GREED VERSUS GRIEVANCE DEBATE HIGHLIGHTING ITS EMPIRICAL, THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND APPLICABILITY TO THE STUDY OF CONFLICTS: A CASE OF BALOCHISTAN PROVINCE IN PAKISTAN

Mir Dosteen Hoth¹ and Saeeda Mengal²

Abstract
Greed versus grievance theory has been a milestone in understanding conflicts and civil wars around the world. It has been a highly debated topic in the study of conflicts. Much has been written about conflicts and a wide available literature has several theories that envisage the possible precipitating factors and explain the extent of many conflicts over the past few decades. In this paper, we explain the “Greed versus Grievance” debate highlighting the central arguments of Collier and his associates. Moreover, this paper also look at wider available literature on Balochistan conflict in Pakistan to endorse the stance of Murshed and Korf, who argue that it is neither only “Greed” nor only “Grievance” but a multi-dimensional of factors comprising of both “Greed and Grievances” that actually trigger conflicts and civil wars. Additionally this research concludes the argument that both of these factors are crucial in explaining reasons of the conflict in Balochistan case, but at same time both models are not perfect and need further research. Thus, it would be much more helpful to the study the conflict with the lens of both “Greed” and “Grievance” perspectives as they complement each other.

Keywords: Pakistan, Balochistan, Greed vs. Grievance theory, Conflict

1. Introduction
Conflict is said to be precipitated by a variety of issues ranging from ethnic and religious ones, socio-economic grievances and politico-ideological contests to land disputes, unfavourable government policies and greed (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2003; Collier et al., 2003 and Sambanis, 2001). Analytical discourses surrounding the subject of civil wars in the first half of the 1990s were largely centred on theories that tried to explain their occurrence, concluding that they were irrational and fundamentally inexplicable (Berdal, 2005). In the late 1990s civil conflicts were analysed according to the ‘greed model’ put forward by Paul Collier. Collier’s theory focuses on, among other things, the ‘resource curse’ argument wherein he suggests that countries that possess more natural resources are more susceptible to greed-driven wars than countries with fewer natural resources. He also claims that countries experiencing economic stagnation and that provide little education, as well as

¹ Student of Development Studies, University of Sussex, United Kingdom (UK), currently working as a Provincial Civil Service Officer with Government of Balochistan, Pakistan. Email: mirdosteen@yahoo.com
² Assistant Professor and Chairperson, History Department, University of Balochistan. Email: mengalpearl@gmail.com
having a large uneducated and unemployed youth population, are highly prone to outbreaks of civil war. Collier (2006) develops the idea that internal conflicts occur because of dearth of economic opportunity. However, his postulations have been criticized for being ‘crude and simplistic’ and are categorised as an econometric ‘greed model’ of rebellion (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2003: 3).

There are several theories presented in the literature that describe, predict and explain the extent of the many conflicts over the past few decades. However, each of them describes a different pattern of intra-state conflict. This paper explains the ‘greed’ theory highlighting the central arguments of Collier (2000), Collier and Hoeffler (1998) and Collier and Hoeffler (2004). Further, this research upholds the viewpoint of Murshed (2002) and Korf (2005:203), who declare that it is not only greed, or indeed, only grievance, that provokes civil wars, but that it is both greed and grievance that are causes of conflict. Whether based on motives of greed or grievance, conflict literature blames current intra-state conflicts on clashes between groups based on ethnical identity, as well as on ideologies that is one of the scholarly arguments in this paper.

2. Examining “Greed vs Grievance” Nexus in Conflict

2.1 Greed Theory

The academic investigation into the causes of conflict began in the 1990s (two and a half decades ago) with the greed versus grievance debate. This debate, according to Aslam (2011:190), brought up many other related topics such as ethnicity and ideology in order to explain the nature of civil conflicts. She states that a violent conflict erupts following ‘greed theory’, when potential rebels find lootable resources (see Collier, 2000; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Collier et al., 2003). This theory is based largely on econometric and statistical inferences made by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, where they argue that “rebels will conduct a civil war if the perceived benefits outweigh the costs” (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998: 563). Others have mainly taken ‘greed’ as being ‘loot-seeking’ (Cornell, 2005), as an acquisitive desire comparable to crime in order to control ‘rents’ from natural resource exploitation (Murshed, 2002 and Hegre, 2004). Regan and Norton (2005: 319) perceive ‘greed’ as a convenient monitor to describe self-interested behaviour if the resources available to pay for selective benefits.

Collier (2000) argues that much civil war is not motivated by ‘grievance’ but by the silent force of greed. In addition to this, it is argued that the economic agenda underlying civil war and conflicts is more likely to be founded on economic opportunities than on grievances (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). Thus, the ‘grievances’ expressed by rebels are more likely to be economic. Korf says that, according to the ‘rebellion-as-business models’ referred to by the greed theory, “not only are rebels motivated by greed when they start a rebellion, but greedy motives also explain why they have no incentives to end civil wars” (Korf, 2006:111). Using an econometric analysis of cross-country statistics,
Collier and Hoeffler (1998) conclude that resource abundance in poor countries, as well as scarcity, largely precipitates war.

On the other hand, Collier (2000) also claims that countries with having high reliability on the export of primary commodities have high chances to engage in conflicts. He further says that multi-ethnic societies with a large number of young populations are more prone to going into civil wars. Collier (2000) sees no statistical correlation between inequality and conflict. His results point to the overwhelming importance of economic agendas as opposed to grievance. Thus, the greed theory comes up with the justification of economic agenda as the basis of the civil wars in resource abundant countries such as Biafra in Nigeria, Aceh in Indonesia and Cabinda in Angola. It further argues that multi-ethnicity and high unemployment and illiteracy are important factors in driving countries into wars than those who have no or fewer resources and better human development indicators.

However, a number of scholars like Berdal (2005) and Korf (2004, 2006) challenged the validity of the greed theory. They assert that reliance on statistical methods to understand conflict is a fundamental limitation of this theory. They maintain that conflicts are social issues and hard to see with the lens of statistics and econometrical methods. A criticism of the greed model is discussed in the critical analysis part of this paper.

2.2 Grievance Theory

The proponents of this model see conflicts as a result of different grievances that exists within a society (see Gurr, 1993; Homer-Dixon, 1999 and Stewart 2000). Murshed defines grievance as “a motivation based on a sense of injustice about the way a social group is treated, often with a strong historical dimension” (Murshed, 2002:389). They see inequality, oppressions, exploitation and fight over scarce resources as the leading causes for the conflict. They added that weak, resource scarce and poor countries with fragile political setup having heterogeneous population are more susceptible to conflicts and bloody wars. Gurr (1993) sees a number of conflicts in African countries (Bakongo and Ovimbundu in Angola; San in Botswana; Tutsi in Rwanda etc.) and elsewhere (Baloch in Pakistan; Kurd in Iraq and Turkey etc.) as associated with discrimination, poverty and social grievances. In these cases aggrieved communities mobilize the masses on the pretext of injustice and often engage in conflicts. Gurr describes grievance as “the reaction of the minority people to inequalities, discrimination and repression” (Gurr et al., 2005:2).

Murshed takes into account the economic grievances that lead to civil war and argues that “systematic economic discrimination against groups based on ethno-linguistic or religious difference” mainly result in conflict (Murshed, 2002:389). While Stewart also proposes that it is high horizontal inequalities that increase the risk of violent conflicts (Stewart, 2010).
There are several examples that illustrate these arguments. The recent events in the Middle East (Egypt, Tunisia and Libya) could be explained from this point of view. Historical evidence of several old conflicts suggests that horizontal inequalities provoke civil conflicts. The case of South Africa during the apartheid era is really illustrative. As for example, a white minority inherited political power in 1910 and during the next eight decades used this power to entrench itself politically and to enhance its economic, cultural and social interests (Schrire, 1996:59-60, in Stewart, 2008). This exclusion of the black people effectively motivated the rebels and created ethnic differences between black and white which fuelled violence. Thus, despite the fact that it took a long time, in 1976 the poor socio-economic conditions of the black people drove the rebellion (Stewart, 2008).

Call (2010) presented an interesting analysis of the failure of peace process in Liberia after the election of Charles Taylor in 1997 as Liberia’s president. Elections ended the seven-year war (1990-1996) but the exclusionary policies and undemocratic rule of the new president compelled the rebels to raise a rebellion again and there started a new civil war. Call does not deny the role of economic opportunities and Liberia’s dependence on natural resources which have a role in this new uprising, but he puts more emphasis on exclusionary behaviour of the Taylor’s government which was the main force in the return to conflict (ibid).

Ethnic dominance and exclusion of the minorities by the dominant group increases the risk of conflict. Ostby analysed a number of countries and associated inequalities with high risk of internal conflict given certain conditions as form of government and institutional arrangements (Ostby, 2007). Edward Azar also supports this claim and perceives that these inequalities might not produce conflict but they certainly worsen the conflict (Azar, 1991). They take in grievance as an important perpetuating cause of conflict.

Ballentine and Nitzchke inquired into civil wars in different countries and argued that “conflicts are motivated by a mix of political, security, ethnic and economic factors” (Ballentine & Nitzchke, 2003:1). The advocates of grievance model do not explicitly reject the economic factor based on greed in conflicts and civil wars. However, they include other factors such as socio-economic deprivation, political exclusion and oppression etc. as important causes in leading to violent conflicts.

3. Critical Analysis of the Greed versus Grievance Model
Those who adhere to the ‘grievance’ theory do not explicitly reject the place of economic issues in causing rebellions; instead they include it in the ‘mix of concerns’ which provoke them. Thus, the essence of grievance theory is that socio-economic deprivation and political exclusion are the driving forces that lead to rebellious insurgency.
Study of the conflicts and civil wars is a very challenging task and require a great amount of time and effort. Studying first-hand accounts, going into war zone areas to observe things and getting required datasets for the study are very hard tasks which often lead to ambiguous and flawed findings. There is no doubt that greed vs. grievance paradigms to study civil wars helped the researchers and students to understand the dynamics and complexities of conflicts. But at the same it would not be wrong to say that none of the paradigm is able to answer the causes of conflicts at its own. Rather a mix of both will better explain the causes and give more appropriate results.

The researchers and scholars have raised a number of questions as which methods were taken into account in reaching the dominant view that greed causes conflicts. Murshed and Tadjoeddin argue that Collier and Hoeffler used empirical methods to substantiate their claim about greed but they dismissed the “alternative hypothesis of grievance” without checking and testing its invalidity formally (Murshed & Tadjoeddin, 2007:5). Suhrke et al., (2005) also criticised the Collier and Hoeffler’s work in failing to differentiate between civil wars and extra-systematic wars (a war between a system member and a non-state entity). For example, two wars of independence (Zimbabwe and Guinea Bissau) and two wars based on colonial extension (Morocco in West Sahara and Indonesia in East Timor) are not distinguished and studied in the same manner. They even indicate that the datasets do not fully support their conclusion and policy recommendations (Suhrke et al., 2005).

Oyeniyi (2010) noted that it is impractical to count the number of deaths in the conflict regions and developing countries as per the definition of the Collier for civil war. He further says causalities are buried without official documentation and injured hardly seek medical assistance from governments for fear of arrest. In this case a number of conflicts are not considered as civil wars despite of significant damages and heavy displacement of people.

Regan and Norton (2005) claim that there are more chances of rebellion in heterogeneous states than homogenous one. Challenging Collier’s claim that ethnically diverse societies are safer than mono-ethnic societies. Regan and Norton (2005) further argue that moving from low levels of cultural heterogeneity to high levels increases the likelihood of civil war by 12 percent. Hegre also argues in examining the nature of civil wars that “civil wars are very heterogeneous in both why and how they start, how they develop and how they end” (Hegre, 2004: 249). Weiss et al., (2010) further deepening the argument, opine that the various causes of civil war have not been adequately addressed by the researchers, who offer limited and incomplete clarification. They accuse the followers of the ‘greed’ theory of taking the easy route and assuming that there is a linear relationship between the variables employed in their explanation of why conflicts start, continue and stop.
Grievance model also attracts criticism from a number of researchers and scholars as well. Collier (2000) states that the ‘collective action problem’ is a factor that has to be taken into account. Briefly, he considers that people prefer not to rebel against the government because it would mean high costs. Other factors such as the lack of coordination and the time-inconsistency (too much time to achieve the justice) are also inhibitory factors. Theuerkauf (2010) warns about the problem of heterogeneity within identity groups, something that grievance-based explanations do not take into consideration. For instance, Albanians in Macedonia did not mobilize with one voice, as they had different political agendas (Alonso and Ruiz, 2005). It is difficult to measure grievance indicators due to the lack of statistical and quantitative data “at the level of the nation state” (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2009:102). Therefore, most of the theories about grievance fail to provide empirical support for their statements (Theuerkauf, 2010).

Conflict may be based on motives of greed or grievance or it may come from other causes, but most of the scholars blame current conflicts between groups on identities, inequality (horizontal or vertical), discrimination or resentments (Stewart, 1998; Tilly, 1999; Napoleoni, 2004). It is often taken for granted that the mere presence of heterogeneous groups within a state is sufficient to produce conflict. There are always differences between social groups that have goals and behaviour that are sometimes incompatible. Thus, this paper describes the existence of disagreements between two actors (individuals, groups, or organizations) in their interaction over the issues of interests, values and beliefs which lead to violent conflict. To conclude, it is necessary to stress that although the importance of grievance-based explanations in providing knowledge about the occurrence, recurrence and perpetuation of civil conflicts is obvious, the combining of greed-based and grievance-based explanations would offer a better understanding of the scholarly argument of this paper when it comes to the case of Balochistan conflict in Pakistan.

4. Applicability of the “Greed and Grievance” Models in Case of Balochistan in Pakistan

Balochistan, one of the four federating units (provinces) of Pakistan, is a region of geo-strategic importance rich in oil, gas and other natural resources. It has remained conflict ridden since 1948 (Bansal, 2006 and Grare, 2006) when it became part, of the newly created state of Pakistan. ¹ Geographically it is the largest province of Pakistan, comprising 44% of the country land area and shares international borders with Iran to the west and Afghanistan to the north. However, its population is the smallest within the federation; its inhabitants numbering around 6.5 million people while the total population of Pakistan is about 132 million; the majority of whom are ethnic Baloch (see Faiz, 2015 and Census Report in 1998).²
There is no doubt that greed and grievance are both equally important factors when it comes to determining the causes of conflict throughout the globe. It would be wrong to generalise its applicability as “civil wars are not homogenous” (Murshed and Tadjoeddin, 2007:2). Similarly, the conflict in the Pakistani province of Balochistan is not only a greed-grievance nexus but it is also all about other reasons. This is a multi-dimensional conflict. The greed-grievance nexus, ethnicity, the marginalization of ethnic Baloch, their relative economic deprivation, and various historical reasons are escalating the conflict in Balochistan.

Many scholars including Wirsing (2008), Khan (2009) and Gichki (2010) underline the causes which are primarily responsible for the conflict in Balochistan: 1) the exploitation of natural resources, while leaving native Baloch in an economically and socially deprived position; 2) the geo-strategic importance of Balochistan; 3) its cultural identity and sense of historical nationhood; and 4) the Baloch grievances (Faiz, 2015).

Every country is different from other in so many ways so are the conflicts in their objectives and genesis. Despite of the fact that there exist some
deficiencies in the greed-grievance model as explained above, this model has been a success in offering exposition of the dynamics of the conflicts and civil wars. Most of the factors explained in the theory and some proved empirically are true for most of the civil wars to certain extent but it still needs further research and refinement.

To explain the applicability of this model to the present day conflicts, the case of Balochistan in Pakistan is a good example. It is province of Pakistan which is rich in natural resources but remained underprivileged and neglected for a long time. These longstanding issues of neglect and deprivation were used by a group people as injustices and started a war of secession against the Pakistani federation. Highlighting the issue, Aslam (2011) notes that the conflict in the Pakistani province of Balochistan is not only a greed-grievance nexus but it is also all about ethnicity and ideology. According to her both greed and grievances were responsible for the escalation of this conflict as economic deprivation and marginalisation along with historical reasons of forceful annexation were used as tools to fuel this conflict.

While ‘greed-based’ theory seems to explain this very well empirically, the problems come in trying to relate these ‘greed-based’ findings with reality as many of their affirmations are non-credible; for example, “grievances that motivate rebels may be substantially disconnected from the larger social concerns of inequality, political rights, and ethnic or religious identity” (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004:589). On the other hand, ‘grievance-based’ arguments are good in explaining theoretically the factors relating to civil wars, but the lack of empirical evidence and their insistence on making philosophical statements make them lose legitimacy. For this reason, a combination of both greed and grievance models including ethnicity and ideology could give us a more complete picture of the situation in countries with civil conflicts.

Oyeniyi has presented an interesting account of the Ife-Modakeke conflict in Nigeria in the light of the greed vs. grievance model (Oyeniyi, 2010). He concluded that the theory has been very helpful in explaining the conflict notwithstanding some inadequacies. In addition of the examples explained above, the theory has been applied successfully to a number of regions around the world (Sri Lanka, Columbia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Indonesia, Sudan etc.) and produced interesting finding which helped in understanding the complexities of the conflicts.

We still go with the notion that nothing is perfect and there is always room for further improvement. Therefore, it could be said that further efforts are needed to come up with more reliable theoretical and empirical frameworks including other additional factors, such as ethnicity and religious identity or ideology in order to fully understand the conflicts and to make a good case for the Balochistan conflict in Pakistan.
The reason is because the literature has been paying an increasing amount of attention to the role of ‘greed’ and ‘grievance’ in this conflict. There is little overall clarity in the literature as to what constitutes a ‘greed-grievance’ conflict model. Setting aside for the movement what constitutes a conflict (an issue already discussed in detail in the section on greed-grievance), there seems to be an agreement that a conflict does not need to be waged on both greed and grievance models when it comes to Balochistan. That is, the issue over which the conflict is being fought does not need to be solely a ‘greed-grievance’ one. In this research neither turns out to be the central factor in Balochistan. Presenting the example of the Balochistan conflict in Pakistan, most that deal with this issue find that ‘greed-grievance’ motivation does influence the conflict, but there are other factors beyond the ‘greed and grievance’ debate such as ethnicity, and ideological issues.

Conclusion
As noted earlier, if greed can be seen as taking an ‘economic opportunity’, grievance should mean the ‘motivations’ of a group to fight against injustices argued by Collier. In this sense, the concept of identity (culture, ethnicity and ideology) plays an important role in the group formation and in the perception of its position in society according to Murshed and Tadjoeddin. Violent conflicts can be influenced by identity, and mobilizing great numbers of people with the common feeling of belonging to a group can be quite powerful mentions by Stewart. Thus, a detailed analysis of the greed and grievance models indicates that there is no consensus among the researchers and scholars as which model best describes the conflict. Similar point of view could be argued in case of Balochistan, which is a multidimensional conflict based on various reasons. Regardless, of the existence of flaws in each model, they are still very significant in explaining the complications of the conflicts and civil wars in general and also the Balochistan conflict specifically. Though, it is hard to differentiate that the motive behind the armed struggle whether, it is only for economic incentives or struggle against a repressive government. It is important to note here that even economic incentives has a very crucial role in rebellions, but still one cannot ignore the role of grievances in worsening those violent conflicts. They may be more useful if analysed together rather separately as both complement each other. In order to see the applicability of the conflicts, one should note that every region has unique dynamics different from other places. It is, therefore, more logical to take into consideration the time and space dynamics to better understand the causes and arguments of the parties engaged in different conflicts.
Notes and References


Notes:

1 Since the division of United India in 1947 into two sovereign states, Pakistan has, constitutionally, become a federal state.
2 The figure is from the census in 1998. There has been no census since then.