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Introduction: Looking for Democratic Constraint

In February 2003, British citizens opposed to the war in Iraq held the largest public demonstration ever seen in the United Kingdom. The protest brought London to a standstill—no mean feat in a country with a long and storied tradition of public protest. In the three months preceding the war, only a third of the British public on average supported a military attack on Iraq, compared to nearly half (47 percent) opposing it. Public support bottomed out in the month prior to the war (February 2003), falling to 29 percent, with opposition rising to 52 percent. Indeed, as late as March 16, four days before the US-led invasion, 54 percent of the British public considered war against Iraq unjustified, while only 30 percent considered it justified.

Despite strong public opposition, Tony Blair—a Labour prime minister whose left-of-center politics made him no obvious ideological ally to Republican US President George W. Bush—proceeded to commit forty-five thousand troops to the conflict. Blair maintained that presence—a force second in number only to that of the United States—in the face of opposition that intensified in the years that followed. In short, despite substantial opposition from his own electorate, Blair prioritized the strategic relationship with the United States, which was pushing very hard for contributions to its "coalition of the willing."

The British public was not alone in disapproving of the Iraq War. Prior to the war's outbreak, an overall average of two-thirds of respondents across sixty-two countries surveyed—in some cases over 90 percent—opposed a military attack on Iraq.[1] Protests of comparable magnitude to those in London sprang up in many Western countries in the first half of 2003, but the domestic responses to them varied widely. Canada—a country with equally deep cultural, military, and financial ties to the United States—withheld support for the conflict, as did France, a long-standing ally. Both cited domestic opposition as a primary reason. Italy and Spain initially committed forces, but withdrew them in the face of the same sort of mounting opposition that Blair withstood.

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[1] Baum (2013).

How should we understand this variability? When it comes to foreign policy, why are some leaders seemingly constrained by public opinion, even in the earliest stages of policy formulation, while others are more insulated from it? These are the questions that motivate this book.

The problem is substantial. Republican forms of government, by design, put distance between leaders and voters. Citizens voluntarily delegate some of their sovereign power, for limited periods of time and in limited domains, to elected representatives. In theory, this allows leaders to make considered decisions by insulating them from popular passions. In the longer term, however, representatives must either faithfully represent the deeper preferences of the citizenry or be replaced through elections. In an era of mass democracies in which millions hold the franchise, we are inevitably speaking of such republican arrangements in which the few represent the many. Yet the variability that we have just described in the way American allies responded to calls for contributions to the coalition of the willing suggests that not all democracies are alike when it comes to insulation and responsiveness.

We argue that this distinction arises from the way diverse institutions modulate the flow of information from leaders to citizens. There are important differences among democracies on this dimension. Some foster the flow of information much more effectively than others, and these distinctions are important. With information comes democratic constraint. Without it, democracies are in some important regards functionally equivalent to autocracies.

Most existing work on democratic conflict behavior assumes that information flows easily and responsiveness is automatic. These assumptions might approximate the realities of direct democracy in ancient city-states such as Athens, but they bear little resemblance to democratic processes in modern mass democracies. As is so often the case, the result is a mismatch between theory and practice that undercuts the validity and usefulness of academic research on this subject. In practice, citizens cannot perfectly constrain their leaders. The best evidence suggests that, more often than not, they fail to even come close. This is because, once in power, leaders have powerful incentives to prevent citizens from holding them to account. In some cases they also possess institutional tools enabling them to do so.

Nowhere is the gap between elected representatives and the public larger than in the "high politics" of international affairs, particularly in matters of war and peace. Most citizens have little or no firsthand knowledge of events taking place abroad. In this sense, the Iraq example is more the exception than the rule in that citizens worldwide were at least aware and mobilized enough to have preferences and make them known. More commonly, leaders make foreign policy decisions without any meaningful public scrutiny. Citizens generally lack the time and incentive to inform themselves about distant events with uncertain implications for their daily lives. This leaves them dependent upon political and media elites to tell them what they need to know about foreign

policy.[2] Consequently, political and media institutions that systematically foster both robust opposition elites and the flow of information from them to citizens enhance democratic responsiveness, whereas their absence tends to insulate leaders from their citizens.

WHY DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS MATTER

While an extensive body of empirical research explores how and why states become embroiled in international conflict, very little of it differentiates among democracies. For example, the voluminous literatures on the democratic peace and domestic audience costs—which we grapple with in this book—generally identify states as either democracies or autocracies, thereby smoothing over any institutional differences within democracies as a group. This can be a useful simplification for answering some questions, but it also means that puzzles like the aforementioned variability in nations' responses to the Iraq conflict generally escape scrutiny. Within democracies, this body of work tends to implicitly assume that the foreign policy process is perfectly transparent to attentive voters, that these citizens easily "hire and fire" their leaders, and that this translates into relatively high leader responsiveness and consistent constraints on foreign policy behavior. Indeed, the mechanisms underpinning the audience cost and democratic peace propositions actually *require* that these assumptions meaningfully approximate reality. The initial departure point of this book is to challenge their universality.

Given the extent of executive insulation in the United States when it comes to foreign affairs, it is perhaps unsurprising that the long-dominant, made-in-the-USA paradigm in international relations, neorealism,[3] holds that it is possible to understand and explain states' interactions with one another, including decisions to go to war, while simultaneously "black boxing"—that is, ignoring entirely—everything that goes on within the state. A common neorealist analogy thus likens the international system to a billiards table, with states—the only meaningful actors on the table—as balls moving around independently while occasionally bumping into one another (that is, interacting). Neorealism thereby treats states—regardless of regime type—as "functionally undifferentiated units." The implication is that scholars interested in studying international interactions, including international conflict, can safely model autocracies and democracies in the same way while ignoring the institutional differences between them, or among democracies.

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[2] Baum and Groeling (2010); Brody (1992); Berinsky (2009). In the US case, the incongruity between relatively potent and autonomous leadership in foreign affairs and more constrained leadership in domestic politics underlies Wildavsky's (1966: 23) well-known "two presidencies" thesis, that "[t]he United States has one president, but it has two presidencies: one presidency is for domestic affairs and the other is concerned with defense and foreign policy."

[3] Waltz (1979).

Challengers to this perspective have sought to pry open the black box to better understand how variations in the linkages between citizens and leaders might influence states' foreign policy activities. This led to the rediscovery of Kant's democratic peace thesis, according to which democracies are—due to their pacific norms or institutional checks and balances—either less likely to fight wars or less likely to fight wars against one another, or both.[4] More recently it has spawned a large scholarly literature focused on determining whether and when democratic citizens will be inclined to punish their leaders either for foreign policy failures or for failing to live up to their foreign policy promises. According to the theory, such potential punishment—commonly referred to as domestic audience costs—makes democratic leaders more credible to adversaries than their autocratic counterparts.[5] The reason is that democratic leaders will tend to issue threats only when they mean business, because once they make a public threat citizens will punish them at the ballot box for backing down.

While these literatures are substantial in size and influence, nearly all work purporting to consider the role of domestic political institutions in international interactions has simply replaced the realist black box—that is, the simplifying assumption that in explaining the interactions between states it is possible to assume away all the nuances of politics within states—with two slightly smaller ones: democracy and autocracy. Yet, as others have established for autocracies,[6] democracies are far from an undifferentiated class. We argue that there is actually a great deal of consequential variation within these categories and that by taking such variations into account, we can substantially improve our understanding of the conditions that lead to variation in citizens' abilities to hold their leaders to account in foreign affairs.

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL INFORMATION
WITHIN DEMOCRACIES

We contend that the reliability of the flow of information from elites to the masses most directly determines the degree to which citizens can constrain their leaders. Two basic conditions must be present for citizens of mass democracies to hold their leaders accountable. First, there must be independent and politically potent opposition partisans that can alert the public when a leader missteps. This is the part of the system required to counteract leaders' incentives to obscure and misrepresent. Second, media and communication institutions must be both in place and accessible sufficiently to transmit messages from these opposition elites to the public.

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[4] Kant ([1795] 1983); Doyle (1986); Maoz and Russett (1993); Russett and Oneal (2001).
[5] Fearon (1994); Schultz (2001b); Potter and Baum (2010); Smith (1998).
[6] E.g., Weeks (2008); Geddes (2003).

Scholars of international relations have long recognized the importance of information and variations in its quality in mediating interactions between states. Influential theories of international conflict, in particular, turn on questions of the transparency, reliability, and availability of information to the actors involved in disputes.[7] After all, states cannot prevail in crisis bargaining or negotiations unless they are able to successfully communicate their intentions and resolve. Yet scholars have devoted scant attention to the process by which states disseminate information internally. In effect, most international relations research assumes (implicitly or explicitly) that among democracies, information passes efficiently from leaders' mouths or actions to the intended recipients.[8] If so, the only remaining uncertainty—which underpins much of the formal literature on international conflict—concerns what information a leader transmits or withholds and whether or not the intended recipient considers it reliable. As noted, this assumption is problematic in an era dominated by mass democracies.

Throughout the post–World War II era, democratic citizens have primarily learned about their governments' activities via the mass media. The past decade has witnessed the emergence of new political information sources, like social media, that may in some cases serve as alternatives and in other cases as complements to traditional mass media. However, a great deal of data, some of which we introduce in later chapters, clearly indicate that at present, mass media—especially television, but also newspapers and radio—remain the predominant sources of political information for the vast majority of people around the world.

This raises the questions of whether and how the mass media influence states' behavior in international conflicts. The few scholars of international relations who have investigated this question have mostly emphasized the possibility that a press free from government influence might facilitate peaceful conflict resolution by raising the domestic political costs to leaders of engaging in war abroad.[9] The trouble is that nearly all democracies feature a free press, so press freedom alone cannot help resolve the puzzling variability in democratic constraint that we introduced at the start of this chapter.

Communication scholars and journalists have shown greater interest in this question.[10] Nonetheless, while avoiding the unstated assumptions of the international conflict literature, they have in at least one important respect drawn a similar conclusion, at least for the United States (the case upon which research in this area is largely based). That is, they typically agree with international relations scholars that the media frequently do not exert very much independent

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[7] E.g., Putnam (1988); Fearon (1995); Powell (1993); Slantchev (2003); Lake and Rothchild (1996).

[8] For an exception, see Baum and Groeling (2010).

[9] E.g., Van Belle (2000); Slantchev (2006); Choi and James (2006); Potter and Baum (2010).

[10] Among communication scholars see Mermin (1999), Jakobsen (2000), and Wolfsfeld (2004). For a journalistic perspective see Sharkey (1993).

influence in foreign affairs. Instead, the prevailing view is that in most instances the (American) media index their coverage of foreign policy to the tenor of elite rhetoric on whatever issue elites are publicly debating.[11] This means that when elites are united across party lines in support of a president's foreign policy, media coverage will reflect this harmony and the public will tend to support the policy. In contrast, when elites engage in partisan conflict, media coverage will reflect this partisan discord and the public will consequently divide along partisan lines. In such cases, the president's fellow partisans will tend to support the policy while opposition partisans oppose it.

Others such as Entman, however, hold that in at least some circumstances the media can play an important proactive role, even in the archetypal US case.[12] Yet in many such situations, contrary to the international relations literature, communication scholarship emphasizes the propensity of media to *exacerbate* military conflicts by, for example, pressuring democratic leaders to use military force for humanitarian purposes. According to this so-called CNN Effect hypothesis (an admittedly outdated term), public opinion, driven by dramatic images of human suffering, can pressure governments to take military or humanitarian action abroad that they would otherwise be inclined to avoid.[13] That said, with the exception of some anecdotal accounts of the US-led intervention in Somalia in 1992,[14] most of the related research finds no consistent evidence of such a pattern, leading to the current prevailing wisdom that the supposed CNN Effect is either incorrectly specified or perhaps the imaginings of self-congratulatory journalists overestimating their own importance.[15]

Despite the substantial body of work, there remains a disconnect between the understanding of communication and international relations scholars concerning whether, when, and how the media are likely to matter in situations of actual or potential international conflict. We argue that by properly situating the media within the larger context of the information transmission process between governments and citizens, it becomes possible to reconcile these seemingly contradictory arguments concerning how media might influence international interactions in potential conflict situations. We contend that media influence can cut multiple ways. In some circumstances it can reduce the likelihood of conflict between states; in others it is more likely to raise the odds of a military clash, while in still others the media are unlikely to exert any significant influence on policy makers.

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[11] Bennett (1990); Berinsky (2009); Baum and Groeling (2010).
[12] Entman (2004).
[13] Livingston and Eachus (1995); Mermin (1999); Strobel (1997); Jakobsen (1996).
[14] E.g., Sharkey (1993); Maren (1994).
[15] Communication scholars have also broadened the search for evidence of an independent media effect on foreign policy to include structuring the environment surrounding peace negotiations (Wolfsfeld 2004) or as a means by which leaders can go over the heads of foreign leaders to speak directly to the publics of foreign nations (Goldsmith and Horiuchi 2009).

THE RECIPE FOR DEMOCRATIC CONSTRAINT

We identify two aspects of democratic systems that affect both the generation and the flow of information about foreign policy by influencing the extent of independent political opposition and their ability to reach the public with their messages. These aspects are political opposition and media access. Our argument, which we introduce here but develop more fully in chapter 2, is that these forces work in conjunction with one another and that their effects are thus conditional—both are required for meaningful and consistent democratic constraint.

Institutions and the Flow of Information: Political Opposition as Whistleblowers

The primary source of quality foreign policy information challenging the executive's policy frame is a strong and independent political opposition. Political systems that feature robust and diverse opposition have effective whistleblowers who can relay news of a leader's foreign policy miscues to the media.

Independent and robust political opposition can come from many sources. For example, it might emerge in the context of a close election between parties that are near power parity. Alternatively, high-profile individual political dissidents or provocateurs—like Lech Walesa in Poland, Andrei Sakharov in the former Soviet Union, Fang Lizhi in China, Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States, or Mahatma Gandhi in India—can sometimes apply more pressure on a regime than any organized group. In other circumstances, nonprofit organizations, like Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International, can serve this role by carefully monitoring government actions and sounding the alarm when a government commits a transgression. However, when speaking systemically across countries and over time, opposition arises most reliably when there are multiple independent, robust, and diverse political parties.[16] Throughout this book we therefore rely on the number of parties in a political system as our primary empirical indicator of the extent of elite political opposition.

A robust and diverse opposition changes the nature of media institutions and content, as well as the electorate. Research has shown that multiparty electoral systems engender more diverse and policy-oriented media coverage of

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[16] It is worth noting that this assertion may not hold at the extremes. For instance, Anderson (2000) argues that extreme fragmentation in party systems can prevent citizens from attributing responsibility for policy failures to individual politicians or parties, thereby weakening their ability to hold leaders accountable for poor performance at the ballot box. Moreover, not all opposition parties have equal incentives to blow the whistle on the incumbent government, particularly if they anticipate being included in a future coalition with the incumbent (Kunicova and Rose-Ackerman 2005). However, despite these and other potential exceptions (some of which we discuss in chapter 2), on average more and more potent opposition parties tends to mean more potential sources of opposition messages.

politics,[17] and consequently better informed and more politically sophisticated citizens, relative to two-party systems.[18] Therefore, citizens in multiparty systems are less likely to uncritically accept a leader's foreign policy pronouncements. All else equal, this should reduce leaders' willingness to accept the risky gamble of a war, make risky threats, or otherwise ignore the expressed or latent foreign policy preferences of the electorate.[19]

Throughout this book, we use the term "whistleblower" to invoke the monitoring role that we argue elite opposition can play in the foreign policy process. While this is useful shorthand for the theoretical mechanism we propose, it is admittedly a partial departure from the typical usage of the term in the principal-agent and bureaucratic politics literatures. In those contexts it usually refers to an individual within an organization who alerts principals to malfeasance.[20] We are referring to parties or groups of party elites who, as part of their standard function, alert voters to foreign policy activities that they consider missteps, failures, or out of step with their preferences.

Institutions and the Flow of Information: Access

Whistleblowers mean little if citizens never receive the information they attempt to relay, or if it diffuses too slowly to allow citizens to engage policy debates *before* leaders have already implemented the policies in question. Absent sufficient media access, citizens are relatively unlikely to receive any messages an opposition whistleblower might send and hence will be unable to hold a leader accountable.

This concern is more than academic. Citizens of different nations vary widely in their access to the mass media and therefore to information about their leaders' activities abroad and whistleblower complaints about those activities. For instance, among democracies from 1965 to 2006, the mean number of televisions per one thousand population is 205, or about one television for every five inhabitants. Greece in 1992 fell very close to this average, at 203 TVs per one thousand people. However, there is enormous variation around this mean. For more than one-third of the democracies in our data, there is at most one television for about every 10 inhabitants. The Philippines in 1993 fell near this level, with, on average, about 101 TVs per one thousand residents. In 1996, TV access was just over half that level in India, at 63 TVs per one thousand residents. This represented a sharp rise from, say, 1985, when Indians had ac-

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[17] Benson (2009); Moosbrugger (n.d.); Schmitt-Beck (2003); Milner (2002).
[18] Kumlin (2001); Swanson and Mancini (1996).
[19] We recognize that the effects of macro-institutional factors like proportionality or the number of parties in a system on the responsiveness of leaders to citizens in democracies are complex and subject to some debate in the literature. In chapter 2 (both in the text and across several extended footnotes), we address some of these issues and arguments, along with our justifications for employing the party system as an admittedly blunt proxy for the information environment.
[20] E.g., Ting (2008).

cess to only about one television for every 250 residents. The United States and United Kingdom have among the highest levels of TV access among democracies in our data, at 831 (1997) and 850 (1999) TVs per one thousand inhabitants, respectively. While radio access and newspaper access are in some instances higher overall—particularly radio in some developing countries[21]—they exhibit similar variability. The implication is that while press freedom differs relatively little across democracies, *access* to that press varies substantially.

The Keys to Democratic Constraint Are in the Interactions

Cioffi-Revilla and Starr observe that "[p]olitical behavior . . . is caused by two fundamental, necessary conditions: the operational opportunity to act and the willingness to do so."[22] Along these lines, while opposition and access may in some instances and to varying degrees be individually consequential, we argue that each is independently insufficient to constrain the foreign policies of democratically elected leaders. The electorate is unlikely to hear whistleblowers and recognize their messages—that is, it will lack the *knowledge and incentive* to act—without a robust press. At the same time media access and institutions are irrelevant if there is no strong, independent opposition to generate credible information about foreign policy. We will demonstrate that the key factors in determining whether the media will inhibit, embolden, or fail to influence democratic leaders are their propensity to challenge the government's preferred framing of a given policy (which depends on the extent of opposition) as well as the public's likelihood of hearing such a challenge (which depends on access). In short, the effects (on political behavior) of the forces we identify are interactive and interdependent.

In the chapters that follow, we explore these complex interactions in detail. At times this can make for an intricate story about the origins of democratic constraint on foreign policy. However, this intricacy is the source of the important variation in the way foreign policy works within democracies. This makes unpacking it essential for developing and testing our argument.

EFFECTS ON WHAT?

States typically become involved in wars in one of three ways: they *initiate* disputes or conflicts, *reciprocate* in response to challenges from other actors, or *join* with preexisting groups of actors engaged in disputes or conflicts (who may themselves be initiators or reciprocators). We search for evidence for our argument in all three contexts. The first two represent the domains in which the literature has most emphatically argued for distinctive democratic behavior in international conflict. Initiation speaks directly to the democratic peace lit-

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[21] International Telecommunication Union (2010).
[22] Cioffi-Revilla and Starr (1995: 447).

erature, while reciprocation addresses the substantial literature on domestic audience costs.

The third domain, coalition formation, is a less studied and more current concern. In an era seemingly dominated by multilateral interventions, this is an increasingly important question and allows us to extend our theory to the future as well as to speak to dominant existing debates.

Contextualizing the Relationship: The Role of a Free Press

We have already noted that with respect to conflict behavior our hypothesized interplay between opposition and media access is limited to states with democratic electoral institutions. But there is a second crucial precondition that we should also note from the outset. Simply put, responsiveness is unlikely if a leader can short-circuit the relay of opposition messages through the media by censoring or otherwise limiting the media's independence. Thus, the population of cases to which our theory and hypotheses apply is limited to states with free presses.

A free press is a defining characteristic of liberal democracies. In the United States the press is the only private actor that enjoys specific constitutional protection, via the First Amendment. Many autocracies have elections, legislatures, and the outward trappings of representation, but few tolerate open dissent from the press corps.[23] This near perfect coincidence of democracy and press freedom has obscured the systematic variation in the transmission of information to the public that mediates citizens' capacities to hold their leaders accountable in foreign affairs. This does not, however, mean that the independent effect of press freedom is immaterial. Several scholars have argued that a free press can help account for the democratic peace.[24] Others have argued that it facilitates—via its reputation of being a neutral arbiter uninterested in supporting a particular partisan perspective—the creation of domestic audience costs.[25] Underlying both arguments is the presumed greater credibility to citizens of a free press, relative to an unfree press.

A corollary of our theory, then, is that we should be able to observe our hypothesized relationships between partisan opposition and media access in the context of democracies with free presses, but that they should fade away when these conditions are absent. Throughout the empirical chapters that follow, we assess this corollary and consistently find that our story holds for states with free presses, but not for those without them.

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[23] For instance, in 2003 (at the outset of the Iraq War), there was nearly an 80 percent correlation between the widely used Polity IV measure of relative democracy and the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index. No country with a Polity score less than 5 (on the–10 to +10 DEMOC-AUTOC scale, where +10 is most democratic) scored higher than eighty-first (Cambodia) in the world in press freedom.

[24] Van Belle (1997, 2000); Choi and James (2006).

[25] Slantchev (2006).

MOVING FORWARD

In the remainder of this volume we develop the notion that media and electoral institutions fundamentally influence the extent of democratic constraint by shaping the flow of information from leaders to citizens. Absent an understanding of these institutions, we are missing essential information that would allow us to comprehend variations in the behavior of democracies in the international system.

In chapter 2 we develop a theory of democratic constraint and derive testable hypotheses. Drawing on literatures ranging from principal-agent theory to political communication to crisis bargaining, we establish expectations about the processes that result in the public actually becoming aware of foreign policy and then responding at the ballot box. We argue that democratic institutions that favor the flow of information between citizens and leaders—most notably those fostering both political opposition that can generate credible information and an independent and accessible media that can transmit it—contribute to constraint. There is, however, enormous heterogeneity among democracies in the extent to which these conditions hold. We develop expectations about how various combinations of these institutional attributes will translate into foreign policy behavior, with a particular eye toward conflict behavior.

In chapter 3, we begin the process of testing our theoretical propositions. We start with the broadest examination of the data in the book, employing a time-series, cross-sectional analysis of conflict initiation in all possible pairs of countries (that is, all dyads) from 1965 to 2006. This analysis demonstrates the interactive relationship between media access and political opposition. Across a variety of indicators of conflict, we show that states with media and political institutions that facilitate the flow of information between leaders and the public are less prone to initiate military conflicts. These findings suggest not only an underlying mechanism that could fuel the democratic peace proposition, but also that not all democracies are likely to be equally peaceful.

Chapter 4 extends the analysis we present in chapter 3 to the thorny question of domestic audience costs. For leaders to generate credibility through audience costs, there must be mechanisms in place that enable citizens to learn about foreign policy failures in a timely and consistent way. The institutional variation among democracies that we identify has important implications for the extent to which citizens can obtain such information. Specifically, we demonstrate that the number of electorally viable political parties in a country, conditional on relatively widespread public access to the mass media, has an important impact on credibility in international interactions. That is, states possessing these attributes fare better—in terms of avoiding reciprocation—when they issue threats or initiate conflicts.

Chapter 5 turns to coalition formation. Here, we examine the validity of our arguments in the context of the lead-ups to the 2003 war in Iraq and the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan. We draw on cross-national data on public support for

the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the decisions of countries to contribute troops to the coalitions the United States sought to assemble in both conflicts. As expected, we find in both cases that the quality and flow of information from whistleblowers, through the media to citizens, importantly mediates public support for intervention and leaders' responsiveness to public sentiment. Countries with more parties were more likely to have populations opposed to the wars and to contribute fewer troops to the coalitions as their access to mass media increased. In contrast, also as expected, in states with fewer parties we find the opposite relationships: increased media access is associated with *lower* opposition to the wars and *higher* troop contributions.

Chapter 6 takes a step back to assess the validity of a critical assumption underpinning the theory and findings in chapters 2 to 5. This is simply the idea, which we term the "Downsian Premise," that democratic multiparty systems tend to engender political coverage that is more diverse, more policy-centric, and more prone to challenge the government's policy line than coverage in two-party democracies. To test this proposition we conduct content analyses of international media coverage of four recent multinational conflicts (Kosovo 1999, Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003, and Libya 2011). Our data range from a minimum of all coverage mentioning Kosovo in about 241 newspapers across twenty-three democracies in 1999 to a maximum of about 1,140 papers mentioning Libya across sixty-five democracies in 2011.[26] We assess the relative emphasis on policy-oriented coverage (as opposed to personality- or human-interest-oriented news), the valence of coverage (that is, the overall average level of support for or opposition to the government's policy), and coverage diversity (measured as the number of distinct topics included in the news). Across these dimensions we find consistent support for the Downsian Premise. Multiparty democracies offer relatively more policy-oriented news, more challenges to the government's policies, and more varied topical coverage than their two-party counterparts. This enhances our confidence in the validity of the theoretical linkages we have drawn between parties, the nature of political information, media access, and public attitudes that are implicit in the statistical analyses of chapters 3 through 5.

Chapter 7 adds context to our statistical findings through more detailed process tracing. We assess the decisions of the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, and Poland regarding whether they would join with the United States in the coalition of the willing to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Among these countries, there was much variation in both key variables we identify as the ingredients of constraint and in the extent to which leaders were responsive to pressure from either their domestic publics or the United States. This deeper, qualitative dive into several representative cases enables

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[26] These figures include only newspapers that actually covered the respective conflicts. The data sets include additional nondemocracies and many more newspapers. The data are described in detail in the appendix to chapter 6.

us to more fully elaborate the mechanisms that underpin our aggregate data analyses.

Chapter 8 concludes. The theory and findings we present in the book have substantial implications for future academic research in international relations. We argue that insufficient attention to underlying mechanisms has obscured the consistent role of democratic political institutions in conflict processes. Unsurprisingly, the failure to model institutional heterogeneity, most often by modeling democracies dichotomously, has led to ambiguous findings in a number of research domains because scholars have lumped together leaders who face substantial democratic constraint with those who do not. The implication is that not all democracies are alike when it comes to matters of war and peace. In the conclusion, we also draw out the policy implications of our findings and consider the possible roles of the Internet and satellite television—media technologies that had not yet proliferated globally during much of the period under investigation.

Much of what we uncover about the origins on democratic constraint lends itself better to explanation than policy prescription. It is unlikely that countries will rush to change their electoral systems in hopes of spurring the effects that we describe (with the possible exception of a new democracy building its institutions from scratch). More to the point, most leaders do not prefer to reduce their own freedom of action and therefore have little incentive to implement such changes.[27] There are, however, a few policy instruments that influence constraint and are more immediately at the disposal of policy makers in established democracies. Specifically, variations in media ownership structures represent one of the few clear factors influencing media content that are sensitive to policy intervention and that can contribute meaningfully to responsiveness. Ownership regulations are subject to normal legislation, and we consider how the choices that states make about media ownership can independently influence some of the important information processes we describe.

Finally, the insights that we draw out in the context of coalition building and joining are new and relevant to policy makers as well as scholars. These results have clear implications for future efforts at assembling international coalitions for multilateral interventions. From Bosnia to Kosovo to Afghanistan to Iraq to Libya, this has proven an increasingly thorny problem for policy makers. As indicated by the difficulty that the United States had assembling a coalition for Iraq (and echoed at a smaller scale in the French experiences with Libya and Mali), it is also one in which policy makers are clearly operating on a somewhat ad hoc basis, divorced from any general logic of action or notion of best practices. Our findings are the first to provide insight into when leaders are likely to commit to such endeavors in spite of opposition from their publics and when democratic constraint might make for unreliable allies.

[27] Baum (2011).