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Regional and spatial impacts of external and internal conflicts on ecological footprint: the case of Middle East and Africa

Abstract:

The economic and environmental structures of countries are greatly impacted by domestic and foreign conflicts. To promote sustainable development, it is crucial to understand the spatial impact of these conflicts on the ecological footprint of a region. With a focus on Middle Eastern and African countries, this paper investigates the impact of such conflicts on their environments, taking into consideration the unique spatial features of their ecological footprints. Using a spatial econometric model, the study assesses the contributions of ecological footprint determinants, particularly internal and external conflict indicators, across 46 Middle Eastern and African countries from 2001 to 2019. The results indicate that internal conflict can lead to increased pressure on natural resources and ecological systems in neighboring countries, while energy use and economic growth impose a significant ecological burden both domestically and abroad. While urbanization and resource rents were found to reduce the ecological footprint, trade openness was found to be nonsignificant. Conflicts such as war, foreign pressure, civil war, and civil disorder were found to have a significant negative impact on the environment, suggesting that reducing these conflicts would improve environmental circumstances. The findings highlight the need for conflict resolution measures to achieve a sustainable environment in the Middle Eastern and African regions and have implications for other countries facing similar issues.

Keywords: *Carbon Dioxide/analysis, Africa, Middle East, *Natural Resources, Internationality, Economic Development, Ecological footprint, External conflict, Internal conflict, Middle East and Africa, Spatial econometrics

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