaution to make them feel free in their answer and to worry about the results. This was mainly important for the part dealing with their knowledge but it was also important for sections of the questionnaire. Before seeing the results I created an assumption of the research.

The hypotheses of the assumption were that younger generation would have difficulties with history question. I also expected that those who had voted in the last general elections would have better knowledge about the Falklands War.

Results

In question number one I asked the respondents “When did the Falklands War take place?”. The options were a) in 1982, b) in 1984 and c) in 1986. The majority of respondents either knew or guessed the correct answer, 12 of them, 60%, chose a). 5 respondents, 25%, chose the second option and the rest 15%, 3 respondents, chose the last option, in 1986.

This question was followed by an easier one in which the questionnaire required an answer for the following question: “What function did Margaret Thatcher have during the conflict?”. The options were General, Defence Secretary and Prime Minister. The order of the options was randomized there. The answers show that the British know their recent history well at least in terms of their Prime Ministers. All the answers, 100%, were correct and said that Margaret Thatcher had been the Prime Minister during the conflict.

The next question asked the respondents about the country which had fought against Great Britain in the conflict. The expectations before seeing the results were that the percentage of correct answers in this question would be slightly higher than the percentage of the correct answers in the previous question, which obviously was not possible due to perfection of the respondents in question number 2. However, it was considered the easiest question of all in this questionnaire and 15% of wrong answers might be regarded as a slight surprise. Three respondents regarded Iraq as the country which Great Britain had fought against in the Falklands War. All of the wrong answers were collected from students of age 23 or younger and none of them answered the first question right.

The question number 4 was “What was the location of the Falklands War?”. It did not appear to the respondents until they finished the first three questions so they could not guess the answer for the previous question from the offered locations which were North Atlantic, South Atlantic and North Pacific. The order of the answers was randomized. 5 participants of the survey, 25%, thought that the correct answer was North Atlantic. 3 people, 15%, marked North Pacific as the correct answer and 60% of examined respondents rightly stated that the location of the Falklands War was South Pacific, one of them, however, regarded Iraq the country Great Britain was in war with in the South Pacific, which indicates a lucky guess in this case.

The question number 5, “How did the conflict affect the following general elections?”, was the last in the part of questionnaire examining knowledge of the British people about the Falklands War. The respondents were to choose among the following answer in randomized order: It helped the Conservative Party, it helped the Labour Party, and it did not have a significant effect on the elections. 70% chose the first option which was considered as to correct, 20% voted for the second option, and 10% thought that the war had not had a significant effect. 70% chose the correct answer but the 10% of respondents thinking that the war did affected the general elections much cannot be regarded as being purely wrong. The options were bordering with opinions at this point, therefore the only wrong answer was the one considering the Labour Party taking profit from the Falklands War.

The following part of the questionnaire was focused on opinions of the respondents. It consisted of two statements in which the respondents were to answer to which extent they agree or disagree with it. The given scale consisted of five options; strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, strongly disagree. The first statement was “A war could be a useable instrument to improve sentiment in a country.”. One person strongly agreed with that, three other people, 15%, agreed, 40% of the respondents, 8 individuals, answered that they were not sure, 5 of the 20 respondents disagreed with the statement, and 3 individuals strongly disagreed.

The next statement “Great Britain had right to take the Falkland Islands back.” had different distribution of votes. 45% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 25% of the respondents chose the answer “not sure” but two of them, 10%, were those who regarded Iraq as the opponent of the Great Britain in the South Atlantic. One person disagreed with the right of Great Britain to retake the area and one respondent strongly disagreed. The two participants of the survey who either disagreed or strongly disagreed had good knowledge about the conflict because they correctly answered majority of the first five questions.

In the last closed question I wanted to know which political party did the respondents vote in the last general elections. 15% voted the Conservative Party, 20% voted the Labour Party, 10% gave their vote to Liberal Democrats, and the rest, 55%, did not vote. Nobody claimed voting “an other party”. All of the Conservative Party voters strongly agreed with Great Britain’s response to Argentine invasion to the Falkland Islands. This creates the hypothesis that the voters of the conservative party agree with the military response more than the rest of population.

The very last question was an open one, optional, and appeared only to those respondents who either agreed or disagreed with British retaking the Falkland Island. Three of them decided to develop their answers and answered the question “Why do you think so?”. Two of them agreed with the re-taking and the last strongly agreed with the same. They submitted the following answers:

Well, the more I think about it. The more I realise that they really shouldn't give it back. Honestly no Argentinian settlement has ever existed on the Falklands, so why should Britain give it back? Britain owned it.

They were apart of the British empire in the first place. Also they didn't wish to be apart of Argentina so Argentina really had no right to do what they did

I guess because it's an agreed overseas English territory and like many other countries around the world, protected by the monarchy and British rule. I understand that Argentina was closer than the uk but geographical location isn't a right of passage or power. In any case there was needless bloodshed over this "claiming". At the last vote I think close to 98% of residents on the island consider themselves part of the uk.

The outcome of the research is the following hypothesis; the voters of the conservative party agree with the military response in the South Pacific more than the rest of British population. The assumption that younger generation would have considerable difficulties with history questions was not; their knowledge was satisfactory. The other assumption that the non-voters would have worse knowledge proved. 3 of the 11 non-voters chose "Iraq" as the country Great Britain had fought against in the Falklands War, which creates second and the final hypothesis of the research; people who do not vote in general elections have worse knowledge of the Falklands War.

7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this undergraduate thesis was to show how the economic and political situation in one or more countries could determine an international conflict. History led Argentina and Great Britain into a disputation over a part of world which lacked economic value and where lived more than hundred times more sheep than people. Nevertheless, a strange set of events forced a conflict over the particular piece of world. The Falklands conflict was caused by Argentina, its poverty and unstable political situation. The junta desperately needed to raise their popularity and they temporarily managed to do so by provoking a military conflict, despite the fact that the legality and legitimacy of their army attack are to a certain extent shaped by the part of the world one lives in; in Argentina it is still considered both legitimate and legal but in democratic countries is the majority view different. Despite the ambition of this thesis to be as objective as possible it is likely it would be suspected from a strong bias in Argentina. Nevertheless, penetration of army forces into an area of another state cannot be considered legal under any circumstances. Argentine politicians argue that they had legally possessed the Falkland Islands before the conflict and they try to justify the aggression in 1982. It is difficult to prove the legal truth when it has not been tested by an international court. Are Argentina's never-ending claims legitimate? They certainly are in terms of location. If one has a legitimate expectation of possessing something, one should negotiate or file a request at an international court. The junta provoked an open conflict hoping to solve their domestic issues and to use the economic crisis in Great Britain more than having defended their rights abroad. This is the reason their act can be regarded as unnecessary, aggressive and unforgivable. The British military answer followed but one can suspect that even this was shaped by the domestic political and economic situation rather than by the will to protect its citizens. Regardless of the motivation of Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party to send British troops to South America, the decision strengthened the position of Great Britain among other states and gave its citizen reason to feel proud again. However, the situation has not changed much since 1982. Argentina still longs for the Falkland Islands; the islanders still want to stay British. The future of the islands might be uncertain.

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SUMMARY IN CZECH

Ambicí této bakalářské je popsat Válku o Falklandy, její příčiny a důsledky. Jednalo se o první významný mezinárodní konflikt od Suezské krize, ve kterém hrála roli Velká Británie. Práce je rozdělena do čtyř hlavních částí. Na začátku diskutuje obecná fakta o souostroví. Část zabývající se historií je zaměřena na kořeny konfliktu a jejich vývojem. Politická a ekonomické část čtenáři poskytne dostatečné informace o zákulisí konfliktu. Válečná část zobrazuje konflikt samotný. Důsledky války se čtenář dozví v následující části této bakalářské práce, jež zahrnuje také výzkum, který odhaluje, co si Britové myslí o této válce dnes.

Klíčová slova: Válka o Falklandy, Argentina, Jižní Atlantik, Velká Británie

APPENDIX 1

When did the Falklands War take place?			
	in 1982	in 1984	in 1986
reality	12 (60%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)
prediction	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	6 (30%)

What function did Margaret Thatcher have during the conflict?				
	Prime Minister	General	Secretary Of Defence	
reality	20 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
prediction	16 (80%)	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	

What country did Great Britain fight against in the Falklands War?			
	Iraq	Peru	Argentina
reality	3 (15%)	0 (0%)	17 (85%)
prediction	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	19 (95%)

What was the location of the Falklands War?			
	South Atlantic	North Atlantic	North Pacific
reality	12 (60%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)
prediction	8 (40%)	6 (30%)	6 (30%)

How did the conflict affect the following general elections?			
	It helped the Conservative country	It helped the Labour Party	It did not have a significant effect on the elections
reality	14 (70%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)
prediction	8 (40%)	5 (25%)	7 (35%)

A war could be a useable instrument to improve sentiment in a country.					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
reality	1 (5%)	3 (15%)	8 (40%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)

Great Britain had right to take the Falkland Islands back.					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
reality	9 (45%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)

What party did you vote in the last general elections?					
	Conservative Party	Labour Party	Liberal Democrats	An other party	Did not vote
reality	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	11 (55%)

APPENDIX 2



The proportion of sheep and residents.
<http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2013/1/3/1357230010922/Sheep-on-the-Falkland-isl-001.jpg>

APPENDIX 3



A famous picture of a soldier bringing the Union Jack
(http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2010/02/09/article-1249540-005BFA28000004B0-282_634x603.jpg)