Inside Rebellion

Some rebel groups abuse noncombatant populations, while others exhibit restraint. Insurgent leaders in some countries transform local structures of government, while others simply extract resources for their own benefit. In some contexts, groups kill their victims selectively, while in other environments violence appears indiscriminate, even random. This book presents a theory that accounts for the different strategies pursued by rebel groups in civil war, explaining why patterns of insurgent violence vary so much across conflicts. It does so by examining the membership, structure, and behavior of four insurgent movements in Uganda, Mozambique, and Peru. Drawing on interviews with nearly two hundred combatants and civilians who experienced violence firsthand, it shows that rebels' strategies depend in important ways on how difficult it is to launch a rebellion. The book thus demonstrates how characteristics of the environment in which rebellions emerge constrain rebel organization and shape the patterns of violence that civilians experience.

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THE POLITICS OF INSURGENT VIOLENCE

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For Rachel

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List of Abbreviations

AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Liberátion du Congo-Zaire (Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo–Zaire)
AIS	Armé Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Army)
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization, Rhodesia
CPN(M)	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CRH	Comité Regional del Alto Huallaga (Regional Committee of Alto Huallaga), Shining Path, Peru
DINCOTE	Dirección Nacional Contra el Terrorismo (National Counterterrorism Directorate), Peru
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)
FIS	Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front)
FLN	Front de Libération National
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique)
FRONASA	Front for National Salvation, Uganda
GIA	Groupe Islamique Armé (Armed Islamic Group)
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
NPFL	National Patriotic Forces of Liberia
NRA	National Resistance Army, Uganda
NRC	National Resistance Council, Uganda
NRM	National Resistance Movement, Uganda
PRIO	International Peace Research Institute, Oslo
RC	Resistance Council

Renamo	Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
RUF	Revolutionary United Front, Sierra Leone
UHV	Upper Huallaga Valley, Peru
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front
UPC	Uganda People's Congress

Preface and Acknowledgments

My first exposure to the politics of rebellion came in South Africa in 1995, only months after Nelson Mandela's election. An idealistic college sophomore, I moved into the township of Guguletu outside of Cape Town, seeking a connection to the powerful political changes and social transformations under way in the country. Through countless conversations with friends and acquaintances, I grew to understand the history of South Africa's remarkable transition. I learned about the meaning of resistance from those who had participated in nonviolent protest, joined the African National Congress and its guerrilla army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and sought to make the townships ungovernable, under the banner of the United Democratic Movement. Seeing Mandela take the reins of power was the culmination of decades of *their* struggle for human rights, economic opportunity, and political power.

Four years later, then a Ph.D. student at Harvard, I returned to southern Africa, this time on a summer fellowship. I headed to Mwange refugee camp in northern Zambia, which was flooded with tens of thousands of people fleeing the fighting in eastern Congo. My aim was to learn something about the brewing rebellion and to understand why people felt the need to flee the country. The former dictator of Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko, had been overthrown only a year earlier by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who, after his victory, acted more like his predecessor than the revolutionary his supporters had expected. Decades of misrule and neglect in eastern Congo had created the conditions for resistance, and I wondered whether the new movements taking shape would bring the Congolese people the freedoms and opportunities for which they hoped. Sitting under the hot sun, recording the personal experiences of countless refugees, I found out the answer: No. Not one of the refugees expected that these movements would bring

about a political transition. Fleeing to Zambia, I was told, was not an easy decision. Many left their relatives and most of their possessions behind. But when confronted by the brutality of the insurgents and their external backers, few could imagine an alternative to leaving.

Returning to graduate school, the intellectual question became quite obvious to me. Can social science help us to understand the conditions under which rebellion mobilizes the disenfranchised for political change, and when it serves only the narrow interests of its leaders? Extending the arena of research beyond these two cases, I became fascinated by the horrific violence perpetrated by insurgent movements in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the disciplined strategies of social mobilization pursued by communist rebellions in Latin America. I decided to concentrate my inquiry on the abuse of noncombatant populations, asking why insurgent movements commit high levels of violence in some conflicts and not others. My timing was fortuitous as the research questions I found fascinating gained currency in political science. Civil war replaced interstate war as the dominant form of international conflict, motivating a flood of new research on why some countries experience civil war and others do not. Yet, while the study of civil war onset lent itself to analyses conducted from afar, my interest in the strategies and behaviors of perpetrators drove me to the field. Understanding rebellion from the perspective of those who experienced it became my central preoccupation.

In the pages that follow, I offer an explanation that helps to resolve the puzzle of insurgent violence. To advance it, I generalize from the personal stories shared with me by countless individuals in Uganda, Mozambique, and Peru. I use the collective wisdom embodied in their experiences to compare and contrast insurgent behavior in different contexts, over time, and across countries. While the resulting narrative offers readers a look inside four rebel groups, it references commanders and combatants, and reports the experiences of particular towns and villages, without including the names of the individuals who served as sources during my research. For reasons of confidentiality and for the protection of their security, I promised them anonymity. I respect that promise in the presentation of my argument and evidence.

I am indebted to the individuals who patiently told me their stories and answered my questions. They opened their homes, sharing what little food they had to offer. They introduced me to others in their villages and communities, making it possible for me to hear diverse perspectives and experiences. Each shared with me a piece of their autobiography. These

gifts of time, trust, and life experience cannot be easily repaid. Although this book cannot possibly give voice to each of their individual experiences, I hope that it does make a contribution to the historical record and provide part of an explanation for the violence experienced in Uganda, Mozambique, and Peru. I also hope that the lessons learned from making comparisons across conflicts will provide important insights to policy makers who seek to prevent the violence now perpetrated against civilians in much of the developing world.

I am often asked how I managed to identify the insurgent leaders with whom I needed to speak for this project. Thankfully, I benefited from the goodwill, genuine interest, and assistance of key individuals in each country who proved willing to open doors for me at every stage. Lieutenant General Elly Tumwine (Uganda) encouraged members of the National Resistance Army to tell me their stories and brought me into the Luwero Triangle for the first time. William Pike (Uganda) shared recollections of his first visit with the insurgents "in the bush," made valuable introductions to many in the movement leadership, and took the arresting photograph that graces the cover of this book. Senior party leaders entertained my requests for assistance from Renamo's political hierarchy; their letters of support gave me access to Renamo cadres in central and northern Mozambique. Benedicto Jiménez, a former head of Peru's counterterrorism police and distinguished analyst of the Shining Path in his own right, recognized the enormous value in comparing Sendero's strategy to that of other movements. His support opened the door to research among incarcerated Sendero militants, enabled my access to the police department's private archive of captured Shining Path documents, and made possible my field work in the tense, drug-growing region of the Huallaga Valley.

My research in Uganda, Mozambique, and Peru also would have been impossible without the hard work of three tremendous research assistants. Each, a social scientist in training, joined me in the field as a partner and colleague, conducting interviews, writing field notes, and challenging my thinking at every stage. Without their probing questions, keen insights, and careful attention to telling me honestly what was and was not possible, this project could never have been completed. My special thanks go to Phoebe Kajubi (Uganda), Laudemiro Francisco (Mozambique), and Abdie Ramirez (Peru). I am also grateful to three institutions that provided me with an academic community in which to base my research in the field: the Makerere Institute of Social Research (Uganda), the Higher Institute

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This book began as a doctoral dissertation in the Program in Political Economy and Government at Harvard University. I owe a substantial intellectual debt to my four dissertation advisors, Robert Bates, Jorge Domínguez, Stephen Walt, and Monica Toft. They were wonderful mentors, offering a constant stream of inspiration, encouragement, and support from the project's inception to its conclusion. Their shared commitment to analytical rigor, creative field work, and clarity of presentation – expressed consistently in their incisive comments and feedback – is, I hope, reflected in the final product. I am also indebted to a group of colleagues and friends at Harvard, who contributed in formal and informal ways to my intellectual development and the growth of this project: Karen Ferree, James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Kosuke Imai, Alan Jacobs, Andrew Karch, Robert Mickey, Daniel Posner, Peter Singer, Naunihal Singh, Smita Singh, and Dan Zuberi. Macartan Humphreys, in particular, has been a source of tremendous insight and perspective; our collaborative work has shaped my thinking in innumerable ways.

The Development Economics Research Group at the World Bank, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Brookings Institution, the Center for Global Development, and the Department of Political Science at Stanford University provided extremely supportive environments in which to complete this project. I received useful feedback on various pieces of the manuscript in seminars at Cornell University, Columbia University, Emory University, Georgetown University, Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Michigan, and the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to the useful critiques offered by participants in these seminars, I received valuable comments and suggestions from Ron Atkinson, Christopher Avery, Ian Bannon, David Capie, Dara Cohen, Paul Collier, Suzanne Cooper, Alexander Downes, Jesse Driscoll, James Fearon, Raymond Hopkins, Herbert

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Lew Bateman, the senior editor for political science and history at Cambridge University Press, recognized the importance of the manuscript and made every effort to assist me in preparing it for publication. Ruth Homrighaus brought the skills of an editor and the perspective of a general-interest reader to these pages. I believe the book is much stronger for her contribution.

Finally, the very existence of this book owes much to the support and encouragement of colleagues, friends, and family. For lively intellectual debates and unstinting friendship, I am indebted to friends and colleagues from California, Swarthmore, Harvard, and beyond. My twin brother, Joshua Weinstein, has been with me from literally the beginning and his interest in finding out "what my argument was" consistently challenged me to clarify and refine my thinking. My parents, Harvey and Rhona Weinstein, with their professorial caps and academic red pens, have challenged me (since childhood) to ask big questions and collect empirical evidence in support of my arguments. They have also emphasized the importance of investing the necessary time and energy to complete a final product of which I can be proud. That lesson took a while for me to learn, but I hope they will see here that I have taken it to heart. Most of all, without

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