

Political Science 202
Introduction to Political Analysis
Fall 2023: Problem Set #5

Due on Blackboard on Friday, October 27 at 6:00 PM. 3 points in total. Late submissions are penalized with 1 point per 24 hours.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU RECEIVE AN UPLOAD CONFIRMATION and SAVE THE CONFIRMATION (submission date and confirmation number). If you have trouble uploading to Blackboard, email as an attachment to your TA before the deadline. If you don't get a reply confirming that you handed it in, send it again.

You can discuss the problem set with others, but you need to submit your own answers. If you discussed the problem set with others, note their names on your submission.

1. A researcher is interested in the effect of democracy on economic development. She hypothesizes that countries which are democracies will have higher economic development (i.e. be richer) than countries which are autocracies. For democracy, she uses a variable that classifies countries into either being a democracy or not being a democracy based on the judgment of country experts. She measures economic development using [GDP per capita](#). She wants to test whether variation in being a democracy *causes* variation in economic development. In this homework, you will work through the 4 hurdles to establishing causality that we discussed in class. For each sub-question, write a paragraph or two explaining your reasoning.
 - a. *First hurdle: Is there a credible causal mechanism that connects X to Y?* Provide a causal mechanism (=theoretical story) for how being a democracy could lead a country to have higher economic development.
 - b. *Second hurdle: Can we rule out the possibility that Y could cause X?* Discuss whether or not it is possible/likely that a country's level of economic development has a causal effect on whether it is a democracy.
 - c. *Third hurdle: Is there covariation between X and Y?* What would we expect to find in our data if there is covariation between democracy and economic development (as measured by its GDP per capita)? What would we expect to find if there is no covariation?
 - d. *Fourth hurdle: Have we controlled for all confounding variables (Z) that might make the association between X and Y spurious?* Discuss one potential confounding variable and discuss how that variable could have an effect on both whether a country is a democracy and on its economic development.
2. Think about an important decision in your life. Use process tracing to describe how you reached that decision. Lay out your steps in a short essay (between ½ and 1 typed page). Note: You should *not* use a decision that was already discussed in lecture or discussion section.