

**Remembering the Malvinas/Falklands War:  
National, Generational, and Ideological Differences**

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Authors' Note

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**Abstract**

A recurrent topic in collective memory studies is war, more specifically, global wars such as War World II. In this study, we investigate the collective memory of a less global war, the Malvinas-Falklands war between Argentina and Britain. The war and the territorial claims that motivated it still figure in public discourse in Argentina, but less dramatically in Britain. As a result, the generational cohort effects characterizing intergenerational collective memory might be less marked among Argentines. To test this claim, we assessed the memories of Argentines and Britons for the Malvinas war, employing both free and cued recall, across two generations and different political ideologies. Many of the generational differences established in the extant empirical studies were found, but were generally less marked for Argentines. Ideology had little effect. The results are discussed in terms of how continued engagement with the causes of a war can mitigate generational differences.

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## **General Audience Summary**

Citizens of a country often have a shared representation of their nation's past. These collective, or national, memories can often differ from one nation to another and across generations. Moreover, they often involve wars. To date, most studies of the national memories of wars have focused on recent, global wars, such as World War I and World War II. In both instances, subsequent representations of the war were dictated by the victors and the causes that motivated them subsided. But many wars are small and local. Moreover, the causes that motivate them may still figure in public discourse, especially the citizens of the defeated country. The Malvinas-Falklands War is a good example of such a war. It was largely of importance only to the war parties -- Argentina and Great Britain. Moreover, the territorial claim that motivated it still concerns the Argentine people, less so the British. This difference in the lingering allegiance to the cause of the war among Argentines suggests that the memory is still alive for them. We would expect, then, that many of the generational differences established in previous studies of wars and other political events may be mitigated among Argentines. The findings replicate those of others examining generational differences: The memories of those who lived through the war contained more facts, more personal narrative tellings, and more contextualizing statements than the memories of those who were born after the war. Moreover, the lived memories were more emotionally intense. These generational differences, however, were less pronounced in Argentines than in Britons. Ideology had little effect. The continued engagement with the causes of a war can mitigate generational differences.

(272 words)

## **Remembering the Malvinas/Falklands War: National, Generational, and Ideological Differences**

National collective memories often involve wars and political conflict (Liu & Hilton, 2005). In one study, they accounted for approximately 70% of the events named as the most important in world history (Liu et al., 2005). Perhaps because of their role in recent history, much of the psychologically-oriented empirical work on collective memories of wars has focused on War World I and II (WWI, WWII; Abel et al., 2019; Bouchat et al., 2017; Frederick & Coman, 2022; Wertsch, 2007; for exceptions, see Lewandowsky et al., 2005; Obradović, 2016; Werstch & Karumidze, 2009). In these studies, similar, not different collective memories emerge across the warring parties, confirming Churchill's dictum that "history is written by Victors."

Churchill may have overstated the matter. If victors are to write history, they need to care about the historical events. But the public might become less concerned over time even about something as shattering as war. It might no longer be in public discourse nor commemorated. The cause(s) motivating it might seem less relevant. Especially if brief, nations can move on from war.

One might expect that the defeated rather than the victor would be more likely to want to "move on," to forget a war. The defeated might, for instance, avoid referring to the war in media representations or fail to memorialize or commemorate it. We want to explore here the opposite situation, where the war is less relevant for the victor, but still figures in the public discourse of the defeated. The defeated, not the victor, still discusses it, features it in

media representations, and commemorates and memorializes it. The war we have in mind is the Malvinas/Falklands war of 1982<sup>1</sup>.

The war was initiated by a brutal military dictatorship in an attempt to overcome its slipping popularity (Cardoso et al., 2012; Novaro, 2010). At the time of the invasion, on April 2, 1982, the British were (and are still) in control. The war lasted 74 days. Argentina's claim to the islands dates from the early 1800's, after its war for independence from Spain. At the time, control of the island transferred from Spain to Great Britain. After the Argentine defeat in the 1982 Malvinas war, a government without ties to Great Britain replaced the military government (Novaro & Palermo, 2003). In that the victor, Great Britain, had no venue through which to write history for the defeated Argentina, Argentina had a chance to shape its own collective memory.

The two warring countries have treated the war differently over time. In the case of Argentina, the war still plays a substantial role in public discourse and social practice, even after over 40 years. The claim that the Malvinas are Argentine territory became a national cause almost fifty years before the war (Guber, 1999, 2001) and is still viewed as valid. All Argentine maps continue to depict the islands as part of Argentine territory (Camaño Iglesias Paíz, 2022). Moreover, to this day, the war is featured in popular culture. For example, Argentine supporters sang *Muchachos* at the 2022 World Cup, which equated the young Argentine soldiers of the Malvinas War with national idols such as Maradona and Messi. Additionally, on both the 30<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Argentine government reasserted their territorial claims in discussions with Great Britain and in other forums (see Ayerdi, 2022; Maltby, 2016). And on the recent 41<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the conflict was discussed on the front page of most major newspapers and led in television news coverage (personal observations of

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<sup>1</sup> For Argentinians, the islands are called *Islas Malvinas*, and for the British, they are called *Falkland Islands*. The main author is from Argentina, and for that reason, we are using the *Malvinas* name through out the paper.

the first two authors). Finally, extensive commemorative practices exist, including a national holiday.

In contrast, public discussion and commemorative practices are less obvious in contemporary Great Britain. At the time of the war, Britain's decisive victory was viewed as evidence that the country was "back," with the lingering memory of its decline from being a great empire upended (Boyce, 2017). However, analyses of various media representations of the war since then detected a move from an emphasis on military victory to one of personal introspection (Maltby, 2016). Moreover, in contrast to the widespread media coverage in Argentina, the 41<sup>st</sup> Anniversary went largely unnoted in Great Britain, with the BBC archives listing just one feature around the time of the 41<sup>st</sup> Anniversary. In addition, unlike Argentina, there are no widely embraced commemorative practices designed to "remember" the war.

Finally, whereas in a 2021 survey, 81% of the Argentine respondents indicated that their country should claim sovereignty of the islands (France24, 2022), even as the war was unfolding, only 68% of the British public supported military intervention (IPSOS, 1982). A recent editorial in *The Guardian* suggested that claims for the Falklands rested on lingering imperialist ambitions and, as a consequence, should be abandoned (Jenkins, 2022). In a small interview study, Sivan (2021) found that British interviewees had at best a passing knowledge of the war, with several not even aware that it had taken place. Argentine interviewees were familiar with details about the war and claimed to have studied it in school and talk about it often with others.

Given these differences, one might wonder how memories of the war differ across these two countries and most critically, for those who were born after the war. Those who lived through the war no doubt have a memory of it, but societal effort of the kind just articulated is often needed to ensure memories are retained for those who were born after the war. The issue is best framed in terms of Hirst and Manier's (2002) distinction between *lived*

and *distant* memories, with *lived memories* involving events the rememberer lived through and *distant memories* involving events that occurred before the rememberer's birth. Thus, the interest is not so much about generational cohort effects (Corning & Schuman, 2015), in that different generations can directly experience the same event, but, if you like, generations who were or were not alive during the Malvinas war.

Research on the characteristics of lived and distant memories is limited, but differences have been identified. Lived and distant memories can evoke different values. For instance, those born after WWII view the bombing of Hiroshima negatively, whereas those who lived through the war viewed it positively (Zaromb et al., 2014). Moreover, lived memories appear to be more detailed, more personalized, and more intensely felt. They also contain more contextualizing information, such as causes and consequences (Authors, 2016, 2018; Stone et al., 2014; Svob & Brown, 2012; van der Hagen et al., 2022).

In this study, we ask whether the size of these differences will change for Argentines and Briton as a function of the degree to which they are still engaged with the Malvinas war. Assuming that the difference between lived and distant memories will diminish as engagement increases, then there should be an interaction between country and memory type in emotional intensity, contextual detail and the proportion of personal narrative tellings (with those who did not live through the war telling stories of a personal nature about their elders).

### **Method**

In the present study, participants from both Argentina and Great Britain filled in two different memory tests: a Free Recall and a Cued Recall test, examining participants' memories about the war. Each of these national samples were composed of a group of individuals who lived during the war and group of individuals who did not. We further divided the groups into two political ideological subgroups (those inclined to the left and those inclined to the right). We assessed ideology because the left in each country was less enthusiastic

about the war than the right. All data and detailed tables breaking down the results according to each of the variables we studied can also be found in the Supplementary Material, at Open Science Framework (OSF), and can be accessed at <https://osf.io/skf8h/>.

## **Participants**

The sample size was based on an a priori power analysis using G\*Power (Faul et al., 2007). The analysis was conducted for three-way ANOVA. Based on past data (Cyr & Hirst, 2019), we estimated an effect size of .25, an  $\alpha$  of .05, and a desired power of .95. The results indicated a need for a total sample of 210 participants. We opted to oversample, inasmuch as we were uncertain how many liberal and conservatives we would recruit. In the end, a total of 295 participants took part in the study. Because of coding difficulties, four participants were eliminated from the sample. See Table 1. One-hundred forty were citizens of Argentina, while 151 were citizens of the United Kingdom (UK). Their mean age was 40.2 years ( $SD = 17.59$ ), with a range between 18 and 91. The sample was composed of 183 women and 106 men, and two participants were non-binary. Regarding educational level, within the Argentinians participants, 87% had at least some postsecondary education, whereas 89% of the British sample did. In both the Argentinean and British samples, all participants were born in and currently lived in the nation in which they were grouped. The Argentinean sample was recruited through flyers posted on social media and through snowball sampling, while the British sample was obtained through Prolific, a UK-based internet recruitment platform. The differences in the recruitment and testing procedures practiced in Argentina had no effect on the results, inasmuch as when we included recruitment in our analyses as a between-subject factor we did not find any significant main effect for this factor. Consequently, we do not consider this factor in the analyses presented below. For both the Argentine and British sample, the study was advertised as being about the Collective Memory of the Malvinas/Falklands war. Argentinean participants received 100 Argentinean



pesos (approximately 2 US dollars) compensation for their participation; UK participants were paid 5 British pounds (approximately 6.50 US dollars). The difference in compensation reflected the difference in cost of living in the two countries. The research was approved by The New School IRB.

**Table 1**

*Number of Participants by Nation, Type of Memory, Ideology, and Level of Education*

|       | Argentina |       |         |       | Great Britain |       |         |       |
|-------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|-------|
|       | Lived     |       | Distant |       | Lived         |       | Distant |       |
|       | PS        | Other | PS      | Other | PS            | Other | PS      | Other |
| Left  | 24        | 6     | 32      | 1     | 31            | 5     | 45      | 2     |
| Right | 27        | 7     | 39      | 4     | 25            | 9     | 33      | 1     |

*Note.* PS = Participants with at least some postsecondary education; Other = High school education or lower

As in previous studies (Authors, 2016, 2016), the sample was composed in a way that the participants who were recruited fell into two classes: Those with lived memories of the war, with an age of 48 years (49 years in the case of the British sample) or older, and those with distant memories, which were between 18 years old and 36 years old (37, for the British sample). The age of 48 was chosen to eliminate any concerns about infantile amnesia or lack of awareness of current events. Participants in the lived memory group would have been at least 10 years of age at the time of the war. The one-year difference reflected recruitment schedule, with the Argentine sample recruited one year before that the British one. The delay in recruitment of the British sample reflected a delay in coordinating with the British team. The sample was further divided into those who self-rated themselves as ideologically inclined to the Left, and those inclined to the Right. (See the Materials section for details regarding the question on ideological orientation). Those participants who initially identified themselves with the center were asked if there was a slight tendency to the left or to the right

in their political ideology. In those cases where there was no response to this further query (0.69 % of the sample), two coders placed them into the Left or Right group based on the politicians and the political party with whom the participants identified the most. The coders agreed in one of the two cases. The disagreement between the coders was resolved through a brief discussion. In total, there were 146 participants from the Left and 145 from the Right.

### **Materials**

A questionnaire with three sections was used. See Table 2. Argentine participants received a Spanish version, British participants an English version. The Spanish survey was back translated to ensure compatibility. The first section was a Free Recall Test. In this section, participants responded to one broad question about the war. For the Argentinean sample, the question was (in Spanish): "Please, write down everything you remember or know about the Malvinas War"; for the British participants: "Please, write down everything you remember or know about the Falklands war." The Argentine survey always referred to the Malvinas; the British survey, the Falkland Islands. The second section was composed of a series of Cued Recall questions, consisting of five questions about the war, formulated mainly around facts, causes and consequences, but also assessing emotional aspects. The third and final section was about demographics, which contained questions about participants' age, gender, education, and nationality. Also, there were questions about political ideology and political party inclinations. Additionally, they had to indicate the political party and the current politicians with whom they identified most, and the candidate (in the case of the Argentinean sample) or party (in the case of the British sample) they voted for in the last general election.

### **Procedure**

Participants filled out the three sections of the questionnaire after indicating their informed consent. The order of the sections in the questionnaire was always the same: first,

the Free Recall task, second the Cued Recall task, and third, the demographic section. The questions for the Cued Recall task were counterbalanced. The counterbalance design was done around the order of the questions. Participants responded to each question in writing. In the Argentinian sample, some participants completed the questionnaire in a paper-and-pencil version while others completed it online; in the UK sample, all participants completed the survey online over Prolific. There were no time restrictions to complete the tasks.

## **Table2**

### *Free Recall and Cued Recall questions*

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#### **Free Recall**

Instructions: “Please, write down everything you remember or know about the Malvinas/Falklands war”.

#### **Cued Recall**

- 1) Mention who were the main actors you remember in the Malvinas/Falklands war. List the three most important.
- 2) What do you know about the emotional state of Argentine population during Malvinas/Falklands war? What do you know about the emotional state of British population during the war?
- 3) Point out which were the three most salient facts you remember of the Malvinas/Falklands war. If you can't remember three list as many as you can.
- 4) Point out which were the three most relevant causes you remember of the Malvinas/Falklands war. If you can't remember three list as many as you can.
- 5) Point out which were the three most relevant consequences you remember of the Malvinas/Falklands war. If you can't remember three list as many as you can.

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#### **Coding**

For the narrative analysis of the Free Recall task, we used the coding scheme developed by Hirst and Manier (1996; see Table 3). It proceeds by identifying the Structural Units (those that capture a single idea) and divides them into Narrative and Non-narrative units. There are three types of Narrative units: Narrative Tellings, Contextualizing Statements, and Affective-Evaluative Remarks. We further divided Narrative Tellings into

Personal and Non-Personal units (Stone et al., 2014). Contextualizing Statements were divided into Social and Personal. Following Manzi et al.'s (2004) general classification among facts, causes and consequences, we further divided Social Contextualizing Statements into causes or consequences. Finally, Affective-Evaluative Remarks were divided into Positive Affective-Evaluative Remarks and Negative Affective-Evaluative remarks.

Two coders categorized the responses. For the British sample, the coders were the two native English speakers. For the Argentine sample, the coders were the first two authors, who are fluent in both English and Spanish. There was agreement on 95.3% of the responses across codings. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved.

As to the Cued Recall test, we analyzed the responses by considering their frequency. Two coders separately reviewed all responses and categorized them as *similar* when they judged a response to capture the same concept, idea, or event. The final categories composed the coding scheme for each question. The two coders then compared their list and assembled a final coding scheme. The coding scheme can be found in Table S3 in the Supplementary Material. Using this coding scheme, two additional coders categorized each response of the cued recall. The initial agreement was 97.99%. Discrepancies were all resolved after a brief discussion.

### Table 3

#### *Structural units: definitions and examples*

| Structural Unit (Definitions)  | Examples   |
|--|--|
| NON-NARRATIVE UNITS  |  |
| <p><b>Metamemory Statements</b></p> <p>Evaluate one's own ability to remember; comments on the requirements for remembering successfully</p> | <p>"I am not good for remembering historical events"</p> |

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 NARRATIVE UNITS
 

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**Personal Narrative Tellings**

States or events related to a central topic or theme of the narrative that involved a personal anecdote or relevant fact or state, dealing either directly with the person recalling the material or with someone personally known

“My brother was a combatant in Malvinas”

“I thought that the war was going to be brief”.

**Non Personal Narrative Tellings**

States or events related to a central topic or theme of the narrative that did not have the characteristic of being personal, as described above

“War started April, 2nd”

“People thought that islands sovereignty could be recovered”

**Social Contextualizing Statements**

Narrative tellings related to social events or states outside the immediate spatio-temporal context of the narrative, adding “context” to the narrative tellings

“Other wars were taking place at that moment in the world”

“Before the Junta, Isabel Perón was the president”

**Social Contextualizing Statements - Consequences**

Statements linking one event or state to a consequence of that event or state

“The war had as a consequence the fall of the dictatorship the next year”

**Social Contextualizing Statements - Causes**

Specifically, statements causally linking one event or state to another

“United Kingdom had occupied the islands in 19th century”

**Personal Contextualizing Statements**

Narrative tellings related to personal events or states outside the immediate spatio-temporal context of the narrative, adding “context” to the narrative tellings

“At that moment, I was 10 years old”

“My grandfather died that year”

**Positive Affective-Evaluative Remarks**

Positive editorial judgments or expressions of

emotional reactions to the narrative tellings

“Many people were happy with the possibility of recovering the islands”

“Soldiers were very brave”

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|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Negative Affective-Evaluative Remarks</b>   | “People were afraid”                             |
| Negative editorial judgments or expressions of emotional reactions to the narrative tellings | “Argentine military of the Junta were criminals” |

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## Results

We have divided this section in two main analyses. First, we will attend to the analysis of the Free Recall and then turn to the Cued Recall test. In order to streamline the presentation here, we do not present the results in details, but only the main findings. See Supplemental material for complete results (<https://osf.io/skf8h/>).

### Free Recall

#### *Word Count*

We first counted the number of words that composed the participants' recall (across all conditions,  $M = 97.5$  words;  $SD = 103.61$ ). In a Univariate Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) with three between-subject factors – Nationality (Argentinians vs. British), Type of the Memory (Lived vs. Distant) and Ideology (Right vs. Left) – we found a main effect for each factor. For Nationality,  $F(1, 283) = 54.33, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .16$ , Argentinean participants ( $M = 142.44, SE = 7.87$ ) produced more words than British participants ( $M = 61.87, SE = 7.58$ ). For Type of the Memory,  $F(1, 283) = 15.50, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$ , with those participants with lived memories ( $M = 123.68, SE = 8.00$ ) also using more words in their recall than those with distant memories ( $M = 80.63, SE = 7.45$ ). Finally, for Ideology,  $F(1, 283) = 6.80, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$ , with participants of a Left ideology ( $M = 116.40, SE = 7.75$ ) using more words than those with a Right ideology ( $M = 87.91, SE = 7.71$ ). Caution is needed in interpreting this result, in that the number of words needed to express a similar thought in English and Spanish may differ.

### *Unit Analysis*

We now turn our attention to an analysis of what we call *units* (see Coding section). This analysis allows us to contrast those elements in the free recall that contributed to the narrative (Narrative Units) with those representing comments on the narrative, such as metamemory statements (Non-Narrative Units). We should note from the outset that, not surprisingly, the proportion of narrative units out of the total number of units ( $M = .91$ ,  $SD = .23$ ) was greater than the proportion of non-narrative units ( $M = .09$ ,  $SD = .23$ ),  $t(290) = 30.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.77$ .<sup>2</sup> Our focus here is in how the proportion of narrative units and non-narrative units varied according to the factors we were interested in: Nationality (Argentine vs. British), Type of Memory (Distant vs. Lived) and Ideology (Left vs. Right). We separately analyzed the narrative and non-narrative units using ANOVAs in which the dependent variable was either the proportion of narrative units or the proportion of non-narrative units. See Table 4 for relevant statistics. We only discuss narrative units here, inasmuch as the non-narrative units mirror the narrative ones.

With respect to the narrative units, there were main effects for Nationality [ $F(1, 283) = 15.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ ] and Type of Memory [ $F(1, 283) = 19.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .06$ ]. These main effects were qualified by an interaction between these two factors,  $F(1, 283) = 12.01$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ . See Table 4. When considering the Type of Memory, Argentinean participants produced a significantly higher proportion of distant narrative units than did British participants,  $t(155) = 4.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $g = .66$ , but the difference with respect to lived narrative units was not significant,  $t(132) = 1$ ,  $p = .321$ ,  $g = .17$ . As to Nationality, there was no difference in the proportion of lived and distant narrative units produced by

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<sup>2</sup> When comparing structural units across the whole sample, we will report Cohen's  $d$ , but when comparing groups with different sample sizes we will report Hedges'  $g$ .



Argentines,  $t(138) = -1.89, p = .061, g = .32$ . Britons, however, produced a larger proportion of lived narrative units than distant narrative units,  $t(149) = -4.21, p < .001, g = .69$ . These findings support the claim that the Malvinas War is still "alive" for the younger generation in Argentina, at least in comparison to Britons, even if they themselves had not lived through it.

### ***Further analysis of narrative units***

Narrative units were broken down into personal and non-personal narrative tellings (the latter, basically, the historical facts of the story), various contextualizing statements (overall, those involved with either social or personal contexts, and more specifically, the social ones involved causes and consequences), and finally affective-evaluative remarks, both positive and negative. In all the analyses, the proportions are out of the total number of narrative units, not the total number of units altogether (narrative and non-narrative).

Inasmuch as we mostly failed to find effects for Ideology, and in the interest of streamlining our data presentation, we only present results relevant to the factors of Nationality and Type of Memory in Table 4. See Table S1 in the Supplementary Material for full details about the ANOVAs, including the results for Ideology. See Table S2 for the results for ideology.

**Table 4**

*Proportion of Narrative Units, Narrative Tellings, Contextualizing Statements, and Affective Evaluative Remarks in the Free Recall as a Function of Nationality and Type of Memory*

|                           | Argentina |           | Great Britain |           |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
|                           | Distant   | Lived     | Distant       | Lived     |
| <b>Narrative Units</b>    | .96 (.03) | .98 (.03) | .77 (.02)     | .97 (.03) |
| <b>Narrative Tellings</b> |           |           |               |           |
| Personal                  | .03 (.01) | .17 (.02) | .00 (.01)     | .07 (.01) |
| Non-personal              | .67 (.04) | .48 (.04) | .70 (.03)     | .78 (.04) |

### Contextualizing Statements

|                             |           |           |           |           |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Social                      | .15 (.02) | .06 (.02) | .09 (.02) | .03 (.02) |
| Causes                      | .06 (.01) | .03 (.01) | .03 (.01) | .01 (.01) |
| Consequences                | .07 (.01) | .02 (.01) | .05 (.01) | .02 (.01) |
| Personal                    | .00 (.01) | .04 (.01) | .00 (.01) | .04 (.01) |
| <b>Affective-Evaluative</b> |           |           |           |           |
| Positive                    | .01 (.01) | .04 (.01) | .00 (.01) | .01 (.01) |
| Negative                    | .12 (.02) | .16 (.02) | .03 (.02) | .04 (.02) |

**Narrative Tellings.** The free recall included more non-personal narrative tellings (which would be about the war itself rather than how the participants or someone they knew lived through the war) ( $M = .67, SD = .32$ ) than personal ones ( $M = .06, SD = .14$ ),  $t(290) = 25.55, p < .001, d = 1.50$ . This difference is not surprising, since we asked them about the war, not about personal experiences of the war. Nevertheless, they did include personal narrative tellings.

Turning first, then, to the personal narrative tellings, there were main effects for Nationality [ $F(1, 283) = 21.85, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$ ] and Type of Memory [ $F(1, 283) = 53.08, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .16$ ]. These were qualified by an interaction between these two factors,  $F(1, 283) = 8.12, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = .03$ . See Table 4. Argentinean participants ( $M = .03, SD = .08$ ) produced a significantly greater proportion of distant personal narrative tellings than did British participants ( $M = .00, SD = .02$ ),  $t(155) = 2.47, p = .015, g = .39$ , though the proportions are small. One needs to interpret this finding cautiously, in that floor effects may have distorted the results. Regarding those with lived personal narrative tellings, Argentine participants ( $M = .17, SD = .19$ ) also produced a higher proportion of these units

than did British participants ( $M = .07$ ,  $SD = .14$ ),  $t(132) = 3.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $g = .64$ . Lived personal narrative tellings were more likely to be produced than distant narrative tellings, for both Argentinean participants,  $t(138) = -6.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $g = 1.04$ , and British participants,  $t(149) = -3.97$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $g = .65$ . Taken together, these results suggest that personal details were more likely to find their way into a recounting if one had lived through the war, but this was even more the case for Argentine participants. It was also the case that Argentines who did not live through the war produced more personal details, presumably about those who they knew who had lived through the war, than did Britons, though in both instances the proportions were small and, as noted, need to be interpreted carefully.

The results differed for non-personal narrative tellings. Now, there was only a main effect for Nationality,  $F(1, 283) = 20.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ . This was again qualified by an interaction between Nationality and Type of the Memory,  $F(1, 283) = 14.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .05$ . Again, see Table 4. There was no significant difference between Argentinean participants and British participants when considering distant memories,  $t(155) = -.41$ ,  $p = .684$ ,  $g = .07$ . In reverse of what we found for personal narrative tellings, now British participants ( $M = .78$ ,  $SD = .29$ ) produced more non-personal narrative tellings than Argentine participants when considering lived memories,  $t(132) = -6.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $g = 1.05$ . If we focus on Nationality, Argentinean participants produced more distant non-personal narrative tellings than lived non-personal narrative telling,  $t(138) = 4.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $g = .78$ . When considering British participants, there were no significant differences,  $t(149) = -1.41$ ,  $p = .161$ ,  $g = .23$ . That is, for those who lived through the war, British participants' free recall was more about the facts than about personal tellings, whereas Argentine participants featured personal tellings.

Or, to put it another way, when considering the results for personal and non-personal narrative tellings together, it would appear that both groups, if they lived through the war, were more likely to tell the story in personal terms than they would if the war was a distant memory, but this tendency was greater for Argentines than Britons. In addition, Argentines who did not live through the war also tended to recount the war in more personal terms (writing about themselves or those who they knew) than did Britons.

**Contextualizing Statements.** We coded for different types of contextualizing statements: social, personal, causes, consequences. See Table 3. Details of the statistical analysis can be found in the Supplementary Material (see Table S1 and S2), but for each type of contextualizing statement, we found main effects for Type of Memory,  $F(1, 283) > 7.22, p < .01, \eta_p^2 > .03$ . As an inspection of Table 4 indicates, except for the case of Personal Contextualizing Statements, these main effects indicate that there was greater proportion of contextualizing statements associated with distant memories than with lived memories, which is opposite of the pattern found in Authors (2018). We will comment on this discrepancy in the Cued Recall section. As for Personal Contextualizing Statements, their greater presence in lived rather than distant memories is consistent with the personalized nature of lived memories.

Turning now to Nationality, we found main effects for all types of contextualizing statements, except for Consequences and Personal,  $F(1, 283) > 6.90, p < .01, \eta_p^2 > .02$ . Again, see Table 4. In those instances in which there was a main effect, Argentinean participants included a larger proportion in their free recall than did British participants, suggesting that Argentines could contextualize the war better than their British counterparts.

**Affective-Evaluative Remarks.** As Table 4 indicates, for both positive and negative affective-evaluative remarks, Argentines produced a greater proportion of these remarks than did Britons [Positive:  $F(1, 283) = 13.85, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .05$ ; Negative:  $F(1, 283) = 51.68, p <$

.001,  $\eta^2 = .15$ ]. Moreover, those who had lived through the war produced more positive and negative affective-evaluative remarks than those who did not live through the war [Positive:  $F(1, 283) = 13.75, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ ; Negative:  $F(1, 283) = 7.43, p = .007, \eta^2 = .03$ ]. There is an effect for Ideology, now for positive affective-evaluative remarks. Those on the Right produce significantly more positive remarks than did those on the Left. We did not find an interaction between Nationality and Type of Memory [Positive:  $F(1, 283) = 1.78, p = .183, \eta^2 = .01$ ; Negative:  $F(1, 283) = .07, p = .786, \eta^2 = .00$ ], which may reflect the small proportion of affective-evaluative remarks among all Britons.

### **Cued Recall**

The cued recall analysis followed the same structure of analysis as in previous work on the collective memory of the Argentine military junta (Authors, 2016). The present Cued Recall task consisted of five questions, inquiring about actors, emotional response, facts, and causes and consequences of the war.

### ***Level of Recall***

For all the questions except for the one about emotional state (Question 2 on Table 2), participants were asked to generate three responses. They often failed to do so. Hence, following Liu et al. (2021), we used as a measure of “knowledge,” the number of responses participants offered to a query. We undertook separate ANOVAs for each question, with Nationality, Type of Memory, and Ideology as between-subject factors, and the above stated level of recall as the dependent measure. See Table 5. The dependent measure was the number of items listed out of three.

There was a main effect for Nationality for all four questions [Actors:  $F(1, 283) = 34.58, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$ ; Facts:  $F(1, 283) = 11.92, p = .001, \eta^2 = .04$ ; Causes:  $F(1, 283) = 4.57, p = .033, \eta^2 = .02$ ; Consequences:  $F(1, 283) = 34.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$ ], as well as a main effect for Type of Memory for Actors, Facts and Consequences [Actors:

$F(1, 283) = 44.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$ ; Facts:  $F(1, 283) = 15.98, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ ; Consequences:  $F(1, 283) = 5.40, p = .021, \eta^2 = .02$ ]. The main effect for Type of Memory for Causes was not significant,  $F(1, 283) = 3.14, p = .078, \eta^2 = .01$ . As we have repeatedly found, there was no main effect for Ideology ( $F$ 's  $< 3.60, p$ 's  $> .05$ ). Overall, Argentines produced more responses than did Briton. Moreover, there were more responses when lived memories were involved than when distant memories were involved.

**Table 5**

*Level of recall for specific questions as a function of Nationality and Type of Memory*

|              | Argentina              |           | Great Britain |           |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|
|              | Distant                | Lived     | Distant       | Lived     |
| Actors       | 1.76(.12) <sup>1</sup> | 2.56(.13) | 1.04(.12)     | 1.86(.12) |
| Facts        | 1.44(.13)              | 2.12(.14) | 1.16(.12)     | 1.51(.13) |
| Causes       | 1.67(.11)              | 1.62(.11) | 1.20(.10)     | 1.63(.11) |
| Consequences | 2.34(.11)              | 2.34(.12) | 1.44(.10)     | 1.94(.11) |

*Note.* 1- Means and Standard Error. Values are the mean of responses out of a maximum of 3.

Whereas the results for Nationality are consistent with the Free Recall data, the Type of Memory results differ from what was found in the Free Recall, for which those with distant memories recalled more contextualizing information (except for personal contextualizing information) than those with lived memories. We suspect this discrepancy arose because the free recall allowed participants to write what they thought was important, which the data suggests are personal stories and facts. In the cued recall, we more pointedly asked what participants know about actors, facts, causes and consequences, and semantic knowledge. When they were specifically asked to recall contextualizing information, those

who lived through the war were better able to do so. This claim is consistent with the results of Authors (2018).

The ANOVA also revealed interactions for three of the questions, those involving Actors, Causes, and Consequences. For Actors, there was an interaction between Nationality and Ideology,  $F(1, 283) = 4.09, p = .044, \eta^2 = .01$ . When considering Argentinean participants, there were differences between the Left ( $M = 2.38, SD = .87$ ) and the Right ( $M = 1.88, SD = 1.11$ ),  $t(138) = -2.90, p = .004, g = .49$ . However, there were no significant differences between the Left and the Right when considering British participants,  $t(149) = .37, p = .715, g = .06$ . Among participants in the Left, there were differences between Argentinean ( $M = 2.38, SD = .87$ ) and British participants ( $M = 1.39, SD = 1.19$ ),  $t(144) = 5.61, p < .001, g = .94$ . A similar difference emerged when considering participants in the Right (Argentinean:  $M = 1.88, SD = 1.11$ ; British:  $M = 1.46, SD = 1.16$ ),  $t(143) = 2.26, p = .025, g = .38$ .

For Causes, there was an interaction between Nationality and Type of Memory,  $F(1, 283) = 4.81, p = .029, \eta^2 = .02$ . When considering participants with lived memories, there were no significant differences between Argentinean and British participants,  $t(132) = -.12, p = .906, g = .02$ , but differences were found when considering distant memories. Argentinean participants ( $M = 1.66, SD = .93$ ) provided more responses involving causes than did British participants ( $M = 1.19, SD = .84$ ),  $t(155) = 3.35, p = .001, g = .53$ . In addition, when considering Argentinean participants, there were no significant differences between the groups with lived or distant memories [ $t(138) = .30, p = .769, g = .05$ ], but among British participants, those with lived memories ( $M = 1.63, SD = .85$ ) were the ones who provided more responses involving causes than did those with distant memories ( $M = 1.19, SD = .84$ ),  $t(149) = -3.21, p = .002, g = .52$ .

For Consequences, there was again an interaction between Nationality and Type of Memory,  $F(1, 283) = 5.36, p = .021, \eta^2 = .02$ . When considering those with distant memories, Argentinean participants ( $M = 2.32, SD = .87$ ) produced responses with a higher number of consequences than British participants ( $M = 1.41, SD = 1.01$ ),  $t(155) = 6.03, p < .001, g = .96$ . The same took place when taking into account participants with lived memories (Argentinean:  $M = 2.33, SD = .84$ ; British:  $M = 1.94, SD = .98$ ),  $t(132) = 2.44, p = .016, g = .42$ . Finally, when considering Argentinean participants, there were no significant differences between groups with lived or distant memories,  $t(138) = -.09, p = .932, g = .01$ . We found a difference among the British participants (Lived:  $M = 1.94, SD = .98$ ; Distant:  $M = 1.41, SD = 1.01$ ),  $t(149) = -3.30, p = .001, g = .54$ .

These interactions between Nationality and Type of Memory suggests that Argentines' ability to generate contextualizing details did not differ significantly, in most instances, between those who lived or did not live through the war, whereas Britons' ability did. The results are not only consistent with what Authors (2018) found, but also speak to the shrinking differences between generations when the "cause" is still alive, as it is in Argentina.

### ***Content of answers***

We also considered the content of the responses, based on our coding scheme. As we indicated above, we asked five questions about the war that specifically probed for: (1) the actors, (2a) the emotional responses of Argentines and (2b) the emotional response of Britons, (3) the facts, (4) the causes, and (5) the consequences. As one might expect, the responses were varied. We coded them into a set of pre-established categories (see Coding Scheme in Table S3), calculated the number of mentions, and then performed a chi-square test to determine whether each coded category differed as a function of Nationality, Type of



Memory and Ideology. The details can be found in Table S3. For the present, we offer a summary.

With regard to the question about actors, the most frequently mentioned actors were “Thatcher”, “Galtieri”, and “the Argentinian Junta.” Thatcher and Galtieri were more often recalled by those who lived through the war than by those for whom these actors were a distant memory. Perhaps not surprisingly, Galtieri was more predominant for Argentinian than British participants, as was the Junta Government. Ideology had no impact.

As to the question about the emotional response of Argentines, Argentines recalled more positive emotions than the British participants, while those who lived through those years did the same. This finding is in line with the claim that Malvinas is still a national cause in Argentina. Interestingly, the Argentinians also mentioned more negative emotions than did the British participants. Moreover, those reporting distant memories tended to remember the war in more negative terms than those reporting lived memories. Those who lived through the war may have had a more nuanced view of the emotional complexity associated with war. One of the coding categories was “National Feeling.” It refers to statements of patriotism, national pride, and nationalism. It was present in Argentines' comments about Argentina, but not Britons' comments.

Turning now to the emotional response of the British, the British referred more to the “Negative Emotions” and to “National Feeling” than did the Argentines. With respect to “National Feelings,” it was used more by those with lived memories and those with a Left ideology. Finally, British participants were more inclined than Argentines to mention “Support to war”.

For the remaining three questions (Facts, Causes and Consequences), nationality differences make sense: Argentines were more likely to talk about the Junta seeking legitimacy than Britons, whereas the British were more likely to mention that Argentina

"invaded" the Malvinas. As to consequences, Argentines were more likely to mention the fall of the Junta as a consequence than the British.

### **Discussion**

The results underscore that, on occasion, collective memories of those defeated in war need not fade, be erased, and/or retold by the victor, but can remain robust as the victor's memory fades. Such a pattern of collective recollection may particularly hold for distant memories, for which direct experience of the war no longer exists. In this instance, memory retention depends on interpersonal communication, cultural artifacts, and social practices, what we might call *social effort* (Hirst & Manier, 2008). For various reasons, the victor may not make this effort, but the defeated will. This appears to be the case for the Malvinas War. In comparison to the British, Argentines discussed the war more, particularly in their press, embraced the national cause leading to the war, and formally commemorated and memorialized it. As a result, not only did Argentines remember more about the war and included more contextualizing information, such as causes and consequences, they also offered more personal recollections, though, at least for distant memories, this result needs to be cautiously interpreted, given the possibility of floor effects. The benefits of social effort on memory can best be observed in the finding that the Argentine's distant memories were more likely to resemble the lived memories of their compatriots than was the case for the British. Indeed, whereas we replicated in the British sample, for the cued recall task, the previous finding that lived memories were more contextualized than distant memory (Authors, 2016; 2018), this difference was substantially mitigated in the Argentine sample.

The results underscore the critical role social effort plays in maintaining collective memories across generations. It adds to the extant literature on how nations remember wars by providing a clear contrast in the social effort warring parties make to remember a concluded war (see Hirst & Merck, 2024, for a general review of the relevant collective

memory literature). Specifically, it examines a situation in which the defeated not only controls its narrative about the war, but also make a greater social effort to remember the war than the victor. Most studies of the social representations of war supports Churchill's dictum that it is the victors who write history, as can be observed in the overlapping social representations of both Allied and Axis of WWII (with Russia as the exception; Abel et al., 2019). The current study is a reminder that a war figures in a nation's memory not because the nation was victorious, but also because the nation makes a social effort to remember.

But why would Argentina make more of an effort than the British, when the Argentines were defeated? It is not merely that the Argentine effort enhances group solidarity, inasmuch as, whereas suffering and tragedy can promote group solidarity (Bar-Tal, 2003), so can triumph. Nor is it easy to appeal to the functions that Liu and Hilton (2005) associated with the social representation of history, in particular, the role of social identity. Building on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), they specifically underscore the need to "maintain sources of collective pride and expiate feeling of collective shame." (Hilton & Liu, 2017, p. 298). But one is more likely to feel shame than pride in defeat, making this function of social representation not easy to apply to the present set of results (cf., Choi et al., 2021).

For us, the concepts of Anderson's (2016) *imagined community* and Said's (1978) related *imagined geography* seem more useful than appeals to group solidarity or social identity theory. Wars are often about territory. As the qualifier *imagined* suggests, it is not necessary concerns about legally defined national borders, but socially constructed borders. The Malvinas may legally be overseas territory of Great Britain, but, we suspect, they do not figure in the image most Britons have of their country and its territories. It would not be included in their cognitive map, especially the map of younger people who did not live through the war. For many Britons, to the extent that they are even aware of its existence, the

Malvinas are a left-over of an imperial past. Why remember a war about territories that, in the end, don't figure much in how one views one's community in the present?

In contrast, for Argentines, the Malvinas figure in their cognitive map of Argentina not simply because the islands are closer to their country than to Britain. Rather, when Argentines imagine their country, we suspect that the image includes the Malvinas. They may have lost the islands to a European, imperial power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and been defeated in this recent battle with this power, but for them, the Malvinas are unequivocally part of Argentina. Indeed, they are not just part of their cognitive map, but are part of Argentina in the physical maps displayed in school.

It is not surprising, then, that the Malvinas War continues to engage Argentine public discourse, even 40 years after its conclusion. It is as if someone squatted in your house and would not leave. How could one not be obsessed with every effort made to get the person out? Surprisingly, psychological studies of national memory rarely consider how people imagine the spatial extent and contours of their country, but largely explore which historical events are accessibility and subjectively important, what narratives are constructed around these events, and how collective identity is shaped by these narratives (see Hirst & Merck, 2024, for review). Although the notion of cognitive maps has its origin in the field of psychology, it is more likely to be evoked by cultural theorists and historians in studies of collective memories concerning, for instance, the Balkans or the Cold War than in psychological studies of collective memory (see, for instance, Casey, 2008; Kitchin & Blade, 2002; Martin, 2011; Rau, 2019; Schenk, 2013). The present study suggests that it may be a useful tool in understanding the present results, as well as perhaps other aspects of collective memory.

This latter possibility raises the question: Are the present set of findings the exception rather than the rule? The above emphasis on differences in the imagined territory

of Argentines and Britons suggests that it may be found in other post-colonial struggles. What do Britons's know about the Mau Mau uprising between 1952 and 1960 or the Suez Canal crisis of 1956/1957, especially in comparison to what Kenyans or Egyptians know? If the present research underscores anything, it is the importance of looking beyond the big events in history to focus on how the small ones are remembered, not just among those who lived through them, but among those who know about them only vicariously. Moreover, the results suggest that it may be as important to consider the way a nation imagines its territory. Clearly, researchers need to better understand why a nation and its people make the effort to remembering the historical past and what, in the end, they remember as a result of this effort.

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