

# **POLI 120N: Contention and Conflict in Africa**

## **Professor Adida**

**Explaining civil conflict: economic explanations**

# Recap

- Discredited ethnic hatred explanation for war
- IR scholars explain conflict instead as state failure or weakness creating a world of anarchy that makes conflict more likely
- Alternatively, conflict can be explained as the result of economic factors

# Early economic explanations



World Economic Forum.Org 2004

Samuel Huntington



American Academy of Political and Social Science 2000

Ted Gurr

# Early economic explanations

Huntington: Modernization + Weak institutions → Violence

Gurr: Modernization + Relative deprivation → Violence

# But grievances are everywhere

- Rebellion is risky
- Rebel movement needs
  - motivated participants
  - some form of organization
- In other words, rebel movements suffer from a collective action problem, which require resources to overcome
- Question then becomes: what are those resources?

# Explanations of civil war

Motivations “Grievance”	Opportunities “Greed”
What <u>makes</u> people want to rebel	What <u>facilitates</u> rebellion
Push factors	Pull factors
Example: poverty	Example: financings

Q: Which of the following is an example of a greed explanation for civil conflict?



- a. Rebel groups use diamonds to recruit fighters
- b. Communities with natural-resource endowments are poorer and aggrieved by displacement, inequality, and corruption, and more likely to rebel

# Systematic tests

- ✓ Natural resources
- ✓ Income and male school enrollment
- ✓ Ethnic fractionalization/Ethnic dominance
- ✓ Political rights
- ✓ Mountainous terrain
- ✓ Diaspora funding



Figure 2a: *Probability of Civil War at Low/High Levels of Political Rights and Variable Ethno-linguistic Fractionalisation*

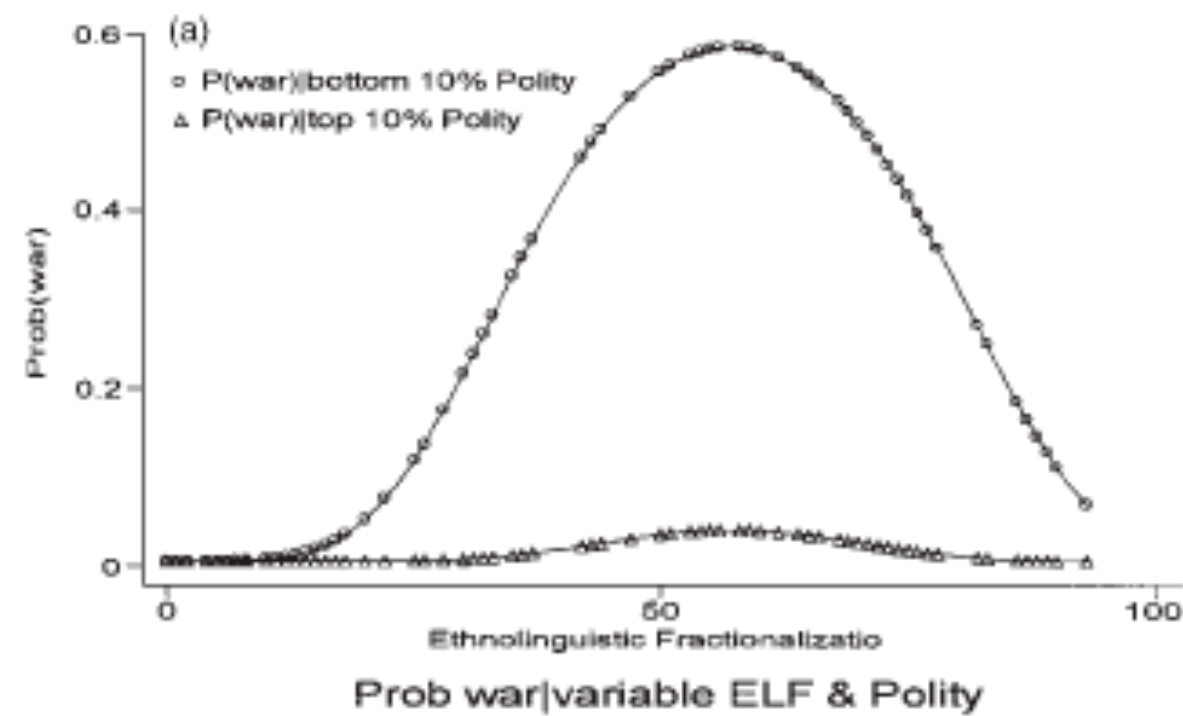
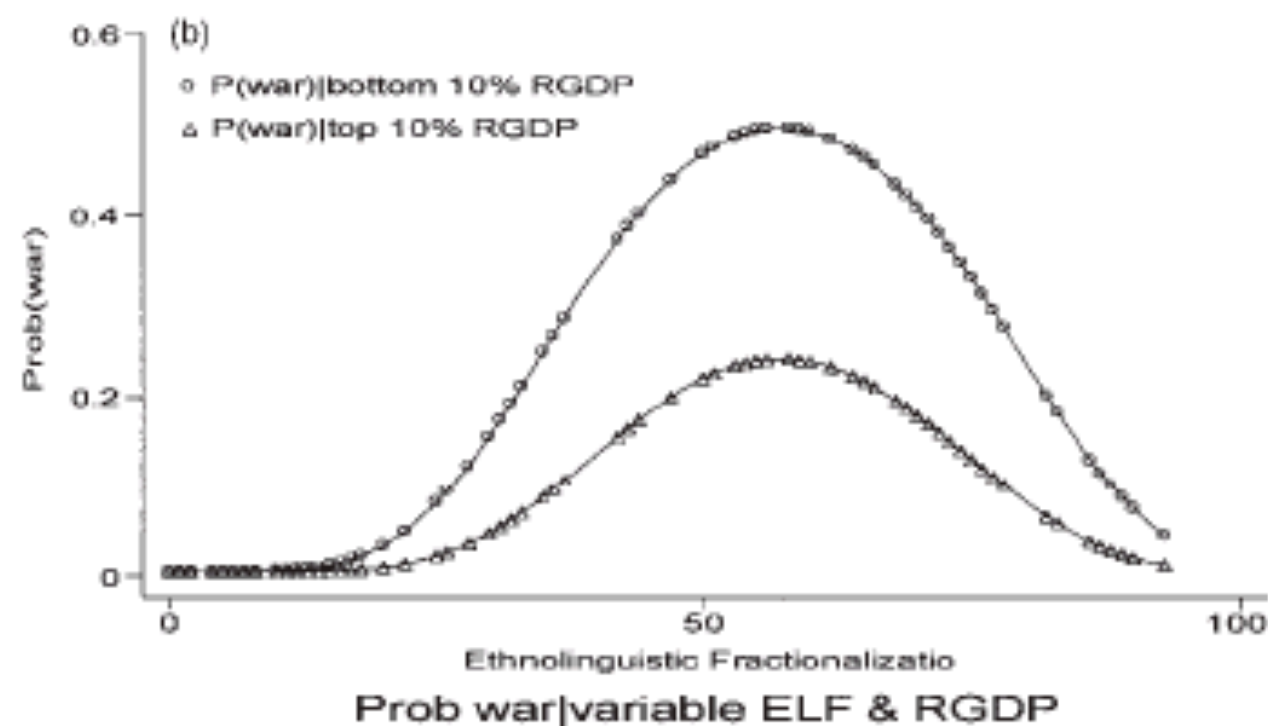



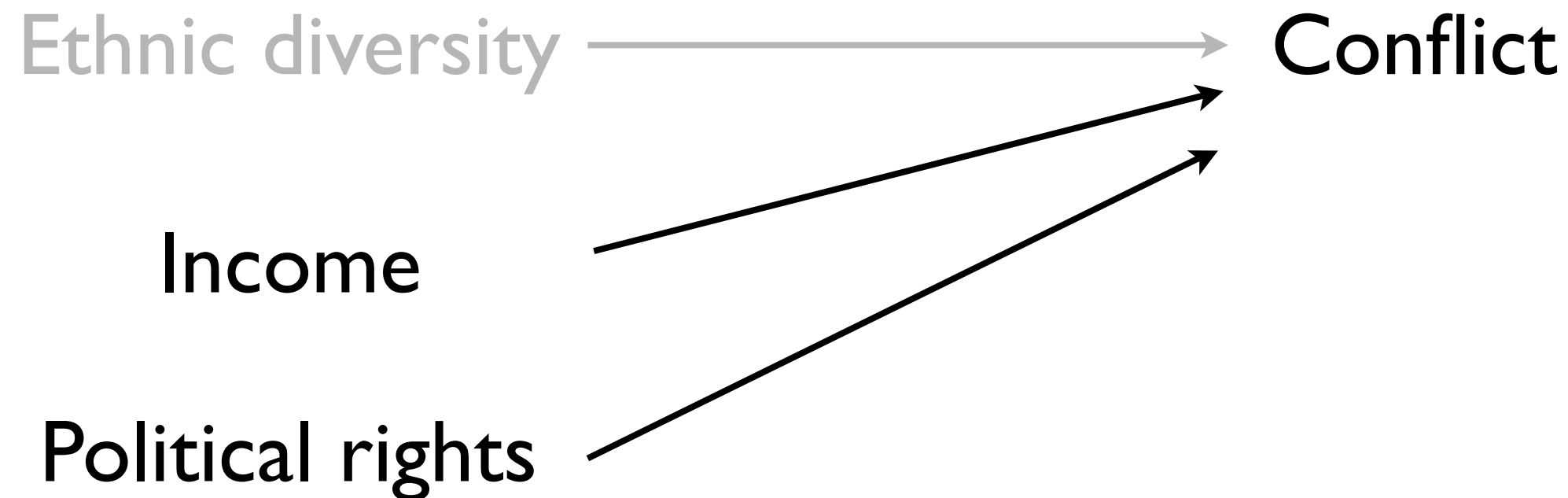
Figure 2b: *Probability of Civil War at Low/High Levels of Income and Variable Ethno-linguistic Fractionalisation*



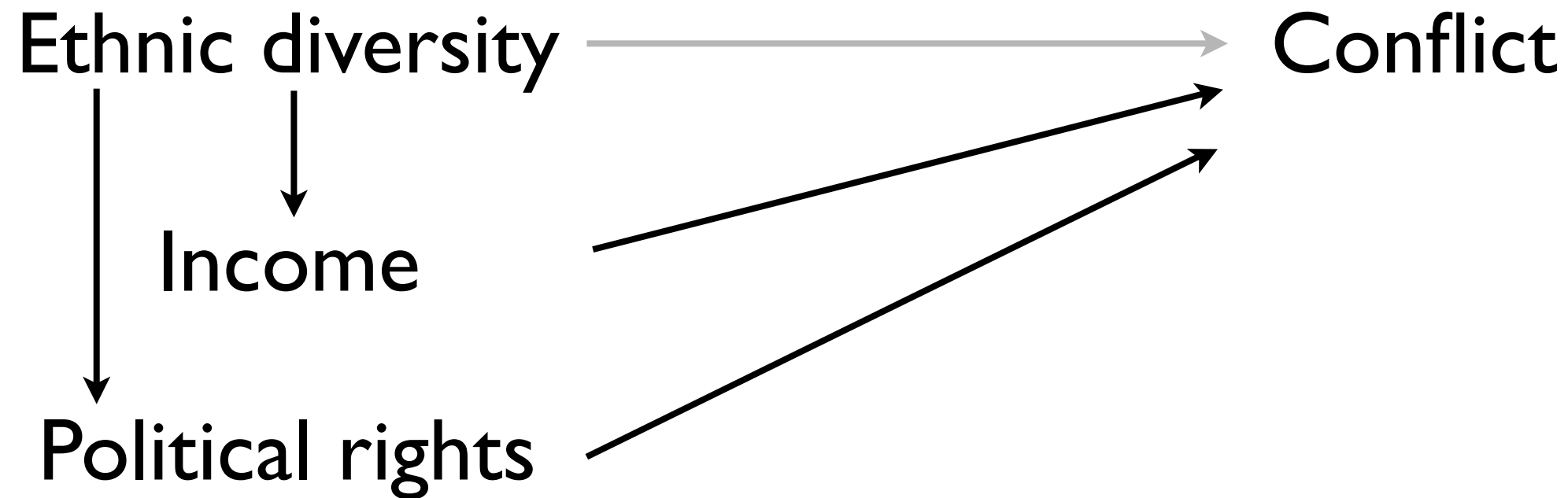
# No direct effect

Ethnic diversity  Conflict

# No direct effect



# But an indirect one?



Q: True or False, ethnic diversity has no direct effect on civil conflict.



- a. True
- b. False

# Herbst's critique

## I. Combination of Factors

- Economic rewards
- Political indoctrination
- Coercion
- Ethnic loyalty

## 2. Greed/Grievance distinction

- Political ideology not merely a grievance story, but a resource
- The strength of the State will determine whether rebels rely on greed or grievance

# The resource curse

Evidence of a positive correlation between lootable resources and conflict. Why?



Philip Spagnoli

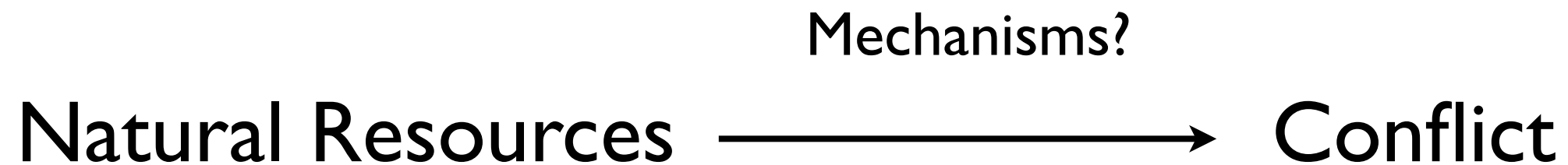
Natural gas from oil field in Nigeria



Eric Feferberg/AFP/Getty Images

Mining in DRC

# Ambiguous mechanism





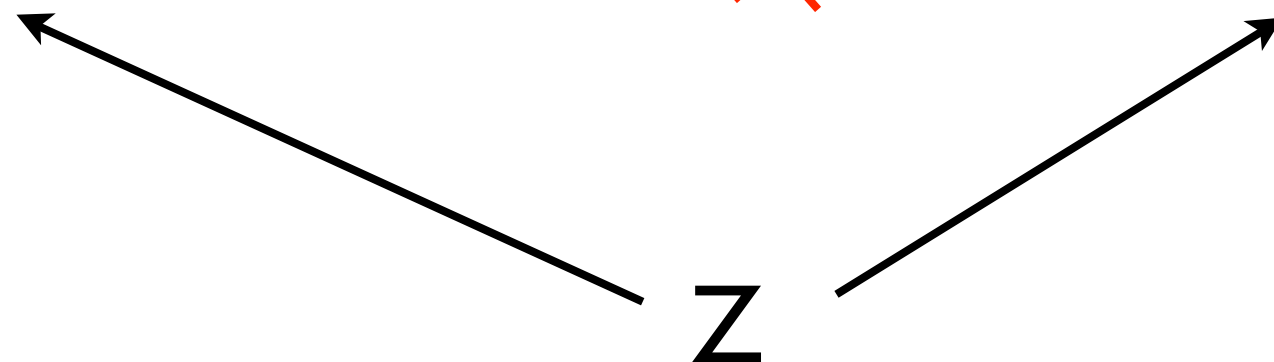
# Why study mechanisms?

## Reason I: Spuriousness

Natural Resources  $\longrightarrow$  Conflict

Natural Resources  $\longleftarrow$  Conflict

Natural Resources  $\longleftrightarrow$  Conflict



# Why study mechanisms?

## Reason 2: Elucidate disagreements

- Which resources matter?
- All agricultural commodities?
- Only mineral resources like oil and diamonds?
- Illicit resources like drugs?

# Why study mechanisms?

## Reason 3: Policy recommendations

- Which policy recommendation?
- Compensations for local communities?
- Building state capacity?
- Destroying the rebels' resources?

# Studying the mechanisms: Greed?

- Looting to fund startup costs
- Incentives to start own State
- Weak State

# An example



Sierra Leone, 1991-2002

USAID

# Studying the mechanisms: Grievances?

- Inadequate compensation

# An example



AP



[tuaregcultureandnews.blogspot.com](http://tuaregcultureandnews.blogspot.com)

# Studying the mechanisms: Results

- ✓ Greed

- ✓ incentives for separatism

- ✓ foreign intervention

- ✓ sell future exploitation rights

- ✓ state weakness

- ✓ Grievances

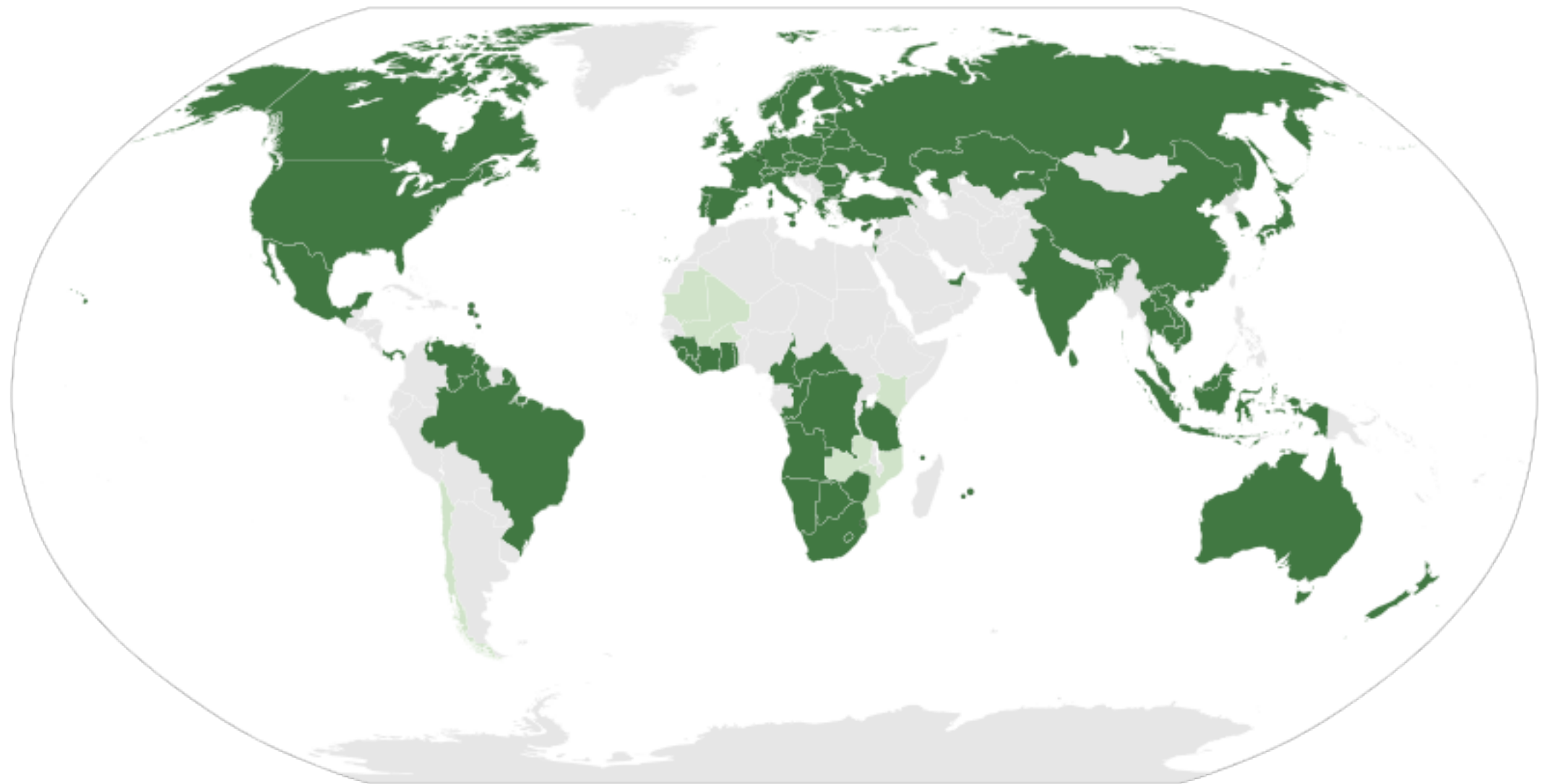


# Other aspects of natural resource curse

- Duration of conflict (Fearon, Ross)
- Natural resources exacerbate rebel violence (Weinstein); conflict intensity (Ross)
- Natural resources hurt post-conflict recovery (Girod)

# Policy Recommendations?

- Improving transparency and accountability
- Examples: Kimberley Process, EITI



Participants in Kimberley Process

# Unintended consequences



[humanevents.com](http://humanevents.com)

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