Why Using One-Sided Violence in Civil Wars?
A Theoretical Argumentation Attempt
on Strategic Logic

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Abstract: Most of the research on one-sided violence focused on factors that have an effect on the targeting of civilians, which were selected on account of the clarity of their definitions, characteristics that can be differentiated from the other factors, the ease with which they can be studied, as well as their recognizability. Some of the factors researched will be briefly discussed and the most important ones, which are central to this study, examined in detail.

Keywords: One-Sided Violence, Civil War, Strategic Logic, Military Strength, Revenge

1. Introduction

One-sided violence against civilians is not a rare occurrence. Studies have found that actors -most of which are state actors- adopt strategies that target civilians or inflict civilian mass killings in one-fifth to one-third of wars (Arreguín-Toft, 2001, 2005; Valentino et al., 2004; Downes, 2006a, 2008). According to Downes (2008: 1), despite the fruitful literature that has emerged in the last decade to explain the causes of

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civilian targeting (e.g., Kalyvas, 1999, 2004, 2006; Valentino, 2004; Valentino et al., 2004; Valentino et al., 2006; Mann, 2005; Weinstein, 2007; Downes, 2006a, 2006b, 2008), the effectiveness of civilian victimization for achieving belligerents' war objectives remains fairly understudied. Much of this new literature on the causes of civilian victimization suggests that, at least in some circumstances, targeting civilians has a positive utility or that leaders often believe it does.

What specifically explains the occurrence of violent acts against non-combatants? Three general explanations are mentioned in the literature, of which two are central to this research study. The first focuses on the strategic situation in which civilians are intentionally targeted. The difference in terms of the warring parties' strength and the outcomes of the battles they fight are examined. Furthermore, certain factors such as revenge and reciprocity are considered. The second logic that is central to this study is the so-called international logic. This logic focuses on the influence of international actors on the intentional killing or harming of civilians. The third logic, the so-called organizational logic which is not central to this research, but is nonetheless an important explanation and is worth mentioning, examines the influence of the organizational structure of armed groups on one-sided violence. It deals with the internal structure of an organization that uses one-sided violence. The central theory of this logic is based on the relation between the principle and the agent. However, though it examines the relations within an organization, an idea that is very appealing in the context of this research, they are difficult to evaluate, since very little useful data is available to adequately test this logic. That is, for some of the case studies included in this study it is not possible to find data on the internal structure of the organizations. Therefore, this study will primarily focus on the other two logics on one-sided violence. These two logics will be discussed in more detail below. Attention is in particular paid to what scholars have already written about and researched on these two logics.

2. One-Sided Violence

Looking at civil wars, it is important to begin by pointing out that the understanding of violence is culturally defined. Verwimp (2006) determines in his case study on Rwanda that killings were mostly committed with knives and machetes and in masses by gathering people in large places, for example, camps, stadiums, or schools. According to Kalyvas (2001: 115), this is a primitive form of killing which is more horrifying than the often incomparably more violent massive killings by aerial and field artillery bombings. The historical process of machine modernization and war is the focus of Lyall and Wilson III's study (2009: 67-83). The significance of modern arms was also studied by Crozier (1960: 158) in the 1960s, who states: "The violence of the strong may express itself in high explosives or napalm bombs. These weapons are no less discriminate than a hand-grenade tossed from a roof-top; indeed, they will make more innocent victims. Yet they arouse less moral indignation around Western firesides." Moreover, the "senseless" violence of new civil wars is often not as gratuitous as it appears. Kalyvas (1999: 253) argues that the massacres in Algeria were often highly selective and strategic, as was the violence used by Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, RENAMO (see also Kalyvas, 2001: 115-116).

Humans have always used violence to achieve political objectives. Political conflict, characterized by the interaction between and among individuals, groups, and governments, is a hallmark of the human condition. In political conflicts, each of the contending parties, unequal in power, will seek to maximize their self-interests in pursuit of their respective goals. The clash of competing interests often produces violent outcomes. Although political violence takes many forms -the most conventional and most commonly studied being revolutions and wars between states- it determines conflict between states and non-state entities (Dekmejian, 2007: 1). The "dra-

matic" increase in violence in unconventional conflicts between state and non-state entities has been noted by Dekmejian.

Heldt (2003) examines this question by analyzing atrocities against civilians[2] in the context of civil wars. "Atrocities" refers to deaths attributable to the intentional killing of non-combatants, and as such excludes indirect deaths caused by disease, starvation, and crossfire. This category of violence includes some elements such as targeted violence by governments, standard definitions of genocide and politicide, but excludes others, namely intentional starvation and other indirect methods of killing. Moreover, and unlike common definitions of genocide, it does not require for victims of violence to be distinguished on ethnic or political grounds or that governments carry out violence.

Killing non-combatants in civil wars can be carried out by either one or both of the conflicting actors. Studies are subdivided on victimization by the government or rebel side. Early studies (like Rummel 1994, 1997; Harff 2003a, 2003b) on this phenomenon were on violence (political) by the state, because the actors were states and the majority of conflicts examined were interstate conflicts. With the increasing trend of civil wars, attention has also been paid to violence by non-state actors (i.e., Heldt 2003; Hultman 2007, 2008; Merelits 2009; Kalyvas and Kocher 2009; Wood, 2010). Some of the more recent studies (i.e., Hultman, 2006; Schneider et al., 2011a; Schneider et al., 2011b) on violence do not deal with civilian victimization by only one actor (the government forces or the rebels), they study violence used by both.

Some studies consider rebels to be perpetrators of atrocities against civilians. For instance, the targeting of civilians is explained by Hultman (2008: 13-14; 2007: 205-222) as a strategy that rebels use to influence government response and improve their bargaining position in the war. She argues that insurgents victimize civilians as a conflict

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2. Atrocities against civilians, civilian victimization, civilian abuse, violence against civilians will be used interchangeably.

strategy, meaning that they do so to achieve a specific purpose. She examines when rebels victimize civilians; they target civilians when they believe that the government dependents on the support of the population. Their strategic aim is to thus turn the population against the government, and rebels mainly target civilians when they are unable to impose enough costs on the government on the battlefield.

In her study on rebel group behavior, Merelits (2009) arrived at the conclusion that some rebel groups kill civilians while others protect them. She pointed out that the conduct of rebel groups can change over time like the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) in southern Sudan in the 1990s or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia/FARC) in Colombia.

A number of scholars has recognized the variation and explain it as the result of available resources to the insurgent groups, the struggle for territorial control[3] and/or competition among individuals at the micro-level. However, for Merelits, this is not a sufficient explanation. She argues that insurgents decide whether or not to kill civilians based on whether 'active rivalry' for resources exists. When insurgents can capture resources without competition, they engage in contractual relations with civilians, but when they must compete for resources, rebels use violence against the local population to obtain them.

Wood (2010) covering all civil wars from 1989 to 2004 reports that the smaller the relative rebel capability, the larger the magnitude of atrocities against non-combatants; when governments increase the level of violence against civilians, so do rebels, and in particular, weak rebel groups. These findings are consistent with those reported in a

3. According to Hultman (2008: 19), Kalyvas's theory is mainly a theory about selective violence where actors seek territorial control. However, attacks against civilians in the form of massacres are often carried out in areas where rebels are just passing through; bombings of civilian targets often take place in urban areas which the rebels do not aim to control militarily.

study of the Vietnam War (Kalyvas and Kocher, 2009). Heldt (2003) also argues that because rebels are more exposed than government forces and more reliant on civilians, they thus are more prone to resort to the civilian victimization when their position is weak or weakening. This expectation is borne out in the overall pattern of non-combatant abuse reported above, in that rebels are responsible for 3/5 of all civilians murdered in civil wars, and for nearly 4/5 in the case of the South and North Kivu. However, when rebels become very weak relative to government forces, atrocities may not increase recruitment, as the risk for retribution from government forces is larger than the risk for civilian victimization, who refuse to be recruited or cooperate.

Other studies consider the government to be the perpetrator of violence against civilians. DeMeritt (2008: 2) determines that existing work tends to explain the government's decision to kill by focusing on the structural conditions of countries (regime type, levels of poverty, presence of war, etc.; e.g., Fein 1993; Harff 2003a, 2003b; Rummel 1994, 1997), or on the political benefits to be gained by executing civilians (e.g., Downes 2006, Kalyvas 2006, Midlarsky 2005, Valentino 2004, Valentino et al., 2006, Valentino et al. 2004). While this view provides compelling explanations for the decision to kill, it also reveals a puzzling phenomenon: perpetrators charged with executing the order to kill do not comply uniformly. That is, even when two countries are sufficiently similar in that both leaders decide to order the killing of unarmed civilians, body counts can vary widely. With her study, DeMeritt (2008) claims to open a new line of inquiry into the systematic research of one-sided (government) killing and explains why civilian death tolls vary widely even when states face similar conditions and incentives to kill.

Arreguín-Toft who examines the systematic harm of non-combatants in war refers to civilian abuse "barbarism"[4] and presents four

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4. Barbarism is the systematic harm of non-combatants for a specific military or political objective (Arreguín-Toft, 2003: 5-6).

key findings. First, barbarism is rare. Second, authoritarian regime types use barbarism slightly more often than democratic regimes, but they lose more wars when they use barbarism than when democratic regimes use barbarism. Third, strong actors -those whose armed forces and populations outnumber their adversaries by at least 10: 1- tend to be hurt by the use of barbarism, but weak actors tend to do slightly better when they use barbarism than when they do not. Fourth, barbarism in general appears to increase the resolve of its target audience (the adversary's soldiers and supporting civilians) much more than to deter or destroy resistance (2003: 5).

However, some studies on one-sided violence against civilians deal with both actors. Hultman (2006) proposes that when fighting is low, governments try to avoid killing civilians unless the threat is high enough, and rebels kill civilians to signal resolve in order to gain concessions. However, as the intensity level increases control becomes more important, so both parties target civilians to establish territorial control and undermine the support of the opponent. Using new data on killings of civilians, Hultman examines all conflict actors in an internal armed conflict from 1992 to 2004. Her findings suggest that rebels use violence for communicative purposes in less intense conflicts, characterized, e.g., by more violence when rebels are relatively strong and early into the conflict. In more intense conflicts, on the other hand, violence is used to secure control and compensate a lack of military capacity -then, the weaker groups kill more civilians and they are likely to kill more civilians the longer the conflict lasts. Governments kill more civilians when the rebel opposition is strong; surprisingly, they kill fewer civilians the longer the conflict lasts, and democracy is not found to have any effect on government behavior.

Eck and Hultman (2007: 233-246) with their annually collected data research on civilian victimization in armed conflicts consider the intentional and direct killing of civilians by both actors between 1989 and 2004. Using this data, general trends and patterns were present-

ed, revealing that the post-Cold War era was characterized by periods of fairly low-scale violence punctuated by occasional sharp increases in violence against civilians. Furthermore, rebels tend to be more violent on the whole, while governments commit relatively little violence, except in those few years which see mass killings.

Schneider et al. (2011b) examine the dynamics of mass killing in Bosnia. They did not look at which group used one-sided violence, and although they tried to determine the logic behind such acts, it was possible to identify the perpetrator and the victim. The study of Schneider et al. (2011a) also dealt with the causes of civilian victimization. They examined political violence building on three logics: the strategic context where armed groups only perpetrate acts of one-sided violence when they expect to gain military advantages from it, the organizational context, where the strand is that one-sided violence is the result of a lack of sanctioning mechanisms within the rebel or the governmental organizations, and from the international organizations perspective, which looks at how international actors react to civilian abuse or already perpetrated atrocities.

The Konstanz One-Sided Violence Event Dataset (KOSVED) also deals with violence carried out by both actors. In this dataset one-sided violence is defined as acts perpetrated by an organized group -which can either be a rebel organization or government troops- directed against a group of unarmed non-combatants during a major conflict. Such violence results in immediate physical harm or the death of more than one non-combatant (Bussmann and Schneider, 2010).

Although this research is primarily built on the definition of one-sided violence, some other forms of violence (e.g., genocide, massacres, and mass killings) need to be discussed as well. No generally accepted definition exists for such acts of violence. To eliminate the ambiguity of the term 'violence against civilians', Eck et al., try to explain genocide and massacres. "To understand the pattern of violence against civilians better, UCDP first considered coding the categories

'genocide' and 'massacre'. This became problematic for a number of reasons: firstly, the terms genocide and massacre are highly contested; and, secondly, non-combatants are also killed in low-level situations which are neither massacre nor genocide, but which have important implications for the inhabitants of an area" (2004: 134).

3. Theoretical Argument

This section presents the theoretical arguments and their underlying assumptions in detail. Building on studies conducted by Downes (2006a, 2006b, 2008), Kalyvas (1999, 2004, 2005, 2006), Ziemke (2007, 2008), Bussmann and Schneider (2010), Schneider et al., (2011b).

3.1. Regime Type

Previous research has shown that the characteristics of a given conflict may influence the combatants' strategies and the military's use of violence. Although some of these characteristics are not central to this study, they will be briefly discussed. One of the characteristics that have been at the centre of research is the state, which not only involves the government, but the other conflicting party as well. A review of the relevant literature reveals that conflict behavior may differ in various types of regimes. The scope of the discussion on regime type will cover democracy and autocracy. Democracies may encourage violent attacks on civilians by virtue of their participatory nature and the links between the preferences of the population and actions of the state (Goodwin, 2006; Hultman, 2007; Pape, 2005; Wood et al., 2010).

In his studies, Downes (2006b) focuses on democratic and autocratic regimes and discusses "norms" from a political perspective to provide an understanding of regime types. According to Valentino et al., (2004), democratic norms represent the primary restraint against the killing of civilians. They find out that if democratic values promote tolerance, nonviolence, and respect for legal constraints, then

democracies should wage their wars more humanely than other forms of government. Moreover liberal norms forbid violating the rights of others or treating people as means to an end, and apply even to the citizens of enemy states in wartime. Doyle (1997), for example, contends that restraints on violence against civilians have their origin in liberal thought and endorses Immanuel Kant's view that liberal democracies must "maintain [...] a scrupulous respect for the laws of war" (Downes 2006b: 159-160).

With reference to regime type, it must be emphasized that the general assumption is that non-democracies are more likely to target civilians than democracies. However, studies on democratic institutions and war imply just the opposite: according to Reiter and Stam (2002), democracies may be more likely to victimize non-combatants, because the vulnerability of leaders to public opinion makes them wary of incurring heavy costs on the battlefield for fear of losing support at home. Moreover, the existence of democratic elites induces the targeting of non-combatants to avoid costs or to win the war quickly.

Two alternative explanations link the targeting of civilians with a focus on regime type. One explanation is that autocracies account for the lion's share of targeted non-combatants, because democracies are uniquely restrained by their domestic norms. The other is that democracies are more likely to target civilians because institutions of accountability make democratic states more cost sensitive and in need of victory (Downes 2006b: 158).

One group of scholars claims that autocracies use one-sided violence more than democracies do. Engelhardt (1992: 56) supports this idea and asserts that the literature confirms the assumption that autocratic regimes are free to use much harsher tactics in dealing with insurgency than are democratic regimes. Having studied all wars since 1945, Valentino et al., (2004) find that democracies are less likely than authoritarian states to engage in mass killings, and Merom (2003: 15-24) supports this finding by determining that democracies

fail in small wars because they cannot find a winning balance between the costs of the war in human lives [in relation to their own military forces] and the political cost incurred by controlling these costs with force, i.e., between acceptable levels of casualties and acceptable levels of brutality.

A contrasting perspective on democracies is that they are more likely to inflict civilian victimization on their foes. The underlying logic is that as wars become protracted and the costs of fighting increase, public support tends to decline. Aware of this, democratic elites endeavor to keep atrocities minimal to thereby maintain public backing for the war effort, which may, however, result in the targeting of civilians as a means to manage costs. This argument is supported by Downes. He (2006b: 190) examined interstate wars between 1816 and 2003 and his results clash with Valentino, Huth, and Balch-Lindsay's findings that democracies are less likely to engage in mass killings in all types of wars (after 1945). Moreover, he concludes that liberal democracies targeted civilians in 81 percent of the cases in which they were involved in wars of attrition, compared with 54 percent for autocratic regimes. He finds that wars of attrition and wars of territorial expansion are positively and significantly correlated with the targeting of civilians, whereas regime type and cultural differences have little impact. Democracies are more likely than autocracies to target civilians in protracted wars of attrition (Downes 2006b: 176).

To conclude this argument, Downes (2006b: 155) asserts that analysis shows that the adversary's identity has little effect on a state's decision to target civilians; it also demonstrates that democracies and autocracies are nearly equally likely to victimize non-combatants[5] in in-

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5. "…argument in Downes (2006a/b) those democracies are willing to kill civilians if they believe that will shorten the war. Institutional commitment through ratification shapes state strategies; it does not dictate them. If ratification creates audience costs for democratic leaders, they might still choose to violate such a commitment if the consequences for losing were worse. Reciprocity, however, appears in-

terstate wars. Morrow discusses the effects of ratifications of agreements of a state and the compliance of them[6] and determines (2007: 560) that regime type of a state could influence compliance because democracies are more likely to respect the rule of law, meaning international law can be enforced through domestic institutions.

3.2. Effectiveness vs. Ineffectiveness of Targeting Civilians

The effectiveness of using one-sided violence and targeting civilians is yet another factor that plays a role. Without considering what type of war is being analyzed, this factor—like the other ones—consists of two perspectives. On the one hand, some opportunistic political scientists claim that targeting civilians is effective for achieving certain goals; others, on the other hand, argue the opposite. In his study, Downes (2006a: 2) examined the effectiveness of civilian victimization to answer the questions: Is killing civilians an effective strategy for achieving political or military goals? Under what circumstances might it be more or less effective?

By "efficiency of the strategy of killing civilians", Downes (2008: 1-2) understands the relationship between morality and strategy. He discusses the dilemma of morality and strategy in detail and determines that doing the morally 'right thing' may collide with doing the strategically 'right thing'. In other words, the morally 'right thing' to do is to protect civilians from being targets, yet this may conflict

to explain his data as well as desperation for victory does; of Downes's 14 cases of democracies that victimized civilians, either the other side also did so or was incapable of targeting civilians in Downes's judgment (and so excluded from his data set) in 12 of the 14 cases. The non-democracy committed the first violation of civilians in nine of these cases; with the other five cases have first violations against civilians by the non-democracy within a week of the first violation by the democracy" (Morrow, 2007: 570).

6. Morrow (2007: 559-571) uses three international relation theories (realist, liberal, and constructivist) to compare the ratification of agreements and the compliance of states.

with the strategically 'right thing' to achieve specific military goals. Downes' efficiency path of civilian victimization is of interest for this research, but so is the notion that the targeting of civilians as a strategy for achieving political or military goals (Downes 2006a: 3). It must be noted that the effectiveness of targeting civilians varies based on the given circumstances. This implies that targeting civilians can be more effective in specific types of war and warfare or against specific types of opponents. Civil wars are a good example of this or unconventional warfare.

As stated above, some scholars believe that killing civilians is not effective. That is, based on their analyses, targeting civilians does not help achieve the perpetrator's goal. Polk (2007: 34) explains military efficacy with the theory of counterinsurgency. According to Polk, the underlying reason for brutality is that the more effective and brutal the armed forces are in suppressing the general population, the more recruits the opponents will gain, considering that with each single combatant or even innocent bystander who is arrested, detained, wounded, or killed, a dozen of the victim's relatives and friends will be outraged and join the opposing forces. Polk examined the military forces of a state; however, not only do state forces use violence against civilians, rebels also use brutality against civilians.

In scope of using one violence in war, Pape (1996: 58-86) explores the relative effectiveness of three broad types of airpower strategy to coerce an enemy to cease fighting in an ongoing war. These comprise denial[7], decapitation[8], and punishment strategies.[9] He also stud-

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7. Denial strategies target an adversary's military production, industrial infrastructure, energy production, transportation network, or fielded forces to undermine its military strategy for continuing the war. The goal is to cripple the enemy's ability to fight and convince the enemy that making concessions is preferable to fighting a war it cannot win.

8. Decapitation strategies, as the name implies, aim to destroy the enemy leadership, decimate its instruments of repression, or isolate it from its fielded military forces. Decapitation aims to destroy or facilitate the overthrow of the enemy lead-

ied economic sanctions (1997), a weaker form of punishment, and found that these were similarly ineffective, only accounting for a handful of successful cases out of 120 after 1945.

Punishment strategies aimed at an adversary's civilian population rarely extract meaningful concessions. Horowitz and Reiter (2001: 164) found that military vulnerability significantly predicted coercive success, whereas vulnerability to punishment did not. They conclude that their findings are perhaps a welcome reaffirmation of the belief that bombing civilians is not effective and that policy makers can take the morally preferable path of minimizing non-combatant atrocities without decreasing the likelihood of successful coercion.

Abrahms (2006: 43) finds that combatant groups achieved their goals in only 7 percent of the cases. Moreover, groups that primarily targeted civilians never succeeded in obtaining their objectives. He claims that the reason for the failure of terrorist attacks against civilians is inherent to this mode of attack: targeting civilians communicates that the group has unlimited aims, such as the destruction of the state's dominant group or the state itself, which in turn reinforces governments' resolve to reject terrorists' demands. Furthermore, Kalyvas (1999: 251) contends that indiscriminate violence and killing that is not directed at particular people for particular reasons, but which vic-

er, thereby inducing a change in the state's policy (hopefully for the better), or disorganize the adversary's defenses by making it impossible for the regime to communicate with its army.

9. Punishment involves inflicting costs on civilians in order to coerce their government to end the war because (a) the regime estimates that the costs suffered outweigh the possible benefits that could be attained by continuing to fight, or (b) the people themselves rise up and demand that the government end the war and thus bring to a halt the pain they are suffering. Punishment thus clearly constitutes civilian victimization, but civilian victimization is not always punishment (Downes 2006a: 16). According to Downes, Pape's recent studies (2003, 2005) of suicide terrorism - a relatively less hard form of punishment employed by non-state actors- demonstrate that this strategy succeeds in obtaining concessions from target governments in about half the cases, well above the success rate for interstate coercion by punishment.

timizes groups merely based on nationality or membership in an ethnic group, is ineffective and often counterproductive, because cooperating with the perpetrator of such violence is no guarantee for survival.

Arreguín-Toft's study of asymmetric conflict outcomes supports the theory of the failure of punishment in conventional wars. When strong actors implement an indirect strategy, such as strategic bombing, against a weaker adversary who uses conventional defense measures, strong actors are more likely to lose because indirect strategies tend to backfire, stimulating precisely the sort of resolve they aim to break (Arreguín-Toft 2001: 108, 101 and 111). He calculates, that about 20 percent of conflicts are asymmetric, i.e., wars in which one side is significantly more powerful than the other. According to Arreguín-Toft, weak actors win 63 percent of conflicts in which the two sides employ opposite approaches (direct attack vs. guerrilla strategy or indirect attack vs. direct defense). Victimization of civilians is much more effective when the weak side pursues an indirect (guerrilla) strategy: strong actors win 77 percent of the conflicts in such cases. In a later study, however, Arreguín-Toft (2003) argues that targeting civilians is generally ineffective. According to Buzan (2002), the targeting of civilians is never effective, because it does not help in achieving the initial goal, and will instead destroy the perpetrator.

Other scholars believe that using one-sided violence against civilians is effective. That is, it helps the perpetrator achieve the intended goal. Kalyvas (1999, 2004), for example, contends that violence in guerrilla conflicts is "effective when selective," that is, when it is limited to people who actually provide support to the adversary. Killing them clearly signals the fate of opponents or traitors to observers and thus helps deter defection and maintain the organization's support among the civilian population. Indiscriminate violence, however, tends to be counterproductive because it kills people without regard for their actions, which gives individuals no incentive to collaborate since they may be killed no matter what they do. Arreguín-Toft

(2001) finds that the use of guerrilla tactics against the enemy which targets civilians at same time can be militarily effective in the short, but not in the long run.

According to Downes (2006a: 22), one way to assess the effectiveness of targeting civilians in territorial wars is whether the killing of civilians helps attain the perpetrator's goals, i.e., effective control over the coveted territory, or whether it instead triggers a backlash which leads to the victimizer's defeat and loss of control over the territory. Downes (2006a: 5) finds that violence against civilians appears to be more effective in guerrilla wars than in conventional wars, and that even indiscriminate violence in such conflicts is not always counterproductive.

If killing civilians is a war-winning strategy, actors will have incentives to target them, because they will thereby increase the likelihood of victory. Killing civilians might also further other goals the fighting parties may have, such as reducing their own losses or gain territory.

3.3. Strategic Logic

The strategic logic comprises all aspects linked with the strategic situation in which the intentional killing and harming of civilians takes place. A number of different arguments can be classified under this logic. This study will, however, only focus on the two main arguments of this logic: the influence of the difference in strength between the warring parties and the idea of revenge.

3.3.1. Military Strength of the Warring Parties
(Difference in Strength of the Warring Parties)

This factor looks at the asymmetrical power distribution between the parties fighting each other (Arreguín-Toft, 2001). In most conventional battles, one party is usually stronger than the other. It is argued that the stronger party, in particular, uses offensive conventional military

strategies to succeed against the opponent. The weaker party, on the other hand, is more likely to pursue a rather defensive strategy which often involves guerrilla tactics (Jacoby, 2008; Münkler, 2004; Chojnacki, 2004). As already mentioned, conventional warfare entails face-to-face battles between regular armies within clear frontlines. For Kalyvas (2005), this type of warfare requires a commonly shared perception of a balance of power between the two sides. In the absence of some form of mutual consent (which is based on a reasonable belief in future victory), no conventional battle can take place.

Conversely, according to Kalyvas (2005: 90-91), an irregular war is characterized by warfare that requires a choice by the strategically weaker side 'to assume the tactical offensive in selected forms, times, and places'; in other words, to refuse to match the stronger side's expectations in terms of the conventionally accepted basic rules of warfare. Insurgents seek to win by not losing and by imposing unbearable costs on their opponent. Kalyvas (2005: 91) describes irregular war as: 'One side is not strong enough to win and the other is not weak enough to lose'. It can consequently be deduced that the weaker party will use each and every available instrument to achieve victory. An example of this difference in strategy was evident in the Vietnam War between the United States (US) and (North) Vietnam. The American military used more conventional offensive strategies, while the latter primarily relied on guerrilla tactics. The Vietnam War demonstrated that such guerrilla tactics, mainly hit-and-run, suicide bombings or targeting civilians, can inflict damage on the stronger player (Adas, 2003; Moyar, 2006; Murshed, 2010). Hit-and-run strategies depend largely on the relationship between the combatants and the local population: Combatants seek shelter and support by local residents (Valentino, 2004; Münkler, 2004). Because of this interdependent relationship, government forces have strong incentives to break the link between insurgents and civilians. Although there are less violent ways to do this, such "hearts and minds" strategies typically require large numbers of

troops and lots of time to implement (even under optimal conditions) with no guarantee of success. Governments may thus opt for high violence strategies against guerrilla insurgencies to deter or prevent people from supporting the rebels. Violence is likely to be particularly effective the smaller the theater of battle and/or the smaller the civilian population whose loyalties are being contested, because government forces are able to isolate the battlefield and intern or otherwise eliminate the population, rendering it unable to assist the insurgents (Downes, 2007: 19). As Valentino (2004) and Münkler (2004) emphasize, the difference between civilians and combatants is heavily blurred because of the inter-linkage stated above.

Guerrilla warfare is generally considered an instrument of the weaker party. The weaker party is organized in small units and relies on the support of the local population. Guerillas seek to cause extensive damage to their enemy and to minimize their own losses. As such, the use of guerrilla tactics is viewed as the result of an asymmetrical conflict. Lohmann (2004: 57-62) defines this type of conflict as one in which significant differences exist in terms of the forces, instruments, and methods used, the motivations or legitimization of the groups involved, i.e., the government and rebel group. Furthermore, the shift of the balance of power plays an important role in the targeting of civilians. When there is an intervention in a conflict, the balance of power is affected. Wood et al., (2010: 3) found that intervention alters the strategic landscape by increasing the capabilities of the side supported by it and diminishes the capabilities of the opponent.

Another sub-factor in the targeting of civilians is insurgency and counter-insurgency. This entails two views on the intentional killing or harming of civilians. Valentino et al., (2004: 376) argue that the intentional killing of civilians in war is often a military strategy designed to fight powerful guerrilla insurgencies.[10] Directly defeating a

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10. Includes attacks on tourists, police, and civilians, but also public demonstrations and riots.

large, well-organized guerrilla army can be extremely difficult, because guerrilla forces themselves almost always seek to avoid explicit engagements with the opposing forces, opting instead to wage a protracted campaign of hit-and-run attacks. As a result, counterinsurgent[11] forces often choose to target the guerrillas' base of support in the population. Such a counterinsurgency strategy can lead to the intentional killing of substantial numbers of civilians.

Furthermore, a cost-benefit calculation by the main players who plan and order attacks is a key issue (Schneider et al., 2011a: 59). Using a rational choice approach, the author of this research study assumes that every actor's goal is to maximize his/her benefit. If the costs of defending civilians against an attack are higher than not defending against it, the actor can turn a blind eye to the civilians being killed or harmed. In other words, the actor offers no protection for civilians. If the costs of defending against an attack are not as high as those of not defending against it, the actor will defend and protect the civilians. If the actor gains no benefits from defending against an attack, he/she will take no action (Dunne et al., 2006). Also, the protraction of war has an effect on costs, according to Downes (2006b: 160) - as wars become protracted and the costs of fighting increase, public support tends to decline. Aware of this, democratic elites endeavor to keep casualties at a minimum and maintain public backing for the war effort, which in turn may produce civilian victimization as a means to manage costs. Moreover, while actors will win with minimum losses, targeting civilians seems to be one of the easiest ways to achieve the goal. Civilians are killed and harmed not only as reduce the costs of the ongoing fight, but also as costs of the conflict in the future.

Downes (2008: 4) discovered that in roughly half of such cases, the side that victimized civilians went on to win the war, i.e., civilian victimization can plausibly explain victory in approximately half the

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11. Includes both political arrests and attacks on militants (Fielding and Shortland, 2010: 3).

cases. Yet states that refrained from targeting civilians won only 44 percent of the conflicts, suggesting that civilian victimization in the face of difficult circumstances is not necessarily a 'bad bet'.

No Hope of Winning: Downes was also one of the first scholars who linked the idea of asymmetrical conflict to the intentional killing and harming of civilians (2006a, 2006b, 2008). He argues that civilian victimization is the result of two processes. First, the intentional killing or harming of non-combatants results from a severe level of despair to win the war and save lives on one's own side. When embroiled in costly conflicts, states and armed groups become increasingly desperate to prevail and to reduce their losses. Since civilians are considered a form of extractable resources (civilians are indispensable for support, for providing new fighters, etc.), the desperation to succeed leads to attacks against this resource pool. That is, civilian victimization allows states and armed groups to continue fighting, while reducing the other party's resource pool. At the same time, one side may reduce the number of its own casualties and possibly win the war by coercing the adversary to capitulate.

Stalemates on the battlefield may give rise to two mechanisms that can trigger civilian victimization. First, such deadlocks induce desperation to win: belligerents will use any means that have the potential to pull victory from the jaws of defeat. According to the desperation logic, being embroiled in costly conflicts causes actors to become increasingly desperate to prevail and to reduce their losses. Strategies of targeting civilians allow belligerents to continue fighting, reduce casualties, and possibly win the war by coercing the adversary to quit. Second, the costs of fighting generated by wars of attrition cause desperation to save lives and lead to the targeting of non-combatants as a cost reduction strategy that allows a state to continue the war at an acceptable price in casualties (Downes, 2006b: 161-162). Downes finds that these two mechanisms are obviously related: protracted wars are often costly; rising costs can contribute to

desperation to win and civilian victimization to save costs is also implemented to help win the war.

From a realist standpoint, when wars become protracted with little chance of victory over the immediate situation, belligerents are more likely to employ civilian casualties out of desperation to win the war. Furthermore, as the costs of fighting rise, actors need to conserve their armed forces while still applying pressure on the enemy. Given that the manpower resources of most actors are not inexhaustible, suffering large numbers of casualties threatens to exhaust the enemy's most important armed property, which could eventually result in the enemy's inability to continue the war. If leaders did not previously believe in the efficacy of targeting civilians or think that they would use such a strategy, the costs of fighting convince them that something must be undertaken to win the war, but also to limit losses. Civilian victimization is a promising option on both counts. The costs of fighting come in two forms: the costs of actual military operations and those expected to result from future operations. In the former case, increasing losses from combat threatens to destroy a belligerent's forces (Downes, 2006b: 164-165).

Civilians also tend to be targeted when belligerents expect the costs of future fighting to inflict serious military costs. The anticipation of high costs of fighting may evolve before the war actually begins or during the war itself. The prospect or expectation that a war will be costly induces actors to develop strategies that will achieve their aims, yet avoid paying a high price.

Given that civilians prefer to end on the winning side, when insurgent capabilities intensify civilians should revise their views on the likely benefits they will receive from remaining loyal to the insurgents. By contrast, when the insurgents face setbacks or when their relative capabilities are in decline, maintaining civilian support becomes more difficult. As the power balance in a conflict shifts against the rebels, they are less able to deliver resources to civilian supporters. Civilian

defections are thus likely to increase as the population perceives the insurgents to be less likely to achieve victory. Furthermore, as the rebel side weakens and civilian loyalty declines, insurgents are less capable of policing the territory under their control. Rebel violence varies with the changes in the level of support insurgents get from the local population, such that rebels increase violence when the population withholds loyalty and decrease violence when civilians are supportive (Wood et al., 2010: 5-6).

Desire to Conquer Territory: Another related process of the strategic logic concerns the territory the warring factions are fighting over.[12] The fighting parties target civilians to achieve territorial objectives; a strategy of civilian victimization can only be implemented in such cases if the actor is winning the war. The reason civilians are targeted in such cases is to eliminate them from the territory the attacker intends to take from the adversary. Taking enemy territory, in other words, entails the targeting of civilians. Military advantage makes the targeting of civilians possible rather than vice versa.

Downes (2007, 2008) argues that belligerents' desire for territorial conquest leads to civilian victimization when the territory they seek to annex is inhabited by enemy non-combatants. This is a typical attribute of wars of territorial expansion or when hostilities break out between intermixed ethnic groups that make a claim to the same territory as their homeland. In this type of conflict, the killing and harming of civilians often occurs because it eliminates the so-called 'fifth column'.[13] This column encompasses civilians who could potentially re-

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12. It should be noted that this process only takes place in conflicts that primarily focus on territory, e.g., in a separatist conflict. An example of this type of conflict is the territory of Sri Lanka involving the Tamils' struggle (Jayatilleka, 2001).

13. The 'fifth column' is a clandestine group or faction of subversive agents who attempt to undermine a nation's solidarity using all means at their disposal. The term is credited to Emilio Mola Vidal, a nationalist General during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). As four of his army columns moved on Madrid, the General referred to his militant supporters in the capital as his "fifth column", intent on undermining the

volt against the adversary if the territory is annexed. Eliminating this column reduces the probability that the adversary will attempt to re-conquer the disputed territory in the future (Downes, 2006b: 154; 2006a: 6 and 22). While actors prefer to win quick and decisive victories, they typically seek to defeat an adversary's armed forces at the outset of the war. Unless actors specifically intend to seize and annex territory populated by the enemy, one-sided violence tends to be a "tactic of later resort" (Downes, 2006b: 166).

Loss of Control: "Control" is an important factor before continuing with the annexation of territory. There are two main types of control: the control over civilians and the control over territory. However, both types are dependent on each other. The argument of control over civilians has been researched by Ziemke. Her findings on Angola (2007: 14) are that the government and rebels, the belligerent actors, are more likely to commit abuses against civilians in a civil war when they are losing. Belligerents do *not* kill civilians because they are standing in their way or because they are considered superfluous to the fighters' cause. Furthermore, fighters do *not* harm civilians because civilians obstruct access to diamond mines or other lootable resources. Rather, combatants opt to take such extreme measures as massacring non-combatants as a last ditch move meant to coerce losing-side supporters to stay in their camp. Ironically, it is precisely *because* civilians are so essential to a military campaign that belligerents sometimes abuse them. Combatants massacre civilians in the context of loss to instill fear which suffices to prevent mass civilian defection.

A further reason for targeting civilians when losing control is that the armed forces of the fighting parties suspect or believe that they are losing the civilians' loyalty. The competition between the would-be governments of the incumbents and insurgents for the loyalty of the population is what drives much of the violence in guerrilla wars.

loyalist government from within (http: //www.britannica.com/ Echecked/topic/ 206477/fifth-column, 20.03.2018).

Each side wants to gain the support (or at least submission) of the population and, perhaps more importantly, to deny that support to the opponent. Massacres, whether aimed only at known enemy supporters and their families or at an entire village where guerrillas are known to be active deter the population from providing aid and assistance to the enemy.

As gaining control over both the population and territory is a primary goal of fighting parties, the side that can command greater loyalty from the population is more likely to achieve its war aims. The balance of capabilities between the rebels and government shapes civilian expectations about the credibility of the benefits promised by the rebel group and the likely outcome of the conflict. As such, relatively strong rebels are more easily able to exert control over territory and to garner the population's loyalty. Maintaining civilian support through the extension of benefits is difficult and expensive for fairly weak rebels and they thus have an incentive to escalate the violence against the population as a means of enforcing loyalty. Hence, as the rebel group's resources dwindle and its relative strength declines, violence offers an economical means of inducing continued civilian support through negative incentives (Wood et al., 2010: 2-3). Fighting groups caught in an intense loss dynamic are suddenly surrounded by people who they feel might betray them. Rebels will do anything to try to prevent civilian defection in the wake of massive loss. During their retreat, they will increase abuses along the way to instill fear in a last-ditch effort to prevent further civilian defection. Such offenses may also be meant to signal continued strength. Combatants deliberately hone violence to appear irrational and harsh in order to instill greater fear of defection by the population and thereby increase the likelihood of its own effectiveness (Ziemke, 2007: 5).

Territorial control is likewise strongly related to the level of violence. The extent to which an actor consolidates control over an area determines the actor's ability to extract information from the popula-

tion about the location of defectors or enemy sympathizers (Kalyvas, 1999; 2006). Thus, territorially weak insurgents lack sufficient information to differentiate between supporters and potential defectors and may be prompted to use higher levels of indiscriminate violence. Since the control over territory is indicative of strength, this is considered a strong signal that insurgents can provide other benefits promised to supporters (Mason 1996: 74). Territorial control allows insurgents to shield supporters from government violence and to provide them a nominal level of stability (Kalyvas, 2006: 124). In his study of genocide, Midlarsky (2005), for instance, denotes that territorial loss can be an important precursor for mass killings. He exemplifies this with the participation of Italian soldiers in the Holocaust as a function of Mussolini's loss in North Africa and Sicily in 1943.

Territorial loss brings some consequences with it, i.e., uncertainty about civilians. According to Ziemke (2007: 4-5 and 2008: 16), loss of territory increases the set of potential enemies for losing belligerents as uncertainty emerges about who is friend and foe. Because uncertainty in this regard cannot be tolerated, defining 'the enemy' necessarily includes even those who had been considered stalwart friends. Defining "the enemy" necessarily expands to include even those who had been considered stalwart friends. During times of loss, the number of civilians who are considered potential enemies, traitors, or defectors increases rapidly because the cost of being wrong rises drastically. And because sustained territorial and battlefield losses increase the odds that civilian allies may defect to join the winning side, the losing perpetrators end up killing civilians of all persuasions, even those allies who had always been considered longtime supporters, to frighten them and prevent the defection of the rest of the group. In periods of extreme loss, civilian targeting may even become a matter of survival.

Similarly, Kalyvas (2006: 111-146) discusses the idea of a link between the control over territory and the likelihood of civilian abuse. He argues that violence in civil wars is primarily driven by levels of

control of belligerent actors over specific areas. Ziemke (2008: 15) extended this argument by contending that *change* in territorial control, or more specifically, the *loss* of control, best describes patterns of civilian abuse. In other words, the sheer *level* of control is not as significant for driving violence as is the direction of *change* in control. Taking all this into consideration, the author of the study argues that the weaker party[14], i.e., the party that loses the majority of battles, is desperate to prevail and is therefore more likely to rely on one-sided violence.

3.3.2. Revenge

The second argument in this train of thought is related to the revenge factor. This argument is based on the presumption that the perpetrator may plan one-sided violence. This 'planning aspect' is also recognized in many definitions of political violence. For example, according to the Geneva Convention, a series of massacres has to be 'planned' for such acts to be categorized as such (Bussmann and Schneider, 2010).

Planning an act of violence relates to the argument of revenge. The logic of revenge is that if deterrence breaks down and one side strikes its opponent's non-combatants, the victim may strike back to exact revenge or to persuade the enemy to refrain from further attacks (Downes, 2006b: 172). Browning (1993: 160-161) comes to the conclusion that intentional attacks on civilians can take the form of arbitrary explosions of violence or revenge inspired by "battlefield frenzy". Kalyvas and Sambanis (2005) and Downes (2006), for example, have argued that one-sided violence is committed in response to cruelty perpetrated by the enemy. This implies that one-sided violence is used as a tool to punish[15] previous actions of the opposing

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14. Note that the weaker party could either mean the rebels or the military forces.

15. Punishment is a coercive strategy that erodes the adversary's will to fight, either by convincing the government or the rebels that the civilian costs outweigh the benefits of resistance, or by turning the civilians themselves against the war and hoping they will pressure the government or the rebels to end it (Downes, 2006b: 162).

party. As such, the killing and harming of civilians is seen as an instrument of revenge and a way to persuade the enemy to refrain from further attacks.

Attacks on non-combatants, furthermore, appear to cluster in particular wars, as actors whose civilian populations are victimized tend to strike their opponents' civilians, indicating that revenge or retaliation may be a motive for civilian victimization (Downes, 2006b: 176).

Kalyvas (1999, 2004, 2006) argues that violence is "effective when selective" that is, when it is targeted at individuals based on actual intelligence about their behavior. Thus, violence becomes a strong deterrent message to observers that defection will be punished, which will do actual damage to the adversary's capabilities (i.e., punishment and denial functions are combined) (Downes, 2008: 14). Also, revenge is related to memories of past violence.

Downes (2006b) has primarily focused on the use of political violence in interstate wars. However, he has argued that it can also be applied to the context of civil wars, in which this aspect of revenge may result in the elimination of a potential threat (by killing civilians or by forcing them to flee from the territory). The case of Nagorno-Karabakh where approximately one million people fled or were exiled from their homes during the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan from 1992-1994 is a good example of this (Downes, 2008: 16).

While attacking unarmed civilians at close range to induce flight is easy, this type of targeting of civilians is likely to achieve its goal unless it triggers a reaction from another actor that adversely affects the interests of the perpetrator and renders the attacks counterproductive (Downes, 2008: 23).

Yet another aspect of revenge is the link between one-sided violence and emotions. Downes determines that eliminating the enemy's resource pool may lead to reciprocity. He asserts that "[e]liminating fifth columns in one's midst may also seem necessary for survival and hence override fears that the enemy might launch reprisals elsewhere"

(Downes, 2006b: 168). Schneider et al., elucidate this relation by noting that the perception of one-sided violence is often based on emotions rather than an unambiguous choice and is further incited by the reciprocal nature one-sided violence has in many conflicts. As a result, many acts seem to be motivated by revenge (2011a: 75). Revenge as the motivation for one-sided violence has also been empirically researched. Schneider et al., for example, investigated these dynamics in the case of Bosnia Herzegovina. They found that there was indeed a strong indication of reciprocity: for instance, if Serbs killed Muslim civilians, the likelihood increased that Muslim troops would kill Serb civilians in the next period. They even discuss the idea of "revenge" addiction (2011b).

4. Conclusion

Together with the transformation of war and warfare came in research on especially civil wars into prominence one-sided violence used by either one or both of the actors. This action, which emphasizes the necessity of including intentionality, show up to be used for purposes such as achieving certain goals, doing cost-benefit calculations, providing public support, deterring the supporters of the rivalry from their behavior, cover up military inefficacy, as well as controlling territory and individuals. Particularly the actors' desire to win new territory and public support, the belief losing control of the organizations internal structure, territory or public support or win the fight constitutes the driving force to use one-sided violence against civilians. Furthermore the necessity to be a planned act should be taken into account when evaluating one-sided violence against civilians from the strategic logic perspective. The planned use of one-sided violence composes also a motive for punishing previous actions of the opponent, refraining from further attacks of the opponent or destroying the support pool of the opponent.

Özet: Tek taraflı kuvvet kullanımı konusunda yapılan araştırmaların çoğu, tanımların netliği, diğer faktörlerden ayırt edilebilecek karakteristik özellikleri, incelenebilirliği konusundaki kolaylığı ve kabul edilebilirliği gibi, sivillerin hedeflenmesine etki eden faktörlere odaklanmıştır. Bu faktörlerden bazıları kısaca tartışılarak bu çalışmanın odağında yer alanlar ayrıntılı olarak incelenmiştir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Tek Taraflı Kuvvet, İç Savaş, Stratejik Mantık, Askeri Güç, İntikam.

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