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Article

Six Alternatives to War, One Solution for Peace: The Pacifying Effect of Civil Society

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Abstract

Although civil society has significant implications for international peace, it has been overlooked and not given enough attention. Instead, existing studies focus on other factors that contribute to peace. In this study, we compare five prominent peace factors, namely, democratic peace, Cold War peace, contractualist peace, capitalist peace, and territorial peace, to a robust civil society. Our research presents a unique theoretical argument that a robust civil society can have a pacifying effect on international conflict. This is because it can organize a united front against belligerent leaders, solve collective action problems, and take immediate action against leaders' war decisions in pursuit of a common peace agenda. We begin by building a canonical democratic peace model and then compare the results related to civil society and each of the five peace factors. Our findings provide supporting evidence that a robust civil society has a stronger pacifying effect compared to democratic, Cold War, contractualist, capitalist, and territorial peace, respectively. Our empirical results are significant for academics and policymakers, highlighting the importance of building a robust civil society in the pursuit of perpetual peace.

Introduction

Within scientific research on International Relations, one of the greatest waves after the demise of the Cold War concerns the relationship between regime type and conflict processes. Commonly referenced as the democratic peace, many studies affirm pacifying effects. They offer empirical evidence that democratic dyads are less likely than other types of

pairs to experience conflict, notably war.[1] However, critics of various kinds have proposed and tested alternative explanations for the democratic peace. Among the different accounts for the absence of war between dyadic states are media openness,[2] capitalist peace,[3] globalization,[4] territorial borders,[5] the Cold War system,[6] third-party conflict resolution,[7] systemic difference,[8] and contract-intensive economies.[9] In light of such findings, we continue to work within the tradition of conflict research designs that include democracy as an explanatory variable.

This study explores what third factor engenders a pacifying effect on international conflict. Our exploration focuses on the role of a robust civil society that facilitates collective resistance and collective action against leaders' conflict decisions. Archetypal is German and French civil society's involvement in anti-war movements.[10] In South Korea, a robust civil society "waged intense nationwide protests against the Roh government's decision to send South Korean soldiers to Iraq to help the United States…explored and employed new movement methods, such as one-person demonstrations, candlelight vigils, lawsuits, and cyber protests."[11] Our interest in civil society was initially inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's insight: "the essence of a society consists in the activity of its members and a state without movement would be nothing but a corpse."[12] We have also been intrigued by existing studies on the involvement of civil society in peace processes, such as the role of civil society in peacebuilding,[13] international organizations and peace,[14] the achievement of

[1] For example, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, et al., "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (1999), pp. 791–807; Jarrod Hayes, "The Democratic Peace and the New Evolution of an Old Idea," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2012), pp. 767–91; Paul Hensel, Gary Goertz, and Paul Diehl, "The Democratic Peace and Rivalries," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (2000), pp. 1173–88; Bruce Russett and John Oneal, *Triangulating Peace* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2001); Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, "No Professional Soldiers, No Militarized Interstate Disputes?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 47, No. 6 (2003), pp. 796–816; for a dissenting view, see Douglas Lemke and William Reed, "The Relevance of Politically Relevant Dyads," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2001), pp. 126–44; John MacMillan, "Beyond the Separate Democratic Peace," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (2003), pp. 233–43; Michael Mousseau, "The Democratic Peace Unraveled," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2013), pp. 86–197.

[2] Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, "Media Openness, Democracy, and Militarized Interstate Disputes," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (2007), pp. 23–46.

[3] Erik Gartzke, "The Capitalist Peace," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2007), pp. 166–91. However, Gartzke's results are not affirmed in Choi Seung-Whan, "Re-evaluating Capitalist and Democratic Peace Models," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (2011), pp. 759–69.

[4] Seung-Whan Choi, "Beyond Kantian Liberalism: Peace through Globalization?" *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (2010), pp. 272–95.

[5] Douglas Gibler, *The Territorial Peace* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[6] Patrick McDonald, "Great Powers, Hierarchy, and Endogenous Regimes," *International Organization*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (2015), pp. 557–88.

[7] Sara Mitchell, "A Kantian System: Democracy and Third-Party Conflict Resolution," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2002), pp. 749–59.

[8] Erik Gartzke and Alex Weisiger, "Under Construction: Development, Democracy, and Difference as Determinants of the Systemic Liberal Peace," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (2014), pp. 130–45. However, Gartzke and Alex Weisiger's work is brought into question by Seung-Whan Choi, "A Menace to the Democratic Peace? Dyadic and Systemic Difference," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (2016), pp. 573–7.

[9] Michael Mousseau, "The Social Market Roots of Democratic Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (2009), pp. 52–86.

[10] Mary Kaldor, "The Idea of Global Civil Society," *International Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (2003), pp. 583–93.

[11] Sunhyuk Kim, "Civil Society and Democratization in South Korea," in Charles Armstrong, ed., *Korean Society* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), pp. 53–71.

[12] Quoted in F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

[13] Mathijs van Leeuwen, *Partners in Peace* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009).

[14] Charles Boehmer, Erik Gartzke, and Timothy Nordstrom, "Do International Organizations Promote Peace?" *International Organization*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2004), pp. 1–38.

human security,[15] enduring peace,[16] quality peace,[17] and social accountability.[18] Between Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell, we find the human rights peace proposed by Sobek, Abouharb, and Ingram and Peterson and Graham intuitive.[19] These scholars show that interstate dyads with higher levels of human rights are less likely to experience conflict. The findings are straightforward: norms within a state are expressed in domestic and *international* behavior.[20] The obvious next question is, what is the foundation for those norms? Civil society, a comprehensive way to look inside the state, emerges as the natural place to look for an answer.

We argue that a robust civil society engenders a peacebuilding effect on the grounds that it can organize a united front against belligerent leaders, solve a collective action problem in the pursuit of a common peace agenda, and take immediate action against leaders' war decisions. We build a canonical democratic peace model as a starting point and then compare results related to civil society and each of five peace factors. We are particularly interested in evaluating whether civil society emerges as a competing cause against the democratic peace. We provide supporting evidence that the pacifying effect associated with a robust civil society outperforms that of democratic, Cold War, contractualist, capitalist, and territorial peace, respectively. The empirical results are significant to academics and policymakers and notably point toward building a robust civil society in the search for perpetual peace.

What Civil Society and Democracy Are

In this study, we view civil society as a societal force that pools together material and financial resources to process its agenda, including issues ranging from promoting animal rights to opposing war.[21] One of the most defining features of civil society is that it helps "enhance [individual citizens'] ability to solve collective-action problems," as discussed later.[22] Civil society includes entities such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), voluntary charities, and community-based organizations.[23] A robust civil society is "one that enjoys autonomy from the state and in which citizens freely and actively pursue their political and civic goals"[24] and therefore can form collective resistance and collective action against government misconduct that may include leaders' decisions about international conflict. We define democracy from an institutional perspective, which is consistent with the tradition of democratic peace studies that examine the pacifying effect of citizen voices and legislative

[15] David Andersen-Rodgers and Kerry Crawford, *Human Security* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).

[16] Desirée Nilsson, "Anchoring the Peace," *International Interactions*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2012), pp. 243–66.

[17] Thania Paffenholz, "Is Civil Society Needed for Quality Peace?" in Madhav Joshi and Peter Wallensteen, eds, *Understanding Quality Peace* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), pp. 163–77.

[18] Håvard Hegre, Michael Bernhard, and Jan Teorell, "Civil Society and the Democratic Peace," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2020), pp. 32–62.

[19] David Sobek, M. Rodwan Abouharb, and Christopher Ingram, "The Human Rights Peace," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (2006), pp. 519–29; Timothy Peterson and Leah Graham, "Shared Human Rights Norms and Military Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (2011), pp. 248–73.

[20] For other democratic norms, see Seung-Whan Choi and Henry Noll, "Democratic Peace: Does Ethnic Inclusiveness Reduce Interstate Conflict?" *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (2021), pp. 179–96; Seung-Whan Choi, "The Democratic Peace through an Interaction of Domestic Institutions and Norms," *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (2013), pp. 255–83.

[21] See also Michael Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument," Gunnar Myrdal Lecture, October 1990, University of Stockhom; Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[22] Elinor Ostrom and T. K. Ahn, "The Meaning of Social Capital and Its Link to Collective Action," in Gert Svendsen and Gunnar Svendsen, eds., *Handbook on Social Capital* (Massachusetts, MA: Edward Elgar, 2009), p. 20.

[23] Catherine Barnes, "Weaving the Web," in Paul van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, and Juliette Verhoeven, eds., *People Building Peace II* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005), pp. 7–8.

[24] Michael Coppedge et al., "V-Dem Codebook v10," Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project, 2020, p. 287.

constraints on international conflict.[25] Most democratic peace studies operationalize the effect of democracy based on the Polity data collection that captures democratic institutions with competitive executive recruitment, fair political competition, and limits on executive authority.[26]

Since we theorize that a robust civil society can organize collective resistance and collective action against leaders' decisions, we first test whether a robust civil society exerts an independent, pacifying effect on international conflict. Second, we perform additional empirical tests, including a robust civil society and democracy in the same model, to see how each plays out. This model considers civil society and democracy to be distinctive. We expect that due to its power of collective resistance and collective action, the former outweighs the latter in reducing the risk of international conflict. We are aware that democratic peace scholars underline the efficacy of citizen voices that impose checks and balances on leaders' conflict behavior. Yet, democratic peace scholars have not paid as much attention to the fact that democratic citizens often fall short of mobilizing their strengths due to a collective action problem. Individual citizens are atomized and act on self-interest, so they are frequently unwilling to cooperate with one another, discouraging joint action.[27] We offer a theoretical argument about why a robust civil society can solve such a collective action problem and restrain leaders' conflict behavior. Third, to evaluate the potential interplay between a robust civil society and democracy, we also test an interaction effect between the two variables.

Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell offer pioneering research on civil society's social accountability and international conflict;[28] however, our study stands out in three different aspects.

First, Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell present civil society as an enforcer of social accountability on the grounds that political survival hinges on support from individual activists. Our theoretical take is different from that of Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell because we underscore three novel functions of civil organizations that help build a robust civil society. We maintain that a robust civil society reduces the likelihood of international conflict because it is more effective than individual citizens in organizing a united front against belligerent leaders (collective resistance), solving a collective action problem in the pursuit of a common peace agenda (effectual collective action), and taking immediate action against leaders' war decisions (immediate collective action).[29] Armed with these three societal collective powers, a robust civil society has the ability to impose high levels of audience costs on the top leadership in two states within a dyad that may otherwise be prone to interstate conflict. The literature on conflict processes has not yet identified the preceding three key features of a robust civil society, notably in combination with each other.

[25] For example, Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*; John Oneal and Bruce Russett, "Rule of Three, Let It Be?" *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (2005), pp. 293–310; Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, *Civil-Military Dynamics, Democracy, and International Conflict* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2005); Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, "Civil-Military Structure, Political Communication, and the Democratic Peace," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2008), pp. 37–53.

[26] Monty Marshall, Ted Gurr, and Keith Jaggers, "Polity IV Project," 2016.

[27] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

[28] Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell, "Civil Society and the Democratic Peace."

[29] It is worth noting that not all civic organizations are peace-loving. The Russo-Ukraine War may be an example of liberal societies' support for war to protect and accomplish liberal values. Accordingly, some civil societies may prefer war over peace when they face international conflicts and crises. However, we maintain that civil society is, *on average*, a peace enabler; it is more likely to exert a dampening effect on militarized disputes. We expect that our empirical results will show that there were far more dyadic states with a robust civil society that did not engage in military adventures. Furthermore, the Russo-Ukrainian War is a war at best in a mixed dyad. Russian civil society is fragile because the Kremlin has deliberately divided civil society by issuing state licenses only to pro-Putin organizations and not to those opposing Putin. Graeme Robertson, "Managing Society," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (2009), pp. 528–47; Graeme Robertson, *The Politics of Protest in Hybrid Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Second, Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell operationalize the theory of social accountability via the level of civil society participation. We operationalize our civil society theory with the degree of civil society robustness. This operationalization shifts the focus of inquiry from civil society participation to civil society robustness. While the former considers only participation rates of civic organizations, the latter concerns whether civil society is robust enough to have full autonomy from the state against which its members freely, collectively, and timely pursue their political goals. This shift of focus is necessary because the concept of civil society participation does not address how individual activists overcome problems of collective action, when they have enormous incentives to free ride under repression. Simply put, we argue that it is a robust, not merely participatory, civil society that can effectively enable powerless individuals to engage in collective resistance and action against leaders' conflict-related decisions. We evaluate how civil society robustness plays out in the context of the canonical research design of the democratic peace.

Third, we offer a direct comparison of civil society peace versus five major peace theories (democratic peace, Cold War peace, contractualist peace, capitalist peace, and territorial peace). Below is our elaboration on three overlooked but pivotal functions that a robust civil society offers toward peaceful conflict resolution: organizing power, a solution to collective action problems, and the power of immediacy.

Civil Society and International Conflict

Since we view a robust civil society capable of mobilizing peace-seeking individuals and civic organizations with a minimal collective action problem, we project it as a potential agent of peace. A robust civil society consists of a large number of individuals and organizations, so some of them may push foreign policy in an aggressive direction. However, a robust civil society can harness or subdue their aggressiveness as it becomes a united front against the state. This is because it can put through its policy agenda with support from a majority of peace-loving members. This reasoning is consistent with Ryckman's findings: civil society is, most of the time, able to enforce nonviolent discipline as only "20 percent of nonviolent movements escalate to using violence as their primary tactic at some point during the campaign."[30] As a rallying point for individuals and organizations, civil society contributes to successful collective resistance and collective action.[31] We later detail why a robust civil society possesses, over and beyond individual powers, the ability to mobilize a united force against belligerent leaders, pursue a common peace agenda even in the face of a typical collective action problem, and take immediate action against leaders' war decisions.

Organizing Power

A robust civil society has the ability to produce a great degree of organizing power. The literature on democratic transition reveals the organizing power of civil society since it "features a mobilized civil society as the critical actor in the breakthrough to democracy."[32] A robust civil society as a potentially unified voice offers a powerful representation of any given person, over and above what could be achieved on an individual basis. It provides what individual, unorganized citizens cannot achieve, effectively mobilizing the collective interests of the public vis-à-vis a state's war-related decisions. A particular advantage of

[30] Kirssa Ryckman, "A Turn to Violence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 64, No. 2–3 (2020), p. 319.

[31] Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*; Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2000); Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society," *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (2001), pp. 362–98; Ostrom and Ahn, "The Meaning of Social Capital."

[32] Michael Bernhard and Ekrem Karakoç, "Civil Society and the Legacies of Dictatorship," *World Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (2007), p. 542.

civil society organizations (CSOs) over unorganized individuals is inferred from a fable of Aesop: "Sticks in a bundle can't be broken, but sticks taken singly can be easily broken." The same logic applies to people who are organized in civil society and demand peace over war together. Thus, a robust civil society should be considered as, collectively speaking, a process of effectively and collectively raising a united voice vis-à-vis the state's conflict behavior.[33]

In times of international crisis, a robust civil society has been able to organize anti-war movements that succeeded in some instances in either preventing or reversing government action. Canadian public opinion and anti-war activities, to cite one recent example, put very severe limitations on involvement in the Iraq War of 2003.[34] Means toward change can include "art projects, concerts, and other creative ways of reaching out to the wider public," along with more intense efforts such as "mass protests at the use of military force or demonstrations in favor of peace processes."[35] Civic organizations engage in activities such as advocacy, protest, and monitoring and thus impose potential audience costs to induce government responsiveness to popular preferences. The observation that the network of voluntary organizations with complementary, peace-compatible interests expands to counter the power of the state is vitally important. The observation highlights a high degree of organizing power by civil society that outweighs the mobilization power of each individual citizen in protesting against leaders' war decisions.

A Solution to Problems of Collective Action

Given that "the members of [civic organizations] solve problems of collective action,"[36] a robust civil society is a more powerful pacific agent than the well-known peace enforcer—individual citizens—that the democratic peace literature has emphatically underscored. Presidents and prime ministers are expected to formulate foreign policies that reflect the interests of citizens. In this regard, Kant remains on target: citizens are very cautious about an escalation of conflict because "this would mean calling down on themselves all the miseries of war."[37] Yet, individual citizens lack a ready organization. They lack the mobilization power to express demands as a unified and formidable force effectively. Most importantly, due to the basic collective action problem, their mobilization is not as effective as Kant envisioned long ago. Since individual citizens are concerned with their own immediate material gains rather than public goods, widespread mobilization of individual citizens is less likely.[38] For protests to succeed, individual citizens must overcome incentives toward nonparticipation—to forego short-sighted thinking in favor of the public good of achieving peace.

Consider citizens opposed to war in the context of the classic collective action problem noted earlier.[39] A significant disadvantage of an individual citizen aspiring to protest

[33] Accumulating evidence from both case studies and aggregate data analysis overwhelmingly supports the democratizing effect of civil society; for example, see Mohammad Kadivar, "Alliances and Perception Profiles in the Iranian Reform Movement, 1997 to 2005," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 78, No. 6 (2013), pp. 1063–86; Mohammad Kadivar, "Mass Mobilization and the Durability of New Democracies," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 83, No. 2 (2018), pp. 390–417; Dylan Riley and Juan Fernández, "Beyond Strong and Weak: Rethinking Postdictatorship Civil Societies," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 120, No. 2 (2014), pp. 432–503; Yuko Sato and Michael Wahman, "Elite Coordination and Popular Protest," *Democratization*, Vol. 26, No. 8 (2019), pp. 1419–38; Sandra Grahn and Anna Lührmann, "Good Seed Makes a Good Crop?" *Journal of Civil Society*, Vol. 17, No. 3/4 (2021), pp. 297–322.

[34] Patrick James, *Canada and Conflict* (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[35] Barnes, "Weaving the Web," p. 18.

[36] Ostrom and Ahn, "The Meaning of Social Capital," p. 19.

[37] Immanuel Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in Hans Reiss, ed., *Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 100.

[38] Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*; Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science*, Vol. 162, No. 3859 (1968), pp. 1243–8.

[39] Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*.

activity is the need for financial support.[40] Participation in anti-war protests cannot occur unless meals, transportation, and possibly other resources are provided. If demonstrations are to be sustained, monthly rent/mortgage and grocery and utility bills must be paid. Those living paycheck-to-paycheck face the most intense pressure to limit or even eschew commitments outside of work. Some also must cope with either personal illness or that of family members.[41] Additional resource-related considerations, which have been understood to exist for a long time and apply regardless of personal income level, are loss of free time and fear of disturbances.[42]

The collective action problem becomes more acute among individual citizens when the incumbent government implements restrictions, such as curfews, surveillance, limits on assembly, preventive arrests of leaders, and infiltration, and engages in physical integrity violations, such as disappearances and political imprisonment.[43] By harassing and intimidating individual protesters, the incumbent government imposes higher costs. Accordingly, individual protesters must decide whether their participation is an "affordable" activity in terms of costs compared to benefits that will accrue only if the activity succeeds.[44] Given high expected costs, the default position is for individual citizens to eschew protests.

CSOs can facilitate collective action by maintaining or increasing motivation and/or removing barriers to protest.[45] For example, these organizations can rely on their membership fees and emergency funds to mobilize individuals. This is true, especially for civic organizations with mandates to support anti-war protesters financially. A robust civil society can offer what individual, unorganized citizens cannot afford, effectively financing the collective interests of the public vis-à-vis war decisions of political leaders. Furthermore, a robust civil society can foster solidarity among individual members who would otherwise feel isolated due to government repression and thus forgo participation in collective action. All these civic activities are facilitated by the rise of social media as a platform for opposition to the government, as revealed, for example, in a study of political communication in Egypt.[46]

Power of Immediacy

A robust civil society, moreover, can use the power of organizational immediacy—acceleration of a collective and critical response to unwanted involvement in international conflict. If individual citizens wish to punish incumbent leaders for war involvement through voting, they must wait for the next election cycle.[47] Thus, in the time before the next election, leaders who have waged war may have sufficient time to sway public opinion in their favor and remain in office. For example, US presidents have multiple years to manipulate or embellish their foreign policy performance. Leaders' manipulation is likely to provide incomplete or distorted information to citizens. Under those circumstances, "citizens do not have sufficient information to evaluate the incumbent governments, [so] the threat of not being reelected is insufficient to induce governments to act in the best interest of the

[40] Jacquelien Stekelenburg and Bert Klandermans, "The Social Psychology of Protest," *Current Sociology Review*, Vol. 61, No. 5/6 (2013), p. 895.
[41] Bert Klandermans and Dirk Oegema, "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (1987), p. 529.
[42] Klandermans and Oegema, "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers," p. 528.
[43] Hencken Ritter and Courtney Conrad, "Preventing and Responding to Dissent," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 110, No. 1 (2016), p. 87.
[44] Stekelenburg and Klandermans, "The Social Psychology of Protest," pp. 889, 895.
[45] Klandermans and Oegema, "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers," p. 520.
[46] Zeynep Tufekci and Christopher Wilson, "Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest," *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (2012), pp. 365–6.
[47] Scott Ashworth, "Electoral Accountability," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2012), pp. 183–201.

public."[48] In international relations, electoral accountability—which the democratic peace literature promotes as the power of citizen voices—may be ineffective in reducing the risk of international conflict. Compared to individual citizens and electoral politics, the degree of pressure incumbent leaders feel from civic organizations can be much more immediate and intense. With its established networks and financial resources, a robust civil society has the ability to act quickly, which is beyond the ability of individual, unorganized citizens, immediately raising the stakes against the war decisions of political leaders. It is notable that numerous dissident groups that have organized in past conflicts are able to "tap into their existing social organizations" if a new round of protest seems in order.[49]

Who else can fill the vacuum when individual citizens fail to constrain leaders' war decisions? Institutional constraints (especially by the legislature) that are imposed on leaders' war-related decision-making should, in theory, work in times of international crisis.[50] However, the real world often deviates from the ideal type of political institution. Presidents and prime ministers are capable of exploiting partisanship to persuade their party members while engaging in political manipulation to deflect the opposition from the other side. The power of exploitation and manipulation enables top leaders to dodge a bullet.[51] Thus, when leaders are unwilling to abide by institutional rules, democratic checks and balances are unlikely to work in the ways originally designed and intended. In this scenario, chief executives are likely to be able to govern unconstrained by the legislators' preferences.[52]

We argue that a robust civil society provides a unique role in constraining the conflict behavior of leaders because it can take advantage of organizing power, a minimal collective action problem, and the power of immediacy, enabling it to articulate and convey peace preferences collectively (e.g., mass organized protests). Among the three functions, we particularly note that a robust civil society is effective in discouraging individual defections in collective action and, consequently, able to push through its peace agenda against bellicose leaders continuously. Although leaders may find a way to circumvent the actions of individual citizens and legislators, it is hard to ignore a well-organized civil society armed with a great deal of mobilizing resources. Compared to the individual power of citizens or legislators, the collective power of civil society is more likely to amplify audience costs imposed on leaders' behavior in times of international crisis. Domestic audience costs lock leaders into their stated positions on how to deal with a rising conflict, increasing reputational losses if they are caught bluffing, and thus leaders are less likely to back down after making a threat.[53] When leaders face higher levels of audience costs generated by the speedy action of a robust civil society that has little to no chance of falling victim to problems of collective action,[54] they are more likely to credibly commit to policies that signal their true

[48] Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes, "Elections and Representation," in Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). p. 30.

[49] Sam Bell and Amanda Murdie, "The Apparatus for Violence," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (2018), p. 349.

[50] Seung-Whan Choi, "Legislative Constraints," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (2010), pp. 438–70.

[51] Douglas Rivers and Nancy Rose, "Passing the President's Program," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1985), pp. 183–96; Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* (Florence: Free Press, 1990).

[52] Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell, "Civil Society and the Democratic Peace."

[53] James Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1995), pp. 379–414.

[54] Although it is likely to be more so for democratic than non-democratic regimes, all leaders can suffer from audience costs. Tolstrup observes that "all political actors, democratic or not, must pay attention to the preferences and interests of the groups that back them. The cost of displeasing your supporters is your audience cost." Jakob Tolstrup, "External Influence and Democratization," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2014), p. 129. For example, as South Korea's civil society became strong and alive during authoritarian regimes, it contributed to the emergence of an awakened citizenry that could create effective audience costs. Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2001). Amid authoritarian rule, CSOs in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan encouraged more of their citizens to participate in the political process. Sean Yom, "Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World," *Middle East Review of International*

intentions and thus avoid the kind of escalation that can stimulate an interstate crisis or even an interstate war.

Given that interstate conflicts may originate from the domestic power imbalance between state and civil society, top executives are likely to develop perceptions of how robust civil society is in their potential opponents. If State A's leaders perceive civil society in State B to be a peace enforcer capable of participating in collective resistance, effectual collective action, and immediate collection action, the former should have a better understanding of the conflict behavior of the latter. In other words, while conventional understandings of perceptions describe their formation as a mostly logical process, acknowledging the pacific effect of civil society allows us to argue that dyadic states with a robust civil society are more likely to prefer peace over war.[55]

Consequently, our hypothesis regarding a robust civil society is as follows:

Civil Society Hypothesis: *As civil society becomes more robust in a dyad, the likelihood of interstate conflict is reduced.*

Five Other Well-Established Peace Theories[56]

Democratic Peace

Neo-Kantian peace studies reveal that democratic political institutions exert a pacifying effect on interstate conflict.[57] Relying on the weak link assumption, namely, that the lower score in a dyad is utilized, peace studies operationalize a democracy variable. The more democratic a state is, the more it is expected to face pressures that constrain it from engaging in conflict, and therefore, the more peaceful the dyad.

Cold War Peace

Several existing studies contend that the democratic peace has changed in strength over time.[58] In particular, McDonald argues that the democratic peace is an artifact of historically specific significant power settlements and demonstrates that the pacifying effect of democracy becomes questionable when limiting the sample period to the years 1946–91.[59]

Affairs, Vol. 9, No. 4 (2005), pp. 14–33. Li and Chen show that empty threats and commitments expose the Chinese government to substantial disapproval from citizens regarding their country's international reputation. Xiaojun Li and Dingding Chen, "Public Opinion, International Reputation, and Audience Costs in an Authoritarian Regime," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 38, No. 5 (2021), pp. 543–60. Non-democratic leaders, Weeks persuasively asserts, can be held accountable domestically, at least to some degree, allowing them to generate audience costs. Jessica Weeks, "Autocratic Audience Costs," *International Organization*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (2008), pp. 35–64.

[55] *Perception* is at the center of our theoretical argument, which parallels the one for liberalism made by Owen and Risse-Kappen about the democratic peace phenomenon. John Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1994), pp. 87–125; Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Democratic Peace – Warlike Democracies?" *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1995), pp. 491–517. For example, Owen put forward the idea that democracies that *perceived* each other as liberal would manage to maintain peace—and he provided convincing case studies to show how that worked out in practice. See also Hayes, "The Democratic Peace and the New Evolution of an Old Idea"; Sebastian Rosato, "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (2003), pp. 585–602. Constructivist research on democracy and peace is triangulated with the analysis of Owen and Risse-Kappen, with a case study of the USA and India in 1971 as one convincing example. Jarrod Hayes, "Securitization, Social Identity, and Democratic Security: Nixon, India, and the Ties That Bind," *International Organization*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (2012), pp. 63–93. Working within the context of securitization theory, Hayes found that the US public, despite efforts from President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, could not be shaken from their perception of India as a democracy and therefore worthy of support (or at least neutrality) in its struggle with Pakistan.

[56] Constraints on space permit only a brief overview of each theory. For detailed and highly accessible presentations of theories about conflict processes, see Stephen Quackenbush, *International Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2014).

[57] For example, Oneal and Russett, "Rule of Three, Let It Be?"

[58] For example, Joanne Gowa, *Ballots and Bullets* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[59] McDonald, "Great Powers, Hierarchy, and Endogenous Regimes."

After breaking his sample into four time periods to account for variation in great power orders across the past two centuries, McDonald finds evidence that "the Cold War results are perhaps most surprising in this disaggregation because even prominent critics of the democratic peace like Gowa acknowledge its existence then."[60]

Contract-Intensive Peace

Mousseau puts forth the argument that contract-intensive economy is one of the most potent nontrivial variables that decreases the probability of conflict between advanced market-oriented states.[61] This means that labor, goods, and services are commodified; the state ensures that transactions can unfold, even among those not acquainted with each other, assuming that the terms will be honored. Contractualist nations are friends and inclined toward peace since they are less likely to break away from lucrative market-based relationships.

Capitalist Peace

Gartzke asserts that "capitalism, and not democracy, leads to peace" and calls for further research to "corroborate, extend, and even refute the findings reported [in his study]."[62] Based on four capitalist peace measures (Fin. Open. (Low) for markets, GDPPC (Low) and GDPPC × Contig for development, and INTERESTS for interest similarity), Gartzke provides supporting evidence during the period from 1950 to 1992.

Territorial Peace

Gibler challenges the main thrust of the democratic peace findings through an account based on control over territory. He shows that, when using contiguous dyads, the effect of the democratic peace is reduced drastically via a set of proxies for stable borders.[63]

Building a Standard Model of Interstate Conflict

We collect a sample of 157 states consisting of all interstate dyads during the period from 1900 to 2001.

Dependent Variable

We operationalize our dependent variable, Interstate Conflict, in three ways to assess whether our theoretical claim endures different levels of empirical scrutiny. The first measure is dichotomized for the onset of a Military Interstate Dispute (MID), regardless of severity. A MID is "a set of interactions between or among states involving threats to use military force, displays of military force, or actual uses of military force."[64] To avert temporal dependence and focus on dispute onset, we exclude the years in which a pair of states are engaged in an ongoing dispute in the estimation. The second measure is dichotomized for the onset of a fatal MID where at least one soldier is killed per dyad-year. It is worth noting that the way political leaders respond to military fatalities continues to stimulate scholarship,[65] so the onset of a fatal MID is implemented as an additional check for the robustness of findings.

[60] Ibid., p. 574.

[61] Mousseau, "The Social Market Roots of Democratic Peace"; Mousseau, "The Democratic Peace Unraveled"; Michael Mousseau, "The End of War," *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2019), pp. 160–96.

[62] Gartzke, "The Capitalist Peace," p. 180.

[63] See Gibler, *The Territorial Peace*, pp. 129–30, Table 7.2.

[64] Charles Gochman and Zeev Maoz, "Military Interstate Disputes, 1816–1976," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (1984), p. 587.

[65] For example, Oneal and Russett, "Rule of Three, Let It Be?"

The third and final measure is dichotomized for the onset of wars that involved at least 1000 deaths in battle.[66]

Main Independent Variables

Using the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project,[67] we gather civil society robustness data. Since the V-Dem Project provides detailed explanations of how civil society is conceptualized and measured, we avoid repeating them here due to limitations on space. We use the core civil society index (D) (v2xcs_ccsi) to measure civil society robustness.[68] This variable is constructed based on an expert survey of CSOs and calculated by using the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model. The V-Dem Project states that individual citizens organize in groups to pursue their collective interests and ideals. Examples include interest groups, labor unions, spiritual organizations that are engaged in civic or political activities, social movements, professional associations, charities, and other NGOs. This aligns with Barnes' civic organizations such as NGOs, voluntary charities, and community-based organizations.[69] The wording of the survey question is, "How robust is civil society?" Since a robust civil society functions as an autonomous societal force without government interference, it enables the formation of collective resistance and collective action against leaders' conflict decisions. The V-Dem Project calculates the final score for a robust civil society by incorporating three subcomponents: (1) to what extent the government achieves control over entry and exit by CSOs into public life (v2cseeorgs), (2) whether the government attempts to repress CSOs (v2csreprss), and (3) how actively people are involved in CSOs (v2csprtcpt). The civil society robustness score ranges from 0.011 (least robust) to 0.979 (most robust).

To convert the monadic data into a dyadic format, we use the NewGene software.[70] Final scores for the civil society variable are calculated using the weak link assumption. Since we argue that a robust civil society effectively imposes audience costs on leaders' conflict behavior in a dyad, we employ the weak link assumption. The assumption is not only widely used in democratic peace studies[71] but also conventionally adopted in their competing studies. For example, in operationalizing his capitalist peace theory, Gartzke states that "IMF FIN. OPEN. (LOW) reports the lower monadic score in the dyad."[72] Choi also relies on the same operationalization: "The state with weaker legislative constraints is the stronger determinant of how things will proceed."[73]

Following the conventional, weak link assumption, we take the state with the lower civil society score as the stronger determinant of future interactions in each dyad. This means that the more robust civil society is for a state in a dyad, the more restrained the leadership pairing will feel from engaging in an interstate dispute. Consequently, the dyad will become more peaceful.

To make our study consistent with the democratic peace literature, we collect data for democracy (POLITY2) from the Polity dataset—a composite index fluctuating between –10

[66] Faten Ghosn and Scott Bennett, "Dyadic Militarized Interstate Dispute Data, Version 3.10," 2007.

[67] Coppedge et al., "V-Dem Codebook v10."

[68] As robustness checks, we also test civil society participation index (D) (v2x_cspart), CSO repression (C) (v2csreprss), and civil society participatory environment (C) (v2csprtcpt). The results are quite similar to what we display in the next section, so they are not reported to save space.

[69] Barnes, "Weaving the Web," pp. 7–8.

[70] NewGene is a well-established data management tool for conflict scholars. Its program enables researchers to create datasets for use in quantitative political science analysis, primarily international relations. For more information, see eugenesoftware.la.psu.edu.

[71] See William Dixon, "Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (1994), pp. 14–32; Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, "Civil-Military Relations in a Neo-Kantian World, 1886-1992," *Armed Forces Society*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2004), pp. 227–54.

[72] Gartzke, "The Capitalist Peace," p. 174.

[73] Choi, "Legislative Constraints," p. 451. See also Sobek, Abouharb, and Ingram, "The Human Rights Peace."

(least democratic) and 10 (most democratic).[74] Democracy and civil society do not necessarily work in tandem.[75] An interesting case that experiences high levels of democratic governance and low levels of civil society is the USA, which is considered to exhibit a declining quality.[76] More typical examples are Chile, Colombia, Greece, Laos, Pakistan, Panama, Portugal, and Turkey. The opposite example that exhibits low levels of democratic governance and high levels of civil society is Nigeria. In addition, many autocracies have tolerated civil society, such as Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, and Ukraine, on the road to democracy.

To further differentiate democracy from civil society, we also design another indicator for democracy by disaggregating the Polity democracy composite index into a single critical component—executive constraints.[77] This variable is based on the extent of institutionalized constraints, but not on the quality of civil society, on the decision-making powers of chief executives. Executive constraints refer to the checks and balances engendered by the (1) legislature and the judiciary in democratic countries, (2) ruling party in a one-party state, (3) councils of nobles or powerful advisers in monarchies, and (4) military in coup-prone polities.[78] We provide more detailed scrutiny in the next section.

In addition to civil society, five additional peace predictors are democratic peace, Cold War peace, contractualist peace, capitalist peace, and territorial peace. Each of these predictors is well-supported in empirical research on conflict processes. Respective variables associated with each theory of international conflict combine to offer what must be acknowledged as intense competition for the role of civil society in the quest for explanation. At the same time, other theories could be accessed to understand conflict processes better. Accordingly, the present research design should be regarded as the beginning of a process that could build further credibility for civil society as a would-be explanation for outcomes of peace versus war in one form or another. If the empirical results are encouraging, that would justify further research on civil society as a peace inducer with possible relevance to policy.

Cold War Peace

As in McDonald's study,[79] we limit our reference models to the Cold War, 1946–91. In doing so, we can reassess whether the pacifying effect of a robust civil society and democracy becomes questionable during the Cold War period. We designate McDonald's research as "Cold War" peace to highlight the key finding. In the next section, we provide a replication based on our reference model with the whole study period and the Cold War.

Contractualist Peace

To test the influence of contract-intensive economy, we draw on the value of the contract-intensive economy (CIE) as constant dollars per capita from Mousseau's data collection.[80]

[74] See Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers, "Polity IV Project." When the V-Dem's democracy indicators, including the electoral democracy index, are used instead, this study's main findings remain the same. For comparability purposes, we present estimates based on Polity, which is used in most authoritative democracy studies.

[75] We also use Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland's democracy and dictatorship revisited dataset. José Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Vreeland, "Dictatorship and Democracy Revisited," *Public Choice*, Vol. 143, No. 1/2 (2010), pp. 67–101. When this minimal democracy measure that is purely procedural and focuses on electoral accountability replaces polity's institutional democracy in the estimation, the main findings of our study remain unchanged. To economize space, these results are not reported.

[76] Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

[77] See Kristian Gleditsch and Michael Ward, "Double Take," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (1997), pp. 361–83.

[78] Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers, "Polity IV Project," p. 24.

[79] McDonald, "Great Powers, Hierarchy, and Endogenous Regimes."

[80] See https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/8RPC9E.

Based on the weak link assumption, we choose the lower score of CIE in a dyad for estimation.[81] Note that several existing studies distinguish contract-intensive markets from the creation of CSOs. For example, Kaldor maintains that civil society "[occupies] the space outside the market, state and family."[82] Similarly, Barnes defines civil society as "the web of social relations that exist in the space between the state, the market (activities with the aim of extracting profit), and the private life of families and individuals."[83] Thus, the market and civil society are two different things.

Capitalist Peace

Gartzke assesses his capitalist peace theory with four measures:[84] Fin. Open. (Low) for markets, GDPPC (Low) and GDPPC × Contig for development, and INTERESTS for interest similarity. We collect these four measures from Gartzke's website[85] and include them in our reference model, along with civil society, for comparison. Since Gartzke used the previous version of the democratic peace model built by Oneal and Russett,[86] the transition from his dataset to our data gathering worked out smoothly.

Territorial Peace

Gibler includes nine proxies for stable borders in the same model:[87] the natural log of dyad duration since the younger country in the pair became independent (lnddyaddur1), whether there is an internal war in either country (either_cowintra), same former colonial master in both countries (samemaster), whether there was a peaceful territorial transfer between the two countries in the past 5 years (peacetrans), a violent territorial transfer between the two countries in the past 5 years (violenttrans), the existence of a defense pact in the dyad (low_peace_defpact), the highest number of soldiers per capita in the two countries' neighborhoods (high_threat_militarization), whether there has been any territorial dispute against any of the states in the past 5 years (high_threat_terrMID), and an interaction term between the two latter variables (high_threat_terrMIDxmilpe). As in Gibler's research, including the nine proxies drastically decreases our sample size. But, to make our analysis comparable to Gibler's, we incorporate all of those nine proxies into our reference model and examine how their effects play out in competition with our robust civil society variable.

Control Variables

A set of control variables that have performed consistently well in prior conflict studies are also included in the reference model. This model building is essential to gain the most accurate assessment of how much civil society and each of the other five peace variables matter in comparison to each other. We select eight variables as controls. We operationalize economic interdependence based on the logic of the weak link: the score for the less interdependent state in a dyad is taken to be the stronger determinant of interstate conflict.[88]

[81] We also considered the Contract-Intensive Economy Binary variable. We coded a dyad as 1 only when both states had a contractualist economy and 0 otherwise. But the use of the variable was not fruitful because it "predict[ed] failure perfectly" in our statistical run.

[82] Kaldor, "The Idea of Global Civil Society," p. 584.

[83] Barnes, "Weaving the Web," p. 7.

[84] Gartzke, "The Capitalist Peace."

[85] See http://erikgartzke.com/datasets.html.

[86] John Oneal and Bruce Russett, "Assessing the Liberal Peace with Alternative Specifications," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (1999), pp. 423–42.

[87] Gibler, *The Territorial Peace*.

[88] Oneal and Russett, "Assessing the Liberal Peace with Alternative Specifications"; Oneal and Russett, "Rule of Three, Let It Be?"; Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*. However, Chen presents his extended dependence theory to challenge the pacifying effect of economic interdependence, but Choi disputes Chen's empirical results. Frederick Chen,

Given the salience of democratic peace during the Cold War,[89] we include a dummy variable for the Cold War period. Geographic proximity between states in a dyad is likely to impact the likelihood of conflict, so distance is included as a control variable. The national capability ratio variable is incorporated to recognize that an asymmetric power relationship between dyadic states may decrease conflict occurrence. The alliance variable is included to account for the argument that military alliances diminish the probability of conflict, especially within the bipolar international system. When a dyad shares a border, we can expect a higher chance of interstate conflict. When a major power is involved in a crisis situation, it has an enhanced ability to take military action against faraway states. Hegre notes that the number of states in the system affects the likelihood of conflict among "low-relevance" dyads.[90] Thus, we include system size as the last control in the reference model.

Model Specification

To empirically test the civil society hypothesis, we build a statistical model that closely follows the non-directed dyadic conflict model specification of Oneal and Russett.[91] We choose the non-directed dyadic model as our reference because it has become canonical in the study of conflict processes and because our theory focuses on constraints imposed by a robust civil society in two states in a dyad. Our unit of analysis is non-directed dyads, so the data analysis examines the onset of conflict. As Bennett points out, in non-directed dyadic studies,[92] it is necessary to convert inherently monadic information (e.g. democracy and civil society scores) into non-directional dyadic variables (lower democracy and lower civil society) according to the weak link assumption.[93] This research design makes our findings comparable with those from a wide range of previous studies. Most importantly, it enables us to more easily compare the role of civil society with democracy, plus four additional peace determinants. For this purpose, we use the following equation as a reference model to which we subsequently add each comparison variable starting from civil society and democracy. For example, by evaluating both civil society and democracy in the extended reference model, we can compare directly their relative pacifying effects on interstate conflict in terms of statistical significance.

$$\begin{aligned} \textit{Interstate Conflict}_{it} = {} & \alpha_1 + \alpha_2\,(\textit{Economic Interdependence}_{it-1}) \\ & + \alpha_3\,(\textit{Geographic Distance}_{it-1}) + \alpha_4\,(\textit{National Capability Ratio}_{it-1}) \\ & + \alpha_5\,(\textit{Alliance}_{it-1}) + \alpha_6\,(\textit{Contiguity}_{it-1}) + \alpha_7\,(\textit{Major Power}_{it-1}) \\ & + \alpha_8\,(\textit{System Size}_{it-1}) + \varepsilon_{it1} \end{aligned}$$

The subscripts of the equations reveal that our data are structured in a cross-national, time-series format.[94] Since our empirical analysis follows the canonical democratic peace model

"Extended Dependence: Trade, Alliances, and Peace," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (2021), pp. 246–59; Seung-Whan Choi, "Can Trade and Security Alliance Help Reduce Interstate War?" *PLoS One*, Vol. 19, No. 6 (2024), p. e0304482. Nonetheless, Choi argues that liberal peace fades away in the rise of nationalism. Seung-Whan Choi, "When Does Liberal Peace Fail? Trade and Nationalism," *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 30, No. 5 (2023), pp. 1907–32.

[89] Gowa, *Ballots and Bullets*.

[90] Håvard Hegre, "Gravitating Toward War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (2008), pp. 566–89.

[91] Oneal and Russett, "Rule of Three, Let It Be?" When we test a monadic relationship, we also find a pacifying effect of civil society. We do not report the monadic results to economize space since they are not the focus of this study.

[92] Scott Bennett, "Toward a Continuous Specification of the Democracy-Autocracy Connection," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (2006), p. 319.

[93] For example, Choi, "Legislative Constraints"; Dixon, "Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict"; Gartzke, "The Capitalist Peace"; Oneal and Russett, "Rule of Three, Let It Be?"; Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*; Sobek, Abouharb, and Ingram, "The Human Rights Peace."

[94] The subscript of *i* is a simplified use, denoting dyadic states *a* and *b*.

of Oneal and Russett,[95] the study period coincides with theirs. All independent variables are lagged 1 year to mitigate reverse causality problems—once again, a standard practice.

We adopt the canonical model of democratic peace because it has become a reference for future researchers. Dafoe, Oneal, and Russett assert that "[the conflict] literature establishes important precedents and provides a useful guide to new studies.[96] Analyses should be based wherever possible on standard models to minimize the chance that unrelated aspects of the analysis are driving the results." We take this suggestion seriously and incorporate our variables of interest into the canonical model. Alternatively, we may build a single model to compare civil society with the five peace factors. But this is challenging and possibly even intractable. For example, to test his hypothesis of territorial peace, Gibler relies on nine separate variables.[97] For a single model specification to work, we need to combine the nine variables into a one-factor variable that proxies "stable borders." Yet, this transformation would breach the Dafoe, Oneal, and Russett recommendation. We cannot ensure that the transformation is "driving the results." Accordingly, we forgo the single model approach in this study.

To verify the main findings of this study and minimize specification error, we also employ a reduced form of the conflict model after excluding economic interdependence, alliance, contiguity, major power, and system size. This reduced model specification recognizes a principle articulated by Achen, namely, that too many controls may complicate the estimation.[98] As part of further robustness checks, we limit all dyads to politically relevant dyads, which will appear at the end of our analysis. For example, Russett and Oneal use politically relevant dyads for this purpose.[99] Weede maintains that "only in this relatively small subset of dyads is there a possibility for irreconcilable conflicts of interest to arise and create a substantial risk of war."[100] Dyads are defined specifically as politically relevant when they meet at least one of two conditions: either a major power is involved, or a pair of states share a border.

To ensure the robustness of our findings, we estimate the conflict model with three different statistical methods: (1) standard logistic regression that controls for temporal dependence with the cubic polynomial approximation—t, t^2, and t^3; (2) generalized estimating equations (GEEs); and (3) rare event logit. Logit is our first choice of estimator since it is a standard estimation method for peace scientists who examine the onset of conflict. Since the sample data are clustered on interstate dyads, we specify that the standard errors allow for intragroup correlation. GEEs are introduced with correction for first-order autocorrelation as well as heteroskedasticity. Given that interstate conflict is relatively uncommon, we turn to rare event logit that deals with the presence of excessive non-events in the data.

Empirical Findings: Does Civil Society Matter?

This section begins with simple models to examine the role of civil society, the democratic peace, and civil society versus democratic peace, respectively, and then moves on to multivariate models to evaluate each of the other peacebuilding factors.

[95] Oneal and Russett, "Rule of Three, Let It Be?"

[96] Allan Dafoe, John Oneal, and Bruce Russett, "The Democratic Peace," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (2013), p. 202.

[97] Gibler, *The Territorial Peace*.

[98] Christopher Achen, "Toward a New Political Methodology," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 5 (2002), pp. 423–50. For example, note that contiguity is closely related to geographic distance since both measure the geographic relationship between two dyadic states, and major power status serves to remove variance in the dependent variable but possesses no theoretical meaning aside from reflecting the capability to wage war against faraway countries.

[99] Russett and Oneal, *Triangulating Peace*.

[100] Erich Weede, "Overwhelming Preponderance as a Pacifying Condition among Contiguous Asian Dyads," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1976), p. 396. See also Douglas Lemke, "The Tyranny of Distance," *International Interactions*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1995), pp. 23–38.

Simple Models of Civil Society and Democracy

Table 1 contains an analysis of all dyads. We estimate logistic regression models with three different estimators and for three levels of interstate conflict. Each model includes peace variables and three temporal controls. Regardless of the level of conflict, civil society in Models 1, 2, and 3 and democracy in Models 4, 5, and 6 are significantly different from zero, and the sign is in the expected direction. Both civil society and democracy are negatively associated with all MIDs, fatal MIDs, and wars. However, when civil society is pitted against democracy, the former outweighs the latter. This suggests that it is a robust civil society that functions as an agent of interstate peace. This finding does not coincide with the notion of the democratic peace phenomenon.

What would happen if we add eight control variables that may affect the outcomes? Table 2 displays the estimated results, which do not deviate from those in simple models.[101] This is our attempt to, in the context of the standard democratic peace model design, evaluate how well civil society performs in competition with democracy. The overall results show that while civil society matters in reducing the likelihood of conflict, democracy does not. Among the control variables, geographic distance, national capability ratio, major power, and system size achieve significance across the board. As the physical distance between two states in a dyad increases, the likelihood of conflict decreases. As two states in a dyad widen the power gap, they are less likely to experience conflict. Whenever a major power is one of the two parties in a dyad, the likelihood of conflict is higher. Conflict is less likely as the number of states in the international system increases. Economic interdependence appears to exert some dampening effect on conflict, but it is not consistent across the models. Contiguity collects similar results.[102]

It is important to consider the substantive implications of our statistical results. An empirical finding that is statistically significant but substantively trivial would be of little interest. Accordingly, we calculate the average marginal/substantive effects of the two main variables—civil society and democracy. To visualize the results, we plot average marginal effects in Figure 1 based on the log odds of the models in Table 2. Average marginal effects give us a sense of the impact on conflict probability. The marginal effect is the average change in probability when each independent variable increases by one unit (e.g., when the level of democracy goes from 5 to 6 on a scale of −10 to 10). Since logit is a non-linear model, that effect differs from one individual unit to the next. Unsurprisingly, the average marginal effects do not deviate from the significance tests. *While civil society is negatively associated with conflict, democracy does not exert the same effect as it lays on the vertical reference line at zero*. Since democracy turns out to be an ineffective predictor, it does not matter whether its values are standardized for comparison. The most striking result is that, as the severity of interstate conflict increases from all MIDs to wars, the marginal effect of civil society becomes *stronger*.

How Does Civil Society Compete with Cold War Peace, Contractualist Peace, Capitalist Peace, and Territorial Peace?

Table 3 displays replicated models that purport to see how each of the four prominent peace factors works out in the context of our reference model.[103] Models 1, 2, and 3 show whether

[101] Table A.1 indicates that the correlation between civil society and democracy is 0.789. This means that the two variables are not the same indicator—each is capable of measuring its own concept. As shown in Appendix Figure A.1, high levels of democracy are not necessarily related to high levels of civil society and vice versa. As noted earlier, high levels of democracy and low levels of civil society are observed in many countries, such as Chile, Colombia, Greece, Laos, Pakistan, Panama, Portugal, and Turkey.

[102] To save space, we report the estimates of GEEs and rare event logit in Table A.2. The estimates are virtually similar to those in Table 2 in terms of statistical significance and sign.

[103] Since our control variable, the Cold War dummy, overlaps with the Cold War Peace models, it is not included in the replications.

Table 1. Civil Society, Democracy, and Interstate Conflict

	Logit								
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6	All MIDs 7	Fatal MIDs 8	Wars 9
Civil Society$_{it-1}$	−2.130***	−3.257***	−6.441***				−3.070***	−3.897***	−7.303***
	(0.231)	(0.442)	(1.181)				(0.336)	(0.610)	(1.523)
Democracy$_{it-1}$				−0.050***	−0.091***	−0.170***	0.056***	0.041	0.062
				(0.010)	(0.021)	(0.039)	(0.014)	(0.027)	(0.050)
Intercept	−1.365***	−2.677***	−3.498***	−2.244***	−4.160***	−6.251***	−0.836***	−2.289***	−2.926***
	(0.162)	(0.279)	(0.473)	(0.147)	(0.286)	(0.363)	(0.226)	(0.390)	(0.672)
Wald χ^2	1998.98	447.10	172.61	1951.66	416.46	124.43	2017.52	447.28	175.95
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.24	0.14	0.16	0.23	0.12	0.12	0.24	0.14	0.16
N	424 718	424 718	424 718	424 717	424 717	424 717	424 718	424 718	424 718

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses. t, t^2, and t^3 do not appear to economize space.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

Table 2. Civil Society versus Democracy: Multivariate Regression

	Logit		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3
Civil Society$_{it-1}$	−1.224***	−2.246***	−5.217***
	(0.282)	(0.508)	(1.431)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.011	0.004	0.016
	(0.013)	(0.024)	(0.055)
Econ Interdependence$_{it-1}$	−27.420*	−90.594**	−94.403
	(13.644)	(33.489)	(64.588)
Cold War$_{it-1}$	0.258**	0.212	0.378
	(0.094)	(0.167)	(0.355)
Geographic Distance$_{it-1}$	−0.270***	−0.459***	−0.460**
	(0.063)	(0.095)	(0.175)
Nat'l Capability Ratio$_{it-1}$	−0.234***	−0.350***	−0.770***
	(0.038)	(0.051)	(0.108)
Alliance$_{it-1}$	−0.111	−0.275	−0.486
	(0.109)	(0.166)	(0.339)
Contiguity$_{it-1}$	0.866***	0.669**	0.125
	(0.178)	(0.251)	(0.411)
Major Power$_{it-1}$	0.715***	0.706**	1.511***
	(0.156)	(0.235)	(0.432)
System Size$_{it-1}$	−0.442***	−0.478***	−0.525***
	(0.040)	(0.062)	(0.110)
Intercept	0.421	1.266	1.764
	(0.509)	(0.723)	(1.276)
Wald χ^2	3317.70	1679.96	589.65
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.38	0.31	0.33
N	424 718	424 718	424 718

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses. t, t^2, and t^3 do not appear to economize space.
$^{*}p < 0.05$.
$^{**}p < 0.01$.
$^{***}p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

the Cold War period washes away the pacifying effect of democracy. Models 4, 5, and 6 exhibit the impact of a contractualist economy. Models 7, 8, and 9 are set up to see how capitalist peace plays out. Models 10, 11, and 12 show how territorial peace is related to conflict.

We find evidence that regardless of the conflict level, democracy survived during the Cold War period from 1946 to 1991, though not highly significant. This is consistent with the findings of McDonald in that the significance of democracy shrinks substantially when it comes to (fatal) MIDs.[104] For example, while the magnitude of democracy is −2.130 and the significance level is 0.001 in Model 1 in Table 1, it is −0.021 at the 0.05 level in Model 1 in Table 3. We affirm the contractualist peace for the years 1960–2001. As the degree of a contractual economy in a dyad intensifies, the likelihood of conflict is reduced. This finding coincides with Mousseau's influential research.[105] Our replications also offer partial support for capitalist peace. GDPPC (Low)$_{it-1}$ is statistically significant across the three models. Still,

[104] McDonald, "Great Powers, Hierarchy, and Endogenous Regimes." Note that McDonald does not test the Cold War effect on wars.
[105] Mousseau, "The Social Market Roots of Democratic Peace"; Mousseau, "The Democratic Peace Unraveled"; Michael Mousseau, "The End of War," *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2019), pp. 160–96.

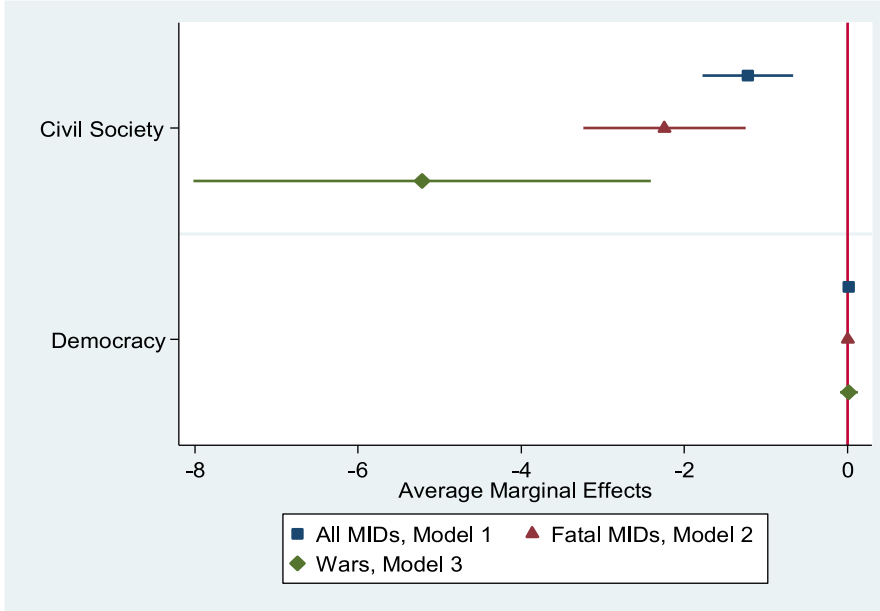

Fig. 1. Average Marginal Effects with 95% Confidence Intervals

the other three peace variables exert a dampening effect that is not as strong and consistent as those reported in the study by Gartzke.[106] Gibler's nine territory-related variables receive partial to no supporting evidence across the models.[107]

Table 4 examines what happens after including the civil society variable in the above-replicated models. It is striking that Civil Society achieves significance across models although the total observations vary due to the data availability of the four prominent peace factors. Even during the Cold War period, civil society is shown to reduce the likelihood of all MIDs, fatal MIDs, and wars in Models 1–3. Note that civil society in Models 1–3 in Table 2—our comparison models to Models 1–3 in Table 4—was significant against all the three levels of disputes. When we pit civil society against CIE_{it-1} (Contract-Intensive Economy) in the same model, all three models strongly indicate the significant role of civil society. Yet only one of them—fatal MIDs—highlights the pacifying effect of contract intensity of national economies. As Mousseau points out, CIE_{it-1} emerges as a strong cause of peace in fatal MIDs that have less estimation bias resulting from Western media coverage.[108] It appears that in Models 7–9, civil society does well in the presence of capitalist peace. The civil society variable is significantly different from zero, while not all capitalist peace variables produce the same degree of peacebuilding effect. Finally, civil society still emerges as a strong and consistent predictor of peace when faced with a group of nine territorial peace variables. The overall results in Table 4 demonstrate the endurance of civil society even amid the significant challenges from variables associated with other peace theories: Cold War, contractualist, capitalist, and territorial.

[106] Gartzke, "The Capitalist Peace."
[107] Gibler, *The Territorial Peace*.
[108] Michael Mousseau, "Comparing New Theory with Prior Beliefs," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2005), p. 69. Western media are more likely to report a small use of force (MIDs) by Western countries than non-Western countries. Given that wars are rare, there is an argument to be made for emphasizing fatal MIDs over the other disputes.

Table 3. Replication of Four Peace Studies

	Logit											
	Cold War Peace, 1946–91			Contractualist Peace, 1960–2001			Capitalist Peace, 1950–92			Territorial Peace, 1900–2001		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6	All MIDs 7	Fatal MIDs 8	Wars 9	All MIDs 10	Fatal MIDs 11	Wars 12
Democracy$_{it-1}$	−0.021*	−0.054*	−0.157**									
	(0.010)	(0.021)	(0.049)									
CIE$_{it-1}$				−0.184***	−0.513***	−0.682**						
				(0.056)	(0.081)	(0.228)						
Fin. Open. (Low)$_{it-1}$							−0.126**	−0.138**	−0.170			
							(0.043)	(0.053)	(0.125)			
GDPPC (Low)$_{it-1}$							0.000***	0.000**	0.000*			
							(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)			
GDPPC × Contig.$_{it-1}$							−0.000*	−0.000*	−0.000			
							(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)			
INTERESTS$_{it-1}$							−0.778***	−0.625**	−0.988			
							(0.148)	(0.242)	(0.612)			
Natural log of dyad duration$_{it-1}$										0.013	0.028	0.424**
										(0.060)	(0.073)	(0.153)
Intrastate war in either state$_{it-1}$										0.194	0.369	0.354
										(0.145)	(0.236)	(0.485)

(continued)

Table 3. (Continued)

	Logit											
	Cold War Peace, 1946–91			Contractualist Peace, 1960–2001			Capitalist Peace, 1950–92			Territorial Peace, 1900–2001		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6	All MIDs 7	Fatal MIDs 8	Wars 9	All MIDs 10	Fatal MIDs 11	Wars 12
Same colonial master$_{it-1}$										0.288	−0.037	0.007
										(0.213)	(0.323)	(0.628)
Peaceful territorial transfer$_{it-1}$										0.539**	0.653**	0.577
										(0.177)	(0.248)	(0.449)
Violent territorial transfer$_{it-1}$										0.236	−0.419	−0.794
										(0.195)	(0.285)	(0.860)
Defense pact with all neighbors$_{it-1}$										0.365***	0.444**	0.633
										(0.097)	(0.154)	(0.392)
Highest neighbor militarization$_{it-1}$										11.540**	13.068*	17.336
										(3.565)	(5.561)	(10.240)
Either targeted in territorial MID$_{it-1}$										0.075	0.533**	0.945*
										(0.125)	(0.197)	(0.402)
Territorial MID × militarization$_{it-1}$										14.002*	−1.890	4.294
										(5.438)	(9.687)	(15.919)
Econ Interdepen$_{it-1}$	−14.108	−60.116*	−207.670	−20.281	−103.536*	−243.713	−2.222	−58.621	−125.951	−41.940*	−180.391***	−254.640

(continued)

Table 3. (Continued)

	Logit											
	Cold War Peace, 1946–91			Contractualist Peace, 1960–2001			Capitalist Peace, 1950–92			Territorial Peace, 1900–2001		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6	All MIDs 7	Fatal MIDs 8	Wars 9	All MIDs 10	Fatal MIDs 11	Wars 12
	(17.602)	(30.245)	(187.582)	(13.064)	(48.081)	(190.403)	(9.860)	(37.857)	(139.913)	(18.267)	(48.539)	(152.142)
Geo Distance$_{it-1}$	−0.211**	−0.371***	−0.443**	−0.341***	−0.489***	−0.735***	−0.218***	−0.351***	−0.508***	−0.107	−0.377***	−0.366*
	(0.071)	(0.100)	(0.138)	(0.081)	(0.116)	(0.185)	(0.060)	(0.098)	(0.148)	(0.074)	(0.089)	(0.184)
Nat'l Cap Ratio$_{it-1}$	−0.197***	−0.305***	−0.788***	−0.214***	−0.357***	−0.950***	−0.088	−0.250**	−0.934**	−0.181***	−0.302***	−0.501**
	(0.044)	(0.053)	(0.124)	(0.041)	(0.067)	(0.216)	(0.045)	(0.086)	(0.296)	(0.053)	(0.069)	(0.162)
Alliance$_{it-1}$	−0.264*	−0.290	−0.571	−0.161	−0.539**	−0.934*	−0.076	−0.111	−0.391	−0.344**	−0.299	−0.384
	(0.129)	(0.184)	(0.393)	(0.135)	(0.202)	(0.461)	(0.139)	(0.240)	(0.510)	(0.118)	(0.161)	(0.416)
Contiguity$_{it-1}$	0.725***	0.487	0.036	0.964***	1.058*	1.250	1.058**	0.786	−2.158*	na	na	na
	(0.189)	(0.264)	(0.465)	(0.222)	(0.418)	(0.672)	(0.339)	(0.796)	(1.072)			
Major Power$_{it-1}$	0.630***	0.725**	1.675**	0.885***	0.745	2.610***	−0.333	−0.276	−2.070*	0.400*	0.487*	1.146*
	(0.188)	(0.271)	(0.566)	(0.191)	(0.407)	(0.717)	(0.280)	(0.697)	(0.951)	(0.161)	(0.242)	(0.504)
System Size$_{it-1}$	−0.481***	−0.523***	−0.528***	−0.367***	−0.413***	−0.423*	−0.490***	−0.523***	−1.187***	na	na	na
	(0.047)	(0.072)	(0.135)	(0.049)	(0.089)	(0.198)	(0.072)	(0.158)	(0.263)			
Intercept	0.114	0.732	0.629	0.845	1.573	4.010**	0.304	1.248	6.010***	−0.575	0.160	−2.372
	(0.568)	(0.748)	(1.027)	(0.665)	(0.968)	(1.474)	(0.564)	(1.000)	(1.262)	(0.475)	(0.656)	(1.318)
Wald χ^2	2477.86	1321.55	538.80	2117.77	839.34	374.52	2037.81	923.47	436.14	613.24	362.97	244.94
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.41	0.35	0.34	0.37	0.28	0.39	0.40	0.35	0.42	0.20	0.19	0.25
N	294 488	294 488	294 488	290 733	290 733	290 733	181 694	181 694	181 694	17 529	17 529	17 529

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses. t, t^2, and t^3 do not appear in Models 1–3 to economize space.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

Table 4. Civil Society versus Four Peace Theories

	Logit											
	Cold War Peace, 1946–91			Contractualist Peace, 1960–2001			Capitalist Peace, 1950–92			Territorial Peace, 1900–2001		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6	All MIDs 7	Fatal MIDs 8	Wars 9	All MIDs 10	Fatal MIDs 11	Wars 12
Civil Society$_{it-1}$	−0.860*	−1.407*	−4.620***	−0.814***	−2.162***	−5.982***	−0.980***	−1.765**	−4.721**	−0.656**	−1.041**	−2.428**
	(0.341)	(0.578)	(1.385)	(0.204)	(0.444)	(1.554)	(0.281)	(0.634)	(1.525)	(0.206)	(0.377)	(0.793)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.008	−0.008	−0.015									
	(0.015)	(0.026)	(0.068)									
CIE$_{it-1}$				−0.080	−0.295**	−0.143						
				(0.062)	(0.093)	(0.239)						
Fin. Open. (Low)$_{it-1}$							−0.102*	−0.105	−0.099			
							(0.043)	(0.058)	(0.121)			
GDPPC (Low)$_{it-1}$							0.000***	0.000***	0.000*			
							(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)			
GDPPC × Contig.$_{it-1}$							−0.000*	−0.000**	−0.000			
							(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)			
INTERESTS$_{it-1}$							−0.743***	−0.582*	−0.705			
							(0.148)	(0.234)	(0.632)			
Natural log of dyad duration$_{it-1}$										0.006	0.009	0.407*
										(0.061)	(0.073)	(0.159)
Intrastate war in either state$_{it-1}$										0.195	0.367	0.422
										(0.148)	(0.238)	(0.471)
Same colonial master$_{it-1}$										0.304	−0.031	−0.113
										(0.217)	(0.319)	(0.628)
Peaceful territorial transfer$_{it-1}$										0.525**	0.660*	0.463
										(0.187)	(0.260)	(0.435)
Violent territorial transfer$_{it-1}$										0.270	−0.350	−0.780

(continued)

Table 4. (Continued)

	Logit											
	Cold War Peace, 1946–91			Contractualist Peace, 1960–2001			Capitalist Peace, 1950–92			Territorial Peace, 1900–2001		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6	All MIDs 7	Fatal MIDs 8	Wars 9	All MIDs 10	Fatal MIDs 11	Wars 12
										(0.193)	(0.304)	(0.814)
Defense pact with all neighbors$_{it-1}$										0.366***	0.435**	0.609
										(0.095)	(0.154)	(0.384)
Highest neighbor militarization$_{it-1}$										10.058**	11.082*	15.254
										(3.466)	(5.546)	(10.978)
Either targeted in territorial MID$_{it-1}$										0.068	0.551**	0.948*
										(0.127)	(0.199)	(0.423)
Territorial MID × militarization$_{it-1}$										15.065**	−0.719	4.504
										(5.486)	(9.605)	(16.211)
Econ Interdepen$_{it-1}$	−10.511	−52.908	−195.248	−17.083	−68.319	−113.556	0.521	−50.180	−112.475	−29.951	−147.545***	−184.418
	(16.237)	(29.822)	(191.055)	(12.474)	(40.358)	(138.570)	(7.958)	(37.903)	(146.190)	(16.793)	(43.967)	(133.358)
Geo Distance$_{it-1}$	−0.220**	−0.386***	−0.514**	−0.350***	−0.498***	−0.812***	−0.224***	−0.355**	−0.573**	−0.127	−0.399***	−0.494*
	(0.071)	(0.106)	(0.170)	(0.086)	(0.128)	(0.216)	(0.063)	(0.110)	(0.206)	(0.072)	(0.095)	(0.203)
Nat'l Cap Ratio$_{it-1}$	−0.195***	−0.301***	−0.775***	−0.204***	−0.336***	−0.833***	−0.062	−0.214*	−0.769**	−0.168**	−0.274***	−0.449**
	(0.044)	(0.052)	(0.120)	(0.042)	(0.067)	(0.213)	(0.045)	(0.088)	(0.277)	(0.054)	(0.069)	(0.156)
Alliance$_{it-1}$	−0.253	−0.283	−0.671	−0.121	−0.449*	−0.863	−0.049	−0.054	−0.380	−0.354**	−0.300	−0.507
	(0.131)	(0.189)	(0.400)	(0.137)	(0.208)	(0.460)	(0.145)	(0.251)	(0.502)	(0.123)	(0.163)	(0.397)
Contiguity$_{it-1}$	0.678***	0.422	−0.194	0.904***	0.825*	0.607	1.099***	0.910	−1.804	na	na	na
	(0.185)	(0.265)	(0.474)	(0.225)	(0.415)	(0.673)	(0.328)	(0.752)	(1.037)			

(continued)

Table 4. (Continued)

	Logit											
	Cold War Peace, 1946–91			Contractualist Peace, 1960–2001			Capitalist Peace, 1950–92			Territorial Peace, 1900–2001		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6	All MIDs 7	Fatal MIDs 8	Wars 9	All MIDs 10	Fatal MIDs 11	Wars 12
Major Power$_{it-1}$	0.575**	0.630*	1.344*	0.858***	0.582	2.186**	−0.242	−0.083	−1.406	0.377*	0.409	0.993*
	(0.186)	(0.276)	(0.580)	(0.195)	(0.403)	(0.758)	(0.285)	(0.692)	(0.970)	(0.161)	(0.248)	(0.496)
System Size$_{it-1}$	−0.483***	−0.525***	−0.540***	−0.365***	−0.432***	−0.451*	−0.472***	−0.489**	−1.076***	na	na	na
	(0.047)	(0.073)	(0.135)	(0.049)	(0.088)	(0.190)	(0.070)	(0.155)	(0.254)			
Intercept	0.562	1.461	3.163**	0.957	1.966	5.142**	0.339	1.417	6.573***	−0.262	0.607	−0.850
	(0.576)	(0.816)	(1.159)	(0.701)	(1.054)	(1.605)	(0.567)	(1.044)	(1.423)	(0.485)	(0.728)	(1.454)
Wald χ^2	2470.02	1402.11	677.68	2161.55	1039.91	421.77	2048.38	975.17	430.46	603.46	349.06	286.79
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.41	0.35	0.35	0.37	0.29	0.43	0.41	0.35	0.45	0.20	0.20	0.27
N	294 488	294 488	294 488	290 733	290 733	290 733	181 694	181 694	181 694	17 529	17 529	17 529

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses. t, t^2, and t^3 do not appear in Models 1–3 to economize space.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

Robustness Tests

Although we argue that democracy and civil society are two distinctive concepts, one may perceive civil society as an element of democratic political systems. To be on the safe side, we implement a robustness check on the connection between the two variables. We re-estimate Table 2 after replacing the polity composite democracy index with one of its central components—executive constraints—whose conceptualization and operationalization have little to do with civil society robustness.

While Polity is one of the best datasets on the authority-related characteristics of modern polities, the project's decisions about which features of politics to cover have led naturally to some exclusion points. Due to a lack of data, the Polity composite democracy index used in this study incorporates no aspect of civil society robustness. Omissions such as civil society in the Polity data allow us to explore the effects of democracy versus civil society on international conflict. More specifically, Polity includes five institutional attributes of democracy—competitiveness of participation, regulation of participation, competitiveness of executive recruitment, openness of executive recruitment, and constraints on the executive—but does not incorporate civil society robustness into its concepts and indices.[109] For this reason alone, the correlation between civil society and democracy is not noteworthy.

Nonetheless, we re-estimate Table 2 to compare the peacebuilding effects of civil society robustness with executive constraints—a replacement for the composite democracy index. As shown in Table A.3, civil society once again outperforms executive constraints, its new principal competitor, across the models in a consistent manner.

We have so far evaluated the pacifying effect of civil society, independent of that of democracy, because we conceptualize that the former is a strong predictor of interstate peace and because we believe that the former affects the latter, but not necessarily the other way around. Yet, as another robustness check, we consider a potential interaction between civil society and democracy. We are aware that reasons exist to suspect the possibility of a significant interaction effect. Consider, for example, this conjecture from Chalmers: "Civil society's potential for strengthening democracy will only be realized if there are strong and responsible electoral systems, party systems, and legislative-executive arrangements."[110] This point is reinforced by Paxton: "Most empirical work does not incorporate the likely reciprocal effect of democracy on associations. A reciprocal effect may be plausible because democratic institutions permit the formation of voluntary associations to a greater extent than nondemocratic institutions."[111]

To examine the potential interaction effect of civil society and democracy, we introduce a multiplicative interaction regression model in Table A.4. The Appendix shows a significant and consistent impact of civil society, some weak support for democracy, and a possible interaction effect across the board. However, interpreting the interaction-related terms is not straightforward since they are non-linear, and their effects depend on each other. Based on Model 3, where the dependent variable is the onset of war, we visualize the impact of the interaction term in Figure A.2 in an effort to offer a better interpretation of the coefficient table. This graphical approach does not require centering variables at their means.[112] Since it is expected to make a minor modification of the multiplicative regression model by changing the democracy constitutive term from a continuous variable to a dichotomous one,[113]

[109] See Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers, "Polity IV Project."

[110] Douglas Chalmers, "How Do Civil Society Associations Promote Deliberative Democracy?" presented to the Latin American Studies Association convention, Washington, D.C., September 2001, p. 10.

[111] Pamela Paxton, "Social Capital and Democracy," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (2002), p. 255.

[112] Bennet Zelner, "Using Simulation to Interpret Results from Logit, Probit, and Other Nonlinear Models," *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 12 (2009), pp. 1335–48.

[113] For example, Choi, "Legislative Constraints."

we follow suit.[114] This modification is made because the dichotomized variable helps the reader better see the pacifying effect of civil society in the figure, conditional on the presence (1) or absence (0) of democratic political institutions. We transform the democracy variable as "1" when its continuous Polity score is greater than or equal to six and "0" otherwise, creating a dichotomous democracy variable. The Polity score of six is the conventional cutoff point for defining democracy in the conflict literature.[115] In Figure A.2, the dotted line representing democracies whose Polity democracy score is greater than or equal to six is on the decrease. The figure confirms that as the level of civil society robustness increases, the peacebuilding synergy comes forth, and the likelihood of conflict diminishes. This result further enforces the notable peacebuilding role of civil society in turbulent world politics.

What would happen if, however, as the old saying goes, too many cooks spoil the broth—a group of control variables complicates the estimation and strengthens the significance of civil society over democracy? To account for this concern, we use a reduced form of the statistical model where only a minimum number of variables are included: civil society, democracy, Cold War, and geographic distance. As shown in Table A.5, we verify the peacebuilding effect of civil society in a consistent manner, while democracy does not create strong and consistent evidence for peace across the board.

As previously noted, some conflict researchers prefer politically relevant dyads to all dyads since the former tend to wield more significant influence over international politics. An analysis conducted with politically relevant dyads should give further credence to the results of studies utilizing all dyads if the findings turn out to be strong and consistent. Table A.6 re-estimates Table A.5 after confining the sample data to politically relevant dyads. While civil society passes the conventional significance tests in all nine models, democracy does not. Not surprisingly, the national capability ratio is also another potential cause of peace, as it is statistically significant and the sign is in the expected direction.

Conclusion

To the best of our knowledge, the pacifying effect of civil society concerning international conflict is only beginning to receive the attention it deserves. Instead, the literature draws attention to other factors such as democratic peace, Cold War peace, contractualist peace, capitalist peace, and territorial peace. In this study, we reason that the likelihood of conflict diminishes when a robust civil society with the advantage of organizing power, a solution to collective action problems, and the power of immediacy is present in an interstate dyad. In particular, we assert that civil society outperforms democracy because the former can amplify domestic audience costs by making a virtually immediate demand for peace as a united front that can minimize problems of collective action, while the latter experiences limitations in constraining leaders' war decisions due to individual defections and institutional failure.

Questions about conceptual mechanisms combine to create a further research agenda. How do mechanisms operate? For example, instead of using a dyadic democratic peace framework, could the mechanisms be evaluated directly through case work? Is there evidence of immediate collective mobilization when it seems that the state might deploy force abroad? How, in turn, could we understand if such action is effective (or not)? In sum, theoretically speaking, how do the mechanisms work—does the constraint come from the threat of collective action or directly observable protest and other forms of mobilization?

[114] When the continuous measure of democracy is instead used, the results remain the same.
[115] For example, Dixon, "Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict."

Our analyses demonstrate that a robust civil society exerts a peacebuilding effect on international conflict. Our theory and measurement underscore a robust civil society's autonomous power of collectively resisting and taking action against leaders' conflict decisions. Our focus of inquiry is the robustness of civil society, not individual CSOs per se. More specifically, our theory and measurement have little to do with whether the peacebuilding effect of civic organizations outweighs the detrimental effect of uncivil organizations in some contexts. This is another research venue and requires another full-length paper, so we leave a probe into the differing effects of civil versus uncivil organizations for future research.

Another promising future agenda is elaborating the dyadic theory of a robust civil society. We believe that the empirical findings of our study are interesting enough to encourage many conflict scholars to consider what elements of liberal democracies do (or do not) lead to fewer interstate militarized disputes and how concretely two states in a dyad perceive each other's conflict intentions in the presence (or absence) of a robust civil society. However, since our study is more empirical than theoretical, qualitatively trained scholars should develop a more coherent dyadic theory of civil society and international conflict.

Conflict of interest statement. None declared.

Appendix

Table A.1. Correlation Matrix

	Civil Society	Democracy	Econ Interdep	Cold War	Geo Distance	Nat'l Cap Ratio	Alliance	Contiguity	Major Power	System Size
Civil Society	1									
Democracy	0.789	1								
Econ Interdep	0.123	0.136	1							
Cold War	−0.384	−0.288	−0.028	1						
Geo Distance	0.000	0.010	−0.237	0.037	1					
Nat'l Cap Ratio	0.018	0.042	−0.085	0.039	0.112	1				
Alliance	0.077	0.098	0.125	0.025	−0.340	−0.030	1			
Contiguity	0.011	0.029	0.249	−0.008	−0.500	−0.037	0.269	1		
Major Power	0.036	0.082	0.078	−0.039	−0.018	0.387	0.077	0.071	1	
System Size	−0.008	−0.065	−0.179	−0.005	0.269	−0.294	−0.198	−0.547	−0.825	1

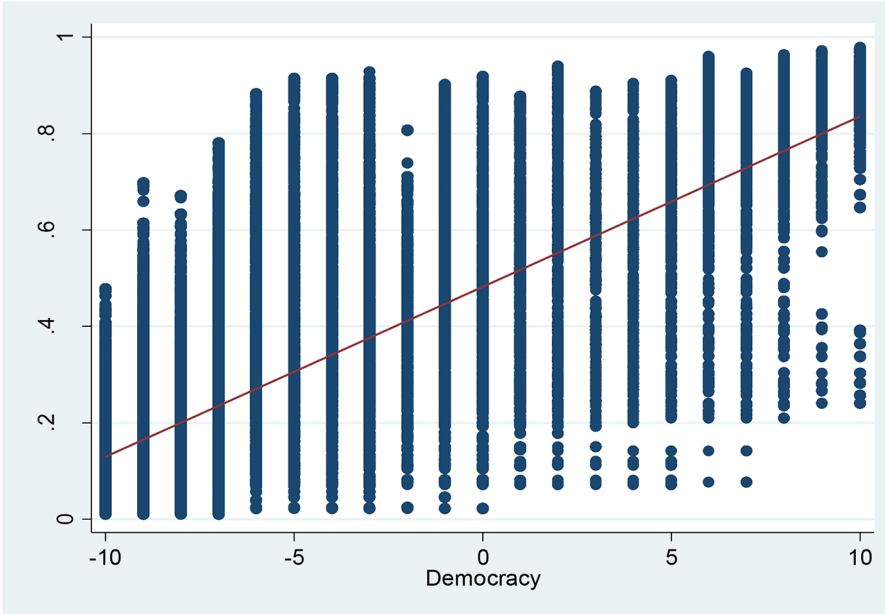

Fig. A.1. Scatter Plot between Civil Society and Democracy

Table A.2. Civil Society versus Democracy: GEEs and Rare Event Logit

	GEEs			Rare event logit		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6
Civil Society$_{it-1}$	−1.764***	−2.134***	−4.512***	−1.798***	−2.123***	−4.342***
	(0.343)	(0.550)	(1.323)	(0.193)	(0.371)	(0.964)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.014	0.007	−0.004	0.018*	0.008	−0.001
	(0.017)	(0.028)	(0.057)	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.046)
Econ Interdependence$_{it-1}$	−50.803*	−140.158**	−119.697	−51.917***	−138.684***	−111.104
	(19.824)	(50.318)	(85.133)	(14.805)	(36.921)	(77.736)
Cold War$_{it-1}$	−0.108	−0.191	−0.204	−0.096	−0.188	−0.189
	(0.099)	(0.159)	(0.299)	(0.058)	(0.106)	(0.226)
Geographic Distance$_{it-1}$	−0.429***	−0.571***	−0.520**	−0.426***	−0.572***	−0.529***
	(0.081)	(0.113)	(0.190)	(0.034)	(0.048)	(0.127)
Nat'l Capability Ratio$_{it-1}$	−0.347***	−0.443***	−0.879***	−0.349***	−0.442***	−0.873***
	(0.054)	(0.064)	(0.126)	(0.024)	(0.042)	(0.105)
Alliance$_{it-1}$	−0.395**	−0.593**	−0.863*	−0.400***	−0.590***	−0.843*
	(0.143)	(0.199)	(0.403)	(0.070)	(0.128)	(0.363)
Contiguity$_{it-1}$	1.617***	1.110***	0.502	1.628***	1.115***	0.561
	(0.257)	(0.294)	(0.467)	(0.100)	(0.186)	(0.362)
Major Power$_{it-1}$	1.368***	1.133***	2.083***	1.372***	1.140***	2.118***
	(0.222)	(0.272)	(0.474)	(0.093)	(0.175)	(0.387)
System Size$_{it-1}$	−0.435***	−0.453***	−0.478***	−0.435***	−0.451***	−0.466***
	(0.050)	(0.068)	(0.120)	(0.025)	(0.045)	(0.099)

(continued)

Table A.2. (Continued)

	GEEs			Rare event logit		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3	All MIDs 4	Fatal MIDs 5	Wars 6
Intercept	−0.520	0.049	−1.025	−0.520	0.051	−0.992
	(0.671)	(0.864)	(1.341)	(0.286)	(0.432)	(0.951)
Wald χ^2	1786.92	1103.74	412.12			
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)			
N	424 718	424 718	424 718	424 718	424 718	424 718

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses.
$^{*}p < 0.05$.
$^{**}p < 0.01$.
$^{***}p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

Table A.3. Civil Society versus Executive Constraints

	Logit		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3
Civil Society$_{it-1}$	−0.791**	−1.789**	−4.973***
	(0.286)	(0.544)	(1.390)
Executive Constraints$_{it-1}$	−0.054	−0.102	−0.025
	(0.041)	(0.073)	(0.143)
Econ Interdependence$_{it-1}$	−16.149	−72.148*	−74.976
	(10.679)	(34.371)	(62.685)
Cold War$_{it-1}$	0.340***	0.288	0.479
	(0.102)	(0.183)	(0.390)
Geographic Distance$_{it-1}$	−0.221**	−0.414***	−0.482**
	(0.069)	(0.107)	(0.181)
Nat'l Capability Ratio$_{it-1}$	−0.183***	−0.304***	−0.759***
	(0.037)	(0.060)	(0.129)
Alliance$_{it-1}$	−0.038	−0.192	−0.868*
	(0.121)	(0.187)	(0.421)
Contiguity$_{it-1}$	0.816***	0.503	−0.403
	(0.196)	(0.298)	(0.415)
Major Power$_{it-1}$	0.578***	0.563*	1.102*
	(0.160)	(0.250)	(0.441)
System Size$_{it-1}$	−0.500***	−0.521***	−0.611***
	(0.046)	(0.068)	(0.109)
Intercept	−0.102	1.095	2.382
	(0.572)	(0.863)	(1.434)
Wald χ^2	2480.50	377 388	609.30
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.37	0.30	0.32
N	377 388	377 388	377 388

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses. t, t^2, and t^3 do not appear to economize space.
$^{*}p < 0.05$.
$^{**}p < 0.01$.
$^{***}p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

Table A.4. Interaction between Civil Society and Democracy

	Logit		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3
Civil Society$_{it-1}$	−1.468***	−2.999***	−7.169***
	(0.281)	(0.446)	(1.372)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.049*	0.082**	0.127
	(0.020)	(0.027)	(0.068)
Civil Society$_{it-1}$ × Demo$_{it-1}$	−0.081*	−0.185***	−0.356
	(0.033)	(0.055)	(0.239)
Econ Interdependence$_{it-1}$	−24.679	−85.746**	−92.606
	(13.264)	(33.228)	(65.494)
Cold War$_{it-1}$	0.289**	0.248	0.368
	(0.094)	(0.168)	(0.353)
Geographic Distance$_{it-1}$	−0.279***	−0.472***	−0.464**
	(0.064)	(0.096)	(0.172)
Nat'l Capability Ratio$_{it-1}$	−0.234***	−0.349***	−0.777***
	(0.037)	(0.051)	(0.109)
Alliance$_{it-1}$	−0.100	−0.269	−0.486
	(0.109)	(0.166)	(0.344)
Contiguity$_{it-1}$	0.896***	0.711**	0.160
	(0.179)	(0.253)	(0.405)
Major Power$_{it-1}$	0.783***	0.800***	1.590***
	(0.154)	(0.237)	(0.430)
System Size$_{it-1}$	−0.431***	−0.464***	−0.516***
	(0.041)	(0.063)	(0.111)
Intercept	0.618	1.747*	2.554
	(0.524)	(0.745)	(1.393)
Wald χ^2	3296.82	1615.11	599.54
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.38	0.31	0.33
N	424 718	424 718	424 718

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses. t, t^2, and t^3 do not appear to economize space.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

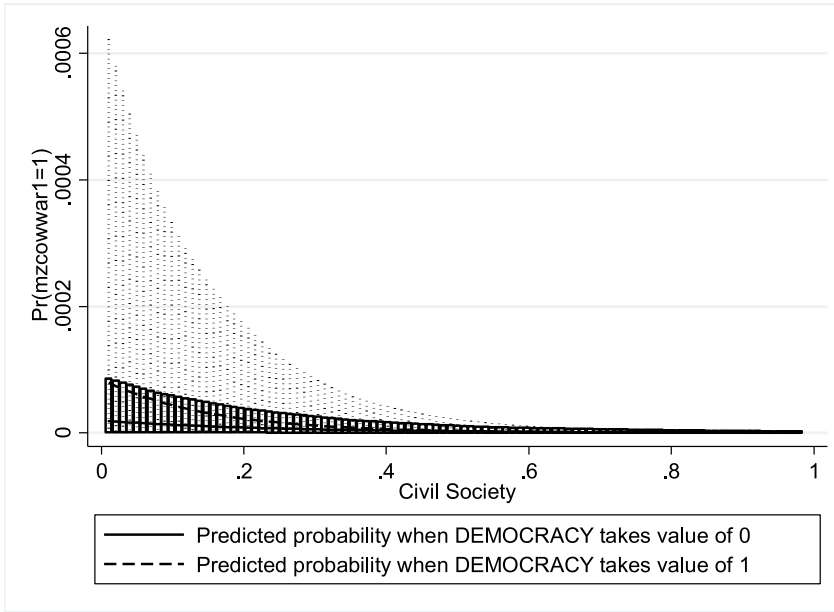

Fig. A.2. Interaction Effect between Civil Society and Democracy

Table A.5. Civil Society versus Democracy: Reduced Models

	Logit		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3
Civil Society$_{it-1}$	−2.422***	−3.548***	−7.009***
	(0.337)	(0.554)	(1.431)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.047***	0.037	0.053
	(0.013)	(0.023)	(0.049)
Cold War$_{it-1}$	0.544***	0.397*	0.430
	(0.107)	(0.199)	(0.412)
Geographic Distance$_{it-1}$	−0.750***	−0.974***	−0.932***
	(0.079)	(0.101)	(0.124)
Intercept	3.944***	4.412***	3.948***
	(0.523)	(0.713)	(0.814)
Wald χ^2	2098.44	662.21	361.17
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.30	0.23	0.21
N	424 718	424 718	424 718

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses. t, t^2, and t^3 do not appear in Models 1–3 to economize space.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

Table A.6. Civil Society versus Democracy: Politically Relevant Dyads

	Logit		
Variable	All MIDs 1	Fatal MIDs 2	Wars 3
Civil Society$_{it-1}$	−1.450***	−1.989***	−4.130**
	(0.303)	(0.549)	(1.346)
Democracy$_{it-1}$	0.018	−0.001	−0.031
	(0.014)	(0.025)	(0.055)
Cold War$_{it-1}$	0.276**	0.403*	0.311
	(0.097)	(0.191)	(0.452)
Geographic Distance$_{it-1}$	−0.307***	−0.463***	−0.364**
	(0.056)	(0.076)	(0.129)
Intercept	1.261**	1.342*	0.294
	(0.393)	(0.597)	(0.948)
Wald χ^2	951.00	391.25	151.32
Prob > Wald χ^2	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Pseudo R^2	0.23	0.20	0.19
N	52 727	52 727	52 727

Notes: Robust standard errors are given in parentheses. t, t^2, and t^3 do not appear in Models 1–3 to economize space.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.
***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed tests.

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