



## Question

How does the type or nature of natural resources alter territorial conflict?

## Theory

- **Resources:** The centrality of a natural resource to a territorial claim raises the salience of the claim as well as the inherent value of the territory under contention, increasing conflict
- **Renewable vs Non-renewable:** Non-renewable resources are zero sum, encouraging conflict and making compromise difficult. Renewable resources need cooperation to prevent “tragedy of the commons,” states avoid destruction and overexploitation.
- **Resource type:** Energy, luxury goods increase conflict due to higher value and security concerns. Timber, food decrease conflict due to concerns of proper exploitation and to avoid destruction.

## Hypotheses

- H1 (resources):** Claims with resources are more likely to experience armed conflict.
- H2 (renewability):** Claims with non-renewable resources are more likely to experience armed conflict than those with only renewable.
- H3 (non-renewable resource types):** Claims to territory with mineral, energy, and luxury resources are more likely to experience armed conflict.
- H4 (renewable resource types):** Claims to territory with timber, food production, and cash crops are less likely to experience armed conflict.

## Research Design

- ICOW territorial claims (global, 1816-2001)
- DV: outbreak of MID over the issue in any given year (any MID, fatal MIDs only).
- Control for joint democracy, claim salience, recent conflict over claim, relative capabilities.

## Logit Analysis: Probability of MID in given year

Variable	Any MID	Fatal MID
<i>Model 1: Resources</i>		
Resource(s)	<b>0.25 (0.79)**</b>	-0.05 (0.13)
Other salience	0.18 (0.02)***	0.33 (0.03)***
Recent conflict	0.77 (0.04)***	0.49 (0.08)***
Challenger cap.s	0.57 (0.11)***	0.53 (0.17)***
Joint democracy	-0.51 (0.18)**	-0.71 (0.44)
N: 13,166; $X^2 = 635.8$ (5 d.f., $p < .001$ )		
<i>Model 2: Renewability</i>		
Only renewable	-0.11 (0.99)	0.07 (0.16)
Only non-renewable	<b>0.24 (0.10)**</b>	-0.05 (0.19)
Both	<b>0.44 (0.10)***</b>	<b>-0.54 (0.20)***</b>
N: 13,166; $X^2 = 600.26$ (7 d.f., $p < .001$ )		
<i>Model 3: Resource Types</i>		
Mineral resources	-0.18 (0.12)	-0.19 (0.19)
Energy resources	<b>0.29 (0.09)**</b>	<b>-0.33 (0.16)**</b>
Luxury resources	0.09 (0.15)	<b>0.51 (0.19)**</b>
Timber	<b>-0.37 (0.16)**</b>	<b>-0.72 (0.27)**</b>
Food production	0.05 (0.09)	<b>-0.35 (0.18)**</b>
Cash crops	-0.15 (0.09)	0.51 (0.48)
N: 13,127; $X^2 = 680.12$ (10 d.f., $p < .001$ )		
* $p < .10$ , ** $p < .05$ , *** $p < .01$		

## Marginal Impact of Key Variables

- Claim includes any resource(s):
  - Yes: .055 any .015 fatal
  - No: .043 .016
- Renewability of resource(s):
  - Non-renew: .058 any .018 fatal
  - Renew: .041 .016
  - Both: .070 .010
- Specific resource types:
  - Non-renewable:*
    - Mineral: .040 any .015 fatal
    - Energy: .063 .013
    - Luxury: .052 .030
  - Renewable:*
    - Timber: .033 any .009 fatal
    - Food: .050 .013
    - Cash crops: .041 .030

## Discussion

- **Renewability:** Non-renewable resources produce more MIDs than renewable; conflict escalation unaffected. States react to salience but are hesitant to damage potential gains from resources.
- **Resource Type:** Resources valued for security, military application produce more conflict (energy). Potentially overexploited resources see less conflict (timber).

## Future Extensions:

- Does econ. development or era affect conflict propensity of certain resources?
- Resources and peaceful negotiations
- Different effects on initiation/escalation?
- Differences between specific resources in each category? (e.g. oil vs. coal?)