

War Economy in the Contemporary Wars: In the Context of Central African Republic

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Abstract

Purpose: Ideally, the war economy is a set of contingencies undertaken by a state to mobilize its economy for war production or to support the war. However, the existing explanation of war economy does not fit in the conflicts of the modern era. In modern days 'new war' or 'contemporary war' are mostly intrastate and fought amongst the brutal unregulated non-state actors. This paper discussed different aspects of contemporary war economy focusing on the ongoing civil war of Central African Republic.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This paper is developed on the basis of published literature and authors own work experiences in the Central African Republic. A qualitative analytical method has been followed to develop this paper.

Findings: This paper identifies the economic system that has been developed in the Central African Republic amidst the civil war for the last two decades. Findings of this analysis show that this war economy is self-financing and parasitic in nature where there is 'more to war than winning'.

Limitations: Due to political unrest and several civil wars for more than two decades, no actual survey could be done in the recent past. Therefore, further study can be conducted to statistically prove the points made in this study.

Implications: By studying the war economy of any contemporary war, one can understand the nature of the war as well as the types of trade that govern the war.

Originality/Value: There are few works of literature on the war economy, contemporary wars and also conflicts of Central African Republic. The paper tries to view the said civil war from the economic perspective and identifies a different aspect of the contemporary war economy.

Keywords: War economy, New Wars, Contemporary Wars, Anti- Balaka, Ex- Seleka, Mining, Recycling of combatan

Introduction

President Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his speech on 29 December 1940, "if the Axis Powers win, then we would have to convert ourselves permanently into a militaristic power on the basis of war economy" (Singer cited in Durham, 2015).

The economy plays a vital role in the war. *Firstly*, most of the wars were fought for economic gain; *secondly*, the economic contribution to shape the war is also a well-established fact. Ideally, the war economy is the set of contingencies undertaken by a modern state to mobilize its economy for war production or to support the war (Durham, 2015). But the question remains whether this understanding of war economy fit in the modern era. Shaw (2003) narrated contemporary conflicts as 'degenerate wars'. Mueller (2004) claims that war is becoming outdated because of the involvement of brutal unregulated actors called 'residual combatants'. These non-state actors developed a different system of the economy to support their war. Therefore, the economy of contemporary intrastate war is totally different than that of common understanding.

The concept of a war economy is different in many ways in contemporary wars. Most of the modern conflicts have developed own economic system support the war. This self-financing also benefits the warlords to that extent that they become more interested in continuing the war than that of a peaceful solution (Kaldor, 2012). Ordinarily, the war economy in the modern era is a predator in nature where maximum extraction of resources, smuggling, illegal trading, excessive taxation etc are practised to finance the war as well as benefits the warlords. This illegal income of warlords and their surroundings often instigate them to continue the war for long. A study of the contemporary

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war economy of any modern conflict can help the policy maker to identify the measures to reduce the sufferings of common people; to some extent can show the way to solve the conflict.

The ongoing crisis of Central African Republic (CAR) is a classic example of New War as defined by Mary Kaldor in her 'New War' theory where belligerents' parties are mostly the non-state authorities (Kaldor, 2012). For decades these armed groups and their warlords developed an economic system. The financial support of these armed groups is so strong that most of them have formed their own political parties to earn social acceptance. The grouping or segregation of armed groups often directly linked with the financial resources restraining the religious and ethnical differences.

For example, Djotodia led the Seleka government was a union of such armed political groups who took over the power in 2013 by defeating the government army (International Crisis Group, 2014). Soon after gaining the territorial control the Seleka commanders quickly extended their field of action and activities to benefit from territorial gains in the west and centre of the country. They organized the looting of economic operators, public administration buildings and NGOs; took over new mining sites in the west, allied with traders and poachers; reorganized the parallel fuel-resale networks bypassing the state network (Internal National Crisis Group, 2015).

This paper is designed to discuss the war economy of contemporary conflicts in the context of CAR. In doing so the paper first discusses the war economy in old wars as well as in contemporary conflicts to distinguish the differences between two economic systems. Then different aspects of the existing war economy of CAR are discussed to show how different sources of income make the war self-financing and benefits the warlords. Finally, it shows the war economy of CAR also shares the same connotation of other contemporary war economies. This paper has some limitations as it discussed the contemporary wars in the context of intrastate conflicts; i.e., war economy developed by the non-state actors or weak state authority. There are some contemporary intrastate wars where actors are multiple state authorities along with other non- state authorities. However, a non-state authority will tend to follow the similar contemporary war economy in addition to their external aid. A qualitative approach has been followed to develop this paper. Besides consulting different books and published articles author own experience as an intelligence staff officer at Forces Headquarters in MINUSCA, CAR is largely used in developing this paper.

Theoretical Background

War Economy

Different Types of Wars: Throughout history, mankind has experienced different types of armed conflicts or wars; yet other than a few concepts no specific definition or category has developed to outline the perimeter of war. The intensity and atrocity of wars increased rapidly after the industrial revaluation when colonial powers started using their industries for massive war production. Therefore, it can be argued that the late colonial period is the start of modern arm conflict or war. Ideally war consists of a conflict between two or more warring parties, generally states or proto-states with their legitimate interests where various characteristics of the state remain functional. This classic form of war is broadly categorized into Total War and Limited War.

Total war can be defined as an all-embracing imperialist war, waged by all manner of means, not only against enemy armed forces but against the entire population of a nation, with a view to its complete destruction (Alger, 1985). In total war there is less or no differentiation between combatants and noncombatants (civilian); nearly every person from a particular country or opposing area, civilians and soldiers alike can be considered to be part of the war effort. World War II is a good example of Total war. Whereas in limited war the aim is limited to certain political or military objectives. Therefore, the military function in a limited war is to achieve the enemy's surrender at a minimal cost of resources/ national treasure. Limited War being ambiguous and complex concepts requires that the government and the military constantly explain and rationalize the reason for the conflict. Vietnam War, the Korean War area good example of Limited War.

This existing concept of war does not fit in complex situations for example when belligerents are non-state actors and so on. Sir Rupert Smith in an interview with International Red Cross suggested that in recent decades there had been shifting in the paradigm of wars. In earlier wars, the desired political outcome used to achieve by breaking the

will of opponents through strength. On the contrary, in a changing paradigm, the political outcome is achieved by changing or capturing the will of the enemy. Here the military operations are no longer useful to decide political solution rather create a favorable condition where the strategic goal can be achieved (Ptanner,2006).

The idea that contemporary organized violence is different from the conventional wars of the twentieth century has been widely debated. Different scholars such as Duffield (2001), Hables Gray (1997), Hoffman (2007), Holsti (1996), Kaldor (2012), Munkler (2005), Smith (2007), Van Creveld (1991) and others used different terms for example, wars among the people, wars of the third kind, hybrid wars, privatized wars, post-modern wars, new wars, etc to conceptualize contemporary conflicts. Off late the Pentagon (Defense HQ, USA) showed concern about how to combat “c,” the combination of stealth invasion, local proxy forces and international propaganda that Russia used to annex Crimea and destabilize eastern Ukraine by including a provision in the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act calling on the Pentagon to develop a strategy to counter hybrid warfare (Gibbons-Neff, 2015).

In the post-cold war era, the world has experienced different types of conflicts. In explaining contemporary conflicts Kaldor’s new war theory suggests “..... During the 1980s and 1990s, a new type of organized violence has developed, especially in Africa and Eastern Europe, which is one aspect of the current globalized era. I describe this type of violence as ‘new war’. I use the term ‘new’ to distinguish these wars from prevailing perceptions of war drawn from an earlier era” (Kaldor, 2001). There are lots of debate regarding the term ‘New War’, nevertheless, it is agreed that most of the conflicts of the modern era are intrastate (which usually termed as civil war) and developed a different system of the war economy.

The contemporary wars as described ‘New wars’ can be defined as an act of violence involving two or more organized groups (termed as actors) framed in different political terms (Kaldor, 2001). New Wars generally take place in weak states where the state systems have less control over territory and citizens, as a result, the area or community becomes vulnerable and opens to the rest of the world. In such conditions, the distinction between various characteristics of state such as public-private; external- internal, economic- politics, war-peace are breaking down and different kind of local authoritarian system is developed to rule. On the contrary Old war consists of a conflict between two warring parties, generally states or proto-states with their legitimate interests where various characteristics of the state remain functional.

Few other visible differences between old and new wars as mentioned by Kaldor (2013) are: Old wars were fought by the regular armed forces of states for geopolitical interests or for ideology in which capturing territory through military means was the method of waging war. Old wars were largely financed by states (taxation or by outside patrons) following a centralized economy. On the other hand, new wars are fought by varying combinations of networks of state and non-state actors in the name of identity (ethnic, religious or tribal) where territory is captured through political means, through control of the population. The economy of new wars is part of an open globalised decentralized economy in which finance mostly depends on continued violence and other criminal activities. Nevertheless, Kaldor’s reference to old war bears too much resemblance to Clausewitz’s classic wars.

War Economy in Classic Wars: Clausewitz’s classic wars portrait the famous "Trinity" of war, i.e.; the people, the army and the state may not be the same in the modern days yet can be observed in the conventional warfare. In classic term, a war economy is a ‘system of producing, mobilizing and allocating resources to sustain the violence’ (Philippe, 2005). The primary economic focus for the country at war is on producing or buying military hardware and related materials to support the war. It also needs to feed and equip its armed forces and manage the other operational costs. In doing so the economy must make substantial adjustments to its consumer products to accommodate defence production. Governments must plan and allocate their resources in a war economy very carefully in order to achieve military victory while meeting vital domestic needs.

Different countries followed different ways to meet their war requirements. For example, during the World War II Britain increased the import of food and concentrated its resources on hardware production; because it had limited land and manpower which they used for hardware production and other operational requirements. At the same time, Britain used its vast colonial territory for food production. On the contrary, Russia increased its own food production on a vast scale. In the USA, besides making new industries many existing industries were modified for defence production.

Apart from the production and supply of combat requirements state has to plan and allocate budget for other associated activities, such as conscription for civil defences, recalling the reservists etc. No doubt these economies were often targeted by the enemy, and states had to take additional measures to protect them. In the modern days, the war economy is faster and complex having deep impacts on many remote issues. The rapid increased of arms purchase by the middle eastern countries after the First Gulf War, sharp fall of oil price after the Libyan Civil War etc were directly linked to the modern war economy. Even different insurance policies made to cover the economic crisis during the war are also part of the war economy.

Needless to say, during the war every country approaches the reconfiguration of its economy in a different way. Many states increase the degree of planning in their economies to support wars; in many cases, this extends to rationing, and in some cases to conscription for civil defences, such as the Women's Land Army and Bevin Boys in the United Kingdom in World War II (Durham, 2015, p-192-193). Several methods were applied by the state authority such as a ban on import and export on specific items, increasing of tax, force or voluntary labour for war materials production etc. However, the complexity mounts high when the economy becomes parasitic and fuels the conflict within its own country.

War Economy in Contemporary Wars: The range and dimension of the war economy in contemporary wars are wider and complex. As in most cases, these wars are self-financing therefore the economy itself shapes and guides the wars. In absence of production, this type of economy is based on extraction and abduction of resources without providing service to the people; therefore, uncontrolled extraction of resources creates a beneficiary group within the system who tend to prolong the war as long as possible. Again as the wars are prolonging the local citizens of those war zones also develop a different kind of economic system in the absence of established legal enforceability.

In the post-cold war era, the world has experienced different types of conflicts. In explaining contemporary conflicts Kaldor's new war theory suggests "..... During the 1980s and 1990s, a new type of organized violence has developed, especially in Africa and Eastern Europe, which is one aspect of the current globalized era. I describe this type of violence as 'new war'. I use the term 'new' to distinguish these wars from prevailing perceptions of war drawn from an earlier era" (Kaldor, 2001). There are lots of debate regarding the term 'New War' nevertheless it is agreed that most of the conflicts of the modern era are intrastate (which usually termed as civil war) and developed a different system of the war economy.

Until recently, the economic dimensions of civil wars have received very little policy attention. Facilitated by developed communication and globalization regulated by weak states authority the belligerents benefit from business deals with criminal networks, arms traffickers and opportunist corporate entities; reaching well beyond the war zones to the world's commodity markets and major financial centres. Given the role of lucrative natural resources in fueling war economies, the term "resource wars" has become popular among analysts and policymakers.

Due to different sources of income and geopolitical differences, the war economy may differ from one to another. Research on the issue has been increased the acknowledgement among analysts and policy-makers that many civil wars have become increasingly self-financing in nature; at the same time, it also shares some common connotation such as illegal trading, recycles of combatant, the involvement of regional and global actors etc.

In fact, where there is "more to war than winning", those benefiting from violence may have a vested economic interest in conflict continuation (Ballentine and Nitzschke, 2005). In every contemporary war the non-state actors even the weak state authorities largely depend on extortion, illegal taxation, extraction of resources, smuggling and so on. In most cases, a good percentage of the money earned is taken by the leaders and their associates. Some are used to maintain the war which includes monthly salary and recruitment of combatants; procurement of arms, ammunition, uniform etc. A small portion is used for the political purpose of the area of control. That's why the contemporary war economy is said to be self-financing and parasitic in nature.

Methodology

In the behavioural and social sciences, it has been a renewed attention of the scholars to the human "*impulse to narrate*" (Sandelowski, 1991; White, 1980, p.5). Recently preoccupied with forms of literary devices, expression, rhetorical conventions, and the writing and reading of texts of experience (including bodies, literature and lives),

researchers now perceive the tale in the theory, the story in the study, the drama in the life and the parable in the principle (Ruby, 1982; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Suleiman, 1986; Turner & Bruner, 1986; Sacks, 1987; Rosaldo, 1989; Bordo, 1990). For example, scientific texts have been regarded as Kuhnian tales where theories are acknowledged to be largely governed by aesthetic forms and prevailing plots (Bruner, 1986; Gergen & Gergen, 1986). Such narrative conventions and literary devices as the use of passive voice and the third person in archetypal science reports and the disuniting of the method from results and from explanation are deemed as "*anti-narrative*" strategies which isolate authors from their texts and mask the narrativity of science (Myerhoff & Ruby, 1982, p.22). The study of narratives has related to the sciences with literature, history and everyday life to replicate the increasing reflexivity that exemplifies contemporary inquiry and advances the postmodern deconstruction of the previously unsubstantiated boundaries among disciplines and realms of connotation (Ruby, 1982).

This study is descriptive in nature where the author shared his experience of Contemporary War in the Central African Republic. Descriptive research methods mean exactly as it sounds – this research method *describe* different situations or phenomena but never make any predictions, and certainly do not portray cause and effect relationship (Jackson, 2009). Secondary data is used in this study. Data were collected from several books, news articles and some official documents from the UN. Secondary data is used in this paper because of not having the possibility of collecting primary data in contemporary war situations. Different types of information are collected for this study by the author himself and the author's self-experience is also used. Many of the data required for this study is very much confidential and can't be directly disclosed for the strong confidentiality regulation of United Nations and Bangladesh Army. That is why the author used his own experience gathered while staying in the CAR.

Narrative inquiry is a treasured investigative method in qualitative analysis. Narrative inquiry offers a different way of knowing, of exploring subjectivity and of investigating the lived experiences of entities. Narrative knowledge is constructed and created through the stories of sense-making and lived experience, the denotations people afford to them, and therefore it offers valuable understanding into the complexity of cultures, human lives and behaviours. It allows seizing the rich data within stories, together with for example giving insight into beliefs, feelings, images and time. It also takes account of the association between the wider social and cultural contexts and individual experience. Also, critically, it involves collaborative inquiry and co-construction of sense between the researcher and participants (Lumsden, 2018).

Analysis and Findings

War Economy in CAR

With a population of only 4.6 million (2016), The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country boarding on an extensive path to recovery. A security crisis unravelled its social fabric in 2013. In 2016, elections brought hope for a steady end to turmoil and transition.

Political Context: CAR has a democratically-elected president and parliament for the first time in its history. Faustin Touadera was avowed president after a run-off with his foremost rival, Anicet Dologuele in March 2016. Legislative elections positioned Abdoul Meckassouat the head of the National Assembly from the Muslim minority. The elections resolved the two-year mandate of Catherine Samba-Panza's interim government. CAR's crisis commenced when President François Bozizé was ousted in March 2013 by the Séléka rebel movement. Séléka leader Michel Djotodia was enforced to step aside after conflict between the mainly Christian Anti-Balaka and Muslim Séléka less than a year later. A ceasefire in July 2014 and the Bangui Forum in May 2015 marked an end to the all-out conflict, although sectarian tensions have continued to erupt since (World Bank, 2018).

Social Context: Internal displacement in the CAR rose in 2017, the UN reports: by early 2018, about 688,000 Central Africans were internally displaced and 546,000 were refugees in neighbouring countries. Clashes in December 2017 displaced about 78,000 people from Ouham-Pendé Prefecture's Paoua town. At least 2.5 million people will need assistance in 2018, more than half the country's population. The government and Country Team launched a \$515.6 million (CFAF 275.7 billion) Humanitarian Response Plan in 2018 (World Bank, 2018).

Economic Context: Economic recovery in CAR continued in 2017 with 4.3% real GDP growth rate, slightly slower than 2016 (4.5%), but better than the forecast made at the beginning of the second half of 2017 (3.8%). Private consumption contributed the most, along with a slight contribution from the government. Export growth decelerated to 5.2% in 2017, after picking up at 8.2% of GDP in 2016 on the back of key exports, such as timber, gold, coffee, and cotton. Imports, including food, increased as security along the Bangui–Garoua Boulai corridor improved. On the supply side, industrial sector growth rose from 2% in 2016 to 7.2% in 2017 (led by construction, agri-industry, and green diamonds), while the service sector struggled amid volatile security. The primary sector dropped from almost 6% in 2016 to about 3% in 2017. Inflation fell from 4.6% in 2016 to 4.1% in 2017. The current account deficit reached 8.5% in 2017, down from 9.0% in 2016, reflecting a deceleration in food aid and slightly stronger forestry, diamonds, and gold exports. Public debt, 56.2% of GDP in 2016, is projected to fall to 51.8% of GDP in 2017, driven by the clearance of domestic arrears. However, the CAR remains at high risk of debt distress (World Bank, 2018).

Brief History of CAR Conflict: Soon after her independence, the country stepped into political instability followed by internal conflicts. A vast country with meagre military power failed to establish the government authority across the country, thus allowed the local warlordsto flourish to the maximum. As the country has the history of long dictatorship many timesthese dictators used different armed groups to dominate others; even political parties used the support of armed groups to overturn the governments as Bozizé did in 2003. Every time the armed groups got access to the state resources as a prize of their success.

In 2013, Muslim Seleka rebels led by Michel Djotodia ousted President François Bozizé. Responding to widespread atrocities by the Seleka militia and the Christian ‘anti-Balaka’ militia France sent forces in December 2013 and the UN deployed a peacekeeping force in September 2014. Djotodia stepped down early in 2014 and was replaced by interim President Catherine Samba-Panza. A cease-fire was signed in April 2015, but the violence, which has resulted in more than 6,000 deaths and more than 800,000 displaced persons, continues. In Mar 2016 Faustin-Archange Touadéra took over the power as elected president.

Presently three major parties playing the praetorian roles in the existing war economy of the country namely: the government authority, anti- Balaka and Ex- Seleka. In French the ‘Seleka’ means union; it is the union of different armed groups mostly Muslims united together and took over the government in 2013. Due to the international pressure, the ‘Seleka’ was disbanded in 2013. In 2014 ‘Seleka’ backed president Michel Djotodia stepped down and forced to leave the country under the UN sanction. The members of these rebel groups fled away and regrouped under different names such as FPRC, UPC, MPRC, MPC and so on. They are now commonly known as ‘ex- Seleka’ means former coalition. They control a large area of central and western CAR.

Table 1: A Chronology of Key Events

Before Independence	
1880s	France annexes the area
1910	Ubangi-Chari becomes part of the Federation of French Equatorial Africa
1920-30	Indigenous Africans stage violent protests against abuses by concessionaires
1957	MESAN wins control of the territorial assembly; Boganda becomes president of the Grand Council of French Equatorial Africa
Independence	
1958	The territory achieves self-government within French Equatorial Africa with Boganda as prime minister
1960	The Central African Republic becomes independent with David Dacko, nephew of Boganda, as president
1962	Dacko turns the Central African Republic into a one-party state with MESAN as the sole party
1964	Dacko confirmed as president in elections in which he is the sole candidate
The Bokassa era	
1965	Dacko ousted by the army commander, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, as the country faces bankruptcy and a

	threatened nationwide strike
1976	Bokassa proclaims himself emperor and renames the country the "Central African Empire"
1979	Bokassa ousted in a coup led by David Dacko and backed by French troops after widespread protests in which many school children were arrested and massacred while in detention
1981	Dacko deposed in a coup led by the army commander, Andre Kolingba
Ban on parties lifted	
1991	Political parties permitted to form
1993	Ange-Felix Patasse beats Kolingba and Dacko in elections to become president, ending 12 years of military rule. Kolingba releases several thousand political prisoners, including Bokassa, before standing down as president
1997	France begins withdrawing its forces from the republic; African peacekeepers replace French troops
1999	Patasse re-elected; his nearest rival, former President Kolingba, wins 19% of the vote
Patasse ousted	
2003	Rebel leader Francois Bozize seizes Bangui, declares himself president and dissolves parliament
2006	Rebels seize Birao, a town in the north-east. French fighter jets fired on rebel positions as part of the support for government troops trying to regain control of areas in the northeast
Peace process	
2008	Two of three main rebel groups - the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) and the Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD) - sign a peace agreement with the government providing for disarmament and demobilization of rebel fighters
2010	50th independence anniversary. Former self-styled Emperor Jean-Bedel Bokassa is officially rehabilitated
Bozize Ousted	
2013	Seleka rebels overrun the capital and seize power. President Bozize flees. Rebel leader Michel Djotodia suspends the constitution and dissolves parliament in a coup condemned internationally
2014	Muslim Seleka rebels and Christian "anti-balaka" vigilante forces agree to a tentative ceasefire at talks in Brazzaville
2015	Communal clashes broke out in Bangui after Muslim taxi-driver attacked. Pope visits, calls for peace between Muslims, Christians
2016	Faustin-Archange Touadera wins the presidential election in the run-off
2018	International Criminal Court overturns the conviction of Congolese ex-rebel Jean-Pierre Bemba for war crimes committed in CAR

Source: BBC (2018)

On the other hand, anti- Balaka are Christian majority armed group controlling the capital, the majority of the eastern part and few parts of the centre area. Unlike ex-Seleka their chain of command is not sturdy rather they are very locally grouped and named after the local leaders. Due to the strong chain of command, the ex-Seleka could establish a self-made taxation system in their area of control whereas the anti- Balaka largely depends on criminality in their controlled area.

War Economy Developed in CAR

World Bank ranked the CAR as the poorest country in the world in 2015. More than half of the population of the country is extremely poor live in rural areas and depend on agriculture. The country has abundant timber, diamonds, gold, uranium, and prospects for oil exploration. Despite enormous potentialities, the country has been indulged into civil war for long. Perhaps ‘there are many things to win than war’ propel the CAR into the long-lasting civil war. Few practised economic activities of these armed groups are:

Looting: In CAR every coup and civil unrest led to massive looting of the civilian population, private companies and NGOs by domestic and foreign rebels. Frequent looting accompanied the 1996-1997 mutinies partly caused the departure of big companies and the arrival of new economic operators. In the 2013 crisis CAR experienced the most

widespread and organized looting. Vehicles owned by NGOs, the UN and private companies were stolen and sold in neighbouring countries on such a scale that the Seleka coup seemed more like a car theft operation than the result of political struggle. According to the UN, this was the price paid for the Seleka victory. In Bangui, many unemployed youths participated in the looting in the wake of the Seleka but then joined the anti-Balaka. (Internal National Crisis Group, 2015). Apart from this, looting of the humanitarian convoy is very common in CAR, especially in sector west.

The ‘Comzone’ Economic System: ‘Comzone’ means commander of the zone who maintains few armed people under him to have control over an area. After coming into power Michel Djotodia officially entrusted comzones with administering regions of the country as a prize for their support. It also helped him to suppress his oppositions. Presently, in CAR various armed groups divided their area of control into different comzones who practice extortion, collect the illegal tax and at the same time threaten the private businesses to employ them for security. For example, Kaga Bandoro is famous for its cattle market. The cattle traders have to pay 5000- 10000 CFA as a tax to the comzone on every cattle they sell. Similarly, artisan miners and diamond collectors have to pay 20,000 to 2,00,000 CFA every month to their respective comzones. Sometimes the diamond traders join the armed groups and turned into comzone. This comzone are so powerful within their area that they also act as a police force, customs and even traditional judges; anyone who disobeys their verdict are brutally tortured.

Mining: CAR is very rich in mineral resources especially diamond and gold. Armed groups are benefited from the mines in different ways; the most common being extortion and the least common is organized production. Diamond operators and the armed groups often cooperate with each other. For example, during the Seleka regime around Berberati, collectors in league with the Seleka went to the mines under the protection of their armed sponsors and forced diggers to sell at a low price. In the same town, the Seleka installed a purchasing office for buying and selling of diamonds. Many Seleka armed leaders were artisan miners and diamond collectors. They used their experience to develop their strategy for capturing production zones. The expansion of the Seleka’s area was rapid and strategic (ibid). It is worth mentioning that sector west is richer in minerals and soon after the fall of the Seleka regime was taken over by anti-Balaka. They followed all most similar strategy to gain maximum benefit from the mining sites.

Smuggling: Due to the vast open border, weak custom system and absence of border security force smuggling and illegal trading have become an integral part of the Central African Republic’s economy. Diamond, gold and forestry are the main smuggling items from the country. On the other hand, arms, ammunition and other commodities are smuggled into the Central African Republic. Cameroonian route, Sudanese route and Airport are the main routes for smuggling. A diamond alone earns 50% of the country’s export revenue. Unfortunately, almost 70% of the produced diamond are smuggled outside every year. Gold and diamond are smuggled through Cameroon route by the Christian traders, Sudanese route by Muslim traders and Airport route with the help of government employees. In 2013, several people smuggling diamonds and gold at Bangui airport were intercepted including foreign citizens; some of them were found with false documents issued by the mines ministry.

Poaching: The savanna forest CAR is blessed with elephants, rhinoceros and other wild animals. Apart from meat the ivory, horns and bones are also having a large demand in different countries. Thus poaching becomes a profitable profession in CAR. On the other hand, due to the absence of agro farms, the bushmeat meets up the demand for protein, and Bangui alone consumes almost 70,000 tons of bushmeat every year. The business of supplying bush meat was previously controlled by the clans in power through illegal poaching. In 2013 it was taken over by Nourredine Adam, a Seleka general and soon after the Seleka plunged in 2014 the business went to the anti-Balaka leaders.

Poaching also involves ivory trafficking. Most of the ivories are carried to Sudan to export to Asia, while a considerable proportion is transported to Bangui for sale to local traders (Chinese, Lebanese) and also to markets in Libongo and Yokadouma in Cameroon. Except for a few locals, most poachers operating in the country for the last few decades are from neighboring countries, especially from Chad and Sudan. Groups of 20 to 80 poachers operate on a military scale in north and eastern CAR. According to the locals, these groups are equipped with automatic weapons and satellite phones. The ivory trade was banned in the CAR in 1985, still, it continues as the authorities

have always been powerless to deal with the large groups of well-armed poachers at the same time did not want to miss the profit of ivory trading.

Informal Taxation: The comzones also establish numbers of check posts on the main roads in their respective areas which not only control the movement of goods and arms but also act as a source of huge income. For example, in sector centre, a moto-taxi (motorcycle used as a taxi to carry passengers and goods) has to pay 100 to 2000 CFA to cross a check post. An informal conversation with the traders of sector east revealed that they had to pay around 80,000 \$ a year to carry the goods up to Bangui. The illegal taxation of comzone is so profitable that armed groups sometimes united together to fight other comzones irrespective of their ethnical, religious or motivational values. For example, in Nov 2016 local anti- Balaka supported FPRC led ex-Seleka coalition to fight against UPC (another ex-Seleka group) to establish control over 'Main Supply Route-2' which resulted in more than 200 deaths and few thousand displacements in the sector centre.

Illegal Fuel Trading: As a landlocked country illegal fuel trading is a very profitable business in CAR and it has long existed illegal fuel market. The smuggled fuel from Chad and Sudan is sold at a price much lower than that charged at service stations. Usually, the clan in power directly or indirectly control this business. For example, the Bozizé family members and presidential guards reportedly became involved in the sale of smuggled fuel, especially in Bossangoa. Once Seleka took over, with signed official orders, Seleka combatants allegedly threatened service station managers to take smuggled petrol and sold it to street dealers known as "Jaguars", who sell it at a price below that of the service stations (ibid). As usual, after the Seleka regime, the informal fuel market is now being controlled by the members of anti-Balaka. The situation has improved in Bangui since the political government took power in 2016. However, in other areas, it is the ex-Seleka, anti- Balaka or other armed groups that patronize the illegal fuel trading.

Government Corruption: Like most other third world countries CAR has deep corruption problem from high-level policymakers to root level service providers. For example, a customs officer post whether paid or unpaid gives opportunities for additional income. Besides obtaining customs clearance with false documents and pressure by government high officials are very common. In 2006, Bozizé dissolved the customs service and replaced it with a private company owned by his friend who had helped him in exile. Again during the Seleka regime, they established a parallel customs system, such as in Bangui Seleka commanders ordered wholesalers "to seek customs clearance with them" (ibid). Similar pictures were seen in other attractive ministries such as Minister of State of Mines, Energy, and Water Resources; Minister of Water, Forestry, Hunting, Fishing and Environment etc.

Connotation of Contemporary War Economy in the Context of CAR: As the contemporary war economy is different than classic war economy the effects of contemporary war economy are also different in many ways. Similarly, the practice of war economy may differ from place to place with the geopolitical differences. Nevertheless, they share some common features in every situation such as recycling of armed groups, spreading illegal trading, an involvement of global actors etc. The war economy of the Central African Republic is noexception to this connotation.

Spreading of Refugees and Illegal Trading: Normally two types of displacement take place in the contemporary wars. In contemporary wars, the violence is very much directed to the civil population resulting in a large displacement of the population. The violence towards the civilian is not only to create panic but also snatching their resource by evicting them from their possession. Though the initial displacement takes place due to lack of security the subsequent displacement takes place in search for other needs within the conflict zone. Therefore, the displaced people tend to be relocated to the area where all these war economy activities are functional.

As per UNHCR till January 2017 there are 543000 refugees from CAR and 693900 internally displaced in the country. Spreading of refugees and internal displacement due to an armed conflict are common to this country. In December 2013 a few hundred thousand refugees fled to Cameroon, Chad, Congo and DR Congo when Seleka government took over the power. A similar picture was seen when Seleka government stepped down in 2014, few hundred thousand Muslim traders and habitats were pushed out of Bangui and Western part of the country by the anti-Balaka. After every conflict, the rebel groups took over the control of all government / non-government

resources including diamond & gold mines within the area. They established control over the supply route for the easy smuggling of goods. Gradually displaced people relocated them around such illegal trading hubs and involved in it.

Recycling of Armed Groups: The armed groups of CAR never laid down their arms rather they converted from one group to another. The emergence of the anti-Balaka forms part of a long tradition of resistance by the Gbaya, Banda, Mandjia and Mboum ethnic groups, which supported each other during anti-colonial insurrections. (Internal National Crisis Group, 2015, p-3) Several times in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the Gbaya, the Mboum and the Banda formed alliances to resist the much better-armed Fulani Muslim slave-merchants. Nevertheless, these alliances sometimes broke down and some Gbaya groups made peace with the Fulani in order to gain a share in the slave trade. This tradition of self-defense has continued until the present day in the form of village self-defence militias. In the 1980s and 1990s, the French army, which led operations against the criminal gangs that robbed people on the roads (road cutters or zarginas) often encountered these village militias. Politicians have often recruited rural self-defence groups to act as armed support. François Bozizé, president 2003-2013, used them to combat road cutters and contain the Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD). It is reported that they received arms from the authorities in the towns of Bossangoa, Bozoum and Bocaranga.

Similarly, the Mbororo archers, mainly Woodabe, who united in the early 1990s to defend their herds and combat hostage-taking by road cutters were used by former president Ange-Félix Patassé when he was in power between 1993 and 2003. The authorities provided the Mbororo archers with vehicles, entrusted them with operations and issued duly signed orders. The emergence of the Seleka in 2012 in the north-eastern area resulted from the government's abandonment of the region and the growing influence of Chad and Sudan. These regions have for decades sheltered armed groups, especially Chadian and Sudanese rebels. Ex-Seleka combatants and their leaders have had a long career as rebels. Changing from one movement to another, they never really put down their arms in recent years and have long been part of the political and security landscape in the Central African Republic.

Examination of the profiles of the commanding officers reveals that many "ex-liberators" were former companions of Bozizé and helped him take over the power in 2003. Along with Abakar Sabone, Nourredine Adam, Al Khatim and many others who control the entire north-central zone of the country, was a "liberator" in 2003. Unable to either pay the combatants who helped him take power or integrate all of them into his presidential guard, François Bozizé offered some of the positions in the administration. Feeling betrayed, many turned to rural banditry. Their resentment against Bozizé fuelled their desire to join the ex-Seleka. Other ex-Seleka warlords also came from well-known armed groups. For example, Ali Darassa, now the leader of the Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC) was a long-time right-hand man of Baba Laddé, a Chadian rebel and leader of the Popular Front for Recovery (FPR) since 1998. Many of the militiamen in Revolution and Justice (RJ), an armed group that appeared in 2013 in the Paoua region, were in the ex-APRD.

Therefore, it is always elusive either to be a part of an existing armed group or form a new armed group. The recycle of combatant in CAR does not limit within the recruitment of new combatant. It includes grouping, regrouping, segregation and creation of armed groups.

Involvement of Regional and Global Actors: The contemporary war economy involves regional and global actors as it provides 'win-win' situation to the warlords and illegal traders. This parasitic economy largely depends on extracting the natural resources which have hardly any demand in the local market. Therefore, these resources smuggled into the global market with a very low price which attracts global actors for a quick profit.

For example, the well-debated ISIL also established an excellent system of war economy based on oil smuggling. In 2014 the satellite image showed that 42 oil production sites (34 in Syria, 8 in Iraq) were functional under the ISIL arrangement which earned almost US\$3 millions per day (Leigh K, 2014). Apparently, the act seemed to be very local, helped the ISIL to procure arms, ammunition and other necessities to continue the war. However, it had a deep impact on the regional and global economy by dropping the oil price to the record low level.

Similarly, despite civil unrest for the last few decades, all diamond and gold mine sites are functional in CAR. Poaching, rhino horn and ivory trading; deforestation etc are continuing at full scale. Obviously, all of these products are smuggled to the global market as they have hardly any demand in the local market. Soon after the discovery of oil deposit in Um Dafuq (a bordering town in Sudan), Chinese oil miners were seen in 2016 in Birao (a bordering town inside CAR). It was reported that the team also visited N'dele and Kaga Bandoro which are the HQ of rebel groups in those areas.

Besides, due to prolonged unrest in the conflict zones, the local production lowers down to the minimum. Therefore, the vacuum necessary commodities and services are mostly filled by foreign traders. These foreign traders know the art of trading in the conflict zones. They often take the advantages of weak government and absence of legal instrument by not paying the tax and supplying inferior quality of goods, services. The insecure market offers them an unopposed playground. However, they ensure their security and free play by selecting their counterpart from the clan in power, purchasing armed leaders, bribing a corrupted official and so on. As it was discussed, in the CAR for last 20 years, the illegal oil market is controlled by the closest ally of the presidents, the mining of diamonds is controlled by the warlords of the conflict zones and the government officials including ministers taking their tolls from the smuggling and illegal trading. In CAR most large service provider such as telecommunication, private security companies etc are French won companies ran by the locals.

Conclusion

It is argued that new wars are motivated by economic gain; however, it is difficult to distinguish between those who use the cover of violence for economic reasons and those who engage in predatory economic activities to finance their political causes. The contemporary war economy tested in the context of CAR shows that despite having different sources of incomes it shares some common connotation with other contemporary war economies such as recycle of combatants, the involvement of global actors etc.

The political economy analysis of the modern intrastate conflicts can help to understand the key dynamics of that civil war. It can also lead to a more systematic understanding of how these dynamics impact on conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. At the strategic level, the understanding of this war economy is very crucial to realize the root causes of the conflict and frame the policy guidance for establishing peace and political stability. However, this is also important at the operational and tactical level as the war economy of CAR is extended to the remote villages involving every member of the armed groups as well as the local authorities.

United Nations and African Union are working for long to restore peace and stability in CAR. At the strategic level, it will not be possible unless these sources of financing are regulated by comprehensive plans. Similarly, a well regulated economic system has to be developed at the tactical level to support the common people. So that recycling of combatant and spreading of illegal trading can be prevented. This manuscript summarizes economic impacts from different events. These findings from those incidents can be helpful for policy formulation for the emergency time in Bangladesh.

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