

"FATHERS OF THE AXE": EXPLAINING REBEL VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS IN  
THE ANGOLAN AND MOZAMBIKAN CIVIL WARS

by

DIANA LEIGH PAUKSTA

(Under the Direction of Christopher S. Allen)

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explain the similar levels of violence against civilians exhibited by Angola's and Mozambique's rebel forces during their respective civil wars. According to the extant literature on rebellion in civil wars, Angola, with its vast natural resource wealth, ethnic polarization, and multiple interventions, seemed more at-risk for an intense insurgency by its rebel group, UNITA. However, Mozambique's rebel group, Renamo, exhibited violence against civilians of a similar intensity. This study will use a most-different-systems approach to examine the influence of three hypotheses, South Africa's "Total Strategy," traditional religion, and child soldiering, on UNITA's and Renamo's violence against civilians. This thesis will use qualitative and historical data to determine the effect of each hypothesis. The findings support the main hypothesis, as well as the two alternative hypotheses to a lesser degree. South Africa's "Total Strategy" had the greatest impact on UNITA's and Renamo's use of violence against civilians.

INDEX WORDS: Destabilization, Traditional Religion, Ritualized Violence, Guerrilla Warfare, Proxy Warfare, Child Soldiering, UNITA, Renamo

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Edward and Patricia Pauksta, for their constant support and encouragement during my seemingly endless quest for a graduate degree. Their perseverance, wisdom, humor, and understanding have been invaluable to me in both my academic and personal life, and I owe more to them than can be expressed in this dedication.

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## **GLOSSARY OF FACTIONS, PARTIES, AND GROUPS**

**ANC:** African National Congress. Formed in 1923, then added a military wing in 1961 to fight against the apartheid regime in South Africa. Supported by both the MPLA and Frelimo, which provided the rationale for Pretoria to include Angola and Mozambique in their "Total Strategy" of defense.

**CIO:** Central Intelligence Organization. Rhodesian intelligence agency created in 1963 with Ken Flower as its first leader. Responsible for the creation of Renamo

**ELP:** Exercito de Libertacao Portugues, or Portuguese Liberation Army. Right-wing Salazarist faction in Portugal. Assisted UNITA militarily in UNITA's war against the MPLA.

**FAM:** Forca Aérea de Mocambique. Originally known as the People's forces for the Liberation of Mozambique (FPLM) Armed wing of Frelimo through the 1970s and 1980s. Conscription-based force of around 80,000. Depended on Zimbabwean and Tanzanian military support to maintain military superiority against Renamo.

**Frelimo:** Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, or the Liberation Front of Mozambique. Founded in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1962 with the unification of three other nationalist organizations—the Mozambican African National Union (MANU), the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDENAMO), and the National African Union of Independent Mozambique (UNAMI). Fought against Portuguese colonialism, then took over as Mozambique's governing party in 1975. Democratic socialist, Marxist-Leninist ideology during the war against Renamo. Now more pro-West as the majority party in a multi-party parliament.

**FNLA:** Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola, or the National Front for the Liberation of Angola. Militant organization that fought in the war of independence from Portugal under Holden Roberto. Predominantly northern-based with ethnic support from the Bakongo people. In 1975, FNLA formed an unsteady alliance with UNITA but was permanently defeated by MPLA forces not long after. Many FNLA members joined UNITA. Now a political party with five seats in parliament.

**MID:** Military Intelligence Directorate. Established in 1962 to coordinate the collection and management of information pertaining to defense. Actively supported Renamo despite opposition from Vorster's administration.

**MNR:** Mozambican National Resistance. Original name for Renamo during its affiliation with Rhodesia.

**MPLA:** Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, or the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. Founded in 1956 with the merging of the Angolan Communist Party (PCA) and the Party of the United Struggle for Africans in Angola (PLUA). Other movements later merged with MPLA as well. Linked with European and Soviet Communist parties; heavily supported by the Soviet Union. Democratic socialist, Marxist-Leninist ideology. Fought against Portugal in the war for independence from 1961 until 1975. Has run Angola since 1975; fought with UNITA and FNLA from 1975 until 2002.

**Renamo:** Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, or Mozambican National Resistance. Formed in 1975 by the Rhodesia's CIO as an anti-Communist organization. Fought against Frelimo from 1975 until 1992 and against ZANLA. Trained, armed, and sponsored by apartheid South Africa under P.W. Botha. Disarmed in 1994; presently a conservative political party which won 29.7 per cent of the popular vote in the 2004 elections.

**RUF:** Revolutionary United Front. Rebel army in Sierra Leone. Led a failed insurrection from 1991 to 2002.

**SADF:** South African Defence Force. Formed in 1957, used extensively to suppress opposition to apartheid. Led by P.W. Botha until he took over the government in 1978. SADF actively trained, armed, and assisted both UNITA and Renamo until the end of apartheid.

**SWAPO:** South West African People's Organization. Based among the Ovambo people of northern Namibia. Formed to fight against apartheid South Africa's military occupation after a British mandate gave South Africa authority over Namibia. The MPLA provided SWAPO with bases in Angola from which to launch attacks on the South African military, which led to attacks on the MPLA by UNITA and SADF forces.

**UNITA:** União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, or the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. Founded in 1966, fought against the MPLA during the war against Portuguese colonialism and the civil war. UNITA originally received aid from the People's Republic of China, then the United States and South Africa. UNITA received arms, training, and support from apartheid South Africa until the end of the apartheid regime. Guerrilla organization led entirely by Jonas Savimbi. Ideology started out as somewhat Maoist, but later degenerated into a personality cult around Savimbi. UNITA ended with Savimbi's death in 2002.

**ZANLA:** Military wing of ZANU. Renamo's earliest activities involved fighting against ZANLA forces on behalf of Rhodesia.

**ZANU:** Zimbabwean African National Union. Formed by Ndabaningi Sithole in 1963 as a splinter of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). Fought for independence from Rhodesia. Strongly linked with Frelimo, whose support for ZANU brought about retaliation by Rhodesia in the form of Renamo.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In Africa, the time between the end of colonialism and the present has been marked with instability, underdevelopment, and civil war. Henderson and Singer (2000) define civil war as "a sustained, violent conflict between the military forces of a state and insurgent forces comprised mainly of citizens (or residents) of the state" (p.276). There is a wealth of literature on post-colonial civil wars, and the consensus is that these wars have been marked by unprecedented brutality toward civilians. Post-colonial civil wars in Africa are often characterized, in part, by the indiscrimination between soldier and civilian. However, there is a gap in the literature: many scholars point to the shared experiences of colonialism, outside intervention, ethnic rivalry, et cetera, in order to explain the nature of civil war in Africa. Quite often, scholars use large-*n* studies to pinpoint specific factors that motivate government and/or rebel forces to perpetrate violence against civilians. These studies have produced interesting results and furthered the knowledge of civil war in Africa. However, a closer look may yield different results. Instead of carrying out a large-*n* study, as is often done, the purpose of this thesis will be to narrow the focus to two African countries and their protracted civil wars, in order to explore other (often unexplored) factors behind violence against civilians.

The southern African countries of Angola and Mozambique both experienced protracted civil wars with staggering brutality to civilians. Angola's civil war lasted from 1975 to 2002,<sup>1</sup> while Mozambique's civil war lasted from 1975 to 1992. Angola, with its abundant natural

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<sup>1</sup> The actual length of the war remains a topic of debate among those who have written about it. Some describe Angola's conflict as several separate wars, separated by brief cease-fires in 1989, 1991, 1994, and 1995. Due to the short duration of these cease-fires and the violence that continued during them, this thesis considers the Angolan war to be essentially one, 27-year war.

resource wealth in the form of oil and diamonds, strong ethnic rivalry, multiple military interventions by several countries, and significant external financing, has all the characteristics of a state that is vulnerable to civil strife. These conditions, which have been shown to be catalysts for violence against civilians, make the extremely high level of violence and atrocities committed by Angola's main rebel group, União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (hereafter referred to as UNITA), somewhat unsurprising, as control over the land equates to ownership over the resources underneath it, and the struggle for ethnic dominance often involves the attempted elimination of rival ethnic groups. Mozambique, on the other hand, has no natural resource wealth to speak of, no divisive ethnic rivalry, and much less in the way of external intervention and financing than Angola. Given extant theory on the factors that increase intensity of violence to civilians in civil war, one would not expect to see a similar intensity of violence from Mozambique's rebel group, Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (hereafter referred to as Renamo.) However, there is a puzzling convergence in the intensity of violence against civilians by both groups during their respective civil wars. The aim of this study is to examine factors that explain this convergence. In light of the significant differences between these two countries, why have both experienced civil wars that were notably fraught with rebel violence against civilians? In other words, what explains the intensity with which both UNITA and Renamo perpetrated violence against civilians?

The literature comparing Angola and Mozambique tends to stress the role of Portuguese colonialism and Cold war politics on the onset and duration of these wars. Few studies seek to explain intensity of violence towards civilians during civil war in a systematic way, and most studies analyze violence by government forces rather than by rebels. This study focuses on the rebel forces because, in the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars, the intensity of violence toward

civilians by rebel forces far exceeded that of the governing Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) and Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Frelimo), respectively. The mass murder and brutality toward civilians through the use of landmines, rape, and mutilation make this study relevant, not only to an increased understanding of the realities of these wars, but also to a broader understanding of catalysts to rebel violence toward civilians that have been overlooked in scholarly literature until now.

In order to carry out such a study, this thesis employs the comparative method. As Lijphart (1971) writes, the comparative method is a "method of discovering empirical relationships among variables, not as a method of measurement" (pg. 683). In his discussion of deviant case analyses, he explains that cases are selected

in order to reveal why the cases are deviant—that is, to uncover relevant additional variables that were not considered previously, or to refine the (operational) definitions of some or all of the variables. In this way, deviant case studies can have great theoretical value. They weaken the original proposition, but suggest a modified proposition that may be stronger. The validity of the proposition in its modified form must be established by further comparative analysis (pg. 692).

In this thesis, the intensity of violence toward civilians by Renamo is considered the deviant case because there are no hypotheses in the existing literature on intensity of violence toward civilians that explain the Renamo case. The comparative analysis brings the UNITA case into the study because it possesses many of the factors that have been shown to affect intensity of violence. As Dogan and Pelassy (1990) write, "An analysis of deviant cases is of great interest because it may disclose new causes" (123). The purpose here is not to reject hypotheses in the literature on intensity of violence; however, if there are similarities between UNITA and Renamo that explain their propensity for intense violence against civilians, it may be possible to use these additional, more detailed hypotheses for a future study involving more cases.

In order to lay out the rationale behind treating Renamo as a deviant case and compare it with UNITA, this thesis utilizes what is commonly understood as a "most-different-systems (MDS) design." (130) Dogan and Pelassy posit:

Opposing two strongly contrasting countries is often perceived as a way of more surely appreciating the relations existing between two variables; if the same factor produces the same effects in two very different situations, its influence tends to be confirmed. (144)

The use of the most-different-systems design could be contentious. Some might argue that UNITA's and Renamo's similar proclivity to violence toward civilians is not puzzling; on the surface, it does seem that the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique have some things in common. Indeed, as Dogan and Pelassy note, "No two countries are identical; two countries always have something in common" (144).

This thesis therefore has a difficult objective, as it is not trying to explain, for example, convergence of some variable between a totalitarian state and a democracy. There are some similarities between the two cases: for one, both Angola and Mozambique were Portuguese colonies. Secondly, both gained their independence in 1975. Both civil wars pitted a Soviet-backed government against a pro-Western rebel group. This comparative analysis originated as a most-similar-systems design study, in fact. However, as illustrated later in this chapter, the similarities do not have explanatory power. Dogan and Pelassy write that "neither similarities nor differences are absolute. They are clearly a matter of viewpoint and perspective" (pg. 132). The authors argue that similarities can become less similar upon further study; they may even turn into contrasts, as they did in an earlier attempt at comparing Angola's and Mozambique's civil wars.

Although the setup of this thesis is in the most-different-systems style, to describe it as a MDS study would be a misnomer. In general, Angola and Mozambique are too similar for a comparison using the MDS design. Viewed with the lens of a particular theory or set of variables,

however, the significant differences between the two cases are illuminated. Perhaps a study on colonialism might employ a most-similar-systems (MSS) design instead, given Angola's and Mozambique's similar colonial experiences. The standard practice of choosing cases based on their total similarities or total differences can cause scholars to overlook puzzling phenomena or choose not to go ahead with an analysis. Indeed, both MSS and MDS methods could be more nuanced—choosing cases based on their similarities or differences as they pertain to the theory or variables under examination could allow scholars to perform comparative analyses that would otherwise remain untouched or confined to quantitative analyses. In order to avoid a misnomer, this thesis utilizes its own methodology which highlights the differences between the two cases as they pertain to the variables under examination. Specifically, UNITA and Renamo operated in countries that differ substantially when it comes to commonly-held theory on causes of violence against civilians. It is because of this that their similar outcomes are puzzling and merit empirical analysis. One may call this a "different cases, same outcome" design, which uses the standard MDS format to set up the cases, despite the more nuanced analysis required to test them.

Since this thesis is in a most-different-systems design format, it follows that the differences between the two cases should be discussed in detail. The following section does this, then the similarities which provide the hypotheses for this study are illuminated.

### **Why Use a "Different Cases, Same Outcome" Design?**

Despite the geographical proximity of Angola and Mozambique and the fact that their civil wars began around the same time, UNITA and Renamo operated within vastly different countries. Scholars have shown that many variables affect civil war onset, duration, and intensity of violence, and when examined in the context of these variables, the differences between the two cases become more significant. Arguably the most significant difference between Angola and

Mozambique is the amount of natural resource wealth in these two countries. The correlation between natural resources and civil war has been analyzed by several scholars. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) posit that the risk of civil war is higher in states that rely heavily on primary commodity exports than states that do not. The likelihood of civil war onset has been shown by Fearon and Laitin (2003) and de Soysa (2002) to be higher in oil-exporting states, and Fearon (2005) illustrates that gemstones and narcotics tend to increase civil war duration. Buhaug and Gates (2002) find that mineral resources tend to increase the geographical scope of a conflict.

Ross (2003), chooses thirteen cases on which to test these findings. Ross confirms that oil, gemstones, and drugs have influenced the onset and duration of civil wars. He also finds that "other types of commodities—in particular, legal agricultural commodities—did not have an effect on civil wars" (37-38). Ross adds further hypotheses that relate specifically to intensity—that if the two sides engage in resource battles, there will be more casualties; and if the two side engage in "cooperative plunder," there will be fewer casualties (pg. 39). However, he could not test these two hypotheses with the available data. Nonetheless, Ross finds that resource wealth tends to increase casualty rate "by causing combatants to fight for resource-rich territory that would otherwise have little value" (pg. 45).

Angola's oil reserves have been estimated to be in tens of millions of barrels. Angola is "quite literally swimming in oil" ("Swimming in Oil," Washington Post). In addition to having large oil reserves, Angola is a major producer of diamonds. Angola's unworked diamond are in high demand from major corporations such as De Beers, and during the 1990s, UNITA controlled 60 to 70 per cent of Angola's diamond production ("Angola: Diamond Trade and War"). The literature on natural resources and civil war often characterizes Angola's situation as a "resource curse," a term which describes the tendency for an emphasis on selling "extractive" resources to

lead to authoritarianism, repression, and high risk of civil war (see Figure 1). Mozambique, on the other hand, does not suffer from the "resource curse." Mozambique's natural resources include coal, titanium, hydropower, graphite, and natural gas, yet the coal and natural gas reserves have largely remained untapped. Renamo, therefore, had no major resources to control or attempt to control during the war.



**Figure 1: Distribution of Natural Resources in Angola**

Another factor that scholars often cite as a catalyst for violent civil wars is ethnicity. Kuper (1977) argues that ethnicity overrides other cross-cutting cleavages, such as religion, culture, and regional variation. Other scholars, such as Fearon and Laitin, and Collier argue that ethnic heterogeneity has no effect on conflict. Krain (1997) constructs an ethnic fractionalization index based solely on ethnicity and not linguistic cleavages, claiming that "more ethnopolitical conflict centers on the primary cleavage of ethnicity" (pg. 341). The index is a measurement of the probability that two people selected at random from a given country. He operationalizes the

variable by squaring the proportion of the population of each ethnic group to the total population, then taking the sum of the squared proportions and subtracting that number from 1. A high score is an indicator of several groups with "small or relatively equal percentages of the population" (ibid). In Krain's dataset, interestingly, Angola's and Mozambique's scores are practically identical, at .76 and .77, respectively. However, this measure of ethnic fractionalization does not address ethnic polarization or rivalry. Angola has three large ethnic groups that are relatively proportional in size, whereas Mozambique has several, much smaller ethnic groups that are relatively proportional in size (see Fig. 1). Elbadawi and Sambanis (2001) show that ethnic fragmentation and civil war have a parabolic relationship: ethnic homogeneity and the presence of several small ethnic groups do not tend to increase the likelihood of civil war, while an ethnic makeup such as Angola's would. Drawing from their findings, one can conclude that Mozambique's several small ethnic groups would not increase the probability of civil war.

Maksudova (2006) tests ethnic fractionalization on civil war intensity; she hypothesizes that "once ethnicity is politicized by certain interest groups and conflict occurs, it becomes an important factor in making the war more intense than it otherwise would be" (pg. 6). She finds that ethnic fractionalization has a negative, significant effect of on the dependent variable. UNITA was led by Jonas Savimbi, a member of the Ovimbundu ethnic group. The Ovimbundu make up the largest ethnolinguistic group in Angola at 37 per cent of population and are primarily in the south and east of the country. Malaquias (2007) writes that there was a "strong ethnic rationale behind the creation of UNITA," which was created by Savimbi on March 15, 1966 (pg. 65). The MPLA often labeled UNITA as a group of tribalists who only concerned themselves with the welfare of the Ovimbundu, while UNITA claimed that the MPLA's multi-ethnic makeup made the group "less Angolan." Despite the fact that Savimbi was Ovimbundu and UNITA's

ranks were primarily made up of people from the ethnic group, Savimbi displayed as much ruthlessness toward his fellow Ovimbundu as he did to the Kimbundu or the Bakongo (Bridgland 2004). In fact, as UNITA's tactics became more brutal over time, Savimbi and UNITA lost support from the Ovimbundu. Savimbi's 1992 presidential bid failed due, in large part, to the support that many Ovimbundu eventually gave to the MPLA (Chabal 2002, pg. 172).

In contrast to UNITA, Renamo had no significant indigenous roots in Mozambique. Renamo was founded in 1976 by Ken Flower, head of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization (CIO). Renamo was an amalgamation of Portuguese ex-counter-insurgency squads and ex-Frelimo soldiers who had been imprisoned for corruption. Although some of Renamo's early recruits were voluntary due to dissatisfaction with Frelimo rule, the majority of Renamo's recruits were forced into service. Much of the group's military activities focused on countering the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) on behalf of Rhodesia (Hall 1990, pg. 40). As Renamo's efforts focused inward on Mozambique, Afonso Dhlakama established himself as President of Renamo, and forced recruitment continued, the ethnic makeup of the group changed somewhat. As Hall writes:

Shona-speakers from central Mozambique dominate Renamo's military leadership, reflecting early patterns of recruitment...the Ndua subgroup of the Shona to which Dhlakama himself belongs are disproportionately represented within the topmost ranks of that leadership. But...there are regional variations...the large majority of the military commanders are Shona-speaking "veterans," although the rank and file number men from all ethnic groups (pg. 45-6).

Evidence suggests that the composition of Renamo units changed over time to reflect the multitudinous ethnic composition of Mozambique. In this regard, Renamo is in contrast to UNITA.

A third significant difference between UNITA and Renamo is the level of external

assistance—both military and financial—that each rebel group received. There is much debate over whether foreign interventions tend to increase or decrease civil war duration. However, the literature suggests that foreign interventions intended to influence the outcome of a civil conflict run the risk of prolonging conflict (Feste 2003). Regan (2002) finds that these interventions were more common in the Cold War era. Yoon (1997) finds that the United States intervened in civil wars more often as a reaction to Soviet intervention than because of the importance of the warring state to the U.S.

As Ciment (1997) writes, "Unlike Angola, Mozambique was not a Cold war battleground. Western interference was largely restricted to economics" (pg. 15). In Mozambique, Frelimo had Soviet support but was eventually able to take advantage of anti-apartheid attitudes in the West as well. The Frelimo leadership was influential in bringing about the end of the Rhodesian war, which further increased Western support for the party. Frelimo was able to capitalize on Western foreign aid while keeping close ties with the Soviet bloc. Renamo, on the other hand, was not able to gain legitimacy even among its right-wing allies in the West. Renamo "did not receive overt, or even covert, aid from them" (Chabal, pg. 77). UNITA received much more in the way of military and financial support from the West. As Chabal writes, "The very circumstances of its decolonization, which involved both a South African invasion and Cuban deployment, ensure that the country's fate was profoundly marked by Cold War politics" (pg. 77). The MPLA regime was completely on the Soviet side and received substantial economic and military assistance; therefore, UNITA received similar (if not more) military and financial support from the United States and right-wing organizations. As long as Cuba had a presence in Angola, the United States and South Africa would provide assistance to UNITA.

Although this is not an exhaustive list of all the differences between UNITA and Renamo, it does illustrate the need for a "different cases, similar outcome" design, and it illustrates the puzzling nature of the kind of intensity with which UNITA and Renamo engaged in civil war. According to the literature on natural resources and ethnic polarization, UNITA soldiers would have had more of an incentive to perpetrate violence against civilians than Renamo. Thus, an examination of factors that both UNITA and Renamo shared is warranted. This thesis will examine the significance of three of these factors: UNITA and Renamo as "contras" for apartheid for South Africa, traditional religion<sup>2</sup>, and the use of child soldiers in accounting for the markedly high intensity of rebel violence toward civilians. In using these three hypotheses, it is necessary to contrast them with MPLA and Frelimo, in order to also explain why the intensity of rebel violence was similarly high and similarly higher than that of government violence. The hypotheses are, in part, meant to be an investigation as to whether the violence perpetrated by these two groups stems from external influence or from characteristics of the groups themselves.

There are other similarities that are worth mentioning but do not hold up as alternative hypotheses in this thesis. This chapter has already illustrated that, although both Angola and Mozambique were influenced by Cold War politics, their experiences were much different. One can hypothesize that the environment of violence in both countries during colonization left a legacy of violence in the post-colonial civil wars. While it is true that Portugal colonized both countries and was notorious for extreme brutality, slavery, rape, and torture of its subjects, this does not adequately address the research puzzle. For one, interviews of civilians in Angola stress that the Angolan people considered colonial and anti-colonial violence to be dichotomous; they

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<sup>2</sup> The most accurate terminology is unclear: technically, the traditional religion in this region is animistic. However, many scholars avoid the use of the term "animism," as they claim it is culturally insensitive and/or a remnant of Western-biased ethnography. For purposes of convenience, and because there is still no universally-accepted terminology, this thesis uses the terms "traditional religion" and "animism" interchangeably.

themselves do not recognize a connection between Portuguese violence and what atrocities committed by UNITA during the post-independence war (Brinkman, 2000, pg. 5).

The violence perpetrated by Portugal was used to maintain status quo, not to destabilize or overthrow it. For this hypothesis to be correct, one should find a similar or increased level of violence toward civilians from MPLA and Frelimo, which is not the case. One can also hypothesize that the communist vs. anti-communist nature of both civil wars explains the convergence in violence against civilians. This can be rejected because UNITA's and Renamo's violent acts against civilians do not correlate with popular support for MPLA or Frelimo. In fact, even as popular support for MPLA and Frelimo was waning due to failures in state agricultural projects and unpopular villagisation projects, UNITA's and Renamo's violence against civilians increased over time.

Indeed, it is puzzling that UNITA and Renamo engaged in such atrocious acts of violence against civilians. Valentino (2005) argues that communist regimes have been responsible for the bulk of violence against civilians because of the control they wanted to take over people's lives. However, UNITA was labeled as one of the worst violators of human rights in the world and certainly the worst in Angola (Ciment, pg. 191). Renamo is described by Ciment as a "terrorist organization;" he writes that "a discussion of Renamo tactics is not recommended for the squeamish" (pg. 193). There are numerous accounts of soldiers on both sides "cutting off ears, noses, lips, and sexual organs" (pg. 194). For both rebel groups, the brutality of violence against civilians did much to destroy whatever reputation they originally had. Jonas Savimbi lost a presidential bid mainly because of UNITA's tactics, and Renamo lost the credibility it first had with Mozambican traditionalists. In Brinkman's (2000) collection of interviews of Angolan refugees who had witnessed such tactics, the witnesses often "emphasized the senseless and

absurd character of what had happened" (pg. 2). This thesis is an attempt to shed light on the reasons why these two rebel groups engaged in such senseless acts.

The next chapter will provide a review of the literature on civil war intensity and violence against civilians, as well as a review of the literature that more specifically relates to the main and alternative hypotheses. It will also illustrate the contribution that this thesis will make to the study of Angola's and Mozambique's civil wars and rebel violence against civilians in general. Chapter 3 will be an introduction and explanation of the main and alternative hypotheses: South Africa's use of UNITA and Renamo as proxies for their "total strategy," traditional religion, and the use of child soldiers in increasing the intensity of violence against civilians. This chapter will also elaborate on this study's most-different-systems research design, the process tracing that will be conducted in order to identify the causal mechanisms behind the rebel groups' violence, and the conditions that must be present in order to support or reject each hypothesis. Chapter 4 will present the findings of the research, and Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of these findings on future research.

**Table 1: Common Variables Used in Intensity Studies—Angola and Mozambique**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Angola</b>	<b>Mozambique</b>
Natural Resources	Petroleum, diamonds, iron ore, phosphates, copper, feldspar, gold, bauxite, uranium	Coal, titanium, natural gas, hydropower, tantalum, graphite
Ethnicity	Ovimbundu 37%, Kimbundu 25%, Bakongo 13%, mestico 2%, European 1%, other 22%	"Africa" 99.66% (Makhuwa, Tsonga, Lomwe, Sena) Europeans 0.06% Euro-Africans 0.2% Indians 0.08%
Terrain	Narrow coastal plain rises sharply to large interior plateau	Coastal lowlands, uplands in center, plateaus in northwest, mountains in west
Per capita Income (PPP\$)	1980--\$1,110; 1985--\$1,300; 1990--\$1,590; 1995--\$1,220; 2000--\$1,580	1980--\$370; 1985--\$330; 1990--\$490; 1995--\$580

<[http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator\\_detail.cfm?country=AO&indicatorid=140](http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?country=AO&indicatorid=140)>

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the scholarly literature on rebel groups and violence against civilians is necessary before conducting an assessment of the factors that contributed to it in Angola and Mozambique. There is a small but steadily growing amount of literature on civil war intensity and violence against civilians in civil war by rebel groups. This chapter will first discuss extant theory on violence against civilians. To make clearer the connection between rebel forces and violence against civilians, especially as it pertains to UNITA and Renamo, it is also important to discuss the literature on rebellion and guerrilla warfare. This is necessary because it outlines what is considered typical in guerrilla warfare, addresses the possible rationale for rebel violence against civilians, and shows the ways in which Renamo and UNITA followed and deviated from this.

Many scholarly works seek to explain why some people rebel and why some rebels do so more violently than others. These studies tend to frame combatants' motivations within one of two dichotomies: "greed versus grievance" or "public versus private." The first dichotomy addresses whether combatants participate in violence because they are motivated by the possibility of financial gain through control over natural resources, looting, et cetera, or because they have ideological grievances. This dichotomy has increased scholarly understanding of rebellion in some ways; it lends itself to different strategies to prevent conflict and/or reduce conflict duration. Rebellions motivated by "greed" can be quelled by actions that reduce the financial payoffs to rebel, whereas those motivated by "grievance" must address the underlying

grievance, whether it be politically, racially, ideologically, or religiously based. This dichotomy often oversimplifies rebellion, however, by assuming that the reason for mobilization is one or the other. Rebellions can and do have elements of both, and it is highly likely that individual actors within rebel groups are compelled to fight for different reasons.

The "public versus private" dichotomy addresses this problem by taking into account the possibility that any given combatant may participate in a violent rebellion for a multitude of reasons, including those that are *both* greed- and grievance-based. While this dichotomy makes generalizations much more difficult because it requires the knowledge of individuals' private motivations, it can help to explain why combatants engage in behaviors that may seem unrelated or even counterintuitive to the overall war effort.

### **Motivation: Greed versus Grievance**

Scholarly focus on violence against civilians in civil war is relatively recent compared to that of civil war onset, scope, and duration. In formulating hypotheses on the catalysts for violence, many scholars reiterate the "greed versus grievance" theory first posited by Collier and Hoeffler (2004). Studies by Collier et al. (2003), Buhaug and Gates (2002), Lischer (2007), Terry (2002), Regan (2002), and others stress the role that resources in the form of aid or loot play in exacerbating civil conflict. Likewise, much of the intensity literature focuses either on the material benefits or the potential costs that warring groups can incur through violence.

Some authors discuss the violence as a means to extract resources to fund the warring groups' military objectives, while others view the violence as an end in itself. The former group focuses more on theoretical models and large-*n* studies. For example, Azam's (2002) theoretical model of looting includes violence against civilians as a by-product of the act of looting. Similarly, Azam and Hoeffler (2002) construct a model of violence against civilians to investigate

whether the violence is indeed a unfortunate side-effect of looting or it has a military purpose.

They hypothesize that increasing funding to a loot-seeking army would decrease violence against civilians, while doing so to a terror-seeking army would increase violence. Their model refers to a government army and not a rebel force, however, and their indicator for the amount of violence against civilians is the flow of refugees from a given civil war. Angola and Mozambique each had around four million internally displaced persons (IDPs) by the end of their civil wars, which far outnumbered the number of refugees. It is unclear whether their findings are supported by the UNITA and Renamo cases. Certainly, the funding to these groups served to increase their capacity for violence, and yet, for both rebel groups, violence seems to have reached its peak when external financing was at its lowest. Nevertheless, it is not accurate to describe these groups as primarily "loot-seeking" either. Also interesting is their conclusion that displacement of a large portion of the population weakens the effectiveness of the rebel side. UNITA and Renamo, both being rebel groups, were responsible for the intentional displacement of millions of civilians.

Several scholars analyze more grievance-based variables in their studies of civil war and rebellion. Heger and Salehyan (2007) and Lacina (2006) address a long-standing gap in the literature by examining why some civil wars produce many more casualties than others. Heger and Salehyan point to the size of the ruling coalition as a major determinant in the level of violence in a civil war. They find that smaller governments tend to repress insurgencies more strongly because they are a more legitimate threat, which leads to more intense civil conflicts (pg. 400). Their focus is on the state's *reaction* to an insurgency, however, and does not address the insurgency directly. Lacina shows that factors pertaining to civil war onset are much different from the factors that lead to large numbers of casualties. An increase in duration of a conflict

obviously leads to increased casualties, while the population of the warring state does not affect conflict severity. What does affect severity is the amount of external aid and intervention (pg. 286). Lacina's findings also show that ethnic and cultural diversity have little effect on the ability of warring elites to convince their followers to mobilize. Democracy has a significant negative effect on conflict severity (pg. 287). Building on these results, Eck and Hultman create a new dataset on fatalities caused by intentional violence by rebel or government forces in "One-Sided Violence Against Civilians In War: Insights from New Fatality Data" (2007). The disaggregation of rebels and government forces is a significant contribution to the study of rebel violence. Their regressions produce interesting results—"While autocratic governments undertake higher levels of one-sided violence than other regime types, rebels are more violent in democratic countries" (pg. 243). There is a U-shaped correlation with violent autocratic governments and rebels fighting democratic governments on either end (pg. 244). Overall, governments were, on average, more violent than rebel groups. The cases examined in this thesis do not echo their conclusions: UNITA and Renamo should have, according to their conclusions, exhibited less one-sided violence than the autocratic regimes of MPLA and Frelimo, which is not the case. This dichotomy fails to adequately explain the cases of UNITA and Renamo: while aspects of both greed and grievance are present in both rebellions, neither is sufficient to explain the rebel groups' violence against civilians.

### **Identity: Public versus Private**

Other scholarly analyses break from the "greed and grievance" vein and examine different causes of violence against civilians. Kalyvas (2003) introduces a "public versus private" dichotomy in order to explain why the line between combatant and civilian is often blurred during fighting. He states that "civil wars are not binary conflicts, but complex and ambiguous processes

that foster the 'joint' action of local and supralocal actors, civilians, and armies" (pg. 475). This has particular relevance to this thesis, as the focus is on rebel groups and their interactions with civilians, not government forces. The violent actors are not just members of a rebel group; they have different identities in the public and private realms, which makes it practically impossible to pinpoint a single motivation for their violent acts. Indeed, this thesis may find that all three variables under examination have some degree of explanatory power in relation to the dependent variable. In Kalyvas's analysis, violence against civilians in civil war can be due to small, private conflicts within communities. Actions "on the ground" are the result of local issues instead of the "master cleavage" (pg. 476).

The explanatory power of this argument is limited in the cases of UNITA and Renamo, however. Both groups were known to take recruits across several miles, sometimes to the other side of the country, before training them and putting them to work as soldiers. Very rarely did any soldier in either group fight in his own community, except upon initiation into the group when he was likely forced to commit an act of violence against a relative or neighbor of the commander's choice (Herbst, 2000). Shepler (2004) more accurately posits that warring elites destroy combatants' ties to their communities by strategically forcing them to perpetrate violence against their neighbors. After the violent act takes place, the combatant is disconnected from their community, usually permanently. Kalyvas also writes that local leaders who lost power and authority under Frelimo in Mozambique were "highly likely to join the Renamo insurgency" (pg. 487). This is true for Renamo as well as UNITA at the initial stages of the conflicts; however, after two or three years, voluntary recruitment was practically nonexistent. Both groups relied on local leaders to carry out administrative duties, but the violence was carried out strictly by Renamo and UNITA forces.

In their case study of civilian abuse in Sierra Leone's civil war, Humphreys and Weinstein (2006) start with the logic that "coercive tactics are potentially costly, as they undermine the civilian base of support for warring parties" (429). This logic is put forth in Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsey (2004) as well. From the case study, Humphreys and Weinstein find that characteristics of the warring group itself determine whether or not it will perpetrate violence against civilians. More specifically, they posit that "Units composed of members with private goals, which organize into ethnically heterogeneous groupings and lack internal mechanisms to discipline behavior" are more likely to engage in abusive behavior towards noncombatants (pg. 430). In contrast, units that are organized ethnically, share common goals, and have disciplinary structures in place are less abusive and more likely to "establish constructive relationships" with civilians (ibid.) Neither UNITA nor Renamo lacked disciplinary structures, and yet these structures were primarily in place to punish recruits who attempted to flee or refused to carry out such extreme violence. It is certainly not the case that UNITA or Renamo leadership punished excessive violence from their rank-and-file.

The cases of Angola and Mozambique contain elements of both dichotomies, but neither is sufficient to explain the intensity of violence against civilians. Looting, while common, was more often a symbolic act than a self-sustaining act. Looters in both wars would often bring one item back to camp as proof that they had destroyed a home or a village, and the loot was more of a trophy than a utility. The rebel groups' widespread destruction and mine-laying made sustenance-based looting impossible to keep up indefinitely. As discussed earlier, UNITA had a financial stake in oil- and diamond-rich territory, but Renamo did not. Both groups claimed to fight because of grievances against their Marxist rivals, but their violence cross-cut this ideological cleavage. The "public versus private" dichotomy does not adequately explain the

violence against civilians either. Since most of the combatants in both rebel groups were forcibly recruited and taken to a different part of the country before fighting, private grievances against civilians is an unlikely motivating factor. Local issues do not seem to play a role in Renamo's and UNITA's violence, but neither does an identifiable "master cleavage."

These studies show that the subject is much more complex than theories of greed or grievance, or public or private identities, can account for; they also show that case selection has a significant effect on results. Some studies are more applicable to UNITA and Renamo than others, but because their specific objectives remained unclear throughout their respective civil wars, it is difficult to tell which theory best applies. The review of the literature above shows that the intensity and brutality with which both groups attacked civilians do not make sense from a theoretical standpoint. In order to shed more light on the interaction between rebel group and civilian, it is necessary to briefly discuss the literature on guerrilla warfare precisely because it addresses this interaction. As this thesis is an examination of why UNITA and Renamo engaged in seemingly illogical violence against civilians, this literature holds particular relevance.

### **Guerrilla Warfare and Civilian Support**

Although Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay's work, "'Draining the Sea:' Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare" discusses violence against civilians by government forces, it outlines the ways in which guerrilla forces are connected to civilians. They write:

Guerrilla war may be distinguished from other forms of combat by three central characteristics. First, guerrilla warfare relies primarily on irregular forces, organized in small, highly mobile units, and operating mostly without heavy weaponry such as tanks, artillery, or aircraft. Second, guerrilla tactics seek to avoid decisive set-piece battles in favor of prolonged campaigns focusing on hit-and-run attacks, assassinations, terror bombing, sabotage, and other operations designed to increase an opponent's political, military and economic costs, as opposed to defeating the opposing military forces directly. Third, clear lines of battle in guerrilla warfare are rare... (pg. 384).

Furthermore, guerrilla armies are prone to rely heavily on the local population for sustenance, supplies, and intelligence. Many civil wars turn extremely deadly for civilians, they argue, when government forces attempt to separate the guerrilla forces from their civilian support (ibid).

Laqueur (1976) provides a historical analysis of guerrilla warfare, which dates back before recorded history (pg. 3). Traditionally, the most important motivating factor for engaging in guerrilla warfare has been patriotism. He writes, "Guerrilla movements fighting domestic contenders stress obvious political or social grievances...generally speaking, the 'antipopular character of the ruling elite'" (pg. 399). However, this is certainly not always the case, and he argues much like Kalyvas that fighters may be motivated not by ideological concerns but by personal vendettas. Guerrilla warfare, according to Laqueur, is a more likely outlet for cruelty and aggression than conventional warfare. According to his analysis, guerrilla warfare and urban terror lead to a perpetual pattern of brutality and glorified violence (pg. 400).

In this volume, Laqueur distinguishes between guerrilla warfare and "urban terror": guerrilla warfare mainly targets the forces of the enemy and strategic infrastructural sites, while urban terror is less discerning in its choice of targets. In their anti-colonial struggles, MPLA and Frelimo conducted traditional guerrilla warfare. In contrast, urban terror seems to apply more to UNITA and Renamo than traditional explanations of guerrilla warfare, even though both groups operated mainly outside urban areas. Interestingly, however, Laqueur argues that "an urban guerrilla group cannot grow beyond a certain limit because the risk of detection increases with the growth in numbers" (pg. 403). A successful urban guerrilla war can only occur when the government is so weak as to fail to prevent armed bands from moving throughout the city, and situation such as this only lasts for a few days before one side or the other wins (ibid). Laqueur's analysis sheds light on aspects of UNITA's and Renamo's violence, yet it does not explain how

both groups managed to keep up their terror tactics for over fifteen years.

This section's review of the literature on violence against civilians in civil war shows that, while hypotheses from studies on civil war onset and duration have some utility in intensity studies, they do not suitably apply to UNITA and Renamo. The literature on guerrilla warfare and "urban terror" is helpful as an introduction to the kinds of tactics that insurgencies employ in achieving their goals. As Lichbach (1995) and others argue, a dissident movement can be sustained without ideological underpinnings. The "greed" argument does not hold up in the UNITA and Renamo cases either, as both groups destroyed enough infrastructure and planted enough land mines as to render their countries practically untenable. Renamo in particular had no financial incentive to displace four million people. Identity politics a la Kalyvas do not really hold up under scrutiny either, as the vast majority of soldiers on the ground were there involuntarily. The literature discussed in this section thus brings us again to the research question—what explains the level of violence against civilians by UNITA and Renamo?

### **Addressing the Gap in the Literature**

The activities of UNITA and Renamo were neither characteristic of typical guerrilla warfare nor urban guerrilla warfare; therefore, extant theory cannot explain UNITA's or Renamo's interactions with civilians. Minter's (1994) book, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry Into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*, focuses on the "social mechanisms which enable an insurgent army to exist and function" instead of on technical military issues (pg. 173). His work holds primary importance to this thesis, as it addresses many of the aspects of UNITA's and Renamo's insurgency that are overlooked in the literature on violence against civilians in civil war. As he writes, "Data from Angola and Mozambique strongly suggest that insurgent armies with sufficient outside support can and do substitute force and technical military capacity for

political mobilization" (ibid.) This goes contrary to the understanding of guerrilla warfare which is assumed to be unlike war waged by the establishment, in which the regime may be oppressive and hated by the public but still stay powerful and militarily victorious. Minter shows that guerrilla insurgencies can and sometimes do operate oppressively.

Minter's interviews of ex-UNITA and ex-Renamo soldiers sheds light on possible reasons behind the rebel groups' excessive use of violence towards civilians:

Evidence indicates...that forced recruitment has been an essential component of the insurgent force. My working hypothesis before interviewing ex-participants was that there would be considerable variety in recruitment, including forced recruitment, ideological or ethnic motives, and material incentives for a young population with many people marginalized by the successive traumas of economic collapse, drought and war. The interviews in Mozambique revealed a far more consistent pattern than expected, with forced recruitment overwhelmingly dominant. The Angolan pattern was mixed, with voluntary recruitment predominant at first and forced recruitment taking on a major role in the 1980s (ibid).

An important point is that in both UNITA and Renamo, all the rank-and-file soldiers were abducted. While Renamo practiced widespread forcible recruitment throughout its existence, UNITA enjoyed a modicum of popular support for the first two years after independence. The Ovimbundu of the south saw UNITA as the logical group to support after independence, but UNITA was not engaged in much combat between 1974 and 1976. In 1977, Savimbi implemented his "theory of large numbers" and ordered his subordinates to recruit more soldiers; however, when they failed to recruit voluntarily, they turned to abductions in government-controlled areas (pg. 178).

How did UNITA and Renamo manage to forcibly recruit and turn their abductees into guerrilla forces? Minter argues that the strategies employed by UNITA and Renamo are similar to conventional conscripted armies, in which the elites rely on force, the threat of force, and claims of legitimacy in order to keep their recruits (pg. 179). When rebel groups forcibly recruit

from enemy territory, however, the need to provide a sense of legitimacy is not as apparent. Thus, for UNITA and Renamo, fear and assimilation were the keys to maintaining their armies.

This research intends to contribute to the literature on violence against civilians by examining factors both outside of and within the warring groups themselves. By taking the focus off the country at war, this research will dig deeper than theories of resource extraction or ideology usually go. Narrowing the focus to UNITA and Renamo makes it possible to avoid overgeneralization through "greed versus grievance" or "public versus private" dichotomies. The analysis will not focus on the MPLA or Frelimo except where it is useful to contrast their actions with UNITA and Renamo. This narrow focus on these two rebel groups will provide explanations for the intensity of violence against civilians that future studies can apply to other cases.

First, this research will discuss the influence that apartheid South Africa had on the tactics of both UNITA and Renamo. Scholars of South Africa's hegemonic influence in the region are divided on how significant this influence was in the violent operations of the rebel groups. Studies of the relationship between apartheid South Africa and these rebel groups are primarily descriptive and either overlook the regime's direct role in creating a rationale for violence against civilians or take for granted the regime's influence without testing it against other variables. The degree of apartheid South Africa's influence in shaping the objectives of UNITA and Renamo will be uncovered empirically.

Secondly, this research will examine the role that traditional religious beliefs within the rebel groups had in determining the level of civilian violence perpetrated by their soldiers. Since, in both countries, the majority of the population adheres to traditional beliefs and practices, it is not an examination of religious cleavages. Instead, this research will inspect the possibility that the soldiers' traditional beliefs led to a kind of cultic violence against civilians. This adds to the

literature on violence in civil war by addressing the contradiction that soldiers who do not want to fight in a war wind up perpetrating intense violence of a sadistic nature against civilians.

Furthermore, this research will examine the role that child soldiering plays in promoting violence against civilians. Scholars have already addressed the link between child soldiering and brutality; much of the literature examines the phenomenon as it pertains to international law and psychology. This study will instead focus on determining whether UNITA's and Renamo's use of child soldiers directly affected the level of violence.

Unfortunately for Angola and Mozambique, the damage has already been done. However, by determining the most significant catalysts for the rebel groups' violence against civilians (catalysts which have yet to be empirically analyzed in the extant literature), this research will not only "solve the puzzle" but will provide a different perspective in the study of violence in civil war as well. The era of apartheid may be over in South Africa, but foreign patronage of rebel groups is certainly not over. Moreover, traditional religious practices continue to be a part of daily life for many people, and unfortunately, child soldiering is not limited to these cases or even to the continent of Africa. It is for these reasons that the brutality with which UNITA and Renamo engaged civilians is still a topic of discussion among human rights advocates and international legal scholars, and an empirical examination of the root causes of this brutality is warranted.

## CHAPTER 3

### HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis examines the similarity in rebel violence against civilians in the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars. It is an attempt to identify the cause(s) of this similarity in light of many important differences between UNITA and Renamo, which were discussed in the first chapter. Because this thesis utilizes a "different cases, same outcome" design, it is necessary that the explanatory variables are factors that apply to both UNITA and Renamo. In the first part of this chapter, the main explanatory variable, South Africa's "total strategy," will be introduced and developed. Then the alternative explanatory variable, traditional religion, will be developed. Finally, the second alternative explanatory variable, child soldiering, will be discussed. Each of these variables will be discussed in detail as they relate to the dependent variable, violence against civilians. Before discussing the hypotheses, it is necessary to explain what constitutes violence against civilians—this study utilizes Humphreys and Weinstein's (2006) broad operationalization of "civilian abuse." Behavior is termed "abusive" if it involves killing, forced displacement, maiming, or sexual assault, or "actions...that render civilians unable to produce or that provoke them to flee an area" (431). Simply focusing on the civilian deaths fails to address the many other ways that UNITA and Renamo (and other rebel groups) have perpetrated violence against civilians.

#### **South Africa's "Total Strategy"**

This thesis hypothesizes that the use of both UNITA and Renamo as proxies in South Africa's "Total Strategy" explains their similar use of violence against civilians. The "Total

Strategy" refers to Pieter Willem (P.W.) Botha's strategy to counter the perceived onslaught against the apartheid regime from inside and outside South Africa. Part of Botha's plan involved using both UNITA and Renamo as proxy armies to destabilize Angola and Mozambique, respectively. This emphasis on destabilization—as opposed to a strategy centered primarily on installing the rebel groups into government by defeating the government forces militarily—made violence against civilians an integral part of both rebel groups' strategies.

*H1: Apartheid South Africa's use of UNITA and Renamo as proxies to destabilize their respective countries explains the similarity in the level of violence against civilians.*

This hypothesis draws on Minter's study of proxy warfare to make the claim that South African patronage directly contributed to UNITA's and Renamo's violence against civilians. South Africa's use of both rebel groups to destabilize the region explains the level of violence, which does not correlate with any socioeconomic or ethnolinguistic cleavages. UNITA and Renamo were both beholden to South Africa with the purpose of making their respective countries "ungovernable." This explains the post-independence descent of both groups from pseudo-political parties into outright criminal organizations.

### **Traditional Religion**

One alternative hypothesis of this thesis is that the widespread adherence among Angolans and Mozambicans to traditional or animist religious beliefs, as well as the widespread practice of ritualistic ceremonies associated with these beliefs, promoted a kind of cultic violence among soldiers in UNITA and Renamo. The adherence to animism is a major similarity between the two countries.

*H2: The belief in rituals to defend against witchcraft and sorcery in the traditional religion of Angola and Mozambique explain the similarity in the level of violence against civilians by UNITA and Renamo.*

Admittedly, there is no available literature that makes explicit any link between animism and violence. This hypothesis came from data on Angola's and Mozambique's similar adherence to animism and news reports of witchcraft being used during the war. The purpose of employing this hypothesis is to determine the extent to which traditional religion played a role in UNITA's and Renamo's violence against civilians. Animism in these countries emphasizes the influence of ancestral and nature spirits in determining the welfare of their descendents or community. In addition to the emphasis on ancestral and nature spirits, many animists ascribe magical powers to individuals they call "witches," who can use their powers maliciously to bring about the demise of others. Witches or sorcerers are thought to exercise their powers through a magical substance in various organs. A diviner, also known as a *kimbanda*, has the ability to discover whether a person's misfortune is due to witchcraft or sorcery. This belief in spirits as causal agents is all-encompassing ("Indigenous Religious Systems").

### **The Use of Child Soldiers**

The final hypothesis analyzed in this thesis concerns the fact that both UNITA's and Renamo's forces were made up of significant numbers of child soldiers. Literature on child soldiering in war stresses the brutality that child soldiers often display during combat (Honwana 2006, Rosen 2005, Fleischman and Whitman 1994, Faulkner 2001, etc). While exact figures on the number of child soldiers in UNITA and Renamo are unknown, estimates for both groups are in the thousands.

*H3: The similar reliance on child soldiering in UNITA's and Renamo's forces explains the similar intensity of the groups' violence against civilians.*

Obviously, the ways in which armed groups use children have an effect on the likelihood that the children become brutal combatants. Some children involved in war have support roles such as messengers, porters, or sex slaves. While many of UNITA's and Renamo's child soldiers held support roles, the majority of boys in both groups participated in armed conflict.

This thesis presents three hypotheses in order to explain the similarities in the level of violence against civilians by UNITA and Renamo, two rebel groups that operated in different countries with regards to ethnic polarization, natural resource wealth, and external intervention. The first and main hypothesis argues that South Africa's support of both UNITA and Renamo in return for their assistance in carrying out P.W. Botha's "Total Strategy" explains the high level of violence against civilians. Apartheid South Africa's disregard for the human rights of black Africans, its isolation and xenophobia, and its emphasis on military force as a guarantor of regional hegemony made it capable of promoting the kind of violence perpetrated by the two rebel forces. Its desire to avoid economic pariah status explains their use of UNITA and Renamo as proxies instead of simply invading overtly and unilaterally. Their patronage allowed UNITA and Renamo to operate as guerrilla forces with no political ideology or even clear goals, which made the long-term campaign of destruction a matter of inertia.

Alternatively, this thesis hypothesizes that the widespread adherence to traditional animist beliefs and practices, as well as the commitment by UNITA and Renamo to "protect" these beliefs, explains the similar intensity of violence. Belief in witchcraft among the Angolan and Mozambican population led to "witch hunts" carried out by the rebel forces as well as a cultic

environment of violence among the rebel soldiers. It is possible that the reliance on traditional rituals allowed the forced recruits to justify their actions.

Finally, the last hypothesis argues that the widespread use of child soldiers explains the high level of violence against civilians by both rebel groups. Both rebel groups used child soldiers more often than the MPLA or Frelimo, and they used them more for direct combat than did the government forces. The literature on child soldiering suggests that the psychological trauma of having to commit such violent acts, as well as the trauma of being separated from their families and communities, leads to the desensitization necessary to commit heinous acts of violence. The next chapter discusses the methodology of this thesis, and Chapter 4 will examine these hypotheses against the qualitative data.

### **Methodology**

This thesis employs a comparative case study analysis for its methodology, using a "different cases, same outcome" design based on MDS methodology and process tracing to find causal mechanisms. Bennett and George (1997) write that "The general method of process tracing is to generate and analyze data on the causal mechanisms, or processes, events, actions, expectations, and other intervening variables, that link putative causes to observed effects" ("Process Tracing in Case Study Research"). They posit that the use of process tracing in case study methods is a "stronger methodological basis for causal inferences than the estimation of covariation through congruence tests" (ibid). The two rebel groups, UNITA and Renamo, are the two cases under examination, and so the rebel group is the unit of analysis. These two groups were chosen because of the relative differences between them, which were discussed in the first chapter. Also, they were chosen because of the variables that scholars have shown to exacerbate civil conflict. Natural resource wealth, ethnic polarization, and multiple foreign interventions are

commonly held as factors that affect civil war onset, duration, and intensity. Angola's civil war incorporated all three factors, while Mozambique's incorporated none. The three hypotheses discussed in the previous chapter are presented as possible alternative variables to these. Each of the three hypotheses will be qualitatively analyzed in Chapter 4, which presents the findings of the research.

The quantitative data on rebel violence against civilians is limited to civilian deaths, and although it is invaluable to research on this topic, it cannot be used in this analysis because the data on Renamo is limited to the last four years of the conflict. As data becomes more available, future studies on this topic will be able to shed more light on rebel violence against civilians. As Cairns (1996) explains, the environment of a civil war makes conducting fully controlled research impossible. Accurate records are difficult to obtain due to damage or inaccessibility; therefore, "precise quantitative measurements simply cannot be obtained" (Wessells pg. 35). In discussing the qualitative approach to civil war research, Kalyvas (2003) warns against ignoring pertinent evidence just because it is not easily systematized. Reliable and systematic data is practically impossible to get in civil war cases, and "the requisite analytical and empirical disaggregation is impossible without the use of typically unsystematized fine-grained data" (pg. 476). It is with these issues in mind that the hypotheses are tested and analyzed.

### **Indicators Required to Support Each Hypothesis**

The first hypothesis, UNITA and Renamo as proxies in South Africa's "Total Strategy," requires several indicators to support the link between apartheid South Africa's anti-communist views, its influence on UNITA and Renamo, and resulting violence against civilians. First, the findings must show that South Africa's influence on UNITA and Renamo were qualitatively similar. There must be evidence of significant South African financial and military assistance to

both groups. There must be evidence of both UNITA and Renamo accepting this assistance and using it to carry out violence against civilians and not just the MPLA and Frelimo. The descriptive data must indicate that both the UNITA and Renamo leadership were influenced by the "Total Strategy" as outlined by P.W. Botha, and that that influence led to their brutal treatment of civilians.

In order to gauge the influence of South Africa's patronage, the findings must show that both UNITA and Renamo relied on South African support enough to adhere to the policy of destabilization, despite pressures to cease their activities towards civilians. Evidence of the UNITA and Renamo leadership taking subordinate roles in formulating strategies in regards to the civilian populations would also support this hypothesis. Because of the most-different-systems design of this thesis, the data will also need to show that factors unique to one rebel group or the other did not contribute to the level of violence against civilians. If the findings show that South African support was necessary for UNITA and Renamo to carry out the amount of violence against civilians that they did, this will support the hypothesis.

The second hypothesis, which addresses the role of traditional religion, namely animism, on the level of violence against civilians by UNITA and Renamo also requires specific indicators to be confirmed. The data must show that animism is similarly significant to members of both UNITA and Renamo. The qualitative data must also show that the ritualistic nature of their animist beliefs led to a ritualistic, cultic kind of violence against civilians. Evidence of perpetrators in both groups using accusations of witchcraft in order to justify violence against civilians would also support this hypothesis. Again, it is important to illustrate that animism was not a part of the MPLA's or Frelimo's tactics, although Frelimo's rank-and-file participated in sporadic animist rituals during the liberation struggle against Portugal (Wilson, 1992, pg. 50).

Evidence of animism being unevenly significant or actually having the opposite effect on soldiers' willingness to perpetrate violence against civilians would disconfirm this hypothesis.

The third, and final, hypothesis addresses the impact of the similar use of child soldiers by UNITA and Renamo on the groups' propensity to violence towards civilians. This hypothesis will be supported by indicators that illustrate the similarity between both groups in their methods of using child soldiers, as well as data that shows that these practices led to acts of brutality towards civilians. The findings must indicate that the level of brutality by child soldiers was greater than adult recruits in both rebel groups.

All of the indicators outlined above must be present in order to confirm the three hypotheses in this study. The data must show that South African influence, animism, and child soldiering all impacted the level of violence against civilians by both UNITA and Renamo in the manner hypothesized. The next chapter will present the findings of this research and reevaluate the three hypotheses. It will confirm or reject these hypotheses based on the descriptive data.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This thesis has thus far presented the research question, reviewed the literature on the topic, and presented and discussed the three hypotheses that will be analyzed using the descriptive data in this chapter. The data will be qualitative because, as discussed earlier, quantitative data that could answer this research question are not available.

#### **South Africa's "Total Strategy"**

This section presents and analyzes the relative influence of apartheid South Africa's "Total Strategy" on UNITA and Renamo's violence against civilians during the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars. In order for this hypothesis to be confirmed, the data must show that the apartheid regime successfully influenced both UNITA and Renamo, and it directly resulted in their violence against civilians.

#### **Background**

In his study on nationalism in Angola and Mozambique, Birmingham (1992) discusses the influence that South Africa had over the region at Angola's and Mozambique's independence. He writes that South Africa was the oldest foreign influence in the region besides Portugal itself, and when the MPLA and Frelimo began assisting the anti-colonial insurgencies of Rhodesia and Namibia, they brought about the hostility of the South African regime. Eventually, "the security and military dimension of the confrontation led to spasmodic interferences which gradually became a systematic policy of destabilization" (pg. 68). The destabilization policy came about under P.W. Botha, who took over after John Vorster's ousting from the premiership.

This is not to say that Vorster had no military inclinations towards either Angola or Mozambique. After 1975, the Vorster government became increasingly concerned with the spread of MPLA offices near the Namibian border. P.W. Botha, then the regime's defense minister, promoted a South African Defense Force (SADF) offensive in 1975, which began South Africa's long period of intervention in Angola. Later that year, Vorster decided to send supplies and instructors to UNITA, Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA), and the ELP (the small Portuguese Liberation Army), which, according to Jaster (1989) was a major victory for P.W. Botha and his military associates. They strongly believed that South Africa should intervene in order to "influence the course of events in Angola" (pg. 70). Within the year, however, Vorster pulled back his military intervention, angering P.W. Botha and the SADF, who titled their account of the campaign "We Could Have Gone All The Way" (pg. 75). Not only did this failed intervention ruin Vorster's *détente* policy of working with black African leaders to resolve regional conflicts, but it also damaged the SADF's "aura of regional instability" (pg. 77). Thirdly, it gave P.W. Botha reason to distrust the U.S. and the West because the U.S. did not support the intervention. P.W. Botha's "Total Strategy" reflected these points. As soon as Botha had the means, he restarted the destabilization of Angola with the intention of "going all the way," and UNITA wound up being the best vehicle for this strategy.

P.W. Botha's "Total Strategy," outlined in his August 1979 Twelve-Point Plan speech to the National Party, was "the product of the leadership's shifting perception of its total security situation: in particular by the perceived security threat, internal and external [and] the state of Pretoria's relations with Western powers" (pg. 89). In order to prove to the white electorate that his regime could protect them from a black uprising at home, he had to show military strength against South Africa's neighbors. Jaster's insight that "Botha's foreign policy became hostage to

his programme of domestic race reform" holds much relevance to this hypothesis (pg. 90). The South African communists' promotion of racial equality was appalling and threatening to the apartheid regime's supporters, so the Marxist regimes of Angola and Mozambique presented a particularly unsettling threat. Their support of ANC operations against the apartheid regime confirmed to Botha that destabilizing Angola and Mozambique was justified to protect white South African interests.

South Africa originally supported the Rhodesian-backed Mozambican National Resistance (MNR), also known as Renamo, in its plan to disrupt guerrilla operations against Rhodesia and attack the black government. When that objective failed and Rhodesia became Zimbabwe under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, South Africa took over as the main sponsor of Renamo and instructed the rebel group to "provoke incidents in Maputo and Beira" (pg. 126). Renamo's heavily armed units conducted traditional guerrilla attacks on pipelines, railroads, and villages. By 1981, Mozambican President Machel called for a mutual non-aggression pact out of desperation at the havoc wreaked by Renamo. The Nkomati Accord was signed by both Machel and Botha; however, the pact merely justified the use of Renamo as a destabilizer because it was effective, and it meant that the ANC presence in Mozambique would be reduced significantly. The SADF was supposed to send Renamo troops back to Mozambique as an exchange. The SADF sent Renamo troops back but with an arsenal of weapons that were used to attack Mozambique's capital (pg. 128). Botha's regime had no intention of supporting anything but South African dominance in the region.

As shown by Birmingham and Jaster, Botha's regime had the political and ideological motivation to disrupt the Marxist regimes of Angola and Mozambique, no matter the costs to South Africa or its neighbors. The regime certainly had the military capabilities to do this.

Botha's mistrust of the U.S., the United Nations, and the West in general meant that the regime did not feel it necessary to tone down its behavior to maintain good relations. However, South Africa was still somewhat dependent on the West as a major source of trade and thus could not attack Angola and Mozambique outright. Botha could, however, use UNITA and Renamo as proxies to carry out the destabilization objectives that South Africa could not. How does this lead to increased brutality of UNITA's and Renamo's forces? This thesis hypothesizes that the sponsorship of UNITA and Renamo by South Africa meant that both groups received what they needed to thrive militarily from a white supremacist regime that held no significance to black African human life. There was no urgent need for either rebel group to formulate any kind of coherent ideology besides "anti-MPLA" and "anti-Frelimo." Both groups exhibited severe inertia—although they both wreaked havoc and destruction on their opponents, there was never a time during their civil wars that they formulated a cohesive plan for how they would govern if they won. As shown by Humphreys and Weinstein, warring groups without a unifying goal or ideology are more likely to perpetrate violence against civilians. Whereas these groups would normally fade away after a short time, outside assistance by South Africa allowed them to continue their campaigns of destruction for several years.

## **UNITA**

Prior to Angola's independence, UNITA was a small armed group that occasionally provided assistance to the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), Namibia's guerrilla organization. At independence, however, UNITA sided with South Africa for assistance against the MPLA, and SWAPO developed ties with the MPLA. SWAPO posed a serious threat to the security of the Namibia/South Africa border, and although Vorster did not want to send SADF troops into Angola after the failed 1975-76 campaign, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Battalion under P.W. Botha

regularly sent elite special forces into Angola, "attacking both SWAPO guerrillas and Angolan civilians" (Minter, pg. 30). Although Vorster considered the Botha-promoted intervention to be a failure, it benefited UNITA and also increased the level of violence by introducing armored cars, fighter jets, tanks, et cetera (Malaquias 2007). At this point, UNITA's violence was directed at beating the MPLA militarily. South African troops, however, were not very concerned about killing civilians, intentionally or unintentionally. In 1977, South African forces massacred over 600 Namibian refugees in a camp in Cassinga, including women and children (Minter, pg. 30). South African troops entered Angola twelve times after the country gained independence, and each time they attacked MPLA forces and civilians. These attacks occupied the government while UNITA expanded its guerrilla activities.

P.W. Botha was elected to the premiership in September of 1978. Later that year, Savimbi faced capture by the MPLA but escaped by calling in a South African helicopter (pg. 32). Until 1979, the UNITA army and its supporters remained scattered across the countryside, mainly trying to survive. Civilians who were suspected of loyalty to the MPLA were forced to go deep into the bush so that they could not easily rejoin (pg. 31). By 1980, the government was somewhat successful in establishing security, and a large proportion of the civilians who had sided with UNITA returned to government-secured areas. Botha stepped up South African support to UNITA in order to counter the MPLA's increasing success in establishing security for the Angolan people. The objective of the increased support was to make the Angolan people feel insecure, and SADF instructors trained UNITA soldiers in destabilization tactics. South Africa's defense budget rapidly increased and covert operations went from the state's security bureau to the military. 1980 signaled the end of South African military activity in Namibia and Rhodesia with Robert Mugabe's victory in Zimbabwe's first election. 1980 also signaled "the beginning of

'total onslaught' on Angola and Mozambique" (pg. 38).

By 1982, UNITA had adopted a strategy of planting enormous numbers of landmines in MPLA-controlled areas and attacking civilians on the roads. Over time, these actions escalated and "succeeded in their purpose of creating a climate of insecurity" (pg. 41). UNITA forces dispersed across rural areas but remained centered in the south, where both UNITA and South African forces operated. The MPLA regime could not defend against such scattered attacks, and so it could not successfully counter UNITA's terror tactics.

Despite overtures by the MPLA government to reach a peace agreement in 1984, Pretoria refused to go through with any kind of withdrawal and instead invited Savimbi to Botha's State Presidential inauguration as a sign of continued support. Assistance to UNITA increased in 1983 and 1984, and UNITA was not even involved in peace talks during this time. It was apparent to the MPLA that cessation of UNITA hostilities depended on Pretoria. South Africa's signing of the Lusaka agreement was purely a strategic move to take international pressure off the regime, despite the fact that it had no intentions of calling off UNITA (pg. 45).

In 1985 and 1986, UNITA's guerrilla warfare ravaged the countryside, and any counterattacks by the government's forces brought about South African reprisals. The Reagan administration repealed the Clark Amendment blocking covert intervention against the Angolan government and Reagan gave \$15 million to UNITA that year. It was insignificant compared to South African assistance, but it signaled to South Africa that its "Total Strategy" was supported by the Reagan administration. Once again, South African forces rescued Savimbi from defeat by the MPLA. UNITA was able to continue guerrilla attacks: UNITA slaughtered large numbers of civilians in 1986 and 1987 and planted thousands of landmines (pg. 48).

By 1989, Namibia was nearing independence and South Africa had signed a peace accord

stating its commitment to end military support for UNITA. After a major siege on Angolan and Cuban forces at Cuito Canavale in 1987, South Africa found itself losing its air superiority, which threatened the safety of white South Africans. However, this accord was held up as much as Lusaka was, and UNITA's attacks continued. Even after Botha's replacement by F.W. de Klerk in 1989, covert operations to support UNITA continued.

Although detailed information about UNITA's internal structure is limited, the dominance of Jonas Savimbi as UNITA's leader is without question. Leon de Costa Dash, a journalist who spent time with Savimbi in 1977, characterizes Savimbi as "an enigma, a man on whom many labels can stick—brilliant, charismatic, affable, unyielding, forgiving, temporizing, Machiavellian, opportunistic, lying, nationalistic, Marxist, Maoist, pro-Western and socialist" (1977, pg. 113). Furthermore, Savimbi was unquestionably convinced of his destiny to be the leader of Angola. He was definitively anti-whatever stood in his way on the path to power, which justified "any strategy or outside alliance" (Minter, pg. 221). This made Savimbi's relationship with Pretoria particularly dangerous for the Angolan people. Botha's regime was determined to maintain regional hegemony and force pro-apartheid policies from its neighbors at any cost, and Savimbi was determined to control Angola at any cost.

It can be argued that South Africa's influence over UNITA was a sufficient, but not necessary, condition for the rebel group's violence against civilians. After all, UNITA's violence against civilians continued and even increased after South Africa ceased its support. In 1998, Savimbi recruited genocidaires from Rwanda who were hiding out in Congo-Kinshasa, and by 1999 UNITA had more troops than the government due to increased kidnapping efforts (Birmingham, 2002, pg. 181). As Birmingham writes, "The new civil war of 1998 was the most cruel yet seen in Angola and UNITA adopted a policy of starving the cities" (ibid.). Savimbi

hoped that international opinion would force Dos Santo's government to negotiate in order to stop the civilian deaths. However, international opinion was more focused on the oil wealth of the country, and nothing changed. By 2000, UNITA had 100,000 forced laborers digging in alluvial plains for diamonds. UNITA's "totalitarian savagery" continued in the countryside. It was only at Savimbi's death that a lasting peace came about (ibid).

This data shows that atrocities by UNITA continued after South African support had ended, yet it does not take away from the explanatory power of the hypothesis. Had South Africa not chosen Savimbi's UNITA as its vehicle for the "Total Strategy," Savimbi would have been forced to explore other options. His rebel officers were trained by South African elite forces to carry out their destructive guerrilla warfare, and both UNITA and the SADF had major military bases of operation in the south. The fact that UNITA's campaign of terrorizing civilians began *after* the introduction of Botha's "Total Strategy," and the fact that Savimbi would have without a doubt been defeated by the MPLA on more than one occasion had South African forces not rescued him and UNITA proves the validity of this hypothesis as it pertains to UNITA. Not only did South Africa prop up UNITA by providing financial and logistical support, but the SADF trained UNITA to carry out destabilization. If South African influence was not a major (if not *the* major) explanatory factor, one would expect to see a marked decline in violence against civilians in the south and an increase in the north, where all of Angola's large oil and diamond mines are (See Fig. 1). Data show that there was no such decline and UNITA continued to ravage the south despite the lack of financial returns for doing so.

Savimbi's unwavering reliance on terror tactics illustrates the military inertia that kept the rebel group from adapting into a viable political party. Furthermore, had UNITA not been so violent against civilians, Savimbi may have had the chance to lead Angola and control its vast oil

and mineral wealth, as much of the population was dissatisfied with the MPLA's Marxist policies. The U.S. certainly would have stepped up its support for Savimbi instead of ending it in the wake of reports of the rebel group's atrocities. UNITA's tactics represent a series of miscalculations that contributed to the group's demise; these tactics can only be explained in light of South Africa's influence.

### **Renamo**

Renamo's experiences as a proxy in South Africa's "Total Strategy" are significantly similar to UNITA's. As Malaquias writes, "A unique feature of South African strategy...was the use of UNITA as a proxy army to weaken the Marxist regime...a strategy later employed with equally lethal effectiveness through Renamo" (pg. 76). Mozambique was spared the tough independence struggle of Angola. While Angola's anti-colonial groups fought amongst each other as well as the Portuguese, Mozambique's anti-colonial groups were largely unified under a common party—Frelimo. Frelimo had strong ideological and organizational links with the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in Rhodesia (Young, 1990, pg. 493). Ciment argues that Mozambique could have had a modicum of early post-colonial success, but Frelimo's support for ZANU brought about the wrath of apartheid South Africa. This wrath came in the form of Renamo, a guerrilla group founded by the head of Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), Ken Flower. Flower worked with South African forces to train Renamo in destabilization practices. Flower himself said that "It is a war, and in war all things are allowed" (Brocklehurst, 2006, pg. 116). Renamo's early recruits and leadership were made up of former Frelimo officers who had been ousted after various accusations, most commonly of theft. Former soldiers of the colonial army joined Renamo, as well. Rhodesia initially proposed a strategy to "win the hearts and minds" of real or potential supporters of ZANU in Mozambique (Vines, pg 20). With South

African prodding and assistance, however, Renamo punished the Mozambican people in the north for Frelimo's actions and destroyed infrastructure that Frelimo had blocked from Rhodesian usage (Ciment, pg. 2).

The white minority rule in Rhodesia came to an end in 1979, and Pretoria transported Renamo to the south for training in mid-1980. Renamo's sponsorship went from a joint Rhodesian-South African setup to one that was led entirely by Pretoria. Interestingly, South Africa presented Renamo as a political organization instead of a covert guerrilla group, despite the lack of a coherent ideology within Renamo. South Africa stressed the need for Renamo to move away from its image as a covert group so that it could increase the scale of its military operations in Mozambique; it specifically wanted Renamo to launch attacks in Gaza and Inhambane provinces in the southern part of the country (pg. 497). By 1981, Renamo had between 6,000 and 7,000 rebels and a base in Inhambane province, and reports of attacks against civilians on the Maputo-Beira road began to surface (see Fig. 1, pg. 75). The group had begun to attack and destroy villages and kill foreign aid workers. Proof of South Africa's influence was found by Mozambican National Army (FAM) troops—the military wing of Frelimo—who took a large Renamo base in Manica Province: documents confirmed that South Africa's objectives were to destabilize Mozambique and turn it into a buffer to limit ANC infiltration into South Africa (Vines, pg. 20).

South Africa proved to be more determined and more capable of using Renamo to destabilize Mozambique than Rhodesia. Renamo went from a lightly armed force to one with a range of powerful armaments, including rifles, rockets, and rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPG-7) due to large shipments from South Africa in the early 1980s (Weigert, 1996, pg. 77). As Ciment notes, "Indeed, South Africa's aims were not so much to overthrow the Frelimo

government—though this was undoubtedly what Renamo's leaders had in mind—but to render the country ungovernable" (pg. 3). Unlike UNITA, Renamo's leadership was not in the hands of one person. Andre Matsangaisse was the first leader of Renamo but was killed by FAM. Afonso Dhlakama succeeded Matsangaisse, but he was largely unpopular. His second in command was Orlando Christina, a white Portuguese who became an important link between Renamo and Pretoria (Vines pg.16). The data suggests that the Renamo leadership was beholden to South African interests. A defector states that

Sometimes things were rejected but they happened. Christina and Dhlakama had to accept them. For example, the South Africans decided that the armed bandits must attack the Beira-Zimbabwe pipeline and the Beira-Malawi railway. Christina and Dhlakama did not want to because they feared losing men and because it would only benefit the South African economy but they had to attack. They had to sign these orders (Reis 1984, in ).

Young states that the true motives behind South Africa's support for Renamo remain controversial among policy scholars. He doubts that Pretoria was seriously concerned over Frelimo's achievements or threatened over the spread of Mozambican socialism. Instead, its "embattled mentality" as well as the ability to disrupt its neighbors, combined with extreme sensitivity to the actions of the ANC, created a logic that saw destabilization as a means to two possible ends: either cutting off the ANC's sanctuaries or forcibly establishing its regional hegemony (Young, pg. 499) Despite the precise motives, Renamo had become skilled at disrupting life for Mozambicans all over the country, so much so that in early 1984, Samora Machel, the head of Frelimo, approached Pretoria with a proposition to end Renamo's insurgency. Mozambique and South Africa signed the N'komati accord, pledging to cease support for each other's opposition movements. As with UNITA, South Africa could not overtly support the campaign of destabilization by Renamo after signing the accord. As with the Angolan government, however,

the accord went largely ignored by South Africa and covert aid continued to flow to Renamo, and Renamo's destruction intensified (Vines, pg. 21).

Between 1984 and 1985, Frelimo and Renamo were engaged in negotiations in which South Africa was heavily involved. The Pretoria Declaration were unsuccessful because Evo Fernandes, Renamo's new white Portuguese replacement for Christina (who was murdered by rivals in Renamo) and the new link between Renamo and South Africa, overruled any conciliatory measures by Dhlakama and other black members of Renamo (pg. 24). Around this time, the Mozambican army captured Renamo's headquarters at Casa Banana and found the "Vaz Diaries," a volume of correspondence between Francisco Vaz, a high-ranking member of Renamo, and Pretoria. The diaries revealed that high-ranking members of the SADF were still ardently supporting Renamo; van der Westhuizen of the Military Intelligence Directorate (MID) stated that "We, the military, will continue to give them [Renamo] support without the consent of our politicians in a massive way so they can win the war" (pg. 24).

Ultimately, the end of apartheid in South Africa and a concerted effort by the UN to reach a solid peace agreement signaled the end of Renamo's terrorist tactics. The UN learned from its mistakes in trying to promote peace in Angola; also, the international community felt that Mozambique's and South Africa's tenuous peace processes were so linked that failure in one would lead to failure in the other (Chabal, pg. 223). In Mozambique, demobilization worked because the UN paid soldiers for turning in their weapons. The only political ideology the Renamo had was one of "anti-Frelimo," much like UNITA's "anti-MPLA" stance. In the end, Frelimo wound up embracing the pro-Western, pro-democracy platform that Renamo had called for but never developed on its own. (pg. 231).

The pattern of violence against civilians by Renamo is also illustrative of South Africa's

influence on the rebel group. In 1988 the U.S. State Department published a report by Robert Gersony. The report was based on over 200 interviews with refugees and IDPs and showed a pattern of brutality towards civilians that reflected the proximity of the civilians to South Africa. In "tax areas" and "control areas," civilians native to the area or captured from government-controlled zones were held as captives. "Destruction areas" were areas in which Renamo did not try to take captives but instead focused on murdering civilians and destroying their property. Later research confirmed that "tax" and "control" areas were primarily in northern Mozambique, while areas bordering South Africa and in the southern half of Mozambique were "destruction areas" (Minter, pg. 206). Also in 1988, a report by Christine Geffray, a French anthropologist, confirmed Renamo's apolitical nature and reliance on coercion for support (pg. 207). Both Geffray and Young posit that, despite widespread disenchantment with Frelimo and its attempts at Marxist modernization, the resentment would have remained nonviolent were it not for Renamo and its South African sponsors (Minter, *ibid.*; Young, pg. 508).

Much like UNITA, Renamo enjoyed some initial support in various regions of the country. However, it was more due to anti-Frelimo than pro-Renamo sentiment, and the brutality with which Renamo interacted with civilians quickly diminished that support. Between 1980 and 1988, Renamo's operations destroyed roughly 1,800 schools, 720 health centers, 900 shops, and 1,300 public vehicles. It is estimated that tens of thousands of civilians died at the hands of Renamo soldiers (pg. 17). Whereas Frelimo's guerrilla war for independence was based among the peasantry and rural population, Renamo's guerrilla warfare was waged primarily on the peasantry itself. Chabal writes that "As these methods of barbarism emerged during the period when South African control...was most direct, it must be assumed that this was part of the...strategy devised by the South African security services" (pg. 212). In speaking of Renamo's

"success," Dhlakama echoed similar Maoist analogies as Savimbi: "We are like fish in the water—if one drains the water, the fish die" (*Die Welt* 1989). If anyone "drained the water," it was UNITA and Renamo, which explains their failure to successfully overthrow the MPLA and Frelimo regimes.

### **Similarities between UNITA and Renamo**

Because this hypothesis focuses on the similarities between UNITA and Renamo in their relationship with apartheid, the data must suggest that South Africa had an integral role in both groups' violence against civilians. The data outlined above confirm this hypothesis. In discussing UNITA and Renamo, Minter writes that there are inconsequential parallels between SWAPO and the ANC, and UNITA and Renamo:

SWAPO and the ANC operated against South Africa with support from the Frontline States; UNITA and Renamo attacked Angola and Mozambique with support from South Africa. But the parallelism concealed profound differences. Troops from Angola or Mozambique never launched operations into South African territory; by contrast, South African troops repeatedly raided and invaded neighboring countries. SWAPO and ANC guerrilla operations were small-scale, caused only limited casualties, and avoided indiscriminate attacks on civilians. UNITA and Renamo operations were explicitly designed to destroy the economies and spread terror among civilians (pg. 42).

Indeed, "South Africa paid no significant penalty for military escalation, nor were the human costs counted at all by Pretoria's total strategists" (pg. 43). South Africa carried out the deaths of hundreds for every white death at the hands of their opponents. Minter states that the installation of UNITA and Renamo into positions of government control would have demanded large, overt military operations by South Africa that would have been practically impossible to maintain. Within the apartheid regime, there was never a clear agreement on practical objectives for the region, which can explain the lack of coherent goal-setting within UNITA and Renamo.

The evidence for both cases shows that, while both UNITA and Renamo formed without

direct involvement from Pretoria, the intensity of violence against civilians increased sharply after this involvement was established and continued to increase with South African support. While Renamo's capability as a destabilizing force declined significantly after the cessation of South African support, UNITA's campaign of destruction continued. This, however, does not disprove the hypothesis: while UNITA had to turn to mineral and oil wealth to sustain its existence, it continued to rely on the same tactics as it had under South African patronage. If Angola had no significant natural resource wealth, one could make the argument that UNITA would have either adapted to be more like a political party or it would have ceased to exist. While the resource wealth fueled the continuation of war, the brutal tactics were already firmly in place. Savimbi's continued reliance on these tactics shows an inertia that prevented UNITA from joining the political process in Angola.

The SADF trained soldiers in both UNITA and Renamo, and the SADF proved itself to be capable of atrocities against civilians so long as they were not white. Given this "by any means possible" attitude by Botha's government, its emphasis on military solutions to all security concerns, and its willingness to take a significant degree of international condemnation to pursue these solutions, it is clear that South Africa had the motivations to use UNITA and Renamo as destabilizing proxy armies. Their shipments of armaments and financial backing gave UNITA and Renamo the capabilities to commit atrocities and continue operating without a unifying political ideology. Multiple interventions on behalf of both groups kept them alive when they might have otherwise been defeated.

The section has identified the similarities in South Africa's influence over UNITA and Renamo and the resulting similarities in violence against civilians perpetrated by both groups (See Table 2). This thesis hypothesizes that South Africa's use of both UNITA and Renamo as proxy

armies in their "Total Strategy" explains the similar levels of violence against civilians by both groups. The qualitative data in this section has supported this hypothesis. In the next section, the first alternative hypothesis, which addresses the role of traditional religion in explaining the similar levels of violence against civilians, will be analyzed against qualitative data.

### **Traditional Religion**

This hypothesis examines the similar religious beliefs among Angolans and Mozambicans and how they similarly affected the level of violence against civilians by UNITA and Renamo. It analyzes the possibility of "cultic violence" by the rebel soldiers through ritualistic killing and mutilation. Underlying this argument are the ways in which the leadership in UNITA and Renamo used traditional religious beliefs in order to facilitate the kind of atrocities that their soldiers, who were predominantly forced recruits, committed. Weigert writes that studies of religion in civil war "may reveal that religious traditions in sub-Saharan Africa are the well-spring out of which a 'military mythology' and a 'military ethic' have flowed" (pg. 105). This hypothesis attempts to make a similar connection—first, by discussing the acts of violence themselves, then by connecting these acts to aspects of traditional religion in both countries.

### **Background**

Despite the Portuguese colonial emphasis on Roman Catholicism and the spread of Protestantism through missionaries, about two-thirds of the Mozambican population adheres to animist customs. Many of the Catholics and Protestants in Mozambique practice a mixture of these religions and traditional animist customs, as well. Angola is similar with the majority of the population adhering to traditional animist beliefs as well as a mixture of Catholicism and Protestant with animism. The Marxist regimes of the MPLA and Frelimo perceived religion as a threat to their power and a symbol of colonial oppression. As Gyimah-Boadi writes (2004), "In

the prevailing ideology, religion was considered obscurantist and therefore incompatible with the creation of the... 'socialist man'" (pg. 189). Frelimo declared religion and tradition to be enemies of the state. The MPLA also declared itself to be a secular, socialist party and marginalized traditional religious figures. Interestingly, however, the MPLA did carry out trials and executions of accused "witches," but this was during its guerrilla campaign to defeat the Portuguese colonial regime. Since the colonial administration banned witch trials and executions, the MPLA conducted these trials as a reaction against colonial rule. Once the MPLA came to power, the Marxist anti-religious/anti-traditional policy came into effect, and UNITA began emphasizing the importance of traditional animist practices as a reaction against the MPLA (Brinkman 2003). Likewise, Renamo took traditional animism under its umbrella because Frelimo's rejection of religion alienated much of the population.

This hypothesis addresses the ability of UNITA and Renamo to perpetrate such excessive brutal violence against civilians using almost entirely forced recruits. Indirectly, it also addresses the reasons for popular support for UNITA and Renamo. Despite their destructive tactics, some Angolans and Mozambicans saw UNITA and Renamo as the guardians of their traditional religious beliefs, which were being stifled under the MPLA and Frelimo. More specifically, it addresses the possibility that UNITA and Renamo leaders manipulated the beliefs of their soldiers to get them to kill. Perhaps the soldiers turned to their traditional religious beliefs to find justification for what they were doing. Killing a "witch" or a "sorcerer" implies doing something good for one's community, whereas simply killing a person lacks that kind of justification.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the predominance of animism in both countries, and its adherence to beliefs and rituals associated with preventing misfortune from witches, has been confirmed. This section will show that the nature of traditional beliefs among UNITA and

Renamo soldiers had a powerful effect on their propensity to commit violent acts against civilians. First, the significance of animism among civilians, UNITA's leadership, and the rank-and-file, as well as the significance it held in acts of violence will be presented. The same will be done in regards to Renamo. Finally, the hypothesis will be evaluated by discussing the similarities between the two cases.

## **UNITA**

In a series of interviews conducted by Brinkman (2000), survivors of UNITA's violence stress its ritualistic nature. One survivor, a woman from Cuito Canavale, described the acts of a rebel fighter:

When he captures somebody, he cuts him/her up with an axe and drinks the blood. like when they came and seized Nyavihoma [the mother of Vihoma], he killed her and drank the blood. Then he spat it out towards the sun: phaa! Those who lived in the bush told us about Vindindo. He chopped up people....And they also called him Salingimbu [the father of the axe] (pg. 1).

Torture and mutilation were integral to the rebels' campaign against civilians. Interestingly, while the civilians emphasized the torture, the men who actively participated in the violence preferred to discuss the "technological aspects of warfare" (ibid). Although the war for independence was intense and violent, the post-colonial war was much more so. As the reasons for fighting became increasingly opaque, the atrocities against civilians became more common. Brinkman's interviewees were fearful of speaking of their experiences because deportation from the refugee camp in Namibia would put them in UNITA-controlled territory; however, many agreed to discuss their experiences so that the Namibian government would understand that the refugees needed to stay there (pg. 3). Above all, the victims and witnesses believed that the reliability of their testimonies was of crucial importance and insisted that their accounts could possibly be verified.

The nature of fighting between Angolans prior to the war was much different, as warring groups would taunt and tease each other, fight, take lunch breaks, fight, and then go home. Women and children were taken as slaves but not killed (pg. 8). Although the civilians discussed UNITA's widespread torture and mutilation practices as a "new development" of the post-independence war, the instruments used for these acts were not sophisticated; instead, knives, sticks, and axes predominantly figured into the violence. Many witnesses state that bullets were saved for the war, while these rudimentary weapons were reserved for civilians (pg. 14). The interviewees attribute the violence to the length of the war, which spanned generations (pg. 7). The top-down nature of the relationship between UNITA and the civilians was also cited as a factor in the indiscriminate violence.

While a detailed discussion of UNITA's torture tactics is unpleasant, it is necessary to analyze whether UNITA's tactics were inspired by traditional religious rituals, specifically as they relate to witchcraft. The general consensus is that the torturers were always men, and men and women victims were tortured according to their gender. While women suffered torture based on "insertion," UNITA's torture of men was more related to "severance" (pg. 11). Women and children victims were often impaled. Women who suffered "insertion" torture but were not killed were almost always rendered infertile, and children's metabolic systems were often blocked. Scholars have already made the connection between traditional religious beliefs and these torture tactics. Taylor (1992) posits that insertion torture relates to "blocked flow," and severance torture relates to "hemorrhagic flow." Both "flows" correspond with disease and healing rituals in traditional religion in many sub-Saharan African societies (pg. 13). Severance practices involved cutting off protruding parts of the body, as well as eyes and skin. When witnesses and victims of severance torture spoke of their assailant, they almost always referred to

him as "Satan" or "Salingimbu." Severance torture was exceptionally ritualistic, as the perpetrators attempted to gain power through severing a body part and drinking the victim's blood, then spitting it out towards the sun (pg. 13). The act of spitting the blood at the sun was, according to the traditional religious beliefs of the people, "a specialty of Satan and Salingimbu" (ibid). Often tied in with severance was the act of forcing the victim to cook and eat his or her own body parts or those of his or her relatives, often with mothers eating their own children.

Also telling of the link between UNITA's violence and traditional religion is the manner in which UNITA cleansed its ranks and civilian support of "traitors," which they referred to as "witches" (pg. 15). Fred Bridgland, a British journalist and biographer for Savimbi, first exposed the nature of UNITA's violence against civilians. His 2004 report on the murder of Savimbi's second-in-command, Tito Chingunji, and his family, details Savimbi's use of traditional religion as a tool to purge alleged traitors:

Savimbi accused them [Tito's family] at a rally of witchcraft and of plotting to kill him. Savimbi said Violeta was a witch with powers so great she could fly. She had flown over Savimbi's own house. She also ate people, claimed Savimbi...

Savimbi began publicly burning women and children to death. On 7 September 1983 he summoned everybody to a "very important rally"...Commandos were ordered to ensure that no one missed the event. Savimbi rose to speak on a day that would be remembered as Setembro vermelho (Red September). He said witches had been plaguing the movement. Some witches would this day breathe their last and would no longer be able to retard the war effort...The giant bonfire was lit. He called the names of women and asked them to step forward: they, he said, were witches who he had condemned to death. Some had children: they would die with their mothers because "a snake's offspring is also a snake" (pgs. 24-25).

The condemned women who had not been thrown into the fire that day were eventually burned, but not before their heads were shaved and "a witch doctor searched them for magic charms" (pg. 27).

The inclusion of witch hunts in UNITA's operations was not *per se* condemned by the people when the victims were assumed to be witches by the community; it was generally accepted that real witches posed a serious threat. However, the abuse of the ritual by UNITA angered witnesses, especially on Red September. Reports suggest that Savimbi sacrificed one or more of his own relatives to become a witch himself (Brinkman, pg. 16). Brinkman makes a critical observation for this hypothesis as it pertains to UNITA: although Satan/Salingimbu gained power through drinking blood, he was not a witch because he operated under the command of UNITA and within the framework of the rebel group's rules (pg. 16). The act of UNITA soldiers cutting off limbs and drinking blood made them fearless and compassionless by taking away *ngozi*, or their capacity for mercy: "Many soldiers became obsessed with killing. Like addicts they could feel good only when doing it" (pg. 18). Traditional healers in turn sought to heal the soldiers of their madness by calming the spirits of their victims through other rituals; however, many UNITA soldiers who perpetrated this kind of violence wound up as criminals after the end of the war (ibid). From the civilian perspective, Savimbi purposefully facilitated the loss of *ngozi* among his men in order to spread madness among the population. This point has been echoed by both MPLA and UNITA sympathizers (pg. 18). Although data on the ritualistic nature of UNITA's violence against civilians is limited to a few studies, these studies illustrate that UNITA used traditional religion as a tool for maximizing the death and destruction of the Angolan people, especially those who did not emphatically support Savimbi.

### **Renamo**

Renamo's connections to traditional religion are quite well-documented compared to those of UNITA. The data, however, paints a similar picture in both cases. That Renamo aligned itself with right-wing evangelical Christian groups is paradoxical given the fact that the rebel group

heavily endorsed traditional religion in Mozambique. Renamo presented itself as a protector of all religions as a contrast against Frelimo's anti-religious stance. By the early 1980s, the traditional religious leaders in Mozambique had largely given their support to Renamo, as Renamo advocated a reversal of their marginalization by Frelimo. Weigert states that, beneath the modern influence on the rebel group, there was always a "stubborn adherence to a magico-religious worldview. Comparable manifestations of a traditional religious influence on Renamo's rank-and-file members appear throughout the fifteen-year war" (pg. 79). The supernatural connection began with Matsangaisse, who allegedly had a *feiticerio* (spirit-medium) give him power that would protect him and his men from bullets. After Matsangaisse was killed by a Frelimo bullet, his followers claimed that his bulletproof powers had been negated immediately before his death. Dhlakama, on the other hand, visited witch doctors but did not have the same reputation as a man with superpowers. Other high-ranking insurgents claimed that they could see the future, fly, disappear and reappear, and turn bullets into water (pg. 80).

The emphasis on rituals and powers applied to the average Renamo soldier, as well. Guerrilla camps performed ceremonies to gain the approval of ancestral spirits in the area, and witch doctors waved goat tails dipped in a liquid that was believed to stop bullets. Originally, the insurgents took care to remove all their dead from combat areas so that the "bulletproof" magic would still be believed by civilians. Ancestral spirits apparently "dictated" all of the major decisions of Renamo commanders, who consulted with them regularly (pg. 81). However, as Hall (1990) states, being a follower or even a performer of rituals of the traditional religion did not make one any less likely to become victims of Renamo violence. Collaborators with Renamo had few alternatives, and civilians in Renamo-held zones were just as likely to suffer as civilians in enemy territory. As Anderson (1992) writes, Renamo took advantage of the widespread practice

of black magic—"The state of spiritual frenzy that some attackers are reported to reach...and the vividly deep, though often obscure practices of traditional life, offers a cultist meaning" to life among Renamo's soldiers (pg. 62).

The ritualistic nature of Renamo's violence against civilians is strikingly similar to that of UNITA. Renamo's "campaign of terror" involved public massacres centered around a "witch hunt" theme, mutilations, ritualized "insertion" and "severance" torture of randomly chosen individuals (pro-Renamo or not), and the cooking and eating of children. In discussing this violence, however, it is necessary to determine whether it was a top-down strategy or simply a matter of the violence getting out of hand. Skjon discusses the "benefits" of Renamo's violence and writes that the ritualistic nature of the violence gave perpetrators much more power over civilians than the violence itself; indeed, "particularly in discourses of witchcraft and sorcery, power is evaluated with suspicion as well as approbation, the powerful with fear as well as respect." It must be noted that the ritualistic violence did not have the same effect on non-animists: systematic executions, limb-breaking, and cutting did not have the intended effect on a village of Jehovah's Witnesses, for example. Instead of promoting fear and awe of Renamo as a powerful commander of spirits, the Jehovah's Witnesses found no meaning in the brutality and therefore saw it as completely illegitimate (ibid).

By 1990, however, Renamo's brutal tactics had alienated most of its traditionalist supporters. Any initial support for Renamo was based on the group's protection of traditional religion, but, much like UNITA, Renamo began exploiting traditional rituals to get its recruits to commit atrocities against civilians. Renamo's emphasis on traditional religion was not a part of any political ideology, as people had originally believed. In March of 1990, the "Naprama" movement signaled the disillusionment of traditionalists with Renamo. A traditional healer

named Manual Antonio pronounced his divine mission to end the war and recruited 400 men for a campaign against Renamo. Much like Renamo, Naprama prepared for battle with magic rituals and potions intended to make the soldiers invincible. "By the end of 1990, Naprama's machetes and spears had proven to be far more effective in attacks on Renamo bases in Zambezia province" than Frelimo's guns had been (Weigert, pg. 93). Renamo claimed that the ancestral spirits supporting it were stronger than those favoring Naprama.

Even after the war ended, Renamo continued to champion itself as a pro-traditionalist group. David Alone, the deputy leader of the Renamo parliamentary group, said in 1997 that "All of us, except those of European origin, are animists. One day we were evangelized by Islam or Christianity, but in our hearts we remain animists" ("AIM Reports," 18<sup>th</sup> July 1997). The Frelimo government attributed Renamo's intense violence against civilians as the result of psychopathic behavior by criminally-minded members of Mozambique's society. That Renamo's violence "goes beyond any purely rational military explanation" makes some analysts view the violence as an end in itself. The ritualized frenzy with which Renamo destroyed and killed still begets explanations of a "negative culture of evil" (Weigert, pg. 99). Like UNITA, however, Renamo was organized and possessed mechanisms for disciplining soldiers who did not follow the group's objectives. Furthermore, U.S. Ambassador Wells, who witnessed Renamo's destruction, described it as "maniacal, methodical, meticulous," (Young, pg. 506). In sum, the prevalence of ritualistic violence was not due to a group of crazed mass murderers running loose, nor was it limited to Frelimo members and supporters. The nature of the violence, while indiscriminate, was a tactical move by Renamo.

### **Similarities between UNITA and Renamo**

As shown by the descriptive data, UNITA's and Renamo's emphasis on traditional religion

contributed to the widespread use of violence against civilians (See Table 2). Both UNITA and Renamo promoted themselves as protectors of a religious tradition that emphasized connection with the land the soil. Logic follows that had they been serious about this protection, they certainly would not have laid hundreds of thousands of landmines, cut off the hands of farmers and rendered their wives infertile, or killed infants and children. Had they been serious about this protection, they might have won enough public support to take control of their countries, as the MPLA's and Frelimo's anti-religious stance alienated much of the population. This is not to suggest that every traditionalist in these rebel groups committed atrocities the same way or for the same reason, or that no non-traditionalists committed atrocities. The evidence shows, however, that traditional religion played a crucial role in UNITA's and Renamo's actions.

While this hypothesis has been confirmed, it holds only in the context of the first hypothesis concerning South Africa's use of UNITA and Renamo as destabilizing forces. The "maniacal, methodical, and meticulous" destruction was clearly part of a larger purpose, and again, was not an end in itself. Brinkman echoes Wilson (1992) when she writes, "The purpose of the torture and mutilation was the same: to instill a paralyzing and incapacitating fear" (pg. 14). The intention to paralyze and incapacitate the civilian population was directly related to the rebel groups' objective—to paralyze and incapacitate the economy and the state. The ways in which UNITA and Renamo exploited traditional religion—by taking away their soldiers' ngozi, making them "mad" and "bloodthirsty"—explains how soldiers were willing and able to commit atrocities without discrimination and without a political or ideological purpose.

This hypothesis has explanatory power not as a "why" factor, but as a "how" factor. Traditional religion did not directly lead to violence against civilians, but it was used as a vehicle by which UNITA and Renamo carried out destabilization. The methods of torture are distinctly

tied to the traditional religious beliefs in both countries, which provided the rebels with a kind of legitimacy based on fear and awe that could not be possible through non-symbolic violence.

Whether or not this was a direct suggestion or order from Pretoria cannot be determined by the available data, and so whether or not there is a degree of endogeneity with the first hypothesis is unclear at this time.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of this possibility, it is indisputable that animism is a pre-colonial religion and other armed groups have fought under the banner of animism without significant prodding from outside forces. It appears to have been a necessary but not sufficient factor to explain the violence against civilians. Townspeople who had fled to the bush in order to escape the fighting were excluded from farming by UNITA. As Brinkman writes, UNITA killed them "for wanting to resume the once fruitful link between town, country, and bush" (pg. 15). Not only did these groups fail to protect the traditionalists and their connection with the soil, they perverted the connection by ritualistically using farming tools as torture devices and covering the soil with the blood of their victims (ibid). The next section will examine another factor that may explain the similar levels of violence against civilians by UNITA and Renamo—the use of child soldiers in combat. The next section will present the findings for the final hypothesis.

### **The Use of Child Soldiers**

This third and final hypothesis analyzes the role of UNITA's and Renamo's reliance on child soldiering as a contributing factor to the high intensity of violence against civilians. Human Rights Watch reports that, since 1998 alone, over six thousand child soldiers were mobilized by UNITA. The "Cape Town" definition, which is used by the international community, defines a child soldier as

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<sup>3</sup> As Wilson (1992) writes, "Though it is indeed likely that the South African military was involved in promoting the systematic use of spirit mediums by Renamo...this cannot account for the extent and types of influence they are shown to have" (pg. 529).

any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to, cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members ("Cape Town Principles").

Using this definition would put the number of UNITA's child soldiers well over 10,000 ("Forgotten Fighters: Child Soldiers in Angola 2003"). Another Human Rights Watch (1996) report that UNITA's use of child soldiers was extensive and children who were not already in the rebel group were at high risk for abduction and forced conscription ("Angola: Between War and Peace"). A 1994 UNICEF report discusses the logic behind forcibly recruiting child soldiers; Basta, one of the report's authors, claims that "In many places, the perpetrators of some of the worst war atrocities are children. They want to be praised, and their only peer approval may come from being even more vicious than adults" ("Child Soldiers"). The report labels Renamo as one of the worst offenders.

### **Background**

There is evidence that the MPLA and Frelimo also used child soldiers, but to a far lesser extent than UNITA and Renamo. The MPLA forcibly recruited children between ages of fifteen and eighteen, but the majority of these children were trained as mechanics and radio operators (Human Rights Watch, "Forgotten Fighters" 2003). Furley (1995) writes that, during the war for independence, children could earn small sums of money for performing odd jobs for the Portuguese army, and they kept them around to keep Frelimo from attacking them on journeys. Families with children fled to Frelimo-controlled territory for safety from the Portuguese, but neither side deliberately used child soldiers in combat. While Renamo earned the name "The Khmer Rouge of Africa" due to its child soldiering practices, the general understanding is that Frelimo was not involved in abducting large numbers of children and forcing them to engage in

combat. In fact, many of the children that wound up in Renamo were unwanted by Frelimo and could not find other work (Brocklehurst 2006, pg. 118).

Herbst (2000) discusses child soldiering as a symptom of the changing nature of warfare. As economic incentives in recruitment take a back seat to coercion, warring groups are less discriminating in their choice of recruits (pg. 279). Faulkner (2001) states that advances in weapons technology are to blame for the trend, as cheap, easy-to-use weapons that are light enough for a child to handle (such as the M-16 and AK-47) are in wide circulation (pg. 495). In "Recruitment and Allegiance: The Microfoundations of Rebellion" (2002), Gates argues that rebel groups often organize themselves much like organized criminal groups like the mafia, yet they need to have forces large enough to have a chance of success against government forces. The nature of rebellion dictates that the main goal is military success, and so rebel groups must be able to recruit and motivate their soldiers (pg. 112). Forced recruitment of child soldiering can make fulfilling these requirements easier. Gates's analysis shows that child soldiers sometimes join voluntarily as well; for some children facing poverty and/or lacking familial ties, the costs of avoiding recruitment are higher than their calculation of the potential costs of joining the rebellion. "Indeed," he writes, "this may be the fundamental reason that non-ideological rebel groups rely so heavily on child labor" (pg. 128). Gates cites an article from *The Economist* in which a Congolese rebel officer states that boy fighters "make very good soldiers" because "they obey orders, are not concerned with getting back to their wife and family, and they don't know fear" ("Children under arms" 1999, pg. 22).

The case of Sierra Leone is a prime example of how children in combat can fuel brutality and violence against civilians. Faulkner's study of "kindergarten killers" in The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone's civil war illustrates the disturbing connection: the children

in RUF engaged in a "systematic exercise of rape, murder, abduction, and mutilation of the young and old alike" (pg. 499). This environment desensitized the child soldiers, who became some of the most brutal and inhumane soldiers in the war. They were often drugged, then forced to torture and/or execute their family members and members of their own village. After that experience, it was "easier" for these dehumanized children to carry out the same acts on civilians in other villages (ibid). Drawing on these studies, this hypothesis examines whether the similar emphasis on child soldiering in UNITA and Renamo explains the similar level of violence against civilians.

As Honwana (2002) writes, "The issue of child soldiers cannot be explained in terms of Africa's pre-colonial history, nor does it have roots in African traditional culture. Rather, [it] is rooted in the crisis of the post-colonial state in Africa" (pg. 1) Both UNITA and Renamo recruited significant numbers of children to serve in their insurgencies, and this can explain the similarities in violence against civilians. Like the traditional religion hypothesis, however, it may not hold as much explanatory power as the first hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is important to examine its significance as a catalyst for violence. The act of forcing a child to kill is, indeed, a form of violence against civilians in itself, and much of the literature on child soldiering emphasizes the trauma children experience in the process. However, this hypothesis focuses specifically the actions of the recruits themselves, after they cease to be civilian children and become desensitized recruits. This section will illustrate the similar emphasis on child soldiering by UNITA and Renamo and analyze its effect on violence against civilians.

## **UNITA**

The data on child soldiering in UNITA presents a mixed image of its contribution to violence against civilians. Drawing on his interviews of UNITA soldiers, Minter concludes that

UNITA clearly differed from Renamo in that the interviewees reported no pattern of forced recruitment of young children for military training. With the exception of one, who said he was involved in training children in 1986, all the interviewees said that recruits were not sent for military training until they were adults—minimum ages mentioned ranged from 17 to 19. Two had themselves attended school after joining UNITA before being sent for military training (pg. 182).

However, a number of other studies discuss a significant number of children being forcibly recruited by UNITA and subsequently committing atrocities against civilians. In Minter's interviews it is unclear whether the soldiers were referring to formal military training or a more general use of child soldiers in combat. Other sources of descriptive data suggest that UNITA's child soldiers who were not forcibly recruited often cited insecurity, hunger, and powerlessness as reasons for joining the rebel group. Once initiated, children were often given marijuana or hallucinogens, and they ate bullet powder to gain strength (pg. 4).

Honwana (2006) interviews several children who were ex-combatants for UNITA. According to her study, boy soldiers were conditioned to be powerless except for the moments when they were committing acts of violence. She emphasizes their inability to act humanely (pgs. 60-61). Their first act as UNITA soldiers typically involved witnessing the mutilation or sexual abuse of a close relative then committing such an act themselves. This not only cut off the child from its community but made him more dependent on UNITA as a replacement family. The child's given name was changed to a "war name," such as "Rambo," "the invisible," "Russian," or "the powerful" (Honwana, pg. 4) The next act of killing usually involved the child killing a fellow UNITA soldier who had made a failed attempt at escape (pg. 3)

The evidence suggests that child soldiers made up an important group in UNITA. After the Lusaka protocol, UNITA was supposed to demobilize its soldiers, especially any children in its ranks. However, UNITA commanders deliberately manipulated the demobilization process so

that child soldiers could be moved back into UNITA training camps. The rebel group also stepped up recruitment of children in order to make up for the soldiers that were officially demobilized (Verhey, 2001, pg. 10).

The child soldiers attended UNITA ceremonies in which they were officially "inducted" as members of the group. These ceremonies almost always included the murder of one or more failed escapees. The newest and youngest children were often called upon to perform these executions; if they were "successful" at following orders, they would be given positions of authority over the other children ("Child Soldiers" UN Report). Training in torture tactics and participation in massacres quickly removed any residual moral direction (Brocklehurst, pg. 17). Child soldiers were often routinely tortured to wear them down, then rewarded for carrying out torture and murder. The end result was a group of desensitized child soldiers who were often much more brutal than adult soldiers were (pg. 118). One of many examples is Timangane, a young child soldier for UNITA who became so efficient and brutal that

after a while the commander of the base no longer bothered to check whether his order would be carried out because he knew it would be. Timangane had lost count of how many people he had killed. He would dehumanize his victims...Timangane identified with his commander. In his dreams...he saw himself in the skin of his commander, and...had the power to decide about life and death (pg. 72).

Clearly, UNITA's use of child soldiers had a positive and significant effect on the level of violence against civilians during Angola's civil war.

### **Renamo**

The ways in which Renamo used child soldiers against civilians are nearly identical to those of UNITA. Honwana (2006) writes of Marula, a ten year-old boy kidnapped by Renamo insurgents in Gaza province:

He was not allowed to see his father and sister, but they managed to arrange secret

meetings on a few occasions. During one of these meetings, they agreed to run away together. But they were caught attempting to escape. Marula was ordered to kill his own father, and so he did. Following this first killing, Marula grew into a fierce Renamo combatant was active for more than seven years. He does not even remember how many people he tortured, how many he killed, how many villages he burned...(pg. 49).

Although adult combatants in Renamo committed atrocities against civilians regularly, Renamo recruited children because they were more willing to do things that adults did not want to do. A Renamo party delegate stated that his child soldiers did "quite nicely in the field. You know they always did what they were told to do, they were fiercely loyal and brave in battle" (Brocklehurst, 2006, pg. 37). While Renamo manipulated traditional religious beliefs in order to get its adult recruits to commit atrocities, it manipulated children differently. Child soldiers in the rebel group were often drugged and told that they were playing a "war game" (ibid).

As in UNITA, their first act as Renamo soldiers usually involved having to watch the mutilation or sexual abuse of a close relative then having to commit such an act themselves. This also cut off the child from its community and made it more dependent on Renamo as a replacement family. Renamo's child soldiers were often the first to charge into a village during a raid, thus having the first contact with civilians. According to Andersson, while reports of Renamo's attacks claimed that adult soldiers perpetrated the violence, often those soldiers were children of eight, nine, ten, and twelve years old (pg. 59). When war photographer Kok Nam visited a rehabilitation center in Maputo, he came across a young man named "Fifteen." When asked why his name was Fifteen, the boy said, "I burned fifteen buses with people inside" (pg. 59). According to Nam, the boy then laughed but "had a crazy look on his face. Most of that group had no normal reactions" (ibid.). As the war went on, children made up an increasingly higher proportion of the total recruits. According to information in the Gorongosa documents taken from Renamo headquarters, a set of papers containing, among other things, a list of

Renamo recruits, the average age of total recruits fell from 25 years to 16.93 years between 1978 and 1987 (pg. 60). It is apparent from the data on Renamo's child soldiers that they frequently carried out atrocities against civilians.

### **Similarities Between UNITA and Renamo**

The descriptive data shows that UNITA and Renamo used child soldiers in practically the same ways, and their use of children as combatants directly affected the level of violence against civilians (See Table 2). The ritualized use of strenuous exercise, training with weapons, and strict discipline created in UNITA and Renamo forces of young soldiers who terrorized the rest of the civilian population (Honwana, pg. 63). In her analysis of the violence against civilians by child soldiers in both rebel groups, Honwana describes the child soldiers' increased brutality over time as a kind of "tactical agency," a term which de Certeau (1984) first established. De Certeau argues that tactics are means to cope with one's present situation despite the likelihood that those means may have negative consequences in the long-run. Honwana applies this to her argument about "tactical agency" among child soldiers in the rebel groups: over time, children in UNITA and Renamo saw their situation as long-term and therefore tried to "make the best of it" (pg. 4). The more brutal they were, the more they were rewarded by their superiors; they did not see their actions as a means to bring about political change in their countries (ibid).

This hypothesis is confirmed by the data. It is important, however, to analyze it within the appropriate context. As Andersson writes, psychologists who have worked with ex-combatant children from UNITA and Renamo state that the methods these rebel groups used "are not the usual or traditional methods found in Africa, and appear to be the result of some outside advice" (pg. 58). Similarly, Vines writes, "An increasingly large number of refugees tell of this phenomenon in southern Mozambique, something that was virtually unheard of until the late

1980s" (pg. 95). In both Angola and Mozambique, the use of children as soldiers was a deliberate strategy, not a random outcome (Honwana 2006).

This hypothesis has less explanatory power than that of traditional religion and certainly less than the importance of South Africa's sponsorship of the two rebel groups. Although UNITA and Renamo relied heavily on child soldiers, this hypothesis is neither necessary nor sufficient. The number of child soldiers in both groups, while larger than many other warring groups who have used child soldiers, is not large enough in itself to explain the level of violence against civilians. It certainly contributed, however. UNITA and Renamo could not have destabilized their countries to the extent that they did without using traditional religious rituals to paralyze the population, whereas child soldiering was a tactic that became more attractive to the rebel groups as adult recruitment became more difficult.

**Table 2: Summary of Results**

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>UNITA</b>	<b>Renamo</b>
<b>H1: South Africa's "Total Strategy"</b>		
--SADF training to rebel group	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Rebel violence against civilians prior to SADF training	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
--Rebel violence against civilians more intense in the south	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Rebel adherence to destabilization despite resulting decrease in popular support	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Evidence of rebel group subordination to South African demands	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Rebel activities cease at end of apartheid regime	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Factors unique to the rebel group explain the violence against civilians	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>H2: Traditional Religion</b>		
--Animism significant among the majority of the population	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Elements of traditional rituals present in violent acts against civilians	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Accusations of witchcraft by rebel group to justify violence	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Animism as a deterrent to rebel violence against civilians	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
--Use of witchcraft by rebel leaders to instill fear and gain power over civilians and combatants	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Animism a sufficient explanation for rebel violence against civilians	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>H3: The Use of Child Soldiers</b>		
--Significant number of child soldiers involved in actual combat	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Evidence of child soldiers perpetrating violence against civilians	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Evidence of child soldiers acting with greater brutality than adult recruits	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
--Use of child soldiers a sufficient explanation for rebel violence against civilians	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has examined the puzzling similarity in the level of violence against civilians by UNITA and Renamo in the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars, despite differences in natural resource wealth, ethnic polarization, and foreign interventions. This thesis has identified three hypotheses and analyzed their relationship to the dependent variable in seeking to explain this similarity. All three hypotheses, South Africa's "Total Strategy," traditional religion, and the use of child soldiers have proved to have influence over UNITA's and Renamo's similar use of violence against civilians.

The qualitative data shows that the "Total Strategy" of apartheid South Africa under P.W. Botha similarly influenced the activities of both UNITA and Renamo during their civil wars. This is the strongest explanation for the assault against civilians by the rebel groups. The fact that South Africa heavily financed and trained both rebel groups explains the nature of the violence, which cross-cut ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status. To these rebel groups, it did not matter much whether the victim was a Marxist, an Ovimbundu, an animist, a pregnant woman, a child, et cetera. Geography played a more significant role, or rather, proximity to South Africa: in both countries, the most intense destruction and violence against civilians took place not in the capital cities, but in the south. As shown by the data, Renamo's "destruction zones" were primarily in the areas closer to South Africa. Southern Angola was strategically important to South Africa as well, which explains the SADF presence there, as well as Savimbi's violence against Ovimbundu civilians there. Ultimately, it was a catch-22: without South African support,

it is doubtful that UNITA, and especially Renamo, would have had the military capabilities to fight the Soviet-backed MPLA or Frelimo. The costs of Pretoria's patronage outweighed the benefits, however. The MPLA and Frelimo were largely unpopular among much of the population, but the rebel groups' violence against civilians, even among their initial support bases, made the governing regimes seem like the lesser of two evils.

This thesis shows that traditional religion, and the rebel groups' exploitation of it, also influenced the violence against civilians. In the beginning, their shared emphasis on protecting traditional religious practices seemed like a legitimate opposition to the Marxist regimes' anti-religious laws. However, the rebel groups exploited their victims' beliefs by ritualizing the violence. Among animists in both countries, the violence was legitimized through these rituals. UNITA and Renamo changed victims' perceptions of their soldiers' powers through the cutting of limbs and the drinking of blood. The violence was indiscriminate but also calculated and symbolic, causing a vicious cycle. Recruits killed and drank the blood of their victims to increase their power and take away *ngozi*, and as the ranks of both groups grew with more and more forced recruits who killed and drank blood, the less *ngozi* there was among the population.

From the perspective of the civilians, this was all very real. Indeed, ritualized violence does serve its purpose. As Hall explains, "There seems little doubt that Renamo's fearful reputation is well-based, and probably consciously cultivated" (pg. 52). Finnegan writes of a situation in which a single, unarmed Renamo soldier was able to loot and rape women with no resistance from the villagers. Eventually, a woman killed the soldier with an axe to avoid having her home destroyed. The villagers were awestruck that the woman was able to break the Renamo spell (pg. 46). Despite the crucial role that this exploitation of traditional religion played in getting forced recruits to kill civilians, it was still a vehicle for destabilization. It is not a

sufficient explanation on its own, especially since religion was not a divisive factor. Most of the population practiced some form of animism, regardless of whether they had been converted to Catholicism, Protestantism, or Islam. These were not wars of animists versus non-animists.

Finally, the last hypothesis that this thesis examined pertains to the significance of UNITA's and Renamo's similar emphasis on child soldiering. The descriptive data has also confirmed this hypothesis, although, like traditional religion, their use of child soldiers was primarily as a vehicle for destabilization. By removing children's ties with family, friends, and community, the rebel leadership created groups of loyal soldiers who committed some of the most heinous acts during these wars. This strategy allowed UNITA and Renamo to maintain their numbers without having to develop a coherent ideology around which to rally its troops.

As Kalyvas observes, research on war and rebellion has by and large neglected violence against civilians or assumed that it is irrational, a byproduct of the frenzy of battle. News reports suggested that Renamo and UNITA were armed gangs of bandits and murderers, but as Hall writes, "Over and above the exemplary dimension, Renamo violence against civilians is directly instrumental...essentially, it works to disarticulate the state" (pg. 52). The evidence shows that the same must be said in the case of UNITA. Studies on the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars that focus on South Africa's influence, traditional religion, or child soldiering usually emphasize their subject without formally addressing the relative significance of the other two. Scholars have claimed that exploitation of traditional religion and use of child soldiers are not originally African phenomena but instead come from some outside source. Scholars have hinted at the possible links between these phenomena in the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars and South African influence, yet this study is the first to weigh all three variables against the dependent variable and against each other. It is in this regard that this study has advanced the scholarly literature. In

conclusion, UNITA's and Renamo's role as "apartheid's contras" explains their violence against civilians. Exploitation of traditional religion and child soldiering contributed to this violence, but the overarching goal of these tactics was destabilization.

### **Implications**

This research has made an important contribution to the literature: from a scholarly perspective, it has shown that characteristics of a society which are commonly thought of as major catalysts for violence—ethnicity, religion, et cetera—may not be enough to explain violence against civilians in some civil wars. External influence, if strong enough, may be able to override these cleavages. Further studies on civil war may discover that "contra" rebels are more likely to perpetrate mass violence against civilians than rebel groups whose goal is simply to take over the government. "Shadow cases" such as the Janjaweed in Sudan, the Contra proxy army in Nicaragua, the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, and other proxy forces in Vietnam, Laos, Colombia, Rwanda, Ethiopia, and elsewhere merit examination to determine if this is the case. The Janjaweed, for example, are known as "devils on horseback," and as Alex de Waal explains, they are government-controlled bandits used to fight a cheap war. De Waal describes the widespread violence as "genocide by force of habit" (On Our Watch). His description of the Janjaweed is undeniably similar to the descriptions of UNITA and Renamo in this thesis. An empirical analysis of these "shadow cases" may show that, as in the cases of UNITA and Renamo, outside patronage may be the deciding factor in determining if an armed group will perpetrate violence against civilians on a large scale. States involved in mediating a cease-fire may be the most influential sponsors of the violence, as was the case with South Africa.

This thesis has also made a contribution by showing that a critical examination of MSS and MDS methodology is warranted. Despite the many similarities between the countries in

which UNITA and Renamo have operated, the similar outcome—extreme and indiscriminate violence against civilians—does not immediately make sense in light of important differences shown in the literature to determine severity of violence. On the surface, Angola and Mozambique are neither "most similar" nor "most different," and thus few scholars have examined phenomena in these countries using the comparative method. By using these cases, this study has gone beyond the standard explanations of greed vs. grievance, ethnic-based violence, the resource curse, et cetera.

As more quantitative data and better qualitative data become available, it will be interesting to see whether the results of this study are verified or disconfirmed. More case studies and quantitative research on violence against civilians might show trends that would allow policymakers to gauge the potential risk for civilians as a particular conflict escalates. From a policy perspective, this study illustrates the need for foreign policymakers and state leaders to be much more careful in their support for foreign rebel groups. Viewed through the lens of the Cold War, UNITA seemed the lesser of two evils to the U.S. government when compared to the Soviet-backed MPLA. The U.S. government eventually had to re-evaluate its support for UNITA in light of shocking reports of the rebel group's atrocities, but by then the numbers of victims and displaced persons was in the millions. This has happened numerous times, as groups previously considered to be "freedom fighters" or allies are now pariahs to the U.S. Saddam Hussein, the Taliban, Osama bin Laden, and Mobutu are prime examples. A shift away from "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" mentality and towards a more rational and perhaps normative viewpoint might be worthwhile. This thesis illustrates the dire need for citizens in the developed world to look at who their governments are sponsoring and determine whether that sponsorship is worthwhile in the short- and long-run.



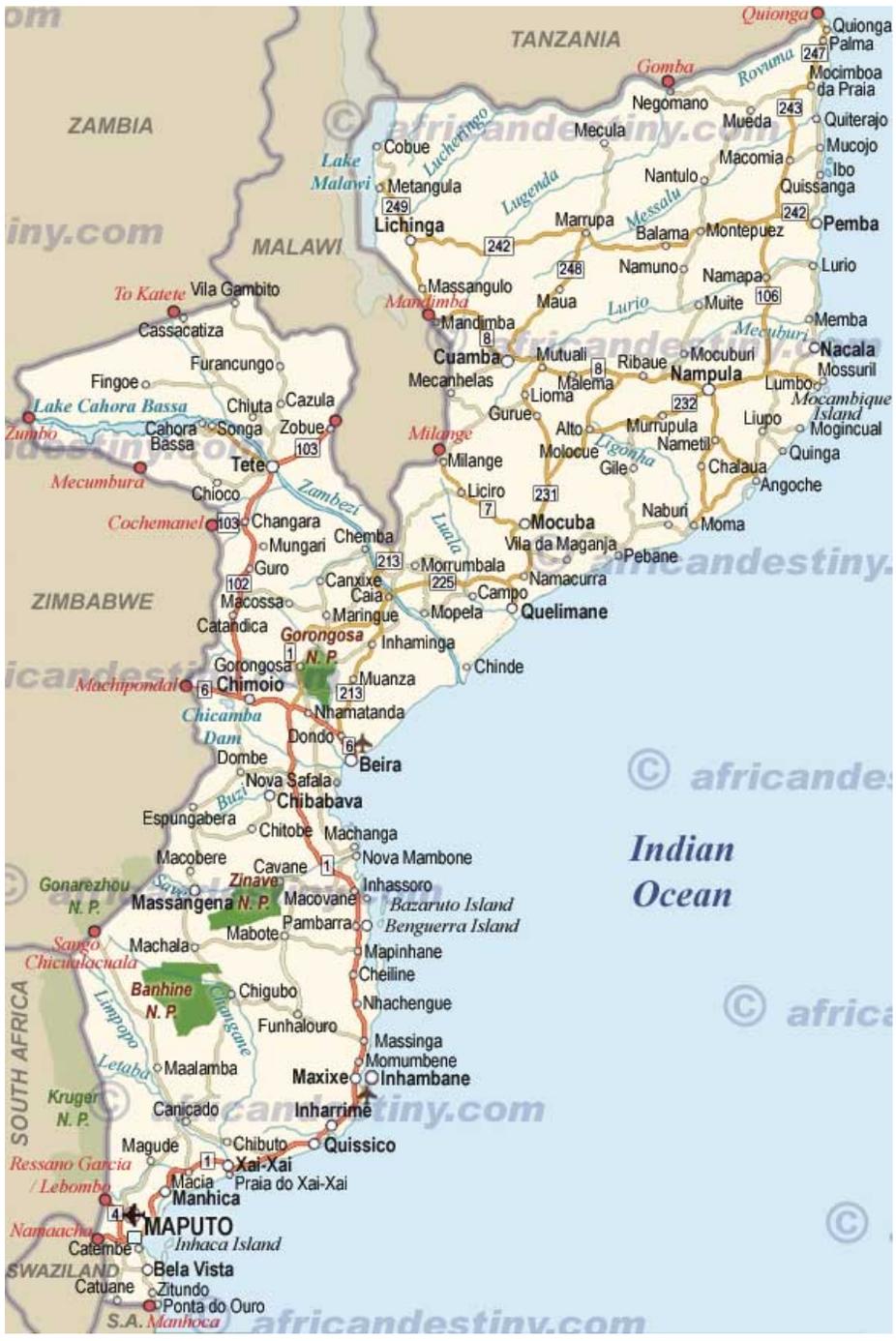


Figure 3: Map of Mozambique

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