

## When Does Migration Lead to Interstate Conflict?

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International migration movements throughout history have been important to the dynamics of interstate conflict. The typical narrative is that of war causing forced migration or migration movements being used as a coercive state strategy to achieve policy goals. The question ignored in the literature is what happens when migration is a contributing factor to conflict or violence in the first place? Overall, scholars know very little about the causal direction of migration and conflict processes. How relevant is the causal path of migration movements to the onset of international interstate violence? This study will flesh out the theoretical perspective revolving around the nexus of migration and conflict. The migration-conflict story will be investigated using the case of the 'Football War' between El Salvador and Honduras to serve as a plausibility probe for the theories suggested herein. Internal societal disruption caused by migration, ongoing territorial divisions blurred by migrant movements, and internal scapegoating of migrants are all factors that can lead to interstate war between nation-states.

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## **Introduction**

Currently, migration is seen as an important post-9/11 national security issue (Adamson 2006), with migrants lumped alongside transnational criminals, terrorists, and drug traffickers as problems for a state to deal with by increasing border security (Andreas 2003). Unfortunately, the study of the nexus of migration and security largely fails to include the broader impact of the factor on international security (Choucri 2002). Studies mainly focus on policy issues or border coordination problems. The clear linkages between the movement of peoples and security remain undeveloped. These issues can no longer be ignored by the international relations scholarly and policy community. The fear of migrants and the disruptions they cause is, for some, the primary reason for intervention into Libya in 2011.<sup>1</sup> So then what impact does the factor of migration have on the onset of conflict throughout history?

Coerced migration (Greenhill 2010) and refugees (Salehyan 2008) can be tools used in the course of conflict. Yet, there are many more theoretical pathways remain to explore. What if international migration is more than just an internal security issue that spreads civil wars (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006) or a tool used by the state to achieve security ends (Greenhill 2010)? Migration movements (both forced and economic) can be a factor in the onset of a traditional interstate conflict and systemic breakdown.<sup>2</sup> Fears of the “other” or internal destabilization caused by a migration influx are factors that should added to the causes of war research agenda.

Current research has failed provide a guide to the processes of migration and state security. Studies examine the impact of war as a cause of the forced migration of peoples (Moore and Shellman 2004); of refugee flight causing conflict between a dyad (Salehyan 2008); of international crises causing a reevaluation of border security and policy (Rudolf 2003); migration as a foreign policy tool of the weak (Greenhill 2002); and finally, of migration causing peace (Ware 2005). There is another aspect of the story that is unexplored: when do migration movements cause the onset of international violence between nation-states?

This paper first examines previous studies that investigate the link between migration and conflict, and then develops some new theories and set of predictions that can account for the pattern left unexplored - the pattern of migration causing external conflict. The story of the ‘Football War’ between El Salvador and Honduras will provide a jumping off point for this inductive study of interstate war and conflict. Societal disruption caused by migration, ongoing territorial divisions blurred by migrant movements, and internal scapegoating of migrants are all factors that can lead to interstate conflict.

This is only a first step in the investigation of the linkages between conflict and migration but it remains critical. There may be a class of migration wars that scholars have missed in the past, which holds important implications of the study both migration and conflict. The expansion of typical typologies of warfare (Vasquez and Valeriano 2010) is the goal. There are clearly different types of war, and migration wars deserve their own separate class based on the issue under consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Saideman, Stephen. “NATO and Libya: Déjà vu or exceeds expectations?” Current Intelligence. <http://www.currentintelligence.net/columns/2011/5/9/nato-and-libya-deja-vu-or-exceeds-expectations.html> (accessed 5/14/2011)

<sup>2</sup> By conflict I mean low level violence of the sort noted in the Militarized Interstate Dispute project (<http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/MIDs/MID310.html>) and the Armed Conflict dataset (<http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/>) up to, and including, all out interstate war.

This study is important since it touches on the critical issue of migration and assimilation. How do countries assimilate new migrants into their society? When done poorly, conflict can erupt either internally or externally. The question is what migration conditions lead to societal disruptions and disharmony? Taking the first step to find that migration may cause conflict does not mean that migration should be discouraged; only that it is important for the state to make a serious effort to incorporate new migrants before conflict can erupt.

### **Migration Studies**

Migration is the movement of peoples across international borders. Certainly, there are many studies that look at the link between conflict and forced migration (Moore and Shellman 2006), but what of the cases where migration is causing interstate violence? As of yet, there is no global migration dataset that provides data for the majority of states over a large period of time. Choucri (2002: 105) notes the difficulties presented in collecting migration data in that formal population studies can often destabilize a state. The true impact and quantity of migration is often an open question due to the political nature of the issue for the state collecting the data.

There have been quite a few studies that explore the linkage between population dynamics and conflict (see Cohen 1984). However, Choucri (2002: 114) makes the point that most studies of population and warfare analyze the issue from within the state, rather than as an external issue. Even when studies look inward, they rarely attempt to deal with the security implications inherent in the research. In terms of the impact of population movements and conflict, Goldstone (2002) suggests a few areas of accumulated knowledge on the subject. First, population growth can lead to environmental degradation and resource issues. These problems rarely result in violence and when they do, they are typically outliers, since statistical investigations have not been able to find a systematic interaction between population, resources, and the environment in their analysis. Second, Goldstone (2002: 9) suggests that only specific types of demographic changes are likely to produce conflict. It might be that the stress caused by population expansion can cause conflict.

Relevant for this research is the work of lateral pressure theorists (Choucri and North 1989). Most versions of the theory (Kamiya and Wils 1998) hold that the interaction between population, technology, and resources generate the pressures needed to seek external conflict. The idea is that, as population pressures interact with resource needs and technological advances, states may need to seek outside areas of conquest to continue to grow and thus relieve pressure. Cranmer and Siverson (2008) provide an interesting quantitative test of the theory demonstrating that only certain types of states (democratic small powers) are likely initiate conflict due to population pressures.

Looking at studies that explore forced migration and its causes could be seen as the starting point to any investigation of the linkage between violence and migration. This body of research has produced many findings that would suggest that the security externalities from migration movements can impact the course of domestic security (Teitelbaum 1984). Most work conducted on forced migration is on individual cases and suggests that refugees are a security problem or threat to be dealt with (Posen 1996; Weiner 1992).

Studies that investigate the systematic causes of forced migration focus on personal security as the cause of diasporic migration movements (Davenport, Moore et al. 2003). They argue that when an individual feels that their life is threatened by the prevailing security situation, they will flee. Studies also show that transitional states are likely to produce the instability which forces people to flee (Davenport, Moore et al. 2003). Forced migration is a rare

event (Moore and Shellman 2004), yet the event itself is usually caused by security considerations. Moore and Shellman (2004) go on to point out that governmental terror, dissident violence, civil wars, and international wars at home all increase the probability of force migration movements.

It seems the push factor of internal violence is important in producing forced migrations. Moore and Shellman's (2006) research suggests that government sponsored violence has the greatest impact on migrations, while the characteristics of surrounding states have an impact on the probability of refugee flight. States that are surrounded by authoritarian regimes are less likely to produce forced migrants because there is little hope of receiving better treatment than from the home country (Moore and Shellman 2006). The most predictive risk factors for forced migration movements are civil wars, past forced refugee flight, and human rights violations (Rubin and Moore 2007, Dowty and Loescher 1996).

Greenhill (2002, 2010) takes research on forced migration in a different direction suggesting that coercive engineered migration is a typical state strategy and more common than researchers realize. Since migration is a typical state strategy of the weak, it is also an effective strategy since it is successful more than half of the time (Greenhill 2010, 2). The remaining question is what happens when these tools fail to achieve foreign policy ends. Also, what is engineered migration as a strategy starts a chain of conflict events centered on preventing that state from ever using that strategy again?

Whatever perspective one has towards migration, there is clearly a link between internal security issues and spread of war. Gleditsch et al. (2008) make a strong case that there is an important linkage between civil violence and interstate conflict. An internal civil peace may be a strong predictor of interstate peace. Few past studies have looked at the connection between internal conflict, international migration, and external conflict. Salehyan (2008) is unique in that he demonstrates that refugee flight can cause disputes between states to prevent future refugee flight or to pursue rebels across territorial boundaries.

Other studies take a different perspective on the issue and explore how emigration might be a factor for peace; Ware's (2005) study on migration and conflict in the Pacific is an example of this type of work. The main idea is that emigration from a state allows it to reduce internal pressure and thus reduce the probability of internal violence. If a population grows, one solution to the resulting problems caused by this growth (jobs, 'youth bulges,' welfare) is to send these people away from the state.<sup>3</sup>

It does seem obvious that the key question that remains unexplored is whether there is a causal relationship between migration and interstate conflict? And if so, what direction causality flows? Beyond forced migration, we know very little on the topic of immigration and war. A simple review of history tells us that conflict causes forced migration, but what about migration movements in general. If forced migration is a rare event and migration is not rare in human history, why has no one sought to explain the linkage between migration and the onset of violence? What do the conflicts in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the U.S. and Japan prior to World War II, or even the American Civil War all have in common? It seems there is a clear linkage between migration and the onset of war. The true dark side of migration has yet to be explored.

## **Research Design**

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<sup>3</sup> Goldstone (2002: 11) notes that "a youth bulge (an unusually high proportion of youths 15 to 24 relative to the total adult population) has historically been associated with times of political crises."

This work is concerned with the broader category of migration. There is a close linkage between the causes and consequences of migration movements (July 2000) therefore we must first understand the causes of migration before we extend the concept to conflict studies.<sup>4</sup> The state makes war and war makes the state (Tilly 1985). This perspective has been clearly advanced throughout the political science field for many years. It has withstood the challenges of generalizability and scope to regions beyond Europe (Thies 2005). The concept has even been expanded to include the idea that racism makes a state and state makes racism (Marx 1996). The notion that external threats (the ‘other’) create a clear danger of which states (as actors) are weary of, and should be, eliminated is a central aspect of these statist theories. This concept can then be extended to migration movements with migrants becoming the external threat or ‘other’ (Tir and Jasinski 2008). They can either make the state capable of pursuing rent-seeking activities or of focusing capacities against the threats from the ‘outsiders.’ Therefore, in much the same way the state makes migration and migration makes the state.

States are made through a process of assimilation of disparate peoples into a state-level national group. The critical variable for Tilly (1985) is the ability of the state to extract resources: “the building up of war-making capacity likewise increased the capacity to extract.” (Tilly 1985: 183) Migration should have a similar dynamic in that the labor and demographic benefits of migration make a state stronger and better able to extract resources from its communities. Migration movements are further precipitated by flights from repression, which allow the receiving state to mobilize protection rackets that stabilizes the state in its goal for security. Migration may help ‘make’ the state by providing a state with an internal enemy or ‘other’ that can be blamed for internal problems.

Despite calls to end immigration by cultural conservatives, migration throughout history has been critical to the process of nation-building. Papademetriou (1997/98: 20) notes, “there is near universal agreement that immigrants have played a major role in creating the prosperity of most advanced industrial societies, through both their brawn and their brains.” Taylor, Arango, et al. (1996) even demonstrate that emigration countries are growing through migration due to remittances. Migration can make a state stronger and strong states are the ones that typically engage in interstate war (Bremer 1992). Yet, the instability caused by migration could bring about disruption and conflict before a state is able to consolidate the gains that can be made through migration.

When migrant actors are introduced into a society they may cause societal disruptions through the expression of same discontents that led them to leave their homeland in the first place. It is in this way that a theory of migration as a cause of conflict combines both the statist and issue based perspectives (Mansbach and Vasquez 1981). The treatment of migrants in a receiving state can become the issue that motivates irreditilist conflict between states.

The ‘Football War’ (between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969) will be used as an example that can theoretically inform the theory regarding migration as a cause of external conflict. It has been suggested that the main cause of this conflict was shifting demographic pressures so it is worth exploring this case in light of the issue of immigration. The method will be a structured and focused case study; it will be structured around the common questions or hypotheses outlined in the theoretical discussion. Does the case exhibit evidence of societal disruptions, territorial disputes, concern for the welfare of former migrants, and ethnic reunification as motivations for interstate war? This analysis takes the form of an inductive

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<sup>4</sup> Massey, Arango et al (1993) provide an excellent review of current migration theories.

plausibility probe since it explores whether the theory suggested has a plausible chance of working in the political world (George and Bennett 2005).

### **The Football War, Migration, and Conflict**

The 1969 Football War was a tragic mistake for both sides engaged in this short conflict.<sup>5</sup> The war halted the possibility of a Central American political and economic unity for decades.<sup>6</sup> El Salvador was mired by internal infighting for years afterward, while Honduras suffered profound economic decline following the war.

An estimated 2,000 people died during the conflict between Honduras and El Salvador in 1969.<sup>7</sup> The refugee flows triggered by the war were more unsettling than the death toll, as were the human rights violations that occurred due to the conflict. Beyond the pure number of fatalities, this war was important because it destroyed any sense of unity in Central America and demonstrated the inability of common markets (Mercado Comun Centroamericano) and institutions like the United Nations (UN), Organizacion de Estados Centroamericanos (ODECA), and Organization of American States (OAS) to halt building conflicts although the OAS was instrumental in stopping the conflict once it had begun.<sup>8</sup> While it should not have been a surprise, the international community was thrown off guard by the speed at which the conflict escalated during June and July of 1969. The soccer matches between El Salvador and Honduras in June had a big impact on the context of war and will be discussed first.

#### *The Path to War through Sport*

In June of 1969, Honduras and El Salvador engaged in a tense series of playoff soccer matches to determine who would face Haiti for the right to advance to the World Cup finals in 1970. Advancing to the World Cup finals would have been a major source of pride for either state since the prestige attached would provide a considerable boost to national morale and would serve as a distraction to the major social issues plaguing each state. On June 8, 1969, Honduras won at home 1-0. On the return leg, El Salvador won 3-0 at home. Since aggregate goals were not considered, a final playoff match would have to be played on neutral ground. The last match took place in Mexico City on June 26th with El Salvador winning 3-2 in extra time.

The second match in El Salvador is of interest to this analysis. There were some incidents in Tegucigalpa during the first match and thus, the second match took a greater political significance. Honduran fans were attacked in El Salvador and the flag was desecrated. Charges of violence and rape were made against Salvadorans by the Honduran press. In response to the mistreatment of Hondurans in El Salvador, Salvadorans were attacked within Honduras. Cable (1969: 662) notes that “an unspecified number of Salvadorian settlers were killed and many fled the country. El Salvador condemned these occurrences as ‘genocide’ and demanded reparations.”

Without the racism and hysteria attached to the purported attacks on Hondurans during the game, there might not have been a claim to war in the first place. Cable (1969: 66) notes,

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<sup>5</sup> The war is often called the Soccer War but the term Football War will be used here because Football is the universal and Spanish term (Futbol) for the sport.

<sup>6</sup> The war ruined any chance of a free trade market in Central America in the 1970s and the market has only recovered due to the Central American Free Trade Agreement that was agreed upon in 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Time Magazine. “A Population Explosion.” July 25, 1969

<sup>8</sup> The terms Mercado Comun Centroamericano (MCCA) and Central American Common Market (CACM) are used interchangeably here only difference being the Spanish and English spelling of the agreement.

“Certainly the highly intemperate language used immediately after the first rumors trickled in from El Salvador of the defeat of Honduras on the football field was directly responsible for the anti-Salvadorian riots which were the main pretext for the invasion by El Salvador.” Violence surrounding the football matches led to an increase of threats from both sides. Many Hondurans came to El Salvador to witness the second football match. Two men were hurt in the subsequent post-match violence. “The Honduran press, of course made the most of it, showing endless pictures of Molina Meza’s bloody nose...*El Cronistas*, as usual, outdid everyone else, speaking on 19 June of hungry and thirsty Hondurans being served urine and manure, of women stripped and violated in the streets by Salvadorean mobs.” (Anderson 1981: 96) Although these charges were untrue, they certainly sparked outrage and violence. By early July, retaliation in Honduras had reached extreme levels with attacks of Salvadorans in the cities being frequent and suggestions of rural killings widely reported.

On June 27, one day after the final qualifier in Mexico City, Honduras broke off relations with El Salvador. Honduras may have had other things to think about if it had been able to advance to the World Cup finals, but its failure led to the escalation of tensions between the two states. It is therefore difficult to argue that the football matches had little impact on the course of the war since media awareness of the mistreatment of Salvadorans was only sparked due to the press coverage surrounding the matches. The football matches activated the kinship ties that were relevant for the coming conflict (Saideman and Ayers 2008)

Time Magazine notes that “El Salvador accused Honduras of pursuing a policy of genocide against the Salvadoran people, and both countries broke off diplomatic relations.”<sup>9</sup> “The Salvadorean ambassador sent a letter to Arellano on June 20th which mentioned the killings, lynchings, and other various crimes and asked for a ‘change in the situation.’” (Anderson 1981: 99) El Salvador broke off diplomatic relations on June 24th with this note: “the government of Honduras has not taken any effective measures to punish these crimes which constitute genocide, nor has it given assurances of indemnification or reparations for the damages caused to Salvadoreans.” (Anderson 1981: 105)

Once the conflict began to escalate, an estimated 20,000 Salvadorans fled back to El Salvador. Scheina (2003) contends that the migrants returned to El Salvador at a rate of 1,400 refugees a day. The Red Cross estimated that 80,000 fled, but a report from Honduras to the OAS puts the number at 18,000. Mediation in late June was attempted by the OAS and other Central American states. On July 2, El Salvador activated its troops and reserves, and border clashes were observed on July 3 (Anderson 1981). Most historical sources suggest that El Salvador started the conflict but Time Magazine details a slightly different path. “In an outburst of machismo, they sent an air force plane streaking across the skies of El Salvador. The Hondurans may well have looked on the flight as only a bit of face-saving muscle flexing, but the Salvadorians regarded it as a grave provocation.”<sup>10</sup> Anderson (1981: 109) also mentions the incident and notes that a paper, *La Prensa Grafica*, recounted the flight in its July 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.<sup>11</sup>

Honduras sent a letter to the OAS on July 4 which listed attacks on its aircraft, ports, and border by El Salvador as instances of provocation. On July 12, the mediation council asked both states to withdraw from the border but their request was refused by both sides. The war was launched on July 14, 1969 when El Salvador attacked Honduran targets with its air force. The air

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> It is unclear if the flight was a mistake or an act of provocation, but the newspapers did report the story as fact and called for a reaction from the Salvadoran government.

force was not very effective (Anderson 1981: 114) with DC-3's being pressed into service.<sup>12</sup>

The basis for the eventual OAS-imposed peace was the refusal to acknowledge territorial aggrandizement by OAS members as detailed in Article 17 of the charter. While the Salvadorans did have a claim concerning the mistreatment of kin within Honduras, their claim came with no explicit legal rights because the violations occurred on Honduran territory. Tension remained, producing border clashes in January and February of 1970 and again in April and May of 1971 (Anderson 1981: 132-133). These border clashes were important because the territorial boundaries remained unclear and in dispute.. Anderson (1981: 136) identifies six areas of contention between the two states and border clashes seemed to be a regular occurrence flaring up most vividly in 1976.

### **Theoretical Explanations**

Goldstone (2002: 10) notes that specific types of demographic changes can lead to external violence. I go one step further to suggest that one type of change that can cause external violence is a rapid increase of migration into an unstable state. The question is when and why does migration lead to conflict? Past studies (Gleditsch 1998) have consistently shown that resources are not linked to the question, and consequently will be left out of this analysis (but this factor should be controlled for statistically in the future). The prediction is that states that have a relatively high amount of internal or external migration would be more likely to fight external enemies due to societal disruptions, lateral pressure, the need to protect former resident or ethnic kin, and ethnic reunification. Each theoretical explanation will be examined in turn as it applies to the Football War case.

#### **Table 1: Why Does Migration Produce External Conflict?**

1. Societal Disruption
2. Lateral Pressure and Territory
3. Protection of Former Residents
4. Ethnic Reunification

#### *Societal Disruption and Contested Migration*

The first possible reason that migration may cause conflict is through societal disruption.<sup>13</sup> Joly (2000: 27) notes that social cleavages are likely to develop from migration movements. As a new influx of residents settles in a country, they disrupt the norms, economic, and political structures of a state to such an extent that society changes and societal disruption is exhibited. The state may then seek to start new or old conflicts with enemies to divert attention away from their ongoing internal social problems.

This theory has clear linkages to the theory of diversionary warfare. The idea of diversionary war (Levy 1989) has been prevalent in international relations theory, yet there has been inconsistent empirical evidence to support the theory. Diversionary war is the perspective that suggests internal problems can cause external crises in that actors seek to distract the public. Migration processes might upset societal cohesion so much that external motivations for conflict would be articulated around the internal societal battle being waged for or against the new migrant group. It has been noted that "international migration has fostered new constituencies,

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<sup>12</sup> Bomb racks were hung off the wings of the planes in the style of World War I era bombers.

<sup>13</sup> Rudolph's (2003) analysis suggests that societal insecurity will promote closed migration regimes so as to promote an 'image of control.'

new parties, and new issues.”(Suarez-Orozco and Paez 2002) Because most migrants reside in the lower levels of the economic system, they have little access to capital, education, and housing and as a result exist in a state of deprivation (Joly 2000: 30). For a stable state, these issues take the form of political battles but do not reach the level of outright violence. In an unstable state, conflict can potentially result through diversionary motivations to distract the population from internal struggles brought on by immigration.

Kamiya and Wils (1998: 416) make the point that in thermodynamics, adaptation cannot continue indefinitely; the same idea might be present in host states. Immigration can only continue to a certain point before the consequences become evident. Conflict can result due to internal inequality (Booth 1991). When an ethnic group moves into a new location, these newcomers can upset the power balance of a stable society, which would likely lead to internal conflict. Goldstone (2002: 5) notes that when population changes lead to domestic political crises, the risk of international war increases.

*H1: Societal disruptions produced by a new immigrant population will lead to overt external conflict when the state in question is failing or failed.*

Societal disruptions are defined as low level internal conflicts where the balance of power within a state is upset by newcomers, newly educated classes, or indigenous peoples moving into or within a state. The prediction would be that certain variables such as income inequality, protests, or strikes increase due to high levels of migration. The combination of immigration and internal issues would interact to produce conflict if and when a state fails.

What evidence does the Football War case provide for this hypothesis? Honduras had serious economic problems in addition to student struggles. The state did not push land reform and thus sought to maintain rule through any means necessary. In addition to its balance of trade problems, Honduras had long been stagnant internally. Honduras was particularly troubled, prior to the war, with internal social and economic issues weighing heavily on the state. Anderson (1981: 68) notes an incident that was particularly important for highlighting the troubles inside Honduras. “On 24 May, 1967 the head of the Superior Economic Planning Council, Miguel Angel Rivera, made a report which rocked the nation, outlining the lack of public investment and blaming it on lack of interest by government, nepotism, and lack of planning.” Cable (1969: 660) also notes, “It has been argued that this fervor was carefully encouraged to help the Government overcome its immediate political problems – a strike of teachers, labour troubles generally, and student disorders.”

Salvadorans in Honduras seemed to be caught off guard by the change in the political situation. In 1906, Honduras offered Salvadorans free land and a relief on taxes if they migrated. “They were proud of their Salvadorian birth and saw no reason to hide in a country that had welcomed them.” (Anderson 1981: 71) It is important to note that immigration after the 1950s was of a different sort and tended to upset the delicate balance within Honduras. With an influx of migration producing a situation in which 12 percent of the entire population came from another country, this balance between the Hondurans and Salvadorans was upset. Durham (1979: 170) notes that “our evidence indicates that the Salvadorean migration then exacerbated the process of resource competition between large and small farmers in Honduras.”

When the economy slowed, problems began to surface and the migrants were 'scapegoated' as the source of the problems. Scapegoating refers to placing individual blame for problems and faults that are the responsibility of others.<sup>14</sup> Salvadorians were blamed for the

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<sup>14</sup> Scapegoating is more likely to occur in authoritarian states, of which both Honduras and El Salvador were at the time.

internal problems in Honduras which is confirmatory evidence that internal societal disruption was a cause for this conflict. The Salvadorans were identified as an 'other' to distract from the internal problems in Honduras.

Likewise, there were diversionary motivations in El Salvador. The avoidance of a coup was realistic motivation for conflict on the Salvadoran side. Anderson (1981: 111) argues, "[avoidance of an internal coup], says this author, was a definite possibility because of the monopolizing of land by the oligarchy, the lack of jobs for rapidly growing urban sector, and the high taxes and bad laws." Honduras is not innocent in the outbreak of the war either, even if the country did not commit the atrocities it was accused of. President Oswaldo Arellano clearly had to deal with serious internal issues. He used racism and the hatred of Salvadorans to help him out of the situation. His scapegoating to divert attention away from internal struggles led to the conflict. "It appears doubtful that Lopez Arellano actually wanted a war to extricate him from his errors and his brutalities, but he certainly fastened on the Salvadorians living in Honduras and on the economic benefits of the MCCA to El Salvador as a means of turning attention away from his own mismanagement." (Anderson 1981: 70) In this context, it is clear that El Salvador was pushed to respond to the racist provocations unleashed by Honduras to distract the population from its own problems. Both sides were motivated to launch a war due to their internal domestic situation.

#### *Lateral Pressure and Territory*

The second possible theoretical motivation for conflict comes from ideas presented in lateral pressure theory (Choucri and North 1975, Choucri and North 1989). According to lateral pressure theory, migration into a state could upset the balance of a state to the extent that an external motivation for conflict is activated by the need to release pressure and conquer new territorial regions in order to accommodate an influx of immigrants. Japan, prior to World War II, exemplifies lateral pressure in that Japan's motivations for combat came from the need for land and resources (Choucri, North et al. 1992). Although there is little evidence for economic lateral pressures systematically, the idea that lateral pressure is produced by migration movements that then lead to territorial disputes due to land pressures is a new addition to the literature. There is a long history of territorial disputes being seen a primary cause of conflict (Vasquez and Valeriano 2009). Extending the concept of territoriality to migration through lateral pressure motivations is a needed theoretical refinement.

When a state grows to such a level that it can no longer provide for the basic rights of its population, there could be a motivation for expansion. Crowding in a host state may lead that state to attempt to find suitable land for the new group to live on. New populations of peoples could lead to the need to provide economic and resource opportunities for these new residents by conquering new territory.

Lastly, migration movements might blur territorial boundary lines that were once thought stable. When people move into a country through a porous border, the border becomes unstable and in need of protection by the state - who then might engage in territorial disputes to stabilize the boundary. Migration or refugee flows caused by terrorist activity in a region might be another factor leading to a territorial dispute between the receiving and sending country (Valeriano 2011). People might flee due to terrorists and rebels operating in a region and the receiving country would then intervene to root out the terrorist problem and also stop the migration flows. It is in these ways that age-old territorial boundary questions could be revived with the motivation that comes from the problems associated with migration.

*H2a: Migration movements provide the trigger for territorial disputes that are motivated by the need for land or economic opportunities for the new migrants within the attacking state.*

*H2b: Migration movements blur the territorial boundaries between countries and will cause a rise in territorial disputes between the sending and receiving country.*

In the case of the Football War, there is evidence that there is an interaction between migration and unstable territorial boundaries. Concerns raised by alarmists suggested that migration was a problem in Honduras, while El Salvador had a parallel need for territory in order to prevent internal conflict over land reform. Instead of seeking to redistribute its current land resources, El Salvador felt it would be easier to look for territorial compensation from Honduras. Durham (1979: 60) argues that landless poor (with evidence from surveys) were the ones who were migrating to Honduras. This evidence demonstrates that overpopulation did not cause the war, but poor land allocation did cause migration.

Honduras has had many boundary issues contributing to its overall instability and insecurity. A long boundary dispute with Guatemala led to clashes in 1957 and eventually was brought to court in 1960 which upheld prior 1904 agreements (Anderson 1981: 41). There were at least six zones of dispute between El Salvador and Honduras. Durham (1979: 2) notes “a second issue concerned the border between the two countries which had remained in dispute for the 130 years of their existence as independent nations.” A commission was created to settle border issues in 1963 and ended its work in 1967 without resolution.

Cable (1969: 661) mentions the “need to acquire lebensraum” in El Salvador as a reason behind the conflict if it is to be considered a premeditated attack. Lebensraum, or living space, is a background consideration that should not be ignored. The two states did have an ongoing territorial dispute. The dispute began formally in 1861, when the municipios of Santiago de Jocoara (Honduras) and Nino de Dios de Arambala and Asuncion de Nuestra Senora de Perquin (El Salvador) clashed over the limits of their municipal governments. The problem became international of nature, “and fifteen subsequent agreements failed to end it, for one side or the other failed to ratify.” (Anderson 1981: 42)

The territorial issues mentioned, in addition to the lack of land reform within El Salvador were important contributing factors to the conflict. Anderson (1981: 41) goes so far as to mention, “this long dispute points out very clearly that a question of population pressures and immigration was not needed to touch off border conflict in the region.” The region was filled with unsettled border issues and when these issues combined with migration, instability, and economic collapse, they became deadly.

Since there was a territorial background to the conflict, this war can be said to be a territorial war in terms of issues at stake (Vasquez and Valeriano 2010). Territory does not appear in any discussions of war aims, but the factor was noted by many at the time and Cable summarizes the dominate view: “the Salvadorians, more numerous and better armed, clearly hoped to seize a large area of land either for resettlement or to enable them to bargain from strength with Honduras over their compatriots’ rights in Honduras.” (Cable 1969: 662) While the territorial motivations for conflict were present, they were one of many issues behind the war.

### *Protection of Former Residents*

The next hypothesis relates to the need to protect the former residents of a state or to the protection of an ethnic national group. Dowty and Loescher (1996: 44) note that “in internal

situations where armed hostilities have already broken out and are accompanied by widespread violations of human rights, other more ‘hard’ forms of intervention, including military action, may be necessary to bring such violations to a halt.” What is left out is the motivation for intervention. States just do not choose to intervene solely based on humanitarian principles, often these interventions are considered necessary to protect former state residents.

This path towards war would demonstrate a rise in conflict between a sending country and the new host country to protect some class of peoples. Typically the problem is with the treatment of migrants by the new host country which will enact policies that will demonize and deny services to new migrants. Continued internal disruption caused by migrants could lead to a decline in approval rating for the state’s leadership. The impact is felt in the economic and social realms, motivating an embattled leader to wage war against an internal minority group (Tir and Jasinski 2008). The sending country would consequently feel the duty to protect its former citizens based on national origins. Mexico has gone so far as to warn the United States over its treatment of Latino immigrants.<sup>15</sup> If Mexico is willing to threaten the U.S. (its powerful neighbor and interconnected trading partner), what would another state be willing to do to protect its former residents or kin?

A series of research studies by Saideman (1997, 2002) can illuminate expectations regarding this path to conflict. Research suggests that support for either secessionist or irredentist conflict can be explained by ethnic kinship ties and the internal makeup of a state (Saideman and Ayers 2008). Since ethnic identity shapes internal preferences, leaders have to protect the rights of ethnic kin in other countries to satisfy nationalist sentiments (Saideman 1997). Studies demonstrate that those states with common ethnic kinship ties are likely to support secessionist movements (Saideman 1997); minorities with strong external support are more likely to initiate secessionist demands (Jenne, Saideman, and Low 2007); groups with strong ethnic ties to external actors are more likely to receive outside support (Saideman 2002); and, finally, irredentist claims are likely to be conditional on regional support and concurrent separatist demands by a neighborhood actor (Ayers and Saideman 2000a, 2000b).<sup>16</sup>

Although I do not confine analysis to ethnic kin, the theory behind ethnic kin motivated conflict is important. A state will engage in interstate conflict to protect the rights of former residents if it finds the violations are gross enough to warrant military action. This analysis adds the consideration of a broader class of linkages between states that includes national and ethnic ties all linked by migration movements.

The main problem with this path is the attacking country may be constrained in its ability to initiate combat operations because of its own internal problems. When a country fails to provide basic economic opportunities, there may be little chance that its military can launch the types of operations needed to conduct war. The caveat would be in authoritarian societies where defense burden (Sample 1998) is so high that the military holds a dominate position in policy making. During these situations a rally around the flag motivation to support external offensive operations might help repress domestic discontent.

It could be that the sending country is attacked by a receiving country due to the problems that caused migration in the first place. The internal discord that leads to the movement

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<sup>15</sup> Mexico’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release, “The Mexican Government’s Position on the U.S. House of Representatives Bill 6061.” September 28, 2006

<sup>16</sup> Woodwell (2004) takes the idea of ethnic ties a bit further and demonstrates that common ethnic ties between ethnically cohesive states are likely to experience territorial conflict at a greater rate than would be expected by chance, but this finding is likely explained by unsettled border questions during partition and the founding of a state.

of peoples may motivate a strong regional actor to intervene against the sending country in order to stabilize it (see Salehyan 2008). The act of sending large numbers of people to a receiving state would put the sending state's problems on the local political radar. To prevent future migrations, the attacking state would seek to impose some stability on the sending state.<sup>17</sup>

Within this path there is likely to be evidence of racism at work. We can see this throughout history. Prior to World War II Japan was upset at the treatment of Japanese immigrants in the United States - an issue that became a source of rivalry (Iriye 1987). No matter how constrained a state may be; no actor can stand idly by while people with a common identity are attacked and harassed. It thus stands to reason that large migration movements from one state to another could start direct conflict between the sending and receiving countries. This process could be a cause of the recent conflict between Georgia and Russia in 2008. Both Georgians within Russia and Russians within Georgia were mistreated to such a degree that both states became concerned about the welfare of its former population.

*H3: Migrants from a sending country who are attacked economically, socially, and racially by a new host state can lead to direct conflict between the sending and receiving countries.*

While the prior two hypotheses have found strong support in this case, hypothesis three is the most relevant for the Football War of 1969. The war was primarily launched to protect migrant Salvadorans in Honduras. This is evident in the declarations made by the Salvadoran government to Honduras prior to the break in diplomatic relations and the conditions for peace established by El Salvador. While statements made by the leadership may have been strategic in order to rally domestic support, it is clear that for many, the country was concerned about the treatment of its ethnic kin. It was firmly stated prior to and during the war that the goal was to receive guarantees of safety for Salvadorans on Honduran territory. The government of El Salvador even made the case for reparations and compensation for the crimes committed against the Salvadoran people. While attacks against Salvadorans might have been exaggerated, what matters more is that Salvadorans believed these slights and attacks were true and thus supported President Hernandez in his efforts to press the Honduran government. Anderson (1981: 108) notes, "by and large, however, the populace was solidly behind the government, and was urging the government toward a confrontation."<sup>18</sup>

In an interview with a Salvadoran army officer, Anderson (1981: 120) provides a solid example of why the people of El Salvador felt they needed to go to war. After explaining that war would ruin the economy of El Salvador and that many of his friends were in the Honduran army, the officer states, "Honduras is driving our people out, raping little girls, cutting off breasts, cutting the balls off men. We didn't start this but now we must fight." Most of the incidents cited were isolated or untrue, yet the key fact is that the people of El Salvador believed these events to be true. Salvadorans felt the need to defend the migrants, no matter what the costs. President Hernandez (Scheina 2003) asked, "How is it that a man can walk with safety on

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<sup>17</sup> It also possible that cross-cutting ties within a society will impact the probability for migration based conflicts. Ross (1986) finds evidence that societies with high levels of cross-cutting connections throughout the state increase the probability of external conflict. The idea is that bridges built within different groups in a society will also increase the capacity of a state to mobilize its population towards an enemy. Ross (1986: 435) notes that "societies with strong bonds among local communities may become more ethnocentric and brazen when facing outsiders."

<sup>18</sup> Anti Honduran propaganda was apparently prevalent in El Salvador. Anderson (1981: 108) recounts this effort. "One labeled "Honduran Heavy Artillery" showed an elephant with several arrows protruding from his nose, while a Honduran soldier prepared to whack his testicles with a board." A similar picture circulated on the internet of Osama Bin Laden using a camel as a triggering weapon in 2002.

the moon and cannot do so, because of his nationality, on the prairies of Honduras.”

This was not a war borne out of rational calculations, but rather a war driven by fear, emotion, and brotherhood ties. Saideman and Ayers (2000) find evidence that demonstrates that minorities who are discriminated against are more likely to promote separatist aims. This research herein supports the theory that when national kin are discriminated against and attacked, interstate conflict can erupt to protect former emigrants. While discrimination alone may not promote separatism, it may promote intervention and interstate war when high levels of migrants upset internal social dynamics. It is how the issue is framed that matters most. When presented to the population as a negative loss (El Salvadorians are being humiliated), the public will support an offensive military action (Perla 2011).

The refugee flow back into El Salvador, as well as the negative opinions fostered by this movement in the press, pushed El Salvador to attack its neighbor. “El Salvador therefore made a quick decision to attack to put pressure on Honduras to reform its anti-Salvadorian policy.” (Anderson 1981: 110) It seems that the paramount goal for El Salvador truly was to protect its migrants. Hernandez remarked after the dispute, “We did not want to withdraw the troops, despite the pressure, until we felt that the rights of Salvadorians were secure.” (Anderson 1981: 125)

While the refugee flight did contribute to the onset of hostilities, the refugees fled back into El Salvador because that is where they migrated from in the first place. This is a key point since it is thought that forced migration may cause war (Salehayen 2008), but the trigger may be migration in general.

### *Ethnic Reunification*

The final hypothesis proposed here deals with motivations to reunify peoples along ethnic lines, either through irreditalism or secession.<sup>19</sup> Migration flows may relocate people of an ethnic group to a new country. Once residency is established, this migrant group may assert the need to protect its ethnic brethren to such an extent that an external war is launched in the name of reunification. Migration may embolden an ethnic group to wage war across borders in order to unify the ethnic group.<sup>20</sup>

Migration also has linkages to the politics of separatism. Separatism or secession is the political situation when a group of actors within a state wishes to secede from the state (Spencer 1998). When migrants establish a foothold in a new state, these actors may seek to encourage separatism (irreditalism) in their sending state and then seek reunification after secession is a reality.

Hypothesis four also speaks to the ability of receiving states to express dissatisfaction with a sending state when refugees “nurture a collective project toward the country of origin.” (Joly 2000: 34) When refugees mobilize their resources to affect the course of politics in their country of origin, conflict can result.

*H4: Migration of an ethnic group across international boundaries may lead to conflict to either support or reunify an ethnic group.*

Support for this hypothesis on ethnic reunification or irredentism is not evident in this

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<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that this hypothesis and the literature surround it are underdeveloped at this time.

<sup>20</sup> Evidence for this factor has been mixed in the past (Gibler 2007 does not find a link while Saideman 2002 finds a positive link.

case. In fact, the influx of Salvadorans returning into El Salvador was a problem that the country was not prepared for. The situation where pressure was relieved through the immigration valve seemed to suit El Salvador. Saideman and Ayers (2008) suggest that irredentism wars will be launched when internal nationalist movements are co-opted by unstable leaders, leading to reunification movements in order to protect ethnic kin. Yet, there was no reunification movement in this case because the migration movement suited El Salvador. The real problem was that Honduras did not want to keep supporting the Salvadorian migrants due to shifting economic problems.

#### *Alternative Explanation: Population and Resources as a Cause of War?*

Population density could be a key issue in this case. If population density is accepted as a cause of this war, it would rule out migration as a factor. It could be the composition of a population that leads to war rather than the movement of peoples. Time Magazine noted at the time, “The 3,300,000 Salvadorians, who are multiplying at one of the world’s highest growth rates, are jammed into a volcanic land no larger than the state of Massachusetts.”<sup>21</sup> Yet, the population boom was not the main problem between the two states as some, such as Hartley (1972), contend. The theory is that El Salvador did not have enough land for its people to sustain an acceptable lifestyle. The real issue was the leadership’s refusal to redistribute land and the choice to focus on export rather than subsistence crops (Durham 1979).

There were 300,000 Salvadorians in Honduras by 1969 (Anderson 1981: 103) and, at that time, these migrants accounted for 12.5% of the total Honduran population (Cable 1969). “Limited to less than eight thousand kilometers, and growing so rapidly in numbers, the Salvadorians sought to escape their dilemma by immigration abroad.” (Anderson 1981: 35) Durham’s (1979) extensive ecological study does demonstrate that overpopulation was not the cause of migration. Instead, the migration movement “had been a response to the survival and reproduction consequences of the land shortage,” which was caused by land concentration (Durham 1979). The average Salvadoran farmer did not have enough land or equipment to feed his family. The largest farms occupied 70 percent of farming land in El Salvador (Cable 1969: 660). Salvadorans first moved to urban areas but found them unsuitable for economic stability.

Honduras encouraged early migration movements because they depended on migration to grow. Labor was needed to supplement the cotton industry after the end of slavery; migration was a way to solve this problem. There was a long tradition of foreign ownership of land and property in Honduras. For years Salvadorans were valued members of Honduran society.

General economic decline led to Salvadorans being blamed for the high unemployment rate and the depression of wages in Honduras. These issues led to changes in land usage policies within Honduras. On September 29, 1962, Honduras passed a land reform law that prohibited Salvadorans from owning land in Honduras. This act was not enforced until 1969 and the enforcement of the law sparked the war, since it forcibly removed Salvadorans from what they consider their property. Those who owned land had to be “Honduran by birth, male over sixteen years if a bachelor or any age if married, or a spinster or widow if caring for a family.” (Anderson 1981: 78). Scarcity was an issue for the conflict by only in that it led to Salvadorians migrating into Honduras (Durham 1979).

#### **Assessment and Conclusion**

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

The Football War was not a demographic or population war. The primary cause of Salvadoran out-migration into Honduras was scarcity within El Salvador caused by poor distribution of land within the state (Durham 1979). Likewise, this war was not caused by a rush for resources, but by the mistreatment of Salvadoran immigrants within Honduras who had been previously welcomed, before being demonized when the Honduran economy hit dire straits.

What we see in this case is the impact of racism and scapegoating of a migrant group as a cause of war. The casual processes start with push and pull factors that lead to emigration. Next, weak or failing states with deep social, economic, and political problems will divert attention away from these issues by scapegoating a migrant group. The reasons for migration (push factors) will also likely produce tensions between the sending and receiving states in the form of territorial disputes. States with unstable borders and internal overpopulation plus economic stagnation are particularly vulnerable to the onset of territorial questions. Finally, the racism and mistreatment caused by the scapegoating will produce the need to protect a state's former citizens. Each hypothesis and variable is linked to another in a long causal process.

Another factor evident in this case is the importance of refugees to the onset of violence. A state can choose to ignore the mistreatment of its former citizens, but this is very difficult to do if they begin pouring back into their homeland in large numbers. The return migrants cause societal disruption within the sending state. Migrants can cause disruptions in their new country, but a critical issue is that the disruptions caused can also be evident in the homeland which set off the conflict.

We also find support for hypothesis 2 in that unstable borders and out migration caused by land reform pressures lead to the resumption of territorial questions. While there is no evidence that hypothesis four is in operation here, it will be left for future analysis to falsify the hypothesis definitively. Overall, the theory presented here is multi-causal, there is no simple on factor that produced the war, but a multitude of different issues generated the conflict. Migration is clearly one of the defining characteristics of this conflict and there are other conflicts that might follow this same path. The key point is that there is likely a class of migration wars long ignored and issues such as territorial boundaries and internal cohesion are important events on the path to war. In short, the issues at stake matters a great deal (Hensel 2001). Future research should explore each hypotheses presented here for generalizable findings and also focus on the timing of the mechanisms suggested herein.

This research should convey the need to avoid demonizing, scapegoating, and the use of racial epithets in the context of migration movements. The story here has been one of conflict erupting due to migration and racism. This is a troubling story because the resulting policy advice could be to limit immigration and enforce existing laws, although this is not a conclusion I propose. It is likely that the negative impact of migration is limited to states that are dealing with development or economic problems. It is the states we rarely think of, the transitional and developing states, which are in danger of waging conflict around issues raised by migration movements.

What does one do about migration then? The obvious answer is to take seriously the problems that immigrants bring into a society and to focus on solving these issues. Choucri (2002: 105) suggests, "if the political system accepts or even values, demographic and social diversity, and when mechanisms are in place to recognize and accommodate this diversity, then the migration will not become a determining factor in the nation's security calculus or a key factor in gauging its degree of insecurity." Either through education, investment, or social safety

nets, the state can incorporate a migrant population that can help it grow and thrive.

Migration does help 'make' a state and the negative influences of migration should not be the story that one takes from this research effort. Rather the variables that lead to migration becoming a problem in the first place that are the ones of interest. These are societal destabilization, ethnic reunification movements, protection of former residents, domestic actors who have incentives to scapegoat immigrants, and territorial disputes which all interact with migration flows to produce conflict. Diversity and multiculturalism should be cherished and sought in international processes, yet these factors are rarely discussed and researched (Valeriano 2008). Hopefully research such as this will spur movements to better deal with the problems associated with migrations in the future.

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