

Rally Around the *Team*?
How International Sports Shape Civil Conflict

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Famous *American Economic Review* Study

Emilio Depetris-Chauvin, Ruben Durante, and Filipe Campante (2020). “Building nations through shared experiences: Evidence from African football”

- ▶ Uses large- N approach to evaluate whether a national soccer team's success affects levels of intrastate violence.
- ▶ African Cup of Nations qualifiers, 1997-2015
- ▶ Key finding: Countries that barely qualify see significantly less political violence in the following months than countries that barely fail to qualify.
- ▶ Effect is temporary

Possible Mechanisms

- ▶ Increased salience of national (over ethnic) identities
- ▶ Emotions from sports outcomes could (irrationally) spill over into politics.
- ▶ Positive or negative mis(attribution)

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 - ▶ Third, we analyze their sample as updated in a 2024 corrigendum that they published in *AER* (109 cases)
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 - ▶ Fourth, we attempt to revise that sample using the criteria from their corrigendum (114 cases)
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 - ▶ Finally, we extend their sample temporally and geographically (303/255 cases)
 - ▶ We consider cases outside of sub-Saharan Africa using ACLED data set
 - ▶ We consider tournaments outside of Africa
 - ▶ We consider cases from 1997 to 2022

Results

- ▶ The results grow stronger after we revise the data set.
- ▶ For the global data set, the results are statistically significant at the 10% level.
- ▶ Among countries where soccer is the most popular sport, the results are statistically significant at the 5% level.

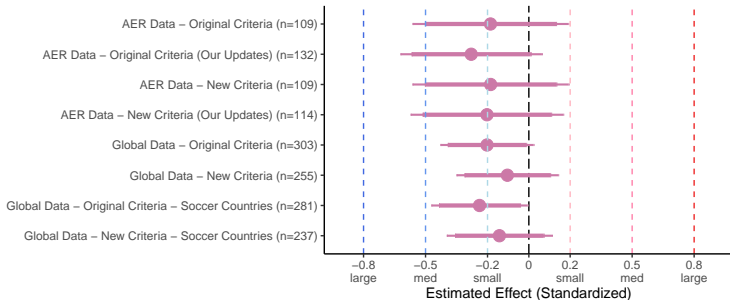
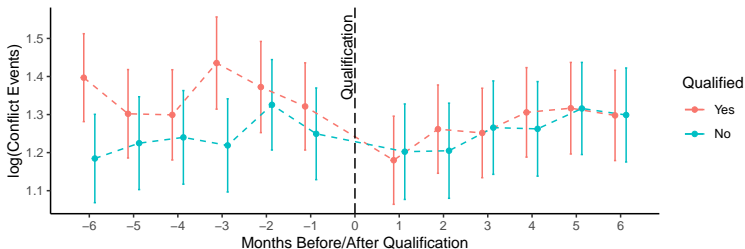


Figure 1: In this coefficient plot, the thin lines represent the 95 percent confidence intervals, and the thick lines represent the 90 percent confidence intervals.

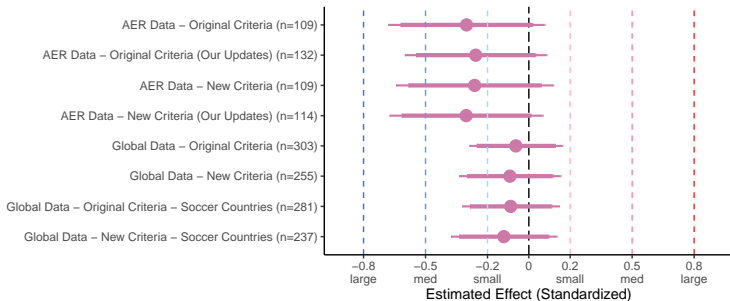
Results

- ▶ We confirm that soccer success seems to reduce civil conflict in the global data ($n = 303$).



Results (cont.)

- ▶ When we examine ethnic conflict (preliminary measure), our reanalysis of the *AER* sample somewhat confirms their findings ($p = 0.12$).
- ▶ However, the effect weakens after we revise the original *AER* dataset ($p = 0.14$).
- ▶ Lastly, we find no effect on ethnic conflict using our global data set ($p = 0.58$), nor for countries where soccer is popular ($p = 0.47$).



Conclusion

- ▶ In sum,
 - ▶ We confirm that sporting success reduces civil conflict.
 - ▶ The original *AER* sample approaches significance for our difference-in-differences test
 - ▶ The estimated effect strengthens after we revise the *AER* sample
 - ▶ The estimated effect is significant with the global sample for countries where soccer is the most popular sport
 - ▶ However, we find less evidence that sporting success reduces ethnic violence (with our preliminary measure)
 - ▶ The original *AER* sample approaches significance for the difference-in-differences test
 - ▶ The estimated effect weakens with the updated *AER* sample
 - ▶ The estimated effect weakens further with the global sample