Military Culture and the Sources of Battlefield Restraint: Examining the Ugandan Civil Wars

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Abstract: *What explains armed group conduct toward civilians in war? The National Resistance Army (NRA) of Uganda demonstrated notable restraint toward civilians during its wars in northern Uganda in the 1980s, restraint that is puzzling given the overdetermined predictions for mass atrocity under rationalist, identity, and regime-type theories. Instead, the NRA case demonstrates that military culture—the organizational norms underlying combatant socialization—is a primary determinant of armed group behavior, influencing combatant conduct in ways not conceptualized under existing theories of victimization.*

This review of the NRA case, based on field interviews with Ugandan military officers and examinations of Ugandan documentary archives, reveals three key points regarding the role of military culture in effecting restraint. First, the NRA case shows that organizational factors like military culture can determine military behavior toward civilians. Second, the NRA case reveals that theories of military culture, incorporating both formal and informal mechanisms of combatant socialization, can provide a more complete theoretical account than existing theories of armed group conduct. Finally, the NRA case provides potential hypotheses for mechanisms through which culture influences military behavior.

I analyze the effect of culture on the NRA's conduct as a plausibility probe, generating inductive insights drawn from detailed field research to shed light on the organizational drivers of armed group restraint. The NRA case thus points the way to a reconceptualization of military culture and the role of organizational factors that influence conflict behavior.

Introduction

In September 1986, the National Resistance Army (NRA) of Uganda, fresh from its recent victory in capturing the national capital of Kampala, drove into northern Uganda to eliminate the former national army's forces and consolidate state control. Civilians living in northern Uganda awaited the assault anxiously, expecting a full-fledged onslaught. They feared with good reason.

The NRA's five-year war with the former regime had been a brutal one, with thousands of NRA-supporting civilians massacred by government forces, the Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA). Inter-ethnic differences had compounded the hatred between the NRA, drawn from southern ethnic groups, and the UNLA, drawn largely from northern tribes. Additionally, the Maoist-inspired NRA lacked the liberal-democratic norms that might check a vengeful turn against noncombatants, while former government forces, now known as the Ugandan People's Democratic Army (UPDA), were again mobilizing and threatening the NRA's hold on power. Given these conditions, an all-out NRA assault against northern civilians seemed likely.

Remarkably, however, the NRA's campaign evolved quite differently. Instead of instigating a bloodbath, the NRA surprised the civilian population with its discipline and restraint, defeating the UPDA over a two-year campaign that produced low numbers of civilian casualties. Over the next two decades, the NRA went on to conduct against recurring northern insurgencies campaigns that were similarly marked by limited violence.

What explains the NRA's restraint towards the northern civilian population in these wars? Given the high level of inter-ethnic enmity, the NRA's nondemocratic nature, and the strategic threat posed by the UPDA, the NRA's sustained restraint toward northern Ugandan civilians is puzzling under rationalist, identity, and regime-type theories of civilian victimization. Instead, the NRA case demonstrates that organizational factors can determine military conduct, even when predictions for mass atrocity are overdetermined under these theories of civilian victimization.

Furthermore, the NRA case demonstrates the impact of a key variable not captured by organizational-level theories of military conduct toward civilians. Military culture—the beliefs, customs and institutions that socialize combatants to organizational norms—is a primary determinant of armed group behavior, influencing combatant conduct in ways not fully accounted for under existing theories of victimization. The NRA case thus both presents a powerful test of organizational theories and points the way to a more nuanced understanding of how military culture can influence patterns of violence against civilians.

Understanding the source of the NRA's restraint is important for two reasons: First, the NRA case reveals major theoretical gaps in our knowledge of the causes of civilian victimization. The prediction for NRA-led slaughter is overdetermined under rationalist,

identity, and regime-type explanations, and the fact that these theories so explicitly fail to explain the NRA's conduct reveals that we still do not fully understand the sources of such behavior.[1]

Second, as a policy matter, the NRA case can provide insights that can be used to improve human rights records of militaries in general. The U.S. and other Western states have made foreign military training a centerpiece of their international policy in recent decades, but such initiatives have had a decidedly mixed record of success.[2] Understanding the sources of NRA restraint can thus potentially help shape these initiatives to improve the conduct of armed groups around the world.

This review of the critical case of the NRA war against the UPDA, based on field interviews with Ugandan military officers and examinations of Ugandan documentary archives, reveals three key points regarding the role of military culture in effecting restraint.[3] First, the NRA case shows that contrary to the expectations of major theories of victimization, organizational factors like military culture can determine behavior toward civilians: the NRA case provides a robust test of group-level factors, showing that organizational culture can outweigh even strategic, identity, and regime-type influences that produce mass atrocity. Second, the NRA case suggests that military culture provides a more complete theoretical account of the organizational level factors that can lead to restraint, incorporating both formal and informal mechanisms of socialization into models of armed group conduct. Finally, the NRA case provides potential hypotheses for mechanisms by which culture influences military behavior, particularly through the socialization of combatants to organizational norms. While a full theory of military culture and restraint is beyond the scope of this article, I analyze the effect of culture on the NRA's conduct as a plausibility probe, generating inductive insights drawn from detailed field research to shed light on the organizational drivers of armed group behavior. The NRA case thus points the way to a reconceptualization of the role of organizational factors that influence wartime conduct.

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[1] See, e.g., Alexander B. Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Alexander B. Downes, "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War," *International Security* 30, no. 4 (April 2006): 152–95; Benjamin A. Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare," *International Organization* 58, no. 02 (May 2004): 375–407.

[2] See, e.g., *Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interest, Volume I*, Joint Report to Congress (Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, March 1, 2000), "Unmatched Power, Unmet Principles: The Human Rights Dimensions of US Training of Foreign Military and Police Forces" (Amnesty International USA Publications, 2002), and Michael Shank and Cassidy Regan, "How American Military Assistance Goes Wrong in Africa," *US News & World Report*, June 2013, http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2013/06/19/how-american-military-assistance-goes-wrong-in-africa.

[3] Field research was conducted in Uganda during the summers of 2010 and 2012. I am indebted to the many Ugandan academics, human rights experts, military officers, and research center staff members who provided assistance in this project.

This article proceeds in five sections. Section one briefly reviews existing theories of civilian victimization, noting their limitations in explaining armed group behavior. Section two outlines the concept of military culture and how it influences group conduct. Section three examines the 1980s Ugandan civil wars and the NRA's development of a culture of respect for civilians, while section four conducts a "controlled comparison" test of the UNLA and NRA counterinsurgencies, demonstrating how military culture provides the best explanation of NRA behavior. Finally, section five reviews how the NRA broadens our understanding of military culture and conflict behavior, concluding by outlining areas for future research.

Theories of Civilian Victimization

Why do armed groups target civilians during war? Various theories, including identity, regime-type, and strategic-rationalist explanations, have been developed to explain the causes of civilian victimization.[4] Identity-based theories focus on ethnic, ideological, and religious differences that lead to victimization, either through elite-predation, combatants' perception of opposing civilians as "barbaric," or the creation of group fears and inter-group security dilemmas.[5] Identity theories, however, provide an incomplete explanation for civilian victimization, being both over- and under-predictive: conflicts between different identity groups often fail to turn toward counter-civilian brutality, and conflicts between similar ethnic and racial groups can result in systematic atrocities.[6]

Regime-type theories, conversely, focus on the role of democratic and autocratic norms and institutions that produce victimization or restraint.[7] Regime-type theories, however, make

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[4] Civilian victimization can be defined either as military strategies that intentionally target civilians or military operations that will predictably kill large numbers of civilians. I adopt the definition used by Alex Downes but modify it to focus on the unit of theoretical interest, the military. See Alexander B. Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[5] Regarding elite-predation, see Rui J. P. de Figueiredo and Barry Weingast, "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict," in *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention*, ed. Barbara F. Walter and Jack L. Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 262–63. Regarding perceptions of barbarism, see John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986). Regarding group fears, see Stuart J. Kaufman, "Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence," *International Security* 30, no. 4, Spring (2006): 45–86. Regarding security dilemmas, see Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (1993): 27–47. Conversely, identity can also actually lead to greater compliance with international humanitarian law, especially among Western and European states. See Tanisha M. Fazal and Brooke C. Greene, "A Particular Difference: European Identity and Civilian Targeting," *British Journal of Political Science* (July 2014): 1–23.

[6] Examples include the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). Additionally, multiple statistical analyses have demonstrated that civilian victimization is not more likely in wars fought by different identity groups. See Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, 2008; Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay, "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare."

[7] See, e.g., R.J. Rummel, "Democracy, Power, Genocide, and Mass Murder," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39, no. 1 (1995): 3–26; Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay, "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare"; Michael J. Engelhardt, "Democracies, Dictatorships, and Counterinsurgency: Does Regime Type Really Matter?," *Conflict Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1992): 52–63. A related school finds liberal norms to be the basis for democratic

conflicting assumptions about the impact of democratic institutions on victimization, and studies have shown that liberal democracies often fail to externalize domestic norms in international behavior.[8] Additionally, statistical analyses have found little evidence that democracies target civilians less than nondemocracies.[9]

A third school, the rationalist perspective, emphasizes the wartime incentives that lead militaries to target civilians. Some theories focus on the use of violence either out of "desperation to win" or in order to "drain the sea" of insurgents.[10] A related explanation focuses on the role of victimization in "deterring defectors," emphasizing the use of selective or indiscriminate violence based on dynamics of territorial control and access to civilian intelligence.[11] Despite the advances they have produced in explaining political violence, strategic theories are often imprecise in measuring variables such as threat or in accounting for timing and causation of such victimization strategies. Additionally, it is unclear whether such tactics actually produce strategic benefits.[12]

The broad strokes by which these theories paint the motivations of military actors obscures a more fine-grained understanding of the causes of civilian victimization, and as these theories demonstrate, social scientific explanations are incomplete without taking into account the military organization that ultimately implements violence against civilians.

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restraint. See Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (July 1, 1983): 205–35.

[8] See John Mueller, *American Foreign Policy and Public Opinion in a New Era: Eleven Propositions*, ed. Barbara Norrander and Clyde Wilcox, *Understanding Public Opinion*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2002). Regarding elite manipulation of democratic publics, see Norrin M. Ripsman, *Peacemaking by Democracies: The Effect of State Autonomy on the Post-World War Settlements* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004); Matthew A. Baum, "The Constituent Foundations of the Rally-Round-the-Flag Phenomenon," *International Studies Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (2002): 263–98. See also Sebastian Rosato, "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 4 (2003): 585–602.

[9] Downes, "Restraint or Propellant? Democracy and Civilian Fatalities in Interstate Wars." See also Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Sarah Croco, "Covenants Without the Sword: International Law and the Protection of Civilians in Times of War," *World Politics* 58, no. 3 (2006): 348.

[10] Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War*, 2008; Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay, "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare."

[11] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 2006; Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Wanton and Senseless?: The Logic of Massacres in Algeria," *Rationality and Society* 11, no. 3 (August 1999): 243–85. Conversely, other rationalists argue that armed groups employ restraint toward civilians in order to gain international and domestic support during counterinsurgency. Jessica Stanton, "Strategies of Violence and Restraint in Civil War" (Columbia, 2009): 50-58.

[12] See, e.g., Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 151; Jason Lyall, "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (2009): 331–62. Kathryn McNabb Cochran and Alexander B. Downes, "Targeting Civilians to Win? Assessing the Military Effectiveness of Civilian Victimization in Interstate War," in *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict*, ed. Erica Chenoweth and Adria Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010): 285.

Organizational Factors, Military Culture and Restraint

In response to these explanations, a research agenda has recently begun to develop identifying organizational-level factors that drive group behavior.[13] Focusing largely on non-state actors and the principle-agent challenges inherent in armed group command structures, much of this research attempts to explain not just leader-directed victimization but also "opportunistic" violence by combatants.[14] Some studies in this perspective emphasize the role of economic rationalism, examining the effects of resource endowments, while others focus on the role of organizational authority and discipline in explaining group behavior.[15]

A different strain of analyses examines the impact of non-rationalist factors on patterns of violence.[16] In this vein, Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Elizabeth Wood recently issued a call for scholars to investigate more fully the role of ideology and other normative sources of armed group behavior.[17] Ideology, in such a perspective, influences organizational structures such as institutional training and enforcement mechanisms in shaping group behavior toward civilians.[18]

This article builds upon these theoretical advances by offering a new understanding of the role of organizational factors in producing restraint. In examining the conduct of the NRA in Uganda, I argue that existing organizational theories overlook the critical effect of an important

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[13] For an in-depth examination of the micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors that can lead to restraint in conditions of potential genocide, see Scott Straus, "Retreating from the Brink: Theorizing Mass Violence and the Dynamics of Restraint," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 02 (June 2012): 343–62.

[14] On the principle-agent challenges inherent in insurgency, see Scott Gates, "Recruitment and Allegiance The Microfoundations of Rebellion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 1 (February 1, 2002): 111–30, and Neil J. Mitchell, *Agents of Atrocity: Leaders, Followers, and the Violation of Human Rights in Civil War*, 1st edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 29-55.

[15] Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 135-140. See also Devorah Manekin, "Violence Against Civilians in the Second Intifada The Moderating Effect of Armed Group Structure on Opportunistic Violence," *Comparative Political Studies* 46, no. 10 (October 1, 2013): 1273–1300, and Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 3 (August 2006): 429–47.

[16] Stathis N. Kalyvas and Laia Balcells, "Did Marxism Make a Difference? Marxist Rebellions and National Liberation Movements," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, 2010), http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1642509.

[17] To understand armed group organization and behavior fully, Gutiérrez Sanín and Wood argue, "analyzing ideology…is essential." Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (March 1, 2014): 222.

[18] See Amelia Hoover Green, "Repertoires of Violence Against Non-Combatants: The Role of Armed Group Institutions and Ideology" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 2011).Kai M. Thaler, "Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars: Theory and Evidence from Mozambique and Angola," *Civil Wars* 14, no. 4 (2012): 546–67, Elisabeth Jean Wood, "Armed Groups and Sexual Violence: When Is Wartime Rape Rare?," *Politics & Society* 37, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 131–61. See also Amelia Hoover Green, *Learning Restraint: The Role of Political Education in Armed Group Behavior Toward Civilians*, Simons Papers in Security and Development, No. 30/2013 (Vancouver: School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University, December 2013). Dara Kay Cohen also examines the role of rape in armed group socialization rites. Dara Kay Cohen, "Explaining Rape during Civil War: Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009)," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013): 461–77.

variable, *military culture,* in shaping armed group behavior toward civilians.[19] Contrary to current organizational models, military culture theory explicitly recognizes the interactive effects of both formal and informal mechanisms of socialization that can influence combatant conduct in conflict.

Based on the example of the NRA, I argue that a military culture based in norms of noncombatant immunity, embodying formal and informal mechanisms of combatant socialization, can fundamentally transform combatant preferences regarding wartime conduct, leading to restraint toward civilians on the battlefield.

Previous analyses have examined the process by which norms shape and influence military behavior, focusing on the content of international norms and their interaction with state interests.[20] In this understanding, values and codes of appropriate conduct in war can form the normative content for the organizational culture of militaries and other armed actors.

Culture—defined generally as a set of evaluative standards, such as norms or values, and a set of cognitive standards, such as rules and models, that define social behavior—constitutes a significant influence in international politics, shaping behavior in ways not predicted by materialist theories by transmitting normative constraints to national or subnational actors.[21] Theories of organizational culture, derived from both organization theory and sociological institutionalism, emphasize the cognitive scripts and moral templates that provide 'frames of meaning' and guide human behavior, defining and shaping the norms of their members.[22]

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[19] On the effect of military culture in shaping general military doctrine or the employment of "restricted" weapons, see Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997) and Jeffrey W. Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995). Culture theories have roots in the constructivist IR perspective. See Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46 (1992): 391–425; John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Constructivist Challenge," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 855–66.

[20] See, e.g., Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*, 1st ed. (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1996); Theo Farrell, *The Norms of War: Cultural Beliefs and Modern Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005): 135-17; Jeffrey W. Legro, "Culture and Preferences in the International Cooperation Two-Step," *The American Political Science Review* 90, no. 1 (1996): 118–37; Ward Thomas, *The Ethics of Destruction: Norms and Force in International Relations* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2001), 20-25.

[21] Peter J. Katzenstein, "Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 6. See also Thomas, *The Ethics of Destruction*, 39-40.

[22] Such theories counter a Weberian view of the rationality of bureaucracies. See John W. Meyer and W. Richard Scott, *Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1983); Martha Finnemore, "Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism," *International Organization* 50, no. 2 (1996): 325–47. See also James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1989) and Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*, 3rd ed. (New York: Random House, 1986). For critiques of culture-based theories, see Michael C. Desch, "Culture Clash: Assessing the Importance of Ideas in Security Studies," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (Summer) (1998): 153-156.

Building from this understanding, military culture can be defined as a military's "set of basic assumptions, values, norms, beliefs and formal knowledge that shape collective understandings" in how armed groups organize themselves and engage in the use of force.[23] Importantly, this emphasis on *collective* understandings emphasizes the social nature of culture: culture is a collectively-held phenomenon, existing through a military community's shared acceptance of and adherence to communal norms.[24]

Organizational culture theory specifically emphasizes the effects of culture in creating both formal and informal influences that socialize members to organizational norms.[25] Specifically, cultures are developed and sustained in armed groups first through three formal mechanisms designed to transform new recruits' identities from civilian to organization member: promotion of group norms by the organization's leadership, intensive training of members in group norms, and enforcement of group norms through reward and sanction structures.[26] Under organizational theory, such formal institutions constitute the important "first round" of member socialization.[27]

Additionally, culture also embodies informal*, social* nature of norm adoption—members' communal sharing of ideas and habits through peer interaction—that serves as an essential "second round" of socialization. This informal socialization occurs within a group's culture when new members assume operational roles within the organization and begin to learn from their peers how "official" organizational norms are translated into practice in the complex environment of real-world operations.[28] The practices of new members' immediate communities signal which "official" group norms are supported and enforced or, conversely, weakened and ignored; official group norms that are not reinforced in this "second-round" of socialization are

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[23] Kier, *Imagining War*. See also Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire*. Importantly, the organizational culture perspective differs significantly from traditional IR organizational theory (or, "parochial interests theory"), which posits that bureaucratic organizations share a focus on maximizing resource allocations and a resistance to external constraints. See Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany between the World Wars*, *Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Jack L. Snyder, "Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984," *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984): 108–46.

[24] Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire,* 22.

[25] See Lindsey M. Kotrba et al., "Do Consistent Corporate Cultures Have Better Business Performance? Exploring the Interaction Effects," *Human Relations* 65, no. 2 (February 1, 2012): 241–62, and Guy S. Saffold III, "Culture Traits, Strength, and Organizational Performance: Moving beyond 'Strong' Culture," *The Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 4 (October 1, 1988): 546–58.

[26] Edgar H. Schein, "Organizational Culture," *American Psychologist* 45, no. 2 (1990): 109–19. See also Kier, *Imagining War,* 29.

[27] John Van Maanen, "People Processing: Strategies of Organizational Socialization," *Organizational Dynamics* 7, no. 1 (1978): 22.

[28] Ibid., 26. See also Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3 edition (San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass, 2004): 18-22.

unlikely to be internalized by combatants, eventually leading to a loss of the norm within the group's culture.[29]

Military cultures embody particularly strong mechanisms of informal socialization. The bonds and identities shared by military members, forged in the shadow of combat, constitute a powerful influence on member behavior.[30] Further solidifying group bonds, military members often even share a unique language comprehensible only to other group members.[31] Such informal socialization, strengthened by members' communal bonds, is as important as formal institutions in norm transmission and combatant socialization.

Culture is conceptually intertwined with the notion of ideology, which can be described as a "highly articulated, self-conscious belief and ritual system, aspiring to offer a unified answer to problems of social action."[32] Indeed, as other organizational-level theories of military behavior have shown, ideology-based institutions, such as political education and punishment structures, can also shape combatant preferences regarding violence against civilians.[33]

Despite their similarity, however, cultures tend to embody a level of organizational norm adoption that is deeper and more stable than simple ideological principles, and the organizational culture perspective explicitly theorizes the informal, peer-based socialization processes that internalize organizational norms, giving them greater resilience over time.[34] Through the formal and informal socializing mechanisms of culture, group members adopt, internalize, and sustain organizational norms.[35] This depth of norm adoption provides greater norm stability that continues even after the original basis for such a norm falls away.

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[29] Joseph L. Soeters, Donna J. Winslow, and Alise Weibull, "Military Culture," in *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, ed. Giuseppe Caforio, Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research (Springer US, 2006): 251. See also Van Maanen, "People Processing," 26-27, Daniel Charles Feldman, "The Multiple Socialization of Organization Members," *The Academy of Management Review* 6, no. 2 (April 1, 1981): 314, and Jill A. Haueter, Therese Hoff Macan, and Joel Winter, "Measurement of Newcomer Socialization: Construct Validation of a Multidimensional Scale," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 63, no. 1 (August 2003): 23.

[30] Sam C. Sarkesian and R. E. Connor, Jr., *The U.S. Military Profession into the Twenty-First Century: War, Peace and Politics* (London: Frank Cass, Jr., 1999): 77-91; Schein, "Organizational Culture."

[31] See, e.g., Frederick Elkin, "The Soldier's Language," *American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 5 (March 1, 1946): 414–22.

[32] Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (April 1, 1986): 273–86.

[33] See Thaler, "Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars"; Sanín and Wood, "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond"; and Hoover Green, "Repertoires of Violence Against Non-Combatants: The Role of Armed Group Institutions and Ideology."

[34] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2004. 13-15. See also Kier, *Imagining War*, 26; Swidler, "Culture in Action," 279; and Van Maanen, "People Processing."

[35] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (October 1, 1998): 904-905. Culture shapes group behavior by "establishing what is 'natural' and making other patterns of behavior inconceivable." Kier, *Imagining War*, 26. See also Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 62.

The "total" nature of military organizations makes them particularly effective in instilling group norms in members, and numerous studies have demonstrated how military culture influences both combatant norms and the behavior of forces in combat.[36] Notably, such cultures can operate within state and non-state military actors in both interstate and intrastate conflict.[37]

Importantly, organizational culture can influence not only general battlefield behavior but also conduct toward civilians.[38] Previous analyses highlighted the role of humanitarian law norms, legal institutions, and military lawyers in examining organizational culture and U.S. Army conduct in Iraq.[39] Because counterinsurgency warfare presents state forces with greater opportunities for both strategic and opportunistic violence against civilians, the effects of cultures of restraint are likely more pronounced in such wars.[40]

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[36] On "total" organizations, see Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007): 1-123. Finnemore and Sikkink note that professions serve as particularly powerful agents in internalizing organizational norms among members. Finnemore and Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," 905. For a modern account of the socialization of recruits into U.S. Marine Corps culture, see Thomas E. Ricks, *Making the Corps* (New York: Touchstone, 1997). Jeffrey Legro shows that organizational culture "defined organizational preferences" and governed the level of cooperation in unconventional weapons use during World War II. Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire*. Similarly, Elizabeth Kier demonstrates that military culture and domestic political constraints can shape military doctrine, determining the tactics used by armies during war. Kier, *Imagining War*. See also Theo Farrell, "Transnational Norms and Military Development: Constructing Ireland's Professional Army," *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 1 (March 2001): 63–102; Charles B. Breslin, "Organizational Culture and the Military" (Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2000). Lynn Eden, *Whole World on Fire: Organizations, Knowledge, and Nuclear Weapons Devastation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988). Although a theory of culture formation is beyond the scope of this paper, organizational cultures can be established in militaries through the influence of early leaders or formative war experiences. See Austin Long, "First War Syndrome: Military Culture, Professionalization, and Counterinsurgency Doctrine" (Massachussetts Institute of Technology, 2010).

[37] Regarding similarities in interstate and intrastate conflict processes, see, e.g., Dennis J. D. Sandole, *Capturing the Complexity of Conflict: Dealing with Violent Ethnic Conflicts of the Post-Cold War Era*, 1 edition (London: Routledge, 1999), 1, and Meredith Reid Sarkees, Frank Whelon Wayman, and J. David Singer, "Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution over Time, 1816–1997," *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (March 1, 2003): 49–70. Organizational-level theory focuses on the operative effects of organizational factors in both interstate and intrastate settings.

[38] Isabel Hull finds that Imperial Germany's political institutions and military culture led to the German military's barbarity in World War I. Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). See also Craig M. Cameron, *American Samurai: Myth and Imagination in the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division 1941-1951*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). While relying on culture as causal explanations, Hull and Cameron do not present a systematic exploration of the formal and informal mechanisms of culture that can influence combatant conduct.

[39] Colin H. Kahl, "In the Crossfire or the Crosshairs? Norms, Civilian Casualties, and U.S. Conduct in Iraq," *International Security* 32, no. 1 (July 2007): 7–46; Laura A. Dickinson, "Military Lawyers on the Battlefield: An Empirical Account of International Law Compliance," *American Journal of International Law* 104, no. 1 (2010): 1–28.

[40] In counterinsurgency, state militaries have increased propensity to inflict mass violence on civilian populations due to insurgents' greater reliance on civilians for support and concealment, the lack of clear distinction between insurgents and civilian noncombatants, and the amorphous nature of the battlefield in counterinsurgency warfare. See U. S. Army and the Marine Corps, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-*

However, while such reviews helpfully pointed to the role of culture in limiting violence, they provide an underspecified account of the causal pathways by which culture can produce restraint; such studies overemphasize features of international law and professionalized state militaries, ignoring the interactive effects of formal and informal socialization mechanisms that transmit organizational norms in armed groups generally.

Such accounts demonstrate the need to revise our understanding of the effects of organizational factors on violence. Indeed, as the case of the NRA demonstrates, a military culture based in based in norms of noncombatant immunity provides the best explanation of the military's restraint in Uganda.

Military Culture in Conflict: Examining the Ugandan Civil Wars

The Ugandan civil wars of the late twentieth century have been a particularly tragic chapter of modern history: throughout a series of post-independence civil conflicts, Uganda's leaders often opposed rebel movements using counter-civilian strategies, leading to the deaths of hundreds of thousands. Two Ugandan counterinsurgencies in particular are useful for a comparative examination of the role of military culture on the battlefield: the Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA) war against the National Resistance Army (NRA) (1981-1986), and the subsequent NRA war against the Ugandan People's Democratic Army (UPDA) (1986-1988). Proximate in time and location, these two cases comprise an excellent "controlled comparison" because they hold major civilian victimization theoretical variables—identity difference, regime-type, and strategic threat—constant, evidencing variance in the key explanatory variable of military culture.

The seeds of Uganda's civil turmoil were sown in the late nineteenth century colonial period, when British political and economic favoritism of Uganda's dominant southern ethnic group, the Baganda, led to bitter resentment from northern Acholi and Langi ethnic groups.[41] When Uganda gained independence in 1962, it was promptly embroiled in internal conflict: Uganda's first prime minister, Milton Obote, a northern Langi, soon took control as president and wielded authoritarian power to oppress southern Ugandans until he was displaced by his protégé, Idi Amin. Amin subsequently intensified Uganda's ethnic divisions through the killing of hundreds of thousands of civilians.[42]

24/Pub. 3-33.5) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 7-2, and Benjamin A. Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare," *International Organization* 58, no. 2 (May 2004): 384-385.

[41] Samwiri Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*, 2nd ed. (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1996): 13, 33; Monica Duffy Toft, *Securing the Peace: The Durable Settlement of Civil Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009): 99.

[42] Amin, of Kakwa and Lugbara ethnicity, came from the multi-ethnic West Nile region of northwestern Uganda. See Harold Acemah, "The Story of West Nile: From DRC to Uganda to the United States of Africa," *Daily Monitor*, July 21, 2013, http://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/ThoughtIdeas/The-story-of-West-Nile--From-DRC-to-Uganda-

Triggering a regional backlash, Amin was driven from power in 1979 by an invading Tanzanian army as well as an alliance of forces led by Obote and Yoweri Museveni, a rebel leader from southwestern Uganda.[43] Following Amin's departure, Obote, as the leader of the Ugandan People's Congress (UPC) party, rigged the 1980 national elections and again seized control of government. This move prompted coalition partner Museveni to withdraw and form the insurgent group that would become the National Resistance Army (NRA). Museveni's NRA then launched a rebellion against Obote's rule, again sparking civil war.[44]

The 1980s civil wars were comprised of two principle stages: in the first "Bush War" (1981-1986), Obote's UNLA fought a counterinsurgency against the NRA until the UNLA's defeat in January 1986. In the second war (1986-1988), the NRA, now controlling the government, launched a counterinsurgency to defeat UNLA forces that had fled to northern Uganda and been reconstituted as the Ugandan People's Democratic Army (UPDA).

The UNLA vs. the NRA (1981-1986)

Following Obote's seizure of power, the NRA, backed primarily by southern Banyankole, Baganda, and exiled Rwandan Tutsi ethnic groups, grew quickly from its initial few dozen fighters, and by 1981 it numbered in the thousands. The group soon made its base of operations in the Baganda-dominated Luwero Triangle north of Kampala, receiving great support from local civilians.[45] After achieving a series of early victories against the UNLA, the NRA continued to grow in strength, eventually posing a significant threat to the UNLA regime.

As the NRA grew, however, the UNLA began to focus more on civilian attacks.[46] Since independence, the Ugandan state military had been decimated by Uganda's rulers in politically- and ethnically-motivated purges, with successive leaders using the military to intimidate and coerce political opponents.[47] By the early 1980s, the army was an illiterate, undisciplined force composed of fighters from Obote's northern homeland. The UNLA embodied a culture based in intimidation and terror rather than in norms of restraint: laws against detention and torture were ignored, political education consisted primarily of "identifying Baganda…as the enemy," and

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to/-/689844/1921012/-/5hluvq/-/index.html. Amin's brutality crossed ethnic lines, and he systematically committed atrocities against northern and southern Ugandans alike. Phares Mukasa Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1992).

[43]Robert Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda: Results of a Field-Based Assessment of the Civil Conflicts in Northern Uganda* (Kampala, 1997); Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007; Amii Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

[44] Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985,* 157-162.

[45] Yoweri K. Museveni, *Sowing The Mustard Seed: The Struggle For Freedom And Democracy In Uganda* (London: Macmillan Education, 1997): 121-137. Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda*; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007; Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985*. For reasons of space, this summary necessarily condenses many events of the civil war.

[46] A.B.K. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1994): 180.

[47] Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985*.

high ranking army officers frequently led violent raids to loot or terrorize the civilian population.[48]

Known for its arbitrary use of violence, UNLA conduct grew even more indiscriminate as the war progressed. By 1983, the UNLA launched a massive civilian victimization campaign known as the "Grand Offensive," turning its firepower on Baganda civilians in the Luwero Triangle. In this campaign, the UNLA was given free-rein by its leadership to violate the civilian population, abuses that were exacerbated by the severe hatred between northern and southern ethnic groups.[49] Indeed, reflecting the ethnic enmity between the two sides, Baganda civilians referred to the hated UNLA soldiers as "the Acholis" based on the large number of ethnic Acholis in the UNLA.[50] The UNLA campaign killed approximately 50,000 and 300,000 southern civilians, emptying villages and decimating entire families.[51]

The strategy worked, causing a major set-back for the NRA and forcing it to leave the Luwero Triangle. The NRA experienced significant losses from this campaign, which for a time put the viability of the NRA's insurgency at risk.[52] Despite the UNLA's brutality, however, the NRA was eventually able to regroup and mount a resurgence elsewhere around the country, gaining strength through its support from civilians. By 1985, the NRA numbered around 21,000 troops, approaching parity with the UNLA's force of 35,000, and UNLA fighters began large scale defections to the NRA.[53] The NRA soon opened up a two-front war, leading to a military coup that replaced Obote as president but kept the UNLA in power.[54] The NRA continued to gain strength through further victories, and by January 1986 the NRA was able to defeat the UNLA and seize Kampala.[55]

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[48] Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 145-153. The widespread use of roadblocks by underpaid UNLA soldiers to rob and violate Ugandan civilians symbolized the lack of discipline and respect for the civilian population within the state military.

[49] Toft, *Securing the Peace*; Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 178-181.

[50] Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda*, 10.

[51]See Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda,* 145-163, 180, and Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007, 71. Widespread reporting supports descriptions of significant UNLA victimization of Ugandan civilians. See, e.g., Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda,* 10.

[52] Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 70.

[53] Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda, 8;* Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 68.

[54] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 69-71.

[55] Muhoozi Kainerugaba, *Battles of the Ugandan Resistance* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 2010): 155; Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda*, 12.

The NRA vs. the UNLA/UPDA (1986-1988)

The UNLA did not disappear upon its defeat, however. Instead, it retreated to its tribal homelands in northern Uganda to continue its resistance under the new name of the Ugandan People's Democratic Army (UPDA).

Expecting retaliation from the newly-ascendant NRA, former UNLA troops and northern civilians poured into UPDA ranks to defend their homelands, known as Acholiland. The northern-dominated UNLA had wreaked devastation against southern civilians during the Bush War, and ethnic hostility between the southerners and northerners was especially intense.[56] The UPDA grew to significant strength, estimated to be 15,000 soldiers,[57] which posed a major threat to the NRA's force of approximately 80,000 troops.[58] The reinvigorated UPDA insurgency grew and spread across multiple districts in northern Uganda, including Gulu, Kitgum, Lango and Teso.[59] This insurgent threat led other groups to rise up against the NRA, and the NRA soon found itself confronting eight major insurgencies around the country simultaneously, creating a major security crisis for the new regime.[60]

The war between northerners and southerners soon began anew. NRA forces invaded Acholiland in September 1986, but the carnage expected by Acholi civilians never materialized: the NRA generally focused its hostilities on UPDA combatants, largely eschewing the wholesale violence against civilians that had come to mark Uganda's civil wars, and surprising northern civilians with its restraint.[61] The NRA eventually was able to defeat the UPDA in a series of

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[56] Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda*, 13; Ali Mari Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010): 152.

[57] *Uppsala Conflict Data Program*, *UCPD Conflict Encyclopedia* (Uppsala, Norway), "Uganda: In Depth: The conflict in the north erupts (August 1986)." Based on the poor data on the civil conflict, estimates of UPDA strength vary greatly. Some estimates put the UPDA numbers as high as 50,000, but this likely vastly overestimates UPDA strength. See Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime*.

[58] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007, 68. See also Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[59] Dan M. Mudoola, "Institution-Building: The Case of the NRM and the Military in Uganda 1986-9," in *Changing Uganda: The Dilemmas of Structural Adjustment & Revolutionary Change*, ed. Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle (London: James Currey, 1991): 230–46; Ondoga ori Amaza, *Museveni's Long March from Guerrilla to Statesman* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1998).

[60] Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda: Paradoxes of Power in a Hybrid Regime*, 157; Janet I. Lewis, "How Rebellion Begins: Insurgent Group Formation and Viability in Uganda" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard, 2012). See also Mudoola, "Institution-Building," 244. One Ugandan commentator notes that the UPDA rebellion opened a "Pandora's box" for threats to the NRA regime. Amaza, *Museveni's Long March from Guerrilla to Statesman*, 120.

[61] Obote had earlier warned UNLA leaders that an NRA victory would result in massacres of the Acholi population in northern Uganda. Timothy Kalyegira, "Insurgency in the Northern and Eastern Regions in 1986," *The Daily Monitor*, December 12, 2012, http://www.monitor.co.ug/SpecialReports/ugandaat50/Insurgency-in-the-northern-and-eastern-regions-in-1986/-/1370466/1642098/-/15dlhhtz/-/index.html. See also Mudoola, "Institution-Building," 244. See also Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda*, 14, 22.

battles and offer amnesty to UPDA fighters, weakening the rebel group. Suffering intense losses, the UPDA's leadership finally surrendered in 1988.[62]

Examining the NRA's Military Culture

As a rebel group, the NRA's leadership had focused on creating a strong culture of civilian protection, instilling norms of noncombatant immunity into the NRA membership as part of the group's embrace of nationalist revolutionary ideology and Maoist-inspired "people's war" strategy.[63]

Museveni had studied Marxist ideology as a university student in Tanzania, and he later adopted tenets of Maoist revolutionary doctrine while undergoing guerilla training with the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) in Mozambique.[64] The "people's war" strategy at the heart of Maoist ideology became a key pillar of his Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), a precursor to the NRA, and Museveni made the development of Ugandan people and the related norm of civilian protection a central focus of the NRA's revolutionary project.[65]

With the 1986 NRA victory over the UNLA, the new state military faced an unexpected challenge: a flood of new recruits threatened to transform the foundational norms underlying the NRA's organizational culture. Within a few short years, the NRA's ranks swelled from 20,000 to approximately 80,000 soldiers, which included tens of thousands of "late joiners" and former UNLA fighters who did not share the activist, ideological commitment of NRA's core rebel membership.[66] This influx of new members threatened to weaken and overwhelm the organizational norms that formed the basis of the NRA organization.[67]

NRA leaders recognized that that an intensive norm-embedding program was needed to maintain the focus on respect for civilians at the basis of the NRA's culture.[68] As a result, the

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[62] The Gulu Accord of 1988 ended most of the UPDA insurgency, though remnants lived on in continued northern Ugandan insurgencies.

[63] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Weinstein also examines the NRA in creating a structural theory of rebel group dynamics. However, Weinstein foregoes a detailed examination of the NRA following its assumption of power as the Ugandan state military.

[64] Nelson Kasfir, "Guerillas and Civilian Participation: The National Resistance Army in Uganda, 1981-86," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, no. 2 (2005): 275-276. Indeed, there are often strategic benefits to valuing local civilians in insurgency and counterinsurgency. Museveni himself recognized the intertwined humanitarian and strategic rationales for such an ideology of civilian protection. Yoweri K. Museveni, "The Strategy of Protracted People's War," *Military Review*, December 2008: 5-8. On Maoist insurgent strategy, see Ralph L. Powell, "Maoist Military Doctrines," *Asian Survey* 8, no. 4 (April 1, 1968), 249.

[65] Interview with Ugandan human rights expert, [#5.2012.B]. See also Kasfir, "Guerillas and Civilian Participation: The National Resistance Army in Uganda, 1981-86," 275. Kainerugaba, *Battles of the Ugandan Resistance*, 44-45, 198.

[66] Pecos Kutesa, *Uganda's Revolution: How I Saw It* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 2006): 254. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 68.

[67] Kutesa, *Uganda's Revolution: How I Saw It*, 254-255.

[68] Interviews with senior Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) general [#5.2012.B] and retired UPDF colonel [#5.2012.F]. The NRA was renamed the UPDF in 1995.

NRA focused on strengthening organizational norms through four key mechanisms: leadership promotion of the norm, intense norm training of army membership, the use of enforcement structures to reinforce norm adoption, and the peer-based socialization of members.

1. Leadership Norm Promotion

From the group's beginnings, the NRA's leadership had demonstrated a strong interest in promoting respect for civilians in the military. Museveni formally signaled the NRA leadership's support for civilian protection norms with the 1981 NRA Code of Conduct, which established rules for the NRA's treatment of civilians.[69] Museveni himself and other senior commanders also taught political education courses emphasizing respect for civilians, highlighting the norm's importance to the NRA's leadership.[70]

Upon becoming president, Museveni reiterated the importance of the norm as a key emphasis of his military and political philosophy: during his swearing-in as president of Uganda, Museveni proclaimed, "We make it clear to our soldiers that if they abuse any citizen, the punishment they receive will teach them a lesson. As for killing people—if you kill a citizen, you yourself will be killed."[71] Throughout this early period, Museveni often publicly emphasized the importance of respecting civilians, noting that "[t]he…revolution is dedicated to restoration of human dignity and observance of people's rights to life" and at other points stating, "First of all, you must never attack noncombatants. Never, never, never, never!"[72] Other NRA leaders also reinforced this theme, issuing public proclamations promoting respect for civilians and condemning incidents of abuse.[73] Finally, Museveni and the NRA leadership also made the norm a central aspect of the NRA's political and military institutions, including the NRA's training and enforcement structures.[74]

2. Intensive Norm Training

Rigorous norm training was the second component of the NRA's efforts to strengthen organizational norms and socialize combatants to a culture of noncombatant immunity.[75] Both

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[69] Mudoola, "Institution-Building," 237. The Code of Conduct was later formalized in Ugandan law as Legal Notice No. 1 of 1986 (Amendment).

[70] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 141.

[71] Faustin Mugabe, ed., *Yoweri Museveni: This He Said* (Kampala, Uganda, 2011). Elsewhere, Museveni stated that "I became a soldier to save myself and my people against state-inspired violence." Ibid., 27.

[72] Mugabe, *Yoweri Museveni: This He Said,* 75. See also "Museveni warns NRA," *The New Vision*, February 8, 1993, 1. Museveni similarly publically promoted noncombatant immunity for civilians who worked with opposing forces, stating "Civilians should not be killed if they are not armed—even if they are for [the enemy]—you just scare them away." Museveni, "The Strategy of Protracted People's War," 7-9.

[73] See, e.g., Issa Kagimbo, "No one is above the law—Brigadier," *The New Vision*, January 24, 1992, 1, and Frederick Nyakabwa, "NRA condemns Kabarole killings," *The New Vision*, March 28, 1992, 1.

[74] Interview with Ugandan human rights expert [#5.2012.B].

[75] Dan M. Mudoola, "Institution-Building," 237.

during its insurgency and after its assumption of power, the NRA emphasized organizational norms in its training for military officers and soldiers.[76]

In the earliest phases of the insurgency, the NRA leadership had established systematic military and political training programs to instill its core values into NRA recruits even before they were allowed to join the insurgency's operations.[77] Military training was implemented by a special "Nkrumah" training unit that focused its three month training program on "people's war" and the protection of civilians. The first training briefing new soldiers received, entitled "Who is the Enemy?," was designed to establish the distinction between the civilian population and enemy forces.[78] This training was deemed important enough to keep desperately-needed fighters in the classroom before sending them into combat. Political education was conducted daily within combat units when they were not engaged in battle by commissars embedded in every unit.[79] Commissars helped emphasize to soldiers the doctrine of "people's war," and this repeated training helped to reinforce the norm training soldiers received during their initial military training.[80]

As the NRA transitioned to power and tens of thousands of new recruits flooded the group, the NRA formalized and increased the norm training mandated for soldiers, a policy all the more remarkable for its institution during multiple insurgencies.[81] NRA officers underwent four more months of ideology training at the Namugongo national political education school.[82] The NRA also instituted a system of *chaka-mchaka,* mandatory ideological courses for military officers and civil servants.[83] This program emphasized the importance of the Ugandan people

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[76] Interview with senior UPDF general [#5.2012.C].

[77] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 110.

[78] Interview with senior UPDF general [#5.2012.C].

[79] The Nkrumah Unit's formalized training program provided half the day to military training, with the second half of the day reserved for political education. The Nkrumah Unit taught recruits how to behave toward the civilian population. As one former commander noted, "The main issue was teaching respect for the civilian population." Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007. See also interviews with current and former UPDF colonels [#5.2012.D, #5.2012.F].

[80] Interview with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.D].On the importance of reiterated training, see Hoover Green, "Repertoires of Violence Against Non-Combatants: The Role of Armed Group Institutions and Ideology.", 40.

[81] Ngoga, "Uganda: The National Resistance Army," 104; interview with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.D]. Interview with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.E].

[82] Political education at the school emphasized treatment of the civilian populations, including courses such as "Introduction to Political Education," "Revolutionary Methods of Work," and "The Importance of Ideological development for Leaders." The school is known today known as the National Leadership Institute, or NALI. Interviews with UPDF general [#5.2012.E] and UPDF general [#5.2012.C].

[83] *Chaka-mchaka* takes its name from the sound of military boots stomping in unison during drills. For a critical view of the *chaka-mchaka* system, see Peter Bouckaert, "Hostile to Democracy: The Movement System and Political Repression in Uganda," 1999.

and the necessity of protecting civilians.[84] Such training was continued, at all levels of command, throughout soldiers' careers.[85]

The NRA also used intensive political education to integrate former anti-NRA fighters into the NRA's culture. All former anti-NRA fighters were required to undergo intensive training in NRA doctrine, and NRA norms-integration efforts were so successful that many former anti-NRA fighters later achieved senior command positions.[86] Reintegration of former anti-NRA fighters was emphasized to the extent that NRA members often used a popular saying: "The NRA is like a bus on its way: it doesn't matter when you get on, it only matters that you do."[87]

3. Norm Enforcement Structures

Additionally, norm enforcement structures were critical to the maintenance of the NRA's culture of noncombatant immunity. To enforce this Code of Conduct, Museveni instituted a "zero-tolerance" policy for violations, known as *emiziro* (taboos).[88] Charges for violations could be brought against soldiers by NRA political commissars, and in an effort to demonstrate publicly the NRA's commitment to discipline, the NRA also encouraged civilians to bring charges for abuses against soldiers.[89] Discipline was emphasized throughout the NRA's ranks to such an extent that even low-level enlisted soldiers were known to report officers' violations against civilians directly to the prime minister's office.[90]

Prosecution of such violations was also an important norm enforcement mechanism. Early in the NRA's existence, the group's leadership tried and punished a number of soldiers in prominent cases that publically signaled the importance of norm compliance.[91] In one particularly important early case, Museveni himself, as chairman of the NRA's High Command, presided over the public conviction of two soldiers who had killed two civilians at the town of Semuto.[92] In another important early case, NRA leaders arrested the leadership of an associated

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[84] Interview with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.D]. Interviews with Ugandan human rights expert [#5.2012.B], senior UPDF general [#5.2012.C], and UPDF colonel [#5.2012.A].

[85] Interview with former UPDF colonel [#5.2012.A].

[86] Lt. Gen. Andrew Guti, once an anti-NRA rebel from the northern region of Karamojo, directed the Ugandan Military Academy. Former anti-NRA fighters Brig. Gen. Charles Angina and Brig. Gen. Fred Tolit have served as chairs of the UPDF courts martial. Other prominent former anti-NRA fighters who achieved high rank in the NRA include Maj. Gen. Francis Okello and Maj. Gen. Julius Oketa. Interviews with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.A] and civilian Ugandan defense expert [#5.2012.G].

[87] Interview with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.A].

[88] Mudoola, "Institution-Building," 237. See also Yoweri Museveni, "Understanding Separation of Powers, Independence of the Judiciary," *New Vision*, March 19, 2007, sec. Archive, http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/459/555008. Such crimes included extra-judicial killing, rape, defilement, and threat to civilian property.

[89] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007, 226.

[90] See "Petition implicates NRA officers," *The New Vision*, August 31, 1992.

[91] Interview with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.A].

[92] Museveni, "Understanding Separation of Powers, Independence of the Judiciary." See also Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007, 226.

rebel movement that abused civilians.[93] As it transitioned to its role as the state military, the NRA continued to use these structures to enforce these norms. Notably, courts martial were held in public to highlight the NRA's punishment of members who violated the military's rules protecting civilians.[94] These well-known cases demonstrated to all Ugandans the NRA leadership's emphasis on upholding norms of civilian protection.[95]

Convictions brought severe punishment for NRA soldiers: lesser crimes incurred sentences of *kiboko* (beating) and prison, while more serious crimes were punishable by death.[96] A detailed examination of Ugandan media archives revealed that during the post-revolutionary period from 1986 to 1993, at least 21 NRA soldiers, including unit commanders, were prosecuted for killing civilians, and another 19 soldiers were charged for non-lethal abuses of civilians.[97] At least 45 NRA soldiers since 1986 are reported to have been sentenced to death for harming civilians, and some NRA commanders have estimated that as many as 120 soldiers were executed for Code of Conduct violations.[98] This frequent reliance on the death penalty presents compelling evidence of the NRA's vigor in enforcement of organizational norms: the number of NRA executions approaches the number of executions committed by the entire U.S. military during World War II, a force some 200 times the NRA's size.[99] The forceful and public nature of the NRA's punishment of violations against civilians indicates that the NRA prioritized norm enforcement as a means to reinforce norm socialization among NRA members.

4. Informal Socialization

Finally, the NRA encouraged members to internalize group norms through the "second round" socialization mechanism of communal, peer-based interactions within combat units. In interviews, NRA fighters frequently highlighted the importance of peer influences in helping them to learn and adopt NRA norms.[100] The NRA focused on the development of close bonds through the group's emphasis on comradeship and "conscious discipline," principles that

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[93] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007.
[94] Interview with Ugandan human rights expert [#5.2012.B].
[95] Interviews with former UPDF colonel [#5.2012.D]; Museveni, "The Strategy of Protracted People's War," 9.
[96] Mudoola, "Institution-Building," 1991. 238.
[97] Because of media underreporting, these numbers likely significantly underrepresent the actual number of NRA prosecutions for civilian abuse. A survey of Ugandan archives examined records from all major Ugandan newspapers from 1986-1993, including *The New Vision*, *The Monitor*, *The Citizen,* and *Focus*. I am indebted to the staff at the Center for Basic Research in Kampala for archival research help.
[98] Interview with former UPDF colonel [#5.2012.F]. NRA officers during this period noted that the military's courts martial were more effective than civilian courts in prosecuting soldiers. See Hellen Mukiibi, "Army tries cases better than judiciary—Tumwine," *The Star*, June 3, 1989, 1. See also Museveni, "Understanding Separation of Powers, Independence of the Judiciary."
[99] The U.S. military executed 147 U.S. service members during World War II. Stephanie Picolo Manzi, "Capital Punishment in the United States," in *Handbook of Death and Dying*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2003), 368–77, 374-375.
[100] See, e.g., interviews with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.A], UPDF colonel [#5.2012.C] and UPDF general [#5.2012.D].

prioritized discipline through the internalization of organizational norms rather than through rules and punishment.[101] Under "conscious discipline," every soldier was expected to act as a "political commissar," promoting NRA ideological principles to other soldiers.[102]

Unit "open meetings" were another important way in which NRA fighters were socialized through peer-to-peer interactions.[103] In open meetings, which somewhat resembled "therapy sessions," NRA fighters of all ranks were encouraged to critique commanders regarding unit compliance with organizational norms: commanders, like the lower-level troops they led, were held publically accountable for norm violations.[104] Though these meetings, new members learned of the significance of the NRA's organizational principles for all unit members. Open meetings helped to underscore to all NRA members the importance of norm compliance and accountability within operational units.

Similarly, the institution of a common language among NRA members helped to reinforce the development of group bonds, members' identification with the NRA, and the peer-based socialization of organizational norms. Following the NRA victory over the UNLA, the NRA adopted Swahili, a language not indigenous to Uganda or its ethnic groups, as the military's common language for all training, operations and unit communications.[105] Soldiers learned Swahili during training and subsequently used the language when in operations or when interacting with other NRA members. This distinctive language helped reinforce members' identification with the NRA and their fellow fighters, solidifying group bonds and further enhancing peer-to-peer socialization among members.[106]

The integration of former anti-NRA fighters into NRA ranks demonstrates the powerful effects of informal peer-based socialization mechanisms. Over 22 anti-NRA rebel groups were incorporated into the NRA following its victory in 1986.[107] Although these new members experienced intensive political training upon joining the NRA, the influence of other NRA members within combat units helped to further socialize them to NRA principles.[108] In one example of this effect, as the NRA moved into Acholiland and UPDA members began to change sides, the NRA used ethnic Acholi members to gain the trust of these anti-NRA fighters, encouraging them to form relationships to help integrate new converts into the NRA and

[101] Interviews with former UPDF colonel [#5.2012.F].
[102] Interview with UPDF general [#5.2012.D].
[103] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007, 140, 144.
[104] Interviews with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.D].
[105] Ali Al'Amin Mazrui and Alamin M. Mazrui, *Swahili State and Society: The Political Economy of an African Language* (East African Publishers, 1995), 76-77.
[106] Interviews with former UPDF colonel [#5.2012.F].
[107] Interview with civilian Ugandan defense expert [#5.2012.G].
[108] Interview with civilian Ugandan defense expert [#5.2012.G].

socialize them to organizational norms.[109] Such examples demonstrate how informal, peer-based socialization was a critical mechanism in shaping NRA member preferences.

These interactive socialization mechanisms helped NRA members internalize group norms of noncombatant immunity, shaping members' preferences and beliefs regarding appropriate conduct on the battlefield. Indeed, rather than take up the example of cruelty set by previous Ugandan armies, every NRA combatant interviewed for this research cited a desire to exhibit respect for the Ugandan people during the NRA's wars.[110] One colonel summed up this sentiment when he stated: "What we did in the bush we did not for survival but for our doctrine and our ideology."[111] Another officer, commenting on the general attitudes of NRA members, remarked that "We experienced constant education and our training became like 'preaching to the converted': we believed in our ideology to the point that it became almost automatic."[112] Such sentiments were frequently echoed by former NRA members interviewed for this research. Such a deep level of norm adoption suggests that the norm of civilian immunity had become part of the NRA's organizational culture and had a significant effect in shaping its members' norms of wartime conduct.

The Effects of Military Culture: NRA Conduct Toward Civilians

Despite the influx of new recruits during its transition to a state military, the NRA in its war against the UPDA inflicted limited violence toward civilians in northern Uganda; while data from the UPDA war are extremely poor, the number of civilian casualties from the conflict is estimated to be in the low hundreds.[113] While the deaths of any civilians are tragic, such numbers provide evidence of the NRA's general restraint; given the hundreds of thousands of civilians killed under Uganda's previous regimes, as well as the chaotic nature of counterinsurgency warfare, such estimates of civilian casualties stand out for being notably low.

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[109] Interviews with former UPDF colonel [#5.2012.F].

[110] While interview subjects may be expected to provide self-serving rationales for wartime action, the degree to which NRA fighters repeatedly emphasized ideological and moral rationales provides a window into NRA members' perceived basis for conduct.

[111] Interviews with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.D].

[112] Interviews with UPDF colonel [#5.2012.A].

[113] See *SIPRI Yearbook 1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 377. The Yearbook does not present numbers of civilian deaths, representing the lack of evidence for a large-scale campaign of civilian victimization. The pervasive violence, political divisions, and limited press coverage in the Ugandan wars embodied the difficulties inherent in most attempts to gather objective civilian casualty data during conflict. See Jay D. Aronson, "The Politics of Civilian Casualty Counts," in *Counting Civilian Casualties: An Introduction to Recording and Estimating Nonmilitary Deaths in Conflict*, ed. Taylor B. Seybolt, Jay D. Aronson, and Baruch Fischhoff (Oxford University Press, 2013), 29–50; Peter Andreas, Kelly M. Greenhill, and Kelly M. Greenhill, eds., "Counting the Cost: The Politics of Numbers in Armed Conflict," in *Sex, Drugs, and Body Counts: The Politics of Numbers in Global Crime and Conflict* (Cornell University Press, 2011). The Yearbook does put total military casualties for the 1986-1990 period at 11,000, indicating the intensity of threat facing the NRA during this period. See also Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda,* 122, and Mudoola, "Institution-Building," 244.

Indeed, reflecting such numbers, the NRA was praised by multiple human rights organizations for its conduct during the UPDA war. In one example, an Amnesty International delegation reported in May 1987 that NRA rule had led to a "massive qualitative improvement in the human rights situation" in Uganda, adding that there was "no evidence to suggest there was a policy of killing civilians."[114] Similarly, a report from this period by the London-based Minority Rights Group found that the NRA was responsible for a significant improvement in human rights in Uganda.[115]

NRA behavior was not flawless, and some human rights organizations criticized the NRA for reports of extrajudicial killings and other human rights abuses.[116] An incident at the town of Mukura, in which 69 civilians suspected of being UPDA insurgents suffocated to death while held in an overcrowded train car, stands out as a particularly notorious example.[117] Other reported atrocities involved former anti-NRA rebel units that had been incorporated into the NRA, such as the September 1986 killing of 40 civilians at Namukora by the 35th battalion.[118] Such incidents indicate that some NRA units did engage in violence against civilians during the war.

Despite these events, however, overall NRA violence against civilians was generally limited, and the NRA leadership took steps during the war to reduce such violence. In an example demonstrating the NRA leadership's commitment to enforcing the norm of noncombatant immunity, Museveni fired the commanders of the 35th Battalion and arrested the perpetrators of the Namukora incident, an action that resulted in a significant improvement in NRA conduct.[119] Reflecting such efforts, following a fact-finding visit the director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees highlighted the NRA's restraint, stating: "From what I saw, I am convinced that the performance of the NRA with respect to civilians who are traditional ethnic

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[114] "Amnesty praises NRM," *The New Vision*, May 12, 1987. The norm of respect for civilians was emphasized to the extent that despite the NRA's early funding constraints, the NRA instituted a policy of repaying civilians for property that had been appropriated by its forces during the civil war. Justus Muhanguzi, "NRA repays Luwero war effort," *The New Vision*, May 29, 1987, 1.

[115] Yunusu Abbey, "London group lauds NRA," *The New Vision*, August 15, 1989, 12.

[116] For critiques of NRA conduct during the war in Acholiland, see, e.g., "Uganda: Human Rights Violations by the National Resistance Army" Amnesty International, USA (New York, 1991) and Adam Branch, "Neither Peace nor Justice: Political Violence and the Peasantry in Northern Uganda, 1986-1998," *African Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (2005): 1–28.

[117] See "The Mukura Massacre of 1989," Justice and Reconciliation Project (Gulu, Uganda, 2011), http://justiceandreconciliation.com/2011/03/the-mukura-massacre-of-1989-fn-xii/ (accessed February 22, 2014). Museveni ordered an official investigation into the incident, resulting in the arrest of 14 officers and prosecution of two officers.

[118] The unit was comprised of former anti-NRA fighters from the Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda (FEDEMU) and Ugandan Freedom Movement (UFM) soldiers Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda,* 122; Amaza, *Museveni's Long March from Guerrilla to Statesman,* 24.

[119] Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda,* 24.

antagonists is qualitatively better than that of the UNLA…."[120] The director went on to recognize the role of organizational culture in shaping NRA conduct:

> The NRA has a thorough political education system that places political indoctrination high on the agenda for soldiers and new recruits. Enforcement of discipline within the NRA is a cardinal operating principle…The core of the NRA is a cadre of highly ideological, well-educated men and women who are strong nationalists….Their motivations, after hundreds of hours of discussion with many of them, are primarily political, not ethnic. They seek to build a popular, highly politicized army that earns its way rather than living off the people.[121]

Indeed, when compared to the cycles of almost unimaginable brutality during the civil wars of the previous decades, the NRA's relative restraint is remarkable.

Testing Military Culture Theory: A "Controlled-Comparison" Test

The UNLA and NRA counterinsurgencies provide excellent cases by which to examine through controlled comparison theory testing the impact of organizational culture on military behavior.[122] The "controlled comparison" (or "most similar" case comparison) is a research design in which multiple cases, comparable in all respects except for the independent variable, are analyzed to examine whether the variance in the key independent variable may account for the difference outcomes in the dependent variable.[123] The UNLA and NRA cases hold key civilian victimization variables constant: identity/ethnicity enmity, regime-type, and strategic threat are held equivalent in both counterinsurgencies, and only organizational norms and the key explanatory variable of military culture vary significantly across the two cases.

Theories of civilian victimization are probabilistic, and not every case of victimization will be explained by such theories. However, the overdetermined predictions for NRA victimization makes the NRA case a striking puzzle for the theories of ethnic enmity, regime-type, and strategic threat theories. As noted in the case outlines, ethnic and identity hostility between northern and southern tribal groups was extremely high in both the UNLA and NRA cases. Notably, identity theory predicts an even greater likelihood of civilian victimization by the NRA: the already intense inter-ethnic hostility between the Acholi and Langi tribes of northern

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[120] "American Vindicates NRA Discipline," *The New Vision*, September 18, 1987, 6-7. The director, Roger Winter, co-authored a report outlining these findings. See Roger P. Winter and Tom Brennan, *Human Rights in Uganda: A Season of Hope for Its Refugees and Displaced Persons*, United States Committee for Refugees, 1986.

[121] "American Vindicates NRA Discipline," *The New Vision*.

[122] Case selection is critical to and gaining maximum inferential leverage on hypothesized causal mechanisms. Gary King, Robert Owen Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Trenton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994): 118.

[123] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

Uganda and the Baganda and Banyankole tribes of southern Uganda was exacerbated by the UNLA's slaughter of southern civilians. Given this brutality, it could be expected that southern NRA fighters would seek to retaliate for the violence they or their families had faced at the hands of the northern-dominated UNLA.

Regime-type theories predict civilian victimization by both the UNLA and NRA. Throughout the UNLA counterinsurgency, the Obote-led United People's Congress (UPC) regime (1980-1985) earned scores for "anocracy" (3) on the Polity IV democracy scale and "Not Free/Partly Free" (4-6) from Freedom House.[124] Similarly, the Museveni-led National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime throughout the NRA counterinsurgency (1986-1988) earned scores for "autocracy" (-7) on the Polity IV scale and "Partly Free" (4-5) from Freedom House.[125] As nondemocracies, both regimes lacked the political norms and institutions that can lead to respect for individual rights under regime-type theories, leading to prediction of victimization.

Finally, both the UNLA and the NRA faced significant strategic threats that predict counter-civilian violence under rationalist theories.[126] The UNLA faced a clear threat from the NRA, which eventually grew strong enough to overthrow the Obote regime. Similarly, the NRA faced a significant regime threat from the UPDA, with thousands of UPDA troops serving as a catalyst for multiple other rebellions around the country.[127] Strategic learning from the UNLA's earlier defeat also does not fully account for NRA restraint. While there is mixed evidence regarding whether civilian victimization represents a successful long-term counterinsurgency strategy,[128] clear models for victory relying on mass killing existed for NRA leaders in recent Ugandan historical memory: British colonialists effectively used counter-civilian violence in the early twentieth century to pacify Acholi and Bunyoro resistance; successive Ugandan regimes since independence had relied on violence and repression to seize and maintain power; and the

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[124] Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jaggers, *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2010*, 2011; *Freedom in the World* (Washington, DC, 2010). The Polity IV scale ranges from -10 (Autocracy) to 10 (Full Democracy). The year 1985 is coded as an "interregnum" year for Uganda. The Freedom House scale ranges from 1 (Free) to 7 (Not Free).

[125] Marshall and Jaggers, *Polity IV Project*; "Freedom in the World." For an insightful analysis of the NRA/NRM system of "no party democracy," see Nelson Kasfir, "'No-Party Democracy' in Uganda," *Journal of Democracy* 9, no. 2 (1998): 49–63.

[126] Notably, the NRA case appears to contradict the "deterring defectors" theory of civilian victimization. While complete data from the civil war period are unavailable, there is little indication of an NRA campaign of selective violence as the NRA achieved dominance in UPDA-infiltrated areas, and there is no little of indiscriminate violence when the UPDA weakened to the point that it was not able to protect local civilians. Such restraint is surprising given that the fragile nature of the recently-established Museveni regime provided a clear strategic logic for victimization: the NRA had great incentive to brutally suppress these nascent insurgencies in order to secure its own tentative hold on power. See Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 2006, 168, 204 and Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda,* 14, 16; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007.

[127] Mudoola, "Institution-Building," 244. Numbers of military casualties shed light on the threat faced by the NRA in this period: between 6,000 and 11,000 combatants on all sides were killed during this early period of NRA rule. See *UCPD Conflict Encyclopedia* and *SIPRI Yearbook 1991*.

[128] Allison M. Shelton, Szymon M. Stojek, and Patricia L. Sullivan, "What Do We Know about Civil War Outcomes?," *International Studies Review* 15, no. 4 (December 1, 2013): 524-526.

UNLA's "Grand Offensive" three years earlier had produced remarkable success, coming close to achieving victory for the UNLA.[129]

Furthermore, while the NRA undoubtedly had strategic motivations for maintaining popular support, the deep-rooted, historical antagonism between NRA-supporting southern ethnic groups and the UPDA-supporting northern population suggested that a campaign for the "hearts and minds" of northern Acholi and Langi would be difficult if not impossible to implement; northern Ugandan tribes represented a potentially intractable and enduring source of support for anti-NRA forces.[130] The NRA thus faced significant strategic rationales for using indiscriminate violence to coerce or enfeeble the population of northern Uganda.

Armed group organization—and particularly military culture—is the only key theoretical variable to vary across the UNLA and NRA cases (see Table 1). As noted above, the UNLA placed no emphasis on civilian protection within its membership, embodying instead a culture that failed to emphasize discipline or respect for civilians. In contrast, the NRA leadership's instilled a culture of noncombatant immunity within the military organization, socializing commanders and fighters to embrace tactics of restraint. As this controlled-comparison test of these two cases shows, military culture was the factor that most likely led to differences between UNLA and NRA behavior.

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[129] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007, 70; A.B.K. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain Publishers, 1994): 1-6, 22-23. See also Adam Branch, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 47-48. The "Grand Offensive" case illustrates the potential negative long-term consequences of civilian victimization strategies. However, Downes demonstrates that such mass killings can be effective in certain conditions, such as when the population is small, the insurgency occupies limited geographic scope, and insurgents have no access to sanctuary. Alexander B. Downes, "Draining the Sea by Filling the Graves: Investigating the Effectiveness of Indiscriminate Violence as a Counterinsurgency Strategy," *Civil Wars* 9, no. 4 (December 2007): 420–44. Overall, there is also mixed evidence regarding the short-term effectiveness of counterinsurgency strategies employing restraint or violence against civilians. See, e.g., Lyall, "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks?"; Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas B. Pepinsky, and Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War," *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (April 1, 2011): 201–18.
[130] Downes notes that indiscriminate government violence is likely to be more effective than selective violence when the civilian population is already committed to the insurgents' cause. See Downes, "Draining the Sea by Filling the Graves," 439.

Table 1. Comparison of UNLA and NRA Counterinsurgencies

	UNLA Counterinsurgency	NRA Counterinsurgency
Ethnic/Identity Enmity	High	High
	Northern (Acholi/Langi) vs.	Northern (Acholi/Langi) vs.
	Southern (Baganda) Tribes	Southern (Baganda) Tribes
State Regime	Nondemocratic	Nondemocratic
	3: Anocracy (Polity IV)	-7: Autocracy (Polity IV)
	4-6: Partly Free/ Not Free (FH)	4-5: Partly Free (FH)
Insurgent Threat	High	High
	21,000 NRA (Insurgents) vs.	15,000 UPDA (Insurgents)
	35,000 UNLA (Government)	(+ 8 other insurgencies)
		vs. 80,000 NRA (Government)
Military Culture	No Norms of Noncombatant Immunity	Norms of Noncombatant Immunity
Dependent Variable:	**Civilian Victimization**	**Restraint**
Behavior toward Civilians	300,000 civilian deaths (est.)	Low civilian deaths (<1,000)

Sources: POLITY IV; Freedom House; Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda;* Uppsala Conflict Data Program; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence, 71; SIPRI Yearbook 1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Amaza, *Museveni's Long March from Guerrilla to Statesman*, 117.

Notably, a prominent analysis of the NRA attributes its restraint as a rebel group to its social and economic resources, arguing that armed groups facing material resource constraints attract more ideologically-committed individuals, which leads to greater organizational discipline and restraint toward civilians.[131] Though it puts forth an intuitive explanation for rebel group behavior, such a review unfortunately presents a truncated analysis of the NRA case, and the history of the post-victory NRA regime provides a compelling contrasting explanation for NRA conduct. As noted above, the victory over the UNLA brought a flood of 60,000 new recruits into the ranks of the NRA, quadrupling its size from 20,000 to 80,000 fighters. As it transitioned to a state military, NRA membership became within a few short years overwhelmingly dominated by less ideologically-committed late-joiners and former anti-NRA fighters, particularly in the middle and lower ranks that interact with civilians.[132]

Such an influx fundamentally transformed the NRA from a predominantly ideologically-committed ("investor") to a predominantly opportunistic ("consumer") based membership, a

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[131] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*, 2007.

[132] Notes Amaza, "There was thus the danger that these forces would pollute the NRA with their anti-people traits, and maybe even swamp it, considering their numbers." Amaza, *Museveni's Long March from Guerrilla to Statesman,* 149-150.

shift which would appear to predict a decline in organizational discipline and restraint under the recruitment logic of resource endowment theory. That fact that such an overwhelming transformation of NRA recruiting and membership produced almost no variation in the army's conduct suggests that organizational culture, not resource endowments and fighter recruitment, serves as the primary variable influencing group conduct.[133]

Other analyses attribute restraint by Marxist-inspired insurgent groups such as the NRA to ideological orientation or Maoist revolutionary strategies.[134] However, while Marxist ideology does prescribe organizational structures that are generally intended to limit indiscriminate violence against civilians, a closer review of such movements reveals that ideology was likely not the source of the NRA's restraint.

The Maoist "people's war" strategy adopted by Museveni mandated institutions that emphasized political indoctrination, discipline and the maintenance of popular support.[135] However, under Maoist doctrine such institutions were not based on fundamental norms of respect for civilians or individual rights; instead, they were designed to mobilize popular support in order to reduce insurgent vulnerabilities against stronger government forces.[136] Such institutions were not ends in themselves but "tools to accomplish the political end" of seizing and maintaining political power.[137] Indeed, as the examples of the Marxist regimes in China, Ethiopia, and Laos demonstrate, once such groups seize power, the strategic incentives for restraint fade away: no longer needing civilian "seas" in which to swim, Marxist regimes often relied on massive civilian victimization during their own counterinsurgency campaigns.[138] Thus

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[133] Because of the "unflinching commitment to the most stringent version of path dependency" under the resource endowment account, it is impossible to conclusively attribute NRA behavior in this single case primarily to either organizational endowments and recruiting or the NRA's organizational culture. See Stathis Kalyvas, "Weinstein, J. M. (2007). Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press' [book review]," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 9 (2007): 1149.

[134] See, e.g., Thaler, "Ideology and Violence in Civil Wars," 549.

[135] Powell, "Maoist Military Doctrines," 249-252.

[136] Maoist doctrine was founded in Marxist-Leninism revolutionary thought but envisioned mass peasant mobilization, "self-reliance" on the masses, and a three-phase "protracted war" leading to the overthrow of the state. Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (London: Frank Cass, Jr., 1996), 286-287; Powell, "Maoist Military Doctrines," 11, 250.

[137] Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam*, 6.

[138] The majority of Marxist governments in history have committed mass atrocities against civilians. Other examples of Marxist regimes that inflicted mass atrocities during counterinsurgency include the governments of Afghanistan, Angola, Vietnam, and the USSR. This does not include cases of mass atrocity committed outside of conflict settings by the Marxist governments of Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cuba, East Germany, Guinea, Romania, and Yugoslavia. See Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century*; Stéphane Courtois and Mark Kramer, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Harvard University Press, 1999); "Genocides, Politicides, and Other Mass Murder Since 1945," *Genocide Watch*, 2010, http://www.genocidewatch.org/aboutgenocide/genocidespoliticides.html. Counter-civilian atrocities were also a common feature of many Marxist insurgent movements, such as those in Columbia, India, Nepal, Peru, Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

its ideological foundations and historical record suggest that Marxist ideology alone does not lead to government restraint in counterinsurgency.

Conversely, the NRA's organizational culture and conduct in counterinsurgency campaigns in Acholiland and elsewhere provide further support for the role of military culture in group restraint. Between 1986 and 1995, the NRA fought eleven different rebel movements, rebellions which exhibited variation in threat, ethnicity, and location.[139] Groups such as the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), the Ugandan People's Army (UPA), and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) presented significant threats to the NRA, fielding thousands of fighters as the NRA consolidated its tenuous hold on power.[140] Despite significant ethnic-based popular opposition and the NRA's inability to rely on "people's war" strategies in these conflicts, and despite the extreme strategic threat posed by such movements, the NRA directed little violence against local civilians in these campaigns.[141] As in the NRA's war against the UPDA, military culture again remains the most notable variable explaining NRA conduct.

Given the conceptual similarities between culture and ideology, it is difficult in this single case to attribute NRA conduct conclusively to either military culture or ideology. However, several factors suggest that military culture and not merely ideology alone led to NRA restraint. First, military culture embodies the interactive effects of both formal and informal socialization mechanisms, causal pathways extant in the NRA case that are underspecified by current accounts of ideology and military behavior. Second, interviews with NRA combatants consistently demonstrate fighters' deep collective adoption of organizational norms and their beliefs that formal and informal mechanisms of socialization—training, enforcement, and peer-influences—contributed to their internalization of NRA norms.

Finally, the stability of the norm of noncombatant immunity within the NRA, persevering long after NRA assumed power and the strategic necessity for "people's war" strategy had disappeared, indicates that the NRA's adoption of such norms was deeper and more resilient than simple ideological orientation. The contrast between the NRA and other Marxist-inspired

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[139] Lewis, "How Rebellion Begins," 243. Nine of these groups were formed in the first five years following the NRA's assumption of power.

[140] Multiple analyses estimate that during the 1986-1992 period, HSM fighters generally totaled approximately 7-10,000, UPA fighters totaled 1,500-2,000, and LRA fighters totaled 3-5,000. The significance of the HSM threat alone is further reinforced by the high levels of casualties produced by its rebellion: the UCDP database reports a "low" estimate of over 3,000 military deaths for the conflict. See, e.g., *UCPD Conflict Encyclopedia;* Heike Behrend, "War in Northern Uganda," in *African Guerillas*, ed. Christopher Clapham (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, Ltd., 1998): 107–118; Gersony, *The Anguish of Northern Uganda,* 27-52; Lewis, "How Rebellion Begins," 134-144; Kevin C. Dunn, "Uganda: The Lord's Resistance Army," *Review of African Political Economy* 31, no. 99 (2004): 139–142.

[141] Civilian casualty data present the most significant evidence regarding NRA conduct: despite the threat posed by the multiple rebel groups, the number of civilian deaths attributed to the NRA is in the low hundreds. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program One-Sided Violence Dataset attributes only 139 civilian deaths (1990-1991) to the NRA/UPDF. *UCPD Conflict Encyclopedia*. While such data likely undercount casualty numbers, they capture the general scope of NRA conduct.

regimes in conduct toward civilians provides further evidence for this difference. While not dispositive, these factors suggest that military culture and not ideology alone provides the most complete explanation of the organizational-level influences that shaped NRA restraint.

Conclusion and Implications

How does the NRA case affect our understanding of the determinants of military behavior during war? The NRA case points to three key implications: First, the NRA provides strong evidence that organizational factors and particularly military culture shape group conduct toward civilians, even overriding countervailing strategic, identity, and regime-type influences. Although other theoretical explanations are useful in explaining aspects of political violence, the NRA case shows that scholars must focus greater attention on organizational-level factors in order to understand more fully why militaries engage in victimization or restraint.

Second, the NRA case reveals that our current understanding of the impact of organizational factors in battlefield restraint is too limited: military culture and the collective internalization of group norms socialize combatants through the formal and informal mechanisms, shaping conflict behavior toward civilians. As current theories of military restraint fail to account completely for these mechanisms and their interactive effects, a new focus on organizational culture is needed.

Finally, the NRA case provides initial hypotheses for mechanisms by which such a military culture of noncombatant immunity is instituted and strengthened, leading to battlefield restraint. Based on the NRA experience, it is appears that a culture of noncombatant immunity operates through four key mechanisms: 1) promotion of the norm by the military's top leadership; 2) pervasive norm training throughout the military organization; 3) enforcement structures that require norm adherence; and 4) the informal, peer-based socialization of group members. While leadership promotion of the norm is necessary for the institution of other aspects of military culture, norm training is likely needed to socialize military members to group norms, and enforcement structures are likely necessary to reinforce such norms.[142] Additionally, the NRA case shows that informal, peer-based socialization mechanisms are likely necessary to strengthen and reinforce organizational norms in combatants. Further research is needed to assess the necessary and sufficient nature of these causal mechanisms.

Further research is also needed to provide greater insight into military culture and its effects on conduct toward civilians. What are the sources of such cultures of restraint? Under what conditions can military culture determine group conduct toward civilians? What factors lead to organizational culture decay? In the years following the NRA victory, the Ugandan

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[142] For organization theory strategies on instituting culture, see Schein, "Organizational Culture"; S.C. Widen, "United States Military Cultures: A Mandatory Lesson for Senior Service College Curriculum" (Carlisle, PA, 1997); Daniel Druckman, Jerome E. Singer, and Harold P. Van Cott, *Enhancing Organizational Performance* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 1997).

military received increased criticism for a perceived decline in its norms of restraint, particularly in regard to later wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in northern Uganda.[143] Was such decline due in part to decay in organizational norms and ideological commitment, and by what processes can such decay occur? Such questions regarding culture formation and decay must be answered before scholars can assess with confidence the effect of culture on armed group conduct.

The findings from this analysis point to important policy implications as well. The U.S. and other Western states have made the professionalization and training of foreign militaries a key national security priority, focusing great resources on such training in order to promote regional stability operations and improve the human rights records of forces around the world.[144]

The findings from this research, however, call into question some aspects of these training initiatives: the NRA case suggests that a primary emphasis on training alone may fail to produce battlefield restraint.[145] For such foreign training initiatives to work, sustained attention from the military leadership, as well as focus on training, enforcement, and peer-based socialization, may all be necessary in order to institute a culture of respect for civilians within such military groups. The NRA case suggests that foreign military training efforts that fail to emphasize the four mechanisms outlined in the NRA case are likely to fall short in improving the armed groups' human rights records.

As the NRA case demonstrates, military culture is indeed an "important variable in political behavior," and it must be incorporated into our understanding of the causes of state victimization and restraint in war.[146] It remains a challenge for future research to determine the full contours of culture's impact on the battlefield.

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[143] See, e.g., Rune Hjalmar Espeland and Stina Petersen, "The Ugandan Army and Its War in the North," *Forum for Development Studies* 37, no. 2 (June 1, 2010).

[144] See *Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA)* (Stuttgart, Germany: U.S. Africa Command Public Affairs, October 2012), and Nina M. Serafino, *The Global Peace Operations Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, June 11, 2009). See also Alex Vines, "Rhetoric from Brussels and Reality on the Ground: The EU and Security in Africa," *International Affairs* 86, no. 5 (September 2010): 1091–1108.

[145] Hoover Green, "Repertoires of Violence Against Non-Combatants: The Role of Armed Group Institutions and Ideology" 40.

[146] Legro, "Culture and Preferences in the International Cooperation Two-Step," 121.