

Greed versus Grievance in Contemporary Civil Wars in Africa

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Abstract

Civil wars, as intrastate conflicts, play a significant role in contemporary debates within peace and conflict studies. The end of the Cold War marked a notable increase in the prevalence of these wars, particularly in the global south. While academic scholars have highlighted the destructive nature and human impacts of these conflicts, they have also developed theories to explain their underlying causes. One prominent theory is the “Greed and Grievance” theory, in which Collier and Hoeffler investigate whether civil wars arise from motivations rooted in greed or grievances. Although various theories have been employed to analyze post-Cold War civil wars, there is an ongoing debate about the relevance of theories like greed and grievance in explaining contemporary conflicts. This study uses the Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, Sudan and Libya as case studies to explore this issue due to the availability of data from these four countries. These conflicts have been widely documented by international organisations such as the United Nations, African Union and International Non-governmental Organisations. Additionally, all four cases involve active or recent conflicts, making the research timely and relevant for policy discussions. We contend that greed and grievance theory continues to be pertinent in understanding modern civil wars.

Keywords: Civil Wars, Greed and Grievance, Cold War, Contemporary Armed Conflicts.

Introduction

War can be devastating and catastrophic, often resulting in unimaginable suffering for countless civilians. In addition to the tragic loss of innocent lives, conflicts can cause long-term damage to infrastructure, environmental destruction, disruptions to economic activities, negative impacts on social life, and psychological trauma for many individuals (Murshed, 2007, p.2). Between 1945 and 1999, 127 civil wars occurred in seventy-three countries, leading to 16.2 million battle deaths and displacing over fifty million people (Taydas et al., 2011, p.2627). Moreover, civil unrest in one nation can pose regional security threats, particularly to neighboring countries. A notable example of this is the conflict that began in Liberia in 1989, which spilled over into Sierra Leone in 1991.

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, numerous regions across the globe, particularly in the Global South, experienced significant armed and civil conflicts. For instance, Sierra Leone and Liberia experienced eleven and fourteen years of civil conflict, respectively (Bangura, 2016, p.39). Today, countries like the Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, and Sudan are witnessing similar trajectories, with even more devastating consequences. The underlying causes of many of these conflicts have been framed within the "Greed and Grievance" debate.

The civil wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, Cambodia, and Rwanda emerged in the immediate post-Cold War context. The change in conflict dynamics today raises the question of whether this theory framework is still relevant to contemporary civil wars and armed conflicts in places such as the CAR, Sudan, and South Sudan. We argued that the Greed and grievance theory remains relevant in explaining the onset of contemporary civil wars. Consequently, this paper examines the applicability of the "greed" and "grievance" theory in explaining the emergence of today's civil wars using the CAR, South Sudan, Libya and the ongoing conflict in Sudan as case studies. The research aims to contribute to various areas of International Relations. For instance, it will explore policy implications that could inform peacebuilding strategies to determine whether economic incentives, such as resource sharing, or political buy-ins, like power sharing, are the most effective mechanisms for conflict resolution. Moreover, it can contribute to theoretical debates regarding whether modern civil wars are mainly driven by greed (economic interests, warlordism) or grievances (ethnic, political, and historical injustices).

First, we introduced the article, establishing a foundation for the subsequent discussion. Next, we delved into the "Greed" and "Grievance" theory, contextualizing it

Greed versus Grievance in Contemporary Civil Wars in Africa

within conflict situations of the immediate post-Cold War era. In the third section, we evaluated the theory in light of various critical reviews. The fourth section of the paper explored the relevance of the theory to contemporary civil conflicts, utilizing the case studies above. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the key arguments presented throughout the paper.

1. The “Greed” versus “Grievance” Theory: An Overview

The main proponents of the Greed and Grievance theory, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, contend that the primary drivers of conflict stem from two contrasting motives: “greed” and “grievance.” The greed perspective posits that conflicts are largely fueled by self-serving or selfish interests, whereas the grievance approach attributes political actions to feelings of discontent and frustration. Firstly, they examined the concept of rebellion, suggesting that it tends to arise when grievances reach a critical threshold, prompting individuals to engage in violent protest. Rebellion may be motivated by a desire to attain wealth through the illicit capture of resources (greed). Secondly, they explored the funding sources for these rebellions, identifying three common avenues: the extortion of natural resources, donations from diasporas, and financial support from adversarial governments. Thirdly, they addressed the notion of proxying objective grievances, identifying four measurable indicators of grievance: ethnic or religious animosity, political repression, political exclusion, and economic inequality. Lastly, they considered scale effects, examining factors such as primary commodity exports, income levels, and school enrollment, which they analyzed in relation to the size of the country (Collier and Hoeffler, 1990).

Collier and Hoeffler (1990) assert that the explanations they provide may represent the primary causes of conflicts rooted in greed and grievance. This framework can be observed in the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the 1990s. In both instances, the theories of greed versus grievance proposed by Collier and Hoeffler are applicable. The rebellions in Sierra Leone and Liberia were initiated by discontented individuals, such as Foday Sankoh of the Revolutionary United Front and Charles Taylor of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, who were frustrated with their countries' governance systems. They also enlisted aggrieved youth from their nations to join their rebel movements.

2. Literature Review

The “greed and grievance” theory has received several critical reviews. Many scholars have had their say on the subject, with many arguing based on theoretical perspectives. Some scholars on the subject have also designed some models. For instance, Collier and Hoeffler (1999), developed a model called “the looting and justice model of rebellion”. They argued

that loot is acquired during the process of rebellion and not upon prior victory (Collier et al., 1999, p.1). They further argued that the risk of conflict is influenced by both the desire for justice and the expense of providing it (Collier et al., 1999, p.5). They further looked at three types of grievances: hatred arising from relations between distinct social groups, repression in political decision-making, and poor economic outcomes (Collier et al., 1999, p.5).

Murshed, et al. (2007, p.1), argued that grievance can exist independently without greed, but it is hard to sustain greedy motives without some underlying grievances. Both are regarded as competing views and can complement each other. They further argued that (Murshed, et al, 2007, p.1) for greed and grievance to escalate into large-scale violence, additional factors must be at play, particularly the breakdown of the social contract. Thus, even if resources can be seized to offer important rewards, violent conflict is unlikely to arise if a country has a widely accepted set of rules, both formal and informal, that regulate resource distribution and the peaceful resolution of disputes (Murshed, et al, 2007, p.1).

De Soysa, (2001), pointed out that the availability of natural resources is a powerful indicator of potential conflict, highlighting the influence of 'greed'. De Soysa also concluded that a higher population size and density are linked to increased conflict. The impact of grievances from lack of democracy (justice) is less significant compared to the opportunity costs of conflict, as the effects of democracy follow a curvilinear shape.

Collier (2000) argued that conflicts are far more likely to be caused by economic opportunities than by grievance. For him, civil wars create economic opportunities for certain groups. In this case, during the process of conflict greed might also come into play. Collier further maintained that even if where the rationale at the top of the organization (in this case it could be a rebel group) is inherently greed, the actual discourse might be entirely dominated by grievance. Collier argues that both rebel groups motivated by greed and those driven by grievances often present their actions within a narrative of grievance. However, simply observing this narrative does not provide researchers with genuine insight into the true motivations behind the rebellion. Collier concluded that significant exports of primary commodities, lack of proper education, a significant number of young men, and economic decline highly increase the risks of conflict.

Taydas et al., (2011) pointed out that apart from both grievance and opportunity, three other factors that can be attributed to armed conflict, are: economic development, repression, and regime type. Poor economic conditions boost the mobilization of the aggrieved community. They also argued that motivation and opportunity should be seen as jointly vital

Greed versus Grievance in Contemporary Civil Wars in Africa

conditions rather than alternative explanations that are mutually exclusive. They concluded that in addition to the basic motivations and opportunities, the potential for mobilization - shaped by factors such as the group's size, level of organization, shared identity, and cohesion - can significantly influence the onset of civil conflict and should not be overlooked. For them, it is challenging to incite groups to engage in conflict without historical grievances, even when valuable resources are involved (Taydas et al. 2011).

3. Where is the “Greed” or “Grievance” in the Case Studies?

3.1 The Central African Republic Case

The CAR has a long, chequered history dating back to 1960 when it gained independence from France. Like many other African countries, CAR has faced tough political and economic challenges. The CAR's history has been marked by ten military coup attempts which occurred between 2005 and 2015 and hindered its development (Siradağ, 2016, p.86). This escalated into a major civil war in 2013, where the government and various armed groups, primarily the Seleka and the Anti-Balaka fought for control over territories and the civilian population (Alecú and Miroiu, 2021, p.5; Weyns et. al., 2014, p.8). The Séléka rebels include some non-Muslims and are linked to Islam while the anti-balaka mainly consists of Christian and non-Christian militias (Kah, 2014, p.35; Alecú and Miroiu, 2021, p.5). After a few years of intense fighting, several peace initiatives have been undertaken including the demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) program and security reform (2015), the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation (2015), the Brazzaville Agreement (2014), the Nairobi Agreement to restore peace to the country (2015), and the electoral process (2015) (Natalia, 2016, p.26).

At the peak of the conflict, rebels from the Seleka group overthrew the Bozizé government after taking control of the capital city, Bangui. As the leader of the Seleka coalition, Michel Djotodia declared himself as the new president of the CAR; he dissolved Bozizé's government, suspended the country's constitution and informed the citizens of his intention to rule by decree for the next three years (Natalia, 2016, p.2). By 2015, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, who mostly relies on Russia's Wagner group for national security, was elected president in 2015 (Kunkel and Ellis, 2024, pp.11-12). After amending the nation's constitution to provide for such a clause, President Touadéra, who is presently spending his second term in office, hopes to serve a third.

The civil war in the CAR, like those in many other African nations, clearly reflects a combination of grievance and greed. In the case of grievance against the Bozize government,

members of armed militias often aired out their frustration about the country's existing economic predicament and marginalization. For instance, Abdel Khader Khalil, a general of the Seleka militia group and a close ally to President Djotodia explains his frustration with former President Bozize's government in the following excerpts:

“The core issue is Bozizé and his family, who have held power in our country for over thirteen years. For anyone not from the Gbaya ethnic group, securing employment has been nearly impossible, irrespective of their education or qualifications. This systemic discrimination has left many Central Africans feeling frustrated and marginalized. This widespread discontent motivated us to rise against President Bozizé, leading to the formation of the Union of Democratic Revolutionary Forces (UFDR). From there, we united to create the Seleka, which became a formidable force of 5,000 armed members dedicated to bringing about change.” (Vice News, 2014: 15:50).

As noted in the excerpt above, this marginalization of specific groups, combined with extreme poverty levels, created an environment where rebel groups could thrive; with religious rhetorics providing a veneer of legitimacy to their actions (Isaacs-Martin, 2017, p.133). Expanding on this legitimacy and marginalization, Weyn et. al., (2014, p.24) wrote that while the Seleka did not start their rebellion on the grounds of religious discrimination, some of its members felt their Muslim population were being discriminated against and as such made several attacks on non-Muslims especially Christians leading to the need to protect the Muslim community.

Greed has also been a key component of the CAR conflict. Despite that the media has painted the conflict as a religious conflict, many scholars have argued otherwise citing greed as a key root cause of the civil war. For example, Sıradağ (2016) asserts that the conflict in the CAR is fundamentally driven by a power struggle among political elites. While the violence has contributed to the polarization of Muslims and Christians, the primary issue lies with the political ambitions of those in power. Specifically, rebel groups like the Seleka demonstrated clearly, the pursuit of greed in their war efforts. For instance, in December 2012, they asked for financial compensation for the combatants especially those who had fought alongside former President Bozize until he took power in 2003 but felt less compensated (Weyns et. al., 2014). By 2017, rebel groups such as the ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka had devolved into criminal activities as a means of survival and to sustain their movements (Knoope and Buchanan-Clarke, 2017). Similar to the other case studies below, it is clear that the greed and grievance hypothesis can be used to explain the civil conflict in the CAR as demonstrated above.

3.2 The South Sudan Case

After gaining independence, political leaders became fixated on retaining power and were willing to destroy the nation to achieve it. South Sudan, located in East Africa, is the youngest country in the world. It used to operate autonomously under the supervision of the central government in Khartoum, Sudan's capital city. After many years of prolonged conflict, South Sudan gained independence from its northern neighbour, Sudan. A significant aspect of this conflict is the Darfur Conflict in the Darfur region. The country shares borders with Ethiopia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR), Uganda, and Kenya. As of 2024, South Sudan has a population of just over eleven million people (Worldometer, 2024, para: 1).

In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the North (the central government in Khartoum) and the South (the Sudan People's Liberation Movement) to end Africa's longest civil war (Brosché et al., 2016, p. 73). This war resulted in the deaths of more than two million people (Brosché et al., 2016, p. 73). It was a historic agreement because it led to South Sudan becoming an autonomous state.

Immediately after its independence in July 2011 from Northern Sudan, South Sudan was plunged into a civil war (ethnic conflict and political tensions) that has left thousands of people dead and displaced. The conflict constituted the two main ethnic groups the Dinka (to which President Salva Kiir belongs) and the Nuer (to which former vice president Riek Machar belongs). However, ethnic tensions and tribalism are far more deeply rooted within the country than just the Dinka-Nuer polarity (Rolandsen, 2015, p: 165). The main causes of the civil war in South Sudan are complicated. However, many believe that it has an ethnic undertone and political cleavages, especially within the ruling party Sudan People's Liberation Movement (Pinaud, 2021, p: 1).

In 2013, fighting broke out between factions within the ruling government and some members of the presidential guard (Brosché et al. 2016, p: 68), this occurred between members of Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups within the presidential guard (Amnesty International, 2014, p: 9). There were rumours that some members of the ruling party SPLM, including Vice President Riek Machar wanted to overthrow President Salva Kiir after signaling his intentions to run for political power (Rolandsen, 2015, p: 163). Within just a few months, more than 10,000 people were killed (Brosché et al., 2016, p: 76), and well over one million people have been forced from their homes (Amnesty International, 2014, p: 7). Following the political skirmishes, President Salva Kiir sacked all his cabinet members, including Vice

President Machar (Pinaud, 2021, p: 123; Al Jazeera English, 2019, para: 5). Machar and others including the party secretary general voiced their grievances, accusing President Kiir of being dictatorial, undemocratic, and his failure to adhere to the agreements made in the CPA (Rolandsen, 2015). One of the agreements included a provision for the National Liberation Council (NLC) to organize National Conventions every five years. However, the failure to hold these conventions sparked strong resistance from Machar's camp (Rolandsen, 2015, p: 169). Additionally, it was only a matter of time before the SPLM leadership had to confront increasing public grievances. After independence, Juba, the capital, became the focal point of the nation, with political power concentrated there. Meanwhile, the rural areas, home to diverse communities, were seeking constitutional inclusion within a unified state (Al Jazeera English, 2013, para: 10).

Corruption is also widespread within the ruling elites (Clémence Pinaud, 2021, p: 115). For instance, in an investigation, 11,000 revealed fake names on the police payroll, with 16,000 under suspicion (Al Jazeera English, 2013, para: 1&2). Corruption allegations also raised concerns about the ability of Kiir's administration to maintain transparency and accountability in public spending (Al Jazeera English, 2013, para: 11). There is a fight for the control of natural resources (especially oil and gas), as political leaders see it as the only means to enrich themselves. Also, the possibility of getting rich outside of government is very low (Brosché et al., 2016, p: 80).

Following the failed attempted coup, many critics were arrested, but Machar managed to escape. Intense fighting continued between the government and the rebel group Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition (SPLM-IO) headed by former Vice President Machar (Brosché et al., 2016, p: 77). Machar succeeded in mobilizing many aggrieved youths in the periphery. These youth, as argued by Jalloh (2024), became mere victims of their political and economic predicament perpetrated by years of bad governance, endemic corruption, marginalization, youth neglect, and ethnocentrism.

A brokered Peace deal in 2015 in Addis Ababa by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) ended the conflict. However, the peace deal was short-lived by another relapse in violence in July 2016 (Accord, 2019, para: 1). Another Peace deal between the government of President Kiir and former Vice President and Rebel Leader Riek Machar was signed in 2018. The Revitalized Peace Agreement in Addis Ababa at the 33rd Extraordinary Summit of IGAD (Accord, 2019, para: 1).

3.3 The Sudan Case

Since the fall of President Bashir's government, the military has chosen to maintain its grip on power by refusing to transfer authority to a civilian government and disregarding the people's demands. Two former allies are now fighting each other, causing further destruction to the nation.

The Republic of Sudan is a country in Northeast Africa, it is bordered by the Central African Republic, Egypt, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, and South Sudan. The country used to be the largest in Africa until the secession of its Southern neighbour, South Sudan in 2011. The country has just over forty-nine million people (Worldometer, 2024, para: 1). The country gained independence from Britain in 1956 (Sharkey, 2008, p: 23). Since its independence, Sudan has experienced a checkered history with lots of coup d'états (power struggles) and civil wars. The most notable one is the civil war in the Darfur region that started in 2003, which many, including the International Criminal Court (ICC), have described as a genocide (ICC, 2005).

Following al-Qaeda's twin bombing of the United States Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 1998, the US launched Operation Infinite Reach (US State Department, 2022). In 1993, the US had already designated Sudan as a State-sponsored Terrorist country and suspended its diplomatic operations in 1996 (US State Department, 2022, para: 1).

Former President Omar al-Bashir led a coup d'état in 1989, which saw him rule the country for three decades. Under his leadership, Sudan became a one-party state (Sharkey, 2008, p: 36). President Bashir held onto power until a popular protest against a rise in bread prices and other essential commodities broke out in 2018, leading to his removal by the defense minister in April 2019 (Al-Jazeera English, 2019, para: 1). Many believe that the effect of the Arab Spring spread to Sudan. After the overthrow of President Bashir, the military wanted to stay in power, however, mounting pressure from the pro-democratic movement, the military agreed to share power with a civilian government. Under the civilian-led transitional government (CLTG), Abdalla Hamdok served as prime minister and head of government until he was overthrown by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan in 2021 (US State Department, 2022, para: 2). Prime Minister Hamdok was again reinstated to office in November 2021 but subsequently resigned in January 2022 (US State Department, 2022, para: 2).

Following months of mounting tensions between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the para-military forces known as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), in April 2023, fighting broke out between the two forces over the integration of thousands of RSF forces into the main armed force (Human Rights Watch-HRW, 2024, para: 1). Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (popularly known as “Hemedti”) of the RSF and General Burhan of the SAF, the leaders of the two factions used to be allies, and they had been since the war in Darfur, and both fought together in Yemen (Al Jazeera English, 2023; International Crisis Group, 2023, p: 4). The RSF, which is widely known as the Janjaweed, was used by former President al-Bashir to fight rebels in the region of Darfur. As part of Sudan’s transition to democracy, there have been talks to integrate the RSF into the army, but they disagreed on a timeline, according to reports, the army proposed two years, but the RSF wanted it to be ten (International Crisis Group, 2023, p: 5). The SAF realized that the RSF had been multiplying, and Hamdan Dagalo had political ambitions, so if the RSF did not integrate quickly, it would become uncontrollable (International Crisis Group, 2023, p: 5). When the fighting started in April, it was unclear who started the fighting as both sides started trading accusations (International Crisis Group, 2023, p: 6).

The failure to fully integrate the RSF into the primary army forces has been perceived as a contributing factor to their grievances and subsequent decision to engage the SAF. Additionally, it appears that Burhan views Hamdan Dagalo as a potential threat to his leadership position. Today, fighting has spread into places like western Darfur, EL Geneina, Kordofan, etc. In June last year, the West Darfur governor was brutally killed (International Crisis Group, 2023; HRW, 2024, para: 14). Both sides have international support. The SAF has closer ties with Egypt, which wants the military rule to continue in Sudan, whilst the RSF enjoys support from the United Arab Emirates (International Crisis Group, 2023, p: 2).

There have been international efforts by the African Union, the US, Saudi Arabia, etc. to end the conflict in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, but those talks have failed. The AU and IGAD have also weighed in to try to mediate between warring factions, however, those talks have also not been successful. Instead, General Burhan has accused Kenyan President William Ruto and IGAD, of being too friendly, biased, and lenient with Hamdan Dagalo (Al-Jazeera English, 2024, 14:00). However, President Ruto denied these accusations in a recent interview with Al-Jazeera.

Another, thing that complicates diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in Sudan, is the lack of communication between external actors (International Crisis Group, 2023, p: 8). For

Greed versus Grievance in Contemporary Civil Wars in Africa

instance, the AU, European Union (EU), and United Kingdom (UK) complain about the lack of communication from the US. Western diplomats agreed that UAE officials felt blindsided by their exclusions in Jeddah (International Crisis Group, 2023, p: 8). And, such a move could have dire consequences and may jeopardize any peace talks agreements, because the UAE is a key player in the conflict supporting the RSF.

Since the fighting started, there have been reports of serious violations of human rights committed by both sides in the conflicts. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (ONOCHA) estimates more than fifteen thousand fatalities so far (ONOCHA, 2024, p: 1). Furthermore, it also estimates that twenty-four million people need humanitarian assistance, and since April last year, seven million people have been internally displaced. The RSF has also been accused of raping women and girls and committing ethnic cleansing on the Masalit people and other non-Arab groups (Amnesty International, 2024, p: 7; HRW, 2024, p: 15).

3.4 The Libyan Experience

Libya is a country in the Northern part of Africa on the Mediterranean coast. Egypt, Algeria, Chad, Sudan, Niger, and Tunisia border the country. Its population is just over 7 million (Worldometer, 2024). The kingdom of Libya gained independence from Italy in 1951 (Aghayev, 2013: 193). The country was under Ottoman rule before this time (Aghayev, 2013: 193).

Scholars have pointed out several factors that caused the Arab Spring in general. Some have mentioned economic, political, and social factors. Moreover, decades of marginalization of certain social groups (social injustice) and the absence of geographic diversity (Darwisheh, 2014: 1) have contributed to the phenomenon.

Moreover, it is also important to note that before the Arab Spring, Libya was one of the success stories when it came to economic stability in Africa; the literacy rate was 80 percent, and a majority, if not all, of its population, enjoyed free healthcare (Aghayev, 2013: 194). Many agree that Gaddafi was not the puppet of Western neo-colonialism (QadirMushtaq et al., 2017: 7). This begs the question of what may have caused the uprising in Libya if most of its population enjoyed the opportunities mentioned earlier. This chapter will only examine the main factors that caused the Libyan conflict and how these factors are linked to the 'greed and grievance' theory.

In 1969, at the age of 27, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi launched a coup d'état and overthrew King Idris in what became known as the Al Fateh Revolution (Al Jazeera English, 2011: 8:53; Aghayev, 2013: 193; BBC, 2011: para. 7). Gaddafi and his movement became very popular among ordinary people and mostly among university students because of its anti-colonialism, nationalism, egalitarianism, and modernization of Libyan society (Al Jazeera English, 2018: 9:50; BBC, 2011). Moreover, they nationalized big businesses like the banks and the oil industry (Al Jazeera English, 2018: 10:50; BBC, 2011: 10).

In the 1990s, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, formed by Mujahideen returning from Afghanistan, attempted to overthrow Gaddafi and establish an Islamic State, but their coup failed (Al Jazeera English: 34:44, 2018). Many members were imprisoned without trial under harsh conditions in Abu Salim prison in Tripoli (Al Jazeera English: 35:07, 2018). In 1996, after being denied access to their families and lawyers, some prisoners protested and managed to escape. In response, prison guards, acting on orders from Gaddafi's intelligence chief, killed around 1,200 prisoners (Al Jazeera English, 2018: 35:20). In an interview with Al Jazeera English in 2018, Professor Ali Abdullatif Ahmida described the incident as “one of the ugliest and most brutal massacres under the regime, and in the long term, it hunted the regime (35:46).” Many of the families of those killed in Abu Salim Prison wanted answers that they never got, and this was one of those discontents that started sowing the seeds of hatred towards the regime in Libya among civilians in Benghazi because many of these families were from that city (Al Jazeera English: 36:00, 2018).

In the wake of the Arab Spring (which many believe to be pro-democracy uprisings) that engulfed North Africa and the Middle East in 2011 had its strongest effect on Libya (Zaheer, 2023: 56; Pedde, 2017: 99). In fact, many refer to it as the “third wave of democratization” (Plakoudas 2017: 2). The revolution was inspired by the fall of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, former Tunisian dictator, in December 2010 (McQuinn, 2013: 716). It then spread through Egypt, which saw the end of Hosni Mubarak's thirty-year rule (Mahmood et al., 2020), it later spread to Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Protesters were motivated by issues such as corruption, social justice, human dignity, authoritarianism; and lack of political freedom, as well as calls for democratic and anti-corruption reforms (Barakat et al., 2021: 8).

However, during Gaddafi's rule, although the basic economic needs of the Libyan people were fulfilled, the political situation was highly unstable (Aghayev, 2013: 194). Many believed that strict repression stifled any form of political diversity or civil society, with political dissent being outlawed under Law 75 of 1973, and the regime's failure to address the

Greed versus Grievance in Contemporary Civil Wars in Africa

ongoing demands of citizens had fueled their frustrations (Aghayev, 2013: 194; Barakat et al. 2021). Colonel Gaddafi was known to be brutal against political dissents, not only inside of Libya but also with those who criticized him outside of the country as the target of assassination (BBC, 2011: para. 35). For instance, the East had a distinct identity, and a narrative centered on the belief that it was intentionally punished and sidelined by the Gaddafi regime (Al Jazeera English, 2018: 48:30). These repressions motivated exiled political leaders soon after the violent protests had started in Tunisia and Egypt. (McQuinn, 2013: 716). The National Conference for the Libyan Opposition, a group of exiled dissidents based in London, mobilized emerging opposition to Muammar Gaddafi by organizing domestic and international protests against his regime on February 17 (McQuinn, 2013: 716). The planned protest was called the “Day of Rage” and was organized by the lawyer (Fathi Terbil) representing the families of the prisoners killed in Abu Salim prison in 1996 (Al Jazeera English, 2018: 40:00).

The majority of people who participated in the revolutions were youths, and Libya was not an exception to this (Plakoudas, 2017: 6). For instance, in Libya, these disgruntled youth took to the streets in main opposition areas, especially in Benghazi, in violent protests against Gaddafi’s regime (McQuinn, 2013: 716). That is why when these violent protests started, Benghazi quickly fell to the opposition (Al Jazeera English: 49:00, 2018). For instance, in Benghazi, demands for political liberalization extended past free and fair elections (Qadir Mushtaq et al., 2017: 7). They included dismantling oppressive security apparatuses, stopping human rights violations, removing the military from civic politics, guaranteeing political freedoms, ending corruption and nepotism, and upholding minority rights (Qadir Mushtaq et al., 2017: 7). This also, at times, included the rights of more marginalized LGBTQ+ people (Plakoudas, 2017: 4).

The political mechanisms of the Gaddafi regime reached into every Gaddafi-era military establishment (McQuinn, 2013: 716). Gaddafi's sons or loyalists were placed in command of crucial parts of the National Army, while the ordinary military was too little funded, suggesting that they may have only been loyal to him (McQuinn, 2013: 717). Until Gaddafi's regime began experiencing problems in 2011 and rapidly started losing its political grip, defections occurred mass from lower ranks of the military. These defections were particularly high in the east but also in Kufra, Misratah, and the western mountainous areas, and at times, local conflicts have erupted, fueled by deep-rooted communal grievances. (Al Jazeera English, 2011; McQuinn, 2013: 717).

Conclusion

The study examined how the "greed versus grievance" theory plays a role in contemporary civil wars. Throughout the paper, we argued that this theory remains relevant in explaining the primary causes of civil wars post-Cold War. In the introduction, we highlighted that immediately after the Cold War ended, the issue of greed versus grievance was a critical factor in many civil wars and armed conflicts, particularly in countries from the Global South. Key examples are drawn from the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Secondly, we delved into the "Greed" and "Grievance" theory, contextualizing it within conflict situations of the immediate post-Cold War era. Thirdly, we also looked at what the literature has been saying about the said theory.

Furthermore, we focused on four case studies (CAR, South Sudan, Sudan and Libya) and argued that the conflicts in these countries can be attributed to the issue of greed and grievance. First, in the case of the CAR, we introduced the country's civil war and accounted for the greed and grievance aspect of the war. Moving forward to the case of South Sudan, we showed how the greed for power clouded the mind of President Salva Kiir, and how his failure to allow the NLC to organize the National Convention angered Machar and his camp. Moreover, the sacking of members of his cabinet including Vice President Machar, based on an attempted coup, was not well-received by an already aggrieved Machar and his camp members. Additionally, the study showed how ethnicity played a crucial role during the conflict, and how both camps used ethnic sympathy to appeal to fighters. The control of natural resources was also another key factor during the conflict.

In the case of Sudan, the research also showed how since the fall of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019, the leaders of the country have been struggling for control of the country. First, the overthrow of the civilian-led government in 2021, and the cracking down on pro-democracy supporters, left many people aggrieved. Moreover, how the greed for power of two former military allies has led the country into a civil conflict. The failure to agree on a timeline for the integration of more than 100,000 RSF fighters into the military, was also seen as the main cause of the conflict (Al-Jazeera, 2023). The paper highlights the prolonged nature of the conflict, emphasizing the involvement of international actors such as Egypt, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. It also explains how this international support for various warring factions complicates efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Finally, we focused on the impact of greed and grievance during Gaddafi's forty years of rule, which ultimately led to the Arab Spring.

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Greed versus Grievance in Contemporary Civil Wars in Africa

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