4 Democracy, Restrained Leadership and the Use of Military Force

Many academic analysts and policy advocates focus on domestic institutions as key to understanding the use of force in foreign policy. In this conceptualization, democratic polities "rarely wage war on one another;" consequently, promoting democracy increases the level of international security among democratic states. (Democracy is valued for other reasons as well, but here we are focusing on its alleged implications for conflict management.) Secure in this belief, numerous inter-American analysts and policymakers propose sanctions on those polities that, while still peaceful and cooperative internationally, restructure domestic institutions in such a way as to undermine democratic institutions. The OAS recently adopted a resolution that a threat to democracy in any Western hemisphere nation automatically constituted a threat to the security of all American nations. The Miami Summit of American Nations seconded it and the hemispheric meetings of Ministers of Defense followed suit.[1]

The empirical finding that democracies tend not to engage in large-scale war (defined by 1,000 battlefield deaths) with other democracies[2] is under increasing attack as being an artifice of classificatory schemes: which states are classified as democracies or liberal republics and what time period is considered.[3] The theoretical reasoning to explain the alleged democratic peace has always been contentious.[4] In the case of smaller scale wars and militarized disputes we have even less of a consensus on how democratic states have used military force.[5]

This chapter examines whether democratic institutional constraints best explain the pattern of regional conflict and cooperation in Latin America. Qualitative and quantitative methods are used to evaluate the institutional constraint argument. The qualitative analysis of the first section examines the theoretical logic and decisionmaking processes hypothesized to make institutionally constrained political leaders less likely to engage in the use of force internationally. Quantitative analysis in the next section evaluates the correspondence between democracy and regional conflict behavior. Analyses of general participation rates, levels of hostility, participation rates by individual countries over time, and conflict dyads indicate that the level of democracy is not a systematic or powerful determinant of conflict behavior in Latin America. Democratic institutional constraints appear to sometimes matter for a state's decision to utilize military force in a dispute, but in different ways across subregions and countries. The analysis in this chapter strongly suggests that such factors are at best secondary, and may not even point unambiguously in the direction of nonviolent management of conflict.

Institutional Constraints: Logical Imprecision, Operational Confusion

Institutions themselves do not determine action; rather they provide a context in which social interaction occurs. Both the historical-sociological and rational choice approach to institutions claim that institutions affect the incentives facing actors and structure the relations of power between groups, thereby affecting their behavior.[6] Building on this insight, the democratic peace model claims that something in the nature of democratic domestic institutions makes it difficult for the leaders of a state to use force internationally, in particular against other democracies.

The relevant constraints are of two types, one focusing on elections, the other on multiple veto gates. The electoral focus privileges democratic states as inherently peaceful,[7] while the veto gates argument might be equally effective for constraining nondemocratic governments. The electoral focus makes us consider the interests of the voters and their political leaders, while the analysis of veto gates highlights the institutional role of potential vetoes.

Electoral Constraints

The need for decisionmakers to stand for periodic elections constitutes the most general institutional constraint in a democracy. Elections make it useful to assume that a politician's interest can be condensed to winning elections. The claim is not that politicians have no other interests, but that in order to accomplish whatever her goals are in politics, a politician needs to first be elected. The politician thus needs to offer the voters what they want if she is to be elected or re-elected.[8] If we wish to know how a democratic state will behave, therefore, we need to look to its electorate.

In a nondemocratic polity, leaders do not need to stand for regular and free elections. Because expressing disagreement via rebellion is more costly to participants than filling out a secret ballot, citizens' preferences will constrain a leader less in a nondemocratic than a democratic polity.[9] Nondemocratic leaders still face some constraints imposed by their supporters, but the selectorate will be composed of a narrower cross section of society. Given its small base, the selectorate in a nondemocracy may be able to pursue its goals utilizing military force while shifting the costs (in both money and blood), to the rest of society. In a democratic polity, on the other hand, those who must pay in taxes and lives will be able to effectively communicate their opposition to military adventures.

Although institutional analysts want to avoid incorporating norms, they sneak in via assumptions concerning voter preferences. Individuals are assumed to be driven by the implicit norm that material interests guide their behavior, rather than glory, revenge, or moral purity (e.g., religious, cultural, and national fundamentalism).[10] Since war does not materially benefit the individual soldiers who must do the fighting, individuals will not elect leaders who will take them into costly wars. Because the electoral constraint empowers the pacific people, leaders will have a difficult time fabricating threats to justify the use of force. Politicians recognize this constraint, hence democracies prefer to resolve disputes peacefully.

Any analyst of the third world will immediately be stunned by such a proclamation of pacifist intent. Democratic Britain, France, and the United States share a bloody history in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Democratic peace advocates have a ready answer: the international system is not comprised solely of democratic states. When a democratic state becomes involved in a dispute with another democratic state, the leaders are similarly

constrained. Consequently, both sides can credibly communicate that neither wishes war and diplomats thus have time to work out the differences. When a democratic state confronts a nondemocratic state or other political grouping, however, both sides understand that one is constrained while the other is not. Hence the democratic state fears being bullied and the nondemocratic state's leaders may believe that they can face down the leaders of the democratic state.[11] The democrats could thus strike preemptively if the stakes are high enough, and the people back home would understand this as a purely defensive action.

In sum, the democratic peace argument does not claim that democracies are pacifists.[12] If threatened, they will utilize military force to defend themselves, perhaps even preemptively. When democracies make war, therefore, it is always the fault of the nondemocracy, at the very least for being nondemocratic.[13] If all states were democratic, there would be no war, even under conditions of anarchy.

The electoral constraint argument merits closer attention before one accepts it as an appropriate depiction of democratic foreign policy. The democratic peace argument becomes logically imprecise once we incorporate a more realistic and complex model of electoral politics. The difficulties are threefold and relate to (i) voter preferences; (ii) the structure of the voting process; and (iii) the process of electoral accountability itself (term limits, party structure, and transparency of the process).

Voter Preferences

Voter preferences can be usefully discussed in terms of three factors: political philosophy; distribution of preferences and issue dimensionality; and the costs of using military force. Only under very restrictive conditions will the three combine to produce an unequivocal argument for a society's preferences to favor peaceful resolution of conflict.

Political Philosophy

I noted above that democratic peace advocates assume strictly materialist interests drive citizens. What drives voters in elections, however, is fundamentally determined by political philosophy concerning the appropriate relationship between citizen and state.[14] If a materialist voter preference is sufficient for peace, the question then becomes whether democratic citizens everywhere hold the same political philosophy. If citizens are driven by other

concerns, the logic of the institutional constraint argument could drive politicians in democratic societies into diverse positions concerning militarized conflict. Because Latin America has been buffeted by three major political philosophies (liberal, corporatist, and militarist), its experience can illuminate their potential impact on how voters see the legitimacy of using military force.

A liberal political philosophy is individualist and materialist. Society exists for the benefit of its members. The state is subordinated to society. Sovereignty rests in the people, not in the state. In fact for liberals, the state does not exist. There is a government that guides a state apparatus, and that government expresses the will of the dominant political forces. In a liberal government occurrence of free elections means that these forces effectively represent the people. The government exists to defend the individual and not the reverse; individuals seek a peaceful environment in which to accumulate wealth. The people express their will directly via elections and they do it in an individual manner, hence the government finds it difficult to deceive the public. The military is part of the governmental apparatus and as such, subordinated to the will of the people via the civilian government. Citing Locke, Owen notes that all liberals "share a fundamental interest in self-preservation and material well-being. . . . liberalism's ends are life and property, and its means are liberty and toleration."[15]

A corporatist political philosophy conceptualizes the nation as the context in which a society exists. From this perspective, modern society cannot exist in the absence of a national context. In this political philosophy, "the people" is an agglomeration of groups and not of individuals. Individuals define themselves and act in accordance with the group to which they belong. Sovereignty becomes inherent in the "state" itself, rather than in individuals. For corporatists, the nation becomes anthropomorphic as the mother or father of the citizens; consequently, each corporatist group has a responsibility to defend her. The military establishment is understood to be the people in arms and therefore has a special responsibility to defend the state. In political systems defined by corporatist philosophies, the military's internal role is facilitated by constitutional clauses that permit fairly easy declarations of states of emergency.[16] Since the needs of the state come before those of the individual, a corporatist democrat will evaluate the costs of using force differently than will a liberal democrat. Specifically, the former would be willing to pay more individual costs to protect the state than would the latter.

In a militarist political philosophy, the military establishment is believed to be the vanguard social organization in a national process of modernization. According to this conception, since the national defense depends on military capacity, the military are attentive to technological and industrial innovations and seek to keep themselves up to date. Their mission as defender of the state in an anarchic world gives them a vision with which to appreciate the modern reforms that the nation should adopt. The organizational and professional qualities of the military make it contrast with the political and economic forces of the country which continue to focus on defending their own interests and thus cannot bring the country out of underdevelopment. Militarism tends to have an organic vision of the state: it either grows or it dies. The role of individuals is to form part of society and defend it. Individualism represents a threat to the nation because it subordinates the national good to personal good. Within this panorama, both civilians frustrated with socioeconomic progress and military officers anxious to protect the nation perceive that at certain historical moments the military has the moral obligation to assume leadership.[17] Democracies in which a militarist political philosophy reigns might be more likely to accept the use of force to resolve disputes because the military's voice is accorded such a preeminent role when it comes to defending the nation.[18]

A number of problems arise in using political philosophies to reflect citizen preferences on the use of military force in international affairs. First, liberal analysts disagree among themselves as to when a society is dominated by a liberal political philosophy. Doyle marks Great Britain as liberal after the Reform Act of 1832 and the U.S. as liberal from its inception. Owen claims, however, that British citizens did not view the U.S. as liberal until the Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery in the rebellious states (not in those fighting with the Union) in 1863. U.S. citizens, in turn, believed that monarchy, even a constitutional one, was incompatible with Liberalism; they did not alter this view until after 1884 when the British expanded the franchise once again. Yet North and Weingast identify England as developing "the fundamental institutions of representative government" after the Glorious Revolution of 1688![19] In the absence of systematic criteria determining when a state will perceive another as "liberal" such distinctions in times of crises take on an ad hoc flavor.[20]

A second major problem with this type of analysis lies in the ability of societies to draw from a variety of political philosophies in creating their own political culture. Latin American societies developed with a hybrid political

philosophy that expresses the tension inherent in belonging to western culture (and therefore liberal), of having Hispanic roots (and therefore corporatist), and of arriving late to the industrial revolution (and therefore having militarist aspects). This combination means that Latin Americans have always searched for democracy and peaceful resolution of conflict, but feared internal disorder and external defeat. This hybrid political culture does not recognize conflict resolution as having an inherent value, but rather as a mechanism for social-economic development, political stability, and the defense of the motherland.

The foreign policy implication of such a hybrid political philosophy is ambiguous. Latin American democrats historically could support military coups against governments they perceived as unable to govern effectively or to keep competitors from using the democratic process to institute important social and economic changes. One could hypothesize from such behavior that Latin American democrats would decide when to use force based on what was at stake, rather than on principle. Some examples include popular support for democratic Colombia's military buildup after a war scare over territory and resources with democratic Venezuela in 1987 and popular support on both sides during the war between the two democracies, Peru and Ecuador, in 1995.[21]

Some analysts deny that the normative and philosophical understanding of politics can remain independent of the institutional structures of democracy.[22] But the historical experience of Ancient Athens belies such claims: although democratic for more than half a century, democratic Athens attacked democratic Syracuse with a large and costly force.[23] Doyle and Huntington are more credible when they postulate that political philosophies can exist independently of political institutions and hence it is only certain types of democracies ("liberal republics" and "western civilization"[24]) which will have mutually peaceful relations, but only when they both perceive themselves as such.[25]

Distribution of Voter Preferences

The distribution of voter preferences and the dimensionality of issues also affect the ability of voters to constrain their leaders. Polling of voters and public opinion is still in its infancy in Latin America, and foreign policy issues do not generally interest these pollsters, so much of the analysis in this subsection will be theoretical. The comparative and American politics literature recognizes that voter preference distribution and issue dimension-

ality are important even if we are speaking of societies dominated by liberal political philosophies.[26] The median voter in a liberal society may prefer a peaceful resolution of conflict with other states, but this may not dominate a winning candidate's policy preference. Depending on the relationship between an issue concerning the use of force and other issues, voters may still elect or reelect a decisionmaker who supports the use of violence against the electorate's preferences.[27]

Intransitive preferences at the group level make the aggregation of individual preferences into a coherent social choice problematic.[28] Table 4.1 illustrates the problem. I draw upon three major issues that have concerned voters across Latin America: inflation, guerrilla activity, and a border dispute. In this example, the distribution of preferences across the three issues produces a different preference ordering among the three groups of voters or opinion poll respondents.

Given this distribution of preferences, a cycling problem develops. Fighting inflation is preferred to fighting guerrillas by two of the voters (A and C), and fighting guerrillas beats defending borders (A and B), so we might think that society's preferences would be to focus on inflation-guerrillas-borders. But note that if B and C form a coalition, we now have defending borders preferred to fighting inflation. The majority preference thus depends not on the preferences of individual voters or poll respondents, but on the institutional mechanisms for aggregating votes or opinions.[29]

The cycling problem is aggravated when the issues considered vary along two or more dimensions. The question of whether to use military force can actually tap into three dimensions: whether to use force (yes or no), whether to be involved internationally (isolationist/internationalist), and whether to act in concert with others (unilateral or multilateralist). This range of opin-

TABLE 4.1 Social Choice and Intransitive Preferences

A	B	C
Fight Inflation	Fight Guerrillas	Defend Borders
Fight Guerrillas	Defend Borders	Fight Inflation
Defend Borders	Fight Inflation	Fight Guerrillas
The Cycling Problem: A + C > B and A + B > C but B + C > A		

ions produces six distinct attitudes toward foreign affairs: *Unilateralists*, *Multilateralists*, and *Isolationists*, each with versions favoring the use of force (hard-liners) or rejecting it (soft-liners).[30]

In Latin America, *unilateralists* see a competitive international arena in which the nation must participate by relying on its own resources. Argentina provides numerous examples of this perspective in the supporters of Argentine neutrality during World War II, or of its covert intervention in Bolivia throughout the twentieth century, and especially in the mass enthusiasm which erupted in response to the military government's seizure of the Malvinas Islands in 1982. In Peru, we have the popular support for its quick, yet bloody, military ouster of Ecuadorian troops in 1981. *Multilateralists* believe in the utility of acting in concert with others. They can be international institutionalists (e.g., supporters of participation in the OAS, the Rio Group, or participation in international peacekeeping[31]). But multilateralists may also be geopolitical advocates who see the region as engaged in a global geopolitical struggle (e.g., those that supported membership in the Andean Pact, an economic integration scheme built on the idea of import substitution industrialization).[32] *Isolationists* believe the country is better off with minimal ties to the international arena. Examples include supporters of government policy in Guatemala in the late 1970s, 1980s, and Chile from 1972–1989, as well as many Chileans who marched in the streets, demanding General Pinochet's return to Chile after his arrest in 1998–99.

The complexity of public opinion is further increased when we examine specific issues.[33] An opinion poll might theoretically ask if force should be used in resolving disputes. All hard line respondents would answer yes, while soft-liners would answer no. But the resolution of an international dispute can be pursued in a variety of ways. Possibilities include simple cessation, [G in table 4.2] (e.g., Mexico's renunciation of claims to Belize); diplomatic negotiation [N] (there are many examples, both bilaterally and multilaterally); using military force unilaterally to impose a solution [UM] (e.g., U.S. invasion of Panama, Argentine seizure of the Malvinas/Falklands Islands), or using military force multilaterally to guarantee a status quo ante [MM] (as in peacekeeping on the Ecuador-Peru border).

These four policies (G, N, UM, and MM), arrayed across six attitudinal positions produce 24 policy options. Table 4.2 arrays these options across a hypothetical distribution of preferences concerning how a country should respond in an important international dispute. To make the discussion more tractable, I make two assumptions: (1) the public does not perceive its own

TABLE 4.2 Preference Orderings Concerning the Use of Force (Hypothetical)

Unilateralists		Multilateralists		Isolationists	
Hardliner	Soft	Internationalist	Accommodationist	Forceful	Restrained
20%	10%	20%	30%	8%	12%
UM	N	MM	N	G	G
MM	G	N	G	UM	N
N	UM	UM	MM	MM	UM
G	MM	G	UM	N	MM

Key:
G: give up one's claims in the dispute
N: bilateral negotiations
UM: unilateral military use of force
MM: multilateral military use of force

country as the aggressor in the conflict; and (2) the dispute is not over whether a country has a right to exist. These assumptions fit the Latin American experience in the twentieth century fairly well (see Chapter 2).

Unilateral hard-liners prefer unilateral military action. As internationalists with a regionally competitive geopolitical orientation, they value the need to "win" (e.g., retain territory, control migration, etc.) because it adds to one's resource base and reputation while detracting from that of a competitor. They prefer to win on their own, but would be willing to accept the status quo ante if a multilateral peacekeeping force can guarantee it. Because hard-liners would prefer not to make concessions, negotiations rank low. They would least prefer to give up on the matter in dispute. Their preferences would thus likely be: UM > MM > N > G. Soft unilateralists do not want to use military force, and would prefer to negotiate or give up in the dispute rather than use military force. If force is to be used, being unilateralists, they prefer to act alone. This groups' preferences are likely to be: N > G > UM > MM

Hard-line multilateralists prefer to use international solutions for resolving conflict. In the event that the international community did not use its force in favor of this Latin American country against another, these multilateralists

would accept a return to the status quo ante rather than use unilateral force. In addition, they prefer to negotiate rather than impose a solution, if one is necessary. Since they are hard-liners, they prefer to fight than lose anything. For this group: MM > N > UM > G. Soft-line multilateralists prefer negotiation to conceding, but would rather give up than use military force to enforce the status quo ante or impose a solution. N > G > MM > UM.

Isolationists desire to limit the country's international entanglements. Given that resolving a dispute via negotiations or the use of force implies becoming active internationally, both hard-line and soft-line isolationists prefer to walk away from disputes. Preference orderings differ once we move beyond conceding. Hard-liners would next use military force unilaterally, followed by multilateral safeguarding of the status quo ante, and lastly, negotiations (G > UM > MM > N). Soft-liners rank negotiations ahead of the use of any military force, and unilateral over multilateral use (G > N > UM > MM).

Given preference intransitivity across the six groups, we can easily wind up in a policy cycle. Table 4.2 indicates that a majority in this hypothetical example has negotiations as their first choice (40%), but when we incorporate the full range of options, more people prefer multilateral military action to negotiations (48% to 40%). Once again, the ability to put together a stable winning coalition depends on factors outside the groups' preferences on the issue.

Consequently, if voter preferences are intransitive, issues are multidimensional, and alienation exists among voters (voter turnout in the new Latin American democracies declined almost everywhere in the 1990s[34]), the candidate who takes median positions on all issues will lose. A candidate can take extreme positions on multiple issues, pulling together a coalition of minority voters to provide the margin of victory. "When this happens, a minority, which supports a candidate for the position he takes on a couple of key issues, regardless of his position on others, is essentially trading away its votes on the other issues to those minorities feeling strongly about these other issues."[35] We thus cannot extrapolate from simple citizen preferences to electoral constraints on government policy.

Costs of Using Military Force

The *costs of the use of military force* are another factor that logically affects voter preferences, since at root the democratic peace argument turns on the disparity between the costs of war to individuals and the benefits accruing

to small groups. Three factors stand out. *Domestic mobilization costs* affect the time opposition has to organize, as well as the personal disruption experienced by the relevant publics. A reserve-based military would generate high mobilization costs, while a standing army produces lower costs. *Force alternatives* influence the likelihood that using force will result in casualties on one's own side. The use of ground forces will likely produce the highest casualties, with air and naval forces resulting in fewer casualties. Thus the U.S. government did not land troops in Haiti when confronted with armed mobs on the docks, but had decided to attack with aircraft a few months later when the Haitian government capitulated.[36] One might also hypothesize that some of the popular support in El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua for defending sovereignty in the Gulf of Fonseca depends on the conflict being limited to an occasional confrontation between naval vessels.[37] In addition, *the dyadic balance of power* affects the likelihood of a military dispute spiraling toward war. If the balance greatly favors the voter's side, the likelihood of suffering high casualties diminishes. Thus hard-line Peruvians in 1998 were unwilling to make concessions to Ecuador, even if it meant war.[38]

In conclusion, the two assumptions that voter preferences are against the use of force, and are unambiguously communicated to the decisionmaker, are not appropriate for examining democracies' proclivities toward the use of force internationally.

Structure of the Voting Process

Another problem with the democratic peace argument is that it ignores the nuances in the comparative politics literature concerning the importance of variations in the structure of institutional constraints. Rules governing voters and candidates, as well as party strength, will affect the aggregation of voter preferences and the sensitivity of politicians to their constituency. While rules provide a way to diminish the cycling problem examined in the previous subsection, in the process they become another determinant of society's choices.

Electoral Rules

The voting literature points out that electoral rules which influence when one votes, how many issues are involved in an election, and how those issues are presented to the voters can influence who votes as well as how con-

strained politicians might be on a particular issue.[39] For example, voter turnout is significantly affected by the costs to an individual of registering to vote, the timing of election day (workday or weekend) and the distribution of the winnings (winner-take-all or some version of proportional distribution).[40] There is no *a priori* reason to expect election results to be the same regardless of whether 30, 60, or 90 percent of eligible voters participate.[41] The structure of the ballot itself can also affect the vote. In Peru's 1996 presidential elections, incumbent Fujimori was strategically placed on the ballot; the use of pictures instead of names, while useful to illiterates, also favored the incumbent.[42]

Distribution of Winnings

Critics of Presidentialist political systems have pointed out that *the distribution of winnings* can affect voter preferences. In societies with minor cleavages, winner-take-all elections decrease the number of parties and push voters toward the center. Where cleavages are great, however, the winner-take-all nature of most Presidential elections may propel voters and their candidates toward extremist positions. These rules diminish the incentive to cooperate because both sides know that the winner does not have to cooperate with the loser in forming a government.[43] In Latin America there are major cleavages around border and migration issues between those who want to resolve the issue and those for whom any concessions constitute treason.

Process of Electoral Accountability

Term limits

Term limits also affect the electoral constraint on politicians. If we assume that politicians seek election and we allow for limitations on terms served by the chief executive, *ceteris paribus*, the degree of electoral constraint will vary as term limitations vary. Presidents who cannot run for re-election cannot be directly sanctioned via the ballot box. In the Americas, variation on reelection restrictions has been great. These range from no reelection (currently, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Honduras) through no-consecutive reelection (e.g., Venezuela since 1958 allows two interrupted terms; Argentina before 1994, Bolivia, Panama, Peru before 1993, while Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador in the 1990s now allow one), two-term limit (the U.S. since the 1940s, contemporary Peru and Argentina), all the way to unlimited re-election (e.g., the U.S. before the 1940s,

Ecuador until 1979, currently the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Paraguay).[44] The logic of the electoral constraint argument should make, *ceteris paribus*, Presidents facing unlimited reelection possibilities the most constrained of the group.

Party Strength

Party strength should also affect electoral constraints on the Executive. In political systems with strong parties, an executive who cannot be reelected will feel constrained by the desire for her party's candidate to succeed her. And if the President is significantly constrained by the legislature (see the discussion of veto gates below), and party discipline is strong, even a president facing no reelection possibilities may feel constrained by voter preferences.

The strength of party systems varies across Latin America in terms of their institutionalization (stability in interparty competition, parties with stable roots in society, their legitimacy, and stability of their organizational structure and rules). Mainwaring and Scully identify four categories of party strength: institutionalized competitive party systems (Venezuela, Costa Rica, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia and, less so, Argentina); inchoate party systems (Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and Ecuador); hegemonic party systems (Mexico and Paraguay); and no party system (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Cuba, and Bolivia).[45] Party constraints would be relevant only in the first two categories.

Transparency of the Decisionmaking Process

Transparency will also affect the constraints under which leaders labor. Because politicians are assumed to desire election they will not behave in ways opposed to the interests of the public, *if they expect the public to find out*. While one would like to think that democratic leaders have a more transparent decisionmaking process when the use of force is contemplated than their nondemocratic counterparts, empirical evidence and the existence of covert mechanisms of foreign policy make it impossible to say with any degree of certainty. U.S. presidents have carried out secret diplomacy in such an aggressive manner as to provoke others to act overtly and thus be able to claim defensive action when resorting to force themselves. Repeated *exposés*, in both the domestic and international policy arenas, suggest that either presidents are stupid to think they won't be caught, or that there are sufficient successes to allow presidents to think

that they have a good chance of succeeding in their secret policies.[46] The latter seems a more reasonable answer, although by its very nature (success means that we don't know), we cannot test the proposition.

In summary, if the electoral constraint hypothesis were correct, the *content* and *extent* of such constraints should vary across democratic polities. Table 4.3 illustrates the range of electoral constraints across Latin American democracies. In conjunction with the discussion in this section, the table suggests that a blanket assertion that democracy places similar constraints on the use of force in Latin America, simply as a result of being a democracy, is probably too theoretically parsimonious to be useful.

Veto Gates

The argument concerning veto gates claims that the greater the number of institutions and interests required to sign off on the use of force,

TABLE 4.3 Hypothesized Electoral Constraints On the Use of Military Force In Latin American Democracies

Type of Constraint	Variation Across Constraints
Voter Preferences	
Political Philosophy	liberal-corporatist-militarist
Distribution	transitive-intransitive
Issue Dimensionality	single-multiple
Personal Cost of Using Military Force	low-medium-high
Periodicity	regularly scheduled 4 and 6 years
Barriers to Voting	low-medium-high
Distribution of Winnings	winner take all-proportionate
Re-election Possibilities	none-no immediate-one consecutive-unlimited
Party Strength	none-hegemonic-inchoate-institutionalized
Transparency of Decisionmaking	filtered-clear

the less likely a country is to resort to force. Since the use of force is assumed to be costly by these analysts (yet empirically it is often cheap), it is harder to convince multiple groups than it is to convince just one that violence is unnecessary. These vetoes can be formally mandated, institutionalized, or informal and are generally found in the legislature, cabinet, and the military. While nothing in the general idea of a veto is peculiar to a democracy, democratic peace advocates believe that the veto gates are significantly more numerous and influential in a democracy.[47]

Presidentialist systems (all Latin American countries are variants on presidentialism, as is the U.S.) provide the Chief Executive with constitutionally mandated and legislatively delegated powers to administer the business of government. The number and extent of these powers vary across policy arenas and political systems.[48] The study of legislative-executive relations in Latin America focuses on domestic politics, while analysis of these relations in the U.S. context includes foreign policy issues. I extrapolate from the comparative politics literature, and draw suggestions from the U.S. experience, to discuss ways of thinking about the vetoes which confront a Latin American president considering the use of force.

Three basic questions guide the analysis in this subsection. First, does the decision to use force in a dispute require the acquiescence of anyone outside the cabinet? Second, what kind of control over the cabinet does the Executive have? Third, can anyone sanction the Executive for using force? The degree of difficulty of imposing sanctions will also matter for this last question. These can range from the relatively easy (if a majority of the Lower House can stop an action by refusing to fund it) to the difficult (when a constitutional amendment is required). The answers to these three questions will provide us with a good sense of whether veto gates matter in Latin American MIDs, as well as how.

In a presidentialist system the legislative veto over executive use of force depends upon the timing and resources required.[49] When war requires a long-term commitment of troops and large financial outlays, legislative support is generally required to increase the size of the armed forces and pass budgets. Yet even here variation exists across systems, with Chile's current constitution allowing the president, with the consent of the cabinet, to require expenditures in order to avoid "causing serious detriment to the country."[50] In addition, executives may be able to administratively shift funds, as when U.S. President Richard Nixon bombed

Cambodia "on credit" because Congress had restricted funds in order to pressure the administration to end the Vietnam War.[51]

Shorter term or more limited military engagements are harder to effectively control. For example, the U.S. War Powers Resolution of 1973, which was designed to limit the president's ability to use military force (and which has never been accepted as legitimate by a president of either party), allows the president to send troops for 90 days without congressional approval. It also provides for an additional 60 days to withdraw them if Congress demands. Hence by its own terms, the War Powers Act allows the president to engage in a five-month war without Congressional approval. In the days prior to the 1991 Gulf War President Bush felt comfortable drawing on the precedent that the U.S. had engaged in over 200 military engagements without a Congressional declaration of war to argue that he did not need Congressional authorization to begin bombing Iraq.[52]

Secret accounts may also be tapped for low-cost military engagements. In the "Irangate" scandal, the Reagan administration continued funding the Contra war in Nicaragua by selling arms to Iran, despite Congressional prohibitions on both actions. The secret account containing more than $17 million, handled by Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Pérez, and the Ecuadorian President's unilateral control over a special account (*gastos reservados*), might also support a policy the president believed necessary and which Congress was unwilling to fund. Constitutional provisos also guarantee the Chilean and Ecuadorian military guaranteed shares of the revenue generated by the country's major export (copper and petroleum, respectively), for military purchases could also facilitate sustained support of a military mission over Congressional objections. Some Latin American militaries control profitable enterprises, giving them a source of funds independent of congressional control as well.[53]

Mobilizing force to deal with disputed borders (which is the type of conflict in which Latin American countries are most likely to engage), is easier than sending troops to fight in foreign territory because Latin American constitutions contain provisos facilitating the militarization of a region during "exceptional" times.[54] The degree of checks and balances across countries also varies in this matter.

The 1961 Venezuelan constitution gives the president the authority to declare a state of emergency, even preventively, subject to approval of his cabinet (council of ministers) and review by the Congress. The 1991 Colombian Constitution provides the president, upon the approval of all of his

ministers, with the ability to declare a "State of Internal Commotion" and issue legislative decrees that suspend laws incompatible with the State of Commotion. He can do so for up to 90 days, renewable for two equal periods, with Senate approval required for the last extension. Because the Congress can censure the ministers, there is an added degree of legislative constraint on this executive action. The 1979 Peruvian constitution, which returned the country to democracy, allowed the president to unilaterally declare a state of siege to confront war, civil war, or its imminent danger but gave Congress the right to override it; the 1993 Constitution limits Congress to being informed.[55]

A legislature may have other means to influence the use of force besides refusing to fund or authorize it. Some presidentialist systems allow for congressional censure of cabinet members as a way to constrain Executive actions. At one extreme of these Executive-Legislative relationships are Ecuador, Chile from 1891–1925, and Peru to 1992. In these cases, congressional censure does not require evidence of criminal wrongdoing on the part of the cabinet minister. When ministers are directly accountable to the legislature and dependent upon it for survival, the Congress has a powerful negative tool to shape presidential policy.[56]

On the other hand, some Latin American democracies give the Executive an important resource to limit the congress' interest in playing out this scenario: the power to dissolve the legislature and call for new elections. Contemporary Chile and Paraguay have the most formal authority since the president can dissolve Congress without provocation. In Uruguay and Peru the president can only dissolve Congress after the legislature has taken steps to censure the Executive (before 1993 the Peruvian president had to wait until Congress censured three of his Ministers, the 1993 Constitution lowered this requirement to two). Although Congress can avoid dissolution by refusing censure motions,[57] such restraint in itself diminishes the legislature's ability to serve as a veto gate on presidential action. With no reelection permitted and the legal power to dissolve Congress the Chilean "superpresident" would seem to be highly unconstrained. This was obviously General Pinochet's intent when his dictatorship wrote the 1980 Constitution. But with redemocratization, the strength of the party system and the continuing influence of the military, presidential power has significantly diminished in contemporary Chile.[58]

The claim that democratic presidents are significantly constrained by institutional vetoes confronts another problem. Whether formal or informal

vetoes effectively constrain executives may depend on the context in which the issue of the use of force arises. Chief executives who are more willing to use force in their foreign relations often utilize their legitimate faculties to maneuver the country into a position in which it is threatened and then appeal to the nation for support in "responding" with force. Many members of the U.S. Congress, including ex-President John Quincy Adams, accused President Polk of instigating the war with Mexico in 1846 in order to confront Congress with the choice of supporting or abandoning already committed troops. The House of Representatives passed a resolution, later struck down by the Senate, noting that the President of the United States had unconstitutionally begun the war.[59] Ecuadorians were similarly not informed that their government provoked Peru by establishing military posts in disputed territory in 1994, and thereby perceived Peruvian actions as aggressive.[60]

Democratic polities are also not immune to the use of force as a diversionary tactic. Morgan and Bickers found that as the president's partisan approval rating declines, the likelihood that the U.S. uses military force increases.[61] While those targets may have been overwhelmingly nondemocratic, and hence may support the notion that democracies do not use force against each other,[62] the argument for the power of democratic vetoes is significantly undermined. If the president needed to convince institutional veto holders in order to authorize military action, the correlation between his declining political fortunes and the use of military force would not likely be significant, especially since different parties have usually controlled Congress and the Presidency in the 1946–1976 period examined in the Morgan and Bickers study.

The very notion of covert action in a democracy raises questions about legislative oversight and, through it, institutional vetoes. Covert action oftentimes does not utilize military force and there are very important limits to what one can say about it, given its secretive nature. Still, the subject crops up in discussions of democratic peace.

Russett offers the best defense of the democratic thesis in the face of covert aggression against other elected governments in Latin America (Guatemala 1954, Brazil 1964, Chile 1973 and Nicaragua in the 1980s). He notes that the U.S. fears were "often excessive" and attributes this partly to the Cold War and the "American ideology of the day" which believed that once overthrown by totalitarianism a democracy could not reemerge. Russett recognizes that these criteria make the democratic peace thesis subject to very

peculiar international and perceptual circumstances and searches for some "objective" criteria to explain such behavior.

Russett focuses on the stability of the domestic political processes of the nations in question to explain covert action between democracies. Although the formal institutional process indicates who is democratic at the moment, if those institutions confront great domestic disorder the likelihood that they will be jettisoned is sufficient that others will not treat it as a democracy. For example, he argues that the domestic political disorder in Chilean politics during 1971–73 as a result of the "peaceful road to socialism" of the Popular Unity government made the U.S. distrust its democratic character. Hence U.S. action, which he regrets, is explainable within his model.[63]

Russett's defense suffers from serious problems. In 1964 and 1969–70 Chile clearly met his democracy criteria: it was an established and stable democracy.[64] Yet the U.S. covertly intervened in Chilean politics by channeling money into the 1964 presidential elections to help prevent the Socialist (not Communist) Party candidate Salvador Allende from overcoming his narrow defeat in the 1958 elections. This was done covertly not just to avoid the ire of U.S. citizens who might disapprove, but also to avoid a negative reaction from Chilean democrats who would object to another government actively working for one of the candidates in a Chilean election. In addition, before any of the hypermobilization that characterized Chilean politics from 1971–73, the U.S. government covertly attempted to bribe the Chilean Congress not to ratify Allende's election. When that failed, U.S. agents began discussions with military officers in hopes of provoking a military coup that would then turn power over to a Christian Democratic government. The effort failed in 1970 because the Chilean military did not believe that a coup was necessary. The U.S. economic embargo and CIA funding for the miners' strike also helped create economic chaos.[65] In short, Russett ignores the impact of U.S. covert action on the domestic turmoil that he uses to justify U.S. covert action!

In summary, the logic behind the proposition that democratic states resolve their disputes more peacefully among themselves than any other pairing of types of government is indeterminate and ambiguous. Only under very strong assumptions can we hypothesize that democracies will peacefully resolve their mutual conflicts. Those assumptions are (1) that voters cross-culturally value material wealth above all else; (2) that their preferences are transitive; (3) that the issue of the use of force is unidimensional; (4) that veto gates on this issue swing predominantly against the executive; and (5) that democracies can

objectively identify each other. If all these assumptions do not hold, whether or not conflict is resolved without the use of force must depend upon factors other than the democratic nature of a polity. The next section demonstrates empirically that even taking one of the most widely utilized definitions of "democraticness" the argument does not hold up well.

Empirical Analysis of Democratic Peace Variants[66]

In this section I test the argument that democracy should lead to a less militarized foreign policy. Democracy scales are provided from *Polity II* and *III*, while MID behavior is taken from the revised MID II data set (1816–1992). I explore the behavior of states in the two subregions of Latin America: South and Central America. I then examine the proposition that democracy matters by distinguishing MIDs in three ways: by general participation in the subregions; by behavior of individual nations; and via dyadic relations among democracies.

The 11-point democracy scale (0–10) used in *Polity II* is built on a weighting of four components which can be found in all political regimes and which help us understand the difference in the general level of constraint confronting political leaders.[67] The components are competitiveness of political participation; competitiveness of executive recruitment; openness of executive recruitment; and constraints on the Chief Executive.[68] *Polity III* extends the original database from 1982 to 1993.[69] I added data for 1993 to MID II to provide a Polity/MID set to 1993.

With the *Polity* data sets we can examine the effect of greater degrees of democracy on the propensity to use force in interstate disputes. Many recognized and respected Latin American democracies only gained a 6 in this data set (e.g., Chile in the 1960s, Uruguay in the 1920s) so when I discuss democracy in general, I consider all regimes falling within the 6–10 range.[70] In specific cases, I will examine whether thresholds appear at 7 or 8.

National-level Hypothesis

States at higher ranks of the relevant scales (institutionalized democracy or constraint on the executive) should participate in militarized interstate disputes significantly less frequently than those at a lower rank.[71]

Two probit estimations were analyzed in table 4.4, for South and Central America (including the Caribbean and Mexico). The dichotomous dependent variable was operationalized by whether or not a MID occurred during a regime year.

South American data do not support the hypothesis that domestic constraints make a difference in militarized dispute participation. Regressing level of democracy on the dependent variable proved statistically insignificant for South America (significance at 0.44). In Central America, however, the hypothesis was supported with statistically significant findings (at the 0.01 level) and coefficients in the hypothesized direction (implying a negative impact on the occurrence of a MID). Unfortunately, these findings largely reflect the paucity of high democratic scores outside of the Costa Rican experience. Costa Rica was democratic at a level of 10 for all but one year, while no other Central American or Caribbean country attained a 10 in this time period and rarely reached the level of 6 (table 4.5). We can't tell if it is the impact of democracy or something unique to Costa Rica which is correlating with diminished involvement in a MID in Central America.

From Table 4.5 we can see that the average number of MIDs per regime year up to 1988 does not exhibit a constant downward pattern as we move up the democracy scales. Even taking into account the relatively fewer

TABLE 4.4 Democracy and Participation in Militarized Interstate Disputes (Probit Analysis)

Variable	Coefficient	Std Error	T-stat	Significance
South America 1884–1993				
Constant	−0.6292	0.0669	−9.40993	0.000
Democracy	0.0127	0.0165	0.76906	0.442
Central America 1908–1993				
Constant	−0.7181	0.0652	−11.0137	0.000
Democracy	−0.0420	0.0172	−2.4386	0.015

TABLE 4.5 Level of Democracy and MID Participation

Subregion	Number of MIDs/Regime Years at Level of Democracy										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Central America	43/2107 40%	46/321 14%	10/91 11%	8/62 13%	9/80 11%	4/20 20%	8/32 25%	1/4 25%	3/12 25%	— —	12/80 15%
South America	23/65 35%	36/240 15%	50/255 20%	19/57 33%	63/186 34%	16/50 32%	27/117 23%	0/6 0%	14/64 22%	4/18 22%	3/14 21%

regime years at the highest levels of democracy (9 and 10 in South America, 7–9 in Central America), there are still some regime years at low levels of democracy which are more peaceful than more democratic years. For example, in Central America the same number of MIDs occurred at level of democracy 3 as at 6, even though there were almost twice as many total regime years (62 compared with 32) at the lower level. In South America, MIDs at level 1 just exceeded those at level 6 (36 to 27) despite there being 123 more regime years at the lower level.

Dyadic-Level Hypothesis

The first section basically confirmed the results of other studies of the impact of democratic institutions on international behavior: for a country's foreign policy in general, they do not matter.[72] In this section we examine the proposition that it is not until democratic states confront each other that the peaceful impact of democracy on their behavior is felt.

Using the democracy level of 6 as the cutoff between democracy and nondemocracy there were 433 regime years of democracy in our time frame (1884–1993 in South America, 1907–1993 in Central America). Table 4.6 presents the MID behavior of democratic dyads (pairs of democracies).

From the table we note that democratic dyads were clearly less likely to experience MIDs than were mixed dyads (characterized by a combination of democratic and nondemocratic states). But, the same is true of nondemocratic dyads relative to mixed dyads. In fact, the proportion of total dyads that suffer MIDs is practically identical for both democratic and nondem-

TABLE 4.6 The Participation of Democracies in Latin American MIDs After the National Period[a]

	Total Dyads	MID	% of Total
Democratic	1,699	19[b]	1.12%
Nondemocratic	13,217	157	1.19%
Mixed	8,082	154	1.91%

[a.] South America 1884–1993 and Central America 1907–1993. Dyads include the U.S., but not European states for the relevant time period. For a discussion, see text.

[b.] Includes five Ecuador-Peru MIDs not recorded in the MID data base. Carlos E. Scheggia Flores, *Origen del Pueblo Ecuatoriano y Sus Infundadas Pretensiones Amazónicas* Lima: Talleres de Linea, 1992 p. 61 reports a MID in 1983; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hacia la Solución, reports two MIDs in 1985, and one each in 1988 and 1989.

ocratic dyads: 1.12% compared with 1.19%, respectively. The slight difference would actually decrease if we were to incorporate my democracy rankings after 1993 given the prevalence of democratic dyad MIDs in the contemporary period (see Table 2.6).

Conclusion

The democratic peace argument states that the nature of democratic institutions makes it at best difficult for leaders of democracies to use force against each other. This argument assumes that voters will always prefer peaceful negotiations to the use of force, and that voters' ability to punish decisionmakers forces leaders to heed this preference. Two critical flaws limit this model. Variations among democratic institutions affect the immediacy and directness of voters' ability to punish or even observe decisionmakers. Specifically, electoral constraints, the structure of the voting process, the process of electoral accountability, and the existence of veto gates all have the potential to limit voters' power. In addition, the assumption that voters will always prefer peaceful negotiations is not borne out empirically.

In Latin America in the last two centuries, the use of force does not allow us to distinguish interactions between democracies from interactions

between nondemocracies. Democratic status does not have a statistically significant impact on the decision to use military force, and democracies are nearly as likely to use military force against each other, as are nondemocracies. Mixed dyads of one democratic and one nondemocratic nation are most likely to use military force.

Democracy has many qualities in its favor and as a form of government is desirable. But the theoretical and empirical analysis in this chapter demonstrates that, in and of itself, guaranteeing peaceful relations among states in Latin America is not among those qualities. If we want to understand the pattern of interstate conflict in Latin America's security complex we need to look beyond domestic political systems.

We proceed in chapter 5 to examine the military distribution of power argument. There are two competing and mutually exclusive versions to this argument: that two nations with equivalent power will not have military conflict, and that a situation in which one nation has a preponderance of power will not lead to military conflict. After evaluating the contribution of this model, we assess whether the combination of the military distribution of power argument with the democratic peace model provides insight into the use of military force.