

Rebel Mobilization through Pandering: Insincere Leaders, Framing, and Exploitation of Popular Grievances

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In civil wars, unpopular and violent rebel organizations sometimes gain support from politically-motivated constituencies who should, by outside appearances, logically oppose the rebels. I explain this through a logic in which self-interested, insincere rebel leaders pander to aggrieved civilian populations to mobilize them, presenting the rebel organization as empathizing with and offering solutions to popular grievances. Leaders exploit an information asymmetry about their true preferences to gain allegiance using cheap sociopolitical appeals, rather than more costly material incentives or coercion. I inductively develop the theory through a case study of Renamo in Mozambique and then probe the generalizability of the logic through two case studies of the Nicaraguan FDN and the NPFL in Liberia, drawing on interviews and archival materials. The article explicates a previously undertheorized phenomenon in the study of rebel mobilization, and demonstrates how apparent popular, voluntary support for rebels can be more tenuous than it appears.

“We are like fish in the water—if one drains off the water, the fish die. The People are the water in which we swim and survive...” – Afonso Dhlakama, president of Renamo.¹

“Renamo kills people slowly with unsharpened axes or knives. They can pick any family and kill them one by one. Anyone who cries out is killed.” – Mozambican refugees²

Afonso Dhlakama, paraphrasing Mao Tse-Tung, evocatively describes the nature of insurgencies and how ‘the people’ sustain them. Yet, as Mozambican refugees described, the Rhodesian and South African-sponsored *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo) insurgency committed atrocious violence against civilians—the fish attacked the water. Nonetheless, alongside forced conscripts and paid recruits, Renamo attracted a constituency of voluntarily mobilized, politically-

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¹ Alex Vines, *Renamo: Terrorism in Mozambique* (York: Center for South African Studies, University of York, 1991), 1.

² K.B. Wilson, “Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence in Mozambique,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, no. 3 (1992): 527.

motivated fighters and supporters, despite being funded and largely directed by racist foreign regimes. How do self-interested leaders of rebel organizations like Renamo, with unpopular aims and behavior, attract politically-motivated fighters and supporters? I argue that this occurs through *strategic pandering*.

Building inductively on the Renamo case, I theorize pandering as a pattern of rebel mobilization in which leaders change their self-presentation and how they frame their cause, tailoring political narratives and behavioral signals (e.g. rituals or appearance) to potential constituencies' grievances to gain recruits and support in areas where they want to operate.³ Since only leaders know their true preferences and intentions, they may mislead politically-motivated constituencies and individuals into voluntarily supporting leaders ultimately unconcerned with popular grievances and welfare. Pandering is a subtype of framing that is, by definition, *insincere*. It is *strategic* in that it is adopted as a consistent mobilization plan, rather than a one-off action.

In peacetime, civilians might be able to seek a costly signal of a recruiter's true intents.⁴ Where strong anti-state grievances and threats of state violence exist, however, civilians may join an organization based on promises and the prospect of anti-state resistance alone,⁵ since they are choosing between anticipated continuing losses in the status quo, and the potential losses but possible improvement rebellion could bring.⁶

³ Pandering can include both rhetorical *and* behavioral signals aligned with public opinion, under uncertainty about leaders' true intentions—though some only consider policy *implementation* as pandering: Haifeng Huang, "Electoral Competition When Some Candidates Lie and Others Pander," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 22, no. 3 (2010): 333–58. On framing more generally, see Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611–39.

⁴ See Michael Spence, "Job Market Signaling," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 87, no. 3 (1973): 355–74.

⁵ Stathis N. Kalyvas and Matthew Adam Kocher, "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars?: Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem," *World Politics* 59, no. 2 (2007): 177–216; Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way Out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); T. David Mason, "Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, and the Rational Peasant," *Public Choice* 86 (1996): 63–83.

⁶ Jeffrey Berejikian, "Revolutionary Collective Action and the Agent-Structure Problem," *American Political Science Review* 86, no. 3 (1992): 647–57.

Individuals may thus adhere to an organization believing it will represent their interests, while ultimately leaders channel collective efforts toward self-interested ends.⁷ The internal dialogues and thinking of leaders and followers are difficult to assess in real-time during a civil war. Through contemporaneous and retrospective statements and by observing leaders' policies and actions, however, rank-and-file group members, civilians, and observers can triangulate preferences, ideological commitments, and intentions, especially where rebel territorial control provides opportunities to put stated principles into action.

Rebel leaders strategically and sometimes insincerely present their preferences, commitments, and goals to international actors to secure resources and support.⁸ Rebel leaders are often engaged in a two-level game, facing both foreign and domestic audiences, yet insincere appeals in domestic rebel mobilization have been insufficiently explored, with theories focusing on mobilization based on sincere ideology, economic incentives, fear, or force. I illustrate how insincerity and grievance manipulation can help rebel leaders mobilize combatants and supporters domestically.

Why does pandering matter?

All rebel groups and social movements aim to understand popular interests and how they can be used for mobilization.⁹ I focus on the particular issue of the insincere use of popular frames

⁷ Rui J.P. de Figueiredo and Barry R. Weingast, "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*, ed. Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 261–302.

⁸ Clifford Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media, and International Activism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Bridget L. Coggins, "Rebel Diplomacy: Theorizing Non-State Actors' Strategic Use of Talk," in *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, ed. Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 98–118; Reyko Huang, "Rebel Diplomacy in Civil War," *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016): 89–126.

⁹ E.g. Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements"; Anastasia Shesterinina, "Collective Threat Framing and Mobilization in Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 3 (2016): 411–27.

in cases where a rebel group seeks to mobilize support, but lacks popularity—whether due to unpopular aims, leaders, or backers; violent behavior; or other issues. Existing theories predict these groups would have difficulty mobilizing support without coercion or material payoffs,¹⁰ yet I demonstrate how they manage to still attract voluntary politically-motivated recruits. Showing how even self-interested rebel leaders use grievances for mobilization contributes to civil wars scholarship moving beyond the greed-versus-grievance dichotomy to explore rebels’ interacting political and economic agendas¹¹ and grievances’ importance in rebel mobilization.

It may be possible in some situations—for instance possessing significant material resources, foreign fighters, or strong territorial and societal control—to forgo seeking civilian support.¹² For developing insurgencies, however, mobilizing voluntary support can potentially lower costs to territorial control by reducing tensions with the population; yield new recruits, intelligence, and material resources; create perceived momentum and attract bandwagoners; and provide international legitimacy due to apparent popular backing.

Surveys and systematic interviews show individuals join or support rebel organizations for myriad reasons.¹³ Importantly, the pandering logic presents rebel leaders and potential followers

¹⁰ Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Patrick M. Regan and Daniel Norton, “Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 3 (2005): 319–36; Paul Collier, “Rebellion As a Quasi-Criminal Activity,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 6 (2000): 839–53.

¹¹ See Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman, eds., *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003); Mara Revkin, “What Explains Taxation by Resource-Rich Rebels? Evidence from the Islamic State in Syria,” *Journal of Politics* 82, no. 2 (2019): 757–64. Collier discusses grievance exploitation by rebel leaders as useful for financing rebellion initiation, but suggests rebels then sustain themselves through predation. Collier, “Rebellion As a Quasi-Criminal Activity,” 851–52. I show that grievances may be harnessed for mobilization, too, with ‘greed and grievance’ coexisting after an organization has become viable.

¹² Thomas Hegghammer, “The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters,” *International Security* 35, no. 3 (2010): 53–94; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*.

¹³ E.g. Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, “Who Fights? The Determinants of Participation in Civil War,” *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (2008): 436–55; Güneş Murat Tezcür, “Ordinary People, Extraordinary Risks: Participation in an Ethnic Rebellion,” *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 2 (2016): 247–64; Jocelyn S. Viterna, *Women in War: The Micro-Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

as independently rational actors, with varied reasons for group adhesion: elites have regional or national political and economic goals, while ground-level recruits and supporters have their own, often local and personal, motivations. Studying pandering therefore illuminates one particular pathway of rebel mobilization, which leaders may pursue alongside other mobilization strategies. Understanding this pathway is important for state or non-governmental engagement and conflict bargaining with rebel organizations. Leaders who appear to have devoted popular supporters may actually enjoy tenuous loyalty if followers were gained by pandering to popular grievances, and followers may defect if states or outside actors work quickly and sincerely to redress grievances.

Structure, Cases, and Data

After examining existing explanations for rebel mobilization, focusing on incomplete information and elite manipulation, I introduce a logic of rebel mobilization through pandering induced from the case of non-coercive, political recruitment by Renamo in the Mozambican Civil War. I demonstrate the logic in the Renamo case, and then show the logic's applicability beyond Renamo in two other positive cases of mobilization through pandering: the *Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense* (FDN), a proxy group like Renamo, and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), which developed more organically. Given the difficulties of disentangling leaders' rhetoric and true intentions, in-depth case studies are the best method for the task.¹⁴

The FDN was selected as a similar case to Renamo in its origins and goals, but differing in geographic location to examine pandering in a non-African case. The NPFL was likewise a resource-rich, highly violent rebel organization lacking a coherent ideological program, but began

¹⁴ Following Roessler, I present the derived theory first, then the theory-building case, then additional cases. Philip Roessler, *Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa: The Logic of the Coup-Civil War Trap* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

fighting later than Renamo and the FDN and developed without strong foreign influence on its goals and actions, demonstrating pandering beyond proxy groups and post-Cold War. The number of parties in each conflict also varied. No other rebel group emerged alongside Renamo the challenge the Mozambican state; the FDN faced one major competitor, ARDE, but fought and mobilized support in different parts of the country; and the NPFL in Liberia faced a breakaway faction (the INPFL) and two ethnically-based competitors (ULIMO and the LPC).

Renamo, the FDN, and the NPFL all possessed foreign funding or natural resources, so they should be hard cases for finding grievance-based appeals and mobilization.¹⁵ Renamo was organized by racist foreign regimes. FDN leaders came from a hated, recently-deposed military. The NPFL was seen as a paradigmatic ‘greedy’ organization.¹⁶ All three groups engaged in widespread, indiscriminate violence against civilians, undermining their popularity.¹⁷ These are therefore surprising cases for finding successful mobilization using popular political appeals. In each case, pandering contributed to improved short-term mobilization, with joiners then relatively unlikely to desert.

The FDN case study utilizes archival documents from the Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica in Managua (cited ‘IHNCA’ or ‘IHCA’), the Hoover Institution, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The NPFL case study draws on 54 individual and group interviews with a purposive sample of 102 subjects in Liberia, primarily former NPFL military officers and political officials (cited with interview number and name/position), and trial transcripts from the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). Interview research was approved by Harvard University’s Committee on the Use of Human Subjects. Ex-combatants who are not

¹⁵ Cf. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*.

¹⁶ Morten Bøås, “The Liberian Civil War: New War/Old War?,” *Global Society* 19, no. 1 (2005): 73–88.

¹⁷ Pandering may be especially advantageous for organizations unwilling or unable to exercise restraint, or who actively encourage violence.

public figures received blanket anonymity as a precaution. Contemporary public figures in government and civil society were offered anonymity, but all declined. The Supplemental Appendix provides full details on all interviews, archival research, and fieldwork ethics and practicalities.

Renamo, the FDN, and the NPFL represent a limited set of positive cases in which pandering worked, and further in-depth study will be needed to fully establish both the theoretical and practical limits of pandering. Following the case studies, I discuss tentative conclusions and directions for further research, and, finally, examine policy implications.

Information and Rebel Mobilization

Information about intentions is a key currency of politics, and lying and other forms of information manipulation like propaganda are commonly used by leaders, governments, organizations, and other actors to protect their own interests. States manipulate signals in international relations;¹⁸ campaigning politicians lie about intentions or tailor messages to audiences with rhetoric and actions whose (in)sincerity is only revealed after voters elect them;¹⁹ and domestic and international actors increasingly use social media and online platforms to spread disinformation, portraying themselves excessively favorably and smearing their rivals to rally supporters and potentially provoke violence. Nationalist elites building support for interstate wars or genocide and ethnic cleansing and ethnic elites inciting communal violence have likewise manipulated

¹⁸ Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); John J. Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie: The Truth About Lying in International Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁹ Huang, "Electoral Competition"; Steven Callander and Simon Wilkie, "Lies, Damned Lies, and Political Campaigns," *Games and Economic Behavior* 60 (2007): 262–86.

popular fears and grievances to scapegoat ‘enemies,’ mobilize constituencies for violence, and bolster their own political standing.²⁰

This phenomenon appears to be present in civil wars mobilized along ethnic cleavages. The extremely violent Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda formed around grievances over government persecution of the Acholi people, which remains one of the organization’s primary appeals to civilians. Yet the LRA became a vehicle for leader Joseph Kony’s survival and aggrandizement, with Kony borrowing from different ethnic, religious, and political traditions when appealing to different audiences, and failing to act on ostensible political aims.²¹

Whether or not a rebel group has official goals based around ethnic cleavages—Renamo, the FDN, and the NPFL did not—information about intentions is a crucial component of rebel efforts to mobilize fighters and civilian supporters. Political economy theories of rebel mobilization treat recruitment of fighters and supporters as labor markets. Rebel leaders face both collective action and principal-agent problems, needing to mobilize people to pursue their goals, but also needing to screen recruits for loyalty and obedience.²² This perspective builds on signaling

²⁰ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 5–38; de Figueiredo and Weingast, “The Rationality of Fear”; V.P. Gagnon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, And War in Rwanda* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003). Individual followers may be “blinded by a discourse” of identity or victims of an information asymmetry in which they believe leaders understand best how to defend the group: James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity,” *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (2000): 845–77. See Kaufman, however, on potential limits of ‘elite manipulation’ theories of ethnic conflict. Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

²¹ Ledio Cakaj, *When the Walking Defeats You: One Man’s Journey as Joseph Kony’s Bodyguard* (London: Zed Books, 2016); Paul Sturges, “Information and Communication in Bandit Country: An Exploratory Study of Civil Conflict in Northern Uganda 1986–2007,” *Information Development* 24, no. 3 (2008): 204–12.

²² Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*; Scott Gates, “Membership Matters,” *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 5 (2017): 674–86; Thomas Hegghammer, “The Recruiter’s Dilemma: Signalling and Rebel Recruitment Tactics,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 1 (2013): 3–16; Jonathan Filip Forney, “Who Can We Trust with a Gun? Information Networks and Adverse Selection in Militia Recruitment,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 5 (2015): 824–49; Kolby Hanson, “Good Times and Bad Apples: Rebel Recruitment in Crackdown and Truce,” *American Journal of Political Science* 65, no. 4 (2021): 807–25. If both the state and rebels attack civilians, however, joining a rebel organization may be safer than remaining outside, easing collective action problems: Kalyvas and Kocher, “How

theory, treating rebel leaders as ‘employers’ with limited information about the reliability of potential ‘employees’ (followers).²³

Rebel leaders are not only interpreting potential followers’ intentions: they may actively try to reshape them towards leaders’ own aims. Beber and Blattman focus on leaders manipulating information, modeling “the possibility that a rebel leader can ‘indoctrinate’ [child] recruits, so that they have a lower disutility of fighting...allow[ing] for the possibility that the principal can shape a recruit’s expectations through misinformation.”²⁴ Other theories of rebel mobilization mention in passing strategic misinformation and rebel leaders manipulating information asymmetries.²⁵ Tilly notes that “manipulative leaders direct the diffuse anger of their countrymen to their own ends.”²⁶ Galula argued an insurgent leader is “free to use every trick...he can lie, cheat, exaggerate... he is judged by what he promises, not by what he does,” with a leader benefiting from “tactical manipulation” of causes or grievances, “tailored for the various groups...he is seeking to attract.”²⁷ Rebel leaders may “strategically frame messages”²⁸ and “manipulate information...to present their story in the best light,” setting up “a ‘smoke screen’ for their rank-and-file followers.”²⁹ Like other political entrepreneurs, rebel leaders can be ‘multivocal,’ issuing

‘Free’ Is Free Riding in Civil Wars?”; Aisha Ahmad, “The Security Bazaar: Business Interests and Islamist Power in Civil War Somalia,” *International Security* 39, no. 3 (2014): 89–117.

²³ Spence, “Job Market Signaling.”

²⁴ Bernd Beber and Christopher Blattman, “The Logic of Child Soldiering and Coercion,” *International Organization* 67, no. 1 (January 16, 2013): 65–104.

²⁵ Social movement leaders likewise frame appeals to resonate with constituencies they seek to mobilize: Benford and Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements.”

²⁶ Charles Tilly, *The Vendée* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), ix.

²⁷ David Galula, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 10–11, 18.

²⁸ Irena L. Sargsyan and Andrew Bennett, “Discursive Emotional Appeals in Sustaining Violent Social Movements in Iraq, 2003–11,” *Security Studies* 25, no. 4 (2016): 618.

²⁹ Mark Irving Lichbach, *The Rebel’s Dilemma* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 89.

statements and taking actions that may be interpreted differently (but positively) by different audiences to “manipulate the actors around them.”³⁰

Therefore, while rebel recruits may possess private information as to their preferences and commitment to the organization, the information asymmetry can also run the other way. Rebel leaders may be aware of the preferences of potential followers with observable grievances against the state, while followers remain uncertain of leaders’ *true*, unrevealed preferences. Aggrieved populations may thus support rebel leaders in exchange for promised efforts to redress anti-state grievances, without knowing leaders’ sincerity.³¹

Some rebel ideological claims are ‘cheap talk,’³² but many rebel leaders possess sincere ideological commitments and seek to fulfill promises,³³ so civilians must try to determine the credibility of rebel leaders’ claimed intentions. This is similar to models of electoral politics and campaign promises, yet while democratic electoral processes can constrain and undercut incentives to lie, even in peacetime, people have difficulties detecting deception.³⁴ Detecting deception is even more difficult for lies about intentions, when a leader claims “a future action or goal...but does not in fact intend to carry out.”³⁵ People are also less suspicious of statements or

³⁰ Stacie E. Goddard, “Brokering Change: Networks and Entrepreneurs in International Politics,” *International Theory* 1, no. 2 (2009): 263.

³¹ This logic can apply to mobilizing fighters, activist supporters, and sympathizers. See Lichbach, *The Rebel’s Dilemma*, 17; Roger D. Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

³² E.g. Barbara F. Walter, “The Extremist’s Advantage in Civil Wars,” *International Security* 42, no. 2 (2017): 7–39; Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Falling and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 17–32.

³³ Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond,” *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 213–26; Jonathan Leader Maynard, “Ideology and Armed Conflict,” *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 5 (2019): 635–49.

³⁴ Nadia M. Brashier and Elizabeth J. Marsh, “Judging Truth,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 71 (2020): 499–515. On lying and political campaigns, see Callander and Wilkie, “Lies, Damned Lies, and Political Campaigns.”

³⁵ Eric Mac Giolla and Pär Anders Granhag, “True and False Intentions: A Science of Lies About the Future,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Deceptive Communication*, ed. Tony Docan-Morgan (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 386.

proposals with which they agree.³⁶ So if civilians have grievances against the government and rebel leaders echo these and claim they will address them, civilians are more likely to believe leaders are sincere.

A civil war context imposes further limits on civilians' access to information and choices. Rebel organizations tend to form and initiate fighting in low-information environments like remote rural areas, so civilian access to information can be very limited beyond rumors and what rebels tell them.³⁷ The LRA, for instance, emerged in northern Uganda in a context "thoroughly inimical to information seeking and use" with high illiteracy rates,³⁸ and rebels may destroy communications infrastructure offering access to outside information. Mobile phones, the Internet, and social media can potentially offer alternative information from independent or pro-government sources, but access may be scarce. Even in regions with better communications infrastructure, like Eastern Ukraine, rebel organizations produce their own online messaging and have their own supporters and propagandists echo leaders' claims to counteract negative reports.³⁹ Rebel leaders may also shape the information available to civilians by convincing, coercing, or buying off local actors to spread the rebels' message through social networks that will trust these 'brokers.'⁴⁰ Constituencies with grievances against the government have good reason to be skeptical of pro-

³⁶ Kathleen M. McGraw, Milton Lodge, and Jeffrey M. Jones, "The Pandering Politicians of Suspicious Minds," *Journal of Politics* 64, no. 2 (2002): 362–83

³⁷ Jennifer M. Larson and Janet I. Lewis, "Rumors, Kinship Networks, and Rebel Group Formation," *International Organization* 72, no. 4 (2018): 871–903.

³⁸ Sturges, "Information and Communication in Bandit Country," 204. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) leaders recruited aggrieved youths whose illiteracy was "particularly high and political awareness largely determined by the commanders' selective control of information." Kieran Mitton, "Engaging Disengagement: The Political Reintegration of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front," *Conflict, Security & Development* 8, no. 2 (2008): 202.

³⁹ Cyanne E. Loyle and Samuel E. Bestvater, "#rebel: Rebel Communication Strategies in the Age of Social Media," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 36, no. 6 (2019): 570–90; Allan Dafoe and Jason Lyall, "From Cell Phones to Conflict? Reflections on the Emerging ICT–Political Conflict Research Agenda," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 3 (2015): 401–13.

⁴⁰ Larson and Lewis, "Rumors, Kinship Networks, and Rebel Group Formation."

government information and so may also be more willing to take rebel claims seriously, in the hopes they are sincere.

The violent nature of civil war also constrains civilians' options. Government repression is a frequent component of civilian grievances, and once a rebellion has begun, harsh government counterinsurgency responses may breed further resentment. Rebel groups themselves may commit violence against civilians, especially those who will not pledge support. Civilians can organize nonviolent or unarmed resistance to the state and rebels, but this is very risky.⁴¹ Civilians seeking to protect themselves thus often have limited opportunities for free-riding,⁴² so those already opposed to or threatened by the state may be more tolerant of the risk of rebel leaders lying—despite the potentially high personal costs of rebellion—facilitating pandering. Once some people in a region begin to mobilize in response to pandering, others may also be more likely to follow and to at least partially accept leaders' claims as true, similar to acceptance of propaganda claims in authoritarian settings.⁴³ How and when do rebel leaders engage in pandering?

The Logic of Rebel Mobilization through Pandering

The logic of mobilization through pandering takes place in a dyadic conflict environment including three actors: the rebel organization leadership, the state, and the civilian population.⁴⁴ Leaders initially form an organization with a core set of recruits who may have joined due to commitment to the organization's stated political goals or for personal gain.⁴⁵ With this nucleus in

⁴¹ See Juan Masullo, "Refusing to Cooperate with Armed Groups: Civilian Agency and Civilian Noncooperation in Armed Conflicts," *International Studies Review* 23, no. 3 (2021): 887–913.

⁴² Kalyvas and Kocher, "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars?"; Mason, "Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, and the Rational Peasant."

⁴³ E.g. Andrew T. Little, "Propaganda and Credulity," *Games and Economic Behavior* 102 (2017): 224–32.

⁴⁴ Potential implications of multiple competing rebel groups are discussed in the conclusion.

⁴⁵ Early-stage rebel organizations tend to be small and clandestine. Janet I. Lewis, "How Does Ethnic Rebellion Start?," *Comparative Political Studies* 50, no. 10 (2017): 1420–50.

place, the rebels begin attacking the state. At conflict onset, I assume civilians are distributed across pro-government, anti-government, and neutral preferences, allowing both belligerents to potentially mobilize followers.

Rebels should only be able to win quickly if the state is extraordinarily weak, and should only initiate attacks if leaders believe the organization possesses sufficient strength to avoid annihilation in the first engagement. Initial attacks reveal the observable relative capabilities of the rebels and the state.⁴⁶ Rebel leaders can then update their assessment of the probability of victory (or achieving lesser goals) and resources needed to achieve it, updating again after subsequent battles.

If current practices in mobilization of labor (recruits and supporters) and capital (weapons and finance) are considered adequate, these practices should continue. If leaders decide increased labor is needed—particularly important early in rebellions—they must determine the most efficient and ‘effective’ means of mobilization, aiming to ensure recruits and followers help the organization achieve leaders’ goals.⁴⁷

If the state has engaged in practices before or during the conflict that have aggrieved a portion of the population, who prioritize the grievance being addressed,⁴⁸ and if rebel leaders perceive this grievance—whether through interactions with civilians, social networks, or media—these anti-state civilians provide a pool of potential fighters and supporters who should

⁴⁶ Though biases may skew perceptions.

⁴⁷ Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*; Gordon H. McCormick and Frank Giordano, “Things Come Together: Symbolic Violence and Guerrilla Mobilisation,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2007): 295–320; Alec Worsnop, “Who Can Keep the Peace? Insurgent Organizational Control of Collective Violence,” *Security Studies* 26, no. 3 (2017): 482–516. Maximizing labor may be inefficient if numbers become unmanageable or increase vulnerability to intelligence breaches or defection.

⁴⁸ Unlike social sectors prioritizing economic interests in deciding whether to support an organization. Ahmad, “The Security Bazaar.”

theoretically be easier to attract.⁴⁹ Individuals in this aggrieved bloc may have diverse personal motivations for opposition, but I assume they are unified on this grievance. The grievance could also act as a screening mechanism, suggesting aggrieved constituency members have collective, not only personal, interests at stake.⁵⁰

Rebel leaders thus have strategic incentives to signal they empathize with and offer possible solutions to this grievance to try to capture the aggrieved constituency's support. It always benefits rebel leaders to "use terms and symbols [their] targets understand"⁵¹ and 'align' mobilizing frames with popular concerns,⁵² but while some leaders may *actually* empathize with grievances, insincere leaders pander, changing their message according to their social environment. Pandering leaders may lie about their sympathies, conceal their true preferences, or present only positive aspects of costly goals.⁵³ Unlike preference falsification, when individuals lie about true preferences to avoid costly sanctions,⁵⁴ pandering rebel leaders are insincere to seek advantages.

Insincere rebel leaders *could* try to buy the aggrieved constituency's support with material payments or promises, but pandering has lower costs and may engender stronger loyalty, at least short-term, due to aggrieved constituencies' belief in shared priorities. Even if leaders are uninterested in governance, it is more sustainable and efficient resource-wise to obtain some degree of non-coerced compliance and support.⁵⁵ Pandering offers a cheap option, since a more

⁴⁹ See also Sara M.T. Polo and Belén González, "The Power to Resist: Mobilization and the Logic of Terrorist Attacks in Civil War," *Comparative Political Studies* 53, no. 13 (2020): 2029–60.

⁵⁰ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*; Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*.

⁵¹ Samuel L. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 260.

⁵² Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements," 624–25.

⁵³ Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie*.

⁵⁴ Timur Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁵⁵ David Brenner, "Authority in Rebel Groups: Identity, Recognition and the Struggle over Legitimacy," *Contemporary Politics* 23, no. 4 (2017): 412–13.

positive view of the rebels can increase civilians' risk tolerance and lower their expectations for private benefits.⁵⁶ Mansfield and Snyder note the “big payoffs” of leaders tailoring ideological appeals in high-stakes, low-information situations like civil conflicts, “when there is no efficient free marketplace of ideas to counter false claims with reliable facts.”⁵⁷

As Jervis highlights, the “costs of issuing deceptive signals, if any, are deferred to the time when it is shown that the signals were misleading.”⁵⁸ Benefits are more immediate, while potential costs are only incurred long-term, so pandering should be more effective early in conflicts when there is less information about rebel leaders' ‘type.’ Unarmed civilians are also in a weak position relative to rebels, and so while cheap talk may be ignored and lies punished in peace talks and other bargaining situations in civil wars,⁵⁹ the power imbalance between rebels and civilians makes punishment more difficult—though recruits and followers may still shirk, desert, or defect. Depending on the aggrieved constituency's size, its successful mobilization could encourage bandwagoning or even provide the critical mass to achieve a more favorable war outcome.

For the aggrieved constituency, mobilization is rational if they believe the rebels offer the best possibility for addressing their grievances and if they face state or possibly rebel violence by remaining unaffiliated.⁶⁰ The success of pandering depends on how much the target cares about detecting insincerity and the costs of testing it.⁶¹ Fear or a common enemy alone may provide enough unity for collective action, but especially if there is uncertainty about trusting the rebels,

⁵⁶ Mason, “Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, and the Rational Peasant,” 71.

⁵⁷ Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” 29.

⁵⁸ Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, 18.

⁵⁹ See Barbara F. Walter, “Bargaining Failures and Civil War,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (June 2009): 243–61.

⁶⁰ Rebels also provide an opportunity to gain a defiance benefit in resisting the state. Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action in El Salvador* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶¹ See James D. Fearon, “Strategic Dynamics of Social Mimicry” (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2013), <https://www.stanford.edu/group/fearon-research/cgi-bin/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/socialmimicry2.pdf>.

believing leaders share a common frame of reference and grievance can catalyze adherence, with lower costs than coercion.⁶² Once they have joined the rebels, it may be rational to stay *even if* individuals or groups later recognize rebel leaders' true preferences, due to threats of punishment by rebel or state forces upon desertion and/or to keep opportunities for social and economic gains.⁶³ Like in other more authoritarian settings, once in a rebel group and under its control, it is better to behave 'as if' one believes leaders versus risking punishment by questioning them.⁶⁴

Pandering is available not only to less ideologically-motivated, more predatory organizations like Renamo, the FDN, and the NPFL. More ideological, 'activist' rebel organizations, too, must make appeals to followers to see their grievances in the leaders' political-ideological frame.⁶⁵ Activist rebel groups, however, are *less likely to be insincere* when appealing to popular grievances, with leaders likely more committed to following through on promises and implementing proposed programs,⁶⁶ though sincerity can be difficult to judge absent territorial influence and rebel governance.

If, however, an activist organization is unpopular—for instance due to extremist aims, severe violence, or harsh internal discipline—pandering can still help generate local acquiescence or support. The Islamic State (IS), for example, is doctrinaire, with ideologically-driven

⁶² Ioannis D. Evrigenis, *Fear of Enemies and Collective Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Kristine Eck, "Coercion in Rebel Recruitment," *Security Studies* 23, no. 2 (2014): 364–98.

⁶³ Carrie Manning, "Constructing Opposition in Mozambique: Renamo as Political Party," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 1 (March 1998): 161–89; John Riley et al., "Escaping the LRA: Examining the Decision to Disengage from Militarized Dissident Groups," *African Security* 10, no. 2 (2017): 80–102.

⁶⁴ Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Little, "Propaganda and Credulity."

⁶⁵ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*; Kristine Eck, "Recruiting Rebels: Indoctrination and Political Education in Nepal," in *The Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Revolution in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Mahendra Lawoti and Anup K. Pahari (New York: Routledge, 2010), 33–51. Even where resource endowments exist, organizations can appeal to collective grievances for mobilization, but may have less need to pander if they restrain violence and have congruent interests with the population, a scenario likely among ethnonationalist groups. Edward Aspinall, "The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 6 (2007): 950–72.

⁶⁶ James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

leadership.⁶⁷ Based on extreme ideological commitments to a ‘pure’ Islamic society, IS has been highly violent, but remained flexible in appeals to civilians, falsely proclaiming moderation. In Somalia, IS’s affiliate downplayed its religious orthodoxy and exploited popular discontent with al-Shabaab to mobilize followers, promising “an easier life: lower taxes, more tolerance for substance abuse and fewer political diatribes.”⁶⁸ In Syria, IS “pandered to moderate skeptics by emphasizing their common cause—[toppling] Assad—and downplaying their desire for an Islamic state, leading new converts to believe that Syria’s future would be decided by its people,” before seeking to lock in new followers through reeducation.⁶⁹ Another ideologically-motivated group with strict internal discipline, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), occasionally falsely promised salaries and better living conditions to entice poor recruits—who wound up disappointed by “the asperity of guerrilla life and unfulfilled (economic) promises.”⁷⁰

Limits of Pandering

Pandering is a strategy designed to meet rebel leaders’ proximate goals of increased mobilization and may or may not help achieve ultimate, long-term goals.⁷¹ Support gained by pandering may be fleeting, and could provide only short-term benefits if an organization takes control of significant liberated areas or seizes state power, or if the government addresses sources of popular grievances: leaders and aggrieved constituencies converge in preferences for regime change or generalized political changes, but diverge over further preferences about future

⁶⁷ Revkin, “What Explains Taxation by Resource-Rich Rebels?”

⁶⁸ Heidi Vogt, “Islamic State in Africa Tries to Lure Members from Al-Shabaab: Jihadist Group Courts Al-Shabaab Members in Somalia with Promises of Lower Taxes, Fewer Political Datribes,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 26, 2016.

⁶⁹ Vera Mironova et al., “Syria’s Democracy Jihad: Why ISIS Fighters Support the Vote,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 13, 2015.

⁷⁰ Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín, “Telling the Difference: Guerrillas and Paramilitaries in the Colombian War,” *Politics & Society* 36, no. 1 (2008): 23.

⁷¹ On mobilization over time, see Polo and González, “The Power to Resist.”

governance. Disillusionment occurs in any armed organization when frustrations arise due to slow progress or failure to meet stated objectives, with followers questioning leaders' competence. When leaders have pandered, however, and aggrieved constituencies begin to suspect or discover that leaders are insincere, they may feel lied to, misled, and betrayed. This can provoke stronger resentment of leaders, fueling defections, fragmentation, or revenge attacks on leaders.

Several mechanisms can exacerbate these tensions. Reduced government repression may diminish incentives to join the rebels and make rebel violence less tolerable.⁷² Once rebels control territory, civilians may expect them to provide order and public goods, expectations that will only rise if rebels capture the state;⁷³ if rebel governance is predatory and demonstrates leaders prefer private gain over public interests and grievances,⁷⁴ maintaining support mobilized through pandering may be difficult. Leaders negotiating unpopular deals with the state may also undermine voluntary followers' allegiance. In Colombia and Myanmar, for instance, politically-motivated fighters demobilized or defected when leaders deviated from what had been proclaimed as collective goals.⁷⁵ Many Syrian IS recruits became unhappy when leaders betrayed their stated "meritocratic and rule-abiding" principles.⁷⁶ Pandering could also incur costs if a particular aggrieved constituency's joining antagonizes existing rebel forces. Finally, in some cases where

⁷² Kalyvas and Kocher, "How 'Free' Is Free Riding in Civil Wars?"; Reed M. Wood, "Rebel Capability and Strategic Violence against Civilians," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 5 (2010): 601–14.

⁷³ Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Cherian Mampilly, eds., *Rebel Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁷⁴ William Reno, "Predatory Rebellions and Governance: The National Patriotic Front of Liberia, 1989-1992," in *Rebel Governance in Civil War*, ed. Ana Arjona, Nelson Kasfir, and Zachariah Mampilly (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 265–85.

⁷⁵ Ben Oppenheim et al., "True Believers, Deserters, and Traitors: Who Leaves Insurgent Groups and Why," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 5 (2015): 794–823; Brenner, "Authority in Rebel Groups."

⁷⁶ Mara Revkin and Ahmad Mhidi, "Quitting ISIS: Why Syrians Are Abandoning the Group," *Foreign Affairs*, May 1, 2016.

material resources are abundant or there is a large pool of potential recruits with low reservation prices for their labor, rebel leaders may decide pandering is unnecessary or risky.⁷⁷

I now empirically illustrate the logic of strategic pandering through the theory-building case of Renamo.

Renamo in Mozambique

Renamo was, in many ways, an archetypal ‘proxy group.’ Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975, after a long liberation struggle by the leftist *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo). Seeking to destabilize Frelimo’s new government and punish its support Zimbabwe Africa National Union (ZANU) insurgents, Rhodesia’s Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) organized a force of Mozambican exiles and dissidents.⁷⁸ A 1977 raid on a Frelimo reeducation camp yielded recruits angry at the state, including André Matsangaissa, Renamo’s first leader. Renamo remained subservient to Rhodesia until 1980, when white minority rule ended. CIO officials offered to help Renamo fighters repatriate and reintegrate in Mozambique, or to transfer them to South African management; the majority chose the South Africans, who wanted to destabilize Mozambique and curtail Frelimo’s support of the African National Congress (ANC).⁷⁹

Renamo’s initial nucleus of supporters held anti-Frelimo grievances due to mistreatment or lost economic opportunities. But Renamo’s growth, from a few hundred to nearly 2,000 members from 1976-1979, and its survival as a cohesive force would have been impossible without Rhodesian funding.⁸⁰ Where Frelimo’s support was stronger, Renamo initially only attracted

⁷⁷ Weinstein argues that in Sierra Leone, the RUF’s initially politically-motivated leaders abandoned political appeals after gaining access to natural resources. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, 303–5.

⁷⁸ See Stephen A. Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique: The Frelimo-Renamo Struggle, 1977-1992* (Solihull, England: Helion, 2014).

⁷⁹ Vines, *Renamo: Terrorism in Mozambique*, 18.

⁸⁰ William Minter, *Apartheid’s Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (London: Zed Books, 1994), 33; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, 111–16.

criminal youths.⁸¹ Renamo also engaged in widespread forced recruitment, with most fighters and low-level officials recruited coercively, and others offered economic incentives.⁸² Forced recruitment accelerated under South African patronage, and South Africa ceased Rhodesia's salary payments to Renamo members, with fighters 'paid' through looting and extortion opportunities.⁸³

Renamo Leaders' Goals

Rhodesia and South Africa envisioned Renamo as a proxy force to attack ZANU and the ANC within Mozambique and destabilize the Frelimo government. A Renamo document formulated by Dhlakama and South African intelligence delineated the destabilization program: "1. Destroy the Mozambican economy in the rural zones. 2. Destroy the communications routes to prevent exports and imports to and from abroad, and the movement of domestic produce. 3. Prevent the activities of foreigners (*cooperantes*) because they are the most dangerous in the recovery of the economy."⁸⁴

Renamo's leaders had some genuine anti-Frelimo grievances, yet were motivated primarily by material and personal gain. They embraced the Rhodesian and South African destabilization program as a means to force concessions and potentially gain political power, but lacked "a coherent political programme" or "any real desire to win support on ideological grounds."⁸⁵ In

⁸¹ Otto Roesch, "Renamo and the Peasantry in Southern Mozambique: A View from Gaza Province," *Canadian Journal Of African Studies* 26, no. 3 (1992): 477; JoAnn McGregor, "Violence and Social Change in a Border Economy: War in the Maputo Hinterland, 1984-1992," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 1 (1998): 40.

⁸² William Minter, "Inside Renamo: As Described by Ex-Participants," *Transformation* 10 (1989): 1-27; Jessica Schafer, "Guerrillas and Violence in the War in Mozambique: De-Socialization or Re-Socialization?," *African Affairs* 100, no. 399 (2001): 215-37; Christian Geffray, *La Cause Des Armes Au Mozambique* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1990); Manning, "Constructing Opposition in Mozambique."

⁸³ Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, 112-15.

⁸⁴ Margaret Hall, "The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo): A Study in the Destruction of an African Country," *Africa* 60, no. 1 (1990): 58.

⁸⁵ Glenda Morgan, "Violence in Mozambique: Towards an Understanding of Renamo," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 28, no. 4 (1990): 613. See also Lisa Hultman, "The Power to Hurt in Civil War: The Strategic Aim of RENAMO Violence," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (2009): 821-34.

1979, Matsangaissa stated, “We are not interested in policy making...later we will have to work out politics.”⁸⁶ Propaganda efforts in Mozambique were vague, stressing “themes such as ‘we are against communism, we are against socialism, we are for capitalism, we are against (communal) villages and want to live individually in the bush.’”⁸⁷

Asked about the content of ‘political education classes,’ a Renamo commander replied: “It was, ‘we cannot run away, when the war ends we are going to do this and that, when we win we will have such and such a life, everyone will have a job...After the war, we will all have jobs, everyone will have money...’”⁸⁸ Matsangaissa, however, recognized anti-government grievances that Renamo could leverage to mobilize followers, beyond those who could be bought or kidnapped.

Development of an Aggrieved Constituency

Two prominent, interrelated sources of popular anti-government grievances existed: Frelimo’s policy of rural collectivization and its persecution of traditional leaders and lifeways. Starting during the independence war, Frelimo moved much of the rural population into collective villages. The program initially was optional, and many people willingly resettled. In ‘insecure’ areas, however, Frelimo used force and threats against resisters.⁸⁹ Resistance to collectivization varied regionally: in southern Mozambique, the rural population adjusted, but for central and northern Mozambicans, collectivization threatened their livelihoods.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Alex Vines, *Renamo: From Terrorism to Democracy in Mozambique?* (York: Centre for Southern African Studies, University of York, 1996), 76.

⁸⁷ Minter, “Inside Renamo,” 13.

⁸⁸ Manning, “Constructing Opposition in Mozambique,” 178.

⁸⁹ Geffray, *La Cause Des Armes Au Mozambique*; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, 236; Vines, *Renamo: Terrorism in Mozambique*; Roesch, “Renamo and the Peasantry in Southern Mozambique.”

⁹⁰ Roesch, “Renamo and the Peasantry in Southern Mozambique”; Stephen C. Lubkemann, “Migratory Coping in Wartime Mozambique: An Anthropology of Violence and Displacement in ‘Fragmented Wars,’” *Journal Of Peace Research* 42, no. 4 (2005): 493–508.

Land also represented an ancestral inheritance and home to spiritually-significant graveyards and shrines. Many Mozambicans viewed the world as composed of visible and invisible realms, with healers mediating the invisible realm or sorcerers manipulating it.⁹¹ Collective villages thus formed a dangerous environment where family and land ties were broken and sorcerers could exploit state-created disorder.⁹²

Frelimo wanted to eliminate the influence of traditional local leaders and religion and to remove colonial administrative structures reliant on local elites.⁹³ Frelimo's hostility to organized religion and attacks on "the feudal-traditional past, religion, [and] obscurantism" aimed to uproot traditional authority and promote a modern, 'scientific' worldview.⁹⁴ Traditional leaders thus interpreted war's arrival as a consequence "of the humiliation of chiefs by Frelimo, of the devastation of places of cult ceremony and of the destruction of ritual objects," while many peasants felt Frelimo was attacking their ways of life.⁹⁵

Renamo's Pandering

Renamo leaders recognized that popular discontent with Frelimo's modernization and collectivization projects created an aggrieved constituency in north and central Mozambique, bordering Renamo's Rhodesian patrons.⁹⁶ Renamo leaders "sought to use those aspects of the

⁹¹ E.g. Stephen C. Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos: An Anthropology of the Social Condition in War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Harry G. West, *Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

⁹² West, *Kupilikula*, 177–79; Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos*.

⁹³ Morgan, "Violence in Mozambique"; Roesch, "Renamo and the Peasantry in Southern Mozambique"; West, *Kupilikula*; Geffray, *La Cause Des Armes Au Mozambique*; Michel Cahen, *Mozambique: La Révolution Implosée* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987).

⁹⁴ McGregor, "Violence and Social Change in a Border Economy," 43. See also West, *Kupilikula*.

⁹⁵ Geffray, *La Cause Des Armes Au Mozambique*, 77. See also Corinna Jentsch, "Auxiliary Armed Forces and Innovations in Security Governance in Mozambique's Civil War," *Civil Wars* 19, no. 3 (2017): 325–47; Cahen, *Mozambique: La Révolution Implosée*.

⁹⁶ Frelimo further undermined itself by purging from popular party leaders from northern and central Mozambique. Justin Pearce, "History, Legitimacy, and Renamo's Return to Arms in Central Mozambique," *Africa* 90, no. 4 (2020): 774–95.

existing system that angered people the most in the areas where it operated,”⁹⁷ trying to exploit grievances by reinstating traditional authorities and signaling respect for tradition. Commander Raúl Domingos described Renamo’s mobilization and lack of political indoctrination: “The war was about mobilizing people to get rid of aspects of the regime they found offensive. We used the language of the population, appealing to specific aspects that they felt. To speak to the population about democracy, liberty, human rights, things very...[abstract]...they don’t understand.”⁹⁸

Since traditional authority and religion underpinned grievances, Renamo used “traditional religious idioms.”⁹⁹ Politically-motivated fighters told Schafer that Renamo’s fight “was a political conquest” they joined because Frelimo sought “to expel the chiefs and put in the [party] secretaries, but it’s the chiefs who know how to give to the spirits while the secretaries couldn’t do this, and they gave orders people didn’t like.”¹⁰⁰ Renamo forces met with traditional authorities and spiritual leaders when entering towns, often restoring their status and using them and local informants for indirect rule.¹⁰¹

This situation suited Renamo as a primarily military organization uninterested in governance.¹⁰² Renamo Secretary General Evo Fernandes stated in a 1985 interview, “Administration doesn’t have anything to do with the military. We are based on the traditional system: the administrative system depends on the area the chieftain has.”¹⁰³ Renamo did not really care about traditional authorities’ interests, though: Renamo sometimes attacked traditional leaders without seeking alliances, and “Religious practitioners [were] no more immune from kidnap,

⁹⁷ Manning, “Constructing Opposition in Mozambique,” 178.

⁹⁸ Manning, 178.

⁹⁹ Hall, “The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo),” 49.

¹⁰⁰ Schafer, “Guerrillas and Violence in the War in Mozambique,” 226.

¹⁰¹ Vines, *Renamo: Terrorism in Mozambique*; Minter, “Inside Renamo”; Hall, “The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo)”; Jentsch, “Auxiliary Armed Forces.”

¹⁰² Emerson, *The Battle for Mozambique*.

¹⁰³ Hall, “The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (Renamo),” 50.

injury or death at Renamo's hands.¹⁰⁴ Renamo violently suppressed any chiefs or spiritual leaders seeking independent influence.¹⁰⁵

Renamo's embrace of tradition was a rational strategy to mobilize and capture an aggrieved constituency. For rural Mozambicans with anti-state grievances, it was rational to join Renamo, since no other force existed to challenge the state and it offered protection from state and Renamo violence.¹⁰⁶ In some areas, therefore, Renamo recruits fought to "live as we pleased" outside Frelimo's collective villages,¹⁰⁷ and "tens of thousands of people...voluntarily moved to Renamo-controlled and occupied areas"¹⁰⁸

Some traditional leaders rejected Renamo, and regional Frelimo officials sometimes ignored national policy, working with traditional leaders. Yet only late in the war, around 1989, did Frelimo begin embracing traditional leaders and religions, undermining some Renamo support and developing the government-affiliated spiritualist Naparama militia.¹⁰⁹ Once members of the aggrieved constituency had joined Renamo, however, it became rational to remain in the organization even if they recognized Renamo's pandering, due opportunities for socioeconomic advancement and the threat of rebel or state punishment if they deserted.¹¹⁰

Renamo started losing its aggrieved constituency support, however, as the war dragged on and the rural population began seeing through Renamo's rhetorical and behavioral façade. Geffray

¹⁰⁴ Hall, 50. See also Bjørn Enge Bertelsen, "'The Traditional Lion Is Dead': The Ambivalent Presence of Tradition and the Relation between Politics and Violence in Mozambique," *Lusotopie* 10 (2003): 263–81.

¹⁰⁵ Wilson, "Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence in Mozambique."

¹⁰⁶ Jeremy M. Weinstein and Laudemiro Francisco, "The Civil War in Mozambique: The Balance Between Internal and External Influences," in *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis, Volume 1: Africa*, ed. Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005), 157–92.

¹⁰⁷ Schafer, "Guerrillas and Violence in the War in Mozambique," 226.

¹⁰⁸ Geffray, *La Cause Des Armes Au Mozambique*, 39.

¹⁰⁹ Wilson, "Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence in Mozambique"; Jentzsch, "Auxiliary Armed Forces"; Tom Young, "The MNR/Renamo: External and Internal Dynamics," *African Affairs* 89, no. 357 (1990): 491–509.

¹¹⁰ Manning, "Constructing Opposition in Mozambique"; Schafer, "Guerrillas and Violence in the War in Mozambique."

wrote that “Renamo does not have a way to maintain in the long-term the credibility of its propaganda and...the illusion that it has anything else in mind other than war,” and Renamo constantly attacked civilians.¹¹¹ Once war ended and competitive elections arrived in 1994, however, both Renamo and Frelimo tried to “engage with and invoke the support of local traditional authorities,” and top Renamo leaders continued appealing to wartime grievances against Frelimo’s rural policies,¹¹² reinforcing the mobilization opportunity grievances on these dimensions had presented during the war.

Discussion

Renamo began as a foreign-created proxy organization with little domestic constituency, but mobilized voluntary domestic support by pandering to anti-state grievances around tradition and collectivization. The organization grew from a few hundred members at its mid-1970s founding, to an estimated 6,000 to 10,000 in 1980-81, and 20,000 members by the mid-1980s.¹¹³ Pandering was one among multiple mobilization strategies, but Renamo’s growing support base helped push the war to a stalemate and negotiated settlement. Renamo also gained domestic legitimacy it otherwise lacked, important not only for presenting the organization to foreign actors, but also for elections and mobilization in a new 2012-2018 low-intensity conflict.¹¹⁴

The cases of the Nicaraguan FDN and Liberian NPFL illustrate the workings of strategic pandering in different settings, with the FDN like Renamo a foreign-funded and founded group,

¹¹¹ Geffray, *La Cause Des Armes Au Mozambique*, 121. On violence against civilians, see Hultman, “The Power to Hurt in Civil War.”

¹¹² Bertelsen, “‘The Traditional Lion Is Dead’,” 266. See also Pearce, “History, Legitimacy, and Renamo’s Return to Arms”; Carrie Manning, “Party-Building on the Heels of War: El Salvador, Bosnia, Kosovo and Mozambique,” *Democratization* 14, no. 2 (2007): 253–72.

¹¹³ Weinstein and Francisco, “The Civil War in Mozambique,” 170–71.

¹¹⁴ Pearce, “History, Legitimacy, and Renamo’s Return to Arms”; Manning, “Party-Building on the Heels of War.”

and the NPFL having more domestic, organic origins and aims and fighting in a non-Cold War conflict.

The FDN in Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, a 1979 revolution led by the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) overthrew the Somoza dictatorship and its hated *Guardia Nacional* military. A counterrevolution soon began on multiple fronts, with rebels collectively called the ‘contras.’ The main contra force, the *Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense* (FDN), was led by former Guardia members, with CIA and Argentine organization and financing. Despite some exiles’ efforts to moderate the FDN, ex-Guardia hardliners dominated it: some advocated calling the organization the “Nicaraguan National Guard—to preserve the name.”¹¹⁵

The CIA tried recruiting civilian leaders to hide “that the FDN... was led by former Somoza National Guard officers,” but the organization’s Guardia roots impeded popular support and domestic legitimacy.¹¹⁶ FDN leaders claimed “only three percent of FDN combatants” were ex-Guardia members, yet by 1985, 46 of 48 FDN commanding officers were ex-Guardias.¹¹⁷ The entire FDN Strategic Command were ex-Guardia officers (except the communications assistant); the air, naval, and counterintelligence sections were headed by ex-Guardia officers; and all officers

¹¹⁵ Sam Dillon, *Comandos: The CIA and Nicaragua’s Contra Rebels* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1991), 65.

¹¹⁶ Peter Kornbluh, “Nicaragua: U.S. Proinsurgency Warfare Against the Sandinistas,” in *Low-Intensity Warfare*, ed. Michael T. Klare and Peter Kornbluh (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 140. A CIA assessment suggested withdrawing US aid would “effectively remove the military threat posed by [the FDN] within four to six weeks.” CIA, *Impact of Cutoff of Assistance to the Nicaraguan Insurgents* (Washington, DC, 1984), 1.

¹¹⁷ Hoover Institution, “‘Informe de Entrevista,’ 22 November 1982,” *Enrique Bermúdez Varela, Box 1*, 1982; US Congress Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, *Who Are the Contras?: An Analysis of the Makeup of the Military Leadership of the Rebel Forces, and of the Nature of the Private American Groups Providing Them Financial and Material Support: An In-Depth Research Report* (Washington, D.C.: United States Congress, 1985).

in two of the four regional commands were former Guardia officers.¹¹⁸ No clear FDN political program was formulated beyond opposing the FSLN, and the organization committed widespread and brutal human rights violations.¹¹⁹ The CIA continued giving the FDN directives on operations into 1987, one of the last years of heavy fighting.¹²⁰

Yet despite its Guardia roots and leadership and violent actions, the FDN gained voluntary, politically-motivated civilian recruits and supporters. After sporadic cross-border raids and failed urban insurrection efforts, FDN leaders recognized the need for political appeals to “capture” a peasant social base.¹²¹ Peasants in Nicaragua’s highlands had received few benefits from the new FSLN government, disappointing their expectations. They were angered by agricultural policies restricting markets for crops; land tenure issues and expropriations; conflict between the FSLN and Catholic Church leaders; weapons seizures; pressure to join FSLN-led associations; and, eventually, a military draft.¹²² The civilian political opposition was weak, dominated by economic elites, and unappealing to peasants. These factors created an aggrieved constituency and a mobilization opportunity for the FDN.

¹¹⁸ US Department of State, “Documents on the Nicaraguan Resistance: Leaders, Military Personnel, and Program” (Washington, D.C., 1986). The *Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática* (ARDE) contra group rejected any alliance because FDN leadership was “composed in its totality by ex-officers of the Guardia Nacional.” Hoover Institution, “‘Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática (‘ARDE’), Establece Su Posición Con Respecto a Las Demás Organizaciones Nicaragüense, y En Especial a Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense (F.D.N.),’ 13 July 1983,” *Alfonso Robelo C., Box 1, Folder 2*, 1983.

¹¹⁹ Lynn R. Horton, *Peasants in Arms: War and Peace in the Mountains of Nicaragua, 1979-1994* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1998); David Close, “Responding to Low-Intensity Conflict: Counterinsurgency in Sandinista Nicaragua,” *New Political Science* 9, no. 1–2 (1990): 5–19; Hoover Institution, “‘Reglamento de Los Comités Regionales de Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense,’ February 1982,” *Enrique Bermúdez Varela, Box 1*, 1982; Kornbluh, “Nicaragua.”

¹²⁰ Eduardo Cruz, “La Operación Olivero, El Más Grande Ataque de La Contra En Los Años Ochenta,” *Magazine*, May 3, 2021.

¹²¹ Alejandro Bendaña, *Una Tragedia Campesina: Testimonios de La Resistencia* (Managua: Editora de Arte, 1991), 37–38.

¹²² Timothy C. Brown, *The Real Contra War: Highlander Peasant Resistance in Nicaragua* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001); Horton, *Peasants in Arms*; CIPRES, *La Guerra En Nicaragua* (Managua: Centro para la Investigación, la Promoción y el Desarrollo Rural y Social, 1991); Anonymous, *Dos Pasos Atrás y Dos y Medio Adelante: Reflexiones e Interrogantes Sobre La Política Agraria y Militar*, 1984, IHCA/FN,972.850,53,D722.

With generous US support, the FDN pandered, portraying itself as pro-peasant and devoutly religious.¹²³ Propaganda and mobilization teams were instructed to engage peasants about land-related concerns and appeal to them using religion, folklore, and local customs.¹²⁴ The FDN incorporated elements of peasant militias created by rural landlords and disillusioned former Sandinistas; coopted disgruntled rural leaders and their networks; and recruited heavily among aggrieved peasants in Honduran refugee camps.¹²⁵

Religious appeals were particularly prominent. FDN propaganda chief Edgar Chamorro described how their newsletter “exploited the image of the Christian soldier” and portrayed the Pope as a contra supporter amid FSLN-Vatican conflicts.¹²⁶ The FDN’s infamous CIA-published manual “Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare” called them “Christian guerrillas” on a “democratic crusade,” and FDN forces carried rosaries to distribute when appealing to peasants.¹²⁷

An FSLN report cited the FDN’s appeals as religious pandering, “capitalizing on the contradictions existing between the Church hierarchy and the revolutionary state, which is mustered as clear evidence of Sandinista atheism...[the FDN] proclaims that God is their commander-in-chief and that they will win because He is helping them,” trying “systematically” to gain rural religious leaders’ allegiance.¹²⁸ Worried FSLN military officers cautioned that by

¹²³ Edgar Chamorro, *Packaging the Contras: A Case of CIA Disinformation* (New York: Institute for Media Analysis, 1987), 24–25; CIPRES, *La Guerra En Nicaragua*, 400.

¹²⁴ Tayacán, “Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare,” in *Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare, with Essays by Joanne Omang and Aryeh Neier* (New York: Vintage, 1985), 31–98; Dieter Eich and Carlos Rincón, *The Contras: Interviews with Anti-Sandinistas* (San Francisco: Synthesis Publications, 1985), 33.

¹²⁵ Dillon, *Comandos*; Brown, *The Real Contra War*; Horton, *Peasants in Arms*.

¹²⁶ Chamorro, *Packaging the Contras*, 24.

¹²⁷ Tayacán, “Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare”; Alberto Reyes, “La Moral Sandinista Brilla En Medio de Los Combates,” in *Corresponsales de Guerra: Testimonios de Cien Días de Sangre, Fuego y Victorias*, ed. Barricada, 2nd ed. (Managua, 1984), 29–30.

¹²⁸ MIDINRA, *Notas Sobre Campesinado, Revolución y Contrarrevolución: Zelaya Central* (Managua, 1984), 37–38.

“taking advantage of...the religious sentiment of the population [the FDN] has a possibility of increasing its forces.”¹²⁹

Membership gains cannot be attributed to pandering alone, but FDN forces grew from around 1,000 in the early 1980s to 8,500 by mid-decade, and peaked in 1989 between 9,000 and 12,000, with around 30,000 peasant collaborators.¹³⁰ FDN leaders, however, condescendingly viewed peasants as pawns. One stated, “You know as well as I do that a peasant has nothing in his head but straw...Two or three stories well-told, and he will join you.”¹³¹ Peasants had no agency over decision making once in the FDN and leaders “in every moment had other objectives, different from the interests for which the armed peasants were fighting.”¹³² Recruits increasingly clashed with ex-Guardia leaders, whose promises to focus on peasant concerns were insincere.¹³³ One peasant said, “The [FDN] administration [in Honduras] killed more *comandos* than the enemy. The administrators robbed the troops. They stole money, stole the aid. They hoarded it, making themselves rich...[They] beat, killed, and raped.”¹³⁴ Peasant fighters “coming down from the mountains and confronting reality, had to discover the illusion with which they had been victimized by their leaders and allies.”¹³⁵

The FDN also formed an alliance with Indigenous Miskito rebels on the Caribbean coast, presenting itself as fighting to protect Miskito rights violated by the government. However, “By the mid-1980s, it had become apparent to the Miskito that they had been manipulated by the CIA and [FDN], who cared nothing about Miskito goals like land rights, cultural autonomy, and local

¹²⁹ Jorge Portocarrero, “Las Pequeñas Unidades de Lucha Contra Bandas,” *Revista Segovia* 2, no. 4 (1985): 50.

¹³⁰ Jaime Morales Carazo, *La Contra* (Mexico City: Grupo Editorial Planeta, 1989); Horton, *Peasants in Arms*; Close, “Responding to Low-Intensity Conflict.”

¹³¹ Eich and Rincón, *The Contras*, 101–2.

¹³² CIPRES, *La Guerra En Nicaragua*, 45.

¹³³ Dillon, *Comandos*.

¹³⁴ Horton, *Peasants in Arms*, 252.

¹³⁵ Morales Carazo, *La Contra*, 20.

control over natural resources.”¹³⁶ In areas of FDN influence, the organization did not seek to govern, but, a priest observed, related to the population “only through recruitment of fighters and acquiring food from peasant families.”¹³⁷ The organization’s true goal was destabilization, FDN officer Jorge Ramírez Zelaya admitted, rather than victory or redressing grievances.¹³⁸

The FSLN government over time undertook reforms addressing many peasant and Indigenous grievances, reducing the FDN’s operational space and mobilization pool. FSLN commander Humberto Ortega described the counterinsurgency using Mao’s fish-in-water analogy: “the economic, political, and social comprehensive plans are what, structurally, have allowed the counterrevolutionaries less and less space; the water in which the fish tries to move is contaminated.”¹³⁹ By the war’s end in 1989, only 10-20% of Nicaraguans polled viewed the contras positively.¹⁴⁰ FDN leaders could not maintain their façade of concern with peasant welfare, but mobilizing aggrieved peasant constituencies helped achieve their goal of destabilization, eventually forcing the government to the negotiating table.

The NPFL in Liberia

The National Patriotic Front of Liberia differed in two important ways from Renamo and the FDN. First, the NPFL was not a foreign proxy force, and always aimed to capture and control the state; second, the organization emerged and fought outside the Cold War context, lacking incentives to join the Western or Soviet bloc ideological camps.¹⁴¹ The NPFL fought against the regime of

¹³⁶ Philip A. Dennis, “The Miskito-Sandinista Conflict in Nicaragua in the 1980s,” *Latin American Research Review* 28, no. 3 (1993): 136.

¹³⁷ Anonymous, *Dos Pasos Atrás y Dos y Medio Adelante*, 1.

¹³⁸ Eich and Rincón, *The Contras*, 42.

¹³⁹ Humberto Ortega Saavedra, “La Desarticulación Mercenaria [Interview],” *Revista Segovia* 2, no. 16 (1986): 5.

¹⁴⁰ Andrew Reding, “The Evolution of Governmental Institutions,” in *Revolution & Counterrevolution in Nicaragua*, ed. Thomas W. Walker (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 47.

¹⁴¹ On Liberia and Cold War politics, see D. Elwood Dunn, *Liberia and the United States During the Cold War: Limits of Reciprocity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Samuel Doe, an Indigenous Liberian soldier from the Krahn tribe, who seized power in a 1980 coup, ending 133 years of political dominance by Americo-Liberian elites.¹⁴² Thomas Quiwonkpa became the national Armed Forces of Liberia's (AFL) commander under Doe, but the two fell out and Quiwonkpa fled the country in 1983, gathering dissidents to form the NPFL. After Doe won rigged 1985 elections, Quiwonkpa launched a failed coup attempt and was killed. Doe responded by attacking Quiwonkpa's Gio coethnics and the related Mano tribe, concentrated in Nimba County, also purging Gios and Manos from the military and sparking intense ethnic animosity.¹⁴³ Following the failed coup, Charles Taylor, another ally-turned-enemy of Doe, consolidated control of the NPFL.

Pandering came naturally to Taylor. His former Finance Minister, Nathaniel Barnes, described Taylor as having "the gift of gab, he had a silver tongue. You sit in a room with Charles Taylor and he could convince you of anything" (interview 36). A social and political chameleon, Taylor was "tricky" (interview 18, former NPFL officer), seeking to be "all things to all men."¹⁴⁴

Of mixed Americo-Liberian and Gola heritage, Taylor was raised in the Americo-Liberian community and educated in the US, where he was a political activist, before returning and serving in the Doe administration. Taylor then fled in the early 1980s like Quiwonkpa. Throughout the late 1980s, Taylor bounced around West Africa, building ties to regional leaders and working to rebuild the NPFL. Other Liberian dissidents distrusted Taylor, who demanded that in toppling Doe, the

¹⁴² Americo-Liberians are descendants of resettled former US slaves who organized the modern Liberian state. See Amos Sawyer, *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and Challenge* (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1992).

¹⁴³ Mark Huband, *The Liberian Civil War* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2007); George Klay Kieh, *The First Liberian Civil War: The Crises of Underdevelopment* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

¹⁴⁴ David Harris, "From 'warlord' to 'Democratic' President: How Charles Taylor Won the 1997 Liberian Elections," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (1999): 446; Amos Sawyer, "Violent Conflicts and Governance Challenges in West Africa: The Case of the Mano River Basin Area," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 42, no. 3 (2004): 448.

“military would determine who would dictate everything...[and] he would be the head of everything” (interview 53, Sen. Conmany Wesseh, former student leader and peace negotiator). Taylor meanwhile sidelined other militant leaders he considered rivals and made fighters pledge personal loyalty to him.¹⁴⁵

After training in Libya, the NPFL invaded Liberia in December 1989, entering Nimba County from Côte d’Ivoire with about 100 men. Doe responded with repression in Nimba and the NPFL soon attracted more recruits, expanding by late 1990 to an estimated 10,000 members.¹⁴⁶ Doe had crushed the limited existing domestic political opposition after Quiwonkpa’s coup, so the NPFL presented one of the only means of active opposition for regime opponents. Other fighters, meanwhile, joined due to promises of loot or of jobs and money when the NPFL won, and displaced Americo-Liberian elites were promised renewed political influence.¹⁴⁷

Entering through Nimba was intentional: many early joiners were Gio and Mano volunteers with grievances against the Doe government, seeking revenge against Doe’s Krahn coethnics and Mandingo allies.¹⁴⁸ Taylor was pursuing his own interests, but thought that “to [gain] power, I should get assistance from the most aggrieved party” (interview 35, Joseph Saye Guannu, political historian). Taylor “used the fact that the Gios and Manos were mortal enemies of Doe...And he exploited that, entered through their territory,” but “he was just using them to accomplish his own ends” (interview 47, Nakomo Duche, legal scholar and former UN official). Jonathan Taylor, Charles Taylor’s cousin and cabinet minister, said of the NPFL and other rebels: “when they come in the idea is to want to create a better life, so-called coming to liberate. And they will say how all

¹⁴⁵ Huband, *The Liberian Civil War*, 53–59; Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy*, 72.

¹⁴⁶ Morten Bøås, “Liberia and Sierra Leone—Dead Ringers? The Logic of Neopatrimonial Rule,” *Third World Quarterly* 22, no. 5 (2001): 709.

¹⁴⁷ George Klay Kieh, “Combatants, Patrons, Peacemakers, and the Liberian Civil Conflict,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 15, no. 1 (1992): 129–30.

¹⁴⁸ Interview 3, NPFL intelligence officer; interview 13, NPFL general; interview 19, NPFL special forces officer.

of these rights and freedoms have been denied. And they will use that once they find an environment that's receptive, they will play on that" (interview 49).

The post-war Truth and Reconciliation Commission found the NPFL was responsible for almost 40% of total human rights violations and war crimes, "three times greater than the second worst offending faction."¹⁴⁹ According to a survey of demobilized combatants, though, about 10% of NPFL fighters reported joining the organization because they supported its political goals, despite the NPFL's violence and harsh demands for discipline and labor.¹⁵⁰

Politically-motivated followers did not only join the NPFL due to appeals about collective security threats, but in response to leaders' claims they would create a 'new Liberia,' end tribalism, and uplift marginalized rural populations.¹⁵¹ The NPFL systematically sought to gain control over media, especially radio broadcasting, to spread leaders' narrative about the group's aims and smother alternative voices.¹⁵² Like Renamo and the FDN, the NPFL used traditional religion and symbolic politics to signal empathy with aggrieved followers. Though Taylor denied the NPFL used ritual specialists (*zoes*) or religious ceremonies,¹⁵³ he and the NPFL actively engaged with traditional religion. Taylor stated that NPFL leaders "took advantage of our chiefs, our elders, our

¹⁴⁹ Colin M. Waugh, *Charles Taylor and Liberia* (London: Zed Books, 2011), 134.

¹⁵⁰ Compared to 35% who reported joining to protect their family, 20% because of fear, and 19% who were abducted. James Pugel, *What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Liberia, February-March 2006* (Monrovia: UNDP Liberia, 2007), 36.

¹⁵¹ Kieh, *The First Liberian Civil War*; William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998); Huband, *The Liberian Civil War*. Mano and Gio followers understood ending tribalism as stopping pro-Krahn and Mandingo favoritism (interview 3, NPFL general; interview 5, Brigadier General and founding member of NPFL; interview 7, NPFL captain). On collective security threats, see Shesterinina, "Collective Threat Framing"; cf. Barry R Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993): 27–47.

¹⁵² Michael A. Innes, "Denial-of-Resource Operations and NPFL Radio Dominance in the Liberian Civil War," *Civil Wars* 7, no. 3 (2005): 288–309.

¹⁵³ SCSL, TRAN-03-01-0417, "SCSL-03-01 Charles Taylor Open Transcript 2009-12-02 CT02DEC09_FINALPUBLIC," 2 December 2009, p.32942. Available from http://www.scsldocs.org/transcripts/Charles_Taylor/2009-12-02/7410.

Zoes to work along with the population,”¹⁵⁴ channeling mobilization. The NPFL at times acted violently against certain zoes and secret societies, however, further suggesting instrumentality, not genuine belief and respect, drove NPFL leaders’ relationship with traditional religion.¹⁵⁵

Despite its rhetoric, the NPFL lacked a coherent ideology and developed few concrete plans for governance.¹⁵⁶ Taylor’s “evident aim was to rule...[he] fought only for [his] own ambitions to hold power for its own sake.”¹⁵⁷ Prince Johnson, an early NPFL commander who split with Taylor in 1990 to form the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), said he left because Taylor was “overambitious for power” and “wanted to seize and hold power” with himself as president.¹⁵⁸ Taylor purged popular Mano and Gio military and political leaders and centralized power around himself to the point that “There is no NPFL but Charles Taylor” (interview 3, NPFL officer).¹⁵⁹ Many Liberians with anti-government grievances had been convinced, however, that the NPFL would provide redistribution and development after toppling Doe. One young NPFL deserter said “she had been indoctrinated to believe that she was fighting to liberate Liberians who were supposed to be in bondage...fighting for peace and prosperity against a common enemy.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ SCSL, TRAN-03-01-0465, “SCSL-03-01 Charles Taylor Open Transcript 2009-07-15 CT15JUL09_FINALPUBLIC,” 15 July 2009, p.24376. Available from http://www.scsldocs.org/transcripts/Charles_Taylor/2009-07-15/7458.

¹⁵⁵ Rebecca Nielsen, “The Differential Impact of War on Local Power Networks in Sierra Leone and Liberia,” presented at Harvard-MIT-Yale Graduate Student Conference on Political Violence (New Haven: Yale University, 2014), 11.

¹⁵⁶ William Reno, “Foreign Firms and the Financing of Charles Taylor’s NPFL,” *Liberian Studies Journal* 18, no. 2 (1993): 175–88; Reno, “Predatory Rebellions and Governance.” Taylor’s former adviser John Richardson claims Taylor “had a vision, but he didn’t have the foggiest idea of how to implement [it],” (interview 52).

¹⁵⁷ Yekutieli Gershoni, “War Without End and An End to A War: The Prolonged Wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone,” *African Studies Review* 40, no. 3 (1997): 60–61.

¹⁵⁸ Interview 44, Prince Johnson; see also Prince Yeduo Johnson, *The Gun That Liberates Should Not Rule: The Philosophy of the I.N.P.F.L.* (Lagos: Pax Cornwell, 1991). Other interviewees confirmed this (interview 1, NPFL general; interview 21, ULIMO officer).

¹⁵⁹ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy*, 85.

¹⁶⁰ Emmanuel Kwesi Aning, “Gender and Civil War: The Cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone,” *Civil Wars* 1, no. 4 (1998): 17.

Yet leaders often personally appropriated whatever goods fighters captured, while Taylor and top deputies raked in millions of dollars from diamonds, timber, and other enterprises.¹⁶¹ One young ex-combatant lamented, “When I think of the five years I spent in the bush, killing people and being shot at, I feel pretty stupid. We were giving our lives for people who by tomorrow won’t remember how they got where they are.”¹⁶² A former NPFL general remarked, “They came to us, they say we are fighting for freedom. We know before the war the people were suffering, but this country before the war, the suffering were not like this” (interview 1). As Kieh wrote, “Taylor’s strategy for winning support was anchored on the exploitation of the grievances of the various groups who were essential to the success of his military campaign,” though promises were not kept and Liberians discovered that “the Taylor-led NPFL was no better than the Doe regime.”¹⁶³

Some supporters defected from the NPFL because “the citizens thought that the rebels were bringing transformation...But, having fought for some time...the citizens began to realize there was no change” (interview 31, former AFL captain). Despite controlling over three-quarters of Liberia’s territory from 1990 into 1995, the NPFL developed limited governing structures, and those that existed were predatory, geared toward exploiting local populations, extracting resources, and pursuing central power in Monrovia, which they won in 1997 after a negotiated settlement.¹⁶⁴ Taylor and NPFL leaders exploited marginalized Liberians’ grievances to gain power, but merely

¹⁶¹ Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy*; Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*; Felix Gerdes, *Civil War and State Formation: The Political Economy of War and Peace in Liberia* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2013).

¹⁶² Howard French, “Liberia’s Teen-Age Soldiers Find Civil War Is Over but So Is Hope,” *New York Times*, September 11, 1995.

¹⁶³ Kieh, “Combatants, Patrons, Peacemakers,” 130.

¹⁶⁴ David Harris, *Civil War and Democracy in West Africa: Conflict Resolution, Elections and Justice in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (London: IB Tauris, 2012), 130–31; Nicholai Lidow, *Violent Order: Understanding Rebel Governance through Liberia’s Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 100; Martin Lowenkopf, “Liberia: Putting the State Back Together,” in *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Order*, ed. I. William Zartman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 93; Reno, “Predatory Rebellions and Governance.”

enriched and empowered themselves, contributing to grievances that fueled a new civil war and ultimately toppled Taylor and the NPFL in 2003.

Table 1 summarizes key elements of strategic pandering in the three case studies.

Table 1. Goals, Grievances, and Pandering in the Renamo, FDN, and NPFL Cases

Group	Organizers	Leaders' Goals	Civilian Grievances	Pandering Mechanisms
Renamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External patron 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destabilization • Private enrichment • Personal political advancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deposing traditional leaders • Persecution of traditional religion • Collectivization and resettlement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective restoration of traditional elites • Religious rhetoric and rituals • Opposing land collectivization
FDN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External patrons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoring conservative elites' power and wealth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivization and resettlement • State control of agricultural markets • Government-Catholic Church tensions • Indigenous land and cultural rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious propaganda • Opposing land collectivization • Indigenous rights rhetoric
NPFL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal political advancement • Private enrichment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic persecution of Mano and Gio • Economic marginalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implicit endorsement of Mano/Gio ethnic empowerment • Religious rhetoric and rituals • Development rhetoric

Conclusion

This article demonstrates a logic of rebel mobilization through pandering by self-interested rebel leaders, who insincerely align themselves with popular preferences to capture support from an aggrieved portion of the population. For an unpopular rebel organization, the development of an aggrieved constituency offers an important opportunity for mobilization and potential to develop domestic and international legitimacy. Successful pandering increases the organization's size,

attracting bandwagon joiners, potentially making the organization a veto player in the conflict, and improving its probability of achieving a favorable outcome. Pandering can decrease dependence on foreign sponsors. It signals that rebels could remain a political force in peacetime. These gains, however, may erode if rebel leaders fail to deliver on their promises or the state takes actions to redress grievances, especially early in the conflict when newly-mobilized rebels have not been strongly socialized or incentivized into remaining in the group.¹⁶⁵ Further testing of the pandering theory is needed to specify the conditions under which pandering is and is not attempted and when it may be more successful as a mobilization strategy. Negative cases may be difficult to identify, but it should now be easier to look for failed pandering attempts or instances when unpopular groups decided not to engage in pandering.

I have discussed the pandering logic in dyadic conflicts between one rebel organization and the state, but a multiparty conflict in which rebel groups are competing with each other militarily and for civilian support may change the structure of mobilization. I consider groups competing if they are operating in the same region and seeking to mobilize the same population.¹⁶⁶ Competition could undermine pandering by giving civilians a choice of groups to support, yet competition can still be compatible with pandering.

First, competing rebel groups might pledge to *truly* address popular grievances, pressuring pandering leaders to follow through on insincere promises or face diminishing support, though this was not the case in Liberia—the INPFL’s 1990 breakaway due to Charles Taylor personalizing

¹⁶⁵ Reforms addressing popular grievances improve the effectiveness of counterinsurgency, protest suppression, and conflict resolution. Mason, “Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, and the Rational Peasant”; Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010), 154; Erica S. Simmons, “Targets, Grievances, and Social Movement Trajectories,” *Comparative Political Studies* 54, no. 10 (2021): 1818–48.

¹⁶⁶ In Nicaragua, though both groups were center-seeking, ARDE was operating at the southern border of Nicaragua, while the FDN operated and mobilized support in the northern part of the country; Indigenous rebels on the Caribbean Coast sought autonomy.

power did not lead Taylor to change course and fulfill the NPFL's ostensible public aims before or after the INPFL's 1992 dissolution. Or, the entry of a new competitor making grievance-based appeals could lead rebel leaders to engage in pandering, making new ideological claims and promises to try to undercut the new group's support base.¹⁶⁷ If grievances exist against a rebel group, other rebels could also pander against them by saying they will treat civilians differently. In Liberia, the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) and the Liberian Peace Council (LPC) both mobilized among Krahn and Mandingo populations that had supported the Doe government and then been targeted by NPFL forces. ULIMO and LPC leaders promised to liberate their ethnic kin and improve their lives, but both groups were violent and predatory towards civilians while leaders enriched themselves, just like the NPFL.¹⁶⁸

Disaggregating rebel organizations and their supporters, more generally, helps us understand both rebel leaders and followers as rational actors pursuing varied strategies and interests. Rebel leaders may use a variety of mobilization strategies at the same time, including pandering, to increase their fighting capacity and support base. For governments and international actors, understanding how rebel organizations generate support and the depth of popular affinity for organizations is key to calibrating conflict resolution efforts. By better understanding mobilization pathways and the specific grievances or incentives motivating different rebel group members, policymakers and practitioners can also improve and target demobilization efforts to build a more durable peace.

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¹⁶⁷ Efe Tokdemir et al., "Rebel Rivalry and the Strategic Nature of Rebel Group Ideology and Demands," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65, no. 4 (2021): 729–58.

¹⁶⁸ Lidow, *Violent Order*; Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy*.

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Methodological Appendix for “Rebel Mobilization through Pandering: Insincere Leaders, Framing, and Exploitation of Popular Grievances”

Kai M. Thaler

This article’s case study of the *Fuerza Democrático Nicaragüense* (FDN) of Nicaragua includes archival evidence from multiple sources. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) case study includes evidence from field interviews and court transcripts. In this methodological appendix, I discuss in greater detail sources and methods used to collect these data, as well as research ethics, and provide a table of interviewees in Liberia.

Nicaragua: The FDN Case

Archival evidence on the FDN was collected in multiple stages. In July and August 2013, I conducted research in Nicaragua at the Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica (IHNCA) at the Universidad Centroamericana in Managua. I examined collections related to government security forces and the different *contra* rebel forces, including the FDN. Documents from the IHNCA collections are cited with their call number at the end of the citation, denoted by ‘IHNCA’ or ‘IHCA.’ I also analyzed books written by officials and fighters from the belligerent groups and Nicaraguan and foreign analysts. I sought access to the military historical archive, the Centro de Historia Militar, but it is closed indefinitely to outside researchers.

From June to July 2014, I conducted research on the Nicaraguan civil war through the archival record available in the United States. Political and social concerns create selection biases available documents in archives, with only a sample of those that were originally produced included and/or accessible to researchers (Brown and Davis-Brown 1998; Burton 2006; Schwartz and Cook 2002). I wanted to see what documents on the FDN and the civil war were available in the United States and how the organization and the government it fought

looked from the perspective of an FDN ally. I spent two months examining documents at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University (cited as ‘Hoover Institution,’ since authorship was not attributed for many documents in the collections). I examined the following collections: Anaya; Bermúdez; Fagen; Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense; Hassan; Miranda; Nicaragua, Ministerio de Defensa; Nicaragua, Ministerio del Interior; Pastora; Resistencia Nicaragüense (Organization) Ejercito; and Robelo (each citation provides the collection name and box number).

I also examined documents from subscription Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) service. These declassified documents from the US State Department, Department of Defense, and intelligence agencies provided an external view of the FDN and its activities. I examined documents from the collection “Nicaragua: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1978–1990.” In this article, I cite one document found in the DNSA collections, but the document, a report from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), is available openly through the CIA’s Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room (cited as ‘CIA,’ with a public link provided).

Liberia: The NPFL Case

I conducted three months of interview research in Liberia on the NPFL case in late 2015. Research plans and interview protocols were approved by Harvard University’s Committee on the Use of Human Subjects. I sought to interview the following types of subjects: former NPFL military officers and political officials who had been involved with the NPFL during its rebellion or the organization’s time in power after its candidates won the 1997 elections¹; former officers in the government Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) who fought the NPFL; and scholars,

¹ NPFL leader Charles Taylor won the presidency and the NPFL’s newly-created political party, the National Patriotic Party (NPP), won a majority of legislative seats.

journalists, and civil society actors. I conducted 54 interviews with 102 subjects. Interviewees are listed below. Two interviewees were each interviewed on three separate occasions.

Interviewees were selected through a mix of purposive sampling, in which I directly contacted them, and limited snowball sampling, where interviewees suggested additional potentially useful contacts. Two local research assistants helped with initial contacts and navigating geographic and social terrain. A local journalist provided further contacts among political elites. The war is distant enough that enmities among former combatants have largely subsided, so talking to certain interviewees did not impede talking with others and there was little foreseeable risk to my research assistants.

Interviews were conducted in and around Monrovia, the capital. Approximately one-fifth of the national population lives in Monrovia and it is Liberia's political and economic center. Due to limited time and the logistical difficulties and costs of travel to the interior (especially during the rainy season), I did not conduct interviews elsewhere in the country. The presence of former military officers and civilians from throughout the country living in Monrovia should reduce the risk of information collected from my subjects in Monrovia being unrepresentative.

Military interviewees' preference was often for the interviews to be conducted in groups. Group interviews were only conducted when suggested and agreed to by interviewees. After explaining the project and receiving interviewees' informed consent, I asked each person for a brief description of his/her role and experience in the NPFL or AFL, before continuing to more specific questions about the dynamics and policies of the NPFL, with individuals able to respond when they wanted. A few interviewees also had fought as members of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), the Liberian Peace Council (LPC), the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO), and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy

(LURD), as noted in the ‘subject names/positions’ column. I also note positions held or organizations served during the Taylor presidency, including those NPFL officers who transitioned to the AFL or specialized forces like the Special Security Unit (SSU), Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU), or National Security Agency (NSA). I told interviewees they did not need to relate any personal experiences of suffering or committing violence and I asked no questions about these issues to try to avoid retraumatization.

I attempted to ensure each person who wanted to could respond to each question. Interviews took place in private homes or private rooms in restaurants. Almost all interviews were recorded, though on two occasions, military interviewees requested no recording, and so I took handwritten notes. Having formerly been in a military organization, security and secrecy were concerns expressed by many military interviewees, and so I asked these interviewees to not state their names while the recorder was on (and did not write them down). This practice is in line with other interview-based works on Liberia’s civil wars, which omit the names of interviewees who were combatants (Gerdes 2013; Lidow 2016). I told interviewees I had limited funds, but wanted to recognize their time and sharing of experiences, and so depending on the number of interviewees present, I offered compensation of around US\$3 cash and a soft drink or US\$4 cash, a not insignificant amount, but not high enough to be a major pressuring incentive for participation and divulging their stories and experiences.

Non-military interviewees are today national-level public figures in Liberia in government or civil society, and while I offered anonymity, all agreed to speak on the record and their names are included. In my judgment, there is minimal risk of negative future consequences (Knott 2019) for named interviewees based on their statements. Interviews with non-military

subjects took place in private offices, homes, or private rooms of restaurants. Interviews are cited in the article with the number listed below and the name and/or position of the interviewee.

There are few archival records preserved in Liberia from the first civil war and the NPFL's time in power (1989-2003). On two occasions in the article, I cite transcripts of Charles Taylor's testimony at his war crimes trial in the chambers of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in The Hague. The citations include the document number, title, date, and page number for the relevant citation, and direct links on the SCSL website (<http://www.scsl-docs.org>), where documentation for Taylor's trial is openly available.

Liberia Interview List

Interviews each have a number based on the temporal order in which they were conducted.

Following the number, I list the interview date, number of subjects in the interview session, and participant(s) identities. Interviews cited in the article are denoted with an asterisk (*).

Table I. Interviews for NPFL Case Study

Number	Date (all 2015)	Subjects	Subject Names/Affiliation
1*	5 October	4	NPFL, then SSU and ATU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then pro-government militia during Taylor presidency NPFL, then pro-government militia during Taylor presidency NPFL
2	7 October	2	NPFL NPFL, then joined INPFL, then rejoined NPFL
3*	7 October	4	NPFL, then NSA during Taylor presidency NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency NPFL NPFL
4	7 October	3	NPFL, then SSU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then SSU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency
5*	9 October	1	NPFL
6	11 October	2	NPFL, then SSU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then pro-government militia during Taylor presidency
7*	12 October	4	NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency

			NPFL NPFL NPFL
8	12 October	2	NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency
9	12 October	1	Former AFL, then joined NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency
10	14 October	1	Former UNHCR refugee official, was refugee in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea
11	14 October	2	NPFL, then SSU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency
12	14 October	1	Community leader
13*	15 October	4	NPFL, then SSU and ATU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency NPFL
14	16 October	1	Community leader
15	16 October	1	Former AFL colonel, left before war, rejoined AFL during Taylor presidency
16	16 October	2	NPFL, then ATU and SSU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency
17	17 October	1	NPFL, then on Executive Mansion staff during Taylor presidency
18*	19 October	6	Former AFL, then joined NPFL, then police during Taylor presidency Former AFL, then police during Taylor presidency NPFL NPFL, then LURD during Taylor presidency NPFL, then LURD during Taylor presidency INPFL, then joined NPFL, then LURD during Taylor presidency
19*	20 October	2	NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency
20	21 October	7	NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency NPFL, captured and joined LPC, then AFL during Taylor presidency INPFL, then policy during Taylor presidency NPFL, then pro-government militia during Taylor presidency NPFL NPFL ULIMO, then LPC, then LURD during Taylor presidency
21*	22 October	5	NPFL NPFL NPFL

			NPFL, then ULIMO Pro-government (Taylor) militia, then LURD
22	22 October	3	Former AFL, then joined NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency NPFL
23	23 October	1	NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency
24	23 October	1	INPFL, then joined NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency
25	26 October	5	NPFL NPFL NPFL NPFL War widow of NPFL officer
26	26 October	4	NPFL NPFL NPFL Former journalist from NPFL areas
27	26 October	4	NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency NPFL, then pro-government militia during Taylor presidency NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency NPFL
28	26 October	1	NPFL, then SSU during Taylor presidency
29	26 October	1	NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency
30	27 October	2	NPFL, then military police during Taylor presidency NPFL, then SSU during Taylor presidency
31*	27 October	2	Former AFL Former AFL
32	28 October	2	NPFL, then pro-government militia during Taylor presidency NPFL, then ATU during Taylor presidency
33	28 October	2	Former AFL Former AFL, then captured by and joined NPFL, then AFL during Taylor presidency
34	29 October	1	Former AFL
35*	31 October	1	Joseph Saye Guannu, political historian and professor, University of Liberia and Cuttington University
36*	2 November	1	Nathaniel Barnes, Minister of Finance (1999-2002) in Taylor government
37	3 November	1	Rev. J. Emmanuel Bowier, historian, former government minister
38	4 November	1	Philip N. Wesseh, journalist
39	10 November	1	Rep. George Mulbah, NPP Vice Chair, worked with Taylor in Gbarnga and became superintendent for Bong County in Taylor government

40	12 November	1	Rev. J. Emmanuel Bowier (2 nd)
41	13 November	1	Hassan Bility, journalist and human rights advocate
42	13 November	1	Kenneth Y. Best, journalist
43	16 November	1	Rep. Jefferson S. Kanmoh, rural political activist in 1980s and 1990s
44*	17 November	1	Sen. Prince Y. Johnson, former NPFL general and INPFL commander-in-chief
45	18 November	1	Dr. S. Byron Tarr, social scientist, former political activist and government minister
46	19 November	1	Sen. Dr. Peter Coleman, Minister of Health and Social Welfare in Taylor government
47*	20 November	2	Dr. S. Byron Tarr (2 nd) Nakomo Duche, legal scholar and former UN official
48	23 November	1	Monie Captan, , Minister of Foreign Affairs (1997-2003) in Taylor government, former professor and newspaper publisher
49*	24 November	1	Dr. Jonathan Taylor, Minister of State for Presidential Affairs (2000-2003) in Taylor government, professor and dean at University of Liberia
50	27 November	1	E. Reginald Goodridge, Deputy Minister of State for Presidential Affairs and Press Secretary, later Minister of Information, Culture, and Tourism in Taylor government
51	2 December	1	Dr. S. Byron Tarr (3 rd)
52*	2 December	1	John Richardson, former NPFL commander and political official, Minister of Public Works and National Security Advisor in Taylor government
53*	9 December	1	Sen. Conmany Wesseh, former student leader and peace negotiator, member of IGNU
54	11 December	1	Rev. J. Emmanuel Bowier (3 rd)

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