

**War by Other Means:
The Problem of Population and
the Civilianisation of Coalition Interventions**

Colleen Bell
University of Bristol
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**School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies,
University of Bristol
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Dr Colleen Bell is a visiting fellow at the Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto and a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Politics at the University of Bristol. The driving focus of her work concerns how freedom is shaped by liberal strategies of security. Currently, she is conducting a project on the re-emergence of counterinsurgency doctrine in Coalition interventions, exploring how counterinsurgency represents a remedial movement to win ‘hearts and minds’ among occupied populations by strategizing culture within the schema of war. She is co-editor and contributor of a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* on the topic of post-interventionary societies. She is also in the process of publishing a book which addresses how freedom has been re-shaped by Canada’s ‘war on terror.’ Other published work can be found in *Security Dialogue* and the *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*.

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Abstract:

This paper examines the re-emergence of counterinsurgency doctrine in Coalition interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. While counterterrorism has tended to emphasize the detection and elimination of known or suspected assailants, the paper considers how counterinsurgency operates at the level of the population by strategizing culture within the schema of war. The paper first contextualizes counterinsurgency as a stratagem of war that elides the Clausewitzian dictum that war is simply the continuation of policy by other means. It then analyzes how counterinsurgency works as remedial effort to turn the tide on Coalition setbacks by shifting the focus from particular terrorists or insurgents to a problematization of whole populations. Counterinsurgency encounters occupied populations as potentially insurgent forms of life that can be pacified through the strategic use of ethnographic knowledge, by building 'trusted networks' within the population and by mobilizing non-material forms of development which aim to reconstitute social relations through graduated sovereignty. Counterinsurgency, it is concluded, is not simply a shift in military practice, but is mostly a civilian form of warfare which retells the narrative of intervention as part of the evolution of political and economic liberalization, marking a passage from interventionary force to post-interventionary governance.

Key words: counterinsurgency, intervention, warfare, biopolitics, ethnography

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'If this sounds unmilitary, get over it' (Kilcullen 2006a, 104).¹

There is significant opposition among Iraqis and Afghans to the presence of Coalition forces in their countries. While much attention has been paid to suicide and roadside bombings as the principle expressions of this discontent, opinion polls and consecutive studies commissioned by the US and UK militaries, media outlets, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and research institutes point to more widespread, popular opposition. Since 2005 studies have shown rising support among Iraqis for an immediate withdrawal of foreign troops, growing sentiment that the U.S. presence has served to provoke conflict rather than solve it and a widespread feeling that attacks on US Army and British Armed Forces personnel are often justified.² And while Afghanistan has been held up as the less controversial, even legitimate intervention by comparison, it is also rife with public frustration at the Coalition presence. Polls point to declining patience with foreign troops, severe economic problems in which foreign actors are partly blamed and increasingly negative assessments of the Western-backed Karzai administration (Loyn, 2007; Independent Panel 2008; ICOS 2006). Organized and mass opposition in both countries has also taken root. Iraqi worker federations, trade unions and whole communities in the hundreds of thousands under the leadership of Moqtada al-Sadr have banded together not only to demand a withdrawal of Coalition forces and more government accountability, but also to insist that public resources remain in public hands rather than be auctioned off to foreign bidders (Sheridan 2008). The Kabul riot of 2005, which spread to six provinces, saw the culmination of public anger over flagrant disregard for civilian life by Coalition personnel and cruel treatment of prisoners (Lawrence 2005). This and more recent demonstrations have undermined the previously unquestioned belief that Afghans are simply grateful for the intervention (Azimy 2008).

Widening discontent among occupied populations in Iraq and Afghanistan raises the question of whether victory is decided on the battlefield or determined by the perceptions of ordinary people and the impact of war on their lives and livelihoods. This question has led to policy and operational changes which mark a step change in how the War on Terror is being waged. No longer convincingly seen as limited to terrorist networks or even armed opposition groups, there is now a growing attentiveness among military professionals to the increasing number of average

¹ It is worth noting that the title of David Kilcullen's paper, 'Twenty-eight paper s', asserts a connection to T.E. Lawrence's ('Lawrence of Arabia') 1917, 'Twenty-seven Paper s'. See Packer 2006, 'Knowing the enemy'. *The New Yorker* 18 December 2006, available at http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/12/18/061218fa_fact2?currentPage=2.

² See, for example, World Public Opinion Poll. *The Iraqi Public on the US Presence and the Future of Iraq*. Program on International Policy Attitudes, University of Maryland 27 September 2006. This study was supported by the findings of a previous one in 2005 where the British Ministry of Defence discovered that a startling 45 percent of the Iraqi population felt that attacks on US and UK troops are justified, while a separate poll in 2006 showed a staggering 61 percent in support of attacks against US forces, even while the vast majority disagree with the aims and tactic of terrorism. Also see, James Paul and Céline Nahory, *War and Occupation in Iraq*, Global Policy Forum, June 2007; Amit R Paley, 'Most Iraqis Favor Immediate US Pullout, Polls Show', *Washington Post*, (Washington), 27 September 2006, pp. A22; and Sean Rayment, 'Secret MoD Poll: Iraqis Supports Attacks on British Troops', *Telegraph*, (London), 23 October 2005, available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/1501319/Secret-MoD-poll-Iraqis-support-attacks-on-British-troops.html>.

people within occupied spaces who are affected by and oppose the presence of foreign powers and the local regimes that they support (US Army 2006). This paper examines this shift in terms of the re-emergence of counterinsurgency. Counterinsurgency signals a movement away from exclusive reliance on the elimination of terrorist cells towards the targeting of whole populations for political support and a treatment of those populations as the decisive variables of mission success or failure. Some might suggest that the distinction between 'insurgency' and 'terrorism' is simply a matter of terminological preference and it is true that there is some conflation in terminology. The approach taken here, however, suggests that the current discourse of counterinsurgency speaks to a broadened and modified understanding of threats, periodic lengthening of mission time-frames and reevaluation of appropriate uses of force. While counterinsurgency may encompass existent counterterrorism policies, it denotes the coming to the fore of a wider and more complex form of engagement which connects interventionism to specific aspects of post-interventionary governance of which the militaries of Coalition states seek to play a pivotal role. Coalition forces now emphasize defeating subversion, encouraging support for new governments and promoting 'collaborative partnerships' between Coalition forces and the local population. Comparatively deemphasized are the detection and hunting down of terrorist cells. Locating the 'enemy' is now appreciated as an often delicate matter of negotiation and networking among the population, rather than being effected through housing raids and mass displacement, or the technical endeavours of mobile sensory systems, interdiction and precision bombing. Counterinsurgency, in other words, marks a decisive shift away from the overwhelming crudity of 'shock and awe', towards the labyrinthine craft of winning 'hearts and minds' (ICOS 2007; Gombert and Gordon IV 2008; Sepp 2007; Long 2006).

This paper argues that counterinsurgency can best be understood not simply as a re-strategization of military doctrine, but as an acknowledgement within military circles of the limits of the use of force and the inability of the traditional paradigm of warfare to achieve desired outcomes. Comprised of practices which take their cue for action from non-military forms of engagement, the premise of counterinsurgency is that the problem of terrorism, insurgency and instability is really a problem of population, underdevelopment and governance. Indeed, despite counterinsurgency being widely positioned as reconfiguration in military manoeuvres, its pedigree is as much civilian as it is military. It represents a shift in strategy which can be sourced from an influential cadre of defence intellectuals, including for example, General David Petraeus, David Kilcullen, Montgomery McFate, Jacob Kipp and John Nagl, who straddle the worlds of armed force and the social sciences. Their work is associated with the heightened integration of civil-military efforts outlined in the release of the US Army/Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* in 2006, the 2007 troop surge in Iraq dubbed 'The New Way Forward', as well as the growing use of anthropologists and social scientists in programs of 'human terrain mapping' among targeted populations. Counterinsurgency's revival also grows out of the civil-military initiative of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, which predate more formalized movements towards counterinsurgency's principle aims, yet have been held up as microcosms of its savvy potential.

The practices that flow from counterinsurgency thinking, I argue, are intimately tied to broader trends in global liberal governance which link the social, political and economic character of societies and peoples to international security. Resolving internal conflict, promoting cultural understanding and reconstructing war-torn societies are not just the work of NGOs and the UN, but form the ideational remit of Coalition counterinsurgency warfare. Thus, even while articulations of counterinsurgency as a form of military re-strategization abound, its principle rationale to pacify host societies resides, to a large degree, within and through civilian forms of intervention long established as programs for the political and economic development of 'illiberal' societies. At the same time, however, the development efforts that interventionary arrangements call forth emphasize good governance, elections and the non-material, basic needs, 'sustainable' model that characterizes much of what is said and done in the name of development today

(Duffield 2007; Pupavac 2005; Luke 2008). As such, this paper examines the rationale of counterinsurgency as one axis of the liberal way of war (Dillon and Reid 2001) connected to a problematization of the efficiency of the use of force and the belief that it is the development of liberal modernity, rather than an equalling of global political and economic relations, which leads to peaceful coexistence within and between human societies. In this respect, counterinsurgency is an ameliorative design of governance for the post-interventionary context, an attempt to quell resistance to occupation, regain lost legitimacy and reaffirm altruistic claims of bettering others in the build up to intervention. The significance of counterinsurgency, therefore, is not only that it represents the advancement of non-traditional roles for the military, but also that it makes visible the way in which the battlespace of interventionary warfare expresses a liberal will to govern.

There are three aspects to this argument. The first is that the shift towards counterinsurgency, while not simply a re-strategization of military activity, remains, instrumentally, a form of warfare. I demonstrate this by exploring how we might redress the Clausewitzian dictum that war is simply policy by other means in order to account for the way in which power relations are themselves invested with force. That is, war occurs not simply in the meeting between two adversaries on a battlefield, but is mobilized within and through civil relations. The second aspect of this argument is that counterinsurgency, in moving the battlespace of interventionary war beyond terrorism and armed struggle, involves a problematization of whole populations. Unlike counterterrorism which focuses military efforts on the elimination of terrorist cells and the removal of rogue leaders, counterinsurgency, while not excluding the possibility of coercive action, hinges winning the war on changing how people feel, on developing new subjectivities and on creating societies anew. The grounding of this process is that the populations of Iraq and Afghanistan are rendered strategic objects of ethnographic knowledge within the military circuit. Third, the paper advocates for conceptualizing the re-emergence of counterinsurgency, which works from the interconnection of the two above points. By doing so, it becomes possible to consider how the political and economic activity of post-intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq can and should be conceptualized as a war by other means, even while these forms of engagement are waged as designs of peace.

War

The conventional analytics of war have been typically built upon the work of Carl von Clausewitz, in particular his dictum that war is 'a mere continuation of policy by other means' (1832/1968, 119). For many strategists of war this dictum has been treated principally as an expression of the necessary subordination of war to the political ends of sovereignty, and therefore as a practical recommendation for the political management of its aims. Yet as Julian Reid (2006) has insightfully pointed out, for Clausewitz war was neither reducible to the instrumental standpoint of the state, nor was it simply captured by the overburdened dictum of policy by other means. War, for Clausewitz, was also an 'act of force', a 'conflict of living forces' and 'commerce'. These other aspects of war have been influential in the development of what Reid has termed 'counter-strategic thought'; that is, the interrogation of those relations of power which have typically been left unquestioned within political thought. Thinking in such terms exposes the way in which war is not simply the duelling of two armies, but is a social relation entailing both productive and divisive dimensions. The latter dimension has informed the development of a dialectical conception of war, in which war is conceived of as a principle of opposition or antagonism between two historically sedimented and discrete camps which are politically irreconcilable. This view informed Marx's and Engels' characterization of modern societies as defined by a 'more or less veiled civil war' (1848/1998, 11). And seeing this antagonistic division between oppressors and oppressed, Antonio Gramsci conceived of a 'war of position' in which raising class consciousness of opposing interests would foment revolutionary change (1971, 229-239). According to these formulations, war is not simply a utile instrument of state coercion, but is entwined with the development of

modern political order. War is the expression, in other words, of the ‘already determined historically founded divisions which structure antagonisms within society’ (Reid 2006, 246).

This view of war stands in sharp contrast to Hobbesian (1651/1985) inspired contract theory of state formation, in which modern societies are conceived of as products of the cessation of war (Luttwak 1999). Yet the idea that war exists within the fabric of societies, rather than prior to their formation or simply at their demise, has also been picked up in order to explore how war can serve as a condition of possibility for the emergence of new forms of subjectivity. In his 1976 lectures published under the title *Society Must be Defended* (2003), Michel Foucault began to develop an argument which rejected the idea that Western societies were products of the resolution of war, as well as the idea that they were simply the expression of ‘hidden’ wars. Rather, he sought to explore how Western societies had come to be shaped by the internal refinement of war within civil relations. While this view does not accept the Marxian view of society as a ‘veiled’ civil war, it does suggest that if war is the expression of historically founded divisions which structure social relations, its prosecution points not only to its divisive dimensions, but also to its productive potential. War, in other words, can be a way of reconstituting social relations by disrupting existing divisions and creating new possibilities. For Foucault, the social relations that shape Western societies operated ‘dynamically through the inculcation and dissemination of the force of war’ (Reid 2006, 285).

What is significant about this move in Foucault’s work is not that it represented a departure from his preceding analyses of disciplinary power in relation to the functions of social institutions, but rather that it signified a development in his thinking along these very lines. The schema of war, he proposed, might provide the optimal political tool for the study of civil society. To this end, Foucault began the 1976 lectures by inverting the Clausewitz’s dictum, suggesting that war is not so much policy by other means, but that policy is war by other means. In ways that can be historically specified, power relations within society are invested with force. Political power is the ‘perpetual use of silent war’, inscribed into the institutions of society, the economic system, language and even bodies (2003, 12). Thus, while political power is used to end battles of war, subsequent efforts to establish a reign of peace within society is actually a means of maintaining the ‘disequilibrium’ of relations of power that were instantiated by the last battle (2003, 15). It is the political framework of civil peace, therefore, which sanctions and reproduces the relations of force manifested in war. What is typically construed as ‘peace’, a state of peace, a standing down of the state’s capacity for violence is not, consequently, a condition antithetical to war. Likewise, activities construed as peaceful, or non-coercive, even empathetic, do not simply represent a cessation of war. Rather, strategies of war function in specific ways on the terrain of peace.

While this inflection of peace with war appears to muddy the conceptual waters, it has a practical utility. It allows us to approach the question of war by considering what form political power takes when military dominance cannot produce victory. That is, what effective strategies of power emerge when military warfare makes war un-winnable? And what becomes the object of warfare when military power cannot achieve victory? To begin with the last question first, I suggest that counterinsurgency encounters the impossibility of achieving set goals by establishing military dominance, as is the case in Iraq and Afghanistan, by re-strategizing power to the level of the society. More specifically, it is the population of a given society which becomes a strategic object of warfare, a discussion to which the paper now turns.

Counterinsurgency and the Problem of Population

The revival of counterinsurgency has been most coherently outlined by the US Army in its 2006 *Counterinsurgency: Field Manual* which begins from the perspective that insurgency and terrorism are different forms of action. The latter is simply one tactic, while the former is a

movement of resistance that may include terrorism but is not limited to it. Thus, while the US Department of State defines terrorism as ‘premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents’ (2005, 1), insurgency has been given a much broader definition by the U.S. Army (and U.S. Navy) as ‘an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control’ (2006, 1-1). In contrast to terrorists – who are perceived to ‘come and go’, are often self-funded and well resourced compared to the local populations in which they move, are typically small in number, and whose targets may be internal or external to their base of operations – insurgencies tend to be sustained, greater in number of participants, reliant on popular support and internally focused (Kilcullen 2006b, 112-7).

It is this distinction and more specifically renewed interest in applying it to military strategy which currently animates an intra-military ideological struggle between ‘old school’ neo-traditionalists and ‘new school’ thinking of network-centric warfare (Der Derian 2008). The ideological heyday of the neo-traditionalists’ predecessors was the ‘irregular warfare’ of imperial powers in the colonial era, their subsequent ‘stabilization’ campaigns in the decolonization period and the latter half of the U.S.-Vietnam War. The latter group, tied to the mantra of superior fire power, gave rise to the Revolution in Military Affairs which dominated military thinking thereafter. Today the lessons of counterinsurgency have been resuscitated to address the messy fallout that the era of technological sophistication was supposed to thwart. With the re-emergence of counterinsurgency, the traditionalists are back in vogue and the ‘new school’ has become old.

In what therefore appears to be a back to the future scenario, the distinction between terrorism and insurgency has become significant for current strategists to address the complexity and magnitude of oppositional forces in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as for assessing why the framework of counterterrorism has proven to be disastrous. The War on Terror’s emphasis on countering terrorism, first through large-scale operations of ‘shock and awe’, and then through detection and ‘precision’ bombing, have contributed to local resentment by killing civilians, destroying infrastructure and compromising livelihoods. The counterterrorism framework has also tended to ignore how the regimes which are supported by Coalition powers may be seen as inept, corrupt and illegitimate by the people they purport to serve. It is these problems which have stimulated indigenous opposition, which is now referred to in Coalition discourse as ‘insurgency.’ Indeed, as an assessment by the RAND Corporation argues, the counterterrorism strategy of the War on Terror has not just been strategically out of touch, but has actually been counterproductive to the Coalitions own objectives of defeating terrorism:

Recognizing organized Islamic violence as insurgency, with local and global aspects, also demands that we face up to its scale, breadth, and shades...the number of individuals prepared to fight against U.S. forces in the Muslim world is two orders of magnitude greater than the number of terrorists US forces have been sent there to fight...only 1 percent of Iraqis approve of terrorism, while over 50 percent approve of attacks on U.S. troops...The COIN [counterinsurgency] paradigm exposes and confronts this danger; the GWOT [Global War on Terror] paradigm overlooks and aggravates it (Gompert and Gordon IV 2008, xxvi; also see Lopez 2007 and ICOS 2008).

The failure to recognize the shortcomings of the counterterrorism approach has compounded a consequential misapprehension of the source and nature of opposition and how that opposition can be overcome. The framework of counterinsurgency, in contrast, offers remedial hope.

In his influential classical counterinsurgency text which provided much of the ground work for the U.S. *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (2006), David Galula locates the indigenous population of

an intervention as the central focus of counterinsurgency warfare. For Galula the population is not simply the prize to be won, but is itself the *battleground of the war* (1964, 8). It is among the population, not between armies, that the outcome of a struggle between insurgents and counterinsurgents is ultimately decided. The extension of this logic means that crushing an insurgency through military prowess simply validates the grievances of insurgents, ‘increasing their appeal, and replacing their losses’ (Gompert and Gordon IV 2008, xxiii). The purpose, instead, must be to ‘diffuse’ the insurgency within the population more than to wage and win the war in the customary way. Rather than simply focused on destroying the enemy, then, counterinsurgency is principally oriented towards securing the people (Kilcullen 2006b, 122). Since it is only possible to secure political rule and stability by gaining the explicit support or at least acquiescence of the population, this support must be gained at the expense of more or less established political resistance within that population. Counterinsurgency, therefore, is principally a political rather than military struggle; the battle is for control over, and most importantly support of, the people. Bernard Fall (1965) might have put it best when he noted that losing a population to insurgency is not a matter of ‘being outfought’ but a consequence of ‘being out-administered’.

Counterinsurgency, in this respect, mobilizes a liberal rationality of government in which its object of concern is society, both its political character as well as its life processes. It is, more specifically, society conceived of in terms of population which underscores counterinsurgency. Schools of information about the population, hitherto seen as peripheral or irrelevant, are now regarded as strategically vital factors for Coalition forces to discover, understand and manage. The struggle is over the administration of the life of the population and is, therefore, concerned fundamentally with the establishment and advancement of a biopolitical relationship (Foucault 1997, 141-3; 2003, 239-41) between the population on the one hand and Coalition actors, the UN, international financial organizations and involved NGOs on the other. This struggle over the administration of life, especially in Afghanistan, operates through the distinction between developed and underdeveloped life in which ‘making live’ is a matter of meeting basic needs and producing frameworks for joint rule over the modalities of life. With little evidence that Coalition efforts are working towards mass industrialization in Afghanistan or reconstruction of Iraq into its pre-1991 industrial condition, administering autonomous, self-reproducing, life via non-material development is occurring through the liberalization of political and economic relations which are taken to be foundational to the transformation of zones of conflict into spaces of peace (Duffield 2007, 16-19; Pupavac 2005). What is demanded to meet these objectives is not so much the sovereign execution of violence against known or suspected assailants – to take, in other words, the life of some while allowing others to go on living – but demands a biopolitical form of warfare which seeks to direct the life of the population in elaborate and concrete ways. What is called forth is a transformation of whole societies (Nagl 2005) which are conceived of as potentially insurgent, long-term problems which interventionary actors and their indigenous partners must address.

There are two aspects of the population which seem especially significant to this biopolitical connection. The first is the focus on the population as an object or mass, especially as a datum of risk and potentialities. In Western societies, governing through risk has reached epic proportions in various domains (Beck 1999; 2002). In particular, the risks of internally or externally executed incidents of terrorism against Western nations as well as violent political opposition have been objects of detailed psychological and socioeconomic profiling in decades past (Petai, 1983; Pryce-Jones, 1989), with renewed attention in recent years (Victoroff 2005; *Ejournal USA* 2005; Pape 2005; Atran 2006). Counterinsurgency, however, attends to the profiling of populations within and against non-Western nations by the foreign actors who are stationed within them. Counterinsurgency builds upon, and specifies, the well-established claim in political discourse that those Southern populations mired in crisis and emergency have become dangerous beyond their own borders and regions (Abrahamsen 2005; Duffield 2002). While this view increasingly structures the connection between development and security, in counterinsurgency, the specific life

processes of these populations become relevant to post-interventionary strategy within the military circuit.

Counterinsurgency thinking connects the problem of political resistance, which is normally reduced to a matter of identifying enemies within the military circuit, to the characteristics of the populations of non-Western states. This is at least partly because it is at the level of population that violent opposition becomes an object of prediction, speculation and measurement. The level of the population, in other words, offers up a psycho-social terrain for investigation and calculation. Through the population terrorism via insurgency becomes aleatory. There can be ‘forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures’ (Foucault 2003, 246) about levels of organized resistance within the population over time. These can make use of the psychosocial data that informs terrorism studies involving individual and group level profiling and prediction, including who might join an insurgency and who might be persuaded to disapprove of insurgent activities, the comings and goings of ‘people of interest’ within the population. But it can also include broader ‘tracking trends’ in daily lives to understand economic and social patterns, attentiveness to public attitudes towards the government and/or outside forces and attempts to measure and predict the population’s resilience to the influence of insurgents according to cultural and historical identities and narratives, economic and demographic indicators and so on (U.S. Army 2006, A 6-7; Campbell and O’Hanlon 2007). Unlike traditional and more localized emphasis on covert surveillance, in counterinsurgency clandestine operations can actually constrict collaboration and collecting ‘information about the population (identity, location, well-being, and attitudes) is as important as discovering information about insurgent forces’ (Gompert and Gordon IV 2008, xlii). The point here is that ‘population’ is not so much a way of conceiving of social collectivity, but rather a strategic datum of knowledge. Insurgency and the population are seen as endemically connected. The population under observation is problematized in terms of its predisposition to insurgency, fragmentation and violence, and on that basis, becomes an aggregate object of management to be acted upon. Insurgency becomes the permanent risk factor which may disrupt the population’s ideal homeostasis, or undermine its ‘progress’ and betterment. And it is by countering insurgency, therefore, that ‘measures of effectiveness’ can be installed around its random elements (Derilek et. al. 2001; Cohen 2006; Willis 2008). The resilience of whole populations to insurgency and crisis, as well as their fitness for emergent designs of governance, become strategized as ‘indicators’ within post-interventionary warfare (Campbell and O’Hanlon 2007; O’Hanlon and Campbell 2007; Campbell and Shapiro 2008).

As a second strategization of the population, counterinsurgency focuses security mechanisms on uncovering the ‘inner workings’ of the population through the collection and processing of ‘deep cultural knowledge’ (Tomes 2004, 19). The concern is with how cultural dynamics can be harnessed to improve strategic outcomes for the Coalition and local security forces. In the words of David Kilcullen, the current context of counterinsurgency is not ‘a single insurgent network to be penetrated, but rather a cultural and demographic jungle of population groups to be navigated’ (2006b, 124). Rather than a focus on acquiring secret intelligence from another nation state, as is traditionally the case, it is the detailed knowledge of the human and cultural milieu ‘based on a combination of open-source research and “denied area ethnography”’ which are claimed to be critical to defeating insurgency (2006b, 124). Rendering the population an object of ethnographic intelligence, it must become known in terms of who comprises it, its evolving social milieu, its collective grievances and aspirations as well as the narratives which inform its history. Interest in these dynamics of social collectivity is a strategic enterprise for the redeployment of what Robert Gonzales (2007) has called ‘mercenary anthropology’.

Gaining knowledge of the population through ethnography is now well underway in conflict management literature, research initiatives and funding schemes (McFate and Jackson 2005; Renzi 2006; Kilcullen 2007a). In the last couple of years there has been a surge of ethnographic

accounts of Afghan culture which appear loosely to double as policy directives. Conflict is often ethnicized in these accounts by being almost exclusively connected to tribal politics especially in relation to the Afghan-Pakistan border, inter-group relations, customs and cultural beliefs.³ The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, for example, offers up services for the compilation of this type of research on a moment's notice for Western government departments and agencies, while NATO countries in general have become increasingly reliant on the reports of Afghanistan's Tribal Liaison Office (2008a; 2008b; GFN-SSR 2007). Interest in knowing the population for strategic utility has gained popularity in Iraq as well, in which studies on Shiite and Sunni Iraqi Muslims and their tribal lineages have become critical factors in strategic studies and crisis management circles alike (Cordesman 2007; Hassan 2007; International Crisis Group 2006).

Similarly, interest in ethnography has picked up pace in recent funding schemes for ethnographic analysis. The Minerva Research project, an initiative funded by the Pentagon now enlists academic research on 'terrorist organizations and ideologies' and 'future ideological trends within Islam', among other topics. While the start-up budget of \$18 million is not significant in light of the annual military and development budget of the United States, it is nevertheless large in comparison to other grant funding bodies for anthropologists, and therefore is likely to have a remarkable effect on the direction of scholarly research in a climate of inadequate operational funding to universities and increasing pressure for academics to bid for research grants (Lutz 2008).

The specifically 'hearts and minds' bent of the focus on ethnography, however, is articulated most clearly by the Human Terrain System introduced by the Foreign Military Studies Office of the U.S. Army (Finney 2008). In September of 2007, U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates authorized a \$40 million expansion of the program in order to attach teams of anthropologists and social scientists to all of the combat brigades in Iraq and Afghanistan (Bhattacharjee 2007; Mulrine 2007). As with the Minerva Research Institute, anthropologists and social scientists have been identified in this capacity as unique knowledge producers who might be able to turn the tide on Coalition mission failure. Infusing national security with anthropology, McFate argues, is entirely consistent with 'a discipline invented to support warfighting in the tribal zone' (2005, 43). Mapping the human terrain involves anthropologists and social scientists advising commanders of the social networks of local peoples, providing cultural awareness training and liaising on behalf of military commanders with local leaders. The Human Terrain System is augmented by 'reachback connectivity' from the battlefield to interagency and academic experts managed by a 'centralized information-clearinghouse' within the Foreign Military Studies Office (Kipp et. al. 2006, 9). It is designed to correct the 'disregard for the necessity to understand the people among whom our forces operate as well as the cultural characteristics and propensities of the enemies we now fight' (Kipp et. al. 2006, 8). Michael V. Bhatia, an embedded civilian casualty of the program, argued that his work ensured that brigade commanders would gain an 'organic capability' to address the human terrain (quoted in Jacobsen 2008).

Thus, while human terrain mapping and other engagements with the collection and use of cultural knowledge are often focused at the level of communities, they are linked up with the aggregate project of nation building. The so-called mapping of the 'human terrain' is to factor cultural specificities into more effective management of the population. This is a biopolitical endeavour which works towards the broader objectives of countering insurgency through the administration of life. To be sure, some in the defence community are already claiming that the human terrain system has led to a reduction in the 'need' for combat operations and allowed for soldiers to increase efforts towards security, health care and education provisions for local populations.

³ There is an utter plethora of literature connecting ethnographic and strategic knowledge. Some very quite examples include: Giustozzi (2006); Gizabi (2006); Abbas (2007); Fair, N Howenstein and A Their (2006); Aziz (2007); Liebl (2007); Simons and Tucker 2007; Yousufzai and Godar 2005; Lin. 2006; McFate 2008.

Others called the program ‘brilliant,’ in helping American forces ‘see the situation from an Afghan perspective’ (quoted in Rhode 2007). According to U.S. military Colonel Martin Schweitzer, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, the Human Terrain System has meant a whole new outlook on the situation: “[w]e’re looking at this from a human perspective, from a social scientist’s perspective. We’re not focused on the enemy. We’re focused on bringing governance down to the people” (quoted in Rhode 2007).

This perspective is not novel. Rather, as Montgomery McFate, a military anthropologist and advocate for ethnographic expertise in counterinsurgency notes, it recalls the roots of anthropology as the ‘handmaiden of colonialism’ (2005). Rather than simply being dependent upon the use of force, expansionist campaigns of interventions past relied heavily upon cultural knowledge to stabilize colonial rule. Once again, it is the strategization of local culture which, some claim, holds the political solution to nationalist insurgency. ‘To confront an enemy so deeply moored in history and theology’, argues McFate, ‘the U.S. Armed Forces must adopt an ethnographer’s view of the world: it is not nation- states but cultures that provide the underlying structures of political life’ (2005, 43). It is more than cruel irony, then, that ‘cultural awareness’ is today’s rendition of the fundamental principle of warfare to ‘know thy enemy’.

War by Other Means

The first question, asked at the outset of this paper, was what form of power emerges when conventional warfare makes victory impossible? According to counterinsurgency doctrine, the resolution of conflict will not come about through the meeting of two adversaries on a designated battlefield and success does not depend upon the use of force. This scenario, or perhaps conundrum, in which conventional military engagement cannot conclude conflict and may even proliferate and internationalize it, points us towards part of the answer: a paradigm of conflict described by Rupert Smith (2006) as ‘war amongst the people’. War amongst the people denotes long-term low-intensity forms of conflict which resemble the small wars of colonial occupations. In this paradigm of war, according to Smith, the use of force must be redressed in light of the intermingled nature of conflict, in which military victory rarely corresponds to a political resolution and reality does not fit into a framework that clearly delineates a state of war from that of peace. ‘Rather than war and peace’, writes Smith, ‘there is no predefined sequence, nor is peace necessarily either the starting or end point’ (2006, 17; for empirical application of Smith see Kilcullen 2007b). As a form of warfare, counterinsurgency fits comfortably with this indistinction between war and peace. It opens a space by which to mitigate the shortfall of conventional industrial models of war by shifting war to the political field. Working through the category of population and rendering it a strategic realm of knowledge, counterinsurgency mobilizes the remedial modalities of ‘soft power’ (Nye 2008) to dissipate the force and enmity that characterize conventional warfare into post-interventionary civilian arrangements of pacification.

With this in mind, the final section of this paper considers how counterinsurgency’s problematization of the population renders visible the dissemination of the force of war within civilian relations in specific and concrete ways. I wish to propose that problematizing the population as both a datum of physical and cultural knowledge does not simply denote counterinsurgency as a form of low-intensity ‘war amongst the people’ but logically leads to the strategization of power as civilian warfare. Counterinsurgency warfare is refined as a dynamic of force that circulates through the reconstruction and reform of war-afflicted societies in ways that work to maintain the inequality of relations as they were instantiated by the last major military battle (Foucault 2003, 13-7). Political power, in other words, takes the form of a war by other means. War is waged at the level of the population in and through civilian modalities of life, in ways that strategize the population and instrumentalize peoples for liberal internationalist ends while governmentalizing political subversion as a flipside of eliminating ‘internal enemies’.

Counterinsurgency evokes a liberal rationality of security which applies a fitness test to post-interventionary populations through technologies of engagement which distinguish between those whose dispositions can be improved and made safe and those who must be eliminated.

Counterinsurgency, therefore, ought to be analyzed as holding the two faces of biopolitics together through the category of the population. In the first instance, counterinsurgency is concerned with the biopolitical task of eliminating internal threats on the basis that the enemies that must be defeated are not simply the opponents of the Coalition, or even the government, but are enemies of *the people*. As a war amongst the people counterinsurgency situates the battle against enemies in and through the population. In doing so, the consequence is not simply that less deadly force will be called forth (Gompert and Gordon 2008, xxxii), but that an alternative to the extermination of the very population that has been made problematic becomes possible. This alternative to extermination is presented in terms of biopolitics' second face, the betterment of the people on the basis that insurgency is a consequence of 'unrequited aspirations' (Kipp et. al. 2006, 9). It is the view that peace is undermined by underdevelopment which has contributed to overlapping agendas among counterinsurgency strategists and the longstanding mandates of NGOs and UN agencies working in zones of crisis. They share the very policy space that links security and development through the view that 'peace will come primarily from good politics and effective development' (Slim 2004, 42). Here, counterinsurgency thinking is intimately related to the recurrent security narrative that underdevelopment leads to conflict. And as remedial designs of engagement, aid and reconstruction become tied to the discourse of diffusing the insurgency. These very ideals inform broader global efforts to foster coherence between aid and politics (Duffield 2001) and the more contemporary assertion that development must now link up with the need to address insurgent populations, violent networks and the shadow economies which supposedly support them (Development Assistance Committee 2003; Gompert and Gordon 2008, xxvii). Counterinsurgency has emphasized the central goals of development since the 1980s, seeking to improve the resilience and self-reliance of populations as a means of containing the destabilizing effects of underdeveloped life. The dominant development of today is a therapeutic development, which seeks to cultivate subjectivities which are equipped to deal with and accept unremitting low-level warfare, economic self-reliance and the continuous emergency that both evoke (Pupavac 2005). This is a form of non-material development whose primary function is to counter insurgency. As Kilcullen contends, it is not the military, but 'long-term development and stabilization by civilian agencies which will win the war' (2006a, 104).

In bringing these two sides of biopolitics together, modern counterinsurgency operations find their point of reference not simply in the New Imperialism, the pacification campaigns against decolonization, or in the latter half of the Vietnam War, but in the contemporary articulation of the integrated mission. It is the integrated mission that seems to have inspired the degree of role-blurring and confounding of traditional boundaries between military and civilian practice in new and profound ways. Counterinsurgency attempts to fit political, economic and military instruments into a coherent campaign strategy. Not only is almost everything in counterinsurgency campaigns interagency (Kilcullen 2006, 123) but the military aspect of counterinsurgency is only a small component. As classical theorists contended, military action makes up less than twenty-five percent of counterinsurgency (Smith 2001; Galula 1964). Today, with the greater presence of media and the wider use of the internet to document not only Coalition activities but their insurgent counterparts, counterinsurgency 'may now be 100% political' (Kilcullen 2006b, 123).

The parameters of the U.S. Army's *Counterinsurgency Manual* (2006) are a testament to this point. If the manual can be distilled into one instructive point, Wendy Brown points out, 'it is that successful wars against insurgents involve erudite and careful mobilization of every element of the society in which they are being waged' (2008, 354). (Brown (2008) makes the important caveat that the US Army's Counterinsurgency Field Manual (2006) was 'produced' and not really written

‘since there was so much material lifted from unattributed sources’, as discovered by anthropologist David Price (2007).) These wars can only be won through a new and total kind of governance, one that begins from the military insofar as it involves a rethinking of the modalities of force, but reaches to broader areas of what it means to secure civilian life: formal and informal economies, structures of authority, patron-client relationships, political participation, culture, law, identity, social structure, material needs, ethnic and linguistic subdivisions and more. Hence, the manual was not so much a product of military training but emerges from the scholarly insights of teams of intellectuals trained in anthropology, political science and sociology. Hardly incidental, its premise, aptly, is communicated not by a military commander, but by Sarah Swell of the Carr Centre for Human Rights at Harvard University, who wrote the introduction to the University of Chicago Press edition of the field manual.

The focus on the population positions civil society at the centre of post-interventionary warfare. In ethnographic intelligence, information about the population is regarded as a strategic asset not simply because it serves as terrain for the detection of enemies, but because it can transform violent struggles into competing truth claims. It can shift the conflict ‘from a self-perpetuating war of attrition to a winnable war of cognition’ (Gompert and Gordon 2008, xli). In proposing to secure and control populations through cognitive transformation, counterinsurgency works at the level of what Nikolas Rose (2001) calls ethopolitics. While ethopolitics is a theme explored in terms of Western designs of power which have turned inward to quell political contestation over the excesses of neoliberal governance, it is also turned outwards in Western counterinsurgency. The theme of ethopolitics is talk of partnerships, a ‘third way’, communities, networks and participation, which promote the idea that there is compatibility between one course of action and what was originally perceived by many in the opposition to be a diametrically different path (Tietäväinen et. al., 2008). As a remedial stratagem of war, which proposes to correct the failures of the past, counterinsurgency is way of saying that prior policies and approaches have ignored trust and association and that there is a new direction which will bring them in. The success of counterinsurgency is dependent, therefore, upon changing how people feel and affecting the social forms into which they channel their grievances. Dealing with the problem of insurgency requires tapping into the senses to encourage the development of particular views and sentiments. It is about transforming dangerous forms of expression into safe forms. Rather than seeking to eliminate threats through military power, threats can instead be transformed into opportunities.

In being waged at the level of social life and seeking civilian forms of behaviour modification, there is an ethopolitical dimension of counterinsurgency which problematizes whole populations while emphasizing individual- and community-level change. Insurgency is addressed by attempting to change how people feel, by shifting their loyalties and the ways in which they express their grievances. In doing so, counterinsurgency does not propose to share resources differently or bring about bona fide material transformation, but may use aid and resources to create incentives and alter behaviour, for example. It does not comply by ousting occupying forces, but may propose new frameworks outlining responsibilities and procedures to improve protocols for more responsive governance toward the civilian population. It seeks, in other words, to rationalize a condition of externally meditated governance through the shaping of local identities and their corresponding spaces for political engagement.

Where ethopolitics informs the spatial dimensions of community, counterinsurgency takes specific forms of narrative creation and diffusion. In the post-interventionary battlespace, counterinsurgents are counselled to dispel the narrative used by insurgents with an alternative discourse that taps into culturally and historically relevant realities. Don’t peddle a ‘pro-American narrative’, RAND strategists advise, but a ‘local alternative to jihad’ (Gompert and Gordon 2008, xliv). Influence is to be exercised by exploiting a narrative which organizes peoples’ experience and realities into a framework for understanding a set of events. Exploiting a narrative is also part

and parcel of building ‘trusted networks’ among the population and its leaders which will displace the networks that are used to organize the insurgency (Kilcullen 2006b, 105). It is important in counterinsurgency to identify needs and respond to them, to build common interests in ways that will encourage support. This requires that counterinsurgents develop their ‘situational awareness’ by improving relations with the population, presenting themselves not as fighters but as ‘real people’ who frequent local spaces, whom locals can do business with and who can be trusted (US Army 2006, A-7). Counterinsurgents are further encouraged to develop targeted programs which co-opt neutral or friendly women by building ‘networks of enlightened self-interest’ in which locals are not only convinced that opposing the Coalition is pointless, but that their best interests will be protected by it (Kilcullen 2006a, 105). In this respect, counterinsurgency is public diplomacy. Opportunities for reducing social distance between the Coalition and the local peoples are forged, not by asserting the foreign policy objectives of Coalition states, but by organizing the operation around a discourse that asserts the interests and needs of local peoples. While ‘networks of trust’ are applied principally to ‘grow like roots into the population, displacing the enemy’s networks’, they also include local allies beyond community leaders, such as indigenous security forces, NGOs, local and global media (Kilcullen 2006a, 105).

Convincing the population that the Coalition and government act in its interests while the insurgents do not (‘hearts’) has, as its counterpart, practices designed to persuade the population that resistance is futile (‘minds’). The resistance-is-futile aspect of counterinsurgency calls for consideration of how it is connected to the establishment of the legitimacy of power in a way that harkens back to the development of sovereignty and law within the Western imaginary. Rather than the instantiation of a juridical order developed out of the resolution of conflict, from the vantage point of war by other means, it is worth considering how counterinsurgency rests instead upon *dissolving the element of domination in power* (Foucault 2003, 13-7). The War on Terror was initially waged not simply as a hawkish act of national security, but also on the liberal premise of freeing populations from despotic rule. The terminal crisis of erecting spontaneously self-governing liberal societies out of the ashes of military invasion, however, has brought forth a renewed commitment premised once again upon the liberal urge towards these very same ends (Jahn 2007a; 2007b). This time, the liberal problematic of security has abandoned hopes of the quick in-and-out mission, and emphasizes institutional arrangements involving Coalition provisional authorities, donor governments, the UN, international financial institutions such as the World Bank, militaries and NGOs. These are frameworks which harness the conceptual utility of sovereignty in the promise of self-rule, while instantiating provisional forms of political and economic trusteeship and agreed frameworks linking several of these institutional actors.

Thus, the element of domination in power relations, which mark foreign invasion and political overthrow, is replaced with two things. The first is the legitimate right of sovereignty as a legal principle. The second is the instantiation of the legal obligation to obey. In post-interventionary Afghanistan and Iraq, where the sovereign authority of the Taliban and the Baath Party (both Saddam Hussein and subsequent de-baathification measures) were disposed, subsequent agreements between Coalition partners and provisional authorities setting out a new liberal political order materialized in an effort to achieve sustainable power consolidation. Relevant contemporary examples include the Afghan National Development Strategy (2005), the Afghanistan Compact (2006), as well as the Law of Administration for the State of Iraq (Coalition Provisional Authority 2004). These were not simply efforts to set out responsibilities, but evoke a theory of Right through the technical mythology of social control: the diagram of the social compact. They constitute the process through which procedures of subjugation become principles of rule and regulation. These agreements are site-specific accounts of the dilution and incorporation of subjugation into a ‘mythical narrative of legal continuity that sees nothing but peaceful evolution’ (Valverde 2007, 166). And thus the agreements of this legal continuity of nation building are modelled upon the very contractual narrative which recalls the liberal solution

to rebellion, the ‘wishing away of conquest’ at the heart of English law and political theory. As Foucault recounts, at issue in Hobbes’ theory of the state was not war or defeat or conquest, but the subjects of rule who have, by their very self-preserving existence, constituted the sovereign authority that represents them (2003 96-100). For Hobbes, power is the people. And so he made a valiant effort to disassociate sovereignty from war, to eliminate the conquest, in his constitution of legitimate political authority.

As ideational legacies, the constitution of sovereignties and agreed frameworks towards self-rule today are processes which attempt to mimic the elimination of conquest in Western political thinking by marking a passage for the battleground of war to the governance of post-interventionary societies. In disassociating war from the constitution of graduated sovereignty, they are specific documentations of counterinsurgency *par excellence*. They seek a science to manage the problem of sedition and rebellion by marrying the discourse of sovereignty and contracts to the political life of the population. They are ways of channelling the political fallout of war – grief, humiliation and loss – into socio-legal forms; a means of transforming threats which must be eliminated, once again, into opportunities for governance. But they are also, in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, modulated as tests of governance. As a remedial program counterinsurgency is concerned with the liberal dilemma of how to ‘make people free’ (Berlin 1969). This is both the place where liberalism is tasked to distinguish between those who are seen as equipped to govern themselves and those who are considered unfit to the task (Rose 1999; Hindess 2001). The civilian side of counterinsurgency addresses the problem of internal enemies – those who are to be exposed and eliminated – not through detection and seizure, but through the political consolidation of the nation.

Conclusion

The turn towards counterinsurgency highlights the deep points of convergence between the security concerns which have been mobilized under the War on Terror and the basic principles which drive civilian forms of engagement, typically associated with the work of peace building following the cessation of hostilities. This paper has shown that collaboration between military and non-military forms of engagement does not simply represent a militarization of civilian forms of engagement, but that an analysis of counterinsurgency as a war by other means calls for a deeper analysis of the moral overlap that produces sites for confluence between the work that is commonly associated with campaigns of war and that work which is associated with building of post-interventionary peace. The re-emergence of counterinsurgency calls for a consideration of the temporal and spatial transition from interventionary warfare to post-interventionary governance. It demands that we consider the broadly shared liberal ethic between the schema of war and the conventional designs of peace that counterinsurgency brings together and exposes. The work of winning ‘hearts and minds’ is not simply a dubious and cynical aim, but one which is tied to a longer vision of liberal organization for the transformation and shaping of human societies. It is also one which calls forth the schema of war as the means through which that transformation can be brought about.

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