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 Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

# **CONFERENCE PAPERS**

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# **NATURAL RESOURCE AND CIVIL WARS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

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# **ABSTRACT**

After outbreak of number of civil wars in the decades of 1970's and onwards, there have been many studies and research's probing the relation between natural resource and civil war, which a number of countries faced during this period. Even through there have been a no. of quantitative (econometric) and qualitative research analysis on this issue, there appears to be little agreement on the validity of the resource-civil war correlation. Through this paper I wish to shed some light on; the mechanism of relationship between the natural resource and civil war, reasons for disagreement between various research's and what we can do in future to prevent or subside these unrests. First section of this paper deals with possible linkages through with natural resources of a country could inflict a civil war. Second section discusses results of various researches on this topic and why are there contradicting results. Third section shows though case by case analysis, why a generalised model to explain this relationship would fail. The last section deals with policies that could prevent or control the effects of the civil war.

# **KEYWORDS**

natural resources, civil war, policy measures, quantitative analysis, global action.

# SECTION 1: CAUSALITY BETWEEN NATURAL RESOURCES AND CIVIL WAR

he set of countries which faced civil wars in last 30 years or so, have mostly been characterized by poor and declining economies sitting on an abundance some type of natural resource. The question is why is then, some countries took advantage of such a position and others fell into the trap of conflicts and hence perpetual underdevelopment.

Essentially civil wars results in a country when there are rebellion's formed against the existing rule of the state. Factors explaining the rebellion's can be explained under three heads:-

# **GREED REBELLION**

This type of rebellion is motivated by predation of rents from lootable (easily extractable or attainable) natural resources e.g. alluvial diamonds, opium, coca, timber. The rents are then used to finance the start up or for intensifying a violent civil war.

Its not only rebels that fall into this category, even policy makers and private actors could intensify or start a civil war by being victims of resource wealth myopia, producing a "get rich quick mentality". All in all, a rent maximising behaviour of economic agent's lead to either start up or further intensification of a civil war.

# **GRIVENCE REBELLION**

It is motivated by hatred which might be intrinsic to ethnic and religious differences, or reflected objective resentments such as domination by an ethnic majority, political repression, or economic inequality. It suggests that resource extraction creates grievances among the local population, because of land expropriation, environmental hazards, insufficient job opportunities, and the social disruptions caused by labour migration; these grievances, in turn, lead to a civil war.

Rebel's further act to intensify these grievances as stimulating these issues would build public support for them and open up more sources to funding their agitation.

# **SECESSIONIST REBELLIONS**

These movements are motivated by the allure of claiming the ownership of natural resources in a particular region. If resources are geographically concentrated in the peripheral regions of a country then the likelihood of resource based secessions is higher. Resources are also more likely to prove a separatist rebellion if they are extracted through a capital-intensive process, which offers fewer benefits to local unskilled workers and more benefits to the state and extraction firms.

# **EXOGENOUS FACTORS**

There are a number of exogenous factors that can provoke or intensify a civil war. One of them being external support by foreign parties to start a civil war, because in return of this support, they might earn future contracts or rent sharing from the captured natural resources. These parties could be high profile businessmen, MNC's or other governments; which usually lend their support to rebels by funding their arms requirement. There could also be a case of direct intervention by these foreign parties by bidding for future rights over the captured natural wealth and thereby being a stakeholder of the outcome of the civil war. Civil wars could also be inflicted by deliberate actions of other countries, in order to change the current regime through military interventions or supporting massive coups, so that the alternate regime that comes to power formulates polices of resource exploitation.

All the four factors that I have mentioned are not independent of each other; they have feedback effects into each other. Greed- rebellions need to generate grievance for military cohesion, separatist movements are often generated due to grievances among particular section of society and these movements often backed through external support. Exogenous factors too play a major role in intensifying greed and grievance rebellions. Therefore pin-pointing a particular factor that results in a civil war is quite difficult. These feedback effects are the reason why different types of resources produce different levels of rents; and even same quantity of same resources can produce different quantities of rents in different countries.

Whatever may be the reason for the civil war, the end result of it is; poverty aggravation, public money being taken for military spending from basic social services, retarded economic growth. To end these sorts of conflicts what is important is to understand the factors that contribute to the risk of civil war. In the next section we are going to see different explanations by various researchers regarding factors contributing to onset, duration and intensity of civil war.

OF EXPLORING RELATION BETWEEN	

Studies	Resource measure	Finding	
Collier & Hoeffler	Primary exports/GDP	Increases likelihood of war	
Collier & Hoeffler	Primary exports/GDP	Increases likelihood of separatist wars only	
Elbadawi & Sambanis	Primary exports/GDP	Weak or no effect	
Fearson & Laitin	Primary exports/GDP	No significant effect	
Fearson & Laitin	Oil exporter(Dummy)	Increases likelihood of war	
Hegre	Mineral exports/total exports	No significant effect	
Hegre	Primary exports/GDP	Increases likelihood of war	
Humphreys	Oil production	Increases likelihood of war	
Humphreys	Oil reserves	No significant effect	
Humphreys	Diamond production	No significant effect	
Humphreys	Diamond production	Reduces war duration	
De Soysa	Natural resource stocks/capita	No significant effect	
De Soysa	Mineral stocks/capita	Decreases likelihood of conflict	
De Soysa	Oil exporter(Dummy)	Increases likelihood of conflict	

TABLE 2: COUNTRY WISE ANALYSIS OF CIVIL WAR AND ASSOCIATED RESOURCES

Country	Duration	Resources
Afghanistan	1990s	Opium, cannabis, gems
Angola	1975-99	Oil
Angola	1990s	Diamonds
Burma	1949-	Tin, gems
Burma	1990s	Opium, Gems
Cambodia	1990s	Cannabis, Gems
Colombia	1990s	Opium, coca
Democratic Republic of Congo	1960-65	Copper
Democratic Republic of Congo	1990s	Diamonds
Indonesia	1969-	Copper, gold
Indonesia	1975-	Natural gas
Liberia	1990s	Diamonds
Morocco	1975-88	Phosphates, Oil
Nigeria	1967-70	Oil
Papua New Guinea	1988-	Copper, gold
Peru	1990s	Coca
Russia	1990s	Diamonds
Sudan	1983-	Oil
Sierra Leone	1990s	Diamonds

# **SECTION 2: QUANTITATIVE STUDIES AND THEIR CONTRADICTING RESULTS**

There appears to be little agreement on the validity of the resource-civil war correlation. However, there seems to be a pattern emerging out of the results of quantitative studies and on which there is some consensus among scholars. These are:

- Oil exports are linked to onset of conflict, esp. separatist movements. It also been agreed upon that state and its officials suffer from bouts of Petromania rentier psychology in presence of oil abundance
- Lootable natural resources like gemstones, alluvial diamonds, opium etc. don't lead to onset of a conflict but they tend to intensify and prolong the
  duration of civil war.
- Agriculture commodities seem to be uncorrelated with civil war

Now the question is why is there a disagreement among statistical studies over the resource – civil war correlation. The answer is that quantitative studies of natural resources and civil war have been characterised by problems of misspecification and spuriousness. First of all, let us take into consideration: the Independent variables taken by various studies:

# 1) RESOURCE EXPORTS / GDP

Now because civil wars do not officially "begin" until they have crossed some threshold of violence, they might be preceded by years of low-level hostilities that drive off manufacturing firms, producing a higher level of resource dependence before the civil war is coded as commencing. The natural resource-civil war correlation could also be spurious: both civil war and resource dependence might be independently caused by some unmeasured third variable, such as a weak rule of law- due to which the country might be unable to attract investment in manufacturing sector.

# 2) PRIMARY EXPORTS / GDP

In case of primary commodities, there are only particular types of natural resources that rent seekers target — as oil, opium, timber, coca etc. Primary commodities variable is overly broad, as it includes a wide range of raw materials and other commodities, some of which may be uncorrelated with conflict and hence pose a threat to the estimation of the particular study.

# 3) PARTICULAR NATURAL RESOURCE EXPORT / TOTAL EXPORTS

As found in almost all the cases of civil wars, most of the natural resources extracted are exported through illegal means and black markets. Therefore, taking into account, exports of a particular natural resource or production would not be accurate as these figures do not reveal the true picture.

Other reasons for conflicting results among studies are:

- 4) There is no consensus over a particular definition of civil war i.e. criterion of selecting that a civil war has occurred. Different scholars use different definitions based on number of violence related deaths. This could bring about differences in results among studies using different parameters of civil war onset, as natural resources tend to have a strong effect on large conflicts but no influence on small ones; and further, that one dataset uses narrow coding rules that classify only large conflicts as 'civil wars', while another uses broader rules that also classify both large and small conflagrations as civil wars. In this case, natural resources might be significantly associated with civil wars in the first dataset but not the second.
- 5) Datasets, used by different studies, differ in how they determine when a war has ended and also the fact that results could differ on basis of how a scholars deal with missing data.

In the next section, taking case studies of various countries, I would show how the general patterns that emerged from the quantitative analysis by various scholars can't be universally applied to explain all cases.

### **SECTION 3: CASE STUDIES**

There are always some variables like illegal trade, military coups, external financing etc. which contribute to the onset and intensification of civil wars but are very difficult to measure for an econometric analysis. Further there are other factors like separatist rebellion which are country specific. Therefore the findings of any econometric analysis cannot be generalised to a larger set of countries.

We will consider the first pattern suggested by these studies regarding oil being a major factor contributing to the on-set of a civil war in oil abundant countries. Let consider a case study of **three oil exporting countries** that entered civil war:

### **ANGOLA**

It was a classic case of greed rebellion wherein, a rebel group UNITA waged an offensive that brought more than 70 percent of the country-including all of its diamond-rich areas under its control. To fund a counteroffensive, the government sold off future exploitation rights to both oil fields (still under the government's control), and diamond areas (some of which were under rebel control). In one deal, the government hired International Defence and Security (IDAS), a private military services company, to retake the diamond fields near the DRC border; the government paid IDAS with a share of the contested diamonds.

This shows that it cannot be generalised in case of Angola that oil wealth caused the onset of civil war. Further this case also shows how state actions could be responsible for further intensifying the civil war.

### SUDAN

In 1983, Sudanese president took some serious policy measures that upset the delicate balance between two major ethnic groups of the society. He put the newly discovered oil well of southern Sudan into jurisdiction of northern Sudan. As a consequence Sudan's people liberation army (SPLA) waged a separatist war against the regime.

This was one case in which policymakers badly designed polices regarding natural resource wealth caused grievance amongst certain section of the society and hence resulted in a secessionist rebellion. This case concurrent to the pattern that emerged from econometric studies.

### **VENEZUELA**

It was observed that most of civil wars in oil rich countries started around the time of OPEC shocks, which resulted in oil being a more alluring resource to capture. Some scholars are of the view that oil boom weakens the state's fundamentals alluring its operators to fall prey to what is called petromania. However if we take into account Venezuela's case, we observe that despite its large boom effect, it remained to be Latin America's most politically stable country. The strength of its fundamentals can be judged from the fact that, in 2001, a massive CIA backed coup to remove president Hugo Chavez failed as the state officials refused to withstand the alternate regime whose aim was to exploit the oil reserves of the country. Venezuela now out performs the rest of Latin America in terms of GNP growth and all development indicators.

Therefore in light of these case studies we can argue that the results of econometric analysis cannot be generalised all countries.

Now we will consider a case study of **three mineral rich countries** and see if the claim by economists that minerals don't contribute to on-set of a civil war it just extends the duration and intensity of a civil war:

### SIFRRA LEONE

It presents a case in which greed and grievance worked together to provoke an outbreak of civil war in resource rich Sierra Leone. The war began in 1991, when Revolutionary United Front (RUF) first crossed border from Liberia, with massive support from Charles Taylor (president) with the aim of gaining access to Sierra Leone's diamond fields. The RUF propaganda complained about the resource exploitation by Freetown elite, however side by side it was also exploiting the captured resources itself, by selling them into world market through black markets.

On observing this case we can conclude that diamonds did play a major role in the outbreak of civil war.

### **BOTSWANA**

This case depicts that mineral resource need not be a curse as, twenty five years ago, Botswana and Sierra Leone were similarly poor countries, both sitting on vast diamond reserves. Over the ensuing quarter century, Botswana harnessed this opportunity, becoming the fastest-growing economy in the world. Sierra Leone used the same resources to impoverish itself, experiencing the most rapid sustained decline of any country's development indicators.

# AFGHANISTAN

In case of Afghanistan, before 1990, the rebels were fighting for the independence of their country from USSR and they used receive huge funds from CIA in form of arms, ammunition and money.

However, in the post Cold War era, this funding stopped but a civil war was still going on between the two major ethnic groups, therefore to fund this war the rebels now turned to extracting and exporting gemstones and opium through Pakistan, India and Iraq.

Now the econometric result doesn't fit into this case either as in this case initial civil war was started due to external assistance and the second one stated from sale of precious minerals of the country.

As in case of Oil countries, in case of Mineral rich countries we can also state that Minerals can lead to an initiation of a civil war and therefore an econometric result based on a generalised model cannot be extended to a larger set of countries.

Finally most scholars agree upon the result, from their econometric models, that Agricultural commodities have no effect on civil war. We will now take a case study of Cambodia and see if the generalised results are valid for it.

# CAMBODIA

Although there are only a few countries in which agricultural commodities as natural resource provoked the on set of a civil war, the reason being, rents from most of agricultural commodities are not sufficient enough to fund a rebellion.

Timber had the clearest effect in Cambodia. Between 1989 and 1995, the rebel Khmer Rouge was able to maintain its viability as a military force owing to its sales of both timber and gemstones; when this revenue dropped off after 1995, the Khmer Rouge gradually fell apart, and by 1998 it had collapsed. Therefore it can be clearly observed that Timer played a major role in Cambodia's civil war.

By taking into account all the case studies I have mentioned, it can be analysed that results of a generalised econometric model cannot be extended most countries, as the underlying factors contributing to civil war in each case might be unique and the variables that affect the civil war might not be measurable. Therefore it's better to analyse each country's civil war independently.

We will now discuss in the next section, what step could be taken to avoid such unrests in future and how we could control an on-going civil war.

# SECTION 4: POLICY MEASURES TO AVOID AND CONTROL CIVIL UNREST

Global efforts to curb civil war should be more focussed on reducing the viability- rather than just the rationale – of rebellion and for that the underlying reason for its outbreak in each case must be taken into consideration.

List of policy measures that could be undertaken in future to avoid such conflicts:

• Sharing of post conflict rents with rebels: The best way to break out of the conflict trap is to ensure that countries that have just ended one conflict do not quickly become enmeshed in another. The state could formulate a policy through which it shares the post conflict peace dividends with rebels. Such a strategy would be more successful in grievance based unrests and therefore cannot be universally applied.

In case of Congo Republic, Burma and Cambodia; such policy measures halted the civil war.

• In case of Greed based civil wars: If rebels hold a considerable amount of natural resources, then UN should force upon trade embargo's (for particular resources), to cut off the source of funding for the rebels and force them to surrender. However sanctions imposed must be stringent, as there were cases in the past where rebel groups of Sierra Leone and Angola were able to easily export conflict diamonds despite sanctions being imposed by UN. However, there are examples of stringent sanctions like Kimberley Process, which played a considerable role in subsiding civil war in Sierra Leone.

- Penalty Mechanism: Many rebel movements also receive illicit support from neighbouring governments, MNC's and wealthy individuals. Such support should be exposed and heavily penalised such that the cost incurred due to imposition of penalties should outweigh the benefits of rebel alliances.
- Military Action with help of foreign intervention or other wise should be avoided, as it leads to further intensification of the agitation by the rebels and at times creates massive public support for the rebels. We can observe this by analysing the effect of military action in case of Afghanistan wherein US intervention not only has intensified unrest in Afghanistan but has also had a spill over effect causing a massive unrest in Pakistan too.
- UN Security Council should set up a committee that looks into the matter of Natural Resource Wealth of each country and it should be vigilant enough so as to oversee that these resources are not exploited by a certain section of the society.

### CONCLUSION

In this paper we analysed how civil wars could be inflicted upon a resource rich country through various routes (Greed rebellion, Grievance rebellion, Separatist rebellion and exogenous factors). Further we saw results of various econometric models, giving contradicting results and we probe into the reasons for it. Then we considered different country cases wherein we concluded that results based on econometric models cannot be generalised to a larger set of countries as the underlying factors contributing to civil war was different in each case. Finally we conclude the paper, suggesting some policy measures that could be undertaken to avoid or control such conflicts in future.

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