

Make Two Democracies and Call Me in the Morning:

Endogenous Regime Type and the Democratic Peace

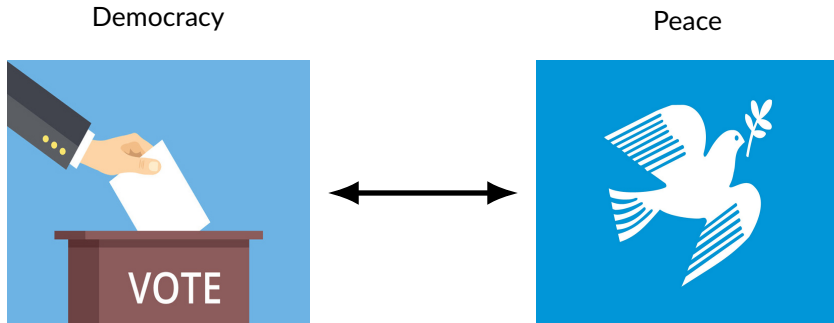
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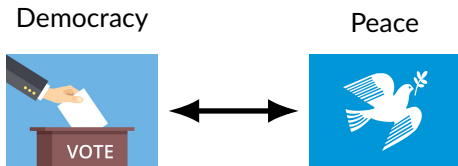
Asian Online Political Science Seminar Series

The democratic peace: consensus about the **correlation**

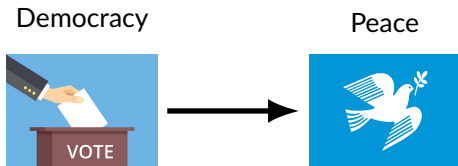


Pairs of democracy rarely, if ever, fight wars with each other.

The democratic peace: disagreement about the **causation**



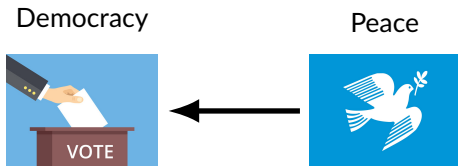
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- institutions (BdM et al. 1999)
- information (Fearon 1994, Schultz 1998)

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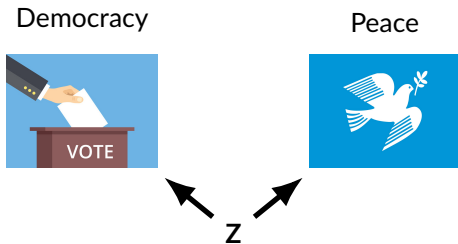
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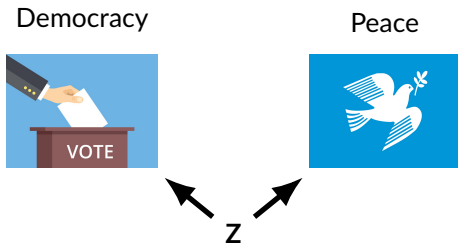
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- Alliance (Farber & Gowa 1997)
- National interests (Gartzke 1998, 2000)
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So many theories; not as many credible empirical tests.

Looking for causality

Previous attempts

- ▶ Observational studies
 - Too few controls (omitted variable bias)
 - Too many controls (post-treatment bias)
 - Unobservable confounder (endogeneity)
- ▶ Experimental studies
 - RCT on war and peace not possible
 - Effect of regime type on something else (e.g., public support for war)

Our contributions

- ▶ Quasi-experimental design (IV)
- ▶ Result: Democracy **increases** conflict

Identification strategy: fertility rate as an instrument

A country's average **fertility rate** (# of childbirths per woman)

We will show:

- ▶ **Relevance:** low fertility rate \Rightarrow democracy
 - Female empowerment \rightsquigarrow democracy
 - Quantitative and qualitative empirical evidence
- ▶ **Exclusion restriction:** fertility rate is unrelated to international conflict
 - Falsification tests

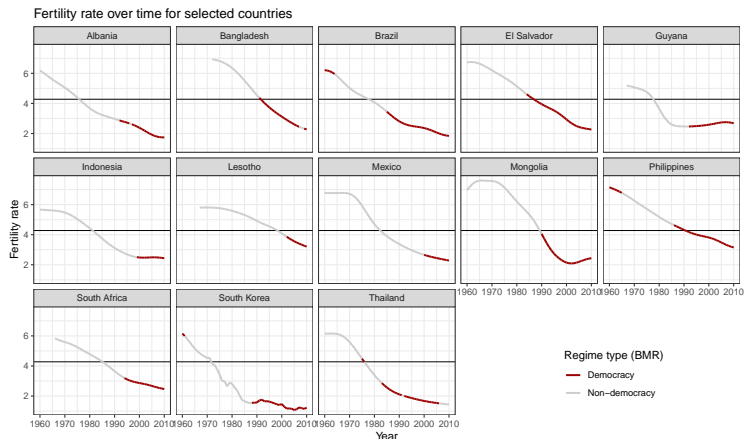
Instrument relevance: fertility rate decline \Rightarrow democracy

Countries that transitioned

- ▶ Initially, high fertility & non-democratic
- ▶ Then, a sizable decline in fertility
- ▶ Then, democratization

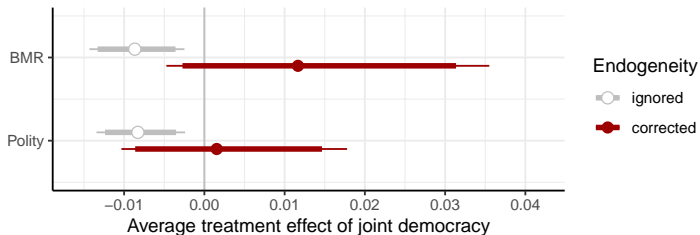
Overall

Strong relationship when analyzing all countries and controlling for other determinants



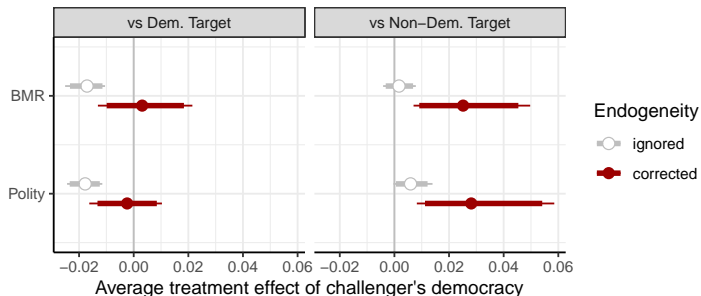
Main findings

- ▶ When ignoring endogeneity, democracy has a **negative effect on conflict**.
- ▶ When correcting for endogeneity, the effect is **zero**.



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- ▶ When ignoring endogeneity, democracy has a **negative effect on conflict**.
- ▶ When correcting for endogeneity, the effect is **zero**.
- ▶ Dem. challenger vs non-dem target particularly dangerous



Critical assumption

Exclusion restriction

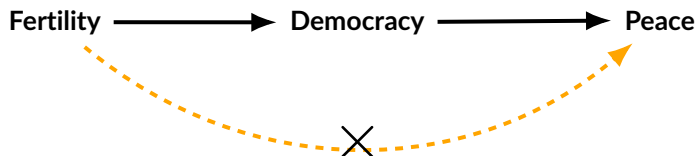
Fertility influences peace **exclusively through** democracy

Fertility → Democracy → Peace

Critical assumption

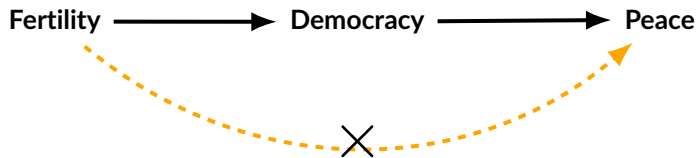
Exclusion restriction

Fertility influences peace **exclusively through** democracy



Fertility **must not** influence peace directly.

Falsification tests



Three tests to assess the plausibility:

1. Fertility and female leader
2. Reduced-form analyses
3. Model of fertility

Falsification test 1: Fertility \Rightarrow conflict?

Some studies find: fertility rate \Rightarrow conflict

- ▶ Caprioli (2000): positive
- ▶ Regan & Paskeviciute (2003): negative

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The theoretical argument:

- ▶ (a) Women have more peaceful preference than men
- ▶ Mechanism
 - Lower fertility rate
 - ↓ (b)
 - female empowerment
 - ↓ (c)
 - peace

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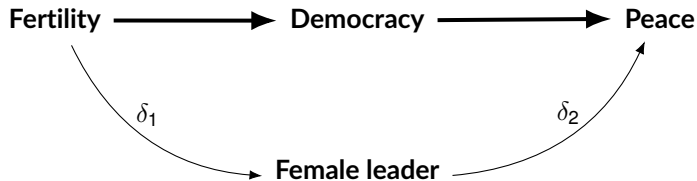
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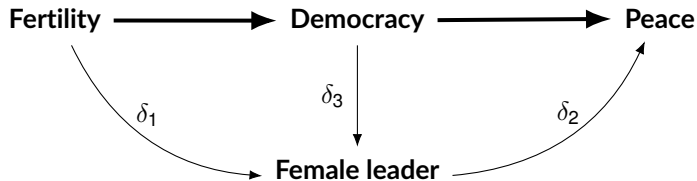
We agree with (a) and (b). Can (c) happen in the absence of democracy?

Falsification test 1: Fertility \Rightarrow conflict?



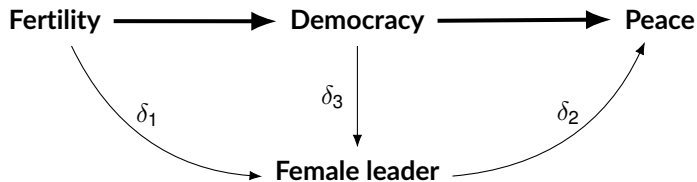
- If $\delta_1 \neq 0$ AND $\delta_2 \neq 0 \Rightarrow$ exclusion restriction is **violated**

Falsification test 1: Fertility \Rightarrow conflict?



- ▶ If $\delta_1 \neq 0$ AND $\delta_2 \neq 0 \Rightarrow$ exclusion restriction is **violated**
- ▶ However, if $\delta_1 = 0$ (maybe $\delta_3 \neq 0$) OR $\delta_2 = 0$, exclusion restriction **still holds**.

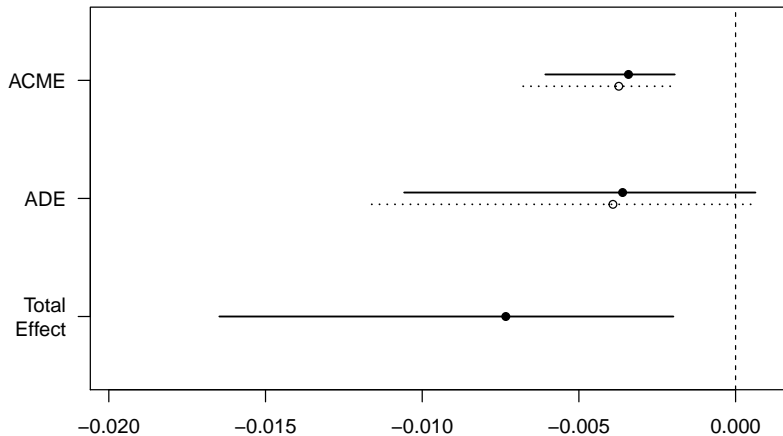
Falsification test 1: Fertility \Rightarrow conflict?



Causal mediation analyses to estimate

- ▶ δ_1 = direct effect (ADE)
- ▶ δ_3 = causal mediation effect (ACME)

Falsification test 1: leader gender



$\text{ADE}(\delta_1) = 0 \Rightarrow \text{support exclusion restriction}$

Falsification tests 2 & 3

2. reduced-form analysis

- ▶ Reduced-form model
- ▶ Assuming no defiers, non-dem with low fertility (e.g., China) = “never takers”, dem with high fertility = “always-takers”
- ▶ Null findings for “never-takers” and “always-takers”

3. Models of fertility

- ▶ # of conflict does not affect fertility

Conclusions

- ▶ Joint democracy **does not** have a pacifying effect.
 - ▶ If anything, democracy **increases** the risk of conflict initiation.
 - ▶ Need to revisit the debate about causal mechanisms (norm / institution / audience costs)
- ▶ Caveat: this is LATE (*local* average treatment effect) \neq ATE
 - ▶ Fertility-induced causal effect of joint democracy
 - ▶ That said, **better LATE than nothing!**