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Accommodation or Confrontation? Explaining Differences in Policies Toward Iran[1]

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Even though democracies by and large share the perception of Iran as a threat to peace and security, they disagree over the appropriate policy response. This paper examines why some democracies prefer accommodation while others plead for confrontation. Using a new data set on democracies' policies toward Iran in the 2000s, we assess the impact of power positions, commercial interests, and domestic political cultures while controlling for government ideology. While we find little support for any impact of power positions, "cultures of dealing with deviance," that is, the discourses and practices of dealing with violations of norms domestically as institutionalized in a society's criminal law and justice system, have a substantial and statistically significant effect on state policies. Finally, we find qualified support for commercial liberalism: Whereas high levels of total trade do not have the expected effect of making states more accommodationist, high levels of trade in strategic goods such as oil do.

Since the end of the Cold War, liberal democracies in particular have considered Iran as a threat to international peace and security. Although most liberal democracies do not fear becoming the victim of a military attack themselves, they share a concern that Iran undermines international peace and security by continuously violating key international norms. Violations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as found by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2003 and 2006, weigh particularly heavy as the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become a cornerstone of the post-Cold War international security order. Especially since 9/11, Iran's support for Hezbollah and Hamas has been seen as breaching another key norm, namely the prohibition on supporting terrorism. Massive human rights violations and the rigging of the 2009 presidential elections have further added to Iran's reputation as a "pariah," "renegade," "rogue," or "state of concern."

Despite a widely shared concern about Iran, liberal democracies have disagreed over the appropriate policy responses. Discussions about the merits of a "critical dialogue" and negotiations over the imposition of sanctions have demonstrated that liberal democracies have remarkably stable policies in this respect. Some typically plead for an accommodationist approach that emphasizes diplomatic, non-military means to foster mutual trust and reassure Iran. This approach is exemplified by former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who told the Munich Security Conference that "Iran will only abandon its nuclear ambitions for good if not only its economic but also its legitimate security interests are safeguarded" (Schröder 2005). An accommodationist approach has also inspired the European Union's strategy against the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction which states that:

> The best solution to the problem of proliferation of WMD is that countries should no longer feel they need them. If possible, political solutions should be found to the problems, which lead them to seek WMD. The more secure countries feel, the more likely they are to abandon programs: disarmament measures can lead to a virtuous circle just as weapons programs can lead to an arms race.(Council of the European Union 2003)

For such an accommodationist approach, empathy and understanding are key strategies for dealing with Iran. For example, the European Union's High Representative Javier Solana reasoned,

> All countries are difficult to understand. Iran is one of the most difficult. […] Its more recent history has in many ways been tragic. It is therefore not surprising that, in the light of that history, many Iranians have a profound suspicion of the outside world. And it is not surprising either that many other countries have a pro-

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> found suspicion of Iran. Iran is a sophisticated but complicated country and it is not easy for others to deal with [….] No doubt they think the same about us.(Solana 2005)

On the other end of the confrontation/accommodation spectrum, some democracies typically prefer a confrontational policy that increases the pressure on Iran's government, imposes sanctions, and includes the threat to use military force. Such an approach is exemplified by former US President George W. Bush, who not only revived the stigmatizing label of "rogue state" for Iran but also placed Iran on an "axis of evil." According to Bush,

> The guilty party is Iran. They're the ones who are not living up to international accords. They're the people that the whole world is saying, "Don't develop a weapon."(Bush 2005:355)

Instead of engaging Iran in some form of "critical dialogue," Bush suggested to isolate Iran and to build a united front against it:

> the Iranians need to feel the pressure from the world that any nuclear weapons program will be uniformly condemned.(Bush 2004:645)

What accounts for the policy differences among liberal democracies toward Iran? Of course, Iran's actions may explain confrontational or accommodating moves over time. However, the puzzle remains why some democracies always tend to be more accommodationist than others. In this article, we test the impact of power positions, commercial interests, and political culture on policies while controlling for government ideology. We find qualified support for the commercial-liberal notion that high levels of trade make countries refrain from coercive diplomacy: Whereas trade as such seems to have the opposite effect, trade in strategic goods such as oil does. We also find consistent support for the liberal-constructivist explanation according to which policies toward Iran are driven by domestic "cultures of dealing with deviance," that is, discourses and practices of dealing with violations of norms domestically as institutionalized in a society's criminal law and justice system. In contrast, we find only little support for the (neo-)realist notion that powerful states have a higher propensity to use coercive diplomacy and no support for the influence of government ideology.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows: The next section introduces our theoretical framework in greater depth. It first presents (neo-)realist and commercial-liberal accounts of policies toward Iran according to which policies are driven by power positions and commercial interests. It then introduces our liberal-constructivist explanation in greater depth. Drawing on sociological and criminological literature, it distinguishes a rehabilitative from an exclusionary culture of dealing with deviance and outlines how such cultures can be expected to influence foreign policy toward states that repeatedly violate international norms. The following section presents our research design that correlates data on 34 democracies' policies toward Iran with data on their power positions, commercial interests, and domestic cultures of dealing with deviance while controlling for government ideology. As discussed in section 'Data and Methods', our results show that trade in strategic goods and domestic cultures of dealing with deviance indeed have a significant impact on policies toward Iran.

Explaining Liberal Democracies' Policy Differences Toward Iran

Explaining different policies vis-à-vis a third state is the home ground of foreign policy analysis. Of course, theories of international bargaining may explain why states make confrontational or accommodating moves in response to Iran's actions *over time*. However, theories that focus on characteristic patterns of interactions have difficulties accounting for different degrees of confrontation or accommodation *across states at the same time*. In this article, we therefore test realist, commercial-liberal, and liberal-constructivist theories of foreign policy to account for different policies toward Iran.[2]

The Power of Power Positions: (Neo-)Realist Accounts of Foreign Policy Differences

According to (neo)realists,[3] policy differences result from differences in states' power positions. According to Waltz (1993:45), "the placement of states in the international system accounts for a good deal of their behavior." Weak states that lack the military capabilities to carry out military threats will therefore chose diplomatic, non-military means. In contrast, powerful states have the full spectrum of foreign policy instruments at their disposal and frequently make use of it. This notion was popularized by Kagan with a view to the United States and Europe:

> American military strength has produced a propensity to use that strength. Europe's military weakness has produced a perfectly understandable aversion to the exercise of military power.(Kagan 2002:10)

Realists posit that "the distribution of material capabilities among states is the key factor for understanding world politics" (Mearsheimer 1995:91). The militarily preponderant powers tend to be more likely to escalate conflicts toward war (Siverson and Tennefoss 1984; Huth 1989). By a similar token, countries that have better trained troops (a property that can be conveniently approximated by military spending; Reiter 1999) tend to win confrontations and therefore can be expected to be more likely to escalate disputes into a military confrontation (Stam 1996). Therefore, countries possessing "a hammer" might be reasonably expected to see international disputes as nails.

With a view to nonproliferation, Kroenig (2009, Forthcoming) has argued along (neo-)realist lines that nonproliferation policy is best explained by a state's strategic considerations and its ability to project power over the potential proliferator. The (neo-)realist notion that policies toward Iran are driven by states' power positions can be found in both scholarly and journalistic accounts of US policy (Goldberg 2010; Klein 2010; Woodward 2010). By the same token, European authors

[2] Because we only study the policies of liberal democracies, we do not test the effect of regime type.

[3] Although neorealism differs from realism in many respects, both agree on the point of interest here, namely that foreign policy differences are by and large explained by states' power positions. We follow Elman (1996) in taking neorealism not only as a theory of international politics but also as a theory that can and is frequently used to explain the foreign policies of states.

have argued that the military preponderance drives the United States to pursue a different policy compared to the European diplomatic approach toward Iran (Posch 2007, 2009).

"It's the Economy....": Commercial Liberal Explanations of Foreign Policy Differences

Commercial liberals[4] argue that foreign policies are not a function of states' power positions but of their commercial interests. From this perspective, states that extract significant commercial benefits from a relationship with Iran may suffer economic losses if the conflict escalates and are therefore served best by an accommodationist strategy. In contrast, states with insignificant trade ties to Iran are free to confront the regime. Democracies are particularly considered sensitive to the disruptive effects of conflict on commerce (Papayoanou 1996; Gelpi and Grieco 2003, 2008) because leaders are held accountable by a large "selectorate" (Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow 2003). The elected leaders of democratic countries will therefore seek as little conflict with a country with which they are economically interdependent as possible, in order not to impose costs on their domestic constituencies.

Commercial liberals have disagreed over the type of trade that is expected to lead to a more accommodationist policy. Whereas "mainstream commercial liberals" do not distinguish between different forms of trade but expect any form of commerce to have an impact on foreign policy, "strategic commercial liberals" have argued that not trade as such but rather trade in so-called strategic goods impacts a state's foreign policy. Strategic goods are defined as those essential for the survival of the state and its economy (Blanchard and Ripsman 1996) such as energy or arms. A decline in trade in strategic goods therefore does not only hurt the economy in general but may compromise the security of the state as such. From this perspective, states with significant trade in strategic goods (such as oil) with Iran can be expected to adopt an accommodationist policy to avoid damage not only to their economy but also to state security. We will test both the "mainstream" and the "strategic" commercial-liberal hypotheses.

With a view to policies toward Iran, pundits and scholars alike frequently draw on commercial-liberal arguments. The most popular version is that dependence on oil makes states adopt a soft approach toward Iran. In his analysis of the EU's hesitation to impose sanctions against Iran, for example, Orde Kittrie quotes Germany's then foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, who had commented on this decision by saying that "You cannot reproach us for following our economic interests" (Kittrie 2007).

Rehabilitation or Exclusion? Domestic Cultures of Dealing with Deviance

Whereas commercial liberalism traces states' policies back to economic interests, constructivist liberalism emphasizes the impact of political culture and identity. Governments are not regarded as utility maximizers but as acting in line with the norms and values that are widely shared and institutionalized within society. In some cases, such norms and values are explicitly geared toward foreign policies issues. For example, EU members' policies toward a deepening of European integration can be explained with their political identities that incorporate a European dimension to different degrees.[5]

In most cases, however, foreign policy issues have not been salient enough to have become part of a state's political culture or identity. Instead, foreign policy issues are linked to political culture via a domestic analogy: Norms and values which are institutionalized in an analogous area of domestic politics also guide foreign policy. This is because decision makers (as well as society at large) strive for a consistent set of norms and values.

Arguments linking domestic culture to foreign policy have been brought forward with a view to various areas of foreign policy: Most prominently, Russett and others argued that democracies do not wage war against each other because their domestic culture of nonviolent conflict resolution leads them to abhor the use of force internationally as well (Russett 1993 et passim). In international political economy, Katzenstein (1978) argued that consociational democracies are more accommodating in international politics, too, because a culture of compromising is part of the political culture and identity in consociational systems. Lumsdaine (1993) suggested that Scandinavian welfare states spend more on foreign aid than Anglo-Saxon liberal states because their domestic culture emphasizes the responsibility of the state (rather than that of the individual) in alleviating poverty. Finally, Wagner (2002) demonstrated that states with regional parliaments also support a strengthening of the European Parliament, whereas unitary states are opposed to any form of parliamentarianism above or below the national level.

We argue that democracies' policies toward Iran are influenced, via a domestic analogy, by their domestic discourses and practices of dealing with norm violations. Drawing on research on deviance in sociology and criminology, we distinguish a rehabilitative culture from an exclusionary one. Such cultures of dealing with deviance characterize a country's criminal law system in particular as well as its welfare state more broadly. A rehabilitative culture is characterized by the basic axiom that "penal measures ought, where possible, to be rehabilitative interventions rather than negative, retributive punishments" (Garland 2001:34). Institutions, discourses, and practices all center around inclusive notions of assimilating deviance (Young 1999:1–29). An underlying assumption is that the frequency of norm violations can be reduced by means of social engineering. The main approach toward crime is to address "directly the factors—economic, social, or personal—believed to be the cause of crime" (Hollin 2001:241). In this culture, punishment only seems legitimate to the extent that it contributes to rehabilitation. As the 1972 edition of the US Model Sentencing Act puts it:

> Persons convicted of crime shall be dealt with in accordance with their potential for rehabilitation, consider-

[4] The term has been coined by Moravcsik (1997). The extensive literature on the so-called commercial peace draws on the same idea (Polachek 1980; Pollins 1989; Morrow 2003; Reuveny 2003; Keshk, Pollins, and Reuveny 2004). With a view to policies on Iran, see Tarock (1999), Kittrie (2007, 2008), as well as Barzegar (2010).

[5] See Risse, Engelmann-Martin, Knopf, and Roscher (1999) for this argument with a view to Economic and Monetary Union. Jachtenfuchs, Diez, and Jung (1998) have made a similar argument about different institutional "Leitbilder."

> ing their individual characteristics, circumstances and needs.[6]

Punishment, therefore, is seen as one of many possible treatments. If the individual characteristics, circumstances, and needs are unlikely to be advanced by harsh penalties, an alternative treatment seems appropriate. The key is to understand the offender's individual needs and to find measures that enhance his or her self-esteem that forms the basis of re-integration.

The exclusionary paradigm has developed as a critique of the rehabilitative optimism about the correctability of offenders. It combines two different lines of thinking: First, it draws on retributionist thinking according to which penalties are imposed because they are just and wrong-doers simply deserve them for what they have done. Especially conservatives were found to make strong attributions of personal responsibility, to experience anger and contempt toward norm-violators, and to sometimes advocate their punishment (Skitka and Tetlock 1993). According to Bennett, DiIulio, and Walters (1996:91), "virtually all of those in prison […] are just what most average Americans suppose them to be—not victims of unfettered capitalism, rampant racism, a reactionary citizenry, or Reagan-era budget cuts, but duly tried and convicted violent and repeat criminals who are either dangerous enough, or deserving enough (or both), to merit secure confinement." This retributionism often comes with a "criminology of the other" (Garland 1996:461) that regards certain criminals as intrinsically different from the rest of the community. Attempts to understand deviant behavior thus appear as morally dubious and are associated with an expert discourse out of touch with popular moral sentiments. Punishment then also serves the moral purpose of expressing that someone's conduct was wrong and that (s)he is blameworthy for having committed it (von Hirsch [1976] 1986:48).

Second, the exclusionary paradigm is fueled by actuarial ideas and language that are typical of a risk-society (Beck 1992; O'Malley 2010). In the absence of the optimism that characterizes the rehabilitative paradigm, people "formerly defined as aberrant and in need of transformation are […] seen as high-risk subjects in need of management" (Simon 1998:453). Penology is thus recalibrated away from a focus on individual guilt to the identification and management of unruly groups (Feeley and Simon 1992:455).

Retributionist and risk-societal thinking concur in assigning priority to social defense, that is, the deterrence, punishment, and incapacitation of deviant delinquency. It is the protection of the public and the concern for victims of crime that drives scholars and politicians in the exclusionary paradigm. Society is "exclusive" and "responds to deviance by separation and exclusion" (see also Young 1999:26; Bauman 2000). Incarceration is considered a technique of maximizing the protection of possible future victims against "high-risk individuals."

These domestic cultures of dealing with deviance are expected to influence policies toward Iran because the underlying problem—how to approach actors who break core norms of the community?—is analogous. Countries characterized by a rehabilitative domestic culture of dealing with deviance are expected to adopt rather accommodationist policies toward Iran, whereas states with an exclusionary culture are expected to prefer a rather confrontational policy.

[6] Quoted from von Hirsch ([1976] 1986:9).

Research Design

Measuring Foreign Policy Differences with the Help of an Expert Survey

To close observers of policies toward Iran, differences among democracies' policies are obvious. However, and unfortunately from a scholarly perspective, such policy differences rarely find expression in measurable indicators. The main reason for this is that states act strategically toward nuclear aspirants: Whether they prefer accommodation or confrontation, states are aware that their bargaining position improves with the degree of unity with which it is presented. States therefore have incentives to keep differences among themselves behind closed doors and to find compromises that all states can accept. According to British diplomat Wood, "most of the negotiating history of a resolution is not on the public record, and indeed may be known in full only to Council members or even to a limited number of them" (Wood 1998: 81). Indeed, the UN Security Council resolutions on Iran were all carried either unanimously or by large majorities with all democracies under study voting *en bloc*.[7]

On the IAEA Board of Governors, voting is often done by raising hands, individual votes are not officially recorded, and only aggregated data are published officially. To the extent that unofficial sources provide insights into voting behavior, they by and large reveal the same *en bloc* votes as in the UNSC. South Africa was the only democracy under study that abstained when the large majority on the Board (and all other democracies in our sample) voted in favor of condemning Iran in 2005 and 2006.[8] Such large majorities, however, obscure the policy differences among democracies. As a consequence, we carried out an expert survey to obtain data on a country's degree of confrontation and accommodation.[9]

Expert surveys have been widely used in European studies (Huber and Inglehart 1995; Ray 1999; Whitefield, Vachudova, Steenbergen, Rohrschneider, Marks, Loveless, and Hooghe 2007; Hooghe, Bakker, Brigevich, De Vries, Edwards, Marks, Rovny, Steenbergen, and Vachudova 2010) and foreign policy analysis (Schafer and Crichlow 2002; O'Malley 2007). In total, we asked more than 400 experts from 47 countries to complete the survey. These experts were researchers at universities or think tanks who study nuclear nonproliferation or international security more broadly, though in the case of a few small countries we also asked foreign policy analysts. Having received 173 responses that had at least one valid answer, our response rate reached 38%. Our survey aimed at mapping the policies of democratic countries toward Iran. We focused on those moments in time when the international community was confronted with a challenge to the nonproliferation regime either because norm viola-

[7] The non-unanimously adopted resolutions related to Iran include UN SC Resolution 1969 (2006, no sanctions, Qatar against), UN SC Resolution 1803 (2008, sanctions tightened, Indonesia abstained), and UN SC Resolution 1929 (2010, sanctions further tightened, Lebanon abstained, Turkey and Brazil against).

[8] See the information made available by "Iran Watch" on http://www.iranwatch.org/international/IAEA/iaea-boardofgovernors-votingtally-092405.htm and http://www.iranwatch.org/international/IAEA/iaea-boardofgovernors-votingtally-020406.htm. (Accessed July 2012.)

[9] For a detailed discussion of our expert survey see Onderco and Wagner (2012).

tions had been detected or because obligations under the regime had been questioned. Thus, policies were measured for 2002, when the nuclear program was revealed, 2006, when the IAEA published its report on NPT implementation by Iran in which it concluded that Iran stepped up its enrichment efforts, and 2009, when secret nuclear facilities near Qom were uncovered.

Each expert was given the above-mentioned time points and was asked to evaluate policies of six countries toward Iran at each of the time points from "very accommodationist" to "very confrontational" on a seven-point scale (ranging from 1 to 7).

We evaluated the reliability of our measure by looking at the standard deviations of expert scores for each state-year. We expect higher degrees of disagreement among our experts than among experts on, for example, positions of political parties. Whereas diplomats aim at remaining flexible on issues of international security, elections provide political parties with strong incentives to stand out with clearly defined positions in order to attract voters. Indeed, standard deviations in our data are slightly higher than, for example, in Ray's data on party orientations.[10] We follow Leonard Ray (1999) in identifying those expert judgments that deviate excessively from the mean as "suspect."[11] We then exclude them from our sample and further exclude all time points with fewer than three observations. If more than two time points were eliminated from a particular country year, we also excluded the country from the analysis.

We report the expert scores for all countries and episodes in the online appendix. Figure 1 visualizes how the experts view states' policies toward Iran for 2002 (x-axis) and 2009 (y-axis). The figure captures the escalation of the crisis over Iran's nuclear program between 2002 and 2009 as the vast majority of countries' positions lie above the $x = y$ line. At the same time, it visualizes the diversity of policies and shows that countries maintain typical policy profiles over the course of the crisis. For example, the United States and Israel were always more confrontational than any other state, the United Kingdom was always more confrontational than France which in turn was always more confrontational than Germany, etc. The figure also squares well with the sparse information we obtain from the available data on voting on the UNSC and the IAEA Board of Governors, namely that South Africa has been among the most accommodationist countries. At the same time, the figure demonstrates that the expert survey allows for a differentiated map of democracies' policies toward Iran.

Data and Methods

We analyze the relationship between three independent variables (domestic culture of dealing with deviance, commercial interests, and power positions) and policies toward Iran as the dependent variable while controlling for government ideology. We include only UN members whose democratic nature is beyond doubt and thereby also control for regime type. Thus, we select all countries

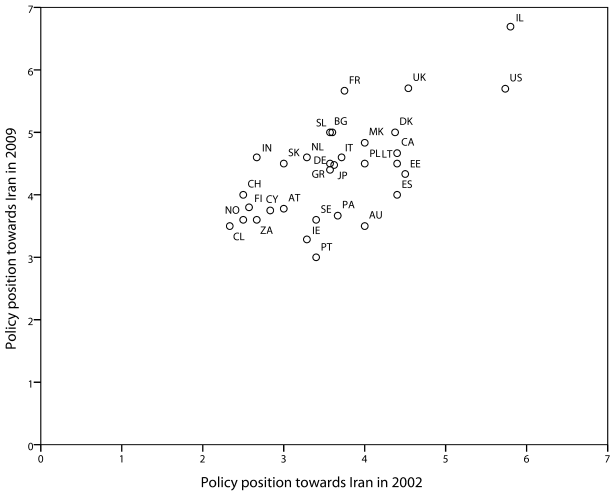

FIG. 1. Positions Toward Iran in 2002 and 2009

(except Taiwan) whose Polity IV score is 9 or higher for the entire period under study, 2002–2009 (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2009).

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable is the degree of confrontation and accommodation as measured by the expert survey for a particular country during one of the three crises outlined above (2002, 2006, and 2009). Out of the initial sample of 42 democracies, two countries had to be excluded entirely because we miss data on their policies for two or three time points. Appendix 1 lists all countries included in the analysis. As data on the degree of accommodation and confrontation were available for three time points for each country, our sample included 102 cases.

Independent Variables

Power Position

The (neo)realist hypothesis holds that countries are the more likely to adopt a confrontational policy toward Iran the more military power they can muster. We measure the relative military power by measuring democracies' military expenditures as a share of Iran's military expenditure (similar to, for example, Reiter 1999). This operationalization captures how many times more any given democracy spends on defense compared to Iran. The data are taken from the SIPRI Military Expenditure Database (SIPRI 2011). The military power of the democracies under study varies considerably, ranging from 0.001 for Mauritius in 2006 to 84.3 for the United States in 2009. The mean value of the variable is 3.06, and the median is 0.55 (within our sample).

Commercial Interests

According to commercial liberalism, states are the more likely to adopt an accommodationist policy toward Iran the higher their commercial stakes in their relationship with Iran. Following the discussion among commercial liberals, we distinguish a "overall trade" hypothesis and a "strategic goods" hypothesis. According to the former, states are the more likely to adopt an accommodationist policy toward Iran the higher the level of their overall trade with Iran. According to the latter, states are the more likely to adopt an accommodationist policy toward

[10] Whereas the standard deviation in Ray's data is up to 0.97, it is 1.1 in our data sample.

[11] With an average (and median) of 0.2 on our seven-point scale, the effect of excluding excessively deviant experts is limited. In order to check the robustness of the findings we present in this article, we rerun all analyses also with excessively deviant experts included; our main findings remain although the magnitude and statistical significance of some effects varies.

Iran the higher the level of trade in strategic goods with Iran. For the "overall trade" hypothesis, commercial interests are measured by the amount of overall trade between a democracy and Iran as a share of democracy's gross domestic product.[12] Values range from 0% in the case of Israel in 2009 to 1.25% for India in 2009.

For the "strategic goods" hypothesis, we adopt the categorization and the list of strategic goods created by Cullen Goenner (2010:550) which includes energy, nonferrous metals, chemicals, electronics, nuclear goods, and armaments. Commercial interests are measured by the aggregate amount of trade in strategic goods with Iran as a share of the country's total trade in strategic goods. All data on the trade volumes were obtained from UN COMTRADE (2011).

Domestic Culture of Dealing with Deviance

We hypothesize that the more exclusionary a state's culture of dealing with deviance is, the more confrontational the state would be toward Iran, ceteris paribus.

A state's culture of dealing with deviance finds expression in various ways. On a rather general level, the degree to which a state has assumed responsibility for socially marginalized citizens can be taken as an indicator for the priority assigned to the principle of rehabilitation. Welfare states can then be expected to be less punitive than states that attribute responsibility for the well-being of its citizens to individual responsibility, rather than to malleable structural circumstances. As a consequence, the percentage of GDP devoted to social welfare may indicate differences in countries' culture of dealing with deviance. However, when applied to a group of both developed and developing countries, it first and foremost measures differences in socioeconomic development, rather than different cultures dealing with deviance. With a view to the countries under study here, the percentage of GDP devoted to social welfare is therefore not a valuable proxy for cultures of dealing with deviance.

A more pertinent indicator is a state's criminal law system which reflects how punitive a society reacts to norm violations. A country's penal code as well as sentencing guidelines show what kind of sanction is considered appropriate for what kind of norm violation. However, to fully capture a country's culture of dealing with deviance, one would have to take their actual implementation into account, that is, to what extent harsh provisions remain dead letter and to what extent rehabilitative measures such as probation and parole are used in practice.

The interplay between penal code, sentencing guidelines, and the actual practice of punishment is well captured by prison populations, that is, the number of prisoners per 1,000 inhabitants. High shares of prisoners indicate that a country's criminal law system emphasizes retribution, incapacitation, and deterrence over rehabilitation and re-socialization. A country's prison population is low if either the penal code refrains from harsh punishments, if sentencing guidelines prioritize rehabilitative over retributive measures, or if courts use the discretion they have to avoid retribution (for example, by using probation and parole).

Of course, the use of capital punishment is also an important indicator for a country's punitivity. However, in contrast to prison populations, it only allows for distinguishing between a very small group of countries who use it and the large majority that do not. Thus, incarceration rates are a much more fine-tuned indicator than the death penalty.

One may object that prison populations reflect crime rates, rather than cultures of dealing with deviance. However, criminologists have argued that prison populations "are largely unrelated to victimization rates or to trends in reported crime" (Lappi-Seppälä 2011:308); instead, they are "ultimately a matter of political choice" (Morgan and Liebling 2007:1107). At the same time, research on prison populations has pointed out that incarceration and welfare are alternative ways of "governing social marginality" (Beckett and Western 2001). A state's culture of dealing with deviance is therefore closely tied to related cultural features of the welfare state (see also Greenberg 2001; Lacey 2008). Thus, although we have rejected the percentage of GDP spent on welfare as a good measure of culture of dealing with deviance, the use of prison populations as an indicator brings the welfare state back in as part of a broader picture of governing social marginality.

A final advantage in using prison populations as a measure for cultures of dealing with deviance is that high-quality time series data are available for all countries in our sample from the International Centre for Prison Studies (2010). According to its figures, prison populations range from 0.28 per 1,000 inhabitants in India in 2002 to 7.56 per 1,000 inhabitants in the United States in 2009, with a mean of 1.52 and median of 1.08 (within our sample).

Control Variable: Government Ideology

Power position, commercial interests, and political culture are all structural attributes of the state that may pose considerable constraints on government policy. The government of the day, however, retains considerable discretion in how it interprets these structural constraints. Moreover, it may endorse and reproduce them or it may ignore them or even invest in (slowly) re-shaping them, for example, by changing the military budget, by setting new economic incentives, or by promoting new norms. Governments may use this room for maneuver "to shape their countries' policy according to their political beliefs and ideology" (Schuster and Maier 2006:230). To capture the possibly confounding role of a government's political beliefs, we control for government ideology. Differences in government ideology have been mostly used to account for variance in domestic policies (such as the welfare state, cf. Schmidt 1996). However, Rathbun (2004) and Schuster and Maier (2006) have demonstrated that government ideology can also explain variance in foreign and security policies. According to their studies of military interventions in the Balkans and in Iraq, left-wing governments value non-military conflict management much more highly than right-wing governments. We measure the government ideology using the Schmidt-Index, measuring the cabinet composition. Discreet values of the Schmidt-Index range from 1 to 5, where 1 denotes the hegemony of right-wing parties and 5 the hegemony of left-wing parties. Data were obtained from the data set collected by Armingeon, Engler, Potolidis, Gerber, and Leimgruber (2010). Data missing in Armingeon were supplied by Woldendorp, Keman, and Budge (2011); the remaining missing data were coded by authors using the information from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2011).

[12] This measure is widely accepted to capture the dependence of an economy on the trade with another country (Barbieri 2003; Keshk et al. 2004).

To be sure, explanations based on government ideology overlap with those drawing on structural attributes because, especially in liberal democracies, the government is likely to reflect the interests and normative orientations in society. At the same time, however, the inclusion of a government ideology-variable allows us the possibly confounding effect of an entrepreneurial government that deliberately challenges vested interests and established norms. Addressing the issue of endogeneity and allowing for a dynamic panel model, we used a 1-year lag for all dependent variables (Wawro 2002).

We decided to address the issue of missing data not by listwise deletion, because it has been argued that imputation is superior to listwise deletion when meaningful imputation can be done (King, Honaker, Joseph, and Scheve 2001). The missing data on trade in specific trade groups were first imputed by back retrieval (exports from *A* to *B* in particular goods *X* were retrieved as imports to *B* from *A* in the given goods). Where these were incomplete, the missing values were imputed with zeroes as it seems safe to assume that there simply is no trade between the two states under consideration (for an overview of the debate, cf. Oneal and Russett 1999).

We use panel data analysis using Stata 11. Our temporal variable is a crisis because during crises, confrontational or accommodationist policies become more visible (between crises, the unwillingness to confront Iran would be overdetermined). Following Beck and Katz (1995), we estimate our models using ordinary least squares estimator with panel-corrected standard errors model, with first-order autocorrelation.[13] We also included country dummies to control for unobserved and pre-existing variance (Plümper, Troeger, and Manow 2005). Model 1 tests prison populations, military spending, and aggregated total trade; Model 2 adds the aggregate measure of trade in strategic goods, and Model 3 disaggregates trade in strategic goods into its various components (energy, nonferrous metals, chemicals, electronics, nuclear-related goods, and armaments; Models 1–3 are reported in Table 1). In order to test the robustness of our results, we then repeat the same analyses without the United States and Israel that are outliers in respect to several variables.[14] The analyses are conducted in Models 1a–3a, which correspond to Models 1–3, respectively (Models 1a–3a are reported in Table 2).[15]

Results

Table 1 reports results of the Models 1, 2, and 3, and Table 2 reports results of the Models 1a–3a. To make the substantial effects of the various variables comparable, Table 3 calculates how a change by one standard deviation influences the degree of confrontation toward Iran.

As Table 1 indicates, we found no evidence that lower levels of total trade or higher levels of military spending would lead to more confrontational policies. Instead, our analysis suggests that confrontational policies are associated with low levels of trade in strategic goods and an exclusionary culture of dealing with deviance.

Though in all three models with the full sample of liberal democracies we found statistically significant influence of military expenditure, the individual coefficients were all negative, statistically significant only at the 10% level and with a paltry substantive effect. This suggests that countries which overspend Iran in military expenses do not tend to be more confrontational toward the country. However, once we exclude the United States and Israel from the sample of democratic countries, we observe that military expenditure increases in statistical significance, and the direction of the effect is positive. This suggested that confrontational behavior toward the country is associated with the military expenditure, but only once we exclude the two most confrontationist countries from the sample. Having a big hammer thus does make countries bolder in their foreign policies.

In all three models, we found a statistically significant and positive influence of the exclusionary culture of dealing with deviance (as expressed by high prison population) on the adoption of confrontational policies toward Iran. As expected by constructivist liberals, countries with an exclusive domestic culture of dealing with deviance are also more confrontational toward norm-breakers abroad. Substantially, an increase in prison population by one standard deviation is associated with the increase in confrontation by approximately 0.8 points (0.4–0.5, if the United States and Israel are excluded). The results resonate with findings in political psychology according to which individuals have consistent policies of addressing norm violations. For example, probands that tend to attribute responsibility to individuals rather than society are motivated by considerations of punitiveness across different situations (Skitka and Tetlock 1993). In a similar way, individual support for retributionist policies toward norm breaking and individual support for the death penalty are linked to support for hard-line policies toward norm-breakers abroad (Liberman 2006, 2007; Rathbun 2007). Our results suggest that this connection has been institutionalized in domestic discourse and practices. These findings fit well with previous scholarship on the importance of domestic norms in foreign policy (Noel and Therien 1995; Jachtenfuchs et al. 1998; Risse et al. 1999; Thérien and Noel 2000).

With a view to commercial liberalism, we find mixed results. Only the trade in strategic goods has a significant impact in the expected direction, confirming earlier results by Dorussen (2006) and Goenner (2010). In contrast, democracies do not become more accommodationist with higher levels of total trade, as mainstream commercial liberalists would expect. In fact, we find a statistically significant effect in the opposite direction. While an increase in total trade by one standard deviation is associated with a move toward more confrontation by 0.5–1 point on a seven-point scale (0.3–0.9 point, if the United States and Israel are excluded), increasing the trade in strategic goods is associated with a move toward accommodation by about 1 point. When we dissect our data into repeated cross-sectional analysis, we find that in

[13] Autocorrelation was detected with the help of the xtserial procedure in Stata (Wooldridge 2002; Drukker 2003).

[14] Both states are the most confrontational and are thus outliers on the dependent variable. Moreover, the United States has far higher military spending and a far higher prison population than any other democracy in our sample.

[15] One reviewer focused our attention on the sensitivity of our results to pooling of cross-sections within the sample. There are good reasons to believe that the pooled analysis provides better understanding of our data (taking into account both within and between group variation; Wooldridge 2002). To alleviate these concerns, we conducted a repeated cross-section analysis, using simple multivariate OLS regression with robust standard errors. The only statistically significant result in contradiction to our findings concerns overall trade: in two out of 18 models, we find that overall trade is negatively and statistically significantly correlated with confrontation, rather than positively as in the pooled model. This does not challenge our main findings in this article but only underscores our doubts about the effect of trade as a useful predictor of policies toward Iran.

TABLE 1. Panel Model of Confrontation

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*
Prison population	0.636 (0.104)***	0.684 (0.160)***	0.581 (0.109)***
Total trade	177.622 (25.053)***	408.681 (54.124)***	207.450 (18.370)***
Government ideology	−0.061 (0.050)	−0.035 (0.037)	−0.066 (0.041)
Military expenditure	−0.010 (0.005)$^{+}$	−0.010 (0.006)$^{+}$	−0.010 (0.006)$^{+}$
Trade in strategic goods		−53.417 (8.088)***	
Trade in energy			−11.692 (1.911)***
Trade in non-ferrous metals			−49.286 (19.542)*
Trade in chemicals			59.147 (14.934)***
Trade in electronics			−85.316 (25.551)***
Trade in nuclear-related goods			−7.610 (9.725)
Trade in armaments			−26.974 (16.398)$^{+}$
Intercept	2.924 (0.044)***	2.739 (0.137)***	2.843 (0.126)***
N	100	100	100

(*Notes.* Panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses $+p < 0.10$; $*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$; $***p < 0.001$; we control for country-level fixed effects, but do not include these for the reasons of brevity.)

TABLE 2. Panel Model of Confrontation (Excluding USA and Israel)

	Model 1a	*Model 2a*	*Model 3a*
Prison population	0.548 (0.150)***	0.615 (0.239)*	0.506 (0.170)**
Total trade	120.781 (32.455)***	359.817 (55.469)***	194.119 (18.639)***
Government ideology	−0.062 (0.038)$^{+}$	−0.037 (0.025)	−0.059 (0.038)
Military expenditure	0.290 (0.079)***	0.310 (0.074)***	0.264 (0.090)**
Trade in strategic goods		−56.168 (8.609)***	
Trade in energy			−12.868 (2.249)***
Trade in non-ferrous metals			−42.024 (19.899)*
Trade in chemicals			13.022 (26.283)
Trade in electronics			−88.066 (29.057)**
Trade in nuclear-related goods			−11.314 (10.553)
Trade in armaments			−22.377 (14.537)
Intercept	2.469 (0.178)***	2.218 (0.274)***	2.536 (0.151)***
N	94	94	94

(*Notes.* Models presented are identical to those presented in Table 1, but exclude Israel and USA.
Panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses $+p < 0.10$; $*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$; $***p < 0.001$; we control for country-level fixed effects, but do not include these for the reasons of brevity.)

TABLE 3. Substantive Effects of Variables

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 1a*	*Model 2a*	*Model 3a*
Prison population	0.83***	0.89***	0.76***	0.46***	0.51*	0.42**
Overall trade	0.44***	1.02***	0.52***	0.31***	0.91***	0.49***
Government ideology[1]	−0.06	−0.04	−0.07	−0.06^{+}	−0.04	−0.06
Military expenditure	−0.10^{+}	−0.10^{+}	−0.10^{+}	0.58***	0.62***	0.53**
Trade in strategic goods		−1.01***			−1.08***	
Trade in energy			−0.46***			−0.52***
Trade in non-ferrous metals			−0.26*			−0.23*
Trade in chemicals			0.26***			0.06
Trade in electronics			−0.13***			−0.13**
Trade in nuclear-related goods			−0.02			−0.04
Trade in armaments			−0.10^{+}			−0.09

(*Note.* Change in confrontation score when variable changes by one standard deviation. + p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; refers to the statistical significance in original models.)

two out of 18 year-models, we find a statistically significant opposite effect of trade. This underscores the thrust of our argument that trade is not as reliable a predictor of policies toward Iran as commercial liberalism suggests.

Model 3 disaggregates strategic goods and therefore helps to scrutinize which goods in particular are associated with more accommodationist policies: a significant decrease in confrontation is associated with trade in energy, non-ferrous metals, and electronics, whereas the opposite move is associated with trade in chemicals (this effect disappears once the United States and Israel are excluded). These findings qualify those of Goenner who found that trade in energy, non-ferrous metals, and electronics was associated with an increased likelihood of conflict, whereas the trade in chemicals was associated with a decreased one; in other words, our results point in the completely opposite direction. Goenner also predicted energy and non-ferrous metals to be less important

than other goods, due to the relative elasticity of their demand and supply. Instead, we find that trade in energy-related goods has by far the strongest substantive impact on policies confirming the notion that major importers of Iranian oil tend to adopt an accommodationist policy. An increase in the trade in energy by one standard deviation leads, ceteris paribus, to decrease in confrontation by about half a point. Substantive effects for all commodities can be found in Table 3.

We find almost no statistically significant effect of government ideology. The only point where the effect of government ideology is weakly statistically significant (at the 10% level) is in Model 1, if the United States and Israel are excluded. Even then, however, the substantive effect of a one-point move on the Schmidt-scale is associated with no more than a 0.06 point move toward more accommodation. A purely left-wing government would be thus 0.3 point more accommodationist compared to a purely right-wing one.

Conclusion

Among democracies, Iran's nuclear program has been one of the most divisive security issues. For more than a decade, it has pitted countries preferring confrontation and stigmatization against those pleading for diplomacy and "critical dialogue." Although countries recalibrate their policies in interaction with Iran, they maintain remarkably stable policies relative to each other. As this paper has demonstrated, these policy differences do not result from different power positions, as realists would expect. Instead, we have found support for liberal foreign policy theories that highlight the domestic sources—both materialist and ideational—of security policies. The import of oil and gas in particular is associated with an accommodationist policy. This resonates well with popular notions that dependence on oil and gas stands in the way of a more confrontational stance toward Iran. At the same time, however, our findings also point to the importance of principled beliefs about rehabilitation, punishment, and exclusion. Discourses and practices of dealing with deviance domestically also inspire policies toward violators of international norms.

We have no reason to assume that the effects of material interests and political culture on the emergence of confrontational policies are limited to the single case of Iran. Rather, our analysis suggests that similar effects should be expected in comparable cases of states that challenge international security by violating key community norms. While the escalation or de-escalation of a crisis will to a large extent depend on the behavior of the norm violator, democracies' policies are likely to be driven by a mix of material self-interest and principled beliefs.

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Appendix 1: Countries Included in the Analysis:

Australia	Included	Macedonia	Included
Austria	Included	Mauritius	Included
Bulgaria	Included	Mongolia	Missing data
Canada	Included	the Netherlands	Included
Chile	Included	New Zealand	Missing data
Costa Rica	Missing data	Norway	Included
Cyprus	Included	Panama	Included
Denmark	Included	Peru	Missing data
Estonia	Included	Poland	Included
Finland	Included	Portugal	Included
France	Included	Slovakia	Included
Germany	Included	Slovenia	Included
Greece	Included	South Africa	Included
Hungary	Included	Spain	Included
India	Included	Sweden	Included
Ireland	Included	Switzerland	Included
Israel	Included	Trinidad and Tobago	Missing data
Italy	Included	United Kingdom	Included
Jamaica	Missing data	United States	Included
Japan	Included	Uruguay	Missing data
Lithuania	Included		

Included indicates inclusion in the analysis, *missing data* indicates democratic nature of the country but lack of reliable expert judgments.

Appendix 2: Expert Scores:

Democracy	Year	Expert Score	Democracy	Year	Expert Score
Australia	2002	4.00	Japan	2002	3.62
Australia	2006	3.50	Japan	2006	3.57
Australia	2009	3.50	Japan	2009	4.48
Austria	2002	3.00	Lithuania	2002	4.40
Austria	2006	3.43	Lithuania	2006	4.50
Austria	2009	3.78	Lithuania	2009	4.50
Bulgaria	2002	3.57	Macedonia	2002	4.00
Bulgaria	2006	3.75	Macedonia	2006	3.80
Bulgaria	2009	5.00	Macedonia	2009	4.83
Canada	2002	4.40	Mauritius	2002	
Canada	2006	4.20	Mauritius	2006	3.75
Canada	2009	4.67	Mauritius	2009	4.00
Chile	2002	2.33	the Netherlands	2002	3.29
Chile	2006	3.00	the Netherlands	2006	3.78
Chile	2009	3.50	the Netherlands	2009	4.60
Cyprus	2002	2.83	Norway	2002	2.50
Cyprus	2006	3.25	Norway	2006	3.57
Cyprus	2009	3.75	Norway	2009	3.60
Denmark	2002	4.38	Panama	2002	3.67
Denmark	2006	4.50	Panama	2006	3.33

Appendix 2 (continued)

Democracy	Year	Expert Score	Democracy	Year	Expert Score
Denmark	2009	5.00	Panama	2009	3.67
Estonia	2002	4.50	Poland	2002	4.00
Estonia	2006	5.00	Poland	2006	5.00
Estonia	2009	4.33	Poland	2009	4.50
Finland	2002	2.57	Portugal	2002	3.40
Finland	2006	3.25	Portugal	2006	3.00
Finland	2009	3.80	Portugal	2009	3.00
France	2002	3.75	Slovakia	2002	3.00
France	2006	4.50	Slovakia	2006	3.43
France	2009	5.67	Slovakia	2009	4.50
Germany	2002	3.57	Slovenia	2002	3.60
Germany	2006	3.57	Slovenia	2006	4.60
Germany	2009	4.40	Slovenia	2009	5.00
Greece	2002	3.57	South Africa	2002	2.67
Greece	2006	3.75	South Africa	2006	2.40
Greece	2009	4.50	South Africa	2009	3.60
Hungary	2002		Spain	2002	4.40
Hungary	2006	4.33	Spain	2006	4.00
Hungary	2009	4.67	Spain	2009	4.00
India	2002	2.67	Sweden	2002	3.40
India	2006	3.50	Sweden	2006	3.50
India	2009	4.60	Sweden	2009	3.60
Ireland	2002	3.29	Switzerland	2002	2.50
Ireland	2006	2.89	Switzerland	2006	3.67
Ireland	2009	3.29	Switzerland	2009	4.00
Israel	2002	5.80	United Kingdom	2002	4.54
Israel	2006	6.00	United Kingdom	2006	5.57
Israel	2009	6.69	United Kingdom	2009	5.71
Italy	2002	3.71	USA	2002	5.74
Italy	2006	4.25	USA	2006	6.52
Italy	2009	4.60	USA	2009	5.70