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Benjamin Smith , David Waldner  
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# Cambridge Elements

Elements in the Politics of Development

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MIT CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

## RETHINKING THE RESOURCE CURSE

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## Rethinking the Resource Curse

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**Abstract:** This Element documents the diversity and dissensus of scholarship on the political resource curse, diagnoses its sources, and directs scholarly attention toward what the authors believe will be more fruitful avenues of future research. In the scholarship to date, there is substantial regional heterogeneity and substantial evidence denying the existence of a political resource curse. This dissensus is located in theory, measure, and research design, especially regarding measurement error and endogenous selection. The work then turns to strategies for reconnecting research on resource politics to the broader literature on democratic development. Finally, the results of the authors' own research are presented, showing that a set of historically contingent events in the Middle East and North Africa are at the root of what has been mistaken for a global political resource curse.

**Keywords:** resource curse, democratization, endogenous selection bias, political economy, comparative politics

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