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FEAR AND GREED:  
DOMESTIC UNREST, FOREIGN TARGET, AND INTERSTATE CONFLICT

by

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Jack S. Levy

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation asks and answers the question of when domestic unrest leads to interstate conflict. First, I present the diversionary target theory that argues that a political leader's decision for military use of force is affected by foreign as well as domestic conditions. I expect that domestically-troubled states are more likely to use military force against some, not all, states because political leaders prefer targets which can produce their domestic audience's fear and/or greed in order to enjoy "rally-round-the-flag" effects. I suggest that the fear-producing targets are foreign states having rapidly rising power or having different identities; the greed-producing targets are foreign states occupying disputed territory or exercising regional/local hegemony despite declining power. In addition, I expect political leaders prefer fear-/greed-producing targets that possess similar powers because domestic audiences may see initiation of military conflicts against too-powerful states and too-weak states as too risky and unnecessary, respectively.

Then, I conduct a quantitative test of the cases of states from 1920 to 2001. The result shows that the presences of the rising power, the territory target, and the hegemony target contribute to the correlation between domestic unrest and initiation of interstate

conflict in a statistically significant way. Especially, the rising power target shows the strongest effect on the domestically-troubled state's initiation of dyadic conflict. Also, I found that domestically-troubled states are more likely to initiate a military conflict against slightly stronger rising power targets than other rising power targets, and prefer weaker territory targets to other territorial targets when choosing their military targets.

Next, I carry out a qualitative test on two historical cases: the first North Korean nuclear crisis and South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War. The two cases show the causal mechanism that political leaders are motivated by domestic unrest to initiate military aggression but also constrained by foreign conditions. After the Korean War, South Korea suffered political unrest and economic troubles. This is why unpopular South Korean leaders, Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee, sought to send combat troops to Vietnam in 1954 and in 1961, respectively. But it was in 1965 that President Park could realize his plan when South Vietnam could not defend itself anymore and the People's Republic of China developed nuclear weapons. While North Korea was diplomatically isolated and militarily and economically weaker than South Korea, at least from 1990 on, it did not adopt confrontational policies toward its opponents, including South Korea and the United States, until 1993 when Kim Il Sung recognized domestic troubles such as a bad economy and weak military loyalty. In short, the interaction between internal unrest and external threats led to the two Koreas' initiation of military aggression.

## **Acknowledgement and Dedication**

My years at Rutgers was a six-year journey with good people. I have incurred academic debts to my teachers, especially to my dissertation committee members, Professors Jack S. Levy, Roy Licklider, Richard Lau, and Jeffrey Pickering. Levy showed his maps of international security and foreign policy analysis through his classes, encouraged me to find a theoretically meaningful and empirically testable research question, and gave constructive and detailed comments to every research proposal and dissertation chapter paper. Licklider taught me what is and is not a good science and helped me develop a clear and focused research design before jumping into dissertation research and writing. Lau offered me a gentle introduction to statistical analysis and political psychology and provided both useful comments and warm encouragement. Pickering showed his faith in my dissertation research and gave thoughtful and helpful points for further development.

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My years as PhD student was a journey under His wings. With gratitude and happiness, I dedicate this dissertation to my Lord, my Savior, and my Friend.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1. QUESTION

Does domestic unrest cause interstate conflict? Many historians and journalists have often attributed a cause of interstate conflict to domestic unrest. According to them, struggling leaders tend to initiate interstate conflicts in order to divert public attention from domestic troubles, as seen in many historical cases such as the Falklands War and World War I. However, this diversionary war theory has faced challenges from studies which found no strong correlation between domestic unrest and interstate conflict. The critics of the theory of diversionary war insist that domestically-troubled states are as aggressive as others are because when faced with domestic troubles political leaders have multiple policy options, some of which seem to them less costly and less risky than foreign diversion and/or because a political leader's diversionary incentive rarely results in the military use of force due to domestic and foreign constraints. While there has been continuous if not growing interest in domestic unrest as a cause of interstate conflict, no consensus has been reached among scholars until now.

This study aims to explain when domestic unrest leads to interstate conflict, with a focus on types of potential targets. What types of potential targets attract diversionary action? Against do political leaders try to use military force in order to divert public attention and consolidate their political control of the state? As I discuss below, some

scholars have paid attention to various state-level and dyad-level conditions such as regime type and rivalry under which domestic unrest contributes to interstate violence. However, few have conducted empirical studies to see the effects of potential targets on diversionary action. In this study, I expect struggling leaders are prudent in choosing their diversionary targets because they know that the domestic audience's response to their military action is largely affected by which state they target. They may prefer a state against which a new conflict would produce not domestic discontent but "rally-round-the-flag effect" with which they can stay in office.

## **2. ARGUMENT**

This study argues that domestically-troubled states are more aggressive than others only toward certain types of states. More specifically, the more a state suffers from domestic unrest, the more likely a state is to initiate a conflict against a state whose relative power has increased rapidly (a rising power target) or a state which occupies a disputed territory (a territory target). By conducting statistical analyses on directed dyad-year cases from 1920 to 2001, I found that domestic unrest significantly contributes to the correlation between a state's political unrest in (t-1) year and its initiation of interstate conflict against a power or territory target in (t) year. In addition, my case studies on the North Korean nuclear crisis and South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War show that this study's causal mechanism generally produced the expected foreign diversion outcome. When faced with domestic unrest, political leaders in both cases targeted states whose relative power had increased rapidly and justified their actions as necessary and

beneficial to the whole nation. This had the effect of consolidating their control over domestic politics.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Domestic unrest has been regarded as one of the domestic causes of interstate war.<sup>1</sup> While domestic factors have attracted relatively little attention from the mainstream of international relations studies during the Cold War, neorealism and neoliberalism, focusing on system-level factors such as power distribution and international institutions, many historians, journalists, international relations scholars have shed light on domestic unrest when explaining the outbreaks of interstate conflicts, including the Sino-Japanese War in 1894,<sup>2</sup> World War I,<sup>3</sup> the Six Day War,<sup>4</sup> the Yom Kippur War,<sup>5</sup> the Falklands War,<sup>6</sup> the tension between Taiwan and China from 1995 to 2004,<sup>7</sup> North Korea's artillery attack on Yeonpyeong Island of South Korea in 2010.<sup>8</sup> According to them, when faced with domestic troubles, political leaders often expect a high probability of losing their office and then try to create interstate conflicts in order to divert public attention to foreign affairs and to keep or increase their political power. For example, Mas Hastings

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of the domestic politics approach to interstate conflict, see Levy 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholls, Huth, and Appel 2010: 930-933.

<sup>3</sup> Joll and Martel 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Stein 1993; Cashman and Robinson 2007: Ch. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Stein 1985a, 1985b.

<sup>6</sup> Hastings and Jenkins 1983; Levy and Vakili 1992; Oakes 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Li, James, and Drury 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Fackler 2010.

and Simon Jenkins explain General Galtieri's decision for invasion leading to the Falklands War as his "gamble" for political survival:

Within Argentina, recovery of the 'Malvinas [Falklands]' would not stifle internal dissent, but at least it would unite the nation for a time. It would serve as a vindication of military rule and cleanse the reputation of the armed forces after the horrors of the dirty war ... It would also elevate the junta to an authority which was certainly required to enforce Alemann's economic package.<sup>9</sup>

A more recent example is the political analysis on North Korea's repeated aggressions at least since the 1990s. They often attribute its military provocations to political and economic unrest:

North Korea's artillery bombardment of a South Korean island on Tuesday follows what analysts call a pattern of aggressive actions by the secretive government when it feels under stress or threatened.

...

The recent provocations could be a show aimed at the broader domestic population, to once again rally them behind the government by creating an air of crisis. Some experts have also speculated that the recent acts were ordered by the younger Kim to establish his leadership credentials with the military, arguably the most powerful institution in North Korea.<sup>10</sup>

This logic of diversionary war has gained some support from social psychologists' studies on the effects of out-group conflict on in-group cohesion.<sup>11</sup> Even in a "minimal" intergroup situation in which people rarely have contact with their out-group members, people usually show their bias for in-group members and against out-group members. If their group is under threat from the out-group, the bias is significantly

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<sup>9</sup> Hastings and Jenkins 1983: 48.

<sup>10</sup> Fackler 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Coser 1964; Simmel 1964.

strengthened. Not surprisingly, some political scientists have begun to develop formal models in (most of) which two rational actors in domestic politics, a leader and a public, are given the choice whether to initiate diversionary conflict in order to achieve the goal of political survival (leader) or whether to change the political leader in order to ensure greater competence (public). These models show why and how a state's diversionary action results from political leader's rational calculation of his private interests.<sup>12</sup>

But the diversionary war literature has found at best mixed support from statistical analyses on cases across time and space.<sup>13</sup> As summarized in **Table 1.1**, there has been little consensus among International Relations (IR) scholars on the effects of domestic unrest on interstate conflict since Rudolph Rummel's (1963) study.<sup>14</sup> Although there were 18 studies supporting the diversionary view, 14 studies found only little or ambiguous correlation between domestic trouble and interstate conflict. However, IR scholars have given growing attention to the effects of domestic unrest on interstate conflict as seen in increasing numbers of cross-national quantitative studies on diversionary conflict from the 1980s (1 study), to the 1990s (6 studies) to the 2000s (14 studies). In addition, they have developed various sophisticated research designs. First, scholars have studied diversionary conflict as a state-level outcome (i.e. initiation of conflict) as well as dyad-level outcome (i.e. occurrence of conflict between two states). While in the 1960s and 1970s the unit of analysis was state-year or state average in a given period,<sup>15</sup> beginning in the 1980s these scholars began to test their diversionary

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Richards et al. 1993; Smith 1996; Tarar 2006.

<sup>13</sup> For reviews on diversionary war theory, Levy 1989; Heldt 1997; Enterline 2010; Levy and Thompson 2010: 99-104.

<sup>14</sup> For examples, see Tanter 1966; Enterline and Gleditsch 2000; Meernik 2004; Oneal and Tir 2006.

<sup>15</sup> One exception is Denton's (1966) study whose unit of analysis is war.

hypothesis with various units of analysis, including state-year, non-directed dyad-year, directed dyad-year, leader-year. Second, scholars sometimes focused on a subset of all cross-national cases in order to see the effects of dyadic, regional, or temporal conditions (e.g. bordering states, states in Africa, the Middle East, or Latin America, city states of Renaissance Italy) or in order to use data which are valid but limited to some states in relatively recent years (e.g. industrialized democracies since the 1960s). Below I discuss in more detail how IR scholars tried to go beyond the gap between theory and evidence, between small-N studies and large-N studies through more sophisticated theories and research designs. They examined various types of independent variables, intervening variables, and/or dependent variables in order to answer when, which domestic unrest leads to which diversionary action.

**Table 1.1 Cross-National Quantitative Studies on Diversionary Conflict, 1963-2010<sup>16</sup>**

| Author                       | Unit of Analysis   | Diversionary Motivation Variable  | Dependent Variable  | Condition   | Diversionary Effect |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---------------------|
| Rummel (1963)                | State average (1955-57, 77 states)                           | 9 indicators (# of assassinations, strikes, guerrilla warfare, government crises, purges, riots, revolutions, demonstrations, and people killed in domestic violence) | 3 factors (War, Diplomacy, Belligerency) based on 13 indicators (# of anti-foreign demonstrations, negative sanctions, protests, countries with which diplomatic relations severed, ambassadors expelled or recalled, diplomatic officials of less than ambassador's rank expelled or recalled, threats, military action, wars, troop movements, mobilizations, accusations, people killed in foreign conflict) |   | No                  |
| Denton (1966)                | War (1820-1949)  | Government insecurity   | War size  |   | No                  |
| Tanter (1966)                | State average (1955-57 for 77 states/ 1958-60 for 83 states) | See Rummel (1963)   | See Rummel (1963)   |   | Yes or No           |
| Haas (1968)                  | State average (1900-60, 10 states)                           | 1. Unemployment/2. Electricity consumption  | Military expenditure/War frequency/War aggressiveness   |   | 1. No/2. No         |
| Wilkenfeld (1968)            | State average in a given year (1955-60, 74 states)           | See Rummel (1963)   | See Rummel (1963)   | Types of nation (centrist, polyarchic, personalist)/ Introducing state-year as a unit of analysis | Yes                 |
| Wilkenfeld (1969)            | State average in a given year (1955-60, 74 states)           | See Rummel (1963)   | See Rummel (1963)   | Types of nation (centrist, polyarchic, personalist)   | Yes                 |
| Zinnes and Wilkenfeld (1971) | State average in a given year (1955-60, 74 states)           | 2 factors (Internal war, Turmoil) based on Rummel's (1963) 9 indicators   | 3 factors (War, Diplomatic, Belligerency) based on Rummel's (1963) 13 indicators  | Types of nation (centrist, polyarchic, personalist)   | Yes                 |

<sup>16</sup> I slightly changed Miller and Elgün's (2010: 3-4) Table 1 and appended recent studies (2007-2010) to it.



|                              |   |   |  |  |                      |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|--|----------------------|
| Collins (1973)               | State average/ State average in a given year (1963-65, 33 African states) | 7 variables (anomic outbreaks, subversive activities, revolutionary activities, elite instability, # killed in domestic violence, domestic suppression, # of political arrests)   | 8 variables (diplomatic hostility, negative behavior, military violence, # killed in foreign violence, antforeign unofficial activity, internal interference, hostile policies, general criticism) |  | Yes                  |
| Hazlewood (1973)             | State average (1958-60, 82 states)  | Economic growth (Change in GNP per capita)  | See Tanter (1966)  | Population diversity   | Yes                  |
| Wilkenfeld and Zinnes (1973) | State average in a given year (1955-60, 74 states)                        | See Zinnes/Wilkenfeld (1971)  | See Zinnes/Wilkenfeld (1971)   | Types of nation (centrist, polyarchic, personalist)                                | Yes                  |
| Hazlewood (1975)             | State average in a given year (1954-66, 75 states)                        | 1. Mass protest (# of riots, protest demonstrations, political strikes, arrests for protest participation)/2. Elite instability (# of assassinations, political executions, unsuccessful irregular power transfers, successful irregular power transfers, governmental sanctions, repressive actions against specific groups) | Disputes/Conflicts/Hostilities   | Structural wars (# of guerilla wars, armed attacks, deaths from domestic conflict) | 1. Yes/2. Yes        |
| James (1987)                 | Dyadic crisis (1948-75, 133 crises)                                       | Domestic conflict (4 indicators)  | Crisis escalation  |  | Yes                  |
| Miller (1995)                | Dyadic dispute target-Year (1955-76, 294 disputes)                        | Economic growth   | Use of force   | Regime type (Autocracy)  | Yes                  |
| Gelpi (1997)                 | Dyadic crisis (1948-82, 180 crises)                                       | 1. Protest (# of non-violent strife)/2. Rebellion (# of violent strife)   | Minor/Major force  | Regime type (Democracy)  | 1. Yes/2. Yes        |
| Leeds and Davis (1997)       | State-Year/State-Quarter (1952-88, 18 industrialized democracies)         | 1. Economic growth/2. Election  | MID initiation/Showing or using force  |  | 1. No/2. No          |
| Dassel and Reinhardt (1999)  | State-Year (1827-1982, 107 states)  | Contested institutions  | Using force  |  | Yes                  |
| Heldt (1999)                 | Dyadic territorial dispute challenger-Year (1950-90)                      | Economic growth   | Military conflict  | Risk/Cost  | Yes                  |
| Miller (1999)                | Dyadic dispute-Year (1816-1992)   | 1. Economic growth/2. Protest/3. Rebellion  | Use of force/war   | Regime type (Autocracy vs. Democracy)  | 1. Yes/2. Yes/3. Yes |

|                                |  |  |   |  |                           |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|--|---------------------------|
| Enterline and Gleditsch (2000) | Leader-Year (1948-82)  | 7 indicator factor   | Repression/MID(>=4) involvement   |  | No                        |
| Davies (2002)                  | Directed dyad-Year (1816-1992, Using case control method)                    | 1. Protest (# of non-violent strife)/2. Rebellion (# of violent strife)  | Use of force/war  | Regime type/Regime change and turbulence               | 1. No/2. Yes              |
| Sprecher and DeRouen (2002)    | State-Month (1948-98, Israel and Arab 5 states)                              | Protest  | Military action   |  | Yes                       |
| Chiozza and Goemans (2003)     | Leader-Year (1919-92)  | 21 variables (Risk of losing office)   | Crisis initiation   |  | No                        |
| Mitchell and Prins (2004)      | Politically relevant directed dyad-Year (1960-2001)                          | Inflation (CPI)  | MID initiation  | Enduring rivalry                                       | Yes                       |
| Pickering and Kisangani (2005) | State-Year (1950-96)   | 1. Elite unrest (# of crises, purges)/2. Mass unrest (# of strikes, demonstrations, riots)/3. Economic growth/4. Inflation | # of Int'l Military Intervention (IMI)s   | Regime type (Consolidating/mature autocracy/democracy) | 1. Yes/2. Yes/3. No/4. No |
| Oneal and Tir (2006)           | Directed and non-directed dyad-Year (1921-2001)                              | Economic growth  | Fatal MID initiation/onset  | Regime type  | No                        |
| Kisangani and Pickering (2007) | State-Year (1950-96)   | 1. Elite unrest (# of crises, purges)/2. Mass unrest (# of strikes, demonstrations, riots)/3. Economic growth/4. Inflation | # of politico-strategic interventions/# of socio-economic interventions             | Regime type  | 1. Yes/2. Yes/3. No/4. No |
| Sobek (2007)                   | Directed dyad-Year (1250-1494, seven major city-states of Renaissance Italy) | Sorokin (1962)'s intensity of domestic unrest (# of people, amount of violence)  | War initiation  | Regime type (Oligarchy)                                | Yes                       |
| Kisangani and Pickering (2009) | State-Year (1950-96)   | 1. Elite unrest (# of crises, purges)/2. Mass unrest (# of strikes, demonstrations, riots)/3. Economic growth/4. Inflation | # of IMIs   | Mature democracy                                       | 1. No/2. Yes/3. No/4. Yes |
| Miller and Elgün (2010)        | State-Year (1960-99, Latin America)  | Coup risk  | MID initiation  |  | Yes                       |
| Mitchell and Thyne (2010)      | Politically-relevant directed dyad-Year (1960-2001)                          | Inflation (CPI)  | MID initiation  | Ongoing issue claim                                    | Yes                       |
| Pickering and Kisangani (2010) | State-Year (1950-2005, 140 autocracies)                                      | 1. Elite unrest (# of crises, purges)/2. Mass unrest (# of strikes, demonstrations, riots)/3. Economic growth/4. Inflation | # of IMIs   | Types of autocracy (Single-party)                      | 1. Yes/2. No/3. No/4. No  |
| Tir (2010)                     | Directed dyad-Year (post-WWII, bordering dyads)                              | 1. Government unpopularity (# of protests, strikes, riots)/2. Economic growth  | Territorial MID initiation/Fatal Territorial MID initiation/Int'l Crisis initiation |  | 1. Yes/2. No              |

### 3.1. WHAT CAUSES CONFLICT? (INDEPENDENT VARIABLE)

First, there has been much attention to types of domestic unrest. What type of domestic unrest is most likely to make political leaders initiate diversionary actions? With which political and/or economic variable can we measure domestic unrest without measurement error? Since Rummel<sup>17</sup> and Raymond Tanter<sup>18</sup> used nine indicators of political unrest (assassinations, strikes, guerrilla warfare, government crises, purges, riots, revolutions, demonstrations, people killed in domestic violence), many have followed their example. By counting the number of political unrest events in a given country (in a given year), they tried to measure whether or how much a state suffered from domestic unrest. One weakness of this measurement is difficulty in measuring the size of domestic unrest. Although more (or fewer) events represent more (or less) severe domestic unrest in these studies, we may agree that even one political unrest event could threaten political leaders more than do multiple ones because not all events include many people (especially politically influential ones), occur in/around the capital, or directly aim to change leadership rather than policies.

In addition, IR scholars have used economic and public opinion data. Variables of economic growth, inflation, and unemployment provide more information about the intensity of domestic trouble than does the political event number variable. But it is unclear whether and when a bad economy weakens political leadership. While people often attribute high inflation, low growth, and high unemployment to their incumbent

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<sup>17</sup> Rummel 1963.

<sup>18</sup> Tanter 1966.

leader, they sometimes blame their previous leaders and/or external powers such as foreign investors and international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for their situation, especially during and in the wake of international financial crisis. Accordingly, even if a state is going through an economic recession, its political leader might enjoy strong national, or at least partisan, support by emphasizing poor management by his/her predecessor and/or the immoral and speculative nature of foreign investment. On the other hand, some scholars have used public opinion polls on the political leader's job approval.<sup>19</sup> But this type of data is available only for politically and economically advanced states and covers a recent time period.

There has also been interest in different types of correlations between domestic unrest and foreign diversion. Although scholars often assume that more unrest is more likely lead to diversionary conflict, Jack Levy has suggested an inverted U relation, rather than a linear positive one, between domestic unrest and the probability of diversionary action, pointing out that severe domestic troubles often weaken the power of political leaders and reduce their resources significantly.<sup>20</sup> Political leaders may have both the incentive and the capacity to initiate a diversionary conflict during a medium level of domestic unrest while they have only incentive during a high level of domestic unrest and they have only capacity during a low level of domestic unrest. Jeffrey Pickering and Emizet Kisangani have developed the hypothesis that a "medium," not "acute," level of

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Ostrom and Job 1986; Morgan and Bickers 1992; Meernik 2004; Clark and Reed 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Levy 1989: 273-275.

domestic unrest is most likely to lead to diversionary action by domestically-troubled states. Their tests of this hypothesis have yielded mixed results.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.2. WHEN, UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS? (INTERVENING VARIABLE)

In addition to the independent variable, IR scholars have paid due attention to intervening variables. Considering that political leaders have multiple policy options for dealing with domestic troubles, they asked when political leaders choose a foreign diversion over other policy options such as domestic repression and domestic reform in order to stay in office. They then tested whether or not certain conditions affect the correlation (or causal relation) between domestic unrest and interstate conflict. Although there are some scholars who study the effects of dyad-level and leader-level factors, including (territorial) rivalry<sup>22</sup> and the leader's in-group bias,<sup>23</sup> two domestic conditions have been explored widely as intervening conditions for the onset of diversionary conflict: regime capacity and regime type. These studies provided more sophisticated explanations for the occurrence of diversionary conflict but also suffered from some limitations in logic and/or evidence, as discussed below and in the next chapter.

#### 3.2.1. Regime Capacity

Assuming that foreign diversion is more costly and more risky than other policy options, some scholars argue that political leaders prefer domestic repression and internal reform to diversionary action. According to them, the reason that political leaders initiate

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<sup>21</sup> Pickering and Kisangani 2005; Kisangani and Pickering 2007, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Mitchell and Prins 2004; Mitchell and Thyne 2010; Tir 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Foster and Keller 2010.

a diversionary conflict is because there is no available alternative. Because they lack the power to repress dissatisfied people and/or the resources to initiate internal reform, they resort to their least wanted option. In explaining the occurrence of the Falklands War, Amy Oakes stresses two “indirect causes” which led to the military junta’s decision to launch a foreign adventure: “inability to repress” and “inability to reform.”<sup>24</sup> She argues that not only domestic unrest but also low state extractive capacity led the Argentinian leader to invade the Falkland Islands. On the other hand, Christopher Gelpi has shed light on the fact that democracies initiate diversionary actions more often than do autocracies by pointing to the inability of democratic leaders to engage in domestic repression.<sup>25</sup> In short, only political leaders who can neither repress nor satisfy their domestic audience search for foreign military targets in order to remain in office.

But this approach should consider that multiple policy options for dealing with domestic unrest, including foreign diversion, internal reform, and domestic repression can be complementary rather than mutually exclusive.<sup>26</sup> If political leaders are allowed to choose only one for maintaining or increasing their political power, we should say the policy options are substitutes. But struggling leaders often try to kill one bird with two or three stones. For example, Kim Jong Il was a brutal dictator who repressed the North Korean people beginning in the 1990s. But he also initiated several short-lived and failed reforms, and started limited militarized conflicts with South Korea, the United States, and Japan when North Korea suffered from domestic troubles, including several floods, food scarcity, and the transfer of political leadership to his third son. In their analyses of

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<sup>24</sup> Oakes 2006.

<sup>25</sup> Gelpi 1997.

<sup>26</sup> Clark and Reed 2005.

leader-year cases from 1948 to 1982, Andrew Enterline and Kristian Gleditsch found little support for the idea that political leaders substitute repression for diversion, or vice versa when faced with domestic pressure.<sup>27</sup> The result implies that political leaders often rely on using force against their domestic audience *and* a foreign target in order to survive politically.

### 3.2.2. Regime Type: Domestic Constraints and Transparency

Some scholars have taken an interest in the effects of domestic political institutions on a political leader's decision to use diversionary action, focusing on domestic constraints on political leaders and transparency. Based their argument on the selectorate theory of Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and his colleagues,<sup>28</sup> Kisangani and Pickering have suggested that mature democracies, regimes with large winning coalitions, i.e. regimes with a high level of domestic constraints, are more likely to initiate a diversionary conflict because leaders who are expected to satisfy many people have larger diversionary incentives than do leaders of other types of regimes when faced with same level of domestic unrest.<sup>29</sup> On the contrary, Ross Miller insists that domestically-troubled states are more likely to retaliate against foreign aggression when they are autocracies because authoritarian leaders are less constrained by domestic actors than democratic leaders from escalating crisis into large-scale violence.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, by dividing domestic unrest into elite unrest and mass unrest, Pickering and Kisangani tested whether or not autocratic diversions (or democratic diversions) result

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<sup>27</sup> Enterline and Gleditsch 2000.

<sup>28</sup> Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Kisangani and Pickering 2009.

from elite unrest (or mass unrest) because authoritarian leaders are vulnerable to military coup and intra-elite revolt while democratic leaders are concerned about losing popular elections and weak public support.<sup>31</sup> Pickering and Kisangani also shifted the focus to various sizes of winning coalitions across autocracies and then provided some evidence for systematic differences in diversionary behaviors among three types of autocracy: single-party, personalist, military regime.<sup>32</sup>

Aside from domestic constraints, there has been interest in transparency and its affect on the onset of diversionary conflict. One explanation for the absence of diversionary conflict is strategic interaction between states, more specifically strategic avoidance by potential targets. Even if political leaders had planned to initiate a diversionary conflict, they may not have been able to do so because their potential opponent recognized the aggressive preference and took some strategic move (e.g. a conciliatory stance, an alliance) in order to avoid being a target of international conflict. Alastair Smith has suggested that democratic leaders may want foreign diversion but cannot initiate diversionary conflicts because their opponents know what they want.<sup>33</sup> Following his logic of strategic interaction, some scholars have tested whether democratic states<sup>34</sup> or the United States<sup>35</sup> are less likely to initiate or to be involved in interstate conflicts when suffering from domestic troubles, and have found some evidence supporting their hypotheses.

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<sup>30</sup> Miller 1995.

<sup>31</sup> Pickering and Kisangani 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Pickering and Kisangani 2010.

<sup>33</sup> Smith 1996, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Leeds and Davis 1997; Chiozza and Goemans 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Clark 2003; Fordham 2005.



However, IR scholars have not reached a consensus about which regime type is more likely to prevent diversionary action or diversionary conflict. To find an answer to this question, it is necessary to develop more sophisticated research designs which contribute to a better understanding of causality as well as correlation between domestic unrest and interstate conflict. There have been some efforts to see whether certain institutions have pacifying effects on diversionary conflict but few efforts to show why. Even if there is strong evidence that democracies are more peaceful than autocracies in terms of the initiation of diversionary conflict, we still do not know which mechanism produces this outcome. While some may argue that a democracy's transparency prevents a diversionary conflict by triggering its potential opponent's strategic move, others who prefer the institutional constraints approach might insist that a democracy's check-and-balance system keeps its leaders from gambling for their political gains.

### 3.3 WHAT KIND OF MILITARY ACTION? (DEPENDENT VARIABLE)

Diversity of diversion has attracted attention from some scholars. Many of those who study diversionary conflict have an interest in domestic unrest as a cause of large-scale interstate conflict, i.e. interstate war. But some have insisted that struggling leaders prefer small-scale conflict to large-scale conflict because the latter is more likely than the former to produce domestic backfire (i.e. domestic resentment of a political leader's decision for military action and his/her leadership) due to its large cost.<sup>36</sup> This is one of the reasons of why many quantitative studies of diversionary conflict consider interstate conflict (or crisis) rather than interstate war as their dependent variables. For example,

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<sup>36</sup> Levy 1989: 281-282.

Kisangani and Pickering distinguish between “high politics” interventions (politics-strategic intervention) and “low politics” interventions (socio-economic intervention) and test whether non-authoritarian leaders are more likely to initiate the latter than the former when suffering from domestic troubles.<sup>37</sup> The rationale for this expectation is that leaders of non-autocracies are more concerned about high (expected) costs of military action and are less able than authoritarian leaders to initiate “belligerent” actions due to their regimes’ transparency resulting in potential targets’ strategic avoidance.

However, even if it is true that political leaders aim to initiate non-military intervention (and small-scale military conflict), it does not mean that domestic unrest is not a cause of interstate conflict with large-scale violence. If our interest, our study’s dependent variable, is interstate large-scale violence, we should try to examine the conditions, if any, under which domestic unrest drives states into brutal fighting. For example, Argentina’s junta leaders expected that the UK would not retaliate militarily to their invasion of the Falkland Islands before the Falklands War. But their misperception of their potential target’s intention (and their potential target’s misperception of Argentina’s intention) contributed to the onset of the large-scale violence. When and why do leaders choose military intervention for diversion rather than non-military intervention? When and why are struggling leaders’ diversionary actions escalated into large-scale violence? Though various types of diversion are worthy of study, interstate military conflict is still the main target in the diversionary war literature.

### 3.4. MISSED: AGAINST WHOM?

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<sup>37</sup> Kisangani and Pickering 2007, 2011.

In sum, the recent studies of diversionary war have developed more sophisticated theories linking domestic unrest with interstate conflict and have tested them in both quantitative and qualitative ways. By considering various types of political and economic unrest (e.g. undergrowth, inflation, unemployment, unpopularity, intra-elite conflict, discontent of the ruling party supporters, divided government, elite/mass unrest), of international outcome (small scale/large scale violence, low-politics/high-politics intervention), and of potential diversions (e.g. mature/immature democracy/autocracy/mixed, conservative/liberal leadership, transparent/non-transparent regimes), these studies aim to answer a question of when, what makes what.

Yet, little attention has been paid to types of potential target. Which potential targets attract diversionary action? Against whom are domestically-troubled states more likely to initiate conflicts? Considering not only types of potential diverters but also types of potential targets, we may reach a better understanding of when diversionary conflicts occur. Kim Jong Il, a former leader of one of the failed states, initiated military crises with South Korea, the United States, and Japan. Why not with China or Russia? While few expect that the current economic recession would make the US initiate a conflict with its bordering neighbors Canada and Mexico, some worry that the bad economy may lead Russian leaders to create a crisis with the US in order to consolidate their domestic control.<sup>38</sup> Why did General Leopoldo Galtieri of Argentina choose the UK rather than one of Argentina's neighbors in 1982? Given that political leaders of domestically-troubled states expect different domestic responses from provoking different targets before making decisions for diversion, we can expect that struggling leaders take

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<sup>38</sup> Barry 2009.

aggressive actions against some states but not against others. They might be selective in choosing their military targets in order to maximize the probability of their political survival.

This study will fill the hole in the literature by examining whether and how types of potential targets affect the onset of diversionary action. Although some scholars have noted a need for target-based diversionary conflict theories,<sup>39</sup> few have made efforts to develop and test a theory about the effects of the combination of one state's domestic unrest and its potential target's type on the state's decision to take military action. Only some scholars have paid attention to dyadic conditions such as rivalry and "contentious issues" in order to see whether dyad types affect diversionary military action.<sup>40</sup> But these studies do not provide a clear causal mechanism from domestic unrest to interstate conflict. For example, even if we find a positive and significant effect of rivalry on the relation between domestic unrest and interstate conflict, we do not know who initiates conflict and why. Did domestically-troubled states initiate a conflict because their leaders wanted to divert public attention? Or did states free from domestic unrest start conflict with states suffering from domestic troubles in order to take advantage of their target's difficulties? If domestically-troubled states often initiate conflicts with their territorial or strategic rivals, why? Is a state suffering from domestic troubles more likely to initiate a territorial conflict when it is a defender (i.e. a state now occupying disputed territory) or when it is a challenger (i.e. a state seeking to (re)take disputed territory)? The studies focusing on dyad-level conditions fail to answer these questions. But this study can do so

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<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Levy 1989: 274-275, 277.

<sup>40</sup> Mitchell and Prins 2004; Mitchell and Thyne 2010; Tir 2010.

because it considers not dyadic conditions but the potential target's condition and then provides a more detailed causal path from domestic unrest to interstate conflict.

#### **4. ORGANIZATION**

The organization of the dissertation is as follows. Chapter 2 presents a theory of diversionary targets. I propose two sets of targets which attract diversionary actions, fear-producing ones and greed-producing ones, and then develop testable hypotheses about the effects of rising power targets, identity targets, territory targets, and hegemony targets on the correlation between domestic unrest and the initiation of interstate conflict. In addition, I introduce three alternative theories: a traditional theory of diversionary war, offensive realism, and a theory of opportunistic war. Chapter 3 discusses my research strategy to test the hypotheses in both quantitative and qualitative ways. I introduce the benefits of multi method, explain my unit-of-analysis, statistical model, and measurement of variables for the quantitative test, and justify my selection of two historical cases for the qualitative test. Chapter 4 reports quantitative test results. I present logit analysis results with tables, display predicted probabilities of initiation of interstate conflict, and provide some robust check results. Chapters 5 and 6 report qualitative test results. Chapter 5 examines South Korea and North Vietnam in the early 1960s. I analyze the process of South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War in the wake of the April Student Revolution of 1960 and the May Coup of 1961. Chapter 6 examines North Korea and South Korea in the early 1990s. I trace the process of the first North Korean nuclear crisis with a focus on North Korea's domestic conditions (leadership succession and

economic hardship) and its decline relative to South Korea since the late 1980s. Chapter 7 concludes by summarizing this study's findings, discussing their implications, and pointing toward future research questions.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I propose a theory which explains when domestic unrest leads to interstate conflict with a focus on types of potential foreign targets. This diversionary target theory expects political leaders of domestically-troubled states to initiate a military conflict against a state with which a crisis can produce their domestic audience's fear and/or greed in order to get public support for themselves as well as aggressive foreign policies. More specifically, by targeting a state with increasing relative power or with a different identity, political leaders may manipulate public fear around losing what the nation has, tangible or intangible, and then justify military aggression as an action preventing future great losses. On the other hand, political leaders can choose a state occupying a disputed territory or a declining hegemon as a diversionary target in order to exploit public greed and to sell their military aggression as one of great national benefit.

In this study, I define a diversionary conflict as an interstate conflict initiated by a political leader who wants to divert public attention to foreign affairs in order to maintain his/her control of domestic politics. In short, a political leader's diversionary motivation is necessary for diversionary conflict. But I do not mean that a diversionary conflict is caused only by domestic unrest. Rather, I believe that almost all, if not all, interstate

conflicts result from multiple causes.<sup>41</sup> When I say diversionary conflicts in this study, I refer to interstate conflicts which result from multiple factors, including political leaders' diversionary incentives.<sup>42</sup> The aim of this study is to examine whether and when domestic unrest contributes to an onset of interstate conflict.

In the following, I begin with a discussion of a rational leader framework of foreign policy-making. Then, I review a traditional theory of diversionary war, introduce my diversionary target theory, and develop empirically testable hypotheses. Finally, I compare my diversionary target theory with its competitors: a traditional theory of diversionary war, offensive realism, and a theory of opportunistic war; these present different causal paths from domestic unrest and/or foreign threat/opportunity to interstate conflict.

## **2. RATIONAL LEADER AND FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING**

In order to explain international political and foreign policy outcomes, international relations (IR) scholars have paid varying attention to multiple levels of analysis, such as individual, state, and system since the end of World War II.<sup>43</sup> System-level factors such as balance of power and polarity gained much attention during the Cold War period, especially since the 1979 publication of *Theory of International Politics* by

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<sup>41</sup> I agree with Jack Levy (2008: 3) that labeling some war cases under their common necessary condition (e.g. preventive war) can be “problematic” because it “privileges one over others [other causes]” and “emphasizes the motivation of one state while neglecting those of the other.”

<sup>42</sup> I believe that there are “multiple paths to war.” Thus, I argue that not all, but some, interstate conflicts result to some extent from diversionary incentives. For a view on multiple paths to war, see Levy and Thompson 2010: 213-214.



Kenneth Waltz, who encouraged others to study the effects of system-level variables on international political outcomes as distinguishing international relations theories from foreign policy theories. During this period, for example, some scholars debated and examined whether, why, and how power distribution and power transition contribute to an onset of war, especially one among great powers.<sup>44</sup> Others shed light on the presence and role of global or regional hegemony and economic interdependence among states in order to explain international cooperation.<sup>45</sup> In these neorealist and neoliberal approaches, states are distinct from one another only according to their size, i.e. levels of power.

However, after the end of the Cold War period, many IR scholars began to open up the black boxes. In trying to explain some international political outcomes, especially ones aberrant from system-level theories, e.g. absence of war between democracies, they shifted their focus to state-level and/or individual-level factors such as regime type and perception. For example, assuming that states are not determined but constrained by the international system, some of them posed the question of why democratic states are more peaceful (in state- or dyad-level) than authoritarian states under the same external conditions. They then examined the effects of a democratic political system on foreign policy making and interstate relations. While the system-level approach sees a state as a unitary actor maximizing national interest,<sup>46</sup> this non-system level approach sees a state

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<sup>43</sup> There is no consensus on the number of levels. For example, David Singer (1961) suggests two levels (national state and international system); Kenneth Waltz (1959) three levels (man, state, system); and Jervis (1976) five levels (individual, group, bureaucracy, state, system).

<sup>44</sup> For balance of power, see Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001. For power transition, see Organski 1958; Organski and Kugler 1980.

<sup>45</sup> For hegemonic stability, see Gilpin 1981; Keohane 2005[1984]. For economic interdependence and war, see Keohane and Nye 1977; Axelrod and Keohane 1985; Mansfield and Pollins 2003; Gartzke 2007.

<sup>46</sup> But system level theorists do not always dismiss non-system factors; they sometimes take them into account in order to explain some cases. One recent good example is a study on the effects of lobbies on

as a non-unitary actor in which multiple actors exist and often compete for their own interests.

In order to explain whether and when one state-level factor (i.e. domestic unrest) matters in international politics, I first assume that states are non-unitary actors. Although the unitary actor assumption allows us to develop a *parsimonious* theory, it often renders our theory lacking in *explanatory power*. Without starting with a non-unitary actor assumption, I cannot provide a plausible causal path that links this study's independent variable (domestic unrest) to the dependent variable (initiation of interstate conflict) within a domestic political setting.

Assumption 1: States are non-unitary actors.

If a state is not unitary, who should be examined? Not surprisingly, many IR scholars taking the domestic politics approach have had much interest in those who are politically powerful, i.e. political leaders and elites. But how much do they matter? Some who espouse the models of a bureaucratic/governmental politics and/or group decision-making often see a political leader as one member of a decision-making group who is usually superior in influencing the outcome but who does not alone determine the outcome. For example, some scholars and journalists explain certain policy outcomes through the lens of bureaucratic politics: the outcomes are political resultants among key members who form coalitions and anti-coalitions and bargain with each other using different preferences and varying influences, both of which are shaped by their

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American foreign policy on the Middle East by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (2007) , two scholars well known for their balance-of-power(threat) studies.

bureaucratic positions.<sup>47</sup> In the groupthink model, both the top leader and high-ranking policy-makers are victims of “groupthink,” a psychological phenomenon in which group members are hesitant to share various ideas but feel pressured to reduce conflict within the group, which often results in bad decisions, as exemplified in President Kennedy’s decision regarding the invasion of the Bay of Pigs.<sup>48</sup> In short, in this group level approach there is no such thing as one-man rule. Even political leaders influence policy outcomes only through “pull and haul” and only by negotiations with others.

On the other hand, some IR scholars see political leaders as dominant decision makers. In his critique of the bureaucratic politics model, Stephen Krasner describes a president as a “king,” whose preference is not determined by where (s)he sits, who chooses key members, creates rules of the game, and shapes “action-channels” and “bureaucratic interests.”<sup>49</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and his colleagues begin their selectorate theory by introducing their assumption about political leaders as dominant actors in foreign policy-making.<sup>50</sup> While admitting that political leaders do not always determine all policies but are often checked by others, especially in a democracy, they stress that political leaders sometimes play veto players in decision making processes when surrounded by high ranking officers who share their interests and ideas with their boss, and insist that this dominant leader assumption is useful, albeit not always true, in explaining and predicting domestic and foreign policy outcomes.

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<sup>47</sup> See Allison and Zelikow 1999[1971].

<sup>48</sup> See Janis 1983; Hart, Stern, and Sundelius 1997.

<sup>49</sup> Krasner 1972. Rather than choosing one type of political leader, Jerel Rosati (1981) differentiates political leaders into four groups by considering whether a leader is a dominant actor and by whether a leader is actively involved in foreign policy making.

<sup>50</sup> Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003

Following Bueno de Mesquita and his colleagues, in this study, I assume that political leaders dominate foreign policy-making.<sup>51</sup> While I agree that some decision group and bureaucracy factors often affect foreign policy outcomes in a significant way, the dominant leader assumption allows me to develop a theory which not only describes or explains past events but also predicts future ones. In the group/bureaucracy-level approach it is very hard to predict a policy outcome, especially before knowing (or assuming) each actor's preference and power. Because my goal is not to explain one or a few historical case(s) but to find a pattern which can be applied to many cases, past and future, I need to develop an abstract theory, one with a small number of explanatory variables, with some assumptions on key political actors' power and preference. The dominant leader assumption is the first of them.

Assumption 2: Leaders dominate foreign policy decision-making.

If leaders are dominant actors, what do they prefer? What is their goal? I use one popular assumption among political scientists that political leaders firstly seek their political survival.<sup>52</sup> Taking this assumption does not mean that I refute the existence of multiple goals of political leaders. Rather I suggest political leaders often pursue their own interests, not national interests, when the two interests conflict. With this assumption, some political scientists introduced the principal-agent problem in foreign as well as domestic policy-making and tried to explain some puzzles which cannot be

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<sup>51</sup> For a seminal study of the decision-making approach based on this assumption, see Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 2002 [1962].

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Downs 1957; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003.

explained from the (rational) unitary actor model in which a state is supposed to make a decision for the maximization of national interests. Although domestic actors sometimes “defend national interests” over their own parochial ones,<sup>53</sup> this leader-seeking-political-survival assumption provides a starting point for dealing with the question of why states sometimes resort to a military option even when they have a less risky and less costly option (e.g. negotiation), one which is expected to yield a higher utility. While the unitary actor approach provides its own answer to this question with the introduction of private information and commitment problems,<sup>54</sup> the domestic politics approach with focus on leader-public relations explains states’ seemingly irrational decisions by showing how the choices were preferred and initiated by political leaders who give higher priority to their private interest, not to the national interest.

Assumption 3: Leaders seek political survival above all else.

After assuming political leaders dominate foreign policy-making and seek political survival, IR scholars often make one more assumption about political leaders. How do they make a decision? Broadly speaking, there are two answers to this question, which are based on different assumptions: rational and psychological. First, many IR scholars traditionally assume the rationality of the decision-making unit. In it, states or decision-makers are supposed to consider all possible policy options and then choose the best, i.e. the one expected to provide the highest utility when considering three elements:

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<sup>53</sup> Krasner 1978.

<sup>54</sup> James Fearon (1995) neatly proposes this puzzle on the onset of interstate militarized conflict and then provides his “rational unitary actor” explanation. He says there could be two other approaches: irrational people/leader and rational non-unitary actor.

benefit, cost, and probability of success.<sup>55</sup> This rational approach is very popular among those who develop state-level as well as system-level theories because it paves the way for the relatively parsimonious theory.

On the other hand, there are those who call for more attention to psychological factors in foreign policy decision-making. Criticizing the rational approach as one about what decision-makers *should* do, not about what they actually *do*, this psychological approach takes into account motivated and unmotivated biases and then analyzes their effects on foreign policy and international politics, usually through detailed case studies.<sup>56</sup> Political leaders' decisions are not only affected by their calculation of benefits and costs but also by their beliefs and learning. In addition, they often misperceive, overestimate, or underestimate their opponents' capabilities and intentions due to cognitive heuristics and emotional biases. Moreover, social psychologists find that an individual's risk propensity is not fixed but changes according to his/her domain of gains/losses.<sup>57</sup> This means political leaders are risk-acceptant in decision-making when expecting or experiencing losses, while they are risk-averse when seeking gains. In sum, this psychological approach insists that without considering psychological factors, we cannot explain variations in foreign policy and international political outcomes in a satisfactory way.

In this study, I assume that political leaders are rational in order to maximize expected utility. While I believe the psychological approach is very promising, at least in

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<sup>55</sup> I follow James Morrow's (1994: 17-20) definition of rationality which sees preferences as comparable and transitive.

<sup>56</sup> For reviews on the psychological approach in foreign policy and international relations studies, see Jervis 1976; Levy 2003; McDermott 2004.

<sup>57</sup> Kahneman and Tversky 1979.

IR study, in providing richer and more accurate explanations despite some theoretical and methodological challenges<sup>58</sup>, I take this rational leader assumption in order to focus on my two independent variables, domestic unrest of a potential initiator and types of a potential target, in this empirical study. By assuming expected utility maximizers rather than by considering psychological as well as rational factors, I can develop a theory simple enough to develop hypotheses testable not only with in-depth case studies but also with statistical analyses.

Assumption 4: Leaders are rational.

In sum, the above four assumptions provide a rational leader's decision making framework in foreign policy making. Again, I do *not* believe each assumption is absolutely true; rather, each is useful in developing a theory with parsimony and accuracy, especially one linking domestic unrest to interstate conflict.<sup>59</sup> Based on this rational framework, some IR scholars have tried to pose and answer some puzzles; for example, which states fight longer?<sup>60</sup> Why do some states show higher economic development?<sup>61</sup> When do states prefer peaceful resolutions of territorial disputes?<sup>62</sup> And why did some great powers choose overexpansion?<sup>63</sup> Now I aim to answer the question

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<sup>58</sup> For the theoretical and methodological problems such as strategic interaction and internal and external validity in applying prospect theory to international relations study, see Levy 1997.

<sup>59</sup> In this, I follow Milton Friedman (1953: 3-43) who argued that it is not important whether assumptions are accurate/realistic, but whether they contribute to accurately predicting matters in a positive science.

<sup>60</sup> Goemans 2000a, 2000b.

<sup>61</sup> Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2001.

<sup>62</sup> Chiozza and Choi 2003.

<sup>63</sup> Snyder 1991.

of when and against whom domestically-troubled states initiate a militarized conflict. Next, I review a traditional theory of diversionary conflict, which links domestic unrest directly to interstate conflict but fails to find strong empirical evidence. Then, I discuss my diversionary target theory, a modified version of the traditional theory of diversionary conflict.

### **3. DOMESTIC UNREST AND INTERSTATE CONFLICT**

Domestic unrest has long been considered one of the causes of interstate conflict. Many scholars and journalists have shed light on political and economic troubles while explaining what led to historical and contemporary conflicts in international politics, for example, World War I<sup>64</sup> and the Falklands War.<sup>65</sup> According to them, political leaders of domestically-troubled states tend to initiate an interstate (or intrastate) conflict in order to divert public attention and to consolidate their political position. In other words, political leaders choose “fighting for survival.” Especially when doing nothing means political death, starting a foreign adventure is a rational choice to struggling leaders who anticipate rational and psychological effects conducive to their political survival.

Struggling leaders can show their competence by initiating an interstate conflict. When achieving some goals, they can see that the domestic audience will update information about their leaders’ capabilities and give support for current leadership rather than desiring to change it.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, political leaders may expect the positive

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<sup>64</sup> Joll and Martel 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Hastings and Jenkins 1983; Levy and Vakili 1992.

<sup>66</sup> For rational updating models of diversionary conflict, see Richards et al. 1993; Smith 1996; Tarar 2006.



effects of outside threats on ingroup cohesion when considering a diversionary option.<sup>67</sup> According to social psychology and political science studies, inter-group conflict significantly strengthens an individual's inter-group bias. Individuals show notable and consistent bias for in-group members and against out-group members. Although this bias exists even in the condition of little interaction between in-group and out-group members, it is significantly strengthened when there is inter-group competition.<sup>68</sup> As seen in high presidential approval ratings just after the September 11 attacks in the United States, political leaders often enjoy "rally-round-the-flag" effects even without or before achieving some successes when their states are (or are perceived to be) under high outside threat. To unpopular leaders who are familiar with this ingroup and outgroup relation, initiating a new conflict is a way to save their political lives through increased patriotism and strengthened nationalism.<sup>69</sup> In sum, struggling leaders may use initiation of interstate conflict as a way to boost their domestic standing through rational and emotional processes.<sup>70</sup>

However, this traditional theory of diversionary war has gained mixed support from empirical studies, especially from large-N studies. By conducting qualitative studies, some scholars have showed the diversionary war mechanism worked in some

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<sup>67</sup> For seminal psychological explanations of diversionary conflict, see Coser 1964; Simmel 1964.

<sup>68</sup> For social psychology and inter-group psychology, see Tajfel 1982; Fiske, Gilbert, and Lindzey 2010. For recent reviews on inter-group psychology, see De Dreu 2010; Dovidio and Gaertner 2010; Yzerbyt and Demoulin 2010.

<sup>69</sup> In discussing ingroup cohesion and outgroup conflict, Jack Levy (1989) distinguished between externalization of internal conflict and internalization of external conflict and argued that the former assumes the latter. There are some studies on whether, when, and how foreign conflicts/threats affect public opinion and public support for a leader. See, for example, Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2009; Merolla and Zechmeister 2009.

<sup>70</sup> For a good comparative discussion of psychological and rational explanations of diversionary conflict, see Fravel 2010, 311-314.

historical cases like the Falklands War.<sup>71</sup> But some of those who conducted quantitative studies disagreed about the effects of domestic unrest on interstate conflict as discussed in Chapter 1. Since Rudolph Rummel's seminal statistical study in 1963,<sup>72</sup> scholars have tried to find the causal or correlational relation between domestic trouble and interstate violence but have failed to do so for the diversionary war theory. This discrepancy between theory and evidence, between small-N and large-N studies has led people to discuss and overcome some theoretical and methodological problems in the traditional diversionary war theory.<sup>73</sup> Among others, there are two most widely accepted explanations on the absence of diversionary conflict, each of which provides a causal mechanism from domestic unrest to non-interstate conflict but has some theoretical or empirical limitation, as I discuss below.<sup>74</sup>

### 3.1 MULTIPLE POLICY OPTIONS

Why does domestic unrest sometimes *not* contribute to the onset of interstate conflict? One answer to this question is the existence of multiple policy options which leaders have when faced with domestic troubles. As illustrated in **Figure 2.1**, when leaders expect domestic unrest to make them lose office or become politically paralyzed, they can try to change their fate not only with a foreign adventure (A-2 link in **Figure 2.1**)

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<sup>71</sup> Of course there are some case studies disconfirming the expectation of diversionary war. One example is Fravel 2010.

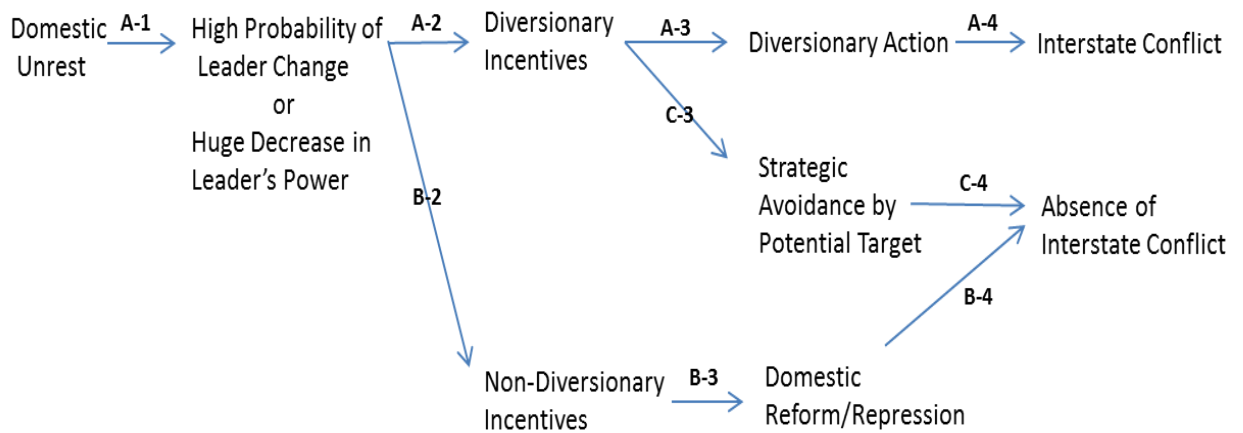
<sup>72</sup> Rummel 1963.

<sup>73</sup> For a critical review on diversionary war theory, see Levy 1989.

<sup>74</sup> Among others, one remaining criticism of diversionary conflict is diversionary non-military action. Emizet Kisangani and Jeffrey Pickering (2007) argue that political leaders prefer low-politics (economic and social affairs) intervention rather than high-politics (political and strategic affairs) intervention in order to divert public attention from domestic troubles because the former is less risky and less costly than the latter. By changing the dependent variable from military intervention to non-military intervention, according to them, we can see high correlation between our independent variable (i.e. domestic unrest) and dependent variable.

but also with a domestic policy option (B-2 link in). For example, if authoritarian leaders face large-scale pro-democracy demonstrations, they can use military force against disgruntled people or promise (and initiate) some political reforms.<sup>75</sup> Considering the high risk and/or high cost of initiation of interstate conflict, political leaders may often be attracted to other policy options. In other words, when other options are unavailable or have been tried but failed, political leaders may resort to their last option, i.e. foreign diversion, in order to save their political position. For example, Amy Oakes explains the Argentina junta's decision for invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982 as resulting from its lack of capacities to initiate and continue political and economic reforms to satisfy its domestic audience.<sup>76</sup>

**Figure 2.1 Domestic Unrest and Interstate Conflict/Peace**



I. Diversionary Theory (A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4)

II. Multiple Policy Options (A-1, B-2, B-3, B-4)

III. Strategic Interaction (A-1, A-2, C-3, C-4)

<sup>75</sup> However, this non-diversion behavior, especially domestic repression, can lead to interstate conflict by inviting aggression by other states which try to take advantage of their opponent's troubles and/or which want to support the repressed side for ethnic, political, and/or strategic reasons. This opportunistic war perspective provides one explanation that competes with my diversionary target theory, as I discuss in this chapter later.

<sup>76</sup> Oakes 2006.

However, it should be noted that the multiple policy options are not mutually exclusive but can complement each other. Political leaders sometimes take more than one option when dealing with domestic trouble. In Syria, Bashar al-Assad facing pro-democracy movements recently tried to escalate a border issue with Israel, which had been (relatively) stabilized since 1974.<sup>77</sup> During political and economic crises beginning in the 1990s, Kim Jong Il initiated nuclear and military crises with South Korea, Japan and the United States, especially in 1994 and in 2002, but also continued his brutal repression and tried several limited economic reforms.<sup>78</sup> By conducting a statistical analysis of political leaders from 1948 to 1982, Andrew Enterline and Kristian Gleditsch provide some evidence that repression and diversion are complements rather than substitutes as responses to domestic unrest.<sup>79</sup> This implies that we cannot say that political leaders do not take diversion when they take other policy option such as domestic reform and repression. In order to know whether and when diversionary conflicts occur, we should focus on the domestic or foreign conditions directly affecting foreign diversion itself. When and under what conditions do political leaders see diversion as one with high benefit and low cost?

### 3.2 STRATEGIC AVOIDANCE

On the other hand, some critics of diversionary war theory emphasize strategic interaction in international politics. According to them, a state's domestic unrest makes

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<sup>77</sup> Mitnick 2011.

<sup>78</sup> Fackler 2010; Oliver and Blitz 2010.

<sup>79</sup> Enterline and Gleditsch 2000.

other states take strategic actions aimed to prevent those states from becoming targets of international conflict (C-3 link in **Figure 2.1**). Even if a political leader of a domestically-troubled state wants to start a militarized conflict, (s)he would lose his/her opportunity to do it because the potential target has already recognized the hostile intention and taken some measures in order to avoid conflict (e.g. taking a conciliatory stance, building a military alliance).<sup>80</sup> Especially when a state cannot hide hostile intention from its potential target due to a transparent and open decision-making system (i.e. democracy), its preference for diversion leads not to its aggressive action but to its potential target's strategic move and no conflict. In order to see whether this strategic interaction really prevents diversionary action by transparent regimes, some scholars conducted empirical studies and found some evidence that democracies are less likely than non-democracies to use military force as both initiator and target of interstate conflict,<sup>81</sup> and that the United States is relatively free from aggression by foreign states (or rivals).<sup>82</sup>

But what makes democracies less prone to diversionary use of force? We still do not know why.<sup>83</sup> The above empirical studies do not test directly the causal effect of strategic interaction on diversionary conflict, but show only the correlation between a certain type of regime type (i.e. democracy) and initiation/being a target of interstate conflict. Considering that political leaders in democracies are more constrained by domestic political actors than those in non-democracies, we may expect that democracies are less likely than are autocracies to initiate a diversionary conflict not because of their

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<sup>80</sup> Smith 1996, 1998.

<sup>81</sup> Leeds and Davis 1997; Miller 1999.

<sup>82</sup> Clark 2003; Fordham 2005.

transparency and their potential target's strategic avoidance but because of their check-and-balance system and constraints on political leaders. For example, before North Korea's attack on South Korea's warship *Cheonan* and Yeongpyeong Island in 2010, South Korea, China and the United States had expected "fireworks" by the hermit kingdom suffering from economic crisis and experiencing leadership change.<sup>84</sup> But South Korea could not or did not avoid being its longtime rival's target. Why did South Korea and its allies' recognition of North Korea's hostile intention not dissuade North Korean aggression? Were they not able or not willing to deter North Korea's military action? Whether strategic avoidance, institutional constraints (or domestic audience costs), or neither prevents the onset of diversionary conflict is another research question not yet examined thoroughly.<sup>85</sup> In short, the strategic avoidance explanation is theoretically plausible but not empirically confirmed with enough evidence showing its working causal mechanism.

In sum, we still need to study the conditions under which domestic unrest leads to interstate conflict. Although the multiple policy options and strategic avoidance explanations can provide partial answers to why there is no strong correlation between domestic unrest and interstate violence, they do not directly refute the causal effect of domestic unrest on diversionary incentives leading to interstate conflict. When faced with

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<sup>83</sup> But there is an argument and evidence supporting the claim that democracies are more likely to divert than non-democracies because leaders in the latter can use an alternative option of repression while those in the former cannot. For this argument and evidence, see Gelpi 1997.

<sup>84</sup> Borger 2010.

<sup>85</sup> Kenneth Schultz (1999) nicely contrasts these two perspectives, "institutional constraints approach" and "informational perspective." For the institutional constraints approach, see Lake 1992; Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, For the informational approach, see Fearon 1994; Schultz 1998; Ritter 2002.

domestic challenges to their leadership, political leaders can choose multiple options, including foreign diversion, and can target their neighbors which are making efforts not to be involved in a military conflict. Since the 1990s, in fact, there have been many efforts to modify the traditional approach of diversionary conflict and to find certain state- or dyad-level conditions contributing to an onset of diversionary action/conflict. For example, some have paid attention to the regime types of potential diverters. While Ross Miller argues autocracies are more likely than are democracies to choose a military response for diversion because their leaders are less constrained by a domestic audience,<sup>86</sup> Christopher Gelpi insists that democratic leaders who cannot rely on repression use diversionary actions more often than non-democratic ones do.<sup>87</sup> By going beyond the dichotomy of autocracy and democracy, some scholars focus on institutional characteristics such as stability/consolidation,<sup>88</sup> institutional infrastructure,<sup>89</sup> or size of a winning coalition<sup>90</sup> in order to explain variations in diversionary action among domestically-troubled states. On the other hand, some emphasize characteristics of a dyad (a pair of states) such as rivalry relations and territorial claims as contributing conditions for diversionary conflict.<sup>91</sup>

But the empirical studies in the diversionary war literature have missed one condition which may affect the onset of diversionary conflict: types of potential targets.

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<sup>86</sup> Miller 1995.

<sup>87</sup> Gelpi 1997.

<sup>88</sup> Mansfield and Snyder 1995, 2005; Pickering and Kisangani 2005; Kisangani and Pickering 2009. Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder do not explicitly discuss a theory of diversionary war, but focus on domestic unrest resulting from regime transition as a cause of interstate conflict.

<sup>89</sup> Lai and Slater 2006.

<sup>90</sup> Pickering and Kisangani 2010.

<sup>91</sup> Mitchell and Prins 2004; Mitchell and Thyne 2010; Tir 2010.

Given that political leaders know that initiating a conflict with different targets can produce different outcomes in terms of domestic support, it is worthwhile to see which types of potential target attract or contribute to diversionary action. In his review article in 1989 on the traditional diversionary war theory, Jack Levy discussed the potential for target-based diversionary war theory.<sup>92</sup> But, surprisingly, there have been no efforts to develop empirical hypotheses and test them. I aim to fill this hole in the literature.<sup>93</sup>

#### **4. A THEORY OF DIVERSIONARY TARGETS**

Which potential targets attract diversionary actions? Which states do political leaders prefer as diversionary targets? In order to answer these questions, I add one more assumption: political leaders need support from the public as well as from elites. IR scholars often see a political leader's survival as depending on politically powerful groups. In their selectorate theory, for example, Bueno de Mesquita and his colleagues argue that political leaders seek support from the members of their winning coalition, the size of which is determined by political institutions. According to them, when their winning coalition is small, leaders can maintain their political power only by providing private goods to a small number of people (i.e. elites) and no public goods to others (the general public). But I do not agree with this. Even authoritarian leaders try to get support from the public due to the high cost of controlling a large number of dissatisfied people and the high risk of repressing large scale anti-governmental opposition. They can bribe a

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<sup>92</sup> Levy 1989, 274-275, 277; Levy and Vakili 1992, 120-123.

<sup>93</sup> In his formal model paper, Ahmer Tarar (2006) suggests political leaders prefer neither too weak nor too strong powers as diversionary targets because their domestic audience attributes the outcomes of foreign



small number of people (i.e. elites) relatively easily with limited resources but cannot satisfy a much larger number of people (i.e. the public) easily. Moreover, if they provide only private goods to politically powerful groups, they might see increased resentment of politically weak groups and large-scale social unrest which will, in return, decrease the political and economic resources needed to maintain their position. To avoid this situation, I believe, not only democratic but also non-democratic leaders seek both the public and elites' support, although the latter are less concerned about public support than are the former. If authoritarian leaders do not need any public support but only elites' support, we can hardly explain why many dictators such as Saddam Hussein and Kim Il Sung tried to distort "memories of state" and build a personality cult.<sup>94</sup>

On the other hand, political leaders want to use public support in order to discourage political and military elites from initiating revolts or coups. Especially when faced with intractable elites, political leaders may prefer diversionary use of force because strong public support often gives them leverage to tame disgruntled and politically ambitious elites. As Jack Levy and Lily Vakili argue, intra-elite conflict can be a major cause of diversionary incentives of political leaders.<sup>95</sup> In these cases, initiation of interstate conflict can benefit struggling leaders not only by satisfying the dissatisfied politically powerful group, but also by increasing public support for the incumbent rather than for the opposition group. Going public through diversionary use of force can provide more political legitimacy and resources with which political leaders coerce and lure domestic elites.

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adventure (success or failure) to the power gap, not to their leaders' (in)competence. But he does not test this hypothesis empirically.

<sup>94</sup> Oberdorfer 2001; Davis 2005.

Assumption 5: Leaders seek support from the public as well as from elites.

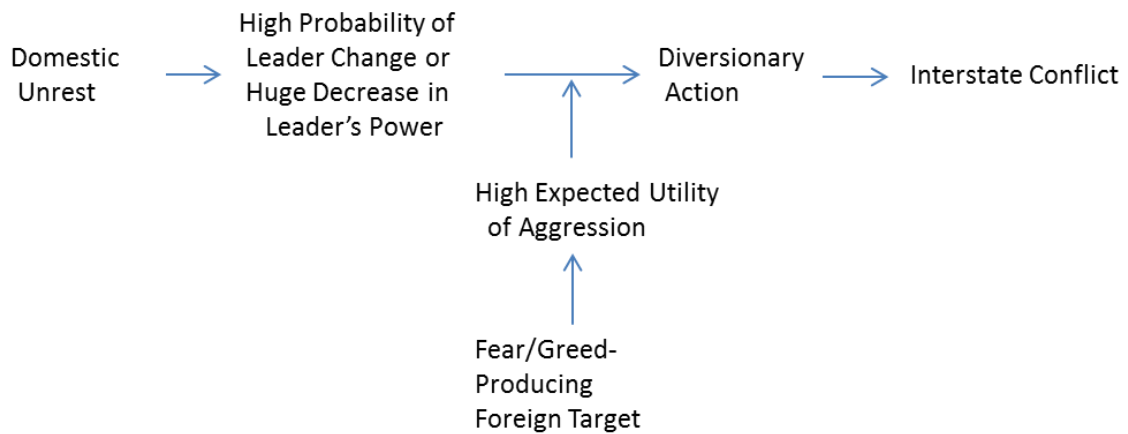
Based on the above five assumptions, I now propose a theory of diversionary targets. Which states do political leaders prefer in order to gain public support when faced with domestic troubles? I expect political leaders will choose as diversionary targets states against which they can easily justify their military aggression.<sup>96</sup> Domestic unrest and leadership crisis may make political leaders willing to initiate a diversionary conflict. But they need opportunity.<sup>97</sup> Political leaders know that if they do not sell their military aggression to their domestic audience well, they will see a backfire after their choice of foreign diversion. Not only when they face domestic troubles but also when they see an appropriate foreign target, political leaders are likely to choose a military action in order to stay in office (see **Figure 2.2**).

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<sup>95</sup> Levy and Vakili 1992.

<sup>96</sup> Of course, domestic justification is one of the factors political leaders consider when choosing their diversionary target. For a winnable, short, and/or low-intensity conflict, they may try to find a state with lower capability and without the intention of retaliating militarily.

<sup>97</sup> For a concept of willingness and opportunity in IR security studies, see Most and Starr 1989.

**Figure 2.2 A Theory of Diversionary Targets**

If so, which states are attractive targets? I suggest two types of attractive targets: fear-producing and greed-producing. On the one hand, political leaders can sell their military aggression by emphasizing or inflating high (future) *cost* of inaction (i.e. non-military action). By giving (false or distorted) information about a potential target's power and intention, they can ignite public fear about losing what they have and then demand public support for their preemptive/preventive action. I call this type of military action fear-driven diversion. On the other hand, political leaders can justify their military aggression by highlighting or exaggerating high *benefit* of action (i.e. military action). By providing an (false or distorted) assessment of the high value of what a potential target possesses, they can exploit public greed for what it does not have and then ask for national unity under their leadership. I call this type of military action greed-driven diversion.

In fact, fear and greed have often been regarded as motivation for state behaviors in (realist) IR studies. Structural realists see states as security-seekers which cannot trust

each other in an international anarchy but continue an arms race out of fear about the other's future aggression and loss of their security.<sup>98</sup> As distinguishing between two types of state, status-quo power and revisionist, neoclassical realists (and classical realists) attempt to explain many historical cases of interstate conflicts as ones initiated by greedy states (revisionists) that wanted to take what belonged to status-quo powers.<sup>99</sup> But these unitary actor model-based studies do not answer the question of where fear and greed come from.<sup>100</sup> With focus on the relation between leader and public, this study tries to explain whether and how domestic conditions (i.e. domestic unrest) and foreign conditions (i.e. types of potential target) shape states' motivations leading to military aggression against other states. More specifically, this study examines four characteristics of potential targets which might attract diversionary action: rising power, different identity, occupying disputed territory, and exercising hegemony despite declining power.

#### 4.1 FEAR-DRIVEN DIVERSION

I expect political leaders to prefer fear-producing states over others as diversionary targets. After targeting states which have potential to harm tangible or intangible resources of their nation, political leaders of domestically-troubled states can exploit public fear. By giving (false or distorted) information about their target's power and intention, political leaders can emphasize the cost of delay (i.e. non-military action) is higher than the cost of preventive action (i.e. military action). When seeing potential or real threats from outside, political leaders have multiple ways to deal with this situation.

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<sup>98</sup> For example, see Robert Jervis' (1976: Ch. 1; 1978) discussion of spiral model and security dilemma.

<sup>99</sup> For example, see Morgenthau 1985 [1948]; Schweller 1994, 1996.

<sup>100</sup> One exception is Schweller's (2009) study on the effects of fascism on revisionist states.

For example, they can devote their efforts to increase national capacity (internal balancing), make friendly relations with the threat itself (bandwagoning), create a new alliance against the rising power (external balancing), wait and see if a third state can deter the rising power (buck-passing), or attack the state.<sup>101</sup> However, if political leaders expect to be deposed from their office soon due to domestic unrest, they may prefer military aggression over other options because they need “rally-round-the-flag” effects which can (re)boost their popularity and power quickly. In other words, a military option that deals with outside threats is more attractive to unpopular leaders than to popular ones.

If so, which potential targets are expected (by political leaders) to produce the domestic audience’s fear? In this study, I consider two sources of public fear: a potential target’s power and identity. Power has been regarded as a primary source of fear in international relations studies. In an international anarchy, according to realists, one state’s increasing power often produces another state’s efforts to increase security through military and diplomatic measures. When fighting now is cheaper and/or more winnable than fighting later, states might prefer military action as a response to an unfavorable change in the balance of power.<sup>102</sup> However, a political leader’s decision for preemptive/preventive action is determined not only by their calculation of national interest but also by that of their own interest. I expect domestic unrest encourages a state’s military action against a rising threat as Jack Levy mentioned:

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<sup>101</sup> For realist’s explanation on states’ response to threats, see, for example, Waltz 1979; Walt 1987; Mearsheimer 2001, 155-165.

<sup>102</sup> For reviews on the definition and literature of preventive war, see Levy 1987, 2011.

Statesmen may also have domestic political reasons for believing that it is preferable to fight a war now rather than later. Under certain conditions, policy makers may believe that a successful war would increase or at least maintain their domestic political support. Such a war might satisfy specific interest-group pressures, exploit more generalized jingoistic sentiment, or distract the public's attention from internal social or economic problems through the creation of an external scapegoat... The scapegoat motive and the preventive motive are analytically distinct, though both of them may operate in a particular case and reinforce each other.<sup>103</sup>

Based on this logic, I hypothesize that in a dyad a state is more likely to initiate a militarized conflict when it faces both domestic unrest and a foreign state whose relative power has increased rapidly. Because political leaders believe that a (perception of) rapid unfavorable change in balance of power allows them to easily manipulate public opinion to see their military aggression as necessary and inevitable, they are more likely to choose a rising power as a military target.

Hypothesis 1a: In a dyad a state is more likely to initiate a militarized conflict when it suffers from domestic unrest and faces another state whose relative power has increased rapidly.

But, there could be some states which have not increased their power rapidly but have the potential to be powerful in the near future. States with nuclear weapons programs are often seen as great future threats, provoking other states which anticipate an unfavorable shift in the balance of power, and sometimes leading to (attempts to carry out) preventive attacks, as seen the 1981 Israeli attack on an Iraqi nuclear reactor and the 1994 American plan to conduct a strategic attack on North Korea's nuclear complex.<sup>104</sup> When a potential target starts or maintains its nuclear weapons program, political leaders

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<sup>103</sup> Levy 1987: 94.

may easily sell their military action by saying that “time is not our side.” However, I expect political leaders do not prefer as diversionary targets nuclear powers against which military actions can be seen by their domestic audience as too risky behaviors due to possible nuclear retaliation.<sup>105</sup>

Hypothesis 1b: In a dyad a state is more likely to initiate a militarized conflict when it suffers from domestic unrest and faces another state whose relative power has increased rapidly or which has a nuclear weapons program but has not yet developed nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, identity has attracted increasing attention from IR scholars as a source of inter- and intra-state conflict. At least from the 1990s, constructivists began to argue that IR scholars should pay more attention to (cultural) identity, ideas, and ideology, while pointing out some limitations of explanations by the mainstream research tradition, which has focused mainly on power and interest.<sup>106</sup> According to them, states’ actions are not always determined by international systems, but states have various preferences shaping their foreign relations and sometimes affecting the structure where they play. If we see states as billiard balls of varying sizes, constructivists argue, we are incapable of explaining many foreign policy and international political outcomes, especially changes in systems such as the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, Samuel Huntington published his article on inter-civilization conflict in 1993, which produced many debates within and outside academia. Although some IR scholars tested

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<sup>104</sup> Levy 2008; 2011, 88, 94.

<sup>105</sup> Matthew Fuhrmann and Sarah E. Kreps (2010) distinguish between states with nuclear programs but not with nuclear weapons and states with nuclear weapons and then examine whether and when the former are military targets of other states.

<sup>106</sup> For constructivism and its critique of structural realism, see Wendt 1987, 1992.

his hypotheses empirically and found little evidence for clashes of civilizations,<sup>107</sup> his study of civilization and conflict inspired many scholars, including non-constructivists, to study the effects of cultural identity on intra- and inter-state conflict and cooperation.

In particular, in the civil/intra-state war literature different ethnic (or religious) identity has been widely regarded as one factor contributing to conflict.<sup>108</sup> One popular explanation of onset of intra-state conflict is that “political entrepreneurs” often divide “us” and “them” by ethnic or religious identity and make their in-group members aggressive against out-group members in order to consolidate their control of the in-group members.<sup>109</sup> This explanation is largely supported by social psychology studies which find that individuals tend to feel more threatened by (members of) dissimilar identity groups than from similar identity groups if other conditions are equal, and that individuals are concerned not only about losing tangible things (e.g. money) but also about losing intangible things (e.g. identity).<sup>110</sup> I expect political leaders to prefer states with dissimilar identities as diversionary targets because they can ignite the public’s fear about losing its (cultural) identity and life style as a consequence of the target’s future aggression and expansion. This leads to another hypothesis about fear-driven diversion:

Hypothesis 2a: In dyad level a state is more likely to initiate a militarized conflict when it suffers from domestic unrest and faces another state whose identity is dissimilar to its own.

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<sup>107</sup> Russett, Oneal, and Cox 2000; Henderson and Tucker 2001; Chiozza 2002.

<sup>108</sup> For an opposing view, see Fearon and Laitin 2003.

<sup>109</sup> For this identity-oriented explanation of civil conflict with a focus on the role of political leaders, see Lake and Rothchild 1996; Fearon and Laitin 2000.

<sup>110</sup> Rousseau 2006.



But Huntington did not argue that his clash of civilizations thesis is applicable to all periods. He said civilization replaces or will replace ideology in the post-Cold War world, the “first multipolar and multicivilizational time” in history. Many neorealists (or structural realists) like Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer have argued that bipolarity, two major powers in an international system, produces more stability than does multipolarity, three or more major powers in an international system, because the latter gives more opportunities for war and more potential for miscalculation than does the former.<sup>111</sup> Huntington also did not downplay the constraining effects of bipolarity on aggressive state behaviors during the Cold War but rather sought to predict the world without the bipolar system. This is why those who empirically tested Huntington’s hypothesis often divided the period into three (before, during, after the Cold War) and examined whether or not the hypothesis is confirmed in each period as well as across periods.<sup>112</sup> In agreeing that a bipolar system affected states’ behaviors significantly by creating very strong ideological identities rather than cultural ones, I expect the cultural identity hypothesis will hold true when there is no bipolarity effect.

Hypothesis 2b: In a dyad a state is more likely to initiate a militarized conflict when it suffers from domestic unrest and faces another state whose identity is dissimilar to its own in the absence of a bi-polar system.

## 4.2 GREED-DRIVEN DIVERSION

I also expect political leaders to prefer greed-producing states over others as diversionary targets. By choosing states which have resources domestic audiences

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<sup>111</sup> Waltz 1979: 134-136; Mearsheimer 2001: Ch. 9. There was a long debate on polarity and stability. For this, see, for example, Deutsch and Singer 1964; Sabrosky 1985; Midlarsky and Hopf 1993.

(would) covet, political leaders can easily inflate the benefits of their military aggression, deflate its costs, and demand unequivocal support in order to pursue their “national” interests and glory. As stated earlier, structural/defensive realists who assume that states are security-seekers could not explain some historical cases, those decreasing/threatening national security, such as Germany’s initiation of World War II and Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, attributing them to domestic illnesses such as cartelized politics,<sup>113</sup> decentralized power,<sup>114</sup> and lack of elite/social cohesion.<sup>115</sup> But there have been other goals of states IR scholars have paid attention to and studied, for example, “empire” and “prestige,”<sup>116</sup> “autonomy,”<sup>117</sup> “proaction,”<sup>118</sup> and “recognition.”<sup>119</sup> By pointing out “neorealism’s status-quo bias,” for example, the neoclassical realist Randall Schweller distinguishes between two different goals, revising the status-quo and maintaining the status-quo, and suggests two types of states, revisionists and status-quo powers. But like other neoclassical realists he does not explain clearly what determines a state’s orientation, when a state becomes a revisionist or a status-quo power.<sup>120</sup> I believe one of the factors which drive one state to seek what belongs to others comes from political leaders’ manipulation of their domestic audience’s greed. Especially in leadership crises, political leaders tend to be gamblers who have nothing to lose from overexpansion. If

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<sup>112</sup> Henderson and Tucker 2001; Chiozza 2002.

<sup>113</sup> Snyder 1991.

<sup>114</sup> Zakaria 1998.

<sup>115</sup> Schweller 2006.

<sup>116</sup> Morgenthau 1985[1948]: Chs 4, 5.

<sup>117</sup> Morrow 1991.

<sup>118</sup> Morgan and Palmer 1997.

<sup>119</sup> Wendt 2003.

<sup>120</sup> Schweller 1994, 1996. For reviews on neoclassical realism, see Rose 1998; Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro 2009, Ch. 1.

they do nothing now ( $t$ ) as a response to domestic unrest, they should leave their office or become politically paralyzed ( $t+a$ ,  $a>0$ ). But if they take an option of foreign adventure, they can have a hope with non-zero possibility of recovering their political power in the near future ( $t+a'$ ,  $a'\geq a$ ).

If so, conflicts with which states produce domestic greed? What resources does a domestic audience want to have? In this study, I consider two types of resources, territory and hegemony. Territory has been regarded as one of the causes of interstate conflict or rivalry.<sup>121</sup> Although bordering states may fight more often not only due to territorial issues but also to other reasons such as proximity and interaction,<sup>122</sup> there is little doubt that people often want some territory not only for strategic and economic reasons but also for religious and historical, as in the case of Jerusalem in the Middle East and Dokdo Island between South Korea and Japan. Accordingly, political leaders can justify aggression aimed to (re)gain some territory which their nation does not occupy but would cherish or has sought to gain. In selling their military action as one for national interest and glory, political leaders can “disarm political opponents by equating opposition to territorial claims with unpatriotic behavior” and (re)consolidate their political power.<sup>123</sup> But starting a *new* territorial conflict may not be welcomed by the public because they do not accept the moral or practical reasons to seek to occupy the territory. So I expect political leaders to be likely to exploit ongoing or recent territorial issues about territory whose sovereignty has been disputed and which is occupied by another state. Based on this logic, Paul Hensel explains Argentina’s choice in 1982:

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<sup>121</sup> See, for example, Diehl 1991; Huth 1996; Rasler and Thompson 2000; Huth and Allee 2002; Vasquez 2009.

<sup>122</sup> Bremer 1992; Hensel 2000; Vasquez 2009, Ch. 4.

Past research has found evidence that overall conflict behavior can be influenced by yearly fluctuations in economic growth (or stagnation), electoral politics, and domestic political conflict...If such findings have been found to characterize overall conflict behavior against any foreign target, they may produce even stronger effects when considered against the background of a long-running territorial claim. For example, when the Argentine leadership in 1982 chose a foreign target to help rally domestic political support in a time of economic and political crisis, it does not seem accidental that the particular target chosen (the Malvinas/Falkland Islands) had been the subject of a territorial claim for well over a century.<sup>124</sup>

Accordingly, one of the reasons that territorial disputes reoccur and are not resolved easily is, I expect, that a state occupying disputed territory is a greed-producing target for a domestically-troubled state.

Hypothesis 3: In a dyad, a state is more likely to initiate a militarized conflict when it suffers from domestic unrest and faces another state which occupies disputed territory.

On the other hand, some IR scholars have paid attention to hegemony as a goal of states in world politics. In the power transition/hegemonic stability literature, a power transition is expected to lead to a great power war between a rising challenger and a declining hegemon only when the challenger is dissatisfied with the status quo.<sup>125</sup> Contrary to the logic of preventive war, the power transition scholars argue that a rising power initiates a hegemonic war out of dissatisfaction, rather than waits until it sees a

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<sup>123</sup> Huth 1996, 100.

<sup>124</sup> Hensel 2000: 81.

<sup>125</sup> For (critical) reviews of power transition literature, see DiCicco and Levy 1999; Kugler and Lemke 2000. For a power transition theory, see Organski 1958; Organski and Kugler 1980; Tammen et al. 2000. For a hegemonic stability theory, see Gilpin 1981.

better power balance.<sup>126</sup> But critics of power transition theory ask: What is the source of (dis)satisfaction? Why do some rising powers acquiesce in the existing orders set by the declining hegemon while others do not? Among multiple factors affecting a rising power's behaviors (e.g. defender's intention and strategy, challenger's regime type or political system), I expect, a rising power's domestic unrest is one of them which leads to its aggressiveness against a declining hegemon. When faced with domestic troubles, political leaders are more likely to ignite public desire for global or regional hegemony by insisting on what they can gain from being a new leader of the world or their region (e.g. more economic benefits from trade, national prestige). Whether a rising power wants a hegemonic war/conflict depends at least partly on its domestic condition which affects a political leader's incentives to manipulate national desire to be a leading state.

In this study, I expect that a rising state's diversionary action against a declining state occurs not only in global competition for hegemony but also in regional or local competition for hegemony. Although the power transition scholars focus mainly on global hegemonic competition, there are some who have applied the theory to non-major power dyads like North and South Vietnam, Iran and Iraq, North and South Korea, and China and Japan.<sup>127</sup> While admitting that non-major powers are more constrained by stronger states and the global system, they argue that power transition theory can be applied to relations between non-major ones because multiple regional and local hierarchies under a global hierarchy have their own status quo despite great power

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<sup>126</sup> Dale Copeland (2000: 11-15) clearly contrasts the hegemonic stability theory's prediction with classical realism's and neorealism's prediction about whether a rising or declining power initiates a war when there is a change in balance of power.

<sup>127</sup> See, for example, Kim 2002; Lemke 2002.

intervention in minor power relations. Following this logic and finding, I develop a hypothesis about diversionary actions against declining global, regional, or local powers.

Hypothesis 4: In a dyad a state is more likely to initiate a militarized conflict when it suffers from domestic unrest and faces another state which is a global/regional/local hegemon and whose relative power has decreased rapidly.

Before proceeding to alternative explanations, it is worthwhile to discuss how my rational leader-based explanation and expectation of how domestic unrest leads to diversionary action through fear-producing and greed-producing targets can be challenged from the view of prospect theory, a psychological alternative to rational explanation. According to prospect theory, a domain of decision-maker affects his/her risk propensity.<sup>128</sup> If an individual sees/expects losses (or gains), he/she is risk-acceptant (or risk-averse) in making a decision. Based on this finding, some IR scholars tried to explain some not utility maximizing but highly risky decisions, including “too-risky” state actions (e.g. Carter’s rescue mission during the Iranian hostage crisis<sup>129</sup>) and great powers’ “overexpansion” (e.g. Japan’s attack on the Pearl Harbor<sup>130</sup>). By examining the domain of decision-maker or decision-group and processing its effect on risk propensity, they provide an explanation of why and how states took decisions which are not understandable from the rational actor model.

From the perspective of prospect theory, some may expect my fear-driven hypotheses are more likely to be supported empirically than are my greed-driven

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<sup>128</sup> For a review of prospect theory, see Kahneman and Tversky 1979; for a critical review of the application of prospect theory to international relations study, see Levy 1997, 2000; McDermott 2004.

<sup>129</sup> McDermott 1998.

<sup>130</sup> Levi and Whyte 1997; Taliaferro 2004.

hypotheses because publics are more likely to be risk-acceptant and support military actions when they try to avoid losses and to maintain the status-quo than when they want to take what belongs to others. Or others can say it is very hard to find the cases of greed-driven diversion because political leaders who know the loss aversion tendency prefer using a loss-frame rather than a greed-frame even when they target “greed-producing” ones, states occupying disputed territory and/or exercising hegemony. After trying to adjust the domestic audience’s reference point not to the status quo but to what their nation wants, they can sell their military aggression as protecting their own territory or status of leadership. Indeed, we often find that not only a defender but also a challenger in a territorial conflict believes that a disputed territory is its own and that its aggression is to save it from the other. Both whether fear-driven diversions are more common than greed-driven ones and whether greed-driven diversions really exist are empirical questions which I can answer after conducting quantitative and qualitative tests in this dissertation study. In order to deal with the first question, I must carry out quantitative tests of cases across time and space and see whether each of two different causal mechanisms provides a satisfactory explanation for an onset of diversionary action; for the second question, I need to examine political leaders’ framing of the issue and their domestic audiences’ reference points and then analyze whether political leaders sell their military action as one satisfying their domestic audience’s greed or as one freeing their audience from fear.

#### 4.3 SIMILAR POWER TARGETS

However, it is true that there are more characteristics of potential targets aside from the four already mentioned: change in power, identity, disputed territory, and hegemony. For example, political leaders may prefer as diversionary targets foreign states which will not be likely to retaliate seriously because they need a cheap but glorious achievement. It is well known that the Argentina junta expected the United Kingdom *not* to choose military retaliation in response to its occupation of the Falkland Islands before the decision for invasion.<sup>131</sup> Because a target's military retaliation makes it harder to achieve a glorious outcome while paying little, struggling leaders may try to find less hostile targets than more hostile ones. On the other hand, some have noted a potential target's relative power, not its change in relative power, as one main factor political leaders consider before their decision for diversionary action. According to them, (democratic) leaders are likely to avoid too-strong or too-weak states in order to secure "rally-round-the-flag" effects around themselves.<sup>132</sup> Even if a beleaguered leader achieves a success through a conflict with a much weaker state, the domestic audience may attribute the success not to their leader's competence but to their state's superior power, and/or they may blame their leader for initiating an "unnecessary" war without using a less costly and more efficient alternative, like diplomacy and economic sanctions. When initiating a conflict with a much stronger power, it is very hard to see a high probability of winning a large-scale military conflict, making it very likely that there will be strong domestic opposition which criticizes the leader's action as reckless even before the public sees the result of the conflict. I agree with this expectation of an inverted U

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<sup>131</sup> For the effects of misperception on the occurrence of the Falklands War, see Lebow 1985.

<sup>132</sup> Levy 1989; Pickering and Kisangani 2005; Tarar 2006; Kisangani and Pickering 2007.



relation between a potential target's relative power and a potential initiator's likelihood of diversion. This leads me to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: In a dyad a state is more likely to initiate a militarized conflict when it suffers from domestic unrest and faces a similar power state.

## 5. ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Before testing the above hypotheses, I would like to discuss alternative explanations linking my study's independent variable(s) (domestic unrest of a potential initiator and/or types of a potential target) to interstate conflict or its absence. By comparing my diversionary target theory with its competitors, I can develop an effective way to test the hypotheses and to see which theory provides a better explanation than the others. It is obvious that my theory is more complicated than its two competitors, the traditional theory of diversionary war and offensive realism, each of which focuses either on domestic conditions or foreign conditions in order to explain the same outcome. If my theory fails to explain both what other theories explain and what they do not explain, it cannot replace its competitors with "higher corroborated content"<sup>133</sup> and does not have strength in both parsimony and accuracy over its competitors.<sup>134</sup>

### 5.1 THE TRADITIONAL THEORY OF DIVERSIONRY WAR

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<sup>133</sup> Lakatos 1970: 118.

The first alternative is the traditional theory of diversionary war. As I discussed earlier, some scholars have tried to examine the correlation (or causal relation) between domestic unrest and interstate conflict without considering foreign conditions (see **Figure 2.1**). But they have failed to find a positive and/or significant relation between the two. By taking into account types of potential targets, I try to show that my modified theory of diversionary conflict provides some answer to when domestic unrest contributes to the onset of interstate conflict. In other words, both my diversionary target theory and the traditional theory of diversionary conflict expect domestically-troubled states to be aggressors in international politics but they are different in considering some foreign factors as affecting diversionary use of force independently.

**Table 2.1 Alternative Explanations**

|  | <i>Diversionary<br/>Target</i>                         | <i>Traditional<br/>Diversionary War</i> | <i>Offensive Realism</i>                | <i>Opportunistic<br/>War</i>              |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Are states a unitary actor?  | No<br>(Leader-Public)                                  | No<br>(Leader-Public)                   | Yes                                     | Yes                                       |
| Which condition (domestic or foreign) should be met for military aggression? | Both<br>(domestic unrest & foreign threat/opportunity) | Domestic<br>(domestic unrest)           | Foreign<br>(foreign threat/opportunity) | Foreign<br>(change in balance of power)   |
| Which states are aggressive?   | Domestically-troubled states                           | Domestically-troubled states            | States seeking more security/power      | Opponents of domestically-troubled states |

<sup>134</sup> For qualities of a “good” theory, see Van Evera 1997: 17-21.

## 5.2 OFFENSIVE REALISM

Offensive realism is one of the rational unitary actor models, in which states are assumed to be security-seeking revisionists. In an international anarchy, states cannot trust others but should help themselves. Although there are some geographical constraints, all states seek maximum relative power not only by checking (potential) aggressors but also by increasing wealth and power.<sup>135</sup> Following this logic, offensive realists may challenge my theory by saying that not domestic unrest but certain foreign conditions (unfavorable changes in balance of power, different identities, and/or opportunities to gain territory and hegemony) lead states to undertake military aggression against their neighbors. They expect no significant difference between domestically-troubled states and others in the use of military aggression against other states. Even if I find strong effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, they will respond that the existence of domestic unrest does not contribute to onset of interstate conflict (see **Table 2.1**). In order to see whether domestic unrest along with foreign conditions matters in the onset of foreign conflict, whether my diversionary target theory has more explanatory power than does offensive realism, I need to show whether and how much domestic unrest and its interaction with foreign conditions have causal effects on the initiation of military conflict.

## 5.3 THE THEORY OF OPPORTUNISTIC WAR

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<sup>135</sup> See, for example, Labs 1997; Zakaria 1998; Mearsheimer 2001. For (critical) reviews on offensive realism, see Taliaferro 2000; Lee 2002; Snyder 2002.

Some agree with diversionary war scholars that domestic unrest is a cause of interstate conflict but disagree with them in holding that not domestically-troubled states but their neighbors are initiators of interstate conflict (see **Table 2.1**). In short, according to this opportunistic war theory, domestically-troubled states are targets.<sup>136</sup> When a state is suffering from domestic unrest, its opponent tries to take advantage of it by taking an aggressive stance toward the recently weakened state. In other words, one state's domestic unrest often leads to a military action by another which sees a favorable change in the balance of power. Like the offensive realist explanation, this theory assumes a state is a rational, unitary actor but gives more weight to strategic interaction in international politics. Even if I find a strong correlation between domestic unrest and interstate conflict, those who support this view will challenge me by saying that my result shows how much domestically-troubled states are attacked, rather than that they are attackers. In order to see who are trouble-makers and who are their targets, I must distinguish between initiation of interstate conflict and being a target of interstate conflict in both quantitative and qualitative tests and analyze whether and how much either or both of these explain(s) domestically-troubled states' participation in interstate conflict.

## 6. SUMMARY

This study assumes that when faced with domestic unrest, political leaders are prudent, rather than reckless, in choosing their diversionary target in order to see not domestic backfire but “rally-round-the-flag effect.” Accordingly, domestically-troubled

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<sup>136</sup> Blainey 1988; Walt 1996; Clark, Fordham, and Nordstrom 2011.

states are expected to be aggressive against fear-producing states, ones with rising power and different identity, and greed-producing states, ones occupying disputed territory and enjoying hegemony despite declining power, with which a military conflict can be easily justified and strongly supported. I contrast the diversionary target theory with its three competitors which provide different causal paths to interstate conflict. The traditional theory of diversionary war and offensive realism emphasize either domestic unrest or foreign threat/opportunity, as factors independently affecting occurrence of interstate conflict; the theory of opportunistic war expects domestically-troubled states to be targets in interstate conflict, rather than to initiate interstate conflicts, because one state's domestic trouble is regarded as a widow of opportunity by its opponent, especially its strategic competitor.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I present a research strategy to test the hypotheses developed in Chapter 2. First, I discuss the benefits of multi-method research, especially a quantitative study's finding a pattern of correlation across cases and a qualitative study's examining a causal mechanism within cases, in an international relations study in general and this diversionary target study in particular. In addition, I explain the need for a sequence of test from quantitative test to qualitative test. Then, I discuss my research design for a quantitative test: unit-of-analysis and cases, measurement, statistical models, and statistical approaches. Lastly, I present my two historical cases for a qualitative test: South Korea and North Vietnam during the early 1960s and North Korea and South Korea during the early 1990s. I justify my case selection and discuss four specific questions I ask in each case analysis.

### **2. MULTI-METHOD STRATEGY**

This study will conduct both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to test the hypotheses developed in Chapter 2. The benefits of multi-methods for social scientific research have been widely and increasingly recognized by political scientists

because each method has its own strengths and weaknesses.<sup>137</sup> Formal modeling allows researchers to develop a logically consistent theory but lacks a way to see whether its theory is empirically supported; statistics provides a way to see whether we can find a correlation across cases between our independent variable and dependent variable but does not show the direction of effects between them, nor the effects of omitted variables; case study makes researchers examine whether their causal theories really explain outcomes in specific cases, but their studies have relatively limited implication for other cases, ones not examined by the researchers. Beyond debating which method is superior or inferior to the others, political scientists, at least IR scholars, have sought a better understanding by using multi-methods in their own studies, collaborating with other scholars specializing in other methods, or dialoguing with those who in other method camps.

One good example of multi-method studies is the democratic peace literature.<sup>138</sup> Going back to the idea of Immanuel Kant, democracies' peaceful behaviors began to attract the attention of IR scholars who found strong empirical evidence of inter-democratic peace in their statistical studies in the 1990s.<sup>139</sup> But their studies on correlations between democracy and peace led to many studies of why democracy produces peace using other methods. The "second generation" scholars using formal modeling provided more sophisticated theories explaining the law-like phenomenon, the absence of war between democracies,<sup>140</sup> while case study researchers explored or tested

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<sup>137</sup> See, for example, Tarrow 1995; Bennett, Aharon, and Rutherford 2003; George and Bennett 2004: Chs 1, 2; Mahoney and Goertz 2006; Levy 2007; Collier and Elman 2008.

<sup>138</sup> George and Bennett 2004: Ch. 2.

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, Russett 1993.

<sup>140</sup> See, for example, Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999.

different causal mechanisms in different historical settings in order to see what relation - causal, reverse causal, or spurious - exists between democracy and peace.<sup>141</sup> Another more recent example is the literature on domestic audience costs. In 1994, James Fearon published an influential formal modeling article arguing that a democracy's foreign behavior is different from a non-democracy's because the former's leader suffers more domestically from backing down from international crises than the latter's leader does.<sup>142</sup> While many IR scholars have applied this theory to explain a democracy's foreign policy and its difference from a non-democracy's, some have tested this theory through statistics and case studies in order to see whether this information-based approach has more explanatory power than other institutional constraints-based approaches,<sup>143</sup> regarding whether some authoritarian leaders also suffer from audience costs,<sup>144</sup> and whether domestic audience costs seriously shape democratic foreign policies.<sup>145</sup> In short, IR scholars have gained much benefit from using multi-methods in their studies.

The diversionary conflict literature is not an exception in getting benefits from use of multiple methods, especially statistics and case studies. As I said in Chapter 1, there is a gap between theory and evidence, between large-N study and small-N study in the diversionary conflict studies. Although those who analyze a few cases often attribute interstate conflict to domestic unrest, others searching for a pattern across a large number of cases often see no significant relation between domestic trouble and international

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<sup>141</sup> See, for example, Owen 1994; Elman 1997.

<sup>142</sup> Fearon 1994. According to Google Scholar, this article has been cited 1,058 times (as of November 7, 2011).

<sup>143</sup> Schultz 1999.

<sup>144</sup> Weeks 2008.

<sup>145</sup> Schultz 2001; Snyder and Borghard 2011.



conflict. On the other hand, even if we find some condition under which the correlation between domestic unrest and interstate conflict exists, we may not know why. Some scholars argue that democracies are less likely than non-democracies to initiate diversionary conflicts due to strategic avoidance by their potential targets as discussed in Chapter 1. But their studies do not show whether it is a democracy's transparent nature, or some other factor such as institutional constraints on a leader, that produced the outcomes, and whether there is a spurious relation between a domestically-troubled democracy and the initiation of interstate conflict. In sum, a diversionary conflict theory needs both quantitative and qualitative tests in order to avoid criticism of its incapacity to provide a general pattern and test a causal mechanism.

In fact, the combination of quantitative and qualitative tests has often been used by political scientists as a way to test their hypotheses in a rigorous way. The two test methods complement each other, as Alexander George and Andrew Bennett explain below:

Both within-case and cross-case analyses are important for advancing theory testing and theory development. The two methods provide different and complementary bases for causal inference. Case studies are superior at process-tracing, which related to the causal mechanism component of causal explanation. Statistical studies are better at measuring the observed probability distribution relating measures of an independent variable to measures of outcomes across a large number of cases, which relates to the component of causal explanation defined as causal effects.<sup>146</sup>

In the same book they describe a quantitative test as one for “assessing the ability of a theory to predict outcomes” and a qualitative test (or process-tracing) as one for “assessing the ability of a[my] theory to predict the intervening causal process that leads

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<sup>146</sup> George and Bennett 2004: 224.

to outcomes.”<sup>147</sup> It is often said that a quantitative test shows a correlation but not a causal relation because statistical models do not include all relevant variables nor capture a theory perfectly.<sup>148</sup> But within-case analysis such as process tracing provides limited implications because of its limited scope, i.e. one or a few cases examined. This methodological consideration has led many IR scholars to use both quantitative and qualitative tests.<sup>149</sup>

In this study, I will conduct a quantitative test first, and then a qualitative test. By using statistical analysis, I aim to find some conditions under which there exists a correlation between domestic unrest and interstate conflict. In other words, I try to search for some types of potential targets which are linked to the positive relation between domestic troubles and the initiation of military conflict. Then I carry out qualitative studies on two cases in order to observe whether my causal mechanism, its rival theory's, or neither, produced the correlation. For example, if I find that rising power targets had a significant effect on the initiation of interstate conflict by domestically-troubled states, I will examine whether and to what extent a rising foreign power affected a struggling leader's decision to use military force against the foreign state. But if not, it is useless to do this examination because there is no confirmed correlation that my causal mechanism of diversionary target theory would produce. Actually, this type of multimethod research of carrying out statistical analysis and then conducting process-tracing is now widely

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<sup>147</sup> George and Bennett 2004: 209 (fn. 12).

<sup>148</sup> For the statistical model's limitation in capturing theory in political science study, see Signorino 1999 and Braumoeller 2003.

<sup>149</sup> See, for example, Reiter 1996: 55-58; Goemans 2000b: 13-18; Mansfield and Snyder 2005: 67-68, 169-170.

used by many international relations and comparative politics scholars, as Gary Goertz and James Mahoney say:

Regression results provide some evidence that a postulated causal mechanism is at work in a large population of cases. Process tracing in selected individual cases is then used to explore whether the causal mechanism works as advertised. This multimethod strategy is very common in many prominent recent works. Scholars first present large-N statistical results and then follow them up with analyses of individual case studies. (*Italics original*)<sup>150</sup>

As I show and discuss in the next chapter, there is strong empirical support for the rising power hypothesis, modest support for the territory and hegemon hypotheses, and weak support for the identity target hypothesis. This is why I chose two historical cases for a qualitative test in order to check the causal mechanism linking domestic unrest to interstate conflict through a rising foreign power.

### 3. QUANTITATIVE TEST DESIGN

#### 3.1 CASES

The unit of analysis is directed dyad-year. This means that I consider one dyad twice in a given year. For example, I examine South Korea (a potential initiator)-North Korea (a potential target) in 1990 as well as North Korea (a potential initiator)-South Korea (a potential target) in 1990. Because I expect that a certain type of state is more likely to *initiate*, not *participate* in, a dyadic conflict, I will distinguish between a potential initiator and a potential target in a dyad and then examine whether the potential

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<sup>150</sup> Goertz and Mahoney 2010: 27.

initiator started a dyadic conflict in a given year. For this reason, I chose the directed dyad-year and not the (non-directed) dyad-year as the unit of analysis, following many IR scholars who study the initiation of military conflict.<sup>151</sup> Although, as I discuss later, there is difficulty in determining the initiator of interstate conflict, I cannot tell whether domestically-troubled states are initiators or targets, or whether either or both my diversionary target theory and a theory of opportunistic theory has (or have) some explanatory power, without trying to determine who initiated a conflict.

I collect all dyads, rather than a sub-group of them like politically relevant dyads or politically active dyads. The rationale for analyzing the sub-group is twofold: First, theoretically, we have little interest in dyads in which states have little opportunity to fight each other due to long distance and/or limited capacity to project power, but we are interested in dyads in which states show variation in their behaviors toward others. Second, practically, we can conduct a more reliable statistical analysis with a more complete data set by focusing on a subgroup of dyads, rather than all dyads. By making the same efforts, we can reduce the portion of missing values in our data set if we focus on a subgroup of dyads, rather than all dyads.<sup>152</sup> But it is hard to believe that states in non-politically relevant or non-politically active dyads completely lack opportunities to initiate a military conflict, especially one with low-level violence. Thus, I decide to examine all dyads first and then some sub-groups, i.e. contiguous dyads, politically relevant dyads, and politically active dyads. As summarized in **Table 3.1**, contiguous dyads are two states which share a land border (or sea border within 400 miles);

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<sup>151</sup> For the studies on directed dyad-year cases, see, for example, Lai and Reiter 2000; Reiter and Stam 2002, 2003; For those on (non-directed) dyad-year cases, see, for example, Oneal and Russett 1997; Oneal and Russett 2001; Mansfield and Snyder 2002b.

politically relevant dyads are two states which share a land border (or sea border within 400 miles), or include a major power;<sup>153</sup> politically active dyads are two states which share a land border (or sea border within 150 miles), includes a global power or a regional power in the region of the other, or in which one of the states is allied to a state that is contiguous to the other, or to a global/regional power that is in a dispute with the other.<sup>154</sup>

**Table 3.1 Cases**

| <i>Type</i>            | <i>Description</i>  | <i>N</i>  | <i>%</i> |
|------------------------|---|-----------|----------|
| All                    | All directed dyad-years, 1920-2001  | 1,211,204 | 100.00   |
| Contiguous 1           | Contiguous by land or sea within 400 miles, 1920-2001                             | 48,094    | 3.97     |
| Contiguous2            | Contiguous by land, 1920-2001   | 28,306    | 2.34     |
| Politically Relevant 1 | At least one major power or contiguous by land or sea within 400 miles, 1920-2001 | 141,042   | 11.64    |
| Politically Relevant 2 | At least one major power or contiguous by land, 1920-2001                         | 124,976   | 10.32    |
| Politically Active     | 1920-2000   | 331,989   | 27.40    |

<sup>152</sup> For a discussion examining all dyads and their subsamples, especially politically relevant dyads, see Lemke and Reed 2001; Benson 2005; Bennett 2006.

<sup>153</sup> For politically relevant dyads, see Maoz and Russett 1993; Maoz 1996. According to them, major powers during the period of 1920-2001 are the United States, Great Britain, France (-1940, 1945-), Germany (-1945, 1991-), Italy (-1943), Russia/Soviet Union (1922-), China (1950-), and Japan (-1945, 1991-).

<sup>154</sup> For politically active dyads, see Quackenbush 2006. According to him, global powers during the period of 1920-2000 are the United States, Great Britain, France (-1940, 1945-), Germany (1925-45), and Soviet Union (1922-91); regional powers during the same period are Germany (1991-; Europe), Italy (-1943; Europe, Africa), Soviet Union (1992-; Europe, Asia), China (1950-92; Asia), and Japan (-1945, 1991-; Asia).

By using the Expected Utility Generation and Data Management (EUGene) program v.3.204, I developed a data set on 1,211,204 directed dyad-year cases from 1920 to 2001.<sup>155</sup> Following the advice of Scott Bennett and Allan Stam,<sup>156</sup> I dropped the cases in which there were ongoing dyadic conflicts. The rationale for this decision is two-fold: First, political leaders' decision for *continuing* a conflict should be distinct from their decision for *initiating* a conflict. They are affected by different factors or by the same factors in different ways. Second, political leaders' decision for starting *another* conflict with its on-going opponent is also different from their decision for driving their state into a conflict with another.<sup>157</sup>

### 3.2 MEASUREMENT

#### 3.2.1 Dependent Variable

##### *Initiation of Interstate Conflict*

The dependent variable is a potential initiator's starting a conflict against a potential target. The dependent variable (*mid1in*) is coded "1" if a potential initiator begins any military action ("threat to use of force," "display use of force," "use of force," or "war") against a potential target as an original member of the conflict, and "0"

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<sup>155</sup> Bennett and Stam 2000a.

<sup>156</sup> Bennett and Stam 2000b, 2004.

<sup>157</sup> The dependent variables of ongoing conflict cases are given missing values. The STATA, a statistical package program I use in this study, automatically drops the cases with a missing variable when analyzing cases.

otherwise. This is based on the Correlates of War (COW) project's Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset v.2.1<sup>158</sup> and v.3.0<sup>159</sup> provided by the EUGene program.

In addition, I measured the dependent variable in different ways by considering whether a potential initiator showed high-level hostility, whether a potential initiator joined a conflict that had been initiated by others, and whether a potential initiator had a revisionist goal. Although measuring initiation of interstate conflict by examining whether a state showed a first military action as the originator of the conflict is widely accepted and used,<sup>160</sup> there are still concerns about the validity of this measurement. For example, Stuart Bremer, Faten Ghosn, and Glenn Palmer, compilers of the MID data set warn that creating an initiator variable from their data set “may be misleading to assume that the state that took the first codable militarized is in fact the instigator of that MID.”<sup>161</sup> Thus, I decided to measure the dependent variable in other ways by including the joiners' initiation of conflict, excluding non-revisionists' initiation of conflict, and excluding initiation of low-level conflict (“threat to use force,” “display use of force”).

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<sup>158</sup> Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996.

<sup>159</sup> Bremer, Ghosn, and Palmer 2004.

<sup>160</sup> See, for example, Reiter and Stam 1998; Lai and Reiter 2000; Reiter and Stam 2003; Li and Reuveny 2011.

<sup>161</sup> Bremer, Ghosn, and Palmer 2004, 140.

**Table 3.2 Dependent Variable**

| <i>Variable Name</i> | <i>Whether a Potential Initiator took a First Military Action as...</i> |                   | <i>Level of Inter-State Conflict Is:</i>                        | <i>Frequency (N=1,211,204)</i> | <i>%</i> |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------|
|                      | <i>Revisionist</i>  | <i>Originator</i> |   |                                |          |
| MID1in               |   | √                 | Threat to use force, Display use of force, Use of force, or War | 1,839                          | .15      |
| MID1inf              |   | √                 | Use of force or War   | 1,315                          | .11      |
| MID1inr              | √   | √                 | Threat to use force, Display use of force, Use of force, or War | 1,403                          | .12      |
| MID2in               |   |                   | Threat to use force, Display use of force, Use of force, or War | 2,508                          | .21      |
| MID2inr              | √   |                   | Threat to use force, Display use of force, Use of force, or War | 1,700                          | .14      |

### 3.2.2 Independent Variables

#### *Domestic Unrest*

I measured a potential initiator's domestic unrest in  $t$  year with its political unrest in  $(t-1)$  year. For this I summed up the number of "governmental crises" and "purges" provided by the Cross National Time-Series (CNTS) data set.<sup>162</sup> The CNTS defines a governmental crisis as "any rapidly developing situation that threatens to bring the downfall of the present regime - excluding situations of revolt aimed at such overthrow," and a purge as "any systematic elimination by jailing or execution of political opposition within the ranks of the regime or the opposition." Although the CNTS provides other domestic unrest event variables (i.e. "assassinations", "general strikes", "guerrilla



warfare”, “riots”, “revolutions”, “anti-government demonstrations”) (see **Table 3.3**), I focus on the two elites-related variables which, I believe, represent more severe political unrest than others do. Because the CNTS dataset does not differentiate domestic unrest events by location and size, it is very hard to measure the extent of domestic political unrest accurately with the mass-related variables. Consider, for example, two states, state A and state B. State A experiences three demonstrations, each of which involved one thousand farmers in the countryside; State B suffers from one demonstration initiated by ten thousand angry citizens in the capital. If I measure their domestic political unrest by counting the number of mass unrest events, state A’s unrest variable is greater than state B’s. But this is not accurate. We can reduce these errors with the variables of elite unrest events, ones which usually occur in or around the capital and often threaten political leadership seriously.

**Table 3.3 CNTS Domestic Unrest Variables, 1919-2000**

| <u>Variables</u>      | <u>Description</u>   | <u>N</u>  | <u>mean</u> | <u>sd</u> | <u>min</u> | <u>max</u> |
|-----------------------|--|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| (1) Assassinations    | Any politically motivated murder or attempted murder of a high government official or politician.  | 1,145,717 | 0.192       | 0.918     | 0          | 25         |
| (2) General strikes   | Any strike of 1,000 or more industrial or service workers that involves more than one employer and that is aimed at national government policies or authority. | 1,145,717 | 0.131       | 0.531     | 0          | 13         |
| (3) Guerrilla warfare | Any armed activity, sabotage, or bombings carried on by independent bands of citizens or irregular forces and aimed at the overthrow of the present regime.    | 1,145,717 | 0.197       | 0.764     | 0          | 34         |

<sup>162</sup> Banks 2010. For the examples of studies using the same or similar way to measure domestic unrest, see Pickering and Kisangani 2005; Kisangani and Pickering 2007; Tir 2010.

|                                    |   |           |       |       |   |    |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------|-------|-------|---|----|
| (4) Government crises              | Any rapidly developing situation that threatens to bring the downfall of the present regime - excluding situations of revolt aimed at such overthrow.   | 1,145,717 | 0.191 | 0.551 | 0 | 7  |
| (5) Purges                         | Any systematic elimination by jailing or execution of political opposition within the ranks of the regime or the opposition.  | 1,145,717 | 0.139 | 0.668 | 0 | 34 |
| (6) Riots                          | Any violent demonstration or clash of more than 100 citizens involving the use of physical force.   | 1,145,717 | 0.459 | 1.810 | 0 | 55 |
| (7) Revolutions                    | Any illegal or forced change in the top governmental elite, any attempt at such a change, or any successful or unsuccessful armed rebellion whose aim is independence from the central government.                        | 1,145,717 | 0.194 | 0.536 | 0 | 9  |
| (8) Anti-government demonstrations | Any peaceful public gathering of at least 100 people for the primary purpose of displaying or voicing their opposition to government policies or authority, excluding demonstrations of a distinctly anti-foreign nature. | 1,145,717 | 0.515 | 1.773 | 0 | 60 |
| Sum                                | (1)+(2)+(3)+(4)+(5)+(6)+(7)+(8)   | 1,145,717 | 2.020 | 4.416 | 0 | 87 |

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Because I expect that the marginal effects of political unrest events decrease as their number grows, I add one to the sum of “governmental crises” and “purges” ( $\text{polunrest}$ ) and then take the natural log of it for the political unrest variable ( $\ln\text{polunrest}$ ).

In addition, I measured domestic unrest with economy variables, inflation and economic growth, in order to compare the results across various measurements of domestic unrest. Even if there is no political unrest event, political leaders recognize the public and/or the elites’ dissatisfaction and anticipate some events threatening their leadership, because they think that their domestic audience is being well-contained but may try to change its leader by taking serious measures. This consideration led me to use two economy variables (inflation and economic growth) as well as political unrest events

in order to measure domestic unrest. For inflation ( $\ln cpi$ ), I used Sara Mitchell and Bradon Prins' domestic turmoil variable which they compiled by taking the natural log of percentage change in Consumer Price Index (CPI) provided by the World Bank.<sup>163</sup> For economic growth ( $grow$ ), I used a percentage change in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth from (t-2) year to (t-1) year, compiled from the Penn World Trade v.7.0<sup>164</sup> for the period of 1950-2001, and Angus Maddison's data set on GDP<sup>165</sup> for 1920-1949.

But I use the political unrest variable as my main variable for domestic unrest in this study. Even if a state suffers from bad economy, its leader may not feel any pressure to divert public attention because he/she still maintains a strong grip on power or can attribute a bad economy to others, such as a previous leader or an international financial crisis. In addition, we often see domestic unrest situations without a bad economy. For example, authoritarian leaders in Chile, Turkey, and South Korea faced strong domestic demand for political freedom and democratic systems which led to regime transitions while their nations were experiencing good economic situations.<sup>166</sup>

### *Rising Power Target*

I measured whether a potential initiator faces a rising power target by (1) calculating a change in a potential initiator's relative power from (t-5) year to (t-1) year and by (2) seeing whether a potential target had a nuclear program but not nuclear weapons in a given year. If a potential power's power relative to a potential initiator has increased rapidly or a potential power maintained a nuclear weapons program but had not

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<sup>163</sup> Mitchell and Prins 2004.

<sup>164</sup> Heston, Summers, and Aten 2011.

<sup>165</sup> Maddison 2010.

<sup>166</sup> Haggard and Kaufman 1995, Ch. 3.

yet developed nuclear weapons, I assigned the rising power target variable (power) to “1,” and “0” otherwise. For a change in relative power, I relied on the COW’s Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) index which provides each state’s relative power score in a given year based on its iron and steel production, military expenditures, military personnel, primary energy consumption, total population, and urban population.<sup>167</sup> I calculated the ratios of a potential initiator’s CINC to a potential target’s CINC in (t-5) and (t-1) ( $\text{caprat}_{t-5}$ ,  $\text{caprat}_{t-1}$ ) and its difference ( $\text{chcaprat} = \text{caprat}_{t-5} - \text{caprat}_{t-1}$ ) and then saw whether or not the change is negative and rapid ( $\text{chcaprat} \leq 25\%$ ). For nuclear program possession, I used the Dong-Joon Jo and Erik Gartzke’s list of nuclear states.<sup>168</sup> They distinguish between states with a nuclear program and states possessing nuclear weapons.

### *Identity Target*

I measured whether a potential initiator faces an identity target by examining whether two states’ majority groups dominated their states and had different religions. Relying on Tanja Ellingsen’s dataset which provides information about each state’s majority (ethnic) group’s population percentage and its language (89 categories), ethnicity (103 categories), religion (8 categories) in a given year,<sup>169</sup> I coded the identity target variable (identity) “1” if two states’ majority groups had different religions and they dominated their own states by comprising 70% or more of the population, and “0” otherwise.<sup>170</sup> Although ethnicity is often regarded as a crucial factor in distinguishing

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<sup>167</sup> Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972.

<sup>168</sup> Jo and Gartzke 2007.

<sup>169</sup> Ellingsen 2000. The eight religion categories are: Animism, Atheism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Shintoism.

<sup>170</sup> For a similar way to measure dyadic identity, see Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006.

“us” from “them,”<sup>171</sup> I prefer religion (dis)similarity to ethnicity (dis)similarity because almost all dyads would be composed of states having different identities if I had used the ethnicity variable of Ellingsen’s dataset.<sup>172</sup> On the other hand, only when a majority group dominates a state, I believe, does its identity represent the state’s. For a state with multiple non-dominant groups, it is not reasonable to align its identity with its largest group’s.

There could be other ways to measure one state’s identity and identity target. For example, some IR scholars take into account all groups in each state or both states’ political leaders in order to see the effects of identity (dis)similarity on interstate conflict. Errol Henderson considers the number and extent of all shared cultural groups in a dyad,<sup>173</sup> while Brian Lai examines whether political leaders have different religious orientations in his study on interstate conflict in the Middle East from 1950 to 1992.<sup>174</sup> But these ways to measure dyadic identity (dis)similarity are less appropriate than mine, at least for this study, because considering all relevant groups can lead to overweighing non-majority group identities (e.g. Muslims in India, Hindus in Pakistan) and because political leaders may target a state which their state’s majority group would fear or hate in order to get the majority group’s support, which would critically affect a political leader’s survival.

### *Territory Target*

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<sup>171</sup> See, for example, Huntington 1996; Midlarsky 2000, 26-28.

<sup>172</sup> In the data set comprised of directed dyad-years from 1920 to 2001, 96.2% of them show ethnic dissimilarity while 59.39 % show religious dissimilarity.

<sup>173</sup> Henderson 1997, 1998.

<sup>174</sup> Lai 2006.

I measured whether a potential initiator faces a territory target by examining whether a potential initiator has challenged a potential target by issuing a territorial claim during the last five years. For this territory target variable (territory), I use Paul Huth and his colleagues' datasets which provide information about a challenger and a defender in each territorial claim. I relied on Paul Huth, Sarah Croco, and Benjamin Appel's dataset for the period of 1945-2001<sup>175</sup> and on Paul Huth and Todd Allee's for 1920-1944.<sup>176</sup>

### *Hegemony Target*

I measured whether a potential initiator faces a hegemony target by considering (1) whether a potential target is a global, regional, or local hegemon and (2) whether a potential target's relative power decreased rapidly. For a status of global/regional/local power, I checked whether a potential target possessed at least half of the power of the strongest power in its region by using Randall Schweller's definition of "a pole".<sup>177</sup> Like Jo and Gartzke, I relied on CINC score and the COW project's region codes (1: Europe, 2: Middle East and North Africa, 3: Africa, 4: Asia, 5: America) for this measurement of regional power.<sup>178</sup> If a potential initiator is a global/regional/local power, I calculated the ratios of a potential initiator's CINC score to a potential target's CINC score in (t-5) year and in (t-1) year and its difference ( $chcpr_{it} = capr_{it-5} - capr_{it-1}$ ) and then assigned "1" to

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<sup>175</sup> Huth, Croco, and Appel 2011.

<sup>176</sup> Huth and Allee 2002.

<sup>177</sup> Schweller 1998, 46.

<sup>178</sup> Jo and Gartzke 2007. The list of regional powers from 1816-2007 is: United States (1816-2007), United Kingdom (1816-1930, 1932, 1933, 1936, 1937, 1939, 1940, 1942-1947, 2005-2007), France (1831, 1841-1843, 1870, 1871, 1881-1884, 1889-1898, 1903, 1904, 1906, 1907, 1909-1912, 1915-1919, 1923-1927), Germany (1882-1929, 1934-1945, 1992-2007), Russia (1820-1822, 1824, 1825, 1829-1834, 1836, 1855, 1856, 1877, 1878, 1890-2007), Nigeria (1960-2007), Democratic Republic of the Congo (2006-2007), Ethiopia (1898-1936, 1943, 1944, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1998-2002, 2004-2006), South Africa (1920-1935, 1937-2007), Iran (1882, 1884, 1886, 1916, 1919-1925, 1927, 1929, 1932-1945, 1950-2007), Turkey (1816-2007), Iraq (1979-1991), Egypt (1937-1946, 1949-2007), Saudi Arabia (1976-2007), China (1860-2007), Japan (1938-1945, 1973, 1984-1991), and India (1985-1992).

the hegemony target variable (hegemony) if the change is positive and rapid ( $\text{chcaprat} \geq 75\%$ ), and “0” otherwise.

### 3.2.3 Control Variables

#### *Relative Power*

Based on some studies on deterrence,<sup>179</sup> I expect the more powerful a potential target is, the less likely a domestically-troubled state is to initiate a military conflict. For this variable (relpow), I calculated the ratio of a potential initiator’s CINC score in (t-1) year to the sum of a potential initiator’s and a potential target’s CINC scores in (t-1) year.

#### *Common Threat/Alliance*

Based on a balance of power/threat theory,<sup>180</sup> I expect a potential initiator to be less likely to start a conflict against its alliance partner because they have a common threat and try to band together against it. In order to measure whether or not there is any alliance between a potential initiator and a potential target in (t-1) year (ally), I used the COW’s Alliance v3.0 data set. I coded ally “1” if there is a pact of “defense”, “neutrality”, or “entente”, and “0” otherwise.<sup>181</sup>

#### *Economic Interdependence*

Based on an economic interdependence theory,<sup>182</sup> I expect a potential initiator to be less likely to start a dyadic conflict when there is a stronger economic relation with a potential target because both may prefer enjoying long-term economic gains to taking a

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<sup>179</sup> See, for example, Russett 1963.

<sup>180</sup> See, for example, Waltz 1979; Walt 1987.

<sup>181</sup> Gibler and Sarkees 2004.

<sup>182</sup> See, for example, Keohane and Nye 1977; Oneal and Russett 2001, Ch. 4; Gartzke 2007.

risk of military adventure for short-term benefits. For this, I used Håvard Hegre, John Oneal, and Bruce Russett's dataset, in which they calculated dyadic trade in each year and divided it by each state's Gross Domestic Product in a given year in order to measure how much a potential initiator relied economically on a potential target (depend1), and vice versa (depend2).<sup>183</sup>

### *Joint Democracy*

Based on the democratic peace theory that democracies rarely fight each other,<sup>184</sup> I expect that when both states in a dyad are democracies, a potential initiator is less likely to start a conflict against its democratic fellow. By using the Polity 4 v.2002.e which measures each state's degree of democracy in a given year by giving a score ranging from -10 (most authoritarian) to 10 (most democratic),<sup>185</sup> I coded the joint democracy variable (jointdemo) "1" when each state's polity score is equal to or greater than seven, and "0" otherwise.

### *Joint Minor Power, Contiguity, and Distance*

Following previous studies on dyadic conflict,<sup>186</sup> I control for joint minor powers, contiguity, and distance between capitals. By using the COW datasets,<sup>187</sup> I coded whether both states are non-major (i.e. minor) powers (jointminor), whether states share a border (border), and the distance between the two capitals (Indistance). For the distance variable, I take the natural log of the miles between capitals.

### *Peace Years and Spline Variables*

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<sup>183</sup> Hegre, Oneal, and Russett 2010.

<sup>184</sup> See, for example, Russett 1993; Oneal and Russett 2001; Oneal and Tir 2006.

<sup>185</sup> Marshall and Jaggers 2002.

<sup>186</sup> See, for example, Bremer 1992; Bennett and Stam 2004.



In order to deal with “temporal dependence” among the same dyads, I measured the number of years during which a dyad did not experience a conflict (peaceyrs) and then created its three spline variables (spline1, spline2, spline3), following the advice of Nathaniel Beck, Jonathan Katz, and Richard Tucker.<sup>188</sup> I discuss this more in the next section.

I summarize the variables I mentioned above in **Table 3.4**. Also, I compare the means of the main dependent variable (mid1in) across cases when there was and was not an attractive potential target (a rising power target, an identity target, a territory target, or a hegemony target) or when a potential initiator was and was not suffering from political unrest. As illustrated in **Figure 3.1**, the presence of a rising power target, a territory target, a hegemony target, or a political unrest event leads to a higher average of initiation of interstate conflict, while a presence identity target is related to a lower average of initiation of interstate conflict. By conducting chi-square tests, I found that there are statistically significant relations between the variable of initiation of interstate conflict and the variable of power target, territory target, hegemony target, or political unrest at the .01 level of significance.

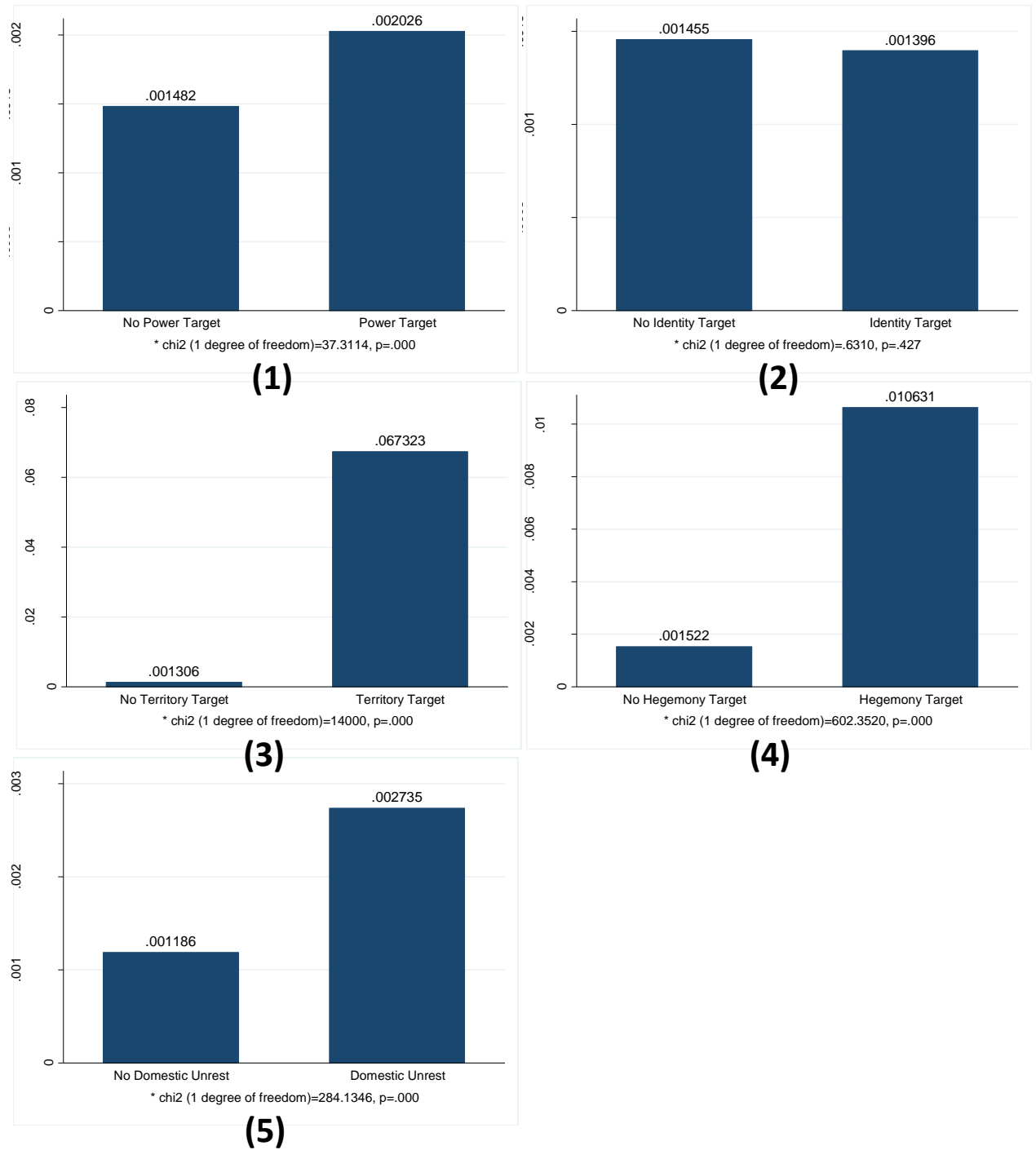
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<sup>187</sup> Small and Singer 1982; Correlates of War Project 2006, 2008.

<sup>188</sup> Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998.

**Table 3.4 Descriptive Statistics**

| <u>Variables</u> | <u>Description</u>  | <u>N</u> | <u>mean</u> | <u>sd</u> | <u>min</u> | <u>max</u> |
|------------------|---|----------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| year             |   | 1211000  | 1,978       | 19.13     | 1,920      | 2,001      |
| mid1in           | c1's first military action as originator                                      | 1206000  | 0.00152     | 0.039     | 0          | 1          |
| mid1inf          | c1's first military action (force, war) as originator                         | 1206000  | 0.00109     | 0.033     | 0          | 1          |
| mid1inr          | c1's first military action as originator & revisionist                        | 1206000  | 0.00116     | 0.0341    | 0          | 1          |
| mid2in           | c1's first military action as revisionist                                     | 1207000  | 0.00208     | 0.0455    | 0          | 1          |
| mid2inr          | c2's first military action as originator                                      | 1207000  | 0.00141     | 0.0375    | 0          | 1          |
| mid1ta           | sum of government crisis & purges   | 1206000  | 0.00152     | 0.039     | 0          | 1          |
| polunrest        | ln(polunrest+1)   | 1112000  | 0.337       | 0.935     | 0          | 35         |
| unrest           | ln(cpi annual & change +1)  | 1112000  | 0.183       | 0.397     | 0          | 3.584      |
| grow             | annual & change in GDP  | 590460   | -0.109      | 3.761     | -25.4      | 9.143      |
| power            | c2=a rising power target, one w. increasing relative power or nuclear program | 977101   | 2.05        | 7.775     | -65.31     | 122.2      |
| power_cinc       | c2=a power target, one w. increasing relative power                           | 1026000  | 0.28        | 0.449     | 0          | 1          |
| identity         | c2=a identity target, one w. different religion                               | 1023000  | 0.253       | 0.435     | 0          | 1          |
| territory        | c2=a territory target, a defender in territorial claim last five years        | 1170000  | 0.334       | 0.472     | 0          | 1          |
| hegemony         | c2=a hegemony target, a declining regional power                              | 1015000  | 0.0061      | 0.0779    | 0          | 1          |
| relpow           | c1's CINC / (c1's CINC + c2's CINC)   | 1023000  | 0.0121      | 0.109     | 0          | 1          |
| ally             | alliance between c1 & c2.   | 1173000  | 0.5         | 0.367     | 0          | 1          |
| depend1          | c1's economic dependence to c2  | 1173000  | 0.0699      | 0.255     | 0          | 1          |
| depend2          | c2's economic dependence to c1  | 1082000  | 0.00215     | 0.0185    | 1.00E-08   | 4.14       |
| jointdemo        | both c1 & c2 are democracies  | 1082000  | 0.00215     | 0.0185    | 1.00E-08   | 4.14       |
| jointminor       | both c1 & c2 are minor powers   | 932214   | 0.0994      | 0.299     | 0          | 1          |
| border           | sharing a land border   | 1173000  | 0.916       | 0.278     | 0          | 1          |
| Indistance       | ln(distance between capitals)   | 1211000  | 0.0234      | 0.151     | 0          | 1          |
| mid1peace        | peace years in terms of mid1  | 1211000  | 8.24        | 0.798     | 1.792      | 9.421      |
| mid2peace        | peace years in terms of mid2  | 1206000  | 28.25       | 30.06     | 0          | 185        |
|                  |   | 1207000  | 27.76       | 29.55     | 0          | 185        |

**Figure 3.1 Mean of the Dependent Variable (Initiation of Interstate Conflict)**

### 3.3 STATISTICAL MODELS

I will estimate the following multiplicative interaction model:

#### MODEL I: Diversionary Target

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{midin}_t = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{unrest}_{(t-1)} \times \text{power} \\
 & + \beta_2 \text{unrest}_{(t-1)} \times \text{identity} \\
 & + \beta_3 \text{unrest}_{(t-1)} \times \text{territory} \\
 & + \beta_4 \text{unrest}_{(t-1)} \times \text{hegemony} \\
 & + \beta_5 \text{unrest}_{(t-1)} \\
 & + \beta_6 \text{power} + \beta_7 \text{identity} + \beta_8 \text{territory} + \beta_9 \text{hegemony} \\
 & + \beta_{10} \text{relpow}_{(t-1)} + \beta_{11} \text{ally}_{(t-1)} + \beta_{12} \text{depend1}_{(t-1)} + \beta_{13} \text{depend2}_{(t-1)} \\
 & + \beta_{14} \text{jointdemo}_{(t-1)} + \beta_{15} \text{jointminor}_{(t-1)} \\
 & + \beta_{16} \text{border} + \beta_{17} \text{ldistance} \\
 & + \beta_{18} \text{peaceyrs} + \beta_{19} \text{spline1} + \beta_{20} \text{spline2} + \beta_{21} \text{spline3} \\
 & + e
 \end{aligned}$$

This diversionary target model includes a binary dependent variable, four independent variables, and control variables. Each independent variable is an interaction term between domestic unrest (unrest) and one of the four types of potential targets.

Following the advice of Thomas Brambor, William R. Clark, and Matt Golder,<sup>189</sup> I include all constitutive terms of the interaction terms (i.e. unrest, power, identity, territory, hegemony). In addition, I control for relative power (relpow), alliance (ally), economic interdependence (depend1, depend2), and geography (border, ldistance). Lastly, I include peace years (peaceyrs) and three spline variables (spline1, spline2, spline3) in order to deal with temporal dependence between cases across time.

With this multiplicative interaction model, I can test my hypotheses (H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H3, and H4) which expect that the effect of domestic unrest on initiation of interstate conflict depends on a type of a potential target. Although there were some

concerns about including interaction terms in statistical models mainly due to multicollinearity and difficulty in interpreting results, there have been some statistical approach studies which encourage scholars to use interaction models with some guidelines on building statistical models and interpreting and presenting results.<sup>190</sup> But the use of interaction terms prevents me from directly testing the last hypothesis (H5) about the effects of relative power. In order to test whether there is a *non-linear* relation between relative power and initiation of interstate conflict, I should include a relative power variable and its squares. But there is no way to make an interaction term between domestic unrest and these relative power-related variables. As in the next chapter, I take an alternative to divide all cases into five or seven sub-groups according to relative power and to compare logit analysis results across the groups.

In order to compare my diversionary target theory with its competitors, I built two restricted (or nested) models. As you see below, model II represents a traditional theory of diversionary war by excluding the variables related with types of potential targets from the unrestricted model (Model I), while maintaining the domestic unrest and other control variables. Model III represents an offensive realism, a system-oriented theory. For this, I exclude the domestic unrest variable and its interaction with other variables from the unrestricted model. By conducting log-likelihood ratio tests and Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve analyses, I can see whether the unrestricted model provides a better explanation than the restricted models, and whether my diversionary target theory

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<sup>189</sup> Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006.

<sup>190</sup> See, for example, Friedrich 1982; Braumoeller 2004; Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006; Kam and Franzese 2007.

has strength in accuracy when compared to the two alternative explanations on interstate conflict.

#### MODEL II: Traditional Diversionary War

$$\begin{aligned} \text{midin}_t = & \beta_0 \\ & + \beta_1 \text{unrest}_{(t-1)} \\ & + \beta_2 \text{relpow}_{(t-1)} + \beta_3 \text{ally}_{(t-1)} + \beta_4 \text{depend1}_{(t-1)} + \beta_5 \text{depend2}_{(t-1)} \\ & + \beta_6 \text{jointdemo}_{(t-1)} + \beta_7 \text{jointminor}_{(t-1)} \\ & + \beta_8 \text{border} + \beta_9 \text{ldistance} \\ & + \beta_{10} \text{peaceyrs} + \beta_{11} \text{spline1} + \beta_{12} \text{spline2} + \beta_{13} \text{spline3} \\ & + e \end{aligned}$$

#### MODEL III: Offensive Realism

$$\begin{aligned} \text{midin}_t = & \beta_0 \\ & + \beta_1 \text{power} + \beta_2 \text{identity} + \beta_3 \text{territory} + \beta_4 \text{hegemony} \\ & + \beta_5 \text{relpow}_{(t-1)} + \beta_6 \text{ally}_{(t-1)} + \beta_7 \text{depend1}_{(t-1)} + \beta_8 \text{depend2}_{(t-1)} \\ & + \beta_9 \text{jointdemo}_{(t-1)} + \beta_{10} \text{jointminor}_{(t-1)} \\ & + \beta_{11} \text{border} + \beta_{12} \text{ldistance} \\ & + \beta_{13} \text{peaceyrs} + \beta_{14} \text{spline1} + \beta_{15} \text{spline2} + \beta_{16} \text{spline3} \\ & + e \end{aligned}$$

On the other hand, for the third alternative explanation, a theory of opportunistic war, I used the unrestricted model but changed the dependent variable from initiation of militarized conflict (mid1in, mid1inf, mid1inr, mid2in, or mid2inr) to being a target of conflict. I coded the being-a-target variable (mid1ta) “1” when a potential target took the first military action as an originator, and “0” otherwise. By examining whether a domestically-troubled state was a target of interstate conflict, I can see whether and how much one state’s domestic unrest attracts another’s military aggression, whether either or

both of my diversionary target theory and the theory of opportunistic war has (have) some explanatory power.

### 3.4 LOGIT REGRESSION

Because the dependent variable is binary, I used logit regressions. One major concern about conducting logit analysis on cross-section time-series datasets is their violation of the independence assumption of logit analysis. For this, Beck, Katz, and Tucker have suggested that researchers include the variables of peace years and their resulting spline or dummy variables in their model.<sup>191</sup> I followed this advice as you saw above. But there are still some who warn against analyzing “dirty pools” without considering “fixed unobserved effects between dyads.”<sup>192</sup> According to Donald Green, Soo Yeon Kim, and David Yoon, we should remember that each dyad has its own base rate due to unobserved predictors of our dependent variable and consequently we should use fixed-effects regressions. One solution for this is to conduct conditional logit analysis, rather than logit analysis. But if we choose the former approach, we cannot take into account the effects on the dependent variable of factors not varying within a dyad such as contiguity and distance and should exclude cases in which the dependent variables do not change within dyads across time. Accordingly, as a robust test, I conduct conditional logit analysis.

On the other hand, there are some who are concerned about conducting logit analysis in order to analyze a dichotomous variable coding presence or absence of *rare*

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<sup>191</sup> Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998.

<sup>192</sup> Green, Kim, and Yoon 2001.

events (e.g. interstate war, revolution). Gary King and Langche Zeng argue that logit analysis of rare event data sets leads to biases on coefficients and underestimated predicted probabilities and encourages scholars to create a sample of datasets which includes all positive cases and randomly choose some negative cases.<sup>193</sup> As a robust test, I also carry out a rare event logit analysis and compare its result with ones from logit and conditional logit analyses.

## 4. QUALITATIVE TEST DESIGN

### 4.1 CASE SELECTION

In order to observe whether my causal mechanism really produced the outcome, whether a combination of domestic unrest and rising power target produced interstate conflicts, I examine two historical cases (see **Table 3.5**). The first case is South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War. I aim to explain why the South Korean leadership decided to send their troops to Vietnam in 1965 but not before. The second case is the first North Korean nuclear crisis. My goal is to trace North Korea's change from non-aggression, producing the 1991 Basic Agreement between the two Koreas, to aggression, culminating in the North Korea's nuclear crisis of 1994. There are three rationales for this case selection.

First, I see a change from low to high in one independent variable and no change in the other independent variable's high level in each case. This enables me to predict that a change in the independent variable leads to a potential initiator's change from non-

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<sup>193</sup> King and Zeng 2001b, 2001a.



aggression to aggression. While there was continuing political and social unrest in South Korea, which experienced the April Student Revolution of 1960 and the May 16 Coup of 1961, it was around 1964 that South Korea began to see North Vietnam as a rising threat which would decrease US commitment to other Asian allies, including itself, make the US remove forces on the Korean peninsula, and which could encourage other communist states to start another “liberation war” in Asia. On the other hand, while North Korea had seen its decline vis-à-vis South Korea due to economic recession and diplomatic isolation since the late 1980s, Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il did not see a domestic challenge until 1992 when they recovered from a military coup attempt.

**Table 3.5 Two Cases and Competing Theories**

| <i>Cases</i>  | <i>Independent Variables</i>    |                                      | <i>Expected Outcomes</i>         |   |                            |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|   | Domestic Unrest                 | Foreign Threat (Rising Power Target) | A Theory of Diversionary Targets | A Traditional Theory of Diversionary War/ A Theory of Opportunistic War | Offensive Realism          |
| South Korea toward North Vietnam in the early 1960s | High (Constant)                 | Low to Medium (Variable)             | No aggression → Aggression       | Aggression  | No aggression → Aggression |
| North Korea toward South Korea in the early 1990s   | Low (Medium) to High (Variable) | High (Constant)                      | No aggression → Aggression       | No aggression → Aggression  | Aggression                 |

Second, I can see whether my diversionary target theory or its competitors (i.e. the traditional theory of diversionary war, the theory of opportunistic war, and offensive realism) provide(s) a more accurate explanation because they provide contending expectations for each case (see **Table 3.5**). My diversionary target theory expects a change from non-aggression to aggression in South Korea's policy toward North Vietnam and in North Korea's policy toward South Korea. But the traditional theory of diversionary war and the theory of opportunistic war guide us to expect no change in South Korea's aggression level because of no change in their independent variable, domestic unrest; offensive realism does not expect a change in North Korea's aggression toward its neighbor because its explanatory variable, a rising power target, had been constantly high since the late 1980s. In each case I can contrast two expectations from my theory and its competitor(s) and then see which has more explanatory power.

Third, there are historical studies on these two cases, which are available and sufficient for an examination of their causal processes. Based on these secondary sources, English and Korean, I can trace the process of a political leader's decision to initiate a military action against a foreign target.

## 4.2 QUESTIONS

This case study not only examines whether there is consistency between my diversionary target theory's predictions and case outcomes and inconsistency between its competitors' predictions and case outcomes but also traces the process from domestic unrest and foreign rising power to interstate conflict. By checking the working of a posited causal mechanism, I can see whether my diversionary target theory has more

explanatory power than its competitors even if they expect the same outcomes in one of two historical cases. When observing consistency between our theory's prediction and case outcome, we should "guard against unjustified, questionable imputation of a causal relationship on the base of mere consistency."<sup>194</sup> In order to observe my causal mechanism for interstate conflict illustrated in **Figure 3.2**, I develop the following five questions:

[Hoop Test 1]: Did a potential initiator suffer from domestic unrest?

[Hoop Test 2]: If so, did a potential initiator's unrest undermine, if not threaten, its political leadership?

[Hoop Test 3]: Did a potential target's power relative to a potential initiator's power increase?

[Hoop Test 4]: Did a potential initiator's leader expect high political gains from initiating a military conflict?

[Hoop Test 5]: Did a potential initiator start a conflict with a potential target?

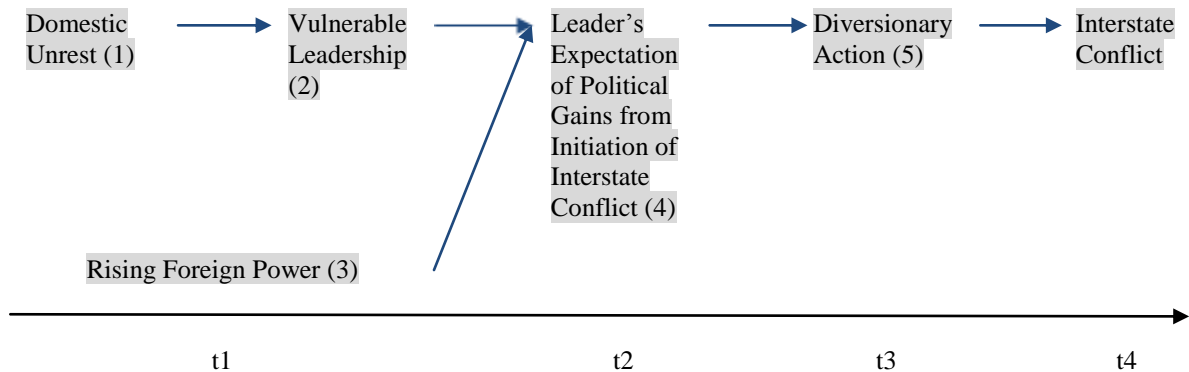
Each question is related with one causal factor representing an independent or mediating variable on the causal process illustrated in **Figure 3.2**. By answering each question, I aim to check whether each case's historical outcome is consistent with my theory's prediction and whether there is a causal relationship or a mere/spurious correlation between my independent variables and dependent variable. According to Stephen Van Evera, there are four types of case-study tests: "straw in the wind," "hoop," "smoking gun," and "doubly decisive."<sup>195</sup> The straw in the wind tests provide "neither a necessary nor a sufficient criterion" for supporting or eliminating a theory; the hoop tests

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<sup>194</sup> George and Bennett 2004: 183.

provide “a necessary but not sufficient criterion”; the smoking gun tests provide “a sufficient but not necessary criterion”; the doubly decisive tests provide “a necessary and sufficient criterion.”<sup>196</sup> I will take the hoop tests because the straw in the wind tests are of no use, and the smoking gun and doubly decisive tests are unavailable due to lack of enough evidence. Although Van Evera argues that failing a hoop test “kills a theory or explanation” and passing a hoop test “gives it little support,”<sup>197</sup> I do not see that a case study on two historical cases can confirm a death of my theory, but that passing several hoop tests, especially difficult ones, increases our confidence in the validity of a given hypothesis.<sup>198</sup>

**Figure 3.2 A Causal Path to Interstate Conflict**



<sup>195</sup> Van Evera 1997: 31-32.

<sup>196</sup> Bennett 2010: 210-211; Collier 2011.

<sup>197</sup> Van Evera 1997: 31.

<sup>198</sup> For utilities of hoop test and smoking gun test in process tracing, see Mahoney 2012.

# CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE TEST

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I provide and discuss quantitative test results. By conducting statistical analyses on the cases of directed dyad-years from 1920 to 2001, I find strong empirical support for the effects of the rising power target, modest support for the territory target and the hegemony target, and weak support for the hegemony target. In other words, domestically-troubled states are more likely than others to initiate a dyadic conflict when they face a rising power/territory/hegemony state, but not in other situations. This pattern of initiation of interstate conflict exists across various measurements of initiation of dyadic conflict (the dependent variable) and across different statistical estimators (logit, conditional logit, rare event logit). In addition, I found that my diversionary target theory has more explanatory power than its competitors as conducting log-likelihood tests and receiver-operating characteristic (ROC) analyses and changing my study's dependent variable from the initiation of conflict to the target of conflict.

In the following, I firstly present logit analysis results with a focus on marginal effects of domestic unrest across various types of potential targets and predicted probabilities of initiation of interstate conflict. Then, I compare the logit analysis results from the model of my diversionary target and those of its competitors. Next, I introduce

my robust checks and discuss their results. Lastly, I conclude by summarizing the findings.

## 2. LOGIT ANALYSIS RESULT

Overall, the logit analyses support my diversionary target theory for the effects of a rising power target, territory target, and hegemony target, but not for those of an identity target. The coefficients of three interaction terms between domestic unrest and a rising power/a territory/a hegemony target are positive and significant (see the first two columns of **Table 4.1**; H1b, H3, H4), while the interaction term between domestic unrest and identity target has non-significant negative effects (H2a). On the other hand, in the same model (Model 1), the coefficient on domestic unrest is negative and significant at the level of .10. It implies that domestic unrest has pacifying effects on a potential initiator when it faces no attractive target (i.e. power=0, identity=0, territory=0, hegemony=0). The control variables show expected directions of effects at varying significance levels, except for the variables of rising power target, alliance, and a potential initiator's economic dependence to a potential target (power, ally, depend1).

**Table 4.1 Logit Analysis**

| DV: Initiator (mid1in) , IV: Political Unrest (lnpolunrest) |                    |       |                         |       |                             |       |                               |       |
|---|--------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|
| power:<br>year:   | MODEL 1            |       | MODEL 2                 |       | MODEL 3                     |       | MODEL 4                       |       |
|   | power<br>1920-2001 |       | power_cinc<br>1920-2001 |       | power<br>No Cold War Period |       | power<br>Post-Cold War Period |       |
|   | b                  | se    | b                       | se    | b                           | se    | b                             | se    |
| unrest×power  | 0.639***           | 0.154 |                         |       | 0.536*                      | 0.304 | 0.692                         | 0.425 |
| unrest×<br>power_cinc                                       |                    |       | 0.613***                | 0.155 |                             |       |                               |       |
| unrest×identity   | -0.147             | 0.161 | -0.128                  | 0.159 | 0.245                       | 0.348 | -1.024**                      | 0.491 |
| unrest×territory  | 0.545**            | 0.212 | 0.532**                 | 0.21  | -0.044                      | 0.405 | -0.682                        | 0.819 |
| unrest×hegemony   | 0.604*             | 0.342 | 0.586*                  | 0.339 | 0.742                       | 0.532 | 0.204                         | 1.317 |
| unrest  | -0.224*            | 0.129 | -0.187                  | 0.124 | -0.338                      | 0.245 | 0.101                         | 0.322 |
| power   | -0.003             | 0.09  |                         |       | 0.268                       | 0.169 | 0.287                         | 0.197 |
| power_cinc  |                    |       | -0.068                  | 0.087 |                             |       |                               |       |
| identity  | 0.480***           | 0.117 | 0.477***                | 0.117 | 0.142                       | 0.197 | 0.079                         | 0.238 |
| territory   | 0.476***           | 0.179 | 0.476***                | 0.178 | 0.520*                      | 0.274 | 0.867**                       | 0.354 |
| hegemony  | 1.112***           | 0.209 | 1.095***                | 0.209 | 0.878**                     | 0.382 | 1.012**                       | 0.458 |
| relpow  | 0.548***           | 0.162 | 0.537***                | 0.161 | 0.677***                    | 0.245 | 0.913***                      | 0.281 |
| ally  | 0.17               | 0.122 | 0.168                   | 0.122 | 0.234                       | 0.186 | 0.173                         | 0.221 |
| depend1   | 1.167              | 1.403 | 1.088                   | 1.421 | -5.337*                     | 2.957 | -3.845**                      | 1.777 |
| depend2   | -1.621             | 2.433 | -1.626                  | 2.428 | -2.85                       | 1.911 | 6.014***                      | 2.008 |
| jointdemo   | 0.682***           | 0.2   | 0.680***                | 0.199 | -0.497*                     | 0.27  | -0.295                        | 0.285 |
| jointminor  | 1.659***           | 0.131 | 1.651***                | 0.13  | 2.095***                    | 0.203 | 2.256***                      | 0.249 |
| border  | 1.907***           | 0.195 | 1.909***                | 0.196 | 2.158***                    | 0.255 | 2.358***                      | 0.32  |
| Indistance  | 0.562***           | 0.076 | 0.562***                | 0.077 | 0.602***                    | 0.096 | 0.619***                      | 0.129 |
| mid1peace   | 0.477***           | 0.027 | 0.477***                | 0.027 | 0.434***                    | 0.047 | 0.388***                      | 0.056 |
| mid1sp1   | 0.002***           | 0     | 0.002***                | 0     | 0.002***                    | 0     | 0.001***                      | 0     |
| mid1sp2   | 0.001***           | 0     | 0.001***                | 0     | 0.001***                    | 0     | 0.001***                      | 0     |
| mid1sp3   | -0.000**           | 0     | -0.000**                | 0     | 0                           | 0     | 0                             | 0     |
| Constant  | 1.581**            | 0.683 | 1.604**                 | 0.685 | 1.661*                      | 0.888 | 1.582                         | 1.172 |
| N   | 742414             |       | 742414                  |       | 253606                      |       | 217659                        |       |
| ll  | -5307.31           |       | -5310.45                |       | -1614.85                    |       | -1234.81                      |       |
| bic   | 10912.02           |       | 10918.29                |       | 3503.449                    |       | 2740.012                      |       |

Note: \* .10, \*\* .05, \*\*\* .01 (two-tailed test); Robust standard errors clustered by dyadid (a potential initiator's COW country code\*1000 + a potential target's COW country code).

Following Brambor, Clark, and Golder's suggestion,<sup>199</sup> I illustrate marginal effects of domestic unrest in different conditions, rather than interpret the interaction terms' coefficients and p-value directly, in order to see whether and how types of potential targets affect the causal relation between domestic unrest and initiation of interstate conflict. In **Figure 4.1**, I illustrate marginal effects of attractive targets on the initiation of dyadic conflict across levels of domestic unrest in a certain type of dyad.<sup>200</sup> In each figure, I subtract the predicted probability of initiation of a dyadic conflict when there is no attractive target from that of initiation of a dyadic conflict and when there is one type of attractive target with 95% confidence intervals. When both upper and lower bounds of confidence intervals are above (or below) the zero line, I can say there are positive (or negative) effects of one type of attractive target on the probability of initiation of dyadic conflict at the significance level of .05. The first column shows the marginal effects for the dyads which experienced a conflict nineteen years ago (peaceyrs=19, median) and the second column for the dyads which fought three years ago (peaceyrs=3, 10%).

We can find that the presence of a power target leads to the positive relation between domestic unrest and initiation of interstate conflict, irrespective of the value of peace years (i.e. peaceyrs=19 or 3); the presence of territory/hegemony target contributes to a positive correlation when two states have recently fought each other (i.e. peaceyrs=3) but the presence of identity target does not. In short, both the coefficients and p-values of

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<sup>199</sup> Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006, pp. 9-15.

<sup>200</sup> I calculate the marginal effects of different types of potential targets for a dyad in which two states are neither alliance partners (ally=0) nor democracy fellows (joitdemo=0), and in which the two states share their border (border=1). I assign its mean (.5) to the relative power variable (relpow), their median (.0000534) to the economic interdependence variables (depend1 and depend2), and 6.194 (median if border=1) to distance (Indistance).



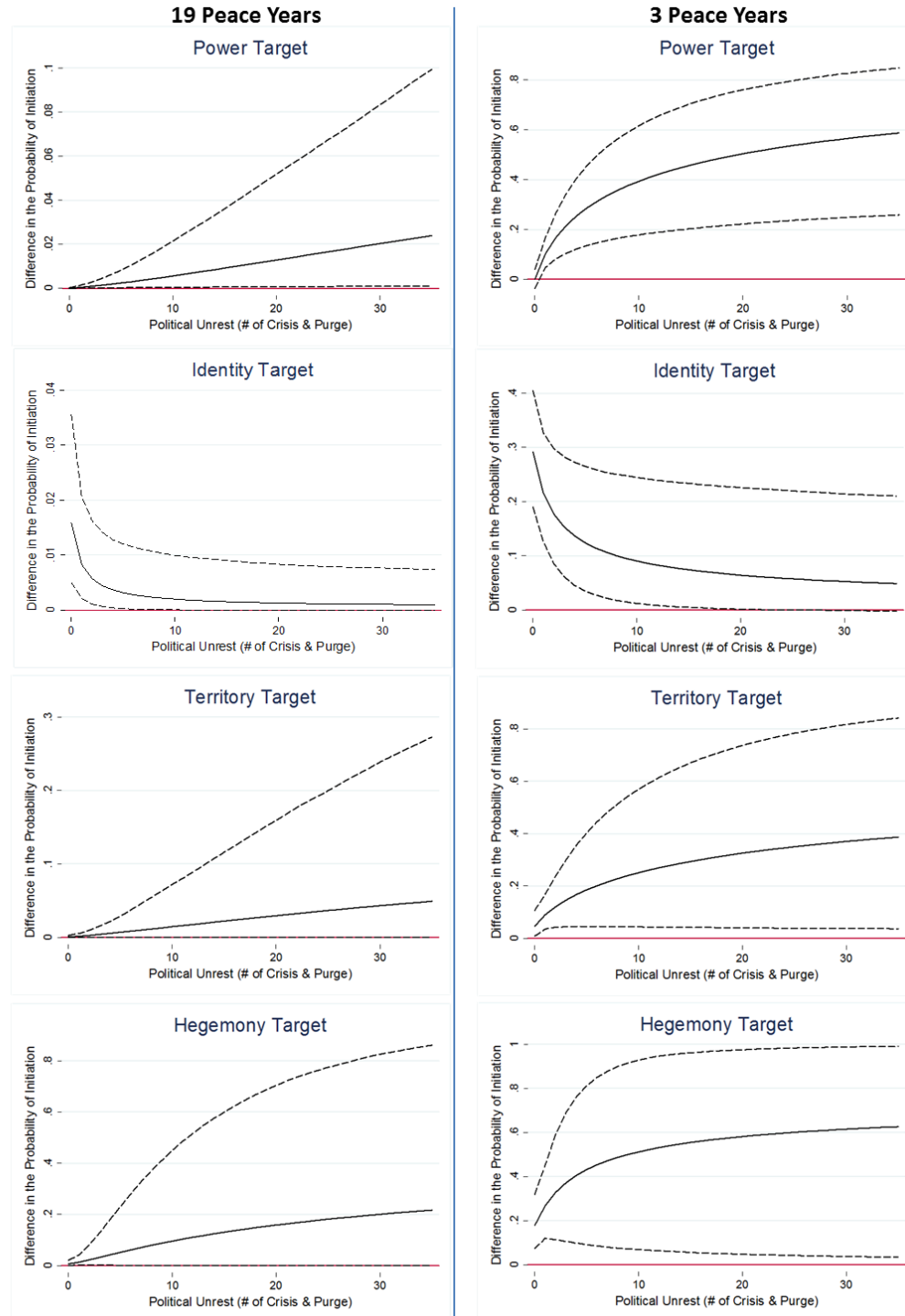
the interaction terms and the illustration of marginal effects of attractive types of potential targets provide the same results: one type of fear-producing targets (rising power) and two types of greed-producing targets (territory, hegemony) contribute to the positive relation between domestic unrest and initiation of dyadic conflict.

With Model 2, I tested the first hypothesis (H1a) by changing the power target variable from the variable (power) measuring whether a potential target is a relatively rising power or whether it has a nuclear program without nuclear weapons, to the variable (power\_cinc) measuring whether a potential target is a relatively rising power (see the third and fourth columns of **Table 4.1**). The results from Models 1 and 2 show no significant difference in terms of two different rising power target variables and their interaction terms' coefficients and standard errors. It means that states which explicitly aim to develop nuclear weapons do not attract diversionary actions more than others do, while states with increasing relative power encourage domestically-troubled states to initiate an interstate conflict.

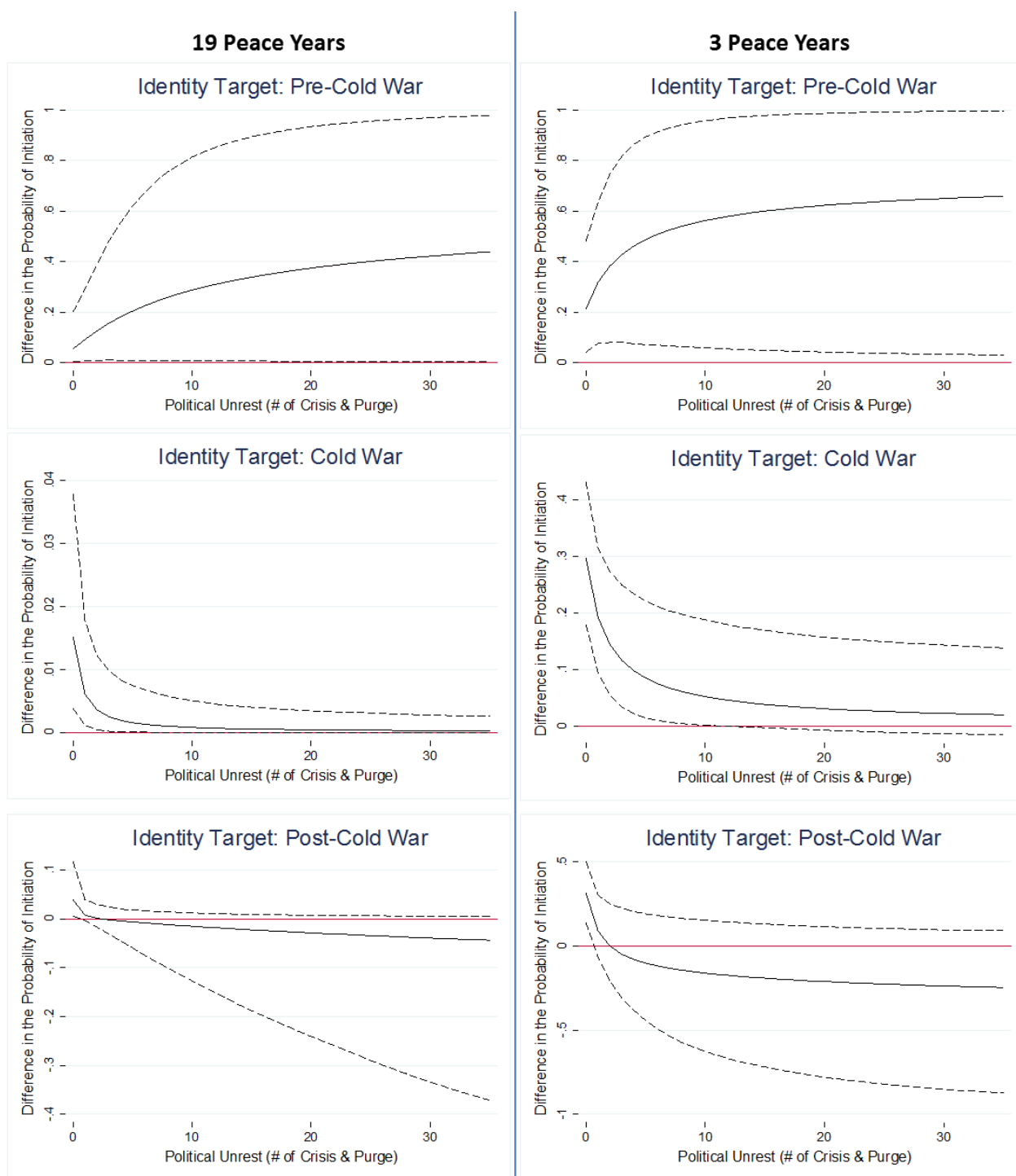
With Models 3 and 4, I tested the effects of identity target in specific time periods (H2b). As in the fifth through eighth column of **Table 4.1**, the interaction term between domestic unrest and identity target does not have significant effects in the no-Cold War period but has negative effects in the post-Cold War period at the .05 level of significance. **Figure 4.2** shows that the upper and lower bounds of the confidence intervals are not together above or below the zero line in the graphs for the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, while there are positive effects of an identity target on the dyads which have recently fought (i.e. peaceyr=3) in the pre-Cold War period. This means that the presence of an identity target does not change the effects of domestic unrest on

initiation of interstate conflict in a statistically significant (.05 level) way, at least for the period of 1945 to 2001.

**Figure 4.1 Marginal Effects of Attractive Targets**



**Figure 4.2 Marginal Effects of the Identity Target before, during, and after the Cold War**



Next, I predicted probabilities for the initiation of interstate conflict across types of potential targets with Model 1. In the top graph of **Figure 4.3**, I illustrate the probabilities of initiation of interstate conflict (`mid1in`) in four conditions: no attractive target, rising power target, territory target, and hegemony target for the dyads which fought a conflict three years ago (i.e. `peaceyrs=3`).<sup>201</sup> When there is no attractive diversionary target, a state's domestic unrest makes it less likely to initiate a dyadic conflict. An increase in domestic unrest from minimum (0) to maximum (35) leads to a decrease in the predicted probability by 48% (0.247 to 0.128). But when a state faces a rising power, territory, or hegemony target, it is more likely to be aggressive when it suffers from political unrest. A change of political unrest from minimum to maximum increases the predicted probability by 140% for the cases with a rising power target (0.246 to 0.591), by 81% for those with a territory target (0.345 to 0.625), and by 59% for those with a hegemony target (.499 to .796). In addition, I changed the dependent variable from initiation of a conflict (`mid1in`; "threat to use force," "display use of force," "use of force," or "war"), to initiation of a high-level interstate conflict (`mid1inf`; "use of force" or "war"), and then calculated predicted probabilities. The reason to focus on high-level military conflicts is to see whether my diversionary target theory works only or mainly for the cases with low-level violence. As illustrated in the bottom of **Figure 4.3**, the outcome of predicted probabilities is similar to the previous one. Domestically-troubled states are less likely to initiate a dyadic conflict against a non-attractive target but more likely to do so against a rising power/territory/hegemony target. One difference

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<sup>201</sup> As when calculating marginal effects, I assigned 0 to `ally` and `joitdemo`, 1 to `border`, .5 to `relpow`, .0000534 to `depend1` and `depend2`, 6.194 to `lndistance`.

is found when the level of domestic unrest is high. When states suffer from severe political unrest (i.e.  $\text{polunrest} \geq 15$ ), their probability of initiation of a hostile conflict against a rising power target is higher than against a territory target. Lastly, I changed the value of peace years from three (10%) to nineteen (median), and then predicted probabilities of initiation of a (high-level) conflict (see **Figure 4.4**). We find that predicted probabilities decrease when we assume more peaceful dyads, but they show the same pattern.

**Table 4.2 Predicted Probabilities**

| Dependent Variable | Peace Years | Type of Target | Predicted Probability |        |              |     |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------|--------------|-----|
|                    |             |                | from (a)              | to (b) | change (b-a) | %   |
| mid1in             | 3           | No Attractive  | 0.247                 | 0.128  | -0.119       | -48 |
|                    |             | Rising Power   | 0.246                 | 0.591  | 0.344        | 140 |
|                    |             | Territory      | 0.345                 | 0.625  | 0.280        | 81  |
|                    |             | Hegemony       | 0.499                 | 0.796  | 0.296        | 59  |
| mid1inf            | 3           | No Attractive  | 0.172                 | 0.096  | -0.076       | -44 |
|                    |             | Rising Power   | 0.162                 | 0.483  | 0.321        | 199 |
|                    |             | Territory      | 0.244                 | 0.440  | 0.197        | 81  |
|                    |             | Hegemony       | 0.337                 | 0.792  | 0.454        | 135 |
| midin              | 19          | No Attractive  | 0.030                 | 0.014  | -0.016       | -54 |
|                    |             | Rising Power   | 0.030                 | 0.120  | 0.090        | 301 |
|                    |             | Territory      | 0.047                 | 0.136  | 0.089        | 187 |
|                    |             | Hegemony       | 0.086                 | 0.269  | 0.183        | 212 |
| midinf             | 19          | No Attractive  | 0.017                 | 0.009  | -0.008       | -48 |
|                    |             | Rising Power   | 0.016                 | 0.073  | 0.057        | 356 |
|                    |             | Territory      | 0.026                 | 0.062  | 0.036        | 135 |
|                    |             | Hegemony       | 0.041                 | 0.243  | 0.202        | 489 |

Figure 4.3 Predicted Probabilities (3 Peace Years)

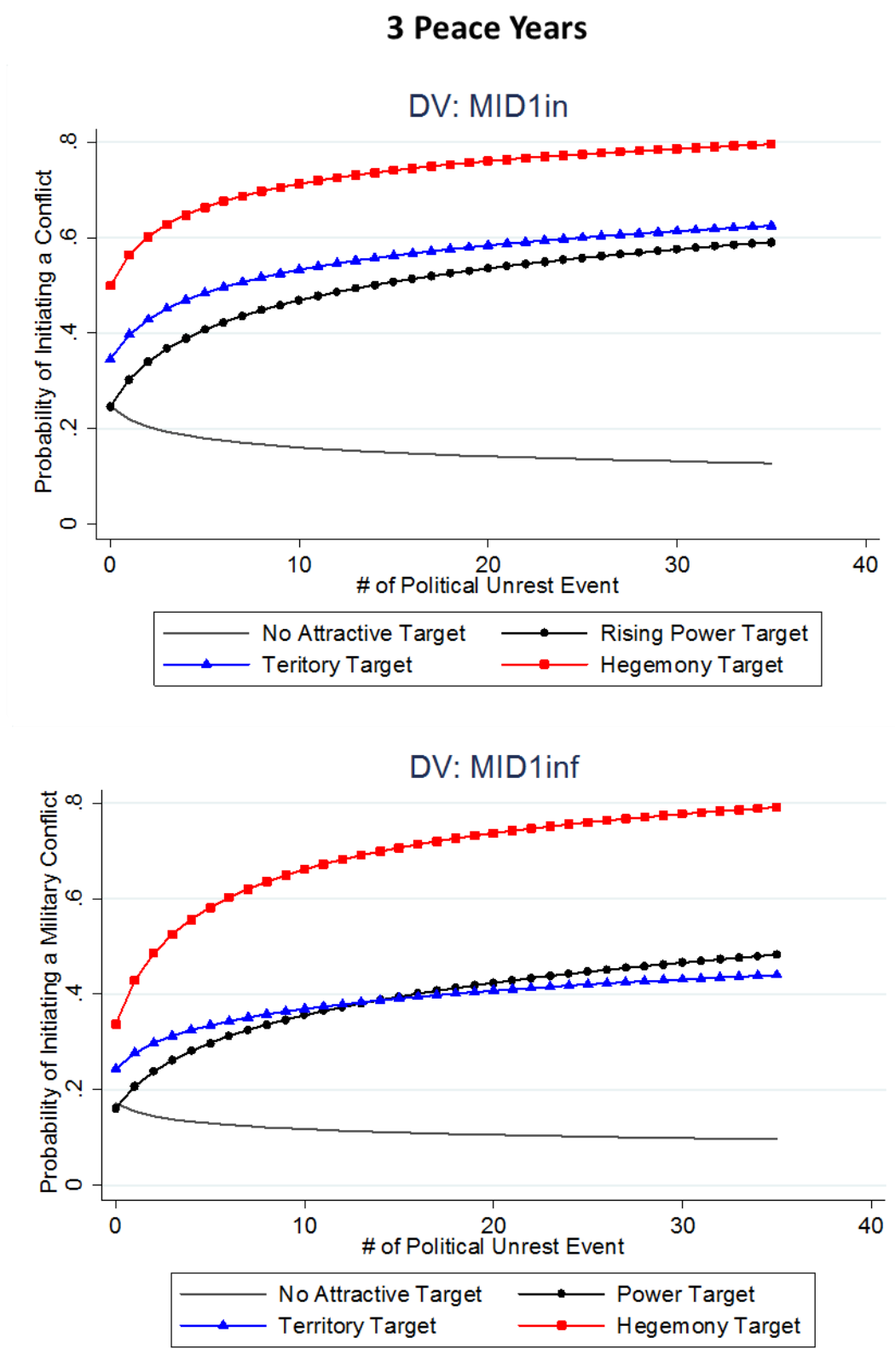
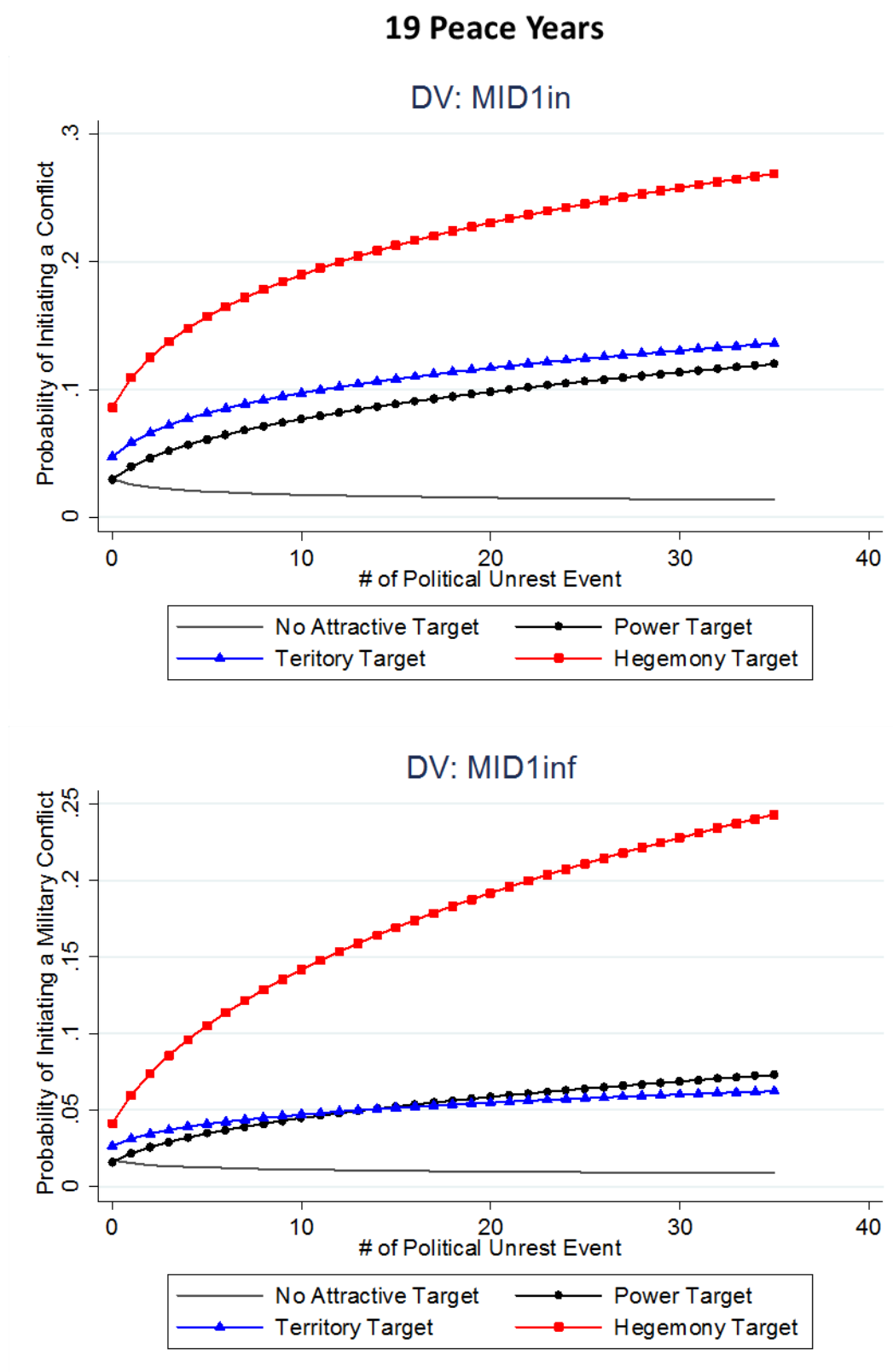


Figure 4.4 Predicted Probabilities (19 Peace Years)



In **Table 4.2**, I summarize predicted probabilities of the initiation of a conflict (mid1in) and a high-level conflict (midinf) for two different types of dyad (Peace Years = 3 or 19). When a state does not see any political unrest, its predicated probability of initiation of (high-level) conflict against a non-attractive target is higher or equal to that against a rising power target. In other words, one state's rising power does not affect a (preventive) military action by a domestically stable state. Only domestically-troubled states tend to target rising power ones. On the other hand, while the predicted probability of initiation of a (high-level) conflict against a hegemony target is higher than the predicted probability of initiation against a rising power or territory target irrespective of the value of peace years, the presence of a rising power target leads to a greater proportional change in the probability of initiation of a conflict (140% (peace years=3), 199% (peace years=19)) than does the presence of a territory (81%, 81%) or hegemony target (59%, 135%).

Then, in order to test whether a domestically-troubled state is more likely to target a similar power state (Hypothesis 5), I divided all cases into seven sub-groups according to a potential initiator's power relative to a potential target, and conducted the same logit analysis with each group. The first group's ("much stronger" target) ratio of a potential initiator's (C1) CINC score to a potential target's (C2) CINC score is less than 1:50; the second group ("stronger") is between 1:50 and 1:10, the third group ("slightly stronger") is between 1:10 and 1:2; the fourth group ("similar") is between 1:2 and 2:1; the fifth group ("slightly weaker") is between 2:1 and 10:1; the sixth group ("weaker") is between 10:1 and 50:1; and the seventh group ("much weaker") is 50:1 or greater. As seen in



**Table 4.3**, the result shows that domestically-troubled states tend to choose “slightly stronger” (and “slightly weaker”) rising power targets and “weaker” (and “much weaker”) territory targets. Although we cannot find the strong inverted U relation between relative power and diversion expected in the Hypothesis 5, this test result implies that domestically-troubled states try to avoid too-strong states as their diversionary targets, and that they prefer similar but rising powers and weaker opponents which are occupying disputed territory.

**Table 4.3 Logit Analysis: Relative Power**

| DV: Initiator (mid1in) , IV: Political Unrest (lnpolunrest) |    |                             |  |   |  |  |  |  |   |
|---|----|-----------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| Cases:  |    | <u>MODEL 1</u><br>All Dyads | <u>MODEL 5</u><br>When C2 is<br>much<br>stronger than<br>C1 (- 1:50) | <u>MODEL 6</u><br>When C2 is<br>stronger than<br>C1 (1:50-1:10) | <u>MODEL 7</u><br>When C2 is<br>slightly<br>stronger than<br>C1 (1:10-1:2) | <u>MODEL 8</u><br>When C2 is<br>similar to C1<br>(1:2-2:1) | <u>MODEL 9</u><br>When C2 is<br>slightly<br>weaker than<br>C1 (2:1-10:1) | <u>MODEL 10</u><br>When C2 is<br>weaker than<br>C1 (10:1-50:1) | <u>MODEL 11</u><br>When C2 is<br>much weaker<br>than C1<br>(50:1 -) |
| unrest×<br>power  | b  | 0.639***                    | .  | 1.073   | 0.981***   | 0.309  | 0.435*   | 0.018  | .   |
|   | se | 0.154                       | .  | 0.965   | 0.351  | 0.3  | 0.248  | 0.621  | .   |
| unrest×<br>identity   |    | -0.147                      | 0.405  | 0.493   | 0.113  | 0.027  | -0.111   | -0.257   | 0.192   |
|   |    | 0.161                       | 0.524  | 0.849   | 0.394  | 0.371  | 0.259  | 0.488  | 0.741   |
| unrest×<br>territory  |    | 0.545**                     | -0.62  | 1.509*  | 0.865  | 0.403  | 0.257  | 1.839**  | 1.977*  |
|   |    | 0.212                       | 0.461  | 0.892   | 0.528  | 0.523  | 0.249  | 0.911  | 1.112   |
| unrest×<br>hegemony   |    | 0.604*                      | .  | 1.212   | 0.659  | -0.667   | -0.109   | .  | .   |
|   |    | 0.342                       | .  | 1.258   | 0.534  | 0.834  | 0.796  | .  | .   |
| unrest  |    | -0.224*                     | 0.701  | -0.993  | -0.221   | 0.304  | -0.274   | -0.785**   | -1.714**  |
|   |    | 0.129                       | 0.427  | 0.909   | 0.309  | 0.236  | 0.173  | 0.328  | 0.73  |
| power   |    | -0.003                      | -0.322   | -0.742*   | 0.037  | 0.112  | -0.083   | -0.019   | 0.723   |
|   |    | 0.09                        | 1.143  | 0.402   | 0.192  | 0.143  | 0.16   | 0.353  | 0.619   |
| identity  |    | 0.480***                    | 0.401  | 0.606   | 0.18   | 0.413  | 0.348*   | 0.550**  | 0.869***  |
|   |    | 0.117                       | 0.495  | 0.443   | 0.271  | 0.261  | 0.197  | 0.279  | 0.317   |
| territory   |    | 0.476***                    | 1.404**  | 0.645   | 0.813**  | 0.164  | 0.561**  | -0.518   | -0.856  |
|   |    | 0.179                       | 0.55   | 0.552   | 0.401  | 0.372  | 0.256  | 0.881  | 0.69  |
| hegemony  |    | 1.112***                    | .  | 0.47  | 1.139***   | 1.621***   | 1.782***   | 1.187**  | .   |
|   |    | 0.209                       | .  | 0.468   | 0.358  | 0.472  | 0.636  | 0.597  | .   |
| relpow  |    | 0.548***                    | 54.579   | 9.882   | 3.091**  | 0.425  | -0.176   | -0.816   | -65.023**   |
|   |    | 0.162                       | 34.787   | 7.392   | 1.28   | 0.999  | 1.162  | 6.604  | 25.539  |
| ally  |    | 0.17                        | 1.718***   | 0.466   | -0.048   | -0.327   | 0.169  | 0.889***   | 0.195   |
|   |    | 0.122                       | 0.435  | 0.419   | 0.242  | 0.209  | 0.203  | 0.31   | 0.297   |
| depend1   |    | 1.167                       | 3.335***   | 4.545*  | 3.225***   | 7.671  | -33.782  | -20.096  | -494.184**  |
|   |    | 1.403                       | 0.948  | 2.417   | 1.147  | 13.852   | 27.802   | 85.33  | 212.124   |
| depend2   |    | -1.621                      | -162.144   | -97.231**   | -14.763  | -18.352  | 0.838  | -1.053   | 4.479***  |
|   |    | 2.433                       | 169.579  | 45.71   | 20.114   | 28.037   | 3.433  | 6.685  | 1.052   |
| jointdemo   |    | -0.682***                   | -1.038*  | -0.15   | -1.251***  | -0.291   | -0.508   | -0.511   | -0.751*   |
|   |    | 0.2                         | 0.576  | 0.557   | 0.425  | 0.397  | 0.385  | 0.436  | 0.433   |
| jointminor  |    | -1.659***                   | -2.668***  | -2.162***   | -1.757***  | -1.889***  | -1.735***  | -1.986***  | -1.296***   |
|   |    | 0.131                       | 0.662  | 0.359   | 0.322  | 0.509  | 0.341  | 0.294  | 0.287   |
| border  |    | 1.907***                    | 0.168  | 1.175**   | 2.127***   | 2.445***   | 2.753***   | 0.611  | 1.990***  |
|   |    | 0.195                       | 0.769  | 0.462   | 0.458  | 0.37   | 0.405  | 0.45   | 0.438   |

**Table 4.3 Logit Analysis: Relative Power (Continued)**

DV: Initiator (mid1in) , IV: Political Unrest (lnpolunrest)

| Cases:     |    | <u>MODEL 1</u><br>All Dyads | <u>MODEL 5</u><br>When C2 is<br>much<br>stronger than<br>C1 (- 1:50) | <u>MODEL 6</u><br>When C2 is<br>stronger than<br>C1 (1:50-1:10) | <u>MODEL 7</u><br>When C2 is<br>slightly<br>stronger than<br>C1 (1:10-1:2) | <u>MODEL 8</u><br>When C2 is<br>similar to C1<br>(1:2-2:1) | <u>MODEL 9</u><br>When C2 is<br>slightly<br>weaker than<br>C1 (2:1-10:1) | <u>MODEL 10</u><br>When C2 is<br>weaker than<br>C1 (10:1-50:1) | <u>MODEL 11</u><br>When C2 is<br>much weaker<br>than C1<br>(50:1 -) |
|------------|----|-----------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| Indistance | b  | -0.562***                   | -0.893***  | -0.581***   | -0.555***  | -0.599***  | -0.375***  | -0.635***  | -1.351***   |
|            | se | 0.076                       | 0.329  | 0.196   | 0.115  | 0.113  | 0.107  | 0.14   | 0.226   |
| mid1peace  |    | -0.477***                   | -0.192*  | -0.584***   | -0.496***  | -0.410***  | -0.384***  | -0.573***  | -0.408***   |
|            |    | 0.027                       | 0.109  | 0.142   | 0.05   | 0.047  | 0.057  | 0.082  | 0.097   |
| mid1sp1    |    | -0.002***                   | 0  | -0.003***   | -0.002***  | -0.001***  | -0.002***  | -0.002***  | -0.002***   |
|            |    | 0                           | 0.001  | 0.001   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0.001   |
| mid1sp2    |    | 0.001***                    | 0  | 0.001***  | 0.001***   | 0.001***   | 0.001***   | 0.001***   | 0.001***  |
|            |    | 0                           | 0  | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   |
| mid1sp3    |    | -0.000**                    | 0  | -0.000*   | -0.000**   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   |
|            |    | 0                           | 0  | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   |
| Constant   |    | 1.581**                     | 2.308  | 1.87  | 1.045  | 1.578  | 0.313  | 4.465  | 71.775***   |
|            |    | 0.683                       | 2.901  | 1.478   | 1.069  | 1.25   | 1.458  | 6.682  | 24.959  |
| N          |    | 742414                      | 42169  | 92164   | 154655   | 161109   | 155464   | 93273  | 43015   |
| ll         |    | -5307.31                    | -228.262   | -399.883  | -928.859   | -1250.59   | -1306.52   | -631.869   | -391.587  |
| bic        |    | 10912.02                    | 658.863  | 1051.254  | 2120.594   | 2764.961   | 2876.033   | 1504.047   | 985.89  |

Note: \* .10, \*\* .05, \*\*\* .01 (two-tailed test); Robust standard errors clustered by dyadid (a potential initiator's COW country code\*1000 + a potential target's COW country code).

### 3. ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Then, as summarized in **Table 4.4**, I compared my basic model of diversionary target theory (Model 1) with its two restricted models (Models 12, 13). The results of logit analyses show that the restricted models' explanatory variables (unrest, power, identity, territory, hegemony) have positive effects on the initiation of dyadic conflict at the .05 significance level. In order to see whether my diversionary target theory provides

more explanatory power than its two competitors (the traditional theory of diversionary conflict, offensive realism), I conducted the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) measures and the likelihood ratio (LR) tests, and compared areas under Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curves. The difference in the BIC scores ( $BIC_{model1} - BIC_{model5} = -1872.71$ ;  $BIC_{model1} - BIC_{model6} = -133.24$ ) provides “very strong” support for the diversionary target model over its two competitors;<sup>202</sup> The LR tests also show that including more variables brings more explanatory power to the unrestricted model in a statistically significant way (Model 1 vs. Model 12:  $\chi^2=154.56$ , degree of freedom=8, p-value=.0000; Model 1 vs. Model 13:  $\chi^2=28.95$ , degree of freedom=5, p-value=.0000); The Model 1 shows the largest area under ROC curve compared with its two competitors (Model 1: .9497, Model 12: .9353, Model 13: .9490).

On the other hand, in order to see whether domestically-troubled states are initiators, targets of interstate conflict, or both, I changed the dependent variable from C1’s initiation of a conflict against C2 (mid1in) to C2’s initiation of a conflict against C1 (mid1ta) and carried out the same logit analysis (see Model 14 in **Table 4.4**). The result shows the interaction terms between domestic unrest and territory/hegemony targets are positive at the .1 or .05 significance level. However, as illustrated in **Figure 4.5**, the presence of any attractive target does not change the probability of being a target in an interstate conflict in a positive (or negative) way at the .05 significance level even for a dyad which has seen nineteen peace years. In other words, we can find little empirical evidence supporting the theory of opportunistic war which argues that one state’s domestic unrest attracts its neighbor’s military aggression.

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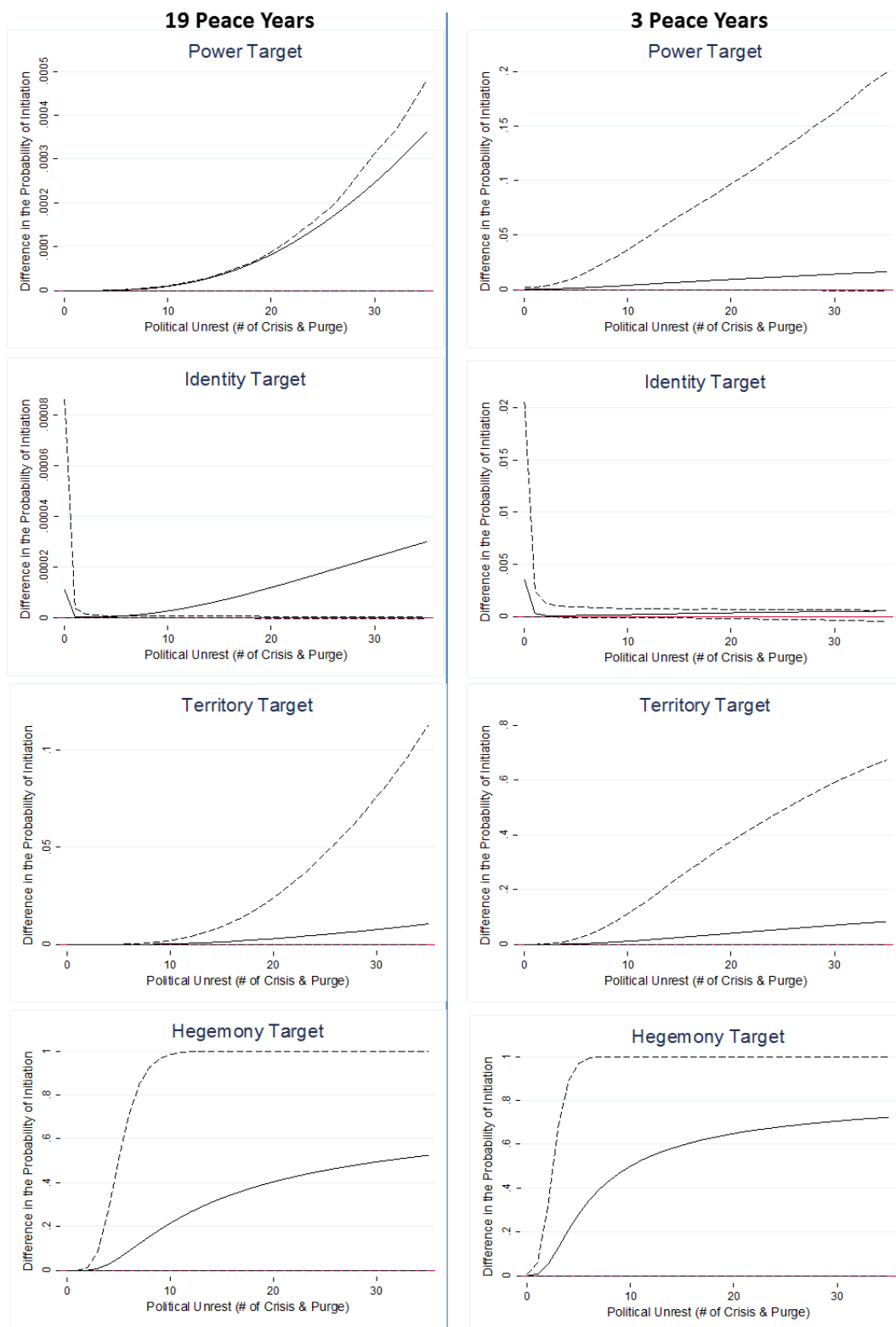
<sup>202</sup> Long 1997: 110-113.

**Table 4.4 Logit Analysis: Alternative Explanations**

| DV: Initiator(mid1in) or Target(mid1ta), IV: Political Unrest(lnpolunrest) |  |       |  |       |   |       |   |       |
|--|--|-------|--|-------|---|-------|---|-------|
| Theory:<br>DV:   | MODEL 1<br>Diversionary Target<br>mid1in |       | MODEL 12<br>Traditional Div. War<br>mid1in |       | MODEL 13<br>Offensive Realism<br>mid1in |       | MODEL 14<br>Opportunistic War<br>mid1ta |       |
|  | b  | se    | b  | se    | b                                       | se    | b                                       | se    |
| unrest×power   | 0.639***                                 | 0.154 |  |       |   |       | 0.095                                   | 0.557 |
| unrest×identity  | -0.147                                   | 0.161 |  |       |   |       | -0.906                                  | 0.583 |
| unrest×territory   | 0.545**                                  | 0.212 |  |       |   |       | 0.848*                                  | 0.456 |
| unrest×hegemony  | 0.604*                                   | 0.342 |  |       |   |       | 1.921**                                 | 0.97  |
| unrest   | -0.224*                                  | 0.129 | 0.200**                                    | 0.083 |   |       | -0.231                                  | 0.384 |
| power  | -0.003                                   | 0.09  |  |       | 0.155**                                 | 0.078 | 0.543*                                  | 0.305 |
| identity   | 0.480***                                 | 0.117 |  |       | 0.446***                                | 0.11  | 1.202***                                | 0.371 |
| territory  | 0.476***                                 | 0.179 |  |       | 0.666***                                | 0.157 | 0.459                                   | 0.407 |
| hegemony   | 1.112***                                 | 0.209 |  |       | 1.242***                                | 0.184 | 1.12                                    | 0.704 |
| relpow   | 0.548***                                 | 0.162 | 0.309*                                     | 0.162 | 0.504***                                | 0.157 | -0.018                                  | 0.519 |
| ally   | 0.17                                     | 0.122 | 0.202                                      | 0.124 | 0.161                                   | 0.122 | 0.537*                                  | 0.322 |
| depend1  | 1.167                                    | 1.403 | 0.032                                      | 1.788 | 0.509                                   | 0.733 | 1.907                                   | 6.045 |
| depend2  | -1.621                                   | 2.433 | -2.237                                     | 2.512 | -1.933                                  | 2.556 | 1.346                                   | 2.192 |
| jointdemo  | -0.682***                                | 0.2   | -0.978***                                  | 0.225 | -0.658***                               | 0.191 | 0.003                                   | 0.599 |
| jointminor   | -1.659***                                | 0.131 | -1.946***                                  | 0.137 | -1.713***                               | 0.129 | -1.186***                               | 0.446 |
| border   | 1.907***                                 | 0.195 | 2.348***                                   | 0.189 | 1.909***                                | 0.193 | 3.171***                                | 0.582 |
| lndistance   | -0.562***                                | 0.076 | -0.599***                                  | 0.079 | -0.564***                               | 0.076 | -0.408***                               | 0.156 |
| mid1peace  | -0.477***                                | 0.027 | -0.416***                                  | 0.027 | -0.481***                               | 0.027 | -0.321***                               | 0.078 |
| mid1sp1  | -0.002***                                | 0     | -0.002***                                  | 0     | -0.002***                               | 0     | -0.001                                  | 0.001 |
| mid1sp2  | 0.001***                                 | 0     | 0.001***                                   | 0     | 0.001***                                | 0     | 0                                       | 0     |
| mid1sp3  | -0.000**                                 | 0     | -0.000***                                  | 0     | -0.000***                               | 0     | 0                                       | 0     |
| Constant   | 1.581**                                  | 0.683 | 1.490**                                    | 0.717 | 1.631**                                 | 0.682 | -4.289**                                | 1.822 |
| N  | 742414                                   |       | 829407                                     |       | 755939                                  |       | 741379                                  |       |
| ll   | -5307.31                                 |       | -6296.97                                   |       | -5407.57                                |       | -414.715                                |       |
| bic  | 10912.02                                 |       | 12784.73                                   |       | 11045.26                                |       | 1126.789                                |       |
| Area under ROC<br>Curve (AUC)  | .9497                                    |       | .9353                                      |       | .9490                                   |       | .9865                                   |       |

Note: \* .10, \*\* .05, \*\*\* .01 (two-tailed test); Robust standard errors clustered by dyadid.

**Figure 4.5 Marginal Effects of Attractive Targets on Being a Target**



#### 4. ROBUST CHECK

Lastly, I checked whether or not this study's main finding holds true across different statistical approaches, across different measurements of initiating a dyadic conflict, across different measurements of domestic unrest, and across different sub-groups (i.e. contiguous, politically relevant, and politically active dyads). As summarized in **Table 4.5**, a change in logit approach results in very similar outcomes. The directions of coefficients of four interaction terms and the domestic unrest variable are not changed, while their significant levels somewhat differ across approaches. Similarly, a change in a way to measure the dependent variable (initiating a dyadic conflict) does not change the overall result (see **Table 4.6**). The coefficients of the domestic unrest variable and its interaction terms with a rising power target, a territory target, or a hegemony target show the same directions and similar effect sizes at the .10 significance level across five models (Models 1, 17, 18, 19, 20). One difference among the models is that there is no significant effect of the interaction term between domestic unrest and hegemony targets on initiation of a conflict as a revisionist (mid1inr, mid2inr).

On the other hand, different measurements of domestic unrest affect the outcome significantly. As summarized in **Table 4.7**, when using economic variables (inflation or economic growth) rather than political variables, we find that the interaction terms between domestic unrest and rising power, territory, and hegemony targets do not have significant effects on the initiation of dyadic conflict, although rising power, identity, territory, and hegemony target variables still have positive and significant ones.

**Table 4.5 Logit, Conditional Logit, and Rare Event Logit**


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DV: Initiator (mid1in), IV: Political Unrest (lnpolunrest)

| Approach:        | <u>MODEL 1</u> |       | <u>MODEL 15</u>     |       | <u>MODEL 16</u>  |       |
|------------------|----------------|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
|                  | Logit          |       | Conditional Logit   |       | Rare Event Logit |       |
|                  | b              | se    | b                   | se    | b                | se    |
| unrest×power     | 0.639***       | 0.154 | 0.428***            | 0.151 | 0.537**          | 0.216 |
| unrest×identity  | -0.147         | 0.161 | -0.286*             | 0.157 | -0.13            | 0.218 |
| unrest×territory | 0.545**        | 0.212 | 0.792***            | 0.174 | 0.562*           | 0.325 |
| unrest×hegemony  | 0.604*         | 0.342 | 0.610**             | 0.298 | 0.428            | 0.383 |
| unrest           | -0.224*        | 0.129 | -0.243*             | 0.125 | -0.144           | 0.168 |
| power            | -0.003         | 0.09  | 0.081               | 0.094 | 0.105            | 0.115 |
| identity         | 0.480***       | 0.117 | 0.388               | 0.34  | 0.519***         | 0.137 |
| territory        | 0.476***       | 0.179 | 0.007               | 0.18  | 0.374            | 0.26  |
| hegemony         | 1.112***       | 0.209 | 0.399*              | 0.213 | 1.245***         | 0.228 |
| relpow           | 0.548***       | 0.162 | 2.670***            | 0.655 | 0.564***         | 0.176 |
| ally             | 0.17           | 0.122 | -0.223*             | 0.134 | 0.152            | 0.138 |
| depend1          | 1.167          | 1.403 | 0.631               | 1.232 | 0.587            | 1.521 |
| depend2          | -1.621         | 2.433 | 0.22                | 0.851 | -0.837           | 2.407 |
| jointdemo        | -0.682***      | 0.2   | -0.299*             | 0.176 | -1.020***        | 0.178 |
| jointminor       | -1.659***      | 0.131 | -0.848**            | 0.364 | -1.868***        | 0.139 |
| border           | 1.907***       | 0.195 | 1.965***            | 0.657 | 1.994***         | 0.203 |
| lndistance       | -0.562***      | 0.076 | .                   | .     | -0.569***        | 0.071 |
| mid1peace        | -0.477***      | 0.027 | -0.228***           | 0.017 | -0.507***        | 0.034 |
| mid1sp1          | -0.002***      | 0     | -0.001***           | 0     | -0.002***        | 0     |
| mid1sp2          | 0.001***       | 0     | 0.001***            | 0     | 0.001***         | 0     |
| mid1sp3          | -0.000**       | 0     | -0.000***           | 0     | -0.000***        | 0     |
| Constant         | 1.581**        | 0.683 |                     |       | 1.915***         | 0.638 |
| N                | 742414         |       | 742414 <sup>a</sup> |       | 75161            |       |
| ll               | -5307.31       |       | -2956.43            |       |                  |       |
| bic              | 10912.02       |       | 6111.505            |       |                  |       |

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Note: \* .10, \*\* .05, \*\*\* .01 (two-tailed test); Robust standard errors clustered by dyadid.

<sup>a</sup> 23906 groups (721828 obs.) have no variation in the dependent variable.



**Table 4.6 Various Types of Initiation of Interstate Conflict**

| DV: Initiator, IV: Political Unrest (lnpolunrest) |           |       |           |       |           |       |           |       |
|---|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| DV:   | MODEL 17  |       | MODEL 18  |       | MODEL 19  |       | MODEL 20  |       |
|   | mid1inf   |       | mid1inr   |       | mid2in    |       | mid2inr   |       |
|   | b         | se    | b         | se    | b         | se    | b         | se    |
| unrest×power                                      | 0.626***  | 0.172 | 0.650***  | 0.174 | 0.592***  | 0.138 | 0.567***  | 0.161 |
| unrest×identity                                   | -0.082    | 0.186 | -0.087    | 0.189 | 0.021     | 0.143 | -0.019    | 0.176 |
| unrest×territory                                  | 0.435*    | 0.242 | 0.675***  | 0.244 | 0.582***  | 0.191 | 0.662***  | 0.228 |
| unrest×hegemony                                   | 0.747*    | 0.434 | 0.341     | 0.411 | 0.578**   | 0.29  | 0.427     | 0.382 |
| unrest  | -0.186    | 0.152 | -0.391**  | 0.156 | -0.373*** | 0.118 | -0.455*** | 0.144 |
| power   | -0.076    | 0.104 | -0.024    | 0.102 | -0.002    | 0.08  | 0.01      | 0.093 |
| identity  | 0.462***  | 0.127 | 0.507***  | 0.137 | 0.438***  | 0.104 | 0.508***  | 0.13  |
| territory   | 0.438**   | 0.19  | 0.591***  | 0.218 | 0.417***  | 0.155 | 0.502**   | 0.197 |
| hegemony  | 0.896***  | 0.288 | 1.016***  | 0.249 | 0.962***  | 0.169 | 0.804***  | 0.219 |
| relpow  | 0.452**   | 0.182 | 0.555***  | 0.181 | 0.394***  | 0.135 | 0.439***  | 0.164 |
| ally  | 0.111     | 0.141 | 0.282**   | 0.143 | 0.206*    | 0.107 | 0.343***  | 0.13  |
| depend1   | 1.888*    | 0.987 | 1.947*    | 1.129 | 1.072     | 1.218 | 2.066**   | 0.918 |
| depend2   | -4.775**  | 1.906 | -0.529    | 2.182 | -0.505    | 2.548 | 0.482     | 1.548 |
| jointdemo   | -0.507*** | 0.186 | -0.712*** | 0.228 | -0.905*** | 0.196 | -0.832*** | 0.216 |
| jointminor  | -1.475*** | 0.152 | -1.570*** | 0.145 | -1.762*** | 0.108 | -1.571*** | 0.131 |
| border  | 1.784***  | 0.231 | 1.762***  | 0.226 | 1.612***  | 0.155 | 1.614***  | 0.192 |
| lndistance  | -0.547*** | 0.087 | -0.528*** | 0.084 | -0.571*** | 0.065 | -0.513*** | 0.074 |
| mid1peace   | -0.522*** | 0.031 | -0.484*** | 0.032 |           |       |           |       |
| mid1sp1   | -0.002*** | 0     | -0.002*** | 0     |           |       |           |       |
| mid1sp2   | 0.001***  | 0     | 0.001***  | 0     |           |       |           |       |
| mid1sp3   | -0.000*** | 0     | -0.000*   | 0     |           |       |           |       |
| mid2peace   |           |       |           |       | -0.481*** | 0.025 | -0.488*** | 0.029 |
| mid2sp1   |           |       |           |       | -0.002*** | 0     | -0.002*** | 0     |
| mid2sp2   |           |       |           |       | 0.001***  | 0     | 0.001***  | 0     |
| mid2sp3   |           |       |           |       | -0.000**  | 0     | 0         | 0     |
| Constant  | 1.339*    | 0.767 | 1.064     | 0.755 | 2.211***  | 0.544 | 1.263**   | 0.638 |
| N   | 742414    |       | 742414    |       | 742762    |       | 742762    |       |
| ll  | -4079.94  |       | -4373.04  |       | -6871.76  |       | -5226.56  |       |
| bic   | 8457.262  |       | 9043.471  |       | 14040.91  |       | 10750.51  |       |

Note: \* .10, \*\* .05, \*\*\* .01 (two-tailed test); Robust standard errors clustered by dyadid.

**Table 4.7 Various Types of Domestic Unrest**

| DV: Initiator, IV: Political or Economic Unrest |  |       |  |       |  |       |
|---|--|-------|--|-------|--|-------|
| unrest:   | <u>MODEL 1</u><br>lnpolunrest<br>(Pol. Unrest Event) |       | <u>MODEL 21</u><br>ln CPI<br>(Inflation) |       | <u>MODEL 22</u><br>grow<br>(Economic Growth) |       |
|   | b  | se    | b  | se    | b  | se    |
| unrest×power                                    | 0.639***   | 0.154 | 0.033                                    | 0.022 | 0.011  | 0.009 |
| unrest×identity                                 | -0.147   | 0.161 | -0.054**                                 | 0.024 | -0.006                                       | 0.01  |
| unrest×territory                                | 0.545**  | 0.212 | -0.035                                   | 0.034 | 0.005  | 0.015 |
| unrest×hegemony                                 | 0.604*   | 0.342 | 0.003                                    | 0.039 | 0  | 0.031 |
| unrest  | -0.224*  | 0.129 | -0.003                                   | 0.023 | -0.022***                                    | 0.008 |
| power   | -0.003   | 0.09  | 0.209**                                  | 0.106 | 0.192**                                      | 0.088 |
| identity  | 0.480***   | 0.117 | 0.442***                                 | 0.141 | 0.558***                                     | 0.118 |
| territory                                       | 0.476***   | 0.179 | 0.445*                                   | 0.237 | 0.601***                                     | 0.18  |
| hegemony  | 1.112***   | 0.209 | 1.250***                                 | 0.312 | 1.437***                                     | 0.222 |
| relpow  | 0.548***   | 0.162 | 0.787***                                 | 0.205 | 0.683***                                     | 0.166 |
| ally  | 0.17   | 0.122 | 0.270*                                   | 0.157 | 0.201  | 0.124 |
| depend1   | 1.167  | 1.403 | 0.191                                    | 1.308 | -0.648                                       | 1.218 |
| depend2   | -1.621   | 2.433 | -2.202                                   | 3.486 | -1.786                                       | 2.602 |
| jointdemo                                       | -0.682***  | 0.2   | -0.648***                                | 0.228 | -0.599***                                    | 0.191 |
| jointminor                                      | -1.659***  | 0.131 | -1.644***                                | 0.177 | -1.744***                                    | 0.131 |
| border  | 1.907***   | 0.195 | 2.162***                                 | 0.249 | 1.741***                                     | 0.195 |
| ln distance                                     | -0.562***  | 0.076 | -0.471***                                | 0.081 | -0.654***                                    | 0.059 |
| mid1peace                                       | -0.477***  | 0.027 | -0.436***                                | 0.036 | -0.467***                                    | 0.029 |
| mid1sp1   | -0.002***  | 0     | -0.002***                                | 0     | -0.002***                                    | 0     |
| mid1sp2   | 0.001***   | 0     | 0.001***                                 | 0     | 0.001***                                     | 0     |
| mid1sp3   | -0.000**   | 0     | 0  | 0     | -0.000*                                      | 0     |
| Constant  | 1.581**  | 0.683 | 0.601                                    | 0.76  | 2.183***                                     | 0.552 |
| N   | 742414   |       | 422777                                   |       | 652348                                       |       |
| ll  | -5307.31   |       | -2940.46                                 |       | -4525.58                                     |       |
| bic   | 10912.02   |       | 6165.92                                  |       | 9345.706                                     |       |

Note: \* .10, \*\* .05, \*\*\* .01 (two-tailed test); Robust standard errors clustered by dyadid.

Finally, I conducted logit analysis with five different sub-groups of all directed-dyad years. As discussed in Chapter 3, I considered three conflict-likely groups: contiguous, politically relevant, and politically active. Some people may be more interested in the effects of my explanatory variables for some, not all, dyads in which a state is able to initiate a conflict against the other without the limitations of geography and power projection. Thus, I created five subgroups which international relations scholars often use for their studies of international conflict. The analyses of the subgroups produced similar outcomes with smaller log likelihood (ll) and BIC scores. My statistical model provides a more accurate prediction for the sub-groups than for the all dyad-year cases.

**Table 4.8 Contiguous, Politically Relevant, and Politically Active Dyads, 1920-2000**

| DV: Initiator, IV: Political Unrest |    |                              |  |  |   |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|----|------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| Cases:                              |    | <u>MODEL 23</u><br>All Dyads | <u>MODEL 24</u><br>Contiguous<br>by land or sea<br>within 400<br>miles | <u>MODEL 25</u><br>Contiguous<br>by land | <u>MODEL 26</u><br>Politically<br>Relevant1: At<br>least one<br>major power<br>or contiguous<br>by land or sea<br>within 400<br>miles | <u>MODEL 27</u><br>Politically<br>Relevant2: At<br>least one<br>major power<br>or contiguous<br>by land | <u>MODEL 28</u><br>Politically<br>Active Dyads |
| unrest×power                        | b  | 0.653***                     | 0.471***   | 0.387**                                  | 0.418***  | 0.383**   | 0.571***                                       |
|                                     | se | 0.156                        | 0.164  | 0.185                                    | 0.156   | 0.165   | 0.15   |
| unrest×identity                     |    | -0.132                       | 0.028  | 0.247                                    | -0.067  | -0.038  | -0.14  |
|                                     |    | 0.161                        | 0.178  | 0.21                                     | 0.162   | 0.168   | 0.156  |
| unrest×territory                    |    | 0.526**                      | 0.386*   | 0.400*                                   | 0.468**   | 0.408**   | 0.555***                                       |
|                                     |    | 0.211                        | 0.202  | 0.23                                     | 0.191   | 0.201   | 0.197  |
| unrest×hegemony                     |    | 0.591*                       | 0.437  | 0.802                                    | 0.536*  | 0.589*  | 0.506  |
|                                     |    | 0.346                        | 0.5  | 0.605                                    | 0.318   | 0.321   | 0.328  |
| unrest                              |    | -0.21                        | -0.14  | -0.119                                   | -0.12   | -0.089  | -0.217*  |
|                                     |    | 0.129                        | 0.137  | 0.155                                    | 0.129   | 0.134   | 0.124  |
| power                               |    | -0.025                       | -0.002   | 0.038                                    | 0.086   | 0.109   | -0.035   |
|                                     |    | 0.091                        | 0.092  | 0.103                                    | 0.093   | 0.101   | 0.089  |
| identity                            |    | 0.468***                     | 0.204  | 0.206                                    | 0.370***  | 0.432***  | 0.486***                                       |
|                                     |    | 0.118                        | 0.142  | 0.17                                     | 0.124   | 0.132   | 0.116  |
| territory                           |    | 0.508***                     | 0.484***   | 0.443***                                 | 0.555***  | 0.530***  | 0.476***                                       |
|                                     |    | 0.178                        | 0.15   | 0.166                                    | 0.143   | 0.149   | 0.157  |
| hegemony                            |    | 1.121***                     | 0.664***   | 0.761**                                  | 0.939***  | 1.002***  | 0.995***                                       |
|                                     |    | 0.21                         | 0.239  | 0.299                                    | 0.2   | 0.211   | 0.198  |
| relpow                              |    | 0.534***                     | 0.588***   | 0.541***                                 | 0.395***  | 0.347**   | 0.488***                                       |
|                                     |    | 0.164                        | 0.166  | 0.19                                     | 0.149   | 0.155   | 0.152  |
| ally                                |    | 0.168                        | -0.197*  | -0.17                                    | -0.006  | 0.02  | -0.055   |
|                                     |    | 0.124                        | 0.103  | 0.113                                    | 0.103   | 0.11  | 0.102  |
| depend1                             |    | 1.31                         | 0.009  | -0.558                                   | 1.456*  | 1.944*  | 1.616*   |
|                                     |    | 1.37                         | 1.222  | 3.538                                    | 0.827   | 1.157   | 0.825  |
| depend2                             |    | -1.489                       | -4.302**   | -3.066                                   | -0.584  | -0.067  | -0.886   |
|                                     |    | 2.431                        | 2.148  | 2.77                                     | 2.078   | 2.087   | 1.977  |
| jointdemo                           |    | -0.687***                    | -0.226   | -0.139                                   | -0.458***   | -0.529***   | -0.601***                                      |
|                                     |    | 0.207                        | 0.183  | 0.214                                    | 0.163   | 0.185   | 0.176  |
| jointminor                          |    | -1.637***                    | -0.255*  | 0.374*                                   | 0.225   | 0.350*  | -0.887***                                      |
|                                     |    | 0.131                        | 0.15   | 0.214                                    | 0.15  | 0.201   | 0.118  |

**Table 4.8 Contiguous, Politically Relevant, and Politically Active Dyads, 1920-2000 (Continued)**

| DV: Initiator, IV: Political Unrest |    | <u>MODEL 23</u> | <u>MODEL 24</u>   | <u>MODEL 25</u>   | <u>MODEL 26</u>                            | <u>MODEL 27</u>    | <u>MODEL 28</u>          |
|-------------------------------------|----|-----------------|---|---|--|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Cases:                              |    | All Dyads       | Politically Relevant<br>Dyads 1: At least one major power or contiguous by land or sea within 400 miles | Politically Relevant<br>Dyads 2: At least one major power or contiguous by land | Contiguous by land or sea within 400 miles | Contiguous by land | Politically Active Dyads |
| border                              | b  | 1.894***        | 0.584***  | .   | 0.745***                                   | 0.622***           | 1.525***                 |
|                                     | se | 0.196           | 0.131   | .   | 0.142                                      | 0.232              | 0.152                    |
| Indistance                          |    | -0.564***       | -0.109**  | -0.105**  | -0.180***                                  | -0.196***          | -0.334***                |
|                                     |    | 0.075           | 0.047   | 0.051   | 0.047                                      | 0.05               | 0.053                    |
| mid1peace                           |    | -0.470***       | -0.357***   | -0.341***   | -0.384***                                  | -0.370***          | -0.427***                |
|                                     |    | 0.028           | 0.024   | 0.026   | 0.023                                      | 0.024              | 0.024                    |
| mid1sp1                             |    | -0.002***       | -0.001***   | -0.001***   | -0.002***                                  | -0.001***          | -0.002***                |
|                                     |    | 0               | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0                  | 0                        |
| mid1sp2                             |    | 0.001***        | 0.001***  | 0.001***  | 0.001***                                   | 0.001***           | 0.001***                 |
|                                     |    | 0               | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0                  | 0                        |
| mid1sp3                             |    | -0.000**        | -0.000**  | -0.000*   | -0.000**                                   | 0                  | -0.000***                |
|                                     |    | 0               | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0                  | 0                        |
| Constant                            |    | 1.559**         | -1.281***   | -1.376***   | -1.399***                                  | -1.343***          | -0.081                   |
|                                     |    | 0.675           | 0.43  | 0.476   | 0.441                                      | 0.472              | 0.492                    |
| N                                   |    | 720472          | 28878   | 17731   | 79357                                      | 70022              | 205205                   |
| ll                                  |    | -5182.414       | -2770.777   | -2162.001   | -3764.32                                   | -3385.613          | -4553.075                |
| bic                                 |    | 10661.557       | 5767.513  | 4529.446  | 7776.838                                   | 7016.67            | 9375.248                 |

Note: \* .10, \*\* .05, \*\*\* .01 (two-tailed test); Robust standard errors clustered by dyadid.

## 5. SUMMARY

The statistical results show two faces of domestic unrest. When a certain condition is met (i.e. when a potential target is a rising power, territory, or hegemony one), domestic unrest is a cause of interstate conflict. But, when the condition is not met, domestic unrest contributes to interstate peace (or absence of interstate conflict).

Although some may attribute this result to either the existence of domestic unrest or a foreign opportunity to increase security/power, my analysis results show that the interaction terms between the two conditions bring some significant benefits in terms of explanatory power. In addition, I found little empirical evidence supporting the idea that domestically-troubled states tend to be targets of interstate conflict due to a decrease in their relative power.

However, these statistical outcomes do not show whether or not the causal mechanism of diversionary target theory discussed in Chapter 3 really worked. Without observing this, we cannot be sure whether the posited causal path produced interstate conflicts historically. One alternative interpretation of the relation between my explanatory variables and dependent variable comes from prospect theory, as discussed in Chapter 2. According to this view, political leaders can exploit public fear when they target my “greed-producing” as well as “fear-producing” targets. They often justify their military aggression as protecting what their states have or should have (i.e. avoiding losses), rather than as taking what other states possess (i.e. making gains), in order to sell their politics and create domestic support. This is why I need to conduct a qualitative test for a more complete test of my diversionary target theory in the next two chapters.

# **CHAPTER 5: SOUTH KOREA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE VIETNAM WAR**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I conduct a qualitative test of diversionary target theory in the case of South Korea and North Vietnam during the early 1960s. By tracing the process of South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War, I aim to see whether a diversionary target theory's causal mechanism works through a historical case, whether the combination of domestic unrest and foreign threat produced the small state's military intervention in Southeast Asia. This case study shows that President Park Chung Hee decided to send combat troops in 1965 when the US decided to take serious military intervention in Vietnam and called for allied participation in the war against the communist power. Actually, Park had tried to dispatch military forces to Vietnam since 1961 when he took power through the May Coup. But he could not materialize his plan until South Vietnam could not defend itself anymore.

In this chapter, I begin to review studies of the motives of South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War, which emphasize pressure by the United States to join the war and South Korea's calculation of political and economic interests. Then, I conduct five hoop tests as discussed in Chapter 3. The questions examined in the hoop

tests, questions which are necessary but not sufficient for accepting my diversionary target explanation, are (1) whether South Korea suffered from domestic unrest, (2) whether Park Chung Hee faced domestic challenges to his leadership, (3) whether there was an increased threat from North Vietnam, (4) whether Park Chung Hee anticipated political gains from a new interstate conflict, and (5) whether it was South Korea that started the conflict with North Vietnam. Lastly, I summarize this case study and discuss its implications.

## **2. SOUTH KOREA’S PARTICIATION IN THE VIETNAM WAR: A RELUCTANT OR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT?**

Why did South Korea participate in the Vietnam War? What made President Park Chung Hee send a large number of soldiers abroad? As summarized in **Table 5.1**, South Korea joined the Vietnam War by sending non-combatants in 1964 and combatants in the following three years. South Korea deployed 47,872 military personnel among whom 3,094 were killed and 6,051 wounded as of February 1970.<sup>203</sup> Surprisingly, South Korea, a small and poor state, sent a much larger number of troops to Vietnam than did any other US ally that answered the US call for “more flags.” **Table 5.2** shows that South Korean troops comprised 70% or more of US allies’ forces in Vietnam from 1965 to 1970. Some 50,000 South Korean soldiers fought with 550,000 US troops during the Vietnam War. Considering its weakness in economic power and its fear about further aggression from North Korea, it is puzzling that South Korea dispatched a large number of soldiers abroad

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<sup>203</sup> US Congress 1970: 1570.



in order to help another state, South Vietnam. Although the South Korean government often justified its decision to its citizens as one which would repay debts they owed to the Free World members who participated in the Korean War, there were few who believed that this was a major motive of the large-scale military intervention.

**Table 5.1 South Korean Troop Dispatch to Vietnam**

| Date             | Type          | Size   | Description  |
|------------------|---------------|--------|--|
| Sep. 1964        | Non-Combatant | 140    | Mobile Army Surgical Hospital & Martial Arts Instructors |
| Mar. 1965        | Non-Combatant | 2,000  | Medics and Military Engineers                            |
| Oct. 3-16, 1965  | Combatant     | 18,904 | Tiger Division w. Special Forces & Marine Brigades       |
| Sep. 25-30, 1966 | Combatant     | 23,865 | White Horse Division w. Special Forces                   |
| Aug. 1967        | Combatant     | 2,963  | Marine Brigades & Special Forces                         |

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Source: US Congress 1970: 1570; Park 2007: 295 (Table 1); Lee 2011b: 409-410

**Table 5.2 Strength of US Allies' Military Assistance Forces, 1964-1970**

| <i>Year</i>       | <i>1964</i>   | <i>1965</i>     | <i>1966</i>     | <i>1967</i>     | <i>1968</i>     | <i>1969</i>     | <i>1970</i>     |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Australia         | 200<br>(42.8) | 1557<br>(6.9)   | 4525<br>(8.6)   | 6818<br>(11.5)  | 7661<br>(11.6)  | 7672<br>(11.1)  | 6763<br>(10.0)  |
| Korea             | 200<br>(42.8) | 20620<br>(92.0) | 45566<br>(86.6) | 47829<br>(80.5) | 50003<br>(76.0) | 48869<br>(70.9) | 48537<br>(72.0) |
| Thailand          | 0<br>(0.0)    | 16<br>(0.1)     | 244<br>(0.5)    | 2205<br>(3.7)   | 6005<br>(9.1)   | 11568<br>(16.8) | 11586<br>(17.2) |
| New Zealand       | 30<br>(6.4)   | 119<br>(0.5)    | 155<br>(0.3)    | 534<br>(0.9)    | 516<br>(0.8)    | 552<br>(0.8)    | 441<br>(0.7)    |
| The Philippines   | 17<br>(3.6)   | 72<br>(0.3)     | 2061<br>(3.9)   | 2020<br>(3.4)   | 1576<br>(2.4)   | 189<br>(0.3)    | 74<br>(0.1)     |
| Republic of China | 20<br>(4.3)   | 20<br>(0.1)     | 23<br>(0.0)     | 31<br>(0.1)     | 29<br>(0.0)     | 29<br>(0.0)     | 31<br>(0.0)     |
| Spain             | 0<br>(0.0)    | 0<br>(0.0)      | 13<br>(0.0)     | 13<br>(0.0)     | 12<br>(0.0)     | 10<br>(0.0)     | 7<br>(0.0)      |
| Total             | 467<br>(100)  | 22404<br>(100)  | 52587<br>(100)  | 59450<br>(100)  | 65802<br>(100)  | 68889<br>(100)  | 67439<br>(100)  |

Note: Percentages are in parentheses.

Source: Larsen and Collins 1975: 23 (Table1)

In order to explain the small state's large military foreign intervention, scholars at first emphasized the unequal alliance relation between the United States and South Korea. According to them, South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War was a *forced* decision.<sup>204</sup> South Korea was a weak alliance partner which seemed to have no option but to meet its strong partner's demand. In fact, its economic and military dependency on the United States was serious. US aid to South Korea, military and economic, was \$12.6

<sup>204</sup> See, for example, Lyman 1968; Han 1978; Chomsky and Herman 1979; Han 1980.

billion dollars from 1946 to 1976 (around \$600 per capita) and it comprised 73 percent of South Korea's annual imports and 12 percent of its gross national product in 1961.<sup>205</sup> In addition, the United States maintained its two combat divisions (52,000 military personnel from 1960 to 1963 and 48,000 from 1965) in order to deter another North Korean attack, although the People's Republic of China (PRC) withdrew all its forces from North Korea in 1958.<sup>206</sup> But South Korea could not expect continued and unconditional massive support from the United States anymore. As illustrated in **Figure 5.1**, the United States continued to reduce its military and economic aid to Korea after the Korean War and demanded that its allies share its burden. In addition, the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty between South Korea and the United States lacked a provision requiring an automatic US military response to an attack on South Korea.<sup>207</sup> In this situation, South Korea made efforts to maintain its alliance partner's commitment to the Korean Peninsula out of fear of abandonment from the major power partner. To the small state, to be entrapped into a war seemed to be acceptable for its security and development.<sup>208</sup> This is why many described South Korea's dispatch of troops to Vietnam as an example of a small state's selling autonomy for security. In other words, according to this view, South Korea's fear of abandonment led to its large-scale military intervention.<sup>209</sup> Sungjoo Han (1978) says:

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<sup>205</sup> Woo 1991: 45-46; Lee 2011b: 407.

<sup>206</sup> Macdonald 1992: 68.

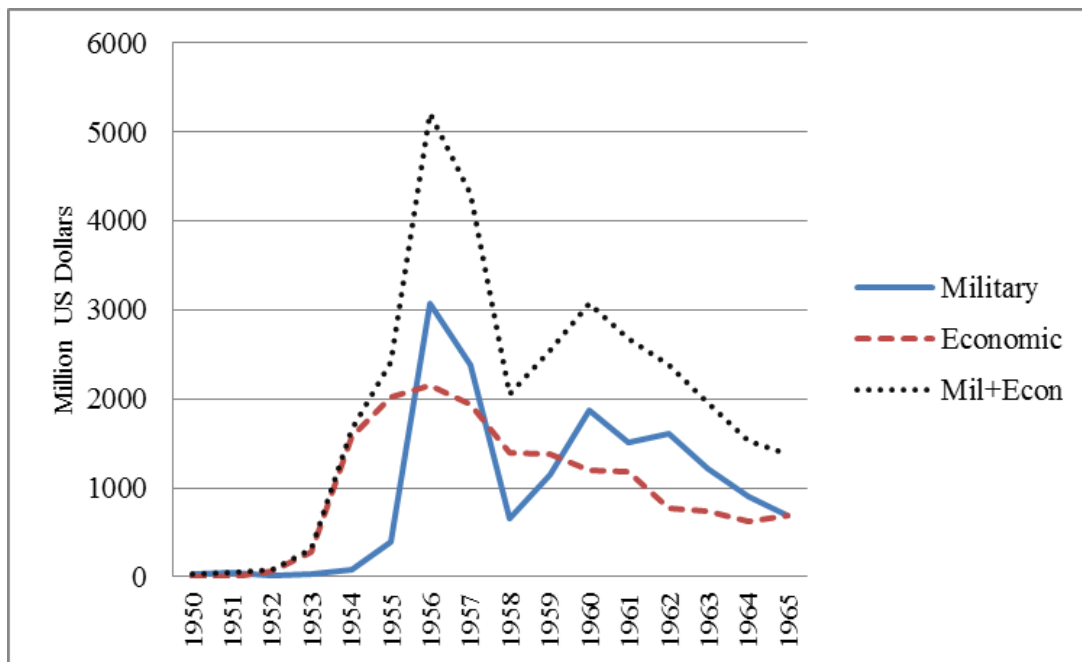
<sup>207</sup> Macdonald 1992: 80-82; Lee 2011b: 405.

<sup>208</sup> For the trade-off between autonomy and security in alliance policy, see Morrow 1991.

<sup>209</sup> For the dilemma between abandonment and entrapment in alliance policy, see Snyder 1997.

The foremost reason for South Korea's decision to send combat troops to Vietnam was to be found in her desire to prevent the weakening of the U.S. security commitment in Korea and, if possible, to further strengthen it. With the deepening of America's involvement in Indochina, doubts grew about the United States' security commitment and deterrence role. U.S. military assistance to Korea was getting progressively smaller, down to \$124 million in FY1964 (1963-1964), an all-time low since 1956...Most significantly, there were reports of U.S. plans, undoubtedly conveyed to the government through various channels, for a possible transfer to Vietnam of one or more divisions of U.S. troops from Korea in the event that additional troops from American allies were not available for combat. (901-902).

**Figure 5.1 US Aid to South Korea, 1950-1965**



Source: U.S. Overseas Loan and Grants (<http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/data/detailed.html>)

But scholars began to oppose this view from the 1990s. Mainly based on declassified US and Korean governmental documents, they argued that it was South Korea's *reasoned* decision which produced the large-scale troop dispatch to Southeast Asia.<sup>210</sup> They shed light on the fact that it was Park Chung Hee who first raised the issue of South Korea's military participation in Vietnam. In his state visit in November 1961, Park Chung Hee, who took power through the May 16 Coup, visited the United States and mentioned his intent to send South Korean troops abroad to US President Kennedy:

...

Chairman Park began by expressing his appreciation for the time the president was able to give him and also for U.S. support for Korea in these difficult days. As he had said to Secretary Rusk and Mr. Hamilton earlier, he realized the heavy burden the U.S. was bearing and he felt that each nation of the Free World must do its best to decrease this burden by its own efforts, thereby increasing the strength of the Free World...

With regard to Southeast Asia, particularly Viet-Nam, the Chairman stated that, as a firm anti-Communist nation, Korea would do its best to contribute to the security of the Far East, North Viet-Nam had well-trained guerrilla forces. Korea had a million men well trained in this type of warfare. These men had been trained in the regular forces and were now separated. With U.S. approval and support, Korea could send to Viet-Nam its own troops or could recruit volunteers if regular troops were not desired. Such action would prove that there was unity of action among the nations of the Free World, Just before he had discussed this question with his senior ROK officers. All were enthusiastic. He suggested that the president ask his military advisers to study this offer and let him know the results.

<sup>211</sup>

...

Although the United States did not accept this offer, Park Chung Hee and his aides did not abandon their plan to dispatch troops to Southeast Asia. In his report on President Johnson's press conference on June 15, 1964, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk

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<sup>210</sup> See, for example, Hong 1991, 1992; Choi 1996; Chun 2004; Park 2005, 2006, 2007; Lee 2011b.

<sup>211</sup> US Department of State 1998.

said “[t]he Chairman of the Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff has asked our views on the possible use of Korean combat units in Vietnam... We have told our Embassy that they should give no encouragement to the Koreans on this point but have requested that they push the idea of the Koreans contributing special forces advisors.”<sup>212</sup> Finally, South Korea sent its first combat division in 1965 when the United States decided to intervene militarily in Vietnam and asked its allies to contribute their combat troops. But only a small number of US allies joined the Vietnam War, which was often regarded as a civil war. But South Korea could pursue political and economic goals by participating in the war. According to Kyudok Hong,<sup>213</sup> there were five benefits from sending combat troops to Vietnam: 1) to elicit various kinds of American support to help South Korea’s economic development plans; 2) to demonstrate Korean willingness to act as a responsible ally; 3) to train forces in actual combat; 4) to obtain foreign exchange and material benefits; 5) to modernize the ROK armed forces. For these reasons, South Korean leaders were neither reluctant to send their troops to Vietnam nor willing to do so at a low price. They were shrewd enough to draw much benefit from the US. During the period of 1965 to 1969, South Korea was estimated to have earned \$516 million from various sources, including military commodity procurement, war risk insurance premiums, contracts for services, construction contracts, remittances of military and civilian personnel, and commercial exports.<sup>214</sup> This is why one US senator called South Korean soldiers in Vietnam “mercenaries” in the Hearing on the US Security Agreements

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<sup>212</sup> Cited from Hong 1991: 142.

<sup>213</sup> Hong 1991: 109.

<sup>214</sup> US Congress 1970: 1547.

and Commitments Abroad.<sup>215</sup> In short, many scholars now agree that South Korean leaders “were mainly motivated by Korean national interests, and therefore, the Korean participation was not necessarily or entirely at the behest of its superpower patron, the United States.”<sup>216</sup>

However, one question remains as to why South Korea did not participate in the Vietnam War until 1965. As said above, Park Chung Hee tried to send combat troops from 1961 when he took political power through the Military Coup. Actually, Park Chung Hee was not the first South Korean leader who considered a military intervention in Vietnam. In 1954, South Korean President Syngman Rhee made an offer to the United States to send a division in return for support for the establishment of five new Korean combat divisions.<sup>217</sup> South Korean leaders whose leadership was shaken by domestic dissatisfaction had continued to dispatch troops to South Vietnam since the end of the Korean War but failed to do it until 1965. How can we explain the timing of the small state’s foreign military intervention? Although there is a growing consensus about the claim that South Korea was an active, rather than reluctant, participant in the Vietnam War, scholars have not discussed fully the domestic and/or foreign conditions under which a South Korean leader could and could not decide to send combat troops to Southeast Asia.

In the rest of this chapter, I apply the diversionary target theory to the South Korean case. In particular, this chapter aims to see whether the diversionary target theory provides a more accurate explanation than its competitor, the traditional theory of

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<sup>215</sup> US Congress 1970.

<sup>216</sup> Hong 1991: 123.

<sup>217</sup> Hong 1991: 10 (fn. 12); Macdonald 1992: 108-110; Lee 2011b: 408.

diversionary war which sees domestically-troubled states as aggressive toward other states because their leaders have diversionary incentives. But as discussed in Chapter 3, this domestic politics approach does not explain why South Korea's military intervention in Vietnam did not occur before 1965. In order to deal with this puzzle, I will examine when South Korea faced domestic unrest and a foreign threat, whether domestic unrest made its leadership vulnerable, and how these domestic and foreign conditions contributed to its military intervention in Vietnam.

### **3. DOMESTIC UNREST? (Hoop Test 1)**

During the early 1960s South Korea was struggling with political and economic unrest. After the March 15 presidential election in 1960, college and high school students began to protest against fraudulent elections and political corruption. President Syngman Rhee and his aides responded with brutal repression but failed to maintain their office. After discovering a body of a high school student protestor who was allegedly killed in a demonstration and thrown into a bay by police, some 20,000 students and citizens marched to the presidential mansion, Kyoungmoodae, calling for President Syngman Rhee's resignation. Finally, the South Korean public succeeded in ousting the first South Korean president on April 26, 1960. But the April Revolution was not the end of the domestic unrest. Although the interim government drafted a new constitution establishing a parliamentary system and held a parliamentary election in July, the new Chang Myon government lacked the political leadership to initiate political and economic reforms that might have stabilized the state in the post-revolution period due to factional splits within



the ruling Democratic Party.<sup>218</sup> Moreover, South Korea's economy was deteriorating during the period of the Second Republic. From December 1960 to April 1961 the price of rice increased by 60 percent and coal and oil prices by 23 percent; from November to February national production fell more than 12 percent. The rate of unemployment was high: 23.4 percent in 1959 and 23.7 percent in 1960.<sup>219</sup>

Against this background, Major General Park Chung Hee came to power through the May 16 Military Coup in 1961. In justifying their military intervention into domestic politics as one “to give direction to our nation, which has gone dangerously astray,” Park and his military officers announced a six-point political platform:

1. Oppose communism and reorganize and strengthen anti-Communist readiness, which has been so far asserted only rhetorically.
2. Respect the United Nations Charter, faithfully carry out international obligations, and strengthen ties with the United States and other free-world allies.
3. Root out corruption and the accumulated evils in this nation and its society, instill moral principles and national spirit among the people, and encourage a new and fresh outlook.
4. Speedily solve the misery of the masses, who are reduced to despair, and concentrate on the construction of an independent national economy.
5. Increase the national capacity to achieve national unification, the unanimous goal of all Korean people, and to oppose Communism.
6. Transfer power to new [generations of] conscientious politicians as soon as our mission has been completed, and return to our original [military] duties.<sup>220</sup>

In short, the junta promised two things: providing security and boosting the economy. However, it lacked the resources to fulfill these promises. Park Chung Hee tried to maintain his country's lifeline, i.e. US military and economic aid. Considering its underdeveloped economy and threatened security, South Korea relied massively on its

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<sup>218</sup> Macdonald 1992: 199-208; Kim 2004: 41-48.

<sup>219</sup> Kim 2004: 45-46.

<sup>220</sup> Han 2011: 51.

major power ally (see **Table 5.3**). When he ascended to power, Park Chung Hee made strong efforts to gain US support by expressing his willingness to oppose communism and his intention to improve relations between South Korea and Japan. Although he was invited to visit the US as Chairman of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction, he could not expect that US aid would last in the future. As mentioned above, the United States was reducing its military and economic aid to South Korea after the Korean War and demanded its East Asian allies, South Korea and Japan, contribute more to collective defense against communism. Actually, the United States tried to withdraw all troops from Korea and often demanded the reduction of South Korean forces in order to decrease its military aid.

Park wanted to use national capital for economic development in his first years but failed. After announcing the first economic development five-year plan in January 1962, the junta initiated a series of economic policies such as increasing deposit interest rates and revitalizing the stock market, and carried out currency reform, changing the currency denomination from *hwan* to *won* in order to secure domestic funds for economic development. But all these efforts failed to find “idle money” and caused more inflation and less development (a decrease in economic growth from 3.5% in 1961 to 2.8% in 1962).<sup>221</sup> In addition, severe drought and flood led to the 1963 food crisis, which not only stopped South Korea’s export of rice but forced the Korean government to call for more U.S. food aid.<sup>222</sup> Accordingly, the junta announced the revised five-year plan in February 1964 after close consultation with the United States. The new plan was more oriented

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<sup>221</sup> Woo 1991: 81-83; Kim 2004: 78-82; Park 2007: 314-328.

<sup>222</sup> Macdonald 1992: 298-300.

toward export-led development and introduction of foreign capital than the previous plan.<sup>223</sup>

**Table 5.3 South Korea's GDP and US Economic Aid to Korea**

|      | South Korea's GDP<br>(A)* | US Economic Aid to<br>Korea (B)** | %<br>(B/A) |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1961 | 2100                      | 1173.371                          | 56         |
| 1962 | 2300                      | 765.491                           | 33         |
| 1963 | 2700                      | 735.8549                          | 27         |
| 1964 | 2900                      | 622.0203                          | 21         |
| 1965 | 3000                      | 684.2658                          | 23         |

Unit: million US dollars

\* Bank of Korea (<http://ecos.bok.or.kr/>)

\*\* U.S. Overseas Loan and Grants; <http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/data/detailed.html>

#### **4. VULNERABLE LEADERSHIP (Hoop Test 2)**

After retiring from the military, Park Chung Hee ran for and won the presidential election with a small margin of 151,595 votes, or 1.5 %, in October 1963. Although he succeeded in maintaining his position as head of state, his leadership was facing serious challenges from both civilians and soldiers. As the U.S. wanted, Park aimed to quickly normalize diplomatic relations with Japan for economic reasons unlike the former South

<sup>223</sup> Park 2007: 329-344.

Korean leaders. There were five meetings for normalization between the governments of South Korea and Japan from 1951 to 1960, thanks to heavy pressure from the U.S. on its two East Asian allies. But public opposition and political leader's lack of willingness, especially in Korea, prevented progress until November 1961 when Director of Korean Central Intelligence Agency Kim Jong Phil met Japanese Foreign Minister Ohira Masuyoshi. In his secret meeting with Ohira, Kim agreed to normalize diplomatic relations in return for the reparations for Japan's wrongdoings during the colonial period, \$300 million in grants, \$200 million in government loans, and \$100 million dollars in commercial credits. When the memorandum was revealed by the Japanese Foreign Ministry in January 1962, Park Chung Hee faced fierce nation-wide nationalistic opposition against "humiliating and unequal diplomacy" and "one-man diplomacy." He recalled Kim from Tokyo. But the Korean government resumed its normalization talks in 1965 when the United States promised its continued commitment to Korea after the normalization between its two East Asian allies, that is, it would not sell Korea to Japan. Although the South Korean public showed strong opposition to normalization with Japan through nation-wide anti-government demonstrations (the June 3 Incident), President Park repressed them by proclaiming martial law and mobilizing four infantry divisions.<sup>224</sup> In short, Park failed to secure public support for his leadership in 1965.

In addition, Park Chung Hee did not control the military completely. There were rifts within the military. In a telegram to the Secretary of Defense on September 21, 1964, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff discuss a probable military coup in South Korea:

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<sup>224</sup> Kim 2004: 96-101; Kim 2011a: 172; Lee 2011a: 439-452.

1. In view of the possibility of a coup d'etat in the Republic of Korea (ROK) and its impact on the operational control of the Korean Armed Forces exercised by the United States through the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command (CINCUNC), the Joint Chiefs of Staff have given consideration to appropriate courses of action available to CINCUNC.

...

3. After considering the factors affecting the stability of the ROK Government and the nature of US involvement discussed in Appendix B hereto, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have concluded that:

- a. An attempted coup d'etat in the ROK is possible. The most likely source of successful action to unseat the present regime is the military.
- b. A successful procommunist coup is unlikely due to the presence of strong United Nations and South Korean Armed Forces, effective internal security, and the anticommunist orientation of the people.<sup>225</sup>

Actually, the junta was divided: progressive young members on the one hand, and moderate senior members on the other hand. When the government's Democratic Republican Party was established in January 1963, the two sides began a serious power struggle. Although Park Chung Hee sided with young members by eliminating General Chang Do Young and his supporters just after the success of the coup in 1961, he could not resist the moderate group's and US pressure for removing Kim Jong Phil, a leader of the progressive group in 1963, who allegedly raised illegal political funds.<sup>226</sup> In May 1965, more than twenty (former) military officers, including former junta member Won Chung-Yeon, were arrested for plotting a military coup. This shows that Park Chung Hee had some trouble in maintaining the loyalty of soldiers.<sup>227</sup>

In sum, South Korea had suffered from domestic unrest as well as vulnerable leadership since the April Revolution of 1960. Although he became a civilian president after succeeding in his military coup, Park Chung Hee failed to draw strong support from

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<sup>225</sup> US Department of State 1999.

<sup>226</sup> Macdonald 1992: 217-219; Kim 2004: 84-85; Park 2007: 259-263.

<sup>227</sup> Kim 2011a: 180-185.

the public and from soldiers. In order to secure legitimacy, he focused on economic development but had troubled in finding capital, national and foreign, due to poor domestic savings and reduced foreign aid. This is why Park rushed to diplomatic normalization with Japan - for more economic aids and trade benefits. But this diplomatic policy weakened the domestic position of Park Chung Hee and generated public opposition and the military's suspicion.

### **5. FOREIGN THREAT (Hoop Test 3)**

It was in 1964 that South Vietnam was no longer able to defend itself from North Vietnam (For the rise of North Vietnam, see **Figure 5.2**). In his memorandum to President Lyndon Johnson on December 21, 1963, US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara expected that “unless current trends are reversed in the next few months, the result would be a neutral or Communist Vietnam.”<sup>228</sup> The US concern about the expansion of communism in Asia led to its decision for military intervention and its call for “more flags” on South Vietnam. Answering the US call, South Korea began to send non-combat forces in 1964 and combat forces in 1965. Although North Vietnam could not be a direct threat to South Korea, South Korea worried about the “domino effect” of the future unification of Vietnam under communism to other Free World states. A fall of South Vietnam could provoke another military aggression for national liberation by a communist state like PRC and North Korea. Although PRC withdrew its troops from

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<sup>228</sup> Cited from Hong 1991: 125-126.

North Korea in 1958, its development of nuclear weapons triggered security concerns in its neighbors, including South Korea. In an address at the national rally against PRC's nuclear test in March 1965, President Park said not only that PRC's development of nuclear weapons aims to "check the Free Bloc, expand its influence, and make more effective its detestable aggression scheme to communize all the world under the name of the so-called national liberation," but also that PRC "recently began to exert its evil influence in Southeast Asia in an explicit way."<sup>229</sup>

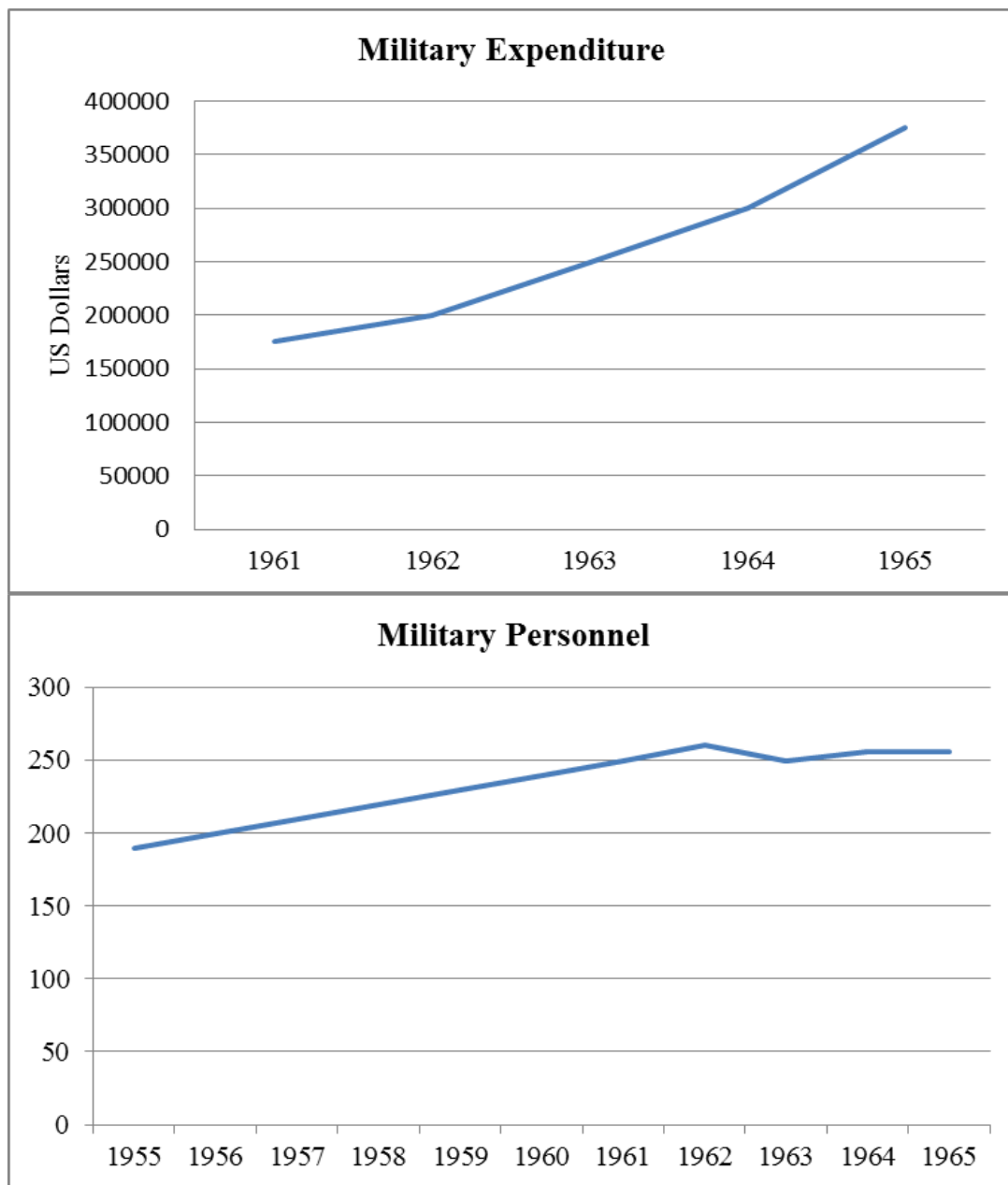
On the other hand, the US decision for military intervention in Vietnam increased South Korea's concern about the reduction of US forces on the Korean Peninsula. As discussed above, South Korea continued its efforts to maintain or increase the level of US and Korean troops in South Korea and called for US support for the modernization of the Korean Army. Accordingly, South Koreans worried that the US would move one or two division(s) from the Korean Peninsula to Southeast Asia in order to reduce its war costs. Considering North Korea's military buildup and its resulting military gap (see **Figure 5.3**), it was reasonable for South Korea to make efforts to prevent the reduction of US forces on the Korean peninsula and to maintain its major power alliance partner's commitment.<sup>230</sup> In the 1967 presidential campaign, President Park insisted that his decision for sending Korean troops abroad resulted from his strategic concerns about the relocation of US troops from Korea to Vietnam.<sup>231</sup> In short, North Vietnam could not attack South Korea. But the communists' growing power increased the capitalist state's security concerns during the Cold War period.

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<sup>229</sup> Park 1965.

<sup>230</sup> Park 1990.

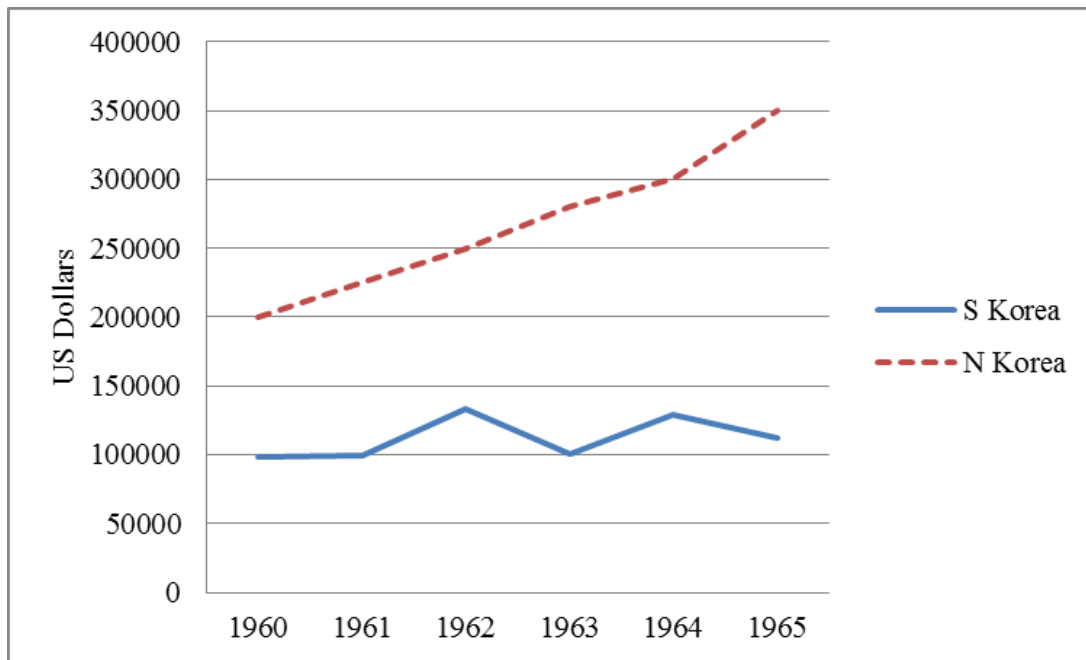
<sup>231</sup> Han 2003: 132.

**Figure 5.2 Rise of North Vietnam**

Source: Correlates of War Project (<http://www.correlatesofwar.org/>)



**Figure 5.3 Two Koreas' Military Expenditure, 1960-1965**



Source: Correlates of War Project (<http://www.correlatesofwar.org/>)

## **6. DIVERSIONARY INCENTIVES (Hoop Test 4)**

It is very hard to find hard evidence on whether or not President Park decided to send combat troops to Vietnam in order to consolidate his control of domestic politics. Based on declassified US and Korean documents, interviews, and memoirs, however, many scholars regard President Park's domestic political interests as one of the main factors leading to his troop dispatch decision.<sup>232</sup> While there is no consensus on whether we should interpret his Vietnam policy as one seeking regime interest, national interests, or both, few dismiss the notion that (potential) domestic challenges to the South Korean

leadership contributed to its foreign military intervention. Some argue that South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War paved the way for a "garrison state" or President Park's long dictatorship in South Korea.<sup>233</sup> In fact, President Park is often described as seeking support from two (potential) challengers, soldiers and the public, to his leadership during the Vietnam War:

It was possible for Park to expect that factionalism in the military would significantly be reduced once they were sent to Vietnam. The war provided the military a rare opportunity to satisfy its corporate interest. Most high ranking officers were handpicked by Park Chung Hee, and their junior officers were again selected by themselves. Personal loyalties to Park Chung Hee were naturally built along command lines. The members participating [in] the war had various advantages in promotion and welfare. A series of potential counter coups, that challenged him during the initial period of the military junta, seemed to have disappeared throughout the remaining years of his presidency. Some, however, felt that his attempt to personalize the Korean military greatly distorted the development of professionalism among military officer corps.

[...]

..., as for the grass-roots mobilization, the ROK government wrote a series of national songs for sending units to Vietnam. In every classroom[s], school children were instructed about the rationale of ROK's participation and were asked to write letters and to send gifts for encouraging the soldiers in Vietnam. In every home TV broadcast these national songs before regular programs. As a result, the mood was rife for people to believe that Koreans could finally do something good for international crusade for freedom.<sup>234</sup>

By providing some opportunities and benefits to the military, he drew support from the military, especially from the young rising officers. In addition, he sold his policy of foreign military intervention to the public as one increasing national prestige as well as providing national security. It cannot be explained why South Korea sent many more troops to Vietnam than did other US allies without considering the South Korean leader's

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<sup>232</sup> See, for example, Hong 1991; Park 2007: 292-294; Hong 2009: 223-226; Lee 2011b: 404-408.

<sup>233</sup> Han 2003.

diversionary incentives. So it is reasonable to conclude that President Park's vulnerable leadership made him willing to initiate a militarized conflict and the decline of South Vietnam provided him with an opportunity to do it.

## **7. INITIATION OF CONFLICT (Hoop Test 5)**

There is no doubt about which state initiated a militarized conflict between South Korea and North Vietnam. As discussed above, South Korean leaders had expressed their intent to send combat troops in order to fight for South Vietnam since 1954. While there was a view that South Korea was forced by the U.S. to join the war, many scholars now agree that South Korea was not reluctant, but active, in dispatching its troops as a political and economic interest maximizer.

## **8. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

As summarized in **Table 5.4**, overall, this case study corroborates the diversionary target theory. During the early 1960s South Korea suffered from political and economic unrest. Its leadership changed twice in two years in the wake of the April Revolution of 1960 and the May Coup of 1961. After restoring a civil government, President Park Chung Hee, a former military coup leader, initiated economic reforms and but failed to

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<sup>234</sup> Hong 1991: 117-118; 148.

find domestic capital and reboot the economy. Its diplomatic policy to normalize relations with Japan ignited an anti-government mood leading to nation-wide demonstrations. In addition, Park was concerned about a counter-coup by dissatisfied military officers. In 1965 when Vietnam was to be neutral or communist, and other Free World allies decided to intervene in Southeast Asia, he began to send combat troops abroad. It is widely accepted that President Park's political interests were one of the driving forces leading to the small state's large scale, multi-year intervention in foreign territory. Still, there were other factors producing South Korea's military participation, for example, U.S pressure and South Korea's expected economic gains.

**Table 5.4 Summary of Test Results**

| <i>Test</i>  |   | <i>Result</i>                           |
|--------------|---|---|
| Hoop Test 1: | Did South Korea suffer from domestic unrest?  | Pass<br>Yes it did, at least since 1960 |
| Hoop Test 2: | Did domestic unrest threaten political leadership?  | Pass<br>Yes it did, at least since 1960 |
| Hoop Test 3: | Did South Korea face increasing foreign threat?   | Pass<br>Yes it did, since 1964          |
| Hoop Test 4: | Did South Korean leaders recognize political gains from participating in the Vietnam War? | Not Fail                                |
| Hoop Test 5: | Did South Korea initiate an interstate conflict?  | Pass<br>Yes it did. in 1965.            |

In particular, this case study shows that domestic unrest leads to interstate conflict when domestic unrest interacts with a rising foreign threat. Park Chung Hee tried to send military troops just after he gained power in 1961. But he could not initiate his plan until his domestic audience was convinced of the reality of a unified communist Vietnam. From this, we can find that the diversionary target theory has more explanatory power than its rival theories, a traditional theory of diversionary war and a theory of opportunistic war. The two alternatives to my diversionary target theory emphasize domestic unrest as the sole condition producing one state's aggression against the other. But when faced with domestic troubles and leadership crisis, South Korean leaders, Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee, were willing to initiate an interstate conflict. They showed their major power ally, the US, their intent to send combat troops to Vietnam. But they could not do so immediately. As summarized in **Table 5.5**, South Korea's military intervention could occur when internal unrest met a rising external threat.



# CHAPTER 6: THE FIRST NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I conduct a qualitative test of diversionary target theory on the case of North Korea and South Korea during the early 1990s. In order to see whether a diversionary target theory's causal mechanism works, I examine why and how Kim Il Sung initiated the first nuclear crisis in 1993 and 1994. In particular, as discussed in Chapter 3, I aim to see which of the competing theories provides a more accurate explanation. My diversionary target theory expects a change from non-confrontation to confrontation in North Korea's foreign policy during the early 1990s, while an offensive realism theory would only anticipate aggressive North Korean policies. This case study shows that Kim Il Sung drove his country into a crisis with its neighbors as a response to domestic challenges to his leadership succession and security environment change. though he had first chosen a strategy of accommodation from 1990 to 1992 when the country's power relative to its rival, South Korea, had declined rapidly, and it could not expect strong support from its traditional great power allies, the Soviet Union and China.

In the following, I first review studies on the origin of the North Korean first nuclear crisis, focusing on a divide between an inside-out approach and an outside-in

approach. Then, I conduct five hoop tests by examining (1) whether North Korea's power relative to its rival, South Korea, decreased, (2) whether North Korea suffered from domestic unrest, (3) whether Kim Il Sung was seriously concerned about domestic challenges to his leadership, (4) whether Kim Il Sung expected strong political benefits (i.e. strong control of domestic politics) from initiating an interstate conflict, and (5) whether North Korea started a conflict with other states. Passing a hoop test increases the relevance of a hypothesis but does not confirm it. Lastly, I summarize this study's findings and discuss its implications.

## **2. NORTH KOREA: THREATENED OR MAD?**

What caused the North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993-94? Why did the small state initiate and maintain its nuclear program despite strong international pressure and threat? There were at least two nuclear crises in the Korean peninsula. The first occurred when North Korea refused inspection of its nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) and announced its will to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1993; the second was when North Korea withdrew from the NPT and fired missiles into the East Sea in 2003 and declared its possession of nuclear weapons. In this study, I examine the first crisis with a focus on the North Korean leader's decision to engage the nuclear crisis with its neighbors. There has been much attention paid to the causes of North Korean nuclear crises among scholars as well as policy-makers. As I discuss below, some who take an outside-in approach describe North



Korea as a threatened state, while others see North Korea as a mad or bad state from their inside-out approach studies.

Some scholars, especially in international relations, have shed light on (the perception of) increased outside threat as a main cause of North Korea's developing nuclear weapons and its nuclear crisis. In examining changes in the international environment around the Korean peninsula since the late 1980s, they describe North Korea as a threatened small state which finally relies on its last option, i.e. nuclear weapons. North Korea lost military and diplomatic support from its allies in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European communist states and the diplomatic normalization between its two major power allies (the Soviet Union/Russia and China) and South Korea. In addition, South Korea showed a rapid and continued success in increasing economic and military power from the late 1960s on, while the North Korean economy had stagnated at least since the late 1980s. Leon Sigal (1998) says:

No country has been the target of more American nuclear threats than North Korea – at least seven since 1945. Even when the United States refrained from expressly menacing the North, its military presence posed an existential nuclear threat...

North Korea's security continued to erode as the South outpaced the north militarily throughout the 1970s and the North could not count on its sometime allies, the Soviet Union and China. Ever since the 1970s, some U.S. intelligence assessments have concluded that South Korea has the edge, especially in the air, and could repulse a North Korean attack even without throwing U.S. forces into the balance. To South Korea, the American military presence may have seemed like insurance against attack. To North Korea, it looked like a threat. (20-21)

According to this view, North Korea is such a rational actor that outsiders can explain and predict its behaviors even without precise knowledge of what goes on inside

the hermit kingdom. Its foreign policy is "neither irrational nor impenetrable to systematic explanation," "neither surprising nor aberrant" (Kang 1995). An unfavorable change in the balance of power on the Korean Peninsula in the wake of the end of the Cold War led a small state to seek national security through taking a risky action.<sup>235</sup> Those who take this perspective often argue that engagement and negotiation is a policy which North Korea's neighbors can and should take in order to solve their North Korea conundrum. Although there are contending views about what kind of engagement strategy (e.g. non-conditional vs. conditional: containment-plus-engagement) should be taken by South Korea and the United States (e.g. Cha and Kang 2003), the system-level or outside-in approach scholars often encourage policy-makers to provide North Korea with security assurance in return for its nuclear program, since they attribute the North Korean nuclear crisis to North Korea's (perception of) lack of security. According to a balance of power/threat theory, the most influential system-level theory on causes of interstate conflict, when a state is in need of security, it makes an internal or external balancing act against its (potential) threat.<sup>236</sup> In the early 1990s, North Korea could not make external balancing actions because its two major power allies were either in serious domestic trouble (Soviet Union) or gave more weight to economic gains from a trade with South Korea than to traditional military and diplomatic ties (China). Accordingly, North Korea's one remaining option was internal balancing, i.e. military build-up with nuclear weapons. According to this view, the only way to make North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons program without a war is to provide security to the state under fear.

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<sup>235</sup> Scholars who emphasize the unfavorable change in balance of power on North Korea's foreign policies after the Cold War often assume that North Korea is concerned about the aggressive intentions of the United States and South Korea, which want to crumble the Kim Dynasty and/or unify the Korean peninsula.

On the other hand, some scholars, especially North Korea specialists, emphasize the mad or bad nature of the North Korean regime in order to explain its initiation of nuclear crisis and its maintenance of a nuclear weapons program. Rather than assuming that North Korea is a rational unitary actor or a state just like others, they try to open up the black box and explain and predict its foreign policy behaviors from its preferences and/or institutions. In particular, in examining the domestic conditions of North Korea during the early 1990s, many of them pay attention to the leadership succession from Kim Il Sung, a founder of North Korea, to his son Kim Jong Il, and then describe North Korea's nuclear crisis policy as a tool to divert the domestic audience's attention to foreign affairs. As Michael Mazarr (1995) says:

Perhaps the most common theory about the North's announcement is that it was prompted by succession politics in the North. With Kim Il Sung more than eighty years old, the North's snub to the international community could be viewed as a dramatic power play designed to rally the military and people behind his son, Kim Jong Il. A crisis would help prevent any dissident voices from raising objections to the younger Kim's rule and might distract people from the North's economic hardships. And North Korea's official language supported this theory, claiming as it did that Kim Jong Il had defended the North's dignity against attempts to impinge on its sovereignty. Kim Jong Il's announcements of military mobilization required pledges of loyalty to him personally, and all the key policy statements issued during the crisis emerged over the younger Kim's signature. South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung Joo would say in the midst of the crisis that "This has all been Kim Jong Il's game. Everything has been in his name. And all the other indications are that he has been responsible for the decisions. (106)

This traditional diversionary approach to the North Korean crisis sees the highly authoritarian state's foreign policies as ones aimed to increase the political leader's interests, rather than national interests. As Kongdan Oh and Ralph Hassig (2004: 279)

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<sup>236</sup> See, for example, Waltz 1979; Walt 1987; Mearsheimer 2001.

argue, “generating one crisis after another may be the best way to stay in power” for North Korean leaders.<sup>237</sup> Although they do not dismiss (perception of) insecurity as one of the factors driving North Korea to its nuclear weapons development, they do not see that a security guarantee would solve the North Korean problem because North Korea is not a “normal” country in which political leaders “must keep its people isolated and impoverished in order to control them.”<sup>238</sup> Instead, they suggest that North Korea’s neighbors should and need to take policy options such as economic sanctions and containment, which do not reward bad behavior but press North Korea to abandon its diversionary tactic. Based on the assumption that the North Korean leader’s main goal is not national security but his own political survival, those who take a domestic politics approach attribute the nuclear crisis to the North Korean leadership, which needed to maintain, if not create, outside threats in order to justify its rule despite a failed economy and little legitimacy.

But it should be noted that there was a change in North Korea’s foreign policies from accommodation to confrontation during the early 1990s. As presenting her “domestic political survival account,” Etel Solingen (2007) points out there was at first a cooperative North Korea before the 1993 nuclear crisis:

Against this background Kim [Il Sung] accepted the “One Country-Two Regions” solution – in effect two sovereign states – at least during transition toward unification. He also approved IAEA inspections of North Korea’s facilities and, in another dramatic reversal, agreed to separate U.N. membership for North and South in 1991. By year’s end both Koreas signed the “Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation” and the “Joint

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<sup>237</sup> See, for example, Mansourov 1995; Mazarr 1995; Park 1997; Oh and Hassig 2004; Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci 2004: 36-38.

<sup>238</sup> Oh and Hassig 2004: 279.

Declaration for the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.” ... A revealing aspect of this evolution is the fact that nearly 40,000 U.S. troops were still in South Korea when the North began moving toward more cooperative positions. The imputed long-standing reason for North Korea’s external vulnerability remained a *constant* while its policies were undergoing *significant change*. (131, italics added)

From 1990 (or 1991) to 1992, North Korea improved its relation with South Korea and the United States, which culminated in its two agreements with the South: the Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation, and the Joint Declaration for the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Witnessing the end of the Cold War, the inter-Korean rivals agreed on coexistence on the non-nuclear peninsula and seemed to enter a non-aggression period. Actually, this peaceful mood on the Korean peninsula resulted at least partly from Kim Il Sung’s shock at the miserable death of his close friend and Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu.

In 1990...North Korean officials were telling a few American visitors that the D.P.R.K.’s longtime leader Kim Il Sung had made three watershed decisions. Siding with pragmatists in Pyongyang ... Kim began partially opening up his autarkic economy to the outside world. Inter-Korean trade, for instance, surged from \$18.8 million in 1989 to \$ 174 million in 1992, before tapering off as the nuclear crisis overheated. Second, Kim opted to normalize relations with the United States, the one country that could restrain the military threat from South Korea and open doors to the rest of the worlds, politically and economically. The hope was that the United States would become a broker and guarantor of peace on the Korean peninsula and encourage investment and trade from South Korea and Japan. Third, instead of trying to delegitimize and destabilize South Korea or pursuing its long-stated aim of unifying the peninsula, the North was prepared to coexist with the South. (Sigal 1998: 24)

So, the question is why North Korea abandoned its cooperative policies toward South Korea, the United States, and Japan but initiated hostile ones in 1993. As reviewed above, most of the studies on the first North Korean nuclear crisis aim to explain the

origin of North Korea's hostile policies by focusing either on a change in distribution of power on the Korean peninsula or on political and economic unrest in North Korea.<sup>239</sup>

But North Korean foreign policies during the early 1990s were not a *constant* but a *variable*. What made Kim Il Sung change his policies toward the South and its allies?

What changes in domestic or international politics led to a change in North Korean foreign policies? As briefly discussed in Chapter 3, the outside-in approach, including offensive realism, can explain neither why North Korea's first response to its deteriorating security was not confrontation (balancing) but accommodation (bandwagoning) nor why North Korea later chose to pursue a hostile policy.<sup>240</sup> It provides a simple explanation linking insecurity to hostility but fails to accurately explain the timing and change of policy.

In the rest of this chapter, I check whether my diversionary target theory's causal mechanism works in this case and whether it has more explanatory power than its competitor, offensive realism. I examine whether and when North Korea faced foreign threat and domestic unrest, whether and when Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il saw domestic challenges to their leadership, and whether and how these foreign and domestic conditions affected a North Korean leader's decision to initiate a nuclear crisis.

### **3. FOREIGN THREAT (Hoop Test 1)**

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<sup>239</sup> One exceptional study on North Korea's nuclear program with focus both on insecurity ("security dilemma") and domestic unrest ("succession") is Kim (2011b),

<sup>240</sup> For a debate among international relations scholars on whether balancing or bandwagoning is more common in international relations, see Walt 1987; Schweller 1994; For a balance of power theory and its (realist) critics, see Vasquez and Elman 2003.

North Korea has declined relative to South Korea, at least since 1990. North Korea had trouble boosting its economy, as seen in its continued decrease in GDP and GDP per capita (see **Figure 6.1**). Due to the bad economy of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Eastern European communist states, North Korea lost its aid providers and trade partners. Its relation with another major alliance partner, China, was strained because China had taken a turn to a socialist market economy since the late 1970s, but North Korea refused to take that path and maintained its *juche* (self-reliance) political and economic system.<sup>241</sup> On the other hand, South Korea, as one of the four “Asian tigers,” continued its economic development called the “Han-River Miracle” and succeeded in shifting its industrial focus from light manufacturing to heavy industry, culminating in its host of the 1984 Asian Games and 1988 Seoul Olympics Games. The South also achieved social stabilization by transforming its political system from an autocracy to a democracy since the late 1980s. This relative decline of North Korea is illustrated in **Figure 6.2**. The ratio of North Korea’s Composite Indicator of National Capability (CINC) score to South Korea’s has dropped since 1990;<sup>242</sup> the ratio of North Korea’s military expenditure to South Korea’s has also decreased since 1984.

Moreover, North Korea could not expect support from its major allies for dealing with its decline relative to the South. In order to maximize their benefits North Korea traditionally maintained an equidistant diplomacy between Moscow and Beijing which showed ideological drifts and were involved in border military conflicts during the Cold War period. But in the late 1980s their great power allies sought more economic benefits

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<sup>241</sup> Kim 2011b: Chs 4, 5; Oh and Hassig 2000: Ch. 3.

<sup>242</sup> The Correlates of War project's Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) index is based on six variables: (1) total population, (2) urban population, (3) iron and steel production, (4) energy consumption,

from a closer relation with South Korea, which had initiated the Northern Policy aimed to make diplomatic relations with socialist states, especially the Soviet Union and China. Witnessing that the Soviet Union and China made normal diplomatic relations with South Korea despite its strong opposition in 1990 and in 1992, respectively, North Korea realized that there could be no more unconditional military and diplomatic support from them. In contrast, South Korea enjoyed a sound relationship with the United States. Although the United States removed its nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula in 1991, President George H. W. Bush promised to “provide the nuclear umbrella – that is, nuclear protection against threats to South Korea’s security – whether or not American nuclear weapons were in place on the peninsula.”<sup>243</sup>

In sum, North Korea suffered from its relative decline to South Korea from the late 1980s and early 1990s. North Korea not only suffered from a bad economy but also saw diplomatic isolation, while South Korea continued its success story in economic and political development and expanded its diplomatic relations even with its former enemies during the Korean War. However, this unfavorable change in balance of power did not lead directly to North Korea’s aggression toward South Korea and its allies. As said before, North and South Korea reached the 1991 Basic Agreement and the 1992 Joint Denuclearization Declaration, and the annual South Korea-US Team Spirit military exercise was canceled in 1992. The Cold War seemed to end also on the Korean peninsula:

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(5) military personnel, and (6) military expenditure.  
(<http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/Capabilities/nmc3-02.htm>).

<sup>243</sup> Oberdorfer 2001: 260.

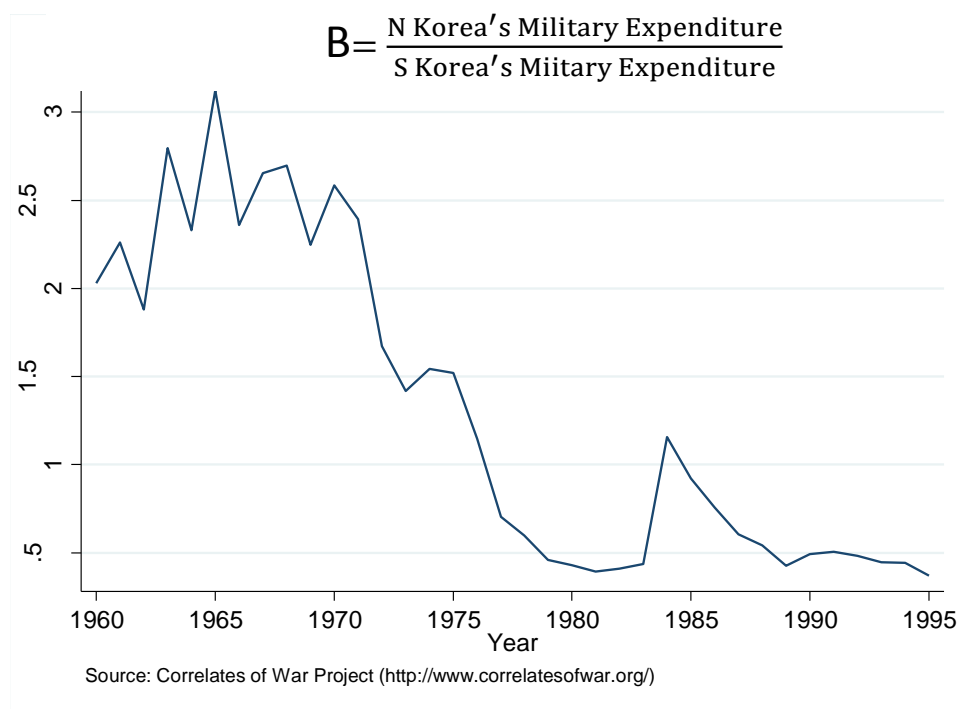
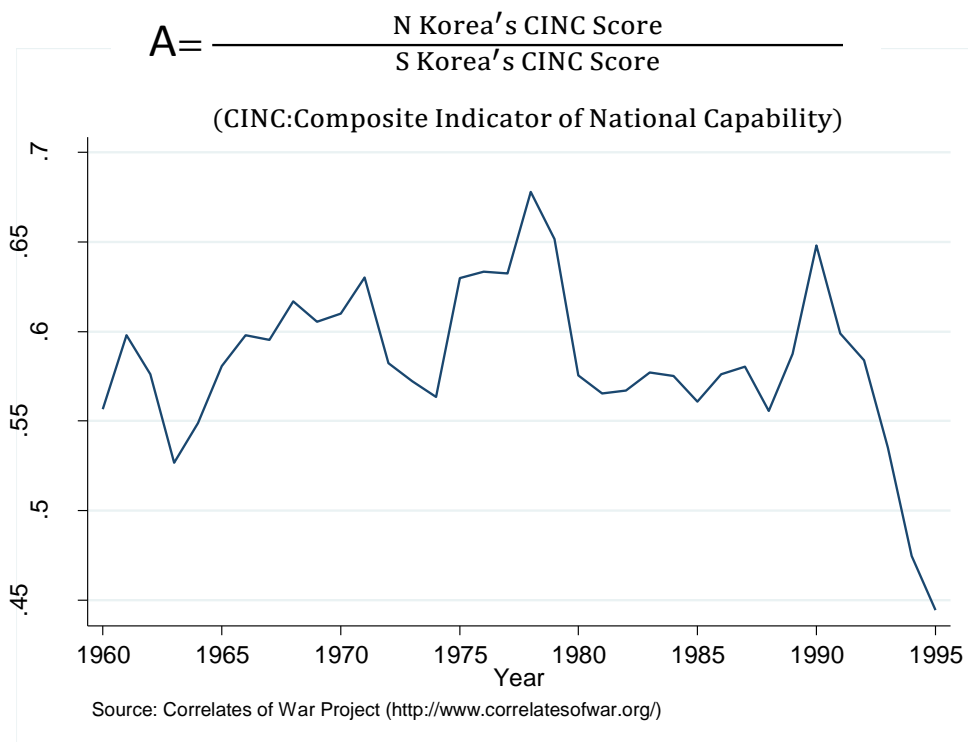


The winter of 1991 inaugurated a period of unusual progress in North-South relations and in North Korea's relations with the United States. It was one of those rare periods when the policies of the two Koreas were in alignment for conciliation and agreement, with all of the major outside powers either neutral or supportive. (Oberdorfer 2001: 260)

**Figure 6.1 North Korea's Economy**



**Figure 6.2 North Korea's Power, Relative to South Korea**



#### 4. DOMESTIC UNREST (Hoop Test 2)

The Kims had begun their leadership succession since the early 1970s. Kim Il Sung, the founder of North Korea, designated his first son as the heir in 1972, when Kim Jong Il became the director of the propaganda bureau of the ruling Korean Worker's Party (KWP). He became a member of the Politburo in 1974 and a senior member of the Politburo, the Party Secretariat, and the Party Military commission in 1980. His military career began in the early 1990s when he became the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army and the Chairman of the National Defense Commission. This leadership succession was finalized in 1994 when Kim Jong Il was appointed the general secretary of the KWP three years after his father's death in 1994.<sup>244</sup>

It is now known that this hereditary leadership succession produced some political unrest in North Korea. Other members of the Kim family and some military elites showed discontent regarding their new leader, who was less charismatic than his father and showed little capability. According to some sources, Kim Song Ae, Kim Jong Il's stepmother, tried to make her own son, Kim Pyong Il, a successor to Kim Il Sung, but failed to do so. Even after becoming an official heir to his father, Kim Jong Il did not rely on formal organization, but built his own organizations, such as the Three Revolution Teams movement and the Socialist Youth League, because he recognized some discontent over his succession and ideas within the Korean Worker's Party.<sup>245</sup> In order to survive as a new political leader without his own hold of power, Kim Jong Il purged

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<sup>244</sup> Kim 2011b: 9.

<sup>245</sup> Harrison 2002: 60.

intractable old powerful figures, promoted young members at all levels of the party, and made some key figures his supporters through gifts and parties.<sup>246</sup> One of the biggest challenges, if not the biggest challenge, to this success was to get support from the military. This is why Kim Jong Il initiated and maintained “Military First Politics” after his father’s death, and until his own death. In order to consolidate his power, Kim Jong Il “nurture[d] the military, advance[d] their interests, and accommodate[d] their demands as much as the country [could] bear.”<sup>247</sup>

Moreover, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il faced a division among domestic elites on how to deal with national challenges, bad economy and diplomatic isolation. There seemed to be some competing positions among political and military elites. While Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il chose cooperation with rather than aggression against South Korea and the United States as a response to a change in international environment, there still were “deepening domestic divisions within the military and economic leadership” (Solingen 2007: 132). This is why North Korean foreign policy in 1991 was regarded as a victory of pragmatism over militarism.

On December 24 [1991] an important meeting of the Central Committee of the North Korean Workers Party heard Kim Il Sung praise the recent North-South nonaggression pact as “the first epochal event” since the start of inter-Korean diplomacy in 1972... the plenum apparently gave party clearance for international inspection of the country’s nuclear program and for a bilateral nuclear accord to be worked out with the South. Selig Harrison of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was later told by a variety of North Korean and foreign observers that the plenum marked a conditional victory for *pragmatists* who argued for making a deal – compromising the nuclear issues in return for economic benefits and normalization of relations with the United States and Japan. *Hard-line elements*...agreed to suspend the weapons program, but not to

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<sup>246</sup> Oh and Hassig 2000: 88.

<sup>247</sup> Mansourov 2010.

terminate it – being confident that U.S. and Japan help would not be forthcoming. (Oberdorfer 2001: 262-63, italics added)

In the early 1990s Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il sought to finalize the leadership succession and save the country from military threat and economic difficulty. Although Kim Il Sung was “not only...in full control of his faculties and the country,” but also had “a firm grip on the issues related with the nuclear problem,” it is often reported that his concerns about the domestic audience were growing in his last years. According to Mansourov (1994):

...Time and again we witness that policy innovations are adopted in the DPRK only after some consensus-building process has taken place at the level of the Central People’s Committee, and not by the Great Leader alone. Moreover, as Dr. Steven Linton who visited the DPRK nine times in the past three years argues “while impossible to quantify with precision, public opinion is a factor in policies adopted by the DPRK leadership...and that when there is a change of policy the DPRK government must explain it to their population in a way that is palatable.” I would add that usually it is done through the state-controlled new media and internal news releases, as well as during the consideration and approval of a new policy line by the Supreme People’s Assembly, which performs more a function of informing the population about major changes in policy rather than as a policymaking institution.

## **5. VULNERABLE LEADERSHIP (Hoop Test 3)**

Did domestic unrest which resulted from a hereditary succession and bad economy threaten Kim Il Sung’s leadership seriously? When did he find some incentives to initiate an international crisis when faced with domestic troubles? Even if North Korea had suffered from serious domestic unrest, Kim Il Sung might not have worried about his

loss of office thanks to his firm grip on power as a founding father. But he and his eldest son began to face some serious military challenges from 1992.

There were at least two reported coup attempts against Kim Jong-Il's succession. In 1991 or 1992 there were reports of an attempted coup by a group of Soviet-trained perestroika restructuring oriented generals. A group of about a dozen generals planned to assassinate the two Kims and implement radical modernization of North Korea. But the plot was discovered, and the plotters executed (according to one rumor they were burned at the stake before a military audience ...).

And in 1995 there was an attempted coup by elements of the Sixth Army Corps in North Hamgyong province bordering China (the area worst-hit by the famine). Along with elements in the neighboring 7<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, they planned to march on Pyongyang. The plot was exposed by the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps commander, Kim Yong-chun, who was promoted to chief of the general staff later that year as a reward...

In August 1998, there were unconfirmed reports that following a March 1998 coup attempt, authorities arrested several thousand members of the armed forces and executed many of them. Also during the year Kim Yong-ryong, the deputy head of the State Security Agency, was dismissed after making highly critical comments about the regime and calling for reform.<sup>248</sup>

After repressing the 1992 coup attempt, it is reported that Kim Jong Il not only punished the coup participants but also purged all officers who received training in the Soviet Union (approximately 600). Although it is not clear whether there were real coup attempts by some military officers with a Soviet background, there is no doubt that Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il saw the group as a serious threat to their leadership and hurried to remove them.<sup>249</sup>

In addition, Kim Il Sung came to perceive economic problems correctly in 1992. As illustrated in **Figure 6.3**, the ordinary people of North Korea had suffered from food and energy shortages since at least the late 1980s due to North Korea's malfunctioning

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<sup>248</sup> Global Security 2011.

<sup>249</sup> Shindonga 2005b, 2006.

planned economy and its decreased trade with and aid from the outside. But Kim Il Sung did not know the real seriousness until 1992 because he had dealt only with “some external work” and his eldest son had managed day-to-day affairs since the 1980s.

...Beginning in March 1992, startled by the contrast with rosier reports that he had been receiving through official channels, Kim Il Sung convened a series of extended Workers Party meetings on the economic situation. By the end of the year, the incumbent prime minister had been fired and Kang [Song San] had been brought back for his third term in the job. In early 1993 Kim presided over an extended Politburo conference on the economic troubles, which led eventually to the new economic policies that he announced in December.<sup>250</sup>

It is widely known that the elder Kim was dissatisfied with his son’s management of domestic (and foreign) affairs and tried to reboot agriculture and light industry after returning from his semi-retirement. According to some sources, his return caused a rift between him and his heir before his sudden death in July 1994.<sup>251</sup> Although we do not know clearly what happened to the relation between the two Kims in the early 1990s, it is certain that Kim Il Sung, who worried about the domestic situation, departed from his indirect leadership as shown in the decline of his public appearances with Kim Jong Il in 1993 and 1994 (see **Table 6.1**).

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<sup>250</sup> Oberdorfer 2001: 298-299.

<sup>251</sup> Hagiwara 2004; Shindonga 2005a.

**Table 6.1 Joint Appearances of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il<sup>252</sup>**


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|      |    |
|------|----|
| 1980 | 4  |
| 1981 | 4  |
| 1982 | 12 |
| 1983 | 8  |
| 1984 | 19 |
| 1985 | 31 |
| 1986 | 19 |
| 1987 | 12 |
| 1988 | 15 |
| 1989 | 19 |
| 1990 | 14 |
| 1991 | 11 |
| 1992 | 25 |
| 1993 | 17 |
| 1994 | 1  |

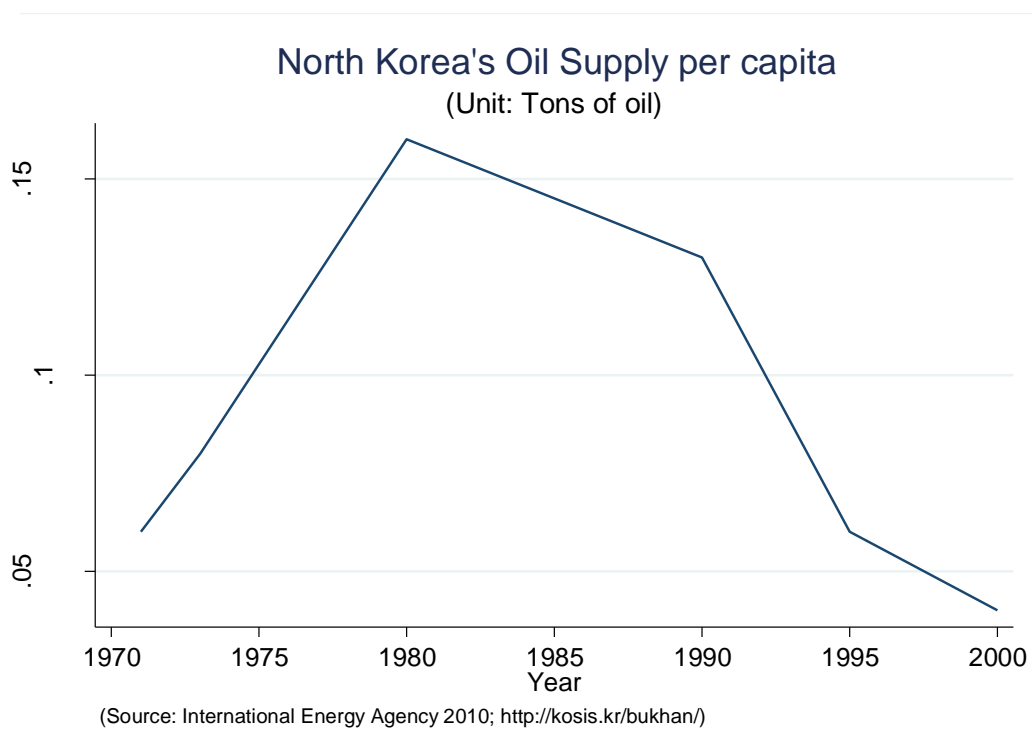
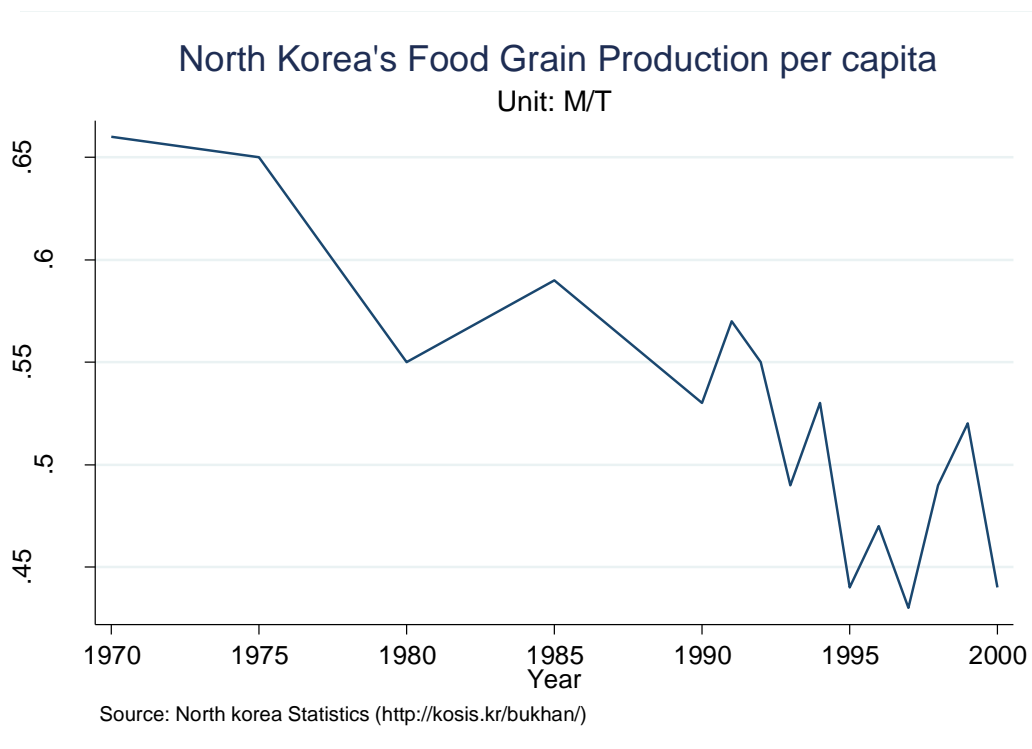
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<sup>252</sup> Pollack 2011: 115.



**Figure 6.3 North Korea's Food Production and Energy Supply**

## 6. DIVERSIONARY INCENTIVES (Hoop Test 4)

It is very hard to find hard evidence that Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il took into consideration potential political gains from initiating a military conflict before their decision to provoke a nuclear crisis. Although there are some reports from former high-ranking officers about how Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il perceived the security environment and domestic troubles they faced, the limited availability of documents and records on the hermit kingdom's leaders and foreign policy does not allow me to reach a conclusion about whether North Korea's initiation of crisis in 1993 was driven by its leader's strategic calculation of domestic and foreign conditions. Accordingly, I believe it is reasonable to suspend any conclusions about whether the diversionary target theory passes the hoop test about whether diversionary incentives drove the Kim Dynasty to initiate the nuclear crisis.

However, there are many scholars and policymakers who have emphasized the North Korean leader's diversionary incentives as a primary cause of the crisis on the Korean peninsula in their studies or memoirs. Among them, there are three US officials, Joel Wit, Daniel Poneman, Robert Gallucci, who negotiated with North Korea during the crisis period:

On the domestic front, generating an external threat was a classic tool for suppressing dissent, demanding sacrifices, and consolidating power. Kim Jong Il could have created a crisis to shore up his position, bolster his credentials with the military, and provide justification for the deteriorating economy. The military focus of the declaration of a "semiwar" state on March 8 included an exhortation to increase economic production. The announcement that Pyongyang intended to

withdraw from the NPT was also accompanied by a call to increase socialist economic production. In short, Kim Jong Il may have used the NPT announcement to assert his authority over conservatives throughout the party, the government, and the military. (Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci 2004: 36-38)

As a young leader without a military career or economic accomplishments who needed to control domestic politics, Kim Jong Il had to demonstrate his ability to provide “butter and guns” to his people, especially to political and military elites. By creating a high crisis with another state, he could create an opportunity to make the domestic audience believe that their leader was saving the nation from external enemies and that the enemies were responsible for famine and insecurity.

## **7. INITIATION OF CONFLICT (Hoop Test 5)**

North Korea initiated an international crisis on the Korean peninsula on March 12, 1993 when it threatened to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In 1985 North Korea became a member of the NPT under the pressure of the Soviet Union which shared with North Korea its nuclear energy technology. It was a big surprise to all of its neighbors:

North Korea’s pronouncement – its first authoritative response to the March 25 IAEA deadline for special inspections – was a bombshell. After years of trying to bring Pyongyang into the international nonproliferation regime, months of trying to get it to implement its nuclear safeguards agreement, and weeks of trying to resolve the discrepancies in its initial plutonium declaration, the North appeared ready to bolt. Left unchecked, Pyongyang’s withdrawal would present a grave security threat to the world and weaken the NPT’s important bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons. (Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci 2004: 26-27)

In addition to its announcement on the withdrawal from the NPT, North Korean officer Park Yong Su threatened his South Korean counterpart at the inter-Korean meeting in the DMZ truce village of Panmunjom on March 12, 1993 by saying that “Seoul is not far from here. If a war breaks out, it will be a sea of fire.” The United States and its allies began to consider economic sanctions and military actions seriously. In response, North Korea released a statement which said “sanctions mean war, and there is no mercy in war.” During the crisis in 1994, US President Bill Clinton seriously considered a preventive attack on North Korea’s nuclear facilities. It was estimated that a major war on the Korean peninsula would incur 52,000 US military casualties and 490,000 South Korean military casualties in the first three months.<sup>253</sup> This crisis escalated to the brink of war until June 1994 when former US President Jimmy Carter visited North Korea and Kim Il Sung promised to freeze its nuclear program.

Which state initiated this nuclear crisis? Unlike in the case of the second nuclear crisis in 2002, many agreed that it was North Korea that triggered the crisis in 1993. But there are some who attribute the crisis to the United States, the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA), and/or South Korea or emphasize their responsibility as well as North Korea’s by arguing that their hawkish approaches drove North Korea to its nuclear option. For example, Bruce Cumings (2003) says:

The last crisis over the North’s nuclear program began for the American press on March 12, 1993, when North Korea announced that it would withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty...

For North Korea, however, the crisis began on January 26, 1993, when newly inaugurated President Bill Clinton announced that he would go ahead with Team

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<sup>253</sup> Oberdorfer 2001: 314-315.

Spirit war games (the largest military exercise in the world), which George Bush had suspended a year earlier and then revived for 1993...

...

The other issue that energized Pyongyang in early 1993 was the IAEA's demand to carry out "special inspections" of undeclared sites in North Korea, including the one that the IAEA said was a nuclear waste dump. The IAEA had never before demanded such an inspection for any other country, but it was under international pressure for not ferreting out several sites in Iraq, discovered after Baghdad was defeated. (64-66)

In fact, South Korea showed a more hawkish stance toward North Korea during the 1992 presidential election campaign than before. The ruling party candidate Kim Young Sam and his aides "feared that continuation of the North-South euphoria of earlier months would benefit his old political rival Kim Dae Jung" who ran for the presidential election as the opposition party candidate.<sup>254</sup> During the campaign period, the South Korean government announced the arrest of "the largest North Korean espionage ring in the history of the republic" and began to prepare for resuming the Team Spirit military exercise.<sup>255</sup> It seems that South Korea's presidential election contributed to the worsening relations between two Koreas.

However, there was no new significant security threat which could justify North Korea's nuclear armament in 1992 and 1993. Although the Team Spirit exercise was resumed in 1992, this joint military exercise was nothing new to North Korea. This is why North Korea's announcement about NPT withdrawal surprised its neighbors and made them curious "not only about why North Korea took such a step but also the rationality of its leadership."<sup>256</sup> In addition, Kim Young Sam sent a dovish signal to North Korea by saying that "no alliance partner can be better than the [Korean] nation" in

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<sup>254</sup> Oberdorfer 2001: 272.

<sup>255</sup> Oberdorfer 2001: 274.

his presidential inaugural address on February 25, 1993. But North Korea's response was its withdrawal from the NPT. Lastly, there is no evidence that North Korea misperceived its neighbors' intentions and/or capabilities and could not help but to take some hostile measures. Accordingly, it is reasonable to say that North Korean leaders' calculation of domestic political gains led to North Korea's foreign policy from accommodation to confrontation as I discuss in detail below.

## **8. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

As summarized in **Table 6.2**, this case study generally supports my diversionary target theory. During the early 1990s North Korea suffered from relative decline and diplomatic isolation and underwent its first leadership succession; North Korean leaders faced domestic challenges, especially from the military, to their leadership and initiated the first nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula; it is widely if not firmly accepted that when faced with domestic challenge as well as foreign threat North Korean leaders seriously considered political gains in terms of control of domestic politics before their decisions in favor of a nuclear crisis. Accordingly, the diversionary target theory passes the hoop tests 1, 2, 3, and 5 and does not fail the hoop test 4.

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<sup>256</sup> Wit, Poneman, and Gallucci 2004: 34.

**Table 6.2 Summary of Test Results**

| <i>Test</i>  |   | <i>Result</i>                                     |
|--------------|---|---|
| Hoop Test 1: | Did North Korea face increasing foreign threat?   | Pass<br>Yes, it did since the late 1980s.         |
| Hoop Test 2: | Did North Korea suffer from domestic unrest?  | Pass<br>Yes, it did since the early 1990s.        |
| Hoop Test 3: | Did domestic unrest threaten political leadership?  | Pass<br>Yes, it did since the early 1990s (1992). |
| Hoop Test 4: | Did North Korean leaders recognize political gains from initiating a conflict with South Korea and the United States? | Not Fail  |
| Hoop Test 5: | Did North Korea initiate interstate conflict?   | Pass<br>Yes, it did in 1993.                      |

This case study finding shows that the diversionary target theory provides a more accurate explanation than its competitor, offensive realism. When political leaders face rising threats from the outside, they can choose a policy option other than a foreign diversion. By taking an accommodation policy toward the rising power, political leaders can avoid a military target but try to find a way to increase their own power. But when faced with a foreign rising power as well as domestic troubles, political leaders prefer a foreign diversion as a way to increase the probability of their staying in power. More specifically, this nuclear crisis case tells us how the interaction between a rising foreign power and serious domestic unrest changed North Korea's policy from accommodation (1990-1992) to confrontation (1993-1994). North Korea agreed with South Korea on coexistence and a non-nuclear Korean peninsula and sought normalization of relations

with the United States and Japan. This is why its opponents, including South Korea and the United States, were surprised when they heard North Korea's announcement about withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1993. Only when delving into the black box, i.e. the domestic politics of North Korea, can we find a reason why North Korean leaders changed the country's survival policy from diplomatic normalization to nuclear brinkmanship. Although Kim Il Sung began to transfer his power to his eldest son Kim Jong Il at least from 1973, the Kims faced a domestic challenge to this leadership succession (and his or his son's leadership) in 1992. As summarized in **Table 6.3**, when faced with domestic as well as foreign threats, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il abandoned accommodation policies and initiated aggressive ones toward North Korea's neighbors.

**Table 6.3 Summary of Findings**

| Year:                        |   | 1990          | 1991          | 1992          | 1993          | 1994          |
|------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <i>Independent Variables</i> | (1) Foreign Threat:                           | Yes           | Yes           | Yes           | Yes           | Yes           |
|                              | (2) Domestic Unrest<br>Vulnerable Leadership: | No            | No            | No → Yes      | Yes           | Yes           |
| <i>Dependent Variable</i>    | N Korea's Foreign Policy:                     | Accommodation | Accommodation | Accommodation | Confrontation | Confrontation |



# CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

## 1. SUMMARY

This dissertation asks and answers the question of when domestic unrest leads to interstate conflict. First, I present the diversionary target theory that argues that a political leader's decision for military use of force is affected by foreign as well as domestic conditions. I expect that domestically-troubled states are more likely to use military force against some, not all, states because political leaders prefer targets which can produce their domestic audience's fear and/or greed in order to enjoy "rally-round-the-flag" effects. I suggest that the fear-producing targets are foreign states having rapidly rising power or having different identities; the greed-producing targets are foreign states occupying disputed territory or exercising regional/local hegemony despite declining power. In addition, I expect political leaders prefer fear-/greed-producing targets that possess similar powers because the domestic audience may see initiation of military conflicts against too-powerful states and too-weak states as too risky and unnecessary, respectively.

Then, I conduct a quantitative test of the cases of states from 1920 to 2001. The result shows that the presence of the rising power, the territory target, and the hegemony target contribute to the correlation between domestic unrest and initiation of interstate conflict in a statistically significant way. In particular, the rising power target shows the

strongest effect on a domestically-troubled state's initiation of dyadic conflict. Also, I found that domestically-troubled states are more likely to initiate a military conflict against slightly stronger rising power targets than other rising power targets, and prefer weaker territory targets to other territorial targets when choosing their military targets.

Next, I carry out a qualitative test on two historical cases: the first North Korean nuclear crisis and South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War. The two cases show the causal mechanism that political leaders are motivated by domestic unrest to initiate military aggression but also constrained by foreign conditions. After the Korean War, South Korea suffered political unrest (the April Revolution of 1960 and the May Coup of 1961) and economic troubles (the Food Crisis of 1963, the currency reform of 1962). This is why the unpopular South Korean leaders Syngman Rhee and Park Chung Hee sought to send combat troops to Vietnam in 1954 and 1961, respectively. But it was not until 1965 that President Park could realize his plan, when South Vietnam could not defend itself anymore and the People's Republic of China had developed nuclear weapons. While North Korea was diplomatically isolated and militarily and economically weaker than South Korea at least from 1990, it did not adopt confrontational policies toward its opponents, including South Korea and the United States, until 1993 when Kim Il Sung recognized domestic troubles such as a bad economy and weak military loyalty. In short, the combination of internal unrest and external threat led to the two Koreas' initiation of military aggression.

## **2. DISCUSSION: INTERACTION BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS**

This dissertation study of the interaction between domestic unrest and foreign targets shows the utility of studies on the combination of internal and external factors and its effects on foreign policy and international politics. Political leaders are motivated by domestic unrest as traditional diversionary theory insists. But their decisions are affected by foreign threats and opportunities as argued by (offensive) realists. Even when they plan to initiate an interstate conflict in order to increase their private, not national, interests, they know not all military conflicts produce rally-round-the-flag effects, so they are prudent in choosing their military targets. On the other hand, when political leaders face foreign threats to national security or foreign opportunities to increase the national interest, they have multiple policy options, such as negotiation and economic sanction. Because military aggression is usually an uncertain and risky option, political leaders often choose another if they do not have any special reason to use military force against a foreign target.

In fact, there has been growing attention to and an increasing number of studies of the interaction between state-level and system-level factors.<sup>257</sup> Some realists have begun to combine foreign and domestic factors in their causal mechanism. Traditionally realists emphasize the causal weight of external factors such as relative power and polarity. But in the late 1990s there emerged a new version of realism called neoclassical realism by Gideon Rose.

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<sup>257</sup> As reviewing studies on interstate conflict last decades, Jack Levy and William Thompson (2010: 212) point out international relations scholars have paid increased attentions on the combination of factors from different levels, but limited attentions on how to do it.

It [neoclassical realism] explicitly incorporates both external and internal variables, updating and systematizing certain insights drawn from classical realist thought. Its adherents argue that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities. This is why they are realist. They argue further, however, that the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressure must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. This is why they are neoclassical.<sup>258</sup>

Although these neoclassical realist studies consider internal and external factors together, they give more weight to the latter, i.e. relative power. This is different from my diversionary target theory which gives relatively equal weight to domestic unrest and foreign targets as causal factors leading to interstate conflict.

On the other hand, some scholars who follow the liberal tradition have also emphasized the need for combining state-level and system-level factors. In the preface to the case study book on the democratic peace, Miriam Elman strongly discourages scholars from focusing exclusively on one (state-level) factor:

Together, we show that regime type is not the only - nor typically the most important - variable that influences foreign policy decision making. We warn that a research agenda aimed at deepening our understanding of war and peace by studying only the impact of one domestic-level variable is doomed to failure, and provides a dangerous blueprint on which to based policy. We must learn how domestic regime types - democracy versus nondemocracy - interacts with a variety of other factors at both the domestic and international levels<sup>259</sup>

After testing the monad version and dyad version of democratic peace theory, Elman and her colleagues conclude that “neorealism and the democratic peace theory may both do poorly when pitted against alternative domestic-level and international-level

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<sup>258</sup> Rose 1998: 146.

arguments.”<sup>260</sup> Rather than weighing one over the other, they prefer an approach that examines the effects on foreign policy outcomes of interaction between domestic and foreign conditions.

By shifting our focus to the interaction between internal and external factors, this dissertation study provides a more accurate but less parsimonious explanation than its competitors, including the traditional theory of diversionary war and offensive realism. As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 1, the traditional theory of diversionary war has been popular among historians and journalists who explain or predict individual cases of interstate conflict but fail to find strong correlation between domestic unrest and foreign aggression across large numbers of cases. A recent example of this approach is Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder’s studies of democratization and war. Although they do not explicitly call their theory a version of diversionary theory, Mansfield and Snyder insist that democratic transitions often lead to aggressive foreign policies because democratizing state leaders have strong political incentives to ignite and rely on strong nationalism.<sup>261</sup> Many policymakers as well as scholars have paid much attention to the studies which imply that promoting democracy, one foreign policy goal of Western democracies since the 1990s, can cause more interstate violence, though these studies do not refute democratic peace theory (which argues that two democracies rarely fight each other). But these studies could not avoid criticisms of their research designs and

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<sup>259</sup> Elman 1997: viiii.

<sup>260</sup> Elman 1997: 483.

<sup>261</sup> Mansfield and Snyder 1995, 2002b, 2002a, 2005.

interpretations of empirical findings, which argue that “the full Mansfield and Snyder model has no more predictive power than a parsimonious controls model.”<sup>262</sup>

On the other hand, offensive realists were successful in providing a simple explanation of why states, especially major powers, initiate military aggression and seek regional hegemony. But they cannot explain why some states do *not* choose military aggression. For example, offensive realist John Mearsheimer predicted that multi-polar Europe would see instability in the post-Cold War and expected a serious conflict between a rising challenger, China, and a declining hegemon, the United States. But his critics respond that there have been no serious conflicts between major powers in Europe in the last twenty years and that there were examples of peaceful power transition cases such as the United States and the United Kingdom during the twentieth century.

Offensive realists fail to explain why states are not always Godzillas but sometimes “make money, not war.”<sup>263</sup>

My study of the combination of internal and external factors contributes to providing logically complete explanations of the onset of preventive action and territorial conflicts. First, many international relations scholars have asked when a declining power adopts a preventive action against a rising power, when a state initiates a military action in order to stop an unfavorable change in the balance of power. By testing the rising power target hypothesis, I found that domestic unrest significantly affects a relatively declining power’s initiation of military conflict. Only when suffering from domestic unrest is a declining power more likely to start a military conflict against a rising power

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<sup>262</sup> For criticisms of Mansfield and Snyder’s studies on democratization and war, see Wolf et al. 1996; Thompson and Tucker 1997; Narang and Nelson 2009.

<sup>263</sup> Brzezinski and Mearsheimer 2005.

target than against a non-attractive target (see **Figures 4.3 and 4.4**). When a state sees a relative decline but has no internal troubles, its targeting a rising power is as likely as its targeting a non-attractive state. We also find that this tendency is strongest when a declining power is slightly weaker than a rising power. In addition, this study shows that declining hegemonic powers are preferred as military targets by domestically-troubled states. From the result of testing the hegemony target hypothesis, we find that domestically-troubled states are more likely to initiate interstate conflict with declining hegemons than with non-attractive targets. This implies that a regional or local hegemon's decline often attracts other states' military aggression.

On the other hand, it is an old question in security studies: when and why do territorial conflicts (re)occur? By testing the territorial target hypothesis, this study shows that a challenger in a territorial claim is more likely to initiate a military conflict against its territorial claim opponent when it suffers from domestic troubles than when it sees no internal trouble. What is interesting is that this tendency is strongest when a potential target is "weaker" than a potential initiator. By targeting a weaker territorial target, rather than a stronger one, political leaders may sell their military action as more beneficial than risky to their domestic audience and then demand public support for their leadership. In short, this result implies that political leaders' diversionary incentives play a role in the (re)occurrence of territorial conflict.

### **3. LIMITATIONS**

There are at least two major limitations of this dissertation study. First, it needs more complete data on domestic unrest and the initiation of interstate conflict. Although the Cross-National Time Series (CNTS) data set, the most complete data set on cross-national political unrest, covers all states from 1920 to 2001, it creates a missing value of the domestic unrest variable for 99,544 cases, 8.22% of all cases. Moreover, because its coding is mainly based on *The New York Times*, the CNTS data can be said to have missed many political unrest events in closed states such as North Korea. Furthermore, we need to develop a more valid way to measure the initiation of interstate conflict. In order to measure whether or not a state initiated a dyadic conflict, I examined whether or not it took the first military action. But there are some who oppose this measurement of the initiation of interstate conflict because when one state's non-military action can cause another's military action, it is more reasonable to say the former was an initiator of the military conflict. Considering that scholars often disagree about who initiated a historical interstate conflict, which state is responsible for a specific war (e.g. World War I, the Iraq War), it is very hard, if not impossible, to reach a consensus about measuring the initiation of interstate conflict even if we examine historians' studies of individual interstate conflict cases. But we should make more of an effort to develop a more valid way to do this job.

Second, this dissertation study examines only rising power cases - South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War and the first North Korean nuclear crisis. We found some significant effects of the territory and hegemony target on conflict initiation by domestically-troubled states, although the presence of the rising power target has stronger effects. By examining territorial and hegemonic conflicts, we can observe whether or not



the suggested causal mechanism also produced the outcomes; by analyzing when territorial and hegemonic rivals experienced (and did not experience) a military conflict, we can see how the interaction between a state's domestic unrest and its potential target's type affected the state's foreign policy.

#### **4. FUTURE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

I would like to conclude by discussing three questions for future research. First, we need to explore the systematic effects of relative power on diversionary action against different types of targets. As reported in Chapter 4 and discussed above, we found that domestically-troubled states prefer as military targets “slightly stronger” rising power states more than other rising power ones, “weaker” territory target states than other territory ones. By developing a new statistical model rather than dividing cases into sub-groups according to relative power, we can assess the effects of relative power, not change in relative power, on diversionary action with respect to different types of potential targets in a more accurate way. Also, in examining political leaders' benefits or losses from choosing weaker, similar, and stronger fear-/greed-producing targets, we can generate hypotheses about relative power and the likelihood of diversionary action.

The second future research question is what characteristics of institutions deter diversionary actions. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are two opposing views on the effects of regime types on diversionary action: strategic interaction and political incentives. Some argue that democratic states are less likely to initiate diversionary

conflicts due to their transparency.<sup>264</sup> According to them, when a democracy suffers from domestic unrest and its leader plans a diversionary action, its potential target easily recognizes the democracy's hostile intention and then takes strategic actions in order to avoid being a future military target. On the other hand, some emphasize democratic leaders' accountability to their domestic audience. In contrast to dictators who can (usually) maintain their office and political power with failed domestic policies, democratic leaders have more incentives to divert public attention to international affairs when faced with domestic troubles.<sup>265</sup> This political incentive approach expects that democratic leaders are more likely than non-democratic ones to initiate diversionary conflicts for their political survival, although the strategic interaction provides the opposite expectation.

The finding of this dissertation case study is more consistent with the strategic interaction than with the political incentive hypothesis. Two authoritarian leaders, Kim Il Sung (and his son) and Park Chung Hee, were not free from but concerned about domestic challenge, so they had diversionary incentives. When North Korea suffered from a bad economy and an uncontrolled military, its authoritarian leader could not be sure of his grip on power but sought to undertake military aggression in order to prevent his loss of political power. The soldier-turned-politician Park Chug Hee not only repressed mass demonstrations with the military and the police but also sought ways to show the legitimacy of his leadership through economic development and foreign use of force. On the other hand, their diversionary actions were a surprise to their target states. South Korea and the United States did not expect North Korea's sudden turn from

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<sup>264</sup> See, for example, Smith 1996, 1998.

accommodation to aggression until North Korea announced its intent to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty in March 1993. South Korea's involvement in the Vietnam War was also considered to be an action forced by its stronger alliance partner when it sent its non-combat and combat troops in the 1960s. The two authoritarian states could hide successfully their intention to initiate a military conflict, at least from their potential targets. We need further systemic studies to estimate the effect of regime type on diversionary action/conflict in order to know what institutional characteristic, transparency or political incentives, deters diversionary actions.

The third future research question is what kind of domestic unrest motivates diversionary action. As discussed in Chapter 2, one way to go beyond the gap between theory and evidence in diversionary war studies is to differentiate the independent variable, i.e. domestic unrest. By considering and comparing different types of domestic unrest, for example, elite unrest and mass unrest, political unrest and economic unrest, some scholars have tried to answer the question of what kinds of domestic troubles cause and do not cause aggressive foreign policies. In the two cases discussed above, the first North Korean nuclear crisis and South Korea's participation in the Vietnam War, Kim Il Sung and Park Chung Hee could not control the military perfectly. Although they also faced other types of domestic unrest, anti-government demonstrations and food and energy shortage, a potential military coup was one of their main challenges, if not the main one, when they considered various foreign policy options. By initiating a military crisis, which often justifies high military spending and usually gives high-ranking military officers more influence on policy-making, political leaders could dampen the

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<sup>265</sup> Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003: especially, 248-250.

dissatisfaction of (some) military officers and increase their loyalty.<sup>266</sup> In addition, this dissertation's quantitative analysis shows that unlike political unrest, an economic condition, like inflation and growth, is not related to the initiation of interstate conflict under the condition of the rising power, territory, or hegemony target. What kind of domestic unrest matters in a political leader's initiation of interstate conflict? What internal troubles increase a political leader's diversionary incentives? These are some of the questions future research needs to address.

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<sup>266</sup> For the effect of the threat of a military coup on the initiation of interstate conflict see, for example, Levy and Vakili 1992; Miller and Elgün 2010.

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