

Rivalries and the Synergistic Effect of Democracy and International Institutions: Some Evidence from Latin America

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Abstract

Taking democratic peace theory as a starting point, this paper explores how two Kantian articles, joint democracy and international institutions, reinforce each other. Even if international institutions as such may not be able to influence the conflict behavior of their member-states, the subgroup of interdemocratic institutions is well suited to regulate security conflicts and to advance cooperation. Hence interdemocratic institutions constitute a missing link between democracy and peace. Additionally, this study also takes research on comparative democratization into account. In most of the democratic peace literature, there seems to be a dichotomous understanding of democracy as either present or absent. However, an observation of democratization processes since the 1980s indicates that many states did not make a clear transition to full democracy, but have either consolidated as something in between autocracy and full democracy or swung back and forth between more democratic and more authoritarian forms of rule. Only very recently, scholars have started to explore how a mixed regime might affect a country's prospect of peace.

Therefore, taking both the formation of international institutions and different degrees of "democraticness" into consideration, I will develop the argument that the reinforcement of democracy and international institutions can be additive as well as interactive: In general, democracies are more likely to form or join international institutions. International institutions, once established, contribute to the stabilization of democracy so that their benefits reinforce the positive effect of democracy on peace. At the same time, preexistent international institutions function better once the participating countries have all democratized. These dynamics are weaker, of course, when democracy is unstable or when we are dealing with a mixed regime.

By means of tracing conflict history and the recent development of democracy and international institutions in three state dyads, this argument will be applied to the Latin American context: Countries that clearly made a transition to democracy, like Argentina and Chile, were able to significantly increase their collaboration and resolve longstanding disputes. In other pairs of states, where democratization processes were protracted, stagnated or even suffered from serious setbacks, like in the Honduras-Nicaragua or the Colombia-Venezuela dyads, international institutions have either evolved to a lesser degree, or the existing ones are less successful in dealing with interstate disputes.

I. Introduction

This paper takes democratic peace theory as a starting point, but introduces some important modifications. It proposes that international institutions, or more specifically the subgroup of interdemocratic institutions, are particularly suited to regulate security conflicts and to further international stability, to advance cooperation, and to inhibit the polarization of international relations. Hence interdemocratic institutions constitute a missing link between democracy and peace. Additionally, this study also takes results from comparative democratization studies into account, addressing the fact that much of the democratic peace literature does not reflect on the concept of democracy. Implicitly there seems to be a dichotomous understanding of democracy as either present or absent. An exploration of democratization processes since the 1980s, however, leads to a different picture: Many states did not make a clear transition to full democracy, but have either consolidated as something in between autocracy and full democracy, or have swung back and forth between more democratic and more authoritarian forms of rule. Up to now, it has hardly been explored how a defective democracy or a hybrid regime affects a country's prospect of peace.

Therefore, I will develop an interaction model taking both the formation of international institutions and different degrees of quality of democracy into consideration. This theoretical model will then be tested applying it to various dyads from Latin America. Latin America is particularly suited for such a study, since despite its general movement towards democracy since the end of the 1970s, severe democratic deficits subsist in some countries. Therefore, it can be traced whether incomplete democratization leads to the formation or revitalization of international institutions in the same way that full democratic transition does, and whether, compared to unambiguously interdemocratic institutions, these institutions with "deficient-democratic" membership have the same capacity in mediating conflicts.

The concept of international institutions employed here goes beyond international governmental organizations (IGOs) and also includes non-permanent interstate arrangements like institutionalized coordination and cooperation mechanisms that meet on a regular basis. It is argued that neither democracy nor the mere existence of international institutions is by itself sufficient for the peaceful management of disputes. Rather, an interaction effect between democratization and the development of international institutions seems to be at work that makes peaceful settlement of disputes more likely.

Although Latin America has traditionally been a region characterized by a low number of interstate wars and, at the same time, a high intensity of intrastate violence, there have nevertheless been a number of militarized interstate disputes or more subtle strategic or enduring rivalries resulting from undefined terrestrial and maritime border lines, from conflicts about resources or from competition for regional predominance (Grabendorff 1982; Domínguez 1998; Mares & Bernstein 1998; Mares 2001). Looking at an overall picture of the region, a movement towards more democracy and more interstate institutionalization that goes accompanied by the settlement of ancient disputes is discernible. When comparing individual states (or dyads), however, there is a remarkable variance across the region as to what degree democratization has been achieved, international institutions have been established (or revived), and rivalries have been settled. This variance enables us to compare different dyads' trajectories in order to examine how processes of democratization and the formation of international institutions interact in order to create peace.

II. Democracy is not enough

Democracies do not wage war against each other. Moreover, democratic dyads experience significantly fewer militarized interstate disputes than any other kind of international dyad

(see f.ex. Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999; Russett & Oneal 2001). This finding, which is labeled the “democratic peace”, is considered extraordinarily robust by most scholars.

Until now, liberal approaches to the democratic peace have always limited themselves to depict causal mechanisms between democracy and peace, without ever questioning the concept of democracy and without connecting democratic quality to the formation and functioning of international institutions. This might be attributable to the fact that democratic peace theory was formulated with particular view to the development of interstate relations in post-World War II and post-Cold War Europe. There the states unanimously evolved into stable democracies, and strong regional organizations were formed. Expanding these experiences to other world regions, however, is more difficult: Numerous studies have shown that the so-called third wave of democracy which began in the 1970s increased the number of states that can be formally classified as democracies and also increased the average level of democracy in the world, but did not necessarily bring full democracy to all of the states (O’Donnell 1996; Zakaria 1997, 2003; Diamond 1999).

Also, a great number of regional and sub-regional organizations and integration schemes exists all around the world. However, many of them, in spite of exhibiting a similar institutional structure, are not really institutionalized in the sense that the organizational mechanisms are routinely employed to deal with problems between the states. There is a large variance between merely formal organizations whose activities remain on the intergovernmental level, and integration schemes that develop a life of their own, independent of the governments’ will.

The paper seeks to address these understudied aspects of the democratic peace proposition: On the one hand, the contributions of interdemocratic institutions to the peaceful management of conflicts will be outlined and are considered decisive in the remainder of the paper. On the other hand, the concept of democracy as “bounded whole” (Sartori 1997) will be differentiated, and it will be argued that the level or quality of democracy has to be taken into account in order to evaluate its potential contribution to peace.

1. Bringing in international institutions

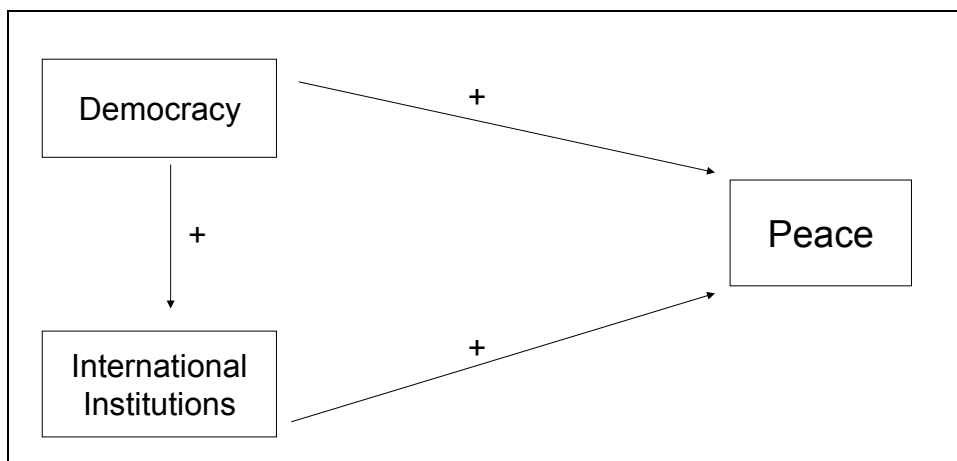
As recent reviews of theoretical approaches to the democratic peace have shown, strategic choices of elected governments in international relations cannot be consistently reduced to the shape of political regimes and their dyadic combination. Democratic peace zones can be distinguished from the rest of the world not only due to constitutional features of the states, but also by the way how they organize their relations (Hasenclever & Weiffen 2006, 2007). Hence any full explanation of war and peace inside and outside democratic peace zones has to integrate the interaction level of state properties and the configuration of international relations. Therefore, the contribution of international institutions to the way how conflicts and disputes are dealt with will be analyzed here.

For decades, international relations scholars shared the view that international institutions do not at all affect the likelihood of war and peace among nations. Most recently, however, the use of enlarged data-sets, improved multivariate techniques, and new research perspectives produced robust evidence that international institutions do matter for peace. Oneal, Russett and Berbaum (2003: 388), for instance, found that shared memberships in international organizations significantly decrease the likelihood of fatal disputes in state dyads even when controlled for the usual suspects such as distance, regime type, power status, alliance membership etc. Boehmer, Gartzke and Nordstrom (2004) differentiate international organizations according to three dimensions of form: mandate, strength of the institutional structure, and level of contention among members. Although they find no strong relationship

between international organization membership as such and member states' conflict behavior, membership in the subgroup of highly institutionalized international organizations correlates significantly with lower levels of conflict involvement. Especially the combination of high institutionalization and low levels of contention significantly reduces the likelihood of conflict. Recently, Jon Pevehouse's and Bruce Russett's (2006) quantitative study has found convincing evidence that densely democratic international organizations contribute significantly to peace among their members.

Democracies are particularly likely to create or join and to sustain such peace-promoting institutions. In technical terms, therefore, the institutions of democratic dyads operate as intervening variable (Van Evera 1997: 11; Kühnel & Krebs 2001: 476): They constitute the missing link in the causal chain between democratic regimes and the extraordinarily low violence proneness of their relations. In this way, it can be argued on the one hand that interdemocratic institutions differ from all other international institutions in terms of their density, their efficacy and their form. On the other hand, it is still possible to attribute democracies' peaceful behavior to domestic characteristics, i.e. to the particular willingness and ability of democracies to co-operate and to abide by agreed-upon rules in contrast to states with autocratic political systems (Lipson 2003). The core argument therefore is that democracies set up or strengthen interdemocratic institutions which help them to avoid wars among them.

Figure 1: International Institutions as intervening variable



Claiming that the international institutions built by democratic dyads exert an autonomous effect on the democratic peace is one thing, probing its plausibility is quite another. It is conventional wisdom that the democratic peace is an over-determined phenomenon (Gleditsch 1995: 554; Russett & Oneal 2001: 53): Democratic dyads – especially those dyads formed in the Western European and the transatlantic region – exhibit an extraordinarily dense network of international institutions (Rittberger 1987; Shanks, Jacobson & Kaplan 1996), and members of democratic dyads do not wage wars against each other. Thus, these two influential variables can be expected to be highly correlated, so that, for reasons of multicollinearity, it might be difficult to identify the strength of the specific impact of each of them. Figure 1 illustrates how the relationship is confounded by the coexistence of a direct effect of democracy on peace and the indirect effect of democracy on peace via the intervening variable international institutions. Recent statistical analyses, after all, were able to prove that densely democratic international organizations are particularly beneficial for peaceful conflict management (Pevehouse & Russett 2006). As for the causal mechanisms,

Pevehouse and Russett argue that democratic IGOs' inclination to peace might be attributed to the fact that they are the most able to create binding commitments, since democracies face executive constraints as well as potential audience costs in case of not fulfilling their promises. IGOs composed of democracies are also more likely to build up mediation mechanisms and engender respect for these mechanisms to reduce and eliminate conflict. Additionally, in homogeneously democratic IGOs, one is more likely to find peaceful norms as common way to deal with potential state conflicts (Pevehouse & Russett 2006).

Drawing on findings from the study of war and on earlier work by Andreas Hasenclever (Hasenclever 2002; Hasenclever & Weiffen 2006), this study offers similar suggestions why interdemocratic institutions, in particular, fulfill a peace-inducing function. The leading opinion in the study of war is that wars stand at the end of stepwise escalation processes, and that we must understand the dynamics of these processes if we want to explain the outbreak of armed mass conflicts between nations (Leng 2000; Vasquez 1993, 2000). There are objects of contention, conflict strategies and interaction patterns which can be classified as especially dangerous because they very often precede international violence.

Firstly, it is a well-established finding in the study of war that power competition is particularly dangerous in international politics both because it gives rise to enduring rivalries and because it typically precedes armed conflicts (Geller 2000; Kugler & Lemke 2000; Rasler & Thompson 2000). The closer two states come in their positional competition, the more likely they will reach for arms. Power competition can be tamed by security organizations (cf. Wallander & Keohane 1999; Müller 2002). With their help, governments establish stable balances of forces, they develop common standards for the assessment of each other's defense policies, and they set up tight verification schemes to detect any deviation from the agreed-upon power ratios. As a consequence, no member state needs to fear an immediate aggression, and each member is in a position to detect unfriendly intentions early enough to take countermeasures. The achievement of security institutions, thus, consists mainly in discouraging the quest for superiority in relations among equals and the quest for parity in relations among unequal partners through the organization of interstate transparency. No member state should be in a position to improve its power position decisively without provoking severe reactions. Interdemocratic institutions appear to be distinctively effective in organizing interstate transparency that covers not only military capabilities but captures foreign policy intentions of member states. Interdemocratic organizations enable member states both to signal their commitments and to monitor each other's defense efforts closely. Any deviation from agreed-upon strategies or established defense standards is unlikely to remain undetected for long. It will be addressed in designated forums, and deviating governments will be asked to explain their decisions.

A second general finding in the study of war says that the recourse to strategies of unilateral self-help significantly increases the risk of armed disputes among two states (Leng 2000; Vasquez 1993, 2000). As a corollary, cooperation – which is generally defined as the opposite to unilateral self-help – reduces the risk of war. Enduring cooperation under conditions of anarchy, however, is dependent on effective international institutions (Keohane 1984; Rittberger 1993). Democracies, in turn, are reported to have higher IGO membership levels than other states (Rittberger 1987; Shanks, Jacobson & Kaplan 1996; Russett & Oneal 2001). Additionally, democracies are distinctively reliable partners in international politics, and this reliability can be explained by the integration of additional political players beyond national executives, such as parliaments, business groups, NGOs, or the media (Martin 2000; Mansfield, Milner & Rosendorff 2002; Neumeyer 2002). Together, these actors facilitate the monitoring of international obligations and provide a source of independent policy information that can be used for effective problem-solving and conflict-settlement at the international level. In inter-democratic institutions, governments know the preferences of their

partners rather exactly and are therefore able to engage in integrative bargaining and to draw up lasting compromises. Consequently, clear-cut cheating among democracies appears to be infrequent and the recourse to self-help strategies remains the exception (Huth & Allee 2002: 773-786; Rousseau et al. 1996: 512).

A third general finding in the study of war says that wars are rarely waged over single issues (Holsti 1991: 307; Vasquez 2000: 352). Rather, international interactions “polarize” in the course of conflict escalation. The number of policy areas with compatible interests decreases, while the number of disputed domains increases. Finally, all individual conflicts merge into one big “us versus them” confrontation (Vasquez 1996: 532). The polarization of international relations is hindered by international institutions which increase the autonomy of issue areas (Doyle 1986: 1161; Rittberger & Zürn 1990: 46-49). Conflict management becomes less sensitive to events outside the regulated domain. “Islands of co-operation” tend to emerge, where politics follows an issue-area specific logic and where encroachments from outside remains the exception (Keohane & Nye 1977: 169; Young 1989: 77-80). Although there is still a need for systematic studies on the autonomy of policy areas and on destabilizing *issue-linkages* within and outside democratic peace zones, there is some evidence that democracies tend to differentiate their relations towards each other to an unprecedented degree and that they respect the autonomy of issue-areas. The distinctive effectiveness of interdemocratic institutions to block steps to war can be reduced to the deliberate integration of societal actors in international decision-making. Insofar as they can voice their concerns both in domestic politics and transnationally, they can exert some extra pressure upon national executives to observe agreed-upon rules and respect issue area-specific cooperation.

2. Refining the concept of democracy

When talking about the democratic peace, the concept of democracy is rarely intensively reflected. Researchers usually elaborate their particular causal hypotheses on how the linkage between democratic rule and peaceful international relations may work. Often, when speaking about democratic, autocratic and mixed dyads, a mere dichotomous categorization of regime is implicitly presupposed, even if researchers draw on continuous data from different political regimes datasets in order to assess the democratic characteristics of the countries examined. This simplistic approach is increasingly problematic in times where democracy promotion and movement towards democratization are ubiquitous, but full and stable democracy is seldom attained. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) already observed that two kinds of regimes in between dictatorship and democracy might emerge: *democraduras* (“hard democracies”) and *dictablandas* (“soft dictatorships”). *Democradura* connotes a “restrictive, illiberal democracy,” and *dictablanda*, a “liberalized authoritarian regime” (Diamond 2002: 24).

Later on, O'Donnell was one of the first scholars who pointed to the problem that these may not be transitory phases, and, accordingly, to the necessity of conceptualizing incomplete political regimes. He claims that there is a category of countries that “reverted to new brands of authoritarianism”; these are the countries that “seem to inhabit a gray area; they bear a family resemblance to the old established democracies, but either lack or only precariously possess some of their key attributes” (O'Donnell 1996: 34). Both Carothers (2002) and Ottaway (2003) advance an end of the transitology perspective, criticizing conventional transitology's assumption that states unavoidably follow the teleological path from authoritarianism toward consolidated democracy. Instead, there are alternative directions which regimes in a situation between autocracy and democracy might choose to follow, or they might choose not to move at all and consolidate as some kind of semidemocratic or semiauthoritarian regime. In line with these observations, Epstein et al. (2006: 555) state that “the Third Wave peopled the globe with partial democracies”.

Concomitantly, democratization scholars initiated a wide debate on classifying political regimes that are located somewhere in between clear democracy and clear autocracy, which led to the conceptualization of a plethora of subtypes (Collier & Levitsky 1997). Many of these subtypes were created with a view to specific cases, as the “delegative democracy” concept (O’Donnell 1994), which, drawing on the examples of Argentina and Peru in the 1990s, characterizes a disproportionate expansion of executive powers. The most comprehensive work in this field, identifying several dimensions of democracy and assigning labels to the corresponding deficits was undertaken by the “Defective Democracy” research project (Merkel et al. 2003; Merkel 2004).

According to Merkel (2004: 36), an embedded, liberal democracy consists of five partial regimes: a democratic electoral regime, political rights of participation, civil rights, horizontal accountability/division of powers, and the guarantee that the effective power to govern lies in the hands of democratically elected representatives. The electoral regime has the most central position among the five partial regimes. The fact that political leaders are designated in free and competitive elections is the basic requirement for democracy – if this characteristic is not given, we cannot speak of a democracy. The grade as to which the other dimensions or characteristics are present can vary, however. Depending on which of the partial regimes of an embedded democracy is impaired, we are then dealing with a certain type of defective democracy. Four types of defective democracy are distinguished (Merkel 2004: 49-50): In an exclusive democracy, one or more segments of all adult citizens are excluded from universal suffrage, which means that the political rights dimension is damaged. In a domain democracy, veto powers – such as the military, paramilitary forces, guerrilla, entrepreneurs, landlords or multinational corporations – take certain political domains out of the hands of democratically elected representatives. As a consequence, the elected government’s effective power to govern is restricted. An illiberal democracy is characterized by an incomplete or damaged constitutional state, so that constitutional norms have little binding impact on government actions. Individual civil rights are partially suspended and the rule of law is damaged. In a delegative democracy, checks and balances are undermined. The horizontal accountability of the (presidential) executive to the legislature and the judiciary is restricted.

These approaches all present subtypes of democracy, which, due to fulfilling the basic requirement, clearly are democratic, but with regard to some attribute fail the classification as “full” democracy. In contrast to that, proponents of the concept of hybrid regimes abstain from defining subtypes. According to them, it is difficult to assess how many defects and what kind of defects a democracy may have while still qualifying as democracy. They rather opt for establishing a “gray area” in between autocracy and democracy, containing states that exhibit autocratic as well as democratic characteristics (Karl 1995; Diamond 2002; Rüb 2002; Zinecker 2004, 2005). Generally speaking, the hybrid regime approach tries to solve the problem of political regime classification by characterizing the gray zone countries as hybrids, i.e. as something produced from the mixture of autocracy and democracy.

For the purpose of classifying the democratic quality of Latin American states, I opt for an integrative approach, putting the different definitions together as steps on a continuum:

Figure 2: Differentiating regime type – Integrating the subtypes and hybrid regimes approach

Autocracy	Liberalized Autocracy	Hybrid regime	Defective Democracy	Democracy
Full autocracy	Some liberties guaranteed, without changing basic autocracy features (no elections)	Mix of autocracy and democracy, or democracy with severe deficit(s) that undermine stateness	Basic requirement of democracy given (elections), deficit in one dimension of democracy	Full democracy

Full autocracies and full democracies, therefore, are regimes that can clearly be put in the respective category. Liberalized autocracies on the one hand and defective democracies on the other hand belong to the respective category according to their basic features, but exhibit some traits that make them “diminished subtypes” (Collier & Levitsky 1997). In the case of liberalized autocracies, this may mean that the admittance of economic freedom brings about increasing civil liberties, though not conceding political rights. In defective democracies, as we have seen, one dimension of democracy is impaired. Hybrid regimes cover the area in between defective democracies and liberalized autocracies (Zinecker 2005: 321). They exhibit a mix of autocratic and democratic traits. In many cases, these are regimes that are formal democracies inasmuch that regular elections take place. Nevertheless, they show deficits with regards to various dimensions of democracy, so that the sum of these different deficits is too severe to classify them still as defective democracy. In addition to that, I would also classify as hybrid regimes states with deficits in just one dimension which, however, are so grave that the stateness or the basic functions of governance are undermined, so that the capacity of the elected government to exercise democratic rule is hampered.

3. Democracy, institutions and peace – an interaction model

The consideration of those two modifications to democratic peace theory leads to an interactive mechanism of how democracy and the formation of international institutions influence and mutually reinforce each other in determining peaceful conflict management.

Regarding the matter of how the effects of democracy and international institutions interplay, three different variants are distinguishable. The first variant is the fact that, in general, democracies are more likely to form international organizations and cooperation mechanisms in diverse policy areas. It has frequently been shown that democracies in general are more likely to be members of international organizations than autocracies are (Shanks, Jacobson & Kaplan 1996; Russett & Oneal 2001: 213). Additionally, Mansfield and Pevehouse (2006) demonstrated that, beyond the higher probability of democracies to be IGO members, recent democratization processes exert an independent effect on states, pushing them toward joining international organizations.

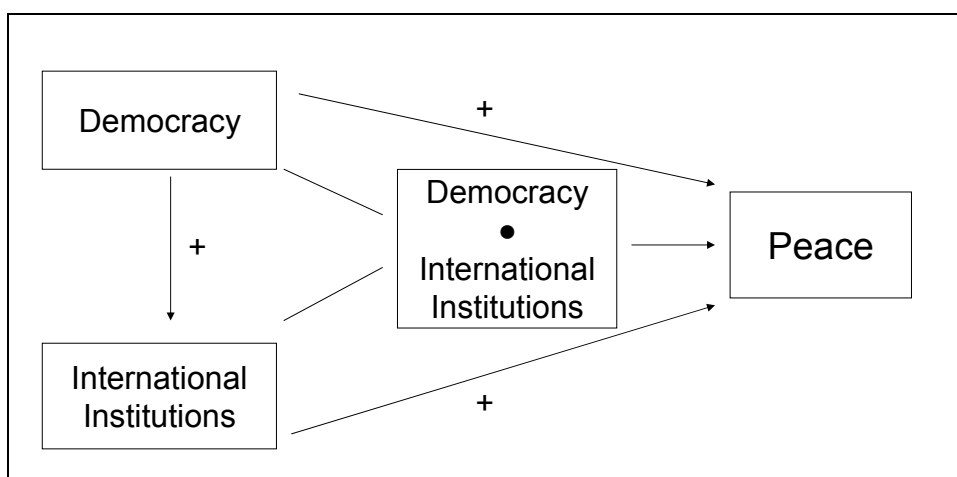
In general, effective policy coordination in IGOs always entails political costs in terms of behavioral constraints. Governments are only willing to meet these costs if they are outweighed by the benefits of cooperation. Hence the formation and maintenance of international institutions remain problem-focused and demand-driven. According to Mansfield and Pevehouse (2006: 139-145), the main motivation for joining international organizations is domestic: Transitional governments have the intention to credibly commit to the consolidation of democracy, which can be achieved by entering IGOs. However, external motivations might prevail in states that either perceive each other as security risk or face a common threat. Particularly in so-called rivalry relationships, i.e. in dyads which envisage

each other as “threatening enemy competitors” (Thompson 2001: 568), the creation of international institutions might be mainly motivated by the intention to build up peaceful relationships. Without doubt, even mainly domestically motivated international institutions render positive external effects, such as the resolution of cooperation problems between states or the concerted pursuit of common goals. This way, the positive effects of international institutions on peace are added to the positive effects of democracy.

Apart from the additive effect, two different sequences of interaction are possible. The first possibility is especially suitable for young democracies: International institutions strengthen peace by strengthening democracy. International organizations and cooperation mechanisms, once established, contribute to the stabilization of democracy so that, by ensuring the continuation of democracy, international institutions reinforce the positive effect of democracy on peace. The mechanism how emergent democracies are stabilized by the commitment to international organizations is outlined, for example, by Pevehouse (2002: 613-616) who also points out the hypothesized positive multiplicative effect of international institutions and democracy on the democratic peace.

The second type of interaction effect implies that preexisting international organizations function better once the participating countries have all democratized. When accomplished by authoritarian regimes, the accession to IGOs or the adherence to cooperation mechanisms often are mere rhetoric or declaratory lip-service. Institutions are formally established, but never take up any activities, or just serve as venue for intergovernmental meetings, without producing any significant output. Democratic transitions in the member states might revitalize such a formal agreement and turn it into an effective mechanism of conflict resolution. This might be accomplished by the creation of new cooperation mechanisms in the framework of the pre-existing organization so that new policy areas or more intense modes of cooperation are added to the original design of the organization. Here, the positive effects on peace set in motion by democratization reinforce the peace-promoting effects of the democratizing states’ international organization membership.

Figure 3: International Institutions as interaction variable



This interaction model between democracy and international institutions also enables us to take different degrees or “lower quality” of democracy into account. If movement from autocracy to democracy takes place, it is thus expected that the formation of international institutions is enhanced and that the positive benefits of democracy and institutions mutually

reinforce each other. However, if democracy remains unstable or defective, the development of institutions and the mutual reinforcement of democracy and international institutions, i.e. the special contribution of “interdemocratic institutions”, are expected to be less pronounced. In other words, a little bit of democratization is not enough to create interdemocratic institutions. Stable democracies have to be in place in order to enable interdemocratic institutions with their particular form characteristics to take root.

For the different types/degrees of democracy outlined above, therefore, the following propositions are set up:

Full democracy: In full democracies, the interactive mechanisms described are expected to unfold in their totality. The institutions that are already present function better, and new institutions are created.

Defective democracy: Among the defective democracies, relatively stable regimes that can be said to have consolidated with a particular type of defect have to be separated from regimes that have only recently reached this level of democracy and are hence perceived as still instable. As long as democracy is unstable in at least one state of a dyad, the positive effects of joint democracy cannot unfold, since there still is a risk of the unstable country returning to autocracy, and possibly to a more aggressive security policy. Here, in line with the first type of interaction effect, forming or expanding joint organizations is a good integrative measure to enforce commitment to democracy and to make the peace-promoting effect of democracy work. In this context, it is also relevant whether we are dealing with a sub-regional organization mainly populated by unstable countries or with a regional organization whose overall democratic density, in spite of democracy still being instable in some member countries, is high. When looking at a concrete dyad, as long as democracy in one of the states remains weak, the neighbor states won't rely on the routinely mechanisms of cooperation provided by a sub-regional or bilateral institution too much, and rather resort to unilateral self-help strategies than entrust conflict resolution to the organization.

In very recently established or still instable defective democracies, I expect the preventive power of international institutions to be low, since institutions are not yet strong and well-established enough to lead to a collaborative disposition. However, a larger institution, even if it cannot prevent the outbreak of tensions, can intervene later to settle the dispute and hence can at least be successful as “fire extinguisher”.

In contrast, if a state has already consolidated as democracy with certain defects, these defects might present internal problems, but are more unlikely to have severe repercussions on the international level. International institutions already had time to evolve and to lead to cooperative behavior and to transparency in relations between the states. Even if tensions in one policy area arise, they are unlikely to spill over and affect cooperation in other policy fields.

Hybrid regimes: When democracy is only weakly developed, the international institutions, if they exist at all, remain weak as well. In cases where democratization is stagnant and where at least one of the states in the dyad remains at the stage of a hybrid regime, international institutions alone do not help to settle disputes.

III. Some Evidence from Latin America

1. Studying the Democratic Peace in Latin America

While interstate war was a remarkably rare event in Latin America throughout the 20th century, and Latin Americans for the most part do not fear aggressions from their neighbors, there are still enduring disputes and rivalries. Interstate conflict over boundaries is relatively frequent, and sometimes these disputes even escalate to military conflicts because states tend to employ low levels of force in order to shape bilateral relations. However, the escalation rarely reaches full-scale war (Domínguez et al. 2003: 13).

Authors like Grabendorff (1982) and Mares (2001) showed that Latin America, in spite of not having large-scale war during the past century, is by no means a peaceful region. Grabendorff (1982: 281-282) identifies different types of conflicts, for all of which he presents several examples from the region: System conflicts are caused by ideological differences between two states, and hegemonic conflicts are attributable to the claims of two big powers to supremacy in a certain region. The border controversies, which in part date back to colonial times, lead to territorial conflicts, whereas resource conflicts arise due to the struggle for raw materials like oil and natural gas, but also the access to hydroelectric power and, increasingly, maritime and seabed resources. Additionally, the difference of economic development between some states of the region and also political factors like civil wars lead to migration conflicts.

Territorial conflicts, according to Domínguez et al. (2003: 13) can be further specified. They generally fall into one of two types: the more traditional arguments over land boundaries that date from colonial times, and the much more modern maritime delimitation controversies. The latter stem from the changes in international maritime law, which led to new rivalries over fishing rights and the oceans' rich resources. Whereas ideological and hegemonic conflicts have become less frequent, territorial conflicts, because of their considerable identification with resource conflicts, have increased.

Another important factor why disputes subsist is geography: Many regions, like the tropical rainforests of Central and South America or the glacier region of the Andes, have been difficult to access, so that it has been logistically costly to demarcate boundaries in an accurate way. Additionally, processes that might have led to settlements were frequently interrupted. International mediation, for example, cooled many conflicts, but did not solve them. Peace was sustained, but below the surface, territorial claims subsisted, and the substantial settlement was deferred to an undefined future.

Domestic politics is another motivation for this long-lingering militarized dispute behavior. Such conflicts have typically lingered because there is domestic political support for continuing to contest the disputed territory (Huth 1996: 133). Consequently, presidents authorize such actions to update their nationalist credentials, help their party in a difficult national election, placate officers in the armed forces, or rally popular support when they have lost it for other reasons. Militarizing disputes can be a cost-effective means of communicating international resolve and gaining support at home (Domínguez et al. 2003: 28).

In addition to the different types of interstate conflicts outlined above, the so-called "new security threats" (see, f.ex. Villagra Delgado 2003; Diamint 2004; Radseck 2005) tend to make the management of interstate relations even more difficult. The new threats, like terrorism, drug-trafficking, money-laundering, contraband, and other forms of organized crime, are transnational in nature and would therefore require close cooperation of the states in the affected region. But to the contrary, they often have exacerbated pre-existing conflicts and led to a more intransigent behavior of the neighboring states.

2. *Three case studies*

In the literature on the democratic peace, statistical methods, case studies as well as formal models have been used (for an overview, see George & Bennett 2005: chapter 2). While statistical methods greatly advanced the research program by refining the research question and testing for possible spuriousness, the identification of causal mechanisms, i.e. the answer to the “why” question of the democratic peace, proved more difficult. For this task, case study methods appear to be the more promising approach. They are able to identify additional variables and generate new hypotheses. By means of process-tracing, the performance of individual cases with regard to the claims made about causal mechanisms that might account for peace between democracies can be assessed. As George and Bennett (2005: 46) further suggest, “case studies can develop typological theories (theories on how different combinations of independent variables interact to produce different levels or types of dependent variables).” This may include differentiating between specified types of democracy and looking at their conflict behavior in diverse contexts. For my approach of focusing on interactions among combinations of variables, rather than variables considered in isolation, case study research thus is a convenient methodological procedure.

In the following, I will undertake a structured-focused comparison of three dyads from Latin America. In the framework of a paper like this, these small case studies of course cannot claim to offer a detailed historical explanation. I will restrict myself to compare the development in the countries since the last wave of (re-)democratization in Latin America with regard to the variables under study. At the beginning, a short conflict history of the dyad will be presented, making reference to the different types of conflict that have been identified in the course of Latin American history (Grabendorff 1982; Domínguez et al. 2003; Diamint 2004). Afterwards, the development of democracy in the countries since the 1980s is characterized, trying to classify the political regimes according to the subtypes of democracy scheme presented above. Also, the joint organizational membership of the states will be assessed, looking closely at whether and how movement towards democracy has changed interstate collaboration. Finally, it will be analyzed whether and how the interaction of democratization and international organization has affected the rivalry relationship.

For mere illustrative purposes, the overview of conflict and democratization history will be supplemented by presenting some data from international comparative datasets. On the one hand, democracy scores for both countries of a dyad from 1975 until 2001 are provided, using the Freedom House political rights and civil liberties measures. Additionally, information compiled from two different conflict databases will be shown. On the one hand, the hostility level in a dyad, coded yearly in the MID3 dataset (see Ghosn, Palmer & Bremer 2004), identifies the years were concrete hostile events occurred. A “militarized dispute” is a conflict between states where one side employs or deploys military force as an instrument of policy to advance its objectives. The second approach which is advanced by Thompson (2001) relies on interpretative measures to identify long-lasting rivalry relationships. Accordingly, a dyad is engaged in a strategic rivalry if governments regard each other “as (a) competitors, (b) the source of actual or latent threats that pose some possibility of becoming militarized, and (c) enemies” (Thompson 2001: 560).

Argentina and Chile serve as examples for countries where democratization has clearly led to the settlement of a long-lasting rivalry via the creation of international institutions. In contrast, in Honduras and especially Nicaragua, democratization has been a much more painful and recent development. Both countries have, time and again, been involved in border disputes that, sure enough, are currently in the process of settlement. As for Colombia and Venezuela, there are good reasons to classify them as defective democracies or even as hybrid regimes. At the same time, they maintain a long-lasting rivalry relationship which has, during the past years, even worsened due to additional new security threats in the region.

2.1. *Argentina – Chile*

Chile and Argentina share the third longest frontier in the world. Due to the erstwhile high number of unresolved territorial disputes dating back from colonial times, the long absence of war between the two countries is a striking fact. However, a permanent atmosphere of latent conflict and a sentiment of vulnerability especially on the Chilean side persisted (Flemes 2003: 10-11).

In 1881, during the War of the Pacific, Chile and Argentina had signed a treaty intended to settle the boundary disputes between them. It established the so-called “bi-oceanic principle” according to which Argentina should control the South Atlantic while Chile was in control of the South Pacific. The Beagle Channel as the geographical feature dividing the two oceans became the southernmost boundary between the two countries. However, the treaty failed to delineate the precise route of the Channel between the islands of Lennox, Picton and Nueva. Great Britain, which had been named as a binding arbitrator in the two countries’ boundary disputes, awarded the islands to Chile in 1977. But, driven by geopolitical aspirations of protection and expansion of territory, prominent members of the Argentine armed forces claimed that Argentina had to control the Strait of Magellan as well as the Beagle Channel, so that ultimately, Argentina declared the award null and void and demanded to renegotiate the issue bilaterally. Both countries began to mobilize their armed forces, and only in 1979, when the Vatican started its own mediation, a peaceful solution was finally pursued.¹

But it was not until 1984 that the controversy over the Beagle Channel was finally settled and Argentina and Chile signed a Peace and Friendship Treaty, which subsequently was approved of by the Argentine voters in a national referendum. The treaty also opened up the possibility of the broad set of means of conflict resolution, ranging from direct negotiations to resorting to the International Court of Justice. (Rojas Aravena 1998: 89)

In spite of the Peace and Friendship Treaty adopted in 1985, the dynamic of bilateral rapprochement was put into full operation only after the redemocratization of Chile (Flemes 2003: 19-20; Rojas Aravena 2003: 97). Already during their first meeting in 1990, president Menem of Argentina and newly elected president Aylwin of Chile decided to form a bilateral commission on limits, whose task was to find a solution for all remaining 24 territory-based conflicts, including all differences regarding the demarcation of the extensive border that divides the two states. 22 issues could be eliminated that way, and the two remaining issues, the disputes over the Laguna del Desierto and Campos de Hielo, were taken before a Latin American arbitration tribunal. The initial decision on Laguna del Desierto was handed down in 1994 and supported the Argentine position. Even after Chile had obtained a revision in 1995, the previous result was confirmed and Laguna del Desierto remained under Argentine sovereignty (Rojas Aravena 1998: 89-90). In the case of the zone of Campo de Hielos Sur, the drafted treaty settling the issue was finally ratified by the congresses of both countries in 1999. Currently, demarcation of the frontier is still pending, but not because of lack of political will, but for technical difficulties in accessing the territory.

Step by step, Chile and Argentina established confidence building mechanisms in defense and security policies. Meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces take place every year, and from 1998 onwards, joint exercises were carried out, especially by the navies. In 1995, Argentine and Chilean governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the Strengthening of Cooperation in Mutual Interest in Security Matters. By this memorandum, annual meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs and defense as well as a mechanism called Permanent Committee on Security (Comité Permanente de Seguridad - COMPERSEG) were

¹ For an elaborate description of the maritime border dispute, see f.ex. Child 1985, 1988; Pittman 1988; Laudy 2000; Mares 2001: chapter 6; Kahhat 2005.

set up to investigate issues of mutual security cooperation. In the framework of COMPERSEG, civilian bureaucrats from the ministries of defense and foreign affairs and representatives of the General Staff meet twice a year, and up to now, these meetings have taken place regularly (Rojas Aravena 2003: 109-121; Runza 2004). As a particularity, COMPERSEG consults with academic institutions which, in the first half of the 1990s, had been very active in promoting closer cooperation in defense matters between the two countries. Among other things, COMPERSEG was involved in preparatory work for a technical study of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC/CEPAL), establishing a standardized methodology for the measurement of defense spending (see ECLAC 2002), which is considered a further step towards confidence building in defense matters.

Although Chile is only an associated member of Mercosur, which means that it does not participate in the economic integration scheme, economic interdependence of Chile and Argentina has increased. Apart from commercial exchange, an important project was the bi-oceanic corridor, meaning the creation of a better infrastructure in order to facilitate Chile's access to the Atlantic and Argentina's access to the Pacific Ocean. Another important issue is energetic interconnection: According to an agreement ratified in 1995, Argentina is Chile's exclusive supplier of natural gas (Rojas Aravena 2003: 98-104).

Whereas Argentina has been classified as delegative democracy (O'Donnell 1994; Merkel 2004: 51), Chile, after its re-democratization, was at first considered a tutelary democracy, since its constitution, last modified by the military regime in 1980, reserved the military and former dictator Augusto Pinochet some substantial influence in the political arena. However, the constitutional reform enacted in 2005 removed these privileges, so that Chile, according to its institutional stability and continuity, can now be termed a full democracy.

Both Argentina and Chile, after the end of authoritarian rule, were interested in building democratic and reliable institutions and to create assurances that the military would return to their traditional activities and not become active in the political realm again. They welcomed broader security engagements that could help legitimate the new domestic arrangements (Bitencourt 2001). Defense cooperation on the military as well as on the political level is stable and has led to remarkable transparency. Currently, Argentina and Chile are in the process of building up combined peace forces, which means that they are proceeding from mere cooperation to a higher level of integration. A return to unilateral self-help strategies is, at this stage, hard to imagine. Economic tensions, as they were occurring in July/August 2006 due to an inadvertent raise of gas prices enacted by the Argentine government, are highly unlikely to lead to a general polarization of interstate relations, since international institutions still foster cooperation in other policy areas.

Table 1: Argentina (ARG) – Chile (CHL) 1975-2001

	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01
FH-ARG	8	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	8	10	10	11	11	11	11	10	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	9	11	9
FH-CHL	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	7	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	10
MID Host.			3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4																	
SR	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x										

Table 2: Honduras (HND) – Nicaragua (NIC) 1975-2001

	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01
FH-HND	5	5	5	5	5	7	8	9	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	8	8	8	9	9	8	8	8
FH-NIC	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	5	4	8	8	7	5	5	6	8	8	9	8	8	8
MID Host.					4									3	4		4				4		4		4	4	3
SR						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x														

Table 3: Colombia (COL) – Venezuela (VEN) 1975-2001

	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01
FH-COL	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	7	7	8	8	8	7	6	6	6	7	6	6	6
FH-VEN	10	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	10	10	10	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	6	6	6
MID Host.								4				2	4	4						4			4			4	
SR	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

FH: Freedom House sum of political rights and civil liberties; the inverted scale ranges from 0 to 12

MID Host.: Highest hostility level reached by either state A or B across all incidents involving both A and B in this MID

1 No militarized action

2 Threat to use force

3 Display use of force

4 Use of force

5 War

SR: strategic rivalry

2.2. Honduras – Nicaragua

Boundary disputes have affected the relationship between Honduras and Nicaragua more or less since the end of Spanish colonial rule in the 1820s. In 1906 the dispute over the Mosquito coastal area was submitted to arbitration to the king of Spain, and in 1960 the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was asked to determine whether the 1906 award which Nicaragua had rejected was binding. The Court decided that it was, and the boundary was then demarcated by OAS sponsored offices.

As a part of a longstanding dispute over fishing rights and territorial waters in the Gulf of Fonseca, several militarized incidents occurred during the 1990s. Both Nicaraguan and Honduran naval forces repeatedly confiscated boats and arrested fishermen, charging them of having intruded on foreign territorial waters. In some cases, armed skirmishes took place, leaving a number of fishermen wounded. In order to prevent armed Honduran fishermen from coming to their territorial waters, in June 1995 the Nicaraguan navy reinforced its forces patrolling its territorial waters in the Gulf of Fonseca by transferring additional boats to the area and intensifying patrol operations. In December 1995, Honduras threatened to open fire on any Nicaraguan patrol boats in the disputed waters, whereas Nicaragua announced that it would continue patrols on its northern Atlantic coast, and warned that its navy boats would fire back. In 1997, in fact, Nicaraguan boats fired at Honduran patrols, claiming that they had been entering Nicaraguan waters.

Already in 1986, Honduras and Colombia had signed the Caribbean Sea Maritime Limits Treaty which granted them a portion of the Atlantic Ocean claimed by Nicaragua. Although Nicaragua protested at that time, relations remained cordial because Honduras did not proceed to ratification of the treaty (Pratt 2001). In November of 1999, however, the Honduran parliament decided to ratify the treaty, leading to a dispute with Nicaragua, which claimed that part of the territory in question belonged to it. The area includes several islands, is a rich fishing ground, and is also believed to have oil and natural gas deposits. As an immediate response, Nicaragua put its military forces on alert, and Nicaraguan President Alemán also announced that they would break the preferential trade relations with Honduras by imposing a 35 percent “patriotic tax” on imports from Honduras. During the following months, a series of militarized incidents occurred. By the end of 1999, therefore, tension had heightened and the situation was achieving a dangerous level and could have resulted in confrontation (Canda 2000). The dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua, therefore, is primarily maritime boundary dispute, involving a dispute about resources.

In this situation, the Organization of American States assigned a Special Representative, Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, a retired U.S. diplomat, to help reduce tensions in the region. In the ensuing months, Einaudi held four rounds of talks with the foreign ministers of Honduras and Nicaragua. Working with the OAS envoy, Honduras and Nicaragua signed a series of agreements to ensure peaceful relations while the substance of their boundary dispute was to be solved at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, where the issue had already been sent by Nicaragua in December 1999 (Pratt 2001). In March 2000, the two foreign ministers signed a memorandum of understanding detailing specific measures that covered such matters as maintaining communications between the two countries’ armed forces, restricting military activities along the border and conducting combined patrols in the Caribbean Sea.

In late February 2001 tensions resurfaced around claims and counter-claims of violations of the confidence-building measures. Again, the OAS started mediation efforts, bringing together the Assistant Secretary General Einaudi and the vice-ministers of foreign affairs of Honduras and Nicaragua. A Technical Verification Agreement, developed during those talks, more clearly defined existing confidence-building measures and established additional measures to reduce tensions between the two countries. On the basis of this agreement, an

OAS International Verification Mission was put into motion. Its objectives were to verify the number and location of military and police posts along the land border and in the Caribbean Sea, where they were supposed to be kept at the same level as on September 1, 1999. Over the summer and fall of 2001, the OAS Mission undertook two visits to the land border and one visit to the Caribbean Sea.

The report of the OAS Mission concluded that the posts visited along the land border did not represent a threat to peace or an indication of increased military presence in the border area. In addition to receiving the report from the General Secretariat, the foreign ministers of the two countries also signed an agreement for a bi-national border development plan, and an agreement on police cooperation and military movement notification, which were key elements in the Organization's efforts to improve relations between Honduras and Nicaragua. The maritime boundary dispute that initiated the clash between the two countries, however, is still pending; hearings at the International Court of Justice have started only in March 2007.

Looking at the development of democracy in the two countries, Honduras began its transition to democracy in 1982 and by the second presidential elections in 1986 had already adopted the procedural requirements to consider elections as meaningful, as well as sufficient institutional requisites to protect civil and human rights (Mares 2001: 41). Although there are still deficits with regard to the rule of law which determine a classification as illiberal democracy, the political regime is rather consolidated. In Nicaragua, after the civil war and the end of the Sandinista government, democratization has been a much more difficult and fragile process.

As for IGO membership, apart from the joint OAS membership, several organizations where Nicaragua as well as Honduras are involved exist. The establishment of the Central American Common Market (CACM; Mercado Común Centroamericano), including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras, was realized in 1960. Despite its name, the CACM was not intended to be a common market. Its main aim was to create a customs union, the countries swiftly moved towards the harmonization of external tariffs, and intra-regional trade saw a rapid rise. However, as a consequence of several problems (see Bulmer-Thomas 1997a: 242-243), the CACM lost dynamism in its second decade and also was severely affected by the advent of the debt crisis in 1982. But intra-regional trade recovered slowly after 1985, and the summit of Central American presidents held in 1990 outlined a new integration scheme. The revived CACM, however, is unlikely to be more than a free trade area, at best (Bulmer-Thomas 1997b).

In the field of security institutions, the Central American presidents, under the leadership of Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, embarked on an original initiative to end the civil wars and regional tensions of the 1980s. The Esquipulas agreements focused on democratic resolution of civil strife and called for a significant reduction in the size of defense establishments. The Central American Security Commission (CASC) was formed as a result of the Esquipulas Process (Esquipulas II). In 1991, the Protocol of Tegucigalpa – enforced two years later – included all but a few existent organizations under the umbrella of the Central American Integration System (Sistema de Integración Centroamericano - SICA). In 1995, SICA member states signed the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America (Tratado Marco de Seguridad Democrática en Centroamérica), which formulates very ambitious goals with regard to the rule of law, human security and regional security and defense. The treaty also creates a Central American Security Commission. However, the principles and commitments that were formally subscribed were hardly put to practice, and the Central American integration process became fragile and stagnated during the past decade (Jácome 2005: 112). According to Domínguez et al. (2003: 19), integration efforts among Central American countries since the second half of the 1990s faltered mainly because of the

greater frequency and severity of their interstate disputes related to boundary and territorial issues that they were not able to address. Since 1999, it was mainly the OAS that has helped to manage and even to resolve half a dozen different interstate issues in Central America. In 2000, the member states of the OAS established a mechanism, the Fund for Peace, to help finance the costs of proceedings when the parties involved agree to turn to the OAS for assistance in resolving their territorial disputes peacefully.

In this dyad, interaction by means of international institutions is only in its beginnings, due to the very recent and instable nature of the Nicaraguan democratization process. Up to now, regional integration initiatives have remained declarative instead of leading to stable and durable cooperation. As long as the political system in Nicaragua was still fragile, mutual trust in stability was not strong enough to make these mechanisms work effectively. Disputes resurged and then receded over the years, but were never definitely resolved. Not too long ago, interstate relations frequently polarized: A territorial issue, the ratification of the treaty between Honduras and Colombia, immediately led to the threat of economic sanctions from the Nicaraguan side. Up to now, only a broader, in its totality densely democratic international organization like the OAS was able to intervene and handle the bilateral dispute. That both states resorted to the OAS as means of conflict resolution after the political regimes have stabilized is already a large step forward.

2.3. Colombia – Venezuela

Colombia and Venezuela have repeatedly oscillated between extended periods of antagonism and instants of good cooperation (Ramírez 2003). Just like in other Latin American dyads, several border disputes dating back from colonial times persisted and remained unresolved until 1941, where the countries signed a bilateral treaty on frontiers and navigation rights on boundary rivers and initiated two decades of close cooperation and vivid economic exchange in the border region.

However, they did not envisage that decades later they would need to extend maritime delimitation two hundred miles from their coastlines. This question came to the fore only in the 1960s, where petroleum was discovered in the seabed of the Gulf of Venezuela (or Gulf of Guajira, from a Colombian point of view) (Domínguez et al. 2003: 26). Once again, boundary issues led to increasing tensions. A number of hostile encounters of Colombian and Venezuelan coastguard ships took place in the first half of the 1980s. The most severe incident at the point of escalation to a military confrontation took place in August of 1987, when a Colombian boat navigating in disputed waters was stopped by Venezuelan warships.

After 17 months of high tensions and aggression, Presidents Carlos Andrés Pérez and Virgilio Barco, both of them originating from the borderland, decided to depolarize relationships and initiated several cooperation mechanisms. Apart from regular summits of presidents and ministers of foreign affairs, two types of commissions were formed: the Negotiation Commissions (Comisiones Negociadoras) which were in charge of border demarcation, and the Presidential Commissions of Frontier Affairs (Comisiones Presidenciales de Asuntos Fronterizos) whose task was to improve interaction and neighbor relations in the frontier region (Ramírez 2003: 221-230).

However, in the mid-1990s, new problems appeared in the frontier region that once again gave rise to mutual suspicion. The main origin of this new conflict was a spill-over of Colombian guerrilla war into Venezuelan territory. Henceforward, the border has frequently been the scene of cross-border incidents involving Colombian guerrillas or drug traffickers and Venezuelan armed forces (Ramírez 2003; Matz 2005). Besides the frequent border transgression due to guerrilla activities and related arms trade and the fight against drug-

traffic and other international crime, bilateral relations have been affected by the migration of refugees or displaced persons caused by the Colombian civil war. Moreover, the dispute has been “enriched” by an ideological component due to the alleged contacts between the actual Venezuelan government and the Colombian guerrilla forces (Tickner 2005: 444-445). The Colombian-Venezuelan dispute hence is an example of how new security threats reanimate and exacerbate tensions and hostility. The maritime dispute between Colombia and Venezuela over boundaries in the Gulf of Venezuela might have been settled, or would not have persisted in virulent form, without these developments.

Because of its long and nearly uninterrupted history of periodical elections and civilian rule since Gran Colombia’s dissolution in 1830, Colombia has frequently been classified as one of the Latin American countries with the longest democratic tradition. However, there are severe limitations with regard to some attributes that are considered constitutive of democracy. During the time of the National Front, a political pact between the two major parties that dominated political life in Colombia between 1958 and 1974, full contestation in elections did not exist. This contributed to a radicalization of opposition parties and, ultimately, to the emergence of leftist guerrilla movements. Today, although the electoral restrictions not only have been lifted, but have been reversed to an excessive opening of the political system and hence a fragmentation of the party system, those radical forces still exist. The radicalization with powerful actors on the left as well as on the right, both of them financed by rents accruing from drug trade, contributes to a partial collapse of the Colombian state. This collapse is geographical – in many territories, state actors simply don’t have influence any longer – as well as functional – some state agencies have become increasingly unable to fulfill their functions or have become totally disfigured with reference to their constitutional functions (Bejarano & Pizarro 2005: 249-250). All the features associated with this partial collapse mean that the state cannot live up to its duty to protect the basic civil rights and liberties any longer and these rights and liberties are violated day by day by all the armed actors involved in the conflict. Defects are hence so severe that Colombia should be classified as a hybrid regime (Zinecker 2004).

Venezuela is also considered to be a state with a long and stable democratic history. However, in 1992 a military coup was attempted, and afterwards, the long-lasting pact between the two major political parties that had governed the country since 1958 ended. Although the current leader Hugo Chávez was democratically elected, many observers perceive his new style of populist governance as a danger for democracy in Latin America. By drafting a new constitution in 1999, the Chavez “revolution” systematically removed all the checks and balances required for liberal democracy (Coppedge 2005: 292). Whether one classifies Venezuela as delegative democracy or as hybrid regime is highly contingent on whether one emphasizes popular sovereignty or liberal democracy as standard model of democracy.

Colombia and Venezuela are joint members of a number of integration schemes, none of which has attained a high profile as security organization. The Group of Three (Grupo de los Tres) with Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico comprises three of the larger countries surrounding the Caribbean. It was founded in 1990. An agreement to bring forward a stepwise integration process towards a free trade area was ratified in 1992 and 1993 (Ferrero Costa 1995: 159). The Andean Pact (AP) was founded in 1969 by Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile (which withdrew again in 1976), Colombia and Peru, with Venezuela joining in 1973. In 1996, it was renamed Andean Community by the Protocol of Trujillo. Already in 1989, some steps toward security cooperation, like confidence building measures and the exchange of information between the armed forces had been envisioned. Given the coexistence of traditional and new security threats in the region, the need for cooperation surely exists. But up to now, cooperation in security matters has only been discussed and proclaimed as useful, but no concrete measures have been realized (Ardila 2005). Currently, the Andean Community is in

crisis: After Peru and Colombia started to negotiate bilateral trade agreements with the United States, Venezuela withdrew and turned towards Mercosur (cf. Ramírez & Vieira 2006).

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS; Asociación de Estados del Caribe – AEC) was founded in 1994 with the aim of promoting consultation, cooperation and concerted action among all the countries of the Caribbean. Membership extends not only to the Caribbean islands, but also to Cuba (which is, in turn, not a member of CARICOM), Spanish-speaking Central America and Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. To sum it up, international interaction between the two states is best characterized by “many initiatives, low continuity” (Ramírez 2003: 241).

In the case of Colombia and Venezuela, interdemocratic institutions with their particular benefits are clearly not in place. Although some international institutions exist, they are unable to lead to mutual trust. The rivalry with its potential danger to escalate into armed confrontation still persists. There is still significant power competition, and all attempts of institutionalization of interstate relations have resulted to be unstable and unreliable.

Frequently, relations have tended to polarize and merge into one big “us versus them” confrontation, which was even instrumentalized in nationalist electoral campaigns. At first, polarization used to be caused by the maritime boundary dispute in the Gulf of Venezuela, and subsequently by the guerrilla problem. Security issues have repeatedly dominated the agenda and have hampered joined initiatives in other policy areas or even induced steps backwards, for example in economic cooperation. Several times, mutual allegations have escalated to the point that scheduled meetings were cancelled or ambassadors were withdrawn (Ramírez 2003: 253-254).

IV. Conclusions

In the case of Argentina and Chile, all three influential mechanisms of democracy and international institutions on peace are at work. We find the additive effect that both democracy and international institutions contribute to peace as well as the first variant of interaction effect, that states’ joint organizational membership stabilized democracy and hence reinforced democracy’s impact on peace. Additionally, democratic rule made it possible to revitalize preexisting international organizations like the OAS, to substantiate treaties and agreements already signed under authoritarian rule and to move towards a durable settlement of disputes and permanent cooperation mechanisms – all of which corresponds to the second variant of interaction effect.

The way how the dispute between Nicaragua and Honduras is being handled is an example for the second variant of interaction effect: Democratic consolidation strengthened the OAS as pre-existing international institution which was directly able to display its conflict resolution capacities. The OAS role in hemispheric security matters was reinforced by the role it played in the mediation of this dispute (Bitencourt 2001: 911). Although democratization, in line with the additive effect, has led to new initiatives for security cooperation, like the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America signed in 1995, these mechanisms have not been very active and were unable to set in motion the first type of interaction effect, the reinforcement of democracy and its peace-promoting effects by means of the collaboration in international organizations. This might be attributable to the fact that democracy in Nicaragua is a very recent and not yet consolidated phenomenon.

In dyads containing hybrid regimes, like Colombia and Venezuela, international institutions do exist, but they are unable to lead to mutual trust and stable cooperation. Internal instability is reflected on the international level: In certain moments, cooperation mechanisms are

initiated and function quite well for a while, but then vanish to inactivity and insignificance again.

These dynamics are illustrated by Figure 4: Democracies, even if equipped with some deficits, form new international institutions and collaborate better in the framework of preexisting institutions (additive effect). If democracies and defective democracies are stable and well-established, the positive benefits of both democracy and international institutions reinforce each other, and interdemocratic institutions contribute to the settlement of former rivalries. In fragile or only recently established democracies, international institutions exhibit the features of interdemocratic institutions only with reservations. The interactive processes hypothesized here are in their initial phase and have not evolved to the same degree as between stable democracies. In hybrid regimes, the lack of democratic quality neutralizes the expected positive effects of international institutions, interaction dynamics between democracy and institutions do not unfold, and the states are unlikely to become reliable partners as long as the unstable status of the political regime persists. It could hence be shown that limitations to democracy obviously weaken the effect of democracy in the interactive model between democracy and international institutions.

Figure 4: Interaction effect at different levels of democracy

	Democracy	International Institutions	Democracy * International Institutions
Full democracy	+++	++	++++++
Defective democracy, stable	++	++	++++
Defective democracy, fragile	+	++	++
Hybrid regime	0	+	0

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