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HOW DO NORMS WORK? A THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

The article discusses what constitutes a norm in international relations, and how we can establish empirically that norms exert causal influence on the foreign policy of African states. The empirical section of the article explores how norms work together with rationality in the Angolan war in 1975 and the Kenyan-Ugandan war of 1979. In both cases norms did play a part by entering into the actors' calculations, but norms alone were not able to fully explain the behavior of the actors concerned. Instead, it is concluded, the challenge is to find the particular mix of rationality and norms in each concrete case. In these wars, the main way for norms to have causal influence was as a constraint on rationality. Another theoretical finding is that norms quickly loose their constraining force for all actors when one party does not adhere to them. However, the article concludes that adherence to norms is contingent upon the behavior of others in the conflict itself but not behavior in other conflicts. Finally, one should be careful not to overestimate the causal importance of norms in explaining behavior as there are often competing norms and the actors will choose the one most conducive to their self-interest when they act.

Introduction

The article analyses the causal impact of norms on the behavior of African states in their international relations. The discussion will address two questions: (1) What is a norm in international relations? (2) How can we establish empirically that norms exert causal influence on the foreign policy of African states?

Many have doubted that norms explain much of the behavior of states in international relations. Morgenthau (1960: 28ff) considers it harmful to give norms any attention at all. In International Relations theory, the so-called English School, founded by Hedley Bull, Herbert Butterfield, E.H. Carr and Martin Wight, has been among the most prominent students of norms. While taking the state situated in an anarchical setting as their point of departure, they argue for the existence of varying societal elements being more than a mask

for power politics. They share a *pluralist* conception of international society whose core norms constitute a morality of states. Those norms are, listed in priority: preserve the international system and society of states; maintain the sovereignty of individual states; keep the peace (Bull, 1977: 16-18). A *solidarist* conception of international society includes norms protecting individuals, for example human rights. It would find humanitarian intervention justifiable and desirable.

It is my conviction that the theoretical problem of how we establish the causal relevance of a phenomenon cannot, meaningfully, be answered without empirical reference. Since the societal elements are stronger, norms are more likely to be effective at the regional level than in the world at large. Due to the shared colonial experience, Africa is usually considered the region with the most effective norms (MacFarlane, 1984: 55-56). I will discuss the various interventions undertaken by African states in Angola during 1975, and the war between Uganda and Tanzania in 1978. As we shall see below, the non-intervention norm is enshrined in the charter of the OAU (Organisation for African Unity), having all African states as members. Therefore, the norm ought to be relevant for all African states. The analysis may also shed some light on the more general question of the impact of norms in the international system at large.

What is a norm in international relations?

Norms are intimately linked to the values of a society because they express the shared values among its members and are sustained by the members' approval or disapproval. The usual justifications given for ignoring norms is that the international system lacks the shared values that create a society, or that it, unlike domestic political systems, lacks a sovereign to enforce the norms, rendering the concept too marginal to merit attention (Goldmann, 1969: 162). Therefore, norms are regarded as mere excuses for rational selfish behavior, which consequently should be the focus of attention. Another line of reasoning points to the lack of 'love-objects' that arouse deep feeling of attachment, like 'the nation' does domestically, as the critical difference between the international system and domestic systems (Kratochwil, 1989: 66).

Norms express what is esteemed and valued and are means to realize valuable end states. Norms must be shared with other actors, and partly enforced by their sanctions. Typically, at least at the level of individual interactions, they are also sustained by emotions: feelings of guilt by the violator and anger and indignation by the observers (Elster, 1989a: 98-99). Defining norms by their consequences (like order in international society), as many have done, includes the question of their effect in the definition itself. As we shall see, it is not easy to determine the consequences of norms, and it may lead one both to overestimate and underestimate their importance. Since international order may arise from purely rational, self-interested motivations leading to balances of power, the very existence of order may lead one to overestimate the causal effect of norms. On the other hand, lack of international order

may not mean norms are unimportant determinants of international behavior. Norms may also be defined by what caused them (the social and psychological mechanisms that sustain them), but these mechanisms are little understood and superfluous to their impact on international politics. Instead of defining norms by consequences or causes, it seems better to define them in terms of their intrinsic nature to avoid prejudging the issue of their effect and the murkier question of how norms make people change behavior.

One may define norms by contrasting them with rational actions. To invoke rationality, implicitly or explicitly, is the standard explanation given in International Relations for the foreign policies of states. Rationality is conditional and future-oriented. And rationality is concerned with outcomes; if you want to achieve X, do Y. Thus one may define norms by the feature that they are *not outcome-oriented.* They may be unconditional, do X, or don't do X. An example is "always oppose a potential hegemon threatening to overthrow the society of states" (Bull, 1977: 17). If they are conditional, they are not future-oriented: If others do X, do Y. For example, if others threaten its sovereignty, may a state wage war (Bull, 1977: 18). The behavior is made contingent upon the past behavior of others, not a hypothetical future state. Frequently, a norm is accompanied by a higher level norm to punish those who violate the first-order norm. Defining norms as not outcome-oriented, though seldom spelled out explicitly, is compatible with most writings on international norms (Zartman, 1967; Cohen, 1980; Goldmann, 1969; Bull, 1977).

In this article, the terms 'motives' and 'motivations' are used as a general concept, to cover actions explained both by rationality and by adherence to norms. Adhering to norms is one type of motivation and rationality is another. The article analyses the particular mix of rational and norm-induced behavior in each agent in two cases: the Angola conflict 1975-76 and the Tanzanian-Ugandan war of 1978. The focus, however, is on the relevance of norms. The idea that norms are constitutive, giving meaning to action, by defining the situation to make action intelligible, will not be explored. In this view case, norms make an impact by entering into the reasoning process itself, before any choice is possible.[1]

Which Norms Exist among African States?

In a seminal article, I. W. Zartman (1967: 558ff) identifies four norms within the African sub-system. The first states that intrasystem solutions are to be preferred to extrasystem solutions to African problems whenever possible. It is a norm because it does not say that intrasystem solutions should be preferred when they lead to good or optimal results. The only condition attached to the norm is that it should 'be possible', an ambiguous statement. It may mean that the rule should be followed whenever the costs attached to the course of action recommended by the norm do not exceed the costs by any other action. The

[1] See Kratochwil (1989: 10-11) which is also the best treatment of this constitutive line of reasoning.

interpretation does not render the norm totally ineffective in influencing behavior as the norm singles out a course of action in situations where there are several, equally good courses of action. More interestingly, it may mean only that 'possible action' merely states explicitly what is usually implicitly assumed. In this event, the explanatory power of the norm is purely an empirical question, as perhaps it should be. If the norm of preferring intrasystem solutions to extrasystem solutions is followed, the effect is to increase the autonomy of the subsystem.

The second norm mentioned by Zartman (1967) is that the three primary goals of African states should be ranked hierarchically in this order: first independence, then development and finally, unity. The importance of the norm has declined as the problems connected with the struggle for independence are now largely past. However, the norm still had some bearing on the situation in Angola in 1975, then very much a part of the struggle for self-determination in southern Africa. The third norm states that wars of conquest are not policy alternatives among African states. The fourth and final norm says that all available means should be used to extend the boundaries of the inner system to its outer limits. In other words, the goal of the African continent should be independence. The second norm indicates a limitation of the means to pursue the goal of independence. Again, this norm was only relevant in southern Africa.

In the literature on norms in African international relations, frequent reference is made to 'the twin pillars of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)', (1) no intervention by African states in the affairs of others and (2) no intervention by external agents in African affairs. These two pillars correspond to the first and third of Zartman's more comprehensive list, the difference being that he includes two norms that lost most of their relevance after the decolonization process. However, as explained above, they still have some relevance in southern Africa. The four norms were all formalized and expressed in the Charter of the OAU from 1964. They have also been frequently expressed in resolutions adopted by the OAU. Thus there can be no doubt that these norms are shared in the sense of being universally known among the foreign policy elites of African states. The institutionalization of these norms in the OAU also ensures that violation of them is subject to sanctioning by others. Let me turn to the question of causal relevance of these norms.

Norms, Rationality, and Causal Importance

The causal relevance of African international norms may be defined in terms of ability to change human behavior (Elster, 1989a: 125; Goldmann, 1969: 162, 166). Contrasted with the other *genus* of action, rational action, there are two broad paradigms concerning the causal impact of norms. In the first paradigm some actions are accounted for by rationality, others by social norms. In this view, norms are able to *fully explain some actions* alone (Elster, 1989a: 97). In the second paradigm, rationality and norms are both needed to explain an action. Thus, norms do influence behavior without being able to explain the course of a single action fully. Norms are *an insufficient but necessary* element in explanations. Norms

may constitute an element in the full explanation in at least four different ways. In the first type of partial explanation, rational action and norms work sequentially. Rationality first works unhampered by norms but yields an *indeterminate* solution. Then social norms work unhampered by considerations of rationality to single out a course of action among the remaining alternatives. In the second type of partial explanations, rational action act as a *constraint on norms*, the actor abides by the norm if the costs are not too high. The norm in African international relations that intraregional solutions are to be preferred whenever possible is an explicit example. Conversely, in the third type of partial explanation, social norms act as a *constraint on rational action.* An actor may rationally pursue a policy for reasons that are entirely outcome-oriented, abiding by norm-motivated constraints on the means he may use. The norm in African international relations that wars of conquest is an unacceptable policy alternative, which does not regulate the goals African states can pursue vis-à-vis one another, is again an explicit example. Finally, social norms and rational action may work together in a kind of parallelogram of forces in explaining a single action. The outcome is influenced both by a norm and by rational self-interest; the agent ends up doing something *in between the action prescribed by the norm and his rational self-interest* (Elster, 1989a: 106; Elster, 1989b: 102). There may be two different mechanisms producing this result; the choice of norm may be decided by rational self-interest, or the preferences are influenced by a norm (Elster, 1989a: 150). At the extreme end of these two mechanisms, there are the reductionist attempts to reduce norms to optimizing behavior or make rationality a norm, respectively.[2]

Hedley Bull (1977: 55-56) claims that norms play a part in social life only to the extent that they are 'effective'. In addition to influencing action in the direction prescribed by the norm, he suggests that a norm is effective if it was recognized as a factor in the calculations of the actors, even among those who end up violating it. In other words, according to Hedley Bull social norms may be effective *even when they do not influence the course of a particular action* itself, if only they were present in the actor's deliberations before acting.

When determining the empirical impact of norms, one may either look at the actor's behavior or his intentions. If behavior is obviously incompatible with rational action and in accordance with a norm, it is best explained by the norm. One problem with relying solely on behavior is that the explanation rapidly loses plausibility if it is necessary to invoke too opaque norms, beliefs or desires.[3] In rational choice explanations any action can be explained if one is willing to impute sufficiently fanciful beliefs and desires to the actors. The social quality of norm – they have to be *shared* among the actors X – makes their beliefs much easier to observe than the beliefs and desires that go into individual rational choice

[2] See Elster (1989a: 128), Elster (1989d: 34) and Elster (1989c: 102-105) for arguments against the attempts to reduce the two different species of action into one.

[3] Moreover, in order to have *explained*, we have to be certain that the desires and beliefs caused the action for which they are reasons and that they caused them in the right way (Elster, 1983a: 70-71; Elster, 1983b: 3).

explanations (Nyhamar, 1997: 181-182). The socialness of norms effectively constrains the choice of norms one may invoke. A related but distinct problem is that some actions are compatible with both norms and rational action. If the action was motivated by anticipated future rewards as well as norms, the course of action was overdetermined. Alternatively, nonconsequentialist adherence to a norm may be sufficient to explain the course of action. One does not know which, as long as the study is confined to behavior (Sen, 1986: 78).

The second main method is to analyze the motives of the agent independently of the actual behavior we want to explain to see whether norms entered into the calculations of the actor. Four different kinds of historical sources can support our hypotheses about the motivation of agents: the agent's own statements about his motives in a particular situation; the agent's statements about other relations, indirectly betraying his motivational propensities in the situation; the statements of others about the agent's action; and, finally, non-linguistic traces of past actions (Dahl, 1956: 125-126). All four kinds of sources involve the traditional method of source critique in historical research.[4]

In conclusion, in this article, for a norm to explain an action means that: (1) the norm is the only reason for an action, (2) the norm can account for the action, constrained only by conflict with rational action, (3) the norm acts as a constraint on some courses of action recommended by rationality, (4) the norms work together with rationality in determining action, (5) the norm was present in the actors calculation before acting.

One may either compare the behavior of the actor with the norm, or try to establish correspondence between the motive of the actors and the norm. The two strategies draw on different evidence and they are up against different problems (Dahl, 1980: 35-36; Dahl, 1986: 52-58). They are fully compatible with one another, and employing both enhance the plausibility of the conclusion.

The Impact of Norms in Intra-African International Relations

In this section, I will assess whether and how the norms of African international relations mattered by exploring *how* norms worked together with rationality in the Angolan war in 1975 and the Kenyan-Ugandan war of 1979. The Kenyan-Ugandan war was a blatant norm violation in itself, being a war between African states, but more remains to be said concerning the impact of norms on behavior in this war.

Angola

On the eve of independence from Portugal in 1975, the three liberation movements in Angola, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Front

[4] For a good exposition, see Dahl (1980). An excellent discussion of some of the problems involved is found in Dahl (1986).

for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), soon proved unable to cooperate peacefully in the transfer of power from Portugal, leading to the outbreak of civil war. The official line of the OAU before and during the conflict was that the three liberation movements ought to cooperate, no African state should intervene in favor of any of the liberation movements, and above all, that all states outside Africa should stay out of the conflict. Did the surrounding states adhere to the norm of non-intervention within African states and the norm of intraregional solutions during the outbreak of the Angolan war?

Angola bordered three states with black rule, Zaire, Congo, and Zambia. Zaire intervened repeatedly on behalf of the FNLA. In the liberation struggle, Mobutu had favored the FNLA. The MPLA had not been allowed to operate from Zairian territory during the struggle against the Portuguese. The first documented direct engagement of Mobutu in the conflict occurred in mid-May 1975 when 1200 regular Zairian soldiers moved across the Angolan border to operate alongside FNLA's forces (Marcum, 1978: 259). In mid-July Mobutu sent a commando company and an armored-car squadron into combat in northern Angola and in the second week of August 1975 two additional Zairian paratroops companies followed. Finally, in mid-September 1975, two more Zairian battalions followed (Davis, 1978: 121). Mobutu's interventions were undertaken in an attempt to help the FNLA win the civil war in Angola. The interventions were not compatible with the norms in African international relations and were in opposition to OAU's policy of equal treatment and its attempts of reconciliation between the three liberation movements.

Not only was Mobutu's rule in Zaire based on the same mix of personal and family ties as Holden Roberto's rule of the FNLA, they were to some extent based on the same family ties. Roberto had divorced his first wife in order to marry the Mobutu's sister in law. However, Mobutu's firm support of Roberto's FNLA also coincided with his personal predilections and with concrete Zairian interest. Mobutu had developed an almost paranoid suspicion of communist countries after his traumatic experiences with the Soviet supported Katangan secessionist movement in the 1960s. The Katangan gendarmerie in Angola remained a permanent worry to him on his flank, fighting on the side of the MPLA from April 1975 due to their antagonism with Zaire. Economic interests (the continuity of his mineral exports) dictated an interest in the Benguela railway and in the oil-rich Cabinda enclave. In addition, Mobutu had a strong ambition to play the dominant role in the Central and Western African regions. These two motives are supported both by Mobutu's own statements regarding Angola and his often stated ambitions in Africa (Legum, 1976: A26-27). An agent's own statements about his motives can not be accepted at face value, but Mobutu's not particularly noble motives appear plausible. An agent stating unflattering motives is more credible than one stating flattering ones (Dahl, 1980: 73). The claim on Cabinda was, of course, incompatible with the territorial integrity of Angola.

Mobutu allowed the voice of Cabinda to broadcast from Zaire. Particularly revealing is the fact that he denied FNLA forces access to Cabinda (Marcum, 1978: 254). This action, incompatible with the policy in the main part of Angola, strongly suggests that Mobutu acted

more out of Zairian national interest than concern for the FNLA. The motives in Cabinda are inferred from Mobutu's actions because he never mentioned Cabinda in any of his statements. Interestingly, the more blatant the norm violations, the less direct evidence about Mobutu's motives exist. This supports the hypothesis that Mobutu consciously violated the norms. It is, perhaps, worth pointing out that the validity of this conclusion stands and falls upon the supposed rationality of Mobutu in this case.

Both Zaire's goals in Angola and the means employed to reach them were incompatible with the norms regulating intra-African international affairs. The fact that all the interventions were denied, however, shows an awareness of what the norms were and a wish to minimize the costs of not complying with them, betraying that the norms figured in Mobutu's calculation. The lack of direct evidence about the motives most at odds with the norms reinforces this conclusion.

The Congo only borders on Angolan territory on the Cabinda enclave. Cabinda had a separatist movement of its own, the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda enclave (FLEC). In November 1974, their bid for power was routed by the MPLA (Marcum, 1978: 254). In January 1975, Neto accused the Congolese of supporting Cabindan separatism. The truth of these allegations is unclear. According to Marcum (1978: 254), the FLEC probably did receive some covetous support from neighboring states, among them Congo. Bridgland (1988: 151) states categorically that the Congo supported the FLEC's secessionist takeover attempt in Cabinda. Furthermore, despite being essentially Pro-MPLA, the Congo also supplied the UNITA with arms and money, presumably to weaken MPLA's hand in Cabinda. The Congo did not use their own troops in Cabinda, nor have they to date ever admitted to the allegations of covetous aid. In other words, only the norm of non-intervention was violated. However, regular Congolese troops were not used in Cabinda, observing the norm restricting means. The extreme military weakness of Angola and the size of the revenues from Cabinda's oil would have made it rational to employ regular troops to gain control of Cabinda. The fear of sanctions may have made it rational for Congo to show restraint, or minimally, the cost of violating the norm figured in Congo's calculations. The Congolese would hardly have bothered keeping the operation so secret, stubbornly denying the accusations if this was not the case. Whether the norms influenced actual behavior (i.e. the amount of aid given and the means chosen) are unknown.

The persistent Congolese denial of any norm-violation leads to a situation where no material is available to infer their desires and beliefs directly. Thus our conclusions as to what the motives might have been rely exclusively on the actual behavior of the Congolese government.

Zambia represents yet another possible variation of the mix between selfish rationality and norm-induced behavior. Zambia's President Kaunda was always a staunch supporter of Savimbi's UNITA. His support was always couched in the language of the OAU – no intervention by foreign powers in African affairs and no interference by OAU members in the internal affairs of other independent states (Bridgland, 1988: 201, 228ff). In practice, the former meant that the Soviet Union and Cuba should get out of Angola. The latter meant

support for the OAU's efforts toward a reconciliation of the three liberation movements. Incidentally, this was also the official line of UNITA, the politically and militarily weakest of the three movements at the time. A political solution would give UNITA a hand in Angolan affairs. The UNITA had its strongest support among the Ovimbundu, the largest of Angola's three main ethnic groups with 37% of the population. A peaceful solution would have reduced the importance of UNITA's military weakness and enhanced the importance of their numerical potential. Furthermore, the Ovimbundu heartland was situated next to Zambia's border. A fair share of the Ovimbundus lived in Zambia. Thus, to follow the prescribed norms, would lead to an outcome favorable to the more parochial interests of Zambia. Since norms and rationality essentially predict the same policy towards the OAU, we need to look beyond behavior to determine Kaunda's priorities.

On January 28 1976, President Kaunda declared a full state of national emergency for reasons that seem like an overreaction – unrest among less than 1000 students at the University of Zambia, and the MPLA/Cuban advance against the Zambian border. The students were few and the MPLA/Cubans were still far away from the border at the time. Coupled with some other bits of information, a hypothesis about the real reasons for the state of emergency may be formed. First, a few days after the Zambian national emergency had been declared, UNITA's foreign secretary Sangumba stated to the press that warplanes had bombed MPLA forces in the eastern Angolan town of Cazombo, a mere 150 kilometers from the Zambian border. He could not say by whom the MPLA had been bombed. Secondly, the UNITA, Zambia, Zaire and South Africa did not always share objectives during the Angolan war. But they *did* have a common interest in cleansing the MPLA from all of the 1300 kilometers of the Bengueala railway. Zaire and Zambia had economic motives, since this would have made the cheapest line of transport available again. The UNITA would have gained credibility if they proved themselves capable of operating Angola's main transportation line in the middle of a civil war and the South African's would have strengthened three of its allies of convenience at a critical moment (Bridgland, 1988: 236-237). At least, they harbored plans of carrying out bombing raids from southern Zaire (Stockwell, 1978: 218). Furthermore, several sources report shooting in the military area of Lusaka airport. One of the sources attributes this to conflict over whether the bombing of targets within Angola should continue. Moreover, the rebellious students had concluded at an emergency meeting that Zambia's neutrality was a mask for its support for UNITA. A small mutiny had also taken place within the Zambian air force because a fraction did not want to fight on behalf of the UNITA. Finally, it is proved beyond any reasonable doubt that South African troops went in transit through western Zambia to fight on behalf of UNITA (Bridgland, 1988: 238-239).

The national emergency seems better explained by the potential for unrest created by the collaboration with South Africa's Angola policy and, possibly, by Zambia's own military activities in Angola. Thus, Zambia probably did not adhere to the non-intervention norm. The norms did enter Zambia's calculations when deciding what to do and did affect behavior in the sense that, probably, actions were carried out secretly and in a smaller scale than

otherwise would have been the case. In addition, any collaboration with South Africa in itself represented a violation of no less than three intra-African norms of international relations – the norm of non-intervention, the norm of expanding the system's boundaries to the borders, and the norm of preferring intrasystem solutions to extrasystem solutions.

In conclusion, the African neighboring states frequently violated the non-intervention norm during the outbreak of the Angolan war. However, Congo and Zambia did take great care to keep their transgression secret, betraying an acute awareness of the expected behavior. In the case of Zambia, the actions prescribed by the norms to a large extent coincided with those prescribed by rational self-interest, but the available evidence indicates that rational self-interest would have prevailed in case of conflict. As far as Zaire is concerned, it seems that norms did not influence Mobutu's actual choice of policies at all.

After the South African invasion of October 23 1975, the norm of expanding the boundaries of the continent became salient again. It led Zambia to abandon its support of UNITA. Containing white-ruled South Africa proved an effective norm. Before October 23 the OAU sought to reconcile the differences between the contending parties; at the extra-ordinary OAU meeting in Addis Ababa in January 1976, the vote was 22-22 on recognizing the MPLA government; six weeks later the MPLA was recognized by 41 of 46 OAU members; the People's Republic of Angola became a full member of the OAU on February 10, 1976 (Bridgland, 1988: 206). The change within the OAU might have been caused by the MPLA, with Cuban and Soviet support, winning the war. But before the South African intervention, recognizing the MPLA was unpopular due to their extensive support from the Soviet Union and Cuba. The emotional tone adopted by many states suggests that throwing the Republic of South Africa out of Angola was what mattered. They supported reducing the reach of the apartheid regime because it extended the boundaries of African rule in the African system. In other words, the change in policy was caused by a norm.

The Tanzanian-Ugandan War of 1979

On January 20 1979, Tanzanian forces crossed the border to Uganda. This was the beginning of the first invasion of one African state which resulted in the toppling of the regime of another African state.[5] It was thus a blatant violation of the norm of non-intervention, understandable only in the light of Tanzanian national interests. Nevertheless, to invoke the concept of norms may enable us to understand these events better.

In January 1971, Amin seized power in Uganda. After 18 months of troubled coexistence, Tanzania's President Nyerere allowed the forces of Uganda's former President Obote to attack Uganda. The attack failed. In the Mogadishu Agreement on October 5 1972, both countries committed themselves not to undertake military operations against one another. Both parties observed the agreement. Tanzania strictly observed the non-intervention clause of the Mogadishu Agreement. For instance, former Ugandan President

[5] *Africa Contemporary Record* 1978-79, p. B397.

Obote, who lived in exile in Tanzania, was not even once permitted to condemn publicly what was happening in Uganda during the rule of Idi Amin.[6]

Tanzania's policy could be interpreted as either adhering to the non-intervention norm or alternatively, as motivated solely by rational self-interest by being deterred by Uganda's military forces. However, the strictness with which the policy was implemented suggests that it was partly guided by norms. Obote was effectively silenced, but on his own behalf, Nyerere never tried to hide his dislike of Amin and his regime. Combining the actions of Nyerere with his statements in other situations yields the conclusion that his actions were partly motivated by the wish to adhere to the norm of non-intervention.

Then in October 1978, Ugandan forces invaded Tanzanian territory. A section of Amin's army had mutinied. The mutiny was quickly routed and about 200 of the mutineers fled into Tanzania. They were pursued by two of Amin's battalions, the Suicide battalion, based at Masaka, and the Simba battalion, based at Mbarara. The battalions occupied and ravaged the Tanzanian province of Kagara. People were killed, women were raped, cattle were stolen, property destroyed, and about 40,000 people fled their homes. These deeds infuriated Nyerere. He proposed a three-point strategy to deal with the situation. First, the OAU had to condemn Amin's aggression, compensation for the damage done had to be obtained and Uganda had to renunciate all claims to Tanzanian territory. Second, Amin's forces had to be driven out of Tanzania and the two battalions involved in the Kagera operations punished. Third, it was necessary to make sure that there would be no more attacks on Tanzanian territory by Uganda.[7] Compensation for what had happened and effective guarantees that it should not happen again by ensuring the integrity of Tanzanian territory, were for Nyerere, the most important demands, revealing the values his policies tried to promote.

The first of these goals was in accordance with the behavior prescribed by the OAU, pointing directly to the relevance of norms for Nyerere's actions in this situation. However, the OAU pursued a policy of reconciliation. They recommended a cease-fire, withdrawal of troops, and adherence to the OAU-charter. This did not drive Amin's forces out of Kagara and Nyerere decided to take unilateral action. This sequence of events suggests that norms did affect Tanzanian policies. First, unilateral action was not tried out immediately. Instead, time-consuming maneuvering within the OAU was attempted. Of course, this could be interpreted as an attempt at achieving its goals with the cheapest means available, but rational deliberation would suggest that the strategy was unworkable and that an experienced politician like Nyerere would know this. Second, the invasion was eventually carried out, suggesting that it was not only the Ugandan deterrent that had held Tanzania back in the first place. Tanzania's actions were influenced by norms, but Tanzania was *cost-sensitive* in their compliance with the norms. Although not fully outcome-oriented, the actor is influenced by

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[6] *Africa Contemporary Record* 1978-79, pp. B393- B395.
[7] *Africa Contemporary Record* 1978-79, p. B394.

the costs involved in following the norm (Elster, 1989a: 208). The incidents in Kagara had made the costs in complying intolerably high.

The idea of cost-sensitive norm compliance gains plausibility if we examine Tanzania's policies further. Before unilateral Tanzanian action was taken, Nyerere called for a revision of the OAU Charter, claiming that it had outplayed its role. It had been useful for African peoples under colonial domination. Now it had become a trade union for Heads of State, some of which deserved protection while others did not. Uganda's Amin clearly belonged to the latter category. Furthermore, the OAU and its member states, remaining passive during Amin's aggression, had forfeited their right to make statements on what Tanzania might do to expel the Ugandans.[8] The attempt to first work through the OAU, the explicit rejection of the norms of the organization, the attempt to replace them or at least the perceived need to justify their transgression, all betray an acute awareness of what the norms were and that they loomed large in the eyes of President Nyerere.

The original goals of the Tanzanian military operation were moderate. Kagara was to be retaken. Tanzanian forces were not to penetrate beyond Masaka and Mbarara, the headquarters of the two battalions responsible for the atrocities in Kagara. The Ugandan people themselves were trusted to bring about the fall of Amin. Or alternatively, let his regime continue, if they so choose. This was an attempt to avoid transgressing the non-intervention norm. However, to help things along exiled Ugandans in Tanzania were given arms and allowed to take part in the military campaign. This betrayed a serious interest in toppling the regime of Amin or, differently put, in the outcome of the situation. Considerable effort was taken to avoid the impression of supporting former president Obote. Nyerere did not want to be seen as being in favor of any particular fraction in Uganda. It was especially important that it should not look as if he was trying to bring Obote back in power. Therefore, all Ugandan exiles were invited to a conference arranged in Dar es Salam to plan their strategy to overthrow Amin. Obote's exiled Ugandan People's Congress (UPC) did not join, but the Save Uganda Movement (SUM), the Uganda Nationalist Organization (UNO), and Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) all did. Nyerere only wanted Amin out; he did not care very much who succeeded him. Obote did not take part in the new Ugandan government after Amin.[9] It would surely have been within Nyerere's power to make Obote Head of State in Uganda after the war, had he wished to do so. It is clear that it would have been in the interest of Tanzania to have a Head of State in neighboring Uganda who owed his position mainly to Tanzania. This possibility was never seriously considered, suggesting that the best explanation of Tanzanian actions is that they were guided by the existence of the norm of non-intervention among African states, constrained by rational considerations as to the costs of complying with the norm.

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[8] *Africa Contemporary Record* 1978-79, p. B395.
[9] *Africa Contemporary Record* 1978-79, pp. B395-96, B428 and B437.

The war began on January 20 1979, with an attack by the Tanzanian army supported by approximately 950 Ugandans. One of the main reasons for the success of the Tanzanian forces was that the Ugandan air force could not be trusted after the defection of two of its pilots to Kenya. On February 24 Masaka fell, and Mbarara was taken two days later.[10] The goals stated for the campaign had been reached. The Tanzanian military effort continued. One interpretation is that the continued war showed that the Tanzanians were motivated by rational self-interest all along and that the only purpose of the initial declaration of the moderate goals was to deceive others. However, the reasons for the continuation of the campaign might also be that Amin's Soviet artillery was able to reach Tanzanian territory from their present position. Supplies, especially oil, from Arabic states had delayed the hoped for internal collapse of Amin's forces. But what reversed Nyerere's decision was that Libya had intervened on Amin's side.[11] There was now a risk that the tide of war might change through Libya's intervention. The Libyan intervention influenced both the rational deliberation of what to do, as well as the effectiveness of the norms non-intervention. The costs of not continuing the campaign had risen. The norm stood weaker when Libya broke it. To weigh the relative impact of discontinuing the intervention and the weakening of the non-intervention norm is impossible.

The campaign continued. On April 10, Uganda's capital Kampala fell. Two weeks later Amin's last position Jinja fell too. The war was over. The Tanzanian victory was helped by massive defections from Amin's forces. The population greeted the Tanzanians as liberators and the fall of the Amin regime was celebrated. There can be no doubt that Tanzanian military victory was dependent upon the low legitimacy of the Amin regime in the armed forces, particularly the Air Force and in Uganda's population. The international repercussions were surprisingly mild. There was little public criticism of the intervention and no sanctions of any kind from anyone.[12] This rather surprising fact could be explained by the combined impact of a number of factors: the Ugandan aggression first in Kagara, the initial attempt to follow the norms, the suggestion of reformulating them preserving an impression of taking these matters seriously, the lack of internal and external legitimacy of the Amin regime, and the Libyan intervention.

The case of the Tanzanian-Ugandan war shows that there is room for norms even in situations dominated by national interests and rationality. In this case, rationality and norms interplayed to determine Tanzania's policies. Norms worked mainly as constraints on action, first by delaying the invasion and then the norm of non-intervention limited the objectives inside Uganda.

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[10] *Africa Contemporary Record* 1978-79, pp. B430- B431.

[11] *Africa Contemporary Record* 1978-79, p. B432.

[12] See *Africa Contemporary Record* 1978-79, p. B434, p. B397. The invasion did, however, start a heated argument within the OAU. The majority condemned the Tanzanian invasion, but there were many critical voices heard. A good summary of the discussion can be found in Cervenka & Legum (1980: A59-A63).

Conclusions

The first theoretically significant observation is that in both cases norms did play a part in the shaping of the agents' actions. Norms entered into the actors' calculations. Norms influenced the actors' less in Angola than it did Tanzania. In terms of actual behavior, all actors tried to hold their transgressions of norms secret. In the case of Tanzania, norms influenced both the timing of actions and their content.

The second theoretically significant finding is that norms alone were not able to explain the behavior of the actors concerned. Norms interplayed with more rationalistically derived motives and were a necessary part to be able to fully explain the actors' behavior. Many of the misgivings about the explanatory power of norms are caused by the expectation that norms should be able to explain behavior alone. This analysis finds that the challenge is to find the particular mix of rationality and norms in each concrete case.

The mingling of norm-induced behavior and rationalistic considerations followed subtly different patterns. Tanzania was constrained by the costs of breaking the non-intervention norm, both in objectives and means, but nevertheless acted openly. Zaire, Congo and Zambia breached the non-intervention norm while betraying their sensitivity to the costs of doing so by trying to keep their interventions secret. Congo did not deploy her troops and conflicting objectives led to support for the MPLA as well as UNITA. For Zambia, norms and rationality initially pointed to similar policies. After the South African intervention, Zambia changed policy because the cost of breaking the non-intervention norm by supporting the UNITA had risen, the expected benefit had decreased, and the norm of expanding the boundaries demanded that the support for the UNITA had to be abandoned. The fact that Zambia had cooperated with the Republic of South Africa in 1975 suggests that the two first factors were the decisive ones. As far as Zaire is concerned, it seems that norms did not influence Mobutu's actual choice of policies at all. The third finding is *the main way for norms to have causal influence is as a constraint on rationality*. Sensitivity to the costs of adhering to the norm is the usual mechanism, but the nature and effectiveness of the constraint posed by norms will vary. Typically, in Angola where the cost of meddling was low, many interventions took place. The precarious balance between three militarily weak liberation movements was easily altered. It took almost nothing to alter the military situation in Angola in the desired direction and the combination of low costs and potential large gains repeatedly proved an irresistible temptation to violate the non-intervention norm (Napper, 1983: 156, 160-162).

The fourth theoretical finding is *norms are vulnerable to transgression*. When one party deviated from the norm, the norms lost their constraining force. First, Uganda's intervention created the situation that led to the Tanzanian intervention. Then the Libyan intervention changed the goals of the intervention in the middle of events. In order to understand the pattern of repeated interventions in Angola, we must consider the interaction of policies. In the Angolan war, Zaire's blatant violations of the non-intervention norm in the pursuit of its own national interests lowered the threshold for intervening for all the other

actors, initiating a cycle of intervention and counter-interventions. Congo's policies toward Cabinda were influenced by Zaire's policies towards Cabinda. This contributed to power politics dominating norms in the Angolan war. The expressed adherence to norms internationally, then, is an unstable situation which unravels easily in the face of blatant transgression.

The fifth theoretical finding concerns the type of transgression influencing the effect of norms on behavior. One may conclude that *adherence to norms is contingent upon the behavior of others in the conflict itself, but not behavior in other conflicts.* In neither of the conflicts were any reference made to other situations where the norms were broken. Nor was there any reference to the frequent norm violations in Angola in the Tanzanian-Ugandan conflict.

One, admittedly speculative, reason can be that reciprocal norm-violation usually is collectively irrational. In hindsight, the situation that developed in Angola was clearly not advantageous to anyone.[13] The conflict was perceived as a case where most things had gone wrong and, more importantly, the policies that had caused this situation were considered not only as norm-violations, objectionable on normative grounds, but also irrational. The context that made the policies individually rational at the time was forgotten. This irrationality associated with norm violating behavior can explain the seemingly limited influence such behavior has on future situations. Actors in international relations consider situations less interconnected with one another, and more isolated, than most analysts are inclined to think. Thus, there is a tendency to act in each situation independently of what others have done in similar situations (George & Smoke, 1974: 552-53, 558-61). These two mechanisms ensure a relative robustness of norms, not in their actual causal power in every situation, but more in their continued existence and potential relevance in new situations.

The sixth and final theoretical lesson is that *indeterminacy problems may lead one to overestimate the importance of norms in explaining behavior* because there are several competing norms and the actors will choose the one most conducive to their self-interest because different norms prescribed different courses of action. The Congo continued their support of the MPLA, the target of South African policy, because such support was most likely to bring about the expansion of the system. Zambia supported the UNITA, the movement most likely to be interested in power sharing (because it was the weakest), as the vehicle to promote unity in Angola. There are often several competing norms and the actors

[13]Herbst (1989) argues that the maintenance of African borders generally is a good for African states, and that this fact, rather than the norm against violating them explains why they are so difficult to alter. However, the latter part of the argument betrays a certain confusion between actions that are individually and collectively rational. He has demonstrated that it would be beneficial for Africa as a whole if all boundaries were respected. This does not explain why each individual state should respect the boundaries. In essence, I argue above that the norm of non-intervention owes much of its strength from most African leaders making the common cognitive mistake of confusing collectively rational outcomes with individually rational policies. Touval (1967) is a useful discussion of the discussions of the boundary question in the early years of the OAU.

will choose the one most conducive to their self-interest. On the other hand, norms will still exert some influence unless there is a norm prescribing action identical with rationality.

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