

From Battles to Massacres

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Abstract:

Why do combatants in civil war sometimes target civilians while at other times they refrain from doing so? I examine this question using new, geo-referenced event data on reported battles and massacres in the forty-one year long Angolan war. My research shows that during civil wars, belligerents abuse civilians most often when they are losing. Failure to hold territory after large conventional battles leads to escalated violence as the losing side retreats. Escalated civilian targeting therefore occurs in the context of territorial loss. Combatants use violence to deter would-be traitors from defecting to the winning side. Using disaggregated data, I also test a number of existing hypotheses that may help explain observed spatial and temporal patterns of violence.

"We killed one another to the last man... We exterminated entire lines, from the youngest to the most defunct, from those who hadn't even been conceived to those whose souls were no longer being prayed for."¹

"Now the crimes are meticulous and they are never left half done! I do not know what wars are like elsewhere but here it is no longer enough to just kill! It is necessary to massacre! Even if you survive, you will always have the memory printed on you."²

Why do combatants in civil war sometimes target civilians while at other times they refrain from doing so? And why would combatants ever engage in such a seemingly counterproductive strategy as abusing civilian targets? After all, military campaigns crucially rely on civilian support for their success. Civilians provide combatants with needed quarter, food, future recruits, shelter, intelligence, and portage, among other things. Abusing civilians violates a number of domestic and international norms about acceptable conduct in war. Such abuses anger victims and may actually serve to increase the likelihood of mass civilian defection to the other side. Abuses may also frustrate international allies and threaten a group's key source of monetary or logistical support. Therefore, under what conditions would combatants ever elect to target civilians, especially their own, long-time supporters?³

Civilian targeting is not a ubiquitous feature of warfare. Throughout history, warriors and leaders have recognized the strategic value of self-discipline. Thucydides himself once said: "of all of the manifestations of power, restraint is what impresses men the most."⁴ In many wars throughout history, belligerents have sometimes opted for restraint when it comes to the targeting of noncombatants. And during many periods of the Angolan war, civilian targeting was minimal or nonexistent. Therefore, I seek to understand the conditions under which combatants decide it is in their best interest to begin to engage in such a seemingly counterproductive strategy as deliberate civilian targeting.

1 Mendez, Pedro Rosa. *Bay of Tigers: An African Odyssey*. Translated from Portuguese by Clifford Landers. Harcourt, Orlando: 2003, p. 295.

2 Displaced Person, Huambo Province. MSF-USA Special Report: Angola- Behind the façade of "normalization": Manipulation, violence and abandoned populations: 9 November 2000, pp. 10-11.

3 In the interest of saving precious space I decided for this audience to omit the requisite literature review; please contact me if you are interested in reading this section of the paper.

4 Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Revised Edition. Penguin Classics: 1954.

Because conventional civil wars sometimes devolve into mass killings and genocide, scholars and policymakers interested in preventing these scourges will benefit from a more thorough understanding of civil war dynamics themselves. An event-based disaggregated study of the battles and massacres in one civil war contains sufficient data with which to test hypotheses. I collected nearly 10,000 detailed, georeferenced observations of massacre and battle events that took place in the Angolan war that can be analyzed in a number of different ways.

How does Angola compare with other cases of modern civil wars? At first blush, one may consider Angola an exaggerated case of civil war violence. After all, it was a very long and deadly war. However, I argue that the “case” under examination is not the absolute level of violence in the Angolan war but the relative patterns of conflict, a crucial difference. It is the *variation* in the nature of conflict over time and space that is of interest, not simply the aggregate levels of intensity or duration. Similar patterns and trends exist in most other civil wars, even if they are on a different scale. The intensity, variation, and length of this war merely provide the researcher sufficient data on which to conduct an analysis of conflict patterns.

The Angolan war differs from other modern civil wars in one critical way: it was the only instance of mass killing on the State Failure Task Forces’ list of genocides and politicides between 1955 and 2001 for which *both government and rebel actors perpetrated* these crimes, affording one the unique opportunity to examine the qualitative and quantitative differences between state-directed genocides and rebel-side atrocities. Rather than make assumptions about whether states or insurgents are more likely to engage in civilian targeting, one can directly investigate the issue empirically.

Selecting Angola as a case also represents an attempt to highlight cases that have so far not received significant attention in the literature. There is relatively little micro-level data or information systematically collected about Angola or its war. Despite the vast number of primary reports available about the conflict in the Portuguese-language press, relatively little data about the war has actually been collected and systematically coded, because it would be difficult for scholars to obtain many of these documents. Thousands of crucial articles are neither in English nor

electronically accessible, and photocopies are expensive and tedious to obtain. The data is part of the Armed Conflict Location Events Dataset (ACLED) that will soon be made publicly available through the Peace Research Institute, Center for Study of Civil war, in Oslo, Norway.

I searched for, assembled, translated, and coded all of the key events that took place in the Angolan war over a forty-one year period. I coded traditional battle events, territorial transfers, and one-sided massacre events committed by state or rebel side actors. I thoroughly scoured several archives, libraries, and news agency files. I found that the Portuguese press and wire service ran the most detailed news stories about the conflict throughout the duration of the period. Portugal's interest in and press coverage of Angola remains strong due to their linked histories. Please refer to Appendix A for the list of the 186 sources from over twenty countries from which the data were coded. The translations of only the event portions of each article are in a file that numbers over 1,000 pages and is available upon request. As such it represents a short historiography of all known events in the Angolan war.

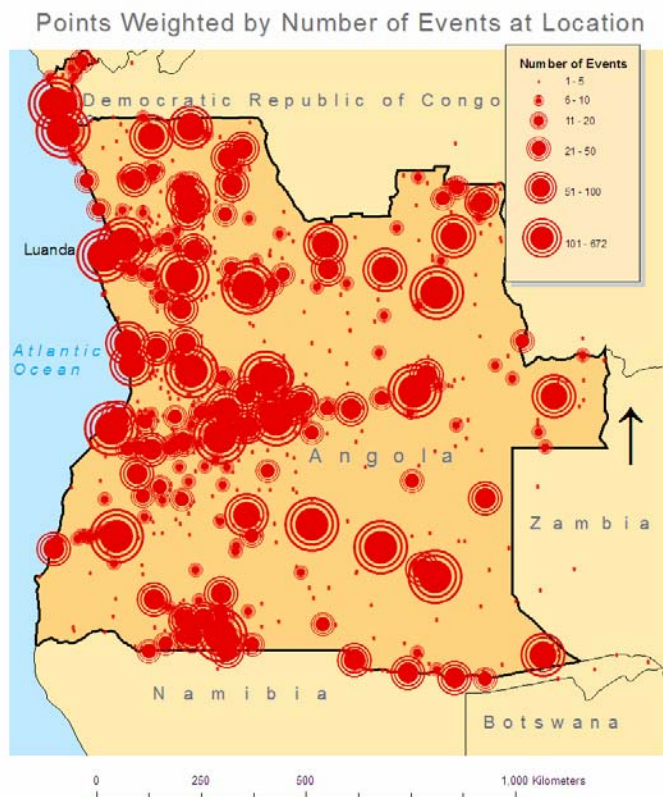
Events constitute the fundamental unit of analysis in this study. Each event corresponds to a location, date, event type, participating actor, and source of information. For each location, I assigned latitude and longitudinal coordinates, elevation in meters, and population. I then recorded fatality estimates and the identity of those killed, if known. The ACLED event types were purposefully limited to eight broad categories. Armed conflict events can result in:

1. No change of territory
2. Transfer of territory to rebel actor
3. (Re)capture of rebel held territory by government forces
4. Establishment of rebel base or headquarters
5. Non-battle related activity, such as troop movements
6. Territorial transfer to rebels at unknown date
7. One-sided violence: state-directed civilian massacres
8. One-sided violence: rebel-directed civilian massacres

The remainder of this article attempts to analyze and assess the depth of information collected about the Angolan civil war. Future work will more fully

incorporate both spatial and temporal dynamics as well as interactions among independent variables using a multivariate spatial panel model. As a first cut, I decided to analyze as far as possible the spatial and temporal implications of a number of existing theories treating spatial and temporal trends separately.

What does a basic inductive spatial analysis of the 9,216 events of violence coded between 1961 and 2002 reveal? A number of problems immediately surface when one attempts to analyze this inherently dynamic space-time data using only static maps. For example, Figure 1 shows that a dot-based map would generally obscure the incredible extent to which events *overlap* on this map.⁵ If these symbols only reflect the raw number of *events*, one can see how it would be difficult to represent other factors, such as underlying casualty estimates for each event, simultaneously in a static map.



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Figure 1: The striking *number of battle or massacre events* at each location in Angola.

⁵ Please see www.jenziemke.net/ for a Google Earth animation of these data, a better but still imperfect attempt to visualize and inductively analyze the nature of this war.

Hypothesis Testing

Explaining Conflict Patterns I: Ethnicity

Casual observers of conflict and some scholars discuss and examine African conflicts in particular through the paradigm of ethnic, linguistic or identity-based cleavages (Gurr and Harff 1994; Posen 1993; Kaplan 1993; Cederman, Rød and Weidmann 2006; Reynal-Querol 2002). Does the distribution of ethnic groups in any way influence the observed patterns of violence in the Angolan war? Using qualitative evidence and maps I examine:

Hypothesis I: Ethnic cleavages. Civilian abuses are partly driven by ethnic, linguistic, or other identity-based cleavages.

I begin a basic assessment of this claim by teasing out the spatial implications of such a hypothesis. Using maps we observe that for both rebel- and government-side perpetrators (Figures 2 and 3), atrocities (red dots) take place all over the country, and not solely in the enemy's heartland. It turns out that belligerents are just as likely to commit violence against civilians in their own ethnic heartland, against their own co-ethnics, as they are in any other place. For example, UNITA's supposed primary ethnic base is the Ovimbundu population (light blue, in this map surrounding Nova Lisboa (Huambo)). We can see from an analysis of the map that red circles denoting UNITA's massacre events took place both inside and outside of this home area. The same applies to MPLA-side massacres: state actors also abuse civilians both inside and outside of their ethnic Kimbundu heartland.

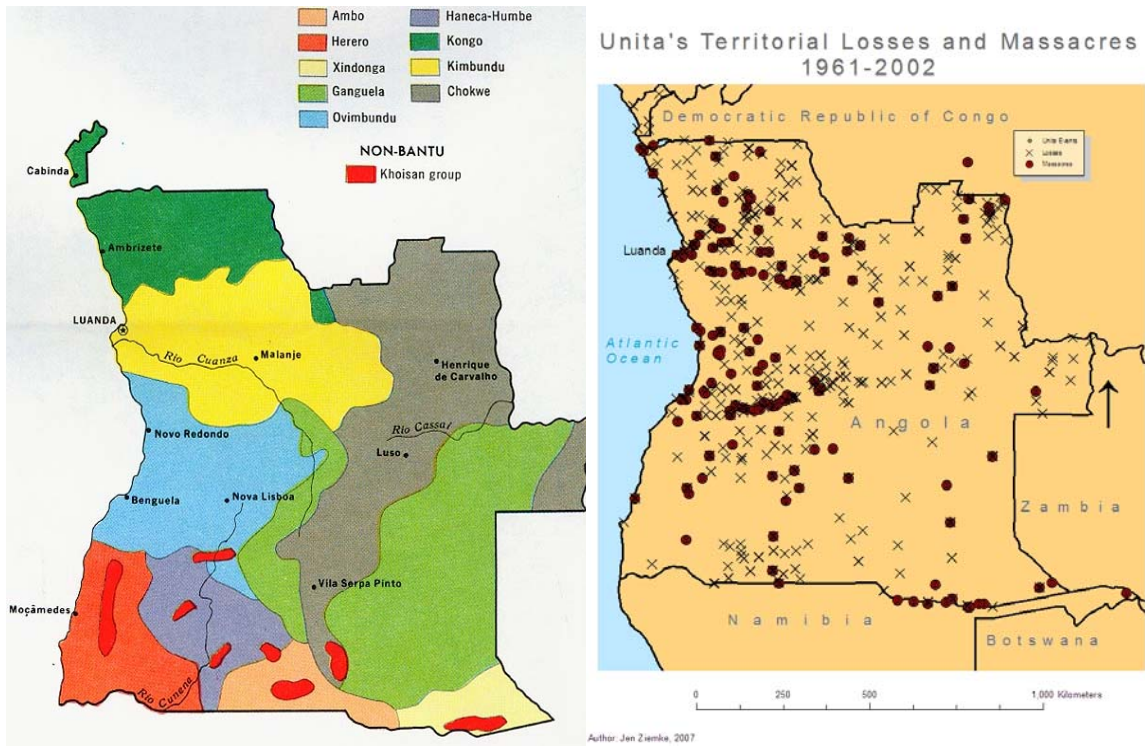


Figure 2: Ethnic divisions (1970)⁶ and UNITA massacres (red circles)

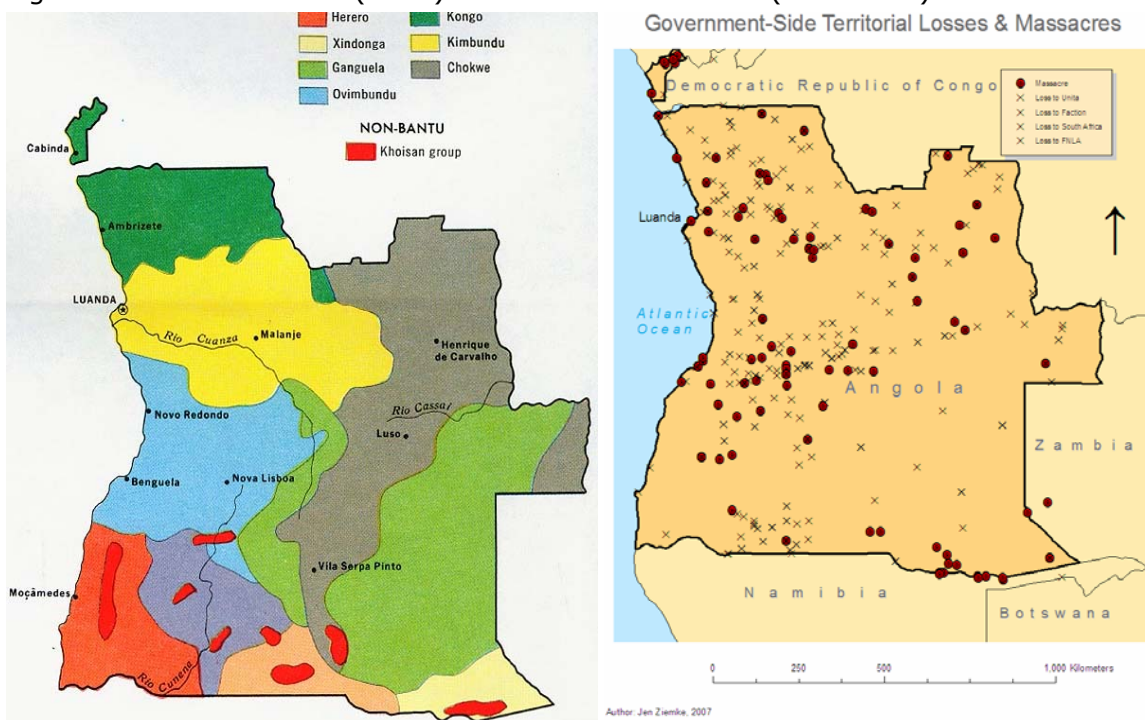


Figure 3: Ethnicity and MPLA-side massacres (red circles)

⁶ Source: University of Texas Library, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/angola_tribes_1970.jpg

Perhaps it could be argued that the events in certain areas were directed against ethnic minorities, and not against ethnic majorities. However, I found that many massacres were so intense that entire villages were indiscriminately razed, making the presumed ethnic diversity of such a location irrelevant. More importantly, I found that, of those reports in the dataset that mention the identity of the perpetrators and victims in this war, approximately one-half of the time the reports indicate rebel belligerents actually abused members of the same ethnic group, *their own co-ethnics*. Election observers, scholars and NGO workers in Luanda also reported on several occasions that UNITA rebels regularly terrorized those civilians under their control who had voted for them in the election. "UNITA employed its anti-civilian tactics largely against the Ovimbundu people of the central highlands, *its supposed ethnic base* (Ciment 1997, 74 emphasis mine). In this war, perpetrators on both sides committed atrocities against civilians of all ethnic affiliations (see Table 1).

It is important to note that reports usually described events with a considerable degree of detail. Most of the reports are sufficiently descriptive such that if ethnic identity constituted a key portion of one's identity it would be reasonable to assume that it would have been reported. Many journalists provided detailed descriptions of the identity of victims of an attack in the reports. However, rarely were these identifiers in ethnic or racial terms. Instead, reporters would note that nuns, schoolchildren, pedestrians, elderly, catholic workers, foreign workers, traditional authorities, and educated people had been killed, as Table 1 also shows.

| Identity of target | UNITA attacks | MPLA attacks |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Opposing ethnicity | 1 | 8 |
| Indiscriminately-same side | 10 | 2 |
| Opposite-side supporters (ethnicity unknown) | 11 | 23 |
| "Whites" targeted during colonial war | 13 | 1 |
| NGO – aid workers, UN, election monitors | 14 | 1 |
| Foreign oil/diamond workers | 10 | 7 |
| Sobas (traditional authorities) | 13 | 5 |
| Religious people (nuns, priests) | 9 | 1 |
| Educated/literate | 2 | 0 |
| Other | 4 | 2 |

Table 1: Count of known identity-based targets of an attack

Reporters throughout the period were well aware of relevant ethnic or racial dynamics on the ground. In certain limited contexts, ethnicity and race does seem to play a role in civilian targeting and reports carefully note this when it does occur. Race played an important role in the earliest periods of the war, during the colonial war of independence from Portugal, when civilians were targeted because they were white or black. Since 1974, however, most ethnic or racial explanations for killings in the reports vanished.⁷

From an analysis of the data I conclude that the dimension of ethnicity cannot be usefully leveraged here to help explain or understand the levels of abuse in Angola nor the changing levels of civilian targeting over time. And I am not alone in this analysis. Most observers of this war have commented on the relatively low salience of ethnic identity as instigator for this war.

Explaining Conflict Patterns II: War by other means

For Benjamin Valentino and his colleagues, state actors commit mass killings of civilians against rebel-side civilians in order to deprive the large rebel insurgencies their base (2004). In this view, mass killings are part of a government strategy to defeat the rebels; killings in this analysis are merely war by other means. To what extent does this argument help us explain the observed patterns in the Angolan war?

Hypothesis II: War by other means. Belligerents will target enemy-side civilians in order to deprive them of their basis of support.

I find that this hypothesis only helps us understand an extremely small subset of the violence that took place during the Angolan war (34 events throughout the entire period). Most troubling, the premise automatically assumes away the most puzzling type of observed violence: targeting same-side civilians in war. Much of the evidence I collected suggests that belligerents on both sides often killed civilians on the *same* side of the war, their own co-ethnic, long time supporters. The dynamics Valentino describes therefore do not seem to explain much of the empirical evidence collected about the Angolan war.

⁷ The other period in which ethnicity seems to matter is during the brief era following the failed elections of late 1992 in which state actors committed purges of ethnic groups based on these groups' suspected allegiance to the UNITA rebels.

Explaining Conflict Patterns III: Resources and Conflict

Most scholars in the “resource curse” tradition agree that Angola constitutes a crucial case for this hypothesis. Political scientists, journalists and historians alike often begin their description of the country with a comment about the vast disparity between Angola’s riches and the poor living conditions of a majority of its people, in addition to the seeming link between natural resource wealth and perpetual war. Diamond areas, for instance, are depicted as hotly contested arenas of violent struggle. All of the conditions are ripe for violent contention in the form of a “resource curse”: Angola’s diamond fields contain primarily high gem-quality, extremely lootable, alluvial deposits diffusely spread over a large territory (see Figure 34). However, we have not achieved consensus about whether and how resources may affect conflict patterns in general, or civil war violence in particular (e.g. see Le Billon 1999, 2000, 2000b, 2003; Lujala, Gleditsch and Gilmore 2005; Zoellner 2006; Weinstein 2007; Cilliers and Dietrich, eds. 2000). The rich evidence collected on the Angolan war thus provides a unique opportunity to test so far only *one* potential observable implication of this hypothesis: that of a spatially proximate relationship between diamonds and massacres or battles.

Hypothesis III: A resource curse? Areas proximate to diamond or oil reserves should be highly contentious areas prone to violence⁸

I find in one test of the many mechanisms that may link resources to conflict that Angola’s resource-rich areas⁹ do *not* experience an elevated risk of sustaining battles or massacres. Actually, I find evidence in support of the *opposite* conjecture. It turns out that diamond producing areas in Angola are actually *less violence-prone*, both in terms of massacres and conventional battles, even when controlling for population, than other areas of the country.

An inspection of the kernel density map in Figure 2 reveals that diamond areas are less likely to experience the outbreak of battles or massacres than other areas of the country. Darker areas depict regions of the highest density of massacres. The

⁸ This hypothesis is tested using both battle and massacre event data.

⁹ As most of Angola’s oil lies offshore, the test focuses on the diamond areas of the country.

deadliest areas of Angola are found to be in the area known as the central highlands, far away from the primary diamond-producing areas of the Northeast.

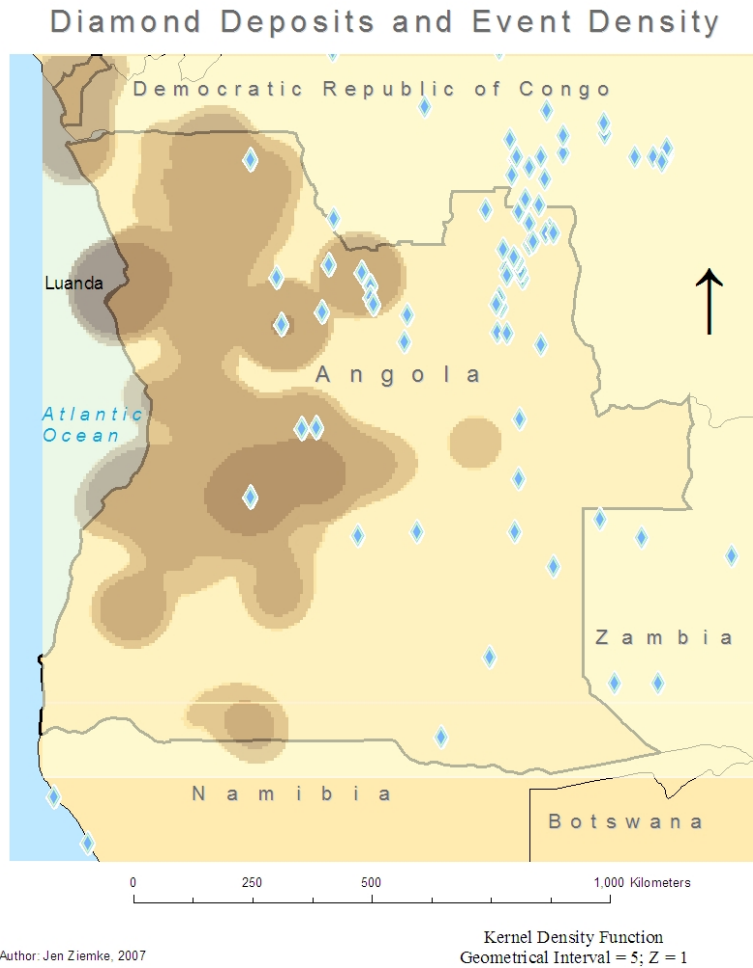
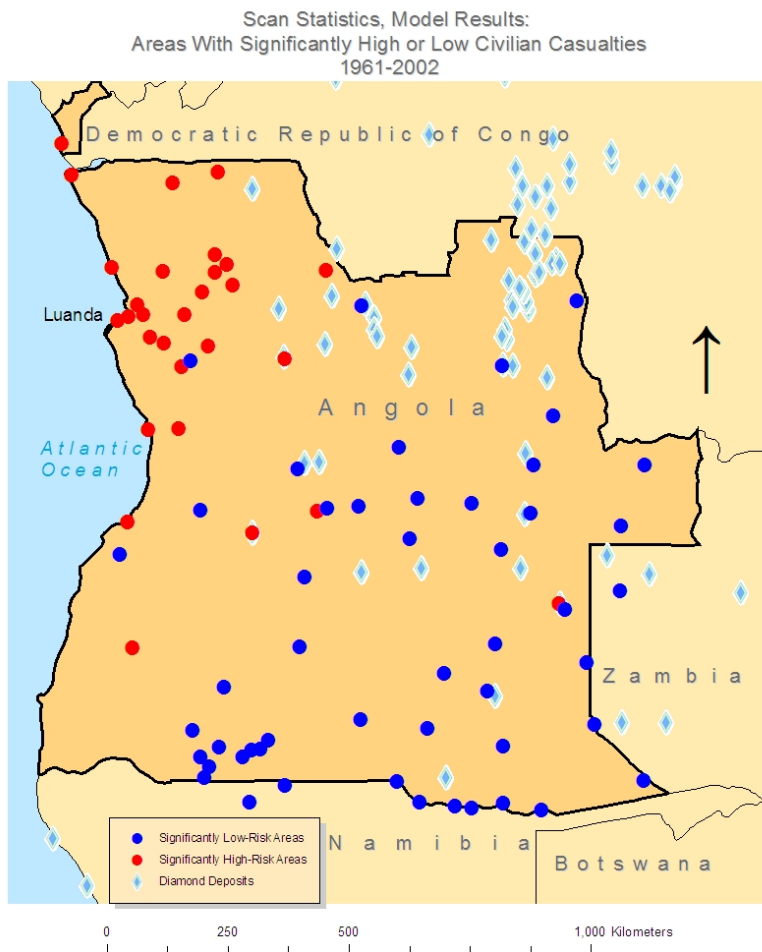


Figure 2: Kernel Density Estimation shows violent regions exist far from diamond areas.

One might argue that perhaps these results can be explained away by noting that very few people live in certain areas of the country. After all, we would expect the lack of people in a location to influence the likelihood of a violent event. I decided to use a statistical test that could incorporate the spatial distribution of the population into the analysis as a control. I used spatial scan statistics, a technique most often used in epidemiological research, in order to detect regions of exceptionally high or low spatial clustering of violent events. I found that even when controlling for population levels, Angola's diamond areas are some of the safest regions of the country, less prone than almost anywhere else in the country to experience the

onset of battles or massacres. Figure 3 shows that diamond areas are actually *less* likely to experience conflict than what would be expected under the null hypothesis of complete spatial randomness. Furthermore, all of these results are statistically significant to the $p < 0.01$ level. This map reveals the centroids of circles exhibiting especially high (red) or low (blue) risk of sustaining massacre events. In almost all instances, diamond regions see less battle or massacre events than what would be expected if the location of violent events was merely randomly distributed over space.



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SatScan Model Estimation Results

Figure 3: High- and Low-Risk areas for violence in Angola.¹⁰

¹⁰ Conceptually speaking, the scan statistic runs a circle of fluctuating diameter over the distribution of points on the map, testing in each of the nearly infinite number of locations whether the number of points inside the circular window lay significantly above or below the expected number of points under the null hypothesis of random distribution (Kulldorff 2006). Searching for elevated hot-spots or clusters, the scan statistic searches for “unexplained clustering” above and beyond what is already controlled for by the

However, despite these strong findings, it is important to note that countries like Angola indeed may still be “cursed” by their diamond wealth. As there is no evidence that resources “curse” through their geographic proximity and location alone, then what may be the causal link or mechanism connecting conflict resources with violence? The link between resources and conflict in the Angolan war is most likely an indirect one, mediated through politics, institutions, battlefield dynamics, and individuals. In the future, I plan to assess the claim temporally to see if a relationship exists between changing levels of civilian abuse and fluctuating values of oil and diamonds on the world market.¹¹

Explaining Conflict Patterns IV: Violent Habituation

What else may explain the patterns of civilian targeting in the Angolan war over time and space? Many scholars have noted that civil wars tend to become more brutal over time. Even the most conventional wars gradually destabilize societies and generate a climate of fear and insecurity among belligerents. Some argue that civil wars habituate combatants to brutality by destroying mechanisms of self-sanction and lowering the cost to violent activity, as Stephen Ellis claims was the case in the Liberian war (1999). As a war wears on, belligerents become more experienced in killing and thereby more practiced in using violence because such battles usually have high rates of accidental civilian killings or “collateral damage.” Belligerents become habituated to violence and war as banal. Conflicts may also tend to degenerate over time due to changes in the structure of military organization. The increasing fragmentation of armed groups allows individual motivations to come to the fore that may threaten army discipline. What does the evidence from Angola reveal about this hypothesis?

Hypothesis IV: Violent habituation. Ceteris paribus, level of abuse will increase as the war progresses.

model (Buhaug and Lujala 2005; 414). It then computes the likelihood that any cluster that moves into its window is a result of chance. Spatial and space-time model results remained robust to specification changes over successive model estimations.

¹¹ Or estimates of monthly revenue for each source by actor.

To test Hypothesis IV, I created a count variable, *Time*, representing the number of months elapsed since January 1960. From an analysis of Figure 4, one can easily see the trend of increased violence over time in the war.

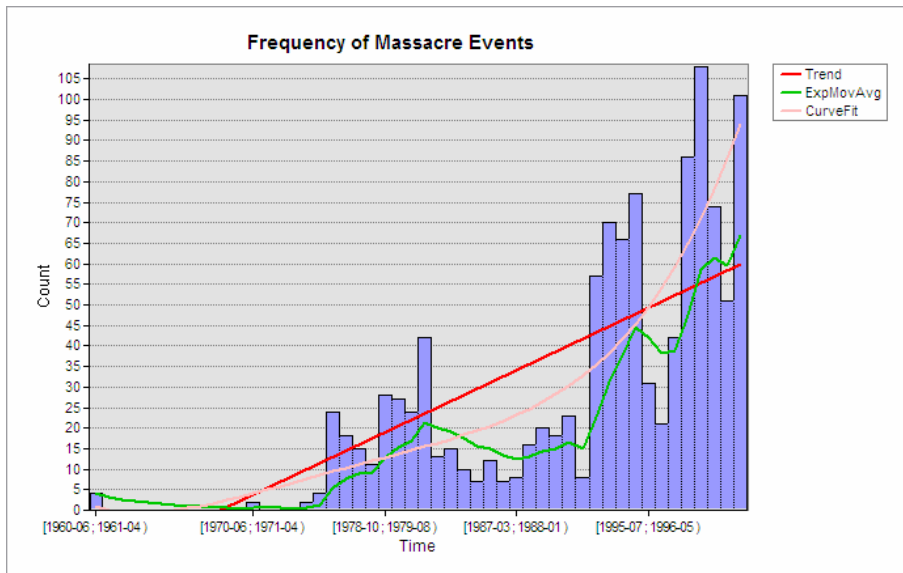


Figure 4: Frequency of Massacre Events, 1960-2002

Formal evidence in support of Hypothesis IV is presented later in Table 3. The evidence reveals a robustly positive and statistically significant coefficient on *Time*. One key feature of the Angolan conflict turns out to be this general trend toward escalating violence against civilians over time.

Certainly not all of the variation in levels of violence in the Angolan war can be explained with a simple trend of greater violence over time. What explains the other fluctuations in these series? Since Hypotheses I, II and III do not sufficiently explain the spatial and temporal patterns of abuse in the Angolan war, and Hypothesis IV only takes us part of the way toward understanding the shifting levels of abuse over time, what else could possibly explain these patterns? I argue here that Hypothesis V explains most of the variation in the levels of civilian war violence in the Angolan conflict. I now spend some length explaining the logic behind this hypothesis that turns out to be the critical finding of this project so far.

Explaining Conflict Patterns V: The Loss Hypothesis.

The hypothesis presented here has its foundation in the literature on conflict and civil war violence. In particular, Stathis Kalyvas advances a related but slightly different theory to the one hypothesized here, a theory that emphasizes *control* (2006). I contend that although Kalyvas contends that levels of civil war violence are driven by levels of *control* over areas by belligerent actors, I hypothesize that what best describes patterns of civilian abuse is *changing* control, or, more specifically, *loss*. And I posit that gains are different from losses. The sheer *level* of control does not matter as much as the direction of *change* in control that drives the violence.

Hypothesis V: Belligerents will be more likely to commit abuses when they are losing the war, indicated by territorial losses and defeat in conventional battles.

The primary finding of my dissertation research is that government and rebel-side belligerent actors alike are more likely to commit abuses against civilians in civil war when they are losing. Belligerents do *not* kill civilians because they stand in their way or because they are considered superfluous to the fighters' cause. Furthermore, fighters do *not* harm civilians because civilians obstruct access to diamond mines or other lootable resources. Rather, combatants opt to take such extreme measures as massacring noncombatants as a last ditch move meant to force losing-side supporters to stay in their camp. Ironically, it is precisely because civilians are so essential to a military campaign that belligerents sometimes elect to abuse them. *Combatants massacre civilians in the context of loss in order to instill fear sufficient to prevent mass civilian defection.*

Evidence from the literature on conflict supports the assumption that civilians will defect to join the winning side if they calculate that switching will increase their odds of survival. Defection could mean providing support or information to the winning side, joining the army of the winning side, moving into the home territory of the winning side, or simply neglecting to provide essential services to the losing side. In Angola, evidence suggests that most civilians indeed were able to defect; many acted as "fence-sitters." They "danced to the tune of whatever drummer" they felt would increase their likelihood of survival in that moment: "Angolans ... stolidly sing

political propaganda songs for visiting strangers. *The nature of the song depends on who is holding the gun.*"¹² Belligerents in this war effectively forced civilians to "support" them, and civilians made outward attempts at compliance to both armies in order to stay alive. The only indication of one's allegiance was simply geographic location. Where you lived determined what "side" you belonged to (Brinkman 2003(a); 217).

Indeed, civilians around the world often engage in such hedging in order to protect themselves from perpetrators. For example, in the wars in Mozambique, El Salvador, Vietnam, and Colombia, civilians frequently collaborated with both armies in an attempt to avoid harm (Kalyvas 2006; 328). From our knowledge of trends in war the world over, it seems safe to assume that in many conflicts civilians will act in ways that increase their odds of survival.

I hypothesize that when actors' fortunes change on the battlefield and they begin to lose, in their retreat they will be more likely to engage in deliberate civilian mass killings than before. The losers may even target long-time supporters, friends, and members of their own ethnic group. Because combatants see would-be traitors wherever they look in the context of loss, they deliberately hone the violence to appear irrational and harsh in order to instill greater fear of defection and thereby increase the likelihood of its effectiveness. In the wake of widespread territorial and battlefield losses, movements suffer legitimacy problems and can no longer take for granted their civilian support. Losers elect to use force and fear as poor substitutes for legitimacy. As such, abusive behavior marks a loser's strategy, a long-run suboptimal strategy of last resort.

But why would combatants target long-time civilian supporters in a context of loss? Stathis Kalyvas suggests that combatants are *persistently* unable to distinguish between those civilians who are enemies and those who are supporters (2006). However, I contend that belligerents do not always face the so-called "identification problem," at least not nearly to the same extent. Most of the time, I argue belligerents *are able* to successfully distinguish between supporters and traitors or

¹² Title: Fighting brings hunger to a land of Plenty, by Victor Mallet. Financial Times, Britain: June 29, 1988. Emphasis mine.

enemies. Indeed, I argue that status-quo successful identification is what explains the observed low levels of same-side civilian targeting recurrent during certain periods of every war.

I contend, therefore, that the majority of same-side targeting is driven by the special *context of loss* insofar as it confuses belligerents and renders them unable to distinguish effectively between friends and foes. Soldiers are confused about who to target both because of the heightened level of generalized uncertainty and confusion that comes from the context of loss as well as the heightened and critical imperative to prevent further civilian defection. When combatants lose they can no longer tolerate any uncertainty related to identifying friends and foes. Defining “the enemy” necessarily expands to include even those who had been considered stalwart friends. During times of loss, the number of civilians considered potential enemies, traitors, or defectors increases rapidly because the cost of being wrong escalates drastically. And because sustained territorial and battlefield losses increase the odds that civilian allies may defect to join the winning side, the losing perpetrators end up killing civilians of all persuasions, even those allies who had always been considered longtime supporters, in order to scare them and prevent the defection of the rest of the group. In periods of extreme loss, civilian targeting may even become a matter of survival. In short, the crucial problem of target identification should not be seen as a static phenomenon: rather, loss severely exacerbates this problem.

If this hypothesis holds, we would expect territorial losses in the previous month to increase the level of abuse (number of massacres and number of civilian deaths, or intensity) in the next month. In order to test this hypothesis, I aggregated the 9216 raw ACLED events into count data in a number of different ways in order to create a variety of relevant dependent variables for *Abuse* or civilian targeting. *What is important to note is that the basic statistical results hold no matter what operationalization of the dependent variable is used.*

One might consider *Abuse* as a function of the number of massacre events or the number of civilian casualties in a month. *RebelMassacre* and *GovtMassacre* refer to the total number of massacre events rebel and government actors committed in each month. *RebelCasualties* and *GovtCasualties* refer the sum of all rebel- or

government-perpetrated casualties committed in a month. In addition, one may also imagine *Abuse* as some relevant combination of both the number of events and the number of casualties.¹³ Table 2 reports summary statistics on the raw *count* variables used in the zero-inflated negative binomial models.

| Variable | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Min | Max | Zero Observations |
|------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-----|------|-------------------|
| <i>RebelMassacre</i> | 327 | 2.61 | 4.28 | 0 | 45 | 98, 30% |
| <i>GovtMassacre</i> | 327 | 0.73 | 2.88 | 0 | 29 | 253, 77.4% |
| <i>RebelCasualties</i> | 327 | 62.35 | 171.03 | 0 | 1610 | 127, 38.8% |
| <i>GovtCasualties</i> | 327 | 35.34 | 315.87 | 0 | 5226 | 276, 84% |

Table 2: Summary Statistics

I first tested the hypothesis that losing leads to civilian abuses with an error correction model.¹⁴ I selected the so-called Engle-Granger two-step method in part because it leads to unbiased and consistent parameter estimates for large samples.¹⁵ Under multiple specifications we can always confidently reject the null hypothesis of a unit root using the Augmented Dickey Fuller test of model residuals.¹⁶ The disequilibrium errors were thus found to be stationary over time, essential for the method to proceed. Adopting an error correction approach to model estimation also affords one the ability to measure directly the short-run effect of *Loss* on *Abuse*

¹³ I also created dependent variables for the relative intensity of atrocities committed in the period. *GovtIntensity* and *RebelIntensity* combine both event intensity and event count to reach a score for every month. Each Intensity variable represents the sum of twice the number of massacre events per month (*RebelMassacre* and *GovtMassacre*) and casualties (*Rebel Casualties* and *GovtCasualties*), because of the drastic underestimation of the deadliness of each individual event in the dataset with respect to casualties. This transformation has the effect of assigning every unknown massacre event two casualties, rather than one. Assigning one or two casualties to a massacre event with an unknown number of casualties is almost always a drastic underestimation of the severity of the event.

¹⁴ The Engle-Granger approach to error correction proceeds in two steps. In the first step, one evaluates the relationship between y_t and x_t using an Ordinary Least Squares regression approach. In the second step, we apply the lagged value of the model residuals obtained from the first regression model (the correction rate) to the second model, reported here and in Table 7:
 $RebelIntensity = constant + \beta_1(rebel_loss) + \beta_2(correction\ rate)$

¹⁵ Luke Keele and Suzanna De Boef suggest that this approach can be used in cases where all series are considered stationary, as is the case with these data (2005).

¹⁶ This means that all series, including the model residuals, are stationary processes, due to the adequate number of months with no massacre events.

separate from any long-run effects.¹⁷ Table 4 reveals that for the rebels, 19 percent of the equilibrium relationship is restored in the first period after the contemporaneous one, a fairly slow rate of correction.

For insurgent and incumbent perpetrators alike, the available evidence supports the hypothesis that losing in one period significantly and substantively increases the likelihood of abuse or mass killing in the next. In addition, the odds these results are a product of pure chance are less than 1 percent. In short, strong empirical evidence substantiates Hypothesis V. And this result is not sensitive to changes in the operationalization of the dependent variable on *Abuse*, nor is it restricted to either government or rebel side actors. I should also note that the positive and statistically significant relationship between *Loss* and *Abuse* holds whether one is using the two step error correction method as shown here or the one-step method, for both rebel and government side actors. Furthermore, model estimates of the reverse hypothesis: that of *winning* on abuse reveal estimates for winning that are unstable, not robust and *statistically insignificant* ($p > 0.39$, see Table 3).¹⁸

17 This model thus assumes that a long run “equilibrium” relationship exists between the independent and dependent variables. Any shock or change in loss in one period cannot always be fully and immediately reflected in a contemporaneous change in levels of abuse. Often it will take a certain number of periods in the future before the equilibrium relationship is restored and the effects of Loss on Abuse are completely absorbed into the system. The rate at which the relationship restores itself to the long-run equilibrium is called the “correction” effect. The lagged values of the first model’s residuals represent the disequilibrium error in the current model. The coefficient on the correction rate is referred to as the adjustment parameter.

18

| | Govt Intensity | P>t |
|--|----------------|--------|
| Govt WIN | 4.13 | 0.39 |
| Total Events | 3.71*** | 0.00 |
| The Correction Rate: Lag Model residuals | -0.008 | 0.88 |
| Constant | -52.57*** | 0.006 |
| N | | 326 |
| R-squared | | 0.2 |
| F test | 26.89 | 0.0000 |

* = $p < 0.1$ ** = $p < 0.05$ *** = $p < 0.01$

Table 3: WINNING does NOT make massacre events more likely.

| Dependent Variable: | REBEL massacre Events | REBEL committed Casualties | REBEL Intensity | GOVT massacre Events | GOVT committed Casualties | GOVT Intensity |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Loss (Count) | 0.2*** (0.06) | 5.95** (2.6) | 9.34*** (2.45) | 0.2*** (0.06) | 44.29*** (5.83) | 27.79*** (6.25) |
| Time | | 0.25** (0.1) | | 0.003 (0.002) | | |
| Correction: Lagged Residuals | 0.16*** (0.06) | 0.18*** (0.06) | 0.19*** (0.05) | 0.09 (0.06) | -0.03 (0.06) | -0.03 (0.06) |
| TotalKills or TotalEvents (K/E) | | 0.014** (0.007) K | | 0.023*** (0.005) E | | 2.96*** (0.48) E |
| Constant | 2.28*** (0.25) | -38.4 (34.36) | 51.46*** (10.26) | -1.04 (0.55) | -17.26 (17.57) | -61.77*** (18.38) |
| N | 326 | 326 | 326 | 326 | 326 | 326 |
| R-squared | 0.07 | 0.11 | 0.09 | 0.21 | 0.16 | 0.25 |
| F test | 12.43 | 9.61 | 15.13 | 20.81 | 29.84 | 35.14 |
| Prob > F | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

* = $p < 0.1$ ** = $p < 0.05$ *** = $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Error correction model

The substantive interpretation of the highlighted portion in Table 4 indicates that for the rebels, for every increase in the number of losses experienced in a month, we expect an increase in "intensity" and mass killing by a factor of 9.3. In months with a single loss, rebels will either likely kill nine-fold more people than they would in a

month without losses, or they will produce 4.5 more massacre events than they would in months without losses.

Despite the many attractive features of the Error Correction Model, the fact that these data have been aggregated from events to event *counts* introduces a number of potential complications into the Ordinary Least Squares regression framework (see Brandt et. al 2000). Count data are distributed in a way that violates a number of assumptions normally made for model estimation to proceed. In addition, the inflated rate of zeros in the study (months without massacre events or civilian casualties), further complicates estimation. To cope with these issues, I re-estimated the effect of *Loss* on *Abuse* using a model that can handle the peculiarities of zero-inflated count data, the Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial (ZINB) model (see Table 5).¹⁹

The results of the formal treatment of Hypotheses IV and V reveal that both losses and length of the war increase the likelihood of civilian abuse, *ceteris paribus*, and this applies to both rebel and government actors. In all models, parameter estimates for *Loss* and *Time* for both rebel- and government-side actors remained both positive and statistically significant.

Hypothesis V, that losing battles increases the likelihood abuse, is the hypothesis most supported by the empirical evidence, and this is true for both rebel and government actors.

¹⁹ ZINB can account for both the over-dispersion present in the data as well as the excess “zeros.” The Vuong model selection statistic indicated for most models that ZINB would be the preferred model over Zero-Inflated Poisson (ZIP) or other alternatives for each model. In these cases, ZINB is preferred to ZIP because the variance of the dependent variable is larger than the mean (see Table 5). I estimated most of the models using ZIP because the Vuong test indicated this would be a better fit given the structure of the data.

| Dependent Variable: N=327 | REBEL massacre Events | REBEL ²⁰ committed Casualties | REBEL ²¹ Intensity | GOVT massacre Events | GOVT committed Casualties | GOVT Intensity |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Loss (Count) | 0.042** (0.02) | 0.064*** (0.001) | 0.071*** (0.001) | 0.136*** (0.04) | 0.215 ²² *** (0.08) | 0.235*** (0.07) |
| Time | 0.004*** (0.001) | 0.003*** (0.0001) | 0.003*** (0.0001) | 0.011*** (0.002) | 0.013*** (0.003) | 0.013*** (0.002) |
| Constant | -0.39 (0.24) | 3.412*** (0.03) | 3.24*** (0.03) | -4.87*** (0.93) | -2.08** (1.47) | -2.4*** (1.01) |
| INFLATION MODEL (logit) | | | | | | |
| Total Events | -1.3*** (0.41) | -0.01** (0.004) | -0.02*** (0.006) | -0.47 (0.52) | -0.41*** (0.12) | -0.3*** (-0.09) |
| Constant | 2.18*** | -1.13*** | -0.56*** | 2.07 | 4.31*** | 2.37*** |
| Zero Obs | 98 | 127 | 95 | 253 | 276 | 251 |
| LR chi2 | 48.12 | 4774.17 | 6051.91 | 47.96 | 19.35 | 36.97 |
| Prob > chi2 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.0001 | 0.000 |
| Vuong Statistic | z=4.01 Pr>z=0.00 | z=4.62 Pr>z=0.000 | z=3.79 Pr>z=0.0001 | z=2.35 Pr>z=0.01 | z=3.11 Pr>z=0.009 | z=2.56 Pr>z=0.005 |

Table 5: Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial Model

20 Vuong tests of these parameters with zinb suggest Zero Inflated Poisson (ZIP) model is a better fit, ZIP is reported here.

21 Estimated using a Zero-Inflated Poisson model.

22 Interpreting the substantive significance of the numbers, the 0.215 parameter estimate in Table 4 for suggests that, among months with massacres, loss of one more territory by the government side makes the predicted number of massacre events rise to $e^{.215} = 1.24$ events. Ceteris paribus, loss increases the likelihood of civilian abuse by 124 percent. Abuse is 1.24 times higher in a month with losses than in a month without losses. Furthermore, the probability that the observed positive association between these variables is a product of chance alone is less than 1 percent.

Despite the fact that a strong and statistically significant relationship between *Loss* and *Abuse* has been established for both government and rebel actors, this does not mean the *direction* of the “causal” relationship has been determined. That is, perhaps *y* is predicting *x* rather than *x* predicting *y*. Perhaps abusing civilians leads to the loss of territory and battlefield losses, rather than the direction of the hypothesis as proposed here. Has the cart been placed before the horse?

Clive Granger won the Nobel Prize in 2002 for his work on the development of a test for directional causality. The so-called Granger Representation Theorem also allows one to consider whether both variables might simultaneously “cause” one another in an endogenous feedback loop of some kind. Using the following tests, I was surprised to find that governments and rebels faced divergent consequences to their participation in civilian killings. These findings were also extremely robust to changes in the way the variables were operationalized, as Tables 6 and 7 show.

For *rebel* actors, evidence supports the hypothesis that *Loss* granger causes *Abuse*, in the sense that current values of *Loss* predict future occurrences of *Abuse*. Critically, however, *Abuses* do NOT granger-cause *Loss*, as the hypothesis and argument predicts (Table 6). Thus, no causal loop is in effect for rebel actors and the direction of causation conforms to the hypothesis outlined above. However, I was surprised to discover that this result does *not* hold for government actors. The first step is as predicted: *Losses* granger cause *Abuse*. However, government actors are caught in an endogenous feedback loop, such that continued civilian abuses lead to further losses on the battlefield (Table 7). Committing abuses against civilians in the Angolan war turns out to be a counterproductive strategy for incumbents as it has the effect of raising the probability of continued losses on the battlefield. How might these results be interpreted?

SELECTED GRANGER CAUSALITY WALD TESTS FOR **REBEL** ACTORS

| X | Y | Loss → | | | Abuse→ | | |
|---------------|------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------|
| | | Abuse? | Chi2 | P | Loss? | Chi2 | P |
| Loss (Count) | Massacres | Yes | 20.23 | 0.009 | No | 11.40 | 0.18 |
| Loss, lagged | Massacres | Yes | 24.70 | 0.006 | No | 15.70 | 0.11 |
| Loss, lagged | Casualties | Yes | 15.61 | 0.008 | No | 5.38 | 0.37 |
| Loss, lagged | Intensity | Yes | 12.78 | 0.002 | No | 4.09 | 0.12 |
| Loss, lag&Log | Intensity | Yes | 16.14 | 0.006 | No | 3.29 | 0.66 |

Table 6: Granger Causality test for Rebel actors

SELECTED GRANGER CAUSALITY WALD TESTS FOR **GOVERNMENT** ACTORS

| X | Y | Loss → | | | Abuse→ | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| | | Abuse? | Chi2 | P | Loss? | Chi2 | P |
| Loss | Massacres | Yes | 18.24 | 0.02 | Yes | 68.64 | <0.01 |
| Loss,Lag&Log | Casualties | Yes | 24.40 | 0.03 | Yes | 41.17 | <0.01 |
| Loss,Lag&Log | Log Intensity | Yes | 30.52 | 0.004 | Yes | 40.89 | <0.01 |
| Loss,Lagged | Intensity | Yes | 39.67 | <0.001 | Yes | 156.9 | <0.01 |

Table 7: Granger Causality test for Government actors

During the Angolan war, it was much less costly for *rebel-side* actors to commit abuses against civilians than for state actors, because such activity went *unpunished* insofar as it did not contribute to continued rebel losses. Negative consequences seemed to be reserved for the government, caught in a feedback loop. These differences might help explain why government actors participated in far fewer

massacre events than their rebel counterparts as Table 8 reveals.²³ Perhaps impunity enabled rebels in Angola to commit the lions' share of mass abuse against civilians.

| | Massacre Events | As Percent of Total |
|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Rebel | 856 | 78 |
| Government | 240 | 22 |

Table 8: Rebel armies commit many more massacres than the state.

Future research might help further unpack why the strategic context surrounding the choice for civilian targeting is different for governments and rebels in civil war.

It may now be useful to step back from the data analysis and return to the historical record. Does what we have learned from the data analysis actually seem to help explain the trends and trajectory of this war in a meaningful way? I now turn to a basic history of the Angolan war and then turn to a detailed examination of the most intense period of violence: when UNITA began to drastically lose the war.

Angola's three nationalist movements, the MPLA (Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola), UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), and the FNLA (Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola) began to fight for power and control even before Angola secured its independence from Portugal in 1975. The MPLA quickly seized control of the capital and put itself in power shortly after independence. The Organization of African Unity soon recognized it as the legitimate voice of the Angolan people. It has been in power ever since. The MPLA's early successes emanated from the massive intervention of around 55,000 Cuban troops and Soviet advisors fighting on the side of the MPLA government (Henderson 1979; 257).

²³ Kristine Eck and Lisa Hultman, in their new cross-national dataset of "one-sided" deaths, also found that rebels killed far more civilians in civil war (nearly 600 percent more) than their government counterparts (2007). They suggest that the reason rebels engage in civilian targeting has to do with their peculiar reliance on civilians for support: "they are forced to use intimidation and violence to ensure compliance and assistance" (2007; 241).

Jonas Savimbi, the founder of UNITA, eventually settled on certain anti-urban, anti-coastal rhetoric to build appeal for his movement, which he officially founded in March of 1966. He characterized UNITA as representative of the majority Ovimbundu population, left out of the mestiço or Mbundu-oriented MPLA (see Bridgland 1986). For much of the war, Savimbi controlled the rural and remote areas of the southeast, the central highlands, and the diamond areas of the northeast (see Burke 1984). Savimbi ended up collaborating with both the Portuguese colonial regime and white South African apartheid-era leaders, showing the depths to which he would sink to gain supplies, weapons, and military assistance for himself. A darling of the United States after the rapid collapse of the FNLA, "Dr." Savimbi would continue fighting for power through numerous peace treaties, an election in which he lost, and through a rapidly growing population disillusioned with his rule until the international community turned against him and his body became riddled with bullets as he tried to cross the banks of the Lomba River in Eastern Moxico Province, in February of 2002.

Regional power politics and Cold War tensions alike directly affected this complex war (Marcum 1987). The list of external actors holding a stake in Angola's conflict extends beyond the US, the Soviet Union, South Africa, Zaire, Namibia, and Cuba. Regional actors like Mobutu in Zaire and Sam Nujoma's Namibia increased in importance as the war progressed. When one factors in the role of the diamond trade and arms transshipment points through Togo, Zambia, Antwerp and the like, one finds that states, government actors and individual racketeers from around the world all had a stake in the politics of the Angolan war.

One might have expected that the de-internationalization of the conflict in the early 1990s would have led to its resolution, as the international press largely depicted the war at that time as almost solely driven by Cold War logic and power proxies. But the war didn't just continue - it got much, much worse. The failure of the 1992 elections set the stage for rising conventional battles which in turn contributed to escalating civil war violence, particularly once UNITA began to lose its heartland to the government.

The fighting that follows the failed election is utterly unspeakable. Remember, these battles set in motion a chain of events that led to escalated civilian abuses and mass killings. We begin with the numbers: *during the deadly two years from 1992 to 1994, more people died than in the previous twenty years combined*" (Ciment 1997). In just two weeks, UNITA captured 57 of 164 municipalities, from as far afield as Benguela in the South to Uige in the North and many places in between. Eyewitnesses to the violence who lost friends and family members during this time to battle violence felt betrayed by Savimbi. One man who had relatives executed by Savimbi said: "This was not why I voted for Savimbi" (Arms Trade and Violations of the Laws of War 1994; 91-92). Everyone expressed extreme disillusionment, betrayal and utter devastation about the voting process. Another man said: "look, see my voting card. I will never vote again in my life." (ibid. 64).

After its return to war, UNITA could no longer be seen as a legitimate social actor, but a social pariah. Even the United States, its long-time supporter, abandoned the movement after it unabashedly violated the rules of conduct in both war and peacetime. Because the apartheid regime in South Africa fell apart and President Clinton in America moved to recognize the government in Luanda, UNITA became increasingly dependent on diamond revenues for funding. After UNITA seized much of the diamond areas in the Lunda Provinces, it used its 500 million dollar annual revenue in the sale of gems to purchase weapons.

Justifications for fighting during this period wore thin as decades old ideological or political arguments gave way to evidence that raw power struggles alone explained the war's continuation. Many began to feel that the fighting devolved into a useless, endless and hopeless situation, and poems and songs grew up expressing this sentiment:

DYING FOR NOTHING
Shouts were the silences born
Of the trees solemn motionless
Witnesses to the swift gestures of death
Selecting men in the street.
Fear was the courage of dying for nothing.
--Fernando Marcelino²⁴

²⁴ Mendez, Pedro Rosa. *Bay of Tigers: An African Odyssey*. Translated from Portuguese by Clifford Landers. Harcourt, Orlando: 2003, p. 239.

UNITA losses

During the mid-1990s, Unita experienced a massive reversal in battlefield fortunes. The loss of Savimbi's legitimacy on the national and international arena following his disregard for the results of the 1992 elections meant the beginning of the end for UNITA. Both the end of the Cold War era and the demise of apartheid in South Africa contributed to its loss of finance, equipment, and military alliances. It took a long time, but eventually the international community had enough with Savimbi and his broken promises. First, the United Nations adopted new sanctions against UNITA in late August, on its diamonds. The UNSC passed resolutions 1173 and 1176 prohibiting the sale of unofficial diamonds. The Kimberley process imposed to stop blood diamonds from entering the world market eventually weakened Savimbi's primary source of revenue, which fell from approximately 600 million dollars in 1997 to 250 million dollars in 1998 and finally to 100 million dollars by the year 2000 (Dietrich 2000; 284).

By August 1999, Dos Santos announced that he would no longer negotiate with Savimbi at the peace table²⁵ and the international community by their silence tacitly agreed that the quickest route to peace in Angola would be a military victory. The government in relatively short order recovered several territories held by UNITA for years. At this time, even Savimbi's son said that the only route to peace would be the physical elimination of his father.²⁶ The national army began to push the starving and losing rebel army to the remotest eastern and southern edges of the country. The final death knell came when the Namibian army agreed to cooperate with government troops to help route UNITA in southern border areas.

It is important to keep in mind when reading the next few sections that the heightened level of massacres and civilian abuses comes in the context of massive UNITA losses on the battlefield. This is just the starkest empirical example of how losses on the battlefield might lead to changing patterns of civilian abuse.

One way in which the violence changed was by the intentionality with which actors struck their targets. I found a drastic increase in the number of reports in this period

²⁵ African Recorder/Chronicle, New Delhi: Aug 17, 1998.

²⁶ African Recorder/Chronicle, New Delhi: Nov 1, 1999.

mentioning that women, old men, nuns, and children were deliberately targeted by the group. Next, Unita took responsibility and pride in these abuses, in contrast to earlier periods where they had apologized for abuse as collateral damage or denied it altogether. Before, actors apologized for killing civilians, referring to them as “collateral damage”. However, by the end of the war, UNITA took responsibility for attacking humanitarian assistance planes, civilian buses and trains, and for shooting civilians trying to flee the carnage. Instead of apologizing for these events, UNITA usually rushed to take credit for them.

The violence committed during this period qualitatively evolved into a form of theatrics characterized by heightened brutality. Torture, the sexual mutilation of victims and the dead, and rape became status quo. For example, Inge Brinkman interviewed hundreds of refugees during the late 1990s and found that many remarked on the fact that combatants participated in increasingly horrifying and ritualized forms of torture. The nature of the violence itself was changing, according to these refugees. No longer did killing seem to be the primary goal, but the painful forms of violence became goals unto themselves, characterized by rituals of impalement, sexual mutilation, and other horrific acts. In earlier times, the interviewees said, “people used to matter,” but in recent times civilians were forced to sing, laugh and dance while family members were murdered (Brinkman 2000; 15).

UNITA added unusually gruesome tactics to its repertoire, including death by crucifixion, public witch-burnings, abduction of civilians for slavery and forced portering and labor, stealing or “taxing” food, the use of human shields in combat; the mutilation of the dead and other forms of unusual torture and wanton brutality (Arms Trade and Violations of the Laws of War 1994; 4, 108; Angola Unravels 1999; 3). Civilian trains were attacked and people who survived the initial assault were shot trying to flee the explosions. UNITA also attacked World Food Program trucks and planes to stop much needed emergency food aid from reaching starving millions. Such horrors became regular features in artistic representations of the war (see Figure 22). The changing characteristics of the war even came to be reflected in street art and in the music and popular culture of the day.



Figure 22: A wall mural outside a military hospital in Luanda²⁷

Another feature of this era included heightened sexualized violence. One displaced woman from Bié province remarked: “before, the FAA did not used to rape women. They have started with this war [post December 1998]. Single or married women, it doesn’t matter. They break into houses, tell the men to leave, threatening them at gunpoint and then they rape the woman.”²⁸ As if that weren’t enough, the rituals of torture and sexual assault took on ever perverse dimensions. Often husbands would be forced to watch as their wives were gang raped, while perpetrators forced others to have incestuous sex. Other tactics militants used included sexual mutilation, such as amputating breasts or penises, ritual impalement, “blocking” or otherwise rendering someone infertile (Brinkman 2000; 12-14). These patterned killings involving sexual or reproductive assault indicate that extermination became a goal of the perpetrating actors. Torture became a form of theatrics.

Finally, the sheer volume of massacre events placed Angola for the first time on the Genocide Watch List by the State Failure Task force. Violence began to take on catastrophic proportions. Inge Brinkman concluded from her interviews that the UNITA leader saw all civilians as enemies. Savimbi had expanded his set of potential traitors to include almost anyone. A report by the UN in January 1999 said Angola was on the verge of catastrophic breakdown, leaving hundreds of thousands of civilians on the run from towns and villages under attack. Terrified civilians crowded

27 USAID. www.usaid.gov/.../angola/thumbs/ang2.jpg

28 “Angola: Behind the Façade of ‘Normalization’: Manipulation, violence and abandoned populations,” A report by MSF-USA, Luanda: 9 November 2000, p. 10.

into urban centers with tales of atrocities committed by rampaging UNITA forces as UN peacekeepers withdrew from exposed areas.²⁹ The situation had reached a state of crisis accumulation such that the capacity of people to cope was stretched beyond the limit. Many literally felt that they were standing “on the edge of an abyss.”³⁰ And all of these atrocities happened in the wake of UNITA’s crushing territorial defeat.

After assassins killed Savimbi, the war came virtually to a complete halt. Emaciated and starving from the government’s policies to starve the rebels into submission, Savimbi’s remaining surviving advisers came out of the bush as if waving white flags. They were left no alternatives: stop fighting or face certain death and defeat. On April 4, 2002 both sides signed the Luena Memorandum of Understanding; officially ending fighting that began in 1961.

Conclusion

What have we learned from a disaggregated, event-based study of the dynamics of violence against civilians in the Angolan war? To summarize the empirical findings of this dissertation: resource wealth, ethnicity, and “war by other means” do not adequately explain the observed patterns of civilian abuse in the Angolan civil war. However, losses on the battlefield escalate patterns of violence against civilians. Belligerent actors do not always abuse civilians; rather they participate in these behaviors in relatively predictable ways: when they are losing and as the war progresses. Furthermore, this result holds for both rebel and government actors across a variety of different models, including restricted analyses, and under different specifications of the dependent variable. In short, a theory of loss best explains the variation in levels of civilian abuse across time in the Angolan war than any other explanation.

Both the feedback loop the government experiences in the Angolan war, in which it is punished by any violence it commits against civilians with further losses and the battlefield, as well as the eventual military demise of UNITA as an organization, in

²⁹ Africa Research Bulletin, January 1999.

³⁰ “Report: Angola, a tangled web: Many players in a complex War,” Worldvision, UK: July 2000.

which UNITA never did get its chance to take over at the helm of the state, remind me of Hannah Arendt's famous quote:

Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course its end is the disappearance of power.³¹

All of the horror and violence committed in this war turned out not to be a successful long run strategy for either side but only served to wreak havoc on the population. For both rebel and government side perpetrators, committing massacres against civilians turned out to be tantamount to shooting oneself in the foot. UNITA ultimately lost the war and the MPLA was punished with losses on the battlefield every time it committed an abuse.

Yet, at the moment of decision making, killing civilians is sometimes the best short-run choice for losing actors. The decision to kill civilians is therefore a rational one given the immediate strategic context of the game, even though continued abuses lead to outcomes that even the belligerents themselves do not desire.

Perhaps the paradox of outcomes and incentives can explain why so many casual observers of civil conflict, rightfully puzzled by these horrors, would tend to reduce the logic of such violence against civilians in civil war to insanity, irrationality, or madness. However, just because the outcome of a strategic game is sub-Pareto optimal does not mean the decision makers acted irrationally. The classic prisoner's dilemma model shows how actors can be caught in the tragic structure of such a strategic game, in which both parties are trapped in a sub-optimal equilibrium because of the disjunction between present choices and future consequences. We must always remember that the outcomes of strategic games and of wars are separate from the immediate contextual incentives that actors and belligerents face when they make their day-to-day decisions.

This research may have limited policy implications. From the perspective of the belligerents, violence may only be effective, even in the near term, if it sends the

³¹ Arendt, Hanna. *On Violence*. Harcourt Brace, San Diego: 1970, p. 56.

appropriate signal (fear) to its victims. If belligerents surmised that civilian targeting would be interpreted as signs of weakness, failure, or desperation, then perhaps they would refrain from abusing civilians. Furthermore, *widespread* civilian abuses may signal imminent failure of an organization and conflict endgame. Mass killings may be the “writing on the wall” signaling the military defeat of the perpetrator and the end of war. However, more research needs to be done to verify whether this casual observation based on the Angolan war can be usefully extended to other cases. In particular, perhaps the theory of loss works best within certain contexts, such as in the shadow of failed elections, or during certain historical periods.³²

I believe that one critical step toward the pursuit of understanding and mitigating conflict in the world today is through the detailed empirical exploration of what happens in a variety of different wars and around the world. I am confident that recent single-country analyses of violence in the discipline already greatly improve our collective understanding of what actually happens during a war. Much can be learned about the dynamics of all types of conflict by thoroughly examining the micro-level attributes using comprehensive, disaggregated data. However, we must work together even more if we are to have a chance to move forward our collective understanding of the human tragedy called war. It is a goal worth fighting for, and whose end would certainly be worth all of our careers:

My hope is that scientists will reject ... fatalism and help us see warfare as a complex but solvable problem, like AIDS or global warming... In the last century, scientists split the atom, cracked the genetic code, landed spacecraft on the moon and Mars. I have faith ... that scientists could help solve the problem of war. The only question is how, and how soon. Now that would be an ending worth celebrating.

-- John Horgan³³

So, let's raise a toast to a goal and a dream: in one hundred years, scholars no longer find it necessary to write on the rather antiquated subject of war. The first step is already complete. It has been imagined.

³² It is useful to remember that in all civil wars certain parties face periods of loss, but these periods do not always correspond with rising patterns of civilian abuse. More needs to be done unpacking the broader conditions that may help explain the observed patterns in the Angolan war.

³³ Horgan, John. “The Final Frontier,” *Discover Magazine*: October 2006.

Epilogue

Keeping Quiet

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.
This one time upon the earth,
let's not speak any language,
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be a delicious moment,
without hurry, without locomotives,
all of us would be together
in a sudden uneasiness.

The fishermen in the cold sea
would do no harm to the whales
and the peasant gathering salt
would look at his torn hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars of gas, wars of fire,
victories without survivors,
would put on clean clothing
and would walk alongside their brothers
in the shade, without doing a thing...

If we weren't unanimous
about keeping our lives so much in motion,
if we could do nothing for once,
perhaps a great silence would
interrupt this sadness,
this never understanding ourselves
and threatening ourselves with death,
perhaps the earth is teaching us
when everything seems to be dead
and then everything is alive.

Now I will count to twelve
and you keep quiet and I'll go.

-Pablo Neruda

All activity is masquerade; shameful covering
Of our persistent
Fear of being

-J. Ziemke

Too Many Names

Mondays are meshed with Tuesdays
and the week with the whole year.
Time cannot be cut
with your weary scissors,
and all the names of the day
are washed out by the waters of night.

No one can claim the name of Pedro,
nobody is Rosa or Maria,
all of us are dust or sand,
all of us are rain under rain.
They have spoken to me of Venezuelas,
of Chiles and of Paraguays;
I have no idea what they are saying.
I know only the skin of the earth
and I know it is without a name.

When I lived amongst the roots
they pleased me more than flowers did,
and when I spoke to a stone
it rang like a bell.

It is so long, the spring
which goes on all winter.
Time lost its shoes.
A year is four centuries.

When I sleep every night,
what am I called or not called?
And when I wake, who am I
if I was not while I slept?

This means to say that scarcely
have we landed into life
than we come as if new-born;
let us not fill our mouths
with so many faltering names,
with so many sad formalities,
with so many pompous letters,
with so much of yours and mine,
with so much of signing of papers.

I have a mind to confuse things,
unite them, bring them to birth,
mix them up, undress them,
until the light of the world
has the oneness of the ocean,
a generous, vast wholeness,
a crepitant fragrance.

-Pablo Neruda

Appendix A: Alphabetical List of Sources

| | |
|---|---|
| 24 Horas | Comunicado de Guerra, UNITA |
| A Capital | Cronologia dos Principais Acontecimentos, ANGOP |
| A Tarde, Brazil | Dagens Nyheter, Sweden |
| ACTSA | Daily News, Tanzania |
| AFP | Daily Telegraph, Britain |
| AFP Interafrican News Survey | Death in the Desert: the Namibian Tragedy |
| Africa Analysis, Britain | De Zeit, Germany |
| AfricaAsia, France | Diario de Leiria, Portugal |
| Africa Confidential, Britain | Diario de Lisboa, Portugal |
| Africa Economic Digest, Britain | Diario de Noticias, Portugal |
| Africa News, US | Diario Economico, Portugal |
| Africa Now, Britain | Diario Popular, Portugal |
| Africa Post | Do Alvor a Lusaka |
| Africa Research Bulletin | Economist |
| Africa South, Zimbabwe | Efe, Spain |
| Africa Watch | El Pais |
| African Business, Britain | Embaixada da Republica de Angola em Portugal |
| African Bulletin, Zimbabwe | Europeau |
| African Recorder/Chronicle, New Delhi | Expresso, Portugal |
| Agencia de Informacoes de Mozambique | Facts and Reports |
| Alem Mar, Portugal | Folha 8, Angola |
| ANC Weekly Newsbriefings | Financial Mail, SA |
| Angola & Namibia-Human Rights abuses in the border area | Financial Times, Britain |
| Angola Cronologia | Guardian Weekly, Britain |
| Angola Information, Britain | Guardian, Britain |
| Angola Observer, US | Guardian, US |
| Angola Peace Monitor | Guy Lamb, Putting Belligerents in Context |
| Angola Press Agency | Human Rights Watch |
| Angola: US Policy and Human Rights violations | Human Rights Watch, "Why Angola Matters" |
| Angop, Britain | Independent, Britain |
| Anop Cronologia | Independente, Portugal |
| Anti-Apartheid News, Britain | International Herald Tribune |
| Arms trade and violations of the war since the 1992 Elections | IPS Africa |
| Associated Press | Jamba |
| Awepaa News Bulletin, Netherlands | James III, A Political History of the Civil War |
| BBC | Jane's Defense Weekly |
| BBC Monitoring Report | Jornal de Angola |
| Between War and Peace, Arms Trade & Violations | Jornal de Noticias, Portugal |
| Business Day, SA | Jornal o Dia, Luis Rodrigues, ISCTE Lisbon |
| Cape Times, SA | Keesings |
| Capital | La Republique, Algeria |
| Christian Science Monitor, US | LA Times |
| Chronicle, Zimbabwe | Le Matin, Morocco |
| Citizen, SA | Le Monde |
| Cm, Portugal | Lea, David. Political Chronologies of the World |
| Communique de presse, Ambassade d'Angola, Belgium | Lisboa, Angola Chronologia |

Lusa
 Lusa, O Seculo, Brazil, Angola Press Agency
 Lusa, Portugal
 Luxemburger Wort
 Mavinga: A Battle that Changed Angolan History
 Media Institute of Southern Africa
 Military Communique from Battle Front in Angola
 Mmegi, Botswana
 MPLA War Communique
 Namibian
 National Society for Human Rights, Windhoek
 New African, Britain
 New Era, Namibia
 New Nation, SA
 New York Times, US
 News Bulletin, Armed forces for Liberation of Angola
 Noticias, Mozambique
 NRC Handelsblad, Holland
 O Dia, Brazil
 O Diario, Portugal
 O Jornal, Portugal
 O Seculo, Portugal
 O Tempo, Brazil
 Observer, Britain
 Political Chronologies of the World by David Lea
 Politico do Comite Central, Freeland of Angola
 Portugal Hoje
 Publico, Portugal
 Radio Report (RR): AFP in French
 RR: Angola Press Agency in Portuguese
 RR: Angop in English
 RR: Angop in French
 RR: Capital Radio, Umtata
 RR: Dar Es Salaam home service in English
 RR: Havana home service
 RR: Johannesburg in English
 RR: Johannesburg home service in Afrikaans
 RR: Johannesburg in English for abroad
 RR: KUP in English (UNITA press)
 RR: KUP in French
 RR: Lisbon home service
 RR: Lourenco Marques in Portuguese
 RR: Luanda home service in Portuguese
 RR: Maputo in Portuguese
 RR: Pana
 RR: Radio France Internationale, Paris
 RR: Radio Mozambique
 RR: Radio Nacional de Angola
 RR: Radio Renascence, Lisbon
 RR: Radio South Africa
 RR: Radiodifusao Portuguesa Internacional
 RR: SABC Channel Africa, Johannesburg
 RR: Tanjung
 RR: Tass in English
 RR: Televisao Popular de Angola
 RR: Televisao Portuguesa Internacional
 RR: VORGAN in Portuguese (UNITA source)
 Rand Daily Mail, SA
 The Register, Britain
 Reuters
 SA Report, June 1985
 SABC-TV, Johannesburg
 Semanario Angolense
 Sempre Fixe, Portugal
 Southern Africa Report, SA
 SouthScan, Britain
 Sowetan, SA
 Star Weekly, SA
 Star, SA
 Sunday News, Tanzania
 Sunday Times of Zambia
 Tass, through International Herald Tribune
 The Mail, Britain
 Times of Zambia
 Times, Britain
 UNITA War Communique
 UNITA, Myth and Reality
 UNITA: Comunicados de Guerra
 Uppsala
 Visão, Cape Verde
 VORGAN
 War Communique from FALA, CIDAC
 War Crimes and other Atrocities, Namibia
 Washington Post
 Weekly Mail and Guardian, SA
 West Africa, Britain
 West Africa, Nigeria
 White Paper on Acts of Aggression
 Windhoek Advertiser, Namibia
 Windhoek Observer, Namibia
 Zambia Daily Mail

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