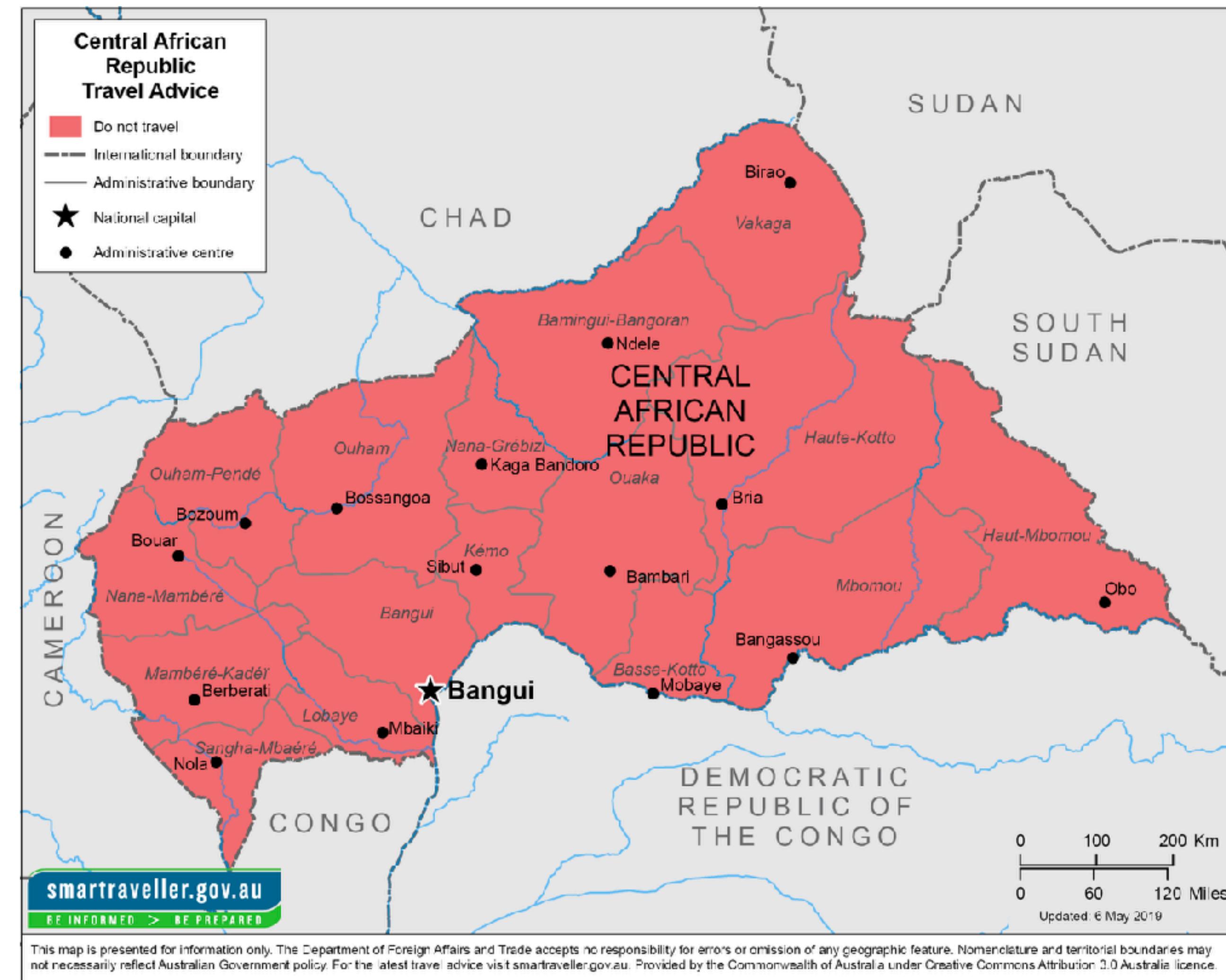


# Poli-416: REVOLUTION & POLITICAL VIOLENCE

DÉDIÉ  
AU GOUVERNEMENT  
de la  
CONFÉDÉRATION GRENADE.  
HOMMAGE de L'AUTEUR

- 
- 1 Why “greed”?
  - 2 The greed and grievance debate
  - 3 Consequences of “lootable” wealth

# Central African Republic



# “New” civil wars

Scholars woke up in the 1990s and thought conflicts looked different:

Many **small** groups, unclearly defined

Seemingly **no ideology**

**No dependence** on local population

Heavily involved in resource extraction, “**looting**”

**Extreme violence**, sexual violence, child soldiers

# Compare CAF to Peru

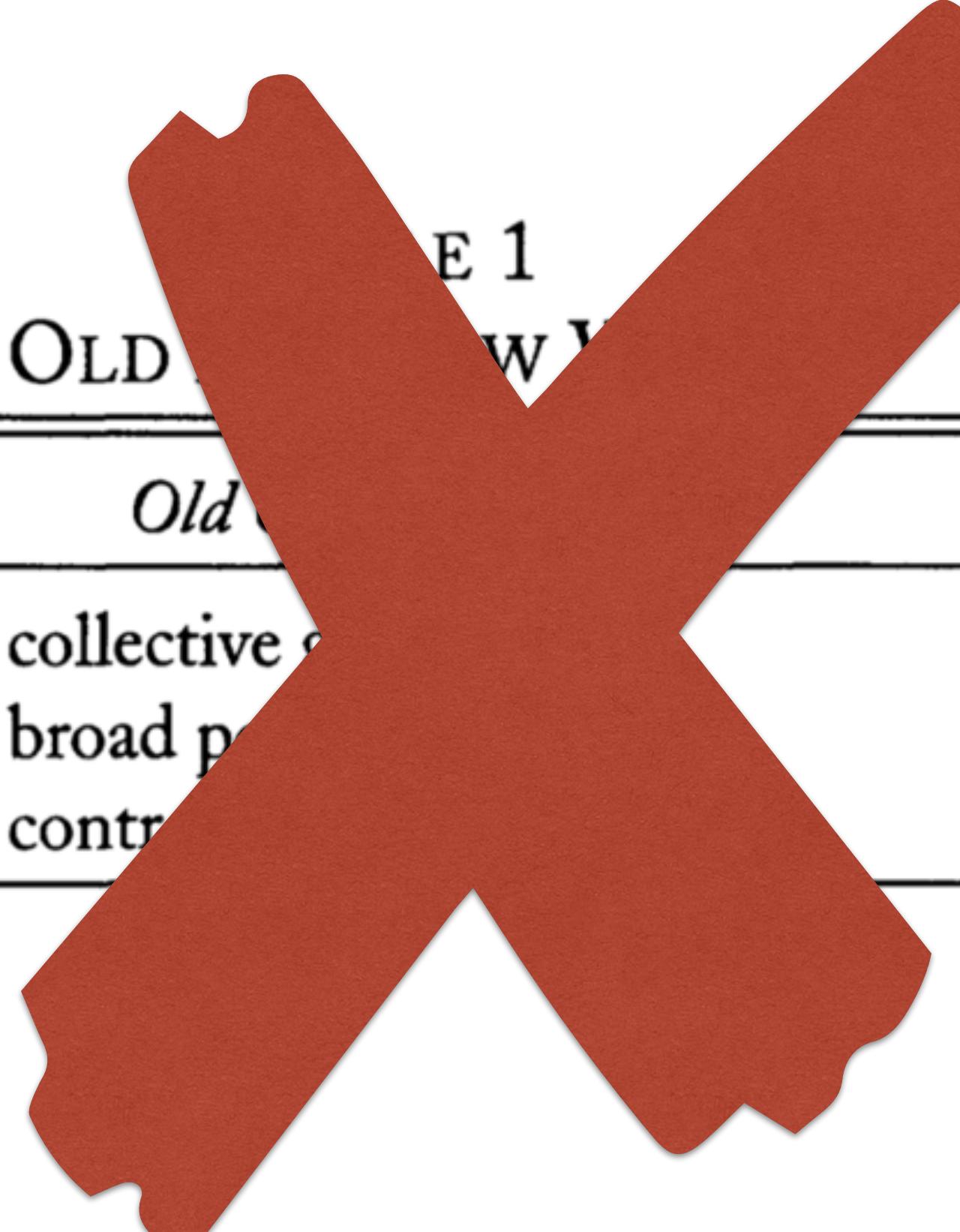


# Change of perspective

**“new” versus “old” civil wars**

**“greed” versus “grievance” debate**

# “New” civil wars?



Old Civil Wars		E 1	OLD	NEW
		<i>Old</i>	<i>New Civil Wars</i>	
Causes & motivation	collective cause		private loot	
Support	broad popular support		lack of popular support	
Violence	contrived violence		gratuitous violence	

# Kalyvas on “new” wars

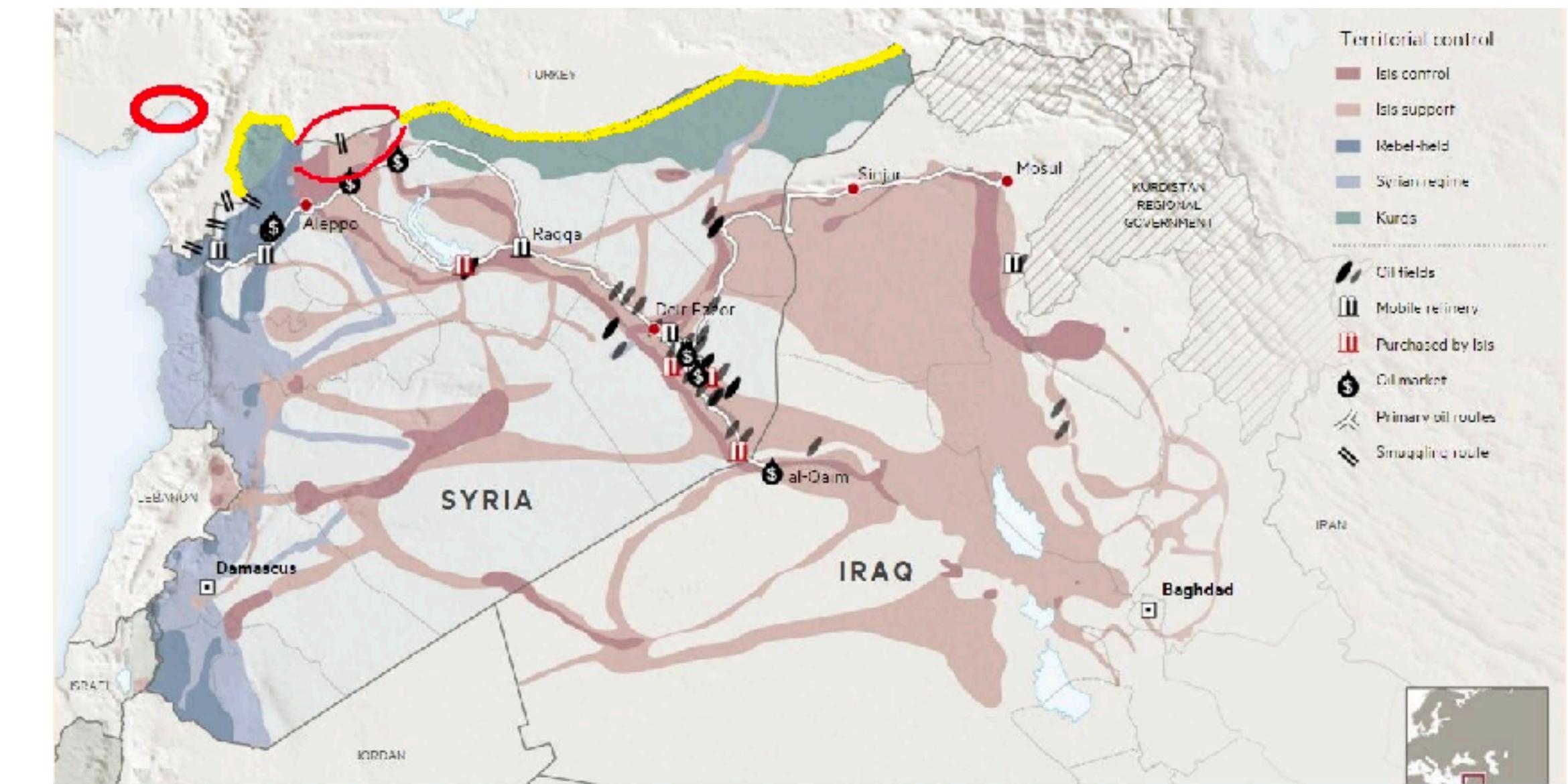
Basically: *there is nothing new under the sun*

There was looting and horror in “old” wars

There is ideological “murkiness” in old wars

There is ideology and collective grievance in “new” wars

# New v. Old



Maybe distinction particularly dead today

# Why the distinction?

We know a lot less about “new” conflicts, more opaque

Exacerbated by “new” wars taking place in Africa, MENA

End of Cold-War —> end of easy, clear-cut “left vs. right” narrative

# The greed-grievance debate

Are rebels (more) driven by **greed** or **grievance** in leading insurrections?

Do **grievances** or **opportunity** better explain where and when conflict happens?

Grievances are **common** but civil wars are **rare**

It is the availability of “**lootable**” resources that make conflict possible

# War as crime

Armed groups are basically **criminal enterprises**



Illegal timber in Cambodia



Oil extraction in Niger Delta



Coca in Colombia

# War as crime

Decision to wage war is a cost-benefit calculation

Civil wars will take place when there is **stuff worth stealing** and the  
**opportunity to steal it**

People organize into groups in order to **capture** those resources, much  
like criminal organizations

# War as crime

Benefits?

In General:

Value of good

Need

Examples:

Gold      Oil?

Diamonds

Timber?

Costs?

Probability of getting caught

Ease of extraction/harvest/production  
“Lootability”

Weak states

Borders

Mountains,  
Rough terrain

Above ground vs.  
subterranean minerals

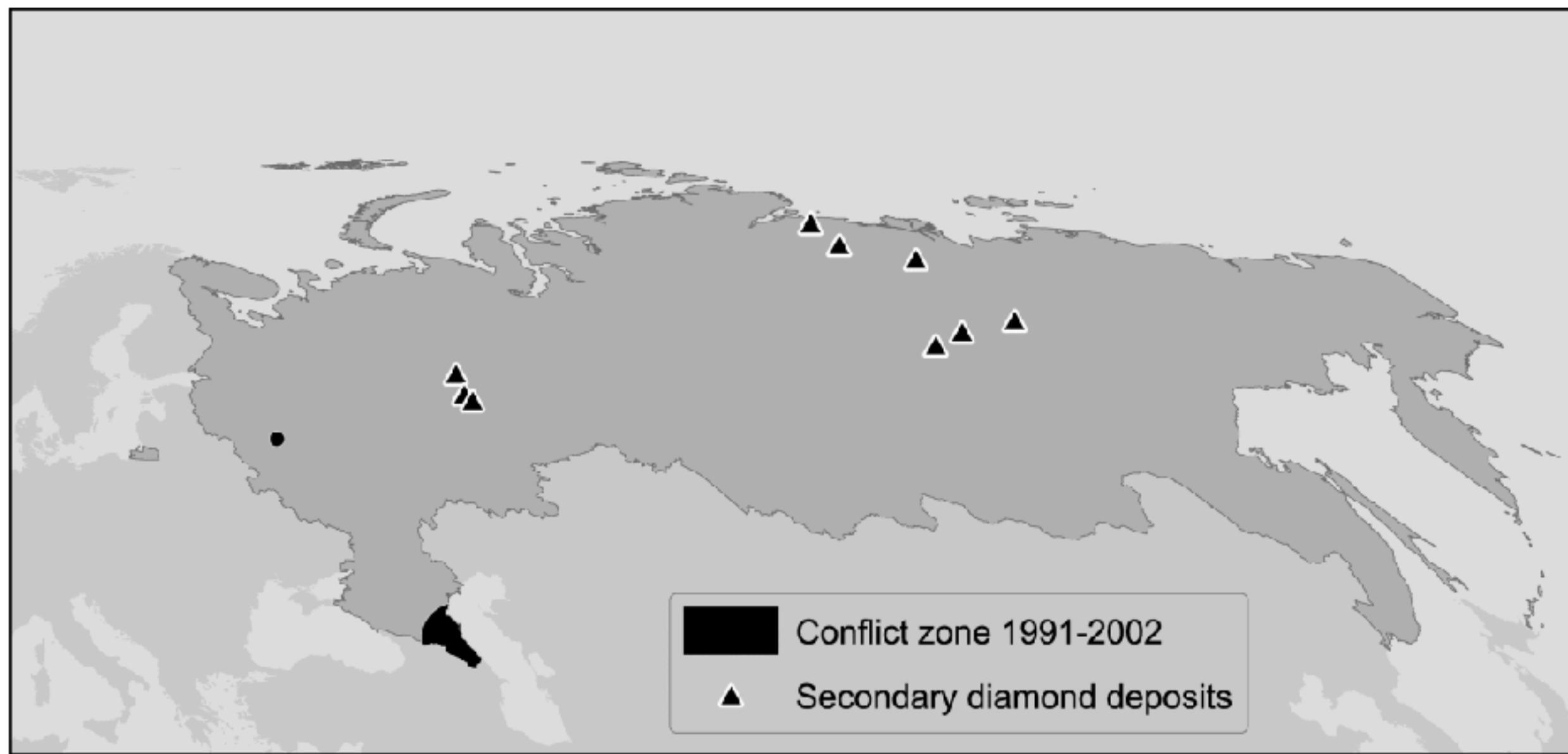
# Value: No one's fighting over wheat

**TABLE 1** Priority resources for collection of spatial datasets

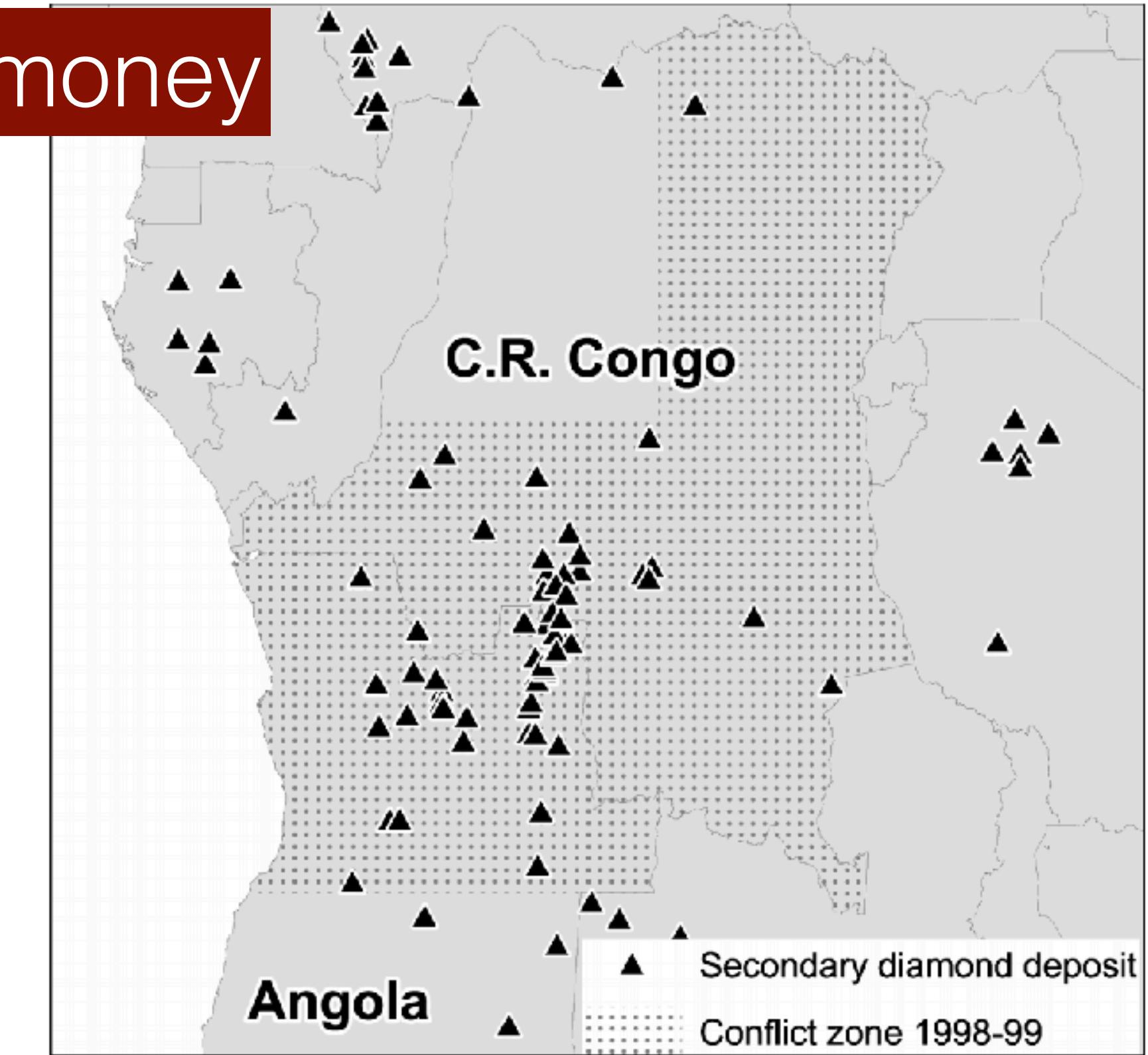
Natural resource	Selection criteria
Gold	Conflict literature, unit value
Diamonds	Conflict literature, unit/lootability of some types value
Gemstones	Conflict literature, unit value, lootability
Chromite (chromium)	Unit value, strategic resource
Tantalite (coltan: tantalum and columbium)	Conflict literature, unit value, strategic resource
Oil	Conflict literature, economic value
Natural gas	Conflict literature
Timber (types not yet specified)	Conflict literature, unit value of some types, lootability
Drugs	Conflict literature, unit value, illicit commodity
Oil pipelines	Conflict literature

# “Lootability”

How easy to convert to money



**FIGURE 4** Conflict and secondary diamond deposits in Russia. Sources: The same as for Figure 3.



**FIGURE 3** Conflicts and secondary diamond deposits 1998–1999 in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Source for the diamond data: Gilmore et al. (2005). For the conflict zones: unpublished data collected by Halvard Buhaug. For an earlier version using circular conflict zones, see Buhaug and Gates (2002) and the conflict data posted on [www.prio.no/cscw/ArmedConflict](http://www.prio.no/cscw/ArmedConflict).

# Opportunity: weak state

## Russian Gangster Jailed for Contract Killings in 1990s 'Aluminum Wars'

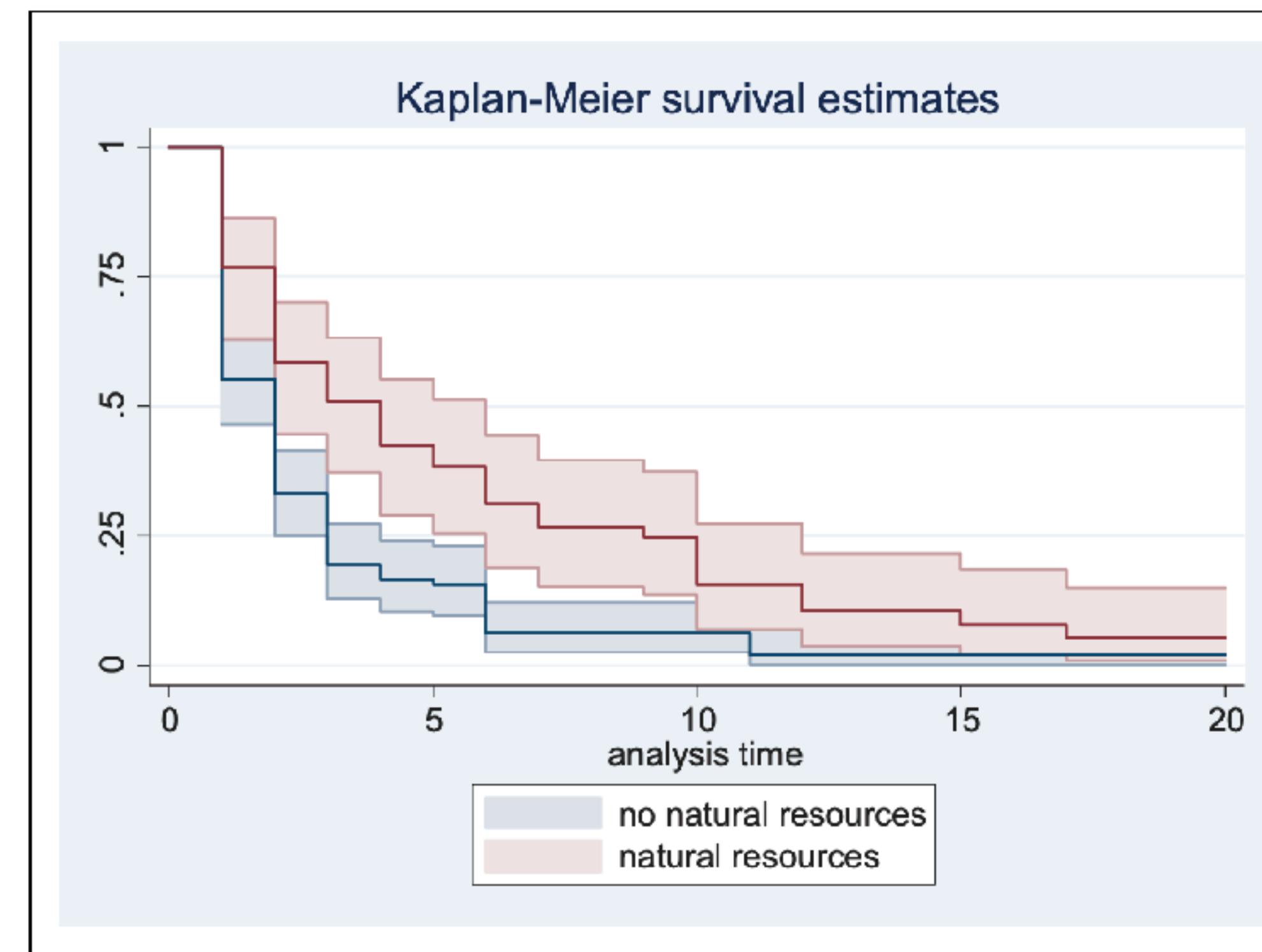
By [Peter Spinella](#)  
April 27, 2015



A weak or collapsing state might make looting viable

# Lootability and duration

Wars in countries with “lootable” resources **last longer**



**Figure I.** Survival estimates of armed conflict by natural resource exploitation, 1990

# Opportunity cost of conflict

Not just a cost-benefit calculation in the abstract,  
but relative to *doing something else*

The other things you could be doing instead of waging war  
(e.g., working) is the **opportunity cost** of conflict

Utility of fighting vs. utility of working

Growth (higher employment, wages) makes war **less likely**  
because the opportunity cost of war increases

# Commodity “shocks”

Sometimes we see sudden changes in international commodities  
(e.g., oil, remember Venezuela in late 1980s?)

What effect do these “shocks” have on conflict?

In the Dude & Vargas piece, we’re looking at changes in price of  
**oil** and **coffee** in Colombia

# Commodity “shocks”

Positive shocks to oil, natural resources —> more conflict

Positive shocks to agriculture —> less conflict

How to combine these findings in one **framework?**

# Shocks and factors of production

Rise in prices:

- Increase amount of stuff available to steal (the looting or "rapacity" story)
- Increase wages in non-conflict sector (the "opportunity cost" story)

Different industries have different **inputs**

- Some rely more on capital (oil, mining, natural gas)
- Others rely more on labor (agriculture, sugar cane, coffee)

The effect of a commodity shock will **depend on the industry**

# Model

Positive shocks to labor-intensive industry

More work/better wages

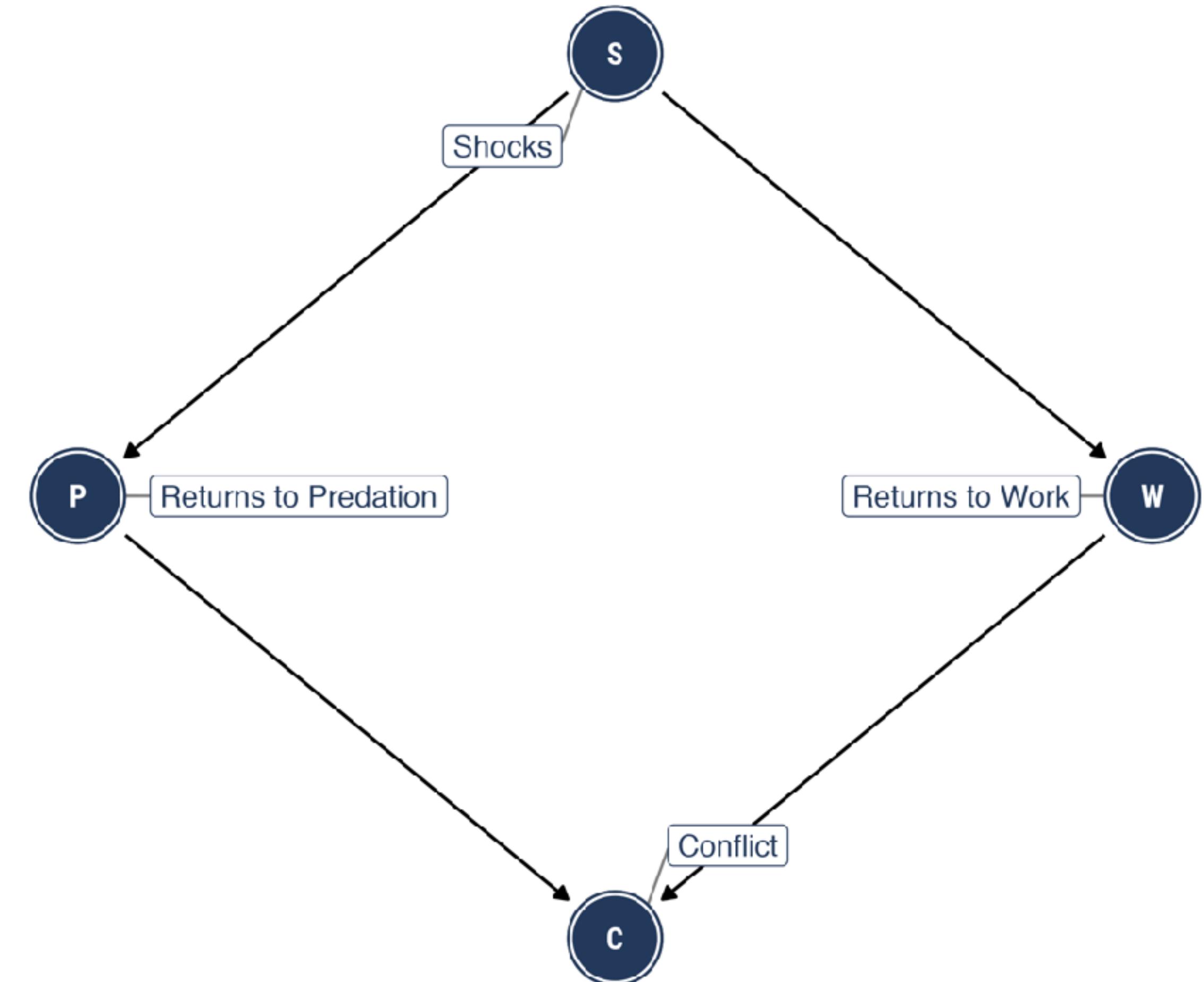
Higher **opportunity cost** of conflict

Less conflict

Positive shocks to capital-intensive industry

More stuff to steal, or **rapacity**

More conflict

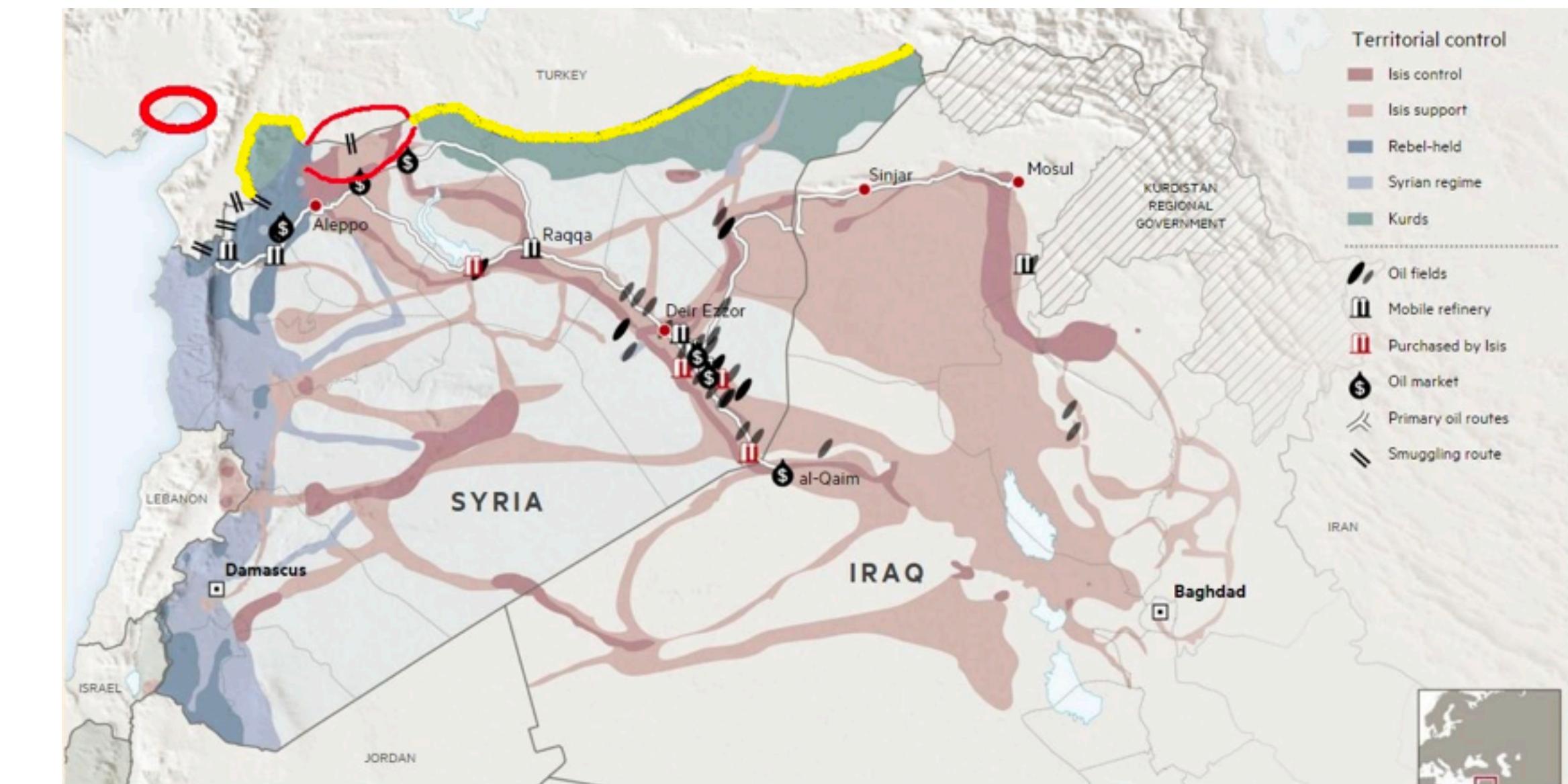


# Rapacity

How do armed groups expropriate oil?



Extortion by ELN



Whole-sale production in ISIL

# Other Consequences: Recruitment

Some groups have **no access** to resources when getting started (e.g., Shining Path)

Others have **lots of resources** (e.g., groups in CAF we just saw)

How do these differences in **endowments** shape how groups grow? And what consequences does this have for how groups behave?

# Jeremy Weinstein: Inside Rebellion

Endowments?

Broke

Moneyed

Offer?

“Promise” of success

Payment

Candidates?

Few recruits,  
Ideological commitments

Many recruits,  
“opportunists”

Training?

Invest heavily in vouching,  
Costly induction

No need to invest

Outcome?

Depend on locals,  
“disciplined” behavior

Unconstrained,  
Violent

# Resources and violence

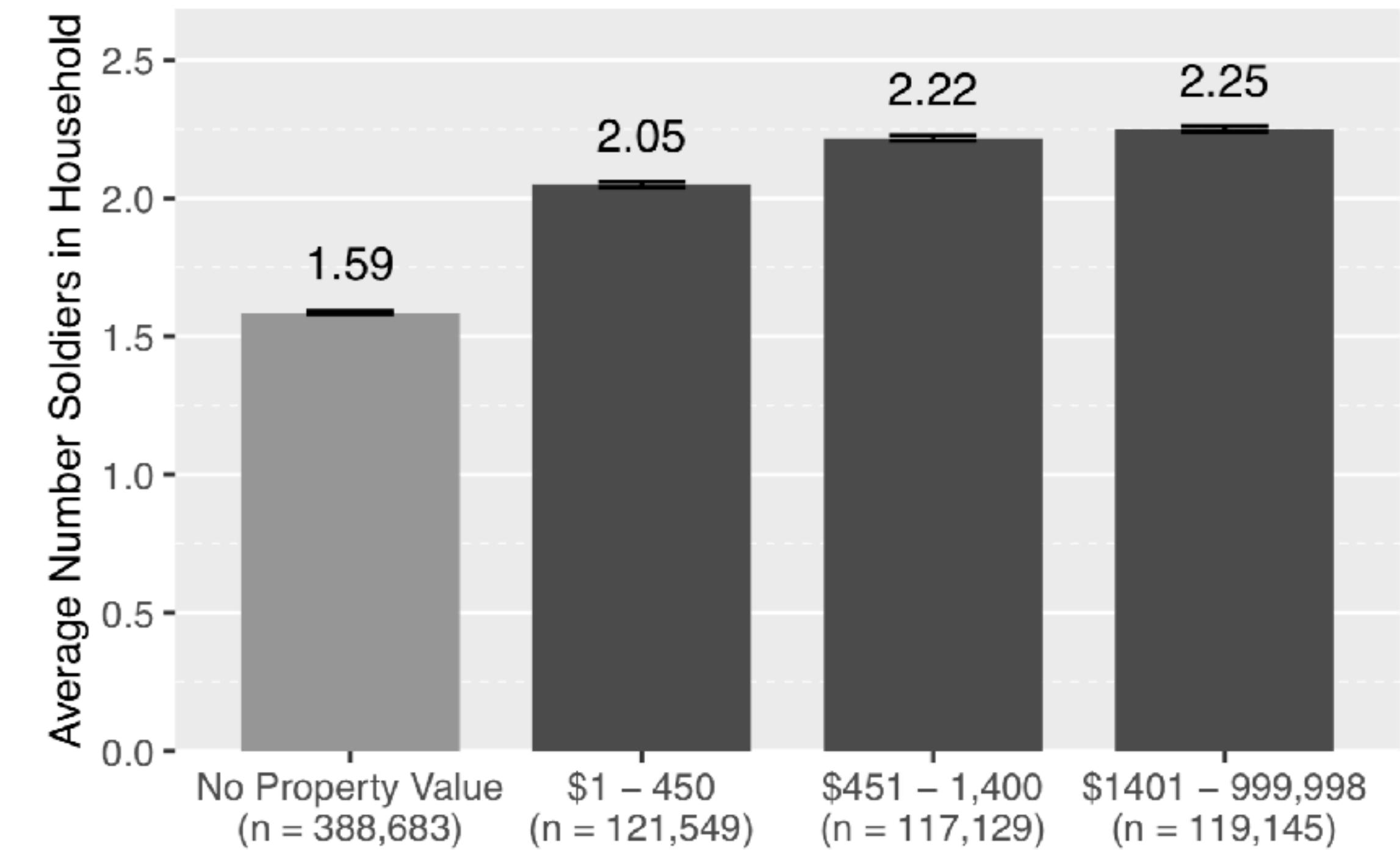
The way in which access to natural resources produces worse rebel groups is called the **resource curse**

# Back to the debate

How do we *really* know whether groups driven by greed or grievance?

Huff et al (2019) find **wealthier** whites more likely to join Confederacy, even among **lottery winners** (why lotto?)

Is this a “greed” story? Why not cut your losses? What is probability you help the war effort?



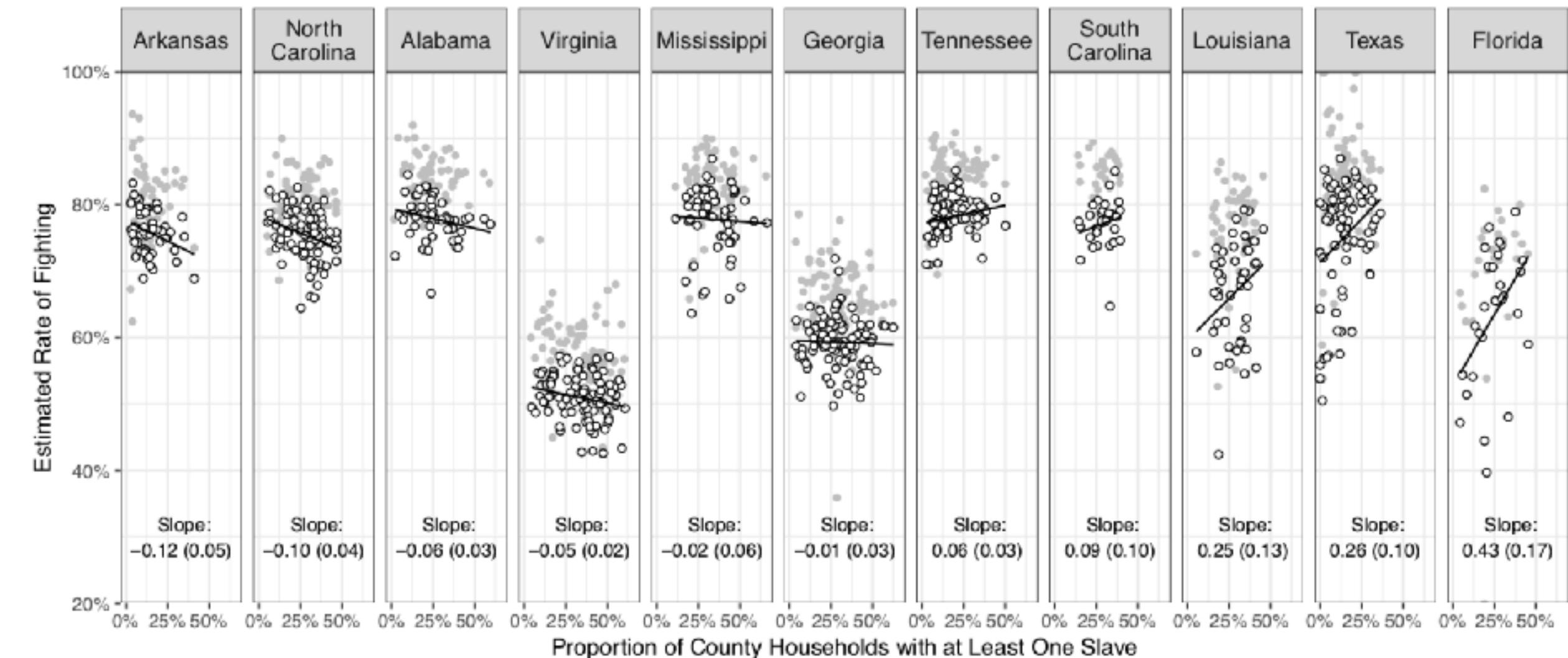
# The confederacy

## The Cornerstone Speech

*[I]ts foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. Our confederacy is founded upon principles in strict conformity with these laws. This stone which was rejected by the first builders "is become the chief of the corner"—the real "corner-stone"—in our new edifice.*

What do these correlations show us?

What are some examples of this?



# Back to the debate

What if looting is “justifiable”?



e.g., group “involvement” in drug trade is often just extortion  
(though it can snowball to more)

What if grievances are *about* resources?



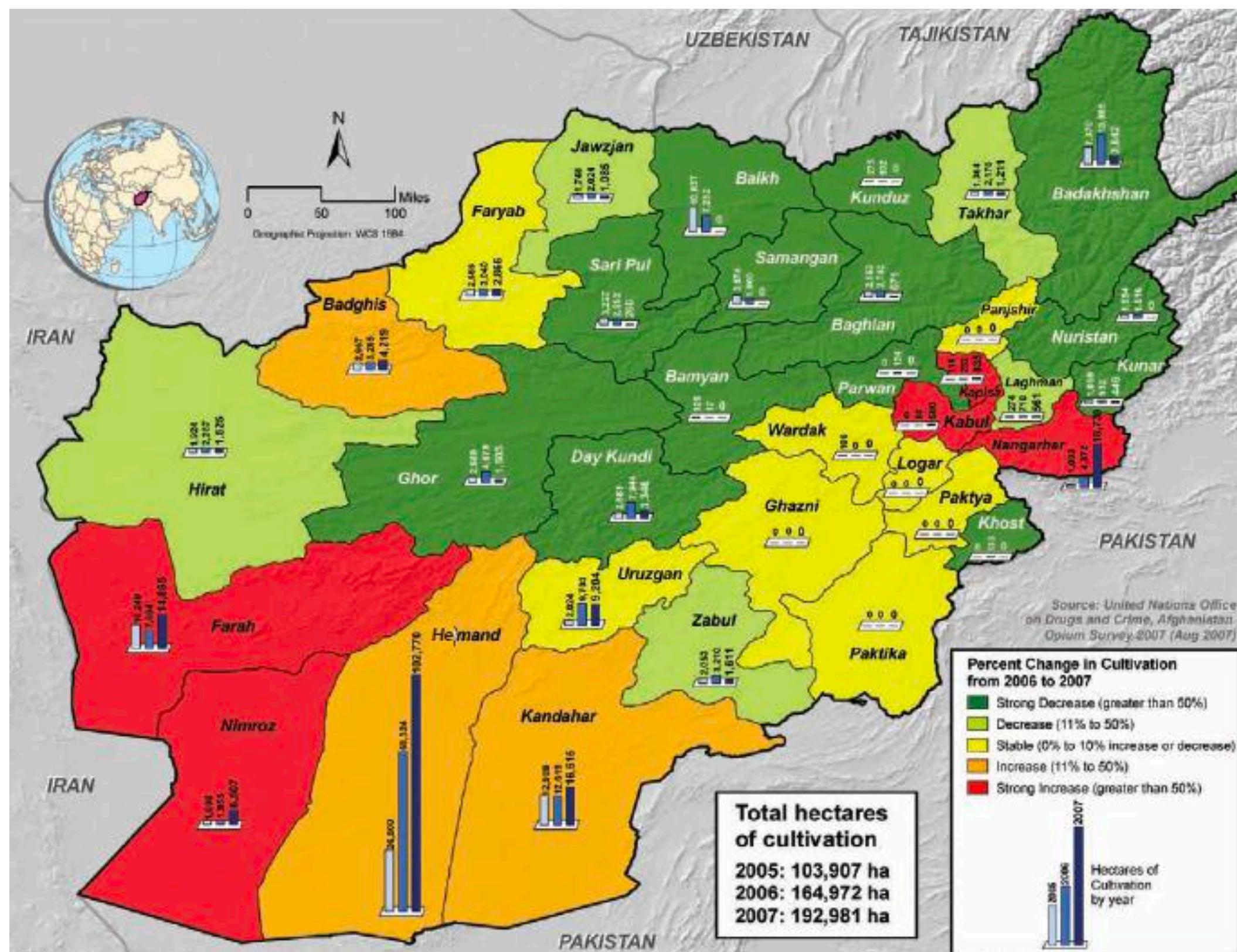
Militant groups in Niger Delta belong to persecuted minority

# Taliban and the opium trade

Afghanistan one of the world's main sources of illicit heroin supply

In July 2000, Mullah Omar calls for a full ban on opium production

heroin market. The result of the Taliban law enforcement action was a net 65% reduction global potential opium/heroin production from the 2001 harvest. Hence, this is arguably the most effective drug control enforcement action of modern times.



# Taliban and the opium trade

Groups also sometimes forgo easy  
money

Why?

Foundational principles

Appeal to international community

???

# All this to say...

It's complicated:

Lootable resources make war possible

But probably not a **sufficient**  
condition for war

Groups also make “non-economic” or  
unprofitable choices all the time

The **type** of resources groups have  
access to shape how they behave