

Nora Schrader-Rashidkhan

# Rebel Parties in African Post-Conflict Elections

Explaining Party Formation and Success



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*To Emanuel and Minou*



## Abstract

In many post-conflict countries around the globe, former rebel groups participate in elections as newly formed political parties ('rebel parties'). This thesis deals with rebel party development in Sub-Saharan Africa and asks precisely if institutional context factors shape paths towards rebel party participation and success in post-conflict elections in this region. Motivated by serious gaps in literature, the thesis develops a new research framework for the comparative analysis of rebel party formation and success by bringing together conflict-oriented research addressing 'rebel-to-party transformation' and general political party literature with a focus on institutionalist perspectives. An original approach is presented that integrates theoretical arguments from various sources to provide a solid basis for a more systematic data collection that covers all African cases of actual electoral participation, and to deduce variables that are suspect of structuring certain opportunities for rebel party development. New theoretical arguments are then empirically tested with several configurational analyses by using fsQCA. The results prove that inter alia the institutionalization of power after military victory is a main explanation for rebel party success, while weaker groups benefit from inclusionary peace agreements that stimulate party formation. A second contribution is the confirmation of serious path dependencies that unfold with the consolidation of rebel party dominance after first elections, so that second elections are won as well. For disarmament provisions and formation costs, the analysis however suggests counter-intuitive effects. In the end, the volume proves that the processes of rebel party formation and success in Africa follow certain patterns and respond to institutional structures, and that they also tend to reproduce typical patterns of African party competition in general.





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# Abbreviations

## *General abbreviations*

Agm	Agreement
CAR	Central African Republic
CATA	Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CTD	Conflict Termination Dataset
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EMB	Electoral Management Bodies
fn	footnote
FPTP	First-Past-The-Post
Frw	Framework
fsQCA	Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis
HoR	House of Representatives
ibid.	ibidem
id.	idem
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MMC	Multi Member Constituency
NC	National Constituency
NSAG	Non-state armed groups
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Peace Agreement
PAD	Peace Agreement Dataset
PBV	Party Bloc Vote
PCE	Post-Conflict Election
PR	Proportional Representation
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
Prot	Protocoll

## *Abbreviations*

PSED	Power-sharing Event Dataset
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
RoW	Regimes of the World
SMC	Single Member Constituency
STV	Single Transferable Vote
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy
VNSA	Violent Non-state Actors

## *Rebel groups and political parties*

ADC	Alliance Démocratique du 23 Mai pour le Changement - Ibrahim Bahanga faction
ADC-Ikibiri	Alliance of Democrats for Change in Burundi
ADF	Alliance of democratic Forces
ADP	Alliance démocratique des peuples
AFDL	Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo
AIAI	Al-Ittihad Al-Islami/Islamic Unity
ALCOP	All Liberia Coalition Party
ALiR	Armes pour la Liberation du Rwanda
ANC	African National Congress
ANDP	Afar National Democratic Party
ATNMC	Alliance Touareg Nord Mali pour le Changement
APCLS	Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain
APRD	Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la République et la Démocratie
ARD	Alliance Republicaine pour la Démocratie
ARDUF	Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ARLA	Armée révolutionnaire de libération de l'Azaouad
ATNMC	Alliance Touareg Nord Mali pour le Changement
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging

BDK	Bundu dia Kongo
Boko Haram	Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad
CNDD	Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie
CNDD-FDD	CNDD - Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple
CNR	Comité national de redressement
CNR	Conseil National de la Résistance
CNRD	Conseil national pour le renouveau et la démocratie
CODEM	Coordination of the Democratic Opposition
COJEP	Congrès panafricain des jeunes patriotes or Congrès panafricain pour la justice et l'égalité des peuples
CPJP	Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace
CSNPD	Conseil de salut national pour la paix et la démocratie
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESDL	Ethiopian Somali Democratic League
FAPC	Forces armées du Peuple congolais
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FARF	Forces armées pour la République fédérale
FDC	Front de la défense du Congo
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda
FDR	Front démocratique pour le renouveau
FDSI-CI	Forces de Défense et de Sécurité Impartiales de Côte d'Ivoire
FIAA	Front islamique arabe de l'Azaouad
FLEC-FAC	FLEC - Armed Forces of Cabinda
FLEC-R	Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda-Renewal
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional
FN	Forces Nouvelles
FNDIC	Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities
FNI	Front des Nationalistes et Intégrationnistes
FNL	Forces nationales de liberation
FNL-LP	FNL-Lovers of Peace Faction
FNT	Front national tchadien
FPI	Front Populaire Ivoirien
FPLA	Front Populaire de Libération de l'Azaouad
FPR	Front patriotique rwandais

## *Abbreviations*

FPRC	The Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central African Republic
FR	Forces du Renouveau
FRCI	Forces Républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire
Frolina	Front de Libération Nationale
FRPI	Force de résistance patriotique d'Ituri
FRUD	Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy
FRUD-AD	FRUD - Ahmed Dini faction
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IGLF	Issa and Guraga Liberation Front
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
LPC	Liberia Peace Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Arm
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
M23	Mouvement du 23-Mars
MAA	Mouvement Arabe de l'Azawad
MAGRIVI	Mutuelle des Agriculteurs de Virunga
MCDDI	Mouvement Congolais pour la démocratie et le développement intégral
MDD	Mouvement pour la démocratie et le développement
MDF	Moorland Defence Forces
MDJT	Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad
MFDC	Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance
MFDC-FN	MFDC-Front Nord
MFDC-FN-MD	MFDC-Front Nord Magne Diémé faction
MFDC-S	MFDC-Salif Sadio faction
MILOCI	Mouvement pour la Libération de l'Ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire
MJP	Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix
MLC	Mouvement de Libération du Congo
MMM	Mai-Mai Movement
MNJ	Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice
MNLA	Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
Mosanat	Mouvement pour la salvation nationale tchadienne
MPA	Mouvement populaire de l'Azaouad

MPA/Rep. of Anjouan	Mouvement populaire anjouanais: Anjouan People's Movement (Comoros)
MPA-SOC	MPA - Said Omar Chamassi faction (Comoros)
MPCI	Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire
MPGK	Mouvement patriotique Ganda Koy
MPIGO	Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest
MPS	Mouvement patriotique du salut
MRLZ	Mouvement révolutionnaire pour la libération du Zaïre
MUJAO	Mouvement pour le Tawhîd et du Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest
NAP	Nouvelle Alliance pour le Progrès
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NDC	Nduma Defense of Congo
NDPL	National Democratic Party of Liberia
NDPVF	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
NDV	Niger Delta Vigilante
NPC	National Popular Congress
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPP	National Patriotic Party
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
Palipehutu	Parti pour la libération du peuple Hutu
Palipehutu-FNL-LP	Palipehutu - FNL - Lovers of Peace Faction
PALIR	Peuple en Armes Pour la Liberation du Rwanda
PARECO	Patriotes Résistants Congolais
PARECO-PAP	Coalition des résistants patriotes congolais/Parti du peuple
PCT	Parti Congolais du Travail
PCUD	Central African Party for Unity and Development
PDC	Parti Démocrate Centriste
PDF	Popular Defence Force
PDI	Parti Démocratique Idéal
PDP	People's Democratic Party
POLISARIO	Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro
PRM	Patriotes Résistants Maï-Maï
PRODEM	Progressive Democratic Party

## *Abbreviations*

PRP/Kabila	Parti révolution populaire
PSR	Parti Socialiste Rwandais,
PUSIC	Parti pour l'unité et la sauvegarde de l'intégrité du Congo
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
RCD-CP	RCD - Christian Pay Pay faction
RCD-K-ML	RCD - Kisangani/ Forces for Renewal
RCD-LN	RCD - Laurent Nkunda faction
RCD-ML	RCD - Movement for Liberation
RCD-N	RCD - National
RCD-PM	RCD - Patrick Masunzu
RDR	Rassemblement des Républicains
Renamo	Resistência nacional Moçambicana
Renamo-UE	Renamo-União Eleitoral
RFC	Rassemblement des forces pour le changement
RFDG	Rassemblement des Forces démocratiques de Guinée
RPRC	Patriotic Assembly for the Renaissance of Central Africa
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RUFP	Revolutionary United Front Party
SLDF	Sabaot Land Defence Force
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SLM/A-MM	SLM/A-Minni Minawi faction
SLM/A-Unity	SLM/A-Unity
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SPDP	Somali People's Democratic Party
SPDP	Somali People's Democratic Party
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A-WN	SPLM/A-William Nyuon faction
SSDF	South Sudan Defence Force
SSUM/A	South Sudan Unity Movement/Army
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
UAD	Union pour l'alternance démocratique
UDPR	Union Démocratique du Peuple Rwandais
UDPS-Amana	Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social - Amana
UDT	Union démocratique tchadienne
UFDD	Union of Forces for Democracy and Development



UFDD-F	UFDD-Fondamentale
UFDR	Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement
UFR	Union of Resistance Forces
UFRA	Union des Forces de la résistance armée
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
ULIMO-J	ULIMO Roosevelt Johnson faction
ULIMO-K	ULIMO Alhaji Kromah faction
UNITA	União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola
UMP	Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle
UPA	Uganda People's Army
UPADS	Union panafricaine pour la démocratie sociale
UPC	Union des Patriotes congolais
UPC	Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (CAR)
URDC/AFPC	Union de Résistance Démocratique Congolais / Alliance des forces populaires et Patriotiques du Congo
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front
WSB	West Side Boys
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front



## 1. Introduction

Several powerful leaders that shaped the fate of the African continent arose from rebel movements. Despite being worlds apart, political leaders like Robert Mugabe, Meles Zenawi or Charles Taylor share a common origin of armed resistance. Today, Paul Kagame and Idriss Déby continue to dominate politics as elected presidents in their home countries after they emerged victorious from civil wars in Rwanda and Chad. These prominent cases show that the transformation from rebellious opponent to presidential ruler and the assumption of offices by former rebels is a viable path for power-hungry actors in many African countries. Nowadays, this road to power leads through elections, and the participation of former armed groups in African elections is the main topic of this book.

Against a background of numerous civil wars and post-conflict democratization since the 1990s, a transformative mechanism has been established in conflict management that permits a reincarnation of rebel groups as political parties in Africa and elsewhere. The decision if and how rebel groups should be integrated into the post-war political system is one of the major challenges after war, and to enhance the chances for establishing peace and democracy, the inclusion of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in conflict management and peacebuilding processes is widely considered the best alternative. Participation in post-conflict elections is one cornerstone of this inclusive approach, and in consequence, former rebel groups participate in elections as newly formed political parties ('rebel parties') in many post-conflict countries around the globe. The emergence of democratization as a standard element of sustainable conflict management and multi-lateral peacebuilding after the end of the Cold War (Cousens 2001; Call/Cook 2003; Jarstad/Sisk 2008; Gillies 2011; Zürcher et al. 2013) laid the foundations for this increased integration of former armed groups, and today, party building by rebel groups constitutes one of the dominant approaches within this context. Electoral participation of rebel parties "emerged as a commonly recognized tool for conflict resolution and democratization in many internationally supervised peace processes" (Söderberg Kovacs 2008, 150), and reflecting this importance, it is noteworthy that since 1989, more than half of all full peace agreements in conflicts over government entitled armed groups to become a political party (Harbom et al. 2006, 624). It is thus little surprising that empirically, the elec-

## 1. Introduction

toral participation of non-state armed groups became “a global phenomenon” (Allison 2006b, 34). Recently, the case of the FARC in Colombia underlined the ongoing appeal of the ‘transformative option’ for peace negotiators (Phelan 2019). Next to the individual Big Men named above are the best-known African examples of this practice the RENAMO party (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*) in Mozambique (Manning 2007 & 2008) and the *African National Congress* (ANC) in South Africa (Ottaway 1991; Lodge 2003 & 2004) which both transformed in the early 1990s. In this introductory chapter, the basic outline of the argumentation and a literature review will be presented that establish the structure of the book.

### 1.1 Outline of the argumentation

The approach of turning rebel groups into political parties has a special relevance for Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>1</sup>. The continent experienced a multitude of civil wars with non-state armed groups and widespread political reform largely at the same time (Clapham 1998; Elbadawi/Sambanis 2000; Lindberg 2006; Cheeseman 2015), and it is precisely due to this context of tentative democratization and increased multipartism after incidences of violent conflict that the electoral participation of former rebel groups gained importance. Electoral participation of former rebels is most common in Sub-Saharan Africa compared to other world regions (Matanock 2012, 8), and many peace agreements on the continent actively suggest their participation (Söderberg Kovacs/Hatz 2016, 991). In consequence, as will be shown, roughly a third of all African post-conflict elections in the time-frame 1989-2014 witnessed some form of rebel party participation, giving rise to several powerful political parties that have their roots in armed resistance. This applies inter alia for the named cases of the ANC in South Africa, the EPRDF in Ethiopia and the FPR in Rwanda, which – leaving aside differences regarding democratic confinement – are amongst the most successful parties in terms of political power. This prevalence of rebel parties makes the African region empirically outstanding, and a particularly interesting case for tracing and comparing pathways of rebel parties in general. With this perspective, it is assumed that African countries share essential similarities regarding political parties and conditions for their

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1 For better readability, the terms ‘Africa’ and ‘Sub-Saharan Africa’ are used interchangeably. They both refer to the 49 Sub-Saharan African states.

work, and that a comparative analysis gains from adapting to these characteristics. This justifies a wider focus on the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The analysis will show that the patterns of rebel party development fit very well to general conditions for party competition in Africa, for example regarding the prevalence of party domination. Party formation of armed groups is an important way to conserve power after fighting ends, and this is valid in particular if the group managed to decide the violent conflict militarily. The set-up of strong party organs helps to consolidate the group's power for years, and this consolidation leads to strong party dominance in several cases – with all the negative implications this has for democracy. From a democracy standpoint, party formation of former rebel groups is thus to be viewed critically, at least if no strong correctives are installed to mediate the impetus towards centralization and autocratization many 'comrades' seem to have.

Luckily, the party landscape in Africa is not filled with veterans in all post-conflict countries. Cases such as Mali or Nigeria illustrate that the presence of armed actors and the holding of elections *alone* are not necessarily leading to the establishment of rebel parties within the political system. In most countries, only a small number of former NSAGs ever achieve parliamentary representation and a decent seat share, let alone bigger majorities. The pathway towards successful party development appears to be fraught with hurdles – internal as well as external – that make rebel party formation and success a rarer phenomenon as might be assumed. This book aims at illuminating the external side of rebel party development and seeks to find answers to the question of which institutions influence the paths for former armed groups as party actors in African countries. In the next parts of this introductory chapter the basic lines of argumentation will be drawn up some more in detail.

### *Comparing Conditions for Rebel Groups' Electoral Participation in Africa*

Despite the empirical prevalence, comparative knowledge of rebel party formation and success is still limited. This applies to African cases, but also to the general comparative perspective on a global scale (Ishiyama 2019a, 460). Related to the absence of systematic comparison, it must be asserted that the overall dynamics of rebel groups' electoral participation have neither been analysed thoroughly in scholarship. To contribute to filling these research gaps, this volume will pursue two main objectives: on the one hand, a new database is generated that provides a comprehensive and

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systematic overview of all rebel groups in Africa in terms of electoral participation since 1989. This is strongly needed as not all groups decide to take the risk of competing at the polls, and not all that do succeed in the short- and longer term. On the other hand, the project goes a step further in asking for the conditions that influence the divergent paths of former armed groups in Africa. The emphasis will be on institutional context conditions, which have also been neglected in a literature that mostly focused on internal group characteristics when examining rebel party development (see section 1.2 for details).

While the project in this regard relates to research about ‘rebel-to-party transformation’ (e.g. Söderberg Kovacs 2007; de Zeeuw 2008; Wittig 2016; Söderberg Kovacs/Hatz 2016; Ishiyama 2019b), the argument will take a new direction to focus on the groups’ participation and their results in elections, and not on the quality of the internal transformation processes itself. The enquiry is thus limited to the actual participation of rebel groups as individual, identifiable political parties in post-conflict elections. Other possible forms of electoral participation such as their integration into existing political parties or independent candidatures are not encompassed, and aspects like their actual competence and aptitude to fulfil political-representative tasks in a conducive manner are not addressed neither. Following Sartori (2005 [1976]), the participation in elections directly relates to party building, as a political party is defined through its presentation of candidates in elections under a given label. A consequence of this perspective is that the process of party formation – that is, the decision to register a party for elections for the first time – and the analysis of the party performance – the party’s results in terms of votes and seats – are to be treated separately.

### *Avenues of Investigation: Rebel Party Formation and Success in Post-Conflict Elections*

The examination of African rebel parties suggests adopting insights from general party research that developed a wide spectrum of theoretical milestones. Rebel-to-party transformation literature clearly suffers from a missing linkage to this ‘mainstream’ knowledge, and as a systematization and enrichment with theoretical concepts is certainly needed, established terminology will be incorporated here to advance the comparative analysis of rebel parties. One aspect which is fundamental for guiding the whole discussion is the differentiation between party formation and success as men-