Differing Effects: The Resource Curse in Seperatist Conflicts

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Abstract

Despite considerable research on the relationship between natural resources and civil wars, minimal investigation has been conducted regarding the effects on separatist conflicts. Previous literature in the field has recognized seemingly different effects, but none have focused on these differences. Using 10 cases, this study fills the gap in the research. The observable results support the idea that the potential effects are unique to separatist conflicts and not civil war in general. Such results demonstrate the variety of mechanisms through which a variable can generate observable changes.

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Abstract: *Despite considerable research on the relationship between natural resources and civil wars, minimal investigation has been conducted regarding the effects on separatist conflicts. Previous literature in the field has recognized seemingly different effects, but none have focused on these differences. Using 10 cases, this study fills the gap in the research. The observable results support the idea that the potential effects are unique to separatist conflicts and not civil war in general. Such results demonstrate the variety of mechanisms through which a variable can generate observable changes.*

The value of natural resources in today's modern economy cannot be understated. In fact, many nations' economies depend upon abundant natural resources that are concentrated within their borders. Naturally, nations will act to maintain control over these regions. So, it is theoretically logical (and, according to some sources, statistically supported) that a correlation exists between abundance of natural resources and the outbreak of civil wars (de Soysa 2002; Ross 2004a). However, because of the complexity inherent in the causality of such conflicts, numerous mechanisms have been proposed to relate the two. This paper adds to the vigorous academic debate by examining the relationship between valuable natural resource abundance and separatist conflicts. The following section explains the areas of study that have been previously pursued, providing the reasons this study was conducted. Then, in the second section, the discussion explores this study's design. The third section describes the criteria and justification for the study's case selection. Beyond that, the fourth section provides general and case by case analyses with regard to the study's hypotheses in order facilitate comparison with expected outcomes (e.g. a direct causal relationship between resource wealth and separatist conflict). Finally, the last section delivers final conclusions regarding the study's focus and offers possible avenues for further research in future studies. However, before explaining my own proposed part in the academic debate, it is critical to understand existing research in order to shed light on my intended contributions.

The "Resource Curse" & Academic Discussion

For many years, researchers have sought to understand the causes of war between and within sovereign nations. Recently, an explosion of research has been dedicated to natural resource abundance as a causal factor of conflicts. In what has been dubbed the "resource curse" by the modern intellectual community, some researchers have proposed that regions possessing an abundance of natural resources are more prone to the onset of violent conflict than regions lacking such resources. While a correlation between the two has been observed by members of the research community (e.g. Collier & Hoeffler 1998, 2002; Ross 2004a, 2004b), a debate still rages amongst scholars regarding the validity and nature of the correlation and any causal mechanisms that might explain the relationship. Originating in aforementioned research, this discussion has spawned a multitude of new studies continuing the debate over the supposed "resource curse."

Investigations into the curse began to emerge in the mid-1990s as researchers were completing initial studies after the end of the Cold War. The standard unit of measure for natural resource availability—the ratio of primary commodity exports to GDP—in many studies was first developed by Sachs and Warner (1995). These scholars sought to explain the question of why

countries abundant in natural resources often grew more slowly economically. Soon, researchers seeking to understand causes of violent conflicts started using the ratio as their main proxy for resource abundance, beginning with Collier & Hoeffler (1998, 2002), who opened the flood gates to discussion.

By the early part of this decade, numerous other scholarly reports proposed mechanisms, attempting to explain the correlation between the curse and warfare (e.g. de Soysa 2002; Addison, Le Billon, & Murshed 2002). In the din of this discussion, scholars like Marta Reynal-Querol (2002) and Michael Ross (2004a, 2004b) began exploring the relationships between the curse and civil wars, as opposed to general armed conflict. Following Ross' projects, various scholars published works challenging the previous findings that linked the resource curse to conflict onset, whether civil or international. For instance, Buhaug and Rød (2006) argued that local determinants and measures— not national ones—better reflected the causalities behind civil wars. Adding to the debate, several studies contended that examining natural resources as a causal factor of conflicts is not helpful (Walter 2006; Wennmann 2007). In fact, a study by Brunnschweiler and Bulte (2008) proposed that the ratio between commodity exports and GDP displays resource dependence, not abundance as Collier and Hoeffler (1998) intended. In their work, Brunnschwelier and Bulte changed the unit of measure and suddenly the effects of the supposed resource curse reversed, becoming *beneficial* (2008). As a result, the debate was, and still is, hotly contested and heavily researched.

Strengths & Contributions

Through its hypotheses, this study will produce findings that contribute to the larger scholarly debate in several ways. First, in all my research, I have not encountered any studies that specifically focused on the relationship between natural resource abundance and separatist conflicts. At most, separatist conflicts have received cursory investigations in studies (Ross 2004b), or individualized case studies that are difficult to expand to the broader community (Oyefusi 2008). Shockingly, Ross even acknowledged the apparent differences between effects of natural resources on civil wars and the more specific separatist wars (2004b). Despite this admission by Ross, no one has yet produced a study focusing on resource abundance and separatist conflicts. To me, this represents a significant gap in scholarly understanding (or at least the debate) of the resource curse.

Second, since Ross' small-N comparative case design (2004b) did not focus on separatist conflicts, it is possible to modify and re-apply his model to allow comparisons between his conclusions and this study's. In addition to the three separatist cases that Ross studied (Indonesia, Burma/Myanmar, and Sudan), this study includes seven new case subjects which will increase the value of comparison between the two. Furthermore, this study is highly valuable for comparison for another reason: Ross restricted his cases to conflicts that occurred within the interval of 1990-2000. Consequently, as much as seven years of data (this varies with each case to as little as four) can be added to his model.

Third, many scholars debate the validity of units of measure (e.g. primary exports/GDP) used in large-N studies, like those conducted by Reynal (2002) or Fearon & Laitin (2003). By concentrating on a specific group of resources as applied to a small-N study like Ross' (2004b), this study circumvents complications that have plagued large-N studies, namely that aggregation of the ratio "does not distinguish between different resource types…," that such a study may "suffer from endogeneity…," and potential spuriousness (Lujala et al. 2005, 542). This approach also has the added benefit of allowing me to examine the cases using multiple data sets, found in previous studies (e.g. *DIADATA* by Gilmore, Lujala, Gleditsch, & Rød [2005]). This is a benefit that other small-N studies seem to have overlooked and that large-N studies are incapable of pursuing feasibly.

Additionally, the *DIADATA*, *PETRODATA*, and United States Energy Information Administration (EIA) data have been updated annually since their creation and therefore contain significant information beyond what Ross selected for his study.

<u>Design Complications</u>

However, small-N studies are not without complications. Foremost, by using the small-N comparative cases design format, my study will significantly decrease in its generalizability. That said, generalizability would likely have suffered from the small overall pool of separatist conflicts in resource qualifying nations; therefore, the sacrifice is acceptable. Nonetheless, as Lujala et. al. (2005) denote, I must be aware of the danger of generalizing from a small case study.

Additionally, a small-N study is weak because it is easier for an exterior bias (unknown third variable) to affect the results. In order to address this issue, I plan to select as diverse cases as possible, which will be problematic given the small pool. For example, half of the cases that this study uses are African nations because more separatist conflicts fulfilled the inclusion requirements in Africa than in other regions. To combat this bias, this study gathers a South American case and four Asian cases. However, regional bias remains the most threatening bias to the study's validity and is considered throughout the analysis and conclusion processes. Ideally, this study will avoid other sorts of biases by selecting nations having both rich and poor populations (drawing on individual per capita income statistics, as done by Hale [2000]) and possessing several different natural resources. Unfortunately, given the nature of this study's proposals it is illogical that a nation could be both "rich" in individual per capita income and yet still create a grievance strong enough to motivate separatist conflict (see Hypothesis 1).

Lastly, small-N studies can be harmed by the appearance of many plausible mechanisms that large-N studies could eliminate via sheer numbers. Hopefully, these controls will allow the study to evaluate the two propositions in depth, rather than addressing a number of potential mechanisms (as Ross 2004b does). This will in turn, optimistically, restrict the potential ways that spurious mechanisms can enter the study. Of course, isolating the independent and dependent variables will be my greatest obstacle; thus, it will be imperative to focus on maximizing the purity of my work with special attention to the selection of cases and design of the study.

Research Design

Then, what can I expect to add to such a thoroughly studied, though tumultuous, academic examination? This section addresses how, after reviewing the diverse literature, I intend to modify and apply aspects of Michael Ross' case study examination (2004b) to separatist conflicts. Put simply, I am interested in *how*—not why or if—natural resources can affect separatist conflicts through several hypotheses. To begin, nations that depend heavily upon resources to generate revenue are exploiting resources that are frequently found in only a fraction of the nation's territory. Thus, the revenues from such resources often are split amongst the entire state, as opposed to benefiting the region of extraction more heavily. In this scenario, it is logical that exploitation of this nature could foster separatist sentiments. Such a concept is articulated as the following:

> H1: *Resource wealth provides a motivating mechanism for separatist movements when citizens feel "insufficiently compensated" by the state for the "expropriation" of their region's resources* (Ross 2004b, 41).

For this hypothesis to be valid, several criteria must be fulfilled. For instance, it is critical that "…the conflict began after the separatist region was identified as having … resource wealth" (Ross 2004b, 42). Next, separatists target resource related industry or infrastructure, most indicatively in their region, for their attacks (Ross). Above all, though, the observation that separatists discuss the "unfair distribution of resource wealth in its propaganda" is most revealing (Ross, 42). The third observation is the most important because it confirms that the separatists have identified an injustice which they seek to correct. It also suggests that attacks carried out against resource infrastructure and production sites are primarily intended to convey a message, rather than solely to hinder the enemy.

In order to observe these standards, it is paramount to establish the *extent of production/extraction of the pertinent natural resources*, which was shown by Lujala, Gleditsch, & Gilmore (2005) to have a statistically significant effect on diamond related conflicts. As reported by the EIA, annual estimates of each nation's production and refining capabilities can be examined as representative of this measure. Also, dates of initial production (with precision ratings again) and geographic location of each resource can be obtained from the *UCDP-PRIO PETRODATA* and *DIADATA* datasets, which are updated annually, similar to the ACD (Lujala, Rød, & Thieme 2007; Gilmore, Lujala, Gleditsch, & Rød 2005).

Moving on, this study is intended to address more than the motivating effects of resource wealth on populations that believe themselves under compensated. Ross, in his study (2004b), found that resources can have a "prolonging effect" on a conflict by funding the war effort. So, it is logical to investigate the following:

> H2: *Resource rich regions involved in separatist conflicts create more prolonged violent conflict with the governments they are attempting to break away from by providing an exportable means of revenue generation for the rebels.*1

If valid, several things will be seen in the cases. First, the region must have identified the *presence—or lack—of abundant natural resources* prior to the conflict. This measure is critical to both of my hypotheses and more subtly nuanced than Ross'. In addition to defining and identifying supposed abundance, conflict must not have arisen before the resources were discovered or in production, therefore thorough examination is required. Ross solely utilized the ratio of primary exports to GDP to determine abundance. Unfortunately, this aggregate prevents distinguishing between effects of one resource over another (Lujala et. al, 2005). Therefore, it is more defensible to consider multiple indicators simultaneously. In addition to the GDP ratio, a nation's proven resource reserves and percentage of GDP attributable to specific resource exports will be included as well. These statistics are reported in annual analyses produced by the EIA. Determining the date of awareness of resources will be trickier; however, the *PETRODATA, DIADATA,* and the EIA's data provide, at the least, approximate dates of discovery for the major resources.

Second, it is important to establish the *duration of the separatist conflicts* in order to examine the resource specific effects (if any) that can be observed. To this end, the *UCDP-PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset* (ACD) provides data on conflicts that have accrued more than 25 battle deaths. The data includes conflicts from 1946 to the present and has been updated annually since its

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[1] This hypothesis assumes that the government faction is drawing funding from the natural resource(s) revenues in addition to their other (if any) means of funding. The "prolonging effect" is only interested in whether or not the separatist faction is funded by natural resources, thereby prolonging the conflict, rather than resulting in defeat.

first production (Gleditsch et. al, 2002). Specifically, the ACD provides dates of conflict initiation, termination, and ratings for the precision of date determination.

   Thirdly, exploitation of profits from natural resources to purchase arms would be indicative of resource abundance prolonging the conflict. This is particularly true of the rebel groups, as they can be assumed to lack other means of funding. However, since sovereign governments likely control the majority of available resources, it is also plausible that they would seek to utilize profits from resources in this manner. Examining this indicator will require case by case investigation through reliable sources of information, such as journals and global news organizations.

Case Selection

   The following section discusses the parameters and corresponding justifications by which this study's cases were examined and selected. To begin, Ross employed a "most likely" method of selecting cases in which he claims that "… there was prima facie evidence that natural resources had influenced the conflict" (2004b, 46). In other words, because the study seeks to examine how resources affect conflicts, cases were largely selected because evidence from the EIA or other scholarly sources suggested that resources played a role.[2] Because of the nature of this study, some of the cases were required to have significant resource abundance and an active separatist conflict at some point since 1990. Hence, from the UCDP-PRIO's *Armed Conflict Dataset*, all civil wars since 1946 were included for this study's sample. Of these, only conflicts that began or ended after 1990 were further examined.

   Next, a rigid definition of "natural resources" was established and used in distinguishing possible cases from the rest. Potential conflicts were required to exhibit abundance of oil, natural gas, coal, and/or diamonds based on three "all or nothing" standards. The cases either surpassed the established minimums or were eliminated from the sample. Nations were considered to have resource abundance by ranking in the respective continent's top five for proven reserves of that resource.[3] It was also required that exports of the resource in question accounted for more than 25% of the nation's GDP. Lastly, the nations were required to produce a minimum average daily or yearly amount of the resource for at least one year during the separatist conflict (see Table 1).

Table 1: Specific Resource Production Parameters Used in Case Selection

Resource	Production Minimum; Export Minimum
Oil	350,000 barrels per day (bbl/d); 275,000 bbl/d
Natural Gas	2 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d); 1 Bcf/d
Coal	50 million short tons per year (MMst); 50 MMst
Diamonds	Account for >5% world's production OR >700,000 carats produced since 1992

* = Diamond production statistics were adhered to less stringently than the other resources' requirements because of difficulties in accounting for illicit trading in some regions, e.g. Sierra Leone

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[2] For further explanation of the "most likely" method, see Ross 2004b, p. 46.

[3] In considering Asian nations, I choose to overlook Middle Eastern nations from the rankings. This decision was made because the Middle Eastern nations would have excluded any other Asian nations from the study based on the "Top 5" requirement, despite fulfillment of all other requirements. Once those nations were excluded, Azerbaijan and Indonesia fulfilled all requisites. Myanmar (Burma) was only in the top 15 Asian nations for reserves, but fulfilled all others. This discrepancy was overlooked in light of Ross' use of the nation as a case in his work (2004b).

Additionally, cases were restricted (with noted exceptions) to separatist conflicts that were coded as having produced more than 1,000 battle-related deaths over the course of their conflict. The ACD also includes any conflict with more than 25 battle-related deaths, but coded conflicts that had surpassed the more common threshold of 1,000 battle-related deaths. In his work, Ross defined the civil conflicts in his sample with the 1,000 death threshold. In the interest of maintaining parallels to his model, it was desirable and did not present serious difficulty to use the same definition.

The cases include five African, one South American, and three Asian nations (listed in Table 2). The selections shown in Table 2 create an acceptable representation of nations of different regional, socioeconomic, and governmental types. So, while the study has very low generalizability to the world in general, a sufficient mix of cases has been achieved to optimize the isolation of variables from extraneous contamination.

At this point, several of the "most likely" system's biases deserve revisiting. This group of cases does not constitute a representative sample to test whether or not resource wealth initiates separatist conflicts. Again, these cases facilitate the examination of proposed mechanisms of *how* resource abundance can affect conflict. So, if the mechanisms are demonstrated within these nations (in general), those mechanisms can be assumed to be plausible. If, however, the opposite is true and the mechanisms are not demonstrated, a convincing argument (more so than the former) can be made that "it is unlikely to be valid more generally" (Ross 2004b, 48). Moreover, conclusions may only be made within each nation; international conclusions are critically susceptible to intervening variables and other contaminations.

Table 2: Separatist Wars Linked to the Resource Curse, 1990-2008

Country	Resources	Conflict Duration
Angola	Oil, Diamonds	1975-95
Azerbaijan	Oil	1991-94
Colombia	Oil	1964-2008 (ongoing)
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	Diamonds	1998-2008 (ongoing)
Indonesia – Aceh	Natural Gas, Coal	1989-2005
Indonesia – East Timor	Natural Gas, Coal	1975-98
Myanmar (Burma)	Natural Gas	1959-2008 (ongoing)
Nigeria	Oil, Natural Gas	2004-2008[1] (ongoing)
Sierra Leone	Diamonds[3]	1991-2000[2]
Sudan	Oil	1971-2008 (ongoing)

Note: Italicized nations were included in the study conducted by Ross (2004b)

1 = the ACD lists this conflict as resolved in 2004; however, the EIA's country analysis denotes that 20% of Nigeria's oil production was completely halted by militant attacks in 2006-07

2 = Termination date not listed in ACD, taken from Ross, 2004b

[3] = Only case not to meet production requirements (diamond production = 3% of total world production; 400,000 carats since 1992)

Findings of Case Analysis

In this section, I explain the results of case study analyses, first in a general sense and then through country specific explanations. Overall, of the ten cases this study investigated, six demonstrate a relationship to natural resources through one or both of the proposed mechanisms, while four do not demonstrate a relationship between their resource wealth and separatist conflicts

(See Table 3). Interestingly, all six of the cases that related to natural resources showed evidence of motivation originating with non-compensation, supporting Hypothesis 1, to varying degrees. Contrarily, only three exhibited qualities that would allow Hypothesis 2 to be deemed plausible.   In examining the individual case analyses, the six supportive cases are discussed first, followed by the explanation of the four unsupportive cases.

<u>Supporting Cases</u>

Angola & UNITA

As with several other cases, Angola has been involved in a conflict with more than one organization that can be tied to the resource curse, though only one fulfills my requirements. Angola's conflict with the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) is an excellent case because the conflict is a straightforward example of natural resources providing motivation for and prolonging a conflict. To begin, in their study (2001), Frynas & Wood claimed that the conflict "seriously affected the Angolan oil industry and put oil operations at risk" (592). In particular, UNITA focused their attacks on onshore oilfields, even overrunning the Soyo fields in 1993. Additionally, the organization quickly became known for their "kidnapping and killing of oil company staff and sabotage of oil installations" (Frynas & Wood 2001, 592). Most importantly, though, UNITA was prompted to conflict by what they interpreted as unfair compensation for their territory's oil production.

Furthermore, the Angolan case with UNITA demonstrates the prolonging effect of natural resources too. In a country that had generated some 2.5 million carats of diamonds in 1992, it is believed that "[d]iamonds funded the … rebel group during Angola's long civil war" (Collier 2003, 41). In their 2005 dataset and study, Gilmore, Lujala, Gleditsch, & Rød claim that Angola's diamond exports were skewed because UNITA undeniably exported illicit diamonds to generate revenue. Of course, this in turn allowed them to fund their side of the war. With the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola**,** Angola's ruling party) relying heavily on oil generated revenues to fund their military forces, the conflict between the MPLA and UNITA clearly displays the earmarks of a resource cursed separatist conflict.

Table 3: Results of Case Study Analyses

Countries	Opposition Organization	Motivation Mechanism (H1)	Prolonging Effect (H2)
Angola	UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)	Supports	Supports
Azerbaijan	Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh	Rejects	Rejects
Colombia	FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)	Supports	Rejects
Democratic Republic of Congo	BDK (Bundu Dia Kongo)*	Rejects	Indeterminate (Rejects)
Indonesia	GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka or Free Aceh Movement)	Supports	Rejects
	East Timor	Rejects	Rejects
Myanmar (Burma)	SSA (Shan State Army)	Rejects	Rejects
Nigeria	NDPVF (Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force)	Supports	Supports
Sierra Leone	RUF (Revolutionary United Front)	Supports	Supports
Sudan	SPLM/A (Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army)	Supports	Rejects

*= one of a number of international/national participants in "the great African war" (Olsson & Fors 2004, 322), but is the only separatist organization listed by the ACD

Colombia & FARC

      Colombia's situation is much more convoluted than Angola's. Their conflict with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has been long and arduous, showcasing several of the criteria of a natural resource motivated conflict. As reported by the Council of Foreign Relations in 2008, FARC (ironically, a communist based organization) openly advocates privatizing the oil sector, which is currently controlled entirely by the Colombian government. It is plausible that FARC's interest in the oil sector is only superficial. Yet, even if this is the case, then their propaganda still implies the existence of a sizable number of people to whom they are trying to appeal as well as recruit. Consequently, it is logical to conclude that a number (if not all) of the FARC's fighters are in some way displeased with oil extraction and its revenue's distribution. Moreover, FARC has been linked to numerous crimes and attacks against the oil sector and their personnel, another gauge for the motivation mechanism. For instance, FARC was recently linked to the 2004 murder of a PdVSA (the Colombian oil company) engineer. With a reputation for brutality against PdVSA officials, it is clear that FARC is driven by the motivation mechanism.

      In terms of the prolonging effect of natural resources, however, the effects of oil are less apparent. While FARC is known for extorting protection from oil companies and kidnapping their employees, these actions do not represent a major source of revenue for the separatists. Their revenue is largely generated by what some scholars (e.g. Ross 2004b; Collier 2003) consider another kind of resource wealth: drugs, in this case cocaine. According to Collier, when Peru defeated "the Shining Path guerrillas… in the early 1990s, drug production shifted to … the FARC" (2003, 45).

Nonetheless, this study does not consider drug related revenue as demonstrative of the effects of natural resources. So, in light of their drug revenues, FARC's revenue gathering activities against the oil sector do not seem to represent much of their funding and refutes natural resource as a prolonging factor in their conflict.

Indonesia & GAM

The Free Aceh Movement's (GAM) separatist war with Indonesia stemmed from a number of major disagreements, among those was the distribution of revenue generated from the region's natural gas reserves. Perfectly matching the motivation hypothesis, GAM used propaganda claiming that "income flowed out of the region to the center, and outsiders" (Global Security, 2006). These outsiders then came to occupy an unfair percentage of the resource occupations. This struck a chord with the Acehnese people, many of whom felt exploited by the Indonesian government. Underscoring the strength of this sentiment, the gas revenue issue was explicitly included in the 2005 Indonesia-GAM peace agreement that ended some 20 years of fighting. In it, GAM and the Acehnese agreed to remain a part of Indonesia, but with several government concessions toward autonomy. Specifically, one of the main tenets of the agreement entitled the Aceh region to no less than *70% of all revenues generated* from the region's natural gas production. Clearly, the inclusion of such a clause in the two party's peace treaty demonstrates the weight of unfair compensation and employment as a motivating factor in the Indonesia-GAM conflict.

Contrarily, the natural gas of the Aceh region did not seem to extend the length of the conflict in any way. Throughout the conflict, GAM was forced to fund their efforts without a large scale income from natural gas revenues, largely because the reserves were either offshore or controlled by the government and thus safe from capture. Consequently, GAM's resolve or other factors, rather than funding from natural resources, appear to have prolonged the war. Therefore, the prolonging effect is unsupported by this case.

Nigeria & NDPVF

In the Niger Delta, the conflict raging over oil production between Nigerian forces and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) separatists is a keystone example of the motivation mechanism for this study. The Niger Delta region "accounts for over 90% of the nation's oil revenue, and its … minority ethnic groups have borne a disproportionate share of the cost … for which they believe they have not been adequately compensated" (Oyefusi 2008, 540). As a result, the Delta is wracked with violence that ranges from attacks on oilfields to kidnapping and other oil-related violence perpetrated by the NDPVF. In fact, the EIA reports that "militant activity in the Niger Delta … has severely impacted Nigeria's oil production potential by shutting-in an estimated 20 percent of total production" (EIA 2007, Paragraph 1). Accordingly, this conflict validates the motivation mechanism through all measures.

In addition, the Nigeria-NDPVF dispute seems to be somewhat dependent on oil for funding, through "revenues from looting and obstructing oil extraction … as well as kidnap ransoms in the course of executing rebellion" (Oyefusi 2008, 542). With an economy in which 95% percent of total export revenues are generated by the oil sector (EIA, 2008, Paragraph 1), it is undeniable that opportunities abound for such rebel activities. Since evidence is still being uncovered as the conflict continues, it is unclear to what extent the separatists depend on such activities for funding. With that acknowledgment, since evidence indicates that the NDPVF draws some significant amount of funding through exploitation of the oil industry, the prolonging effect is supported.

Sierra Leone & the RUF

Sierra Leone's conflict with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) is the third of four that support both hypotheses. In terms of motivation, the RUF used propaganda to take advantage of over a decade's worth of governmental and elite exploitation of the nation's diamond resources. "Politicians … made a fortune, but the ordinary Sierra Leonean standard of living continued to decline through the 1980s" (Zack-Williams 1999, 148). In turn, this allowed the RUF to recruit from the lower, exploited classes effectively with such propaganda. Soon after the conflict's initiation in 1991, attacks against the diamond fields were carried out. Throughout the fighting, the rebels "continued to hit at targets … occupying for a time the diamond fields of Kono District" (Zack-Williams 1999, 150), the prized diamond producing region of Sierra Leone. Consequently, it is clear that the RUF targeted the diamond production and its revenue distribution from the outset. After their recruitment tactics, it is undeniable that the distribution of diamond revenues fuelled the motivating mechanism for many participants in the RUF's campaign against Sierra Leone.

Equally, the Sierra Leone-RUF conflict exhibits qualities of a prolonging effect derived from diamonds. The fact that "both sides fought to control the diamond fields of Kono, Kenema, and the garrison towns" (Zack-Williams 1999, 158) points to the value the fields held for each side. While it is reasonable to surmise that the sides sought to eliminate their enemy's source of funding, it is even more rational that the sides were fighting for the opportunity to exploit the fields, rather than to deny their foes. With both sides drawing funds from the diamond fields, the RUF's separatist war against Sierra Leone exists as a quality example of the resource curse in warfare.

Sudan & SPLM/A

The last of the supporting cases, the war between Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement Army (SPLM/A), also supports the first mechanism, though in a unique manner. In Sudan, the government has displaced inhabitants of the region's in which oil is concentrated. Of course, this forced abandonment of their homes has inspired incredible resentment. Because of this direct cause, the SPLM/A has "increasingly focused on the oilfields" (Rone 2003, 506) with their attacks. Naturally, the SPLM/A's propaganda is geared to attract those refugees and disgruntled southern Sudanese that have been forced away from the oilfields. Undeniably, the Sudan-SPLM/A conflict demonstrates the motivating mechanism.

On the other hand, the SPLM/A has not been able to draw upon oil revenues as a result of their inherent displacement from the region. The Sudanese government has taken steps to draft and train brigades, specifically to defend the oilfields from attacks. This does not mean that attacks have not been made against the infrastructure or personnel of the oil companies, but the SPLM/A has had difficulty in claiming and maintaining control of the oilfields and their operations. Consequently, it is challenging to argue that the SPLM/A has derived significant funding from the oil sector. Thus, the prolonging effect must be rejected in this case.

Rejecting Cases

Of the following analyses, the first is an indeterminate case, but was included in the 'refuted' category for both hypotheses because incomplete evidence prohibited a logical conclusion of support or its lack from being made. The latter three are grouped into a single section for the sake of brevity as the discussion is based on general information that was inherently necessary to

understand the conflicts. In depth analysis, beyond explaining the rejection of this study's mechanisms, would be unnecessary speculation.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) & BDK[4]

The DRC's "great African war" (Olsson & Fors 2004) was started in 1998 when overflow of the Rwandan Tutsi-Hutu conflict resulted in cross border fighting between the DRC and Rwanda. The conflict quickly pulled a number of nations into the fighting that eventually included Congolese, Zimbabwean, Angolan, and Ugandan involvement among others. This does not include the "multitude of rebel and national armies" that became involved in the conflict, such as the Bundu Dia Kongo (BDK) rebels (Olsson & Fors 2004, 321). However, with so many factions involved, and the inherent confusion of warfare, scholars have yet to fully untangle the mess of motives. Hence, BDK's involvement in the conflict is difficult to construe as an example of the motivation mechanism.

Similarly, this case is too convoluted to either support or reject the hypotheses with any level of confidence, but in Olsson & Fors's words from their 2004 study, "[n]atural resource extraction … fuelled the continuation of the conflict in Congo" (326). This is particularly true of the DRC, "a country with conditions for … huge mineral exploitation" (Collier 2003) that allowed it to feed the conflict. Unfortunately, it is unclear to what extent any specific separatist factions have benefited from the diamonds of the DRC, but—due to lack of evidence—it must be assumed that they did not. Nevertheless, as put by Olsson & Fors (2004), Congolese diamonds funded the DRC's war and perhaps the Ugandan and Rwandan involvement through illicit exports (demonstrated by a spike in diamond exports after these nations entered the conflict, without having significant diamond reserves). Thus, information emerging about the recently concluded conflict (2007 according to the ACD) may eventually reveal funding for separatist factions via diamonds. Hence, it would be unjustified to claim support for the prolonging effect and must be presumed nonexistent.

Azerbaijan & the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh; Indonesia & East Timor; Myanmar & SSA

All three of these cases were deemed to lack evidence that supported the two proposed mechanisms. None of them demonstrated a significant inclination toward violence that targeted resource infrastructure, nor did they promote propaganda aimed at exacerbating ideas of unfair compensation or distribution of revenues. Interestingly though, all three of these cases have achieved a greater level of peace, or at least ceasefire, than was generally observed in the cases above. For instance, East Timor was given complete autonomy by Indonesia in 1995. The Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan pursued peace mediation intermittently between 1991 and 1999 that led to a ceasefire and political discussion of their differences (which do not apparently include oil sector topics). Lastly, perhaps the most volatile case in the entire study, Myanmar and the SSA currently co-exist in a standstill with several other states in the nation. Like several other states, the SSA is being allowed to essentially self-govern without official acknowledgment by the government

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[4] The war in the DRC is incredibly complex with a multitude of involved states and non-state factions. The ACD lists the BDK as the only involved separatist faction, but the BDK does not fulfill this study's 1,000 battle deaths threshold.. However, given the magnitude of the war (some casualty estimates reach into the millions, see Olsson & Fors 2004, 321), I have chosen to overlook this study's required minimum of 1,000 battle deaths to include the BDK because the DRC's war is an excellent example of natural resources prolonging the government's involvement in a conflict without necessarily motivating the participants.

of Myanmar; it is unclear whether the national government intends to release grant Shan state (or any of its other rebellious states) autonomy or not.

So, regardless of their differences, these three cases are all similar in three critical ways. First, they have considerable natural resource reserves and either have an ongoing conflict or have experienced a period of separatist conflict. Second, they do not exhibit any of the qualities of this study's hypotheses. Third, all three have achieved some level of resolution via peaceful, reasonably diplomatic methods. The last point is particularly curious because, while some of their wars have ended, the cases that support this study's hypotheses have only achieved peace by forcing surrender or flight of the opposition. Since these three cases did not support this study's hypothesis and used diplomacy to achieve peace, it appears that some other effect may be occurring outside this study's area of investigation.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, I provided the background and justification for research that investigated how a nation's resource abundance influenced separatist conflicts within those nations. In the subsequent sections, justification of this study's design and case selection was plainly discussed. Following that, general and case by case analyses were provided that would validate several conclusions. First, six of the ten separatist conflicts investigated displayed behavior that supported the first hypothesis, or the "motivation mechanism." This supports Ross' conclusion that separatist conflicts can be instigated, at least partially, by a group that feels it has been unfairly compensated for their labor and resources. In turn, this conclusion indicates a difference between the civil wars that Ross studied with his similar model (from which he concluded that no civil wars were affected by this mechanism; 2004b) and the separatist conflicts in this study. Therefore, it is logical to support the idea that civil and separatist wars are, in fact, affected differently by natural resource abundance.

Second, four of the ten cases were found to not support either hypothesis. However, these observations were nonetheless useful as they revealed an interesting pattern. In those nations that lacked a correlation to either of this study's hypotheses, peace was achieved between the disputing parties via diplomatic, peaceful channels, although Myanmar and the SSA are technically still at war. In contrast, any resolution to the first six cases' conflicts resulted from the elimination, suppression, or dispersal of their opponents through violent means, with the notable exception of the Indonesia-GAM conflict. This curious disparagement provides an excellent opportunity for future research.

Finally, based on this study's generally supportive evidence, I support Ross' conclusion that "resources appear to play a different role in separatist conflicts than in nonseparatist conflicts" (Ross 2004b, 63). This study found similar results as Ross despite use of a stricter definition of resources than Ross employed in his study, which suggests the type of resource is a non-factor in these mechanisms as observed in separatist conflict. With this in mind, this study still leaves several important questions for further research. First, because this study operated on a "most likely" basis, an investigation of the role of resources in all separatist wars in general would be a useful addition to the existing body of knowledge. Second, given the differences between methods of conflict resolution, research into why resources held considerable weight in some cases, but not others, would also contribute significantly to understanding the resource curse. Without such research, the resource curse will remain open to debate.

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