# The Fates of African Rebels: Victory, Defeat, and the Politics of Civil War

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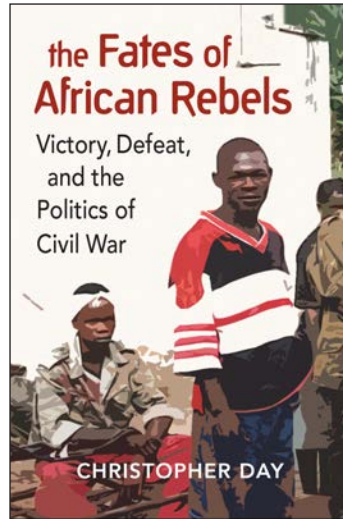
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## Exploring the Fates
## of African Rebels

*In revolutionary warfare, the mere fact of an insurgent surviving and
not being eliminated is in itself a success.*

—Yoweri Museveni,
National Resistance Army/Movement

On 19 January 2002, government motorcades roared past crowds packed
into Wusum Sports Stadium in Makeni, Sierra Leone.[1] Only a few hun-
dred yards from my office, President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah came to com-
memorate the Joint Declaration of End of War alongside Issa Sesay,
interim leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group
that had fought Sierra Leone's government for over a decade. The RUF
was probably best known for its contributions to Africa's iconic war
imagery—blood diamonds, the vacant gaze of stoned child soldiers, and
the amputated limbs of bewildered peasants. Beyond this snapshot, the
rebel group was part of a broader regional conflict and an extension of a
power axis rooted in Liberia that supplied rebels with arms and ammuni-
tion in exchange for precious gems. The RUF fought a series of weak
regimes that faced threats from within their own military, regimes that
also relied heavily on patchy outside support from regional African
armies, United Nations (UN) peacekeepers, and British troops. By mid-
2001, despite massive international intervention to prop up various unsta-
ble regimes, the RUF had come to control large parts of Sierra Leone,
mining alluvial diamonds and gold, controlling illicit cross-border trade,
looting everything lootable, and preying savagely on ordinary people. In
fact, there were several times during its rebellion that the RUF seemed
capable of victory. At the very least, over the course of the conflict, and
at the behest of regional and international actors, the rebel group was
offered more than one power-sharing opportunity with the government.

I had arrived in Makeni, the largest city in the Northern District, when it was the seat of the RUF's high command. Its fighters strutted around in Tupac T-shirts. They manned checkpoints with no traffic save for our Toyota Land Cruisers and the charred remains of roadside vehicles. As an aid worker at a nongovernmental organization (NGO), I maintained an air of friendly deference toward the RUF Big Men. When sober, the jovial "humanitarian coordinator," Gaskin Amara, was my official counterpart (no self-respecting rebellion goes without a "humanitarian" wing). Colonel Augustine Gbao, chief of security, always reassured me of my safety as he held court over 555 cigarettes, his brand of choice, and ranted about revolutionary politics (I eventually gave him my Che Guevara T-shirt). Multiple-gold-chained John "Bokello" Bangura was Sesay's main diamond commander, childhood friend of my local logistician, and buyer of rounds of Guinness. And of course, there was Sesay himself—"General Issa"—at whom I nervously winked once and received a strikingly boyish smile in return.

But now in Wusum Stadium, as Sesay delivered a contrite speech ahead of a symbolic arms-burning ceremony, things were different. The war was over and the RUF had neither won nor exactly lost. The group's leaders had squandered their chance to join the government, and any remaining "peace process" merely extended UN peacekeeping and state authority throughout the country. Most RUF rank and file had begun handing in their arms, breaking ranks, and rejoining civilian life as best they could via underfunded reintegration programs that promised vocational training. Although they were granted amnesty, most of these fighters anonymously walked away with nothing else.[2] Some left to fight in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, while a small number unsuccessfully struggled to transform the RUF into a political party.

Emblematic of the RUF's threadbare condition was the implosion of Makeni's Big Men. Chased out of the eastern city of Kono by stick-wielding civilians, Gaskin kept only the shirt on his back. Gbao habitually stopped me in the street to beg for a sack of rice. Bokello carefully rationed his remaining diamond dollars by drinking the local palm wine instead of Guinness. Sesay remained paranoid about his security and was eventually bundled off to face an indictment for war crimes. After a conflict that had claimed an estimated 200,000 lives in Sierra Leone and Liberia, that had displaced upward of 2 million, the RUF collapsed around its leaders and basically vanished as a rebellion. And I watched it happen.

Years later, as I worked on my graduate studies, the question of the RUF's fate came into sharper relief when I was doing preliminary field-

work in Uganda. An investigation into newspaper articles on armed groups in the country from 1986 until 2002 yielded a hefty list of almost fifty of them. Some were merely "briefcase rebels"—rebels in name alone who appeared only fleetingly to talk to the press. But many were quite real and quite violent, dragging the Ugandan government into several simultaneous conflicts.[3] Aside from the obvious question of why there were so many rebellions, a closer look at how each of them had ended showed a remarkable amount of variation. The Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA) and the Uganda People's Army (UPA) fought briefly but intensely until signing peace accords and joining ranks with the Ugandan government. As the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) fragmented internally, the army killed or arrested its fighters while a related but separate group, the Uganda National Rescue Front II (UNRF II), signed an accord and secured government sinecures. A clutch of small rebel groups—the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), the Uganda Muslim Liberation Army (UMLA), and the National Democratic Army (NDA)—was roundly trounced on the battlefield. Their scattered remnants formed the core of the Allied Democratic Front (ADF), which fought for a decade until it fragmented and imploded much like the RUF, only to rebound later.

As I was doing this research, Uganda's most notorious rebel group, Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was alive and well, carving a path of terror through the lightly governed hinterlands between Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Internationally arranged peace talks based in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, limped forward (and eventually failed) alongside ongoing Ugandan military action against LRA fighters in the bush (that also failed), and the group's fate has remained up in the air (it still is). Years earlier, when I was an aid worker in northern Uganda, I had seen the LRA's handiwork while running humanitarian programs for its civilian victims, and I was deeply and personally invested in seeing this war over. Surely the fates of all of these other groups could illuminate something about which path this persistent rebellion might follow after having fought so brutally and for so long.

## The Puzzle

My goal here is to explain the fates of rebels in Africa's contemporary civil wars, which can vary considerably, and sometimes unexpectedly. A look at the fates of the RUF and Uganda's myriad rebels shows that they do not quite correspond with conventional views of conflict outcomes. These tend to focus on the victory, defeat, success, or failure of

states or armed groups, or on the middle path of peace agreements often brokered by external actors. As shown by many cases beyond those in Sierra Leone and Uganda, this depiction of how conflicts end does not always explain what happens to individual rebellions as they move through civil wars and eventually end in one way or another. The tendency to focus on this victory-defeat dichotomy and on the external orientation of peace accords misses the complex dynamics shaping many recent rebellions and does not meaningfully capture a potential range of fates beyond success or failure, rebellion or nonrebellion.

To be sure, there are clear wins and losses in conflict. For instance, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) is emblematic of Africa's few victorious rebellions, keeping company with Uganda's National Resistance Army and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).[4] In contrast, after years of civil war, the government of Sri Lanka eventually wiped out the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE). The União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) rebellion limped to defeat following the death of its leader, Jonas Savimbi, in 2002 and has since transformed itself into Angola's second-largest political party. Similarly, Colombia's M-19 rebellion was defeated militarily but its members were allowed to contest politically in the late 1980s.

But other rebels may achieve a sense of "victory" through a peace accord or political settlement. El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) ended this way, as did the fifteen-year civil Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO) rebellion against Mozambique's Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo) regime. In contrast, the RUF in Sierra Leone suffered from a sort of "self-defeat"— neither winning nor losing to the national army, nor entering into a durable political settlement via massive international intervention despite having numerous chances to do so.

In explaining distinct rebel fates as variants of conflict outcomes, I have drawn on evidence from Africa to address a novel question within the broader literature on civil wars and insurgent violence. Based on original research and fieldwork, I have developed an argument that attributes rebel fates to their historical role in regime politics.

## The Argument

To explain the fates of African rebels, I propose the following: Rebel groups are organized by their degree of political embeddedness in state authority structures. Although these structures can be formal, they are

largely informal and based on patronage networks. This means that some groups may be composed of disparate political outsiders, whereas others contain key insiders from the fragmented networks of the prevailing political establishment. It is these variations in embeddedness that predict different rebel fates.

Politically embedded rebel groups cohere around disenfranchised elites—insiders—who once played either formal or informal roles in state institutions. These elites maintain prewar patronage networks that bring organizational endowments into rebellion, which either increase the likelihood of winning outright or facilitate their reentry into regime politics by way of a political settlement with incumbents. Alternatively, groups composed of political outsiders are already marginalized from the existing political system. Although these outsiders may have alternative sources of organizational cohesion, such as ethnicity or class, they will lack the access to political networks granting entry to authority structures, unless they replace them entirely. Short of victory, these groups are more likely to lose militarily or unravel on their own.

In addition, although I rule out military capacity as a major factor in explaining rebel fates, I do consider the parity of rebels with state military forces, elsewhere described as the "technology of rebellion."[5] In other words, rebels can fight in irregular wars that are asymmetrical, using guerrilla tactics against a more conventional state military. Or, as in many cases, rebels fight in contexts where irregular warfare is symmetrical, where rebels and state militaries are more or less evenly matched. Either way, although one would expect that a rebel group's capacity relative to a state adversary would make for stable forecasts, a key insight here is that political embeddedness mediates capacity and is a better predictor of rebel fates.

## Why Rebel Fates Matter

In 1980, Gurr noted, "The outcomes of violent conflict are problematic and intrinsically worthy of study."[6] Yet since then, the broader literature on civil war has focused on its causes, conduct, and patterns of violence.[7] My work here contributes to the expanding scholarship on the organization and behavior of rebellions in civil war,[8] engaging in dialogue with the more limited literature on conflict outcomes.[9] Examining the puzzle of rebel fates expands the conceptualization of these outcomes to be more in line with "win, lose, or draw" but considers these as variations of victory and defeat.[10] This dovetails with Staniland's

observation that there are alternative ways to think about conflict out-
comes that capture the fine-grained dynamics of civil wars.[11] Addition-
ally, this study provides a corrective to views of conflict outcomes as
endgames that are "resolved" by outsiders, lending key insights into the
larger industry of policy-oriented research on intervention and conflict
resolution.[12] More important, the research in this book signals a key
conceptual shift from generic conflict outcomes to the distinct fates of a
conflict's main actors—in this case, rebel groups—which is a new
direction of inquiry that contributes to the broader comparative litera-
ture on civil wars and insurgent violence.

In a more general sense, I interrogate the extent to which the win-
ners or losers of Africa's civil wars can potentially shape the broader
nature of politics and society on the continent. Studying the fates of
rebels casts light on the politics of weak states and has implications for
wider-ranging issues related to political order and stability. To be sure,
rebellion in Africa bears witness to the imperfect monopoly of violence
held by many African regimes over their territories. This study therefore
provides further insight into the projection of state authority, particu-
larly in the context of state-society relations in environments with weak
formal institutions and where governance functions largely through
patronage networks and elite coalitions. A key theoretical contribution
here is the observation that rebellions do not necessarily occur periph-
eral to or distinct from the regimes they fight but can arise from the
very political networks that sustain regime authority.

In this vein, my focus on rebellion in weak states takes up the call
from Kalyvas to explore the understudied and less understood phenom-
ena of symmetrical, irregular wars that play out in contexts such as
Africa.[13] This means looking at conflicts where both rebel groups and
state armies adopt similar strategies in fighting one another against the
backdrop of weak or failing state institutions. For instance, for most of
Sierra Leone's civil war, RUF rebels fought a poorly trained, undisci-
plined army that exploited disorder for personal gain, ushering in the
phenomenon widely described as "sobels"—soldiers by day and rebels
by night.[14] In addition, in expanding our knowledge of symmetrical,
irregular wars, examining the fates of rebels who fight in these conflicts
can contribute to a broader understanding of how rebel organizations
are developed, maintained, or unwound in violent environments.

Finally, studying the fates of rebels has important policy implica-
tions. As a former aid worker, I have seen firsthand the tremendous
human costs of civil wars in Africa and South Asia. They cause eco-
nomic and political instability in regions already saddled with weak

institutions. Millions are killed, many from direct violence but most from conflict's downstream consequences of displacement, disease, and malnutrition. Research into the inner workings of rebel groups and their corresponding fates can provide practical advice on how to ultimately solve and possibly prevent such conflicts and more effectively mitigate their humanitarian consequences. For example, foisting peace agreements upon regimes that compel elites to incorporate certain types of rebel groups into state politics may not work out as planned. Equally, counterinsurgency strategies that ignore the complex political networks that are the wellsprings of rebellion can turn out to be much more grueling affairs than expected. More nuanced responses require policymakers and practitioners to take more seriously the full range of forms and possible fates that characterize contemporary rebel groups in weak states and the regions in which these wars occur.

## Prevailing Approaches

What factors explain the fates of African rebels? As mentioned above, the lion's share of research on civil war and rebellion tends to focus on their causes and their myriad processes. Like much of this literature, the more limited, albeit growing work on conflict outcomes deploys large-N, cross-national studies and casts a wide net around a range of state-level variables such as state weakness, natural resources, or geography. This work explores the key questions of why some conflicts last longer than others, what conditions are necessary for them to end, and why some civil wars are more difficult to resolve than others. If rebel fates can be considered distinct variants of conflict outcomes, it makes sense then to situate things in the broader literature of conflict duration and termination, which casts these phenomena as conceptual cousins.

From this literature, we can identify two dominant conceptual binaries. One sees conflict outcomes as a matter of incumbent victory versus rebel victory and examines the ability or willingness of rebels and/or incumbents to fight and win. The other pits conflict resolution versus failed conflict resolution and examines the ability or willingness of rebels and/or incumbents to negotiate. This approach straddles conceptual terrain, framing successful conflict resolution as a variant of conflict termination, and its failure in terms of conflict duration.

In seeking to understand the causal wellsprings of conflict duration and termination, scholars have developed a sizable literature on bargaining in civil wars.[15] Most of this work begins with the assumption that

fighting is costlier than not fighting, and that both rebels and incumbents would prefer to get what they can from negotiations. A more Clausewitzian view recognizes that conflict onset, duration, termination, and even the downstream consequences of civil war can all be folded into a process of bargaining between rebels and incumbents.[16]

Walter helpfully breaks down bargaining into three key components.[17] First, bargaining is possible when actors overcome information asymmetries about the capabilities and resolve of their adversaries—not an easy task. Second, a major obstacle to reaching any resolution comes from the problem of credible commitments. This involves judging whether or not an adversary will back out of a deal, which becomes a thorny issue because bargaining exposes hidden weaknesses and brings forth vulnerabilities associated with disarming. Finally, bargaining must bear in mind the political and economic stakes of a settlement, which can often be indivisible.

This notion that bargaining is the crux of ending civil wars has generated a veritable industry of conflict-resolution scholarship and practice.[18] Here, third-party intervention, guarantees by outside mediators, and promises of power sharing are seen to undergird any successful negotiation in order to overcome any "barriers" to peace (i.e., ongoing fighting). Conflict termination thus becomes a story of bargaining success, and conflict duration is a story of bargaining failure.

If bargaining is indeed the crux of conflict duration and termination, there are surely multiple factors that shape the willingness or capacity of rebels and/or incumbents to bargain at all. These factors slot into two broad categories: the motives that drive rebels or incumbents, and the means that support them. Although valuable, this work suffers from several problems.

Motive-based explanations assert that conflict termination and duration are rooted in the goals and interests of the actors, and by extension, their *willingness* to bargain based on these goals and interests.[19] Indeed, Kirschner observes that if negotiations are to be successful, actors must look beyond past transgressions and overcome their fear of uncertain time horizons through the mechanism of *trust*.[20] Yet Wucherpfennig et al. argue that reaching a political settlement is much more difficult when conflicts are based on ethnic identity, which are also inclined to be more intractable as the stakes of divisible political spoils tend to be higher.[21] In this vein, perhaps because such rebels are more intransigent, Mason, Weingarten, and Fett add that they tend to be the victors of "ethnic conflicts"—but they also claim that secessionists are more likely than ideological "revolutions" to settle with incumbents, which is a

counterintuitive claim, considering the more indivisible stakes of terri-tory.[22] In addition, because civil wars often involve many actors, Cun-ningham maintains that the multiple, overlapping interests of too many "veto players" render them more difficult to resolve.[23]

However, although some rebel groups do organize around ethnic identity, ideology, or territorial identity, there are many other tools of recruitment and allegiance. A closer look shows that rebel motives are wide ranging, can change over the course of conflict, and say little about what fates they experience in civil war. And the main problem with tying motives such as ethnicity to rebel fates is that they are most often only a proximate factor that aggregates a wide range of individual motives. Ethnicity, for example, is not so much a driver of rebel fates per se, but acts as a marker for more salient structural issues that histor-ically situate these groups within political society and its institutions.[24]

Above all, though some rebel leaders certainly wish to rule, not all of them fight to become regime leaders or heads of state.[25] Instead, many groups "derive from blocked aspirations and in some cases from reactive desperation"[26] and "rage against" the dysfunctional institutional machinery of the state.[27] In other words, a rebellion can be as much about damaging, discrediting, or integrating into the state as it is about replacing it. This means that in addition to measurement problems, con-ventional views of the willingness of rebel groups to bargain often make incorrect assumptions about what they ultimately want. Above all, motive-based arguments break down once it becomes empirically clear that groups with similar motives may follow contrasting paths, and those with different motives can experience the same fate.

Means-based explanations consider how the material capacities of rebels or incumbents matter to conflict outcomes. This suggests that access to resources—particularly the fungible, lootable variety—can bolster capacity, prolong fighting, and reduce incentives to bargain.[28] On the incumbent side of the ledger, Rouen and Sobek claim that the increased bureaucratic effectiveness of the state, along with its simply having a bigger army, likely leads to rebel defeat.[29] In contrast, Lyall and Wilson argue that incumbents lose wars more frequently because of the mechanization of national armies, which inhibits more fleet-footed counterinsurgency strategies against shadowy rebel chal-lengers.[30] External intervention that provides material support for either rebels or incumbents can shift material capacities and affect conflict outcomes.[31]

Whereas such work tends to consider the victory-versus-defeat con-ceptualization of conflict termination, other means-based arguments

factor capacity into bargaining models. For instance, Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan look at the strategic interaction between "strong" and "weak" adversaries, not in terms of military victory or defeat but as a basis for incentives to negotiate.[32] In other words, rebels and incumbents may talk only after sizing one another up. This means that raw material capacity to fight and win plays a lesser role than *perceptions* of such, which plays into estimating the odds of winning or losing. Above all, uncertainty of relative means matters during stalemates. Where the conventional view holds that a "mutually hurting stalemate" increases the likelihood of actors' willingness to negotiate,[33] Findley points out that stalemates are often too rife with ambiguity for stable settlements.[34] This means that stalemates may push adversaries to bargain, but only in the short term. Once negotiations are under way, previously obscured information about capacity and resolve is made available through joint interactions, which may incentivize a return to fighting and the prolonged duration of conflict.

This observation underscores a key problem with means-based explanations for conflict outcomes: there is a disconnect between assumptions of perfect information when estimating the capacity of adversaries and the recognition that actors can misestimate or misrepresent capacity, particularly during negotiations.[35] As will become clear in Chapter 2, this is not to say that resource endowments do not matter at all to conflict outcomes, but they are neither a sufficient nor a necessary factor for predicting the fates of rebels. In many cases, there are things that happen off the battlefield that are more important in shaping rebel trajectories than the number of guns and gumboots at their disposal, or even perceptions of such things.

Although such motives or means-based bargaining literature has provided numerous key insights into conflict outcomes, it suffers from additional shortcomings. First, shoehorning rebels and incumbents into game theoretic models tends to impute a rather one-dimensional intentionality to things and brings overarching validity problems in inferring the motives of actors and estimates of their means. This is particularly difficult when considering that most conflicts consist of more actual fighting than bargaining.[36] And as Findley has observed, even if rebellion is viewed as a violent extension of bargaining, there are still multiple stages that unfold where learning occurs and preferences shift.[37] Moreover, civil war is not just about dividing the political pie—as this book will show, incumbents may simply choose to completely foreclose any bargaining opportunities with rebel groups by pursuing their elimination. Alternatively, rebels may prefer ongoing conflict to any sort of

resolution. Second, most studies do not disaggregate rebel fates from broader conflict outcomes and tend to conflate the factors behind civil war onset, duration, and termination.[38] This conceptual blurring, plus the fixation on conflict dyads as the unit of analysis, can obscure the more distinct puzzle of rebel fates.

Above all, the prevailing approaches to conflict outcomes are remarkably agnostic about the political context in which they occur and do not always account for unintended consequences in the highly contingent environments of civil war and rebellion. As Thyne has observed, even small variations within regime politics can influence the dynamics of bargaining.[39] To be clear, I do not necessarily seek to explicitly engage in bargaining models of conflict duration or termination. But I do seek to contribute to the broader literature on conflict outcomes in several ways.

First, this study reconceptualizes how civil wars end as distinct rebel fates. These fates are viewed from the vantage point of rebel groups and are essentially reworked variants of "victory" and "defeat." Here a "victory" can be viewed as replacing incumbents militarily or joining them politically. "Defeat" can occur at the hands of incumbents or can be self-inflicted. In portraying rebel fates in this way, this approach deliberately sidesteps the concept of conflict duration, which it treats as a separate phenomenon called "rebel persistence," addressed in Chapter 6.

Second, I introduce the concept of political embeddedness as the key factor guiding the calculations of rebels and incumbents alike, and it bends the trajectories of rebel groups toward their respective fates in civil war. In this sense, what predicts rebel fates remains a game of perception in terms of what behavior rebels and incumbents expect from one another. But unlike the motives or means predicting bargaining and negotiation, political embeddedness is a structural feature of African state institutions. Thus, the game is placed in the broader environment of African patronage politics and how regimes deal with different elements of political society that challenge their authority. In this context, the rules of the game are shaped by both formal and informal institutional patterns, where the cost-benefit calculus of incumbents varies by the nature of the threat posed by the rebellion, which is a function of where the rebellion sits within political society. Rebellion becomes a way to either replace or negotiate into prevailing state authority networks—most rebels seek total victory if they can get it, partial victory if they cannot. Incumbents seek to maintain hegemony over prevailing political networks one way or another and can achieve this through a variety of means.

## Scope Conditions

To proceed, it is important to draw boundaries around the distinct political terrain that holds the characteristics salient to rebel fates. I expect my theory to apply to civil wars where rebel fates are definitive. That is, ongoing rebellions such as the Lord's Resistance Army, whose fate is not yet known, are not considered here. Moreover, the argument relates best in cases where rebel groups fight the armed forces of weak, fragmented states, and sometimes across contentious regions. Recall that this category of civil war is further refined along the dimensions of the "technology of rebellion," or the joint military tactics of both states and rebels engaged in armed conflict.[40] In this regard, the cases considered in this study occur primarily within the context of symmetrical, nonconventional conflict, where the military capacity of both the state and the rebel group is low and more or less equivalent. Correspondingly, the approach here does not consider the structural anatomy of African rebels to be overly complex or very high-tech. The ability of some groups to survive for considerable periods of time in the bush, the widespread use of small arms such as the Kalashnikov rifle, and the ease of its use by even children are illustrative of this point. In this sense, my argument stands in contrast with Staniland's observations of armed groups that fight much more capable regimes and often in the context of more conventional warfare.[41]

## Methods, Empirics, and Moving Forward

My objective is to explain how variations in political embeddedness make some rebel groups more likely to experience certain fates over others. In doing so I make a general argument but test it against evidence from Africa, which falls suitably within the study's scope conditions and provides a large reservoir of representative cases. A detailed look at a smaller set of these cases is designed to sharpen similarities and differences between them in order to determine each rebel group's degree of political embeddedness, the technology of warfare, configurations of which specify the causal pathways to each particular fate.

I approach rebel fates by looking at patterns of relationships within Africa's wider political fabric and draw on a historical institutional analytical approach. Rebellion is, after all, a political act, albeit writ violent. It is structured by the distributional conflicts between different political actors and the asymmetries of power associated with the origins, operation, and development of state institutions and the state systems they occupy. It is these institutions—both formal and informal—

that distribute power and status unevenly across social groups, giving some disproportionate access to decisionmaking processes, promoting some actors while demobilizing others.[42]

My research for this study included extensive fieldwork in Uganda, Sudan, and Sierra Leone from 2007 until 2013, and in Central African Republic in 2015. Original data are based on visits to current and former war zones and upon multiple and repeated field interviews with former rebel leaders, ex-combatants, military personnel, national scholars, civil society leaders, and government and NGO officials. Interviews provided detailed, on-the-ground narratives and insights into the internal strategic debates and decisionmaking of rebel and military leaders. Questions focused on the political origins of the rebellion's membership, the biographies of leaders, and their prewar roles in the state's political establishment. Where possible, primary documents and newspaper archives from each country augmented the testimony of these participants, reconstructing and confirming narratives, and pointing to patterns of events during the trajectory of each rebel group.

To summarize, rebel fates can be viewed as an issue separate from conventional views of conflict outcomes, prompting us to ask why different fates occur. Using the methodological overview outlined here, the rest of the book is arranged as follows. Chapter 2 focuses on developing a theory of rebel fates rooted in an understanding of regime politics in Africa. It begins by establishing rebel fates as their own units of analysis, surveying the organizational characteristics of African rebels in particular. It then builds a theory from Africa's domestic political context, which shapes political embeddedness and creates rebellions composed of either political insiders or outsiders. I then consider the technology of rebellion, exploring how differences in symmetrical or asymmetrical warfare configure with political embeddedness to push rebels down different trajectories. Taken together, the elements of Chapter 2 provide a new set of theoretical and conceptual tools for analyzing rebellions as civil wars unfold and as they meet their respective fates.

The central portion of the book is divided into three empirical chapters that tackle the problem of rebel fates through several frames of comparison. In Chapter 3, Uganda provides an opportunity for a controlled subnational comparison of nine rebel groups. Taken together, Uganda's insurgencies represent a near complete inventory of the theory's outcomes. Holding the state constant, these cases provide variation across rebel fates within a defined geographic area and a compact time span. This chapter also showcases the inductive development of the book's theoretical argument. Data for this chapter was gathered

from an investigation into Ugandan newspaper articles that covered armed movements from 1986 until 2006 and fieldwork conducted in Uganda from 2007 until 2016.

In Chapter 4, two cases provide cross-national and within-case comparisons that test the argument elsewhere in Africa. Here I examine two cases of politically embedded rebel groups, or "insiders." The first case is the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), whose political settlement in 2005 was a direct outcome of political embeddedness, a factor often overlooked by many observers. The SPLA survived twenty-two years of civil war despite changes in its external resource linkages and in its relations to incumbent regimes' political networks. Data for both cases was gathered from primary sources and the newspaper *Africa Confidential,* and fieldwork in South Sudan was conducted for the SPLA case. The second case study examines the slow path to victory of Côte d'Ivoire's Forces Nouvelles. A composite of several armed groups beginning in 2002, the Forces Nouvelles fought its way to a negotiated settlement by 2007, only to renew fighting in 2011 after the settlement collapsed around highly contested elections.

In Chapter 5, two additional cross-case and within-case comparisons consider the fates of "outsiders." First, Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front is a case of defeat via disintegration, which occurred in spite of access to resources. The RUF factionalized and imploded over an eleven-year civil war even after entering into an internationally brokered peace agreement with Sierra Leone's incumbent regime. Second, the Séléka rebellion in Central African Republic (CAR) is illustrative of outsider victory. Although the Séléka alliance's disparate members had previously negotiated with the incumbent regime, this failure set the scene for renewed rebellion and ultimate victory. The Séléka case, however, contains key implications for postconflict political order and stability, as its consolidation of a postvictory regime was unsuccessful. Research for these cases was based on secondary sources and fieldwork in each country. Information was also gathered from an investigation into *Africa Confidential* and *West Africa* magazine, Trial Chamber Judgment Reports from the Special Court on Sierra Leone, as well as Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report.

In Chapter 6, I summarize the study's main claims and reinforce the significance of its contributions to the literatures on civil war, insurgent violence, and African politics. I then extend my framework and consider several key implications of rebel fates not entirely captured by the book. First, I present a broader discussion of rebel persistence. What factors explain why rebel groups such as the LRA continue fighting in spite of

peace and reconciliation efforts or superior (or inferior) state military capacity? Looking at these cases from the perspective of political embeddedness can shed light on why rebel groups abandon a political settlement or fail at a bid for incorporation, illuminating spoiler issues and explaining why peace accords fail. Second, I revisit rebel capacity and look specifically at proxy warfare as a potential factor in shaping rebel fates. Rather than simply looking at capacity as a material element of rebellion, the cases under consideration here raise interesting questions about the politics behind those resources and ask to what extent different rebel groups become beholden to the imperatives of their sponsors. Although arguments in the book downplay the role of capacity and resources for rebel fates, there are some instances where trajectories are tempered by the strategic priorities of political actors outside their own states.

Chapter 6 concludes with potential directions for future research on the political stability of African states, which includes a discussion on the viability of peace operations and counterinsurgency, and the factors that lead to postconflict political order. The observation that political insiders are more likely to be incorporated into regimes has direct implications for the effectiveness and stability of negotiated settlements, which is an unsettled question in the broader study of peace accords. The stability of settlements also raises questions about the utility of rebellion and its likelihood to cause political change, where civil war often serves to preserve a political order rather than change it, suggesting nonviolent options ought to be more effective.

## Notes

1. "Kabbah's Presence in Makeni Manifests Peace—Gen. Issa Sesay," *Standard Times* (Freetown), 23 January 2002.

2. Douglas Farah, "'They Fought for Nothing, and That's What They Got,'" *Washington Post*, 1 September 2001.

3. Day, "The Fates of Rebels."

4. Young, "The Victors and the Vanquished," p. 178.

5. Kalyvas and Balcells, "International System and Technologies of Rebellion."

6. Gurr, "On the Outcomes of Violent Conflict," p. 245.

7. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil Wars*.

8. For an excellent overview of the current literature on civil war and rebellion, see Woldemariam, *Insurgent Fragmentation in the Horn of Africa*; Arjona, *Rebelocracy*; Balcells, *Rivalry and Revenge*; Krause, *Rebel Power*; Adunbi, *Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria*; Cohen *Rape During Civil War*; Roessler, *Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa*; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*. For a snapshot of literature that inspired this current scholarship, see Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America*; Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion*; Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*; and Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*.

9. O'Connor, "Victory in Modern War."

10. Mason, Weingarten Jr., and Fett, "Win, Lose or Draw."

11. Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, p. 245.

12. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement"; Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes"; Licklider, *Stopping the Killing*; Carroll, "How Wars End"; Stedman, Rothchild, and Cousens, *Ending Civil Wars.*

13. Kalyvas, "Civil Wars."

14. Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*; Abraham, "State Complicity as a Factor"; Kandeh, "What Does the 'Militariat' Do When It Rules?"

15. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict;* Wagner, "Bargaining and War"; Pillar, *Negotiating Peace*; Powell, "Bargaining Theory and International Conflict"; Powell, "War as a Commitment Problem"; Reiter, "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War."

16. Reiter, "Exploring the Bargaining Model of War."

17. Walter, "Bargaining Failures and Civil War."

18. Crocker, Hampson, and Aall, *Taming Intractable Conflicts*; Walter, *Committing to Peace*; Toft, *Securing the Peace*; Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work?*; Regan, "Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts"; Howard and Stark, "How Civil Wars End."

19. Fearon, "Why Do Some Civil Wars Last So Much Longer than Others?"

20. Kirschner, *Trust and Fear in Civil Wars*.

21. Wucherpfennig, Metternich, Cederman, and Gleditsch, "Ethnicity, the State, and the Duration of Civil War."

22. Mason, Weingarten, and Fett, "Win, Lose or Draw."

23. Cunningham, "Veto Players and Civil War Duration."

24. Gilley, "Against the Concept of Ethnic Conflict," p. 1159.

25. Johnston, "The Geography of Insurgent Organization and Its Consequences for Civil Wars," pp. 119–120.

26. Clapham, *African Guerrillas*, p. 5.

27. Bøås and Dunn, eds., *African Guerrillas*, p. 10.

28. Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity"; Fearon, "Why Do Some Civil Wars Last So Much Longer?"; Ross, "What Do We Know About Natural Resources and Civil War?"; Ross, "A Closer Look at Oil, Diamonds, and Civil War."

29. de Rouen Jr. and Sobek, "The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome."

30. Lyall and Wilson III, "Rage Against the Machines."

31. Shirkey, *Joining the Fray*.

32. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "It Takes Two."

33. Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution*.

34. Findley, "Bargaining and the Interdependent Stages of Civil War Resolution."

35. Mason and Fett, "How Civil Wars End"; Mukherjee, "Why Political Power-Sharing Agreements Lead to Enduring Peaceful Resolution of Some Civil Wars, but Not Others?"; Elbadawi and Sambanis, "External Interventions and the Duration of Civil Wars."

36. Fearon, "Fighting Rather than Bargaining."

37. Findley, "Bargaining and the Interdependent Stages of Civil War Resolution."

38. Hegre, "The Duration and Termination of Civil War"; Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom, "On the Duration of Civil War."

39. Thyne, "Information, Commitment, and Intra-War Bargaining."

40. Kalyvas and Balcells, "International System and Technologies of Rebellion."

41. Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, pp. 10–11.

42. Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms"; Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics."