Governments, Partisanship, and Foreign Policy: The Case of Dispute Duration*

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Do variations in partisanship and political outcomes among democratic states affect the duration of militarized interstate disputes? To answer this question, the author develops a model of partisan competition derived from the government failure literature. The author argues factors associated with government failure determine the ability of governments to contend with the domestic political costs of militarized disputes, specifically the duration of those disputes. The author tests his expectations using hazard analysis on a dataset of 20 democratic governments and militarized disputes between 1945 and 1992. The results suggest the outcome of party competition in the form of a government’s sensitivity to the potential political costs of conflict is an important part of the conflict process. The author concludes that differences in domestic political outcomes influence the duration of militarized interstate disputes. Governments that are politically more secure in their tenure engage in longer disputes. Alternatively, governments that are more vulnerable have significantly shorter disputes. In addition, because government partisanship contributes to vulnerability, it also affects dispute duration, with governments of the left engaging in shorter disputes, while governments of the right fight longer disputes.

Introduction

Does politics stop at the water’s edge after states make threats or start shooting at each other? While research examining domestic institutions and interstate conflict shows that domestic institutions affect states’ dispute involvement (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Doyle, 1986; Maoz & Russett, 1993), little research examines how domestic politics affects conflict behavior after the dispute begins. Specifically, once a state engages in an international dispute do domestic institutions still influence conflict behavior?

To address this concern I ask: does a government’s capacity to hold office affect the duration of conflicts? To answer this question, I develop a model that encompasses the constituent parts of the political process. Scholars examining democratic institutions and conflict behavior argue that differences in these institutions produce varying degrees of constraints. These varying constraints produce differences in the foreign policy choices of democratic governments (Clark & Nordstrom, 2005; Koch & Gartner, 2005; Palmer, London & Regan, 2004; Prins & Sprecher, 1999; Reiter & Tillman, 2002). This body of research has furthered our understanding of the links between institutions, incentives, and foreign policy behavior. However, the next step is to move beyond the additive affect of institutions and develop more nuanced theories of party competition and dispute behavior.

Rather than examining single elements of government, such as whether the government...
has a legislative majority, I focus on the outcomes of party competition. Specifically, I examine how the political orientation and ideological complexity of governments affects dispute duration. After all, not all governments share equal immunity to party defection. Ideological cleavages exist in political systems requiring parties to form governments that can work within these divisions. Therefore, parties negotiate and renegotiate the bargain of government to maintain office. By focusing on the role of parties and the resulting governments that emerge, I provide a better accounting of how the capacity of governments to deal with the potential political costs of interstate conflict affects dispute duration.

To test the relationship between different government sensitivities to potential political costs and dispute duration, I develop a model derived from the government failure literature. I argue the factors associated with government failure determine the capacity of governments to contend with the domestic political costs of militarized disputes, specifically the duration of those disputes. I test my expectations using hazard analysis and examine militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) rather than only wars. The results suggest a government’s sensitivity to the potential political costs of conflict affects the duration of disputes.

Disputes and Duration

While research on the ‘Democratic Peace Proposition’ says a lot about when democracies will enter conflict, little research exists about the duration of disputes. Yet, most scholars agree that the duration of disputes, especially once militarized, is an important part of the conflict process (Bennett & Stam, 1996; Bueno de Mesquita, Koch & Siverson, 2004; Krustev, 2006). Longer conflicts lead to greater potential costs for all parties. States and governments must commit more resources to fighting longer disputes. This creates financial costs and political costs which leaders may be unable to pay. Additionally, long-lasting disputes often lead to spillovers creating additional costs to the disputing parties as well as other parties initially not involved, whether as allies or intermediaries (Regan, 1996, 2002). This leads to greater instability and higher costs for all parties. Ironically, it is the cost of international conflict that prods scholars to study their onset, yet as Gartner (1998: 258) notes, ‘It is what happens during a war – the violence, destruction, costs, and casualties – that makes us want to learn how to avoid it.’

Unlike wars, most militarized disputes do not involve high casualties or excessive use of force by either party.Yet, militarized disputes still present the potential for future costs and act as signals about disagreements over the status quo by one or more states (Morrow, 2003). These signals, in the form of dispute duration and the events that comprise the dispute, help states determine the shadow of the future between states and the probability that states can reach an agreement over the disputed issue.

For example, Fearon (1998) examines the duration of state interactions in the context of bargaining. Normally, longer durations of interactions between states lengthen the shadow of the future, making agreements more likely (Axelrod, 1984; Keohane, 1984). However, the dynamics of long disputes may make the onset of militarized disputes more likely but reduce the likelihood of escalation. Repeated militarized disputes allow states to develop mechanisms to manage conflicts before they escalate to war. Both the India–Pakistan rivalry and the USA–USSR rivalry are examples of this.

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1 Most studies that incorporate dispute duration use it as a control variable (Bercovitch & Langley, 1993), examine duration in the context of third-party mediation or intervention (Regan, 2002; Regan & Stam, 2000), focus only on the duration of wars (Bennett & Stam, 1996, 1998; Goemans, 2000), or examine the duration of enduring rivalries (Bennett, 1998; Goertz & Diehl, 1993, 1995).
The duration of a militarized dispute represents two types of information. Dispute duration can represent bargaining opportunities prior to the onset of war for states to try to reach agreements over the issues in question. Alternatively, if threats and fighting are means of conveying information about capabilities and resolve, then extending the duration of a militarized dispute is a signal about a state’s resolve to not capitulate or negotiate a settlement.

A direct link between dispute duration and the intensity of violence exists. According to the MID data, disputes that never escalate beyond the threat to use force average 25 days. Disputes that involve mobilizing forces last 60 days on average. However, the time a militarized dispute lasts before the onset of war is approximately 128 days. Looking only at cases that never escalated to war, specifically disputes between democratic states, the average duration is 51 days. This suggests the ability of states to negotiate and negotiate quickly leads to peaceful settlements. Conversely, states that extend the bargaining time, as Fearon suggests, by bargaining harder to get a better deal may wind up in a costly standoff.2

Parties and the Costs of Competition

A key characteristic of democracies is that institutionalized party competition leads to the peaceful and regularized transfer of power from one leader to another. Within this competition, parties have two primary goals: (1) controlling seats in the legislature, and (2) wielding power in the ruling coalition or cabinet (Brown & Franklin, 1973; Lupia & Strøm, 1995; Strøm, 1990). The competition among parties is over control of the government to secure access to the tools of policymaking. Parties in most democratic states gain office in two ways; one is through dissolving government and holding new elections, the other is through replacing the existing government. Replacement is either altering the members of the current ruling coalition, or replacing the entire government without elections. There are costs associated with removing or altering government. Parties cannot make deals and change government composition without paying costs.

The costs associated with altering or removing government are called opportunity and transaction costs (Lupia & Strøm, 1995). Opportunity costs are the costs incurred by parties for defecting from government and include the forfeiture of future policymaking opportunities. If a party in government can find a better bargain where it will have at least as many policymaking opportunities as in the current government, then opportunity costs are low. Conversely, if there are no better possible bargains that offer more policy opportunities for a party in government than the current bargain, then opportunity costs are high.

Transaction costs are the costs associated with both defecting from government and trying to organize the opposition to bring down the current government. These costs are the price of forming a new government. Examples of these costs are interparty negotiations, campaigning, electioneering, and reputational costs for being a defector. These costs are higher at certain times and under certain circumstances. For example, right after an election, the costs of dissolving government and holding new elections are very high, given the incurred costs from the previous election. In addition, opposition parties that face a majority government have higher transaction costs in trying to persuade parties to defect from the majority and forfeit their policymaking opportunities.

Combined, these two costs determine the total cost of government removal. When the

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2 Much of the empirical research on democratic conflict has focused on militarized disputes rather than war, highlighting the importance of these events. For example, Maoz & Russett (1993) was cited 222 times prior to 2004 (http://www.webofscience.com/CIW.cgi).
combined cost of removal is high, governments are secure in office and, therefore, less constrained in their policy behavior. Conversely, low removal cost means that a government’s hold on office is more tenuous and the government is more constrained in its policy behavior. High removal cost governments have a greater capacity to withstand the pressure of removal and can repress and/or withstand dissent in government and parliament. Low removal cost governments are less able to withstand dissent and prevent the opposition from organizing to bring down the government.

Removal Costs and Dispute Duration

The punishment model (Bennett & Stam, 1998; Gartner & Siverson, 1996) usually explains war duration. However, it is less applicable to MIDs. Most MIDs fail to escalate to the point of war and many fail to reach a level of hostility where one or both sides employ force. Even though states may not pay the tangible costs of fighting, MIDs represent another form of cost for democratic governments. These costs are the intangible costs that governments face in order to stay in office in the face of critical events.

Lupia & Strøm (1995), in their analysis of government failure, argue that governments can succumb to failure if they encounter a critical event and do not act appropriately. Critical events are exogenous shocks that alter the bargaining space, or win sets, of parties in and out of government. Not all exogenous events are critical, but some events are more critical than others. As Lupia & Strøm (1995: 652) note, events are ‘meaningful only if they affect the politicians’ abilities to achieve their legislative and electoral goals’. Events commonly thought of as critical are wars, economic shocks, and scandals. All these events affect the public perception of government and have electoral, and subsequently policy, ramifications. Not all disputes, economic mishaps, and scandals are likely to become critical events, but those that do can potentially alter the costs of government removal. I argue that conflict policy choice is a function of the current costs associated with removal and the ability to withstand changes to these costs should a policy choice become a critical event.

If the dispute becomes a critical event, parties out of office can use the dispute to lower the incumbent government’s reelection chances. If the dispute becomes public, the opposition, in search of issues to bring down the government, can use a MID to put pressure on the incumbent government. This reduces the costs for parties out of office to alter the current government. For example, if the incumbent government is a coalition, some parties in government may fear an electoral backlash and defect from the government. For them, the benefits of office no longer outweigh the costs of trying to form a new government. Hence, the opportunity costs of remaining in government decline. Therefore, the costs posed to governments, while not tangible in terms of casualties and war material, are still real. Governments must try to avoid not only punishment on the battlefield but also, and perhaps more importantly, the potential for punishment by the opposition at home. Governments therefore take policy actions in accordance with their hold on office.

Some critical events are clearly exogenous shocks, such as the attacks of 11 September 2001 (9/11) or the Falklands invasion. Others become critical events only because of the domestic political situation at home. A government’s ability to avoid the creation of critical events is a function of its partisan composition. Weak governments or governments that appear less competent in certain issue areas try to avoid policy actions that can become cannon fodder for the opposition bringing the government down. These governments, if confronted with a dispute,
Determining the Costs of Removal

Various qualities of the political system determine removal costs. Below, I discuss three factors that determine the costs of government removal: (1) political orientation, (2) ideological complexity, and (3) structural qualities.

Political Orientation

Government partisanship and policy choices have implications for government survival. The logic underlying government partisanship’s role in removal is that democratic leaders are not responsive to a majority, as defined by one-half plus one, of the electorate. Instead, leaders implement policies that reflect their ideological beliefs as well as their supporters’ beliefs and rarely attempt to satisfy all or most voters. Instead, the preferences of their supporters constrain their policy choices. This is especially true in proportional representation systems with multiple parties. In these systems, parties and politicians choose policies aimed at policy differentiation. Proportional systems produce centrifugal forces (Cox, 1990), meaning parties must distinguish themselves from one another in an attempt to maximize vote share. Alternatively, majoritarian systems produce centripetal policy forces. Because majoritarian systems produce two-party systems, parties move toward the center in an effort to maximize vote share.3

Among democratic governments, those that are easier to remove will settle disputes quickly. However, if conflict is unavoidable, governments that are more vulnerable will try to win quickly. Either way the dispute should be shorter, otherwise, these governments run the risk of replacement. Alternatively, a secure government runs a smaller risk of replacement. Berrebi & Klor (2006) examine this in the context of Israel. When faced with an increase in terror attacks, governments of the left, who appear more dovish in this policy area, run the risk of replacement by the more hawkish, right-oriented parties if they cannot quickly end the attacks. Overall, I expect that governments with higher removal costs can better withstand the potential political fallout from disputes that drag on for extended periods than governments with low removal costs. This leads to the following conclusions about the duration of disputes and the removal costs of governments:

1. Governments with high removal costs will have longer disputes than governments with low removal costs.

2. The above relationship between government removal costs and duration will be stronger among disputes that escalate to violence and are over salient issues.

3 For deeper insight into the differences between proportional representation and majoritarian systems, see Black (1958), especially chapters X, XI, and XII.
and Koch & Cranmer (2007) all argue that parties of the left are less hawkish than more right-oriented parties. Governments of the left are supported by groups such as labor and are concerned with such issues as welfare, employment, and health care (van der Brug, 2001). In addition, governments of the left often have policy platforms based on ideas of collective action, redistribution of resources, and equality. Given the emphasis on redistribution and domestic welfare, international conflict is more likely to become a ‘critical event’ for left-oriented governments. Therefore, military disputes have a greater effect on the costs of bringing down these governments.

**H1:** Governments of the left should engage in shorter disputes than other governments.

### Ideological Complexity

Warwick (1994) contends the ideological make-up and complexity of governments are perhaps the most important causes contributing to government duration. Dodd (1976: 58) argues similarly, ‘The cleavage system is thus a major source of the quest for power and, at the same time, a major constraint on the behavior that is possible in the quest.’ This differs with standard models of government complexity used in studies of international conflict. Previous studies focus on one factor, such as the number of parties in government or the size of a government majority in the legislature (Ireland & Gartner, 2001; Reiter & Tillman, 2002).

I ideological diversity captures dynamics that other measures, such as party system fractionalization or the effective number of parties, often fail to. These measures assume that the greater the number of parties, the more possible coalition partners. They say nothing about the ideologically possible coalition partners available to a party when trying to form a government. It is not only the number of parties but also their ideological differences that translate into the costs of changing government.

Parties that can reach solid agreements are more likely to stave off competition both from within government and from the opposition. Two factors determine the firmness of these agreements. One factor is the ideological diversity of the coalition. Ideological diversity is the degree to which parties in government have similar or different ideological, or policy, preferences. The second factor is the number of parties in government. Fewer parties mean there are more spoils to go around, which lessens the likelihood of any one party seeking a new arrangement of government (Riker, 1962).

Many models connecting government failure to either coalition size or ideological diversity assume a linear relationship (Warwick, 1994). However, this is not necessarily the case. Ideological complexity can also raise the costs of government dissolution, making government dissolution less likely. While ideologically similar parties share similar policy goals, making coalition dissolution more difficult, ideologically similar parties might see similar issue areas as the most important. A greater probability of conflict can arise over these issue areas, which leads to greater disagreement and subsequently a higher probability of government termination. Browne, Gleiber & Mashoba (1984) find little support for the idea that reducing conflicts of interest among parties increases the duration of cabinets. Parties similar in both size and ideological positions have more to argue over than parties that differ in size and have varying ideological positions.

Conversely, ideologically diverse parties that value different issues encourage policy trade-offs among coalition members. Browne &
Frendreis (1980) assess the distributional payoffs among coalition partners. They argue that certainty of control induces large parties to give up posts. The smaller parties, in two-party coalitions, receive a slightly higher percentage of portfolios compared to the proportion of seats they control in the legislature. Nevertheless, as the number of parties in the coalition increases overpayment decreases, and the larger party begins to hold more ministries than their seat share suggests (Austen-Smith & Banks, 1990; Laver & Shepsle, 1996).

Because the relationship of ideological diversity to government failure is curvilinear, I also expect the relationship between diversity and dispute duration to be curvilinear. Some ideological diversity among coalition members should strengthen the coalition and allow for longer disputes while high levels of diversity should lead to lower removal costs and shorter disputes.

**H2:** Beyond the value of zero, low levels of ideological diversity lead to longer disputes, while high levels of ideological diversity lead to shorter disputes.

**Structure**

Structure is the institutional environment determined by the electoral rules of the political system. Two important structural factors are election timing and whether majority governments emerge. Electoral rules have a large impact on the overall size of governments (Liiphart, 1994). The degree to which the government has control over the legislature affects its ability to enact policy as well as the costs of removal. Governments that command a majority in the legislature are more difficult to remove than minority governments, because the opposition cannot pass a vote of no-confidence or block legislation without enticing members of the majority to defect.

**H3:** Majority governments will engage in longer disputes than other governments.

Time also affects the costs of government removal. Diermeier & Stevenson (2000: 628), in their analysis of the Lupia & Strøm model, state:

At the beginning of every period, a government has some expected life span, which is always less than the time to the next regularly scheduled election. During its time in office, the government receives a period payoff from policy outcomes or from collective distributive benefits. Consequently, at the very beginning of its term, the total benefit a government can expect is large so an early election will seldom look promising.... The expected benefits of staying in office will decrease over time. Thus, as parliament approaches its CIEP smaller and smaller events will be sufficient for dissolution.

Elections subsequently become up or down votes on the governments based on past foreign policy success and, more importantly, failure. Zaller (1997) argues this point for US Presidential elections when he states that voters do not vote for presidents who win the war but rather for those that do not lose. One crucial factor that the public, in general, and the uninformed voter, in particular, uses to evaluate the president is peace or as Zaller (1997:10) states, ‘the party responsible for unsuccessful war’. Therefore, as the mandated election period nears, the costs of government removal decrease.

**H4:** The further away the next mandated election, the longer the dispute will last.

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5 Tsebelis (1999) makes a similar argument using veto player theory. He demonstrates that as the number of veto players increases, the number of political parties and the ideological distance of those parties increase, the number of significant laws passed declines, and the duration of government declines.

6 Dissolution refers to a disbanded parliament resulting in new elections. Replacement refers to the formation of a government from the existing membership of parliament without new elections.

7 Gaubatz (1991) argues that war involvement is most likely in the first two years after an election. The problem is that the average life span of European governments is approximately 24 months (King et al., 1990). Moreover, if governments fail due to dissolution, then it is harder to predict when the next election is going to take place.
Government survival depends on the ideological complexity of the system, the political orientation of the government, and the structure of the political system. Therefore, policies reflect the costs associated with the potential for termination. Governments hesitate to enact policies that might open windows of opportunity for parties both in and out of government to alter or remove the government.

While the above framework is from theories more applicable to parliamentary systems, I apply the same framework to presidential systems. The primary difference between presidential and parliamentary systems is that in most parliamentary systems, the executive is nested within the legislative branch, while in presidential systems, the executive and the legislature are separate. Therefore, the executive does not face a potential loss of office from the legislative branch outside of extreme circumstances of impeachment. Similarly, presidents often face different electoral clocks than do legislatures. For example, the US legislature faces re-election every two years, while the executive faces election every four years. In France, legislative elections occur every five years, while the executive is on a seven-year cycle. Thus, it is sometimes difficult to compare presidential and parliamentary systems.

However, the central aspects of the model are transferable to presidential systems. Presidents are still accountable to their supporters and this should vary by partisanship. Presidents still face an electoral clock, therefore electoral calculations should remain. Finally, while ideologically divided executives do not exist, presidents can face legislatures in which their party does not have a majority.

Research Design, Data, and Measures

To test my hypotheses, I employ hazard analysis. Hazard analysis is the appropriate statistical method given my concerns with dispute duration. Additionally, I estimate models that examine disputes that escalated to violence or are over issues that are more salient. Finally, because dispute duration may be a function of selection, I estimate a model of dispute onset. I include the predicted probability of onset in the duration model using a bootstrapping technique to account for the uncertainty of the estimated parameter (Slantchev, 2004; Krustev, 2006). The unit of analysis is the government dispute month. I examine 588 disputes drawn from the MID dataset between 1945 and 1992 for 20 democratic states. The failure mechanism is called end.

The government measures are from two sources. To determine which parties were in government in a given month, I use Woldendorp, Keman & Budge (2000). To measure ideological diversity and the partisan position of the government, I use the Manifesto Research Group (MRG) data (Budge et al., 2001). To test Hypothesis 1, I create a discrete measure called Left government. I use the average of the left–right scores of the parties in government as determined by the MRG data, weighted by seat share in government, to determine government orientation. The MRG scale runs from −100 to 100 with negative numbers indicating a more leftist political orientation and positive numbers a rightward political orientation. However, the range of government orientation in the sample is −31.3 to 30.47 with a median value of 2.07. I code any government with a score of −10 or less as a left government and 0 otherwise.

To measure ideological diversity, I use the ideological standard deviation of the parties,
weighted by seat share, in government (Dodd, 1976; Warwick, 1994). I square this term to control for the non-linear relationship of ideological diversity. I label this measure Government ideological diversity. Because of the unified executive in the two presidential systems (the USA and the French V Republic), I code ideological diversity for these cases as 0.

Hypothesis 3 states majority governments are better at absorbing costs that might emerge from a dispute. Therefore, I create a dummy variable Majority. Majority indicates whether the government controls a majority of seats in the legislature. In parliamentary systems, it is the number of seats in parliament controlled by the party(ies) in government divided by the total number of seats in parliament. If this number exceeds 0.50, I code this as a majority and 0 otherwise. For the US system, Majority takes on a value of 1 when the same party controls the president and both houses of the US Congress. For the French V Republic, Majority takes the value of 0 for periods of cohabitation (when the President and Prime Minister are not of the same party), otherwise it has a value of 1.

Hypothesis 4 states the further away the next mandated election, the longer the dispute. To test this hypothesis, I create a count variable called Ciepmonth, which is the natural log of the number of months remaining until the next mandated election. I log this measure because all states have different election cycles. The transformation serves two functions. First, it normalizes the different election periods, creating a measure that ranges from 0 to 4. Second, by logging the data, smaller values have more weight attached to them, which is in line with the idea that electoral considerations become more important as the election draws near.

Because properties of the dispute are important to the duration of the conflict and the potential political costs a government might face, I include several measures related to the disputing dyad. I generated these measures using EUGene (Bennett & Stam, 2000) and while disaggregated, they are yearly measures. Although they are not perfect, they help account for potential variation in capabilities and other factors related to the dispute. Bueno de Mesquita, Koch & Siverson (2004) find that democratic dyads have shorter disputes than other types of dyads. I create the variable Democratic opponent, which I code 1 if the opposing state receives a score of 7 or greater using the Polity IV democracy measure (Marshall & Jaggers, 2002).

Additionally, Bueno de Mesquita, Koch & Siverson (2004) find power disparity a good predictor of dispute duration for democracies. Democratic leaders choose to engage in disputes that they are likely to win, and thus states with greater capabilities are likely to be more difficult opponents. The more powerful the opposing state, the more likely the democracy should negotiate, which should lead to shorter duration. Therefore, I include the power ratio of the democratic state and the opposing state. I call this measure Balance of forces. It is the ratio of the democratic state’s composite index of national capabilities (CINC) score divided by the combined CINC score of both states (Bennett, 1998). The power scores come from the the Correlates of War data project (Singer, Bremer & Stuckey, 1972).

I expect shorter disputes between states that share an alliance, because the alliance provides a framework to negotiate differences. The variable Alliance is coded 1 if the states share an alliance and 0 otherwise. The alliance data are from the Correlates of War formal interstate alliance dataset, 1816–2000 (Gibler & Sarkees, 2004). I also include a measure of proximity labeled Contiguity (Stinnett et al. 2002). As Bueno de Mesquita, Koch & Siverson (2004: 261) suggest, ‘Communication between contiguous states should be easier and thereby facilitate...
One possible issue is that disputes in the sample are democratic states involved with other sampled democratic states. To account for both heterogeneity and repeated events between countries that may be due to unmeasured variables, I employ a shared frailty specification clustering on the dyad. The shared frailty model is essentially a random effects model that accounts for heterogeneity within dyads, across various disputes (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones, 2004).

Model 1 presents the Weibull regression results of all disputes involving the sampled democratic states (see Table I). The coefficients of the partisanship and ideological diversity measures are significant and in the expected direction. In terms of partisanship and duration, governments of the left end disputes more quickly than other governments. The median survival time of a dispute is 3.7 months. When left governments are in power, disputes last slightly more than three (3.1) months. When they are not in power, the median dispute time is almost four (3.9) months.

Lower levels of ideological division appear to extend the duration of the dispute, and greater ideological divisions lead to governments settling the dispute more quickly. Figure 1 demonstrates this relationship. Holding all other values at their median, Figure 1 shows the curvilinear relationship between ideological diversity and dispute duration. Between 0 and 10 on the diversity scale, the duration of conflict increases from slightly below four months to almost five months. However as diversity increases, the duration of conflict rapidly decreases until, at its extreme, it is one month.

In terms of structural characteristics, the presence of a legislative majority by the government has the expected effect on dispute duration. Holding all other covariates at their medians, the median duration of a dispute increases from two months for a non-majority government to four months for a majority government. Only the measure of the election cycle is statistically insignificant.

9 I estimated the models using Cox specifications. They are available from the author on request. The results did not substantively change. To test the proportional hazard assumption, I used an estimation technique suggested by Rogers (2004). This approach can be interpreted as testing whether the hazard proportions observed in one period agree with the hazard proportions observed in another. The results suggest that the model does not violate the PH assumption. I also used the Schoenfeld approach on the Cox model to test the PH assumption. The global statistic provides no evidence of the models violating this assumption either.
Table I. Weibull Hazard Analysis of Dispute Duration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>All disputes</th>
<th>Use of force</th>
<th>Salient issues</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Std error)</td>
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Government ideological division  
-0.046* (0.022)  
-0.052* (0.024)  
-0.109** (0.041)

Government ideological division 2  
0.002*** (0.000)  
0.003*** (0.001)  
0.005*** (0.001)

Left  
0.221* (0.131)  
0.287* (0.152)  
0.601* (0.300)

Government majority  
-0.304* (0.152)  
-0.359* (0.178)  
0.253 (0.518)

CIEP month  
-0.031 (0.056)  
-0.026 (0.064)  
-0.118 (0.108)

Contiguity  
0.291* (0.192)  
0.376* (0.214)  
0.290 (0.387)

Alliance  
0.320 (0.218)  
0.209 (0.259)  
1.45* (0.601)

Initiate  
0.115 (0.169)  
-0.108 (0.196)  
-0.015 (0.329)

Democratic opponent  
0.318* (0.195)  
0.507* (0.226)  
0.305 (.370)

Balance of Forces  
0.230 (0.255)  
0.329 (0.281)  
0.488 (0.554)

Salient  
-0.929*** (0.142)  
-1.02*** (0.157)  

Constant  
-1.17*** (0.301)  
-1.31*** (0.342)  
-2.68*** (0.752)

(ln)Frailty  
-0.484** (0.183)  
-0.491* (0.219)  
-1.04* (0.514)

(ln)Shape parameter (rho)  
0.075* (0.039)  
0.069* (0.039)  
0.073 (0.076)

Chi²  
78.55*** 73.00*** 33.66***

Cases  
588 454 146

Failures  
579 445 144

N  
4,374 4,099 2,203

at conventional levels, although it is in the expected direction. The frailty measure is clearly significant, indicating that there is still unobserved heterogeneity in the model. However, my key predictors at the domestic level remain statistically significant, suggesting that the heterogeneity is due to some unobservable variable not accounted for in the model, most likely at the state or dyadic level.

Examining the factors related to the dispute, only issue type, contiguity, and the regime type of the target are statistically significant. The measure Salient is significant and negative, indicating that the tractability of the issue goes a long way in determining the overall duration of disputes. If the issue is territory or regime change, the likelihood of the dispute ending decreases by 62%. Contiguous states, on the other hand, are more likely to settle their disputes quickly, as the positive coefficient suggests. Finally, governments that become involved in disputes with other democratic states can expect significantly shorter disputes, which is consistent with Bueno de
Mesquita, Koch & Siverson (2004). The duration parameter, ln(rho), is positive and significant, indicating that disputes in general exhibit tendencies of positive duration dependence and thus do not persist over time.

Models 2 and 3 examine the relationship between domestic factors and factors that might affect the salience of the dispute by essentially interacting the models with whether the dispute escalated to violence and the dispute issue. Model 2 presents the regression results of all disputes that escalated to the use of violence (level four or greater MID). The results remain essentially unchanged from Model 1, except that the levels of significance have slightly increased. Model 3 presents the results of only those disputes in which the issue was either territory or regime change. The coefficients are much larger in magnitude than the previous models. For example, left governments now have a larger impact on dispute duration, with the presence of a left government decreasing the duration of a dispute by 93%. In addition, while ideological diversity still has a pronounced effect on dispute duration, the majority status of the government no longer does. Among the dispute variables, none of the variables except the alliance measure remain statistically significant.

Onset and Duration

The above results suggest that the government failure framework is useful in understanding how partisan outcomes affect the duration of militarized disputes. One concern is that the dispute selection process might affect the duration of disputes. For example, governments of the left might select themselves into either shorter MIDS, or possibly fewer MIDS, meaning that duration is predetermined. To test for this, I create a dyadic model of dispute onset including a random sample of all non-dispute dyad months involving the 20 countries under investigation.\textsuperscript{10} I then generate the predicted
probability of dispute onset for the dyad month in question and include this in the duration model. I then perform 1140 bootstrap replications, to account for any uncertainty that might be associated with the newly included predicted probability. Table II displays both the results of the logit onset model clustered by dyad and the duration model. I report confidence intervals rather than standard errors, given the above bootstrapping procedure.

Does onset affect duration? Turning to the duration model, the results look very similar to the previous models. While the onset model suggests that left-oriented governments may become involved in more

Table II. Two Stage Model of Dispute Onset and Duration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>2.5th percentile</th>
<th>97.5th percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logistic regression of MID onset</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government ideological division 2</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>2.069</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government majority</td>
<td>-2.52</td>
<td>-3.41</td>
<td>-1.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIEP month</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.167</td>
<td>0.154</td>
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<td>Contiguity</td>
<td>2.388</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of forces</td>
<td>-1.48</td>
<td>-2.18</td>
<td>-0.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic opponent</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td>-2.05</td>
<td>-0.951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace years</td>
<td>-2.08</td>
<td>-2.47</td>
<td>-1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace years _spline1</td>
<td>-0.249</td>
<td>-0.327</td>
<td>-0.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace years _spline2</td>
<td>0.070</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace years _spline3</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
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<td>-0.895</td>
<td>-0.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Log-likelihood</td>
<td>-2,758.1505</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bootstrapped Weibull Regression Coefficients of Dispute Duration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>2.5th percentile</th>
<th>97.5th percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government ideological division</td>
<td>-0.037</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government ideological division 2</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>0.528</td>
<td>0.521</td>
<td>0.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government majority</td>
<td>-0.678</td>
<td>-0.696</td>
<td>-0.667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEP month</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
<td>-0.052</td>
<td>-0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contiguity</td>
<td>0.879</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td>0.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of forces</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>-0.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>-0.909</td>
<td>-0.926</td>
<td>-0.895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic opponent</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>-0.112</td>
<td>-0.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>-0.350</td>
<td>0.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset probability</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
<td>-2.33</td>
<td>-2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-757</td>
<td>-0.781</td>
<td>-0.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ln)Frailty</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ln)Shape parameter ((\rho))</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td>0.246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bootstrap replications                         | 1,140       |                  |                  |
disputes, their disputes are still shorter in duration. The coefficient of the probability of dispute onset is negative, suggesting that factors that increase the probability of conflict increase the subsequent duration of conflict. Comparing the bootstrapped model with Model 1, while none of the domestic factors have changed, some of the dyadic factors have changed signs. For example, both balance of forces and democratic opponent are now negative, suggesting that once initiation is accounted for, they increase dispute duration.

**Discussion**

Overall, the composition of democratic governments appears to affect the duration of militarized interstate disputes. The results suggest that variations in government sensitivity to failure combine with issues of international conflict to affect dispute duration. It appears that political outcomes from institutional arrangements make leaders sensitive to the costs of conflict and that this sensitivity varies with the ability of governments to retain office and satisfy supporters. This has implications for the broader study of domestic institutions and conflict.

For example, the results imply that government partisanship affects dispute behavior after a dispute begins. As the models demonstrate, governments of the left engage in shorter disputes. The relationship holds for parliamentary and presidential systems. Governments of the left have specific audiences to satisfy, and when they take office their policy choices reflect this. This directly effects the duration of interstate disputes.

This result of partisanship and onset may seem inconsistent with Palmer, London & Regan's (2004) work. However, it may be that governments of the left are more likely to be targets, given that aggressors may view them as easy prey. This would be consistent with the argument about governments of the left being less conflict-prone. This would also be consistent with Koch & Cranmer's (2007) results examining international terrorism. They found that governments of the left were more likely to be targets of terror attacks than governments of the right. Thus, it may be that states led by left-oriented governments, while not initiating conflicts, are targets.

The ideological diversity of the government also affects the duration of conflict. Examining the ideological proximity of parties in government appears to be a good indicator of whether parties will act in concert or if they will defect as international problems grow. This presents a different and perhaps more complete measure than just focusing on the number of parties or the presence or absence of a pivotal party. Fragile winning coalitions affect foreign policy in dramatic ways. Parties in ideologically disparate coalitions can use the threat of defection or actually defect to force policy change. The more diverse the coalition, the harder it is for parties to agree on policy and the more likely they will attempt to terminate disputes quickly in an effort to maintain the coalition.

One implication is that under certain circumstances, some parties are more likely to be veto players than others are. The Gaullist parties of the French IV Republic were like this. Their policy preferences were often at odds with the other parties in government, but despite their size in some coalitions, they were able to influence policy (Matthews, 1954). Finally, the majority result is consistent with the results of Ireland & Gartner (2001), who demonstrated that majority governments were more conflict-prone.

Interestingly, the factors that predict onset do not predict duration. The two-stage model demonstrates that the factors associated with duration are correlated with onset but sometimes in the opposite direction. This may be because the onset model captures
duration parameters in all of the models indicate that disputes were less likely to continue, suggesting that as information is revealed within the MID, the easier it is to end.

In relation to previous work on conflict duration, it appears that not all democracies face the same declining advantage in war fighting over time. While this analysis does not refute the claim that democracies have a declining advantage, the estimate of 18 months produced by Bennett & Stam (1998) might be biased by a composition effect in their data, especially if governments that face low removal costs end their disputes quickly while their higher removal cost brethren fight on.

To summarize, governments vary in dispute duration according to their removal costs. The party costs model, when tied with the notion of critical events and government failure, explains this variation. The costs of government removal determine the degree to which a government can withstand the potential domestic costs from international conflict. These costs help determine the duration of the dispute in democratic systems. High removal cost governments can allow disputes to persist. Conversely, low removal cost governments fight shorter disputes.

Conclusion

Using models that predict government failure appears to be a fruitful avenue to explain foreign policy behavior. If governments, and leaders, have one eye always on tenure (see Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003), then examining the context within which they govern should help us understand decisions over war and peace.

In addition, I have presented a framework tied to the bargaining and war literature to examine the duration of militarized disputes and not just war. MIDs represent a revealing of information by both parties in a dispute rather than just random acts of violence or accidents in the international system. The democratic governments as both initiators and targets. In addition, governments may attempt to choose wars or disputes that are short in nature but ultimately last longer than anticipated. For example, Filson & Werner (2004) demonstrated that autocratic regimes overestimate their probability of victory against democratic states, causing them to enter into disputes that ultimately lead to wars in which they lose. The same type of dynamics may be at work in terms of onset and duration.
 Appendix

States and Years of Governments in Sample and Number of Disputes for Each Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country and years</th>
<th>Number of disputes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia 1945–92</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium 1945–92</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada 1945–92</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark 1945–92</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland 1945–92</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France IV 1945–58</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France V 1960–92</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece 1975–92</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland 1945–92</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland 1945–92</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel 1948–92</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy 1945–92</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands 1945–92</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand 1945–92</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway 1945–92</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain 1979–92</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden 1945–92</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom 1945–92</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States 1950–92</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I used the Polity IV data to decide whether state was a democracy. I used standard coding procedures and included states as democratic when they had a combined Democracy–Autocracy score of seven or greater.

Descriptive Statistics for Models (N = 349)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. dev.</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government ideological division</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>9.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government ideological division 2</td>
<td>159.6</td>
<td>235.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,308.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>0.425</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government majority</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td>0.307</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEP month</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contiguity</td>
<td>0.320</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance of forces</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>0.503</td>
<td>0.503</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic opponent</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate</td>
<td>0.379</td>
<td>0.485</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


MICHAEL T. KOCH, b. 1967, PhD in Political Science (University of California Davis, 2002); Assistant Professor, Texas A&M University (2005– ); main interests: political competition, partisan outcomes and interstate conflict. Recipient of an Institute of Global Conflict and Cooperation dissertation grant, post-doctoral research fellow at Pennsylvania State University and a UC Davis Faculty Fellow. Most recent publication (with Patricia Sullivan): ‘Military Interventions by Powerful States 1945–2003’, *Journal of Peace Research* 45(5), 2009.