Civilian violent mobilization and the intensity of civil war in Mozambique

Jentzsch, C.; Krause, J.; Masullo, J.; Rhoads, E.; Welsh, J.

PART TWO

VIOLENT FORMS OF CIVILIAN PROTECTIVE AGENCY

7

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Corinna Jentzsch

Introduction

'Civilian agency' is most often understood as nonviolent interventions in conflict settings by unarmed actors less powerful than their armed (and violent) counterparts.[1] These unarmed 'civilians' are distinguished from members of armed groups and 'combatants'; civilians' vulnerable, unarmed status makes them worthy of protection. However, intra-state wars without clear frontlines make it difficult to identify and protect civilians. The fact that rebels tend to hide among civilians has raised concern that those 'caught between the crossfire' have no easy escape route from armed conflict (Jose and Medie 2015). Yet, even though they may not be formal members of armed groups, civilians often play important supporting roles in providing information, food, and other resources to armed groups, making civilians crucial enablers of armed group activities and also of the infliction of violence on other civilians (Wood 2003; Kalyvas 2006). As a consequence, the deliberate targeting of civilians has become a strategy of war, to deter the provision of crucial support to the enemy (Kalyvas 2006; Ferris 2011 pp. 246–7), which again raises the issue of civilian protection (Jose and Medie 2016).

Whilst civilians often find themselves at the heart of armed conflict, they do not receive sufficient protection from armed groups, including state armed forces. Hence, they develop 'civilian protective agency' (see volume introduction). They engage in 'civilian self-protection' to defend themselves against 'immediate, direct threats to their physical integrity' imposed by armed groups (Jose and Medie 2015, 2016). The activities that people affected by war develop to protect themselves can range from nonviolent to violent and unarmed to armed.[2] Much of the focus of

[1] There are some exceptions to this where authors have conceptualized civilian agency as violent action, see Schubiger (2021), Masullo (2021a), Jentzsch (2022), and the chapters by Masullo and Ben Hamo and Moncada within volume.

[2] There is a difference between violent/nonviolent and armed/unarmed self-protection, as civilians can make use of violence without making use of weapons. The main difference I make in this article is between unarmed and armed, as I assume that a group that arms itself underlies different organizational constraints and possibilities than a group that does not have access to weapons.

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the research agenda has been on nonviolent and unarmed means of protection. Much of the scholarly and practitioner interest in the power of nonviolent and unarmed civilian protection and resistance aims to explain the success of nonviolent action in bringing about social and political change (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Arjona 2016; Kaplan 2017; Krause 2018; Masullo 2021b). Such success is counterintuitive as those who pursue nonviolent action are faced with much more powerful counterparts.

The focus on nonviolent and unarmed forms of protection overlooks, however, that civilians often take up arms for protection, with important implications for how war evolves and ends. This chapter therefore focuses on armed forms of civilian protective agency—the emergence of armed self-defence forces in order to protect local residents from the consequences of war. I seek to make three contributions. First, I discuss in what ways armed civilian self-protection further complicates the distinction between civilians and combatants. I argue that a certain type of armed self-protection strategy, the formation of community-initiated part-time militias, can be considered part of civilian protective agency as this type of militia corresponds with the conceptualization of civilians in conflict studies. Secondly, I analyse the conditions under which armed civilian self-protection actually protects civilians. I discuss the theoretical expectations for the consequences of the emergence of armed self-protection strategies and apply them to a case study of armed self-protection in Mozambique during the civil war from 1976 to 1992. I make use of a data set of violent events that I compiled from archival sources and interview material I collected during fieldwork in Mozambique to show the trends of the evolution of violence during the war. Next, I conduct a careful case study of armed self-protection in a particular district in central Mozambique. Overall, I show that in Mozambique, certain conditions facilitated civilian protection, but the protection effect was temporary, as the rebels quickly learned how to respond to the new armed challenge.

Armed self-protection and the concept of the 'civilian'

In the wake of a focus on micro-dynamics in civil war, much conflict research has focused on civilians as pivotal actors in war, whilst at the same time emphasizing the difficulty of distinguishing between civilians and combatants. Recognizing that armed groups require popular support to achieve military objectives such as territorial control, Kalyvas (2006, 2008) shows how violence shapes civilians' willingness to provide such support. Concepts such as 'civilian agency', 'civilian self-protection', and 'civilian protective agency' aim to demonstrate the power that those without a gun can have over those who do have access to weapons. Such power lies in the access to crucial knowledge and information, strong leadership,

and the sheer number of people able to act collectively (Kaplan 2017; Krause 2018). However, civil war scholars also emphasize the difficulty of distinguishing between civilians and combatants. This calls into question the persistent use of the concept of the 'civilian' and the fact that much theorizing relies on it. 'Civilian' in 'civilian self-protection', for example, refers to the idea that these strategies are 'primarily selected and employed by civilians' (Jose and Medie 2016); the concept of 'civilian protective agency' developed by the editors in the introduction to this volume is used in a similar way.

Can we speak then of 'armed civilian self-protection', or does this further blur the conceptual line between civilians and combatants? Do civilians, once they arm themselves, turn into combatants? Scholars of civilian agency and civilian self-protection include armed forms of self-protection in their typologies of civilian agency. In fact, Kaplan (2017 p. 57) lists six strategies that communities adopt to protect themselves, the last of which is 'local-based armed resistance against external armed groups to protect residents'. The question remains, however, whether including armed forms of resistance in such a list actually obscures the distinction between combatant and civilian even further.

It helps to analyse the distinctions made in international law and conflict studies to evaluate this question. At the core of international humanitarian law is the distinction between combatants and civilians used to identify legitimate military targets in war and protect civilians. As discussed in the introduction to this volume, the definition of 'civilians' in international humanitarian law is a negative one: according to Article 50 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions from 1977, civilians are those individuals who are *not* combatants, meaning that they are *not* recognizable members of organized armed groups with a clear command structure. In civil wars, this distinction is difficult, as armed groups often do not use uniforms, or they follow a decentralized command structure, which makes their group difficult to be recognized as an army with command and control. Another criterium offered by the Additional Protocols is therefore that civilians lose their civilian status when they directly participate in hostilities (Additional Protocol I Articles 45.1, 51.3; Additional Protocol II Article 13.3). Although important, the term 'direct participation in hostilities' lacks a clear definition, which led the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide interpretive guidance. The ICRC guidance emphasizes that the term means participation in specific acts that intend to cause harm in support of a party to the conflict, rather than an activity linked to one's 'status, function, or affiliation' (Melzer 2009 p. 44).[3] Even before the publication of that guidance, codes of conduct for armed forces developed similar, additional criteria to identify

[3] This interpretive guidance is not uncontested, as subsequent debate showed. See Goodman and Jinks (2009).

legitimate military targets. Some Rules of Engagement of the United States (US) military, for example, explicitly allow for the (lethal) targeting of any individual that shows 'hostile intent' by participating in or being complicit in a violent incident against US or allied forces, or against civilians that are in need of protection.[4] However, these criteria are the focus of much debate and are regularly reviewed and refined. This is true not only for US military operations, but also, for example, for Dutch military operations such as the one in Afghanistan (Boddens Hosang 2009).

In conflict studies, the distinction between civilians and combatants has followed a different logic. Most fundamentally, civilians' crucial role in supporting armed groups has been recognized. Arjona (2016 p. 25) defines civilians as 'persons who live in a given local territory, do not participate in hostilities, and are not full-time members of any state or non-state armed organization'. In her work on civilian displacement, Steele (2017 p. 18) defines civilians as 'individuals who do not participate in the military activities of any armed group but who may be "part-time" affiliates or collaborators'. Both Arjona and Steele emphasize that civilians do not directly take part in violence, which makes them, if they do support armed groups in some other way, 'part-time' members. Full-time members are those who do participate in hostilities, thus combatants. However, in wars that are fought on a local level, within communities, that distinction is more difficult to make. In communal wars, for example, Krause (2018 p. 22) refers to members of thugs and gangs as 'armed civilians' in contrast to 'unarmed civilians'. This implies that civilians do not lose their civilian status when carrying weapons as any membership in armed groups for them remains temporary.

What appears to be a (somewhat implicit) definition of being a civilian in recent research on armed conflict is the spontaneous, fleeting, and temporary character of participation in organized violence. It is this sense of temporary membership in armed groups that we can define as making a civilian. As long as community residents do not permanently join existing armed groups and established conflict actors, they do not lose their characteristics as civilians, as they will still engage in their day-to-day lives to support their livelihoods and their families. This is in contrast to the ICRC interpretation of who is a civilian, as civilians lose their protection status when engaging in acts that amount to direct participation of hostilities. This means that what I consider here as civilian self-protection might not amount to a protected activity under international humanitarian law, which implies that community-initiated militias may be seen as legitimate military targets in armed conflict, for the time they engage in these activities.

[4] US Army, Center for Army Lessons Learned, Rules of Engagement Vignettes Handbook, No. 11-26, May 2011, https://info.publicintelligence.net/USArmy-ROE-Vignettes.pdf.

Conceptualizing armed civilian self-protection

Building on the discussion above, I conceptualize armed civilian self-protection as the formation of a specific type of militia. I conceive of militias as 'armed organizations that exist outside of the formal security apparatus of the state; they emerge as "counter-movements" against insurgents either on the initiative of community residents or state representatives' (Jentzsch 2022 p. 2; cf. Jentzsch et al. 2015). Not all militias can be considered a form of civilian self-protection, however. I distinguish between 'community-initiated' and 'state-initiated' militias as well as between full-time and part-time forces (see Figure 7.1).

Given the definitions discussed above, only community-initiated part-time militias should be defined as a civilian self-protection strategy. Community-initiated militias emerge from grassroots processes of collective action, while state-initiated militias form when states decide to make civilians part of their counterinsurgency strategy. Community-initiated militias may be co-opted by states at later stages in the war, while state-initiated militias may become more independent over time. I further distinguish between part-time and full-time forces to capture the level of professionalization of militias and limit the category of 'civilian' militias. For example, full-time forces stay in barracks, are on duty day and night, and have continuous access to weapons and sometimes even uniforms. They may go on missions outside the village they are stationed in, which implies that they conduct both offensive and defensive operations. Part-time forces are more likely to reside in their own houses and, for example, be on duty during the night whilst going about their regular activities during the day. Those forces may have limited access to weapons, and no access to uniforms. Their activities commonly include patrolling, intelligence gathering, policing tasks such as arrests, and defence in case of an attack.

The two dimensions result in the typology shown in Figure 7.1. State-initiated full-time militias are professionalized and state-directed, such as the Janjaweed in Sudan's Darfur region (Flint 2009). State-initiated part-time militias are illustrated by the Guatemalan civil patrols who patrolled villages by night, but otherwise went about their daily routines (Bateson 2017; Remijnse 2002). Community-initiated

		Level of professionalization	
		High	**Low**
Initiator	**State**	State-initiated full-time militias	State-initiated part-time militias
	Community	Community-initiated full-time militias	Community-initiated part-time militias

Figure 7.1 Typology of militias.

militias rarely emerge as full-time forces, but rather evolve into those. For example, the Kamajor militias during the civil war in Sierra Leone represent community-initiated part-time militias before they evolved into a full-fledged army, and community-initiated full-time forces after they replaced the state army (Hoffman 2011). I consider community-initiated part-time militias as an armed civilian self-protection strategy and as one form of protective civilian agency, as it emphasizes the grassroots character of armed mobilization and the temporary status of militia members.

Consequences of armed civilian self-protection

What are the consequences of the formation of community-initiated part-time militias for civilian protection? Kaplan (2017 p. 51) contends that 'local-based armed resistance' is the most contentious self-protection strategy, which implies that employing this strategy could lead to further escalation of the conflict and an increase in violence against civilians. In the following, I outline potential mechanisms by which armed self-protection may affect protection outcomes such as forms of direct, physical violence, but also indirect forms of violence such as forced displacement.

Militias can help end the war through two main mechanisms. Due to their local character, militias can provide crucial local knowledge and intelligence to effectively target insurgents, limit attacks against civilians, and separate insurgents from their civilian resource base (Peic 2014 p. 163). As a consequence, in states in which governments collaborate with militias, they have a better chance of defeating insurgents (Peic 2014). In addition to providing crucial information, militia deployment multiplies armed forces in cases where the state army has a lack of recruits, facilitating a more effective state response to the insurgents (Carey et al. 2013). I term these two mechanisms the *intelligence provision* and the *force multiplicator* mechanisms.

However, militias may also contribute to violence against civilians. First, they may trigger additional violence perpetrated by the conflict's armed groups. Armed resistance against insurgents can pose significant costs on the armed group, which raises their interest in militarily defeating the militias, attracting even more violence upon civilians. Indeed, by eliminating the civilian support base for insurgents, armed groups may retaliate and indiscriminately target civilians (Clayton and Thomson 2014; Clayton 2016). With less information on those who feed information to the other side, rebels are inclined to target civilians more indiscriminately (Kalyvas 2006). I term this the *retaliation* mechanism.

Second, militias may become violent actors themselves, which contributes to the increase in the length and lethality of civil wars (Starn 1995; Hoffman 2011;

Mitchell et al. 2014; Aliyev 2020a). Militias can (further) fragment armed groups and develop a vested interest in continued fighting, which hampers negotiated settlements (Stedman 1997; Staniland 2015). They might develop material interests in benefiting from the spoils of war (Aliyev 2020b), or intensify ethnic divides in cases in which the incumbent and the militia are part of the same ethnic group (Abbs et al. 2020). More generally, militias may polarize the conflict, as the multiplication of armed groups provides opportunities for community residents to settle local conflicts (Clayton and Thomson 2016). These dynamics may lead militias to engage in violence against civilians. I call this the *fragmentation* mechanism.

Thirdly, collaboration between rebels and militias or state forces and militias may contribute to an increase in violence against civilians. The incumbent regime, for example, can co-opt militias and outsource violence to them. The state's main advantage of outsourcing violence is that it can avoid being held accountable for human rights violations perpetrated by forces in a loose alliance with the state (Carey et al. 2013; Mitchell et al. 2014). In some cases, militia violence takes place alongside state violence (Cohen and Nordås 2015). I call this the *co-optation* mechanism.

Overall, militias empower civilians, but in a way that can hamper conflict resolution and further violent conflict. But why do communities then choose for armed self-protection? As I show in the following, the peaceful effects of self-defence are often short-term, and therefore temptatious but also temporary.

Armed self-protection during the civil war in Mozambique

I analyse armed civilian self-protection in the form of community-initiated part-time militias in the context of the civil war in Mozambique, which took place from 1976 to 1992 between the party in power, Frelimo, and the rebel movement Renamo.[5] The Mozambican war was foremost a war about the people (Cahen et al. 2018; Jentzsch 2022), which led the civilian population to develop protective agency. Gaining control over the population through violence and forced resettlement was an important strategy of war, as the population provided important

[5] Renamo stands for '*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*' (National Mozambican Resistance) and Frelimo stands for '*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*' (Mozambique Liberation Front). The party Frelimo was the successor of the main liberation movement before Mozambique's independence in 1975. For an introduction into the war, see Vines (1991) and Finnegan (1992). Overall, the war cost an estimated 1 million lives and displaced almost 5 million people, both as a consequence of fighting and war-induced famines and diseases, and took a heavy toll on infrastructure, with 60 per cent of primary schools and 40 per cent of health clinics destroyed in 1992 (Hanlon 1996 pp. 15–16). The data for this chapter come from interviews and archival documents collected during 13 months of fieldwork in Mozambique in 2011–12, 2016, and 2019. See Jentzsch (2022) for details on methods and data collection.

resources such as intelligence, food for the fighters, and labour for the transport of supplies. Civilians developed different strategies of self-protection, ranging from individual to collectively organized ones. Fleeing war-affected areas and hiding in the bush, often from the late afternoon until the next morning, was a frequent response to the violence. As the war dragged on, such activities became more organized. Groups of young men were sent to patrol at night, and the government provided several thousand residents with limited training and knives and spears to defend communities (Lauriciano 1986).

When it became clear, however, that the government and the rebels were stuck in a military stalemate in 1988, a more organized and armed self-protection strategy emerged. The military stalemate had led to heavy fighting and violence against civilians, without providing either side the necessary leverage to defeat the other and leaving the population without much protection (Jentzsch 2022 ch. 4). A famine in the central region worsened the humanitarian situation. As a last resort, a militia formed in the Nampula and Zambézia provinces in northern Mozambique. Naparama, as it was called, formed as a grassroots initiative and recruited peasants who would go about their work during the day, but join the group as part-time fighters at night. It was an armed movement led by a traditional healer who succeeded in increasing the number of his followers from an estimated 400 in July 1990 (Maier 1990a) to an estimated 4,000–6,000 members across both provinces (Jentzsch 2022). The group gained control over two-thirds of the northern territory within a short amount of time, becoming 'one of the most important military and political factors in contemporary Mozambique' (Wilson 1992 p. 561).

The militia had a central command that conducted its own operations and mobilized units at the district level, which operated independently. The units were unified by the belief in a potion that supposedly rendered fighters immune to bullets. The Naparama leader Manuel António formed units in Zambézia after he, as he claimed, had discovered a powerful medicine to protect fighters during battle. Every new recruit underwent an initiation ritual during which they were 'vaccinated' with the medicine. To ensure the medicine's effectiveness, members had to obey strict rules, at home and on the battlefield, such as avoiding certain foods and only using spears and knives in combat (*armas brancas*, 'white weapons'). Deaths during battle were usually attributed to violations of these rules.

I first conduct a case study of the formation of these militias in a district in central Mozambique that was affected by the war to understand how and when community-initiated part-time militias contribute to civilian protection. I refine and explore further the mechanisms identified above, identifying the conditions under which the intelligence gathering and force multiplier mechanisms dominate. In a second step, I look at the conflict from a regional and national perspective to demonstrate the (temporal) limits of civilian protection through armed self-protection.

How and when armed self-protection succeeds

'It was the *Naparama* who ended the war', an elder told me in a village in northern Mozambique.[6] For the peasants who experienced the war in rural Mozambique, the community-initiated militia provided much-needed relief. A community resident in the Nicoadala district argued that Naparama delivered on its promises: 'When [Manuel António] Parama came, he said that no one will ever [have to] flee again from their home. And indeed, we were able to sleep in our homes'.[7] People perceived the return to their homes as a precondition for securing their livelihoods, which meant that protection from direct and indirect forms of violence was a precondition for protection from hunger.[8]

In analysing the civilian response to civil war violence, I focus on a district in the Zambézia province immensely affected by the war, Lugela. Lugela was a district of 107,000 people (according to the census of 1980) about 240 km from the provincial capital Quelimane and 58 km from Mocuba, an important town with military headquarters along the main north–south Highway EN1. The war came to the district early due to the proximity to Malawi, the mountainous terrain with thick forests, and the state-owned tea factories that became the first targets of rebel violence.[9]

Initially, local chiefs, promised that they would regain the power that Frelimo had taken from them at independence, overwhelmingly supported Renamo.[10] However, popular support decreased when Renamo began expanding its military presence in the rural areas, recruiting youths from occupied areas and targeting civilians indiscriminately.[11] Renamo units attacked and occupied the district town in March 1986 for several months, and then four more times until 1988. Whenever Frelimo regained control of the town, rebels constantly attacked, and control of surrounding areas changed frequently.[12] Whenever the army was able to organize convoys with supplies from Mocuba, Renamo returned and assaulted the convoys to steal the supplies.[13]

This chaotic situation had severe impacts on civilian protection. People constantly had to flee from violence and search for food, which contributed to their

[6] Interview with male civilian (m10), Nahipa, Mecubúri, Nampula, 26 October 2011.
[7] Interview with civilian (f1), Nicoadala, Zambézia, 14 September 2011.
[8] Interview with former Naparama combatant (Nm1), Nicoadala, Zambézia, 9 September 2011.
[9] [11] República Popular de Moçambique, Província da Zambézia, Gabinete do Administrador do Distrito do Lugela, *Relatório mensal de 15 Agosto a 15 de Setembro de 1982*, 14 September 1982 (AGZ, Quelimane); Interview with community leaders (Gr-L), Lugela, Tacuane, Zambézia, 14 June 2012.
[10] Interview with civilian (m36), Lugela, Zambézia, 18 June 2012.
[11] Interview with community leaders (Gr-L), Tacuane, Lugela, Zambézia, 14 June 2012.
[12] Interview with local government official (Gm15), Quelimane, Zambézia, 22 February 2012.
[13] Interviews with local government officials (Gm15), Quelimane, Zambézia, 22 February 2012; (Gm27), Lugela, Zambézia, 19 June 2012.

'nomadic existence'.[14] Only one military battalion—half of which consisted of newly trained local forces—protected the district.[15] Moreover, since the army did not have any supplies, it had to live off the population and often did so by force. The administration's work was made difficult by the fact that part of it was stationed in a camp for the displaced close to Mocuba (Namagoa).

Naparama emerged precisely in that camp for the displaced of Lugela district, in Namagoa, presumably in late 1990, as a part-time community activity. Naparama leader António, coming from Mocuba, asked the local administration for permission to mobilize followers, and neighbourhood secretaries helped to mobilize volunteers to patrol the camp at nighttime.[16] Shortly thereafter, the district administration sent the militia to Lugela to help facilitate the return of the displaced from Namagoa. The force reached a size of 240 men and quickly became part of the local security apparatus.[17] However, the militia retained its part-time, and thus civilian, character as recruits stayed in huts at the militia's headquarters but went to their homes during the day when not on missions.[18]

The militia managed to help the administration keep control over the district town and protect civilians from violence and displacement. The mechanisms that shaped Naparama's impact on civilian protection were intelligence gathering and force multiplier, more than retaliation, fragmentation, or co-optation. Even though they became part of the local security apparatus, Lugela's Naparama managed to retain a certain level of autonomy, which ensured that they remained accountable to local residents who sought protection. The militia was able to avoid fragmentation and retaliation, mainly, as I argue, due to its positive relationship to the local administration and the army.

The district administration recognized that it had to rely on community-initiated militias as a last resort to protect civilians, leading a government official who appeared resigned to state: 'Even if Naparama had not appeared, the people would have asked the military for firearms'.[19] The most important protection effort was 'recuperating' civilians who had been abducted by Renamo and resettled in rebel-controlled areas. The militia's success in returning abducted family members to protected areas generated extensive support for Naparama, from both the

[14] República Popular de Moçambique, Província da Zambézia, Gabinete do Administrador do Distrito de Lugela, *Relatório trimestral (Julho a Setembro/87)*, 1 October 1987 (AGZ, Quelimane); República Popular de Moçambique, Província da Zambézia, Gabinete do Administrador do Distrito de Lugela, *Relatório, período de 1 a 30 de Junho, ano de 1988*, 15 July 1988 (AGZ, Quelimane).

[15] Interviews with former Frelimo combatant (Fm24), Lugela, Zambézia, 12 June 2012; and local government official (Gm15), Quelimane, Zambézia, 22 February 2012.

[16] Interviews with former militiamen (Gr-Mm1), Lugela, Zambézia, 9 June 2012; and former Naparama commander (Nm46), Lugela, Zambézia, 10 June 2012.

[17] Interview with former Naparama commander (Nm46), Lugela, Zambézia, 10 June 2012.

[18] Interviews with former Naparama combatant (Nm49), Tacuane, Lugela, Zambézia, 15 June 2012; and community leaders (Gr-Lm4), Tacuane, Lugela, Zambézia, 14 June 2012.

[19] Interview with local government official (Gm27), Lugela, Zambézia, 19 June 2012.

population and local administration.[20] The fact that the militia was led by a highly-regarded, Frelimo-loyal community leader, Namudavale, also contributed to the trust in the militia. Namudavale, a former combatant of the liberation struggle, was secretary of the local Frelimo party structures that had mobilized people after independence and held administrative positions in the Namagoa camp for the displaced. The trust also found expression in the fact that, when Naparama's strength seemed to wane after its leader António had died in 1991, the local administration supplied the militia with firearms.[21]

A relationship based on mutual trust also evolved between Naparama and the armed forces. When I asked Namudavale about allegations that the military stole relief aid during the war, he demonstrated great loyalty by strongly denying any such corruption existed within the armed forces. He also emphasized that Naparama and the army conducted joint operations, during which each group remained independent and respected each other.[22] Former Frelimo combatants confirmed the positive relationship between Naparama and the army in Lugela, stating that they considered each other 'friends' who were 'fighting for the same purpose'.[23] This affirmation by Frelimo soldiers of their close collaboration with Naparama is remarkable, as in other districts and on the provincial level, Frelimo representatives usually downplayed their reliance on Naparama. Officially, Frelimo could not concede that the party compromised its commitment to a socialist ideology that is hostile to traditional forms of power (Dinerman 2006).

In sum, trust between the district administration, militia, and army prevented Naparama from becoming an additional armed group in the conflict that could have contributed to fragmentation, competing interests, and violence. The community-initiated militia grew quickly in size, was integrated into the local security apparatus, and played a vital part in civilian protection.

The limits of armed self-protection

Trusting relations between militias and local administrative and security institutions can avoid fragmentation and co-optation, but as I show with regional data on violent events, rebel retaliation is more difficult to prevent. Qualitative and quantitative evidence from interviews, journalistic accounts, and archives shows that Naparama succeeded in pacifying areas and protecting civilians in many areas across the Nampula and Zambézia provinces. But this success was temporary, which demonstrates the limits of armed civilian protective agency.

[20] Interview with local government official (Gm27), Lugela, Zambézia, 19 June 2012.
[21] Interview with former Frelimo combatant (Fm24), Lugela, Zambézia, 12 June 2012.
[22] Interview with former Naparama commander (Nm46), Lugela, Zambézia, 10 June 2012. See also Interview with former Naparama combatant (Nm49), Tacuane, Lugela, Zambézia, 15 June 2012.
[23] Interview with former Frelimo combatant (Fm24), Lugela, Zambézia, 12 June 2012.

In the memory of those affected, but also in journalistic reports of the time, Naparama was described as a force that had a surprising and important impact on the war across the Zambézia and Nampula provinces, which allowed people to return home and take up work on their fields (Maier 1990a, 1990b). However, after a while, Naparama activities also contributed to violence against civilians (Wilson 1992 p. 574; Nordstrom 1997). After its initial successes and Renamo's retreat, the militia became the main target for Renamo operations, increasing the number of attacks on civilians and even triggering Renamo to form an anti-Naparama force, a militia of their own (Jentzsch 2017). Moreover, Naparama became increasingly involved in violence against civilians themselves, looting goods and deliberately killing civilians they suspected of working with Renamo, in particular during operations that sought to recuperate people to government-held areas.

These dynamics can be illustrated with evidence from government reports that I collected in the archives in Zambézia's provincial capital Quelimane.[24] In 1985 and 1986, Renamo expanded and occupied many district capitals, which were liberated during the government's counteroffensive in 1987–88 (Jentzsch 2022 ch. 4). The rebels were not able to re-establish control over all the previously occupied district capitals after that counteroffensive and Naparama's emergence, but they continued to stage attacks against these areas from rural rebel bases.

Moreover, data of violent events from newspaper and archival government reports provide a picture of a decline in violence in Zambézia in 1991 after Naparama was well established (see Figures 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4). However, there is an increase in violence in 1992, which could be explained by reference to several developments. First, Naparama's main leader in Zambézia, Manuel António, was killed in December 1991, presumably by Renamo forces. After the death of their leader, many Naparama units disintegrated and ended their activities, which probably gave Renamo more space to operate. Secondly, the peace process advanced significantly in 1991 and 1992, which triggered last efforts by Renamo to occupy districts before the signing of the ceasefire agreement on 4 October 1992. Part of the peace process was the planning of multiparty elections, and Renamo knew that it would fare better if it continued to have influence in certain areas beyond the signing of the peace agreement.

[24] I coded events from my collection of archival documents that include reports about district-level political, economic, and social developments and district radio messages to the provincial government about special occurrences. From the archival reports from Zambézia province and with a research assistant, I created a data set of violent events which includes over 1,300 events from 1974–94. Each event is categorized as a distinct type of violence so that the analysis can differentiate between violence against civilian and military targets and demonstrate patterns of violence across space and time. The data set focuses on the following actors: government armed forces, rebel forces, state-initiated militias, and community-initiated militias. The typology of events the data set includes builds on ACLED, which focuses on changes in territorial control (Raleigh et al. 2010). Battles can result in changes in territorial control or allow a conflict party to remain in control. The data set also codes violence against civilians as a separate category.

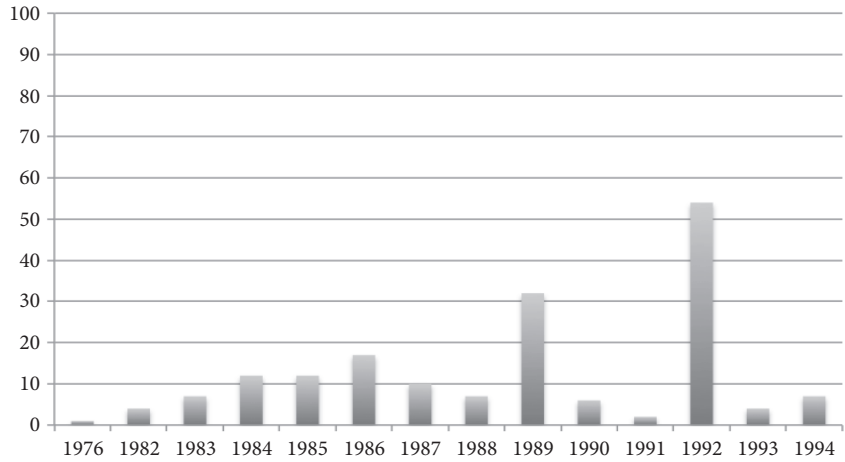

Figure 7.2 Number of violent incidents in Zambézia province, 1976–94, based on national newspaper sources (N = 175).
Source: Weinstein 2007.

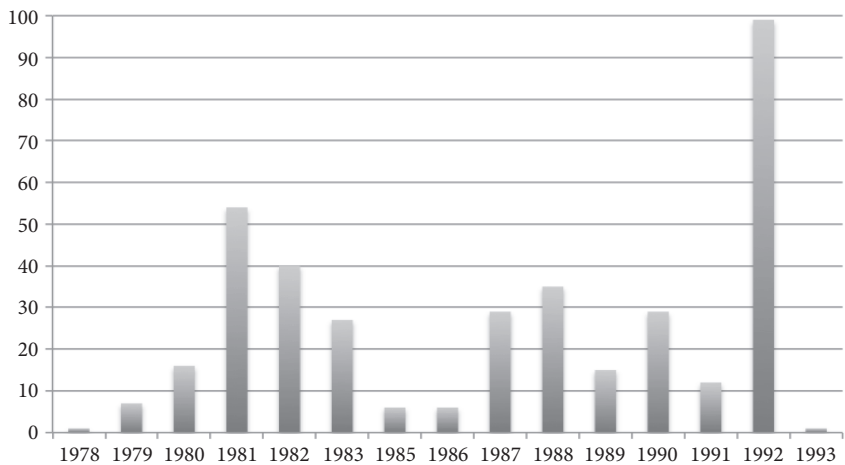

Figure 7.3 Number of battles between government and rebel forces in Zambézia province, 1978–93, based on provincial and district government reports (N = 262).
Source: author's coding, see appendix.

The data have to be read with caution though, as the year with the most violence is also the year with the most documents in my document collection. But it does reflect the historiography of the war, which shows that Renamo fought until the end to be well prepared for national multiparty elections (Do Rosário 2009). This means that while armed civilian self-protection can have a positive

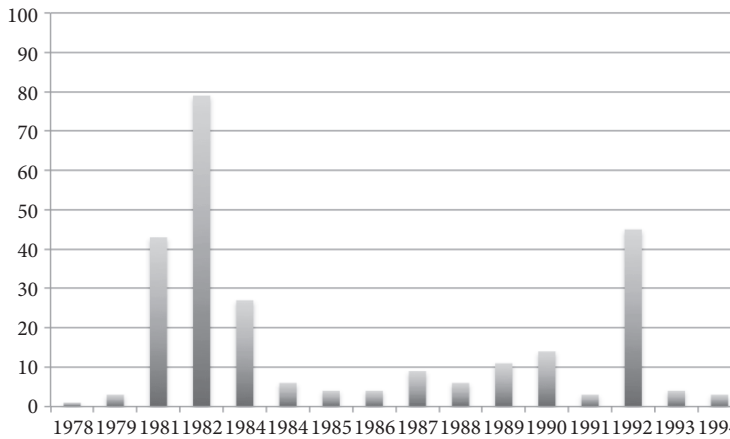

Figure 7.4 Number of incidents of violence against civilians in Zambézia province, 1978–94, based on provincial and district government reports (N = 262).

Source: author's coding, see appendix.

effect at the local level, its effect remains temporary and dependent on national peace processes that may influence incentives to (re-)escalate the conflict.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the ways in which armed civilian self-protection can contribute to the protection of civilians in wartime and makes three major contributions. First, I argue that civilian protective agency is not only nonviolent. Armed forms of civilian self-protection do not contradict the concept of *civilian* self-protection when recognizing the spontaneous, fleeting, and temporary character of civilian participation in organized violence for the purpose of protection. I show that a particular type of militia, community-initiated part-time militias, can be considered a form of civilian protective agency, which is in line with the definition of a civilian in this volume's introduction—someone who is not a recognized member of an organized armed group. Secondly, I show that militias can have various effects on civilian protection depending on which mechanisms dominate the context in which militias act. When militias contribute to the gathering of local intelligence and multiply forces, then they contribute to civilian protection. When, instead, rebels retaliate, armed groups fragment, or the state co-opts militias, then militias contribute to more violence against civilians. Analysing the emergence of community-initiated part-time forces in a particular district in Mozambique—grassroots armed groups that engaged in patrolling, collecting intelligence, and

limited military operations—I find that trusting relations between the state, army, and militia elites prevented the militia from becoming an additional actor in the conflict or being completely co-opted by the state. Thus, the militia was able to engage in civilian protection. Thirdly, regional data on violence from Mozambique demonstrates that rebel retaliation against militias and their supporters is difficult to prevent over the long term, and so, while militias can have an initial peaceful effect, their long-term effect might be to contribute to more violence overall. We see here that local war and peace is embedded in national war and peace, and if developments at the national level incentivize armed groups to escalate the conflict, they challenge local protection efforts (whether armed or unarmed).

Thus, while fragmentation can be averted when militia leaders have close relations with state and army, retaliation by rebels is more difficult to avert and depends on national peace and conflict resolution processes.

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