

# Is There a Democratic Norm in the Americas? An Analysis of the Organization of American States



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**T**he preamble of the Organization of American States (OAS) Charter is explicit about a commitment to representative democracy as “an indispensable condition for the stability, peace and development of the region.”<sup>1</sup> However, in the four decades after its inception in 1948, the OAS failed to develop a consistent policy regarding the promotion of democracy in the hemisphere. For instance, while the Cuban government was suspended from the OAS in 1962 for its incompatibility with inter-American “principles and objectives,” the (anticommunist) authoritarian regimes that emerged in South America in the 1960s and 1970s were passively condoned. Many observers came to view the OAS as a facile extension of the Cold War security interests of its most powerful member, the United States.

With the end of the Cold War, however, the OAS has come to play an increasingly significant role in Western-hemispheric relations.<sup>2</sup> With the approval in June 1991 of the “Commitment to Democracy and the Renewal of the Inter-American System” and the adoption of OAS Resolution 1080, the organization renewed its pledge to protect democracy in the region and established the institutional mechanisms for doing so. In particular, Resolution 1080 pledges the OAS secretary-general to convene an immediate emergency meeting of the OAS Permanent Council following any “sudden or irregular interruption of the democratic political institutional process.”<sup>3</sup> It is then the task of the Permanent Council to examine the situation and recommend whether or not a special meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs or of the General Assembly is warranted—all within ten days of the democratic crisis. In amending the charter through the adoption of the Washington protocol, the organization established that the General Assembly could, with a two-thirds vote, suspend any member state from the OAS in the event that “its democratically constituted government has been overthrown by

force."<sup>4</sup> The OAS also created a specific organization arm, the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD), to develop programs reinforcing the hemispheric trend toward democracy. Moreover, with the recent adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter on 11 September 2001, the OAS broadened its conception of what constitutes a democratic crisis to include any "unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime."<sup>5</sup>

In short, the OAS now appears to spearhead a vigorous international regime for the defense of democratic rule in the hemisphere. Indeed, Heraldo Muñoz, a former chairman of the OAS Permanent Council, recently claimed that "there is now a right to democracy in the Americas in the sense that a concern for the promotion and defense of democracy in the inter-American system has evolved into a normative obligation and, most important, is being implemented through collective action."<sup>6</sup> This new commitment by the OAS, in turn, raises several key questions for the study of international politics. First and foremost, is OAS action in relation to the defense of democracy motivated primarily by strategic or by normative factors? Second, under what conditions would the OAS actually intercede to protect and/or restore democracy in a member state? Finally, what *type* of OAS action would we expect to see if the OAS were to intervene?

Two competing theories in international relations, realism and normativism, offer different explanations for the existence and behavior of international organizations (IOs). Realists view IOs as reflections of the underlying balance of power within the international system; as such, IOs are thought to have no real autonomy of their own. Normativists, in contrast, see IOs as reflections of a normative consensus shared by member states and the wider population of epistemic communities. IOs, for normativists, may develop considerable autonomy from member states. In order to assess the purported normative obligation to democracy in the Western Hemisphere, this essay examines the predictions that realist and normativist theories make regarding IOs and evaluates them against the evidence of OAS practice since the Santiago declaration.

I have organized the essay into three sections. First, I review existing theoretical contributions on the behavior of international organizations, highlighting the distinctions between realist and normativist thought. In the second section, I analyze the behavior of the OAS in response to democratic crises in Haiti (1991), Peru (1992), Guatemala (1993), and Paraguay (1996). In the third and final section, I analyze all four cases in comparative perspective. Overall, the evidence lends conflicting support to both realist and normativist explanations of OAS

behavior: while normative factors explain *why* the OAS intervenes, strategic interests account for *how* the OAS intervenes.

### Competing Explanations of International Organizations: Realism and Normativism

Realists and normativists differ substantially as to why IOs exist and what interests they represent (see Figure 1).<sup>7</sup> For realists, states are the dominant actors in the international system. Given international anarchy and the ubiquity of security threats, moreover, the main imperative that states confront is survival. States, in turn, mind their own interests and pursue gains relative to other states. As a consequence of these assumptions, realists view international organizations in an instrumental fashion: IOs are created merely to pursue selfish state interests—often under the legitimating (but false) guise of neutrality.<sup>8</sup> IOs (and other international institutions), thus, are merely a reflection of the balance of state power in the world. Great-power states, in particular, dominate IOs through their control of financial resources, leadership appointments, and informal influence. It would be naive, realists argue, to treat IOs as autonomous or even semiautonomous since states would never voluntarily cede sovereignty to a supranational institution.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to the state-centric and inherently anarchic world of the realists, normativists start with an entirely different set of assumptions about the nature of international relations.<sup>10</sup> For normativists, a focus on states as the central actors in international relations is misleading. Instead, these scholars regard states as embedded within a larger “inter-

Figure 1 International Organizations' Interests and Autonomy

Theories of International Organizations		
	Realism	Normativism
Theoretical Tenets	Central actors States.	States and nonstate actors, including supranational and epistemic communities.
	Interests and autonomy IOs reflect the balance of military power among states; IOs have no autonomy from member states.	IOs reflect a normative consensus on international rules and values; IOs have considerable autonomy from member states.

national society” of shared values, norms, and purposes. States are a significant part of the world society, but so too are international institutions, ideas, and epistemic communities. Norms, for these scholars, do not operate merely as constraints on state behavior, but shape (and are therefore constitutive of) state interests themselves. In this manner, normativists argue that international-organizational behavior is driven, in part, by the underlying patterns of normative consensus in a given community (including, for example, international regimes). IOs can thus act with considerable autonomy and causal significance.<sup>11</sup>

In important respects the OAS represents an ideal test case for assessing these broad theoretical claims about international organizations and international politics. To begin, the OAS is clearly dominated by a regional hegemon, the United States. In addition to being the hemisphere’s most commanding military and economic power, the United States contributes approximately 60 percent of the \$80 million in the regular OAS budget (excluding some \$11 million in voluntary funds, of which the United States contributes approximately \$7 million).<sup>12</sup> U.S. hegemony, nevertheless, is coupled with a clear normative commitment to democracy in the hemisphere, made explicit in the mandate of Resolution 1080. The OAS thus offers a compelling test case for assessing realist and normativist propositions about hegemonic power and IO behavior.

### Hypotheses

Realism and normativism each generate different hypotheses to explain the conditions under which the OAS would intercede to protect and/or restore democracy in a member state (see Figure 2). Realists, for instance, would expect the OAS to intervene only in cases that clearly advance the strategic interests of the regional hegemon, the United States. A realist would furthermore expect the United States to dictate the terms under which intervention would take place—even if the final outcome were multilateral in nature. For normativists, on the other hand, international values can lead states to act against their own narrow interests and on behalf of a greater normative good. As Thomas M. Franck argues, “Both textually and in practice, the international system is moving toward a clearly designated democratic entitlement, with national governance validated by international standards and systematic monitoring of compliance.”<sup>13</sup> Normative scholars thus emphasize the power of the democratic ideal and would expect a strong and unified OAS response to any democratic crisis.

**Figure 2 The OAS: Behavioral Hypotheses**

Theories of International Organizations		
	Realism	Normativism
Conditions Under Which the OAS Would Intervene to Protect Democracy	Response is case-specific: OAS intervenes only when U.S. strategic interests are advanced.	Response is norm-induced: OAS intervenes whenever the democracy "regime" is threatened.
Nature of OAS Intervention	U.S.-dominated response.	Multilateral consensus among member states.

### Case Studies

To adjudicate between these competing hypotheses, I analyze all of the existing democratic crises that have induced an OAS response pursuant to Resolution 1080. In chronological order, the cases include coups in Haiti (1991), Peru (1992), and Guatemala (1993) as well as the civil-military crisis in Paraguay (1996).<sup>14</sup> While these four countries are relatively small and economically undeveloped in relation to the larger states of the Americas, the response of the OAS to each of these crises varied considerably; the sample of cases thus provides substantial variation in the dependent variable of interest (that is, the nature of OAS intervention).<sup>15</sup> In assessing each case, I adopt the approach formulated by Audie Klotz in her study of norms of racial equality; namely, I regard material self-interest (in particular, that of the United States) as a baseline from which to assess *how much* international norms impact IO behavior.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Haiti 1991: Intervention Without Interest*

The resolve of the OAS to protect democracy in the Americas was put to the test just four months after the Santiago meeting. On 30 September 1991, the Haitian military, led by General Raoul Cédras, overthrew Haiti's first elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The situation was critical as the military not only forced Aristide into exile but also gunned down pro-Aristide demonstrators in Port-au-Prince.

Within days of the coup, OAS foreign ministers met pursuant to Resolution 1080 and swiftly decided to recognize Aristide as the only legitimate leader of Haiti. The ministers also recommended that Haiti be diplomatically and economically isolated. After brief and failed negotiations

with the Haitian military, the OAS imposed a trade embargo on Haiti (beginning 8 October 1991) and later recommended the freezing of Haitian assets. The ruling junta nevertheless remained obstinate and refused to recognize Aristide. In December 1992, OAS ministers began discussing tougher measures, including the possibility of taking the case to the United Nations (UN) to achieve a universal embargo and possibly initiate military intervention. Later, in June 1993, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 841, which imposed a global oil and arms embargo on Haiti and declared the country a threat to international peace.

The strong resolve of the OAS and the UN brought the Haitian military to sign a compromise pact, the Governor's Island Accord of 3 July 1993.<sup>17</sup> Yet the Haitian military again faltered as an angry mob turned away the U.S.-Canadian mission aboard the USS *Harlan County*. The UN responded with renewed sanctions, including a naval blockade. Later, in a landmark resolution in July 1994 (UN SC Res. 940), the United Nations Security Council authorized the use of a multinational force to intervene in Haiti to restore Aristide using "all necessary means."<sup>18</sup> On 19 September 1994, some 20,000 U.S. troops landed in Haiti. The Haitian military finally capitulated and Aristide was peacefully restored to power in October 1994; the embargo was at last lifted. A presidential decree by Aristide in March 1995 later disbanded 7,000 soldiers of the Haitian armed forces. At the conclusion of Aristide's term, Prime Minister Rene Préval was elected for a five-year term, starting in early February 1996.<sup>19</sup>

From a theoretical perspective, intervention in Haiti begs two important questions: were there strategic interests at stake in Haiti for the United States, and was action costly? The high costs of intervention and the low strategic interests at stake suggest that a normative commitment to democracy may have been the driving force behind OAS action. Indeed, being the poorest state in the hemisphere, with a per capita GNP well below \$1,000, Haiti's democratic crisis did not pose any serious strategic threat to any of the major powers in the Americas, not least the United States.<sup>20</sup> U.S. trade interests in Haiti were likewise minuscule. Furthermore, U.S. intervention on behalf of Haiti was all the more unlikely given Aristide's anti-imperialist rhetoric and promulgation of liberation theology. One might argue, however, that strategic interests were at stake with respect to the reputation of the United States; failure to act would profoundly delegitimize the Santiago commitment to democracy and, ultimately, undermine U.S. policy toward nondemocratic Cuba. However, it is unclear to what extent U.S. reputation was really at stake in Haiti; in relation to U.S. policy toward Cuba, there was already a widespread view in the United Nations that the U.S. trade em-

bargo toward Cuba was in fact *not* legitimate.<sup>21</sup> One might furthermore argue that the United States intervened on behalf of strategic *domestic* interests, namely preventing thousands of Haitian "boat people" from flooding U.S. shores. While this point cannot be easily dismissed, one must question whether OAS (and later UN) action was truly commensurate with the supposed threat of economic migration; U.S. intervention, after all, merely dampened—but did not stop—the flow of migrants from Haiti to the United States.<sup>22</sup> In summary, following the premises of realist theory, there is scant evidence to suggest that intervening in Haiti advanced vital U.S. interests.

One must furthermore ask whether or not the actions implemented by the OAS (and made global by the UN) were truly costly to the United States. The answer is clearly yes. Besides the costs of implementing an embargo, the United States committed some 20,000 soldiers to a potentially unstable and risky intervention. Moreover, the OAS and UN missions bore a significant price tag—on the order of \$400 million.<sup>23</sup> In short, the high costs of intervention and the low strategic interests at stake suggest that a normative commitment to democracy was a driving force behind IO action.

Nevertheless, can one conclude that normative factors were indeed decisive and that the OAS initiated action only in the name of democracy? Ultimately, the lack of consensus among member states and the actual nature of OAS actions indicate several limitations to a strictly normative interpretation of events. In particular, OAS policies were undermined by a lack of consensus among member states, including the region's largest powers. First, U.S. policy of repatriating Haitian boat people as economic (as opposed to political) migrants undermined the normative claim made by the OAS that the Haitian military regime was indeed politically repressive.<sup>24</sup> Equally significant, Brazil registered its disapproval when ministers within the OAS sought to take the case to the United Nations Security Council and sanction intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Brazil, arguably, was not willing to treat Haiti's democratic breakdown as if it were a security threat because of the possible implications of such a move for human rights and environmental policies in the hemisphere.<sup>25</sup> Brazil awkwardly joined China in abstaining from the vote on UN Resolution 940. National interests thus undermined OAS resolve in defending the democratic norm. A normative interpretation of Haitian intervention is also contradicted by the nature of the intervention itself. In particular, the United States played a dominant role, single-handedly directing the military occupation of Haiti. In accord with realist predictions, the problem of collective action (intervention) was solved through U.S. hegemony rather than through

broad hemispheric cooperation. What is most challenging from a realist perspective, however, is that the United States intervened at all.

*Peru 1992: Intervention Against Interest*

On 5 April 1992, Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori nullified Congress, displaced the judiciary, and announced the suspension of key civil liberties. Several opposition leaders were arrested. As in the case of Haiti, OAS ministers met within days to discuss the situation and on 13 April passed a resolution urging the restoration of democratic institutions in Peru. In addition, the OAS appointed a special mission to travel to Peru and mediate between Fujimori and opposition forces. The mission was also instructed to report back to the OAS by 23 May as to whether further action, including human rights monitoring, was necessary. Although there was no forceful call for a general trade embargo, many countries cut aid to Peru. The United States, for example, suspended nonhumanitarian economic aid to Peru and successfully lobbied to suspend some \$2.5 billion in pending loans to Peru.

The next month Fujimori surprised his opponents when he made a personal appearance at the second ad hoc meeting of OAS foreign ministers on Peru, held in Nassau, Bahamas. Fearing international isolation, Fujimori announced a compromise path: he would hold parliamentary elections instead of a personal plebiscite. The OAS ultimately endorsed this plan (called the Bahamas Resolution) on 18 May 1992 and later monitored the constituent elections on 22 November 1992. In early 1993, Peru was returned to good standing in the OAS.<sup>26</sup> But despite Peru's return to good standing, the OAS did not fundamentally alter Fujimori's usurpation of power. With the compromise solution presented at Nassau, Fujimori prevented the suspension of critical international credits while simultaneously positioning himself to control the constitution-writing process.<sup>27</sup> Relying on his domestic popularity, Fujimori resisted making concessions to the opposition even though he was accused of frequent human rights abuses.

As in the Haitian case, a theoretical analysis of OAS intervention in Peru requires an evaluation of the strategic interests at stake and the costs of intervention. Unlike the Haitian case, important security issues *were* at stake in Peru. In the first place, Peru is a key producer of raw coca in the hemispheric drug trade—accounting for a significant portion of the raw coca that makes it to the United States after being processed in Colombia. U.S. security interests were thus directly tied to the Peruvian regime. Moreover, Fujimori had shown strong resolve in combating drug production and countering the guerrilla threat posed by the Maoist

Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). Realist theory would thus predict a more cautious OAS policy, since U.S. drug enforcement efforts were of greater strategic interest to the United States than Peruvian democracy *per se*.<sup>28</sup> A second strategic factor is that Peru is located within a zone of geopolitical conflict; border skirmishes between Peru and Ecuador posed a potential threat to the stability of disputed areas in Chile and along the vast Amazonian border of Brazil.

Security factors may have restrained the OAS's response toward Peru, but the fact that the OAS intervened at all lends credibility to the notion of a growing hemispheric obligation to defend democracy. Indeed, while the United States had no intention of breaking diplomatic relations with Peru, U.S. economic influence was decisive in pushing Fujimori toward a compromise solution. In other words, the United States appeared willing to initiate potentially costly action *even though its strategic interests would have dictated otherwise*—that is, even at the risk of alienating an important (and indeed effective) partner in the war against drugs. Clearly normative factors shaped the U.S. perception that Fujimori's threat to democracy was no less important than his cooperation in the hemispheric drug war. As in the case of Haiti, then, the evidence lends credibility to a normative explanation of *why* the OAS intervenes. However, underscoring the importance of hegemonic power as regards *how* the OAS intervenes, the United States once again played a dominant role in bringing Fujimori to the bargaining table.

#### *Guatemala 1993 and Paraguay 1996: Intervention Without Cost!*

On 25 May 1993, President Jorge Serrano Elías of Guatemala attempted to replicate Fujimori's self-coup experiment. Serrano dissolved Congress, dismissed the courts, and announced the suspension of the constitution. In contrast to Peru, however, Serrano's acts were answered with strong domestic opposition—as well as clear indications from the international community that Guatemala would face political isolation and economic sanctions if a democratic solution to the crisis were not found. Actors within the government and Guatemalan civil society openly defied Serrano's mandates. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the Court of Constitutionality, and the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman refused to cooperate, and the Guatemalan media mocked Serrano's calls for state censorship.

Moreover, the international community reacted with firm opposition to Serrano's conduct. The OAS Permanent Council met immediately and called for an emergency meeting of foreign ministers. An OAS mission

to Guatemala led by Secretary-General João Baena Soares of Brazil also made it clear that the Serrano regime would confront serious international repercussions, including economic sanctions, if democracy were not restored through institutional means. Baena met not only with opposition groups but also with the military high command. Meanwhile, the United States reacted by unilaterally suspending aid; a day after the coup, the U.S. State Department warned that a \$67 million aid package for Guatemala might be withheld. Moreover, U.S. trade representative Mickey Kantor suggested that Guatemala's critical duty-free privileges under the Generalized System of Preferences might be suspended.<sup>29</sup>

Spurred on by the posture of the international community, Guatemalan civil leaders organized the *Instancia Nacional de Consenso* to coordinate their support for a democratic solution to the crisis. Responding to the threat of lost trade privileges and a falling currency, many Guatemalan business elites joined the prodemocracy movement. With the final withdrawal of the military's support, Serrano fled into exile on 1 June. The *Instancia* not only rejected Serrano's self-coup but also attempts by his vice-president, Gustavo Espina, to assume office. Ultimately, the movement succeeded in catapulting the attorney general for human rights, Ramiro de León Carpio, into the presidency (by vote of a constitutionally mandated congressional election). The crisis was all but over by the expiration of the ten-day mandate provided for by Resolution 1080.

In several ways, the case of Paraguay in 1996 parallels that of Guatemala in 1993. In February 1989, military strongman General Alfredo Stroessner was ousted by an army coup that eventually ushered in a liberalization of the long-standing authoritarian regime. In 1993, Juan Carlos Wasmosy became Paraguay's first-ever civilian president selected in a free and fair election (monitored by the OAS). However, on 22 April 1996, when Wasmosy called for the resignation of army commander General Lino César Oviedo, the general refused to comply. Heading Paraguay's most powerful branch of the armed forces and commanding considerable influence in Paraguay's Colorado Party, Oviedo threatened to invade the presidential palace.

Within hours of the crisis, OAS secretary-general César Gaviria Trujillo traveled to Paraguay where he encouraged Wasmosy not to back down to Oviedo's threats. At the same time, Lawrence Chewning Fábrega, Panamanian ambassador and president of the OAS Permanent Council, called for the exercise of Resolution 1080, even though there had been no forcible seizure of power. Within twenty-four hours of the crisis, the OAS unanimously resolved to condemn Oviedo's behavior in accord with the Santiago commitment. International pressure outside the

OAS also played an important role. The U.S. embassy in Asunción was quick to condemn the crisis, and the United States made it clear that it was willing to suspend military aid (and possibly economic aid) if the crisis was not resolved in a democratic fashion. The Brazilian minister, speaking on behalf of the other member states of Mercosur (the Southern Cone Common Market), likewise denounced Oviedo's behavior; Paraguay was threatened with suspension from the trade group.<sup>30</sup>

Initially, President Wasmosy caved in to Oviedo's threats, offering him a position as minister of defense if he would retire his post as army commander. Wasmosy's compromise agreement, however, encountered stiff opposition from Paraguayan civil society as well as from the international community.<sup>31</sup> Emboldened by strong support for a democratic solution to the crisis, Wasmosy withdrew his offer; Oviedo in turn retired his post without a fight. Wasmosy, in short, had successfully reasserted his authority as president. As in Guatemala, then, the crisis in Paraguay ended rapidly and within the ten-day period mandated by Resolution 1080. Oviedo, for his part, was imprisoned and later given a ten-year sentence by a military tribunal.

However, the crisis in Paraguay did not end there. In 1998, an Oviedo-supporter, Raúl Cubas, was elected president and swiftly commuted Oviedo's ten-year sentence to three months. More ominously, in March 1999, Oviedo's main rival within the governing Colorado Party, Vice-President Luis María Argaña, was assassinated. Fearing impeachment and prosecution for orchestrating the assassination, President Cubas and ex-general Oviedo fled the country, and Luis Ángel González Macchi, the head of the senate, assumed the vacated presidency. In a dramatic turn of events one year later (on 18 May 2000), loyalists to Oviedo orchestrated a military coup to depose González: the coup ultimately failed for reasons largely reminiscent of 1996. The OAS Permanent Council "vehemently" condemned the coup, and the representatives of the United States and Brazil warned Paraguay's military high command that they would face "ruinous isolation" (including expulsion from Mercosur) if González were overthrown; the Paraguayan military, after some hesitation, quickly put down the rebellion.<sup>32</sup>

The swiftness and coherence of OAS action in both Guatemala and Paraguay suggests that the organization was indeed motivated by a normative concern for democracy and that the Permanent Council was highly effective in working behind the scenes—perhaps exercising limited autonomy in support of the democratic norm. The OAS clearly played an important role in signaling to domestic actors in both Guatemala and Paraguay that antidemocratic actions would not be tolerated. Moreover, even with few strategic interests at stake, the United States and other re-

gional powers exerted significant economic pressure on each of these countries to fulfill their obligations as OAS member states to uphold representative democracy.

At the same time, however, the actions of the OAS do not seriously challenge a realist interpretation for the basic reason that they did not entail serious costs. In Guatemala, Serrano's unpopular self-coup did little to alter the strategic interests of the United States (except perhaps to worsen them marginally by raising the specter of civil-military conflict in Central America). Condemnation of the regime and suspension of aid were thus low-cost actions with a potential payoff. Similarly, in Paraguay, OAS actions were more symbolic than material, imposing no significant costs on the United States or other regional powers. In both Guatemala and Paraguay, the conflict was ultimately over before OAS resolve was fundamentally challenged.

### Theoretical Conclusions

The OAS response to democratic crises in Haiti, Peru, Guatemala, and Paraguay lends partial support to the idea of a strong democratic norm in the Americas.<sup>33</sup> A normativist perspective is especially appealing when one examines Resolution 1080 in historical perspective. OAS practice in the 1990s clearly departs from that of the 1970s and 1980s when authoritarian regimes were not only widespread but also passively condoned. Consider, for example, how the organization responded to the democratic crisis in Panama, just two years before the Santiago declaration. In the spring of 1989, there simply were no explicit guidelines for the OAS to follow in the event of a democratic crisis such as General Manuel Antonio Noriega's violent nullification of democratic elections (clearly won by his opposition). The OAS, in short, had no clear plan. Impatient with the lack of OAS resolve to take stronger actions, the United States bypassed the organization and unilaterally invaded Panama in December 1989. Two years later, the Haitian case would prove to be different.

In this new democratic era, the OAS has clearly played a significant role in signaling support for democracy to domestic actors. OAS actions in all four cases legitimated domestic opposition movements and delegitimated authoritarian leaders. The OAS Permanent Council also appears to have exercised some institutional autonomy, at least in establishing a clear agenda for action. Even in a poor and strategically insignificant Caribbean state like Haiti, the OAS intervened on behalf of

democracy, working to restore a president with strong anti-imperialist views. Moreover, whereas in Haiti the OAS intervened in the absence of vital U.S. interests, in Peru the OAS intervened *in spite of* such a threat. In short, a normative commitment to democracy appears to be a compelling explanation for *why* the OAS has intervened in recent democratic crises.

On the other hand, a realist perspective appears better equipped to explain *how* the OAS intervenes. In particular, the regional hegemon, the United States, clearly dominated the agenda when costly actions were deemed necessary. Instead of the type of OAS intervention one would expect from a strictly normative perspective (that is, multilateral coordination among regional powers), it was U.S. hegemony that solved the collective action problem of coordinating political, economic, and especially military resources. Furthermore, OAS actions have often inspired significant dissent among regional powers, particularly Brazil and Mexico (and, more recently, Venezuela).<sup>34</sup>

Finally, as regards *when* the OAS intervenes, a critical caveat must be added to the argument that the OAS is guided by a strong normative commitment to "democracy." While the language of Resolution 1080 and the Washington protocol is explicit when one considers the sudden overthrow of a democratic government by force, the OAS's mandate is less clear as regards more subtle threats to the democratic process, such as constitutional irregularities or electoral fraud. Dubious measures taken by Ecuador's congress to remove President Abdala Bucaram in February 1997 and threats made by Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez to dissolve congress in April 1999 prompted scant reaction by the OAS. In recent elections in Peru (April–May 2000) and Haiti (May 2000), moreover, OAS election monitors noted significant irregularities—but the Permanent Council failed to invoke Resolution 1080 or contemplate significant sanctions against either country (although the United States in each case exerted unilateral pressure by withholding aid).<sup>35</sup> Moreover, while the recent adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter aims to surmount some of these ambiguities by calling for OAS action in the event of an "unconstitutional alteration of the constitutional regime," it remains to be seen what this contentious statement will mean in practice. As the recent cases of Peru and Haiti ultimately suggest, there is limited consensus among member states as to how the OAS's democratic mandate should be applied to democratic crises that are beyond the scope of coups and self-coups. 🌐

## Notes

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1. Organization of American States Charter as amended by the Protocol of Managua, adopted on 10 June 1993.

2. The move toward greater hemispheric cooperation in the 1990s was also reinforced by the gradual democratization and economic liberalization of Latin America and by concomitant changes in policy outlook; for a persuasive account of these changes, see especially Javier Corrales and Richard E. Feinberg, "Regimes of Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere: Power, Interests, and Intellectual Traditions," *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (March 1999): 1–36, especially 26–28.

3. OAS General Assembly Resolution 1080: Representative Democracy, AG/RES. 1080 (XXI-0/91), adopted by the OAS General Assembly at the fifth plenary session, Washington, D.C., 5 June 1991.

4. The Protocol of Washington, adopted by the 16th Special Session of the OAS General Assembly on 14 December 1992.

5. The Democratic Charter was largely an outgrowth of the Third Summit of the Americas held in Quebec in April 2001. During the summit, the institutional scope of the hemispheric commitment to democracy was significantly extended: a democracy clause was established, making democracy a conditional prerequisite to a state's participation in the summit process and in the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

6. Heraldo Muñoz, "Collective Action for Democracy in the Americas," in Heraldo Muñoz and Joseph S. Tulchin, eds., *Latin American Nations in World Politics* (Boulder: Westview, 1996), pp. 17–34.

7. While these two theoretical perspectives are not exhaustive of all possible explanations of IO behavior, the predictions of realism and normativism bring into sharp focus the central issue of interest here: whether OAS action is motivated primarily by strategic or by normative factors. For a similar (but not equivalent) theoretical distinction, see Robert Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches," in Friedrich Kratochwil and Edward Mansfield, eds., *International Organization: A Reader* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), pp. 44–61.

8. Perceived neutrality arguably allows for greater efficiency in serving selfish interests through enhanced legitimacy. See Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 1 (1998): 3–32.

9. See John Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (1994–1995): 5–49.

10. On the role of norms in international relations, see especially Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer, and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chap. 5; and Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (January 1998): 324–348.

11. See, for example, Klotz, *Norms in International Relations*; and Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

12. The four other regional powers—Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and Mexico—account for just over 30 percent of the remaining contributions.

13. Thomas M. Frank, "The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance," *American Journal of International Law* 86, no. 1 (January 1992): 46–91.

14. This is not to imply that other countries have not experienced significant democratic crises since the Santiago declaration. For instance, a short-lived coup overthrew the democratically elected president of Ecuador in January 2000 and was unanimously condemned by the OAS in Permanent Council Resolution 763 (1220/00). Venezuela (first under President Carlos Andrés Pérez in 1992 and, later, under former coup-plotter President Hugo Chávez) was also beset by executive crises of varying severity. Among the cases of OAS intervention, moreover, Haiti, Peru, and Paraguay have all experienced renewed threats to democracy, as discussed below.

15. Still, as discussed below, the Guatemalan and Paraguayan cases exhibit important similarities.

16. Klotz, *Norms in International Relations*, pp. 13–14.

17. According to the accord, Aristide would be returned to power on 30 October 1993, and a prime minister designated by Aristide, Robert Malval, would assume office. Additionally, Cédras would resign from the army and a UN mission would be established to modernize the Haitian military and police. In return, the sanctions would be lifted.

18. It is worth emphasizing that there is a clear connection between the earlier actions of the OAS and the later actions of the UN. Former U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright recently remarked that "if the OAS had not acted, we would never have gained UN Security Council approval for a multinational force" (quoted in *OAS News*, March–April 2001, p. 2). The interplay between OAS and UN policy is discussed in greater detail in David Malone, *Decision-Making in the UN Security Council: The Case of Haiti, 1990–1997* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

19. Aristide succeeded Préval in February 2001 after a landslide electoral victory in November 2000. While ostensibly a victory for Haitian democracy, local and presidential elections in the year 2000 were marred by irregularities (see conclusion below).

20. Most Americans agreed; a *Washington Post/ABC News* poll in 1994 found that only 38 percent felt vital national interests were at stake in Haiti. See "Public Support for U.S. Action in Haiti Appears Malleable," *Christian Science Monitor*, 1 August 1994, p. 19.

21. Moreover, the significance of such reputational interests lends equal credibility to the normativist thesis that legitimacy and norms affect the perceptions of state interests and, ultimately, guide IO action.

22. Additionally, if we suppose that domestic politics were ultimately driving U.S. behavior, this clearly undermines realist suppositions that international structure drives foreign policy.

23. More recent figures put the total price tag to the United States at \$2.2 billion (see "Aristide Once Again, in Haiti," *The Economist*, 30 December 2000, p. 39).

24. President Bush's repatriation policy was made effective 24 May 1992. President Clinton, after campaigning against this stance, later continued it. U.S. policy in this case arguably reflects domestic political considerations (given the electoral significance of Florida).

25. See Richard J. Bloomfield, "Making the Western Hemisphere Safe for Democracy? The OAS Defense-of-Democracy Regime," *Washington Quarterly* 17 (1994): 157–169.

26. Peru's good standing in the OAS unraveled in 1999 and 2000, starting with Fujimori's rejection of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 1999, the election fiasco of April/May 2000 (see conclusion below), and the ensuing corruption scandal involving Fujimori's spy chief, Vladimiro Montesinos.

27. In elections for the Constituent Congress (November 1992), Fujimori's party won forty-four of the eighty seats; two established Peruvian political parties, the Popular Action (AP) Party and the American Popular Revolutionary Party (APRA), refused to participate in the elections. The new constitution was ratified by popular referendum the following October.

28. This policy preference had already been demonstrated by the passage of President George Bush's 1989 "Andean Initiative," which authorized the disbursement of substantial military aid to Peru despite questions about democracy and human rights practices.

29. "Guatemalans and U.S. Put Pressure on President to Restore Democracy," *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 May 1993, p. 7.

30. At the time, Mercosur did not contain an explicit provision regarding the maintenance of democracy and membership; however, such a clause was added some two months after the Paraguayan crisis.

31. Arturo Valenzuela, "Paraguay: The Coup that Didn't Happen," *Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 1 (1997): 43–55.

32. See OAS Permanent Council Resolution 770 (1235/00), 19 May 2000; "Paraguay Renegades Get Stern Warnings," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 20 May 2000, p. A26; and "Paraguay: Cavalry Charge," *The Economist*, 25 May 2000, p. 38.

33. This normative commitment to democracy, it bears emphasizing, reflects two distinct but related processes. On the one hand, there has been a genuine normative shift in the policy preferences of the United States (and in varying degrees, the other member states of the OAS) in support of democracy. On the other hand, the consensually adopted procedures of the OAS have increased the institutional autonomy of the Permanent Council and other OAS bodies (such as the UPD) to initiate action on behalf of the democratic norm.

34. On the conflicting roles played by the "intermediate" regional powers in the OAS, see especially Andrew F. Cooper and Thomas Legler, "The OAS Democratic Solidarity Paradigm: Questions of Collective and National Leadership," *Latin American Politics and Society* 43, no. 1 (spring 2001): 103–126, especially 113–119.

35. In the case of Haiti, the Permanent Council, on 15 March 2001, issued a resolution expressing concern but did not take more aggressive action. In the case of Peru, U.S. ambassador Luis Lauro initially called on the OAS to invoke Resolution 1080, but he withdrew the idea once it became clear it would

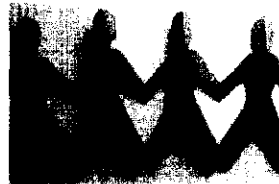
not pass (see "OAS Opposes Condemning Peru Election; U.S. Fails to Muster Support Against Vote," *Washington Post*, 1 June 2000, p. A15). For a more detailed discussion of the OAS mission to Peru, see Andrew Cooper and Thomas F. Legler, "A Model for the Future? OAS in Peru," *Journal of Democracy* 12, no. 4 (October 2001): 123-136.



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