

GV217 - Conflict Analysis

University of Essex - Department of Government

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Week 21 – 21 February, 2020

Today's session

1. Environmental causes of conflicts
2. Assignment 2 - Q&A

Environmental causes of conflicts

How do environmental factors explain the onset of conflict?

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- Contamination, destruction and resource competition caused by **extractive industries** (such as oil, mining) or **industrialized agriculture** (such as soy production)
- Causes and consequences of **climate change** such as droughts, melting of glaciers, floods adaptation, migrations (very recent theme)

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18–19th century debate on resource scarcity and population growth.

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David Ricardo:

- A free-market system will automatically provide an optimal allocation of resources (Say's law) by relying on prices
- Technological change will help the market attain efficiency
- Stability in resource allocations will be achieved → political economy as a dead science, once perfect allocation is achieved.

Environmental factors and conflicts: two views

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Environmental factors and conflicts: two views

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Do you remember what is the hypothesis?

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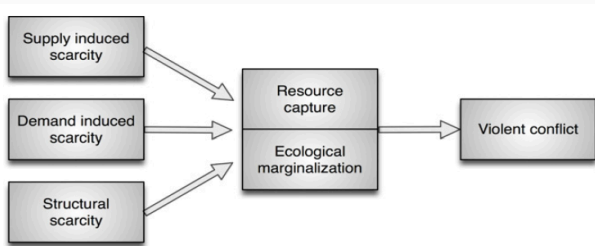


Figure 1. Environmental scarcity and violent conflict.

Source: Bernauer et al. (2012)

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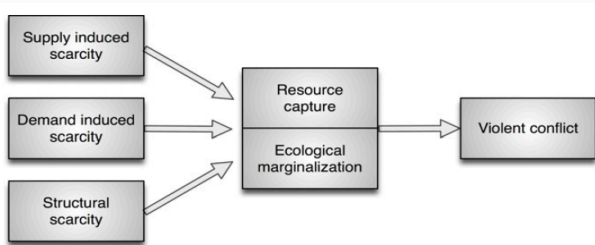


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How could this resource pessimistic view be criticized?

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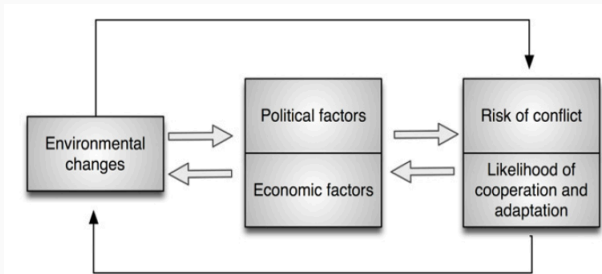


Figure 2. Indirect effects of environmental changes on conflict and cooperation.

Source: Bernauer et al. (2012)

Today's exercise: The Darfur conflict

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Get in groups of 3-4, watch **this video**, read the handout and discuss:

- Evidence for climate as a cause of conflict?
- Evidence for other causes of conflict?
- Are the Neo-Malthusians or Cornucopians right?

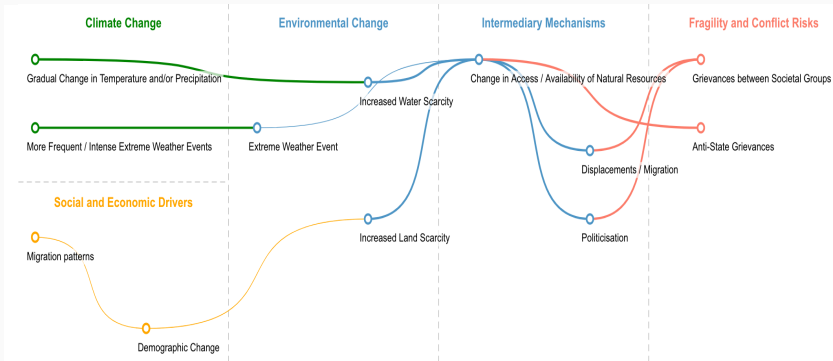
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- Climate variability in the Sahel has arguably played an important role in pitting different groups against one another and against the Government of Sudan.
- The impact of climatic changes in Darfur cannot fully be understood without acknowledging the fundamental imbalances in Sudan's political economy, the profoundly destabilizing effect of Arab-African racial tensions and the erosion of customary land management institutions.

How do environmental factors contribute to conflicts?



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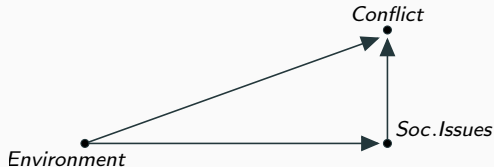


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Questions?

All clear? More questions?
See you next week!