Democratization and International Organizations

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Abstract International organizations (IOs) have become increasingly pervasive features of the global landscape. While the implications of this development have been studied extensively, relatively little research has examined the factors that prompt states to enter IOs. We argue that democratization is an especially potent impetus to IO membership. Democratizing countries are likely to enter IOs because leaders have difficulty credibly committing to sustain liberal reforms and the consolidation of democracy. Chief executives often have an incentive to solidify their position during democratic transitions by rolling back political liberalization. Entering an IO can help leaders in transitional states credibly commit to carry out democratic reforms, especially if the organization is composed primarily of democratic members. Tests of this hypothesis, based on a new data set of IOs covering the period from 1965 to 2000, confirm that democratization spurs states to join IOs.

In recent years, international organizations (IOs) have become increasingly pervasive features of the global landscape. Both the number of such organizations and the range of issue-areas they cover have grown rapidly. The implications of this development have been studied extensively and hotly debated in the field of international relations. Whereas some researchers believe that IOs have little effect on state behavior, many observers argue that the proliferation of these institutions will facilitate interstate cooperation and help to resolve the interstate conflicts that do arise.[1] In contrast, relatively little research has been conducted on the factors that prompt states to enter IOs. This gap in the literature is both surprising and important. While many countries have rushed to join IOs, others participate in few of these organizations. What determines the propensity of states to join IOs?

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1. See Gilpin 1981; Keohane 1984; Mearsheimer 1994/95; Keohane and Martin 1995; Russett and Oneal 2001.

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We argue that changes in a state's regime type are crucially important in this regard. Countries undergoing a democratic transition are especially likely to enter IOs because leaders have difficulty credibly committing to sustain liberal reforms and the consolidation of democracy. Chief executives often have an incentive to solidify their position during democratic transitions by rolling back political liberalization. Entering an IO can help leaders in transitional states credibly commit to carry out democratic reforms and can reduce the prospect of reversions to authoritarianism, especially if the organization is composed primarily of democratic members.

To test this claim, we examine whether regime change has influenced IO membership from 1965 to 2000. Consistent with our argument, we find strong evidence that democratic transitions prompt states to enter these organizations. Furthermore, states in the throes of democratization tend to join IOs composed of democratic members; and the likelihood that a democratizing state will subsequently backslide in an autocratic direction is reduced if it enters a relatively democratic organization. Consequently, political liberalization and IO membership seem to go hand in hand.

Why Do States Enter International Organizations?

IOs are "associations established by governments or their representatives that are sufficiently institutionalized to require regular meetings, rules governing decision-making, a permanent staff, and a headquarters."[2] Since membership in such an organization may limit the policy discretion of national leaders, why would decision makers choose to join one? Most of the existing research on this topic emphasizes that states enter these arrangements to help solve coordination problems, to prompt third parties to change particular policies, or to help enforce bargains.[3] Moreover, most of this work has evolved in the fields of international political economy and security studies. Traditional work in the field of international organization still describes the role of IOs as pursuing "common or converging national interests of the member states."[4] The primary purpose of IOs, for the vast majority of this literature, is to resolve cross-border issues that cannot otherwise be addressed domestically.[5]

Our contention, however, is that a key impetus to IO membership emanates from the domestic political arena, particularly from transitions toward democracy. This is not to imply that international factors are unimportant influences on IO membership, as we discuss at greater length below. Nonetheless, states frequently join

2. Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996, 593.
3. Martin 1992.
4. Feld and Jordan, with Hurwitz, 1994, 10.
5. See Archer 1992, 48; Abbott and Snidal 1998.

international institutions with an eye toward domestic politics, an issue that has received very little attention to date.

The scholarship that does exist on the domestic sources of IO membership focuses primarily on regional organizations.[6] Moreover, little of this research addresses the effect of regime type; virtually none of it addresses the influence of regime change. Some studies have analyzed the relationship between regime type and membership in political-military alliances, but the results have not produced any consensus on the nature or the strength of this relationship.[7] Other research has focused on the links between regime type and organizations that monitor and regulate foreign trade. Mansfield, Milner, and Rosendorff, for example, found that democratic states are especially likely to enter preferential trading arrangements (PTAs).[8] However, alliances and PTAs make up only a small portion of IOs; indeed, many alliances (for example, nonaggression pacts) would not qualify as an IO at all.

The most direct analysis of regime type and IO membership was undertaken by Jacobson and his colleagues.[9] They found that democracy promotes IO membership, but that democratization reduces the rate at which states enter international institutions. However, the strength of democracy's effect varied depending on how their statistical model was specified and their research was based on only two years of data.[10] Russett and Oneal concluded that democracy has fostered IO involvement during the period since World War I, although the magnitude of democracy's effect is quite small.[11] Moreover, as they pointed out, their analysis of IO membership was rather cursory.

Democratization and IO Membership

The aim of this article is to provide a more systematic analysis of whether democratization influences the propensity of states to join IOs. The past three decades have been marked by a wave of democratization: dozens of countries throughout the world have undergone transitions to democracy.[12] This development has stimulated a large body of research, but little of it addresses the foreign policy implications of such transitions. Our central argument is that democratization is a potent impetus to IO membership. A key problem for democratizing countries is the difficulty that leaders face in credibly committing to sustain domestic reforms. Heads of state may have reason to solidify their hold on power during the transition by

6. See, for example, Busch and Milner 1994; Solingen 1994; Milner 1997.
7. See Siverson and Emmons 1991; Simon and Gartzke 1996.
8. Mansfield, Milner, and Rosendorff 2002.
9. See Jacobson, Reisinger, and Mathers 1986; Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996.
10. Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996, 613.
11. Russett and Oneal 2001, 216–17. See also Russett, Oneal, and Davis 1998.
12. Huntington 1991.

canceling elections, suspending reforms, reneging on promises, or even cracking down on potential antiregime forces. Some of these tactics may stem from a desire to consolidate political power at the expense of reform, but it is also possible that the lack of a perceived commitment to liberalization itself hampers reform. Entering IOs can help leaders in transitional states to make a credible commitment to sustain democratic reforms.

The credibility problems faced by democratizing states emanate from the uncertainty that accompanies a democratic transition. In some cases, leaders in nascent democracies limit reform, consolidate their personal power, or attempt to distort and weaken emerging democratic institutions, limiting the consolidation of democracy.[13] In others, leaders are sincere in their efforts to forge and consolidate democracy. The problem is that neither domestic nor international audiences can be certain about which type of leader they are facing. Such uncertainty arises from multiple sources.

First, some transitional governments initiate reforms that they have no intention of completing, especially if incomplete reforms yield rents for key constituencies or create institutions that solidify the leader's hold on power.[14] Since transitional governments are new, observers have difficulty determining whether such a government will sincerely attempt to complete the reforms that it launches. More generally, transitional regimes face reputational problems, including the prospect that they lack restraint and cannot be trusted to honor commitments.[15] In contrast to established regimes, transitional governments do not have an established track record of honoring or violating policy commitments, prompting considerable uncertainty about their reliability. Compounding this problem is that during many transitions, groups that rise to power alter policies and institutions to suit their purposes.[16] This, in turn, undermines the credibility of any commitment they make not to further shift policies and institutions in the posttransition period.

Second, transitional regimes may have time-inconsistent preferences. A regime's optimal policy *ex ante* may differ from its evaluations of proper policy *ex post*.[17] Governments that come to power with the aim of promoting and sustaining political liberalization may find that incentives exist to reverse reforms. Although this problem is not limited to new democracies, the instability of such countries and the high rate of turnover in their leadership exacerbate the probability of *ex post* policy reversals.[18] Leaders in nascent democracies would benefit from the ability to tie their hands by creating a mechanism that increases the cost of *ex post* policy changes.

13. Valenzuela 1992.
14. Hellman 1998.
15. See Linz 1978; Diermeier et al. 1997.
16. Whitehead 1989, 78.
17. Rodrik 1989a.
18. See O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 66; Calvo and Frenkel 1991.

The inability of democratizing states to make credible commitments can generate various problems. Elites often distrust one another in the transitional period and fear that the new regime will not serve their interests.[19] More generally, if the population does not believe that announced political reform efforts are sincere, it is unlikely to support the new regime. This lack of support from society can jeapordize democratic consolidation.[20] Some groups may actively oppose the regime, even turning to violent measures or allying with other disaffected groups in society. The lack of societal support can also lead the government to take actions that undermine democracy, for example, cracking down on opponents or dismissing the legislature. More generally, as Whitehead points out, "if each political sector concludes that the democratic commitment of the other is lukewarm, this will reduce the motivation of all, and so perpetuate the condition of fragility."[21]

Furthermore, the inability of transitional states to make credible commitments can cause economic harm. Firms and financial institutions may be reluctant to invest in or aid democratizing countries that are unable to demonstrate that they will follow through on political liberalization and enact sound economic policy.[22] In fact, if economic actors believe that reform is ephemeral, they are likely to take actions that distort markets and damage a country's economic performance.[23] Leaders who wish to liberalize can benefit from a mechanism that ties their hands, provides information about their policy goals, and distinguishes them from leaders who want to use the rhetoric of reform to accrue power without genuine liberalization.

Membership in IOs can help the leader of a democratizing country credibly commit to reform efforts by establishing a mechanism that increases the cost of deviating from these efforts and backsliding. This mechanism stems from information provided by the organization about members' actions, conditions imposed by the organization for new members, and the reputational impact of violating an IO's rules. Accepting conditionality heightens the credibility of a democratizing regime's commitment to reform, because monitoring and enforcement are handled by a third party with the ability to publicly sound an alarm in the event that reform efforts falter.[24]

In addition, the costs associated with membership (fulfilling the initial conditions as well as the traditional costs of membership) lend credibility to the regime's commitment to the IO by conveying to domestic and international audiences that its accession is not "cheap talk." The IO-imposed conditions also raise the costs of limiting reform because any reversal can jeopardize the benefits stemming from

19. Burton, Gunther, and Higley 1992.
20. Mainwaring 1992.
21. Whitehead 1989, 94.
22. See Rodrik 1989a; Frye 1997.
23. See Calvo 1986; Rodrik 1989b, 756.
24. Conditions and conditionality refer to any terms of joining an organization, including the terms of economic arrangements that a state may join.

membership in the organization. Equally, membership can create expectations about the behavior of a democratizing regime (regardless of whether the institution sets conditions for membership), generating audience costs for the government if these expectations are not met.[25] In this vein, Moravcsik argues that the origins of the European Convention on Human Rights "lie in self-interested efforts by newly established (or reestablished) democracies to employ international commitments to consolidate democracy—'locking in' the domestic political status quo against their nondemocratic opponents."[26] Similarly, observers of the Council of Europe have suggested that Council membership for postcommunist countries can be viewed "as a way of positively 'locking' a country into an intergovernmental democratic network, with its binding international conventions and treaties, so as to protect it more effectively from its own antidemocratic enemies within."[27] Indeed, the then-Secretary General of the Council, Daniel Tarchys, suggested that although Central and Eastern European states did not have spotless records of democracy when admitted to the Council, the commitments accompanying Council membership would expand and solidify democracy in those states.[28]

In addition, various IOs require participants to adhere to practices that are likely to ease tensions among competing groups within a democratizing country. For example, the European Union (EU) stipulates that members must respect property rights. As Whitehead argues, this requirement has "offered critical external guarantees to the business and propertied classes of southern Europe."[29] This was especially true in Spain and Portugal, where economic elites initially had been quite hostile to democracy.[30] For Spanish elites, who were a potential obstacle to democracy, the stipulations of the European Economic Community "provided guarantees and reassurances to those who faced the postauthoritarian future with apprehension."[31] In Central Europe, the commitments made under the auspices of the EU (mostly through Association Agreements) have been equally important. Pridham notes that even that in the absence of full EU membership, "the general recognition given to Eastern and Central European governments as European partners by the EU and its member states . . . is both a means of confidence building for new democratic elites but is also likely to promote the credibility and legitimacy of democratic institutions in these countries, assuming that national publics are broadly favorable to EU entry prospects."[32]

25. Moravcsik 2000, 228.
26. Ibid., 243–44.
27. Pinto 1993, 42.
28. Tarschys 1995, 62–64.
29. Whitehead 1996, 271.
30. See Whitehead 1986; Manuel 1996, 75.
31. Powell 1996, 297.
32. Pridham 2001, 76. Indeed, while there is some variation in public support for EU membership across countries and over time, such support tends to be quite strong. See Henderson 2000, 239; and Haerpfer 2002. In our empirical tests, we consider association status as membership, but do not count observer status.

In some cases, joining an IO can also help a democratizing state send a credible signal to international audiences about its commitment to follow through on political reform. For example, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic formed the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA) in 1991 at least partly to demonstrate to the EU that they were committed to both political and economic liberalization.[33] The EU had demanded that these countries conduct sweeping political and economic reforms before it would consider their applications for membership. Promoting both kinds of liberalization became a cornerstone of CEFTA.

Reneging on conditions set out by an IO can be costly for a democratizing states, serving as a deterrent to influential groups within government that have reason to derail liberal reforms and thus increasing the credibility of commitments to sustain such programs. Violating the terms of membership is likely to lead to a suspension of specific benefits and even risks expulsion from the organization. In fact, IOs do punish violators. For example, the European Community (EC) suspended Greece's associate membership in 1967 after the military came to power.[34] The Organization of American States compelled the leader of a coup in Guatemala to step down after an interruption of democratic rule in 1993.[35]

More recently, the EU "strictly enforced" the conditions of its Association Agreement with Slovakia when President Vladimir Meciar's behavior toward Slovakia's Hungarian minority and his political opponents did not meet EU standards.[36] Not only did Brussels bombard Slovakia with *demarches*, the EU also formally removed Slovakia from its first list of applicant countries. Since Meciar was replaced in October 1998, "EU and NATO entry is the major unifying policy commitment" of the new Dzurinda government.[37] More generally, the EU and especially the Council of Europe has actively enforced its terms of membership, with the Council now issuing public reports on compliance with human rights and democracy commitments at regular intervals.[38]

Of course, there are likely to be some groups in a democratizing society that have no interest in liberalization. Some of them may have the ability to jeopardize the transition. The military, for example, can pose such a threat. It is not unusual for the military's position in society to weaken during a democratic transition.[39] Fortunately, the costs imposed by IOs for reneging on reform apply to these groups as well, discouraging them from attempting to topple a nascent democratic regime. Such a situation materialized in 1996, when Mercosur members convinced would-be perpetrators of a military coup in Paraguay that the costs the organization planned

33. See Kaczurba 1997; Dangerfield 2000.
34. Whitehead 1993, 154.
35. Halperin and Lomasney 1998, 137.
36. Pridham 2001, 87.
37. Ibid., 77.
38. See Klebes 1999, 26–28; Moravcsik 2000.
39. See, for example, Agüero 1995.

to impose if the coup was undertaken would be too high for the junta to bear.[40] This dynamic was an explicit consideration as Greece moved to join the EC. As Greek Foreign Minister Constantine Mitsotakis mentioned in the months before accession:

> Naturally, we do not expect our nine partners in the Community to become the guardians of Greek democracy. By joining a broader group of like-minded Western democracies, however, our own democratic institutions will be reinforced, through constant contact and interchange, but mainly because from now on Greece will share the destiny of its Community partners. . . . They [prospective dictators] are bound to know that the abolition of democracy entails immediate ostracism from the Community. This could have grave internal and external consequences. So, in this respect, the EC is a safe haven.[41]

Even if the conditionality policy of the IO is unclear or there is a possibility of nonenforcement by the organization itself, reneging on international agreements imposes reputational and domestic audience costs on the regime. Concluding an international agreement places a transitional state's reputation on the line. Any reversal, backsliding, or abrogation of its treaty obligations can damage the state's reputation, even if these actions do not elicit sanctions from the organization. Accession itself can be a form of "international recognition of a country's democratic credentials."[42] The domestic audience is likely to be attuned to these issues because association with a highly democratic IO is an early chance to break with the vestiges of an authoritarian past.[43] For Spain, both EC and NATO membership supplied such an opportunity to end its isolation under the Franco regime.[44] As the *Financial Times* reported, "The impact of entry for Spain is mainly psychological, but is by no means a negligible one. Achieving membership was the political equivalent of a doctor's certificate—a sign of acceptance of recognition of Spain as a 'normal' country."[45]

Similarly, in Central and Eastern Europe, joining IOs has been viewed as an important signal to mass publics and a key means to lock in democratic institutions. As one Romanian scholar opined, "I do not, in all fairness, know whether Romania's joining Europe is the only formula for a good future for the Romanians. . . . But it is my strongest belief that Europe is the only strong incentive, for both the political class and the people, to further the democratization of the country."[46]

40. Dominguez 1998.
41. Quoted in Pridham 1991, 226; brackets in original.
42. Klebes 1999, 3.
43. Pridham 1994, 26–27.
44. Story and Pollack 1991, 134.
45. *Financial Times*, 1 December 1986, S1.
46. Pippidi 1999, 148–49.

Thus one strategy for leaders in nascent democracies who want to consolidate democracy is to tie their own hands while sending a costly signal to international and domestic observers that they are serious about political reform. One way to accomplish this goal is by entering an IO. Of course, membership in such organizations is far more likely to achieve this end if the other participants are relatively democratic. A transitional democracy joining the Warsaw Pact, for example, would undoubtedly find that the associated credibility of its commitment to reform is far weaker than a similar state that enters the EU. Nonetheless, we begin with a more general analysis of whether democratization influences IO membership. We then address whether the regime type of existing IO members influences the propensity of democratizing states to join these organizations.

In testing our argument, it will be important to ensure that any observed effect of democratization on IO membership does not stem from a more general tendency for democracies—whether stable or transitional—to enter international institutions. There are various reasons why democracies of all sorts might be drawn to such organizations. Some observers have argued that established democracies tend to join IOs—especially those populated by other democracies—because doing so helps to reinforce and strengthen their democratic institutions.[47] Others have advanced a functionalist explanation, emphasizing that governments join IOs to provide their constituents with benefits that cannot be realized without international collaboration. In order to retain office, leaders in democracies have to be more attentive to constituent demands than their nondemocratic counterparts, giving democratic leaders a particular impetus to enter IOs.[48]

Still another reason why democratic leaders tend to join IOs is that voters have difficulty distinguishing between events that adversely affect the country and that are beyond the leader's control and adverse consequences arising from the leader's poor performance in office. As a result, voters may remove a democratic head of state from office because they believe the leader has done a bad job when in fact this is not the case. Joining an IO can help chief executives to guard against this possibility. Such institutions often are able to furnish reliable information about the behavior of member-states. Countries that violate their commitments to an IO will trip an alarm sounded by other members or the organization itself. By publicizing the actions of democratic leaders, IOs help them to avoid being turned out of office because voters mistakenly believe the leaders have performed poorly. In nondemocracies, by contrast, electoral dynamics are far less important, giving leaders much less incentive to join IOs.[49]

In the following analysis, we will consider the effects of both democracy and democratization on the rate at which states enter IOs in order to ensure that democratization's impact on IO membership is not just an outgrowth of democ-

47. See Risse-Kappen 1995; Russett and Oneal 2001, 213.
48. See Jacobson, Reisinger, and Mathers 1986; Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996.
49. Mansfield, Milner, and Rosendorff 2002.

racy. Our argument is not that democratization is a more important influence on such membership than democracy. Whether that is the case is an empirical matter and we will provide some of the first evidence bearing on it. Rather, our argument is that regardless of whether democracies tend to join international institutions, democratic transitions are an independent impetus to IO membership. We now turn to a test of this argument.

A Statistical Model of IO Membership

To analyze the effects of transitions to democracy on the frequency with which states enter IOs, we estimate the following model:

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta\#\mathrm{IO} = \beta_0 &+ \beta_1\mathrm{DEMOCRATIZATION} + \beta_2\mathrm{AUTOCRATIZATION}\\ &+ \beta_3\mathrm{REGIME\ TYPE} + \beta_4\mathrm{MAJOR\ POWER} + \beta_5\mathrm{INDEPENDENCE}\\ &+ \beta_6\mathrm{FORMER\ COMMUNIST} + \beta_7\mathrm{DISPUTE} + \beta_8\mathrm{HEGEMONY}\\ &+ \beta_9\mathrm{DEVELOPMENT} + \beta_{10}\mathrm{GDP} + \beta_{11}\mathrm{OPENNESS} + \beta_{12}\mathrm{YEAR}\\ &+ \beta_{13}\#\mathrm{IO} + \sum_{i=1}^{6}\beta_i\mathrm{REGION} + \varepsilon \qquad (1)\end{aligned}$$

Our dependent variable, Δ#IO, is the change in the number of IOs to which each state, i, is a party from year t to year $t+1$. We code this variable using the new Intergovernmental Organizations version 2.1 data from the Correlates of War (COW) Project.[50] This data set contains yearly information on IO membership for all members of the interstate system from 1965 to 2000.[51] We create an annual count of all IOs in which state i is a member in year t and again in year $t+1$.[52] The dependent variable is the difference between these yearly counts. There are various cases in the data set where an organization disbands. Under these circumstances, members generally have no choice about whether to exit the IO. Consequently, we do not code states as leaving organizations that fold, although we revisit this issue below.

To test our hypothesis, we include an independent variable indicating whether state i experienced a democratic transition. To construct this variable, we use a 21-point index of regime type developed by Gurr and his colleagues that we refer

50. Pevehouse, Nordstrom, and Warnke 2004. Note that version 2.1 of this data set contains some corrections to version 2.0.

51. Data on IO membership exist before 1965; but from 1815 to 1965, the data are coded in five-year increments, which is not suitable for our analysis.

52. This includes IOs in which state i is an associate member. We exclude IOs where the state is an observer.

to as REGIME TYPE.[53] This index—which is derived using an updated version of the Polity IV data set—ranges from 10 for the most democratic states to -10 for the most autocratic ones.[54] We assess the regime type of state i in year $t - 5$ and then again in year t. Following Jaggers and Gurr, we define countries where REGIME TYPE > 6 as democracies, those where REGIME TYPE < -6 as autocracies, and all remaining countries as incoherent or "anocratic" regimes.[55] DEMOCRATIZATION equals 1 if state i changes from a nondemocratic polity (either autocracy or anocracy) to a democracy or from an autocracy to an anocracy between $t - 5$ and t, 0 otherwise. Our expectation is that the coefficient of DEMOCRATIZATION will be positive, because states undergoing a democratic transition have particular reason to join IOs.

To ensure that the effect of democratization does not reflect a more general tendency for regime change of any sort to influence IO membership, we include AUTOCRATIZATION. This variable equals 1 if state i changes from either a democracy or an anocracy to an autocracy or from a democracy to an anocracy between $t - 5$ and t, 0 otherwise. Equally, to ensure that the influence of democratization does not stem from a more general tendency for democracies to enter IOs at a more rapid clip than other states, we include REGIME TYPE, which is Gurr's 21-point index of state i's regime type in year t. If, in contrast to our argument, the effect of democratization is merely an outgrowth of such a tendency, then the coefficient estimate of REGIME TYPE will be positive and statistically significant and the coefficient estimate of DEMOCRATIZATION will not be statistically significant. Our expectation, however, is that the latter estimate will be positive and significant even after accounting for the influence of REGIME TYPE.

In order to adequately analyze the effect of democratization on changes in IO membership, it is crucial that we control for other factors that also may prompt states to enter or exit international institutions. Five of these factors are political. First, MAJOR POWER is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if state i is considered a great power in year t by the COW Project.[56] Major powers are likely to create and join IOs at a higher rate than weaker states, using these institutions to consolidate their influence and maintain international order.[57] Second, INDEPENDENCE is the number of years that state i has been an independent nation-state, based on the dates of independence furnished by the COW Project.[58] At least one study has concluded that the length of time since statehood shapes a country's propensity to enter IOs.[59] There is also limited evidence that the time since states gained inde-

53. See Gurr 1990; Jaggers and Gurr 1995.
54. See Jaggers and Gurr 1995; Gleditsch 2003; Marshall 2004.
55. Jaggers and Gurr 1995.
56. Singer and Small 1994. During the period we analyze, the major powers were China, France, Great Britain, Russia/Soviet Union, and the United States.
57. See Keohane 1984; and Ikenberry 2001.
58. These dates are compiled by Gleditsch and Ward 1999.
59. Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996.

pendence is correlated with transitions to democracy, suggesting that the variable should be included in our model.[60]

Third, FORMER COMMUNIST is a dummy variable that equals 1 if state *i* was ruled by a communist government during some portion of the period from 1965 to 2000 and it is no longer ruled by this type of government in year *t*. This variable equals 0 otherwise.[61] We analyze FORMER COMMUNIST because a large number of Eastern European countries and former Soviet republics rushed to gain access to Western IOs after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Many of them have also undergone democratic transitions, and it is important to ensure that any observed effect of democratization on IO membership is not being driven by this set of countries alone. Fourth, DISPUTE is the number of Militarized Interstate Disputes (MIDs) involving state *i* that are ongoing in year *t*. We rely on the MID 3.0 data to code this variable.[62] Functionalist and neoliberal arguments suggest that past conflict is likely to stimulate the formation of supranational institutions, as states and societal groups attempt to avert future conflict.[63] On the other hand, participants in an IO may be reluctant to grant membership to a state involved in various interstate disputes, because its belligerence could adversely affect the organization. Further, states embroiled in militarized disputes may focus their foreign policy on resolving these conflicts rather than gaining entry into IOs. Fifth, HEGEMONY measures the relative size of the largest state in the international system. It is calculated by dividing the gross domestic product (GDP) of the largest state in the system (for the entirety of this analysis, the United States) by global GDP in year *t*, using data compiled in the Penn World Table.[64] This measure of hegemony, although somewhat crude, is closely related to that used in many previous studies.[65] Earlier research has found that hegemony influences the formation of IOs as well as patterns of international conflict and cooperation; however, the strength of these relationships remains controversial.[66]

In addition to political factors, we analyze three key aspects of each state's economy. Past research has linked economic wealth and size to both IO membership rates and democratic transitions, so it is important to control for these factors.[67] Consequently, we include DEVELOPMENT, which is country *i*'s per capita GDP in year *t*, and its GDP in *t*. OPENNESS is country *i*'s total foreign trade (imports plus

60. Pevehouse 2005.

61. The communist countries in our sample are Albania (until 1991), Bulgaria (until 1989), Cambodia (1976–90), China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia (until 1989), East Germany (until 1989), Hungary (until 1989), Laos (1975–91), Mongolia (until 1990), North Korea, Poland (until 1989), Romania (until 1988), the Soviet Union (until 1991), Yugoslavia (until 1991), and Vietnam.

62. Ghosn and Bennett 2003.

63. See Deutsch et al. 1957; Haas 1964.

64. Heston, Summers, and Aten 2002.

65. See, for example, Krasner 1976; Russett 1985; McKeown 1991; Mansfield and Busch 1995.

66. See Keohane 1984; Martin 1992; and Mansfield 1994.

67. See Jacobson, Reisinger, and Mathers 1986; Burkhart and Lewis-Beck 1994; Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996.

exports) divided by its GDP in year *t*. There is some evidence that increasing openness increases the propensity for states to join IOs.[68] Furthermore, because the flow of overseas commerce is affected by the regime types of the trading partners, it is important to ensure that any relationship between democratization and IOs is not an outgrowth of international trade.[69]

We also include a trend (YEAR) in the model to ensure that any observed relationship between regime type and IO membership does not stem from the spread of both democracy and international institutions over time.[70] To control for possible "ceiling" or "floor" effects in IO membership, we introduce #IO, which is the total number of IOs that state *i* belongs to in year *t*. As a state participates in a growing number of IOs, the marginal benefit of joining an additional one may decline. Further, the number of existing IOs that a state does not belong to shrinks as it joins more organizations, reducing the number it could join in the future. As such, #IO may be inversely related to the change in IO membership. Alternatively, this relationship may be direct. States that participate in a large number IOs may be "joiners," predisposed to enter many international institutions, whereas those that belong to few IOs may have a general aversion to joining such organizations. Regardless, we need to account for this factor because it is likely to be related to regime change.[71] Equally, because many IOs tend to be regional in nature, patterns of IO membership may be similar within geographic regions.[72] We therefore include regional indicator variables in model (1).[73] Finally, ε is a stochastic error term.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for each of the variables used in this model (as well as some variables analyzed later). To estimate the model, we use ordinary least squares. Tests of statistical significance are based on panel-corrected standard errors, which account for heteroskedastic disturbances and contemporaneous correlation across each panel.[74] We do not adjust for autocorrelation in the data, because we found little evidence of an autoregressive data generating process.

The Results

Table 2 presents the estimates of model (1). As shown in the first column, democratization promotes IO membership.[75] The estimate of DEMOCRATIZATION is

68. See Nye 1988; Yarbrough and Yarbrough 1992; Russett and Oneal 2001.
69. Mansfield, Milner, and Rosendorff 2000. Data on DEVELOPMENT, GDP, and OPENNESS are taken from the Penn World Table. Heston, Summers, and Aten 2002. The first two variables are measured in constant (1995) US dollars.
70. See Huntington 1991; Jaggers and Gurr 1995; Pevehouse, Nordstrom, and Warnke 2004.
71. Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996.
72. Ibid.
73. We use the COW project's definition of geographic regions. See Singer and Small 1994.
74. Beck and Katz 1995.
75. It is important to recognize that our findings are not at odds with recent research indicating that democratization promotes war and that participation in IOs reduces the prospect of conflict. See Rus-

TABLE 1. *Descriptive statistics*

Variable	*Mean*	*SD*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Δ#IO	1.10	1.50	−23	9
REGIME TYPE	−0.27	7.78	−10	10
DEMOCRATIZATION	0.10	0.30	0	1
AUTOCRATIZATION	0.06	0.24	0	1
STABLE DEMOCRACY	0.30	0.46	0	1
STABLE AUTOCRACY	0.37	0.48	0	1
MAJOR POWER	0.04	0.19	0	1
PER CAPITA GDP	6448.04	6342.83	424.28	41354.04
GDP	2.05×10^8	6.38×10^8	3.55×10^5	8.77×10^9
#IO	48.72	20.49	2	130
SATURATION	0.39	0.14	0.02	0.80
OPENNESS	65.31	45.03	2.64	440.50
DISPUTE	0.64	1.29	0	27
HEGEMONY	0.24	0.02	0.21	0.30
YEAR	1982.80	9.89	1965	1999
INDEPENDENCE	52.33	47.60	0	183
FORMER COMMUNIST	0.03	0.18	0	1
DEM LEVEL IO	1.08	4.02	−9.8	10
NORTH AMERICA	0.07	0.26	0	1
SOUTH AMERICA	0.12	0.33	0	1
ASIA	0.16	0.37	0	1
OCEANIA	0.03	0.17	0	1
EUROPE	0.22	0.41	0	1
MIDDLE EAST	0.13	0.34	0	1
AFRICA	0.26	0.44	0	1

Note: N = 4665, except DEM LEVEL IO (N = 3261) and GDP, DEVELOPMENT, and OPENNESS (N = 3687). SD = standard deviation.

positive, statistically significant, and large. States that experienced a democratic transition over the past five years increase their number of IO memberships by 20 percent relative to states that did not undergo a regime change.[76] Moreover, the effects of democratization do not reflect a more general tendency for regime change to promote IO membership. Democratizing countries join nearly 40 percent more

sett and Oneal 2001; Mansfield and Snyder 2005. First, that research emphasizes the conflict-promoting effects of a particular aspect of democratization, namely, transitions that stall before the establishment of a coherent democracy in countries where political institutions are weak. Second, the existing literature focuses on whether the likelihood of conflict between states depends on their participation in IOs, rather than on their initial entry into IOs. Furthermore, there is considerable disagreement about whether IO membership actually inhibits conflict. Some studies have found that IOs increase conflict under certain circumstances; others have found that whether IOs dampen hostilities depends on the type of IO being analyzed. See Kinsella and Russett 2002; Boehmer, Gartzke, and Nordstrom 2004; Pevehouse and Russett forthcoming.

76. We express all marginal effects calculations as the predicted change in IO memberships. To make these calculations, we set all continuous variables to their mean value and all discrete variables to their modal value. All of the regional indicator variables are set to zero.

TABLE 2. *The effects of democratization on changes in IO membership, 1965–2000*

	Model (1.1)	*Model (1.2)*
DEMOCRATIZATION	0.225***	0.222***
	(0.105)	(0.105)
AUTOCRATIZATION	−0.175*	−0.182*
	(0.097)	(0.097)
REGIME TYPE	0.012**	0.011**
	(0.005)	(0.005)
MAJOR POWER	0.521***	0.530***
	(0.133)	(0.133)
INDEPENDENCE	0.0007	0.0007
	(0.0008)	(0.0008)
FORMER COMMUNIST	1.029***	0.991***
	(0.236)	(0.228)
DISPUTE	−0.052**	−0.050**
	(0.023)	(0.023)
HEGEMONY	−22.450***	−22.554***
	(8.188)	(8.179)
DEVELOPMENT	−0.000001	−0.000001
	(0.000001)	(0.000001)
GDP	-8.73×10^{-11}	-9.34×10^{-11}
	(5.90×10^{-11})	(5.89×10^{-11})
OPENNESS	−0.0003	−0.0002
	(0.0006)	(0.0006)
YEAR	−0.053***	−0.046**
	(0.020)	(0.020)
#IO	0.009***	—
	(0.003)	
SATURATION	—	1.256***
		(0.399)
NORTH AMERICA	−0.274*	−0.288*
	(0.163)	(0.163)
SOUTH AMERICA	−0.338***	−0.349***
	(0.130)	(0.130)
MIDDLE EAST	−0.219	−0.376**
	(0.145)	(0.152)
ASIA	−0.234	−0.318**
	(0.154)	(0.159)
OCEANIA	−0.529***	−0.629***
	(0.154)	(0.155)
EUROPE	−0.265*	−0.265*
	(0.142)	(0.140)
Constant	112.580***	97.225**
	(41.535)	(41.535)
R^2	0.07	0.07
N	3687	3687

(*continued*)

TABLE 2. (Continued)

	Model (1.3)	*Model (1.4)*	*Model (1.5)*
DEMOCRATIZATION	0.279***	0.207***	0.347***
	(0.094)	(0.096)	(0.106)
AUTOCRATIZATION	−0.111	−0.139	−0.166*
	(0.081)	(0.086)	(0.095)
REGIME TYPE	0.017***	0.016***	—
	(0.004)	(0.005)	
STABLE DEMOCRACY	—	—	0.196**
			(0.086)
STABLE AUTOCRACY	—	—	−0.079
			(0.079)
MAJOR POWER	0.457***	0.372***	0.456***
	(0.109)	(0.130)	(0.110)
INDEPENDENCE	0.0003	0.0003	0.0003
	(0.0007)	(0.0008)	(0.0007)
FORMER COMMUNIST	0.843***	0.963***	0.868***
	(0.198)	(0.190)	(0.200)
DISPUTE	−0.074***	−0.068***	−0.074***
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)
HEGEMONY	−19.571***	−19.923**	−19.460***
	(7.522)	(7.990)	(7.526)
DEVELOPMENT	—	—	—
GDP	—	—	—
OPENNESS	—	—	—
YEAR	−0.043**	−0.053***	−0.043**
	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.018)
#IO	—	—	—
SATURATION	1.191***	0.293	1.212***
	(0.338)	(0.408)	(0.335)
NORTH AMERICA	−0.428***	−0.276*	−0.405***
	(0.135)	(0.154)	(0.137)
SOUTH AMERICA	−0.369***	−0.192	−0.345***
	(0.127)	(0.138)	(0.127)
MIDDLE EAST	−0.287**	−0.088	−0.304**
	(0.134)	(0.142)	(0.134)
ASIA	−0.436***	−0.330**	−0.420***
	(0.143)	(0.149)	(0.144)
OCEANIA	−0.719***	−0.584***	−0.692***
	(0.158)	(0.161)	(0.155)
EUROPE	−0.447***	−0.401***	−0.432***
	(0.132)	(0.153)	(0.128)
Constant	91.794**	111.195**	90.361**
	(38.246)	(40.525)	(38.234)
R^2	0.07	0.05	0.07
N	4665	4665	4665

Note: Entries are ordinary least squares estimates, with panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses. AFRICA is omitted because it is the region reference category. In Model (1.4), states are coded as leaving an IO if the organization disbands. A one-tailed test of statistical significance is conducted for the coefficient of DEMOCRATIZATION because its sign is specified by our theory. Two-tailed tests are conducted for the remaining coefficients.
***$p \leq .01$; **$p \leq .05$; *$p \leq .10$.

IOs per year than autocratizing states, a difference that is highly significant ($\chi^2 = 8.81$, $p < .01$). In fact, autocratizing states are less likely to enter IOs than stable regimes. The coefficient estimate of AUTOCRATIZATION is negative and statistically significant. These findings strongly support our argument. They also cast doubt on the results of Jacobson and his colleagues, who found that democratization actually led states to decrease their involvement in IOs.[77]

In addition to democratizing countries, democracies have a marked tendency to join IOs. The estimate of REGIME TYPE is positive and statistically significant, indicating that more democratic states join IOs at a more rapid rate than less democratic countries. In fact, increasing REGIME TYPE from what is often considered to be the threshold for an autocracy (-7) to the threshold for a democracy ($+7$) yields a nearly 20 percent rise in the predicted number of IOs that a given state enters in a given year.[78]

Turning to the remaining variables, the coefficient estimates of MAJOR POWER and FORMER COMMUNIST are positive and statistically significant. Whether IOs are used by great powers to promote their own agendas, preserve their favored rules, increase burden sharing, or foster international cooperation, these states accede to international institutions at a rate more than 40 percent higher in any given year than their weaker counterparts. States that had been ruled by communist governments enter IOs at a rate about 80 percent higher than other states, once these governments fall from power.[79] Further, the coefficient estimates of DISPUTE, HEGEMONY, and YEAR are negative and statistically significant. States involved in more MIDs display a lower propensity to join international institutions, possibly because their diplomatic efforts are focused on resolving these conflicts or because existing IO members are reluctant to add belligerent states to their rolls. In addition, eroding hegemony stimulates entry into IOs, a finding that accords with various critiques of hegemonic stability theory.[80]

There is also a tendency for states that participate in more IOs to experience an increase in IO membership. The estimate of #IO is positive and statistically significant, indicating that some states have a deep and ongoing interest in participating in IOs whereas other states do not. Equally, the region-specific variables are jointly significant ($\chi^2 = 8.67$, $p < .01$), reflecting the tendency for many IOs to be regional in nature and for patterns of IO membership to be similar within geographic regions. However, there is no evidence that the number of years a state has been sovereign, the extent of its economic development, its GDP, or its degree of commercial openness influence changes in IO membership.

77. Shanks, Jacobson, and Kaplan 1996.
78. Jaggers and Gurr 1995.
79. We also included a dummy variable indicating whether the Cold War had ended. The estimate of this variable was not statistically significant and including it did not appreciably change the remaining estimates.
80. For example, Snidal 1985.

Assessing the Stability and Validity of the Results

Having generated a set of initial results, we now turn to some supplementary tests of our argument. First, we have implicitly assumed that the supply of IOs does not vary across countries; that is, that all countries have equal access to membership in such organizations. But many IOs are not universal, most obviously those that are limited to members in the same geographic region.[81] To address this issue, we code the number of organizations to which a state has access by assuming that each state has an option to join each IO that operates in its region of the world as well as every universal organization (for example, the United Nations and the International Labor Organization). We then replace #IO with SATURATION, the ratio of the number of IOs in which state *i* does participate in year *t* to the number of IOs in which this state could participate.

As shown in the second column of Table 2, the estimate of this variable is positive and statistically significant, indicating that states that already belong to a large number of the IOs they have access to are inherently "joiners" and tend to enter even more organizations. States that participate in few IOs have an aversion to these organizations and continue to eschew membership. Most important for our purposes, however, is that regardless of whether we replace #IO with SATURATION, the estimated effect of democratization (as well as the other independent variables in the model) is virtually identical. In the remainder of this article, we include SATURATION rather than #IO in our models of IO membership, although this decision has no bearing on any of the following results.

Second, we estimate the model after eliminating DEVELOPMENT, GDP, and OPENNESS. As shown in Table 1, there are roughly 25 percent more data for the remaining variables in our analysis than for these three variables. Furthermore, there is an overwhelming tendency for the countries that are missing data for these three variables, but that have complete information for the remaining variables in our model, to be autocracies. This tendency could introduce a source of bias in our earlier results. Equally, none of these factors has a statistically significant influence on IO membership. The results reported in the third column of Table 2 clearly

81. A number of IOs seem to emphasize democracy as a condition of membership. As such, it could be that democratic and democratizing countries enter more IOs because they have access to more organizations than other states. However, this is unlikely to be much of a problem for our analysis. First, few IOs make any explicit reference to the regime type of members. Second, even those that do make such reference sometimes sidestep the issue in practice. For example, although the NATO preamble contains references to democracy as a underlying principle, one of its founding members was a European dictatorship (Portugal) and military coups in member states resulted in neither major changes within NATO nor pressure to end authoritarian rule (Greece and Turkey). The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is another example of imprecise conditionality—the implicit U.S. criterion for NAFTA expansion seems to include democracy, although there are no formal written conditions. Whitehead 1993. Third, while some IOs may have stressed democracy as a condition for membership, others (most notably those that were established by the Soviet Union to manage the Communist bloc) were restricted to autocracies. Hence, there is little reason to worry that our results are driven by a tendency for democracies to have greater access to IOs than other countries.

indicate that removing these variables from the model has relatively little effect on the estimated coefficient of DEMOCRATIZATION, although the estimate of AUTOCRATIZATION is no longer statistically significant. In the interests of analyzing the broadest and most representative sample possible and because these economic variables have little influence on changes in IO membership, we exclude them from the following analysis. However, it is important to recognize that this change in the model's specification has little bearing on the results presented below.

Third, we mentioned earlier that in coding the dependent variable, we do not consider members of an IO that disbands to be exiting the organization because its participants usually have no choice but to leave. Nonetheless, to ensure that this coding decision does not unduly influence our results, we include in Δ#IO cases where an organization ceases to exist and then reestimate the model. As shown in the fourth column of Table 2, there is no evidence that the influence of democratization or any of the control variables except SATURATION and a few of the regional indicators depend on how we code members of disbanded IOs.

Fourth, it is useful to more fully evaluate the effects of stable and transitional regimes on IO membership. In our analysis of regime change, the reference category is a stable regime. Hence the positive coefficients of DEMOCRATIZATION in Table 2 indicate that democratizing countries are more likely to join IOs than countries that do not undergo any sort of regime change. It is possible, however, that different types of stable regimes vary in their propensity to enter such organizations. We therefore replace REGIME TYPE with one indicator variable (STABLE DEMOCRACY) that is coded 1 if a state remains a democracy from year $t-5$ to year t, and another variable (STABLE AUTOCRACY) that is coded 1 if a state remains autocratic during this interval. The reference category in this analysis is a stable anocracy.

As reported in the last column of Table 2, the coefficient estimate of DEMOCRATIZATION continues to be positive and statistically significant. A state making a transition to democracy experiences a higher rate of entry into IOs than any other regime type considered here: such states experience more than a 50 percent rise in IO membership relative to stable autocracies and autocratizing countries, a greater than 30 percent increase in IO membership relative to stable anocracies, and more than a 10 percent rise in IO membership compared to stable democracies.

These results and our earlier findings provide strong evidence that democratization promotes IO membership, even after accounting for the effects of democracy. As another way to address this issue, we include in our model a variable indicating the number of consecutive years that a state has been a democracy as of year t. Regardless of whether we use REGIME TYPE or STABLE DEMOCRACY and STABLE AUTOCRACY to measure a state's regime type and regardless of whether we include DEMOCRATIZATION and AUTOCRATIZATION in the model, the estimate of this variable is negative and statistically significant. Consequently, democratic states are most likely to enter IOs immediately after they become democratic. They become less likely to enter IOs as democracy matures.

Fifth, it is possible that our results stem from the fact that both stable and transitional democracies have common interests, which in turn predisposes them to join many of the same IOs.[82] Because most of the IOs in our sample are regional rather than universal, we address this possibility in a preliminary way by introducing a measure (tau-beta) of the similarity of alliance portfolios between each state, i, and the most powerful state in i's geographical region, based on procedures developed by Bueno de Mesquita and by Bennett and Stam.[83] The coefficient estimate of this measure, however, is nowhere close to being statistically significant and its inclusion has no bearing on the sign, size, or statistical significance of any remaining variable in our model.

Sixth, it is important to ensure that our results do not reflect any reverse causality that could arise if changes in IO membership influence democratization. Recent research, for example, indicates that regional organizations composed of democratic countries have stimulated both democratization and the consolidation of democracy.[84] To address this issue, we measure Δ#IO from year $t - 1$ to year t and DEMOCRATIZATION from year t to year $t + 5$. Then we estimate a logistic regression of DEMOCRATIZATION on Δ#IO, a set of region-specific variables, and a spline function of the number of years since state i last experienced a democratic transition to account for any temporal dependence in the data.[85] The results provide no evidence that the change in the number of IO memberships has a statistically significant effect on DEMOCRATIZATION.[86] As such, our results do not seem to be threatened by a simultaneity bias.[87]

Finally, although our argument focuses primarily on the domestic political conditions that prompt states to join IOs, the value of Δ#IO is determined by the frequency with which states enter and exit these organizations. It is useful to analyze separately the influences on joining and leaving IOs. To this end, we estimate two models. The dependent variable in the first model is the number of IOs that state i joined from year t to year $t + 1$; the dependent variable in the second is the number of IOs that state i left during this interval. The independent variables in each model are those included in our earlier analysis, specifically model (1.3) in Table 2. Because the error terms in these two models are likely to be related, it is more

82. See Gowa 1999; and Gartzke 2000.

83. See Bueno de Mesquita 1981; Bennett and Stam 2003.

84. Pevehouse 2005.

85. Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998.

86. These results are not inconsistent with Pevehouse's findings, because there is a sizeable difference in the sample of IOs used in his study and in ours. Pevehouse 2005. While we examine all IOs, Pevehouse examines only regional organizations. Moreover, his statistical association was between the level of democracy within an IO and democratization, whereas we examine the change in the number of IOs.

87. We also analyze whether IO membership influences regime type by measuring Δ#IO from year $t-1$ to year t and REGIME TYPE in year t. Then we regress REGIME TYPE on Δ#IO and a set of region-specific variables using feasible generalized least squares, a technique that involves using ordinary least squares to estimate the model and then purging the errors of serial correlation. Here we assume that the serial correlation is first order (that is, AR[1]) and base tests of statistical significance on panel-corrected standard errors that account for any heteroskedasticity and contemporaneous correlation of the errors across countries. On this technique, see Beck and Katz 1995. The results furnish no evidence that changes in IO membership influence a state's regime type.

efficient to estimate the models jointly rather than separately.[88] Because each of the dependent variables is a count, we rely on seemingly unrelated binomial regressions to conduct this analysis.[89]

As reported in Table 3, the sign of each coefficient in the IO "joining model" is the same as the corresponding coefficient in model (1.3); and the estimates that are statistically significant when we analyze Δ#IO remain significant when we focus on the frequency with which states join IOs. It is particularly noteworthy that countries undergoing a democratic transition join IOs significantly more rapidly than either stable regimes or autocratizing states, and that there is no marked difference between stable and autocratizing countries in this regard. Moreover, while the size of the coefficients in Tables 2 and 3 cannot be directed compared since the techniques used to derive these results are quite different, the effects of democratization on IO accession are quite sizeable. Democratizing states enter over 20 percent more IOs than stable regimes and over 25 percent more than autocratizating states.

In contrast, democratization usually does not prompt states to leave IOs. In the "leaving model," the coefficient estimate of DEMOCRATIZATION is negative, but it is not statistically significant. Thus democratizing states generally do not renounce membership in the organizations that its autocratic predecessor participated in. They do, however, display a pronounced tendency to join the rolls of additional organizations. Interestingly, the only factor included in our model that has a strong influence the rate at which states exit IOs is REGIME TYPE. The estimate of this variable is negative and statistically significant, indicating that autocratic states are more likely to leave IOs than their democratic counterparts. Indeed, this tendency is quite pronounced: increasing the mean value of REGIME TYPE by one standard deviation generates about a 25 percent jump in the predicted number of IOs a given state exits.

The Effect of IO Members' Regime Type

The preceding results strongly support our argument. As we noted earlier, however, democratizing states are likely to be drawn with the greatest force to IOs in which the bulk of the members are democratic. The commitments made by a democratizing state to sustain and deepen political reforms are likely to gain more credibility if it joins an IO composed of democracies—countries with a far greater

88. Greene 1993, 489.

89. Various studies employ count models in which the underlying process generating the dependent variable is assumed to have a Poisson distribution. A key feature of this distribution is the assumption that the probability of an event occurring in a given interval of time is independent of previous events in the interval and that the rate at which events take place in this interval is constant and does not depend on previous events. We find statistically significant evidence that this assumption is violated for both the joining and the leaving model, indicating that a negative binomial specification should be used. On this issue, see King 1989; Greene 1993.

TABLE 3. *Seemingly unrelated count models of joining and leaving IOs, 1965–2000*

	Joining	*Leaving*
DEMOCRATIZATION	0.133***	−0.140
	(0.045)	(0.189)
AUTOCRATIZATION	−0.074	−0.025
	(0.067)	(0.191)
REGIME TYPE	0.011***	−0.025**
	(0.003)	(0.010)
MAJOR POWER	0.233**	−0.324
	(0.098)	(0.346)
INDEPENDENCE	0.0002	0.0007
	(0.0005)	(0.0017)
FORMER COMMUNIST	0.589***	0.450
	(0.099)	(0.535)
DISPUTE	−0.047***	0.080
	(0.012)	(0.050)
HEGEMONY	−14.988***	−7.340
	(1.463)	(6.282)
YEAR	−0.030***	0.016
	(0.003)	(0.016)
SATURATION	1.135***	2.764***
	(0.144)	(0.768)
NORTH AMERICA	−0.256***	0.516***
	(0.063)	(0.196)
SOUTH AMERICA	−0.247***	0.212
	(0.060)	(0.225)
MIDDLE EAST	−0.243***	−0.386*
	(0.060)	(0.221)
ASIA	−0.330***	0.103
	(0.059)	(0.272)
OCEANIA	−0.479***	0.632**
	(0.071)	(0.252)
EUROPE	−0.337***	0.217
	(0.058)	(0.243)
Constant	62.826***	−33.838
	(6.161)	(32.470)
$ln(\alpha)$	−2.031***	0.909***
	(0.151)	(0.342)
N	4665	4665
χ^2	73.47***	199.04***

Note: Coefficients are estimated using seemingly unrelated negative binomial regressions. Figures in parentheses are robust (Huber) standard errors. AFRICA is omitted because it is the region reference category. In the Joining model, a one-tailed test of statistical significance is conducted for the coefficient of DEMOCRATIZATION because its sign is specified by our theory. Two-tailed tests are conducted for all of the remaining coefficients.
***$p < .01$; **$p < .05$; *$p < .10$.

interest in political reform than other states—than if it enters an IO with a different make-up. Equally, from a signaling perspective, it does little good for a new democracy to join an IO with a sizeable number of autocratic members. Finally, more uniformly democratic IOs are more likely to enforce the conditions of membership. The transparency of democracies lessens the likelihood that any one state in the organization will shirk its enforcement of the IO's rules.[90] More generally, democracies are less likely to renege on commitments than other countries.[91] Knowing this, leaders attempting to tie their hands will tap IOs made up primarily of democracies.

Indeed, past work has shown that only regional organizations composed of highly democratic countries are especially effective at promoting democracy and assisting in its consolidation.[92] One observable implication of our theory is that democratizing countries should attempt to join those IOs whose membership is more democratic, because these organizations will be more likely to undertake the functions that we have emphasized.

To test this proposition, we make three changes to model (1.3) in Table 2. First, we analyze a different dependent variable (DEM LEVEL IO), the average regime type within the IOs joined by state i from year t to year $t + 1$.[93] To compute this variable, we derive the average regime type score (which, recall, ranges from -10 to 10) of the members of each IO that state i joins and then take the mean of these averages. Second, we restrict the sample to countries that join at least one IO between t and $t + 1$. Consequently, we add a new variable, INSTRUMENT[JOIN], which is the predicted probability of state i entering an IO in year $t + 1$ based on model (1.3). We include this variable to account for any selection bias caused by the fact that many states do not join any IOs between years t and $t + 1$ and the possibility that the very factors prompting states to enter democratic IOs could be the same as those influencing whether they enter any IOs.[94] Third, we omit YEAR because there is little evidence of a secular trend in the dependent variable. We also omit SATURATION since there is no reason to control for preexisting IO membership in the current analysis.[95] Excluding these variables is also useful because in order to identify the instrumental variable (INSTRUMENT[JOIN]), it is necessary to exclude some of the variables that determine its value from the model being estimated. We include the remaining control variables in our earlier analysis in an effort to proceed cautiously and avoid misspecifying the model. However, it is not clear what effect most of these variables are likely to have on the average level of democracy among members of a IO and we do not emphasize those estimates in the following discussion.

The first column of Table 4 presents the results of this analysis. As expected, the coefficient estimate of DEMOCRATIZATION is positive, statistically significant, and large. Democratizing states therefore seem to pay close attention to the regime

90. On the greater transparency of democratic systems than others, see Fearon 1994.
91. Leeds 1999.
92. Pevehouse 2005.
93. The average level of democracy in each IO is computed exclusive of state i.
94. This is therefore a Heckman-style selection model. See Heckman 1979.
95. Whether or not we include DEVELOPMENT, GDP, and OPENNESS makes no difference in the following results.

TABLE 4. *The effects of democratization on the average regime type in the IOs a state joins, 1965–2000*

	Model (2.1)	*Model (2.2)*
DEMOCRATIZATION	0.579**	0.531**
	(0.267)	(0.295)
AUTOCRATIZATION	0.324	−0.790***
	(0.216)	(0.256)
REGIME TYPE	0.145***	—
	(0.017)	
STABLE DEMOCRACY	—	0.889***
		(0.203)
STABLE AUTOCRACY	—	−1.597***
		(0.216)
MAJOR POWER	0.423	0.397
	(0.369)	(0.367)
INDEPENDENCE	0.011***	0.011***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
FORMER COMMUNIST	0.458	0.338
	(0.561)	(0.563)
DISPUTE	−0.054	−0.042
	(0.065)	(0.066)
HEGEMONY	−54.433***	−53.958***
	(8.075)	(8.174)
INSTRUMENT[JOIN]	−1.187*	−1.021
	(0.644)[a]	(0.635)[a]
NORTH AMERICA	1.965***	2.221***
	(0.352)	(0.338)
SOUTH AMERICA	1.614***	1.825***
	(0.361)	(0.353)
MIDDLE EAST	−0.182	−0.194
	(0.368)	(0.367)
ASIA	1.944***	2.128***
	(0.334)	(0.323)
OCEANIA	1.742***	2.171***
	(0.468)	(0.436)
EUROPE	3.653***	4.008***
	(0.400)	(0.381)
Constant	13.816***	13.679***
	(2.403)	(2.400)
N	3261	3261
R^2	0.48	0.48

Note: Entries are ordinary least squares estimates, with panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses. AFRICA is omitted because it is the region reference category. One-tailed tests of statistical significance are conducted for the coefficient of DEMOCRATIZATION because its sign is specified by our theory. Two-tailed tests are conducted for the remaining coefficients.

***$p \leq .01$; **$p \leq .05$; *$p \leq .10$.

[a]Because the value of this variable is estimated, we bootstrap its standard error to correct for any bias in its calculation. We computed the average bias of the standard error for this coefficient based on 1,500 replications of the ordinary least squares estimates.

characteristics of IO members, acceding to organizations with democracy scores that are, on average, about 60 percent higher (on the 21-point scale that ranges from −10 to 10) than those joined by stable regimes and nearly 30 percent higher than those joined by autocratizing countries. New democracies tend to seek membership in highly democratic IOs, supporting our argument that such organizations are best positioned to help states cement transitions to democracy.

In the second column of Table 4, we replace REGIME TYPE with two indicator variables, each of which is measured from year $t-5$ to year t, to distinguish the influence of stable democracies (STABLE DEMOCRACY), stable autocracies (STABLE AUTOCRACY), and stable anocracies. Doing so yields results that are much the same as before, although there are some noticeable differences. The estimate of DEMOCRATIZATION continues to be positive and statistically significant. States undergoing a democratic transition become involved in IOs where the average democracy score is about half a point higher than the IOs joined by stable anocracies, two points higher than the IOs joined by stable autocracies, and more than one point higher than the IOs joined by autocratizing countries. Only stable democracies enter international institutions that are, on average, more democratic than the ones that democratizing states join. This difference, however, is quantitatively small and statistically insignificant ($\chi^2 = 1.81$, $p = .18$).

IO Membership and Backsliding by Democratizing Countries

Central to our argument is that leaders in democratizing countries have difficulty making credible commitments to sustain political reforms and the consolidation of democracy. Entering an IO composed largely of democratic states can help leaders in such countries to address this problem by creating a mechanism that increases the cost of deviating from reforms and backsliding in an autocratic direction. Thus another implication of our argument is that democratizing countries participating in IOs made up of democracies should be less likely to subsequently experience a reversion to autocracy than democratizing countries that participate in less democratic IOs.

Although a comprehensive test of this hypothesis is beyond the scope of our analysis, we can address it in a preliminary way. In our sample, there are 380 episodes where a country experienced a democratic transition over some five-year interval from year $t-5$ to year t; forty-seven of these episodes were then followed by an autocratic transition from year t to year $t+5$, whereas 333 were not.[96] Focusing on all IOs that these states participated in between $t-5$ and t, the

96. Note that all of the following results are essentially unchanged if autocratization is measured from year $t+1$ to year $t+6$ rather than from year t to year $t+5$.

average regime score of the members of these organizations (DEM LEVEL IO) is -0.91 for the democratizing states that experienced an autocratic transition from year t to year $t + 5$, compared to .76 for the remaining states, a difference that is highly significant ($t = 6.58$, $p < .001$). An analysis of the average regime score for the IOs that these states joined between $t - 5$ and t yields almost identical results: an average of -0.89 for countries that made an autocratic transition from t to $t + 5$ and an average of 0.90 for states that did not. Again, this difference is highly statistically significant.

Shifting our focus from the average regime score of all IOs a democratizing state participates in and joins to the average score of the most democratic IO the state belongs to or enters has no bearing on our findings. The average regime score of the most democratic IO that a democratizing state participates in is about 1.3 points higher if it did not subsequently undergo an autocratic transition than if it did experience such a transition. This score is roughly 2 points higher if we restrict attention to the IOs that democratizing states joined between years $t - 5$ and t. Both differences are statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

To further address this issue, we code each IO as democratic if the average regime score of its members is 7 or greater on Gurr's 21-point index (from -10 to 10). On average, democratizing states that do not subsequently experience an autocratic transition are members of 1.65 democratic IOs. The corresponding figure for democratizing states that do autocratize is 0.60. Equally, democratizing states that do not autocratize in the following five-year period join an average of 0.59 democratic IOs, compared to an average of 0.09 for states that do autocratize. To assess the robustness of these results and because defining a democratic IO as one where the average regime score is 7 or greater is somewhat arbitrary, we reset this threshold to 6 and greater and then again to 5 and greater. As this threshold value declines, there is even a more pronounced tendency for democratizing states that do not backslide in an autocratic direction to participate in and join a larger number of democratic IOs than states that do undergo an autocratic transition. Furthermore, all of these differences continue to be statistically significant.

Clearly, these tests are preliminary and do not control for other factors that may influence the sustainability of democratization and IO membership. Nonetheless, the findings are consistent with a key implication of our argument: participating in and joining democratic IOs reduces the prospect that democratizing states will backslide in an autocratic direction.

Conclusions

We have argued that democratization is an important impetus to IO membership. States undergoing democratic transitions have a strong incentive to join IOs, because doing so sends a credible signal to domestic and international audiences that political reform efforts are sincere. Entering an IO can help leaders in transitional states credibly commit to carry out reforms since these institutions convey information, help ameliorate time-inconsistency problems, and improve the reputation of new member states. Membership can also discourage regime opponents from threatening emerging regimes by imposing potentially high costs on countries that renege on IO commitments. Each of these mechanisms can assist in the process of deepening democracy, giving leaders in nascent democracies strong incentives to join IOs.

Our statistical findings confirm these hypotheses. Using a new data set on IO membership covering the period from 1965 to 2000, we find strong evidence that democratizing states join IOs more frequently than other countries. Moreover, democratizing states do not attempt to join just any organizations. Instead, they tend to enter ones composed of relatively democratic members—forming clubs of democracies.

In addition to democratizing states, democracies display a tendency to join IOs. Democracies are somewhat less likely to join all IOs and marginally more likely to join IOs with a highly democratic membership than democratizing countries. However, democracy and democratization have independent influences on the propensity of states to join IOs. Even after accounting for the effects of democracy, democratization has a statistically and substantively significant influence on the decision to enter international institutions. Finally, there is evidence that joining IOs composed of relatively democratic members can help democratizers reduce the prospect of a reversion to authoritarianism, a finding consistent with past research.[97]

Most of the existing literature on IO formation focuses on the impact of international political forces. Our findings confirm the importance of some of these forces. Eroding hegemony and the absence of political-military conflict, for example, prompt to states to enter international institutions. Equally, major powers join more IOs than weaker states. In addition to these international variables, however, our findings underscore the importance of domestic politics in shaping the decision to enter an IO, particularly the role of domestic institutions. Although studies of international institutions have placed relatively little emphasis on the effects of domestic politics, the results of our analysis strongly suggest that the recent wave of democratization is likely to expand the size and number of IOs. Moreover, this expansion is likely to bode well for the long-term survival of democracy.

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