



Counterinsurgency as Ideology
**The evolution of expert knowledge production in U.S. asymmetric warfare
(1898-2011): The cases of the Philippines, Vietnam and Iraq**

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Ruettershoff".

Signature:

While I am on debunking operations, I would like to come to one particular point; it is our use of terminology: The terms 'insurgency,' 'paramilitary operations,' 'guerrilla operations,' 'limited warfare,' 'sublimated warfare,' etc. We have gotten to the position of the doctor faced with a strange disease. Whenever doctors are faced with a strange disease they give it a long name. It does not cure you, but at least it makes you feel good because you think they know what they are talking about. And this is what we have done with this particular subject.

(Bernard Fall 1963)

Abstract

This PhD thesis examines the status of 'expert knowledge' in the history of U.S. asymmetric, or 'counterinsurgency' (COIN), warfare during the last century. The historical rise of expert influence has so far been neglected in the study of wars within the field of International Relations and the thesis will give us an indication of the importance and utility of expert knowledge. With a specific focus on the campaigns in the Philippines (1899-1902), Vietnam (1954-75) and Iraq (2003-11), the central research question guiding the project is as follows: "What were the conditions for the evolution, the constitution and the use of 'outside' expert knowledge in U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns?" The thesis claims that military and academic 'experts' had a key role in framing and implementing the problem-sets and solutions to these conflicts. They have, in Iraq in particular, played an important part in developing the campaigns' ex-post-facto justification of success.

Within the framework of organisational knowledge production, this knowledge does not necessarily play an instrumental role for the military. Instead, it can also serve a merely symbolic function, demonstrating to the audience and stakeholders within the political environment that the organisation is willing to solve the problems the insurgents pose, but without any interest in long-term utilisation of the knowledge. This thesis argues that across time, from the beginning of the Philippine-American War in 1898 to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq in 2011, 'counterinsurgency' has developed from a tactical and operational tool, used instrumentally to fight insurgencies, to a strategy or even 'ideology' in its own right. Whilst the methods or techniques of counterinsurgency remain basically the same, expert knowledge is increasingly used in modern – that is post-World War II – campaigns to support a politico-strategic narrative.

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The key characteristic of a PhD is that it is an original and individual contribution to knowledge. Indeed, writing a PhD is a very 'individual' activity. In contrast to undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes, the researcher works mostly on his own and attends few courses. Nevertheless, whilst I laid the foundations for this 'construction project' of a PhD thesis and remain responsible for every word and all errors in interpretation are mine alone, there have been many people along the doctoral path who have provided support and advice without which this project would have most certainly collapsed.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aims and scope

This thesis examines not just the evolution, but also the role that ‘expert knowledge’ played in the history of United States (U.S.) counterinsurgency warfare over the last century. With a focus on the campaigns in the Philippines (1898-1902), Vietnam (1954-75) and, specifically, Iraq (2003-11), the central research question guiding the project is the following: “What were the conditions for the evolution, the constitution and the use of expert knowledge in U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns?” An analysis of the history and the development of these military campaigns over the last century, suggests that ‘Counterinsurgency’ (‘COIN’) has increasingly developed into a narrative or even an ‘ideology’ of warfighting.¹ It combines a number of (often contradictory) features within a single discursive framework, which serves as a reassuring narrative for both the U.S domestic population and decision-makers. This discourse rhetorically conveys to both groups the necessity and utility of U.S. engagement in so-called ‘wars of choice’ abroad.² This thesis’ original contribution to knowledge is the claim that so-called military and academic ‘experts’ had a key role in framing and implementing the problem-sets and solutions to these conflicts. They have, in Iraq in particular, played an important part in developing the campaigns’ ex-post-facto justification of success.

In the latter half of the last decade, COIN has gained prominence as the central paradigm of the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and was perceived by some

¹ I use the terms ‘counterinsurgency’ and ‘COIN’ interchangeably throughout the thesis.

² By using this term, I refer to Freedman (2010, 9) who stated that, “Wars are now commonly divided into types: those of necessity and those of choice. The former are unavoidable, fought because of a basic threat to our way of life. The latter are discretionary. There is no strategic imperative. These are the wars of regime change and humanitarian intervention.”

as the future of warfare (e.g. Horowitz and Shalmon 2009; Kahl 2007; Kilcullen 2005; Nagl 2005, 207). For many analysts and decision-makers it was the doctrinal guidance that the tenets of *Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency* (U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps 2007) provided and the implementation of a robust COIN campaign with the 'Surge' of troops in Iraq, which enabled the reduction of violence in Iraq in 2007-08 (e.g. Filkins 2008; Mansoor 2008; Petraeus 2007a; Woodward 2008; Yon). At this stage in 2008 – when COIN seemed to have enabled the pacification of Iraq – it had reached a status in the security community that made it more than the military doctrine it nominally was. It became almost a silver bullet panacea, a strategy and theory of warfare which offered a how-to guide for U.S. interventionism that was informed by humanitarian and modernising ideals (Heuser 2007, 153 ff.; Ucko 2009). More recently, however, COIN, like any fashion, seems to have lost its intellectual lustre. On the one hand, there is growing acceptance that the success of the 'Surge' has been, at best, overstated (Biddle et al. 2012; Kilcullen 2009; Ollivant 2011). Moreover, due to different conditions in Afghanistan – illegitimate host nation government, insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan, difficult terrain etc. – the attempt to implement COIN there has been very difficult, to say the least. On the other hand, the long-term success of counterinsurgency in Iraq is now questionable, given the resurgence of violence in the country, which is most prominently visible in the emergence of the terror group 'Islamic State' (IS).

These developments have led scholars to raise serious questions about the application of COIN thinking and principles in conflicts. Given the vast financial and material resources spent on fighting wars of choice in the last decade, it is questionable whether, for all its initial praise, COIN offers the right political and

military returns (Gventer et al. 2013). It is, thus, important to analyse, in depth, the origins and the rationale of COIN and why it gained such prominence in recent military and political discourse. By critically examining the debates about COIN, not just in the past decade but in the last century, we enquire deeper into the COIN discourse, beyond what it might be or whether it was used effectively in a specific conflict. In light of the significance and undeniable impact that COIN has had on past and recent U.S. security policy, the theory and utilisation of its discourse merits closer attention. This is especially so, because these issues are likely to reappear again in future conflicts. The COIN discourse and the rules of engagement in wars of intervention appear with troublesome regularity in Western security thinking (as we can see from past experiences, e.g. Vietnam, Somalia, Bosnia, or Kosovo, but also currently in Syria).

This thesis adds to the larger scholarly discussion on the epistemology of COIN, which has been taking place for a while (e.g. Betz 2008; Gventer 2014; Gventer et al. 2013; Jones and Smith 2010; Michaels and Ford 2011; Porch 2013; Russell 2014) and which addresses a fundamental question: What is the purpose and utility of COIN? Ultimately, the analysis in this thesis suggests that in the post-World War II world, COIN has increasingly developed into an 'ideology' of warfighting, which promises a less lethal and more tolerable form of conflict, aimed at winning the 'hearts and minds' of the local population, and by extension, at achieving victory.³ As such a discursive framework, contemporary COIN inherently serves as a 'strategic narrative', which aims at reassuring domestic

³ By 'ideology', I mean a comprehensive normative set of ideas that is followed by people, political organisations, and ultimately the U.S. government as the central political actor. It is a coherent system of ideas (i.e. it may draw upon, but does not rely on other theories or explanations) which helps people to navigate the complexity of their political universe and which carry claims to social truth (Steger et al. 2013, 19).

and international public and political audiences as well as justifying U.S. interventionist campaigns. In particular, the thesis argues that so-called military and academic 'experts' have been central actors in this framework of strategic communication by framing the 'problem' of insurgency and implementing the solutions for it, as well as providing justificatory narratives of success in these campaigns. As the analysis across the cases shows, the value and utility of knowledge produced by experts on COIN has changed considerably over time.

In the Philippines and at the beginning of the Vietnam War, expert knowledge had an 'instrumental' purpose, i.e. the intent of using experts and their knowledge was to make real and tangible changes in the campaigns. However, towards the end of the Vietnam War and in the Iraq War, COIN expert knowledge had an inherently 'symbolic' purpose, in that such knowledge was not really intended to be used to make changes in a long-term, sustainable fashion, but served mainly to legitimate and sustain a narrative function.⁴ In other words, symbolic knowledge can be conceptualised as a tool through which a dominant narrative is produced, while instrumental knowledge leads to the execution of concrete strategies and decisions in making long-term political and social changes. Yet, even if these some changes are put in place, they may only have a symbolic meaning or do not necessarily embody their inherent rhetoric. Experts play an important role for both instrumental and symbolic knowledge as they add to the epistemic authority (and, thus, legitimacy) in the policy-making process of the

⁴ As Osipov (2012) notes, "Acknowledgement of the very difference between [the] two types of activities [...] is nowadays commonplace for social sciences although there is yet no consent on the definitions and no uniform understanding of how these two areas correspond to each other" (see also Birkland 2005, 150 f.; Schneider and Ingram 1997, 150 ff.). The way I use the concept of expert knowledge utilization in this thesis relies on Boswell's (2008; 2009a) distinction between instrumental and symbolic modes, which has also been used by several other social scientists (see e.g. Beyer and Trice 1982; Graham et al. 2010; Osipov 2012; Scholten et al. 2010, 317 f.; Straus et al. 2013; Weiss and Bucuvalas 1980).

COIN campaign.⁵ I seek to analyse the political, historical and practical conditions for the evolution, the constitution and the utilisation of so-called ‘experts’ by the U.S. government in the Philippines, Vietnam and Iraq. As part of this main research objective, I will examine the historically evolving context in which expert knowledge was created during these campaigns.

From this central research question, a **Subset of Research Questions** emerges:

1. What elements of continuity and change can be identified in the way ‘experts’ have been brought in to advise the U.S. military on adopting certain strategies during specific asymmetric campaigns? What are the major factors that help us understand the shifts in strategy that occurred during the campaigns selected for analysis?
2. What knowledge problems were identified by ‘experts’ in each case study?
3. Were there any ‘experts’ involved in the campaign? How were they chosen? Did they have an impact or was their impact limited in some way?
4. How did they influence the development of military and political strategy? Did they pursue their own agenda and, if so, how?
5. Can existing theoretical frameworks relating to the role that knowledge ‘experts’ play in defence policy formation be applied to the formulation of U.S. strategies now understood in the language of ‘counterinsurgency’?
6. What are the wider implications of using ‘experts’ in defence policy?

Although COIN has experienced a revival in the last decade, it is certainly not a modern phenomenon. The U.S. has been involved in numerous wars where it has faced actors using inferior weaponry and ‘non-conventional’ tactics, in part, to exploit the vulnerabilities of the ‘conventional’ U.S. military.⁶ These wars have

⁵ According to Theodore L. Brown (2009, 23), “epistemic authority” is “the capacity to convince others of how the world is”.

⁶ The term ‘conventional’ denotes the capabilities employed by a military organisation, based on an organized status for coercion. It has been used since the 18th century to describe the army of a state (Ferrero 1933, 8). In contrast, ‘unconventional’ (or ‘non-conventional’) means that one side in the war does not possess conventional military means to counter an opponent and, thus, resorts to guerrilla warfare tactics, intended in a generic sense.

often been described as 'irregular wars', 'small wars', 'insurgencies', 'low-intensity conflicts' (LICs) or "military operations other than war" (MOOTW) to denote their difference from what the military perceived as allegedly regular, that is conventional wars, which many in the U.S. defence establishment believe should constitute the core business of the military (Morrissey 2008; Pugh 1998, 341). Yet, when looking at the use of the U.S.'s armed forces abroad (Grimmett 2011), it becomes obvious that 'non-conventional' wars are the predominant form of warfare the U.S. has engaged in.

In the first half of the 20th century, the U.S. was, inter alia, involved in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), the Philippine-American War (1898-1902), the occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) and Nicaragua (1926-1934) as well as in the deployment of its troops to Russia (1918-1920). After World War II, the number of interventions increased. The U.S. intervened in Greece (1947); Korea (1950-3); Vietnam (1960-1975); Lebanon (1958); Haiti (1959); Thailand (1962); Cuba (1962); Laos (1962-75); Dominican Republic (1965); Laos and Cambodia (1968); Cambodia (1970); Nicaragua (1979); El Salvador (1980/81); Lebanon (1982); Grenada (1983); Libya (1986); Haiti (1986); Persian Gulf (1987-88); Honduras (1988); Panama (1988/89); and the Philippines (1989). In the post-Cold War period, U.S. military interventions include frequent bombings in Iraq (1991-96), Sierra Leone (1992); Somalia (1992-5), Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995), Iraq (1998); Afghanistan and Sudan (1998); Kosovo (1999), East Timor (1999-2000); Sierra Leone (2000); Afghanistan (2001); Iraq (2003-2011); since 2004 military activities have been occurring in Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen, and Eritrea (2004-), as well as drone attacks in Pakistan (2004-); Somalia (2007-).

It is not possible to closely trace the constitution and the use of expert knowledge in all of these campaigns. Consequently, the aim of the thesis is to analyse this longstanding history in employing knowledge experts during U.S. military engagements based on the three cases of the Philippines, Vietnam and Iraq. These three case studies have been chosen, because they stand out as heuristic examples of U.S. interventionism in the last century due to their size and, duration, as well as due to their historical timing.⁷ As such they were essential for understanding the role of expert knowledge production within COIN campaigns.

However, these cases must not be seen in isolation. Rather, the focus of the thesis lies on the identification of elements of continuity and change in terms of the utilisation of expert knowledge: How and why have 'experts' been brought in and what accounts for shifts in the inclusion of expert knowledge? By analysing a select number of campaigns in the context of the growing influx of expertise for the U.S. military, the thesis examines: 1) the historical rise of the participation of experts in developing concepts such as 'counterinsurgency' as an object of knowledge and change and continuity in this process over time; 2) the role of intellectuals in the development of specific military strategies; and 3) the attitudes, values and ideas of individuals in academia and the military that give rise to military thinking about so-called 'unconventional' wars.

⁷ By historical timing I mean that they are not only spread almost evenly across the last century, but also happened at crucial points in time, i.e. when the U.S. first became a great power, at the height of the Cold War, and after the downfall of the Soviet Union and the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

1.2 Literature Review – What is COIN?

My examination begins with an overview of what other scholars and practitioners have said about the theory and practice of insurgency and counterinsurgency. In doing so, this subsection defines key concepts used in the thesis, such as ‘insurgency’, ‘war’, ‘strategy’, ‘policy’, or the ‘war of ideas’. It starts out by exploring what an insurgency is. It then looks at contemporary COIN and the claim by many pundits and scholars that it is a neutral, technical concept. It, in fact, is not. The next subsection then links COIN to the issue of ‘strategic narratives’ and how it plays an important role for propaganda. Through this overview, I highlight that one aspect which has not been treated effectively so far, has been the role of ‘experts’ in these processes.

1.2.1 Setting the stage – Insurgency as a “war of ideas”

Insurgencies have existed as long as polities have existed. For example, over the course of its more than thousand-year-long existence, the Roman Empire faced numerous insurgencies against its imperial rule. Superpowers, both ancient and contemporary, still face the problem of insurgency (Mumford 2009, 8). Thus, insurgency and guerrilla warfare are, as Laqueur has aptly stated, “as old as the hills” (1977, vii). Whether termed “guerrilla”, “revolutionary”, “partisan” or “insurgent”, this kind of warfare can be, very generally, defined as:

A struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses *political resources* (e.g., organisational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and *violence* to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.

(O'Neill 2006, 15, Emphasis in Original)⁸

⁸ Certainly, various definitions of insurgency exist (see e.g. Cassidy 2006, 12; Galula 2006, 2; Kitson 1971, 3; Mockaitis 1990, 3; U.S. Army 2006, 1-1). Yet for the purpose of this study, the broadly-defined definition by O'Neill suffices.

The particular feature of insurgencies is the clear asymmetry in power: Insurgents, as the weaker belligerent, are usually unable to defeat the stronger belligerent – i.e. the ruling authority – militarily, because they lack the means, and capabilities. So, how do insurgents ‘win’ such asymmetric conflicts? After all, “[s]ince Thucydides, the root principle of international relations theory has been that power implies victory in war” (Arreguín-Toft 2001, 96). With “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars”, Andrew Mack (1975) was the first scholar to put forth a strong general argument for the dynamics and outcomes of asymmetric conflicts. He contends that an actor’s relative political resolve or determination explains success or failure in these conflicts. This means that the actor with the most political resolve wins, irrespective of their resources or material power.

Mack argues that this resolve can be assessed by determining the basic relationship of the conflict. An asymmetry in power leads to an asymmetry in interest. The greater the disparity in relative power against the weaker actor, the less determined the stronger actor’s will is to pursue the conflict until the end. In turn, the weaker actor is fighting for his survival and is, thus, more resolute. In other words, “for the insurgents the war is “total,” while for the external power it is necessarily “limited” (Mack 1975, 181). Hence, powerful nations lose small wars, because their disenchanted publics (or, in authoritarian states, competing elites) force them to withdraw from the conflict. For an army of such a stronger actor, General (Gen.) Douglas MacArthur’s maxim, that “in war there is no substitute for victory”, does apply. Yet, for insurgents, the substitute for victory in war is success in politics (Daase 2007, 194). In Henry Kissinger’s (1969, 214) words: “the guerrilla wins if it does not lose. The conventional army loses if it does not win.”

The fact that political resolve is such an important aspect of an insurgency links to Carl von Clausewitz's famous dictum that "war is a mere continuation of policy by other means" (Clausewitz 1832, 28; translation by Clausewitz et al. 1984).⁹ Insurgencies are a form of war and, thus, inherently a political enterprise. This is not necessarily self-evident. Given the increase in asymmetric conflicts in the post-Cold War era, prominent scholars of strategy and war have argued that this constitutes a changing character of war, which makes Clausewitz's ideas and definitions obsolete (e.g. Luttwak 1995, 114; Metz and Kievit 1994; Van Creveld 1991, ix). Proponents of the 'new wars' theory, such as Mary Kaldor (1999) or Herfried Münkler (2002), see Clausewitz's works as fit to define 'old wars', but they do not apply to the 'new wars' of predominantly sub-state actors. Yet, these allegations against Clausewitz's conception of war are imprecise. In the English-speaking world, his magnum opus *On War* has led to a specific, narrow interpretation of war (Bassford 1994). Taking into account other, less-noticed manuscripts – lectures, memoranda, and correspondence – of which many have not yet been translated into English, reveals a more multi-faceted picture of Clausewitz's thinking, in which his ideas about "Small Wars" show a more sophisticated approach to political violence that have contemporary relevance (Daase 2007, 186 f.).

In "My Lectures on Small War" (Hahlweg 1968), given at the Berliner Kriegsschule in 1810/11, Clausewitz analysed asymmetric warfare using examples from the 1793-1796 rebellion in the Vendée, the 1809 Tyrolean uprising and, most importantly, the Spanish insurrection which began in 1808. In 1812, at

⁹ As Clausewitz (1984, 28) further explains: "war is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means. [...] the political view is the object, war is the means, and the means must always include the object in our conception."

the height of Napoleon's reign over Europe, he published his famous "Bekenntnisdenschrift" (Memorandum of confession) in which he argues for a comprehensive guerrilla campaign against Napoleonic France and "a Spanish civil war in Germany" (Clausewitz 1966, 729). Last, in *On War*, he included a concise chapter on "The People in Arms", which deals with practical as well as theoretical aspects of popular uprising and guerrilla warfare. Thus, "[i]t is safe to say then, that biographically and intellectually "People's War" was at the very beginning of Clausewitz's career" (Daase 2007, 187). In his lifetime, he saw the concept of war changing from a 'bipolar' affair fought between nation-states to nationalist upheavals and then back to the re-institutionalisation of conventional war by the Congress of Vienna (Herberg-Rothe 2001; Paret 1992). From a conceptual viewpoint, Clausewitz's view of war, as an extension of a duel (1984, 2) and "the continuation of policy by other means" (1984, 28), is simply an allocation of political identities within different social spheres. This is a general conceptualisation of violence as a political activity, which we can take as a basis for the analysis of the changing character of war.

More recently, an important addendum to Clausewitz's definition of war has been brought forward by Emile Simpson in *War From the Ground up* (2012). In a globalised world, Clausewitz's "the people", which support their states in bipolar wars against other states, do not exist anymore, at least not as a homogenous single entity. Also, through the revolution in information and communications technology, both (domestic and international) civilians and the enemy can receive any aspect of the conflict in seconds, with a simple smartphone (Howard 2013).¹⁰ As a result of these well-known issues, Simpson does not divide war into

¹⁰ Even in the most devastating conflicts, where water and food supply is deficient, we still see a somewhat stable availability of media and internet facilities.

categories of “total” and “limited”, as Clausewitz has done, but into those fought “to establish military conditions for a political solution” and those that “directly seek political, as opposed to military, outcomes” (2012, 135). Whereas the former comprise the traditional, bipolar conflicts in which the aim is to defeat the enemy’s armed forces and force its government to accept one’s own political terms, the latter are those campaigns in which military operations directly seek to create desired political outcomes. In these conflicts, operations and tactics themselves become political tools, which are directed at the adversary to deprive him of political support from the population. Relating again to Clausewitz’s conception of war as an inherently political enterprise, the ultimate aim of combat in both kinds of conflict is to convey a message to specific, ‘strategic audiences’ (Howard 2013; Simpson 2012).

Any actor in any conflict has to think about which ‘strategic audience’ to address, that is which group of people is the main recipient of the political message that the actor wants to convey to in a given military confrontation. This has always been the case, as far back to when the Roman Caesars had to ‘sell’ their imperial ventures to the citizens of Rome. Yet, in Simpson’s view, having a “strategic narrative” in modern conflict is indispensable (2012, 186). I will dwell on the issue of strategic narratives later on in this chapter and how contemporary COIN functions as such a strategic narrative. For now, it suffices to say that a strategic narrative is “a public explanation of why one is at war at all, and how the military operations are devised to serve the strategy that will lead to the desired political outcome” (Howard 2013). Without such a narrative, no actor in war can command the support of its strategic audience. It must be persuasive in rational as well as emotional terms and have an ethical basis.

Thus, an insurgency does not only take place in the physical space, the actual tactical battlefield, in which bullets are fired, bombs dropped and people are killed. It is also fought in the informational realm, in which the adversaries use words and images in order to create a more compelling narrative than their enemy and, thus, defeat him politically. This “virtual dimension of contemporary insurgency” (Betz 2008) has, as others (e.g. Bolt 2012; Mackinlay 2009; Simpson 2012) have asserted as well, become increasingly important in the modern Information Age. A good way to highlight this transformation of the operational environment is Smith’s (2005, 284 f.) analogy of the theatre of operations as a “theatre”:

[...] we fight and operate amongst the people in a wider sense: through the media [...]
Whoever coined the phrase ‘the theatre of operations’ was very prescient. We are conducting operations now as though we are on stage, in an amphitheatre or Roman arena. There are two or more sets of players – both with a producer, the commander, each of whom has his own idea of the script. On the ground, in the actual theatre, they are all on the stage and mixed up with people trying to get to their seats, the stage hands, the ticket collectors and the ice-cream vendors. At the same time, they are being viewed by a partially and factional audience, comfortably seated, its attention focused on that part of the auditorium where it is noisiest, watching the events by peering down the drinking straws of their soft-drink packs – for that is the extent of the vision of a camera.

Thus, particularly in an insurgency abroad, where the domestic audience of the external, strong actor views the conflict through the lens of the media (and does not experience it first-hand, as the population in the conflict does), the informational realm is where the insurgents, try to convey their narrative.¹¹ These actions of insurgents, where a political message is being transferred through the

¹¹ Although, as Betz (2008, 523) states, media does not denote the ‘mainstream media’ (i.e. large broadcast and print corporations such as the BBC), but ‘democratized’ mass communication, in which individuals with smartphones and internet access become reporters, anchormen and bloggers who can reach millions of people (see also Bolt 2012).

use of violence can also be described as 'Propaganda of the Deed' (POTD). Whilst the concept originates from Anarchist terrorism in Russia during the late 19th century (Bakunin 1870), it is not a single act of terror, but rather part of the whole process of narrative construction and reinforcement through deeds. For insurgents, it is a rhetorical tool in their political campaign of winning over sympathetic communities for support and of shocking the enemy's population (Bolt et al. 2008, 2). In the early 21st century, through globalisation, mass migration, the advent of digital mass media and of social networks, POTD has become ever more relevant.¹² According to Bolt (2012, 2) it "has evolved into an act of political violence with the objective of creating a media event capable of energising populations to bring about state revolutions or social transformation."

POTD is a media event that aims for the (local and global) audience's hunger for dramatic stories and, particularly, images. The true event is not the terrorist act of bombing and killing. It is the media-hyped aftermath which triggers associations with recent and historic acts in an "archipelago of violence" (Bolt 2012, Ch. 2) through which a holistic meaning appears. In the modern world of mass communications, these images offer clarity and, thus, "POTD acts as a lightning rod for collective memory". In using POTD, insurgents actively contest society's collective memory. They "fight for control of the past in order to legitimise their role in the present, and stake their claim to the future" (Bolt 2012, 7). POTD is similar to political marketing, because it utilises techniques of resonance and symbolic association to create associations with established ideas and beliefs.

¹² This becomes even more important, due to the fact that Western societies have become more casualty sensitive, due to the experiences of past conflicts and declining birth rates. Thus, their militaries are trying to contain and minimise the risks to the lives of their soldiers in order to reduce political and electoral risk to the national governments (e.g. Cornish 2003; Devine 1997; Luttwak 1995; Record 2000; Shaw 2005).

These interlinked factors, insurgency as an inherently political enterprise, modern war as a 'theatre', and insurgent actions as POTD, lead to a comprehensive view of contemporary insurgency as a 'war of ideas'.¹³ The term has been used for a while to denote a wide range of domestic and international intellectual debates that have spiralled into embittered disputes, for example on abortion, evolution, or economic issues (Echevarria 2008). More recently, references to 'war of ideas' have appeared in defence literature, particularly against the backdrop of the so-called 'War on Terror' (Glassman 2008; Michaels 2013). Wars are no longer defined and limited events in space and time, but we experience a continuation of (often non-military) hostilities, including political actions and propaganda (see also Simpson 2012; Smith 2005). In short, the concept of a 'war of ideas' is not new, but it manifests itself in modern insurgencies.

To summarise, contemporary insurgency presents itself to U.S. as a deeply political endeavour in a Clausewitzian sense, which goes beyond the superficial fighting and immediate battlefield. Insurgents create strategic narratives of their actions and execute them as propagandistic deeds. This has become increasingly important in the modern world of globalised, instant mass communications. People, particularly the international audience and those in the country of the intervening, strong actor, now watch these conflicts almost like in a real 'theatre'. In this sense, (counter-)insurgency presents itself to us as a dynamic and not static concept, which has changed from being conceived merely as violent uprisings against foreign powers to a battlespace of diverging political beliefs and ideologies.

¹³ Although, as Betz argues, the term 'war' is rather misleading, as it is more of an all-encompassing "*Confrontation of Ideas*" (2008, 513).

1.2.2 The paradoxes of COIN

As much as insurgencies have existed for millennia, attempts at fighting them and suppressing internal rebellion have as well. In this sense, counterinsurgency, in a generic sense, is a “traditional (perhaps even a defining) activity of government” with the aim of “control[ling] societies” (Kilcullen 2012, 129). For most of human history the methods that polities have used to counter insurgencies have varied significantly. The techniques used were largely determined by the individual nature of the uprising, the nature of the insurgents, as well as the strong actor’s attitude towards the population it controlled. Thus, this generic form of counterinsurgency has been a long-standing and varied phenomenon, which is not directly associated with any specific set of knowledge, doctrine or methods (Kilcullen 2012, 130).

Nevertheless, in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan COIN had eventually become the central orthodoxy of the U.S. military’s answer to insurgent challenges, after its initial response, by default, had been conventionally-oriented. In the accompanying debate, pundits, politicians, and the media, extensively discussed the concept of a ‘COIN strategy’ that was allegedly being implemented in these conflicts. In autumn of 2007, a seminar entitled “COIN of the Realm: U.S. Counterinsurgency Strategy” was organised by Ralph Wipfli of the Brookings Institution and Steven Metz of the U.S. Army War College (2008). Senator John McCain used the term during his Presidential campaign in 2008 (Cooper 2008). Moreover, different media outlets talked about the “counterinsurgency strategy” in Iraq (e.g. Ricks 2007; Rohde 2007). In 2009, the Obama administration debated whether or not to implement a ‘counterterrorism strategy’ or a ‘counterinsurgency strategy’ in Afghanistan (Baker and Bumiller 2009). Yet, it is questionable if ‘COIN’ can even be considered a strategy at all?

For the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. *Army/Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency* provided the U.S. military's official articulation of COIN, which it depicted as the "military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency" (U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps 2007, 2).¹⁴ Whilst this seems to be a specific definition of COIN, it is, in fact, a definition that could apply to all wars (Gventer et al. 2013, 4). *FM 3-24* postulates a generally applicable response to the 'problem' of insurgency: "Most insurgencies follow a similar course of development. The tactics used to successfully defeat them are likewise similar in most cases" (U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps 2007, ii). Thus, *FM 3-24*, while obviously providing technical guidance, seems to claim that counterinsurgency is a comprehensive military approach or strategy.

Clausewitz broadly defined strategy as "the use of the engagement for the purpose of the war" (1984, 177).¹⁵ In the military context, as Basil Liddell Hart famously noted (1967, 336), strategy is "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy." Thus, strategy needs the link to policy in order to work. Whilst Clausewitz did not define policy, he was clear that *Politik* (meaning both policy and politics in German) was not the same as strategy. By concluding that that war had its own grammar, but not its own logic, he meant that strategy was part of that grammar. By contrast, *Politik* provided the logic of war, answering the existential question: What are we fighting for? In Clausewitz's logic it, thus, had an overarching position as opposed to strategy, which had a much narrower meaning (Echevarria 2007; Strachan 2005; 2013).

¹⁴ In the 2014 update to *FM 3-24*, the definition is more broadly formulated as "comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes" (U.S. Army 2014a, 2).

¹⁵ In the words of Howard (1983, 36), it is "the use of available resources to gain any objective."

The problem with *FM 3-24* and the associated remarks made by pundits and commentaries is that they do not address or answer this existential political question, which would enable the concept of contemporary COIN to work as a strategy in its pursuit. The political end of war requires that the actors involved define and enunciate the political reasons for which it is fought. Yet, this political intent of using armed force or how to achieve political goals is not articulated in modern COIN theory. In fact, as Gventer et al. (2013, 9) remark, the

COIN advocates prefer to present themselves, rhetorically, as disinterested connoisseurs of combat, neutral observers untainted by the messy business of politics. They prefer the image of politically impartial managers, or engineers, who fix problems.

Due to the fact that the political aim of COIN is missing it cannot work as a strategy in the pursuit of politics. Thus, COIN as a concept is not a strategy.

So what is contemporary COIN then? In its self-designation, *FM 3-24* as the keystone of modern COIN thinking is a military doctrine. “Doctrine”, according to the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), presents the “fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives [...] It is authoritative but requires judgment in application” (U.S. Department of Defense 2012). Through writing and using doctrines, the military tries to establish a set of standard operating procedures and methods by which they can conduct their operations based on a common framework of understanding.¹⁶ However, doctrine is much more than that. The term essentially describes a set of beliefs and practices in a religion, which the recognised priesthood defines as the right way of belief. It is, hence, a system of faith which in itself is a dogmatic and fixed orthodoxy (Gventer et al. 2013, 4).

¹⁶ Doctrine encompasses all aspects of military activity – air, land, and sea warfare – and has, more recently, expanded to include new aspects such as space or cyber (e.g. Air Staff 2009; Fryer-Biggs 2012).

War, however, as Clausewitz (1984, 89) observed, is “more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to any given case.” He contended that all wars are different in their outbreak, course, and conduct, depending on the time and place they take place in. These two variables, as well as the Clausewitzian trinity of passion, chance and reason (Clausewitz et al. 1984, 89) make any war distinctive. The fact that all war is unique runs counter the claim of doctrine to present a fixed solution to military problems. This paradox can never be fully resolved. The course of any war cannot be predicted beyond the basic Clausewitzian trinity, which governs it. Military planners have for long been aware of this critical limitation of doctrine. As Helmuth von Moltke the Elder has famously remarked (1871), “no plan of operations extends with any certainty beyond the first contact with the main hostile force.”

Despite the uniqueness of war, modern COIN doctrine stipulates that insurgencies are a specific type or ‘category’ of conflict which is ruled by certain regularities. COIN theory assumes that these regularities can be met with universal prescriptions of how to fight them. Nagl and Burton (2010, 125 f.) claim that insurgencies are defined by an uniform set of “dynamics” which makes them “better defined by their associated methodologies than by ideologies.” Hence, “[w]hile causes change regularly, the fundamentals of insurgent methodology remain relatively constant.” COIN, thus, appears as a military template that can be used in any insurgency. This is based on the key tenet that certain lessons can be extracted from (real or alleged) successful campaigns in the past to inform those in the present. These supposedly timeless and regular dynamics of (counter-)insurgency are central to the COINdinstas’ argument.¹⁷

¹⁷ This term was used in a *Foreign Policy* article by Tom Ricks (2009), in which he described some of the key ‘experts’ involved in the then-highly topical COIN debate.

However, the disappearance of Clausewitz (Jones and Smith 2010, 105) in the last decade, brought forward not only by COIN ‘experts’, but also scholars looking at the phenomenon of new wars, reveal a misunderstanding of Clausewitz’s writings and intentions.¹⁸ Clausewitz is directly rejected because of his view of the centrality of politics to all wars. This is because of the social and political uncertainties that make war unique. In Clausewitz’s view, this makes it impossible to derive a universal and rational template to apply to a specific kind of warfare such as insurgencies (Gventer et al. 2013, 11; Jones and Smith 2010, 105). Only politics can establish the reasons for engaging in a counterinsurgency and determining what success is supposed to look like.

Yet, this rationalist view of counterinsurgency efforts, once aptly summarised by Hans Morgenthau (1966, 391) as a “self-sufficient, technical enterprise, to be won as quickly, as cheaply, as thoroughly as possible and divorced from the foreign policy that preceded and is to follow it”, is appealing to the military and policy-makers. It offers the luring promise of an easy panacea to complex political questions. Thereby it is inherently paradoxical. The core assumption of contemporary COIN theory and, of course, *FM 3-24*, is that the population is the key battleground (U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps 2007, 51). The support of the people is key to success in the fight against insurgents. This key axiom of modern COIN thought leads to further considerations, such as the belief that it is necessary to have a deep understanding of the population’s cultural, linguistic and sociological traits.¹⁹

¹⁸ As Montgomery McFate (2005, 42), an anthropologist engaged in writing *FM 3-24* and implementing the ‘ Human Terrains Systems’ (HTS) in Iraq, claimed: “Neither Al-Qa’eda nor insurgents in Iraq are fighting a Clausewitzian war, where armed conflict is a rational extension of politics by other means.”

¹⁹ Which, by the way, is not a modern occurrence, but rather represents a “powerful military-anthropological tradition [...]” (Marshall 2010, 235).

Yet, as we have seen, modern COIN experts argue that specific circumstances are more or less irrelevant, because all insurgencies are characterised by certain distinguishable dynamics across time and space. This becomes most obvious in the ‘voicelessness’ or missing representation of the population this so-called strategy is supposed to actively engage. As Ambassador Robert Blackwill (2010) noted regarding the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan:

I notice that in the entire treatise, more than 23,000 words, the word Pashtun, who are after all the primary objects [...], is mentioned exactly once. Unless all references to them are redacted and extensive, those folks are Banquo’s ghost at the feast.

COIN thinking as a set of military tactics, packaged into the military instrument of a doctrinal manual, such as *FM 3-24*, claims to be a value-neutral and technical solution to complex issues. Yet, it equally claims to be a universal understanding and response to a specific kind of conflict. Such claims make it profoundly political and ideological. However, exactly because it claims to be an apolitical concept, it discursively states as incontrovertible truth issues that are quintessentially contestable.

In sum, we can discern that COIN is not a strategy as claimed by many commentators and analysts. Moreover, it fails at trying to outsmart the Clausewitzian paradigm that all war is unique, by promoting a standardised response to insurgencies that is based on the assumption that these can be identified by certain “methodologies”. This is because it is inherently paradoxical in how it feigns interest for the local populations, whilst at the same time not giving these people a real ‘voice’, or considerable stake in the process.²⁰ The question

²⁰ Obviously, foreign COIN campaigns have always relied on the use of indigenous forces and the utilisation of local elites friendly to the foreign counterinsurgents. However, as Robert Blackwill’s quote above illustrates, the majority of the population is left out. In fact, as Gayatri Spivak (1988) has argued, the local population has to adapt to the Western way of thinking and acting in order to be heard.

that now arises is ‘What is COIN, if it is not a strategy?’ As I will outline next, modern COIN is not only a misapplication of historical military lessons, but a distinct political narrative of modern conflict, which serves as a reassuring ‘story’ for public and political audiences both within the U.S. and abroad.

1.2.3 COIN as a ‘strategic narrative’

The imprecision of modern COIN terminology and its obfuscation of the Clausewitzian principles of war may be found in the intellectual origins of modern COIN thinking. Contemporary COIN theorists are keen to highlight that they are first and foremost ‘practitioners’ and not academics (even though many of them hold research degrees, see e.g. Mansoor 2013b; Nagl 2014; Petraeus 2010). The same goes for their intellectual luminaries. For example, David Galula (1964), Robert Thompson (1966), Julian Paget (1967), and Frank Kitson (1971) were all active or retired military or colonial officers. Thus, the fundamental dynamics of contemporary COIN also rest on the ‘classical’ cases and literature of the 1950s-1960s, mostly the so-called ‘Malayan Emergency’. In this campaign, which took place from 1948 to 1960, British forces successfully extinguished a communist revolt through the combined use of military, economic, and social measures. Over time, this historical conflict has become the *locus classicus* of a successful counterinsurgency campaign, where the ruling authority can overcome a rebellion by ‘protecting’ the people and winning its ‘hearts and minds’ (Gventer et al. 2013, 7). Hence, modern COIN apologists often use the Malayan Emergency as a blueprint (Bennett 2009; Jones and Smith 2010).

Based on Nagl’s seminal comparison of U.S. and British approaches in Vietnam and Malaya in *Learning to eat soup with a knife* (2002), contemporary COIN thinkers use the Malayan campaign as a repository of methods, tactics and ‘best

practice' rules, which can be taken off the shelf and used in modern wars (see e.g. Kilcullen 2006a; Mansoor 2008; Sepp 2005). In essence, Nagl argues that the British were successful in Malaya vis-à-vis the Americans in Vietnam, because their military had an adaptable organisational culture which was geared towards 'small wars'. For modern COIN, this claim frames a democratically and socially acceptable message, which can be used in today's conflicts (see for example Ladwig 2007; Markel 2006; Sullivan 2007).²¹ In terms of the techniques used to capture the hearts and minds of the people, for example, the modern practice of "shape, clear, hold, and build" (U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps 2007, Ch. 9-1) borrows from the British Malaya tactic of securing safe areas and the move into the more troublesome areas, whilst building guarded villages in which the squatter population was moved into. A similar modern operational embodiment is the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Iraq and Afghanistan, where social scientists and anthropologists tried to learn about and shape the local population (Pritchard and Smith 2010).

Although more recent COIN literature has transcended the anti-Maoist undertone of the "original pioneers of counterinsurgency" (Mumford 2009, 15), there is still a strong appeal to these authors (e.g. Galula, Thompson, Fall) in *FM 3-24* and other publications. Updating and applying the classical precepts to the new campaigns, thus, constitutes more of a "Neo-Classical Revival", rather than a new development of COIN (Kilcullen 2012, 137). Whilst it might have been a good idea to look into examples of past campaigns, it is questionable how these ideas

²¹ However, as Bennett (2009) notes, the admiration for the discrete use of force and 'winning hearts and minds', which some scholars of counterinsurgency bring forward (e.g. Arreguín-Toft 2001; Downes 2007; Nagl 2005; Ucko 2007) is overrated. Instead, the historiography of the Malayan campaign – especially in its opening phase – is characterized by brutality and intimidation, which would certainly be unacceptable today.

and experiences of the 1960s are transferrable to the modern COIN campaigns. Indeed, there are significant differences between the empirical realities of then and now. Yet, to a large extent, the intellectual foundation of COIN doctrine has stayed the same. For example, both 'classical' and 'neo-classical' COIN doctrines assume that insurgents initiate conflict against a weak, yet functioning state (Kilcullen 2006b, 2). When looking at contemporary conflicts such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or Syria, it becomes clear that it can well be the state or invading forces to which insurgents react and that the state has already failed. Thus, the fight is often over 'ungoverned space'. Modern insurgencies do not necessarily represent a bilateral struggle between "the insurgent" and "the counterinsurgent" (Galula 1964). They consist of multiple, competing insurgent (or government) groups, which pursue their own agenda.²²

Even more importantly, 'neo-classical' COIN doctrine still retains pretty much the view that insurgents operate within localised, physical spaces, often called 'active' and 'passive' sanctuaries (Galula 1964, 38 ff.; Thompson 1970). Whilst *FM 3-24* acknowledges that in the modern world, these 'sanctuaries' may well lie in the Internet or in the media (U.S. Army 2006, 1-16), it still focuses heavily on fighting insurgents on the ground. In relation to this, one flawed argument that is still brought forward by contemporary COIN experts and researchers alike, is that insurgents rely heavily on external support, for example from wealthy expats and other individuals abroad (see e.g. Byman et al. 2001; Mumford 2009, 55 ff.; Record 2006; Reider 2014). Yet, as the example of the Islamic State has most

²² As Gventer (2014, 243) rightly notes about the Iraq War, it was "a honeycomb of conflict and competition for power. The players included members of the Iraq government; rogue (or perhaps not so rogue) members of the Iraqi security forces that the United States had built and continued to train; multifarious sectarian, terrorist, and criminal groups; and several, competing, outside powers. [...] Without a name for Iraq's disease, some simply called it a 'perfect storm'."

recently shown (Alexander and Beach 2014; BBC 2014), insurgents can equally sustain their campaign themselves. Last, whilst all of the campaigns of the 'classical' era were waged in rural terrain, insurgencies have shifted towards urban areas. This development is underestimated in *FM 3-24* (Kilcullen 2013b).

Overall, we can trace the influence of the 'classical' COIN doctrine of the 1960s onto the 'neo-classical' version that emerged as a response to the growing insurgency in Iraq in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of 2003. This is not to say that the contemporary 'experts' have not considered modern aspects of insurgency in their own writings and ultimately *FM 3-24*. Nevertheless, the frequently invoked "cultural revolution" (Heuser 2007; Mumford 2009, 15) is much less than it makes out to be. It is just not the case that references to the 'classical' works in contemporary literature are "a case of pacifying the worshippers of the old god when building a temple to the new god", as Beatrice Heuser has claimed (2007, 166). Instead, the ideas of 'classical' authors are key components of the supposedly 'new temple of COIN', whose foundations still rest in these traditions of colonial and post-colonial warfare.

So, if the application of modern COIN merely resembles a selective repetition of historical techniques, what is the point of talking COIN up to be the solution to the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the U.S. was failing? As I have outlined above, contemporary insurgencies play out as so-called 'war(s) of ideas', communicative struggles over political credibility and legitimacy (McCrystal 2009, 6). Insurgents try to influence their opponents and their domestic population as well as the ever-growing international audience, through deeds, proclamations, and images. The same goes for the counterinsurgents. As James Forest (2009, xi) notes: "In both terrorism and insurgencies, states and non-state actors

compete against each other to gain influence among key public audiences – the center of gravity in virtually all contemporary conflicts.” If the state and its military are unable to maintain the support of the population, even nations with the strongest military capacities can face strategic defeat in an insurgency (Mack 1975; Smith 2005). Thus, the outcome of tactical operations on the battlefield is less important to the success of a campaign. What is more important is the perception of the war’s purpose, course and conduct in the public eye at home and abroad (Freedman 2006, 93).

In light of this, modern COIN doctrine, which fails at disguising itself as an apolitical military strategy, is an inherently political ‘strategic narrative’. Given that in protracted conflicts, political decision-makers face various difficult challenges associated with political communication (Roselle 2006, 1), strategic narratives are discursive frameworks that enable people to make sense of the world, events, and policies. As Freedman (2006, 22), writes, strategic narratives are “compelling story lines which can explain events convincingly and from which inferences can be drawn.” More specifically, strategic narratives are “a communicative tool through which political actors – usually elites – attempt to give determined meaning to past, present, and future in order to achieve political objectives” (Miskimmon et al. 2013, 5). Thus, strategic narratives play an important role within political (or strategic) communications for a specific conflict, because they tell the story of why the country is in this war, why it is important to choose a specific approach to that war and what can be considered a success (Freedman 2006; Roselle 2006; 2010).

Narratives can generally operate on three different levels. These are inextricably linked. First, on a meta-level, international system narratives describe how a

perceived structure of the world, how it works and who the central actors in it are. Examples of such narratives are the Cold War or the Global War on Terror (GWOT). In the latter, the narrative sets out that states fight against terrorists that operate globally and trans-nationally with the support of rogue states. Designating a state as a supporter of terrorism (as George Bush's infamous "axis of evil", Bush 2002) influences one's own and other states' actions towards that state. Second, on a meso-level, are national narratives. They define the 'story' of a nation or state and its values or goals (Holsti 1970; Thies 2012; Walker 1987). An example of this is the U.S.' self-perception as an exceptional state, a "City upon a hill" (Kennedy 1961) which had first committed itself to virtues such as liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, and republicanism (Lipset 1996, 17 ff.). Last, on a micro-level, are issue narratives. They set out why a specific policy is needed and useful, and how it can be implemented to achieve the desired results. Furthermore, they contextualise governmental actions, including the relevant actors, and how the proposed plan of action will resolve the underlying problem. Modern COIN would be an example of such an issue narrative. By pretending to focus on 'hearts and minds', COIN serves as a reassuring story which conveys the necessity and utility of U.S. engagement.

Issue narratives in general and contemporary COIN in particular, are related to Alexander George's concept of "policy legitimacy" (George 1989) which postulates that political actors must convince others that a policy is achievable and (normatively) desirable. Policy legitimacy "is tied to the role of political elites and public opinion because these forces play a powerful role in decision-making and may act as a counterweight to leaders and their agendas" (Roselle 2006, 9). It creates a "fundamental consensus" (George 1989, 584) about a policy, such

as a COIN approach in a conflict. Mass media plays an important role in shaping the context for the elite discussion around the policies, strategies, and tactics to be used as well as their public dissemination. As Trout (1975, 256) notes: “[...] the process of shaping the image of the environment in support of a given policy at a given time is both politically significant and at the foundation of legitimation.”

George’s concept of policy legitimacy has two elements. First, there is a cognitive element that determines the feasibility of the policy. A political leader (essentially the U.S. President) “must convince people that he knows how to achieve these desirable long-range objectives.” Second, this leader must convince others in the political sphere (bureaucratic organisations and Congress) and the public that the policy is valid, or “that the objectives and goals of his policy are desirable and worth pursuing – in other words, that his policy is consistent with fundamental national values and contributes to their enhancement” (George 1989, 585). Considering the issue of COIN, this links back to the different levels of narratives mentioned above. COIN as an issue narrative must be consistent with national narratives concerning the (self-) perception of the U.S. and international system narratives. These define the role of both counterinsurgents and the insurgents.

In the first years following 9/11, with the U.S. and allied invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan, it became clear that the practices of combating terrorism and insurgency were often not only completely at odds with the narratives communicated, but they also presented a danger to policy legitimacy. This is due to the fact that the political leaders were unable to prove and convince the people that their policies were working and meeting the desired objectives. For example, the bombing of civilians in Afghanistan, the abuse in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, as well as the obvious inability to stop the growing insurgencies in both countries

all contradicted narratives of freedom and democracy or that of the U.S. as a great power.²³ Besides heavy resentments against the U.S. in these countries, domestic support within the Western alliance also waned due to the lack of campaign success and rising casualties (Dimitriu 2012, 196).

In this context, the concept of strategic communications and strategic narratives became important again. Whilst the terms themselves are rather novel occurrences in political and military discourse, the principles behind them are not. From the colonial campaigns at the beginning of the 20th century to the insurgencies in Indo-China and Latin America after World War II, both practitioners and scholars have tried to ascertain the relevance of capturing and influencing the local population's perceptions during asymmetric conflicts, mainly from a military viewpoint (Helmus et al. 2007). Equally, for several decades, the political conditions under which a domestic population supports their leaders in the use of military force has been analysed (Gelpi et al. 2009).

This latter aspect of considering and trying to influence one's own public perception of a war has become particularly important since the Vietnam War, when the causal link between public opinion (informed through mass media) and foreign policy became drastically apparent (Dimitriu 2012, 196). For the U.S., the Vietnam War was an excruciating experience, because it failed to offer the local population a convincing alternative to the North Vietnamese nationalist narrative of liberation for all of the country (Smith 2005, 238). More importantly, in the course of the war, the U.S. government increasingly failed to convince its own

²³ This strategic narrative of the United States as a great power, as Miskimmon et al. (2013, 43 ff.) outline, has been a central narrative for the U.S. since at least World War II. Thus, by failing in against insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan (as they had done in Vietnam) this key narrative was challenged in front of the whole world.

population of the necessity and utility of U.S. engagement in the country, which eventually created the decisive pressure to withdraw. Scholars today believe that this public perception of a war can be influenced through narratives constructed by the (bureaucratic) government that aim to communicate a specific view on the conflict and, thus, convey a justificatory message (e.g. Freedman 2006; Miskimmon et al. 2013; Roselle 2006). The troublesome experiences with insurgent movements in most recent campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to a re-emergence of interest into strategic communications and strategic narratives. In both countries, insurgents were able to humiliate the U.S. through their propagandistic deeds and threaten the local population, thereby attracting interest and support of radical Islamists worldwide through their own narrative about the establishment of a worldwide caliphate (Kilcullen 2005).²⁴ The development of a coherent counter-narrative in the form of counterinsurgency was, thus, only a logical step.

In this sense, Joseph Nye (2011, 19), the founder of 'soft power' theory, has argued that "[...] outcomes are shaped not merely by whose army wins but also by whose story wins." This story is, in effect, propaganda. As I outlined earlier, terrorists and insurgents use deeds as tools of propaganda. Equally, the state's strategic narrative of COIN, is in its core propaganda that is aimed at selling the U.S.' involvement in these wars as reasoned and just to the sceptical audience at home. Jacques Ellul (1973, 61) famously defined propaganda as:

[...] a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization.

²⁴ In 2015, this lives on in the self-proclaimed 'caliphate' on the territory of Iraq and Syria, established by the so-called Islamic State.

Nonetheless, propaganda is much more than that. If we combine it with the three different levels of narratives, propaganda can provide a complete system for explaining the world which provides immediate incentives for action. It is an “organized myth” (Ellul 1973, xvii) through which a complete range of intuitive knowledge is created. This knowledge is “susceptible of only one interpretation, unique and one-sided, and precluding any divergence” (Ellul 1973, 11). The myth can become so powerful that it occupies all levels of consciousness and produces a biased attitude. Whilst the common perception of propaganda may be that it only occurs in autocratic and dictatorial states, where the lack of accountability requires the despots to extensively promote themselves and their rule, it is certainly also part of the repertoire of democratic states. Here, the governments may find it difficult to lie outright about a certain issue, because there is a great danger that an independent press will follow up on it. Yet, through strategic communications, they can promote their story: “[Democracies] can tell [their] truth, and if that differs from the beliefs of others then the argument needs to be made on [their] truth’s behalf” (Taylor 2002, 441).

With regards to our focus of analysis, COIN, one can see that it is such a story. As several authors have indicated (Broadwell and Loeb 2012; Kaplan 2013; Ricks 2009; Robinson 2008) modern COIN can be illustrated by means of a cultural metaphor: The American frontier, as the core myth of U.S. foundation and the firm belief that both nature and hostile Indians can be overcome to achieve the aim of *manifest destiny* (Slotkin 1973; 1985) serve as the ideological and mythological reference point. In an analogy to old Western movies such as *Rio Grande* or *The Green Berets*, one can imagine David Petraeus as the new sheriff in town; with a moral purpose and clear ideas. He cleans out the local saloon and

figuratively rides out on his white horse with his trusty advisers to make peace with the Indians (Gventer et al. 2013, 16).

To sum up this deconstruction of modern COIN, we have established that it combines different, contradicting elements in the discursive framework of a strategic narrative, which serves as a story of reassurance for the U.S. domestic and international public and political audiences about the necessity and utility of U.S. engagement in Iraq. At its core is the claim and belief that COIN theory and practice can constitute a rational, apolitical approach which not only defies the Clausewitzian principle that war is the continuation of politics by other means, but also identifies the methodological regularities of insurgencies and ways to counter them. This normalisation and depoliticisation of COIN takes place through the selective use of historical examples of insurgencies. From this, normative methods are derived that promise the key to successful intervention.

Yet, as I have highlighted, both insurgency and counterinsurgency are highly political issues. This becomes problematic or even paradoxical, when COIN advocates concentrate on “second-order questions of grievance settlement and the techniques for resolving them [...] instead of first-order questions of ideology and politics” (Gventer et al. 2013, 19; Sky 2015b). In this sense, modern COIN cannot really serve as a military strategy, with some claiming that it can, because it defies its inherently political DNA. Instead, it appears to us as a strategic narrative, even as propaganda, which attempts to sell U.S. intervention to the sceptical audience at home and abroad as well as to decision-makers in the political sphere. It concurrently attempts to pacify the local population in the conflict despite the fact that its country is under the occupation of the counter-insurgent forces present within the country itself.

1.3 Contribution

This thesis' original contribution to knowledge is the analysis of the evolution, the constitution, and the use of expert knowledge production in U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns over the last century, with a particular focus on the cases of the Philippines, Vietnam, and Iraq. It claims that so-called military and academic 'experts' played a key role in framing and implementing the problem-set, solution, and ex-post-facto justification of success of these U.S. interventionist campaigns. Given that modern insurgencies are so-called 'wars of ideas', in which both insurgents and counterinsurgents use 'strategic narratives' to convey their political messages to the strategic audiences at home and abroad, contemporary COIN itself has become a narrative or even an 'ideology' of warfare. The COIN discourse, which consists of conflicting, often paradoxical claims, serves mainly as a reassuring story for the public.

I have traced this scholarly debate about the function of COIN as a narrative and a discursive tool in the literature review above. Whilst the 'experts', or 'COINdinistas', certainly appear in this literature, they only do so on the side line. The existing literature does not treat the influence and utility of so-called 'experts' in the formation and execution of the COIN narrative sufficiently, but takes it as given. Yet, as this thesis maintains, these experts are a vital part of the framing and justification of contemporary COIN as a humane and palatable conflict, whilst the reality is radically different and brutal, as war usually is. In this sense, experts have played a key role in the evolution of counterinsurgency from a generic set of techniques and methods, used in older conflicts (such as the Philippines) to defeat insurgents, to a "bright shining lie" (Sheehan 1988) of modern warfighting. I will trace this development through the three case studies.

Since the beginning of the Iraq War and especially since the ‘Surge’, a lot has been written on doctrinal change as well as on the evolution of counterinsurgency warfare (e.g. Galula 1964; Nagl 2005; Serena 2011; Thompson 1966; Ucko 2009). However, except perhaps for Kaplan’s *The Insurgents* (2013) or Halberstam’s *The Best and Brightest* (1972) – which looked at individual campaigns – the historical evolution of the convening of ‘experts’ to develop knowledge for such campaigns, as well as their possible role in changing policies relating to such wars has been underexplored. There is a plethora of contributions on the influence of knowledge ‘experts’ in certain security policy areas; mostly in the field of U.S. nuclear politics (see e.g. Herken 1985; Kaplan 1983; Kuklick 2007). Furthermore, there is a large amount of literature on the role of intellectuals and ‘experts’ in relation to specific U.S. campaigns, especially Vietnam and, to a smaller extent, Iraq (for example, Chomsky 1969; Gibson 1986; Gilman 2003; McCarthy 1968). Yet, the ‘experts’ themselves only play a subsidiary role in these analyses. There is currently no study that offers a thorough historical account of the way in which the use and constitution of expert knowledge as such has evolved over time and that also examines the major domestic and international influences on this process.

Barkawi and Brighton have noted that, although war is primarily perceived as an act of human suffering, its disruptive nature is not only visible in society, but also in knowledge: “Like a societal centrifuge, [war] has the power to draw in resources—intellectual, scientific, social, economic, cultural, and political—and unmake and re-work them in ways that cannot be foreseen” (2011, 137). As such, this thesis also seeks to fill a gap in the extant literature by looking at how knowledge resources are procured and employed for the purposes of achieving

objectives and goals of the U.S. government and military as (bureaucratic) organisations. This ontology of war has so far been neglected in the study of International Relations. By looking at over a century of U.S. counterinsurgency practice abroad, this thesis aims to account for the disruptive (and creative) nature of warfare on knowledge and how it has made new knowledge systems possible. To do this, it analyses how the U.S. has leveraged 'experts' within the field of counterinsurgency, based on the emergence and the preservation of U.S. hegemony over the last century.²⁵ Moreover, this thesis takes a close look at knowledge production in both the civilian and military realms of all campaigns.

This thesis seeks to enhance our understanding of the underlying factors that drive the development of warfare theory and practice and, in particular, the evolution of knowledge creation, as well as the production of symbolic and instrumental knowledge related to warfare. I will look at these concepts and if and how they are applicable in helping us to understand and explain the nature of expert knowledge production in U.S. counterinsurgencies. By doing so, the thesis seeks to avoid employing anachronistic terminology.²⁶ Much of past military strategy is often simply replicated in more contemporary campaigns, even while 'experts' are convened to offer 'new' solutions to military and political problems. Even the underlying rationale behind these strategies is the same, namely the preservation of a U.S.-global hegemony (see e.g. Block 1977; Cox and Sinclair 1996; Wallerstein 1974).

²⁵ By hegemony, I mean the military, political, social, cultural, ideological, and economic influence (to some extent, dominance) the United States has reached since the beginning of the last century.

²⁶ Understood as the application of a concept, which was developed (usually by 'experts') to explain a particular phenomenon at a historically specific point of time and which may no longer have explanatory validity.

Overall, this thesis is the first formal assessment of the development of and rationale for expert knowledge utilisation over a century of U.S. asymmetric campaigns. The strength of the thesis lies in the combination of the historical analysis of primary and secondary sources, on the Philippines and Vietnam cases, combined with a comprehensive range of interviews with sixteen key counterinsurgency 'experts', most of whom were directly involved in developing and implementing COIN strategy in Iraq. These interviews are an original feature of this thesis and they give us an insight into their values and beliefs as well as their motivation to participate in the knowledge production process during the Iraq counterinsurgency campaign. Hence, for the Iraq War, we have the unique chance to not only assess the organisational side of the knowledge creation process, but we can also 'hear' the voices of the experts themselves.

Their comments and insights are of considerable historical value, as they let us triangulate the results from the analysis of other sources, removing doubt about why the knowledge was needed and how it was applied. Together, they allow some sense of why the U.S. government and its military believe they need to develop counterinsurgency knowledge. The challenges of today's world provide justification for this study. The U.S. military has most recently been engaged in two major campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan where insurgencies have been the dominant threat. In Iraq and Syria, the emergence of the IS has disproved the belief that the U.S. had left Iraq as a sufficiently pacified and stable country. This not only augurs ill for the long-term prospects of Afghanistan after the drawdown of U.S. and allied troops from the country. It also shows us that COIN is doomed to fail if it is conducted principally as a storyline for the public, with no real interest and willingness for long-term stabilisation.

1.4 Structure

The body of the thesis is organised into three case studies preceded by chapters on methodology and theory. The methodology chapter outlines the different methodological tools used to analyse empirical and historical data and present the findings in a structured way. By relying on a comparative case study design and process-tracing we are able to show a relationship or development between the factors evident from the research questions across the set of cases. In terms of the sources used, the thesis utilises primary archival documents and elite interviews, combined with a critical use of secondary literature, all structured within a framework of a comparative case study analysis and a particular focus on process-tracing techniques.

The theory chapter, after first defining the concept of 'expert knowledge', develops an original theoretical framework for the analysis of the utilisation of expert knowledge, which relies on neo-institutionalist and systems-theoretic approaches. Its key tenets are that, above all, (bureaucratic) organisations strive for policy legitimacy and, thus, engage in 'talks', 'decisions' and 'actions' (either individually or collectively) when using knowledge instrumentally to improve the societal impact of their policies. However, there is also another, often underestimated facet to this. As I will show, knowledge can have a merely symbolic value. Similar to the instrumental use, symbolic knowledge utilisation is driven by concerns for legitimacy. Yet, it focuses on 'talks' and 'decisions' and not 'actions'. Experts play an important role for both instrumental and symbolic knowledge as they add epistemic authority.

The thesis' case studies describe the evolution in the utilisation of knowledge 'experts' during U.S. COIN wars from the late nineteenth-century onwards. The

thesis pays special attention to major shifts in the kind and scale of experts brought into advise during such campaigns with particular reference to the case studies of the Philippines (1898-1902), Vietnam (1954-1975) and Iraq (2003-2011). These case studies were chosen for the following reasons: The cases can be considered as crucial to U.S. strategic interest, because they each challenged U.S. global hegemonic pretensions. These wars also lasted more than three years and they all involved a substantial U.S. engagement of 100,000 or more troops. They arguably shaped the U.S. approach to asymmetric warfare. This could not be claimed for small 'in and out' campaigns such as Panama (1989), or operations where the U.S. did not get directly involved with its own troops, such as in El Salvador (1977-1992) or Guatemala (1960-1996).

Only very challenging and enduring military interventions generate enough attention for strategic and political change, which then lead to the need for expert knowledge in dealing with those specific challenges. The time span of over 100 years between the Philippines and Iraq case studies allows for a longitudinal study that periodically traces the influence of expertise across different campaigns for a long period of time. It, therefore, enables the reaching of some generalised conclusions regarding the substantive research problem outlined above. For easier access and comprehensibility, the case studies are each divided into two chapters, with each one focusing respectively on civilian and military knowledge production. Nevertheless, they must be seen as coherent analyses of expert knowledge production in these campaigns.

The first case study of expert knowledge utilisation in the Philippine-American War (1898-1902) utilises the theoretical framework to analyse the circumstances for the production and the employment of experts in the knowledge development

process for the campaign. The chapter outlines how the U.S. aimed at colonial domination of the archipelago, despite claiming to be benevolent and promising the eventual self-government to the Filipinos. As the U.S. government planned the long-term possession and exploitation of the Philippines, knowledge about civilian 'pacification' had to be instrumental and output-oriented. Moreover, as a democracy and former colony itself, the U.S. needed a strong justification of its rule in the Philippines. Thus, the focus of its campaign lay on "benevolent assimilation" and not military rule.

Hence, we can see the first instance, where the U.S. military was clearly used as a tool to exert U.S. domination over a different people. The soldier was not only a warrior anymore, but also defined by his social role as colonial administrator. There were no formal lessons learned from the campaign – in the form of written strategy or doctrine – and the experiences made by the Army personnel slowly faded away from institutional memory after the Insurrection was over. Yet, the processes in which the conflict was treated and knowledge for it created had a lasting impact on the way the U.S. military would act in insurgencies in the following century. Although the latter campaigns in Vietnam and Iraq displayed a different pattern of knowledge utilisation – with an increasing focus on the military part – the Philippine-American War is significant, as it laid the foundations for a concomitant utilisation of both civilian and military expertise in what would later be known as 'counterinsurgencies'.

The second case study of expert involvement during the Vietnam War (1954-1975) outlines how the inclusion of expert knowledge was not triggered by a direct military challenge to the U.S., but already took place before the U.S. got engaged in fighting. It highlights how wider societal transformations — and new socio-

political theories, such as modernisation theory, had an important influence on expert knowledge production and utilisation during the campaign. This went far beyond what had happened in the Philippines campaign. COIN began to emerge as a concept in its own right and was not merely a tactical or operational tool anymore. Driven by de-colonisation movements in large parts of the world and their (alleged or actual) support by the Soviet Union, academic 'experts in political science, sociology and anthropology were used by the U.S. government to develop a comprehensive COIN approach.

The case of Vietnam, vividly exemplifies the inclusion of expert knowledge production in the history of U.S. counterinsurgency. A central aspect of the analysis of this case study is how the 'experts' convened in this conflict constituted knowledge and what effect it had on other campaigns. This case study is not only placed midway between the first and the third case studies, but more importantly it is both influenced by the Philippine Insurrection and has shaped COIN knowledge production for the war in Iraq. Examining the Vietnam campaign helps to establish how the production and implementation of expert knowledge was transformed and shaped by external influences such as decolonisation, 'modernisation' and the bipolar world order. Ultimately, this case study demonstrates that, although the strategies and policies devised for Vietnam were seemingly forgotten afterwards, the way experts in which were brought in and developed knowledge had a lasting influence on how 'COIN' is conceived within the U.S. military today.

Third and last, the Iraq case study looks at the most striking example of expert involvement in U.S. COIN thinking and practice during the 2003-2011 campaign. It is not the only case of recent U.S. military campaigns, but with nearly 4,500

American casualties (U.S. Department of Defense 2012) and almost 110,000 civilian casualties (Iraq Body Count 2010), it can be considered the most critical war the U.S. has been involved in since Vietnam. This case study holds that the expert knowledge production for COIN in Iraq, epitomised by *FM 3-24* and the 'Surge', fulfilled more a symbolic function for the U.S. government and military on a strategic level and added to the strategic narrative about the utility of COIN as a self-sufficient concept of warfighting, rather than providing the instrumental knowledge that would improve the political condition and security of the people. Despite claiming that COIN would lead to a stable Iraq and to a long-term reduction in violence, the knowledge was intended to 'buy out' the U.S. of the quagmire it had got itself into and allow for a quick, favourable withdrawal.

The Iraq War displays the latest societal transformations, from the end of the 20th century into the first part of the 21st century, that still display a continuity in the inclusion of experts in contemporary wars of intervention by the US. The analogies between the 'experts' from the social sciences in different campaigns show that there is continuity in the fact that 'experts' were mobilised. From an intellectual standpoint, today's COIN doctrine is, thus, not fundamentally characterised by new ideas. In fact, the concept of winning 'hearts and minds', based on the materialist conception of social welfare, good governance and legitimate rule (Fitzsimmons 2008, 361), has regained credibility today as a means of fulfilling U.S. objectives. Military and academic 'experts' played a key role in framing and utilising the insurgency problem-set and its COIN solution, along with a story of U.S. success in pursuing this kind of campaigns.

2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This thesis analyses expert knowledge production in U.S. asymmetric warfare in the last century, bridging the divide between history and international relations. This cannot be done by manipulating independent variables and conducting randomized experiments to establish causality, as done in the ‘hard’ sciences. Historical ‘data’ consists of observational events, which makes it impossible for the researcher to make the claim that “x causes y” (Edwards 2000, 7). The aim is to show a relationship or trace an analogy between two or more variables in a set of cases. Hence, the thesis utilises different methodological tools to harness empirical and historical information and present the findings. The research rests on the use of primary archival documents and elite interviews, combined with a critical use of secondary literature, housed within a framework of a comparative case study analysis and a particular focus on process-tracing techniques.

2.2 Comparative Case Studies and Process-Tracing

The use of the comparative method in International Relations (IR) research is as old as the discipline itself. Comparison is not necessarily intended as a positivist method of measurement, but to unveil the empirical interaction between two or more political variables. According to Todd Landman (2008, 4), there are four main reasons for using a comparative analytical framework: contextual description, classification and “typologizing”, hypothesis-testing and theory-building, as well as prediction. This thesis addresses the first of these. The comparative cases of expert involvement in various U.S. military campaigns are supposed to offer a detailed, empirically-grounded description of events in order

to contextualise the development of expert knowledge utilisation by the U.S. military over the last hundred years. Thus, the comparative methodology is used here to analyse the continuities and differences in 'counterinsurgency' knowledge procurement by the U.S. military with the help of 'experts' in different campaigns spanning over a century. Landman goes on to identify four vital components of comparative research: cases, units of analysis, variables, and observations. In detail, 'cases' are the places or phenomena that form the foundation of the analysis. 'Units of analysis' are the "objects in which a scholar collects data." 'Variables' are "those concepts whose value changes over a given set of units," whilst observations are "the values of the variables for each unit" (Landman 2008, 18). The thesis encompasses these components to give a comprehensive framework for the comparative analysis. In this regard, cases are the U.S. campaigns against insurgents in the Philippines (1898-1902), Vietnam (1954-1975) and Iraq (2003-2011). The units of analysis are the distinct dimensions of experts and knowledge, separated into civil and military parts. The variables concern the various U.S. political, military, and intelligence approaches, as well as their organisation, strategy and tactics against the backdrop of U.S. domestic political and public opinion. Holistically the thesis, thus, provides a macro-level analysis of the evolution of the constitution and use of expert knowledge in U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns between 1898 and 2011.

The application of the comparative method in this thesis is also meant to overcome the divide between domestic and international politics that is evident in many IR studies. This divide has existed not least since the publication of Kenneth Waltz's *Man, the State, and War* (1959), in which he distinguishes between three levels of analysis in international relations: individual, state, and

international system. This systemic or “third-image” view of international politics as inherently distinct from domestic politics has characterised international relations theory ever since (see e.g. Gilpin 1981; Posen 1984; Walt 1987), as a result of the differences between international system and domestic society. Whilst the former is anarchical, where independent nation-states have to rely on self-help and bargaining techniques to resolve conflicts, the latter is rule-based and conflicts are resolved through legislative and executive measures: “International politics is concerned with survival; domestic politics has to do with life within the polis” (Caporaso 1997, 564). Hence, many IR studies, including the ones on COIN campaigns (e.g. Krepinevich 1986; Nagl 2005; Petraeus 1987), take up that distinction and focus on the ‘international’ aspects of COIN – i.e. the actual theatre of operations – leaving out the domestic aspects and factors.

Yet, such an arbitrary divide between the international and the domestic spheres as outlined in Waltz’s model has some flaws. Despite this intellectual autonomy of IR theory and domestic comparative politics, there are interdependencies and bridges between the two, which have been explored to some extent by scholars (see e.g. Evans et al. 1993; Katzenstein 1978; Putnam 1988). This is most evident in what Robert Putnam (1988) has termed the ‘two-level game’. In such a ‘game’, a governmental administration interacts with both the international system and domestic constituencies in making policy decisions that have both international and national repercussions. On the one hand, the government must strike acceptable deals with international partners; on the other hand it must ratify and ‘sell’ such deals to domestic stakeholders. There is no temporal priority or logical sequence and both levels are equally important (Caporaso 1997, 567).

The empirical evidence from the case studies and our theoretical model suggest that U.S. counterinsurgency is defined by such two-level interactions. The utilisation of expert knowledge is not merely important in the theatre itself – i.e. the improvement of strategy to reduce the number of casualties and win the war, as well as caring about the local population – but also on the home front, where the domestic audience and rival political factions demand answers and results. In this sense, a comparative analysis that takes into account the two-level nature of COIN, instead of simply focussing on the international level, makes it a valuable methodological approach for both the structure and the epistemological interest of this work. With two recent COIN campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan and a general prevalence of asymmetric conflict, particularly after the downfall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s (see e.g. Arreguín-Toft 2001), it is important to critically reassess the intellectual and epistemological history of U.S. counterinsurgency efforts based on a comparative case study approach.²⁷

Using the case study approach as a research tool has various implications regarding methodological strategies, research design, data collection, dissemination and analysis. As Robert Yin (2003, 1) has argued, case studies are best used “when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.” Given these criteria, the use of case studies is justified in this thesis, because it takes the recent ‘Surge’ in Iraq and the concomitant changes, which were influenced by the ‘COINdinistas’, as the culmination point of over a hundred years of expert involvement in U.S. COIN knowledge production, as revealed through asking

²⁷ (For further details of the cost and benefits of comparative case studies in macro-level analyses, see e.g. Goldthorpe 1997; Skocpol and Somers 1980; Tilly 1997).

“how” and “why” research questions: Why did the U.S. military rely on external expertise in defining solutions for insurgent threats in the different campaigns?; how were these experts chosen?, and how did these experts influence the development of military and political strategy? All cases are analysed in a comparative historical analysis. This is characterized by systematic comparison and analysis of processes over a long period of time (Mahoney 2004, 81).

In theory, comparative case studies “involve the nonstatistical comparative analysis of a small number of cases”, which is usually done through the controlled comparison of two or more instances of a well-defined phenomenon that are similar to each other in every aspect but the one under scrutiny (George and Bennett 2005, 151).²⁸ However, there are several methodological problems inherent in the comparative approach. Two are particularly noteworthy. First, it is very difficult to achieve absolute control in a comparison, simply because it is unlikely that there are two cases that resemble each other in all aspects but one (George and Bennett 2005, 152). Second, as Arend Lijphart (1976, 685) has correctly stated, “the principal problems facing the comparative method can be succinctly stated as: many variables, small number of cases.” In other words, there is usually an insufficient amount of cases to sufficiently explain the phenomena of interest, which has a negative impact on the validity of the comparison. Considering that the aim of the thesis is the analysis of the production and implementation of expert knowledge over a great length of time and across different ‘cases’, statistical or purely comparative approaches (such as Mill’s methods) are, thus, not suitable.

²⁸ The essential logic of the comparative approach is based on John Stuart Mill’s *A System of Logic* (1843), in which he outlines his “method of agreement” (aiming to identify a similarity in the independent variable associated with a common outcome in two or more cases) and “method of difference” (trying to identify independent variables associated with different outcomes).

In an attempt to compensate for these perennial problems of comparative analyses, the thesis combines the comparative case study approach with another method: the within-case method of process-tracing (George and Bennett 2005; George and McKeown 1984; Ragin 1987). This approach does not focus on the analysis of variables across different cases but on the causal nexuses within a single case. Yet, utilising a process-tracing approach, within-case analyses can be used in cross-case comparisons by drawing together the individual case studies in a common theoretical framework. By this, within-case analysis can alleviate the limitations of Mill's methods (George and Bennett 2005, 179). As David Collier (1993, 112) has emphasised, "within-case comparisons are critical to the viability of small-n analysis." In the thesis, the process-tracing approach is utilised by telling a detailed narrative of each case under scrutiny. Outlining the historical processes and developments that took place in each campaign enables U.S. to establish a more analytical and comprehensive meta-narrative pertaining the evolution of expert knowledge utilisation in U.S. asymmetric campaigns. Process-tracing generates numerous observations within a case. To link these observations across cases and allow for better comparability, the thesis rests on the analysis of similar variables across the cases within the two broader categories of civil and military expert knowledge production. This allows for better opportunities to describe and compare the empirical relationships between the variables and their epistemological meaning across time and space.

An important part of this process-tracing analysis in the comparative case study investigation is the use of discourse analysis (e.g. Brown and Yule 1983; Foucault 1972; Van Dijk 2007). This focus, according to Gabriel (Quoted in O'Toole and Talbot 2011, 48), enables researchers "to study organisational politics, culture

and change in uniquely illuminating ways, revealing how the wider organizational issues are viewed, commented upon and worked on by their members.” Given the constitutive role of knowledge, a comparative analysis between the ideas and beliefs of the so-called ‘experts’ in primary and secondary sources and U.S. military discourse, the actual U.S. military strategies adopted for each war will reveal the extent to which such ‘experts’ had a role in producing knowledge. The within-case approach and process-tracing technique also helps to address some other caveats. On the one hand, every such analysis has to be aware of what Richard Rose (1991, 447) has termed “bounded variability”, i.e. navigating between the extreme assumptions of universalism and particularism. In other words, there must be a trade-off between the depth and the breadth of the comparison in order to achieve a good mid-range analysis. Thus, this thesis takes three case studies into account in order to describe how U.S. efforts against insurgents have been supported by experts since the turn of the last century – a manageable number of cases representing broad temporal and spatial variance.

On the other hand, a comparative case study analysis must neither engage in “conceptual travelling” (comparing cases, which are too far away in time or incongruent) or “conceptual stretching” (using cases that fit the desired circumstances) (Collier and Mahon 1993). To avoid this, the cases chosen for this thesis are not only the major U.S. interventions in the last century, but they are also almost evenly spaced across this timeframe, providing a linear chronology. By using an ‘informed grounded theory’ approach²⁹ (Thornberg

²⁹ In contrast to a purely grounded theory approach (see e.g. Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1992; Strauss 1987), informed grounded theory is not completely agnostic of theoretical ideas and beliefs as the researcher is automatically exposed to them whilst collecting data. However, it shares the same approach in that it is an inductive way of researching, with no prior establishment of hypotheses.

2011), the thesis attempts to avoid deductive theorising with preconceived beliefs about the historical impact on contemporary campaigns. In this sense, the thesis also aims to have carefully selected cases. It may be tempting to deductively select cases that neatly confirm predetermined hypotheses, yet it eventually produces flawed research.

So what is the basis for the case selection? The cases in this thesis were chosen for several reasons. First, although the U.S. in its history has waged a multitude of so-called 'small wars' (see e.g. Boot 2003; Grimmett 2011), the case studies selected stand out as the most noteworthy campaigns, signified by a considerable deployment of troops and resource allocation as well as each having a sizeable impact on U.S. military strategy in particular and foreign policy in general. Second, the case studies are nearly evenly spread across time and different geographical regions. The Philippines case study provides an example of early U.S. counterinsurgency abroad (in fact, it was the largest foreign intervention by the U.S. up to that date), coinciding with its ascendance to Great Power status. In terms of Vietnam, this was the largest engagement of U.S. troops since the (conventional) Korean War, taking place at the height of the Cold War. Lastly, the Iraq case is the contemporary example of a counterinsurgency campaign, happening after the downfall of the Soviet Union and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The case studies were not picked to justify any preconceived notions or rigid theories of expert knowledge utilisation. In fact, the units of analyses and the variables present a rather mixed picture concerning the similarities and differences of the constitution and use of expert knowledge across the cases. Yet, holistically speaking, most knowledge and measures in each campaign are recurrent of age-old techniques, indicating that the knowledge

created (particularly in the more recent campaigns) has recently become more symbolic rather than serving actual instrumental policies. One last important aspect of comparative case study analysis is the question of validity and reliability. Validity refers to the viability of the variables in question. Reliability concerns the issue of generalisation of the finding upon other cases. Again, the validity of the analysis in this thesis is guaranteed by the chronological and complementary characteristics of the cases selected. Reliability is ensured by the potential to apply the analytical framework of the thesis across other countries' production of knowledge in COIN (e.g. the British or the French) or by applying it to other domestic fields of U.S. policy-making.

2.3 Sources: Archival Documents and Elite Interviews

This thesis utilises a range of methodological tools in order to construct an in-depth study. On the one hand, archival documents have been retrieved in several archives in the U.S. in order to build a primary source of knowledge on which the analysis is based. Moreover, an extensive search of secondary literature produced an array of documents and analyses that helped ground the research in existing historiographical and contemporary debates. On the other hand, interviews have been conducted with sixteen 'experts' involved in developing and implementing the recent counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq offering insight knowledge to a topic that is usually hard to analyse for an external researcher, due to the organisational nature of the military and the immediacy of the issues and historical events, i.e. many details are still not officially declassified. Such anecdotal evidence from the experts themselves are really helpful to 'connect the dots'; that is, to link to other primary and secondary sources and add to the

explanatory value of the analysis. The accumulative effect of this methodological approach has enabled this thesis to encapsulate the nature of the evolution of expert knowledge production in U.S. asymmetric campaigns over the last century and to enable a critical analysis of how these processes have unfolded by unpacking the different sources.

Primary sources such as archival documents are important because they function as a tool to help reconstruct past events and processes. They enable a first-hand insight into high-level decision-making processes and can be seen as the most accurate representation of events and the motives of decision-makers. However, the researcher must question and triangulate the authenticity, credibility and reliability of any document (Macdonald 2001, 195 ff.). Simply accepting the contents of a document or engaging in what E.H. Carr (1987, 16) has labelled a “fetishism of documents” does not lead to a sound piece of analysis. Documents, including government statements, reports or telegrams, are not neutral; they have a persuasive purpose, which must be placed within the surrounding temporal and institutional context. Due to the historical nature of the Philippines and Vietnam case studies, the thesis places archival research at the heart of the analysis.

Official government accounts of events, minutes of cabinet and council meetings, and even private memos are important in building up a wider picture to assess the development and impact of expert knowledge on U.S. asymmetric campaigns. Research has been conducted at various archives in the U.S. In terms of the Philippines and to some extent the Vietnam cases, the National Archives and the Library of Congress, both in Washington D.C. have provided large amounts of material. Whilst the former holds official government and military

records and reports,³⁰ the latter has the papers and personal correspondence of the U.S. presidents during the Philippine Insurrection (William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt) as well as of other influential decision-makers involved in the campaign (e.g. Secretary of War Elihu Root or William H. Taft of the Second Philippine Commission). Furthermore, the library of the U.S. Army Military History Institute (USAMHI) in Carlisle, PA had extensive records on both conflicts, including personal papers and follow-on interviews with involved (general) officers. In addition, I visited the Presidential Libraries of the U.S. Presidents Kennedy (in Boston, MA), Eisenhower (Abilene, KS) and Johnson (Austin, TX).

In archival research, inaccessibility and incomplete records are two of the most problematic aspects. With the Philippines case, inaccessibility was not so much an issue, as the conflict was over a hundred years ago and all material from that time has been declassified. For Vietnam, whilst most of the material has recently been completely declassified or classification levels reduced, there are certain documents, especially pertaining military or intelligence issues, that are still not available to researchers (see e.g. Marlatt 1995). However, in these cases the cross-tabulation of classified material is possible through comparison with other, declassified, government material, e.g. from the White House or the State Department. As indicated above, one must not treat the contents of archival documents as sacrosanct or attach a notion of true validity. They do not necessarily present an accurate picture of events and the specific historical and temporal circumstances as well as the positions of the experts and decision-makers involved. The researcher must have a critical look for content reflexivity.

³⁰ With regards to my analysis of the Philippine case, most important were *Record Group (RG) 94: Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917*, *RG 350: Records of the Bureau of Insular Affairs* and *RG 395: Records of U.S. Army Overseas Operations and Commands, 1898-1942*.

Moreover, the researcher has to be aware that archival documents often represent an 'elite' account of events. 'Elite' means that many archival documents were written or signed by presidents, ministers as well as high-level military personnel and civil servants reflect a top-level interpretation of discussions and meetings and the entire decision-making process. As a result, qualitative research often has a top-down view that privileges elite political and military accounts over the interpretations of, for example, a Private patrolling the streets of Baghdad (Silverman 2000, 36). This is a difficult yet often unavoidable conundrum that reflects the top-down approach with which counterinsurgency is often constructed (see also Buciak 2012). The thesis attempts to compensate for this by assessing bottom-up knowledge processes and it is also wary of "collapsing the state into the archives and thereby equating the 'state' in a simplistic manner with the 'bureaucracy'" (Kennedy-Pipe 2000, 745).

The contemporary Iraq case study was different from the other two cases in that primary, archival material was virtually non-existent due to the recency of the conflict, i.e. much of the governmental assessments and reports are still highly classified and will be for decades to come. Thus, there was an inevitable methodological shift from archive-based research for the Philippines and Vietnam case studies to reliance on investigative secondary analyses and, most importantly, interviews with participating experts. Interviews, in particular elite interviews, are a highly relevant element for process tracing approaches to case study research. Particularly in security studies, process tracing frequently involves the analysis of developments at the highest level, and elite actors will, thus, often be critical sources of information about the processes of interest (Tansey 2007, 4 f.). Over the last decades interviews have become a powerful

tool for analysing subjects' private and public lives and has been seen as a "democratic emancipating form of social research" (Kvale 2006, 480). An interview constitutes an invaluable method of collecting data that could otherwise not be directly observed or when analysing past events that are impossible to replicate (Merriam 1998, 72). As Kvale (1996, 6) states, an interview

is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge.

In general, elite interviews are very useful because they can corroborate data from other sources, they establish what people think, allow inferences about certain decisions and help to reconstruct a set of events (Tansey 2007, 6 f.).

The interview process itself consisted of several stages. First was the interview research. This included a definition and selection of appropriate candidates to be approached. The 'experts' that I chose for the interviews had been involved in the COIN debate since the U.S. invasion of Iraq, they participated in one or more of the high-profile conferences that took place on that topic, or were involved in the development and implementation of the new counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq. Many of the people met more than one of these criteria and their names were available from conference programmes, academic articles or from secondary literature (in particular by investigative journalists, see e.g. Kaplan 2013; Ricks 2007; 2009; Woodward 2008). Second, selection and access to these experts was similar to that of other elites (see e.g. McDowell 1998, 2135; Odendahl and Shaw 2002, 305). The military is a sensitive institution, often hesitant to give information to outsiders. Yet, it is also quite open to interactions with academia.³¹

³¹ The interviewees were Stephen Biddle, Conrad Crane, Janine Davidson, Thomas X. Hammes, Frank Hoffman, Jan Horvath, David Kilcullen, Richard Kiper, Andrew Krepinevich, Peter Mansoor,

Moreover, many of the experts were themselves working in academic functions, either in- or outside the military. Contact to a few potential interviewees was made through personal connections of my supervisor and then often continued through 'snowballing': After a respondent had been successfully located he or she was asked to provide other contacts through his or her social network (Warren 2002, 87). Gatekeepers, such as secretaries or personal assistants were not so much an issue here, because many of the experts were contactable directly via E-Mail. Although not every one of the contacted experts was willing to sit for an interview or did not even respond to my request, the overall response rate was very good and led to sixteen interviews. Third, in terms of the interviews themselves, they were conducted in various locations in the U.S., in convenient locations for the respondents or via telephone/skype. Concerning the format of the interview, a semi-structured approach was used. In contrast to fully structured, closed questions, where the interviewer sticks to defined questions and response options, the semi-structured approach gives the interviewee latitude to articulate their answers whilst maintaining reliability and comparability of answers across different interviews (see Aberbach and Rockman 2002, 674). The interviews, which lasted approx. 45-60 minutes each, were recorded and later transcribed.

There are certain shortcomings to the interview method, which have to be kept in mind. The purpose of qualitative interviewing is to "derive interpretations, not facts or laws" (Warren 2002, 83). Elites, including military ones, should not be seen as isolated from the organisational contexts in which they operate. It is, thus, critical that interviews with the experts are substantiated by other accounts and analyses (Odendahl and Shaw 2002, 314). In an institution such as the U.S. military,

Thomas Marks, Montgomery McFate, Steven Metz, John Nagl, Brian Page, Dan Roper, Sarah Sewall, and David Ucko.

respondents are always influenced by organisational culture. The researcher has to be aware of the fact that respondents might want to whitewash certain decisions or facts, particularly when they were involved in it themselves, or they underrepresent their role in the decision-making process. Furthermore, interviews are often held several years after the events of interest have taken place, and simple weaknesses of memory limit the usefulness of such interviews (Seldon and Pappworth 1983, 16 ff.). In this sense, the use of elite interviews in the Iraq case study is of course utilised with the same critical caveats placed upon archival documents, i.e. an awareness of the interviewee's position, potential political agenda and views. Yet, there is also a positive side to the institutional affiliation and the *esprit de corps* that many experts have developed over years of service or affiliation with the military. The fact that the experts are such a product of their environment can be very helpful for our analysis, because in their role as experts they equally act as agents who communicate the context of their environment, letting us catch at least a glimpse of the structures of the context.

Holistically, therefore, these methods let us conduct a macro-level analysis of the evolution of the constitution and use of expert knowledge in U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns by accounting for agential and structural developments across the spectrum of analysis. This is aided by the utility of a comparative case study approach that is historically-informed and methodologically reflexive in its use of primary source archival documents as well as expert interviews. In the following chapter, I will look at the theoretical foundations of expert knowledge utilisation within administrative organisations, highlighting that knowledge can play both instrumental and symbolic purposes depending on whether the organisation actually attempts to have an output-

oriented impact with their policy or just pretends to do so. In any case, both purposes are underlined by the organisation's aim for legitimacy and reputability vis-à-vis peer organisations in their environment. This gives U.S. the theoretical tools for the subsequent case study analyses.

3 The uses of expert knowledge

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for the analysis of the case studies of expert knowledge utilisation in the asymmetric warfare campaigns in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Iraq. It allows us to connect the central themes of '(counter-)insurgencies' as 'wars of ideas', in which stories of warfare are formulated as 'strategic narratives', with the production and utilisation of expert knowledge within (bureaucratic) organisations. This is done by providing an original framework of instrumental and symbolic knowledge, which enables us to understand the different uses of expert knowledge for political entities such as the U.S. military or its government. By formulating specific indicators, we can then identify the real purpose of expert utilisation in each campaign.

I start out by defining, what I mean by 'expert knowledge' and how it is analysed within this thesis. Then, I take a look at the '*instrumental*' function of expert knowledge and develop indicators that signify this kind of knowledge. As I have outlined above, in the most recent case of counterinsurgency in Iraq, the U.S. has developed COIN as a comprehensive military approach, claiming it to be a more 'population-centric', less-lethal approach to the conflict. In this process, experts played an integral part in developing seemingly apolitical, technical measures, derived from the methodologies of past campaigns, to successfully fight the current insurgency. In this depiction, experts and their knowledge are utilised to make real and tangible changes in a policy. The central claim of this theoretical view – which is in line with Max Weber's (1948; 1947) functionalist view of expert use in bureaucracies – is that the utility of experts' knowledge is key to creating and enforcing concrete strategies and decisions as actions

However, as I have outlined above, the empirical reality of (in particular, contemporary) U.S. asymmetric warfare is that there is a disparity between words and actions. In other words, despite the verbal promulgation of the instrumental utility of expert knowledge, the actions taken do not reflect this. Instead, the experts seem to play an integral role in the government's attempts to sell COIN and U.S. intervention to the sceptical audience at home and abroad as well as to decision-makers in the political sphere. To account for this, I introduce Nils Brunsson's (1989) concept of "organised hypocrisy". This refers to inconsistent rhetoric and action within an organisation – hypocrisy – as a result of conflicting material and normative pressures it faces whilst trying to secure policy legitimacy. It enables us to understand why, under such specific circumstances, organisations such as the U.S. military may have an incentive to use expert knowledge not in a purely instrumental, output-oriented fashion.

Based on this, I thereafter propose a '*symbolic*' purpose of expert knowledge, for which I also develop some identifying indicators. As a key theoretical tool, symbolic knowledge helps us to understand the disparity between words and deeds which we could see in the Iraq War (and partly in Vietnam). In contrast to instrumental knowledge, symbolic knowledge is not really meant to be used in a long-term, sustainable fashion, but serves mainly to legitimate and sustain a narrative function. Put differently, symbolic knowledge can be conceptualised as a sphere where a dominant narrative is produced. Also, even if there are actions based on symbolic knowledge, they may only have a symbolic meaning or do not necessarily embody their inherent rhetoric. Experts play an important role in symbolic knowledge production, because they lend epistemic authority to the policy decision just as much as they would do with instrumental knowledge.

Overall, this chapter provides an original theoretical framework for the critical analysis of expert knowledge intake in the case studies. Both instrumental and symbolic knowledge, which are identifiable through specific indicators developed throughout the chapter, serve as central theoretical tools to understand the basic motives for utilising experts and their knowledge in U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns from an organisational perspective. In particular, they enable us to understand how experts are an integral actor in the development of COIN as a politico-strategic narrative of warfare in recent times.

3.2 What is expert knowledge?

In the context of this thesis, I refer to expert knowledge as the knowledge produced both by research and experience. For the most part, I follow Stone (2008, 1), in describing research as,

a codified, scholarly and professional mode of knowledge production that has its prime institutional loci in universities, policy analysis units of government departments or international organizations and private research institutes and produced by academics, think tank experts and [military] professionals.

However, I maintain that personal and organisational (operational) experience is also highly important in an organisation such as the military. This is because here, operational (particularly combat) experience is an important indicator for leadership skills.³² However, it is important to note that the borders between expert knowledge and other forms of (non-expert) knowledge are fluid, as understandings of knowledge can vary between different stakeholders or over time. Hence, the question is how decision-makers distinguish between the two

³² In the U.S. military, an interesting indicator for experience seems to be the “combat patch” that soldiers receive for deployment and there is a heated debate about whether a missing patch denotes a lack of experience and leadership skills (see e.g. Faith 2014; Nestler 2013).

rather than finding a universal definition of expert knowledge. In which way is expert knowledge different from knowledge produced by staff within the military (e.g. doctrine writers) and why can it not be produced internally?

Two factors are specifically associated with expert knowledge. First, there is an institutional context (Thomas 2012; Wagner and Wittrock 1990). 'Experts' usually have specific qualifications as well as the necessary institutional affiliations that enable them to disseminate their knowledge. Experts must usually have certain credentials, i.e. extensive education and publication records in their field and they are usually employed in a higher education institution or think tank. Yet, experts do not necessarily live in 'ivory towers'. In the military, the emergence of the so-called 'soldier-scholar' (or, 'warrior-scholar') has created a caste of people who have attained senior military positions, but have also received specialist academic instruction, often to PhD level.³³ Second, the 'knowledge' itself must fulfil certain characteristics so that it is accepted by an organisation that enables it to be passed on to its stakeholders as 'expert' knowledge. Normally, this means that expert knowledge has to meet standards of academic or professional work. That is, it must be theoretically and conceptually sound and conform to stylistic requirements, and must also be clearly labelled as a piece of work that intends to produce or synthesize knowledge. Moreover, it must fulfil procedural requirements. For example, it must use widely accepted methodologies (Boswell 2009b, 24; Gieryn 1999, 2). Again, these are rather malleable requirements, but they help in distinguishing expert knowledge from non-expert knowledge.

³³ In particular, West Point's social science department, or "Sosh", has played an important role in generating soldier-scholars since its foundation after World War II. The founder George A. "Abe" Lincoln, an ex-cadet and Rhodes Scholar, wanted to "to improve the so-called Army mind" (Quoted in Kaplan 2012, 8). This and the issue of the soldier-scholar phenomenon will be elaborated further in the Iraq case study.

Still, what is the difference between expert knowledge and the administrative output created by members deeply embedded in the organisational hierarchy? In essence, the knowledge produced by experts either involves information or analyses that are not internally available to the organisation or that surpass the competence of the organisation's employees. This can comprise specialised historical, technical, legal, or political knowledge about a specific matter. This may prompt an organisation to commission or consult experts or lend an ear to their (perhaps previously unsolicited) advice. These experts often have years of research experience in their field, having conducted literature reviews, fieldwork or even specific data analysis such as statistical analyses. Thus, their expertise often surpasses what is available to officials, in terms of both expenditure of time and skills available. Even if officials, including decision-makers, have the skills and time, it is often seen as desirable to maintain a distance between administration and research (Boswell 2009b, 25). On the one hand, this may derive from the perceived efficiency of such an arrangement. On the other hand, it might also reflect the importance of maintaining an institutional and functional boundary between the two arenas. With a demarcation in place, experts can claim that they produce independent, authoritative knowledge. In turn, decision-makers can enhance their authority and legitimacy (Gieryn 1999).

Thus, the boundaries between expert and non-expert knowledge are indeed blurred, fluid and open to subjective interpretation (Jasanoff 1987). Hence, certain indicators have to be used to make a determination of whether something is expert knowledge or not. These are the institutional contexts in or for which the knowledge is produced and the characteristics of the knowledge itself, such as the research design or methodologies used. In the end, however, expert

knowledge is contingent on the beliefs, interests, and needs of the organisation that commissions or takes in the expert knowledge to utilise it. Therefore, my definition and understanding of expert knowledge for the purpose of this thesis is rather broadly defined. This is not least, because I am analysing expert knowledge utilisation in three different U.S. COIN campaigns. However, such a definition does not mean that it is unfocused or that there are no commonalities of expert knowledge production between the case studies. I acknowledge that there is certainly variation in the range of experts and the kind of knowledge they produce across campaigns.³⁴ Yet, the definition remains sufficiently focused, given that I look at knowledge production that has either been commissioned by the U.S. military itself (e.g. by sending commissions or setting up working groups) or directly and explicitly acknowledged as expert work. The cases are tied together through the theoretical framework of expert knowledge utilisation, which I will develop in the remainder of this chapter.³⁵

It is, consequently, important to understand the basic framework under which expert knowledge utilisation is analysed in this thesis. As I have outlined in the previous chapter, insurgencies pose a unique politico-military problem. They lack the decisive strategic goals of a war between state armies and display an overtly political endgame. In this sense, both insurgents and the counterinsurgents are not simply fighting to take and hold territory, but to fulfil their mandated political objectives (see e.g. Cohen 1984, 167; Smith 2005, 270). To account for this dualistic nature of insurgencies, the units of analysis within which expert

³⁴ For example, the experts in the Philippines are different to the soldier-scholars of today and the scientific and methodological standards in order to be considered expert work have also changed.

³⁵ These commonalities not only stretch to the inclusion of experts but also the way how they were tied into the research process and the way the administration published the findings of the these experts and developed methods that were very similar across the campaigns.

knowledge production and utilisation are analysed are both the civilian and military domains. Each case, thus, rests on these two distinct, yet interactive, elements. Within them, specific aspects of both civilian and military knowledge production (e.g. in education, economic matters, intelligence, utilisation of native troops) are analysed, to determine whether the expertise served an instrumental or a symbolic purpose and enable me to directly answer some the research questions highlighted at the beginning of this thesis.

I will do this by developing certain indicators of both instrumental and symbolic knowledge, which lets us determine whether specific actions or policies within the cases were driven by an instrumental or rather symbolic intent. By doing this, I apply an enhanced theoretical framework about the role that knowledge 'experts' play in policy formation to the formulation of U.S. COIN policy and 'strategy'. More importantly, however, this theoretical framework enables us to trace the elements of continuity and change in the way 'experts' have been brought in to advise the U.S. military on adopting certain strategies across the cases under examination and which knowledge problems were identified by them. Furthermore, by including the political and military background of each case into the analysis, we are able to distil the major factors that help us to understand the shifts in strategy that occurred during the different campaigns. Overall, through this framework – which includes the definition of expert knowledge given above, as well as concept of symbolic and instrumental knowledge and their indicators, outlined below – we can closely analyse if and how experts were involved in the campaigns and how they influenced the development of military and political strategy. This leads us to a better understanding of the use of 'experts' in defence policy.

3.3 Instrumental use of expert knowledge

The standard literature on knowledge utilization widely adopts rational choice arguments, assuming that organisations use knowledge to maximise their power (Pfeffer 1981; Sabatier 1978), or realise their goals (Rich 1975; 1981; Weiss 1977). This view of organisations as rational, unified actors is based on a Weberian account of bureaucracy and expertise. In Weber's view (1947), organisations are formal and informal systems of unified rules that limit the divergent behaviour of their individual members. There are two central hypotheses about this. First, the assumption is that organisations want to fulfil performance-oriented goals. Through different procedures and structures that enable decision-making and the accomplishment of objectives, they can efficiently manage complexity and achieve control over their tasks (Weber et al. 1978, 971 ff.). Hence, an organisation's impetus to form structures and practices are a result of its concern about its output. Second, the preferences and actions of individuals (both members and external experts) are translated more or less directly into organisational action. Although not all individuals have equal decision-making powers (in hierarchical bureaucracies), their views and knowledge feed into the decision-making process, making the organisation's choices the result of a rational process of cumulating individual preferences (March and Olsen 1976). Scientific research as well the findings and knowledge of experts can also be used directly to guide and inform policies.³⁶

These assumptions, give clear implications for the role of expert knowledge in organisational decision-making processes. Organisations use knowledge to help them specify, improve and implement their goals, making knowledge an

³⁶ This is part of the so-called 'evidence-based policy', which has generated attraction over the last few years (see e.g. Boaz et al. 2008; Davies et al. 2000; Parsons 2002).

instrument in the policy process. This knowledge usually comes from individuals – internal and external experts – who have absorbed it and disseminate it within the organisation (Brannen 1986; Weiss 1986). The problem with this theoretical approach, as Boswell (2009b, 32) notes, is that it “takes the determinants of organizational action very much at face value”. In fact, there is not much reflection on if and how individual preferences and actions are translated into organisational behaviour. When analysing knowledge utilisation, many researchers simply adopt a research design that aims to “discover who the participants are, what their intentions, beliefs, and resources are” (March and Olsen 1976, 20). When using interviews or surveys with experts, there is often no proper triangulation of statements. The findings become a circular argument: because individuals in an organisation believe that they are working to improve the organisation’s output with their knowledge by creating rational choices through cumulative action, it confirms the instrumental function of knowledge.

As the conceptual flaws of the traditional, Weberian theory of knowledge utilisation became more and more apparent, several scholars of organisational sociology began to question this paradigm in the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. Blau 1955; Cyert and March 1963; March and Simon 1958), which in subsequent decades lead to the development of neo-institutionalist theories (e.g. DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer and Scott 1983; Tolbert and Zucker 1983; Zucker 1977). Still, these accounts followed in the footsteps of the Weberian tradition in that they portray organisations as systems that have rationalist perceptions of their environment, failing to provide a specific theory. They may help to explain why organisations seek policy legitimacy. Yet, in light of our research questions, what prompts them to draw in knowledge for this?

For the understanding of a more nuanced approach to knowledge utilisation by the U.S. military in counterinsurgency campaigns, it is important to note that organisational actions and interests cannot be understood by a simplistic, view that expert knowledge serves a purely goal-oriented purpose. In reality, the environments that administrative organisations operate in create other dynamics and interests as to why knowledge should be brought in. These dynamics feature in any administration's fundamental concern to secure "policy legitimacy". As outlined above, the concept of policy legitimacy (George 1989) claims that political actors must convince others that a policy is achievable and (normatively) desirable. In other words the administration has to convince the people that it has the knowledge to work on long-range objectives and, furthermore, convince them and others in the political sphere that the policy is valid and consistent with fundamental national values (George 1989, 585).

In the quest for such policy legitimacy, it is important for an organisation to be aware of its environment and interact with it. Both neo-institutionalism and systems theory maintain that each organization has its very own way of how seeing and perceiving the environment and, subsequently, interacting with it. Neo-institutionalist scholars maintain that organisations develop so-called cognitive 'frames' or 'maps' that help them to process and digest information about themselves and their environment, linking the two together (Dery 1986, 19 f.; Weick and Bougon 1986). However, they can also misread the signals from the environment and make the wrong decisions in their aim for legitimisation. In contrast, Niklas Luhmann maintains that the cognitive processes within an organisation are much more disconnected from what is happening in the environment.

Luhmann rejects the notion of 'metanarratives',³⁷ because there is no external observer to any event and any observation of that event is merely one of several possible representations. Or, in his words, there is no longer a "binding representation of society within society" (1998, 7). Yet, he did establish a comprehensive theory that can engage with the complexities of organisations. Thus, although it is difficult or even impossible to make specific, generalizable statements about how organisations behave, we can use his approach to develop a number of expectations about patterns of organisational action that apply to all the case studies under scrutiny. These uniformities derive from similar pressures the military has been exposed to across all campaigns.

The central themes of Luhmann's theory are communication and observation.³⁸ For him, organisations are systems of communication, which consider themselves and their environment as a series of binary codes (Luhmann 2003, 32). Within themselves, he sees organisations as operating in *autopoiesis*. This means that social systems consist exclusively of communication (not of subjects, actors, individuals etc.) and are virtually able to (re-)create themselves in a constant, non-targeted, self-reinforcing process (1984, 167 f.).³⁹ The coding of its functions is necessary because of the complexity of modern states and the ever-increasing range of tasks and responsibilities that organisations have to fulfil in it, meaning that these systems of coding are varying between, and specific to, individual organisations.

³⁷ 'Metanarratives', as described by the French sociologist Jean-François Lyotard (1984, xxiv f.), are grand narratives that provide comprehensive explanation about social phenomena (e.g. Enlightenment, Progress).

³⁸ For reasons of parsimony, the description and interpretation of Luhmann's theoretical framework in this thesis remains far from comprehensive. Due to his extensive works, a selection had to be made. However, the two aspects of communication and observation in autopoietic systems suffice to support the argument that is mapped out below.

³⁹ The term had been phrased by the biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in defining the self-creating chemistry of living cells in the body (1972, here 1980)

For Luhmann, this even amounts to an organisation's subjective view of reality: "There is no such thing as an independent reality that may influence an organization directly" (Luhmann 2003, 33). This complicates the understanding of external demands and pressures (Mingers 2003, 110). However, any organisation can only communicate what is observable. Hence, observation is the second crucial factor within Luhmann's framework. By observing themselves and their environment through the fundamental distinction expressed in their binary code, organisations "draw a distinction" (Spencer-Brown 1971, 3).⁴⁰ For our analysis, we can assume that the U.S. military observes the world as either being successful in safeguarding national security and interests or being unsuccessful.

This is what the U.S. military claims as its primary role and, thus, filters the world through it.⁴¹ There is no other communication outside these essential lines and the military as an autopoietic system relates to the world by subjecting it to this system-specific fundamental distinction. Hence, the binary code is its exclusive source of understanding. Anything outside of the binary code is essentially meaningless and irrelevant.⁴² This binary code and Luhmann's systems-theoretic approach in general is helpful for our analysis of expert knowledge in U.S. COIN campaigns, because unlike the Weberian account, it does not presuppose the salience of a rationalist logic of knowledge utilisation within organisations. This allows us to consider other uses of expert knowledge.

⁴⁰ By binary, I mean a very simple and abstract dichotomous distinction. For example, as Kirsch (1998, 17) states, "[t]he legal system's binary code is legal/illegal, the political system's is power/non-power and the economic system's is payment/non-payment."

⁴¹ This core task is reflected in the DoD's mission statement (2015): "The mission of the Department of Defense is to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country."

⁴² An interesting analogy that also refers to the autopoietic nature of the government/state and its military is Charles Tilly's argument 'war makes states and state make war' (Tilly 1985), which refers to the mutually reinforcing powers and structures of war-making and state-making.

However, systems theory's binary code of observation and communication does not account for why the military would draw on *expert* knowledge in particular, instead of relying on knowledge already available. An answer to this could be the phenomenon of institutional isomorphism, i.e. the emulation of successful or promising behaviours, processes, or policies observed within the organisation's environment (Boswell 2009b, 46). This was termed "institutional isomorphism" by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), which means the process in which an organisation structures its organisational configuration, based on assimilating the behaviour of other peer organisations within the environment. This, can take place in three different ways, of which two – coercive and mimetic isomorphism – are important for expert knowledge production.⁴³

First, coercive isomorphism is a result of "formal and informal pressures [to change or adopt a specific policy] exerted on organizations by other organisations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, 150). This means the direct imposition of rules or procedures. Such adaptation takes place based on the needs and wishes of other actors in the environment. The organisation is constantly engaged in gauging their feedback, looking for guidance and support. The best way to follow this advice this is by aligning the organisation's structures, rhetoric, and decisions on the provisions made by others. Pressure from the environment forces the organisation to emulate other, more successful, decision-making styles and procedures (Edelman 1992).

⁴³ A third mechanism, called "normative pressures", which is a result of the professionalization of organisations, is left out here. DiMaggio and Powell define this "as the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, [...] and to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy" (1983, 152), meaning the recruitment of personnel from similar social spheres.

Second, not all adaptation happens through coercion. As DiMaggio and Powell state, an organisation that operates in uncertain and unstable environment models itself upon other organisations. This is called mimetic isomorphism (1983, 151). In contrast to coercive isomorphism, it takes place of the organisation's own volition. It happens when the organisation is challenged by actors in the environment that cannot necessarily directly order it to change, e.g. the media or the public, but that still threaten its operability and legitimacy. It may prompt the organisation to change its decision-making towards a more rational method (Brunsson 1989; Feldman and March 1981, 179).

In the military, such adaptations, which are essentially voluntary, are usually rather limited and only change slightly. They normally operate in rather stable conditions and their resources (i.e. budget allocations) do not vary much. However, there can be instances where it has to adapt rapidly, for example in the event of a failing campaign, or direct rivalry with another organisation over a specific issue. The result of this is uncertainty, which in turn encourages the organisation to mimic a successful decision-making style (Brunsson 1985, 61 f.). With regards to the analysis in this thesis, DiMaggio and Powell's neo-institutionalist approach of institutional isomorphism, coercive or mimetic, is important, because it gives U.S. an understanding why organisations draw in expert knowledge. In unstable environments – such as insurgencies – organisations have to look for successful examples from other organisations and imitate and internalise their rules, procedures, and behaviour or adapt to provisions from superior agencies to satisfy their requirements.⁴⁴ Expert knowledge can be a valuable tool in this regard (see e.g. Farrell 2010).

⁴⁴ For example, one could point to the changing role of the military over the last century. Since World War II, Western militaries have undergone significant changes in their military structures

As I have mentioned earlier, both instrumental and symbolic knowledge are correlated with the recognition of the 'epistemic' uncertainty an organisation faces, i.e. the need to convince others in the political sphere that the work of that particular organisation and the government is credible. By using expert knowledge instrumentally, the intent is to make real and tangible changes in a policy. Yet, how can this type of knowledge utilisation be determined? This poses a challenge for the empirical observation of the different (military and political) knowledge production areas that are analysed within the case studies.

Thus, I identify certain indicators that help us to observe the specific utility of expert knowledge. By 'indicators', I mean the manifestations of the different ways that knowledge can be used. Observable characteristics of the knowledge produced can quite reliably be associated with, respectively, instrumental, legitimizing or substantiating knowledge utilization.⁴⁵ For reasons of parsimony and comparability, I set out three indicators that we can expect to signal, in different ways, the existence of one of these functions of knowledge. These are: (1) the way the experts are drafted in by the organisation; (2) the commonalities between the expertise and general organisational targets and culture; and (3) the level and kind of dissemination of the knowledge.⁴⁶ I shall deal with each of these in turn. The indicators will be vital for the operationalization of the framework, because they enable us to uncover the utility of experts in each campaign and to trace the elements of continuity and change across the cases.

and roles (Dunivin 1994; Edmunds 2006). Despite the emergence of WMD, this development included a focus on less-lethal forms of warfare, which one could argue resulted from the military's (coerced or mimicked) adaptation of humanitarian values and ideas.

⁴⁵ To be clear in relation to our object of investigation – expert knowledge production in specific U.S. asymmetric campaigns – the different factors under analysis may reveal different motivations for knowledge production. Thus, only the comprehensive analysis of the sum of all factors will give U.S. a clear answer of whether knowledge production in a particular campaign was motivated by instrumental or symbolic purposes.

⁴⁶ For an overview of all indicators, see Table 1, p. 112.

The first indicator is about how the experts are commissioned by the organisation to produce knowledge. The way in which this takes place, gives an indication of the interest that decision-makers have in that knowledge. Important features in this regard are the academic credentials of the experts, their relationship to the organisation and the informal patterns of interaction between such experts and decision-makers. Where knowledge is valued for instrumental purposes, one would expect an early and direct commissioning of experts by the decision-makers, accompanied by fairly intensive interaction between the two groups. This helps decision-makers to ensure that the expertise meets the organisation's output-oriented demands. The knowledge produced will be directly relevant to the policy-making process. This means quite close monitoring and supervision of the research by decision-makers. With instrumental knowledge production, intensive exchange between decision-makers and experts is to be expected.

The second indicator is the extent to which the requested expertise is in line with general organisational targets and culture. The choice of themes and issues that are addressed in a COIN campaign can reveal much about the organisation's motives for knowledge utilisation. Where knowledge has an instrumental purpose, one would also expect a strong interest by the organisation in ensuring that the experts' knowledge is in line with the social theoretic postulations that drive the legitimacy efforts of the organisation.⁴⁷ In a counterinsurgency campaign, much of the experts' knowledge can be expected to be about adjusting the organization's societal impacts. There will be an interest in ensuring that their

⁴⁷ As I have outlined above, different social and evolutionary theories – such as Social Darwinism (Philippines), Modernization and Development theories (Vietnam) or Democratization and Nation-building (Iraq) – were central aspects of the U.S. counterinsurgency efforts across all campaigns. Hence, the success or failure of their implementation posed a threat for U.S. national security and interests and, thus, also a threat for the legitimacy of the U.S. military.

expertise produces valid results to fill perceived gaps in the knowledge and to effectuate these postulations in practice. Most importantly, however, the experts' advice will actually be implemented by the organisation with a long-term, output-enhancing focus in mind. The third indicator is the public dissemination of this expert knowledge. The patterns of publication provide a good indicator of what kind of results the organisation wants to make known, as well as the strategic audience for it. If there is a genuine interest in instrumental utilisation, the organisation will be either indifferent or secretive as to whether or not the use of knowledge is being observed by the public. In the military, that knowledge is primarily produced for internal use or to a limited audience – often highly classified – in order to adjust the policy in line with desired societal impacts. If the knowledge is disseminated to a wider audience, it is an indication that the organisation is keen to enlist wider support, either for itself or specific policy preferences, which points to a merely symbolic purpose.

Overall, the concept of instrumental expert knowledge utilisation provides us with our first theoretical tool for the analysis of the empirical evidence in the case studies. Starting out with Max Weber's rationalist view of bureaucratic organisations as unified, output-oriented actors, I proposed a more differentiated view of instrumental knowledge, which is inherently driven by an organisation's concern for policy legitimacy. Using Luhmann's system-theoretic approach and DiMaggio and Powell's account of institutional isomorphism, I then explained that this legitimacy is decisively determined by its binary view of the world and that organisations mimic other institutions' behaviour, including drawing in expert knowledge. Last, I defined three indicators which enable us to spot instrumental knowledge utilisation in the case studies.

3.4 Organised hypocrisy

As I have outlined in the introduction, COIN has gained a particular prominence in scholarly and political circles during the last decade as the central paradigm of the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2007-08, the implementation of a robust COIN campaign in combination with the 'Surge' of troops in Iraq was considered a key force behind the initial reduction of violence in Iraq. In recent years, however, COIN has not only lost its intellectual appeal. More importantly, when looking at the situation in Iraq over a longer period of time (from the invasion in 2003 until the present day in 2016), we can ascertain that the American COIN endeavours have failed, given the resurgence of violence in the country. The same goes for Afghanistan.

Thus, not only seems the expert knowledge production process epitomised in *FM 3-24* to have been in vain. What is more is that we can see that there is a disparity between words and actions in these recent conflicts. Put differently, the claim of using this expert knowledge to pacify the country, rebuild and transform it into a somewhat stable democracy (words) are not matched by the corresponding long-term U.S. actions and engagement (actions). This mismatch cannot be explained by our theoretical tool of instrumental expert knowledge. To account for this phenomenon, I introduce the concept of organised hypocrisy which addresses this inconsistency of diverging talks, decisions, and actions. Building on it, I then develop the theoretical tool of 'symbolic' expert knowledge in the subsequent section, including some indicators to identify this kind of knowledge utilisation. This will be a crucial tool which helps us to understand how experts in Iraq (and to some extent Vietnam) were utilised to substantiate or legitimize a strategic narrative of COIN as a better form of warfare.

Organised hypocrisy refers to inconsistent rhetoric and action – hypocrisy – as a result of conflicting material and normative pressures (Lipson 2007, 6). Actors respond to existing and expected political and sociological norms with symbolic deeds, while simultaneously violating the norms through their behaviour.⁴⁸ It is called '*organised*' hypocrisy, because it refers to the formal structure of an organisation and the inherent contradictions in itself and its environment. Whilst the term hypocrisy may carry a negative connotation, organised hypocrisy can be of important value to the organisation. It serves as a practical coping mechanism through which the organisation (e.g. the U.S. military) can handle several contradictory values and demands and (Catignani 2008, 14).

Generally speaking, the concept of '*organised*' hypocrisy connects to the organisation's drive for policy legitimacy. As discussed in the previous section, an organisation adopts specific structures or behaviours to show conformity with legitimised standards in their environment (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). When faced with conflicting demands, the organisation will then often develop separate, '*decoupled*' responses to these (Meyer and Rowan 1977). This decoupling enables the organisation to protect their internal techniques and processes against disruptive pressures of the political and public environment (Thompson 1967). In other words, the formal structures created by an organisation comply rather symbolically with normative expectations of the environment, but are causally disconnected – decoupled – from the organisational activities. If this decoupling leads to apparently inconsistent rhetoric and behaviour, it constitutes organised hypocrisy.

⁴⁸ For example, when firms exploit their employees or pollute the environment as a result of competitive pressures, they often initiate public relations campaigns in which they praise their commitment to workers' rights and environmental protection (e.g. Barbaro 2005).

Based on this basic concept of decoupling, Nils Brunsson (1989) offered a modification of organised hypocrisy. Essentially, this rests on two significant innovations. First, there is a distinction between the decoupling of internal procedures of an organisation, which he calls “the organisation of hypocrisy”, and the decoupling of inconsistent organisational behaviour, termed “organised hypocrisy” (Brunsson 1989). This latter aspect is important for our analysis. Second, he interprets decoupling in terms of a causal relationship between rhetoric and action (1989, xiv). Regarding organised hypocrisy, Brunsson identifies three key types of organisational output – talks, decisions, and actions. The inconsistencies brought forward by organised hypocrisy can lead so far that organisations “talk in one way, decide in another and act in a third [way]” (Brunsson 1989). The production of ‘talk’, or ideas, enables an organisation to create a coherent account of its activities and aims (Meyer and Rowan 1991) and demonstrate and ‘sell’ them. In contrast, ‘decisions’, refers to the process of responding to an issue that has been addressed as a policy concern. Yet, their implementation would fall under ‘actions’. Organisations often rely on the former two, because they are unable to derive legitimacy from ‘action’, as it is too diffuse or long-drawn to be tangible (Boswell 2009b, 44).

As we shall see, ‘talk’ and ‘decisions’ are very important for the military during protracted conflicts. These campaigns often take years or even decades to conduct and to see tangible results (Connable and Libicki 2010; Johnston and Urlacher 2012), the military needs to prove through talks and decisions that it is able to tackle these challenges. Thus, in organized hypocrisy, talk and decisions are inconsistent with action. However, as Brunsson (2003, 205 f.) notes, they are not completely decoupled in the traditional sense:

In the model of [organized] hypocrisy talk, decisions and actions are still causally related, but the causality is the reverse: talk or decisions in one direction decrease the likelihood of corresponding actions, and actions in one direction decrease the likelihood of corresponding talk and decisions. The model of [organised] hypocrisy implies that talk, decisions and actions are 'coupled' rather than 'decoupled' or 'loosely coupled', but they are coupled in a way other than usually assumed.

Talk and decisions '*compensate for*' insufficient action, and vice versa (Brunsson 1989, xiv, italics in original). They can satisfy (public and political) pressure to address a specific issue without taking action. Action can be insulated from opposition by contrary talk and decisions that diffuse demand to take action (Lipson 2007, 10). Despite the perceived negative connotations of the term, it can actually have a positive effect, as the contradictory responses of talk, decisions, and actions help achieve organisational legitimacy and survival despite the often irreconcilable nature of conflicting demands (Egnell 2010, 471). It allows for organisations "to sustain an equilibrium between the values and expectations" of contending interests within the organisation itself and the larger political and public audience" (Catignani 2008, 16). Brunsson (1989, xv) even considers hypocrisy as a safety valve by which conflicts can be mitigated:

A world that did not allow for hypocrisy would probably be a more worried and dissatisfied place, which suggests in turn that hypocrisy is a solution for those who want to promote happiness and social stability.

I maintain that Brunsson's typologies are good for differentiating and, thus, clarifying the underlying motives of an organisation. In more general terms, what I will show is that in the recent cases of COIN, the U.S. military has more recently placed heavy emphasis on talks and decisions and less on action. As I show in the following section, this focus on talks and decisions is characterised by a symbolic and not instrumental utilisation of expert knowledge.

3.5 Symbolic knowledge

As the literature review has shown, the expert knowledge drawn in for the Iraq campaign did not have a long-term impact on its strategy and doctrine. Rather, the experts and their knowledge seem to have played an important role in the ex-post-facto justification of success of this COIN campaign and 'selling' this strategic narrative to the sceptical audience at home and abroad as well as to U.S. decision-makers. This use of knowledge cannot be explained through our theoretical tool of instrumental expert knowledge, as we do not see the rational use of this knowledge in adjusting policy outputs in Iraq, at least not in sustainable fashion. Hence, we need another theoretical tool to make sense of this phenomenon. This tool can be found in the symbolic function of knowledge. By 'symbolic', I mean that an organisation acquires knowledge not for its content, but rather as a means of showing to its environment the reliability and validity of itself or its actions and for the purposes of gaining policy legitimacy. In other words, symbolic knowledge serves mainly to legitimate and sustain the dominant narrative. In this sense, symbolic knowledge adds to the 'talk' and 'decisions' elements of Brunsson's concept of organised hypocrisy.

In this section, I contend that symbolic knowledge can serve two different purposes. On the one hand, it can have a *legitimising effect* for the organisation as a whole and its key decision-makers. On the other hand, it can have a *substantiating effect* for specific policy choices. Both forms of symbolic knowledge are particularly prevalent in political organisations, because of their need to adapt to the expectations of their strategic audience. Hence, these organisations employ expert knowledge as a signature feature to give credibility and authority to themselves and their policies, especially when their decisions are

highly contested. Yet, this knowledge is quickly discarded after it fulfilled its symbolic purpose of selling the policy to the audience and has no long-term effect on either the organisation or potential actions in this policy field. The concept of symbolic knowledge gives us a theoretical understanding of the rather ostensible utilisation of experts in recent U.S. COIN campaigns. In particular, it enables us to conceive the role that experts played in developing COIN as a strategic narrative of a 'better' form of warfare. To capture the instances of symbolic expert knowledge utilisation by the U.S. government and military in the three case studies under examination, I again develop specific indicators; three each for legitimising and substantiating knowledge.

For an understanding of these effects of knowledge, we have to look at how organisations can present their decision-making to the strategic audience. As Olsen (1994, 89) has argued, organisations often adopt a rationalist posture. With this, an organisation wants to signal to the environment that it decides 'rationally', i.e. by making preference-driven decisions that consider and evaluate possible outcomes beforehand. There are a number of different ways in which an organisation can adopt such an appearance, e.g. by conducting evidence-based policy analyses or by changing the power relations of its different components. Yet, this rationalist posture can also imply the utilisation of experts. Boswell (2009b, 70 ff) outlines two different ways in which an organisation may be required to show that it possesses such knowledge: when it faces difficult, often technical, problems; and when there are risks and uncertainties involved in the policy-making process. First, it has become more and more difficult for decision-makers in organisations and government to get a full understanding of the complex nature of many modern phenomena (Bawn 1995; Nelkin 1975; Weingart 1999).

Thus, by showing off the knowledge to the audience, the organisation makes a claim that its decisions are well-founded and legitimate.⁴⁹ Second, in ‘areas of political risk’ or uncertainty (Boswell 2009a),⁵⁰ potentially harmful effects of policy decisions cannot be determined with absolute accuracy (Beck 1992). The organisation once again operates in a field of uncertainty. Additionally, there is a risk associated with the future impacts of decisions: “One cannot know the future sufficiently, not even the future produced by your own decisions” (Luhmann 1991, 21, translation mine). Yet, organisations are still responsible for their policies and it could be harmful to their legitimacy if they fail in the future. Hence, a good way to prevent this or at least limit its impacts, is to underpin decisions by expert knowledge to make a claim of legitimacy (Weingart 1999).

The three indicators outlined above provide also a good framework for spotting the legitimising use of expert knowledge in our cases. For the first indicator – the way the experts are drafted in – one would expect that the onus of interest lies in demonstrating that there is access to such knowledge. Here, the organisation’s interest is much less in the content of the knowledge than in showing that it possesses and ostensibly uses the knowledge. The credibility of the research, including the reputation of the experts and their use of scientifically accepted standards, is also important in this regard. Moreover, we can expect the experts to be drafted in quite late amidst a failing policy (i.e. COIN campaign), showing the organisation’s efforts in trying to turn it around.

⁴⁹ As I have outlined with the instrumental use of expert knowledge, this option is frequently used by policy-makers, both within an organisation and government to fill the knowledge gaps necessary to devise a policy.

⁵⁰ By this, I mean areas of policy-making that could have potentially harmful effects on people and society, such as health and safety, environmental issues, but also foreign and security policy issues like counterinsurgency, as in our case.

The relationship between expertise and organisational targets, the second indicator, is rather weak in the case of legitimising knowledge. The COIN knowledge produced is likely to be more influenced by temporary considerations to please the strategic audience. However, neither does it correspond to the organisation's mandated policy goals, nor is there any long-term interest in utilising that knowledge. This is particularly the case with highly politicised issues like COIN, where politics and mass media strongly influence the debate. Last, public dissemination, is very extensive when knowledge is being used as a source of legitimation. Here, the knowledge does not remain in small circles, but the organisation is keen to show the knowledge off to the audience. This can take place through websites, publications or conferences.

Much of the literature on the symbolic use of knowledge subsumes the substantiating function under the legitimising function. Nevertheless, these two functions serve a fundamentally different purpose.⁵¹ With legitimising knowledge, an organisation tries to secure its legitimacy for itself or its leadership by showing to its environment that it can, in general, make well-founded decisions using expert knowledge. Substantiating knowledge, on the other hand, is aimed at getting support for a specific policy. This means that the organisation needs to attain substantiating knowledge to attach weight to its preferred course of action in a particular policy domain (Boswell 2009b, 73). For the analysis in the case studies, the concept of substantiating knowledge helps us to understand why the U.S. military valued expert knowledge in developing and promoting specific measures in 'counterinsurgency' in a symbolic manner.

⁵¹ Yet, the two functions are interrelated. An organisation that has a good reputation for generally employing external expertise may have less problems getting individual policies through that are not necessarily directly supported by expert advice. Equally, an organisation that often bases individual policy decisions on expertise may experience good legitimacy overall.

Substantiating knowledge is used as a catalyst for individual policies. In particular, it is important in political debates with the environment over the use of the policy. Thus, in the case of political contestation, the organisation may find it important to support its claim with expert knowledge to lend credibility to its preferences. Inherent in this are also forms of settlement or arguments that are used in the policy debates. Also, the organisation's justification for using these arguments is another part of the substantiating utilisation of knowledge. Political contestation takes place "where actors articulate conflicting preferences about past, current or possible future courses of political action" (Boswell 2009b, 74). In other words, different actors have different, conflicting views and opinions about the government's intervention in a specific policy area. Obviously, these actors must be considered as legitimate stakeholders in order to participate in the debate. The contestation itself is usually about a specific policy, but can also be over political appointments, the distribution of funds or the applicability of rules and procedures in a specific instance.

What is important to note about using expert knowledge in a policy-substantiating fashion is that the quality of the knowledge is much more important than with legitimising knowledge. Although the knowledge is not really sought for its value *per se*, the organisation must still show to its environment that the knowledge it is using makes sense. This is usually done by employing highly-regarded experts, valid and reliable data as well as persuasive argumentation. Furthermore, there must be the sincere intention to utilise that knowledge for the policy in question. This is in contrast to a mere legitimising role of knowledge, where the organisation only has to show that it has access to expert knowledge and consults it generally (Boswell 2009b, 81).

How can substantiating knowledge be conceptualised through our indicators in the cases? First, in terms of the commissioning, one would expect that decision-makers within the government and military want to ensure that the knowledge is particularly policy-relevant. Hence, there will be a strong interest in the knowledge content and that it stands up to a rigorous examination of methods and design. Moreover, the expertise would be selectively chosen to manage the tensions between standard military procedures and the postulations of COIN knowledge. Again, the experts would probably be involved quite late, given that big changes in a war usually only take place if it is failing and, thus, new policies need a solid foundation to convince the strategic audience.

Second, the expert knowledge commissioned and selected would not necessarily be in line with general organisational targets but simply match the contested policy issues. Therefore, in the case of the military, if it decides to embark on an asymmetric campaign and requires substantiating knowledge, the expert knowledge produced would support the military's preferred course of action, perhaps even in a prescriptive manner. Third and last, public dissemination of the expert knowledge would be selective, yet extensive, in the case of substantiating knowledge. The military would disseminate the findings of particular studies and knowledge that not only underline the key points of their COIN efforts, but also the reputation of the experts. In this regard, aforementioned soldier-scholars would provide excellent advocates, given that they combine putative scientific credibility and military experience. For such substantiating expert knowledge, the target audience would not only be the wider policy community but also (mass) media and through it the general public to enlist wider support for the changes in military strategy.

To summarise, expert knowledge plays an important role in the rationalistic style of decision-making, which has evolved as the norm for political organisations. Hereby, knowledge does not have to play an instrumental role as one might assume, but can be used also for legitimising or substantiating purposes. In the first instance, the utilisation of expert knowledge can serve the purpose of reassuring legitimacy in risky policy areas, particularly with regard to future negative implications or developments. In the second instance, expert knowledge can be taken on board in specialist, technical fields where the demonstration of expertise enhances the credibility of the policy (which then also endows the organisation). In both cases, the intake of expert knowledge enables an organisation to focus on talks and decisions rather than actions in their struggle for policy legitimacy, which is the most important ‘currency’ in politics in the struggle for limited resources.

Table 1 – Indicators of the different kinds of expert knowledge

Indicator	Instrumental knowledge (a)	Symbolic knowledge	
		Substantiating knowledge (b)	Legitimising knowledge (c)
Commissioning of experts/Institutional arrangements (1)	Decision-makers directly commission Experts/Intensive exchange	Decision-makers draw on favourable expertise/Some exchange	Decision-makers draw on expertise, late commissioning/Loose exchange
Long-term interest of the knowledge (2)	Close coupling of expertise with organisational targets/Long-term interest of utilisation	Close coupling of expertise with specific issues/Some long-term utilisation	Looser fit between and organisational targets/No interest in long-term utilisation
Public Dissemination (3)	No clear interest in promoting/publicising knowledge utilization	If the knowledge utilisation underpins claims about a specific policy, it is publicised	Publication of the knowledge and its promotion is a central aim of knowledge utilization

(Source: Own illustration, based on Boswell 2009b, 86)

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have laid down the theoretical foundations for the subsequent case study analyses of expert knowledge utilisation. First, I defined what I mean by 'expert knowledge' in an institutional context. To count as expert knowledge, the knowledge producers must have academic credentials. Moreover, their work must satisfy certain theoretical and methodological requirements to be accepted by the organisation. Nevertheless, the status of expert knowledge is ultimately contingent upon the institutional context, i.e. the beliefs, interests, and needs of the organisation that commissions or utilises such knowledge.

Using neo-institutionalist (Boswell 2008; 2009a; 2009b; Brunsson 1985) and systems-theoretic (Luhmann 2003) explanations for organisational action, I have outlined an account of knowledge utilisation that provides an alternative explanation to the standard Weberian account. My argument is that the U.S. military is a rather politically vulnerable entity, which is constantly engaged in trying to secure policy legitimacy. I have outlined in detail how the military determines what prompts it to utilise expert knowledge. First, Luhmann's conceptual framework of organisations as self-reinforcing systems helps us to understand that organisations observe the world and communicate with it in binary codes. This means that the military sees itself as either being successful in safeguarding national security and interests or being unsuccessful. However, Luhmann's theory can only explain the drive for action, not its path. Why the military might draw on external experts instead of relying on knowledge already available can be better explained by employing the neo-institutionalist approach of institutional isomorphism. This denotes the implementation of successful or promising behaviours, processes, or policies observed in the environment.

Governmental organisations engage in institutional isomorphism to adopt a rationalistic decision-making style to bolster their policy legitimacy. This takes place in either a coercive way, because the political establishment requires it, or in mimetic way, by emulating standards and procedures that have proved successful with others. Yet, instrumental knowledge cannot explain all organisational motivation to use experts. As I have shown before, there is a disparity between words and actions in the most recent U.S. campaign in Iraq. The claim of utilising external expertise to win the hearts and minds of the people by pacifying the country and transforming it into a democracy (words) are not matched by the corresponding long-term U.S. military engagement (actions). To account for this, I have introduced Brunsson's concept of organised hypocrisy, which holds that due to conflicting material and normative pressures, organisations often use diverging rhetoric and action – hypocrisy. His typologies of 'talks', 'decisions' and 'actions' are a good differentiation device that helps us to understand the underlying organisational motives.

Building on that, I have outlined an alternative function of expert knowledge utilisation, the 'symbolic' function of knowledge. A good way of explaining symbolic use of expert knowledge within governmental organisations is by seeing it as fulfilling a legitimising or substantiating function. First, in terms of legitimising knowledge, organisations use it to enhance their standing *per se*. They adopt a rationalistic decision-making style, in which showcasing expert knowledge is central to enhancing their credibility or to provide reinsurance regarding possible negative policy implications in the future. Second, with substantiating knowledge, expert knowledge is not implemented to enhance the legitimacy of the organisation as a whole, but only for a particular policy.

Based on the different characteristics of instrumental, legitimising or substantiating knowledge, I have developed three specific indicators for each specific kind of knowledge. These indicators are the practical utilisation of the theoretical concept developed in this chapter and allow us to identify the different uses of experts and their knowledge in the U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Iraq. In particular, they enable us to connect the central themes of '(counter-)insurgencies' as 'wars of ideas', in which stories of warfare are formulated as 'strategic narratives', with the production and utilisation of expert knowledge within (bureaucratic) organisations.

In determining the different uses of knowledge, we are not only able to assess elements of continuity and change in the way 'experts' have been brought in to advise the U.S. military on adopting certain strategies across these campaigns. Furthermore, we can understand how the experts were involved in the campaign and what impact they had on the development of military and political strategy. By answering these auxiliary research questions with the help of the theoretical tools, we are able to assess the role that experts played in framing and implementing the problem-set, solution, and particularly in the ex-post-facto justification of success of U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns, which is the thesis' original contribution to knowledge.

4 The Philippines (1899-1902) – Civil knowledge

4.1 Introduction

The 1898-1902 Philippine-American War, or “Philippine Insurrection” as it was called in those days,⁵² was not the first time the U.S. military encountered resistance to its hemispheric expansion. Since U.S. Independence in the late 18th century, the U.S. military had been engaged in numerous instances of fighting against indigenous populations overseas, e.g. in the Barbary Wars (1801-1805, 1815), in China (1856), and Korea (1871), as well as at home against the Native Americans, a conflict that spanned several centuries from the arrival of the first European settlers to the beginning of the last century (e.g. Boot 2003; Grimmett 2011; Kessel and Wooster 2005). Yet, the engagement in the Philippines was the biggest military campaign the U.S. Army had fought in since the Civil War (1861-1865). The war involved 130,000 U.S. troops and resulted in well over 4,000 U.S. casualties (Deady 2005, 56; Kramer 2006a, 157). On the Filipino side, over 20,000 soldiers and several hundred thousand civilians died through violence, dislocation and disease (with estimates ranging from 250,000 to 750,000 dead, e.g. Adas 2006; Gates 1984; Smallman-Raynor and Cliff 1998, 70).

This chapter adopts the theoretical framework of organisational instrumental and symbolic knowledge to explain the conditions for the production and utilisation of expert knowledge within this campaign. In conjunction with the consecutive chapter on military knowledge production, this chapter contends that the Philippine-American War, although framed by the McKinley administration as “benevolent assimilation” and underlined by the prospect of eventual “self-

⁵² Linn (1989, xii) notes the difficulties associated with these terms and prefers “Philippine War”.

government” was, in fact, aimed at long-term colonial domination of the Philippines. ‘Experts’, both civilian and military, played a vital role in supporting the U.S. government in this endeavour, by generating and applying specific knowledge for such purposes. There were no formal lessons learned from the campaign – in the form of written strategy or doctrine – and the experiences made by the Army personnel slowly faded away from institutional memory after the Insurrection was over. Yet, the processes in which the conflict was treated and knowledge for it created, had a lasting impact on the way the U.S. military would act in insurgencies in the following century, most importantly in the fact that the soldier was now not only seen as a warrior anymore, but also defined by his social role as colonial administrator.

This chapter argues that because the U.S. government under President McKinley (and later Roosevelt) wanted to retain and exploit the archipelago long-term, the knowledge created for the ‘pacification’ had to be instrumental and output-oriented on the civilian side. As a democracy and former colony itself, the U.S. needed a strong justification of its rule in the Philippines. The insurgents’ actions directly challenged this justification. The utilisation of expert knowledge was, therefore, not primarily used as mere propaganda, aimed at reassuring the American population about the utility of an unpopular U.S. engagement abroad (as at the end of Vietnam and in Iraq), but had instrumental utility in increasing the U.S.’capacity to rule over the islands. Emphasis was put on ‘benevolent assimilation’ and not military rule. The focus was on civilian rule and the knowledge produced by experts of the Philippine Commission – a group of notable civilian experts sent by the U.S. government to analyse the situation and make recommendations – was installed top-down.

4.2 Nature and progression of the war

U.S. engagement in the Philippines began on 1 May 1898, shortly after the beginning of the Spanish-American War. In the Battle of Manila Bay, the Asiatic Squadron under Commodore George Dewey defeated the massively inferior Spanish Pacific Squadron. The victory set off a wave of enthusiasm among the population in the U.S. (Silbey 2007, 40). Although anti-expansionists at home hoped that U.S. forces would leave, President William McKinley thought about how best to exploit the victory. By defeating the Spanish fleet, the U.S. Navy controlled Philippine waters, but large parts of the country, including the capital Manila, were still held by Spanish troops (Linn 1989, 1). Thus, on 3 May 1898, Maj. Gen. Nelson A. Miles, Commanding General of the U.S. Army, recommended to the Secretary of War, the deployment of an expeditionary force “to occupy the Philippines” (Office of the Adjutant General's Office 1902a, 635). McKinley wanted to seize the opportunity, despite being unaware of the actual situation in the Philippines.⁵³

On 10 December, Spain and the U.S. signed the Treaty of Paris (1898), in which the Philippines were officially handed over for \$20 million. Yet, at that time, U.S. forces only held Manila, whereas the insurgents under their leader Emilio Aguinaldo had control over most of the rest of islands and were certainly not going to give in to U.S. demands to cede authority. No side would compromise and tensions kept rising, resulting in the outbreak of war on 4 February, 1899. In the Battle of Manila, the Army easily defeated Aguinaldo's badly organized troops. On 6 February, the U.S. Senate voted 57-27 for the ratification of the Treaty of Paris and the annexation of the islands. The fighting spread throughout most of

⁵³ Dewey had, in fact, cut the transoceanic cable to undermine Spanish communications (Ross 2009a).

the rest of the Philippines in the subsequent months. Modelling his force after European armies, Aguinaldo tried to wage a conventional war, but his force was merely a conglomerate of local volunteer militias, consisting mainly of *bolomen*⁵⁴, only a few rifles and no heavy weaponry. It neither had the leadership nor the training of professional armies. Coherent, large group operations were impossible and even in well-fortified positions, the insurgents incurred heavy losses against U.S. forces (Moyar 2009, 66). Yet, his deliberations were of a hybrid nature: whilst he tried to wage conventional war, he established a decentralised insurgent organisation in towns and villages. Each local government would be a defence committee, and civilian officials were made military chiefs (Decree by Aguinaldo, 13 February 1899, Select Document 866.7 in Adjutant General's Office 1906).

However, throughout most of 1899, guerrilla warfare was only seen as a tactical option and not a strategy (May 1991b, 100). Aguinaldo was able to sustain his campaign throughout the summer, when the monsoon season made it impossible for U.S. troops to advance through the jungle. But in autumn, his army was soon again heavily decimated. With defeat looming, he announced that “guerrilla war” (Agoncillo 1960, 542 f.) would henceforth be the new way to fight the war.⁵⁵ The Filipino insurgents posed a formidable challenge to the U.S. Army. Although they were lacking a revolutionary ideology (or, in other words, a ‘strategic narrative’) to mobilise the whole population and were inadequately armed, Aguinaldo and his followers were very skilled in using terror, propaganda, patriotism, and the existing social structure to keep the insurrection going (Birtle 1998, 112). In light of the theoretical framework, the occupation of the Philippines as its first ‘colony’

⁵⁴ A ‘bolo’ is a kind of machete which was the weapon of choice (and necessity) for many Filipino insurgents.

⁵⁵ The Spanish term *guerrilla*, which literally translates as “small war”, derives from the Spanish rebellion of 1808 against the Napoleonic army (Nagl 2005, 15).

overseas, constituted a unique situation for the U.S. with civilian and military challenges that required new knowledge. Moreover, the fact that it failed at pacifying the country at the beginning of the occupation was a threatening factor for the reputation and policy legitimacy of the U.S. administration and the military within its binary view of the world.

The U.S. entered the Philippines, focusing on 'civic' policies of 'benevolence'. On 19 May 1898, McKinley's had issued instructions for the first troops to arrive in the Philippines. General Merritt was to declare that they had not come "to make war upon the people of the Philippines nor upon any party or faction among them, but to protect them in their homes, in their employments [sic], and in their personal and religious rights" (United States Congress 1902b, 676). Despite claiming "absolute and supreme powers" for the Army, McKinley wanted to implement occupation without causing disturbance. Spanish laws remained mostly in effect and officials continued in their posts if they pledged allegiance. Public revenues and property went into U.S. possession, but private property was supposed to be strictly respected. After the islands had been officially ceded to the U.S., McKinley issued an executive order (Adjutant General's Office 1902a, 859) about the official U.S. policy towards the Philippines.

The order was a vital document of U.S. occupation and gives us an indication of the conditions under which knowledge was to be produced. It showed that McKinley intended civilian rule over the islands, albeit enforced by the military. The Army was to impose "lawful rule" upon the insurgents, yet "win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants" by good conduct to show that "the mission of the U.S. is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule." 'Conciliation' was the most

important aspect of U.S. policy in the Philippines. McKinley stated that the Filipinos “will come to see our benevolent purpose,” and that “time given the insurgents cannot hurt U.S. and must weaken and discourage them” (Office of the Adjutant General's Office 1902a, 873).⁵⁶

McKinley's decision to annex the Philippines was partly due to intra-party rivalry: The rising young Senator Albert J. Beveridge (R-IN) and the Republican candidate for the post of New York governor, Theodore Roosevelt, were both avowed imperialists who had gained much public support. In his well-received speech “March of the Flag”, given in Indianapolis on 16 September 1898, Beveridge had called the Americans “God's chosen people [...] execut[ing] the purpose of a fate” to occupy the Philippines (Beveridge 1898). In New York on 5 October, Roosevelt had proclaimed to a cheering crowd: “The guns of our warships in the tropic seas of the West and the remote East have awakened U.S. to the knowledge of new duties” (New York Times 1898). Driven by his rivals' success, McKinley headed on a tour to assess grassroots support for occupying the archipelago. In only two weeks, he made 57 public appearances, delivering major speeches in Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri. A presidential stenographer, carefully took note of the crowd's response to McKinley's remarks on expansion and anti-imperialism (May 1991a, 258 f.). With the public favouring occupation, his rhetoric began to resemble that of Beveridge and Roosevelt.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ His views on imperialism and his decision to annex the Philippines have led to disagreements amongst historians about his motivations. As Smith states (1993, 205), much of this is down to the “paucity of information on McKinley's personal opinions”, but the onus lies with those who “have portrayed McKinley as a clever or confident imperialist” (see also Love 2004, Ch. 5; Musicant 1998; Smith and Dávila Cox 1999).

⁵⁷ For example, in Iowa, he stated that “territory sometimes comes to U.S. when we go to war in a holy cause, and whenever it does the banner of liberty will float over it and bring, I trust, blessings and benefits to all people” (cited in Jones 2012, 104). Back in Washington, he knew that the public was in favour of occupation and he cabled his negotiators at the Paris peace talks: “The cession must be of the whole archipelago or none. The latter is wholly inadmissible, and the former must therefore be required” (cited in May 1991b, 252).

The religious 'arguments', which McKinley and other American politicians brought forward played an important role in the legitimisation of U.S. occupation of the Philippines. Using religion as a pretence for the occupation of a foreign land was not new, European powers such as the Spanish or the Portuguese had used Catholic missionaries for centuries as "agent[s], scribe[s] and moral alibi" for their colonial adventures (Comaroff and Comaroff 2010, 32) and in North America Christianity had played an important role in justifying and perpetrating violent acts against Native Americans (Carroll and Shiflett 2002, 87). Yet, the Philippines were different, as they had already been catholicised during three hundred years of Spanish occupation (Silbey 2007, 8 f.).

Thus, McKinley's aim to "Christianize" the Filipinos was not about turning pagans into Christians but about instilling them with an American work ethic and spirit of capitalism that could be useful for U.S. occupiers. This was also a case of mimetic isomorphism. Christianity, in particular Protestantism, was conceived by the U.S. political elite as the basis of American society and culture, which consequently had an impact on its successful development from being a colony to becoming one of the world's great powers in just over a hundred years. Adapting these local cultures and behaviours seemed a promising avenue for making the Philippines a useful U.S. asset.⁵⁸ The remainder of this chapter now explores how the experts and their knowledge production were imbued with such ideas and how they were subsequently utilised in the Philippines during the war.

⁵⁸ See also Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (2003).

4.3 Commissions of Experts

Whether or not McKinley received genuine divine advice, the U.S. administration had developed a firm mind-set about how the country should be ruled. Yet, it soon became obvious that the U.S. troops in the Philippines lacked the knowledge to administer a colonial bureaucracy. On 7 January 1899, Admiral Dewey urged in McKinley in a cable to send a “civilian commission, composed of men skilled in diplomacy and statesmanship” (Dewey 1913, 285). This was not least because of the divergences among the military leaders and their troubled relations with the Filipinos. Dewey did not get on with Otis and his initially cordial relationship to Aguinaldo had cooled down, which might have led him to believe that a commission would fare far better in discussing political issues and securing U.S. rule over the islands. The option of sending civilian officials had been discussed within the U.S. administration before Dewey sent his cable and McKinley decided to create a commission of civilian and military ‘experts’, which were to help in “the most humane, pacific and effective extension of authority throughout these islands, and to secure, with the least possible delay, the benefits of a wise and generous protection of life and property to the inhabitants” (Worcester 1914, 294). Yet, the central intention of the commission was to analyse the situation in the archipelago and help normalise the U.S. occupation. Hence, the decision to include experts was taken very early on as there was a clear lack of knowledge.

The turn to academic experts in producing knowledge also had an isomorphic rationale to it. During the Progressive Movement that swept through the U.S. at the turn of the 20th century, not only did the number of schools and students dramatically increase, but the purpose of schools and universities also changed from gaining content knowledge to learning how to live. Education was not about

the acquisition of a predetermined skills set anymore, but rather about giving the students the ability to use their skills and talents better in a way that benefited society. In this sense, education played a central role in social change and reform (Dewey 1929; Reese 2001). By using the power of education through the utilisation of academic expert knowledge, the U.S. administration tried to model their campaign in the Philippines on the policies it had successfully observed and developed at home. However, as we shall see in the analysis below, the U.S. aim in the Philippines was not to educate the Filipinos as independent and freethinking citizens, but to form subservient inhabitants which would serve the U.S.' instrumental aim of making the Philippines a colony.

Furthermore, within our theoretical framework, the fact that the members of the Commission were hand-picked by the U.S. administration and McKinley himself, indicates that there was a strong connection between the decision-makers and the experts and that their work would serve an instrumental purpose. This First Philippine Commission was appointed by the President on 20 January 1899. It was headed by Jacob Gould Schurman, president of Cornell University and "avowed anti-imperialist" (Silbey 2007, 59). Schurman, one of the fathers of state-funded research universities with a liberal reputation, had publicly criticised the developing policy of the McKinley administration and opposed annexation (Hendrickson 1967, 406).⁵⁹ Yet, with the composition of the rest of the commission, McKinley showed that he was indeed not interested in a non-partisan assessment of the situation in the Philippines.

⁵⁹ However, his opposition was more reasoned in the belief that the conquest would be too expensive and a burden for the U.S. than in the principle the Philippines should be independent. In a speech at Cornell on 22 September, 1898, he stated that "democracy which is government by the people and for the people cannot afford to accept as citizens people who are not capable of self-government" (cited in Pomeroy 1970, 71; Schurman 1986).

The other members, Gen. Otis, Admiral Dewey, Dean C. Worcester and Charles Denby, were all in favour of annexation, making Schurman a mere figurehead. The military officers Otis and Dewey had conquered the islands. Worcester, a zoologist from the University of Michigan, had spent several years in the Philippines with his colleague Frank S. Bourns, gaining knowledge about the archipelago and its people.⁶⁰ In view of their later roles during the American occupation, it is obvious that they were acting as reconnaissance for expansionist interests (Pomeroy 1970, 72). The other civilian member of the commission, Charles Denby, had been the U.S. Consul in Peking since 1885 where he represented U.S. business interests and advocated a gunboat policy to protect foreigners. He was considered to be the advocate of various different U.S. business in East Asia – railroad, cotton, and beef – and McKinley put him on the commission to satisfy the most fervent imperialists (Pomeroy 1970, 73). The composition of the Commission, thus, clearly signalled a broad set of expertise that was chosen to represent the different aspects of a colonial administration. It indicates a close coupling of expertise with the goal of retaining the archipelago.

After the commission returned home and submitted their report in January 1900, a second commission was established on 16 March and sent to the Philippines. In contrast to the Schurman commission, which was unable to affect direct political actions due to its advisory nature and had never been intended to interfere with military decision-making (Worcester 1914, 787), the new commission was vested with legislative and some executive powers (Kalaw 1927, 452 f.) and charged with establishing civilian rule in the archipelago (Gates 1973, 141). Again, the fact that the commission was selected by McKinley himself

⁶⁰ Bourns was part of the medical corps in the expeditionary forces in 1898, but in reality he was acting as Otis' chief political adviser and the head of his spy system (Worcester 1914, 87, 266).

shows that he was interested in the instrumental value of their work. Moreover, because they now had the power to actually implement their knowledge directly in the Philippines, the experts had much more impact than their predecessors.

The commission head was William H. Taft, then judge at a U.S. Court of Appeals and later President (1909-1913) and Chief Justice (1921-1930) of the U.S. By appointing Taft, McKinley had again made a clever decision to placate his anti-imperialist critics: Taft was, in the words of historian Stuart Creighton Miller, “a Republican suspected of harbouring anti-imperialist sympathies” (1982, 134). In fact, before his appointment to the Philippine Commission, Taft had been generally “unsympathetic” to, but largely disinterested in the war and “in so far as he expressed any opinion, it was opposed to annexation” (Pringle 1939, 157).⁶¹ Unlike the first commission, Taft’s fellow commissioners were all civilians: Henry Clay Ide, Luke Edward Wright, Bernard Moses, and again, Dean C. Worcester. All of them were no strangers to imperialist thoughts and beliefs. Ide had been a colonial official before as Chief Justice of Samoa in 1891, Wright was a former general and lawyer, vice-governor of Tennessee and staunch Democratic expansionist, and Moses was a professor of history and political economy at the University of California and the author of a book about Spain’s colonies in South America (Gates 1973, 141; Miller 1982). Overall, like the First Philippine Commission, the composition of the Taft Commission had a strong focus on employing imperialist experts. This shows the knowledge gaps the U.S. had in colonial administration. The purported aim of ‘civilising’ the Filipinos and giving them a better standard of living was merely to pay lip service.

⁶¹ However, Taft distinguished between the two concepts of expansion and imperialism. His dislike for expanding U.S. territory and colonial possessions did not equate to a natural opposition to imperialism in general, or the attempt to ‘civilize’ the Filipinos in particular (Burns 2010, 31).

Both commissions, but more importantly the Taft Commission, which this analysis focuses on, had two primary goals. First, in the Philippines, it would advocate McKinley's "policy of attraction" in an effort to draw the Filipino elites away from Aguinaldo and the Republic. Second, it had an intrinsic U.S. domestic political aim. Both in the policy and public arenas, opposition to expansionism began to emerge, questioning the integrity of his imperialist policy and threatening the ratification of the peace treaty (Pomeroy 1970, 71). Hence, the Commission was to produce an authoritative record of events in the archipelago to justify U.S. aggression and undermine the anti-imperialist claims. The commission's task of rationalising the war in its ends and means before the U.S. public was an important one and helped to create an argument for the occupation. With the U.S. being a former colony itself, McKinley wanted to avoid the appearance that the Philippines would be an exploited colony under U.S. rule, making it no better than the 'old' colonial powers of Europe, against which it wanted to set itself apart from. This was crucial: Opponents of the annexation maintained that while the U.S. domestic, continental domain had evolved through the legitimate expansion of democratic institutions into empty (in reality, emptied) space,⁶² the occupation of the Philippines was an 'imperial' venture that would undermine the U.S.' moral and political foundations. Therefore, the experts played an important role not only in developing instrumental knowledge but also acting as legitimisers to the American public back home.

⁶² As argued by Frederick Jackson Turner in his essay *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893).

4.4 Images of Race

For our understanding of the work of civil experts in the Philippines, the measures they developed, and the influence they had, it is important to know the justifications on which their work was based. These justifications form the basis on which the experts developed their knowledge of fighting the insurgents and bring their alleged 'benevolent' policies to the Filipinos. Imperialists defended the policies of the U.S. on the basis of extra-legal, imperial and racial constructions of a dual character, which mutually and simultaneously racialised Americans and Filipinos (Kramer 2006b, 185). On the one hand, the U.S. population was characterized as 'Anglo-Saxons' whose racial and historical ties to the British Empire legitimated overseas expansion. Hence, the annexation of the Philippines was couched in arguments of history and destiny as a natural extension of Western hegemony and expression of the desires, destinies, and capabilities of 'Anglo-Saxon' peoples. The British Empire with its vast naval, colonial, and commercial power was an inspiring example for the U.S., which was closing up to the Great Powers in the late 19th century and it was connected to it by common language and deep and long-standing social and intellectual connections (Kramer 2002, 1320; see also Martin 1902). As Chapman (1900, 364) writes,

The entry of our country upon what appears to be a new policy of foreign conquest and colonization must evidently impart a doubled impetus to that active extension of Anglo-Saxon civilization for which the mother country alone has been in modern times so conspicuous.

The advocates of expansion in the U.S. assumed that, like the British, they had a racial genius for empire building, which had to be used for the advancement of their 'race' and 'civilization'. This Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism was most resonant in Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" (1899), which ascribed the American 'race'

an imperial destiny that it had to shoulder in humanitarian martyrdom.⁶³ The people they conquered were 'liberated' and given 'freedom', a circumstance that was particularly stressed when news of atrocities and war crimes in the Philippines reached the home front (Kramer 2006b, 185).

Although politicians, officials, and scholars looked to the British Empire for guidance, they also proposed a distinct U.S. version of empire, based on the belief in 'American exceptionalism'. Going back to Alexis de Tocqueville (1835, here 2000, 548), this theory stated that the U.S. was different in quality from other states, born out of a revolution and developing a unique ideology based on virtues such as liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, and republicanism (Lipset 1996, 17 ff.). In this "teleological worldview [which] operated like a self-referential feedback loop", U.S. history was seen as unique and not subject to the general rules that governed other states (Schumacher 2006, 487). As we shall see, this self-image of the American nation is a defining characteristic of U.S. 'counterinsurgency', not only in the Philippines but also in the other two cases.

Various scholars claimed that the U.S. were special in contrast to other colonial powers, even Great Britain. Moses stated later that British colonialism in Africa and Asia had been "reckless and tyrannical." Because of its monarchical tradition, the British Empire had failed to keep its promise of developing the "lesser races", whereas the U.S. was endowed with a liberal character because of its unique democratic history. This enabled it to develop a "wise and beneficent governmental authority over a rude people" and offer them an "impulse and

⁶³ However, it was difficult to connect "Anglo-Saxonism" to empire in the multi-ethnic U.S. Imperialists among the various immigrant groups compromised any essentialist connection between the two concepts (Jacobson 1995, 180ff.)

guidance toward the attainment of a higher form of life and larger liberty” (Moses 1905, 387 ff.). Woodrow Wilson, later U.S. President (1913-1921), wrote as a professor in Princeton, that U.S. imperialism was special. Because democracy was a “thing of principle and custom and nature,” it had the “peculiar duty to moderate the process [of imperialism] in the interests of liberty; to impart to the peoples, thus, driven out upon the road of change” (Wilson 1901). Empire was not denied by the proponents of U.S. expansion, it was rather fashioned as exceptionalism (see e.g. Moses 1905, 398).

However, the creation of a self-image, was only one aspect. In addition, the Filipino population was “tribalised” (Kramer 2006b, 185). This was based on social evolutionary theory of the late 19th century, which maintained that in evolving from “savagery” through “barbarism” to “civilization” (Morgan 1877, 5 f.) societies moved in their organisation from fragmented ‘tribes’ to unified ‘nations’ (on social evolutionary theory, see e.g. Haller 1971; Hofstadter 1944; Lubbock 1872; Tylor 1871).⁶⁴ Thus, the logic behind identifying the Filipinos as ‘tribes’ – with different languages, rites, religions and political affiliations – was simple and convenient, as it disproved the existence of a ‘nation’, which was Aguinaldo’s strongest argument (1899). For the McKinley administration, the Philippines was not a nation, but merely different ‘tribes’ fighting for political, social, and commercial rule. This was a key point of their narrative, as the Philippine Republic was discredited as a legitimate state. The commission fully embraced the narrative as one of the cornerstones of their analysis.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Interestingly, social evolution theory formed the basis for development and modernization theories after World War II (see e.g. Bock 1964; Mazrui 1968; Tipps 1973), which were used extensively in the justification of the Vietnam War. See Vietnam Chapter.

⁶⁵ In their January 1900 report, the dispute over the ‘civilization’ of the Filipinos (1900, 11) is mentioned: “The most diverse and contradictory statements are frequently met with concerning the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands, at present collectively known as “Filipinos.” Some writers credit them with a high degree of civilization, and compare them to the Pilgrim Fathers or the

Based on their investigation in the Philippines, they promised to “reconcile [these] views which are apparently contradictory” and concluded as one of their scientific “facts” that the Filipinos consisted of “three sharply distinct races”, which had developed into “84” different “tribes” with different languages, customs, and laws (Philippine Commission 1900, 11 ff.). This alleged plurality was used in imperial reasoning of the commission’s ethnological and political argument: “The Filipinos are not a nation, but a variegated assemblage of different tribes and peoples, and their loyalty is still of the tribal type” (Philippine Commission 1900, 182).

This “fact” of ‘tribal’ pluralism became the centrepiece of the Commission’s argument against the Filipino capacity for self-government. This view was not exclusive to the commission members but resonated within the U.S. administration and the military leaders on the archipelago (see e.g. Letter from George F. Becker to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, in U.S. War Department 1780’s-1917, 354897). As a matter of fact, by defining the Filipino population in such a way, they (and the insurgents in particular) became what was later defined as “subaltern”: a social group that is devoid of political representation or a ‘voice’ within their society (see e.g. Spivak 1988; Young 2001). Although McKinley and his administration claimed to care for the Filipino population, their ‘voicelessness’ or missing representation will become evident in the analysis of different military and asymmetric warfare factors in the Philippines. Moreover, we will also see such a paternalistic attitude towards the local population in the other campaigns, which makes it an element of continuity across the different case studies.

patriots of ‘76, while others regard even the more highly civilized tribes as little better than barbarians.”

4.5 Areas of civil knowledge production

The creation of social and racial images about themselves and the Filipinos was constitutive for way the experts of the Philippine Commissions conducted their work in the archipelago. Even though not all members of the commissions were necessarily fervent expansionists, arguing for complete and long-lasting occupation of the islands, they all took on the mission to ‘civilize’ the Filipinos. Taft, in particular, had a distinct “imperial vision”, dreaming of the Philippines as a dominion of the U.S., much like the relationship between the United Kingdom and Canada (Burns 2010, 5). In this sense, the experts were not only mere executors of the U.S. government’s wishes, but they were able to implement their own views on how the Philippines should be colonised. To achieve this, both commissions, together with the military, worked on implementing key imperial policies in several fields of civil life, which were deemed to be the most important. Some of the central areas where knowledge gaps existed, were education, political education, and the economy.⁶⁶ The work and impact of the experts in these three areas will be analysed in turn.

4.5.1 Education

One of the most important aspects of U.S. colonial policy in the Philippines was education. As mentioned earlier, the use of academic experts in producing relevant knowledge for the occupation of the Philippines was a rather novel feature, yet it emulated the growing academisation in the U.S. This was also the case for the education of the Filipinos. Military leaders as well as the McKinley administration, believed that the rapid introduction of a public school system

⁶⁶ This is based on the issues most highlighted by McKinley (1847-1901, Reel 9) in his Executive Order to the Taft Commission from 7 April, 1900 (see also May 1976).

would facilitate 'pacification'. The establishment of schools began swiftly (Constantino 1970, 21 f.; Gates 1973, 61). The U.S. did not conquer the Philippines to bring education to 'uncivilized' Filipinos, and military pacification was the most important issue during the years of fighting (1898-1902). Yet, education was an important tool in the long-term aspect of governing the colony, making the "teacher/student dynamic [the] literal and metaphorical instrument to justify American expansion" (Justice 2009, 35). Within our theoretical framework, this indicates that the expertise produced in the field of education was closely related to the organisational aim of the U.S. government of retaining the islands.

Because the educational systems were to be installed quickly, the first U.S. educators were soldiers, not qualified teachers. On 30 March 1900 Gen. Otis established the Department of Public Instruction, headed by Captain Albert Todd (U.S. War Department 1899a, Vol. 1, 152; 1900a, Vol. 1, 224-239). Although not an expert in education,⁶⁷ he began to devise a plan for Filipino education. He envisioned a compulsory education system that would be organized and supervised by the central government. Most importantly, however, he considered English to be the language of instruction, taught by teachers from the U.S. This was not an act of 'benevolence', but clearly calculated to ease the U.S. occupation efforts and enable long-term 'pacification' via the education of the Filipinos. In Todd's own words: "The acquirement of the English tongue, to speak, read, and write will prevent distrusts and misunderstandings, which must ever exist where the rulers and the ruled have diverse speech" (U.S. War Department 1900a, Vol. 1, 222).

⁶⁷ It is unclear if and what civilian background Todd had and if he even had any formal teaching qualifications, like some of his predecessors (Eddy 1900).

This sheds a different light on the comments of some military leaders in the Philippines as well as historians, that school building and development by the Army was successful and popular with the Filipinos (Gates 1973, 86 f., 136 ff). In fact, the real picture was much soberer. As Todd's statement indicates, the primary goal of the Army's programme was not to educate Filipinos, but rather to convince them of the U.S.' good will and support the 'pacification' effort, making the schools a mere adjunct to military operations (May 1976, 137). Indeed, the Army's efforts were rather unsystematic: aside from the fact that most soldier-teachers had no formal teaching qualifications, the majority of them spoke neither Spanish nor Filipino dialects and were, thus, incapable of communicating. In the beginning they had to rely on old Spanish textbooks. Moreover, attendance rates fluctuated considerably and school buildings were generally in bad shape (May 1975, 55 f.). This made even Todd concede: "[...] much that is now being done [...] is of small intrinsic utility and is chiefly valuable as it shows the good will of our Government in establishing or continuing schools for the natives (U.S. War Department 1900a, Vol. 1, 221).

Whilst the Army quickly established schools, the Schurman Commission simply analysed the overall educational situation in the archipelago, coming to the same conclusions as Todd, i.e. that "secularized and free public schools" were needed and that the language of instruction should be English (Philippine Commission 1900, 41). In contrast, the Taft Commission later received some guidelines from McKinley on education and the power to enact legislative changes, showing that they now viewed the issue of education and knowledge production as a top-level concern. It was clear that this was a knowledge problem that had to be tackled. The aim was the extension of the primary school system to "fit the people for the

duties of citizenship and for the ordinary avocations of a civilized community” (Executive Order, 7 April 1900, p. 9 f. in McKinley 1847-1901, Reel 9).

McKinley did not specify what he meant by “duties of citizenship”, nor did he explain the “ordinary avocations of a civilized community”, and while the commissioners were able to interpret the President’s instructions in different ways and employ various methods to establish an educational system, it came down to the aims of U.S. policy in the Philippines. On the one hand, in line with McKinley’s words, education could be geared towards creating educated citizens, capable of self-government. On the other, it could focus on practical education to enhance productive labour and increase the earning power of the Filipinos (May 1976, 138). This indicates that the knowledge produced for this civilian factor of the U.S. campaign in the Philippines also had a substantiating aspect to it. Experts were drawn in to show that the U.S. government was clearly interested in providing education to the Filipinos, but there was no instrumental interest in providing more ‘education’ than absolutely necessary. The local population should know enough to make them good labourers. Yet, they should not know too much to challenge the U.S. rule in the Philippines.

The Bureau of Public Instruction was tasked by the Commission to take charge of the education efforts. Its first director, who would serve from July 1900 to November 1902, shortly after the end of the Insurrection, was Fred W. Atkinson.⁶⁸ After a few months in office, he submitted a draft of an education bill. On 21 January 1901 after reviewing and modifying Atkinson’s draft, the Commission

⁶⁸ Despite having good credentials, Atkinson had never managed a school system, let alone a whole country. His experience was in secondary school education, whereas McKinley and the Commission wanted to focus on primary education. Yet, he was hired because of his “thorough preparation in the modern educational methods” (Taft to Atkinson, 24, April 1900, and Taft to Eliot, June 16, 1900, in Taft 1880-1930).

passed it as Act 74. It provided for a centralised system of public primary schools in different school divisions under the General Superintendent (Atkinson) as well as the establishment of agricultural, and trade schools. The schools were to be established throughout the archipelago, albeit they were not compulsory as originally intended (Philippine Commission 1900-1901, 133). The language of instruction was English and religious instruction was only allowed in the school building after regular school hours.⁶⁹ Moreover, the Commission paid for the salaries and transportation costs of one thousand trained U.S. teachers to be hired by Atkinson and all expenses of the Bureau and the schools. Local taxation was to be used to build schoolhouses and pay the salaries of Filipino teachers (Philippine Commission 1901a, 123 ff.).

From the start and throughout Atkinson's tenure, several problems plagued the proposed education system. The education compromise was targeted by the Catholic priests, fearing that the predominantly Protestant American teachers would try to proselytize Filipino children (Nash 1901, 124). These teachers, who had come to the Philippines for various reasons,⁷⁰ often not only complained about loneliness and homesickness but also expressed dissatisfaction with Atkinson. He issued lots of circulars on trivial issues such as dress, haircuts, and manners but did not manage to pay the teachers at the right time and in the promised currency (Lardizabal 1956, 146 ff.; May 1976, 145). More importantly, his recommended course of study was pretty much identical to the curricula of Massachusetts elementary schools, lacking adaptation to Filipino circumstances

⁶⁹ Atkinson, with Moses and Ide, proposed the complete elimination of religious instruction, but Taft and the others voted for the compromise to attract the Filipinos (Philippine Commission 1900-1901, 173 ff.).

⁷⁰ Some indeed had a missionary zeal, but others had much simpler reasons: at 75 to 125 dollars per month, the pay was attractive and equivalent to U.S. domestic salaries (Butts and Cremin 1953, 454) and many were looking for travel and adventures or wanted to be reunited with partners already in the Philippines (Lardizabal 1956, 23 ff.).

(May 1976, 147). This ignorance could be explained by Atkinson's basic idea of the Philippine educational system as 'industrial education'. Coming into fashion in the U.S. in the late 19th century, these schools trained students first in basic industrial skills and later in specific trades. Many White Americans considered industrial education suitable for blacks, because it "appeared to relegate Negroes to an inferior position" (Meier 1963, 99).

With his decision to focus on this kind of 'education', Atkinson not only placed the Filipinos in a similar position (and status) of U.S. domestic minorities, continuing a technique of domestic U.S. oppression and control abroad, but he certainly did not prepare the Filipinos "for the duties of citizenship and for the ordinary avocations of a civilized community" (Executive Order, 7 April 1900, p. 9 f. in McKinley 1847-1901, Reel 9). Within our theoretical framework, the inclusion of Atkinson provides a clear instrumental intent. He was hand-selected by the decision-makers and there was a clear interest to develop an education policy that was supposed to prepare the Filipinos for their tasks as labourers for U.S. companies and institutions. Education of the Filipinos was not meant to create educated citizens or "free people" (Taft 1905, 366), capable of self-government but rather a productive workforce. In the words of Renato Constantino (1970, 22):

The education of the Filipino under American sovereignty was an instrument of colonial policy. The Filipino had to be educated as a good colonial. Young minds had to be shaped to conform to American ideas. Indigenous Filipino ideals were slowly eroded in order to remove the last vestiges of resistance. Education served to attract the people to the new masters and at the same time to dilute their nationalism which had just succeeded in overthrowing a foreign power.

The enlistment of real (Atkinson and his successors) and alleged (Todd) 'experts' was decisive in shaping and creating U.S. educational policy in the Philippines.

Their knowledge served an instrumental purpose for the U.S. administration, because it enabled them, on the one hand, to show to its domestic (and international) audience that it cared about the education of the Filipinos and that it was 'civilising' them, whilst on the other hand the education was basic enough to enable the Filipinos to be productive labourers (yet, not much more than that). Based on the reports they received from the provinces and their own visions, they created a new system of colonial schooling, which purported 'benevolence' and democratic education as a generous gift of American altruism but was in fact just a disguise for established colonial domination.

4.5.2 Political Education

Another form of education, 'political education', was central to U.S. rule in the Philippines and its development was also another central knowledge gap significantly shaped by 'experts'. Ostensibly, the idea was to establish a system of municipal governments to free the Filipinos from the "objectionable", "arbitrary", and "harsh" rule of the Spanish and "for the first time [...] adopt representative control over their own civil affairs." As Otis stated, with "the American spirit" the Filipinos would have the chance to "demonstrate a fitness for self-administration" and receive an "education" in the ways of democratic government (cited in Go 2000, 334). Through this, the Filipinos would gain practical experience in U.S.-style institutions. Under a "strong and guiding hand", the colonised would receive a "course of tuition" and acquire the "character and habits of thought and feeling" necessary for "free self-government" (U.S. War Department 1899a, 24 f.). From our theoretical point of view, we can see another instance of mimicking successful U.S. domestic procedures. Yet, in reality, the real goal of 'political education' was to discipline the Filipinos (Go 2000, 334; Rafael 1993). This was, thus, another

example of instrumental knowledge formation, where the experts' knowledge would be closely coupled to the organisational interest to tie the Filipino population to the U.S. occupants.

Again, it was the U.S. Army who initiated this. Based on the successful experience of Major William A. Kobbé, who had organized civil governments in four towns in the province of Luzon, enforcing regulations over gambling, intoxication, and disorder with local police, which enabled him to pacify the area (U.S. War Department 1900a, 265 ff.), Otis issued General Order (G.O.) 43 on 8 August 1899, setting out the organization of municipal government.⁷¹ Depending on the size of the town, each council was comprised of a president and several councillors. Literate and propertied Filipinos were allowed to vote and stand for office. Their duties included the establishment of a police force, collection of taxes, enforcement of sanitary measures, regulation of local trade, and the building of schools. The local U.S. commander had to approve the election and the ordinances and decrees of the council (Gates 1973, 87 ff.; Linn 2000, 129 f.; U.S. War Department 1899a, 144 f.). Yet, Otis was not entirely satisfied with Kobbé's plan. In his view, municipalities were still too reliant on U.S. directives and guidance (which tied down forces needed for the military campaign) and also inadequate for the management of larger towns and cities. Hence, he appointed a board consisting of three Army officers experienced in Philippine judicial affairs, as well as two wealthy Filipino lawyers to review Kobbé's plan and developed a more systematic system of municipal government, to be "as liberal in character as existing conditions permit" (San Francisco Call 1900, 20; U.S. War Department 1900a, XI, 28). Otis approved their recommendations in March 1900 as G.O. 40.

⁷¹ Against the reservations of General MacArthur who found the project too ambitious and hasty (Otis to Kobbé, 1 August 1899, in Kobbé 1840-1931, Box 1).

However, the amendments by the board were not really “liberal”. While the new code allowed towns some control over their affairs, it removed some of the more democratic features of G.O. 43. The electorate shrank after imposing higher thresholds of income (in form of taxes paid), social position (Filipino officers were automatically able to vote), and literacy (the ability to speak, read, and write English or Spanish), limiting the franchise to a small number of people, in fact the same ‘ilustrado’ and ‘principales’ elite that had ruled during the Spanish period. Thus, contrary to their claims, U.S. rulers did not base their municipal government scheme on a democratic system that would have benefitted the Filipinos, but conformed to the perceptions and wishes of the Filipino elite. Furthermore, G.O. 40 actually provided for even stricter supervision than envisioned by Otis, as commanding officers were to supervise municipal affairs (audit of municipal accounts, regular inspections of the municipality), albeit, municipal ordinances did not have to be approved by the commanding officer as they did before (May 1975, 53 f.). By September 1900, the Army had organized several hundred municipalities under G.O. 40 and 43 (U.S. War Department 1900a, X, 28 f.).

That same month, the Taft Commission took up its work in the Philippines. The instructions they had received from McKinley mentioned the creation of a local governments (Executive Order, 7 April 1900, p. 2 in McKinley 1847-1901, Reel 9). Yet, this ambiguous instruction posed a dilemma for the Commission. On the one hand, as the orders maintained and from what Taft and the others saw on their inspection trips, in order to fulfil Filipino desires, they had to give them a certain autonomy. On the other, they clearly believed that the Filipinos were incapable of self-government and that the electorate had to be limited and political power only exercised under supervision. As a result, the legislation enacted by

the Commission regarding municipal government purported to prepare the Filipinos for self-government, but gave them only limited political power (May 1976, 71). Again, we are presented with an ambiguous picture, as the idea to give the Filipinos only limited political powers was certainly instrumental. Yet, there was a second layer of substantiating knowledge, both in the way that knowledge was drawn upon and how it was presented to the stakeholders in the environment and the American public.

The legislation passed by the Commission, the municipal government act of 31 January 1901 (Philippine Commission 1901a, 133 ff.), reflected this. It was based on the U.S. Army policy found in G.O. 43 and 40, with the electoral qualifications focusing on a small elite, undermining general political participation. The elected local officials had indeed some powers, such as the right to collect taxes, management of municipal property, and construction, but they were strictly supervised by the provincial governor who also oversaw elections and could suspend any local official for maladministration. In turn, the provincial governments were staffed with U.S. officials, so that the alleged municipal rights were in effect under strict U.S. control (Philippine Commission 1901a, 168 ff.). Nationally, Taft suggested to Root, that a popular assembly, chosen by a limited electorate, could share legislative powers with the Commission in the future (Taft to Root, July 14, 1900, in Taft 1880-1930, Reel 464). He envisaged a bicameral parliament, with the assembly as the lower house, and the U.S. Commission, as the upper house, able to potentially disapprove assembly bills (Taft to Root, September 26, 1901, and Taft to Henry Cabot Lodge, October 22, 1901, in Taft 1880-1930, Reel 33, 465). The Philippine Organic Act of 1 July 1902 (United States Congress 1902a), eventually put this plan into practice, along with two (nonvoting) Filipino commissioners in the U.S. Congress.

The plan of government, which the Commission instituted in different stages – local, provincial, and national – in between January 1901 and July 1902 was based on the work of the Army, the recommendations of the Schurman Commission, and McKinley’s orders, but it also reflected their own assessment of the situation, showing that the experts were able to implement their own agenda into the policies. The proclaimed goal of U.S. colonial policy in the Philippines was “self-government”. Yet, in the view of the commission, this seemed decades away (May 1975, 86). Moreover, as mentioned before, “self-government” did not mean ‘independence’. Taft frequently mentioned “quasi-independence, like the colony of Australia or Canada.” This did not rule out full independence, but it was unlikely in his eyes: “[...] if America follows her duty, as I am sure she will ultimately, I do not think that the Filipino people will desire to sever the bonds between U.S. and them” (cited in May 1975, 87).⁷²

The promise of ‘Political education’ in the Philippines was a poisoned bait. The powers that municipal governments had were rather superficial and could be easily revoked by the U.S. authorities. In addition, by limiting the electorate to former officeholders, the wealthy, and the educated, the Commission perpetuated the stratification of Philippine society and guaranteed that the elite that had ruled during the Spanish period would do so under U.S. tutelage. In this sense “‘Political education’ seemed better designed to prepare Filipinos for oligarchic, rather than popular, government” (May 1976, 89). As we will see in the subsequent chapters, these attempts to build the structures in a seemingly liberal-democratic fashion, but ultimately oriented to serve U.S. interests and

⁷² However, this was not for the Commission to decide, because the decision about the U.S.’ future relationship lay with Congress and if the (predominantly) anti-imperialist, Democratic Party would get the majority, it might opt for an independent Philippines.

secure/legitimise occupation, are a continuing characteristic of U.S. 'counterinsurgency' attempts. In the Philippines, U.S. policy was significantly shaped and influenced by the work of individuals rather than central government policy. Since no such policy actually existed and McKinley's instructions were very general,⁷³ the Commission had to come up with their own version of municipal government, which would retain U.S. rule. Although the actual knowledge in this area was created bottom-up from what had been by the Army and Kobbé, taking a model that had worked in the provinces and tried to apply it nationwide, the strategic-political impetus was top-down.

4.5.3 Economic Policies

One of the key aspects of the promised U.S. benevolence in the Philippines was the improvement of the economic situation of Filipinos. When the soldiers and later the Commissioners arrived, they found a dysfunctional transportation system, with poor roads, little railroad links, shallow harbours, and hardly any modern communication lines. As with the other civilian policies, the main question for the policy-makers was about the long-term role of U.S. in the Philippines, i.e. would their policies be more geared towards the interests of U.S. capital and exploitation of the islands or would they actually be genuinely beneficial? As I will demonstrate in this section, the vision of the Commission involved a massive expansion of export agriculture with the help of U.S. capital, which would have probably added to the exploitation of the Philippines. Yet, unlike the other civilian issues of education and political education, the experts did not have free reign in developing and implementing their knowledge, because the U.S. Congress

⁷³ Which, in fact, only bore his signature but had been written by Elihu Root, whose original knowledge about colonial policy consisted of reading a book about the English colonial system (Jessup 1964, 345 ff.).

retained the authority for most economic matters, making the experts' work substantiating and legitimising in some aspects.

McKinley's initial instructions to the Taft Commission only spoke very generally about the economic tasks of the Commission stating, "legislative authority will included [...] the raising of revenue by taxes, custom duties and imports; the appropriation and expenditure of public funds of the islands [...]" (Executive Order, 7 April 1900, p. 3 in McKinley 1847-1901, Reel 9). This general allocation of authority in economic matters, which turned out to be quite narrow, was reasoned in the fact that Secretary of War Root, both the main drafter of McKinley's orders and superior of the Taft Commission, did not want to interfere with Congress. It had already prohibited grants of franchises by the military government in Cuba (Healy 1963, 82 ff.), and did not want to grant additional powers to the Commission. Root stated in 1901 (Jessup 1964, 58 f.; Root in Philippine Commission 1901c, 7):

Broad and peremptory as are its powers for the time, [the military government] is temporary in its character, and can not project its authority into the future. It can not give title to the settler or miner, or corporate rights to the bank or the railroad.

Therefore, the Commission could only appropriate money for public works projects, any further economic policy in the Philippines had to be determined by Congress. However, Taft and the other commissioners could obviously formulate and articulate their ideas and possible goals and attempt to lobby Congress by testifying before Congressional committees and talking to Party leaders about possible legislation, which is what they did (May 1976, 176).

As part of their economic recommendations, the Commission focused on infrastructural improvements, including the railway and roads. Especially the

railway seemed to be a matter of the heart for Taft and his colleagues. When the U.S. troops arrived in the archipelago, there was only one railway line of 122 miles, run by a British syndicate on a Spanish concession. The Commission wanted to extend this line further, calling for an extensive railway system which, in their view, would stimulate, “the production of tobacco, sugar, and “other tropical products” (Philippine Commission to Root, August 21, 1900, in Taft 1880-1930, Reel 31). Also, they believed that “their value from a military standpoint can hardly be overestimated, and indirectly they would only be second to primary schools as an educator of the people” (Philippine Commission 1901c, 71 ff.).

This push for railways was not just a “typically American response to Philippine underdevelopment” as Glenn May claims (1975, 178). Railways had indeed enabled the U.S. to extend its domestic borders and set up new settlement and production areas, reach new natural resources, and provided new employment opportunities (Faulkner 1959, 75 f.; North 1966, 108 ff.) as much as it had helped in suppressing the Native Americans (Fixico 2007). Yet, around the world, great powers build railway links in their colonies to ease military control and the extraction of natural resources (see e.g. Davis et al. 1991; Quiring 1911). A good case can be made that Taft had that in mind when he pushed for new railways. Nonetheless, the Commission’s advocacy took until July 1902, when Congress eventually granted franchise and commission to build.

In other infrastructure projects, most importantly road construction, the Commission could act much quicker, as no Congressional authorisation was needed to improve public works in the islands. The Schurman Commission had already noted in early 1900 that the roads in Luzon (the only island they travelled to) were “in a very wretched state of repair and preservation, being in parts and

for whole sections next to impassable” (Philippine Commission 1900, Vol. 4, 80). Improvement of road conditions in the Philippines was important for several reasons. First, good roads were valuable to the economy and for the extraction of goods (Philippine Commission 1901c, 71). Second, the Commission saw roads as part of their effort to ‘educate’ the people: “It may be asserted as a truism that people without roads are necessarily savage, because society is impossible and just to the extent that roads are lacking or defective, real progress is retarded and prosperity hindered” (Philippine Commission 1900-1901, Vol. 2, 4). Third, not only the Commission, but also the military had a vested interest in good road conditions. MacArthur wanted to increase the rapidity and mobility of U.S. troops, the idea being that all-weather roads would contribute to pacification and eventually require less troops to maintain the peace (Gates 1973, 139, 211; U.S. War Department 1900a, Vol. 1, 12).

Still, the funds allocated for this project were too little and too widespread to have any lasting effect during the war and provincial and municipal taxes yielded not enough revenue to build their own. Progress was only made in the years after the war (May 1976, 195 f.). As with the plans for the railways, road building served a dual purpose. Ostensibly intended to improve the situation of the Filipinos, it would also serve as a way of ruling them because it would enable U.S. troops to move quicker and make use of their mounted troops. Hence, we can say that for these two aspects of economic policies, the experts’ advice was instrumental.

As with the railway, the Commission tried to attract U.S. capital to invest in different fields of the Filipino economy. This included mining (Sawyer 1900, 143 ff.), timber (Taft to Charles P. Taft, 7 July 1900, in Taft 1880-1930, Reel 18), but most importantly agriculture – sugar, tobacco, copra, and abaca. – where they

wanted U.S. investors to introduce modern agricultural techniques and machines, increasing the production and export of Philippine agricultural products (Philippine Commission 1901c, 34). In their view, U.S. capitalists would only invest in the Philippines if there were special incentives. As most of the land was in the public hand, they attempted to do two things: First, the passage of homestead legislation, so that landless peasants could settle and cultivate the land. Second, investors should be allowed to acquire large tracts of the public domain (Philippine Commission 1901b, Vol. 1, 7). However, Congress did not follow the experts' advice. Based on the objections of the Democrats and some Republicans, it rejected Taft's claim of the right to issue franchises,⁷⁴ which was imperative to him: "It would be like running on one wheel to attempt to develop this country without power to offer investments to capital" (Taft to Root, November 30, 1900, in Taft 1880-1930, Reel 464).

As Taft claimed, their economic ideas would be beneficial for the Filipinos: "Nothing will civilize them so much [sic] as the introduction of American enterprise and capital here" (Taft to Lodge, October 17, 1900, in Taft 1880-1930, Reel 31). In his eyes, Filipino natives and U.S. businessmen were compatible and mutually beneficial: "The policy to be pursued with the islands, which should do the best for the Philippine people, will also make them a most valuable associate in a business way", he testified before the Senate's Committee on the Philippines (United States Congress 1902b, Vol. 1, 349). In reality, if Congress had given franchise rights to the Commission, U.S. investors would have been able to buy not only public lands, but also lands from the small farmer who would have been

⁷⁴ This was part of the "Spooner Bill", introduced by John C. Spooner of Wisconsin, one of the Republican leaders in the Senate, on February 8, 1901. However, Congress only approved one part of it, the establishment of civil government in the Philippines (Blitz 2000, 41).

unable to compete with large-scale agricultural corporations and who would have then been forced to earn his living on these bigger farms, being wage-dependent on the U.S. investors. The advice from Taft and his fellow commissioners appeared to be designed to “perpetuate, rather than to alleviate, the exploitation of the [peasant]” (May 1976, 186). Thus, we can say that the experts’ advice in this specific economic area, other than with (rail) roads, was rather substantiating and was not implemented in the end.⁷⁵

4.6 Reflections on civil knowledge production in the Philippines

In 1964, more than four decades after the end of the Philippine Insurrection, David Galula contended that a ‘counterinsurgency’ was “80% political and 20% military” (1964, 89). In a sense, this was true for the Philippines as well, yet in a different way to what Galula later postulated. Whilst he saw ‘counterinsurgency’ and the way it was made up as *a posteriori* issue, i.e. it took effect once an insurgency had started and the state was in response to it, the Philippine Insurrection, at least on the civic/political side was much more *a priori*, with the political strategy for the colonial rule already outlined at the beginning of the occupation. The McKinley administration had not really intended the acquisition of colonial possessions before 1898 (which is reflected in the state of the U.S. Army), but when the chance came about after the Spanish-American War, the President was masterful in the art of politics and he knew how to exploit the electoral potential of expansionist sentiments in the public (May 1991a, 248 f.).

⁷⁵ This was probably because Congress realised that these economic ideas would have exacerbated the poor situation of large parts of the Filipino population, causing further social unrest, which would have undermined the U.S. attempts to pacify the conflict.

McKinley was keen to give the occupation the appearance of 'benevolence', which in his view would be best achieved through a focus on civic action and government. The U.S. was a latecomer to colonial distribution and did not have the knowledge and expertise in colonial administration, which the British, French and (to some extent) Germans had acquired decades before. Hence, this knowledge needed to be acquired and generated. McKinley chose to send commissions of 'experts' to the Philippines to analyse the situation and enact legislation that would bind the Philippines to the U.S. for decades to come. Both the establishment of the commissions as well as their knowledge bore a strong resemblance to successful procedures and policies in the US, indicating isomorphic behaviour in the area of civil knowledge production. Across the two commissions, the 'experts' involved were not really experts on the Philippines or colonial affairs (aside from Worcester and Ide), but rather prominent lawyers and academics, making the composition of the commission much more of a domestic political issue. Also, they were mostly fervent imperialists. Both of these facts underline McKinley's intention to occupy the Philippines for longer and re-model them in the American image. Whilst the Schurman commission merely analysed the situation and made recommendations for the colonial occupation, the Taft commission was actually granted the legislative powers by the U.S. Congress, which is why this analysis focused predominantly on it.

Based on distinct social and racial images about both the role of the U.S. and the Filipinos, Taft and his fellow commissioners devoted their attention to specific aspects of civil life, which they wanted to change according to American ideas and beliefs. In this chapter, the specific focus lay on education, political education and economic reforms, as they were at the centre of McKinley's instructions to

the Commission. It is notable that in all these areas, the Army had already taken actions before the arrival of the Commission. This shows how much emphasis McKinley put on a civilian subjugation of the islands.

This also becomes apparent in the way that the Commission created knowledge and instigated policies in these three areas. Although the Army had set precedents, the Philippines Commission issued their instructions top-down, trying to establish unified, structural policies in education, political education and infrastructure/economic issues across the archipelago. These were obviously based on McKinley's orders to the Commission, but since they remained rather vague, Taft and his colleagues were pretty much free to interpret them in their ways. Hence the 'experts' in the Commission did not implement detailed orders that came from the McKinley administration or the War Department in Washington, but they became policymakers in their own right. However, their powers were not unlimited and mostly legislative rather than executive. As the example of economic policies shows, they did not have the right to grant franchises and Congress was unwilling to give them this right. Thus, they could not pursue their plan to remodel the Philippine agricultural industry.

Holistically, we can conclude that the knowledge production in civilian affairs in the Philippines, which was often initiated by the military, but then further developed by the Taft Commission, was utilised predominantly in an instrumental, output-oriented fashion. This was not as an end in itself but to enhance the policy legitimacy of the U.S. administration, which had promised to 'pacify' the archipelago and 'uplift and civilise' the Filipinos, towards domestic stakeholders and international audiences. For the former, it was important that the U.S. as a democracy and former colony itself presented itself better than the

old European powers in their colonial adventures, for the latter it was to show that the U.S. had arrived in the concert of Great Powers. Thus, the knowledge production and utilisation was essentially a top-down approach, with key impetuses and goals coming directly from Washington. Experts played a vital role in this, not in the merely symbolic sense of attaching credibility to the policy decisions, but actually developing new, instrumental approaches. The next chapter focuses on knowledge production by and for the military in this campaign. This displayed a different characteristic as a bottom-up learning process, showing the little interest that was paid to the development of a comprehensive military strategy to fight the insurgents.

5 The Philippines (1899-1902) – Military knowledge

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter on the military knowledge production in the Philippine-American War, I argue that fighting was seen as the necessary evil to pacification and civil domination. Thus, knowledge production played a rather substantiating, and in parts legitimising, role. Moreover, as highlighted earlier, the adaption of specific techniques was a reaction to the failure of beating Aguinaldo and his followers through 'conventional' methods. Often field officers developed localised solutions to problems, because the military command was unwilling or unable to develop a formalised doctrine for the fight against the insurgents. Aspects that worked were then adapted in a bottom-up fashion. Combined with the previous chapter on civil knowledge production, we can observe the emergence of what would later become known as 'counterinsurgency' as an epistemological phenomenon. Although the latter campaigns in Vietnam and Iraq displayed a different pattern of knowledge utilisation, the Philippine-American War is significant, as it laid the foundations for a concomitant utilisation of both civilian and military expertise in defining and providing solutions to insurgencies.

Whilst the McKinley administration was keen to highlight the civic aspects of U.S. occupation of the Philippines and generate knowledge for it, the military was engaged in fighting the insurgents. This section explores how the military developed specific knowledge and techniques to suppress the insurgency. The fact that the insurgents operated from within the population did not allow for an indiscriminate use of force, as civilian casualties would have not only undermined the advertised 'benevolent' approach of the U.S. but would have also resulted in public outrage at home. Therefore, the military had to develop new methods of

countering the insurgents. First, this section takes a look at how the U.S. Army treated knowledge and expertise at that time and what its mindset was at the beginning of the war, before again analysing three distinct areas of knowledge production and utilisation.

5.2 The U.S. Army and ‘experts’ in the late 19th century

Civic action and the knowledge creation for it was an important aspect of U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines. However, it was only one side of the coin, as the insurgency confronted the U.S. Army with a military challenge as well. To understand how it developed responses to specific issues, it is important to first look at how the Army professionalised in the late 19th century. These enable us to understand the conditions in which the knowledge was produced. After the end of the devastating Civil War, there was a decisive anti-military public sentiment (White 1958). This had an effect on the structure and organization of the U.S. Army, which was dramatically reduced in size and soldiers demobilized.⁷⁶ The Army “rotted in disuse” and was not well trained (Wiebe 1980, 227). Equipment was outdated and morale amongst soldiers was low, for lack of career prospects or adequate wages (Coffman 1986, 263).

The tasks of the Army after the Civil War were pretty much the same as they had been since the U.S. gained independence from Britain. The only enemy to fight for most of the 19th century were indeed the Native Americans. Yet, this was not reflected in military training or education. Instead, the soldiers and officers had to rely on personal experience and shared stories to fight on the frontier (Davidson

⁷⁶ From a strength of over a million at the end of the war, the Regular Army shrunk to 50,000 by the end of 1865. By 1870, it was down to 30,000 and by 1874, to 25,000 (White 1998, 43).

2010, 30). This developed into a non-codified but widely known pacification doctrine consisting of conciliation and repression. Resistance was harshly dealt with: crops and homes were destroyed and (suspected) opponents, including civilians, were imprisoned, expelled or killed (Linn 2000, 9). In the Second Seminole War, the Army struggled to defeat an enemy using hit-and-run tactics. Success came when it resorted to violent means as well as using decentralised patrols that would pursue the enemy (Gates 2002).⁷⁷ Thus, one of the key memories for the Army was that in the fight against “savages”, the fighting had to be brutal (Davidson 2010, 30).

The informal knowledge of pacification was legally justified through *General Orders 100: Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field*, also known as the *Lieber Code* after its author Francis Lieber. Issued in 1863 during the Civil War to establish a legal basis for the occupation of Confederate territory by Union troops, G.O. 100 was the first codified law on the conduct of war. It mandated that enemy soldiers and civilians meet certain rules of behaviour. Soldiers had to wear uniforms and civilians must not fight against the occupier (Silbey 2007, 157). Men who fought “[...] without commission, without being part and portion of the organized hostile army” Lieber wrote, “are not public enemies, and therefore, if captured, are not entitled to the privileges of prisoners of war, but shall be treated summarily as highway robbers or pirates” (U.S. War Department 1863, Art. 82). G.O. 100 became the standard legal code.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Regarding the use of indiscriminate violence in counterinsurgency, also see Downes (2007).

⁷⁸ European powers adopted the Lieber Code and it formed the basis for the Hague Convention of 1899. To some extent, parts of the Code are still evident in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 (Witt 2012).

Aside from the legal basis, there was no formal information for officers and soldiers to resort to for knowledge of how to deal with civilians or insurgents. For most of the 19th century, field experience was not captured by institutional systems, which hampered organisational learning. There was simply no formal means for transferring new ideas from the field to the institution as a whole. Although in 1821, the Army had introduced official regulations (*Military Institutes*), which required officers to submit written battle reports, these were more intended to ascertain acts of valour worthy of medals and awards (1821, 128 f.), rather than using them as the basis for learning and the improvement of strategy and tactics. They were mostly filed and forgotten. Hence, no (written) lessons were learned, and no official military doctrine emerged. In fact, given that the word and the notion of “doctrine” only found entry into the Army terminology around 1912 (Bickel 2001, 2), the informal approach was the only available avenue of learning. At West Point, the officer cadets learned about the Civil War and the great battles that European powers had fought. The operational experiences on the frontier were then markedly different to such historical cases. Learning for the ‘real job’ took place in the field, in the best case through sympathetic senior officers who gave semiformal lectures (Davidson 2010, 31). Yet, as Vetock (1988, 56) notes, “so long as the links in the chain of human memory remained unbroken, the informal approach [to learning] sufficed.”

However, in the last two decades of the 19th century, major organizational changes took place within the Army. This modernisation was associated with a professionalization driven by young reformers. The most influential reformer in the years after the Civil War was Emory Upton. The lack of preparation on the part of the army at the beginning of the war and the organizational problems that

he had experienced himself, caused him to work on remedying these problems. In 1875 he went on a two-year trip to inspect foreign militaries, from which his book *The Armies of Europe and Asia* (1878) emanated. He argued that the Prussian army organization, training, strategy and techniques be adopted by the U.S. Army, in particular a promotion system based on professional ability and merit (White 1998, 51 f.) as well as the establishment of advanced military schools, a general staff, and personnel evaluation reports (Cassidy 2003, 132; Hackett 1983, 38; Huntington 1957, 232 ff.).

In 1881, the year of Upton's death, Civil War hero William T. Sherman, then Commanding General of the Army, followed one of his recommendations and founded the School of Application for Cavalry and Infantry in Fort Leavenworth, KS.⁷⁹ It allowed young West Point graduates the practical application of theories learned, but also sought to improve officers' knowledge (Stubbs and Connor 1969, 22). One of its first instructors, Colonel Arthur L. Wagner, had a profound impact on the way the U.S. Army learned from its experiences. Believing that "all theories as to what *may be* done must, if sound, be based upon what *has been* done" (emphasis in original; Wagner 1890, 150), Wagner published and taught from analytical assessments of past military campaigns. This included reviewing written reports, personal observation, interviews and comparative analyses of different operations. Like Upton, Wagner was a "Prusso-Maniac" (Brereton 2000, 30 ff.) and had looked at the German processes for learning from past experiences. Yet, Wagner's efforts were hampered by the organisation, as he had "no processing agency to send his information to or institutional procedures to transform it into doctrinal adjustments" (Vetock 1988, 29).

⁷⁹ Now the Command and General Staff College (CGSC).

The institutional changes in the Army were reflected in a changing political attitude towards the military.⁸⁰ In 1890, with the publication of Alfred Thayer Mahan's *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890), a new group of school emerged that Samuel Huntington later labelled Neo-Hamiltonian (1957, 270). The beliefs of this group of influential politicians, soldiers and publicists transcended the usual political traditions in the U.S., as they were neither liberal nor completely conservative. Most importantly, they combined a mix of civilian progressivism with military view of power and expansionism. Contrary to the business pacifism that had prevailed after the Civil War, the Neo-Hamiltonians considered war far from obsolete and as the ultimate extension of power politics. The inclusion of military officers such as Alfred Thayer Mahan or Leonard Wood in the articulation of their ideas was also novel. For the first time in U.S. history, military leaders actively and intellectually contributed directly to the activities of a political movement, rather than siding passively with a civilian movement as before, bringing many elements of the military ethic to Neo-Hamiltonianism (Huntington 1957, 273). Beyond the inclusion of members of the military, the Neo-Hamiltonians actively sought advice from high-ranking officers. For example, Elihu Root relied on the expertise of Adjutant General Henry C. Corbin, who was a lifelong friend and confidant (White 1998, 50).

The changes initiated by the experts in the military and supported by the Neo-Hamiltonian decision-makers had a profound effect on the Army. With the end of the frontier wars, patrolling in the West became more and more a police activity and Army forts were gradually closed up. More importantly, new industrial

⁸⁰ Most prominently, in November 1901, Secretary Root signed General Order 155, introducing a system of military education. This included the establishment of the U.S. Army War College and a hierarchy of schools, which officers had to go through to reach the top of the chain of command.

technology revolutionised the conduct and preparations for warfare. The introduction of the machine gun and breech-loading cannons brought new improvements in weaponry. The railroad and telegraphic communications allowed the rapid coordination, movement and supply over long distances of entire armies (Greene 1883; Lazelle 1882). These changes required profound strategic and tactical changes. For example, shoulder-to-shoulder formations, which had been used in different variations from the Battle of Marathon to Gettysburg, were now suicidal. New open order tactics required better trained and motivated soldiers who could fight in small groups with better artillery coordination (Cosmas 1994, 35).

On the eve of the Philippine Insurrection, the U.S. Army presented a rather ambiguous picture. On the one hand, as the Dodge Commission reaffirmed in its report in February 1899,⁸¹ it was in a bad condition, characterized by drunkenness, disorderly conduct and low motivation (Howlett 2009). Moreover, there were neither doctrinal guidelines for fighting an insurgency nor were there institutional structures for capturing and institutionalising lessons learned. On the other hand, the Army arrived in the Philippines with a long experience of fighting in the Indian Wars,⁸² which constituted a constituted significant, albeit informal, knowledge of unconventional warfare (Birtle 1998, 100 f.; Linn 2000, 9), as well as newly introduced tactics and weapons and a legal framework to deal with such kinds of war. More significantly, however, the decades before the war had been a time when individuals in the military, such as Upton and Wagner, had argued for a re-organisation of the Army and a more structured analyses. The Neo-

⁸¹ Which had been created to analyse the shortcomings of the Spanish-American War and the Cuban mission.

⁸² Where 26 of the 30 Generals serving in the Philippines had fought in (Boot 2003, 127).

Hamiltonians meanwhile proposed expansionist ideas and power politics. What is important to note for our analysis, not only of the Philippines but also the other case studies, is that we can definitely see an increased reliance on individual expert knowledge within the military from the turn of the last century. They began to have decisive influence on doctrine and strategy formulation within the military in general as well as in specific campaigns. Moreover, we can already see the phenomenon of the soldier-scholar emerging.

5.3 Into the Philippines

As with the civilian Philippine Commissions, it is important to understand the circumstances under which the military and potential 'experts' operated as well as the ideological foundations that underpinned their actions. President McKinley's instructions from 19 May 1898 to the U.S. expeditionary force regarding the military government were resembling very much what earlier U.S. administrations had ordered their troops to do in Louisiana, Florida, and during the Mexican War (Thomas 1904). However, in the Philippines, the U.S. not only placed much more emphasis on the 'civilising' mission and the reconstruction of the country in the U.S. image, but the military would play a much more important role in this than ever before (Gates 1973, 57). Especially at the beginning of the war, when fighting was still very much prevalent throughout the archipelago, the soldiers were employed in all different kinds of government positions, although they were not necessarily from a special civil affairs branch or had specific training for their positions in government. Many of the U.S. troops (75% according to Gates 1973, 64) in the islands were volunteers who had different civilian jobs. The 'experts' in the military were, thus, often ordinary men.

Otis was keen to employ knowledgeable Army officers in key civilian functions to aid the process of pacification and transformation of Filipino society. To name a few examples, Major Frank S. Bourns, Otis' political adviser and friend of Dean Worcester (see above, footnote 10), had good knowledge of the islands, was fluent in Spanish and local dialects, and had many connections in Manila which were of high value to the U.S. command (Philippine Commission 1900, 347 ff.). Lt.Col. Enoch H. Crowder, a Regular Army officer and lawyer, assisted Otis on the judicial problems of the military government (Lockmiller 1955, 70 ff.). Colonel James F. Smith, a Volunteer officer, was also a lawyer who took upon administrative tasks (U.S. War Department 1899a, 123 f.).

The reason that Army officers took up such positions lay not only in the fact that they were the only Americans at hand during the pinnacle of the insurgency, but rather that it mirrored a similar development that was taking place at home at the same time. In the U.S., progressivism, a middle class and reformist movement, had emerged as a response to the vast changes and problems brought by industrialization. Progressive reformers were promoting economic, social and political changes to alleviate the ills of society (see e.g. Hofstadter 1963; McGerr 2003; Mowry 1958, 59 ff.). The Army's efforts in the Philippines mirrored the ideas of reformers in the U.S. Yet, there was certainly a strong element of racial superiority tied in with it. Like the progressive reformers, many of the officers in the Philippines had Anglo-Saxon, Protestant backgrounds and upper middle-class origins (Brown 1979, 3 ff.; Mowry 1958, 85 ff.). Both groups, like the civilian members of the Philippine Commission, inhibited a strong feeling of Anglo-Saxon superiority and the belief that American imperialism would fulfil the nation's duty of uplifting the world's 'backward' peoples. Ultimately, the Army officers also

shared the view that man had the ability to change other men and the environment in which they lived, which supports the notion that U.S. was working on creating the Philippines in their image (Gates 1973, 68 f.). This fits with the results from the civilian knowledge production, which was instrumental and focused at establishing a long-term dependence of the Philippines to the U.S.

Not only the civic action, but also the fighting was underpinned by a certain ideology. As Kramer convincingly argues (2006b, 195) “Guerrilla war involved not merely a set of tactics but a set of understandings: about the meanings of combat, about the means to victory, about oneself as a combatant, about the nature of the enemy.” But guerrilla war had different meanings for Filipinos and Americans. Higher Filipino officers, who came from the elites, had been schooled exclusively in European conventional warfare, which also explains why Aguinaldo originally set up his Army conventionally. However, Aguinaldo also knew about the symbolism of war. In his bid for independence and international recognition, Aguinaldo was striving to hold himself to standards of ‘civilisation’. In fact, he and other officials of the Republic agreed with the U.S. that, among many other things, “civilized” societies fought “civilized” wars (Kramer 2006b, 196). Yet, what was ‘civilized’, was determined by the West.

For the Americans, Aguinaldo’s turn towards guerrilla warfare was the proof that the U.S. were dealing with ‘savages’. As Gen. J. Franklin Bell wrote in a letter to Apolinario Mabini, a Filipino leader, the resistance to U.S. rule had become not only “criminal” but was “also daily shoving the natives of the Archipelago headlong towards a deeper attitude of semicivilization in which they will become completely incapable of appreciating and understanding the responsibilities of civil government.” Civilization meant “pacification” and the acceptance of U.S.

sovereignty: “The Filipino people can only show their fitness in this matter by laying down their arms” (J. Franklin Bell to Apolinario Mabini, August 28, 1900, in Mabini 1965, 265 f.). This explains the self-justification for the brutal conduct of the war by the Americans. The argument was that if the guerrilla war started by the Filipinos was a ‘savage war’, entirely outside the moral and legal standards of ‘civilized’ war, then the ‘civilized’ U.S. troops were allowed to adopt ‘savage’ methods to defeat the insurgents (Füredi 1998; Kramer 2006b, 205 f.).

Whilst the ideological background on which the Army conducted its actions in the Philippines was clear, the actual military duties and challenges the Army faced in the Philippines were more difficult to assess. In terms of knowledge for the general military campaign, some senior commanders of the Army claimed that they had turned to the principles that had guided them in the fight against other ‘savages’, the Native Americans on the Western Frontier. As Brig. Gen. Theodore Schwan wrote in the fall of 1899 (cited in May 1991b, 95), the Filipinos

[...] are in identically the same position as the Indians of our country have been for many years, and in my opinion must be subdued in much the same way, by such convincing conquest as shall make them realize fully the futility of armed resistance, and then win them by fair and just treatment.

Despite such comparisons of the Philippine insurrection to the Indian Wars, there were not many opportunities to transfer specific tactics of Indian-fighting to the fight against the Filipino insurgents, as the conditions in the prairie differed too much from the tropical jungles of the archipelago and, as already discussed, no formal knowledge from these campaigns had been captured (Birtle 1998, 113). Moreover, the heydays of the Indian Wars had been over for almost two decades and only the oldest members of the expeditionary force could have drawn from

actual military experience for the military tasks in the archipelago. The contemporary 'experts' of the Army, such as Wagner and Birkhimer were widely known in the Army at that time, but their ideas on conventional warfare were of little help in an insurgency. For example, Wagner actually served in the Philippines in various staff positions over several years and despite his extensive writings and some general comments on guerrilla warfare and the campaign (Bell 1903; Military Governor of the Philippine Islands 1899, 252; Philippine Commission 1901c, 306), he neither gave direct recommendations or guidance nor did he have any impact on the conduct of the war (Brereton 2000, 87 ff.).

Insofar as formal training or advice was concerned, the situation had not changed much since the Indian Wars, where specific military knowledge on how to fight insurgents had remained in small, isolated circles. However, at the time of the Philippine Insurrection, there were more attempts to pass on an understanding of what was happening in the archipelago to officers back in the U.S. Both civil and military measures with regards to the Philippine Insurrection were discussed in contemporary professional journals,⁸³ although, the number of articles about insurgency and guerrilla war only made up a minor percentage. As Bickel (2001, 43 f.) has shown, of over 850 professional journal articles in the period 1898-1915, only 29 (or 3%) discussed such matters. Even though this shows that not only the Army but also the military thinkers of that time were already much predisposed towards conventional warfare, it still proves that information and knowledge exchange about tactics and methods of guerrilla warfare were exchanged much more broadly than they had been before.

⁸³ Three main professional military journals existed at that time: *Journal of the Military Service Institution*, *Journal of the U.S. Infantry Association* (later *Infantry Journal*), and *Journal of the U.S. Cavalry Association* (later *Cavalry Journal*). Published quarterly with about half dozen main articles each they reached most of the U.S. Army officers in that period.

Yet, when Aguinaldo made the decision to disband the regular troops and switch to a guerrilla-style warfare, U.S. military commanders were confronted with a totally new situation: “The Filipino idea behind the dissolution of their field army was not at the time of the occurrence well understood in the American camp”, MacArthur later wrote. Meanwhile, Otis was sending reports of an overwhelming victory to Washington. “As a consequence, misleading conclusions were reached to the effect that the insurrection itself had been destroyed, and that it only remained to sweep up the fag ends of the rebel army by a system of police administration not likely to be either onerous or dangerous” (cited in Carter 1917, 240). Otis issued all U.S. commanders in the various districts detailed guidance on strategy and tactics but due to the distance and his unwillingness to leave the capital, he was unable to control the implementation of his orders. The orders themselves were often too general and did not take the special circumstances in each district into account. Hence, although the military orders and the knowledge processes that went into it from Otis and his staff seemed to be instrumental, they were rather serving a legitimising function for the military, to show that something was being done about the situation. Nevertheless, there was no instrumental interest behind it to really enforce it. Also, some district commanders, in the hierarchy between Otis and the field officers, tried to influence the conduct of campaigns, although they often had no understanding of the situation on the ground (Moyar 2009, 68).

However, local commanders quickly acquired their own knowledge, placing the isomorphic processes on a local level, in contrast to the civil knowledge creation process. The remoteness of the different provinces as well as bad infrastructure hindered communications and supervisory control or micromanagement by the

district commanders. Thus, junior U.S. officers there were able to exert a great deal of autonomy, rejecting or only partially complying with orders which seemed impractical and develop their own approaches, which greatly increased their responsibilities. As Inspector General Joseph C. Breckinridge noted in his 1899 Annual Report:

[...] it should be recognized how largely the burden of field work fell upon the regular company officers; who not only had the duties of their grade to perform, but were assigned by the score to every type of duty, both of the line and staff, and civil duties [...]" (War U.S. War Department 1899b, 82).

5.4 Areas of military knowledge production

The following subsections look at how local commanders dealt with knowledge gaps in the areas of intelligence, native troops, and concentration camps and how they themselves became 'experts' in the respective matters and how this knowledge was shared. Although no 'formal' knowledge emerged from the Philippine Insurrection, the knowledge production in the Philippines was much more structured than it had been in the Indian Wars throughout the 19th century.

5.4.1 Intelligence

When the first U.S. troops arrived in the Philippines, they knew virtually nothing about the situation in the Philippines. The Army's intelligence service, the Military Information Division (MID), which had not anticipated a conflict in the archipelago, frantically tried to get more information by interviewing experts on South East Asia, analysing diplomatic communication and even travel journals. Hence, the first intelligence notes to the troops was nothing more than a copy of information on the Philippines from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*" (emphasis in original,

Powe 1974, 32) and the first comprehensive reports only came out in September 1898 (Adjutant General's Office 1898). Information obtained by Otis and U.S. Consul Oscar F. Williams relied on the testimony of wealthy Filipinos who had the most to gain from U.S. occupation (Adjutant General's Office 1902a, 718 f.; Gates 1973, 32; Linn 2000, 127). The failure to collect appropriate intelligence was without consequence at first, because the Army was successful in the conventional warfare against Aguinaldo, but when he turned towards guerrilla warfare, the fact that "the army in the Philippines had [...] no adequate system for the analysis of military intelligence" (Gates 1973, 208) became problematic. Since U.S. soldiers were unable to speak local languages, were unfamiliar with terrain and local habits and ultimately struggled to tell peaceful civilians from insurgents, the Army was, as Colonel Arthur L. Wagner stated "[...] a blind giant" (United States Congress 1902b, 2850).

At the same time, the Americans had a windfall. As Taylor notes, the insurgents were "prone to put into writing all their official acts [...] but they seem very generally not to have taken proper precautions to keep these records from falling into our hands upon the advance of our troops, and accordingly large numbers of such papers were captured" (Select Document 430, in Adjutant General's Office 1906). Otis created the Bureau of Insurgent Records (BIR) to analyse these documents, but it was not only understaffed but also overworked because it was tasked to justify U.S. Army policies in the Philippines to decision-makers and the public back in the U.S. (Farrell 1954, 391; Linn 1991, 92). This lack of intelligence collection and analysis at the strategic level was more and more compensated by adaption at the operational level. Otis' policy (or rather, non-policy) of not issuing guidelines, forced the local commanders to set up their own intelligence

networks and find the most practical and efficient measures for getting information. Hence, throughout much of 1899 and 1900, U.S. Army intelligence took place at the district, and not the departmental/national level (Linn 1991, 96).

In the districts, efforts to gather intelligence differed greatly, depending on how much emphasis the local commander put on this issue. A few examples shall be noted here. Captain John G. Balance, chief intelligence officer in Luzon, required officers in the outposts to include in their reports details about the number of males of military age and whether the U.S. 'pacification' policies were taught to and understood by the people. He used an U.S. Army fund for public works to pay for a network of informants, consisting of municipal officials, policemen and spies who reported on insurgent activities (Linn 1991, 97; Balance, 1900, in U.S. War Department 1898-1942, 395/2167/Letters Sent [LS] 2476, 2395/2157/LS 2137). Based on his experience from the U.S. frontier, Colonel Luther R. Hare created a "mosquito fleet" of mounted troops that matched the mobility of the insurgents and tried to prevent their use of flag stations, church bells, and outposts to warn of U.S. activity (Linn 1991, 98). In March 1900, in the province of La Union, Lieutenant William T. Johnston, was tasked by his superior to analyse the connection between the U.S. sponsored municipal governments and the insurgents. In his report "Investigation into the Methods Adopted by the Insurgents for Organizing and Maintaining a Guerrilla Force" (U.S. War Department 1900a, Vol. 8, 357 ff.), Johnston concluded that the insurgents' influence on local officials was considerable: to varying degrees, all towns contributed. Funds were raised by secret taxes and forging of municipal books, even guerrilla forces were raised and quartered in towns.

Based on his findings, Johnston began to interrogate local officials and captured insurgents, which gradually provided him with the structure of the insurgent supply system and allowed him counter it (Linn 1989, 42 f.). Johnston's work is a good example of how much intelligence expertise was a bottom-up procedure in the Philippines. MacArthur, who had recently succeeded Otis as commander in the Philippines, believed it was "the best description which has reached these headquarters of the insurgent method of organizing and maintaining a guerrilla force" (U.S. War Department 1900a, Vol. 8, 265). He incorporated many of Johnston's findings into his own annual report and later into general policies (Gates 1973, 194 f.; Linn 1989, 43). As in previous wars, the U.S. Army considered the local provost officer an important figure for intelligence collection (Boughton 1902, 227 f.). However, there was a novelty in the Philippine Insurrection: Knowledge did not remain within one unit or a small circle of officers, but was passed on to the top (and actually registered there, at least from MacArthur). Moreover, some officers, such as Lt. William T. Johnston, gained reputation because of their 'knowledge' in this area of work, travelling around the archipelago to take up difficult cases and giving seminar lessons on their methods (Johnston 1902). Hence, information and knowledge interchange was frequent (McAlexander 1905, 190 ff.) and we can see that individual knowledge production had a significant impact.

On 13 December 1900, the BIR was reorganised as the Division of Military Information (DMI), which now actually focused on translating insurgent records as well as passing on the insights to the respective local commanders (Gates 1973, 194). Headed by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph T. Dickman and assisted by Captain Ralph Van Deman, the DMI established a map section to issue accurate

maps of the islands, maintained close cooperation with other agencies such as the Manila Police Department and the intelligence services in the Philippine Constabulary. The DMI also introduced another novel feature. Concerned that that the troops serving in Philippines might be discharged before he had developed a means of “collecting and preserving the Military knowledge and experience gained in the past and which may be acquired in the future and of rendering the same available to succeeding authorities” (cited in Linn 1991, 100), MacArthur ordered the ‘identity cards’ project in March 1901, where each post commander had to fill out cards not only on insurgent officers but on all important people of a community, such as officials, priests, and policemen.

This was helpful in creating a central file of the insurgents and their infrastructure, but also aided in controlling the population.⁸⁴ However, the fact that the quality of Identification (ID) Cards varied from district to district as well as the rapid collapse of insurgent infrastructure within a year prevented that the programme took full effect (Linn 1991, 101). Also, Van Deman got preoccupied with putative actions of Japanese spies in the islands and a possible general uprising, which rendered the daily analyses of the DMI “to be a blend of hearsay, rumor, and fear” (Gates 1973, 251; see also Powe 1974, 36 f.).

As a result, it was no surprise that the DMI did not foresee the massacre at Balangiga on 28 September 1901, where almost all men of Company C, 9th U.S. Infantry, were killed in a surprise attack by the locals (Gates 1973, 248 ff.; Linn 2000, 310 ff.). The event, which caused a great outcry in the US, had been announced by the mayor of the town in a letter to the local insurgent commander,

⁸⁴ As a matter of fact, the issuing of ID Cards has been a vital part of most ‘counterinsurgency’ strategies ever since, e.g. in Malaya or Iraq (see e.g. Beehner 2007; Sepp 2005, 5).

which was intercepted by the Americans but not analysed until after the attack (U.S. War Department 1902b, Vol. 1, 633). In the aftermath of the attack, Major Edwin F. Glenn, judge advocate in Brigadier General Jacob H. Smith's Sixth Brigade, was tasked with locating the "civil leaders of the insurrection on Samar and Leyte" (Chaffee to Corbin, 10 January, 1902, in Corbin 1898-1909, Box 1). Although he might have been successful in damaging the insurgent infrastructure in a short amount of time, his ability to get intelligence rested on the 'expertise' in administering the 'water cure'. He had already used this torture a year earlier in another part of the archipelago. In the 'water cure', the victim had his hands tied behind his back and the mouth was held open by a stick. Water was poured into the victim until his stomach was full and then he was kicked and beaten to force the water back out. This was repeated several times (Schumacher 2006, 484).

Furthermore, despite being outside of military jurisdiction, Glenn raided the neighbouring province of Leyte, kidnapping civilians and causing "serious embarrassment in the operation of the civil government". He also ordered the execution of seven Filipinos and torture of three priests (Linn 1991, 106). Although convicted in a Court Martial, Glenn's military career proceeded smoothly and he rose through the ranks. Indeed, not all intelligence efforts in the aftermath of the Balangiga massacre were as harsh and violent as those of Major Glenn, some officers even expressively forbade torture as a means to collect intelligence (Emory S. West to C.O.'s, 23 September, 1901, in U.S. War Department 1898-1942, 2349), but torture was certainly one aspect of U.S. Army intelligence collection in the Philippines.

In sum, the formation of intelligence expertise was pretty much a decentralised effort in the Philippine-American War. Without general guidelines from

headquarters, local commanders had to become their own intelligence officers. This happened to a varying degree in the different districts, but in contrast to earlier insurgency conflicts, such as the Indian campaigns, information and knowledge was disseminated on a much broader level and even moved, bottom-up, from the operational to the strategic level, albeit too short to show a definite impact on the war effort. Overall, from the view of our theoretical framework, we can conclude that expert knowledge production in intelligence was largely a substantiating one. There was no centralised instrumental interest to invest in this factor of military pacification, simply because the insurgency was not deemed dangerous and important enough, at least at first. Later on, specific successful aspects of intelligence work developed by local intelligence officers were used to substantiate the campaign.

5.4.2 Native Troops

When the conflict between the U.S. troops and Aguinaldo's forces turned violent in February 1899, one particular problem the Americans faced was troop strength. General Merritt, had already forecasted before his arrival in the Philippines that the number of U.S. soldiers would be insufficient for the occupation (cited in Asprey 1975, Vol.1, 484):

When the work to be done consists of conquering a territory 7,000 miles from our base, defended by a regularly trained and acclimatized army [...] and inhabited by 14 millions [sic] of people, the majority of whom will regard U.S. with intense hatred of both race and religion?

Although the U.S. expeditionary force was doubled to 45,000 in August 1899 – consisting largely of Volunteer Regiments transferred from Cuba and Puerto Rico – the beginning guerrilla war made it soon obvious that the U.S. Army had not

enough men and material to pacify the islands. As Matthew Batson wrote in a letter to his wife in June 1899, “to occupy the entire island with a suitable military force [...] would require at least 100,000 on Luzon alone (Batson 1866-1917, Box 2, 59). In addition, significant numbers of the Volunteer U.S. troops were scheduled to be withdrawn due to enlistment constraints. An answer to this problem lay with the Filipinos themselves, the need for more troops was a central factor in considering this. Not all of them were in support of Aguinaldo and different groups and tribes were willing to cooperate with the U.S. troops against him. Hence, the formation of indigenous troops seemed to suggest itself. In fact, the U.S Army had made good experience with such auxiliary troops in the past.⁸⁵

The use of indigenous troops was hardly a unique American idea, but rather resembled another instance of isomorphic adaptation. In establishing their overseas possessions in Asia and Africa, other colonial powers such as Britain, France, and Germany relied heavily on native levies; both for initial conquest and subsequent oppression. The reason for this was simple: In the late 19th century, many colonial empires had grown too large and widespread and were too costly to be ruled entirely with regular soldiers. Thus, the use of indigenous forces was an expedient solution. The fact that other European powers had successfully ‘pacified’ their colonies was well-known to U.S. military thinkers and discussed in scholarly debates (see e.g. Powell 1902; Rhodes 1902; Seaman 1900). In particular, the British experience with colonial troops had an impact. As Rhodes (1902, 3) notes,

⁸⁵ During the Mexican War (1846-1847), the Texas Rangers employed local Mexican scouts and spies, albeit not in a formal manner (Marple 1983, 12 ff.). During the last phase of the Indian Wars (1865-1898), the Pawnee Scouts allied with the U.S. frontier troops in the fight against other tribes such as the Sioux or the Apaches, taking advantage of the inherent tribal hatreds between the different groups which often brought about atrocities (Marple 1983, 18 ff.).

[...] our country is indeed an amateur in the colonizing business [...] the veteran colonizers of the old world have found [native troops] absolutely necessary to permanent success. Great Britain, the greatest colonizer the world has ever seen, has made brilliant use of her Indian, Beluchistan, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Soudanese troops.

As the reputation and techniques of British 'experts' such as Robert Baden-Powell, who had written on this issue several years before (1891), were well understood by many U.S. Army officers at the turn of the century, it is more than likely that British experience influenced and shaped the Army's policies in the Philippines (Freedman 1967, 212; Miller 1982, 81 f.). Indeed, already the Spanish had ruled the islands with only 5,000 Spanish regulars, relying mostly on native troops (Philippine Commission 1901c, 80 f.). Hence, we can conclude that the knowledge in this area was significantly derived from foreign experience. Despite the fact that the U.S. government and military were keen to display themselves as a different, 'benevolent' colonial power that was different from the European ones, they were not hesitant to adapt from their experiences.

The idea of employing native scouts in the Philippines came from Matthew Batson, a lieutenant in the U.S. Fourth Cavalry. This is another indication that in military affairs, the expert knowledge production took a much more bottom-up approach. Batson had hired Macabebes – who opposed the insurrection, and were despised by Aguinaldo's Tagalogs – as guides and boatmen to navigate through the waterways of Luzon during General Henry Lawton's campaign (Laurie 1989, 179). They proved so useful that Batson drew up a plan for a company of Macabebes and requested their enlistment in the U.S. Army (Batson to Adjutant General, 1 September, 1899, in Batson 1866-1917, Box 2). This was approved by Lawton and ultimately Otis by Special Order 112 on 10 September

1899 (U.S. War Department 1900b, 13 f.). Despite their propensity to commit atrocities (Kramer 2002, 202; Ross 2009b, 354), the Macabebes were hailed by military leaders such as Otis, Lawton, and MacArthur for their “fearlessness” and “efficient service” as the U.S. “main reliance and support” (U.S. War Department 1900a, 266; 1900b, 13 f.).

However, not only the military, but also the civilian experts from the Philippine Commission were fond of using native troops in the pacification of the archipelago, because it would eventually enable to reduce the number of U.S. troops (Philippine Commission 1901c, 77). In the light of our theoretical framework, this reduction of the U.S. troops had a clear instrumental, but also a substantiating effect. Obviously, the U.S. was not going to pull back from the archipelago as they intended long-term control over it. Yet, a smaller U.S. footprint in the amount of soldiers deployed would fit better with the narrative of ‘benevolent’ Americans. Yet, the expert knowledge was not developed in an instrumental, top-down manner, but specific aspects of knowledge developed by field officers were utilised in a bottom-up manner.

There were several advantages for employing native troops such as the Macabebes in the Philippines. First, in the long run, it was believed they would replace U.S. troops, because it was both politically and financially undesirable to station large U.S. units in the archipelago. Second, U.S. troops had difficulty distinguishing between insurgents and ordinary Filipinos and were not acquainted with Filipino dialects and habits, whereas colonial troops would be able to distinguish. Moreover, as the Commission stated later in 1904, “it is politically most important that Filipinos should suppress Filipino disturbances and arrest Filipino outlaws” (Munro 1905; U.S. War Department 1904, 181 f., 492). Third,

Filipino troops were cheaper for the US, both financially and politically,⁸⁶ but for the Filipinos themselves the salary, as well as other benefits such as education and training, were quite attractive (Laurie 1989, 182; Rhodes 1902, 15 f.; Schirmer 1972, 227). Fourth, with more native troops stationed in the rural outposts, U.S. troops would be able to move back to secure garrisons, making rural pacification more effective (U.S. War Department 1904, 182).

After the initial success of the Macabebes under Batson's command, the Army Reorganisation Act of 1901 allowed for a larger recruitment of Scouts. In total, the U.S. Army recruited eleven companies of Macabebes, thirteen of Ilocanos, four of Tagalogs, two of Bicol, and sixteen of Visayan. Later, Filipinos from more islands were recruited. By the summer of 1901, over 5,000 Filipinos had joined these units. They were initially stationed throughout the archipelago in three troublesome military districts (Laurie 1989, 182). The stationing was a particular knowledge-gaining process. The Army found out that the scout companies, originally serving outside their home province, actually came from tribes hostile to the insurgents in their home region. By stationing them in their local areas and by tribe formation, the Army took advantage of the traditional hostility and encourage the Scouts to fiercer and more brutal fighting. This allowed the U.S. to further exploit the narrative of the 'savage' Filipinos and gave a justification to their attempts to 'civilize' them. After the end of the insurrection, when the U.S. expected a more submissive nation, the units were more and more mixed to prevent further rivalry and sectionalism (Adjutant General's Office 1902b, 6; Laurie 1989, 183; Stacey 1907, 223). Scouts were always commanded

⁸⁶ Obviously, the U.S. public cared more about a killed U.S. soldier, especially if from the Volunteers, compared to a Filipino Scout. An issue we can see reoccurring in other conflicts, such as the use of contractors/mercenaries in the recent Iraq War (Schooner 2008).

by U.S. officers, because Filipinos were deemed incapable of leading themselves (Woolard 1975, 13). As a contemporary stated, “the yellow and black races make excellent fighting material, when properly led by whites” (Seaman 1900, 853).

The Philippine Commission and the War Department were indeed quite content with their creation. The Scouts “uniformly performed faithful and effective service” and “were ready to follow, or precede their officers into any danger, blindly and without question” (U.S. War Department 1904, 182). In U.S. imperialist circles, the recruitment of native troops was very popular, as it gave the impression of American “sepoys” (Miller 1982, 81). Anti-imperialists, however, maintained that the Macabebes had trained the U.S. soldiers in brutal measures, particularly “the fiendish expedient of the water cure” (Schirmer 1972, 227). As part of an official investigation into army conduct by the Committee on the Philippine Islands, it became obvious that native Scouts (along with U.S. troops) had used torture in numerous instances (United States Congress 1902b). Even Batson had to admit that “our native allies did resort occasionally to this method of inflicting pain, as a means of extorting information from unwilling witnesses” (The Outlook 1902, 711). Yet, the anti-imperialists were unable to capitalise on these allegations and the committee's findings, as the hearings kept being postponed until the end of the war (Schumacher 2006, 485). In terms of public dissemination, we can thus see that the U.S. military and government were keen to only publish specific, substantiating aspects of the native troops, but to hide their negative implications.

In sum, the establishment of native troops in the Philippines was an important factor in U.S. colonial policy. Their assistance in the form of guides, interpreters, boatmen, and scouts allowed the Americans to exert their military superiority against Aguinaldo’s insurrectos. Moreover, there was an inherent psychological

factor in their enlistment. The Scouts made their fellow countrymen believe that collaboration with U.S. military and civil authorities was beneficial for them, and that their service would guarantee social mobility. This undermined Philippine nationalism for decades (Laurie 1989, 175). In terms of the knowledge creation process. It was, yet again, a bottom-up process. Although the U.S. Army had used similar troops in previous campaigns and other colonial powers had set precedents, which were quite well known and discussed in the U.S. Army at that time, there were no instructions from military or civilian decision-makers at the beginning of the war to employ native forces. Only when the conflict turned into a quagmire for U.S. troops and individuals such as Batson, Lawton, and Funston developed the scout system (and once it had proven successful), it was taken on by the superior military commanders and employed throughout.

5.4.3 Concentration Camps

Aguinaldo's decision to wage guerrilla warfare in late 1899 was not only driven by the sheer need to counter the overwhelming U.S. military power and limit his losses, but he also tried to play to the anti-imperialist audience in the US, knowing that with William Jennings Bryan an avowed anti-imperialist was the contestee of McKinley in the upcoming presidential election in November 1900 and that a Democratic victory would likely mean independence for the Philippines (Gates 1973, 163 f.). MacArthur, who had criticised Otis for his policy of focusing on civil government as he realized that the insurgents controlled many of the towns and their officials (William H. Taft to Elihu Root, 14 July 1900 and 18 August 1900, in Taft 1880-1930, Reel 640), did not actually change this policy before the election to limit possible failures and an effect on the election (Adjutant General's Office 1902a, 1203 f.).

After McKinley's re-election, however, there was a definite drive towards tougher measures. As the U.S. Army's Adjutant General, Henry C. Corbin, stated that, "the successes of the Filipinos have conclusively shown that the time has arrived when more aggressive operations would be in order" (cited in Linn 1989, 23). Elihu Root claimed that "methods which have proved successful in our Indian campaigns in the West" (Elihu Root to Secretary of State, 2 November 1900, in U.S. War Department 1780's-1917, 349329) were needed. This shows that there was a knowledge gap of how to wage the "more aggressive" operations. However, this knowledge was not to be produced from scratch, but clearly had its foundations in the U.S. experience on the Western Frontier. Hence, on 20 December, MacArthur instigated a much more rigorous military policy and placed the Philippines under martial law, using central provisions from G.O. 100 of 1863 (Philippine Commission 1901b, Vol.1, 91 f.).

The introduction of martial law brought with it the suspension of civil judicial rights. Local officers now had summary court powers and could revoke local due-process rights and even suspend the right to trial. Travel restrictions and curfews were in place to track the movements of individuals. In some places all males had to have a registration certificate. This was controlled through ID cards, which the town *presidentes* had to control. By this, the Army effectively targeted the social elites, because of the ability to contribute to the insurgents. Some were imprisoned or exiled, their property confiscated and distributed (Bickel 2001, 34 f.; U.S. War Department 1902a, Vol. 1, 192). A critical aspect of MacArthur's orders focused on the attempt to separate the civilians from the insurgents, something that had been tried before, but was now done much more

comprehensively and, in fact, uprooting for the Filipino population through systematic concentration of population in camps.⁸⁷

Concentration camps, which should not be confused with the Nazi extermination camps during World War II,⁸⁸ were an emerging social phenomenon in colonies around the world at the end of the 19th century (Hyslop 2011). Hence, we can certainly say that the experience other countries had made with them had an influence on the way the knowledge about them was produced and utilised in the Philippines. The U.S. public and policy-makers had first become aware of this method in 1897 during the Cuban war of independence, when Spanish General Valeriano Weyler transferred several hundred thousand Cubans into “reconcentration camps”. This caused outrage in the US, which was further fuelled by the U.S. yellow press, who wrote against the “Butcher Weyler” (Fellow 2010, 163; Whyte 2009). Almost ironical, it was the issue of these camps that tilted the U.S. towards the war against Spain, and, thus, ultimately the annexation of the Philippines. As McKinley himself had observed (1897), “the cruel policy of concentration [whilst] justified as a necessary measure of war and as a means of cutting off supplies from the insurgents” was immoral, requiring the U.S. government to issue a “firm and earnest protest.”[...] “It was not civilized warfare”, he stated. “It was extermination.”

However, in late 1900, with the insurgency still in full swing, the U.S. turned its attention to this concept, which was also sold to them by articulate British experts

⁸⁷ The respective provision in G.O. 100 stated: “Common justice and plain expediency require that the military commander protect the manifestly loyal citizens, in revolted territories, against the hardships of war as much as the common misfortune of all war admits” (U.S. War Department 1863, para. 156).

⁸⁸ However, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), Hannah Arendt, traces the origins of Nazi concentration camps to the colonial arenas of imperial powers.

and politicians, who praised the policy's necessity and effectiveness during the Boer War in South Africa (1899–1902). In December 1900, a young, then little-known British MP spoke publicly about the war: Winston Churchill defended the British “policy of removing country people into the towns.” He stated that “the present situation in South Africa seemed to resemble that in Cuba” before 1898. For him, the Boers, fighting as guerrillas, had made it “hard for the British to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants,” and thus made separation necessary. While it was “less comfortable” for the ‘reconcentrated’, Churchill assured his audience that they had “not been subjected to unnecessary hardship” (cited in Kramer 2006a, 153).

The U.S. press, which had condemned Weyler only a few years before, at first followed the arguments of Churchill and other imperialists. In October 1901, an article in the reform journal *Public Opinion*, reprinted from a British magazine, claimed that the “inmates” of the Boer camps were “generally quite happy in their temporary homes, which they have made as cosy and comfortable as circumstances will permit” (1901, 555). In the Philippines, the situation was indeed not “cosy and comfortable”. The Army tried to isolate and starve the insurgents by deliberately destroying the rural economy: peasants were ordered to relocate to a garrisoned town by a given date, leaving behind all but their most basic possessions. Outside of the policed, fenced-in camps, U.S. and native troops would then conduct a scorched-earth campaign, burning houses and food storages, capturing or annihilating livestock as well as killing everyone they encountered without proper documents (Kramer 2006a, 152). As it was aware of the delicacy of the issue, the Army referred to the camps with euphemisms such as “colonies” or “zones of protection” to hide their true nature. Maj. Gen. Adna

Chaffee, who had replaced MacArthur in July 1901, even requested that a plan for a major concentration campaign in Luzon in December 1901, be “hand[ed] to the Secretary to read and then destroy[ed]. I don’t care to place on file in the Department any paper of the kind, which would be evidence of what may be considered” (Chaffee to Corbin, 10 Jan 1902, in Corbin 1898-1909, Box 1). Again, this is clearly an indication that the U.S. military was keen to publish only favourable and substantiating details of its concentration camp policy, but not disseminate anything about the real conditions in the camps. The concentration camps were certainly not an instrumental U.S. policy, because there was no intention to keep them after the military insurrection had been defeated. Yet, they served a clear, substantiating purpose for whilst it was ongoing.

The most comprehensive and controversial reconcentration programme, was carried out by Brig. Gen. J. Franklin Bell, commanding the Third Separate Brigade, in Southern Luzon (Linn 1989, 154). In his Telegraphic Circular No. 2 from 8 December 1901, authorising local officers to establish a zone in each town where inhabitants from “sparsely settled and outlying barrios” could be concentrated. They had time until Christmas to bring in property, livestock, and food into the camp. After that, everything found outside the zones were subject to confiscation (Bell 1902, 1 f.). In his telegraphic circulars, Bell did issue directives to his subordinates to care for the people in the camps, including the construction of storehouses, food price controls, public works projects, and vaccination programs (Bell 1902, 2, 10, 33).

Yet, Bell and other U.S. officers completely underestimated the scale of reconcentration. 300,000 were forced into overcrowded and unsanitary camps. Food shortages, low morale, bad hygiene and disease were commonplace,

culminating in a Cholera epidemic in 1902. In Bell's camps alone, 11,000 Filipinos died (Linn 1989, 155), across the archipelago the numbers were as high as 40,000 (Asprey 1975, Vol.1, 212). Furthermore, Bell's circulars also show that Bell knowingly violated the provisions of G.O. 100, which were not only the legal foundation for the concentration camps but the whole U.S. campaign in the Philippines. Bell bestowed on his subordinates the right of retaliation. When a U.S. soldier was "murdered," they were instructed to "[select] by lot" a prisoner of war, "when practicable from those who belong to the town where the murder and assassination occurred" and execute him (Bell 1902, 8). Moreover, he basically gave his troops a blank cheque to commit atrocities (1902, 2):

It is an inevitable and deplorable consequence of war that the innocent generally suffer with the guilty, for when inflicting for when inflicting merited punishment upon a guilty class, it is unfortunately at times impossible to avoid the doing of damage [...] a short and severe war creates in the aggregate less loss and suffering than a benevolent war indefinitely prolonged.

Since Chaffee received copies of Bell's directives, it must have been apparent to the military leaders what he was doing (Miller 1982, 208). But Bell was never held accountable for his actions, even though his policy provoked a storm of controversy in the U.S. press, when the full scale of the atrocities became apparent and he was compared to Weyler.

In conclusion, knowledge production on the concentration camps in the Philippines was somewhat different to the other two military areas discussed. Whilst the district and departmental commanders were still able to erect and run the camps themselves, and some, such as Bell, indeed became quite knowledgeable in this area, the impetus for concentration actually came from above. As Hyslop rightly puts it (2011, 274), "the concentration camp arose as

the response of new, professionalised military cultures to the challenge of guerilla [sic] warfare.” In this sense, the U.S. military commanders encouraged the construction of camps, based on favourable British experience in South Africa. As a new means of containing and controlling subject populations, the concentration camp entered the military and colonial repertoire, leading (in the long run) not only to the horrors of Auschwitz and other camps during World War II, but the basic concept of rounding up the population to ‘separate’ them from the insurgents was used by the U.S. in subsequent ‘counterinsurgency’ campaigns, including Vietnam and Iraq. This element of continuity that we can see emerging in the Philippines will be recurrent in the subsequent case study analyses of Vietnam and Iraq.

Overall, we have seen that military knowledge production in the Philippines was largely a bottom-up process and the knowledge produced for it was mainly for substantiating purposes. Neither the military nor the U.S. government were ordering the development of specific counterinsurgency strategies or tactics, but this was developed by field officers and in successful cases adopted at higher operational level. A notable exception is the erection of concentration camps, which one could argue played an important role in separating the civilian population from the insurgents and subordinate them to U.S. rule.

5.5 Reflections on military knowledge production in the Philippines

As this chapter has shown, knowledge production in military affairs was different to what happened in the civil area. The isomorphic processes, which certainly took place, happened in a bottom-up rather than top-down fashion, as apparent

in the civilian knowledge production. Since the end of the Civil War the U.S. military had begun a transformation towards a professional military. Based on the model of European Armies, especially the Prussians, the U.S. Army began to reorganise in the last decades of the 19th century, introducing a general staff as well as new techniques and material. More importantly, however, was the establishment of higher military schools beyond West Point that would teach officers throughout their career. Moreover, the Army now began to systematically collect information on past campaigns to analyse them and use the insights gained from it for future operations. In all this, individuals were a major driving force. Military experts such as Upton and Wagner were influential commentators on military strategy and doctrine, whose writings fell on fertile ground with the Neo-Hamiltonian policy-makers during the 1890s. This had an influence on the way the Army operated in the Philippines.

The analysis of three areas of the military policy – intelligence, native troops, and concentration camps – indicates that standard procedures or military theories were quickly dropped or modified to the circumstances of jungle warfare. In the Philippines, the teachings of Upton or other military experts did not play a role. Aside from minor options to directly transfer experiences from the Indian Wars to the Philippines, much of the strategy and tactics in the campaign against the Filipino insurgents relied on adaptation and flexibility. What is important in this regard, is that, in contrast to the civic knowledge formation process, this was mostly done bottom-up. As Linn notes, “the key to the Army’s success was its lack of adherence to rigid doctrines or theories and the willingness of its officers to experiment with novel pacification schemes” (Linn 1989, 169). Although general orders were issued by Otis and subsequent commanders, these were

largely ignored by the district and departmental commanders because they were infeasible for their local conditions. Thus, in most areas of military policy, the field officers became experts themselves, developing local solutions. One of the notable exceptions was the use of concentration camps, whose establishment was based on MacArthur's brutal campaign against the insurgents after McKinley's re-election in November 1900.

Although knowledge procured by experts of conventional war, such as Upton, Birkhimer, and Wagner did not play a significant role in forming U.S. military policy in the Philippines, their work still had an influence. On the one hand, the adaptability the Army showed in the Philippines was not only what it had done on the frontier, but also reflected the versatility, which the military theorists had called for before (Bigelow 1891; Birtle 1998, 114; Wagner 1893, 14). On the other, compared to the Indian Wars, knowledge was now much more disseminated throughout the Army. Although it was certainly not yet captured in formal knowledge, i.e. doctrine, there was a frequent exchange of knowledge and techniques across the districts as shown in the analyses of intelligence, native troops, and to a lesser extent, in concentration camps. Officers such as William T. Johnston or Edwin F. Glenn gained a 'reputation' for their work (which was not always favourable, as seen in the charges of atrocities against Glenn) and travelled around the archipelago to teach other field officers their knowledge. Finally, officers could rely on accounts of the Army's actions against the insurgents in the archipelago (and Cuba) in a slowly emerging body of scholarly literature in the professional journals as well as in official Army reports. Until 1912, when the first formal doctrine began to emerge, these were the only written accounts of lessons learned available to the officers and soldiers.

Overall, however, for the Army, knowledge about military measures seemed to be not as important as the focus for the military would remain on reorganising it in the image of European, conventional Armies and ultimately preparing it to fight conventional war. Yet, there was an important lesson to be learnt from the Philippines, which is scantily, if at all, mentioned in the literature: The new role of the military in a colonial setting. In conjunction with the civilian experts of the Philippine Commission, the U.S. Army's role in the Philippines can best be described in the words of a contemporary French 'expert' in insurgency warfare, Hubert Lyautey. In his book *Du rôle colonial de l'Armée* (1900) he analysed the work of another French 'expert', Joseph Gallieni, in Tonkin. More importantly, however, he stated that colonial officers were defined by their social role. A colonial officer was not only a soldier, but also public official, teacher, architect, and engineer, hence he became an 'expert' and took up any skill required to develop the region under his command. Lyautey claimed that colonial wars were constructive, the prelude to the economic revival of a country that had been torn by anarchy or suffered from other colonial despotism. Thus, in his view, colonialism was no longer the exploitation of one race by another, but it led to progress, which was beneficial for both ruler and colonial subject (Porch 1986, 390). This paternalistic attitude characterised the U.S. conduct in the Philippines during the insurrection and in the decades afterwards.

American 'benevolence', ordered by McKinley and defined by the civilian and military 'experts', was neither really benevolent nor geared towards the interest of the Filipino people, but more towards U.S. interest. In essence, the whole concept of 'benevolence' became more of a public-relations exercise towards the U.S. public than a workable formula for the Philippines. It was designed to appeal

to the critical voices in the U.S. that spoke out against imperialism. Ostensibly, the benevolent terms of tutelage,” “uplift,” “evolution,” “assimilation” were departures from earlier colonial language and racial extermination. The logic behind was the same: like children, the Filipinos had to be supervised, controlled, and punished. As it was implicitly seen by policymakers and ‘experts’, ‘benevolence’ could be replaced with harsher methods (Rafael 1993).

The case study of the Philippines is an important piece of the whole analysis in this thesis and for our understanding of counterinsurgency knowledge utilisation. What we have seen here is that knowledge creation was largely a result of the failure to pacify the archipelago with the existing knowledge, which posed severe problems for the U.S. civilian and military authorities in the first two years to suppress the insurgency. Although the way in which knowledge was created differed from the civilian (top-down) to the military (bottom-up) side, it generally had an instrumental purpose. In this sense, the knowledge was output-oriented, yet, with the ulterior motive of restoring the legitimacy of the U.S. administration and military, which was lost due to incompetent approaches of stopping Aguinaldo and his fellow insurrectos (in particular by Gen. Otis), as well as the aim of enabling long-term U.S. occupation and exploitation (especially in economic terms) of the Philippines. Perhaps the most important impression we can take from this case is that even though no formal doctrine was written down, the inclusion of experts and a focus on learning lessons had turned the fortunes of war in favour of the Americans, which suggested this approach for future campaigns of a similar nature.

6 Vietnam (1954-1975) – Civil knowledge and Modernisation

6.1 Introduction

On 6 January 1961, in a secret speech to representatives of the principal organisations responsible for the official formulation and dissemination of Soviet Communist ideology (United States Congress 1961), Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev predicted that the world was moving towards communism and that “wars of national liberation” were an important part of that movement. He pledged Soviet support for indigenous rebellions against the U.S., saying that, “we will beat the U.S. with small wars of liberation. We will nibble them to exhaustion all over the globe, in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia” (cited in Kempe 2011, 78). The speech, which was publicly released by the Kremlin a few days later, made “a conspicuous impression” upon the newly elected U.S. President John F. Kennedy; especially the “bellicose confidence which surged through” it (Schlesinger 1965, 284).⁸⁹

Kennedy received the speech just before his inauguration, at a particularly sensitive time. The Soviets not only seemed to be euphoric about their own recent military and technological achievements over the US, but concrete events in the ‘underdeveloped’ world seemed to show the inabilities of the ‘imperialist’ powers (Schlesinger 1965, 282). In Laos and Vietnam, the Communists were undermining the US-supported government of Ngô Đình Diệm. In Cuba, the U.S.’s front yard, Fidel Castro had just fought a successful Communist guerrilla

⁸⁹ However, later analyses showed that Khrushchev’s remarks did not actually denote a shift in Soviet worldwide policies and the emphasis of “wars of national liberation” was probably a response to Chinese Communist’s criticism (Library of Congress 1961). In fact, the few paragraphs in which Khrushchev talked about it were embedded in a long review of Soviet domestic and foreign policies (Blaufarb 1977, 54).

campaign and ousted Fulgencio Batista, another U.S.-sponsored dictator. Hearing such words from Moscow just before he was sworn in as President must have led Kennedy to believe that this policy shift was specifically done to provoke and test him (Kempe 2011, 78). Moreover, Kennedy was particularly interested in guerrilla war. He had been to Vietnam in 1951 and witnessed the French struggle against Việt Minh under Hồ Chí Minh and Võ Nguyên Giáp, which led him to conclude that guerrilla war posed major problems that could only be solved politically (Kennedy 1964, 288). In a 1958 Senate speech, he related this kind of warfare to Soviet aggression: “Sputnik diplomacy, limited brush-fire wars, indirect non-overt aggression, intimidation and subversion, internal revolution” (cited in Schlesinger 1965, 290).

Both Kennedy’s and Khrushchev’s interest for “wars of national liberation” and guerrilla war along with the apparent success of these strategies in different countries around the world highlighted the importance of contest for the ‘underdeveloped’ world had become after World War II, particularly in South East Asia. Thus, as with the Philippines case, the analysis does not solely focus on the Vietnam War as such, but stands out against the background of general knowledge constitution and utilisation to achieve or retain a hegemonic position. This chapter utilises the theoretical framework of instrumental and symbolic knowledge to explain how after World War II, wider societal transformations and concomitant socio-theoretic theories had an important impact on expert knowledge production and implementation in the Vietnam War. This went far beyond the way that expert knowledge had been produced and utilised in the Philippines campaign. Modern, activist, contemporary experts came to Washington in the Kennedy and Johnson era and into government

administration, attempting to build a new 'Camelot', but left a nation divided by war and torn by dissent.⁹⁰ Moreover, this case study also questions the notion that Vietnam was predominantly a military campaign. At the beginning of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the focus lay clearly on civilian methods, which were supposed to show the Vietnamese the moral and economic superiority of the U.S. capitalist democracy versus the Soviet Communist system.

This chapter contends that in Vietnam, for the first time, academic 'experts in political science, sociology and anthropology, were used by the U.S. government and military to develop a comprehensive 'counterinsurgency' strategy. This was based on the principles of the so-called 'modernisation theory' to defeat Communist subversion in the country and beyond, attempting to secure a global hegemonic position for the U.S. However, modernisation theory was not merely an ideological narrative, developed as a political instrument to counter the increasing Soviet Communist pressures in Southeast Asia, nor was it simply a rhetorical tool. In fact, it was a "cognitive framework" (Latham 2000, 5) through which intellectuals and elites in the U.S. administration, the "best and brightest", interpreted their actions and the role of the U.S. in the world. In this sense, the civilian knowledge developed for this campaign was, at first, instrumental and geared towards this strategic goal of increasing and safeguarding U.S. influence in Vietnam and beyond. However, when the security situation deteriorated, many civilian programmes invented and initiated by the 'experts' were simply disregarded and dropped, making the knowledge produced for them legitimising or substantiating fig leaf for U.S. involvement in the conflict.

⁹⁰ Kennedy's presidency was often compared to – in particular by his admirers – King Arthur's mythical court which described the ideals of the young president (Zimmer 2013). In this sense, 'Camelot' can be seen as a metonymy for the promises of development and modernization.

6.2 Nature and progression of the war

After the French defeat and withdrawal from Vietnam, concomitant with the establishment of a Communist North Vietnamese state in 1954, the U.S. began to increasingly focus on Southeast Asia in general and Vietnam in particular, to “protect its position and restore its prestige [...] by new initiative in Southeast Asia, where the situation must be stabilized as soon as possible to prevent further losses to Communism [...]” (NSC 5429/2, in U.S. Department of State 1952-1954, Doc. 312). One of the foremost aims of the U.S. government was to thwart the general election, proposed by the Geneva Agreement, because it was more than likely that the “wrong side” (i.e. the Communists) would win (Eisenhower 1963, 372). Despite claims that the U.S. would accept a unified Communist Vietnam, if resulting from free and fair elections (Gravel 1971, Vol. 3, 570f.), Eisenhower heavily supported Ngô Đình Diệm’s anti-Communist regime in South Vietnam through economic and military aid (Latham 2000, 161; Tucker 2011, 1170).

Throughout the latter half of the 1950s, U.S. political support for Diệm was very strong and for several years he managed to suppress the large scale random dissidence in both rural and urban areas (Gravel 1971, Vol. 1, 300 ff.) through his “Denounce the Communists” campaign, during which many thousand (alleged) communists and often innocent civilians were imprisoned, tortured, and executed (Kolko 1985, 89; Lewy 1978, 294 f.).⁹¹ In 1956, Diệm declined to hold the general election, which was in line with what the U.S. government wanted, but the emerging Communist underground in South Vietnam – called the *Việt Cộng* (VC) by Saigon newspapers (Gravel 1971, Vol. 1, 317) – well-understood that it barred

⁹¹ Eisenhower publicly praised Diệm, particularly on his 1957 state visit to the US, yet in private, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles admitted that he had been selected because of a lack of alternatives (Karnow 1997, 230).

them from winning via the ballot. However, U.S. policymakers failed to notice that many people in the South did not identify themselves with Diệm's artificial regime, but with a larger, historically and culturally-defined Vietnam. Appalled by his violence, many influential political, religious, and social leaders of South Vietnam found themselves aligned together against his government and the supporting U.S. (Harrison 1983, 216; Kahin 1986, 95 ff.; Latham 2000, 161).

In 1957, a campaign of terrorism and subversion started in the South. Assassination squads targeted government officials and other opponents, particularly men "who enjoyed the people's sympathy", leaving "bad officials unharmed in order to [...] sow hatred against the government" (Spector 1985, 312). In 1960 the North officially established the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (or National Liberation Front, NLF), to ferment insurgency in the South and acquire public support against the Diệm regime and its American sponsors (Gravel 1971, Vol. 1, 255).⁹² For its survival, the NLF had to put a particular emphasis on learning and adaptation and encompass military, political, and social aspects into its strategy and tactics. Via the Ho Chi Minh trail, Communists from the North infiltrated South Vietnam, putting heavy pressure on Diệm and his U.S. allies. Diệm's response to the growing insurgency was more oppression. In May 1959, the National Assembly passed Law 10-59, which constituted harsh measures to fight suspected terrorists, including drumhead trials that could impose the death penalty (Nguyễn 1993, 304). Diệm also began to form small ranger units to fight the insurgents (Tucker 1999, 93). The Eisenhower Administration was well aware of the unstable situation in Vietnam

⁹² There is scholarly disagreement over whether North Vietnam played an active role in supporting South Vietnamese insurgents at that point (Ang 2002, 16,58; Olson and Roberts 1991, 67; Race 1972, 107), or not (Schlesinger, cited in Gravel 1971, Vol. 1, 250; Kahin and Lewis 1967).

(White House Office 1959, Box 25, NSC 5809) and agreed to send Army Special Forces to provide assistance in anti-guerrilla warfare training. Yet, these U.S. advisors had gained experience in partisan-style guerrilla warfare in the context of World War II and the Korean War, which differed to what was happening in Vietnam (Krepinevich 1986, 25).⁹³

When John F. Kennedy entered the White House in early 1961, he escalated U.S. involvement in Vietnam. There were different reasons for this. On the one hand, as outlined above, Kennedy and many others saw South Vietnam as part of a larger Communist expansion plan. Following Eisenhower's "domino theory", they feared that if the U.S. failed in Vietnam, it would damage its prestige as leader of the 'free world', resulting in other nations doubting Washington's ability to project power. Moreover, Kennedy and his staff – in particular Secretary of State Dean Rusk (Zeiler 2000) – were obsessed not to repeat 'Munich 1938', i.e. to appease to the perceived "aggression from the North".⁹⁴ On the other hand, there were domestic political considerations. The Republicans criticised Kennedy for the "Bay of the Pigs" fiasco in Cuba and the worsening situation in Europe, which culminated in the erection of the Berlin Wall. Kennedy knew that he could not politically afford another "retreat" before Communism (Tucker 1999, 95 f.). Overall, the U.S. government and military as autopoietic systems were, yet again, challenged in their binary assessment of the world, which was based on providing and maintaining U.S. national security and interests.

⁹³ In World War II and Korea, guerrilla warfare took part as a sideline to the conventional conflict. In Vietnam, the NLF's whole strategy until the Tet offensive in 1968 relied on guerrilla warfare.

⁹⁴ The reason for this could lie in the fact that Kennedy's father, Joseph P. Kennedy, had been a staunch supporter of the 1938 Munich conference and appeasement, in his role as U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom. John F. Kennedy himself was accused of appeasement by General Curtis LeMay for opting for a naval blockade during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 (Naftali et al. 2001, Vol. 2, 583 f.).

In his presidential campaign, Kennedy had been influenced by General Maxwell D. Taylor's book *The Uncertain Trumpet* (1960) in which he opposed the Eisenhower administration's reliance on massive nuclear retaliation and argued for a "flexible response", which combined tactical nuclear weapons and conventional forces as a more "limited" way of deterrence. In Taylor's view, this included guerrilla and counter-guerrilla elements, if needed. As a presidential candidate, Kennedy used some of these arguments for his own attacks on Eisenhower's defence policies. More importantly, however, the development of forces and techniques for "counter-guerrilla" actions (National Security Action Memorandum [NSAM] No. 2, February 3, 1961, in Kennedy 1961-1963b, Box 328) – or "counterinsurgency" as it was later called (NSAM No. 114, 22 November 1961, in Kennedy 1961-1963b, Box 332) – became a prime focus of the Kennedy administration's foreign and security policy.

6.3 Imperialism redux: Modernisation and Development theory

In her book *Vietnam* (1968) McCarthy claims that, for the first time, 'experts' in political science, as well as sociology and anthropology, were used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War to give advice on the new 'challenge' of 'counterinsurgency'. This section displays the underlying conditions for this development, contending that modernisation theory provided an all-encompassing theoretical framework that would form the basis for various (civilian and military) counterinsurgency methods. Moreover, since modernisation theory was developed by academic experts, it highlighted the need to also utilise such experts in its practical implementation.

After the end of World War II, the great European powers, particularly France and the United Kingdom, were too weary to retain their colonial possessions and counter the drive for independence within them, despite considerable attempts and fighting. The U.S. realised that the suppression of nationalism amongst colonial peoples would require insurmountable amounts of financial, political and military assets. As I have shown in the previous chapter, in the 1898-1902 Philippine-American War and the subsequent occupation of the islands, military and civilian experts were utilised to produce knowledge with which European-style colonialism could be emulated. Yet, this based on the claim that U.S. rule was “benevolent” and “uplifting” for the Filipino population.

Nevertheless, the annexation of the Philippines was never really popular with the U.S. public, simply because the obvious political subordination of another people was clearly at odds with the republican principles on which the own country had been founded. Hence, Americans were rather relieved when the control over the Philippines was relinquished in 1945 (Gilman 2003, 33). Still, the increasing, internationally connected pressures of Asian and African independence movements under a growing media presence as well as the competition with the Soviet Union for the allegiance of the so-called ‘Third World’ countries to the respective political economic system, required new concepts of hedging or conversion of colonial power (MacFarlane 1985; Prashad 2007; Westad 2005). Despite some claims to continue a direct influence over colonial territories, the strategy of a transition to indirect, “neo-colonized” (Louis and Robinson 1994, 462) influence over formally independent states became more and more plausible. By showing an alleged reluctance to be a colonial power and a willingness to give up the Philippines without much of a fight (contrary to, for

example, the French in Vietnam or the British in Malaya), the U.S. reasserted its self-image of being different from other Great Powers, very much as it had done at the end of the 19th century: being less exploitative and providing more welfare to its overseas subjects. Nevertheless, this dubious historical self-image blinded the U.S. public about the obvious continuities between its former imperial rule and contemporary ideas about how U.S. overseas rule should be projected now.

As Gabriel Kolko (1988) has shown, policy-makers believed that the maintenance of U.S. prosperity relied on effective control over, or access to, strategically important regions, markets and natural resources in certain parts of the world. To secure this aim, the U.S. government was not so much concerned about political democracy and equitable economic development in these countries. The focus lay on political 'stability', which included the support of brutal repression against the opposition. Against the common belief that U.S. interventions were solely prompted by a fear of Communist subversion of Third World countries and expansion of Soviet influence in the style of "falling domino[es]", these campaigns were more based on the belief that leaders unfavourable to U.S. expansionism would restrict the opportunities of businesses, close their markets for access and inspire other countries to follow suit. In this regard, the U.S. government pursued capitalist economic policies in support of U.S. business interests that would enable U.S. companies to operate freely and monopolistically. That such policies were often detrimental to the local population, resulting in impoverishment and a devastation of traditional lifestyles, was not of much concern to the policy-makers (Kolko 1976, 353). The new nations were seen as biddable and amenable. Developed and 'modernised' under supervision they were then integrated into the Western, liberal capitalist system (Carter 2008, 27 f.).

In this sense, we can clearly see a similarity to the Philippines case. Even though the U.S. was now dealing with independent states in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, the attitude and behaviour towards these recently decolonised nations had not changed much from before. The U.S. view of indigenous peoples was a patronising one, driven by self-interest. The success of economic, regional development programmes such as the 1933 Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the U.S. or the Marshall Plan in Europe after WWII (Gilman 2003, 38; Kunz 1997, 12), provided a blueprint, isomorphic examples for the stabilisation of U.S. dominance abroad whilst pretending an interest in modernising and developing these countries. These aspects combined concerns about global poverty, decolonisation, and the commencing Cold War came together in President Truman's Inaugural Address (1949):

We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. [...] The U.S. is preeminent among nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques. [...] The old imperialism – exploitation of foreign profit – has no place in our plans [...] Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge.

Truman's speech encompassed a certain ideological core: a mix of idealism and materialism; a focus on industrialisation as indispensable requirement for development; the belief economic growth in these "underdeveloped areas" was hindered by non-economic obstacles; the perceived notion of anti-colonialism and a strong faith in scientific knowledge and that it could be used to improve social conditions worldwide (Gilman 2003, 71; Lodewijks 1991, 292). This laid the foundations for a knowledge production process that was concerned about maintaining and extending U.S. hegemony with less-violent means.

6.3.1 The emergence of social science expertise

As described in the case study of the Philippines, U.S. experts as well as ordinary Americans serving in the archipelago during the Insurrection had a distinct 'tribal' view of the Filipino population, which was based on the prevailing social evolutionary theory of the late 19th century. In line with this, U.S. actions in the archipelago were based on the belief that the American political, economic and social systems could serve as a blueprint for 'uplifting' and 'civilizing' the Filipinos. Yet, although this racist view had a strong impact on U.S. conduct in the islands, it was not a political agenda per se and in the decades afterwards, the discussion on traditional and modern models of society remained a rather structural-functional one amongst sociologists. This changed in the late 1940s (Appleby 1978, 259 f.). During World War II the interrelationships between the war effort, academia, and federal funding had a massive impact on the connection between science and the state. Both the scale of mobilisation for the war and the channelling of huge sums of money into universities and research centres irrevocably changed the way the state supported science (Leslie 1993, 6 f.). For example, at the Manhattan Project and MIT's Radiation Laboratory, scientific researchers developed nuclear fission and radar technology, supported through government funds. Scientific professions enjoyed more prestige. Research and development contracts kept flowing after the war, reaching \$1.3 billion annually by the beginning of the Korean War (Latham 2000, 47 f.; Leslie 1993, 8).

There were also some attempts in the social sciences to support the war effort. The Research and Analysis branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) mapped German and Japanese supply systems and production lines, analysed prospective bombing targets and the cost-benefit aspect of attacks (Winks 1987,

70 f., 90 f.).⁹⁵ Yet, in contrast to the success of the physical scientists, the contributions of social science to the war effort seemed pale. When the U.S. Senate debated the authorisation of the National Science Foundation in 1946, there were some doubts about the usefulness of social science (as there are today). Physicists produced tangible and cumulative results, which could be empirically tested. The works of social scientists, however, were seen as normative judgements, surrounded by values and biases. For the senators, it was important to measure the 'success' of government-funded social research and how the payoff on public investment could be assured (Larsen 1992, 8).

Social scientists defended themselves on two grounds. On the one hand, they argued that their work was objective and vigorous, very much as 'scientific' as what scientific researchers did. In their view, 'value-free' social science could identify universal laws, which could then be used to produce independent knowledge. On the other hand, they stated that the validity and 'concreteness' of their work would produce authentic contributions and yield practical results (Latham 2000, 48 f.). As Parsons (1986, 107) argued, objective social analysis could be helpful in shaping the future, certainly not to the detriment of the U.S.:

Do we have or can we develop a knowledge of human social relations that can serve as the basis of rational, 'engineering' control? [...] the answer is unequivocally affirmative. Social science is a going concern; the problem is not one of creating it, but rather of using and developing it. Those who still argue whether the scientific study of social life is possible are far behind the times. It is here, and that fact ends the argument.

As one of their first grand projects, social scientists in the U.S. tried to include these two goals in their efforts at developing a comprehensive theory that would

⁹⁵ Involved were historians such as Arthur M. Schlesinger, social scientists like Edward Shils, Alex Inkeles, and Gabriel Almond as well as economists, e.g. Edward S. Mason and Walt W. Rostow.

explain what was taking place in decolonised nations and that would help to promote change in these areas, so that they would be more 'American', and less 'Soviet'. 'Modernisation theory', "emphasized a teleological convergence of societies through several stages of modernisation from primitive traditional forms toward Western-style industrialisation, secularisation, and political pluralism" (Fitzsimmons 2008, 344). In this framework, according to the belief, legitimacy was gained by whoever could lead the society along the hypothesised path of modernisation, which included certain characteristics of good government – economic prosperity, political participation and effective governance. Traditional people would, therefore, have to overcome and reject their cultural, historical, societal pasts and adapt to a modern form of living, as articulated and demonstrated by Western experts (Carter 2008, 33). Modernisation theory posited that a common and existential pattern of 'development' existed, defined by technological, military, and bureaucratic progress along with the political and social structure. A singular path of progressive change led from 'traditional' to 'modern' societies, simplifying complex historical problems of decolonisation and industrialisation, guiding economic and military intervention (Gilman 2003, 3).

With respect to this, modernisation theory was not devised as a mere 'political instrument' to create and shape specific policies or a 'rhetorical tool' to justify their implementation; it was mainly a "cognitive framework" through which American intellectuals and policy-makers interpreted their actions and the role of the U.S. in the world. Therefore, it presented a strategic narrative based on a specific set of assumptions about past and present U.S. foreign policies, which projected an image of a selfless and benevolent American people in general and foreign policy in particular, that could, nevertheless, be tough, harsh and determined if met by

resistance. This marks an element of continuity from the Philippines, but much more elaborate. Modernisation was portrayed as an altruistic theory of benevolence that was first and foremost beneficial for the affected populations. However, U.S. foreign policy was hardly as altruistic as portrayed in Truman's 1949 Inaugural Address. In marked contrast to that, George Kennan, a major architect of post-war grand strategy, had stated in 1948:

We have about 50% of the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population [...] Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit U.S. to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security.

(Quoted in Ikenberry 2001, 169)

In this sense, we can clearly see that the knowledge gaps identified by modernisation theorists pertained more the preservation of this "pattern of disparity" between the U.S. and emerging nations, rather than providing genuinely benevolent support to those newly decolonised states. Modernisation theory, thus, became popular amongst decision-makers in Washington who were looking for new ways of maintaining U.S. dominance in an increasingly complex post-War environment and academic experts were a vital part of a deliberate strategy to develop the tools necessary to do so. Within our theoretical framework, this means that there was clear instrumental interest in the long-term utilisation of modernisation theory in the enforcement of U.S. interests.

6.3.2 Experts on 'Modernisation'

As Gilman (2003) has convincingly shown, the development and promulgation of modernisation theory took place in three key institutions: a university department, a public research committee, and an academic think tank connected to the U.S. government. These different institutions constituted networks of experts, in which

the lines between personal friendship, intellectual work, and the emergence of social scientific consensus were often hard to discern. Yet, these experts were united by a common 'problem', or knowledge gap: The insurgencies that had been unfolding throughout Latin America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East after 1945 were mainly based on a rational, governance-based, revolutionary philosophy of legitimacy – Marxism – which differed from the dominant traditions of Western political philosophy, based on Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. By emphasising the developmental aspects of capitalism and economic classes as the basic political units, both Leninist and Maoist versions of Marxism were modern and, at least in theory, contrary to traditional nationalist or ethnic political ideas (Shy and Collier 1986, 826 ff.).

Therefore, the Communist insurgents advanced a materialist view of social justice. For them, legitimate government was not based on individual freedoms or the provision of basic public goods, but the particular distribution of resources and capital (Fitzsimmons 2008, 343). In this intellectually and politically challenging situation for U.S. rule, scholars interested in developmental problems in the newly established post-colonial states, turned their interest to the work done at Harvard's Department of Social Relations (DSR), which had been established in 1946. In particular, the work of Talcott Parsons attracted attention. Before the war, Parsons had published his much-noted opus *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), combining the ideas of European social theorists Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Vilfredo Pareto to produce a theory for the analysis of society. This was ideal as a foundation for the analysis of the problems of the 'emerging' nations worldwide and for a general social scientific theory of social change, which would later be known as modernisation theory.

The DSR shaped the academic debate about modernisation in several ways (Gilman 2003, 73). First, Parsons had articulated a comprehensive understanding of the concept of 'modernity', which would be used as an implicit template for scholars and policy-makers to understand and, ultimately, to change the post-colonial areas of the world in the U.S.' favour. He saw modernity as a syndrome that involved, *inter alia*, technological advancement, urbanisation, higher income and literacy and the dissemination of mass media. In their views, modernisation – the drive towards modernity – involved “every area and level of the life of a society” (Bator et al. 1960, 4). Yet, at that stage, there was little understanding that modernity might not be as straight forward as first conceived, that it could be torn apart by internal tensions or that modernity's features could manifest themselves differently in different places. In fact, as Lerner assumed, the different features of modernity “went together so regularly because, in some historical sense, they *had* to go together” (1958, 438, italics in original).

Second, even if not all modernisation theorists drew directly on Parsons, they still adapted their explanations to his ideas of modernity. Parsons' view was widely shared amongst his peers, which would have an influence on the policy-making processes of the '50s and '60s. Third, Parsons and other DSR scholars were leading advocates of a reformulation of social theory towards a descriptive, “omnidisciplinary” theory of human behaviour. This would later be used to help develop techniques of social reform in post-colonial countries. Last, as an academic department, the DSR was not only doing research, but also provided training and employment. Many theorists had some affiliation with it as either teachers (e.g. Parsons, Shils) or students (e.g. Marion Levy, Clifford Geertz) spread the 'gospel' of modernisation theory (Gilman 2003, 73).

From this individual university department, the promulgation of modernisation theory was taken into larger institutional networks, most prominently the Committee on Comparative Politics (CCP), which was established in 1954 and became the central network for the production of political development theory. As part of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the CCP provided a discussion forum for social scientists from different universities. Moreover, by redistributing money from business foundations such as Ford or Carnegie, it provided crucial funding for social science research, aiming to elevate it to the same echelon as the natural sciences (Gilman 2003, 114). Whilst Parsons' work at the DSR had a sociological background, the CCP was based on political science. It took on Parsons' approach to modernisation theory, aiming to make political science more scientific and to establish (1) a comprehensive narrative of the process of development, (2) a perceived endpoint of development, and (3) a forum for the discussion of the problems effecting post-colonial societies (Gilman 2003, 114). Yet, there was more determination to find a theoretical alternative to Marxism than Parsons and his colleagues at the DSR had. As a member of the CCP later recalled, its "purpose" had been to "formulate a non-Communist theory of change and thus to provide a non-Marxian alternative for the developing nations" (Quoted in Wiarda 1985, 63).

As with the work the DSR, much relied on the notion of "modern" in the discussion about the development of post-colonial states and how to shape it. An important contribution on this was the paper by Edward Shils of the University of Chicago for the 1959 CCP conference. Shils had worked at the OSS during the war and collaborated with Parsons in defining pattern variables of modernisation, yet he was much more anti-Communist than him (Altbach 1999). In the paper (1960),

he mentioned the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, but more importantly, stated that the contemporary history of post-colonial states was a transition from the former to the latter. Modernity was a monolithic phenomenon, which applied to the established European and American states as well as new states in the Global South.⁹⁶ But, the former “need not *aspire* to modernity. They *are* modern. It has become part of their nature to be modern and indeed what they are is definitive of modernity” (Shils 1960, 267, italics in original).

In this sense, Shils constructed the West (and the U.S. in particular) as the pinnacle of ‘modernity’, very much in the way social evolutionary theorists had seen ‘backward’ regions at the end of the 19th century in relation to the West and which had been the mindset of the experts and soldiers engaged in the Philippine-American War.⁹⁷ He was keen to avoid unpleasant colonial memories, by saying that modernity meant “being Western without the onus of dependence on the West” (Shils 1960, 267), but this was merely window dressing. Hence, we can see here another element of continuity. Just like the context of the Philippines campaign, the U.S. was seen as blueprint for any social, political, or economic (and eventually military) measures taken in decolonised countries. This is important for understanding the theoretical foundations of (civilian and military) ‘counterinsurgency’ methods and techniques, which are analysed later in this chapter.

⁹⁶ The ‘Global South’ includes Africa, Latin America, and developing Asia as well as the Middle East. Whilst the ‘Global North’ can be seen as the richer, more developed region of the world, the ‘South’ is the poorer, less developed region (Mimiko 2012, 47).

⁹⁷ Almond, then at Yale and chair of the CCP, made an important addendum to Shils’ deliberations. He stated that all societies were dualistic, i.e. all contained both ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ elements within a polity. This meant that even the most modern societies had some unmodern aspects: “All political systems are ‘mixed’ systems in the cultural sense. There are no ‘all-modern’ cultures and structures, in the sense of rationality, and no all-primitive ones, in the sense of traditionality” (Almond 1960, 11). Thus, political development was salient and not dichotomous as Shils had envisaged. Yet, for Almond, “Western” systems were still more advanced than “traditional” ones, as they had differentiated “secondary structures” (1960, 12).

Both at the DSR and in the CCP, the work done remained rather theoretical. But at the Center for International Studies (CENIS), founded in January 1952 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), building a grand social theory of human interaction and progress was not the aim. Instead, it was more of a ‘think tank’, doing “problem-oriented” work, i.e. the research agenda would be informed by practical policy concerns (Gilman 2000, 229). Here, we can see how the knowledge production moved from theoretical debates amongst scholars to one that actively sought to influence political decision-making. More than the DSR and CCP, CENIS was devoutly anti-Communist. The belief was that modernisation theory could be adapted to comprehend the Communist phenomenon in the post-colonial areas, creating a politically palatable rationale for U.S. interest in promoting development and presenting a capitalist alternative to the ideas of the Soviet Union.⁹⁸ As Rostow later recalled (1984, 240), “the Korean War, convinced some of U.S. that the struggle to deter and contain the thrust for expanded communist power would be long and that new concepts would be required to underpin U.S. foreign policy in the generation ahead.”

CENIS was, yet, another way social scientists tried to overcome their inferiority complex towards the natural sciences: “In developing an effective American policy in underdeveloped areas, the social scientists have a role equivalent to that of the physical scientists in the arms race.” U.S “national interest” could not “operate simply by instinct or with analogies drawn from the peculiar

⁹⁸ This was not unproblematic. Even the staunchest anti-Communists, such as Walt W. Rostow, had to recognise the definite modernity of the Soviet Union (exemplified, for example, by the launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957). Moreover, modernisation theory itself saw Communism as “a politically pathological but organizationally effective means of promoting development and achieving modernity” (Gilman 2003, 156).

circumstances of our own national experience.”⁹⁹ Policy-makers had to be given a “scientific perspective” on how to “influence the evolution of the underdeveloped areas” (Rostow, Quoted in Gilman 2003, 160).

The Center consisted of scholars from various backgrounds, economists, sociologists, and political scientists.¹⁰⁰ It initially focused on two areas: On the one hand, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations commissioned reports on the problems of development in the ‘Third World’. On the other hand, studies that focused on modernisation in Communist countries were paid for by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Rostow 1984, 241). Instead of issuing separate studies, the scholars decided to “try to weave the various insights from this research into a reasonably integrated account of the transition through which the emerging nations are passing.” They also suggested that the U.S. could fend off Communist subversion of the “transitional” process. By promoting modernisation through foreign direct investment and development planning, it could “help these societies move in directions compatible both with their long-run interests and with our own” (Millikan and Blackmer 1961, v, ix f.).

Despite the undeniable government connections, CENIS contended that it was producing independent and objective scholarship. The fact they wanted to create knowledge that would enable manipulation by policy-makers whilst at the same time adhering to the standards of academic social research, was compatible in the view of the scholars. By promising to link modernisation theory with the fight against poverty and the promotion of democracy with U.S. national interests, they

⁹⁹ Which, in a sense, was how experts in the Philippines approached the problems that confronted them: They tried to look for help and guidance in the history of the US, often drawing on the wrong conclusions.

¹⁰⁰ Such as Daniel Lerner, Lucian Pye, Paul Rosenstein-Rodan and Walt Rostow.

claimed that there would not be any tensions between academic interest and Cold War foreign policy (Latham 2000, 55). Even the direct funding by the CIA seemed unproblematic, because the intelligence service “at no time tried to influence our analysis or conclusions”, as Rostow (1984, 241) stated. Yet, this was not necessary, since the CENIS scholars were keen to give their assistance in sustaining and extending U.S. influence in de-colonised nations and were profoundly anti-Communist. In the relationship between scholars and the CIA we can see a strong interest in linking modernisation theory with U.S. interests.

Indeed, Max Millikan, the director of CENIS, and his staff actively pursued a cooperation with foreign policy makers in Washington. As early as 1954 they mentioned the strategic importance of modernisation and development to senior officials in the Eisenhower administration, yet much of this was confidential. This changed, when Millikan and Rostow published *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy* (1957), basically a declassified version of the central guiding “objectives” of the work done at CENIS. In the book, they called for new initiatives to “promote the evolution of a world in which threats to our security and, more broadly, to our way of life are less likely to arise” (1957, 3 f.). *A Proposal* got the attention of Washington’s political class. As Schlesinger (1965, 589) stated:

It represented an improvement over the philosophy of the country store. It gave out economic policy toward the third world a rational design and a coherent purpose. It sought to remove our assistance from the framework of the cold war and relate it to the needs of nations struggling for their own political and economic fulfilment.

Another thing that was interesting for the policy-makers was how the CENIS scholars developed knowledge for the nascent problem of guerrilla warfare in the newly de-colonised countries. This became apparent in the work of Lucian Pye.

He had served as an intelligence officer in the Marine Corps in China during the war and afterwards embarked on graduate studies in political science at Yale, where he studied with Gabriel Almond. Pye used Almond's ideas in a developmental framework, by identifying Malaya as a "transitional" society. He argued that the real appeal of Communism in Malaya (and other 'underdeveloped' nations) had been the insecurity of people uprooted from their "traditional ways". Their attempt to attain a "modern" life had caused great psychological stress and caused them to turn towards Communism. If peasants in such "transitional societies" joined guerrilla movements to acquire a "modern" life, the solution was to establish more effective governing institutions, which were better than the ones promised by Communists (Berger 2003, 433).

Pye's theory could be combined with that of Walt Rostow. Rostow, another alumni of the OSS Research and Analysis branch, was the emblematic modernisation theorist.¹⁰¹ In his magnum opus *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1960a), he had outlined five stages of economic development: 1. the traditional society; 2. the preconditions for take-off; 3. the take-off 4. the drive to maturity; 5. the age of high mass consumption. Like Marx in *Das Kapital* (1867), Rostow "transformed a mere chronological sequence of past experiences into an evolutionary progression of related social institutions" (Postan 1982, 10). Rostow's categories were directly linked to modernisation theory and, based on a functionalist input-output model matching Parsonian theory, the five stages characterised the "transition" process (Gilman 2003, 192).

¹⁰¹ Albeit, as Nils Gilman (2003, 190 f.) argues, not necessarily deservedly so. Modernisation theory had much more to it than the economic and anti-communist side (both of which were central parts of Rostow's rationale), as has been shown in this section.

For Rostow, the most dangerous period was the second stage, preconditions, where the social dislocation of traditional society and concomitant psychological stress would be present, but not many material benefits of modernisation. Communist authoritarianism, Rostow argued (1960b, 431), would be able to intervene: "It is a pathological form of modern state organisation capable of being imposed by a determined minority on a transitional society frustrated and disheartened in its effort to complete the movement to modernisation by less autocratic means." Yet, the Communists had only little time in which to seize power in the 'underdeveloped' areas (Rostow 1962, 55 f.). Like Pye, he believed that guerrilla warfare was the Communists' main modus operandi, "a systematic attempt to impose a serious disease on those societies attempting the transition to modernization." For him, this kind of warfare was "a crude act of international vandalism" (1961a, 236 f.) that needed countering, even with military means. Modernisation theory, as formulated at DSR, CCP and CENIS, "contributed directly to justifying the militaristic approach to third world politics, above all in Vietnam" (Gilman 2003, 197 f.).

When John F. Kennedy came into office, the social scientists' role changed from that of external scholars and advisers to that of actual government employees. Rostow, Pye, Millikan, amongst others, took important positions in the new administration and helped provide the intellectual foundation for its foreign and security policy. Modernisation theory was appealing to both the U.S. government and the public, because it clearly specified universal requirements for development and provided a new and powerful set of analytical tools. It provided somewhat of a rough guideline of how to act. For scholars and policy-makers alike, modernisation theory scientifically confirmed underlying cultural

assumptions, based on the belief that the U.S. were themselves at the pinnacle of modernisation (Latham 2000, 58). And they were quite self-assertive about this. As Schlesinger remarked: “Euphoria reigned, we thought for a moment that the world was plastic and the future unlimited” (Quoted in Paterson 1989, 15).

Hence, within merely a decade, modernisation theory had changed from a scholarly debate about a model of social change to a vision of a mission for the U.S. to transform the world. As I have shown in this section, modernisation theory linked to older, imperial ideologies of social-evolutionary theory and Social-Darwinism, as they had been applied in the annexation of the Philippines. Other peoples were still seen as ‘underdeveloped’, or ‘backward’, whilst the U.S. was self-characterised as an ‘advanced’ society. Modernisation theory was the ‘Manifest Destiny’ of the post-World War II era, reiterating an imperial ideal in which U.S. political and material goals seemed to conveniently mix with the promotion of democracy, alleviation of poverty and the ‘development’ of a benighted world (Latham 2000, 59). It carefully eschewed claims of colonialism, yet the core belief that U.S. expansion would be beneficial was the same as in the Philippines (Ng 1994, 124 ff.). The U.S. sought to increase its influence particularly in Southeast Asia, where the collapse of European empires had left a power vacuum. Here, with insurgency looming, the experts of the U.S. government would use concepts and techniques, which, not by their names, but in their appearance, resembled those used sixty years earlier. Through the theoretical lens of the thesis, we can also maintain that social scientists were drafted in through mimetic isomorphism. This was based on the success of natural scientist during WWII, which the U.S. government and military tried to emulate in the tackling of the ‘new’ challenge of Communist insurgencies.

6.4 Counterinsurgency as a civil ‘grand plan’

The prevailing historical narrative of the counterinsurgency campaign in Vietnam focuses heavily on the military aspect of U.S. involvement (e.g. Krepinevich 1986; Sorley 1999; U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps 2007, xiv).¹⁰² However, this is an inaccurate picture. In fact, ‘counterinsurgency’, as perceived by the Kennedy and (initially) Johnson administrations, was seen as a ‘grand plan’ for giving indirect civil assistance to foreign governments and moving them to modernity. This required a considerable amount of ‘expertise’ on civil issues, which was readily offered by the modernisation theorists and other social scientists in the late 50s and early 60s. Kennedy and Johnson took those experts into their administrations, where they could put ideas into praxis.

This section analyses how both administrations developed knowledge for civil counterinsurgency with the help of experts who turned from being researchers to policy-makers. Emphasis is then placed on expert knowledge production in two specific “civic action” areas – internal security and economic assistance – in South Vietnam. What becomes obvious is that in Vietnam, like in the Philippines, the focus lay on producing knowledge for civil counterinsurgency methods and techniques, which initially served an instrumental purpose for ensuring the maintenance of U.S. hegemony in the region. However, when the guerrilla war intensified, and these and other ‘state-building’ efforts failed to show significant results, they became merely substantiating or legitimising elements of U.S. occupation whilst the conflict gradually escalated and led to direct military action of U.S. ground forces in Vietnam after 1965.

¹⁰² As Jeffrey Michaels and Matthew Ford have shown, this particular ‘story’ of counterinsurgency in Vietnam was used by the ‘COIN experts’ in Iraq and Afghanistan to justify the ‘surge’ and large-scale military campaigns (Michaels 2012; Michaels and Ford 2011).

When John F. Kennedy came into office in 1961, he also placed an emphasis on the indirect nature of 'counterinsurgency', stating that "it is not always possible for U.S. to take direct action and that, for most of the problems that face U.S. now, we will have to satisfy ourselves with training the people of these various countries to do their own guerrilla and antiguerrilla operations" (cited in U.S. Department of State 1961a, Vol. VIII, Doc. 18). However, there is a distinct difference between the approaches of Eisenhower and Kennedy. Whereas the former saw it as only one (perhaps even minor) aspect of U.S. foreign and security policy, the latter made 'counterinsurgency' a top priority.¹⁰³

Even before taking office, Kennedy had received situational assessments on Vietnam – most importantly Edward G. Lansdale's outline of a "Basic Counterinsurgency Plan for Viet-Nam", in which the president showed a "keen interest" (U.S. Department of State 1961b, Vol. I, Doc. 1-8) – and shortly after his inauguration he approved of a new 'counter-guerrilla' strategy for Vietnam, which involved an increase in the number of Special Forces and military support (Spector 1985, 361 ff.). However, beyond that, Kennedy had no concrete ideas of how to implement 'counterinsurgency' into his political agenda. This indicates the knowledge gap that the U.S. government faced with the nascent insurgencies, which were indeed threatening the binary vision of defending U.S. national interests and security. Hence, he directly commissioned high-level government studies to examine the problem and give him recommendations (Michaels 2012, 39), making expert knowledge a vital and instrumental aspect of the knowledge process within the U.S. government.

¹⁰³ This is shown by the fact that the second NSAM of February 1961 already comprised of the presidential order to develop "counter-guerrilla forces" (NSAM No. 2, February 3, 1961, in Kennedy 1961-1963b, Box 328).

One of these studies, “Elements of U.S. Strategy to Deal with ‘Wars of National Liberation’” (Bissell 1961),¹⁰⁴ called for the creation of a single coordination body for counterinsurgency within the U.S. government. On 18 January 1962, Kennedy followed that advice and signed NSAM No. 124, establishing the Special Group Counter-Insurgency (SGCI) (Kennedy 1961-1963b, Box 333).¹⁰⁵ They met every week in secret for about two hours each time in the Old Executive building near the White House (Maechling 1999, 442). Within our theoretical framework, the fact that there was clear intent to not publish anything about the knowledge production indicates that this was indeed instrumental knowledge that was being produced. As stated in NSAM 124, the group had four different purposes: make all U.S. government agencies aware that “subversive insurgency” was a major form of conflict, ensure this recognition was institutionalised within the bureaucracy, review U.S. resources available to solve the issues at hand, and develop and guide interdepartmental programmes aimed at preventing or defeating insurgencies. Aside from Vietnam, the group initially also monitored the security situation in Laos and Thailand. However, by June 1962 the list of countries had extended to thirteen (Minutes of the SGCI Meeting, 7 June 1962, in Kennedy 1962, Box 319).¹⁰⁶

Perhaps the most important task of SGCI was the translation of Kennedy’s foreign policy aspirations into a generic U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine that would give a definition of the problem and provide guidance on how to respond. In this sense,

¹⁰⁴ Often simply named ‘Bissell report’ after the chairman of the National Security Council’s (NSC) Counter-Guerrilla Warfare Task Force, CIA Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell. Other members of the task force were Edward Lansdale, Walt Rostow and Henry Ramsey.

¹⁰⁵ Members of the Group were the Attorney General, the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Administrator of the Agency for International Development, and a chairman.

¹⁰⁶ The new countries were: Cambodia, Burma, Cameroon, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Iran, Pakistan, and Nepal.

the experts would make recommendations on instrumental issues that were closely coupled with long-term foreign policy targets. In August 1962, President Kennedy approved the Group's proposal of the "Overseas Internal Defense Policy (OIDP) as NSAM 182, "a doctrine for countering subversive insurgency where it exists and to prevent its outbreak in those countries not threatened, yet having weak and vulnerable societies" (NSAM 182, in Kennedy 1961-1963b, Box 338). U. Alexis Johnson (1984, 331) later called the OIDP the "CI Bible".¹⁰⁷ The OIDP is remarkable, in the sense that it clearly outlined the U.S. rationale for being interested predominantly in Communist insurgencies:

The U.S. does not wish to assume a stance against revolution *per se*, as an historical means of change. The right of peoples to change their governments, economic systems and social structures by revolution is recognized in international law. However, the use of force to overthrow certain types of government is not always contrary to U.S. interests. A change brought about through force by non-communist elements may be preferable to prolonged deterioration of governmental effectiveness or to a continuation of a situation where increasing discontent and repression interact, thus building toward a more dangerous climax. Each case of latent, incipient, or active non-communist insurgency must therefore be examined on its merits in the light of U.S. interests.

(NSAM 182, p.12, in Kennedy 1961-1963b, Box 338, emphasis in original)

This distinction between different insurgencies was rather simplistic, as it only looked at the factors that were of interest to the U.S. (communist or non-communist) and not at the deeper causes of the unrest. As Charles Maechling, one of the drafters of NSAM 182, later admitted, "it treated each revolutionary movement in a foreign society as if it were a clearly articulated military force instead of the apex of a pyramid deeply embedded in society" (1984, 34). The

¹⁰⁷ This connotation is particularly interesting, insofar as the current U.S. Army/Marine Corps Field Manual *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency* (U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps 2007) has often been referred to as the "COIN bible" (e.g. Dao 2013).

OIDP is not only interesting for what it said but also for what it did not say. In particular, it did not make reference to any large-scale involvement of U.S. troops in foreign insurgencies. On the contrary, NSAM 182 states: “In countering insurgency, the *major effort must be indigenous* since insurgency is a uniquely local problem [...] Overly prominent participation of U.S. personnel in counterinsurgency operations can be counterproductive” (NSAM 182, p.13, in Kennedy 1961-1963b, Box 338, emphasis in original). Rather than sending ground forces into an insurgency conflict, the role of the U.S. – and especially of its military – was to support the indigenous forces of a friendly government through advice, assistance, and training (NSAM 182, 28).

“With the ‘Bible’ written, we thus had to spread the gospel” (Johnson and McAllister 1984, 332), U. Alexis Johnson later recalled with regards to the OIDP. This task fell to the Special Group. The Chairman, General Maxwell Taylor, reached out to different government agencies for the civilian aspects whilst the military increased its training programmes for military advisors and the Special Forces (Michaels 2012, 47). However, the fact that the military’s programmes were specifically labelled “military counterinsurgency” (Joint Chiefs of Staff 1963, Box 280), indicates that counterinsurgency in general, as seen by both the Kennedy administration and the military, was largely a civilian affair. This resembles the way in which the Philippines campaign had been viewed over sixty years earlier. However, knowledge production in Vietnam was much more structured, oriented and underlined by academic credentials than it had been in the Philippines. Eventually, ‘counterinsurgency’ began to slowly emerge as a coherent and instrumentally focused strategy, not merely a military or civilian tool anymore but an end in itself.

Another issue that Taylor considered important was a centralised counterinsurgency training programme for senior U.S. officials, which included, inter alia, the study of the “historical background of counterinsurgency”, “instruction in counterinsurgency program planning”, and “instruction in preparation for service in counterinsurgency areas” (Memo Taylor to SGCI, 13 Februar 1962, in Kennedy 1962, Box 319). This became a major enterprise, with several thousand people attending the five-week interdepartmental courses at the National War College, the Foreign Service Institute and elsewhere (Blaufarb 1977, 72 f.; Johnson and McAllister 1984, 332).

The main developer of the course was Walt Rostow. Although not a member of SGCI, Rostow, in his functions as Deputy National Security Assistant to the President and head of the State Department’s Policy Planning Council was well informed. In his counterinsurgency course, modernisation theory was translated into tangible political reality, indicating again that there was an instrumental long-term interest in such knowledge. As in *Stages of Economic Growth*, Rostow thought that the U.S. had to support the counterinsurgency efforts to “protect the developmental process in strategically important client-states, especially during periods of their maximum vulnerability to communist takeover, which were supposed to coincide with the transition from one stage to another” (Maechling 1984, 33). The people taught in the course would continue to work in government, infused with the spirit of modernisation theory. Many of them, including Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge,¹⁰⁸ went on to serve in Vietnam. This shows that the experts had quite a significant impact on many mid- and high-level officials in the U.S. government in conveying their ideas and knowledge.

¹⁰⁸ For whom the course was so important, it delayed his arrival in Vietnam by several weeks in 1962 at a time of deepening crisis (Blaufarb 1977, 73).

6.5 Areas of civil knowledge production

In the subsequent sections, I will analyse how these newly minted 'experts', as well as the 'old guard' around Rostow and the SGCI developed and disseminated civil counterinsurgency knowledge in two specific knowledge areas of 'civil' counterinsurgency: Internal Security Assistance and Mekong River Project. What becomes obvious here, is that, like in the Philippines, the U.S. tried to indifferently apply successful U.S. practices in a country of the Global South, highlighting yet another example of isomorphic organisational behaviour.

6.5.1 Internal Security Assistance

A vital part of Kennedy's civil counterinsurgency strategy was the build-up and support of foreign internal security forces, which included units such as civil police, paramilitary police, gendarmeries, constabularies, and civil guards (Komer, Overseas Internal Security, 7 October 1961, in Kennedy 1961-1963a, Box 413). For the President and his advisers, recent campaigns in Greece, the Philippines, and Malaya had proved that police forces could make an important contribution to the defeat of communist subversion (Khong 1992, 87). Hence, the conditions in these other campaigns led the experts to believe that it should also work in Vietnam. However, the U.S. administration did not consider recent failures of foreign-backed indigenous police forces, such as the defeat that the French had experienced in Vietnam a few years earlier. Also, some of their exemplary cases were flawed, such as British 'imperial' policing in Malaya.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ In trying to derive lessons from the British experience, U.S. experts and policy-makers overlooked the fact that this campaign was not only driven by the cynical self-interest to pacify and retain the Malayan colony but the British had also exercised direct control over the police. Thus this example was not very amenable to the proposed U.S. aim of 'anti-colonialism' (Maechling 1984, 33).

More importantly, Kennedy's in-house intellectuals underestimated the challenges of devising an indigenous police force in Southeast Asia based on the conception and the knowledge of the U.S. domestic police. The results of this influx of U.S. expert knowledge was devastating as the police were unable to overcome the Saigon regime's inherent systemic weaknesses – corruption, nepotism and misuse of power amongst them – and stood no chance against the highly motivated Viet Minh revolutionaries. Hence, the example of policing in Vietnam tells U.S. about an important limitation of expert knowledge for our overarching research question. In developing their knowledge for a new policy, experts have to rely on existing theoretical frameworks and empirical examples, based on good academic procedures. However, there is always an element of uncertainty of whether these past experiences provide significant information that is applicable to the current policy under development. As we shall see, in the matter of policing in Vietnam, which was of important instrumental value for the U.S. government in the civilian pacification of the country, the experts applied the wrong experiences, which led to the failure of the policy.

As one French observer already noted in 1958, "Americans in Viet-Nam very sincerely believe that in transplanting their institutions, they will immunize South Viet-Nam against Communist propaganda" (cited in Fall 1966, 181). Indeed, the involvement of the U.S. in bolstering South Vietnam's internal security forces had begun shortly after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu. In autumn 1954, the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) sent a team of academics from Michigan State College (later renamed Michigan State University, or MSU) to South Vietnam, where they inspected the country's public administration, including the security forces. In their final report, the team stated that a stable and

secure democratic government in Saigon would need large sums of aid money from the U.S. as well as technical assistance to prop up South Vietnam's public administration (Brandstetter et al. 1954, 1).

MSU was tasked by the U.S. government to take up that technical assistance, focusing mainly on: 1) establishing an institute for the training of civil servants; 2) consulting national and local government, and 3) training the internal security forces. For the duration of the contract, MSU would receive over \$5.3 million in total, establishing the biggest foreign police training programme of the Eisenhower administration (Rosenau 2005, 36). The scale of MSU's involvement in Vietnam was unforeseen, yet the fact that a university was providing assistance and training police and paramilitary forces was not entirely novel. Other U.S. universities like Purdue or Northwestern had already conducted small-scale training programs for foreign police forces (Huggins 1998, 87). Therefore, we can see that the experts were chosen explicitly for their academic credentials, which is not only in line with the instrumental indicator of our theoretical framework, but also shows a change to the Philippines campaign with an increased reliance and credibility of 'academic' research being the benchmark for expert knowledge.

Analysing and discussing the specific work of the team – which was called Michigan State University Group (MSUG) – here in detail, would exceed the length and focus of this section and there are other excellent monographs, which have already done (e.g. Ernst 1998; Scigliano and Fox 1965; Smuckler 2003). In a nutshell, the U.S. academic advisors, who had a background in U.S. law enforcement administration, planned to develop a 'Civil Guard', which was mirroring U.S. institutions and should serve as a rural law enforcement force. Not only did this create numerous bureaucratic and political obstacles, but MSUG met

with resistance from both Diem, who wanted to use the Civil Guard as his personal goon squad, as well as from the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), which tried to militarise it. Enervated by the quarrelling about the reform course and an ever-worsening security situation, the group left South Vietnam in 1962 (Rosenau 2005, Chap. 4).

The end of the MSUG mission was certainly not the end of U.S. assistance and development of foreign police forces. Although Kennedy and some of his officials claimed that under Eisenhower, internal security assistance was an “orphan child” that had been “shamefully neglected” (Komer to Rostow, 4 May 1961, p.1, in Kennedy 1961-1963a, Box 413), there was surprisingly little change in operational terms concerning the foreign police assistance programmes. U.S. advisors were sent abroad to Vietnam and other ‘underdeveloped’ countries to train police units in investigation, administration, riot control and more. Kennedy, like Eisenhower, saw internal security as an important part of the nation-building process in the developing world and both strongly believed that it was the indigenous population who had to take up responsibility (Rosenau 2005, 84). Under Kennedy, however, internal security assistance received a new theoretical cast in the form of modernisation theory. Development and modernisation scholars were eager to get out of their ivory towers and test their theories in the real world, and police and paramilitary forces were an ideal testing ground. As a U.S. Navy report stated in 1963, “social science research is in a strong position to contribute useful knowledge in designing and developing internal security forces” (Quoted in Deitchman 1976, 34).¹¹⁰ This again, proves to U.S. that

¹¹⁰ The president himself was also quite interested in the contribution internal security forces could make towards countering insurgencies. As Robert W. Komer later recalled, Kennedy was “really enthusiastic about police programs, which [...] tied in with his emphasis on unconventional warfare” (Quoted in, Rosenau 2005). This renewed impetus is also reflected in the number of

'experts' were not only influential in developing knowledge in Vietnam, but also in implementing it. Thus, they had decisive impact on devising political strategy and were able to bring in their own visions of 'modernization'.

The police were seen as the first line of defence against Communist insurgency, because, more than the military, they were close to the "nests of discontent" within the population and could "ferret out subversive elements" in their early stages of development (Komer to Maechling, 3 May 1962, p. 4 ff., in Kennedy 1961-1963a, Box 413). Kennedy and his advisers were well aware of the fact that the police could not engage military-style forces in a full-fledged insurgency with protracted violence. Yet, it was believed that the police could still support the military with intelligence information and work with the local communities. Internal security forces would serve a dual role by being both guardians of the state – in preventing subversive violence – as well as being representatives of the state, showing the government's presence in even the most rural areas (Rosenau 2005, 91). As the "CI Bible" stated, "it is in the U.S. interest, to make the local [...] police advocates of democracy and agents for carrying forward the developmental process" (NSAM 182, p. 16, in Kennedy 1961-1963b, Box 338).

One of the key aspects of modernisation theory was the belief that U.S. was the pinnacle of modernisation in the world. Hence, there was nothing more obvious than to replicate U.S. institutions, ideas, and techniques in the 'underdeveloped' areas to speed up their development process in an isomorphic fashion. This "mirroring" took place in the military, political administration and bureaucracy (Packenham 1973, 157 ff.), but especially law enforcement areas. However,

NSAMs about the development of police programmes for the 'Third World', issued early in Kennedy's presidency (e.g. NSAMs 114, 132, 140, 177 in Kennedy 1961-1963b).

there were two significant obstacles. First the U.S. had no paramilitary forces, such as a gendarmerie or constabulary and, thus, no direct knowledge of how to organise and run them. The policy-makers in the U.S. administration thus tried to model the Civil Guard on the U.S. National Guards, making it, in reality, a military institution. Second, the experts faced more of a quagmire with the issue that U.S. law enforcement was quite decentralised, with different forces on national, state, county, and municipal level. This was attractive, because it limited the potential to abuse by the police. Yet, it was impracticable to establish police forces from scratch in the 'Third World, because even the U.S. did not possess enough resources and manpower (in terms of advisors) for distribution amongst various independent forces. Thus, internal security assistance policy, based on the ODP, focused on a centralised law enforcement agency (Lobe 1975, 96).

These administrative flaws of American police training in Vietnam were accompanied by several other severe problems, which Komer and the other experts oversaw or did not take seriously enough. Already under Eisenhower, the administration had struggled to find appropriate candidates to send as police instructors overseas: young police officers did not want to impede their careers, whereas older ones often lacked languages and modern skills. These problems continued into Kennedy's presidency. Aside from that, the administration never asked itself the simple question if it was suitable to send U.S. policemen from (sub-) urban America to the jungles of Vietnam. An official (Quoted in Lobe 1977, 10) from the Office of Public Safety (OPS), the agency responsible for the training of indigenous forces, later complained:

[c]ement police weren't able to advise rice paddy cops. For instance, a whole bunch of OPS advisors originated out of Walnut Creek, California, one of San Francisco's bedroom cities. When they were suppressing crime in Walnut Creek that meant shoplifting, traffic

violations, family squabbles, petty stealing, throwing beer bottles out of speeding cars, and some Friday night mooning. Are their experiences going to help poor countries?

This related to the deeper question of whether the U.S. conception of a police force and associated institutions was actually transferable to the 'Third World' and highlights, again, the limits of the expert knowledge produced in policing in Vietnam. Because of its universalistic mindset, modernisation theory dictated that the fundamental problems of modernising societies – and public unrest was one of them – were the same around the world. Hence, the solutions could also be universal (Lefever 1971, 221). Another failure on the part of the experts was the conception of the role of policing itself. The OPS taught police instructors that were to be sent overseas instructions based on Orlando W. Wilson's *Police Administration* (1950), a standard reference of the 1950s and '60s, which postulated an apolitical, technical and problem-solving police force (Marenin 1986, 528). However, Kennedy's advisers overlooked that policing is always a political activity, especially when one is engaged in a protracted insurgency in a foreign country, as the police "enforce decisions taken (or allowed) by political authorities, acting in support of specific regime concerns, such as survival" (Hills 2000, 8). In a sense, Kennedy's experts, the OPS and the police instructors on the ground fared no better than the MSUG advisors, who had already discovered that Diem's (and later his successors') corrupt regime(s) were not interested in professional police forces, but only on how to exploit them best. In this environment, the (alleged) value-neutrality of modernisation theory and scientific management was useless for underlying public order problems (Holden 1999, 2).

Kennedy's internal security assistance for Vietnam failed in the end, as did the whole Vietnam War for the U.S. His experts, who had started with the enthusiastic

prospects of modernisation theory as the theoretical cast for remodelling the Vietnamese police, had to learn that institutional reforms, intended to change the structure, organisation, and most importantly control and accountability of the police could not be exported to another country, especially not in the 'developing' world and in the midst of a violent insurgency (Bayley 1997, 62). This provides U.S. with an important answer to the central research question and the puzzle of why expert knowledge is re-commissioned for each campaign. There was certainly an implicit acknowledgement by the U.S. government that the experiences from past, successful campaigns had to be adapted to fit the circumstances in Vietnam, in particular to include the new guiding principles of modernisation theory. However, the experts tasked with this were unable to do this. This was not because the Vietnamese were too corrupt or too 'backward' to understand the concept of internal security assistance, but simply because the very concept of transplanting domestic U.S. experience infused with modernisation theory was flawed. From the viewpoint of our theoretical framework, we can see that whilst the policy was originally instrumental, there was eventually no will to follow things through in the face of adversity, making the knowledge in the end a substantiating cover for U.S. involvement, which in its entirety did not match long-term U.S. strategic interests anymore.

6.5.2 From Tennessee to the Mekong

Both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations were well aware of the fact that the situation in Vietnam could not be improved by simply propping up Diem's police or military. Already the first of Kennedy's fact-finding missions, headed by Stanford economist Eugene Staley, noted in July 1961 "that the subversive intensive warfare [...] in South Vietnam can be brought to a successful conclusion

only by the prompt application of effective military power, coupled with large-scale economic and social action reaching every part of the country” (Staley et al. 1961, 184).¹¹¹ Kennedy and his aides welcomed the report and agreed that economic assistance was an indispensable part of forming a viable, non-Communist state.

This shows us that economic policy was a key instrumental aspect of the civilian counterinsurgency campaign as well as a knowledge gap that needed to be tackled. This section looks at one particular instance of economic aid, the development of the Mekong River Basin, which drew heavily on the U.S.’ own experience with the TVA. As the analysis shows, this was yet another case where ‘experts’ unsuccessfully utilised modernisation theory mixed with the isomorphic application of U.S. concept blueprints in their attempt to remodel an ‘underdeveloped’ area in the American image and failed. Similar to the knowledge production in Internal Security Assistance, there was an instrumental will behind the policy at first, yet when the insurgents’ pressure increased and the cost outweighed the benefits, it became, again, a superficial, substantiating exercise.

Established in 1933 through the TVA Act (United States Congress 1933), the TVA was the flagship of U.S. domestic regional development. With the help of experts, it was intended to modernise the Tennessee Valley and tackle human and economic deficiencies (Schulman 1991, 183). At the time of its creation, the economic situation in the Tennessee Valley was abysmal,¹¹² even by the standards of the Great Depression. Less than three percent of people in the area had electricity, education expenditures stagnated at about one-third of the

¹¹¹ Staley’s most prominent recommendation was the construction of fortified “aggrovilles” to protect the civilian population in South Vietnam, later known as “Strategic Hamlets”. For an in-depth discussion, see the corresponding sub-section under “Military Knowledge” in this chapter.

¹¹² Which includes most of Tennessee and parts of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and Virginia.

national average and the farmers also earned only thirty percent of what farmers earned on average in the rest of the country. From the passage of the act to the entry of the U.S. into World War II, the number of households receiving electricity rose from six thousand to almost five hundred thousand. Farmers received instructions and demonstrations on how to use fertilisers to increase agricultural production and their crop yield (Loring 2004). The TVA was “the granddaddy of all regional development projects” (Scott 1998, 6) and its success made it an appealing model far beyond the U.S. depression.

Nonetheless, the TVA was not simply about delivering technologies to modernise a region. As “a corporation clothed with the power of government but possessed of the flexibility and initiative of a private enterprise” (Roosevelt 1933) it was considered to employ the best of both worlds of both government and entrepreneurship as a democratic way of achieving development. The TVA promised to reconcile technology, management, and planning with grass-roots level democracy (Ekbladh 2002, 336 f.), the locals were “*given a chance to become a part of that process of change*” (Lilienthal 1964, 13, quoted by Ekbladh 2010, 2161, emphasis in original). This was certainly not against the ideals of modernisation theory. Again, with the TVA we see a continuous factor of civil counterinsurgency in Vietnam, namely the reliance on domestic U.S. experience. However, albeit similar to what has happened since the Philippines, the U.S. was now not relying on ‘frontier’ experience anymore, but on experience from economic enhancement programmes in the peaceful American heartland of the 1930’s. This made the knowledge transfer to a conflict area such as Vietnam even more difficult (like the issue of policing had been) and was one important aspect of why the policy failed eventually.

Much of the domestic (and later international) interest in the TVA was down to the skills and efforts of one of its directors, David Lilienthal. Described as a “wonder boy” (cited in Ekbladh 2002, 340), the trained lawyer knew how to run an administration and win supporters for his cause. As an ‘expert’, he was thus chosen because of his extensive knowledge and practical experience with the TVA, which was to be applied instrumentally in Vietnam. He promoted the TVA as a strong symbol of Roosevelt’s New Deal and was able to market scientific programmes and planning as modernisation benefits. In his view, the TVA would also be a helpful tool in decolonised areas after World War II.

Due to its universalistic aspects, the TVA could be exported to other parts of the world, preventing exploitation, because local people would gain a stake in their own futures whilst providing economic growth for a whole nation. In Lilienthal’s own words, “from our own backyard [...] we can best prove our aims for the wide world, and best learn the great truth of universal interdependence” (Lilienthal 1944, 203 ff.). The supposedly local, grass-roots structure of the TVA was an important aspect of using it as a tool in the fight for modernity and against the Soviet Union. Before and after World War II, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union built dams and power plans to modernise their countries.¹¹³ Yet, in the view of U.S. modernisation theorists, only the U.S. was doing it democratically. In decolonised countries, a TVA-style modernisation programme was believed to empower local communities, making it more reliable, flexible and competitive than any Soviet attempts (Espy 1950, 201 f.).

¹¹³ In fact, Lenin’s dictum that “*Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country*” (1920, emphasis in original), brought New Deal programmes such as the TVA or the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) uncomfortably close to Soviet ideas.

For Kennedy, the TVA was an ideal model for his aid and modernisation programme in Southeast Asia. He urged the TVA to reflect on “the lessons it has learned [...] [that] may be exported abroad, and applied to our great objectives of human enhancement.” (Kennedy 1961). Within the Kennedy administration, the TVA became more than the beacon of Roosevelt’s liberalism, it was an outlook of a worldwide liberal future. As both the Brookings Institution and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) agreed, the TVA was a leading “symbol and example”, “based on certain universal truths”, with philosophy and methods “no longer experimental”, but proven to uplift a whole region economically (Baird 1963, 36 ff.; Kampmeier 1961).

When Johnson took over the presidency following Kennedy’s death, he continued Kennedy’s economic development policy. This was partly due to his own faith in development, but even more so, it reflected the U.S.’ general view of development and modernisation as important foreign policy tool. When the U.S. opted for full-scale military action in 1964-65, the aim of modernisation was also upgraded, “to help tamp down the insurgency and serve as an example of U.S. benevolence in Southeast Asia in the court of world public opinion” (Ekbladh 2010, 204). This also reaffirms our assumption that the counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam were predominantly driven by civilian considerations. The instrumental aim, at least throughout Kennedy’s and most of Johnson’s tenure, was to ‘modernise’ Vietnam with ‘benevolent’ civilian means to show the superiority of the Western, capitalist system and ward off any Soviet attempts to instil Southeast Asia with Communism. Experts, like Lilienthal, were important actors in translating these political goals into knowledge that could then be practically applied.

The Mekong River was chosen to be the flagship exhibition of the TVA's capacity to export its success model to 'underdeveloped' regions elsewhere in the world. In the early 1940s, two Chinese engineers, Dr Shen-Yi and P. T. Tan, had already developed a plan for development of the Yellow River. With their planning thwarted by Communist victory in China, they directed their attention to the Mekong, wanting to implement a river development plan through the United Nations (UN) to serve the region, an idea eagerly grasped by the nations along the river – Cambodia, Laos, South Vietnam, and Thailand (Nguyen 1999, 52 ff.). Their effort resulted in the foundation of the Mekong Committee in 1957, but it did not immediately gain U.S. attention. Only after extensive lobby by Lilienthal – who had left the TVA in 1955 – and 'Tex' Goldschmidt – an old friend of Johnson who had worked for the UN and was interested in large-scale development projects – combined with increased U.S. military action in Southeast Asia did the Mekong River come to the attention of the U.S. administration (Ekbladh 2010, 204 ff.).

The project was a way to highlight the U.S.' long-term and peaceful commitment to the area against the backdrop of an escalating war. Johnson's advisers, most foremost McGeorge Bundy and Walt Rostow, pressed the president to announce a 'Johnson Doctrine', showing America's efforts at exporting his success of a 'Great Society' to Southeast Asia (Memorandum by Rostow, "A Foreign Policy for the Johnson Administration" 29 March 1965, and Memo from Rostow, "A Johnson Doctrine," 29 March 1965, Foreign Affairs (1964-1965), both in Johnson 1963-1969b, Box 44). They wanted something like the Marshall Plan for Southeast Asia, and there were discussions about creating a "Southeast Asia Economic Development Plan" to do this (Gardner 1995, 176; Memorandum by H.G. Lodge, 8 March 1965, p. 6 in Johnson 1963-1969a, Box 6). A "TVA on the

Mekong” (Ekbladh 2002; 2010) was a promising way out of the quagmire into which the U.S. had got itself in Vietnam. In fact, through the lens of our theoretical framework, it was initially a major instrumental aspect of U.S. strategy in Southeast Asia. In his speech “Peace without Conquest”, held at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore on April 7, 1965, Johnson noted that the UN had already broken ground at the Mekong. With U.S. support, the project promised to “provide food and water and power on a scale to dwarf even our own TVA.”

Johnson chose Lilienthal as the U.S. member of a high-profile U.S-Vietnamese Joint Development Group (JDG). Lilienthal – or “Mr. TVA” (Ekbladh 2002) – showed that the economic development of Southeast Asia was connected to larger modernisation ideas. But from the start, the project experienced difficulties. Due to the fighting, the initial focus on all riparian states of the Mekong soon shrunk to the confines of South Vietnam. Yet, it was still highly regarded in and outside the administration. Arthur Schlesinger, who had considered the TVA as a “weapon” to contain communism, believed that the collective economic development it promised remained “an honourable resolution to a tragic situation” (Quoted in Look Magazine 1966, 7). Considering that the majority of the Vietnamese population lived in rural areas, the JDG focused mainly on the agricultural sector. Yet, with the escalating war, paddy rice production fell dramatically, by over a million tons, forcing the regime in Saigon to import it.

By 1967, things were so bad that U.S. advisors encouraged changes in the Vietnamese diet to get the people to eat cheaper, imported wheat (Ekbladh 2002, 367). Moreover, the JDG tried to introduce changes to village life (as other U.S. government attempts like the ‘Strategic Hamlet Program’ did) and advocated a change in land tenure. In the Southern US, the TVA programme had been

boosted by large farms. Thus, the JDG argued that “many crops cannot be grown economically [...] other than on a large scale. [...] The solution to rural poverty in some areas may be found in an efficient farm laborforce rather than in small tenant holdings” (Joint Development Group 1970, 545).¹¹⁴ Here, we can see that, like in the Philippines, the experts made recommendations that would have disempowered the local peasants and would have led to large-scale privatisation, most likely benefitting U.S. companies. Therefore, expert knowledge was again instrumental in enforcing U.S. business interests on the grounds of alleged ‘benevolence’. Yet, none of these reforms materialised in the end, because of fears that they would affect the strategic stability of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) regime. Another problem that hampered the Mekong River project were the refugee crises. Constantly shifting battlefields and frontlines forced people to resettle numerous times. Building a grass-roots level participation programme under such circumstances was made impossible (USAID 1975, 3, 19).

When Richard Nixon entered the White House, the Johnson policies gave way to the ‘Nixon Doctrine’ of cutting U.S. foreign commitment, including the international aid and development. The Mekong project was not abandoned altogether. Yet, it drifted into the realm of symbolism. When the regime in Saigon collapsed owing to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam’s (DRV) invasion, the U.S. gave up its seat on the Mekong Commission, as it no longer had any use for the development programme (Nguyen 1999, 169 ff.). In the late 1960s, the larger development community also began to shift its focus away from large projects to the elimination of poverty and meeting the basic needs of the peoples they were supporting. In the end, even Robert McNamara, one of Kennedy’s “whiz kids” and

¹¹⁴ Note here the similarity with the economic ideas of the Taft Commission in the Philippines, advocating the expropriation of small farmers and the creation of larger, capitalistic farms.

originally a staunch supporter of “Revolutionary Development” in Vietnam, changed his views after becoming president of the World Bank in 1968. The Bank now put more emphasis on programmes that were aimed at alleviating poverty, taking into account environmental concerns (Rich 1994, 102; Shapley 1993, 506 f.). The idea of exporting the success story TVA had failed, and with it had Lilienthal and the other experts. Of course, it was also a failure of modernisation theory itself, as it was unable to deliver the economic progress it had promised.

The implications for the research puzzle are clear. The Internal Security Assistance and the Mekong Project are good examples of expert knowledge utilisation in civilian counterinsurgency in Vietnam. Experts were allegedly drafted in to ‘modernise’ the Vietnamese police and economy (and that of other Southeast Asian states). Yet, this was not nearly as altruistic as it was portrayed. The real aim behind it was the protection of U.S. interests and the legitimacy of the U.S. government against Soviet influence in the region. This was the ultimate driver behind the policy and not the protection or well-being of the Vietnamese population. These policies, thus, were in the beginning instrumentally designed to fulfil this purpose, alongside other aspects such as the promotion of U.S. business interest by changing local village life and establishing large, corporate farming entities, similar to what we have seen in the Philippines. When the security situation deteriorated, the perceived cost-benefit situation of the policies shifted towards the negative (perhaps concomitant with the realisation that the Soviets were not that interested in Vietnam after all and that their influence on the Communists in Hanoi was quite limited, see e.g. Hanhimäki 2004, 238) and civilian expert knowledge turned to a mere substantiating and legitimising function for U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

6.6 Reflections on civil knowledge production in Vietnam

As Robert McNamara remarked in the 1960s, when the struggle in Vietnam was already well underway: If World War I was the chemists' war, and World War II the physicists' war, then Vietnam "might well have to be considered the social scientists' war" (Quoted in McDougall 1997, 141). Indeed, the success of the physical sciences during World War II, most visible in the development of the Atomic Bomb, had made a huge impact on the connection between science and the state. When research funds and contracts kept flowing after the war, many in the social sciences also wanted a piece of the cake and began to think about how their research could make a reliable and significant policy-relevant impact. Thus, throughout the 1950s, intellectuals and theorists at various U.S. institutions, universities, research councils, and think-tanks developed the so-called "modernisation theory".

This theory, which outlined the development of societies along a continuum from 'primitive', traditional forms of existence to a 'modern', industrialised society, was much more than merely a political theory or rhetorical tool. It was, in fact, an intellectual framework through which the role and actions of the U.S. in the world could be interpreted. It was, as Latham (2000) has described it, an "ideology", through which the self-image of a benevolent and altruistic U.S. could be displayed and which could serve as the basis for actual foreign policy decision. The U.S. government under President Kennedy was pretty much inclined to utilise these experts and their knowledge, based on the threat that Communism posed to the autopoietic organisation's binary view on national security. Furthermore, the success that other (natural) scientists have had during WWII (in protecting national security interests), promised an easy isomorphic adaption.

As I have shown in this chapter, throughout the 1950s, theories of modernisation and development emerged from purely political theories, originating at Harvard's Department of Social Relations, into policy-relevant knowledge that was promoted most fervently by the CCP and MIT's CENIS. When Kennedy became president, he was heavily influenced by the ideas of these modernisation theorists and he made them part of his administration, turning scholars into policy-makers and turning their thinking into actual policy. Although the modernisation theorists were careful not to eschew claims of colonialism, the basic belief that modernity was inherently synonymous with 'American' (or 'Western') indicated just that. By speaking about 'underdeveloped' or 'primitive' cultures, in contrast to the 'developed' and 'modern' U.S., modernisation theory displayed a socio-anthropological worldview that had equally been apparent in older theories (or rather, ideologies) of social evolution and Social-Darwinism. Moreover, the belief that U.S. actions in Vietnam were benevolent, or in the words of the Colonel in *Full Metal Jacket* that "inside every gook there is an American trying to get out" and the U.S. had to support this process, mirrored the same assumptions and beliefs that had guided the U.S. during the Philippine Insurrection.

In the analysis of civil knowledge for the Vietnam War, I have shown that, in contrast to common assumptions, the Kennedy administration considered 'counterinsurgency' not merely a military activity. On the contrary, counterinsurgency was explicitly devised as a civil 'grand plan' of giving indirect civil assistance and support not only to South Vietnam but also to other foreign governments, to guide them on their way to modernity and avert the 'threat' of Communism. A central tenet of these civil counterinsurgency efforts was the ODP, or the "CI Bible", which had been drafted by the Kennedy's advisory group

on counterinsurgency, the 'Special Group CI'. The OIDP was remarkable, as it clearly stated the U.S. deliberately aimed to intervene in Communist revolutions, because they were "contrary to U.S. interests". In this sense, the OIDP became one of the politico-intellectual backbones of U.S. actions in recently decolonised countries around the world and particularly in South Vietnam. What is notable, is that in the quest for policy-relevant knowledge creation, the Kennedy administration relied heavily on U.S. domestic experiences and tried to apply them to Vietnam. Like in the Philippines, there were several commissions and fact-finding missions that were sent to Vietnam (although they did not reach the importance and influence the Taft Commission in particular had in the Philippines). And much like the situation at the turn of the century, the 'experts' involved were not really experts on Vietnam or Southeast Asia,¹¹⁵ but rather high U.S. administration officials who were infused by the spirit of modernisation theory. As it became obvious in the analysis of two specific aspects of civic action – internal security assistance and TVA-style economic development in the Mekong Delta – the knowledge that had been created by the U.S. experts was applied directly in Vietnam without much consideration for local circumstances, which ultimately led to the failure of both programmes, amidst a worsening of the war itself.

¹¹⁵ Aside from exceptions like Edward G. Lansdale, who derived the wrong conclusions from his experience in the Philippines for the situation in Vietnam.

7 Vietnam (1954-1975) – Military knowledge

7.1 Introduction

This chapter contends that military ‘counterinsurgency’ knowledge was developed quite late in the Vietnam campaign and often not directly commissioned by the government and military, but simply taken up to substantiate or legitimise U.S. military operations. The military experts involved in the knowledge production process did not develop new methods and techniques, but simply rehashed older colonial forms of repression and control. Moreover, the analysis of the military knowledge production process in the Vietnam case study shows that although the strategies and policies devised for Vietnam were seemingly forgotten after the war, the way that experts were brought in and developed knowledge had a lasting influence on how military ‘counterinsurgency’ is seen today. With the help of experts, ‘counterinsurgency’ began to emerge as a strategic concept in its own right during the Vietnam War and not merely a tactical or operational tool anymore. This predetermined the way that knowledge was created for the Iraq campaign.

The role of the U.S. military in the Vietnam War is often associated with the deployment of several hundred thousand ground troops and an extended bombing campaign in North Vietnam after the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964. Yet, similarly to the civic sphere, the U.S. military was also influenced by the theories of modernisation and counterinsurgency. In this chapter, the focus remains on how these concepts were introduced into the military and how it reacted towards them. A closer look is then taken at two specific military actions – the ‘Strategic Hamlets’ and the “Military medicine” programmes – to analyse how experts created specific military knowledge that was infused with the

precepts of modernisation theory as well as older anti-guerrilla strategies and tactics from imperial campaigns. To understand the U.S. military's role in Vietnam and its counterinsurgency campaign, it is important to have a look at the mind-set that had developed before the onset of the war.

As described in the Philippines case study, the U.S. military, and in particular the Army, had developed a preference for conventional, "big war" campaign through the late 19th century teachings of Wagner and Upton. Despite the experience of guerrilla warfare in the Philippines at the turn of the century, Secretary of War Elihu Root had implemented many of Upton's ideas about 'massive armed force' in his reforms from 1901 to 1903. With the establishment of a War Department staff and later a General Staff as well as system of service schools for the development and dissemination of knowledge and doctrine, the U.S. military followed the example of the militaries of the other major, industrialised European states and "underwent a continuous and consistent transformation, accelerated during World War I and World War II and arrested to varying degrees during peacetime" (Janowitz 1960, viii). An integral part of this transformation was the introduction of modern technology and better managerial techniques, allowing the creation and administration of a mass army to wage a total war (Ambrose 1964, 156; Weigley 1962, 149 f.).

The underlying concept of war that guided the U.S. Army had developed, through the teachings of Upton and Wagner, from the Civil War. As Russell Weigley (1981, 2 f.) notes: "The Civil War had moulded the American Army's conceptions of the nature of full-scale war in ways that would profoundly affect its conduct of the Second World War." After the experience of World War I, many U.S. officers (the Generals of World War II) complained about the incomplete destruction of

the German Army and concluded that the frontal assault was the only course of action in industrialised, warfare. Hence, in the interwar years, U.S. military culture geared towards the strategic aim of completely destroying the enemy and imposing its political will on him through the use of overwhelming force. With this, the American military would combine both Grant's method of overwhelming combat power and Sherman's approach of destroying the enemy's economic resources and will to fight (Weigley 1981, 4 ff.). This approach proved successful during World War II and, thus, was also the way of how the U.S. military leadership approached the escalating war in Vietnam. Hence, we can conclude that this 'conventional' mindset, which began to emerge at the time of the Philippine-American War, predisposed the U.S. military for big wars and not for 'counterinsurgencies'. Concomitant with the notion that the U.S. government entered the conflict in Vietnam with a distinct focus on civil counterinsurgency methods, we can expect that military counterinsurgency knowledge did not play an instrumental role in the policy planning and knowledge production processes. This will be analysed in detail in the subsequent subsections.

7.2 Forming military-relevant counterinsurgency knowledge

One place where Kennedy's call to arms to fight insurgency in Vietnam and around the world resonated particularly well was the Research and Development Corporation (RAND). Originally a project of the Douglas Aircraft Corporation to support the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II, by 1946 RAND had evolved to a government-sponsored think-tank focusing on aerospace

technology and policy as well as nuclear strategy.¹¹⁶ In the late 1940s and early 1950s, insurgencies were not a major issue for the defence analysts at RAND (Long 2006, 5). In the late 1950s, however, after communist-inspired nationalist insurgencies had swept across recently de-colonised countries of Asia and Africa, RAND began researching this topic, perhaps even coining the neologism ‘counterinsurgency’ itself (Kilcullen 2012, 131). As with nuclear and aerospace issues, RAND analysed insurgencies mathematically. Project SIERRA, which began in 1954 under Edward Paxson of RAND’s mathematics department, was a series of war games for the U.S. Air Force, focusing on the possibility of limited war in Asia, given the recent U.S. intervention in Korea and the French experience in Indochina. The result of SIERRA was the vision of a semi-conventional conflict, which mirrored the later stages of the French fight against the Viet Cong. The possible use of atomic weapons was also considered in these scenarios (Elliott 2010, 9; Long 2006, 6). Aside from this, counterinsurgency remained of little attraction for RAND under Eisenhower.¹¹⁷

However, RAND’s focus on counterinsurgency did not really kick off until John F. Kennedy took charge of the Oval Office. In February 1962, one year into his presidency, RAND convened a week-long symposium in Washington, D.C., attended by civilian and military experts and the results of which were later published (Hosmer and Crane 1963). In the words of David Kilcullen, “this symposium was a seminal moment in the intellectual history of classical COIN”

¹¹⁶ Obviously, the fact that RAND is a think-tank, raises the question why it is under “Military Knowledge”. I did this, because unlike the other corporations and institutions discussed under “Civil Knowledge”, RAND’s focus on counterinsurgency centered on the military and was much more intertwined with military and government than similar government-sponsored institutions.

¹¹⁷ In fact, when asked by Rostow in February 1961 what work had been done, George K. Tanham replied “we have done very little” and was only able to provide a short Research Memorandum from September 1959, entitled “Doctrine and Tactics of Revolutionary Warfare: The Viet Minh in Indochina” (Letter and Memorandum, Tanham to Rostow, February 24 1961, in Kennedy 1961-1963c, Box 215).

(Kilcullen 2012, 133). The aim of the conference was to “distil lessons and insights from past insurgent conflicts that might help to inform and shape the U.S. involvement in Vietnam and to foster the effective prosecution of other future counterinsurgency campaigns.” In contrast to the work done by the modernisation theorists at universities and think tanks, the focus of the RAND symposium lay explicitly on “warfare” (Hosmer and Crane 1963, iii).

The case study approach to the analysis of contemporary insurgencies and extrapolation of ‘best practices’ from them was in line with what the Kennedy administration, and in particular Robert McNamara and the other ‘Whiz Kids’, considered the best way of developing a scientific, rational, measurable, management-science approach to conflict and foreign policy. As we can see, similar civil counterinsurgency knowledge, military knowledge production processes became inherently more academic, adding to the value of experts that possessed the corresponding credentials. However, in contrast to the civil efforts, we can determine that the expert utilisation and knowledge production process was much less government-induced. The process only started quite late and there was no direct commissioning of experts at the beginning of the conflict. Hence, this is another indicator that there was no instrumental interest by either the U.S. military or government to produce relevant COIN knowledge.

The symposium was attended by some of the most influential counterinsurgency theorists and practitioners of the day.¹¹⁸ There were twelve formal participants, of which five were American, four British and one Australian, French, and Filipino. Eleven participants were Army officers (some retired), proving the military focus

¹¹⁸ For example, David Galula, Frank Kitson, Edward G. Lansdale, and Rufus C. Phillips.

of the symposium. All but the rapporteur, Sibylle O. Greene, were males and all but Napoleon D. Valeriano from the Philippines were Caucasian (Hosmer and Crane 1963, xi). As Galula notes, “[t]here were no specialists in logistics, transportation, policing or civilian government, no naval, marine or aviation officers, no diplomats and no former or current insurgents or host-nation civilian populations” (Kilcullen 2012, 136).¹¹⁹ Moreover, the participant’s experience was limited to tactical (company or battalion) level experience in counterinsurgency, which is indicated by their rank: one captain, eight colonels or lieutenant colonels, two brigadiers and a civilian.¹²⁰ In terms of the campaigns, the experience seems diverse with the Huk rebellion in the Philippines, the Algerian War, the Malayan Emergency, the Greek and Chinese Civil Wars, and campaigns in Oman, Kenya, Indochina, and Thailand. Yet, aside from Galula and Lansdale, the knowledge of most participants was limited to Malaya and Indochina. We can, thus, see that the experts were included by RAND based on their past experiences.

This highlights the problematic aspect of extrapolation and generalisation of ‘lessons learned’ from other counterinsurgencies, as it does with isomorphism more generally. Indeed, it is another example where old ‘best practices’ were adopted by the organisation in an isomorphic fashion, both in terms of the experts themselves as well as their knowledge. The experts had a limited, tactical view on counterinsurgencies, often in different areas of the world, and were now tasked with developing strategic (and inherently political) answers to the insurgency in Vietnam. This was certainly difficult, because the military experts

¹¹⁹ The report inaccurately describes David Galula as a member of the French Marine Corps. Although he had been an officer of the French Colonial Infantry, at the time of the symposium, he had already retired and was a research associate at Harvard (Kilcullen 2012, 150).

¹²⁰ An exception is Edward G. Lansdale, who assisted the Philippine government in the suppression of the Huks.

were unable to assess or address the underlying flaws that the civilian-focused counterinsurgency policy of the Kennedy administration brought with it, most importantly that it was not really about modernising Vietnam, but the enforcement of U.S. interests.

The RAND symposium report lists eleven different major topics of insurgency and counterinsurgency that were discussed, such as “Characteristics and Patterns of Guerrilla Warfare”, “Tactics and Techniques of Counter guerrilla Warfare”, “Psychological Warfare and Civic Action”, or “Intelligence and Counterintelligence” (Hosmer and Crane 1963, xiii). For reasons of parsimony, only a few strategic and tactical points the experts made are reiterated here. These are important for the subsequent analysis of specific U.S. military counterinsurgency programmes in South Vietnam and to what extent these experts’ views were taken in. First, in terms of the strategic environment of counterinsurgency, there was the belief that the insurgents challenged a weak, yet not failed state. That is, the governmental structures of the state were still intact. In the `50s and `60s, this was the normal situation of many recently decolonised states. The experts’ view was that the Communist insurgents (“communist” and “insurgency” were used synonymously, indicating that the experts viewed insurgency as something inherently Communist) challenged the status quo and the counterinsurgent sought to reinstate the state’s legitimacy and its capacity to defeat the internal enemy (Hosmer and Crane 1963, 3 ff.). Also, the assumption was that the insurgent generally started, as Galula stated “whereas in conventional war, either side can initiate the conflict, only one – the insurgent – can initiate a revolutionary war, for counterinsurgency is only an effect of insurgency” (Galula 1964, 3).

These issues were not only based on the empirical observations the experts had made in their campaigns, but they also seemed to confirm to the order of action that actual insurgent leaders, such as Mao Zedong (Mao 2000), had postulated in their work. Hence, the experts focused their attention on recognising an organised insurgency early enough to respond and not mistake it for mere civil unrest. As Robert Thompson noted, “at the first signs of an incipient insurgency [...] no one likes to admit that anything is going wrong. This automatically leads to a situation where government countermeasures are too little and too late” (Thompson 1970, 20 f.). Another factor that preoccupied the theorists was the issue of ‘territory’. Matters such as guerrilla bases, areas and sanctuaries, and how the counterinsurgent had to “secure” and “clean” them (Hosmer and Crane 1963, 17 ff.), were discussed at the symposium and in the publications of the participants (Galula 1964; Thompson 1970).¹²¹ In their view, insurgents were considered to be a unified actor and basically the military wing of a Communist party (Hosmer and Crane 1963, 3). Thus, the struggle was a bilateral one: between the ‘insurgent’ and the ‘counterinsurgent’ (Galula 1964) or the incumbent ‘government’ (Thompson 1970).

Second, and perhaps more important for the analysis of knowledge transfer in relation to the Vietnam campaign, were the operational and tactical aspects of insurgency and counterinsurgency that the theorists brought forward. In terms of the insurgents, they considered that they fought a war of many small incidents, hit-and-run attacks and ambushes, or as Robert Taber (2002, 20) has put it: “The

¹²¹ In his reading of the symposium, Kilcullen (2012, 138) maintains that “sanctuary [is treated] as primarily a physical space (often straddling an international border) in which insurgents can regroup or through which external support flows.” This is not necessarily wrong, yet the participants of the symposium make clear that a “secure base” (for both insurgents and counterinsurgents) is rather “political” than “physical”, i.e. what counts is the support of the population and not the mere possession of territory (Hosmer and Crane 1963, 8 f.).

guerrilla fights the war of the flea, and his military enemy suffers the dog's disadvantages: too much to defend, too small, too ubiquitous, and agile an enemy to come to grips with." If the war continues too long the government is considerably weakened, military over-extended and, politically unpopular. Also, the participants thought that the insurgents were mainly fighting for the support of the rural population. Indeed, their own campaigns in "colonial or independent under-developed territories" (Thompson 1970, 21) had primarily been rural.

So what was the theorists' approach to solving the 'problem' of insurgency? The subsequent operations and tactics of a counterinsurgency campaign, which were discussed at the symposium, are most poignantly summed up in Galula's "Eight Steps", of which the first four are the most important.¹²² First, the counterinsurgent had to move into a selected area via a massive sweep operation and clear it from guerrilla forces (Hosmer and Crane 1963, 42 ff.). Second, the area had to be held by the government with sufficient forces to avert a return of the insurgents and secure both itself and the population. Third, the counterinsurgent had to get back in touch with the population and re-establish its political authority over it. An important aspect in this was "winning over the population" through various social, political, cultural or medical projects (Hosmer and Crane 1963, 56 ff.). Fourth, the insurgents' political organisation had to be destroyed through psychological warfare, such as subversive actions or media campaigns (Hosmer and Crane 1963, 69 ff.) and thorough intelligence (Hosmer and Crane 1963, 87 ff.).¹²³

¹²² I quote where these aspects were discussed at the symposium and by other experts. Galula's listing of the eight steps can be found in his book *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (1964, 75 ff.).

¹²³ The last four of Galula's steps – holding local elections, testing the local leaders, organising a party, and winning over or suppressing the last insurgents – were not discussed at the symposium and are rather concerning the post-fighting phase.

In terms of the means used, the participants discussed in large detail the pros and cons of different weapons (“the noisy vs. the silent weapon”, Hosmer and Crane 1963, 34) and the usability of different vehicles (trucks, helicopters, and planes, Hosmer and Crane 1963, 51 ff.). One important aspect that was neither mentioned by Galula nor discussed at the conference, was the ‘*tache d’huile*’, or ‘oil spot’ (Lyautey 1920, Vol.1, 113) method, which French colonial officers Joseph-Simon Gallieni and Hubert Lyautey had developed during the colonial wars in Tonkin, Madagascar, and Morocco from 1890 to 1925 and which were also used by the French in Indochina (Sheehan 1988, 310; Taber 2002, 61). In the oil spot method, the counterinsurgent forces started off from their isolated strongholds and then spread out into the insurgent areas step-by-step.

The re-emergence of this technique from older, colonial forms of warfare, illustrates the fact that the RAND symposium – along with dozens of other seminars, studies, symposia and individual works of counterinsurgency theorists and practitioners – was representative of the effort in the late 1950s and early ‘60s to sift out the most important strategic, operational and tactical aspects of colonial warfare and recent experiences of (mostly) Communist insurgencies in the wake of post-WWII decolonisation in order to create a Cold War theory of counterinsurgency.¹²⁴ This theory was not necessarily free of ideology, as it was infused with contemporary modernisation theory. Yet again, we can see that the knowledge created by the experts was old wine in new wineskins.

¹²⁴ Even the debates about the use of specific tactical tools such as aircrafts in counterinsurgency was not new, but had been discussed since the introduction of this technology (see e.g. Gwynn 1934; Paris 1989; Ryan 1983).

Despite the attempts by the Kennedy administration to not only strengthen the knowledge of the civil but also the military component of counterinsurgency,¹²⁵ this was not necessarily true for directly drawing lessons from the rear-guard battle counterinsurgencies that the British and especially the French had fought in their former colonies. The brutal conduct of the French in Algeria – the conflict in which Galula participated in and derived his lessons from – was met with dismay in the U.S. Many sided with the rebels and Kennedy, in his longest speech as a senator on 2 July 1957, argued in favour of Algerian independence.

The works of Galula himself were “the victim of bad luck and bad timing”, as Ann Marlowe (2010, 7) notes. His most famous book *Counterinsurgency Warfare* – which had decisive influence on the development of *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency* for the recent campaign in Iraq – at that time received very little attention. Aside from a rather negative, review in the New York Times, the book was hardly read outside of military circles and soon went out of print (Marlowe 2010, 10). The negative review might have been partly due to the lack of sourcing. It hardly contains any notes or sources and the diagrams and figures provide no data basis. This, as well as the factual inaccuracies and logical flaws in the book, are noteworthy, given that Galula spent a considerable amount of time as an academic researcher at RAND and Harvard (Porch 2013, 180). In essence, it was more of an opinion piece, than original knowledge underpinned by strong research. Hence, it can be assumed that, at least at the beginning of the conflict, contemporary military counterinsurgency experts did not have significant

¹²⁵ Aside from reading reports from advisors and experts, such as Edward Lansdale, Kennedy was an avid reader of any literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency, including novels like *The Ugly American* (1958), which portrayed the French struggle in Indochina and which he recommended to other policy-makers (Cuordileone 2005, 220) or works by insurgent leaders such as Che Guevara (Memorandum for Record, General C.V. Clifton, 10 February 1961, in Kennedy 1961-1963c, Box 279).

instrumental impact on military decision-making. For our theoretical framework, this indicates that military counterinsurgency knowledge served a rather legitimising or, at best, substantiating function as the experts were only consulted later on and in specific aspects and there was a looser fit between military organisational targets, which were geared towards 'big wars' and the counterinsurgency knowledge.

Indeed, it was more that case that modernisation theory-infused civil counterinsurgency elements were to be implemented into the military rather than focusing on genuine military methods. The modernisation theorists in Kennedy's administration, not only tried to spread the gospel of modernisation to civilian officials in the U.S. government agencies (for example at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute, see also section "Civil Knowledge"), but also to the military. Lucian Pye had quite early on elaborated on the role of the military in modernisation theory. Although he personally, like other modernisation scholars, preferred democratic ways of achieving modernity (as representative institutions were the climax of modernity), the deteriorating security situation in many decolonised regions made him consider how the military (both of the country and foreign, assisting militaries) could be of help.

His answer was that the military could assist the process of modernisation in three different ways. First, the military was an important tool in overcoming the psychological problems that were an unavoidable side-effect of decolonisation and modernisation. The military was able to bring "people out of a tradition-oriented world and into the modern secular world under conditions that tend to reduce personal anxiety" (Quoted in Gilman 2003, 187). Second, the military was usually the most potent force in a country to provide stability. For Pye, as for other

modernisation theorists like Rostow, 'stability' meant the aversion of Communist regimes coming to power (Pye 1959; Rostow 1952, 102). Last, the military could be effective agents of modernisation and provide functional means of training and advice (Gilman 2003, 189). To be fair, Pye and others always disclaimed that the reliance on military rule and dictatorships to push the process of modernisation was anything but a temporary solution. Yet, the fact that military rule was considered a viable option, shows how much modernisation theory relied on a bureaucratic interpretation of democracy, in which the people were seen as dangerous (see e.g. Gendzier 1985).

On June 28, 1961, Rostow gave a speech to the graduates of the "Counter Guerrilla Course" at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in which he linked military strategy, counterinsurgency, and modernisation. In the speech, later approved by Kennedy himself as a statement of his policy, Rostow argued that guerrilla warfare was an inherent part of the Communists' attempt to "exploit the inherent instabilities of the underdeveloped world." Because the process of modernisation was so disturbing and challenging for the peoples involved, and old ways of life were shaken whilst new opportunities loomed on the horizon, Rostow emphasised that the Communists wanted to exploit the "grand arena of revolutionary change" and sought to capitalize on "the resentments built up in many of these areas against colonial rule." By promoting their own developmental model of "national liberation," they tried to "associate themselves effectively with the desire of the emerging nations for independence, for status on the world scene, for material progress" (Rostow 1961b, 7).¹²⁶

¹²⁶ This course, with a duration of six weeks, had begun shortly after Kennedy's inauguration in January 1961 and was supposed to be conducted four times a year with 60 students (Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, Development of Counter guerrilla Forces, 9 March 1961, Appendix B, p. 4, in Kennedy 1961-1963c, Box 279).

The response to the Communist's challenge of the modernisation process would be modernity itself. In Rostow's eyes, insurgents were "scavengers" of the transition towards modernity and containing them would speed up social progress. The promotion of modernisation by the U.S. and its military would deny the insurgents their window of opportunity for causing social unrest. The U.S. military would play a vital role in constructing "truly independent nations" and act in accordance with its own historical and destined benevolence. The Special Forces – Rostow's audience of the speech – were at the forefront of a military fighting a guerrilla war "not merely with weapons but [...] in the minds of the men who live in the villages and the hills; [fighting] by the spirit and policy of those who run the local government" (Rostow 1961b). In other words, Rostow combined military counterinsurgency with the conveyance of advanced, Western values. Thus, guerrilla war was not simply about fighting the insurgents, but also using the military to win over the population for your cause. Though, because the focus of the Kennedy administration and the modernisation theorists within it, lay so much on civil counterinsurgency knowledge, any knowledge that was to be developed for the military was more a means to an end rather than instrumental. It merely focused on a few substantiating aspects, like the Special Forces.

Nevertheless, in the early 1960s, there was at least somewhat of a curiosity to get involved with counterinsurgency, particularly in combination with modernisation and nation-building, even though many in the U.S. military later claimed that they had opposed counterinsurgency from the start (Fitzgerald 2013, Chap. 2). There were people within the military who lobbied strongly for it. Edward Lansdale was involved in teaching U.S. Army officers for counterinsurgency and in his seminars made explicit links between military tactics and social

engineering. As he explained to the officers on one course, the Hukbalahap rebels had success in the beginning, because they were “running a revolution” while the government attempted to fight them as “formal enemy armed forces.” But once the Philippine Army started to “construct a true political base for their fight”, by providing farmers with material assistance and gaining their trust, they started to win (Lansdale 1961). Much like the civic action measures, Lansdale saw the foundation of military counterinsurgency in civil efforts at the village level. If the military became involved in the construction of schools, roads, or the improvement of hygienic circumstances in isolated towns, the peasantry could be freed from apathy and fatalism, and it would help defeat the Communist’s influence on those communities (Latham 2000, 169). Aside from individuals, the Army as an institution also sought avenues to increase its practical knowledge about counterinsurgency. Most prominent in this regard was “Project Camelot”, a military-sponsored social science study about the outbreak (and controllability) of revolutions. As with the civilian methods, the aim behind it was clear. As William J. Fulbright noted:

Implicit in Camelot, as in the concept of ‘counterinsurgency’, is an assumption that revolutionary movements are dangerous to the interests of the U.S. and that the U.S. must be prepared to assist, if not actually to participate in, measures to repress them.

(Quoted in Walsh 1965, 1211)

When Kennedy came to power, the DoD’s Research, Development, Test and Evaluation programme in counterinsurgency grew from \$10 million to \$160 million. In 1964, when an internal report noted the requirement to improve “the knowledge and understanding in depth of the internal cultural, economic and political conditions that generate conflicts between national groups”, the Army began to develop an ambitious research programme to study revolutionary

movements and counter-insurgency tactics (Solovey 2001, 180). Project Camelot, conducted by the quasi-independent Special Operations Research Office (SORO), had three scientific and political objectives. First, it would “devise procedures for assessing the potential for internal war within national societies”.

Second, it would “identify with increased degrees of confidence those actions, which a government might take to relieve conditions, which are assessed as giving rise to a potential for internal war”. Third, it would “assess the feasibility of prescribing the characteristics of a system for obtaining and using the essential information needed for doing the above two things” (Quoted in Horowitz 1967, 47 ff.). Project Camelot was eventually cancelled in 1965 amidst international and national discussion about its political implications and the escalation of the Vietnam War. The Army was not disinclined to experiment with counterinsurgency. Yet, it was never an instrumental affair in Vietnam. The fact that military commissioned projects such as “Camelot” were short-lived and half-hearted, reinforces the impression that the knowledge served inherently legitimising and substantiating symbolic purposes to justify U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, but not really do develop meaningful and honest solutions to use military means to improve the conditions of the population.

7.3 Areas of military knowledge production

7.3.1 The Strategic Hamlet Program¹²⁷

For the experts in the U.S. administration and in Vietnam, a major obstacle to winning the war against the Vietcong was the fact that country was very rural,

¹²⁷ The Strategic Hamlet Program incorporated civil and military aspects and is, thus, difficult to fit into one specific category of knowledge production. Because the military was used to move the

with the overwhelming majority of the population living in small villages and communities in the countryside. Because neither the Diem regime nor the U.S. had sufficient forces and resources to control all of the rural areas of Vietnam (which, to be fair, hardly any counterinsurgent in any country ever has), a way had to be found to concentrate people and control them.

In contrast to some hardliners, who wanted to “bomb [Vietnam] into the Stone Age” (General Curtis LeMay, cited in Drinnon 1997, 371), many social scientists as well as the counterinsurgency experts that had convened at the RAND symposium, believed that a fundamental transformation of Vietnamese society was needed to win the war. By moving the peasants into government-controlled towns, they would not only escape the clutches of the insurgents, but also acknowledge the benefits of modernity much quicker in thriving, capitalist towns.

As Harvard political scientist Samuel P. Huntington argued (1968, 652):

In an absent-minded way the U.S. in Viet Nam [sic] may well have stumbled upon the answer to ‘wars of national liberation.’ The effective response lies neither in the quest for conventional military victory nor in the esoteric doctrines and gimmicks of counterinsurgency warfare. It is instead forced draft urbanization and modernization which rapidly brings the country in question out of the phase in which a rural revolutionary movement.

This subsection analyses how the ideas of modernisation theorists and military counterinsurgency experts were used to engineer dramatic social changes within the Vietnamese population by moving them in so-called ‘Strategic Hamlets’. In this specific context, it projected a particular (self-) image of the U.S. as a credible world power that employed modernisation theory to directly tackle the problems of a ‘traditional’ peasantry and guide them towards modernity

people into the villages and ‘guard’ (or rather, control) them, I have decided to put it into the latter section.

The Strategic Hamlet Program is an important case for the study of the application of 'expert' knowledge in Vietnam, because with it the U.S. government pretty much followed the recommendations of the experts of the RAND symposium, by clearing a target area and subsequently trying to protect the population against the Viet Cong and winning over their 'hearts and minds'. Yet, as is shown in the analysis, this ultimately failed, because it was merely a substantiating effort of the U.S. military to improve the lifestyle of the Vietnamese and there was no instrumental gain for U.S. interests. Moreover, in its conception and application, the Strategic Hamlet Program was not a novel invention of the counterinsurgency 'experts', but called to mind the history of imperial strategies that relied on "reconcentrating" and "developing" a population, thus, fitting a much older pattern of suppression, in which "progress" and violence were two sides of the same coin (Latham 2000, 153). This shows us again the continuity, or rather rehashing, of counterinsurgency methods apparent across the campaigns.

The relocation of people had a long history in Vietnam, even before the Americans arrived. The French had tried to move peasants into "secure zones" and in 1959 Diem and his brother and main adviser Ngo Dinh Nhu began to experiment with a similar programme. They moved farmers into unsettled areas, hoping this would strengthen their patronage and political control over a hostile population. Peasants had to leave their properties behind and move to so-called "prosperity and density centers" or "aggrovilles". These aggrovilles, which consisted of approximately 400 families, had to be built by the peasants themselves and were located along strategic roads that connected larger towns and cities. Each family received a plot where they could build their own home and keep livestock. Moreover, the villages usually had a school, church, and a

communal fishpond or canal. The peasants worked on rice fields during the day, whilst at night they were locked up in the aggroville (BDM Corporation 1980, Vol. 5, 5-14 ff.). In the end, the aggroville programme was a failure. As the MSUG found, it uprooted the rural population of South Vietnam, forcing them from their homes and pay rent for the aggroville lots. Corrupt officials embezzled funds allotted by the government and maltreatment or even rape of women were commonplace. This made the families rather associate with the insurgents than Diem's government (Zasloff 1962).

Although the scheme had obviously failed, the U.S. government made peasant resettlement a major element of their Vietnam strategy. This sprung primarily from the report, which the Staley Group had submitted in July 1961. Aside from making recommendations about medical assistance, civil service training and increased economic assistance, the experts around Eugene Staley looked at the internal security situation in Vietnam, arguing that an effective solution would require "stepped up economic and social action, especially in rural areas, closely integrated with military action." For them, the effective solution lay in the construction of aggrovilles: "Aggrovilles and land development projects contribute materially to the solution of security problems in the rural areas. All possible effort should be made to speed up these programs." The group asked that the U.S. government provide \$3.5 million for the construction of additional aggrovilles over the next year and a half (Staley et al. 1961, 196). Within the Kennedy administration, these recommendations were taken up favourably. Secretary of State Dean Rusk wrote to Kennedy that the Staley Group had produced "a good economic programme on which to strengthen Vietnamese security" and that the measures would "strengthen the Government, especially in its relations with the

rural population,” and bring the Vietnamese peasantry “more securely within the nation” (Quoted in Latham 2000, 171). Yet again, it was favourable knowledge that the decision-makers drew on, rather than having a pre-existing interest in it. Thus, the knowledge for the Strategic Hamlets can be seen as substantiating for the U.S. counterinsurgency campaign, rather than instrumental.

U.S. involvement in the resettlement programme began in late 1961, when U.S. Special Forces provided training and assistance for village self-defence amongst the indigenous ‘Montagnards’, living in the highland areas (Shackleton 1975). At the same time, the British Advisory Mission (BRIAM) arrived in Vietnam, which Diem had requested from the British government, after seeing the successful quelling of the insurgency in Malaya (Busch 2003, 66 ff.). The head of the mission, Robert G. K. Thompson was a veteran of the “Malayan Emergency”. Based on his experiences there, Thompson argued that the Viet Cong had the ability to create a dense network of intelligence, supply, and troops in the countryside. To defeat them, the Saigon government would have to attack their infrastructure directly (Gravel 1971, Vol. 2, 140).

Thompson outlined three main stages to achieve this (Thompson 1966, 111 ff.). The first of these “basic operational concepts” was the “clearing” of an area, which was next to a secure area by bringing in enough military and police forces in order to disperse local insurgents. However, the security forces could not simply “sweep” through the target area, as the guerrilla fighters could then easily return after their departure. Hence, second, in the “holding” step they had to stay and “restore government authority in the area and [...] establish a firm security framework” (Thompson 1966, 112). An important aspect in this stage were the strategic hamlets in which the peasants could be separated from the insurgent

forces. Thompson argued that if peasants were moved into these villages, they would be easier to defend and control and the insurgents would be denied the necessary resources. In the third step, the counterinsurgents would then move over to “winning” the population by building schools, canals, and roads as well as providing seeds, livestock and fertilisers to the inhabitants. This gave the peasants a “stake in stability and hope for the future.” It stimulated “necessary positive action to prevent insurgent reinfiltration” and encouraged the locals “to provide the intelligence necessary to eradicate any insurgent cells which remain.” After the population had been won, the government could gradually remove restrictions (Thompson 1966, 113).

Thompson submitted his plan, labelled ‘Appreciation of Vietnam, November 1961–April 1962’, to both Diem and the U.S. government in November 1961 and Kennedy soon officially decreed the ‘Strategic Hamlet Program’ based largely on Thompson’s recommendations, which fit perfectly with his own strategic vision of tackling both the military and political shortcomings in Vietnam without sending U.S. ground forces (Busch 2002, 140). Yet, not everyone was so thrilled about the programme. In particular, some in the U.S. military rather preferred “search and destroy” operations, for which the MAAG had trained the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) since the 1950s, over Thompson’s “clear and hold” approach. In a memorandum to Kennedy’s military adviser Maxwell Taylor, General Lemnitzer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), urged him to not incorporate the strategic hamlets. In his view, the war could only be won through firepower and an attrition of the insurgents, i.e. killing them faster than they could be replaced (Lemnitzer Memorandum to Taylor, 12 October 1961, in Gravel 1971, 650 f.). But within the administration, the strategic hamlet programme was

favoured and in February 1962 Roger Hilsman drafted a “Strategic Concept for Vietnam”. In the paper, he argued that the strategic hamlets could be part of a much more comprehensive nation-building approach in Vietnam. He emphasised that “the struggle for South Vietnam, in sum, is essentially a battle for the control of the village” (Document 42, in U.S. Department of State 1961b, Vol. 2).

Thompson’s strategy (and Hilsman’s elaboration of it), which was obviously heavily informed by his experiences in the British Malaya campaign, also conformed to the U.S.’own colonial experience in the Philippines. This shows us once more the continuity of counterinsurgency knowledge and the fact that it was in no way new knowledge, but rather a reformulation of colonial repression. Although the modernisation ‘experts’ never directly admitted to it, the ‘Strategic Hamlet Program’ resonated the measures taken during the Philippine Insurrection. Stuart Miller’s assessment for the Philippines campaign had been that the U.S. had embarked on a “ruthless projection” of their own: “The entire population was herded into concentration camps, which were bordered by [...] ‘dead lines.’ Everything outside the camps was systematically destroyed – humans, crops, food stores, domestic “animals, houses, and boats” (Miller 1982, 208 f.). These words could equally be used to describe U.S. actions in Vietnam. Though the destructive measures were not as drastic as in the Philippines, resettlement and violence went hand in hand in Vietnam, too. Once an area had been cleared and a strategic hamlet erected, peasants who did not move into it could easily be suspected as guerrillas and mistreated (Latham 2000, 180).

“Operation Sunrise”, the implementation of the strategic hamlet concept started in the Binh Duong province north of Saigon in March 1962. Against Thompson’s warnings, the U.S. had chosen a particular unstable region to gain a dramatic

victory. Yet, the results were rather unimpressive. After a massive military sweep, the resettlement began in March 1962. Seventy families moved themselves, while another 140 were forced at gunpoint. ARVN troops torched the old villages so people could not return to them. By May, less than 3,000 of the district's 38,000 inhabitants (or, 7 percent) had moved to the hamlets and the NLF still kept ambushing convoys to show that they had not been ejected from the area (Fall 1964, 376 ff.). The government subjected the residents to surveillance and permanent controls. Peasants had to wear identification cards with photographs,¹²⁸ people found outside the hamlets after curfew risked being shot at by the self-defence forces or patrols. For travel from and to the hamlet, peasants had to notify local officials (Memorandum, National Security Council, Delta Counterinsurgency Plan, January 1962, in Hilsman 1961-1964, Box 3).

As Latham has aptly written, “becoming ‘modern’ citizens of South Vietnam, ironically, entailed a loss of personal freedom and liberty. Membership in the polity demanded that peasants accept the rigid prohibitions and security apparatus of a mature, ‘rational’ order” (2000, 184). Kennedy’s experts saw their efforts as altruistic and in no way colonial. Roger Hilsman even used an example from the Philippine Insurrection – the attack on Company C of the Ninth Infantry in Balangiga on the island of Samar – to describe how bold and determined American leaders had worked with the Filipinos to fight back the insurgents and could do so equally in Vietnam (Hilsman 1961, 455 f.). Thus, emphasising the sacrifices of the U.S. to control their colony at the turn of the century, Hilsman reframed the tale of imperial glory to fit the new counterinsurgency logic (Latham 2000, 194).

¹²⁸ Another similarity to the Philippines and other counterinsurgency campaigns, including the most recent ones in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The deficiencies of the 'Strategic Hamlet Program' became soon obvious on a national scale. The NLF was able to hold on in the contested provinces and rely on the support of the peasants, who were alienated by the resettlement and the forced labour requirements, strong restrictions and, just like in the earlier aggrovilles, often untenable living conditions. Moreover, the NLF changed their tactics, attacking the hamlets both directly in armed assaults and by political infiltration. The NLF was even able to infiltrate the high ranks of Diem's government, possibly trying to undermine and overextend the programme from within (Truong et al. 1986, 46 f.). By mid-1963 it was clear to most U.S. advisers on the ground in Vietnam that the programme was failing and they explicitly stated this in their reports to Washington (Newman 1992, 313 ff.).

However, for the higher-up modernisation apologists, both in Vietnam and back in the US, the apparent failures of the hamlet system were explained within the explanatory model of modernisation theory. Hence, if the programme did not achieve the anticipated results, it was due to a poor execution by the South Vietnamese and not a general shortcoming of modernisation or counterinsurgency theory itself (see e.g. Memorandum, Lodge to Rusk, 11 December 1963, in Johnson 1963-1967, Box 1; National Security Archive 1998). Nevertheless, after Diem's assassination, the support for the programme quickly waned and was officially ended in 1964, although resettlement practices continued to be used throughout the rest of the war. Therefore, instead of questioning and addressing the underlying problems of the Strategic Hamlets, namely the forced relocation and alienation of thousands of Vietnamese peasants, the U.S. tried to use the programme as a substantiating way for its military operations in Vietnam, which were heavily influenced by modernisation

theory's postulations. As with the civilian projects described above, the Strategic Hamlets were also not followed through but quickly discarded in the face of adversity. Yet, in contrast to the civilian methods, there never seemed to be an instrumental interest behind them, but solely as a means to stop the insurgents.

7.3.2 Military Medicine

An important aspect in any military campaign is medical support. Soldiers rely on it for support and aid in action and beyond the front. Modern advances in medicine – be it medication such as penicillin or modern surgery techniques – have dramatically increased the survival rate of wounded soldiers. However, particularly in an insurgency, military medicine fulfils a much more comprehensive role. During the Vietnam War, the U.S. made the first concerted effort to employ direct medical aid to civilians to support the counterinsurgency effort. As I argue in this section, medical civic action programmes for the rural Vietnamese population were devised by the U.S. not merely because of instrumental or altruistic motives to help the Vietnamese population, but as a clear legitimising element of the U.S. occupation of Vietnam. Therefore, the military medicine programme, was different to the Strategic Hamlets. As a tool to help and shape the population, it was at first rather an 'orphan child' and efforts to use it as a strategic tool took place late with considerable interest in publicising the efforts.

When the U.S. became increasingly engaged in Vietnam in the early 1960s, there was certainly a need for professional medical care in the country as it had not developed a nationwide, science-based health care system. There were only 1,400 physicians in all of South Vietnam, of which 1,000 were in the army and the rest were mainly based in major cities (Wilensky 2004, 26). Vietnam and its guerrilla conflict proved an excellent opportunity to use military medicine to aid

civilians and win over their 'hearts and minds'. The knowledge gap was, thus, not how to address the wellbeing of the population but how to best utilise medicine as a legitimising tool for the U.S. In the early years of U.S. involvement, medical aid to civilians was rather loosely organised, mainly in small medical units that were adjunct to the main advisory body and without a major command. It was mainly individual medical officers who acted out of altruism and humanitarianism to help the civilian population and establish a rapport with them. In many cases, help to wounded civilians was simply given so the medical staff would be kept busy and the monetary funds allocated for civilian care remained miniscule (Wilensky 2004, 43 f.). This shows that there was no instrumental interest for the U.S. to help Vietnamese civilians. But when the U.S. began sending ground forces in 1965 and President Johnson initiated the "other war" with the establishment of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) as a key legitimising concept, where one focus lay on a concerted military medicine programme for Vietnamese peasants.

Throughout the war, several medical assistance programmes existed.¹²⁹ They were designed to provide medical care to Vietnamese civilians and increase the popularity and support of U.S. and allied forces. In an increasingly unpopular war (abroad and at home) medical assistance seemed to provide a perfect chance to show the 'good' the U.S. could provide for the people in the conflict (Bruss 1986, 229), indicating the legitimising effect the U.S. government sought from this knowledge. The Medical Civic Action Programme (MEDCAP) was initiated in

¹²⁹ These were the Medical Civic Action Programme I & II (MEDCAP I, MEDCAP II), the Military Provincial Health Assistance Program (MILPHAP) and the Civilian War Casualty Programme (CWCP). With MEDCAP I assistance was given to Vietnamese armed forces to help civilians. In MEDCAP II, U.S. military medical personnel then directly treated the civilians. MILPHAP provided the Vietnamese with knowledge and support in expanding health services, and CWCP treated civilians injured by U.S. military actions (Jenkins 1988, 8).

early 1963 to assist the Vietnamese military build their medical asset: “The objective of the programme was to create a bond between the Vietnamese armed forces and government with the rural population. American personnel were to be used only until the Vietnamese proved capable of continuing on their own” (Greenhut 1992, 140). The medical teams sent by the DOD were assigned to the ARVN forces to augment the Vietnamese capabilities and treat Vietnamese civilians in displacement camps or the ‘strategic hamlets’ (Greenhut 1992, 141).

With the beginning of the ground warfare campaigns in Vietnam, the experts in the U.S. administration and the military began to place a heavier emphasis on medical civic action. It was designated a “high-impact” programme (‘Giving a New Thrust to Pacification’, 7 August 1966, p. 7 in Komer 1966-1967, Box 3). In particular, Robert W. Komer, Special Assistant to President Johnson and later head of CORDS, saw it as important, because it made people healthier and brought them back to work and promoted winning over the Vietnamese (Wilensky 2004, 123 f.). From the military side, General William C. Westmoreland, under Johnson head of the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (USMACV), saw even uniformed medical staff as “civilian specialists” who “are discontent, even feel misused, when they are not occupied with their specialty (Westmoreland 1976, 349 f.). Westmoreland wanted to keep them busy if they were not looking after casualties and aiding civilians seemed a good thing to do.¹³⁰ Although there is no large treatise of this in their works, medical civic action was in line with what modernisation theorists had perceived as efforts to bring an ‘underdeveloped’ society to modernity. Improving the health and hygiene would result in lower mortality rates and higher productivity, which would speed up modernisation.

¹³⁰ Unlike a ‘big war’, there is usually an excess of medical capacity available in a counterinsurgency to provide for the case whereby a large influx of casualties come in at once.

Although most of the involved physicians, paramedics and nurses were certainly led by altruistic motives in helping the Vietnamese population, neither the military command nor the U.S. administration and its counterinsurgency experts had much interest in the quality of medical care provided. Instead, it was merely important to get as many people through the system as possible. This quantification of the medical civic action effort was in line with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's overall system of evaluating the war effort, e.g. by the body count of killed enemies or the amount of bombs dropped. In this system, higher numbers of locals receiving medical treatment meant progress and were evidence for winning the war (Wilensky 2004, 102).

Aside from all the propaganda about military medicine as a tool for 'winning the hearts and minds' of the Vietnamese and for aiding their progress and development, there was also a practical side for the US: the gathering of medical intelligence. This is an integral part of any intelligence work, not least because if inadequate it could lead to the spread of preventable diseases among one's own troops. During the Vietnam War, medical intelligence was both a by-product and an aim of medical support. On the one hand, captured enemies or civilians could be very informative if offered good treatment, e.g. by revealing mines on the road or planned ambushes (Kirkpatrick 1991, 9).

On the other hand, the data collected by the MEDCAP teams provided a good reflection of the population's overall health and could also reveal strategically relevant information. For example, when a strain of malaria endemic to North Vietnam appeared in South Vietnam, this indicated an increased presence of (North Vietnamese) enemies in the region who were preparing for an attack. The fact that so much attention was given to the extraction of medical information, led

one soldier to the assumption that the “over-riding objective” of the program was to obtain intelligence. Yet, if this was the case, it took place at the small-unit level, because no specific orders about the collection of medical assistance exist nor are there detailed reports about it (Wilensky 2004, 119 f.). The different medical programmes, including MEDCAP, were expanded by the U.S. government until 1969, when in the wake of the ‘Vietnamization’ of the conflict, planning for a withdrawal and handover to Vietnamese began. In 1972, the programme was eventually stopped when funding ceased. Overall, the U.S. medical assistance effort had little impact on the outcome of the war. Although many individuals were treated there were no significant health improvements on a larger scale. Many young Americans did good work, yet their efforts were largely in vain because of the inefficiency. In a country without proper health system, endemic diseases and little medical expertise, “malnourishment, malaria and poor sanitation [could] not [be] cured by an occasional MEDCAP visit” (Jenkins 1988, 12).

In this sense, the production and use of medical civic action in Vietnam was clearly politically motivated to aid the legitimisation of U.S. presence in the country. Both civilian and military leaders tried to use it as a way to exert political control and power over the population and, if possible, extract valuable intelligence information from it. Yet, it was not intended to deliver instrumental value for either the U.S. or Vietnamese peasants. The proposed altruistic nature of the programme was ostensible, which is shown by the half-hearted implementation of the programme. What is noticeable in regard to other counterinsurgency programmes (both military and civilian), is the fact that medical action – although certainly part of a modernisation process – was not directly envisaged by the experts in the military or the U.S. administration. In contrast,

only when the sporadic, ad hoc initiatives of low-level units proved successful and when the conflict expanded was the initiative picked up and rolled out on a national scale.

7.4 Reflections on military knowledge production in Vietnam

In a scene of Stanley Kubrick's iconic anti-war film *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), a colonel lectures Private Joker, one of the film's main characters, why the U.S. was in Vietnam:

Son, [...] We are here to help the Vietnamese, because inside every gook there is an American trying to get out. It's a hardball world, son. We've gotta keep our heads until this peace craze blows over.

Despite being fiction, this characterisation of the main reason for U.S. engagement in the conflict between North and South Vietnam is quite apt. The U.S. became involved in Vietnam out of the sincere belief that it could aid the people on their way to modernisation. This was based on the assumption that the U.S. itself was the pinnacle of modernity and that 'being like the U.S.' would be desirable around the world, which would allow an isomorphic adaptation of U.S. best practices and their implementation in Vietnam. However, as with the Philippines over half a century earlier, U.S. actions were not merely as altruistic and 'benevolent' as portrayed but emanated from clear power political considerations in the struggle for global hegemony with the Soviet Union.

In the aftermath of World War II, with countries being decolonised around the world, particularly in Africa and Southeast Asia, the old colonial powers of Europe had lost their hegemonic position. The U.S., which had survived the war relatively

unscathed, set forth to take over that role. Yet, not only the emerging superpower rivalry with the Soviet Union would prove a challenge, but also the fact that European-style colonialism, based on more or less direct rule and suppression of other peoples, was neither economically or militarily feasible nor in accordance with the republican principles of the U.S. In this sense, new forms of domination and justifications for it had to be found, and military and civilian experts played an important role in the formulation and dissemination of knowledge for this. Encouraged by the success of several pre- and post-war economic programmes, both at home and abroad, such as the Roosevelt's 'New Deal' or the European Marshall Plan, theorists set out to devise initiatives that would address concerns about global poverty and decolonisation whilst maintaining U.S. interests.

In the military, in contrast to the civilian sphere, there was not as much enthusiasm to get engaged with 'counterinsurgency', at least at the beginning of the war. Throughout both World Wars the military had developed as a professional organisation that favoured conventional, 'big' conflicts, because it knew about the comparative advantage it had with its resources and manpower. However, when insurgencies began to spread through the Global South in the 1950s, the military's role in counterinsurgency moved into focus. As described in this chapter, the drive towards knowledge creation in this area was much more targeted and planned than it had been during the Philippine Insurrection. In several meetings, conferences, and symposia – most notably the RAND symposium in April 1962 – national and international experts on guerrilla warfare convened to discuss and exchange their views on the topic. Unlike the Philippines, where military knowledge creation took place ad hoc and bottom-up, with standard procedures or military theories being dropped or modified to the

circumstances of jungle warfare, the knowledge for military actions in Vietnam was heavily influenced by a particular vision of counterinsurgency warfare that had been brought forward by theorists and experts, based both on their own experiences in recent Communist insurgencies as well as older, imperial campaigns. The particular theory of counterinsurgency, which emerged from it, was then applied to the conflict in Vietnam.

In the 'Strategic Hamlet Program' the experts' advice, primarily through the work of British counterinsurgency expert Robert G.K. Thompson, was applied directly to Vietnam. With the aim to protect the population and cut off the insurgents from their supply bases, the U.S. and Diem's military uprooted thousands of peasants and moved them into protected hamlets. Although the programme had worked in Malaya (and for the Americans in the Philippines at the turn of the century), the system eventually failed in Vietnam not only because the Viet Cong kept up its pressure, but because the move into the hamlets often put the peasants at a worse position in terms of standards of living than it had been in their original villages. What Thompson and other contemporary experts such as Galula and Kitson had developed in a case-study approach from different recent Communist insurgencies was too generically applied in a top-down fashion in Vietnam. On a different note, the U.S. military in Vietnam still adapted in certain circumstances, such as military medicine, yet even there the MEDCAP programmes, initiated as a bottom-up adaptation of best practices in the field where too little, too late to prove successful at winning hearts and minds.

The Vietnam War is an important case in the development of expert knowledge for 'counterinsurgency' warfare. In contrast to the Philippine Insurrection, the U.S. government and its military, for the first time, approached this issue in a

systematic and 'scientific' way. Based on the promises of modernisation theory, intellectuals and theorists developed first ideas and later actual policies that were designed to uplift and 'modernise' the population of a decolonised country, but which had the implicit aim to retain and/or extend U.S. hegemony in the area. Because of the republican virtues of the U.S. as well as a different international environment, which included the superpower rivalry with the Soviet Union and increased media and public attention, these methods had to be drafted in a more benevolent fashion, although the underlying principles often remained the same as in imperial campaigns. Due to their apparent failures, both modernisation theory and counterinsurgency were deliberately forgotten in the 1970s and '80s. Yet, although it is often claimed that the U.S. military (and government) purged itself "of everything that had to do with irregular warfare or insurgency" (General Jack Keane, quoted in U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps 2007, xiv), the way that counterinsurgency theory was developed and implemented in Vietnam by experts had a profound impact for the development of counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine in Iraq, which is analysed in the subsequent chapter.

8 Iraq (2003-2011) – Military knowledge

8.1 Introduction

In a nationally televised address on 10 January 2007, then-US President George W. Bush announced a “New Way Forward in Iraq”. He stated that, “[i]t is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq”, and he announced that an additional five Army brigades as well as two Marine battalions would be sent to Iraq to stop the escalating violence and to stabilise the country. The mission rationale was “to help Iraqis clear and secure neighbourhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing the security that Baghdad needs” (Bush 2007). The strategy shift in Iraq came only a few days after Bush had nominated David H. Petraeus as the new Commanding General (CG) of the Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I), the US-led coalition of military forces which was responsible for conducting and handling military operations in Iraq during the war.

Both the nomination and the deployment of some 21,500 additional troops were highly related. Whilst Petraeus’ predecessors (the last one being Gen. George Casey) had relied on a strategy of “Iraqification”¹³¹ – i.e. the quick transfer of security responsibility to the Iraqis and a gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq (Wilkinson 2003) – Petraeus sought to implement a new approach that combined an allegedly ‘new’ COIN techniques with the “surge” of combat troops. This chapter will examine COIN in Iraq within the context of experiences from the other cases. By using a chronological approach, starting with an examination of

¹³¹ This strategy was allegedly similar to the Vietnam-era strategy of “Vietnamization”, which was the Nixon administration’s attempt to end the U.S.’involvement by expanding capacity and numbers of South Vietnam’s forces whilst reducing the number of U.S. combat troops (Kissinger 2003, 81 f.). However, as Elliott (2007, 31 f.) notes, it is difficult to directly equate these two strategies. Also leading U.S. officials were adamant to deny any connection to Vietnam.

the lead up to the war, the chapter exhibits a comprehensive analysis of military expert knowledge formation during the Iraq War, including the key figures.

This chapter maintains that the turn to a COIN approach in Iraq (as epitomised by *FM 3-24* and the 'Surge') fulfilled a legitimising function for the U.S. government and military.¹³² It was intended to help form a somewhat stable country and allow a quick withdrawal, or 'buy-out', from the quagmire the U.S. had got itself into. On an operational level, during the Surge, the measures developed served at least a substantiating function, to support the overarching policy. Yet, there was no intent or will of long-term instrumentalisation by U.S. policymakers. This symbolic use of expert knowledge is most strongly underpinned by the early withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq in late 2011, despite the fact that both contemporary observers (Gorka and Kilcullen 2011, 17; Jones 2008, 10; Petraeus 2007b) and classical COIN thinking (Galula 1964, 8) maintain that it takes years – if not decades – to successfully fight an insurgency. Thus, by withdrawing the forces merely four years after the Surge, the new Obama administration sent a clear signal that it was not interested in a long-term engagement in Iraq.¹³³

When Petraeus took over as the head of MNF-I, the concomitant changes in U.S. strategy were decidedly influenced by his own personal experience and knowledge, to the extent that he, as a soldier, was able to make a direct impact

¹³² The importance of safeguarding national and security interests and how it is seen within the organisation's environment were highlighted by Krepinevich: "I think ultimately, if you feel that this threat were existential, if this was a clear threat to the vital interests and the survival of the US, then people are willing to tolerate a lot more" (Interview with Krepinevich 2013).

¹³³ Officially, U.S. forces withdrew because no agreement had been reached between the U.S. and Iraqi governments about the formalities of an extension of an U.S. presence in the country (Jakes and Santana 2011; MacAskill 2011). However, there is no doubt that if there had been a strong U.S. interest in maintaining such a presence – because it was in their strategic, organisational interest – it would have certainly been possible.

on the policy-making process. This would serve as the cornerstone of the renewed U.S. efforts in Iraq, incorporating both “bottom-up” (brigade level and below) lessons learned during the war and older methods and theories of counterinsurgency to form a “top-down” campaign plan in Iraq. ‘COIN’, re-emerged, “once again promising bold tactics in the service of humanitarian ends” (Hunt 2010, 36). Still, this approach was neither new nor “paradigm-shattering” (Sewall 2007a, xxxv) as claimed by its proponents. As this chapter shows, it drew on the experiences from Vietnam and the Philippines as well as other historical experiences, both tactically as well as conceptually. Like the previous campaigns, the Iraq War was aimed at the enhancement of U.S. national interests and the maintenance of U.S. hegemony.

Throughout the analysis of the military knowledge production process in the Iraq War, a picture emerges that experts have not only played an important role since the U.S. administration under President Bush first considered going to war. More than that, experts whose policy preferences were clearly in line with the warmongers were consciously taken in to help form a politico-strategic narrative for the U.S. domestic population of the necessity of U.S. intervention, whilst diverging expert opinion as well as insights from the military bureaucracy were ignored or rejected. Thus, through the lens of our theoretical framework, this chapter will show that expert knowledge during the Iraq War has fulfilled more of a symbolic than an instrumental function. With their knowledge and their status as ‘experts’, these people played a key role in framing and implementing the problem-set, solution, and ex-post-facto justification of success regarding the U.S. campaign in Iraq. Given this disinterest, the experts themselves were only able to instil their expertise within the strategic narrative that promoted ‘hearts

and minds' and, thus, pacification. Although many of them claim to have been critical of the initial invasion, such experts did not critique the knowledge creation enterprise itself. Rather, the military experts in Iraq were technocrats who turned off their critical faculties, focussing on the ends of a quick U.S. withdrawal whilst superficially improving the means of a 'population-centric' COIN campaign.

8.2 The lead-up to the war

It is now widely known that the U.S. government used false information and pretences to justify its 2003 invasion of Iraq (e.g. Kumar 2006; Lewis and Reading-Smith 2008; Pillar 2006), which even President Bush subsequently admitted (CNN 2005; The Guardian 2005). In this section, I outline the run-up to the war and how experts, assisted by the mainstream media, were conscientiously utilised by the U.S. government to create and disseminate the strategic narrative that Iraq was behind the attacks of September 11, 2001 and that it continued to harbour Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). I first outline the two key arguments mentioned above. Then, I look at how experts were (mis-)used in the war planning, arguing that only favourable expertise was taken into account by the U.S. administration, whilst voices warning of the dangers of an invasion of Iraq were deliberately disregarded or silenced. I conclude by arguing that many of the experts and decision-makers involved in the decision to go to war with Iraq were guided by a neo-conservative missionary zeal that aimed at modernising the Iraqi (or even Arab) population.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Neoconservatism is a variant of traditional conservatism, combining it with political individualism and a strong endorsement of free markets and a disdain for political liberalism. Regarding foreign policy, Neocons frequently argue for an 'assertive' promotion of democracy and U.S. interests in international relations, even by the use of military force. Whilst the concept goes back to the 1970s, neoconservative politicians – among them individuals like Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, or William Kristol – have been particularly influential in the articulation of foreign and security policy under the Bush administration (Dagger 2015).

The attacks of 9/11 had shown the U.S. that it was vulnerable to terrorists on home soil, even though it had remained as the sole world power after the downfall of the Soviet Union; to protect itself against future attacks, terrorism had to be fought at the root. Saddam Hussein's Iraq had long been believed to be a leading source of "state-sponsored" terrorism in the world (Council on Foreign Relations 2003; Yaphe 2003), thus, making the country an active threat to the national security of the US, whether or not it had been actively involved in 9/11. President Bush immediately established an ostensible link between Al-Qaeda and the Iraqi regime and asked his staff to explore (or conjure up) such a link (Clarke 2004, 32; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. 2004, 334). The same was true for his administration. Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, amongst others, firmly believed that Iraq was behind it all. Within days, even hours, of the attack, they tasked their subordinates to look for evidence, which would justify attacking the country (Bugliosi 2008, 117; Clarke 2004, 30 ff.; Woodward 2002, 60).

In the run-up to the war, the accusations against the Saddam regime of collaborating with Al-Qaeda in attacking the U.S. were soon brought forward publicly by senior members of the administration (e.g. Cheney 2001; Karl et al. 2002) as well as by the President himself (Bush 2003). As Kumar (2006, 56) states, the connection between Iraq and 9/11 took place in three different ways. First, when facts were presented, it was added that they were not fully certain. This meant that in case the evidence was disproved, the credibility of the source could still be safeguarded by blaming bad intelligence or by referring to classified information. Second, the administration established "guilt through suggestion", by implying a connection between Al-Qaeda and Iraq, but not stating it as a fact.

Third, Bush and his immediate subordinates established “guilt through speculation”, which consisted of creating scenarios of an imaginary alliance between al Qaeda and Iraq.

The other key argument the Bush administration and the pro-war advocates used against Iraq in the run-up to the conflict, was that Iraq possessed WMD and was willing to use them. This presented an immediate threat to the national security of the U.S. This argument was first brought forward publicly in September 2002 in a joint press conference with Bush and the British Prime Minister Tony Blair. They declared that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had recently issued a new report stating that Iraq had restarted its nuclear weapons programme, which they considered as conclusive evidence to take further actions against the country (Curl 2002). Three weeks after this press conference, the chief spokesperson of the IAEA, stated that no such report existed (Curl 2002). Over the following months, new pieces of so-called ‘evidence’ were brought forward by the British and the Americans. Two key allegations were that Iraq had purchased aluminium tubes in order to build nuclear weapons in less than six months and that it had tried to buy uranium from Niger. All this evidence was based on a series of letters, which the U.S. administration claimed to be the “smoking gun” (Kumar 2006, 57). This enabled Bush to win congressional approval for the war against Iraq on 11 October 2002 (U.S. Congress 2002).

Shortly afterwards, the flaws in these allegations became obvious. The aluminium tubes turned out to be unrelated to an alleged nuclear weapons programme (Kohn 2002; White et al. 2003). The story about uranium from Niger was also a hoax (Eisner and Royce 2007; Smith 2003). Despite contrary evidence, the Bush administration kept up the narrative of Iraqi WMDs. On 5 February 2003, U.S.

Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared before the U.N. Security Council to present the already discredited aluminium tubes story (Powell 2003). Speaking before the U.N. shortly afterwards, Hans Blix of the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) who supervised inspections in Iraq, contradicted Powell's arguments (Blix 2003). Yet, this would not stop the U.S.' drive to war. Blix would later speculate that the decision to overthrow Hussein was made much in advance and would have proceeded regardless of U.N. inspections (Blix 2004, 12 f.).

In sum, the U.S. approach and the arguments against Iraq in support of the preparations for war were faulty and misleading. Yet, by repeating them in Orwellian fashion, these falsehoods were soon accepted as truths. Vital to this endeavour was the support of several established think-tanks and their associated 'experts'. Associations such as the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, the Hoover Institute, and the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, were supporting the U.S. narratives about Saddam Hussein (Rampton and Stauber 2003). For example, a report by CSIS declared that Saddam Hussein had the "potential to use chemical and biological weapons against U.S. troops, as well as attempt to lob over Israel a couple of Scud missiles with a chemical or biological warhead" (Quoted in Sovacool and Halfon 2007, 232). Similarly, a report from the Heritage Foundation argued that:

Iraq poses a much greater threat to U.S. national security than does Osama bin Laden. Its clandestine programs to build nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons of mass destruction have proceeded without outside interference [...] Iraq could have a nuclear weapon within a year

(Philipps 2001).

Many of these think-tanks went through public relations companies, such as Benador Associates, to ensure that their arguments were well-placed in the media. Benador was able to book several Middle East and terrorism 'experts' from these associations into TV programmes and placing op-ed pieces in national newspapers (Kumar 2006, 58).

Indeed, U.S. media, both popular and specialist, was keen to jump on the bandwagon of publishing the false allegations against Iraq. As Sovacool and Halfon (2007, 233) show, by February 2003 there were over 1,000 articles in popular newspapers, magazines, and journals of different political ideologies (e.g. *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Economist*, and *Newsweek*), which portrayed Iraq as a direct and immediate threat to the national security of the U.S. requiring military action. Overall, the U.S. administration was able to create a more or less compelling story line of Saddam Hussein as a state-sponsor of terrorism and possessor of WMD, both of which presented a direct threat to the U.S. 'homeland'. This new discursive framework not only replaced the older narrative of him as a dictator and threat to regional stability in the Middle East, but it paved the way for U.S. invasion and reconstruction efforts in Iraq. The 'experts' were not only important in providing a general rationale for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. More specifically, they were also engaged in the preparation for the war. What becomes clear in this regard is that the U.S. administration relied almost exclusively on expert knowledge, which confirmed its own political agenda. Experts who warned of the invasion or specific aspects of it were disregarded or experienced occupational disadvantages, such as non-promotion or forced resignations (Fallows 2004). Thus, already the run-up to the Iraq War was

characterised by a utilisation of expert knowledge, which served purely the justification of the political agenda of the Bush administration and its politico-strategic narrative of Iraq as a threat to national security.

What became apparent in the years after the invasion was that official intelligence analysis was often not relied on in making vital decisions about national security, that intelligence was misused publicly, and that this politicisation of the intelligence community led in turn to biased intelligence reports in turn. As Pillar (2006, 16) explains, the proper relationship between intelligence services and policymaking is one where “[p]olicymakers [...] influence which topics intelligence agencies address, but not the conclusions that they reach.” Yet, in the lead-up to the Iraq war, the U.S. administration used intelligence not to inform policy-making, but to justify the political decision to go to war which had been made beforehand. In doing so, it not only relied on faulty or bogus intelligence as described above (i.e. aluminium tubes, uranium from Niger), but also ‘cherry-picked’ favourable intelligence data that confirmed the desired political message (Pillar 2006, 19).

Before the war, for example, at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (U.S. Congress 2002), intelligence and regional experts presented the likely consequences of an U.S. invasion of Iraq, which were a drastically accurate prediction of what really happened. The experts predicted, inter alia, that Iraqi political culture was not ready for a direct transition to democracy; that huge efforts similar to the Marshall Plan were necessary to stabilise Iraq’s economy; or that the ethnic and religious divisions in Iraqi society were so significant that they could easily lead to violent conflicts between ethnic and/or religious groups (Pillar 2006, 18; U.S. Congress 2002). Another warning came from within the Army itself. At the U.S. Army War College, a team around Conrad

Crane and Andrew Terrill had written a report entitled "Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario" (2003) in which they analysed the situation in Iraq and proposed a "Mission Matrix" – a 135-item checklist of what ought to be done and by whom in the so-called Phase IV "post-conflict" period. They saw 35 of these tasks as "critical", to be prepared for long in advance and executed right after arriving in Baghdad, e.g. securing borders, locating and destroying WMDs, protecting religious sites, performing police and security functions, etc. (Crane et al. 2003).

However, instead of relying on official intelligence estimates and/or knowledge by experienced experts in military and Middle Eastern affairs, the U.S. administration, including the Pentagon's head Rumsfeld, relied on their own sources, which were biased. A focal point for collecting such 'expertise' after 9/11 was the newly established Office of Special Plans (OSP) headed by Douglas Feith at the Pentagon.¹³⁵ The office – whose main purpose was to evaluate the threat of Iraq's WMD capabilities – had been established because the DoD leadership was dissatisfied by the regular intelligence that was coming in. This was mainly because it ran counter their argument of Iraqi WMDs and support of terrorism (Rieff 2003). More importantly, it became the central point of organising the post-war planning efforts.¹³⁶ One of the main contributors of information was Ahmed Chalabi, head of the exile group Iraqi National Congress (INC) and later Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq (2005-2006).

¹³⁵ Feith admitted that it was given such a non-descriptive name, because the government did not want to reveal that there was a new unit in the Pentagon doing its own intelligence assessment on Iraq: "We didn't think it was wise to create a brand-new office and label it an office of Iraq policy" (Feith 2003).

¹³⁶ In October 2002, Bush officially designated the DoD as the lead agency for postwar planning to ensure that the central responsibility and accountability for postwar Iraq lay with one agency. All the postwar planning efforts within it were then centralized in Feith's OSP (Bensahel et al. 2008, 29; Fineman et al. 2003).

Chalabi provided information from alleged defectors of Iraq's weapons programme, pushing heavily for U.S. intervention. Whilst the U.S. government might have viewed Chalabi as an expert on Iraq and an influential figure for reconstruction, he was merely more than his own lobbyist arguing for invasion. In doing so, he opportunistically adapted his arguments to the ideological needs of decision-makers in Washington. That the invasion ended up in a violent civil war bothered him little: "As far as we're concerned [...] we have been entirely successful. The tyrant Saddam is gone and the Americans are in Baghdad. What we said before is not important" (Quoted in Phillips 2005, 75).

Yet, Chalabi was chosen by Rumsfeld and his subordinates, because his 'knowledge' on Iraq's WMDs had a higher symbolic value for the administration's desired policies than the 'real' intelligence coming from its own agencies. The ideological foundations of the civilians in charge of the Pentagon did have decisive influence on the decision to go to war and how it was to be fought. As several scholars have noted (e.g. Diamond 2005; Packer 2005; Phillips 2005), neoconservatives in the Pentagon considered Iraq a malleable state on which they could project their neo-conservative dreams and model it in the U.S.' image. For example, in a meeting with former career diplomat and Middle East expert Barbara Bodine just before the war, "Wolfowitz began musing about redrawing the provincial boundaries altogether. It was as if Iraq were a blank slate, to be remade in the image of its liberators" (see also Diamond 2005, 35; Packer 2005, 125). Given the ideological underpinning of the war ahead, advice that supported the proselytising vision of the Bush administration was more than welcome.

Besides Chalabi, another regional 'expert' consulted a lot by the U.S. administration was Kanan Makiya, a prominent exile who had left Iraq in 1967.

He told Rice that “a new kind of politics is imaginable in Iraq” and that it could become the first liberal Arab country. In a meeting with Bush he stated that an U.S. invasion would “transform the image of America in the Arab world” and that “people will greet the troops with sweets and flowers” (Quoted in Packer 2005, 81, 96 ff.). Anyone with some background knowledge in the Middle East and post-conflict resolution would have known that these projections were far-fetched. The Iraqi dictatorship had existed for so many decades, creating a deeply divided society in which the power-vacuum after the U.S. invasion would almost inevitably lead to chaos. Also, it is rather questionable how Makiya, who had been out of the country for forty years, could have been considered a current expert on Iraq.

Yet, Bush and his subordinates favoured such biased expertise over the official channels in order to support their ideology-driven mission. They also misused the information that came from the official intelligence agencies. By this, the intelligence community and its experts were put into a position of policy advocacy for the administration’s public case for war. This became particular obvious in Powell’s presentation before the U.N. in February 2003, in which he used specific intelligence data that supported the administration’s arguments about Iraq’s alleged WMDs.¹³⁷ This was not the only instance. For example, at the request of the government, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) published a White Paper entitled “Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs” (Intelligence Community 2003) in October 2002. This paper contained a lot of data, but no judgements about the likelihood of these weapons being used (Pillar 2006, 20).

¹³⁷ Interestingly, Powell presented his ‘evidence’ on a series of pictures and posters, similar to what Adlai E. Stevenson had done at the Security Council in 1962. This had been one of the most dangerous moments of the Cold War, when the U.S. confronted the Soviet Union over the placement of missiles in Cuba (Stevenson 1962, 737 ff.). Powell, thus, tried to evoke a similar image of threat to the U.S. from the situation in Iraq.

Aside from misusing specific intelligence data and relying on specific, biased advice from favourable 'experts', the advice of people who had years of experience in military or regional affairs was not just disregarded. In some cases, those who voiced concerns were punished. For example, whilst administration generally did not comment about the financial costs of the war, Lawrence Lindsay, chief White House economic adviser, gave an estimate of \$100 billion to \$200 billion in September 2002 (Davis 2002). He was widely criticized anonymously by other officials. As one stated, his comment "made it clear Larry just didn't get it" (Quoted in Weisman and Allen 2004). By the end of the year Lindsay had been forced to resign.

Another instance of punishing those who did not follow the administration's stance was in the discussion about troop levels. The U.S. Army itself recommended an invasion force of 400,000 troops. Rumsfeld, who before 9/11 had put great emphasis on streamlining the military and introducing the 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA) saw right force size at more like 75,000 (Gordon and Trainor 2006, 88).¹³⁸ One of the military's top brass who pushed back was the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Eric Shinseki. Having experienced reconstruction in Bosnia and Kosovo, he knew that a considerable amount of troops was needed and publicly opposed the Pentagon's official line of argument by arguing that "several hundred thousand troops" would be necessary in Iraq. The Pentagon immediately derided his comments as "wildly off the mark" (Quoted in Schmitt 2002) and Shinseki retired without much fanfare in June 2003.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ The RMA, about which the first discussions had emerged during the 1970s, proposed the utilization of modern information, communications, and technology to transform the U.S. military to become a leaner organization and limit its own casualties in war (see e.g. Biddle 2004; Metz and Kievit 1995). Rumsfeld was an avid proponent of it.

¹³⁹ To be fair, Shinseki had already in 2002 decided voluntarily to retire (Pierre 2008). Yet, the fact that Rumsfeld announced his successor well over a year in advance, contrary to DoD

These different forms of influencing the intelligence community and the (real or alleged) experts in it, certainly led to a politicisation of intelligence. This politicisation was not necessarily a direct pressure by policymakers on the analysts to come up with the 'right' findings, but it took more indirect forms.¹⁴⁰ Well before the first bombs were dropped on Baghdad, the intelligence community was aware that the U.S. was heading for war with Iraq. Thus, it was clear that the administration would favour analysis that supported this decision to go to war and disregard reports that argued against it. This led to the highlighting of favourable data in reports or sugar-coating unpalatable messages about the foreseeable problems with post-war reconstruction (Pillar 2006, 21). The administration, whilst not directly ordering these favourable reports, also influenced the indirect politicisation of intelligence gathering. For example, reports that conformed to policy preferences had it easier to rise through the official channels than unorthodox ones (Silberman and Robb 2005, 49 f.). More importantly, however, the administration pre-shaped the answers of the intelligence community by asking it biased questions that would almost certainly deliver the desired answers (Pillar 2006, 22).

Overall, the Bush administration's approach to gathering the intelligence and knowledge in the lead-up to the Iraq War is characterised by *ex ante* decision to invade the country and topple Saddam Hussein, taken right after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The knowledge production process and the utilisation of experts were, therefore, predefined. They did not aim at developing reliable and valid

tradition, was a sign that he considered Shinseki a representative of uncooperative, old-style thinking (Fallows 2004, 21).

¹⁴⁰ As the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction concluded: "The Intelligence Community did not make or change any analytic judgments in response to political pressure to reach a particular conclusion, but the pervasive conventional wisdom that Saddam retained WMD affected the analytic process" (Silberman and Robb 2005).

independent knowledge which could be used instrumentally to make a decision whether or not Hussein possessed deployable WMDs or indeed links to Al-Qaeda, which would have made him a real threat to the national security of the US. Instead, the knowledge and the experts' opinions served a symbolical function to underline the political decision to embark on the war against Iraq. Many of the top officials in the Pentagon – e.g. Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith – had been campaigning for regime change in Iraq for many years. When Bush signed a National Security Directive centralising responsibility for Iraq in the Pentagon in January 2003 (NSPD-24), they were given a free hand to plan for the realisation of their dream. This not only included the removal of Hussein, but also an opportunity to 'modernise' Iraq and the Arab world (Ajami 2003, 2).

8.3 Descent into an insurgency

After the U.S. and its allies had invaded Iraq on 20 March 2003, it took merely a couple of weeks to reach Baghdad, which eventually fell on 9 April 2003. On 1 May 2003, in Hollywood-like fashion, President Bush landed on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, announcing the end of combat operations and "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq (Bush 2003). However, the celebrations soon gave way to concerns about the deteriorating security situation. After the regime change, the U.S. did not have enough troops to control the ground and, more importantly, secure the population. Within weeks, the state's administrative capacity ceased to exist, with the majority of Baghdad's ministry buildings looted (Dodge 2007, 88). The security and governance vacuum resulted in widespread looting and lawlessness.

The looting was an early consequence of detrimental decisions made by Ambassador Paul Bremer III that would shape future events in Iraq. Bremer arrived in Iraq in early May 2003 as the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the transitional government, which vested itself with interim executive, legislative, and judicial powers. He first decided not to hand over power to an interim Iraqi administration formed of the same exiles who had advised the Bush government in the run-up to the invasion. This decision was made even though other U.S. officials had promised before that such a handover would happen (Bremer and McConnell 2006, 44). Whilst some commentators are critical of this decision, because it “riled Iraqis” (see also Diamond 2005, 40 ff.; Phillips 2005, 170), it also highlights the low value of the advice exiles like Makiya and Chalabi had given U.S. officials before the war. U.S. troops were indeed not welcomed with “sweets and flowers” and Chalabi was, according to post-war opinion polls, more unpopular than Saddam (Oxford Research International 2004).

However, two other of Bremer’s decisions were of far greater significance as they guaranteed all but catastrophe. CPA Order No.1, released on 16 May, banned all but the most junior Ba’ath Party members from holding any government-related job. CPA Order No. 2, issued a week later, disbanded the Iraqi Army.¹⁴¹ Bremer threw thousands of government employees – not only from ministries, but also from hospitals, universities and government-owned corporations – out of their job. Many of them had only joined the Ba’ath Party, because membership had been mandatory in order to win gainful employment. The second order was even more

¹⁴¹ The so-called “De-Ba’athification” policy had a historical precedent in the denazification of Germany after World War II, to which Bremer made reference (Ricks 2006a, 160). However, this was a flawed comparison. Whilst Nazi Germany had suffered total defeat, resulting in millions of military and civilian casualties and bombarded cities, the Iraqi infrastructure had remained largely intact (Biddiscombe 2007). In fact, even Denazification had not been as successful as Bremer tried to make people believe; many war criminals evaded persecution and the programme was quickly ended in 1950 amidst the start of the Cold War.

calamitous, as the hundreds of thousands of men who were thrown out of the Army possessed weapons and looted the arsenals for more. Both in the military and civilian spheres, people felt disenfranchised and robbed of their income, pensions and ultimately dignity. These encouraged them to support and join groups hostile to U.S. and coalition forces. As commentators note, if these orders did not create the insurgency, they fuelled it (Kaplan 2013, 74 f.; Mansoor 2008, 27 f.; Moyar 2009, 216 f.; Ricks 2006a, 158 ff.; Woodward 2006, 193 f.).

What is noteworthy about these decisions through our lens of expert knowledge production is that the CPA deliberately excluded experts and officials with area knowledge from the CPA. For example, Thomas Warrick, who had headed the Department of State's Future of Iraq Project on post-conflict planning and was "the closest thing the U.S. government had to an expert on Iraq" (Dodge 2006, 170), was banned by Rumsfeld and Cheney from travelling to Baghdad for a year (Diamond 2005, 30; Packer 2005, 127). As Dodge further explains, the only individuals with sustained academic training on Iraq working for the CPA in Baghdad were British, not American.¹⁴² The members of the "governance group" advising Bremer possessed little to no knowledge of Iraq and often did not have any knowledge of Arabic. Instead, they were merely more than neo-conservative bureaucrats, appointed for their ideological viewpoints and not their empirical expertise on Iraq or the Arab world (Dodge 2006, 170). The inclusion of such 'experts' indicates that the Iraq War was intended as a "war of ideas", which focused more on delivering narratives of democracy promotion and re-modelling the Iraqi society rather than providing workable and effective solutions for the reconstruction of Iraq.

¹⁴² The most notable probably being Emma Sky (see also Chapter 9.3).

Hence, from an analytical viewpoint, de-Ba'athification "can be seen as both a continuation of neoconservative policy plans for Iraq and as a consequence of their limitations" (Dodge 2006, 165). For the neocons, de-Ba'athification was essential in that it was the symbolic act of removing the old Baathist elite to make space for a 'modernisation' strategy for Iraq as well as for the inclusion of Washington's favoured exiles. Yet, in effect, it removed the last remnants of the Iraqi state: its institutional memory and many of its skilled personnel. Moreover, this decision also reflected the inability to understand Iraqi society and its religious differences. The country consists of a minority of Sunni Arabs (32-37%), who had ruled the country since its creation in 1921 (Hashim 2006, 61), whilst the majority of the population (60-65%, both figures CIA 2012) are Shiite Arabs. To sustain their rule, the Sunnis had brutally suppressed the Shiites for decades and now feared retribution and marginalisation under a new government with diminished Sunni representation. The rivalry between these groups, as well as with the Kurdish and Christian minorities, influenced the conflict (see e.g. Chehab 2006; Hashim 2006; Napoleoni 2005; Ricks 2006a).

Throughout 2003, the security situation in Iraq worsened. There were some spectacular and bloody attacks on U.S. troops as well as against international organisations such as the U.N. (Filkins and Oppel 2003). By autumn, the violence had become a major issue for the Bush administration, which was surprised by the intensity of the insurgency and its increasing popularity with the populace (Knowlton 2003; Landay 2003). The situation was dire and, as Cordesman (2003, 8) claimed, "[t]he U.S. military was dismally unprepared for the security mission." In 2004, the situation did not improve either, despite the fact that the CPA was dissolved on 28 June and power was given to an Iraqi interim government under

Iyad Allawi. That year was instead characterised by an increased number of kidnappings, executions and dumped bodies on the streets (Associated Press 2004; Faraj et al. 2004).

From a military perspective, there was no directly available pool of knowledge on which the U.S. Army could rely as guidance for the worsening situation. As a result of the decades-long aversion and disinterest in counterinsurgency matters, the U.S. military had entered the Iraq War without a distinctive strategy or doctrine for fighting these wars. Instead, *Field Manual 3-0: Operations*, which provided the doctrinal principles for the use of force by U.S. ground troops (U.S. Army 2001), emphasised traditional, ‘conventional’ operations, focusing on manoeuvre and massive firepower to defeat the enemy.¹⁴³ Despite the lack of direct doctrine to counter the growing insurgency, the military leaders in Iraq since 2004, MNF-I Commander Gen. George Casey and Gen. John Abizaid from U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), were not without a consistent military strategy. From 2004 to the end of 2006, their approach relied on a quick turnover of security responsibility to the Iraqis. The approach was predicated on the belief that the insurgency was directed primarily at the U.S. occupation and not the result of a complex, tribal and sectarian conflict over political power in Iraq. Isolating the troops on a few far off military bases and gradually withdrawing them, they thought, would lower the profile of U.S. troops that were foreign to Iraqi society and culture and eventually reduce violence.¹⁴⁴ This in-country low-profile approach of the U.S. military is reminiscent of what we already saw in the previous two case studies of Vietnam and the Philippines.

¹⁴³ In fact, only two out of twelve chapters (“Stability Operations” and “Support Operations”) were related to issues other than manoeuvre warfare.

¹⁴⁴ Casey’s conduct of the war is discussed by several analysts of the war (see e.g. Burton and Nagl 2008; Kaplan 2013; Ricks 2006a; Woodward 2008).

Although Casey did not see the insurgency as a strategic problem, he was still aware that it existed and that U.S. troops had to develop some competencies for it. COIN 'experts' would be central to devising his approach to it. A month into his command, he assigned Col. William Hix, deputy head of MNF-I's strategy office, and Kalev Sepp, a former Special Forces officer and lecturer at the Naval Postgraduate School along with several experts from the RAND Corporation to develop his counterinsurgency plan. Their work rested on two main projects. On the one hand, shortly after his arrival, Sepp wrote a "best practices" paper about COIN, titled "Successful and Unsuccessful Counterinsurgency Practices", which would later be published in *Military Review* (Sepp 2005). In it, he compiled the experiences of the major insurgency wars of the 20th Century in order to extract the do's and do not's of counterinsurgency. This was a first attempt to get something done and give practical advice.

On the other hand, Sepp and Hix surveyed various U.S. units in Iraq to assess their knowledge and application of counterinsurgency techniques. They found that only 20 percent of the combat troops actively "did" counterinsurgency, whilst 60 percent were struggling to adapt and another 20 percent showed no attempt at all. Moreover, younger officers seemed more flexible in learning and using COIN methods than senior battalion and brigade commanders (Russell 2011, 5). This was no surprise, given the little consideration COIN received in contemporary U.S. military doctrine. What is noticeable at this stage is that the COIN knowledge gaps tackled were of a tactical nature for U.S. military forces. From a (rather selfish) U.S. perspective, it was first and foremost about how to limit damage to its troops rather than provide solutions for the endangered Iraqi population or address underlying socio-political problems between the different

ethnic groups and tribes. This is also an indicator that the subsequent expert knowledge in COIN was more about substantiating or legitimising U.S. interests rather than about an instrumental interest in improving the long-term situation.

Casey approved of the experts' work (Kaplan 2013, 103 f.), but he did not use their conclusions to press for more pre-deployment COIN training. However, in late 2005, he established the 'COIN Academy' in Taji/Iraq, where incoming commanders would receive five days of pre-deployment training in COIN theory and practice (Ricks 2006b). The curriculum of the Academy was based on classical COIN literature, mainly the writings of Galula (Rosen 2010, 289). Hence, from the very beginning, we can see that the foundations of COIN knowledge production in Iraq was not a development *sui generis*, springing from the specific circumstances in Iraq, but instead rehashed knowledge from Vietnam, which was itself a rehashing of older counterinsurgency techniques and practice. The Academy did not gain momentum, due to the fact that the courses lasted only a few days and took place when the officers had already arrived in Iraq and not before. Moreover, it was run by (often retired) officers without much expertise in COIN. Yet, there was also little interest by Casey's MNF-I command to bolster the COIN programme as it was focused on building up the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to enable the Iraqis to take responsibility, conduct independent operations, and allow a drawdown of American troops (Russell 2011, 6). Thus, COIN never became an operational imperative under Casey, despite attempts to extract some COIN tactical knowledge.

When Hix produced an overarching campaign plan in the summer of 2005, it did not emphasise COIN principles such as the importance of local security or protecting the population (Burton and Nagl 2008, 305). In June 2006 an outline

of Casey's campaign did not mention security, the insurgents, or counterinsurgency at all (Woodward 2006, 11). This and the emphasis on developing the ISF to allow a quick withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq was at odds with what the local commanders experienced in the field, which prompted some to act on their own initiative. These were the 20 percent of officers, which Sepp and Hix had found were "getting" the idea of COIN and applying it on the ground. By 2005, several U.S. brigade and battalion commanders had begun to adapt to the local security situation and deviated from 'conventional' doctrine, developing initiatives that were based on COIN principles. This was by no means self-evident, as the U.S. Army had struggled to adapt to the insurgency in the years before (trenchantly discussed by several authors, e.g. Aylwin-Foster 2005; Mansoor 2013b; Metz and Millen 2004). As Russell (2011) has described in his book *Innovation, Transformation, and War*, different units developed new competencies, which relied on four key aspects: (1) improved (digital) communications and data systems; (2) delegation of authority, free information flow throughout the units' hierarchy, change of organisational structures to conduct different kinds of operations; (3) use of modern technology and analytical methods to study the insurgency; and (4) a continuous learning and exchange process between different units and other sources with the aim of seeking information and expertise (Russell 2011, 10).

An example of this can be seen in operations of the 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment, led by then-Colonel H.R. McMaster, in the vicinity of Tal Afar in north-western Iraq in the summer of 2005.¹⁴⁵ Tal Afar, which lay along a transit route

¹⁴⁵ McMaster had written a PhD dissertation about the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Vietnam War and was, thus, well aware of the counterinsurgency methods developed in that campaign. (McMaster 1997)

between Syria and Mosul, had experienced a massive influx of al-Qaeda fighters and made the city a key staging ground for attacks and a transit point for fighters coming from Syria (Kaplan 2013, 172). When McMaster, arrived in Tal Afar in July 2005, he first cleared the adjacent villages, then enclosed the city with an earthen berm to stop insurgents fleeing and attacked it with his regiment and several thousand Iraqi soldiers. Through superior numbers and firepower, the insurgents were defeated or in retreat by the end of September (Mansoor 2013b, 23 f.). Afterwards, the U.S. troops did not pull out into the relative security of a base outside the town, but set up over thirty combat outposts within the city's neighbourhoods where they stayed. The berm was replaced by eight-foot concrete blast walls to stop potential insurgent movements. McMaster allocated a lot of funds for the restoration of public services (e.g. electricity, sewage, and waste collection), payment of workers and the training and employment of local security forces. Moreover, he cooperated with local leaders and tribal elders to remove sectarian actors from government and the police force (Herrera 2006). In late 2005, the city had been stabilised.¹⁴⁶

McMaster's multi-stage operation ran along the lines of what classical COIN theorists such as Galula, Nagl, and Lawrence had proposed, so we can certainly see an element of continuity in the knowledge on which McMaster implicitly relied. The operation was conducted independently of U.S. headquarters and McMaster received much praise for it – aided in large part by the reporting of an embedded journalist (Packer 2006) – but it was not the only instance. Throughout 2005 and 2006 there were other units across Iraq which acted on their own to develop and

¹⁴⁶ Although, as Mansoor notes (2013b, 24), his success was in part due to the amount of troops at his disposal, the geography of the region and its relatively little significance. Applying his template to the rest of Iraq would have been difficult.

implement techniques based on Vietnam-style COIN principles, for example the 28th Infantry Division in Anbar and Nineveh provinces (Russell 2011) or the 1st Armored Division in Ramadi (Michaels 2010). The success of these operations prompted the U.S. administration towards a new political-military concept in Iraq, that of “clear, hold, build” (Bush 2005). The intention was to ‘clear’ areas of insurgents, leave enough troops to ‘hold’ them and secure the population, and then ‘build’ governance institutions and public services to establish government legitimacy with “Provincial Reconstruction Teams”, which had been used in Afghanistan and would provide civil-military expertise for reconstruction (Labott 2005). Yet, it was not translated into strategy or doctrine and not operationalised down the chain of command, mainly because Rumsfeld favoured a quick drawdown of U.S. troops (Kaplan 2013, 195 ff.). Thus, despite the bottom-up initiatives by local commanders who became self-made ‘experts’ in COIN, the sectarian violence in Iraq expanded to new levels of intensity throughout 2006.

In sum, soon after the invasion in 2003, Iraq descended into violence and insurgency. Because the Iraq War had begun as a “war of choice” rather than a “war of necessity” (Haass 2009), it was also inherently a “war of ideas” in which the neoconservative decision-makers planned a comprehensive re-modelling of the Iraqi state and society towards democracy and a liberal market economy. Whilst these may be noble motives, they were too abstract to be directly applied to Iraq. Yet, Bremer still attempted to do this through his dogmatic and ideology-driven decisions of ‘de-Ba’athification’ and disbanding of the Iraqi Army, setting the country on path for disaster. Moreover, the abstract ideals on which the war was founded on made it difficult for the U.S. to really engage with the country and the problems it faced. As Packer (2005, 382) argues,

Iraq provided a blank screen on which Americans were free to project anything they wanted, and because so few Americans had anything directly at stake there, many of them never saw more than the image of their feelings.

It is certainly fair to argue that this worldview, combined with organisational indifference towards COIN theory and training, did not lead to a top-down implementation of COIN methods from 2003 to 2006. In those years, COIN in Iraq evolved predominantly through local initiatives by mid-level commanders. The fact that for several years after the invasion, the U.S. military and government as central actors largely disregarded local initiatives and did not change their overarching strategy in Iraq, is an indication that the situation, albeit grave for the Iraqi population, was not posing a severe enough threat to U.S. national interests. It also indicated that there was little instrumental interest at making really effective changes. This certainly changed in 2006, when the increasing violence forced the U.S. government to re-evaluate its approach in Iraq and find a way out of the apparent quagmire.

8.4 FM 3-24 and the COINdinistas

Although some local officers began to experiment with COIN techniques in their area of command, there was a definite aversion in the Pentagon and amongst U.S. decision-makers to call the deteriorating security situation an “insurgency”. Both Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz did not like the term and the ensuing thoughts about turning to COIN methods that evoked images of Vietnam and a long war ahead (Interviews with Conrad Crane, David Kilcullen, and Thomas Hammes, 2013). Moreover, there was a strong belief within the Pentagon that a comprehensive, long-term COIN approach would “break the army as an

institution [...] exhaust the troops [and] the quality in the army as an organised force would plummet and they'd be back in the 1970's" (Interview with Biddle 2013). After Vietnam, COIN and its offspring MOOTW, LIC and various other forms of "state-building", "peacekeeping" and "peace enforcement" had been unwelcomed missions for most of the U.S. military. Whilst they were not entirely absent from doctrine and training, it was thought that this could be delegated largely to allies and civilian agencies (Ucko 2009, 63).

Yet, in early 2004, some within the low- and mid-level echelons of power began to question the conduct of the war, as there was a realisation that the initial looting had turned to a more general discordance about U.S. presence in Iraq. In other words, the U.S. had become engaged in a battle of ideas by promising to pacify Iraq after defeating Saddam Hussein and establishing a free, liberal democracy in the country. Given the widespread violence and chaos, it was clear that the U.S. had not found the right tools to deliver these promises and was, thus, losing the battle of ideas. In fact, U.S. presence was seen by many Iraqis as an 'occupation' and resistance against it developed increasingly into a "protracted guerrilla war" (Anderson 2003).

Within the U.S. defence establishment, a clash ensued between the proponents for a new COIN 'strategy' – often derisively called 'COINdinistas' – and traditionalists who wanted to stick to a 'conventional' approach to warfare. Given the situation in Iraq, this was not a theoretical discussion anymore, as it had been since Vietnam; it was instead decisive for the war in Iraq. For the U.S. government, the first impetus to listen to experts was because of fears of losing both the shooting war and the war of ideas (Interviews with Biddle 2013; Krepinevich 2013). A simple withdrawal would have been political suicide, as it

would have indicated defeat on a military level as well as on an ideological one. From an organisational perspective, the experts' knowledge was neither seen as instrumental – to be implemented as a major doctrinal approach or operational plan – nor was it meant to allocate the necessary resources that would have allowed real pacification and political conciliation in the long run, e.g. by stationing U.S. troops long-term.

Thus, the work of the COINdinistas was neither apolitical nor benevolent. Ultimately, it was another way of projecting U.S. power that was more sellable to the U.S. domestic population as well as political decision-makers. The symbolic implementation of COIN knowledge into the campaign would allow a quicker, cheaper exit from the war by promoting a story of successful pacification. In essence, the apologists of COIN believed that specific aspects could be extracted from specific historical insurgencies, which would then serve as the blueprint for successful COIN methods. By depoliticising the inherently political concept of insurgency and war, the experts tried to re-create the tactical and operational concept of COIN as a rational strategy. This would be a strategic narrative for domestic and international audiences about the *raison d'être* of U.S. engagement in Iraq. As such politico-strategic narrative, the COIN story was highly publicised.

The utilisation of experts to form such a narrative had its roots in 2004, when the U.S. Army itself began to work on a Field Manual on COIN, which was eventually published in October 2004 as *FM Interim 3-07.22: Counterinsurgency* (U.S. Army 2004). The main writers, Lt.Col. Jan Horvath and Lt.Col. Thomas Marks, relied mainly on the classic COIN literature, such as Galula, Lawrence and Lyautey, which were essentially based on colonial warfare (Interview with Horvath 2013). Yet, the designation as an “interim” manual and the fact that it had an explicit

expiry date (October 2006), indicated that it was a rush job: The sections were unbalanced, the definitions often ambiguous, the civil-military relations links superficially explored, and, most importantly, it focused more on the kinetic aspects of COIN rather than an aspect of “winning the hearts and minds” (Kaplan 2013, 136).

On 6 October, merely a week after the publication of the interim manual, the Irregular Warfare Conference took place at Quantico, VA. It was the first of a series of conferences and workshops where experts on COIN met. These conferences would be characteristic for the expert community development and COIN knowledge production in Iraq. What is noticeable is that these attempts at changing the U.S. approach in Iraq began not as a government-commissioned exercise, but as the result of mid-level officers and officials reacting to the failure of the U.S. in Iraq. The conference was attended by over fifty officers, officials and experts, but one of them stood out in particular: Lt.Col. David Kilcullen of the Australian Army. Kilcullen had a long-standing background in COIN. Unlike in the U.S. military, ‘irregular warfare’ was a main topic in Australian officers’ training and early on, Kilcullen had a predilection for it.¹⁴⁷

At Quantico, Kilcullen’s presentation about the Australian view of COIN was in essence nothing extraordinary, mainly reciting the same old principles that Galula and others had defined before him. Yet, Kilcullen was invited to work for the Pentagon on the upcoming 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), a report mandated by Congress about the U.S.’military strategy and its budgets and

¹⁴⁷ In the `90s, he had been actively involved in counterinsurgency in West Java, advising Indonesian Special Forces, and later wrote a PhD dissertation about the Darul Islam, a religious separatist movement during the `50s and `60s. After 9/11 his knowledge about both counterinsurgency and Islamist extremism was suddenly in demand.

programmes (Kaplan 2013, 85 ff; Interview with Kilcullen 2013a). The Quantico conference was the first larger instance during the Iraq War where the conversation about military policy and culture in general and COIN in particular was discussed not within the official 'loop' of doctrine formation or military planning, but within an emerging, informal group of experts.

The following summer, the community of COIN experts took a new line at the Basin Harbor conference in Vermont, organised by Eliot Cohen of Johns Hopkins University. Cohen was a neocon who had good contacts into the U.S. government as he had worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in the early 1990s (Ricks 2009, 18).¹⁴⁸ A co-founder of the neoconservative think-tank *Project for the New American Century* and member of the *Committee for the Liberation of Iraq* (Roth 2013), he had been a staunch supporter of the Iraq invasion (Cohen 2002a; 2003). When the situation deteriorated, he criticised the U.S. conduct and strategy, but still believed that the invasion had been the right decision (Cohen 2005). Cohen was not necessarily an expert on COIN *per se*, but had profound knowledge of military history. In his book *Supreme Command* (2002b), he had emphasized the importance of civilian supremacy in military affairs. Ironically, by promoting the COIN community, he influenced the process of shifting the running of the war in Iraq from the civilian to the military sphere.

The workshop at Basin Harbor had existed since 2000, but because of the situation in Iraq, Cohen decided to focus the 2005 conference on 'irregular'

¹⁴⁸ In April 2007, he became 'Counselor' to Condoleezza Rice at the State Department (State Department 2007). This appointment was seen as difficult by critics. As Glenn Greenwald wrote: "The Cohen appointment is clearly another instance where neoconservatives place a watchdog in potential trouble spots in the government to ensure that diplomats do not stray by trying to facilitate rapproachments between the U.S. and the countries on the neoconservative War hit list" (Quoted in Sheehan 2007).

warfare, inviting both scholars and practitioners of COIN.¹⁴⁹ One of them was LTC John Nagl, who would later become a main proponent of COIN as a solution for the Iraq campaign. Originally a tank officer, Nagl had written a PhD thesis at Oxford, comparing the counterinsurgency approaches of the British and U.S. military in Malaya and Vietnam. He argued that the British had adapted and learned, thus, succeeding in quelling the insurgency, whilst the U.S. Army had not (Nagl 2002).

In terms of the conference programme, there were some contentious debates, e.g. about the definition of victory in COIN, the institutional and cultural constraints of the U.S. Army to adapt to these kinds of wars, or the relevance of historical, colonial or ideological campaigns for modern COIN. Yet, the 'solutions' the experts gave, were a reiteration of well-known classical, colonial COIN theory. What took place at Basin Harbor and other conferences was not novel and inventive. Instead, the presentations consisted largely of rehashing Vietnam (or even Philippines) experiences, about which many of the attendees had written extensively. Thus, the experts wanted to 'sell' their views as something new, to boost their own credibility. As Marks noted:

[...] very quickly you could see what the system wanted to hear was not how you could learn from the past, they claimed everything was *sui generis* [...] everything had to be different, Muslim insurgencies are different, this is different, Iraq is different.

(Interview with Marks 2013, emphasis added)

¹⁴⁹ Participants included, inter alia, David Kilcullen, T.X. Hammes, a retired Colonel and now Professor at the National Defense University who had written on "fourth-generation warfare" (2004); Frank Hoffman, a Marine Colonel who had also attended the event at Quantico; Steve Metz of the U.S. Army War College who had devoted himself to the study of 'low-intensity' conflict (1995; 2004); Janine Davidson, a former Air Force pilot and who was about to start working in the Office for Stability Operations at the Pentagon (Kaplan 2013, 111 f.).

Basin Harbor was a presented the opportunity to the experts to come to terms with the trauma of Vietnam and conduct COIN better in Iraq. This and other conferences were not so much relevant for what was discussed (as the experts had pretty much the same views anyway), but for the networking effect it had for the participants (Nagl 2014, 117). Although all of them had (often deep) knowledge and ideas about COIN, they had tried to disseminate these as their own. There was, if at all, scant knowledge of each other's existence beforehand. Here came the realisation for these experts that they were not lone fighters, but that they potentially formed a community with common ideas and beliefs about COIN. Amidst two wars in which the U.S. military was struggling, their knowledge could be useful in devising new approaches. Basin Harbor marked the self-awareness of counter-elite of thinkers that could have decisive influence on U.S. security policy. Steven Metz, one of the experts involved admitted, this was of the key flaws inherent in the not-so-new COIN knowledge:

Having this body of expertise [of military officers who had cut their teeth in El Salvador or Vietnam] that was still around, that you could draw on, was kind of good news/bad news; it was good news in that they had people who had experienced it, it was bad news in that sometimes they didn't realise the limitations of their own experience in that the Iraq context was different [to] El Salvador or Vietnam.

(Interview with Metz 2013)

The next important step was to disseminate COIN knowledge for Iraq into U.S. policy-making circles. Despite the struggles in Iraq, this was by no means a sure-fire success, as the experts might have had relevant knowledge of COIN, but lacked the rank and access to bring this knowledge to Washington's top decision-makers. The person who would change this was David Petraeus, who would be the key actor in developing the knowledge and later in implementing it in Iraq.

The then-three-star general was high enough in rank to be heard on Capitol Hill and in the White House. He was, as one of the experts phrased it, the “institutional champion” who could push things through the bureaucratic hierarchy (Interview with Crane 2013). Petraeus had a keen interest in, and had developed expertise on, COIN ever since his Princeton PhD thesis (1987), his new command at the CAC in the fall of 2005 put him at the Army’s “Engine of Change” (Petraeus 2010). In October 2005, shortly after taking up the CAC command, he became a public advocate of a new strategy at a conference in Washington, DC (Kaplan 2013, 138). Petraeus’ appearance on the stage was a game-changer. With his influence, he not only put COIN onto the agenda, but as a soldier, he would make and define U.S. defence policy in the Iraq War. As Emma Sky said:

“In showing that there was somebody in charge, somebody credible, that there was a policy. He owned the policy and he owned the implementation. Now without his strategic communications, without people’s belief in Petraeus we would have never got the time”

(Quoted in Bergen 2011, 286).

This two-day workshop, called “Counterinsurgency in Iraq: Implications of Irregular Warfare for the U.S. Government” was organised by Sarah Sewall of Harvard University’s Carr Center for Human Rights Policy and the U.S. Army War College. It was different to other COIN-related conferences. The participant list consisted not simply of the usual military experts, but also of a large number of other administration officials, journalists, and human rights activists such as Michael McClintock from Human Rights First,¹⁵⁰ and organisations like the Red Cross (see attendance list, Harvard Kennedy School 2005b). The COINdinistas, thus, mixed and engaged with the most fervent critics of the Iraq War.

¹⁵⁰ McClintock had written *Instruments of Statecraft* (1992), a highly critical book on U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns.

This was a novel aspect in the development of COIN knowledge and strategy. Before, for example in Vietnam or even in the Philippines, the two camps had viewed each other with suspicion and distrust, but now the integration of critics into the process would give the whole project more credibility. However, it was down to Petraeus and his inner circle to decide what would eventually be published from this, indicating a substantiating knowledge process for the operational aspects of the campaign. At the conference (Harvard Kennedy School 2005a), Petraeus described ten “observations from soldiering in Iraq”, (which would later, complemented by four more “observations”, be published in *Military Review*, Petraeus 2006). These observations, which proposed a focus on civic activities, increasing the number of stakeholders, better intelligence, and local leadership both on the Iraqi and American sides, echoed David Kilcullen’s “28 Articles” (2006a) and T.E. Lawrence’s “27 Articles” (1917).

These basic approaches to COIN had been missing in the interim field manual *FM 3.07-22* and in the coming year, the COINdinistas would engage in rewriting it. Petraeus publicly announced the reissue of an Army COIN manual, of which Nagl would be the managing editor and Crane, Petraeus’ former West Point classmate, the lead writer.¹⁵¹ Still, he was the person in charge of the project. As Nagl recalled, he “was the driver, he was the vision, he was the copy editor, he read the whole thing twice, he turned around chapters in 24 hours with extensive edits and comments” (Quoted in Bergen 2012). What is noteworthy is that despite Petraeus’ focus on civilian capabilities, these would eventually be underdeveloped in Iraq, as we shall see in the subsequent chapter.

¹⁵¹ Nagl was completely caught off guard by Petraeus’ announcement as he hadn’t been approached beforehand (Bergen 2012; Kaplan 2013, 143).

Whilst the work on the Field Manual began almost immediately in November 2005 by the small group of experts associated with Nagl and Crane, the knowledge development process for it climaxed a few months later on 23-24 February 2006 when Petraeus convened the “COIN Field Manual Workshop” at Ft. Leavenworth (Combined Arms Center 2006).¹⁵² At the workshop, over a hundred participants and speakers discussed the contents of the upcoming manual (Ricks 2009, 24). The scope and background of the conference participants went far beyond the usual knowledge creation process for a Field Manual, which is normally a rather exclusive activity within the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC, for doctrine formation process see United States Army 2012).

Whilst the usual experts – by now a cohesive group of COIN stalwarts – made up the core of the conference, the participant list was much more extensive. As Petraeus knew, the new field manual would require broad support to get accepted within the military and the public. The best way to achieve this would be by including of as many key stakeholders as possible (Ricks 2009, 26). The participants came from several military branches and other U.S. government agencies (State Department, USAID, CIA). Other participants were academics and critics as well as journalists (Combined Arms Center 2006, Tape 1). The latter two groups were particularly important. The critics could perhaps be convinced by the beliefs of the COIN apologists, and if not, their dissenting ideas could seem to be taken into consideration. Thus, they could not complain that nobody had talked to them. Similarly, Petraeus believed that journalists would find out details anyway and might write critical articles. So it was better to cooperate with and co-opt them into the production process by winning them over (Kaplan 2013, 149).

¹⁵² The author would like to thank LTC (Ret.) Richard Kiper, analyst at the U.S. Army Irregular Warfare Center in Ft. Leavenworth, for providing him with the recordings of the event.

The Fort Leavenworth conference was another example of where the addressing of stakeholders mattered more than the actual content of the discussions. To convince the U.S. domestic public as well as politicians and opinion leaders of the need to change the strategy in Iraq, the experts needed to win their “hearts and minds”. Bringing together such a diverse group from different backgrounds was, thus, an important part of the COIN dissemination process. It was also another opportunity to network. As Crane remarked,

[...] it was very free-flowing, anything could be said, everybody was involved. For the sessions in the evening they had a big dinner one night, another night we were just drinking around the rooms because we all stayed in the same building at the barracks.

(Interview with Crane 2013)

The socialisation was an important aspect of Petraeus’ efforts to buy-in critics of the concept. Once they had met on a personal level with the COIN experts, it would be harder for them to question it, not only because they knew the experts now but also because they had been involved in the process of developing the knowledge. Ultimately, the Leavenworth conference had more of a legitimising and disseminating effect than developing new knowledge on counterinsurgency. Despite the claims by the organisers that the new manual was not “a new polishing of old crap” (Ricks 2009, 25) and that every participant’s viewpoint and knowledge was essential in formulating new Army COIN doctrine, the ‘big ideas’ and broad outline of what would later be published as *FM 3-24* were already clear beforehand.¹⁵³ As Kilcullen has stated, the “Leavenworth model [...] was basically a co-option tool, bring in the media with a bunch of experts to basically convince them that we were getting it right. [This] was a legitimate activity but it wasn’t

¹⁵³ To underline his, Crane handed out small, coprolite, gem stones to the audience of the conference, saying that they looked pretty but were essentially “dinosaur dung” (Combined Arms Center 2006, Tape 1).

about seeking their opinion [...] (2013a).¹⁵⁴ Instead, the intention was to bring about a new mind-set into the U.S. military as well as the public, changing the way it had thought about conflict since the end of the Vietnam War. The co-optation of critics and journalists would help the COINdinistas to establish a credible strategic narrative of COIN as the right approach to fight the insurgency.

The conference would be Petraeus' chance to lay out his ideas and discuss them with a broad range of professionals, who could help establish his ideas not only in the ongoing campaign in Iraq, but more importantly in the political struggle of changing the Pentagon's attitude towards COIN. Thus, the knowledge of the conference participants was used merely in a substantiating way. Furthermore, the development of *FM 3-24* was characterised by extreme time pressure, as the situation in Iraq worsened by the day and the COINdinistas were desperate to come up with some form of an answer to it. David Ucko has highlighted this in an interview with the author (Interview with Ucko 2013):

[...] what happened with *FM 3-24* and everything that surrounds it is that the intelligentsia, if you call them that, were desperately trying to come out with an answer to a question; to an exam that they were failing every day with huge political and human costs. So the end result is not as academically pure or academically rigorous as one may have wanted it to be. But if you think about the context in which it was written, it was a very hurried and maybe sometimes a frantic process of just getting people 'to get' counterinsurgency.

As the next step in "getting people 'to get'" the strategic narrative of COIN as the solution to the problems in Iraq, the knowledge of the new doctrine had to be implemented into the Army's 'mind'. Petraeus wanted to have a doctrine on COIN in place for when he had to go back to Iraq, so it could serve as the foundation

¹⁵⁴ Or, as Marks remarked to a colleague at the conference "This cake was already baked. We were the icing" (Quoted in Kaplan 2013).

for the new approach he wanted to use. This was by no means an easy process, as a critique of the U.S. conduct of war in Iraq also implied a critique of the generals and politicians who were leading it. As expected, there was not only positive feedback from within the military. A new version of the manual circulated around in June 2006 received “thousands” of (positive and negative) feedback comments from all ranks (Ricks 2009, 26), in addition to the comments and criticisms from the official reviewers in the military hierarchy.¹⁵⁵

One of the most vigorous criticisms of *FM 3-24* came from Ralph Peters, a former Army officer-turned-journalist. He wrote a damning review in the *New York Post*, entitled “Politically Correct War”, calling the new doctrine “dishonest and cowardly” and the writers as “seek[ing] to evade war’s brute reality” (Peters 2006). He criticised the draft for being soft, “a mush of pop-zen mantras” (Peters 2006). Yet, Peters, and other critics like Gian Gentile (2013), did not criticise COIN because it was not helping the Iraqis. Rather, they considered it the wrong orientation for achieving U.S. interests. Their approach was different and more aggressive, but the ends were the same. As Peters argued towards Kilcullen: “You know it would have been cheaper to just invade Afghanistan once every 10 years if they did anything, rather than continue to occupy them for the 10 years in between” (Interview with Kilcullen 2013a). With such a “mowing the lawn” proposition, he showed that it was solely about the enforcement of U.S. interests.

In the end, *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency* was released on 15 December 2006. Like any other field manual, it was intended as a guide for field and staff officers. Yet,

¹⁵⁵ An U.S. Army Field Manual has to go through multiple iterations of review within different levels and constituencies of the military bureaucracy before it is cleared for publication. In the case of *FM 3-24*, particular objection came from the Army Intelligence Center in Fort Huachuca, AZ. They were worried about the regular soldier’s ability to collect intelligence, which was one of the key suggestions of *FM 3-24* (Kaplan 2013, 213 ff.).

the impact it had went far beyond that. Within a month, the online edition had reached over 1.5 million downloads (Petraeus 2010) and was soon published as a book by the University of Chicago Press (2007). It was even reviewed by the *New York Times Book Review* (Powers 2007). Hundreds of manuals had been published over the years with little or no recognition by the public (and often not even within the military itself). Yet, *FM 3-24* was written like a how-to guide for all echelons of the U.S. Army (and the Marine Corps, as it was a “Joint Publication”), which also resonated with an intellectual spirit unbeknownst to other field manuals. As Nagl noted (Combined Arms Center 2006, Tape 6), this was the first “field manual with an annotated bibliography”.

This illustrates two points. On the one hand, *FM 3-24* was to provide a simple issue narrative of why COIN was the right approach in targeting insurgencies, not just in Iraq but insurgencies in general.¹⁵⁶ It broke down the inherently complex socio-political issue of (counter-)insurgency into a practical step-by-step advice, almost like a *For Dummies* instructional book. On the other hand, almost paradoxical, the academic aspect of *FM 3-24* – the “intellectual insurgency from within the Army itself” (Kaplan 2013, 148) – was another ‘selling point’ of the COIN doctrine and provided substantiating knowledge for the claim that COIN was the right approach to cope with the ‘nuisance’ of insurgency. The manual was, thus, endowed with both an understandable message for the broad public, but also substantiated its claim with expert knowledge. Combined with Petraeus’ aggressive advertisement, it got a good reception on Capitol Hill, the White House and public media (Powers 2007; Schultz and Dew 2006).

¹⁵⁶ As a general Field Manual, *FM 3-24* did not directly address the situation in Iraq. However, given the situation the U.S. military was in when it was published, there are constant references to it throughout (e.g. U.S. Army 2006, 1-3, 1-8, 3-3).

8.5 Politics reacts – The Iraq Study Group and the AEI report

By 2006, the deteriorating situation in Iraq had become such a serious matter that it was no longer a purely operational affair, but a question of wider U.S. national security policy that threatened the legitimacy of the Bush administration and the U.S. military. It was discussed within a larger community of policy analysts, scholars, and commentators on both sides of the political divide as well as within the general public (Metz 2010, 22 ff.). Some argued that the Bush's strategy had been flawed from its inception, because it had been wrong to invade, and called for an immediate or quick withdrawal from Iraq (e.g. Korb and Bergmann 2007; Simon 2007). Some realist thinkers like Zbigniew Brzezinski came to the same conclusion, but argued that the strategic costs of further occupation would outweigh the benefits (Brzezinski 2006; see also Odom 2006). Thus, political pressure in Washington grew to the extent that something had to be done.

In Congress, the Democrats had always been critical of the rationale for the war and the Republicans were fearful of the upcoming midterm elections because of public dissatisfaction about the conduct of the war.¹⁵⁷ The creation of a bi-partisan, blue-ribbon commission of prominent lawmakers to assess the situation in Iraq and the US-led war efforts and make recommendations, thus, seemed like a good idea. The bi-partisan Iraq Study Group (ISG), appointed on 15 March 2006, was co-chaired by James Baker, a former Secretary of State (Republican), and Lee H. Hamilton, a former U.S. Representative (Democrat) and consisted of four Democrats and four Republicans. Over the spring and summer, the panel, supported by twenty staff, held hearings and met with more than 170 officials,

¹⁵⁷ With good reason, the election resulted in a sweeping victory for the Democrats which won the House of Representatives, the Senate, and most gubernatorial elections as well as state legislatures from the Republicans

officers, and congressmen, as well as going on a five-day trip to Iraq (Kaplan 2013, 204). The ISG released its report on 6 December 2006, stating that “the situation in Iraq is grave and deteriorating” (Baker et al. 2006, xiii). In terms of actions to take, the group recommended that:

[t]he Iraqi government should accelerate assuming responsibility for Iraqi security by increasing the number and quality of Iraqi Army brigades. While this process is under way, and to facilitate it, the U.S. should significantly increase the number of U.S. military personnel, including combat troops, imbedded in and supporting Iraqi Army units.

(Baker et al. 2006, xvi)

The report also contained 79 detailed recommendations, ranging from increased diplomatic pressure on Iraq’s neighbours Iran and Syria and renewed efforts of training Iraq’s security forces to better economic assistance. Another report from the Pentagon also confirmed the ISG’s assessment, stating that insurgent attacks had risen to nearly a thousand per week (Suarez 2006).

The group’s criticism certainly had an effect on Bush. Although he did not adopt its major recommendations directly, the fact that esteemed experts and politicians from across the political spectrum saw major flaws could hardly be swept under the carpet and increased the pressure on the administration to act. The political right – especially the neocons – lobbied for further public and congressional support of the campaign.¹⁵⁸ Conservative commentators like Rush Limbaugh continued to convey the neoconservative message to the public (see e.g. Media Matters 2006). However, more importantly for our analytical focus, there were also some experts associated with the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) who

¹⁵⁸ In fact, Bush saw the report as important and groundbreaking (BBC News 2009), not least because the bi-partisan recommendations provided him with an opportunity to save his presidency and legacy.

wanted to save Bush's legacy and the Iraq War, most notably military scholar Frederick Kagan and retired U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. John Keane.¹⁵⁹

Keane's input was important. He was retired, which enabled him to speak openly, and despite not being an expert on COIN, he was experienced and still well connected within the military and political establishments. On 19 September 2006, Keane met Rumsfeld and Pace in the Pentagon and told them that the President's aim of decisive victory was not attainable in the way the U.S. military was currently being used in Iraq, namely by focusing on a transition of power to the Iraqis (Robinson 2008, 31). Despite the recent successes in Iraq, including the capture of Saddam Hussein, the drafting of a new constitution with democratic elections, and the killing of Al-Qaeda terrorist al-Zarqawi, there was no satisfactory overall progress in Iraq, according to Keane (Woodward 2008, 130).

Keane talked to Rumsfeld and Pace at length about a new COIN approach, but could not convince them of his ideas directly (Woodward 2008, 132 ff.). However, they agreed to appoint a group of sixteen colonels to review the U.S. policy in Iraq. The group, which would become known as the "Council of Colonels", came – yet again – from the breed of soldier-scholars – many of whom had PhDs – that had dominated the development of COIN knowledge. This was also the first time that experts were commissioned by the government. This late draw on expertise and the disinterest that Rumsfeld showed indicates that the government was not necessarily interested in the instrumental but merely the legitimising value of their advice. Two notable members of the group were McMaster and Peter Mansoor,

¹⁵⁹ Keane was also a close confidant of Petraeus, whom he had known since 1980 and once given first aid when he was shot in an accident on a live-firing range, which "sealed a bond between the two men" (Woodward 2008, 140).

who had served as a brigade commander in Iraq in 2003-4 (Mansoor 2008) and was now the head of the newly established COIN centre at Ft. Leavenworth. It was no coincidence that they were in the group, as Petraeus had personally recommended them to Pace. This was Petraeus' chance to install his acolytes within the Pentagon to advocate his message, highlighting once again the influence he had gained on political decision-making. The colonels were to give the JCS advice about the situation in Iraq. Having access to all information such as intelligence briefings, SIGACT reports, data on weapons systems, they explored different scenarios and met regularly with the JCS to brief them and discuss on an informal level (Kaplan 2013, 223 f.).

After several weeks of discussion, the group presented their findings to Pace (who later briefed President Bush). Under the headline "We are losing because we are not winning and time is not on our side" (Quoted in Ricks 2009, 103), they gave four options: "Go Big", "Go Home", "Go Long", and a "hybrid" comprising options two and three. "Go Big" meant a massive troop increase, something the colonels ultimately rejected as politically and economically infeasible. "Go Home" was also unacceptable because they believed the result would be an all-out civil war in Iraq. "Go Long", instead, advocated a long-term U.S. advisory mission, and the fourth, "hybrid" option implied a short-term increase of American troops to 140,000, followed by a reduction to about 60,000 (Caldwell 2011, 230 f.).

Whilst the Council of Colonels was working on their report and Keane was promoting COIN at the Pentagon, which also led to personnel changes (Ricks 2009, 92), another development took place that would have decisive influence on the translation of COIN theory into practice. This came from the neocons. As they had heavily promoted the invasion in 2003, they were now in fear that the

outcome would be similarly devastating as Vietnam and that it would damage the U.S.'reputation as the world's remaining superpower (Ricks 2009, 94). Yet, Frederick Kagan from the AEI did not appreciate the recommendations of the ISG and decided to conduct his own study, which would promote a surge of U.S. troops and the adoption of a COIN strategy. With this, the AEI emerged as the nexus of the neocons and the COIN movement. This was only a logical development: Whilst the COIN experts considered the new doctrine, enshrined in *FM 3-24*, as a necessary guide for the low-intensity conflicts of the future, the neocons wanted utilise it to ensure the assertion of U.S. global power.

Thus, COIN moved from a military tool to a political one, legitimising U.S. involvement in Iraq and beyond. Kagan organised a conference on 8 December at the AEI building in Washington, DC to publicly present a counterargument to the ISG findings. By bringing COIN onto this visible political stage, it was clear that the intention was to influence politics and the public by telling a compelling strategic narrative of how the war could be turned around. And yet, Kagan's initial intention was not to change the way the war was fought or drastically increase the number of troops, but rather to look at different military approaches to the conflict.¹⁶⁰ This indicates that the knowledge production was not really intended to provide instrumental solutions for Iraq and its inhabitants, but to salvage U.S. interests and reputation by providing legitimising knowledge.

At the AEI conference, the participants – among them Keane and McMaster – discussed the establishment of combat outposts in different areas of the city and

¹⁶⁰ In fact, he believed that the conference would be more an academic exercise than really policy-influential, because it was expected that Bush would be giving a major speech on Iraq in a few days' time (Ricks 2009, 95).

what number of troops would be needed for this. This was done, inter alia, by looking at maps and Google images of Baghdad (Ricks 2009, 94). In the end, they concluded that a marked security improvement in Baghdad and neighbouring Al-Anbar Province would require at least five extra brigades (Woodward 2008, 277). The question was where to find these additional troops. On the internet, the analysts found the Army's planned rotation schedule and worked out that these five combat brigades were the maximum that could be done. As it panned out, the model seemed to work (Ricks 2009, 97).¹⁶¹ On 13 December, the study was presented to the public under the title *Choosing Victory – A plan for success* (Kagan 2006). The public release of these findings, including the claim that it was all about the “protection of the population”, was once more an indicator that this knowledge was used in a legitimising way. Petraeus' resuscitated idea of COIN had been connected to the logistical possibilities of the U.S. military, providing a comprehensive strategic narrative of how the situation in Iraq could be improved. It now needed political support.

As it happened, Keane had been called by the White House to talk to the president about Iraq. The meeting took place on 11 December.¹⁶² At the meeting Eliot Cohen argued for a change in leadership in Iraq. He even offered a replacement: David Petraeus. His name had been mentioned around the White House for a while. Meghan O'Sullivan, Bush's Special Adviser on Iraq and a close confidant of Petraeus', had especially lobbied for him. The other participants agreed with Cohen on Petraeus. Moreover, Keane presented his (and AEI's) case

¹⁶¹ Interestingly, the information on the troop rotations were so accurate that Keane and others believed the analysts must have had access to classified data. Yet, all the material had been freely available on the internet (Ricks 2009, 97; Woodward 2008, 277).

¹⁶² Present were, besides Bush and Keane, Vice President Cheney, Eliot Cohen, Karl Rove, Stephen Hadley, Stephen Biddle, Gen. Dowding, and Gen. (Ret.) McCaffrey (Buciak 2012, 606).

for COIN, implementing *FM 3-24* in Iraq along with a troop increase. Bush seemed impressed by Keane's arguments and White House officials later told him that he had made a strong impact (Ricks 2009, 101).

There is good reason to believe this. The COIN proponents had given Bush an opportunity to turn around the fortunes of his whole presidency. The U.S. administration faced a severe threat to its legitimacy due to its inability to stop the violence in Iraq and, thus, due to its failure to safeguard the state's national security interests. Hence, the real knowledge gap in Iraq was not how to improve the war effort and improve the situation of the civilian population, but how to improve the U.S.' situation. This was all the more necessary as the public was closely watching the developments in Iraq as well as the debate about the Surge and COIN. In essence, the initiative for both a 'new' COIN doctrine as well as an actual strategy change in Iraq was not much more than a well-publicised piece of symbolic knowledge, aimed at the U.S. public and critical political stakeholders:

It [*FM 3-24*] was published not for military eyes, but for public eyes. [...] There's also frankly a much larger chattering class [nowadays]. In the 60s there weren't dozens and dozens of these international relations programmes, political science programmes, etc. Suddenly you've got lots of bright people who'd want to have an opinion on this and that becomes, therefore, one of the few things written on it. And because Petraeus is using it, it becomes a kind of talisman.

(Interview with Hammes 2013)

On 18 December, Robert Gates was sworn in as the new Secretary of Defence. Now that Rumsfeld was gone, with Casey about to leave, and Bush seriously considering a new approach in Iraq, Petraeus became involved again. Keane continued to lobby for his protégé, prodding Gen. Pace to admit that the deployment of five brigades to Iraq was possible (Kaplan 2013, 241). On 28

December, Bush met with his national security advisers to discuss and decided in favour of the five-brigade surge, a change in strategy and Petraeus in charge. When Petraeus took command of MNF-I on 10 February 2007, one of his first actions was the compilation of a team of over twenty experts, military officers, embassy staff, and academics, of whom some had already been involved in drafting the COIN manual. The Joint Strategic Assessment Team (JSAT), headed by McMaster and Ambassador David Pearce, was to review the U.S. strategy in Iraq, assess the campaign plan, and recommend adjustments.¹⁶³ Again, this was more of a ruse or information campaign by Petraeus. He already had a new strategy, basically *FM 3-24* executed by the five Surge brigades. Yet, he knew that that this required the endorsement and political support by critics and other government agencies involved, such as the State Department or USAID.

The composition of JSAT resembled the COIN conference at Ft. Leavenworth. Although, most of the participants pointed out problems and made recommendations, it was Petraeus and his confidants who developed the new approach. The other experts were mainly on it to “widen the circle of support”, i.e. to give the diplomats who had to carry out the civil aspects a sense of ownership and to incorporate academics who would write (positive) articles about it (Kaplan 2013, 261).¹⁶⁴ Given this distribution of work, it seems that the experts employed in the JSAT were mainly contributing substantiating knowledge.

¹⁶³ Other members of the team were, inter alia, David Kilcullen, Peter Mansoor, Joel Rayburn, Steven Biddle from the Council of Foreign Relations, U.S. Ambassador to Algeria Robert Ford, Molly Phee from the State Department, intelligence expert Derek Harvey, Toby Dodge from the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, Colonel Marty Stanton, and Ricky Waddell, an expert on the oil and gas industry (Mansoor 2013b, 104).

¹⁶⁴ The situation of Petraeus in Iraq resembled that of Gen. Creighton Abrams in Vietnam in 1968. Abrams' approach was also based on an assessment recommending a change towards a COIN strategy, the 1966 “Pacification, Republic of Vietnam” (PROVN) study. Yet, his war council, the Weekly Intelligence Estimate Update (WIEU), was an all-encompassing analysis of military, intelligence, political and economic factors in Vietnam (Sorley 1999, 19 f., 32 f.).

For several weeks from 20 March 2007, JSAT met every day, discussing questions such as the root causes of the conflict, the efforts of the Iraqi government (or rather, counter-efforts in their eyes), or the impact a population-centric COIN campaign could even have on such a war-ridden country (Mansoor 2013b, 104). One of the major questions the group faced was a definition of the conflict. On this, the participants eventually agreed that it had evolved into a low-grade civil war, which included elements of an insurgency, (jihadist and foreign) terrorism, and state failure in many areas. This was in stark contrast to the U.S. government, which saw it merely as a “communal struggle”. This definition also had implications for how the experts, and the U.S. in general, would act. The Iraqi government was now seen as a fraction in the war, not simply a government needing support against insurgents. This meant that the U.S. would not only fight against the insurgents, but in certain instances also against the predominantly Shiite Maliki government (Robinson 2008, 114).

The decision signalled the group’s intent, and of the COIN enterprise, that it was first and foremost about U.S. interests. If the Iraqi government was consenting and cooperating, fair enough; but if any of their policies would not satisfy the US, they could be labelled as Shiite interests.¹⁶⁵ The central aim was to ‘win’ the war in Iraq. Everything else, including civilian protection or Iraqi interests were subordinate to this aim. Sewall, herself focused on civilian protection, admitted:

[Petraeus’ view] was ‘we had a war to win’, he wanted to win it, we were not going to win it the way we were fighting it, so we needed to come up with a different approach, *sell a different approach in order to win it.*

(Interview with Sewall 2013, emphasis mine)

¹⁶⁵ This approach was not novel. As Robinson (2008, 115) writes: “The U.S. had frequently imposed conditions on allies or otherwise sought to modify their undesirable behavior.”

Another issue that brought about some debate within JSAT was about the incorporation of indigenous forces, in particular the reconciliation and implementation of former insurgents. MacFarland had done it in Al Anbar province the year before (Michaels 2010, 95 ff.) and it was also mentioned in *FM 3-24* (U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps 2007, Ch. 6). Moreover, it was an element of continuity that had been apparent in other U.S. colonial campaigns, including the Philippines and Vietnam. However, this was a tricky issue: Many Sunni insurgents had been extremely radicalised and some had killed U.S. soldiers, which gave the idea of allying with them a bitter taste.

In the end, the arguments of Kilcullen and Biddle let the group agree to this idea, despite some criticism, e.g. by McMaster. Both argued that the U.S. had to make deals, even ugly ones, because it had to act as a broker between the two sides in the civil war. Giving incentives to the insurgents, like equipment, wages, and eventually incorporation into the security services, would encourage them to stop fighting (Kaplan 2013, 260). Yet, this was a flawed argument, as the U.S. was not only acting as a power broker but actively taking sides. The U.S. support of the “Sons of Iraq” against Al-Qaeda, eventually became a counterweight to Maliki.

In their final, hundred-page report in April 2007, JSAT made several recommendations of what the campaign should look like. These included (1) the adoption of a political strategy, which included cease-fire agreements with insurgents; (2) a population-centric COIN campaign (as set out in *FM 3-24*) with a strong military component against irreconcilable insurgents; (3) active regional diplomacy (e.g. Iran); (4) building of government capacity; and most controversially (5) rooting sectarian actors out of government, which reflected the frustration and negative views that many JSAT members had against the Maliki

government.¹⁶⁶ In relation to their discussion on indigenous troops, the JSAT also recommended a large expansion of the Iraqi army to fill the vacuum that 170,000 coalition troops would leave in the future (Robinson 2008, 115 f.). The report, which was constantly being updated, was supposed to serve together with *FM 3-24* as the strategic blueprint for the surge brigades.

In sum, the idea of a COIN strategy and the deployment of more troops into Iraq had moved from an academic debate to official government policy within just over two years. What is noticeable is that the original impetus to do this did not come from the U.S. administration itself. For a long time, the neocons believed that a small U.S. presence would be enough to steer Iraq towards a liberal democracy. The fact that Rumsfeld and his associates stuck to that approach for years and did not commission any COIN knowledge production themselves is a clear indication that they were not interested in instrumental knowledge.

Yet, when the security situation in Iraq became so catastrophic, they relied on Petraeus and the other COIN apologists for legitimising knowledge to add to a comprehensive politico-strategic narrative of how the war could be turned around. Whilst the story that was sent out to the public and the media conveyed an image of a new strategy which was aimed at securing the Iraqi population, the initiative for a 'new' COIN campaign and a troop surge was not much more than a well-publicised piece of symbolic knowledge. In reality, the aim was to safeguard U.S. interests, which becomes apparent when looking at how the expert knowledge was utilised in Iraq. I will show how this was done below.

¹⁶⁶ The last point of purging the Iraqi government of undesirables was eventually rejected by Petraeus as "an unworkable and an intrusion into a sovereign government" (Mansoor 2013b, 105).

8.6 Areas of military knowledge production

8.6.1 Separating and controlling the population

The first additional surge brigade, from the 82nd Airborne Division, arrived in Baghdad via Kuwait in January 2007, with the remaining brigades following one per month from February to May. By June, the Surge under Multinational Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) was at its full proposed strength – twenty U.S. Army brigades and U.S. Marine Corps regiments, as well as a sizeable number of coalition forces (Mansoor 2013b, 70). The way in which they would be employed had been described half a year earlier in an article by LTC Douglas Ollivant and Lt Eric Chewning of the 1st Cavalry Division in “Producing Victory: Rethinking Conventional Forces in COIN Operations”, which was published in mid-summer 2006 in *Military Review* (Ollivant and Chewning 2006).¹⁶⁷

As they stated, “the combined arms manoeuvre battalion, partnering with indigenous security forces and living among the population it secures, should be the basic tactical unit of COIN warfare” (2006, 50). Contrary to the standard battle order of the U.S military, which placed an emphasis on corps, divisions, and brigades, the article argued for a battalion-focus campaign by dispersing the troops among the population instead of keeping them in large, forward operating bases. This reflected what Galula had considered to be the “basic unit” in counterinsurgency (Galula 2006, 78).¹⁶⁸ Here again, we can see another example of knowledge production for the counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq, which inherently relied on traditional doctrine from the Vietnam War era. It was not questioned whether or not such a tactic was the right approach.

¹⁶⁷ The article actually won first prize in an article contest announced by Gen. Petraeus. This was yet another of his “War of Information campaigns” to spread the gospel of COIN and this piece certainly conveyed the message that he wanted to read (Kaplan 2013, 255).

¹⁶⁸ This dispersion of troops was also mentioned in *FM 3-24* (2007, 48).

The first main operation the surge troops conducted was the Baghdad security plan (Arabic: *Fardh al-Qanoon*, Imposing Law), in which the troops were used as envisioned in Ollivant's and Chewing's article. After first "clearing" an area with a division, the battalions would move in to "control" and "retain" it (Robinson 2008, 122). Part and parcel of this effort was the creation of "combat outposts", which moved the troops from large "forward operating bases" outside Iraq's cities into the neighbourhoods. Some of these outposts operated as "joint security stations", which housed both U.S. and Iraqi troops. All of these outposts came in different sizes and shapes. Some could house a whole battalion and contained aid stations, motor parks, and helipads. On the other end of the spectrum were company/platoon outposts large enough to house fifty to a hundred soldiers secured by blast walls, vehicle blocks, guard towers, and aerial supervision from helium balloons and cameras (Mansoor 2013b, 71).

The key focus of the surge, as communicated to the soldiers and the public, was to 'secure' the population. As Petraeus stated at the beginning of a public letter to the soldiers of MNF-I: "This fight depends on securing the population, which must understand that we – not our enemies – occupy the moral high ground" (Appendix I in Couch 2010). Yet, as he and the other COIN planners knew, "securing" the population meant that they would have to control it, too. Population control measures had, in fact, been postulated in *FM 3-24*. Some of the recommendations made include a census in the area, curfews, and the issuing of ID cards (U.S. Army 2006, 5-21). How such measures were actually employed in Iraq is discussed below. In any case, despite being advertised as new, they only echoed techniques that had been used in COIN campaigns before, as I have shown in the case studies of the Philippines and Vietnam.

In the Iraq War, this was the first time the U.S. military developed a comprehensive overview of the “human environment that was the battlefield” which was aided by new intelligence sources (Robinson 2008, 325). On the one hand, there was a renewed effort on augmenting and exploiting human intelligence (HUMINT).¹⁶⁹ By living among the population, the U.S. troops were able to extract more information from the people than ever before. As they began to trust the U.S. troops, details about planted IEDs, bomb plots or attacks began to come in more often and more accurately (Ricks 2009, 169 ff.). But there were also new developments in signals intelligence (SIGINT). During the surge, the brigade commanders had more aerial capabilities than in previous years, especially through surveillance and fighting drones. Furthermore, a better understanding of their networks and improved telecommunications interception, enabled the Special Forces to target the insurgents in a better and more precise way (Mansoor 2013b, 80 f.). The technical developments certainly displayed an evolution in warfare in general and COIN in particular. Nevertheless, in their first and foremost aim, that is the “control” of the population, such measures had been around in U.S. counterinsurgency warfare since the Philippine Insurrection.

Another measure to control the population used by the U.S. forces was more invasive and the way it was used in the long-run shows that its intent was only ostensibly focused on providing long-term stability in Iraq. In the past, both U.S. and Iraq security forces had already operated a large number of checkpoints throughout the cities. Yet, especially in Baghdad with its seven million inhabitants, they proved inefficient in stopping the movement of insurgents and their car bombs. Thus, for more efficient control of traffic and people, U.S. forces began to

¹⁶⁹ With respect to this, also see the more detailed analysis of the Human Terrain System and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in *Chapter 9: Iraq (2003-2011) – Civil knowledge*.

erect large cement barriers around the city's markets the most troubled neighbourhoods, with checkpoint-controlled entry points.¹⁷⁰ When the first wall was erected in April 2007 around the neighbourhood of Adhamiya, Maj. Gen. Caldwell, the MNF-I spokesperson, stated that: "We have no intent to build gated communities in Baghdad" (Quoted in Giordono and Morin 2007).

Yet, with the progression of the surge, U.S. forces began to erect more and more walls around the city. Petraeus consequently did admit that "we were providing 'gated communities' to the Iraqis at no charge" (Quoted in Mansoor 2013b, 74). In fact, Baghdad was divided into sectors and "subjected to intense yet discriminate infantry operations [...] cordoned off with checkpoints and barriers: the population was issued identity cards, and any travel to and from the area was strictly controlled" (Ucko 2009, 128). Within the surge operations, these walls were seen as a necessary evil. Kilcullen (2007) stated that "gated communities in counterinsurgency are like tourniquets in surgery" – an effective, yet somewhat painful measure for breaking the cycle of violence. He further argued that the walls stop sectarian violence in three ways: First, insurgents have a harder time infiltrating a community, because they cannot easily access the area and the troops on the ground would soon notice an intrusion. Second, because of the checkpoint-controls, insurgents cannot smuggle explosives or other weapons in and out of the gated areas. Third, the cycle of violence, in which 'death squads' retaliate against previous attacks, can be interrupted by the presence of U.S. forces (Kilcullen 2007).

¹⁷⁰ Allegedly with Iraqi government approval, yet Maliki negated that (Mansoor 2013b, 74; Rubin 2007).

It is fair to argue that the walls were a crucial factor in reducing the overall violence in the city, enabling at first a 'normal' level of political bargaining (see e.g. Ricks 2009, 173). As Johnson et al. show in their empirical study of the 2008 Sadr City battle, the walls effectively drew "the enemy into intense combat on extremely disadvantageous terms [they] "agitated" the enemy and forced it to attack U.S. forces that had enormous tactical advantages (2013, 74). The walls created "geographies of security" (Kienscherf 2013, 88) which kept the insurgents out and allowed for the management and control of the population.

Nevertheless, the walls were also problematic. First of all, the term "gated communities", which many of the COINdinistas described them as, was certainly a rather extreme euphemism. Whilst in U.S. domestic discourse, 'gated communities' are often considered wealthy residential areas, in which the rich seclude themselves (Low 2001), this can surely not be said for the walled areas in a war-torn city. Thus, by referring to them as 'gated communities' the COINdinistas created a narrative (mostly for the public at home in the US) of not just a safe, but also a pleasant place which the COIN campaign had created. The reality was markedly different. Not only were they an ostensible reminder of the Israeli wall in the West Bank, but they did indeed limit commerce and trade over several years. The access to stores, schools, mosques, hotels, homes, and markets was often blocked and the inhabitants often protested heavily against them (USA Today 2008).¹⁷¹

The COIN apologists derided these criticisms as "insurgent propaganda" (Mansoor 2013b, 74), but there was genuine concern about negative economic

¹⁷¹ Something that had been heavily criticised by some commentators in the U.S. at the time (Bass 2002).

impact as well as deepening sectarian cleavages. Still, given the arguable impact the walls had on reducing the prevalent violence in 2007-08, one could have accepted them as a temporary necessity. However, the fact that the walls remained in place for several years and even up to this day (see e.g Healy 2011; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2012), exposes the COINdinistas' claim of walls as short-term "tourniquets" as a symbolic piece of knowledge, aimed at substantiating the overall claim of creating security and reducing the violence in the country. Indeed, the walls bring violence down. Yet, by leaving them in place for years, they further entrenched sectarian divisions within society.

This highlights again the 'realistic' view the experts had on the techniques they employed in Iraq. If they helped the Iraqi population in the sense of cooperating with them and building relationships, that was ideal. Yet, what was ultimately more important was to create security for U.S. forces and reduce the violence by controlling the people. This certainly also helped the Iraqis, but despite the U.S. claims, protecting or "securing" the population was not the main reason for doing it. As Petraeus' executive officer at the time, Peter Mansoor, admitted

[What we were] trying to do is control the people and make it impossible for insurgents to operate among them. Now if that means gaining their allegiance, their trust and confidence, that's great. If it means just walling off their communities and making it impossible for insurgents to infiltrate into the population base, that works as well.

(Interview with Mansoor 2013a)

With regards to failed earlier attempts by the U.S. military in Iraq, "securing" of the population, which was the strapline of the COINdinistas, was only achievable through controlling it. The measures taken by the surge troops – segregation of the ethnic groups by walls, population control through censuses and biometrics,

increased human and electronic intelligence, and improved SF activities – had been written down in *FM 3-24*. However, they were not a novel feature. In fact, they only mirrored the tactics used in prior campaigns, as I have also explicitly shown in the case studies of the Philippines and Vietnam. Whilst the walls did improve the situation in Iraq in 2007-2008, they merely subdued the problems in the short run and did not solve the underlying sectarian problems of Iraq. Yet, they were one important factor in allowing the U.S. a face-saving exit in late 2011. Thus, it is fair to argue that the experts' advice in *FM 3-24* to rely on population control measures to support the COIN campaign was intended to reduce the violence long enough to showcase the pacification.¹⁷²

8.6.2 Sons of Iraq

There was another, traditional COIN technique, which helped the U.S. to achieve their aim of superficial pacification of the country – indigenous forces. Rather unusual, this was mostly based on the tribal rebellion against Al-Qaeda in Iraq, known as the 'Awakening', which gave U.S. forces a massive break in their fight against the insurgents. In fact, the awakening had begun before the Surge began, but the arrival of U.S. forces and the eventual cooperation between the two acted as a catalyst for its success. The Awakening was basically the result of Al-Qaeda overstepping the mark. After several years of violence, which included many tribal elders and sheiks, the surviving Sunni leaders made the simple political calculation that allying with the U.S. would be the best option to fight Al-Qaeda and to hedge against Shi'a supremacy in Baghdad (Mansoor 2013b, 120).

¹⁷² It would go beyond the scope of the thesis to analyse the doctrinal quality of *FM 3-24* and to which extent individual measures in Iraq were directly derived from it (for a more detailed discussion on this, read Urban 2010, Ch. 15 f.). However, I believe that the overarching analysis in this thesis suggests that if *FM 3-24* had not been designed as a propaganda tool, and COIN measures had been properly implemented and not just symbolically applied, the situation in Iraq would probably be different today.

On the American side, Petraeus' decision to ally with the Sunni groups meant not only acting behind Baghdad's back (whose ethnic rivals he was basically supporting now), but also behind Washington's. As Ricks (2009, 202) describes, when asked how he got presidential clearance for such a , Petraeus alluded that he had not asked: "I don't think it was something that we needed to ask permission for. We had the authority to conduct what are called security contracts, and that was how we saw these." But, he also admitted that "we didn't see it growing to 103,000" – the peak number in 2008. The fact that Petraeus did not ask for permission for such a big undertaking highlights his role as a policy-making actor during the surge. He was not only taking orders from Washington anymore, but was able to implement wide ranging policy decisions on his own behalf, altering the civil-military relationship once more. The troops were not only helpful as additional manpower, but it also meant that these hundred thousand, often well-trained, fighters would not fight U.S. troops anymore. Whilst the turned insurgents at first called themselves "the Sunni Awakening", the U.S. used different euphemisms such as "security contractors" or "neighbourhood watches" so that they did not have to admit that were de facto negotiating cease-fires and cooperation with (active) insurgents. In the end, the, still metaphorical, term "Sons of Iraq" was used (Ricks 2009, 204).

At first, the cooperation between the U.S. and Sunni groups occurred on a local level, with U.S. commanders allowing armed neighbourhood watch groups to be formed. But after Petraeus had seen those groups in action on a visit to Amiriyah, a heavily contested suburb, he decided to further formalise the process (Mansoor 2013b, 139). Odierno, the head of MNC-I, set up a 'reconciliation cell' to oversee the process and give advice to local commanders, especially with regards to

insurgents' requests for money, weapons, and official support. The Maliki government became increasingly more concerned about the programme. As one of Maliki's ministers described it: "It's like raising a crocodile. It is fine when it is a baby, but when it is big, you can't keep it in the house" (Quoted in Ricks 2009, 206). The fear was that the U.S. was propping up the "Sons of Iraq", either for their own purposes of defeating Al-Qaeda and other insurgent groups or in a long-term plan to balance against the Shiite majority. This would essentially create two rival powers – one loyal to the government, and one not.

Although Petraeus denied outright that he had created a counterweight to Baghdad and he considered the turning of the insurgents as "the single most important cause of improvement in security in 2007" (Ricks 2009, 203), the real picture is more complex. Allying with former insurgents, the U.S. had indeed entered into "a coalition of gangsters, tribal leaders and opportunists" (Porter 2008), the dynamics of which were beyond their understanding. The 'Iraqification' of the war effort by the increasing reliance on the "Sons of Iraq" and other tribal groups meant that the experts were (knowingly or unknowingly) accepting short-term security gains at the cost of long-term political problems.¹⁷³ This is another indication of the fact that the COIN strategy, was not really aimed at long-term stability for Iraq and the concomitant well-being of the population, but were simply interested in turning the military fortunes in order to prevent a crushing defeat. As Bacevich put it, the U.S. avoided "military defeat by embracing political failure" (Quoted in Ricks 2009, 207).

¹⁷³ This utilisation of the Sunni tribes by the U.S. was met with resistance by the Shia majority and after the withdrawal of U.S. forces, these groups were again disenfranchised and, ultimately, many turned to ISIS. Interestingly, like in Vietnam, U.S. pundits saw the emergence of ISIS not as a result of the failure of U.S. strategy in Iraq, but solely due to the failure of the Iraqi government (see e.g. Harvey and Pregent 2014).

One intriguing question about the expert knowledge production and implementation during the Surge is whether or not they stayed within their realm of strategy and operation, applying merely the tenets of their own creation, *FM 3-24*, or if they actually set policy in Iraq. Looking at the evidence, particularly the erection of the walls and the incorporation of large groups of (supposedly) former insurgents onto the Americans' payroll, it becomes clear that at least in part, there was a setting of policy in Iraq by Petraeus. This was the result of a strategy and power vacuum at the White House. Despite some claims that President Bush became more involved into the war effort by the end of 2006 (e.g. Mansoor 2013b, 113), the situation in Iraq was different. He gave Petraeus and his followers much leeway in decision-making. In the words of Kilcullen, he "actually listened to the guys that were doing it and let them do it" (Interview with Kilcullen 2013a). Bush's recurring rhetoric about victory and liberty in Iraq did not reflect the actions on the ground. Petraeus and his team unilaterally changed the U.S. goals in Iraq. Accepting that the country had moved to a nearly full-fledged civil war, the expectations were now not resting on a Jeffersonian democracy with human rights, a non-corrupt legal system and a functioning civil society, but merely a reasonably stable state.¹⁷⁴

8.7 COIN, Now and Forever

The decline in violence in 2007-08 seemed to prove the success of the surge and the underlying counterinsurgency approach which Petraeus and the

¹⁷⁴ A noteworthy aspect about this is that during the surge, there was the clear expectation and consideration by Petraeus and others, that the U.S. were bound to Iraq for years, if not decades, to come. As Biddle, argued in early 2008, by cutting deals with Sunni insurgent groups and Shiite militias, the U.S. military had committed itself to Iraq: "A continued presence by a substantial outside force would be essential for many years to keep a patchwork quilt of wary former enemies from turning on one another" (Biddle 2008).

COINdinitas had initiated. As proponents of the surge argued, the combination of more troops and different methods reduced the level of violence and destroyed the insurgency (see e.g. Andrade 2010; Collier 2010; Kagan 2009; McCain and Lieberman 2008).¹⁷⁵ Given the apparent achievements of COIN in Iraq and the way it was received by decision-makers in Washington and the U.S. public more generally, the experts had not only been able to frame and implement the problem-set of COIN successfully, but they had also become policy-makers in their own right. The question for the experts was now how to keep the momentum of the COIN success story going.

As I argue in this section, with the think tank “Center for a New American Security” (CNAS) as an ‘unsinkable intellectual aircraft carrier’, the COINdinitas tried to establish COIN as a permanent fixture in U.S. defence policy formulation. The Bush administration, which had enabled Petraeus to implement his ideas of COIN in Iraq, was on its way out and the Democrats had good chances of winning the 2008 Presidential Election. Their idea of neoliberal interventionism had lied dormant since the Clinton years, but now provided an opportunity for the experts to retool it into a sort of “Counterinsurgency 2.0” (Vlahos 2009). At the 2009 CNAS Annual conference Petraeus, amid the applause of the 1,400-member crowd,¹⁷⁶ outlined what that meant for Iraq and Afghanistan: A “whole of government” or “full spectrum” approach, led by the U.S. military, requiring massive resources, more weapons, and more soldiers to “protect populations,”

¹⁷⁵ However, not everyone agreed. Critics have advanced a variety of alternative explanations for the decline in violence, including the “Anbar Awakening” of Sunni tribes (Green 2010; Long 2008; Michaels 2010; Simon 2008), the sectarian cleansing which had taken place (Korb et al. 2008; Weidmann and Salehyan 2013) and a combination of these factors (Biddle et al. 2012; Kahl 2008; Malkasian 2007).

¹⁷⁶ The participants were a “mix of Army brass, Navy officers in their starched whites, and soldiers in digital camo networking among the dark suits and smart skirts of the civilian elite. Defense contractors, lobbyists, analysts, journalists, administration reps [...] the “best and brightest”.” (Vlahos 2009).

establish institutions, and train indigenous troops. Overall, “a long-term commitment” to both countries (Quoted in Vlahos 2009).

Petraeus’ speech reflects the CNAS’ attempt to move away from ideology-driven argument for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (on which the Neocons had started it, calling for a modernisation of Arab countries) towards a more technocratic, problem-solving approach to U.S. interventions. As Luban claims CNAS “did not make its name with outspoken denunciations of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; it made its name with pragmatic recommendations for how to wage the wars more effectively” (Luban 2010). This was in line with the COINdinitas’ approach to counterinsurgency: Normalising and depoliticising insurgency by decoupling it from the Clausewitzian concept of war as a continuation of politics.¹⁷⁷

It would be unfair to say that the experts at CNAS – which became “the think-tank of choice for proponents of COIN doctrine” (Luban 2010)¹⁷⁸ – did not genuinely believe in the instrumentality of their knowledge and that it could indeed be used to enhance U.S. interventions. Yet, whilst they criticised the Iraq War’s execution and the devastating effect U.S. actions have had on the Iraqi population, their conclusion was not to argue against future interventions, as one might expect. Instead, they simply concluded that U.S. decision-makers should “internalize these lessons [...] when intervening elsewhere in the future” (Sky 2012). Thus, the reason of this COIN knowledge production was in essence about providing a rational, solution to the problems insurgencies posed to U.S. interventions. The “securing” of the population which Petraeus and the other COINdinitas sold to

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter 1.2.2 “The paradoxes of COIN”.

¹⁷⁸ Many of the COINdinitas were involved at CNAS: Nagl was first a Fellow (2008), then President of CNAS (2009-2012), Kilcullen and Sewall became National Security advisors and Petraeus himself spoke regularly at CNAS events (Vlahos 2009).

the public and the decision-makers as the reason for using COIN in Iraq and Afghanistan (and possibly other countries in the future) was merely the accompanying strategic narrative.¹⁷⁹

The founding of CNAS itself took place in a strategically important time, too. It was established in February 2007 at the height of the counterinsurgency and ‘Surge’ debate by co-founders Kurt M. Campbell and Michèle A. Flournoy. Both had previously worked at another think tank – the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) – as well as had been in several government positions (Belfer Center 2008). In its self-description, CNAS is a “bipartisan” institution whose mission “is to develop strong, pragmatic and principled national security and defense policies” (Center for a New American Security 2015a). Yet, others describe it as “a haven for hawkish Democrats” (Bengali and Gold 2013). Indeed, for Democrats CNAS was a way to regain the prerogative of interpretation about which political party was best in national security affairs ahead of the 2008 Presidential Election. It was, as Hodge (2010) called it, “expert triangulation”: Flournoy, Campbell and the other people working at CNAS postulated a hawkish (in their view “pragmatic and principled”) position on Iraq, arguing for sustained COIN engagement. After the election, CNAS emerged as a key source for Obama’s national security team, with fourteen CNAS employees obtaining positions his administration.

As one would expect for a think tank, CNAS organises and hosts conferences and publishes blogs as well as papers. In addition to that, it runs projects related

¹⁷⁹ Another – more personal and subjective – reason of why the COINdinitas pushed for a continuation of COIN was rather simple. As Vlahos (2009) argues: “For every soul in the room who truly believes this [COIN] is the “pragmatic and principled approach,” there was surely another for whom the Long War means guaranteed employment, flush contracts, justified research, more trips to Capitol Hill.”

to U.S. security matters and security-related issues such as climate change, cyber, or statecraft (Center for a New American Security 2015b). Yet, the way CNAS and other contemporary think tanks such as AEI or the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) interact with government is even more symbiotic than what had happened in the decades before.¹⁸⁰ Think tanks have always played an important role in developing knowledge and ideas for (foreign) policy and influencing government. As we have seen in our case study of Vietnam, academics and think tank experts also often moved from their academic roles into government positions, e.g. Walt Rostow, Lucian Pye, or Max Millikan.

Yet, in the Iraq War era, think tanks became more than just the feeder for foreign policy and national security advisors. People within government now enlisted think tanks and their people to help sell their policies to the public and other stakeholders in government. By giving speeches and keynotes at their events, influential political figures such as Petraeus or then-Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton (who spoke at CNAS' launch in 2007) have used think tanks as platforms to present their ideas and give them a somewhat academic credibility and aura. In turn, the think tanks profited from the presence of such political celebrities, which was in turn helpful in attracting donors.

The way in which CNAS conveyed its message (and inherently that of government officials) to the public was also rather novel. It was at the forefront of engaging with journalists. This was a win-win-situation for both sides, as CNAS could use seemingly independent and trustworthy voices to spread its ideas. This

¹⁸⁰ ISW was founded in 2007 by Kimberly Kagan, the wife of Fred Kagan of AEI, also in response to the surge (Institute for the Study of War 2015). In the wake of Petraeus' extramarital affair, it was revealed that the couple had close ties with him, accompanying him on trips to Iraq and Afghanistan (Chandrasekaran 2012).

was crucial for its clout, adding to the imprimatur of a neutral, non-partisan organisation (Hodge 2010). At the same time, the cooperation was beneficial for journalists, too. They received working space, travel allowances and often quite generous book leaves. Moreover, the bi- or non-partisan label was mutually beneficial. As Eric Schmitt, a veteran reporter on terrorism for the New York Times admitted about his time as a visiting fellow at CNAS: “We’ve tried to keep our reporting middle-of-the-road, for our careers, and I think we were looking for an institution that would reflect that” (Quoted in Hodge 2010).

Besides Schmitt, CNAS has hosted to a several journalists from major U.S. news outlets in their “Writers in residence” programme. For example, Tom Ricks wrote *The Gamble* at CNAS; Greg Jaffe (Washington Post) and David Cloud (New York Times) worked on *The Fourth Star*, a book about Army leaders (Center for a New American Security 2015c). However, CNAS and other newly-established think tanks did not simply rely on traditional print journalism, but they also invested in new media. CNAS hosts and hosted several influential blogs (Hodge 2010): “Abu Muqawama” (a blog on COIN by Andrew Exum); “Abu Aardvark” (a Middle East blog by Marc Lynch); and “The Best Defense” (a military affairs blog by Tom Ricks).

With the media involvement, CNAS not only diluted the independence of the journalists it took on board, despite its claim for non-partisanship. The fact that institutions like CNAS are also heavily funded by weapons manufacturers and other interest groups also created potential conflicts of interest which are often not clearly disclosed. Whilst CNAS receives support from other foundations like the John and Patricia Rosenwald Foundation or the Norman R. & Margareta E. Augustine Charitable Gift Fund, the majority of the heavyweight donors have a

military-industrial background: Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grunman, Raytheon and BAE Systems are among the longstanding supporters. Research contracts with the U.S. military and intelligence agencies allow the functioning of CNAS and similar organisations, such as ISW or the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) (Center for a New American Security 2015b).

Within a couple of years of its inception, CNAS had become a central place of propagation for the COIN gospel, replacing AEI and its neoconservative background with hawkish Democrats' ideas of liberal interventionism. Yet, in essence, both groups were similar in their goals and visions. Both "drank the Kool-Aid," as they considered war as "a perpetual condition" (Bacevich , Quoted in Vlahos 2009) in which large amounts of U.S. forces and money are needed to assert unclear U.S. interests abroad. As MacGregor states, "[n]ation-building at gunpoint, democracy at gunpoint. What's the difference?" (Quoted in Vlahos 2009). With the establishment of CNAS, the COINdinistas tried to move their COIN vision, which in late 2006 had been decidedly pushed onto the national security agenda by Keane, Kagan and the other neocons at AEI, onto a seemingly bi-partisan platform.

It is fair to argue that this was a necessary step to keep the COIN narrative afloat, given the good forecasts for the Democrats ahead of the 2008 Presidential Election. CNAS' vision was firmly rooted in the "population-centric" approach which the COINdinistas had advocated. Yet, they reformulated the old "clear, hold, and build" strategy by adding the vision of a "civilian surge" of Foreign Service officers and Aid workers in an expanded humanitarian mission. At CNAS, COIN morphed into a hybrid of civilian and military doctrine: The military would protect the population and defeat the enemy to open up space for democracy

promotion. In this sense, COIN had not only come full circle in that it had an equally ambitious agenda as neocons had at the onset of the war. More importantly, COIN as a concept moved from an operational technique to a strategy or even 'ideology' of war. At CNAS' height in 2009-2010, COIN doctrine was "on the verge of becoming an unquestioned orthodoxy, a far-reaching remedy for America's security challenges" (Gventer 2009).

However, in the end, this orthodoxy faltered. Despite the fact that so many CNAS employees moved into the Obama administration, they were unable to further instill their vision of COIN into U.S. foreign policy. One of the central tenets of Obama's election campaign had been that the Iraq War was the 'bad' war, begun on false claims and out of warmongering. Afghanistan, on the other hand, was the 'good' war, where the U.S. had been able to uproot the 9/11-planners and installed a somewhat stable government (D'Souza 2014, 162). Thus, for the newly-elected President, a quick withdrawal from Iraq was a fulfilment of one of his key election promises. The COINdinitas believed in their vision of COIN as instrumental knowledge which could be used to transform the way the U.S. military fights and even provide a technocratic solution to all kinds of wars (Gentile 2009). Yet, the way in which the U.S. administration treated this COIN knowledge after it had enabled a temporary and superficial pacification of the country, shows that the real utility lay more in the symbolic value of the knowledge. From 2006 to around 2009, from the first (more or less) public discussions of COIN to the apparent success of the 'Surge' in pacifying the country, it had been a valuable strategic narrative which was now no longer needed and, thus, disregarded.

8.8 Reflections on military knowledge production in Iraq

In an interview about the legacy of COIN in Iraq and his personal involvement in it, Conrad Crane stated:

COIN is not a tool to remake the world, it's an operational technique for the use of the military. [...] COIN is not a strategy it's an operational approach, but because we wrote the new doctrine in a strategic vacuum and it got turned that way, it got turned into more than it was intended to be.

(Interview with Crane 2013).

Looking at the evidence presented in this chapter, the claim that COIN actually did become a strategy in Iraq, although it is rather – as Crane pointed out – an operational technique, is accurate. Another fact that corroborates the assumption that COIN in Iraq was treated as a strategy is that it was only explicitly mentioned in 2014.¹⁸¹ Due to the fact that the U.S. military and the presidential administration behind it were failing in Iraq, challenging their legitimacy, a new approach for the war was needed. This strategy relied in large parts on expert knowledge and promised the U.S. domestic public a better, less lethal and softer way of waging war which would be more successful.¹⁸² Yet, this expert knowledge was old wine in new wineskins, as it largely relied (tactically and operationally) on traditional techniques that had been used in the Philippines and Vietnam. As Nagl admitted:

[...] the crying shame about counterinsurgency is that everything was already on the shelves. There was no new knowledge that needed to be derived particularly, we just had to apply it. We needed some people who'd read Galula.

(Interview with Nagl 2013)

¹⁸¹ The new 2014 edition of *FM 3-24* explicitly states that “Counterinsurgency is not a substitute for strategy” (U.S. Army 2014a, 1-2). Yet, the original 2006 version does not provide such clarification.

¹⁸² As Hew Strachan has pointed out, since the beginning of the Iraq War, the U.S. government has continually confused strategy and policy: “The word ‘strategy’ has acquired a universality which has robbed it of meaning, and left it only with banalities” (Strachan 2005, 34).

It was, yet again, simply a different style of warfare that was still essentially about power politics and the implementation of U.S. interests rather than really about focusing on the well-being and 'protection' of the Iraqi population, as claimed. Thus, similar to Vietnam, COIN knowledge production in Iraq fulfilled a largely 'symbolic' function of knowledge as an answer to domestic dissatisfaction about the conduct of the war. Yet here, the impetus came bottom-up from within the military and not top-down from the administration.

Experts had been used by the Bush administration since the early planning stages of the war. Because the approach to gathering the intelligence and knowledge in the lead-up to the Iraq War was characterised by the ex ante decision to invade, the knowledge production process was predefined. Thus, the knowledge and the experts' voices served a symbolic function to underline the political decision to embark on the war against Iraq. When soon after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 the security situation deteriorated, there was little reaction by either the Pentagon or White House leadership to develop expert knowledge to counter this. This was because on the one hand, there was not yet enough external pressure on their legitimacy to change the strategy, and on the other hand, because turning towards a counterinsurgency posture would have signalled a turn to a failed strategy from the past. Hence, the adoption of counterinsurgency practices in Iraq until 2007 was predominantly a bottom-up affair. Whether such tactics and techniques were adopted or not, relied on the individual commanders in the field and the circumstances of their area of command. Although there were some initiatives, both by Gen. Casey and the U.S. administration to re-orient the campaign based on some principles of COIN throughout 2005, this was often half-hearted and not followed through.

As I have shown in detail above, the development of specific COIN knowledge began to form within the military with the publication of the interim field manual in October 2004 and culminated in the publication of FM 3-24 in December 2006 and with Petraeus' appointment as CG MNF-I in early 2007. What is interesting about this is that in contrast to Vietnam this process was almost entirely a bottom-up approach, initiated by 'mavericks' within the military.¹⁸³ Through a series of academic conferences, which were crucial in gathering up and creating a community of experts, the development and diffusion of a specific set of knowledge about counterinsurgency took place. Although these experts were proposing alternative ideas about how to wage the conflict in Iraq, which has earned them the term 'maverick' in many comments and analyses, the focus of their work always remained the assertion of U.S. interests in Iraq, i.e. securing victory and defeating the 'insurgents' as they were threatening the legitimacy of the U.S. government and military. The ideas of these experts were then implemented in the Surge.

As explained in this chapter, the way in which this was done confirms the assumption that it was largely substantiating rather than instrumental knowledge. On the one hand many of the measures merely reflect an updated version of traditional counterinsurgency techniques, e.g. the separation of the population, enhanced intelligence, registration and census of the population. On the other hand, the U.S. military withdrew the Surge troops within a year and all troops by the end of 2011 without further maintaining any bases in the country. This happened despite previous claims by the COIN experts that it would take years

¹⁸³ Although, as Buciak (2012) shows by analyzing contributions on COIN in military journals, this "top-down" approach within the military rested almost entirely with senior officers, who were able to speak out without significant fear for their career progression.

or even decades of U.S. presence to stabilise the country. This, once again, indicates that the government and the military were not really interested in the long-term “protection” of the Iraqi population. Instead, expert knowledge was seemingly used to support the underlying politico-strategic narrative which postulated the utility of COIN methods and tactics for the U.S. interventionist campaign in Iraq to the American public. Moreover, by pretending that this COIN campaign, conceived to a large extent by the COINdinistas, had sufficiently stabilised and pacified the country, the Obama administration was able to initiate a face-saving withdrawal from the country. In sum, the knowledge was only there symbolically. This is even acknowledged by some of the experts themselves. When asked about the ‘loss’ of counterinsurgency knowledge after the Iraq War, Thomas Marks of the National Defense University (NDU) stated:

Yes, because it [the knowledge] never existed this time. *It is all policy, selecting research to back it up.* There wasn't the depth of research that there was back then [in Vietnam]. Neither was there the breadth of experience. It just wasn't there.

(Interview with Marks 2013, emphasis mine)

Officially, the withdrawal was the result of failed talks about immunity for U.S. troops (MacAskill 2011), but it played into President Obama's hands, who during his 2008 Presidential Campaign had considered Iraq the “bad war” and Afghanistan the “good war”, implying that the U.S. should withdraw from it as soon as possible. After the U.S. had withdrawn, the previously “unquestioned orthodoxy” of COIN faltered. Attempts by the COINdinistas to use CNAS as a think tank to instil U.S. foreign and security policy long-term with the ideas of COIN failed, because the U.S. administration did not need the symbolic knowledge anymore to back up its strategic narrative of the necessity of COIN as an operational tool for achieving stabilisation in military interventions.

Today, in 2016, Iraq is certainly not the safe state that Petraeus and others envisioned. One could argue that this is at least related to the dishonest symbolic application of expert knowledge. The insurgency resurged in the aftermath of the U.S. troop withdrawal and there is hardly a week that goes by where there are new reports about car bombs, IEDs or suicide attacks. Moreover, the civil war in Syria has spilled over into Iraq. Thus, looking retrospectively at the Surge, it can be said that it was tactically successful, but strategically a failure. In other words, the campaign brought about some short-term military gains and a temporary reduction in violence. However, it did not fulfil its larger purpose of enabling the Iraqi politicians to make progress and develop their country towards a stable democracy – which both the COINdinitas and Washington decision-makers frequently claimed it would. Hence, Steven Simon's description of the surge (2008, 65) is apt: "The surge may have brought transitory successes [...] but it has done so by stoking the three forces that have traditionally threatened the stability of Middle Eastern states: tribalism, warlordism, and sectarianism."

Overall, military knowledge production in Iraq was characterised by an increased intake of, real or alleged, experts who played a key role in framing and implementing the problem-set, solution, and ex-post-facto justification of success in the American COIN campaign in Iraq. In this sense, the U.S. government and the military utilised experts' knowledge to frame a strategic narrative of COIN as a 'strategy' which aimed at promoting a story of a pacified Iraq, from which the U.S. could withdraw quickly. By promoting this narrative of a campaign based on allegedly apolitical measures, which were derived from the methodologies of past (counter-)insurgencies, the experts were integral to the U.S. government's attempts to sell intervention to the sceptical audience at home and abroad as well as to decision-makers in the political sphere. Their knowledge had a legitimising

function, because it was first and foremost used to enhance the standing of the U.S. government and military amidst a situation of failure rather than to implement an effective long-standing pacification. Within the COIN campaign itself (i.e. during the surge), expert knowledge was used in a substantiating manner to support the political legitimacy of the COIN campaign itself.

9 Iraq (2003-2011) – Civil knowledge

9.1 Introduction

Whilst experts who supported the politico-strategic narrative of military COIN were used intensively by the U.S. administration in the knowledge production process, the picture of civil knowledge production was different in this regard. I argue here that although there were indeed some attempts to initiate a civilian knowledge creation process – both top-down by U.S. government agencies such as the State Department and bottom-up by the COINdinistas – this knowledge was hardly acknowledged by the U.S. administration and decision-makers in Iraq. This highlights two things in particular. On the one hand, in contrast to the Philippines and Vietnam, the focus of knowledge utilisation had shifted significantly from the civilian to the military policy spheres. On the other, it underlines the assumption that the knowledge production in Iraq was geared towards presenting a narrative of military pacification without instrumental interest in long-term civilian reconstruction.

The neglect of the civilian knowledge production and its implementation signals how COIN in Iraq had transformed from a civilian tool – used in the Philippines and Vietnam to show U.S. benevolence or to enforce ideologies of development or modernisation – to a strategic narrative or even an ‘ideology’ in itself of a better form of warfighting. This ideology was to reassure the U.S. domestic population about the utility and necessity of military intervention abroad. In contrast to the previous case studies, there was not even a genuine attempt to adopt successful U.S. domestic approaches. Instead, the U.S. civilian approach consisted largely of the profligate spending of millions of US-Dollars which led to many disconnected and often not sensible individual projects.

9.2 Disregarding civil knowledge in the lead-up to the war

One would assume that civilian agencies, in particular the State Department, but also other governmental organisations like U.S. Aid, were the first point of contact for the U.S. government to prepare for the post-invasion planning in Iraq. This is because issues of reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, and democracy-building are at the core of the *raison d'être* of these organisations. Nevertheless, as I have shown in Chapter 8.2, planning for the Iraq invasion as well as its aftermath was highly militarised and centrally organised by Rumsfeld and the Pentagon. Based on these previous findings, I now look at how the civilian agencies and their experts engaged in creating and utilising knowledge.

By focusing on the specific case of the “Future of Iraq Project” within the State Department, I show that their experts warned of many of the problems that would eventually arise in Iraq. Thus, their knowledge could have been used instrumentally to conduct effective pacification and reconstruction in Iraq. Yet, the State Department was consciously cut off from the post-war planning process. This was not only because many officials in these agencies opposed the Bush administration’s plan for invasion. As I would argue, the Bush administration simply had no desire to take in their advice to build up sufficient reconstruction and real population protection measures, as it would have undermined the U.S. government’s narrative that the Iraqis were only waiting to be modernised and that this process would be a self-fulfilling prophecy once Saddam Hussein had been removed from power.

The “Future of Iraq” project began in late October 2001 – when the U.S. military had just begun the invasion of Afghanistan – as a means to identify the challenges in Iraq after a removal of Saddam Hussein from power and prepare

for the 'transition' process to a new Iraqi government. On 4 February 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell officially approved the project and the topics that it would work on. At the beginning, the State Department wanted the sponsorship of a neutral, non-governmental organisation, the Middle East Institute (MEI). However, senior U.S. officials opposed this cooperation and, thus, by late April 2002 the State Department decided to do it on its own.¹⁸⁴ By June, Congress approved \$5 million in funding for it (Bensahel et al. 2008, 31). The project was coordinated by Thomas Warrick, a foreign service officer from the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Although he was considered to be in the anti-war camp, he explained the importance of preparing for post-invasion by saying, "I'm nervous that they're actually going to do it—and the day after they'll turn to us and ask, 'Now what?'" (Quoted in Fallows 2004).

The basic idea of the Future of Iraq project was to harness, and perhaps even harmonize, the expertise of exile groups and other experts. It incorporated over 200 academics, engineers, lawyers, physicians, and other experts into 17 working groups where they would strategize on issues such as infrastructure, public health, energy and oil, a fair justice system, democracy and civil society building etc. (National Security Archive 2006). Among the exile experts was also Kanan Makiya, who pushed heavily for U.S. intervention, as highlighted in Chapter 8.2. The first working group met in July 2002 and until early April 2003 there were 33 meetings in total, mostly in Washington. These meetings usually lasted one to two days, including some informal discussion rounds.

¹⁸⁴ MEI sponsorship was opposed by the U.S. government for two reasons. First, its president had publicly criticised the administration's take on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Second, and more importantly, some prominent Iraqi exiles reportedly opposed the project, since they were not invited to participate in it and they feared that it would diminish their influence. Chalabi apparently asked the U.S. government to prevent MEI's involvement, thus, hoping that it would not move forward without funding (Bensahel et al. 2008, 31; Phillips 2005, 37). This shows the influence certain Iraqi 'experts' had on the policy process, as discussed in Chapter 8.2.

Whilst the State Department knew that the quality of the working groups would not be sufficient in all cases, it was important for the U.S. officials to start an early dialogue and brainstorming process. The intent was to be as inclusive as possible and, thus, State solicited as many nominations for Iraqi exiles as possible, and reached out to people who were not active in political opposition groups. The final participants were selected by State to ensure the representation of a wide range of views. Their selection was subject to a vetting process run by several U.S. government agencies. Whilst each meeting was chaired by a U.S. official, the majority of discussion was done by the Iraqis. The observers from various U.S. government bodies sat in the back, symbolising their merely supportive role in the debates (Bensahel et al. 2008, 32).

As anticipated, the project did not overcome all the tensions of the exiles from various backgrounds. The quality of recommendations from the meetings varied, too. Three of the working groups never even met, including the group on preserving Iraq's cultural heritage – auguring ill for potential, post-invasion looting. Whilst most of the groups submitted reports of several hundred pages, the report of the "Education" group was only six pages long (National Security Archive 2006). Some recommendations clearly showed the experts' individual views. When musing over why the Iraqis seemingly had a wrong understanding of U.S. society, the "Democratic Principles" group gave *Baywatch* and *Leave It to Beaver* as the reason. They recommended to make a new film, "Colonial America: Life in a Theocracy", as "[t]he Puritan experiments provide amazing parallels with current Muslim fundamentalism. The ultimate failures of these U.S. experiments can also be vividly illustrated – witch trials, intolerance, etc." (Quoted in Fallows 2004; see also National Security Archive 2006).

Notwithstanding such rather quirky recommendations offered by some, what the project created was quite impressive. The reports developed by the individual working groups amounted to overall 2,500 pages in 13 volumes, plus a summary and overview. Even more important than the specific recommendations made by the project was the holding of the meetings. As David L. Phillips of the Council on Foreign Relations, who worked on the “Democratic Principles” group, later noted: “It involved Iraqis coming together, in many cases for the first time, to discuss and try to forge a common vision of Iraq’s future” (Quoted in Rieff 2003).

In retrospect, many of the project’s judgements ominously forecasted the issues that would become sober reality post-invasion. A recurring theme was the urgency of restoring electricity and water supplies. The first recommendation from the ‘Water, Agriculture and Environment’ group stated: “Fundamental importance of clean water supplies for Iraqis immediately after transition. Key to coalition/community relations” (National Security Archive 2006). The ‘Economy and Infrastructure’ group noted the “importance of getting electrical grid up and running immediately – key to water systems, jobs. Could go a long way to determining Iraqis’ attitudes toward Coalition forces” (National Security Archive 2006). Another issue was the demobilisation of the Iraqi Army. Whilst it was obvious that Saddam’s henchmen had to be removed, the experts knew that a complete demobilisation could have serious implications. The idea was to oust the leaders without alienating the soldiers – or leaving them without pay. As the ‘Democratic Principles’ group wrote in their final report: “The decommissioning of hundreds of thousands of trained military personnel that [a rapid purge] implies could create social problems” (National Security Archive 2006).

Most importantly, however, the project emphasised the disorder that was to be expected after the invasion and how difficult the path to democracy would. Chalabi and the INC told the Pentagon and the White House that once liberated from Saddam, Iraq would move quickly and independently towards a democracy, paid for by its own oil riches, and the neocons firmly believed that. Yet, the project warned that "[t]he removal of Saddam's regime will provide a power vacuum and create popular anxieties about the viability of all Iraqi institutions" and that "the period immediately after regime change might offer these criminals the opportunity to engage in acts of killing, plunder and looting" (National Security Archive 2006). Even Makiya, who was one of the influential exiles pushing for an invasion of Iraq, recognised the upcoming problems. The Americans, Makiya stated needed to understand "the extent of the Iraqi totalitarian state, its absolute power and control exercised from Baghdad, not to mention the terror used to enforce compliance, cannot be overestimated in their impact on the Iraqi psyche and the attendant feeling of fear, weakness, and shame." He continued, "[t]hese conditions and circumstances do not provide a strong foundation on which to build new institutions and a modern nation state" (Quoted in Fallows 2004).

It would be pure speculation to assume that the Future of Iraq Project alone would have prevented the post-invasion situation from deteriorating as it did, if its recommendations had been followed. After all, the project was designed not as a concrete plan but as a process,¹⁸⁵ which would help collect Iraqi expertise on the major reconstruction challenges and provide ideas on how to address them. Yet, the project's insights and suggestions could certainly have been used as an

¹⁸⁵ As the collection of reports amounted to 13 volumes, it was clearly not something that neither Jay Garner, Head of the Office for Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), which would later become the CPA, nor Paul Bremer, would have read in detail.

instrumental knowledge base for the post-invasion. In terms of our theoretical framework, the Future of Iraq project ticks all our indicators for such instrumental knowledge. The project was directly commissioned by the leadership of the State Department and senior U.S. officials from different civilian agencies were in extensive exchange with the exiled experts in the working groups. Given the breadth and depth of the project, both in terms of the topics covered and the experts consulted, there was arguably a long-term interest in utilising the expert knowledge in the post-invasion pacification phase.

Moreover, the expertise was closely coupled with the organisational targets of the State Department and the other agencies involved, namely to provide humanitarian and civilian solutions for the foreseeable problems the invasion of Iraq would create. Last, there was no public promotion of the knowledge production process and the utilisation of experts. This was rather obvious, as the Future of Iraq group conducted most of its meetings throughout 2002, when the war planning was still secretive and the public did not know if and when an invasion of Iraq would take place. Yet, compared to how 'experts' were publicly received by the Bush administration before the beginning of the war, the low-key approach of the working group indicates that it was more about finding instrumental solutions for Iraq, rather than to underpin the neoconservative narrative of freeing and modernising Iraq with symbolic knowledge.¹⁸⁶

Despite its mostly well-founded assessments and the fact that it forecasted and warned of many of the problems that would eventually occur in Iraq (e.g. the

¹⁸⁶ This contrast between the secrecy of the Future of Iraq project and the way that the Bush administration presented the opinion of 'experts' such as Chalabi or Makiya highlights once more the necessity of public exposure for the symbolic knowledge to function and support the propaganda aims of the government.

demobilisation of the Iraqi military) the Future of Iraq project was never really considered by the Pentagon. None of the senior U.S. officials involved in the project were taken over by the OSP. Furthermore, the head of the project, Warrick, was essentially “blacklisted” and forbidden entry to the Pentagon, as “he did not support their vision” (see also Packer 2005, 124; Yaphe, Quoted in Rieff 2003). On the whole, the State Department also remained at the margins of the post-invasion planning process, which was firmly in the hands of the OSP. There are essentially two reasons for this. First, contrary to the Pentagon, the State Department never developed a singly agency position. There have been longstanding tensions between the different organisations and bureaus within State Department.¹⁸⁷ This meant that during the planning process, the participating officials reflected the views of their bureau rather than working towards a coherent State Department position. As Bensahel et al. (2008, 30) argue, “[t]hese views emphasized different points at best, and directly contradicted each other at worst.” This effectively reduced State’s ability to influence policy formation on post-invasion planning for Iraq.

A second, more essential, reason for State’s inability to influence the post-invasion planning process with the Future of Iraq project knowledge was that senior U.S. politicians believed that State opposed a war with Iraq. Whilst many State Department officials, firmly believed in the UN sanctions regime,¹⁸⁸ decision-makers – including Cheney and Rumsfeld – reportedly believed that a diplomatic solution and UN sanctions would be ineffective (Woodward 2004, 154 ff.). Yet, there is another side to this aversion of the State Department knowledge.

¹⁸⁷ These tensions between different bureaus have indeed been apparent for several decades (Warwick et al. 1975, 90).

¹⁸⁸ However, former Secretary of State Powell has repeatedly stated that he supported Bush’s decision to go to war with Iraq (e.g. CNN 2009; Jaffe 2015).

As I would contend, it was not just the fact that neocons believed that State opposed the Iraq War. Rather, the Bush administration simply had no desire to take in State's instrumental knowledge about reconstruction efforts given that it would have undermined their narrative of a war that could be won quickly, cheaply and cleanly. They portrayed the invasion and the removal of Saddam Hussein as something the Iraqis had long awaited. In their minds, reconstruction was a similarly easy, sure-fire success (as Makiya had proclaimed, "people will greet the [US] troops with sweets and flowers"). For this vision, profound and instrumental expert knowledge was more of a hindrance than a help, as it would have signalled to the decision-makers in the political environment, as well as the general public, that the U.S. administration was preparing for a long, costly and perhaps violent reconstruction effort.

This aspect and the Pentagon's aversion to State Department ideas as well as State's own intra-agency problems were central factors of why the Future of Iraq project was dead in the water, even though it was probably the most comprehensive effort to analyse and prepare for the challenges of post-Saddam Iraq. The project remained stove-piped within the State Department, and those officials who did not directly work on it knew little about it. As a matter of fact, the State Department did not reveal the project to the interagency community until October 2002, exactly because there were concerns that it would be seen as another effort to undermine support for the Iraq war by identifying post-invasion challenges (Bensahel et al. 2008, 31). Internal bureaucratic hurdles and external aversion to State's expert knowledge production on reconstruction in Iraq marginalised its influence over the post-war planning process. This already put civil-military relations on a bad footing before the war had even begun.

9.3 The failure to implement civilian COIN at the policy level

Unlike the Philippines and Vietnam, where civic action had been an essential part of the campaigns, COIN in Iraq was predominantly a military affair that rested on the tenets of *FM 3-24* and its supposed implementation by the COINdinistas.¹⁸⁹

The fact that the campaign in Iraq stood on such a military footing is, yet, another indicator within this thesis' theoretical framework that COIN never had the instrumental intent to reconstruct Iraq and install a stable democratic regime. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to take a look at civil knowledge production during the Surge, to highlight this disparity between military and civil knowledge requirements in this conflict. The COIN experts had stated in the field manual that "all instruments of national power" (U.S. Army and U.S Marine Corps 2007, 53) must be used to defeat them. However, civilian experts were not only disregarded in the lead-up to the war, but also in the first few years after the invasion.

In most cases, the interactions between the military and civilian spheres were sparse. There were a few specialists from State and USAID that had been attached to Army units in advisory roles. Since 2003, the responsibilities for each area had been divided, first between the CPA and Combined Joint Task Force 7, then between the embassy and MNF-I. Cooperation was further hampered by rivalries between the different characters involved on both sides (Mansoor 2013b, 103). Nevertheless, there were a few civilian experts who gained prominence in advising US and Iraqi actors, both civilian and military. Just like the British Empire, which over decades of domination over the Arabian Peninsula had produced several distinguished experts on colonial administration in this region – such as Richard Francis Burton, Gertrude Bell, T.E. Lawrence and others – the US

¹⁸⁹ Admittedly, *FM 3-24* included clear lines of operation that were not purely military. However, as this analysis shows, in contrast to the other cases, the civilian part was much less important.

campaign in Iraq inspired its own caste of experts. In particular, these were temporary recruits who enabled the U.S. government to gain a better understanding of the human aspects of the war (Boot 2015).

This group included Ali Khedery, a young Arab-American who from 2003 to 2009 served as special assistant and adviser to four American ambassadors in Iraq. During this period, Khedery was involved in the formation of several Iraqi governments, the drafting of the Iraqi Constitution as well as the trilateral US-Iran-Iraq summits in Baghdad (Robinson 2008, 367). Another was Matt Sherman, who was in Iraq from 2003 to 2007. In the first three years, he assisted the CPA and the U.S. embassy as well as being personal advisor to several Iraqi Prime Ministers. During the Surge, Sherman worked as the Political Advisor (POLAD) to the First Cavalry Division, the military unit in charge of operations in Baghdad during the planning and implementation of the COIN campaign (PBS 2006).

Perhaps the most notable civilian advisor in Iraq was Emma Sky, called by some “the most influential Brit in Iraq” (Sky 2015c). An Oxford-educated, former human rights activist, Sky volunteered to work in Iraq for three months after the invasion. In the end, Sky remained in Iraq for nearly seven years, charting a remarkable rise from being the de facto civilian governor of the Kurdish province of Kirkuk to becoming top political adviser to Col. William Mayville, U.S. commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade as well as aiding Paul Bremer and the CPA in trying to reconstruct Iraq.¹⁹⁰ Sky’s most prominent role came from 2007 to 2010 as POLAD to Gen. Ray Odierno in his position as Commander of US forces in Iraq, a position that had usually been given to US State Department employees (Dickey 2015).

¹⁹⁰ Sky’s rapid advancement in Iraq resembles that of another young Brit: Rory Stewart, now an MP. Stewart was, in fact, a senior coalition official in 2003, at the age of thirty (Stewart 2006).

Sky came to Iraq out of a sentiment to “apologize to the Iraqi people for the war” (Sky 2015e) and help them rebuild the country. She was one of the few women operating in the world of military males. Yet, dubbed a “modern Gertrude Bell” by Iraqi interlocutors (Sky 2015d; 2015f), she quickly began to function like the Arabists of the British Empire: “part diplomat, part diviner of local moods and frequent mediator in bitter disputes” (Dickey 2015). In this sense, Sky became a broker in the political struggle for power in Iraq. In her own words, she

[...] helped change [the US] mindset, getting them to stop and think a bit more: early on there were all these different groups competing for power and the U.S. military had them pegged as good guys or bad guys. [...]. I tried to get them thinking about how we could mediate between these groups and empower them to eventually start running things such as education, health and sewage themselves

(Sky 2015a).

As a civilian and a Brit, Sky could and did challenge US preconceptions of Iraq and the local population in trying to resolve the civil and ethnic strife into which the country had descended. Perhaps Sky’s most important contribution as an expert was that she she did not buy into the narrative of COIN as an apolitical enterprise. Instead, she saw the situation in Iraq as an inherently political struggle for power, in which the Americans as outsiders had a chance to set the rules and arbitrate between the different groups and rely on the use of politics rather than reverting often to violence (Sky 2015e). In this sense, Sky had a more nuanced approach to tackling the underlying problems in Iraq and her knowledge could have probably been used instrumentally. However, her influence and that of other political advisors was often limited to their immediate area of operations.

Instead of taking up Sky's approach of addressing underlying political grievances, the COINdinistas tried to initiate a top-down approach of creating a set of apolitical civilian COIN techniques and measures, similar to what had happened in the military sphere. This attempt focused on increasing the number of local stakeholders in the U.S.' pacification efforts, as well as on bringing about a renewed and improved civil-military relationship between the US military and the different civilian US government agencies operating in Iraq. Petraeus and his experts knew that neither they themselves nor many other military officers had good knowledge of civil affairs such as judicial systems, field crops, businesses, or infrastructure projects. Thus, it was important to get input from civilian agencies, such as the Departments of State, Agriculture, Commerce, and Transportation on these issues.

This was by no means an easy task, as these agencies did not seek active cooperation with the military given the way they had been treated by the neocons in the lead up to war. Whilst many of them had run programmes (in various countries) that were also part of a much more comprehensive COIN strategy – e.g. counter-narcotics operations by the Justice Department, food programmes by USAID and the Agriculture Department, and export and construction schemes by the Departments for Commerce and Transportation – there had been little incentives to reach out to the military to join the different efforts together in Iraq before the Surge. In fact, the clear institutional antipathy between the military and civilian agencies that had characterised the lead-up to the war, continued as leading officials at the civilian agencies believed that any cooperation with the military would undermine the effectiveness of their work (Cerami and Boggs 2007; Gompert et al. 2009; Kaplan 2013, 288).

Consequently, Petraeus did what he had done with the military experts before: he tried to get them on board to provide substantiating knowledge for his grand COIN effort. Soon after the Ft. Leavenworth conference in early 2006, Petraeus had contacted John Hillen, Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs (and Nagl's classmate at Oxford), asking him to "buy in" into the COIN policy. The response was a conference, termed the 'Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative', which took place in Washington, DC in late September 2006 and was sort of the civilian counterpart to what had happened at Ft. Leavenworth. *FM 3-24* was to be published soon and Hillen believed that something similar could be developed for the other government agencies to enable a well-tuned, integrated civil-military approach. The conference was attended by more than one hundred officials from different U.S. departments. Many of the speakers were the usual suspects, such as Nagl, Crane or Kilcullen (Kaplan 2013, 287).

The conference was ambitious. Alluding to Kilcullen's concept of "global counterinsurgency" (2005), the briefing paper for the conference participants stated that the U.S. government should "reframe the GWOT [Global War on Terror] as global COIN" (Hodge 2011, XXX). Swapping acronyms not only heralded a change in the intellectual framework and justification that had guided the war so far, but also signalled that the idea of COIN could be considered as a long-term rationale for U.S. interventions. Such a view of COIN resembled what we have seen in the Philippines, where civilian COIN knowledge production was supposed to provide the instrumental tools and techniques for a long-term occupation of the archipelago. Obviously, in Iraq the U.S. was not interested in an actual occupation of the country. Yet, similar to Vietnam, the COINdinistas believed that civilian COIN knowledge could aid friendly regimes in combatting

local – yet globally connected – insurgencies around the world. Civilian agencies were seen as an essential part of this new strategy. In this sense, the COIN apologists aimed at nothing less than a realignment of U.S. foreign policy and civil-military relations.

This was a long-drawn effort that would require the reorganisation of different cabinet offices to focus them on advising, rebuilding, and even administering war-torn states, all that in close collaboration with the military. One of the co-hosts of the conference, Jeb Nadaner, Deputy Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations, named a “civilian reserve” of experts as one the new “capabilities” the government would need. Analogous to the military reserve, these engineers, social scientists and other experts would be on stand-by to be deployed to crisis areas at short notice. In the same vein, they would take part in military exercises to prepare and train them for their in-country roles. As Hodge (2011, XXX) put it, this was essentially “a call to reform the U.S. diplomatic and foreign aid establishment and place it on a war footing [...] a vision of a reinvented federal government, a sort of Colonial Office for the twenty-first century.”

In theory, this holistic approach would extend COIN beyond the military realm towards a comprehensive vision of counterinsurgency as a state-building strategy, which had existed under Kennedy in Vietnam. Yet, the aims of the conference never fully materialised. The COIN experts were called to Iraq to implement their ideas of counterinsurgency in the Surge. Some mid-level officials from a few different agencies continued to write drafts, but there was constant disagreement over clauses and definitions. In the end, nothing happened and by late 2007, there were only three agencies left on board: Defense, State, and USAID, as well as some support from the White House and CIA. Kilcullen took

over the writing job and turned it from a how-to guide for civilian experts into a guide for senior policy-makers (Kaplan 2013, 288).

The *U.S Government Counterinsurgency Guide* (U.S. Department of State 2009) was eventually published in January 2009. Yet it was too little, too late. Barack Obama, was about to be sworn in soon afterwards and he and his team did not intend to keep the old administration's idea of a comprehensive COIN policy, involving military and civilian assets that could be used in different insurgency conflicts around the world. Also, one can assume that after the failure of civilian counterinsurgency in Vietnam – which had been based largely on the flawed assumptions of modernisation theory – civilian agencies and experts were not keen to try this venture again. This view was corroborated by the condescending behaviour of the military towards civilian agencies and their experts. In large parts of the civilian academic community there was a strong aversion against working with the military, especially in the field of anthropology (see e.g. Gonzalez 2007; Price 2011; Sluka 2010), which also explains the little knowledge production in this area.

Civilian government agencies were not willing to open up their bureaucracies and, thus, collaborate. The creation of a comprehensive civilian COIN strategy was a failure. This was not least because the U.S. government was not interested in instrumental knowledge, which combined with the sensible allocation of considerable amounts of money and personnel could have provided a real option for the long-term pacification of Iraq. Looking at the evidence, it becomes clear that there were indeed attempts at civilian COIN on different levels, although they were not as extensive as within the military. Yet, these measures did not gain enough momentum.

What is important to note is that, similar to military COIN, this was first and foremost about the enforcement of U.S. interests, making the knowledge production process inherently symbolic. On the one hand, the shared meetings between both military and civilian U.S. and Iraqi officials were mainly held to prevent the Iraqis from playing the two American sides against each other (Mansoor 2013b, 103). On the other hand, Petraeus and Crocker employed a “good cop, bad cop” scheme in their meetings with Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki. After Crocker had presented his agenda, in a well-spoken manner, he said to Maliki “if you don’t agree to do this, you’re going to have to deal with him,” pointing to Petraeus who had a sharper, even fiery temperament (Robinson 2008, 150). The Crocker-Petraeus relationship was a key element of civilian COIN in Iraq. Not only did they host congressional delegations, journalists, and Iraqi leaders in formal and informal meetings, but they also worked closely together, which made their cooperation much more intense and collaborative.

A few months into their tenure, violence was still rife and there were no signs of compromise amongst the Iraqi decision-makers. In May, the U.S. Congress tightened the screws, passing a funding bill that required a report by Crocker and Petraeus in September that would have to demonstrate the improvements achieved in eighteen benchmarks in order to assess the success or failure of the Surge. Whilst Petraeus and the military would work on security and bottom-up reconciliation, Crocker focused on economic and governance improvements and top-down political reconciliation, bringing the key Iraqi stakeholders to the table. Six of the eighteen benchmarks set by Congress were about political reconciliation and had already been agreed to by the Iraqis in 2006. These were (1) revision of the de-Baathification law and inclusion of former regime members

in government and politics, (2) new legislation about the distribution of Iraq's oil resources, (3) statutory powers for the provincial governments, (4) provincial elections, (5) constitutional revisions in favour of the Sunni minority, and (6) an amnesty and demobilization of militias (Robinson 2008, 170).

To achieve his task, Crocker was given quite a bit of leeway by the State Department and he used it to assemble a group of experts around him. The group included three ambassadors and three deputy chiefs of mission: Pat Butenis, U.S. ambassador to Bangladesh and Marcie and Charles Ries, ambassadors to Albania and Greece took up different tasks, including economic legislation and political-military affairs. For example, Ries was responsible for economic activities, which meant prodding Iraq's government to spend its \$33 billion budget particularly in banking, finance, transportation, and agriculture. Also, electricity and water posed infrastructure challenges to the experts, especially in connection to the extraction of Iraq's oil riches, which had been a source of contention amongst the different ethnic groups in Iraq for years. What was noticeable is that these efforts took place on a senior, interagency level, with the civilian experts attending military briefings and vice versa. Indeed, civil-military cooperation was now much more "strategic" than it had been before the beginning of the Surge (Robinson 2008, 173).

Yet, Crocker's top-down approach at political reconciliation was hampered by larger U.S. political considerations that basically dismissed the expert's work in Iraq, making the expert utilisation not even merely a substantiating, but a legitimising process. On the one hand, despite being pressed by Crocker and some White House aides, President Bush did not give Maliki any ultimatums about achieving the benchmarks. On the other, by holding biweekly direct video

teleconferences with the Iraqi Prime Minister, Bush devalued the work of his subordinates, including Crocker, but still did not get anywhere. Moreover, the White House could not easily cancel these video casts, because that would have been interpreted by the Iraqis as a break in relations. Thus, as Robinson (2008, 174) writes, the hope that “giving a bear hug to Maliki would empower and embolden him to take the steps the U.S. wanted”, was not fulfilled. Crocker’s and Petraeus’ initial report to Congress, the “Initial Benchmark Assessment Report on Iraq” (White House 2007), which was published on 12 July 2007, was scathing. It stated that progress overall was “unsatisfactory”, especially with regards to the issues of political reconciliation. In sum, the top-down approach by Crocker had not been very successful. In contrast to the military efforts, political reconciliation was not pursued as fervently by the U.S. administration and the willingness to implement knowledge from “technical” experts was much less marked as had been within the military realm.

9.4 Civilian counterinsurgency measures in Iraq

9.4.1 Human Terrain System

A central part of the renewed effort within the “human environment” of counterinsurgency in Iraq was the so-called ‘Human Terrain System’ (HTS), which had been developed independently of the Surge, but was implemented alongside it. First envisioned by the anthropologists Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson (2005) the programme sought to address “identified gaps in [military] commanders’ and staffs’ understanding of the local population and culture, and its impact on operational decisions” (Quoted in Forte 2011, 150) by employing social scientists, e.g. anthropologists, sociologists, and linguists.

Under the auspices of TRADOC, the HTS programme was launched in February 2007 with five Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) and a budget of \$20 million as a “proof-of-concept” programme, reaching its height in 2008 with 28 teams deployed to Iraq and an annual budget of \$150 million (McFate and Fondacaro 2011; U.S. Army 2014b).

As with most aspects of counterinsurgency, HTS was not without precedent. Late in the Vietnam War, the Johnson administration had initiated CORDS as its central pacification programme. Led by Robert W. Komer (known for his abrasive personality as “Blowtorch Bob”), who had been previously Johnson’s National Security Advisor, this hybrid civil-military organization, was intended to unify the U.S. counterinsurgency effort in South Vietnam and win over the “hearts and minds” of the population.¹⁹¹ A civilian CORDS commander was adjunct to each of the four U.S. Corps in the country. Moreover, each of the 44 South Vietnamese provinces had a CORDS advisory unit, consisting of both soldiers and civilians (Andrade and Willbanks 2006, 15). In particular, CORDS focused on the provision of security, centralized planning, and operations against the Viet Cong. Notable programmes were the expansion of the Vietnamese national police from 60,000 to 80,000 personnel, rural development and defector programmes as well as reducing the number of refugees from the war (Stewart 2006, 257). Yet, one of the most controversial initiatives of CORDS was the so-called ‘Phoenix Program’, aimed at destroying the Viet Cong’s political and support infrastructure by identifying, capturing, or (very often) executing Viet Cong members. As Andrade

¹⁹¹ Komer was a “second-echelon” official, but had considerable impact on the policy-making process. For example, he saw the police as the “preventive medicine” against subversive insurgency (Jones 2013). This was important, because government repression was considered an inevitable by-product of modernisation. In his words, “properly voiced dissent” (whatever that meant) was acceptable. But anything that threatened the modernisation process had to be silenced (NSC, Intelligence Inputs to “New Look” at Our LIMWAR posture, 14 February 1961, in Kennedy Box 325; Komer to Maechling, 3 May 1962, p. 5, in Kennedy Box 413).

and Willbanks (2006, 20) point out, “[b]etween 1968 and 1972 Phoenix neutralized 81,740 VC, of whom 26,369 were killed.”

Although the contemporary HTS programme did not have such a ‘death squad’ attachment, it was openly referred to by some of its proponents as “a CORDS for the 21st Century” (Kipp et al. 2006). The authors of this article contend that CORDS had been successful and effective, based on the “belief that the war would ultimately be won or lost not on the battlefield, but in the struggle for the loyalty of the people”. For them, the failure of CORDS was reasoned in missing public and political support and because it “was started too late and ended too soon”. CORDS provided “many important lessons” for the development of HTS as an “effective cultural intelligence program”, which could “support tactical and operational-level commanders today” (2006, 10 f.).

However, CORDS was not the only inspiration for HTS. As Roberto J. Gonzalez, a critic of HTS, argued, the concept can be traced back to a 1968 report by the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) about “the perceived threat of the Black Panthers and other militant groups”, making it a tool for population control (Gonzalez 2008, 22). Given its background in anthropology, it also highlighted the long-standing connections between that discipline and the military. McFate, HTS’ Senior Social Scientist from 2007 to 2010, even purported that anthropology was originally a “warfighting discipline”, which had served as “the handmaiden of colonialism” (2005, 24), retreated “into the Ivory Tower” after Vietnam, and now needed to resurge as a practical science for the “military application of cultural knowledge” (2005, 27, 38).

Hence, HTS was not a novel, *sui generis* development of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, but ostentatiously referred to population control initiatives from the Vietnam War and even the colonial era. It was not a neutral humanitarian project, but it was part and parcel of the U.S. attempt to control and destroy opposition to its objectives in Iraq. In essence, the knowledge creation process inherent in HTS aimed at a gentler form of U.S. domination in Iraq. Thus, in light of the thesis' research question, we can see that HTS certainly had an element of continuity in U.S. COIN warfare, derived from the experiences of Vietnam and earlier colonial adventures. Furthermore, the implications were pretty much the same as Chomsky had outlined during the Vietnam War:

When we strip away the terminology of the behavioural sciences, we see [...] the mentality of the colonial civil servant, persuaded of the benevolence of the mother country and the correctness of its vision of world order, and convinced that he understands the true interests of those backward peoples, whose welfare he is to administer.

(Chomsky 1969, 41).

Since its inception, HTS has received a considerable amount of criticism. Whilst it initially received positive coverage in U.S. mainstream media, anthropologists, journalists, and military officials have criticised it (see e.g. Connable 2009; Gonzalez 2007; 2008; Stanton 2009). On 31 October 2007, the Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) issued a statement in which it opposed HTS as an “unacceptable application of anthropological expertise”, that conflicted with the AAA's Code of Ethics (Goodman and Heller 2007). Concerning the relationship between anthropology and warfare, David Price noted that these two domains had indeed “merged” many times before. Yet, HTS clearly involved activities that betrayed “basic ethical standards for protecting the interests and well-being of studied populations” (2009).

Through the lens of our theoretical framework, it is yet another example of knowledge that was produced and utilised in a substantiating manner. The rationale was not the improvement of conditions for the local population – “securing” them as Petraeus et al. had argued – but the promotion of the strategic narrative of COIN as a less-lethal solution to the problem of insurgency which would ensure the pursuit of U.S. interests in Iraq. McFate has admitted that this was the aim. Relating to the criticism she personally and HTS received from fellow anthropologists, she said:

Well you know I don't really care so much about what the anthropologists think, they're irrelevant to the question. The question to me is: 'How does the U.S. Government provide operating forces with the tools, knowledge and capability they need to fight the war effectively, efficiently and with less lethal force?

(Interview with McFate 2013).

The fact that the U.S. administration was not really interested in utilising anthropological knowledge in an instrumental fashion to improve the situation of the Iraqis long-term prospects is evident in how the HTS programme ended. Like most of the other (civilian and military) counterinsurgency initiatives in Iraq, when U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq began to drawdown in 2010 and 2011, HTTs began to reduce as well. By June 2011 all Human Terrain Teams had departed Iraq (U.S. Army 2014b). This occurred even before the last combat troops had left.

9.4.2 Provincial Reconstruction Teams

Besides the HTS, which was predominantly aimed at giving the military a better cultural understanding of the Iraqi population (and allow a better control of it), there was another central aspect of civilian involvement in the Iraq War that had its roots in CORDS: “Provincial Reconstruction Teams” (PRTs). Having been

established in Afghanistan from 2003, these civil-military teams were established in Iraq on 1 October 2005 through State Department Cable 4045. They became the focal point of the State Department and DoD interagency coordination in Iraq (Brown 2008, 3) and were meant to improve local conditions by focusing on local governance, infrastructure, and economy (Perito 2007). By the summer of 2008, there were 28 US-led PRTs in Iraq, of which 13 were so-called embedded PRTs (ePRTs), which were directly attached to the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) of the Surge troops (Christoff 2008, 2). In the words of one of Petraeus' COIN experts, these ePRTs "gave brigade commanders a powerful tool for waging the softer side of counterinsurgency war" (Mansoor 2013b, 213).

Despite being hailed by military leaders as very effective – enabling "State Department experts access to the local communities for the first time and the freedom to move throughout the battlespace" (LTG Ray Odierno, quoted in Mansoor 2013b, 214) – the concept was overall deeply flawed, ineffective and costly (Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction 2009; Van Buren 2011). From 2003-2011, Congress had appropriated nearly \$62 billion to the Iraq Reconstruction effort (SIGIR 2011, 19), more than the combined, inflation-adjusted, reconstruction costs of Germany and Japan (Serafino et al. 2006). Yet, all this money did not result in any long-term infrastructure projects and even the interim claim that it had given Iraq's Security Forces substantial operational capabilities (SIGIR 2009, viii) is doubtful in light of the emergence of ISIS in recent years. This leads to the assumption, that, yet again, there was no willingness to really implement the knowledge in an instrumental fashion.

The reasons for the PRTs' eventual failure are manifold. Yet, they were already apparent from the beginning. When Petraeus took over the war in Iraq, sixty-two

U.S. government agencies were involved in the project overall, including eight major coordination bodies at the Embassy in Baghdad (Van Buren 2011, 9). On the ground, however, things were quite different. There was a serious lack of volunteers. This meant, on the one hand, that many PRTs were severely understaffed. For example, in the south of Baghdad an ePRT of only eight State Department civilians was embedded with a BCT, serving over a million Iraqis (Van Buren 2011, 9). On the other hand, the Department of State also struggled to find the right personnel, particularly amongst mid-level officers with regional expertise and language skills. This situation resulted in recruitment drives by the State Department at various colleges as well as in the hiring of people without proper vetting procedures in place (Naland 2011).¹⁹² Moreover, many State Department officials were more or less directed to serve a tour in a PRT through a carrot (special danger pay, holidays) and stick (threat of non-promotion) approach (Van Buren 2011, 11 f.). These recruiting problems had not existed during CORDS in Vietnam (McNerney 2005, 44), indicating that many potential civilian ‘experts’ did not have the zeal to get involved in the looming quagmire.

Although military and political leaders praised the co-operation between the military and civilian agencies (Fisher-Thompson 2008; Gilmore 2008), it was not really as efficient as portrayed, which lay in the inherently different *modi operandi* of these different kinds of organisation.¹⁹³ In essence, the military focused on

¹⁹² Sending students to crises regions was not a novel idea, as the young American teachers sent to the Philippines during the Insurrection or Kennedy’s efforts with the “Peace Corps” during the Cold War, show.

¹⁹³ This touches upon the different core operating principles of the military and civilian agencies. As Edward N. Luttwak (1982) has pointed out, efficiency has quite different meanings in both realms. For the military, efficiency means that an enemy is unable to secure high returns for low investments. This means, for example, that centralisation of logistics, which from a commercial point of view is very cost effective, implies severe vulnerability for the military. Because civilian organisations usually do not operate in such violent and dangerous environments as the military does, they can focus on more commercially efficient ways to spend their money.

more immediate projects (e.g. supplying bottled water to the population), whilst the State Department and other civilian agencies like USAID focused on more long-term projects (e.g. building or reconstructing a water plant to produce potable water). In a peaceful environment, it would have certainly been possible to do both. In a war zone, however, things were not so easy, especially when both military and civilians only stayed for tours of one year (Van Buren 2011, 59).

The military focus on short-term projects was also based on the fact that such projects held the allure of a victorious initiative and good public relations, which in turn would look good on the local commander's evaluation sheet for future promotions. Thus, short term "feel-good projects" (Van Buren 2011, 113) such as the provision of vittles' or medical treatment for the local population were the projects-of-choice for many in the military, because they provided something 'to sell' towards the superiors and the audience at home. As Van Buren (2011, 127) sarcastically remarked about this:

The images were amazing – young blond, blue-eyed female doctors holding tiny Iraqi babies, Army women talking to Muslim women about women things, village elders thanking Army doctors for whatever was being handed out. The war was practically won those afternoons.

However, the problem with such haphazard and essentially self-promoting programmes was obvious. They neither provided long-term solutions for the specific problems that affected the population nor gave any real incentives for the Iraqis to take matters into their own hands. The provincial reconstruction teams focused particularly on the creation of jobs and considered this a key metric of success, assuming that Iraqis in employment would be far less likely to participate in criminal or insurgent activities than those who were unemployed (Brinkley

2010). There were hundreds of other projects and business funding schemes. Yet, the results were meagre, showing hardly any significant progress (Glanz 2007). What we can see here is also a repetition of what had happened nearly half a century earlier in Vietnam. As Bernard Fall (1965, 35) had noted then: “Civic action is not the construction of privies or the distribution of antimalaria sprays. One can't fight an ideology; one can't fight a militant doctrine with better privies.”

Still, exactly this happened again in Iraq. The fact that the focus was so much on such short-term projects indicates that there was no U.S. interest in their long-term value, but only in showcasing a seemingly stable country, which the U.S. military could leave. This is also evident in the lack of thorough output analysis of what U.S. actions actually achieved. Whilst input – money spent, projects initiated, press/photo stories published – was certainly measured and communicated, output measurement did not take place, or was patchy. Without a measurable goal for a project beyond the ribbon cutting, reconstruction failed to “form the base of a pyramid that creates the possibility of a top”, that is, the essence of successful development work (Pritchett, Quoted in Freschi 2010).

This wasteful spending of money occurred, because the money was there and the political need in Washington – i.e. the expectations of the stakeholders in the political sphere as well as the public – dictated that it was to be spent on reconstruction projects. Yet, there was little interest in the long-term use of the civilian experts' knowledge. For the U.S. government to showcase that it had learned from the mistakes of the early post-invasion period and utilised expert knowledge to improve the conduct of its campaign, it mostly sufficed to produce nice photo opportunities, ribbon-cutting ceremonies and seemingly convincing metrics, which showed progress, but were inherently flawed because they merely

represented U.S. input efforts rather than actual outcomes/results. However, none of the decision-makers were really concerned with the long-term efficacy of these projects, making the knowledge produced in civilian COIN a legitimising enterprise. Moreover, the experts who were drafted in to develop the knowledge for the reconstruction effort and promote it at home did not seem bothered either.

Van Buren (2011, 197 f.) describes one excursion:

The best thing of all was that when these two fellows were together they did not talk about bands of brothers, [...], or Iraqi democracy, but instead, riding in an armoured vehicle through the badlands outside of Baghdad, they compared book deals and literary agents and gossiped about people they both knew who were getting big advances on memoirs. It became clearer to me why this war had played out so well, with people like this intellectually backstopping the policy makers.

Whilst this is only a snapshot of how the experts themselves considered their role and how they could make an impact on improving the livelihood of the Iraqi population, it highlights the way in which experts and the U.S. government and its subordinate agencies really viewed knowledge production for civilian counterinsurgency in Iraq: as a legitimising feature to enable a quick withdrawal.

9.5 Reflections on civilian knowledge production in Iraq

In this chapter, I have argued that although there were attempts to produce instrumental civilian knowledge in the Iraq War – both in the lead-up as well as during the Surge – these knowledge production processes were hardly acknowledged by the U.S. administration. Whilst real or alleged experts were used extensively to support the politico-strategic narrative of military COIN methods, they were largely disregarded in the civilian area or simply provided a

legitimising addendum. This adds to the general picture emerging throughout the thesis that the focus of expert knowledge production and utilisation in general has shifted since the campaigns in the Philippines and Vietnam.

In these previous campaigns, COIN had been seen mostly as a civilian tool to show U.S. benevolence or to enforce ideologies of development and modernisation. In this context, expert utilisation had been predominantly instrumental, focused on aiding long-term civilian reconstruction in the U.S.'image. In Iraq (and Afghanistan), the COINdinitas elevated COIN to a politico-strategic narrative of U.S. intervention, a one-size-fits-all approach to the problem of insurgency, not only in these two countries but also to future uprisings and rebellions worldwide. In this sense, counterinsurgency was not systematically aligned to underlying theories of development and modernisation anymore – as it had been during the interventions in the Philippines and Vietnam. It rather became itself an 'ideology' of a better form of warfighting. In it, expert knowledge was used to provide largely symbolic knowledge – either in a substantiating or legitimising fashion – to support the strategic narrative of military intervention without the governmental willingness to fully commit to a long-term stabilisation and reconstruction mission.

The knowledge production and expert utilisation processes carried out by the U.S. government and military were preponderantly centered on the military component of the Iraq War. This already became obvious in the run-up to the invasion. As I have shown with the prominent example of the "Future of Iraq Project" within the State Department, civilian experts warned of many of the problems that would eventually arise in Iraq. Their knowledge could have been used instrumentally to conduct effective and long-term pacification and

reconstruction in Iraq. However, the Bush administration deliberately excluded the State Department from much of the post-war planning process. Besides the fact that the apparent opposition to the war within the State Department and other civilian agencies may have contributed to their exclusion, I have argued that the U.S. government had little earnest desire to take in civilian expert advice in order to plan and build up sufficient reconstruction and population protection measures ahead of the invasion. This would have undermined the narrative that Iraq would modernise and democratise itself once Hussein had been overthrown.

The clear institutional antipathy between the military and civilian agencies that had characterised the lead-up to the war, continued throughout the early years of the intervention, as senior officials at several civilian agencies believed that any cooperation with the military would undermine the effectiveness of their work. However, this attitude began to change when the COINdinistas started to criticise the U.S. conduct of the war in Iraq and initiated the writing of FM 3-24. They argued for an enhanced focus on civic activities in Iraq as well as renewed and improved civil-military cooperation. This resulted in some attempts to initiate a similar knowledge creation process as with FM 3-24, bringing together experts from different U.S. government agencies and departments and agencies in order to write a civilian COIN guide, thus, strengthening civil-military cooperation in COIN. However, this idea, which was forcefully pushed by Petraeus and his supporters, never fully materialised. Most of the participating organisations soon pulled out. Only a few mid-level officials from a handful of agencies continued to write the draft, arguing over its clauses and definitions.

The idea of proposing and implementing a comprehensive civilian COIN approach resembled what we have seen in the Philippines and Vietnam, where

civilian COIN knowledge production was meant to provide the instrumental tools and techniques for a long-term U.S. influence in the country. Yet, in contrast to the military, implementing civilian COIN in Iraq was simply not palatable to U.S. civilian agencies. This problem also touched upon the issue of legitimacy, given that the knowledge creation and collaboration processes with the military were considered to negative for the policy legitimacy of the civilian agencies. The analysis of the application of civilian knowledge on the ground reflected such a viewpoint. The measures were implemented half-heartedly and the personal interference by President Bush into the dealings with the Iraqi leadership shows that there was no real interest in relying on the experts' advice.

This apparent disinterest for an instrumental utilisation of civilian COIN also becomes apparent in the analysis of two examples of civilian COIN programmes in Iraq: the HTS and PRTs. As I have shown, the HTS programme was predominantly aimed at giving the military a better cultural understanding of the Iraqi population to allow a better control of it. In this regard, it was not a novel concept, but ostentatiously referred to population control initiatives from the Vietnam War and even the colonial era. It was not a neutral humanitarian project it claimed to be, but rather and parcel of the U.S. attempt to control and destroy opposition to its objectives in Iraq. The PRTs claimed to improve civil-military cooperation and boost civilian projects in Iraq. Yet, their work was characterised by an indiscriminate spending of large sums of money, resulting mostly in short term "feel-good projects" (Van Buren 2011, 113) for supposed developmental purposes as well as the inability to recruit capable and knowledgeable staff.

The empirical reality of the failure of both the HTS and PRT programmes contributes to the overall picture that the U.S. government did not have an

instrumental interest in a long-term engagement in Iraq, which would have required substantial amounts of money and personnel over several years. Despite the rhetoric by the COINdinistas and other U.S. government officials, civilian COIN in Iraq did not have the importance it has had in the previous campaigns in the Philippines and Vietnam. The experts in these earlier campaigns had utilised domestic best practices isomorphically to develop civilian methods and techniques which could be used instrumentally to pursue U.S. interests in the country. In Iraq, civilian COIN knowledge was used in a symbolic way in order to support the U.S.'s strategic narrative of success with regard to its military campaign.

In the end, the way in which the Obama administration left Iraq not only contributed to the problems in Iraq, but also underlines once more the little interest in the instrumental solutions that were potentially available. After the Surge had enabled an initial political reconciliation process in 2007, the decision to keep Nouri al-Maliki in power despite him losing the 2010 election, arguably threw the country back into turmoil (Sky 2015f, 333). This decision was based on the wish to have a (seemingly) stable Iraqi government, which would enable the U.S. to withdraw. As Sky has summed up the inherent motivations of the Obama administration regarding the Iraq War:

[it was] all about ending the war, keeping up the domestic campaign pledges, we can end the war, end the war, end the war. The messaging was on ending the war. They used the word responsibly, but in the end, it just became, "Look, we're ending the war. We're ending the war." All the messaging, which was [for] the domestic audience, was playing out in Iraq, "The Americans don't care. They're not interested"

(Sky 2015b).

In sum, U.S. efforts at civilian COIN in Iraq were too little, too late. As shown in this section, the mechanisms for creating specific knowledge for this aspect of COIN were similar to those that happened within military domain, that is, through conferences and the creation of a specific manual or guidebook for U.S. civilian department and agency officials. The experts were not chosen to deliver instrumental knowledge. In many instances their advice was not even used in a substantiating way, but principally to showcase the access to expert knowledge as well as boost the legitimacy of the U.S. conduct of war in Iraq. Moreover, there were several civilian experts who provided knowledge to individual commanders. Whilst they often worked hard on solving the underlying political problems, this was hardly acknowledged on the political level, as it contradicted the strategic narrative of COIN as a successful and quick apolitical venture.¹⁹⁴

Contrary to the military, the impact of this civilian-based effort was small given that there was little interest by the U.S. government to build long-term interagency capabilities for COIN. In contrast to the previous case studies, there was not even a genuine attempt to adopt successful U.S. domestic approaches. Instead, the U.S. civilian approach consisted largely of the profligate spending of millions of U.S. Dollars that led to many disconnected and often not expedient ad hoc projects. This contributed to the strategic failure of COIN in Iraq, as civic capabilities remained still underdeveloped at the time of the U.S.' withdrawal. This state of affairs arguably kept the country in disarray and made it an easy target for conquest by IS, which began taking over parts of the country from mid-2014.

¹⁹⁴ As Sky (2015f, 341) remarks: "General O[dierno] had gone as far as he could to try to get the U.S. administration to engage more, to uphold the election results, and to try to broker the formation of the Iraqi government through an agreement among the leaders. He had warned of the authoritarian tendencies of Maliki. He had campaigned at the highest level in person, and written countless reports. "I gave my best military advice," he said. But he had been ignored.

10 Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

Since the turn of the last century, with the rise to Great Power status, the U.S. has been engaged in numerous instances of so-called 'counterinsurgencies', spending an enormous amount of time, resources and lives in these operations. Induced by the development of the U.S. Army *Field Manual 3-24* and the implementation of the 'Surge' in the recent campaign in Iraq, the question that motivated this dissertation project was how and for what purpose experts have been utilized in developing knowledge for such campaigns and what were the conditions for the evolution, the constitution and the use of expert knowledge in U.S. counterinsurgencies?

I have shown that across the last century, U.S. COIN has increasingly developed into a strategic narrative or even an 'ideology' of warfighting. By combining a number of different features – such as military pacification and civilian reconstruction – within a single discursive argument, it serves as a reassuring narrative about the necessity and utility of U.S. engagement in so-called 'wars of choice' for both U.S. domestic and international 'target audiences' as well as political decision-makers. The analysis of the three case studies of knowledge utilisation in the U.S. interventions in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Iraq indicates that so-called military and civilian 'experts' have played an important role in framing the problem-sets and suggesting solutions to these conflicts. In Iraq these 'experts' were part and parcel of developing the campaign's ex-post-facto justification of success by lending the strategic narrative of COIN a veneer of intellectualism. This was not only propagandistic in its intent, but also harmful to the proclaimed result of pacifying Iraq.

The thesis set out to accomplish two main objectives. First, I wanted to look at the organisational motivations for using experts in developing COIN knowledge. During the Iraq War, military and civilian experts have gained prominence through the development of *FM 3-24* and their work in supposedly implementing a comprehensive COIN 'strategy' in the conflict zone. In 2008, when COIN had seemingly enabled the pacification of Iraq, it gained the status of a silver bullet panacea to all of Iraq's problems. Several analysts saw it as a strategy and theory of warfare that offered a how-to guide for U.S. interventionism, informed both by humanitarian and modernising ideals. However, more recently, COIN has not lost its intellectual appeal. There is a growing acceptance that the success brought on by the 'Surge' and Petraeus-led COIN campaign has been, at best, overstated. Moreover, the attempt to implement COIN in Afghanistan and deem it a success has also been troublesome. Finally, the long-term stability of Iraq promised by the COIN endeavour is now very much questionable, given the resurgence of violence in the country caused by IS.

The second task, which is inherently interwoven with the first, was to explore the political, historical and practical significance of the processes by which so-called 'experts' have been drawn into advising the U.S. government and military over the last century. I analysed the historically evolving contexts in which expert knowledge was created, taking into account aspects such as 'development' and 'modernisation' theories, as well as the processes of decolonisation and superpower rivalry. I examined whether or not such knowledge may or may not have wielded influence on the development of specific methods and techniques. In doing so, I looked at how expert knowledge production for these kinds of campaigns has evolved over the last century.

For the analysis of the empirical observation of the utilisation of experts in and across the campaigns, I have developed an original theoretical framework of instrumental and symbolic knowledge utilisation that is characterised by the organisation's desire for policy legitimacy. Standard theoretical explanations for the employment of experts in bureaucratic organisations such as the U.S. government or the military are routinely based on instrumentalist theories of knowledge use. These stipulate that the intention to use experts and their knowledge is to make real and tangible changes to a policy (i.e. the campaign). Yet, this instrumental approach of expert knowledge utilisation is too simplistic. The presupposition that the bureaucratic organisation uses expert knowledge in a purely output-oriented, instrumental manner is not apparent in the case studies. Instead, I propose that COIN expert knowledge can also have an inherently 'symbolic' purpose, in that such knowledge was not really intended to be used to make changes in a long-term, sustainable fashion, but served mainly to build and legitimate the underlying strategic narrative of U.S. success.

By applying this theoretical framework in the case study analyses, we are able to connect the central themes of '(counter-)insurgencies' as 'wars of ideas' and 'strategic narratives', which emerge from the existing literature, with empirical observations from the different case studies across over a hundred years of U.S. interventionism. In this sense, we are able to answer the central research question of the conditions for the evolution, the constitution, and the use of expert knowledge and, thus, add to larger discussion on the epistemology of COIN. This is particularly important, as the COIN discourse not only re-appears with troublesome regularity in Western security thinking, but its repeated application leads to the same poor results in different conflicts.

10.2 Findings

The analysis of the case studies through the lenses of the research questions and the theoretical framework enables U.S. to develop a meta-historical view of the evolution, the constitution, and the use of expert knowledge in U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns over the last century. Holistically, COIN has turned from a tactical or operational approach, which supported an underlying policy of 'development' or 'modernisation' respectively in the Philippines and Vietnam, to a strategic narrative or even an ideology. This ideology, which is principally aimed at the U.S. domestic public and political decision-makers, proposes a 'better', less-lethal form of warfare that ostensibly places the protection of the local population at the forefront of U.S. interest. Yet, U.S. COIN is, and almost always has been, inherently about the pursuit of U.S. interests. In this sense, counterinsurgency has transformed from a means to an end into an end itself and experts play an essential in framing this COIN discourse.

The first case study of this thesis presented an analysis of the inclusion of experts and their knowledge in the first major U.S. asymmetric campaign abroad in the Philippines at the turn of the last century (1898-1902). After the U.S. had defeated the previous colonial power, Spain, in the Spanish-American War, the colony fell to the Americans following the Treaty of Paris. This was the U.S.'s first foreign possession outside the Western Hemisphere. As a latecomer to colonial expansion both the U.S. administration and military did not have the knowledge and expertise in colonial administration.. Thus, this knowledge needed to be generated and implemented and experts played an important role in this enterprise. In order to distinguish the U.S. approach in the Philippines from that of the old European powers in their colonies, President McKinley was concerned

withto displaying the occupation as a 'benevolent' exercise that would "uplift" and "civilize" the Filipinos. It became clear that American 'benevolence', ordered by McKinley and practically elaborated by both civilian and military 'experts', was neither really benevolent nor geared towards the interest of the Filipinos, but more towards U.S. interests of exploiting the archipelago.

In McKinley' eyes, the aim of "civilizing" the Filipinos would best be served through a focus on pursuing civic action and developing government. The knowledge to achieve these aims was predominantly developed by the two Philippine commissions. The Second Philippine Commission in particular played an important role in devising and implementing civilian policies in the Philippines given that it had the legislative powers to do so. With few exceptions, the 'experts' on both commissions were not experts on the Philippines, Southeast Asia or colonial affairs. They were instead prominent U.S. lawyers and academics who were essentially fervent imperialists. These two aspects highlight a clear statement by McKinley to the domestic audience in the U.S. that the administration was determined to stay in the Philippines for longer and remodel it and its inhabitants in the American image.

The underlying theoretical rationale for U.S. occupation was based on distinct images of the Filipino as well as (self-) images of the American. On the one hand, there was the belief that the American nation, as "Anglo-Saxons" had a "manifest destiny" to extend Western hegemony and culture by civilizing the Filipinos. This was similar, yet distinct from the older European colonial powers, in particular the British Empire. The U.S. were different, 'exceptional' compared to these states, born out of a revolution and having developed a unique ideology based on virtues such as liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, and republicanism (Lipset 1996, 17

ff.). On the other hand, social evolutionary theory of the late 19th century, the Filipino population was “tribalised” (Kramer 2006b, 185). The Philippines were, thus, not considered a nation, but merely different ‘tribes’ fighting for political, social, and commercial rule. This narrative was useful, because it provided the U.S. with a convenient excuse to discredit the Aguinaldo Republic as a legitimate state and justify its occupation.

Based on such social and racial imagery, the commissioners devoted their attention to specific aspects of civil life, which they wanted to change according to American ideas and beliefs. Central policy areas were, inter alia, education, political education and economic reforms. Although the Army had set precedents in these policy areas, the Philippines Commission issued their instructions top-down, trying to establish unified, structural policies across the archipelago. Because McKinley’s orders to the Commission had remained rather vague, Taft and his colleagues were free in their interpretation of such orders. Thus, the ‘experts’ became policymakers in their own right. Yet, their powers were not unlimited and mostly legislative. Thus, they could not pursue some of their plans, particularly in the field of economic policies, which would have been even more detrimental to the Filipino population.

In terms of the military counterinsurgency campaign, knowledge production was informed by different motivations, albeit the social and racial views of both Americans and Filipinos were very much the same in the military as they were in the civilian sphere. At the time of the Philippine Insurrection, the U.S. military was transforming towards a professional army, which was based on the model of European armies. Individuals such as Emory Upton and Arthur L. Wagner were influential commentators on military strategy and doctrine. Their writings had

significant influence during the 1890s on the Neo-Hamiltonian policy-makers, who saw the military as an important tool in enforcing U.S. power abroad. Yet, as I have shown through the analysis of three key areas of military knowledge production in the Philippines – intelligence, native troops, and concentration camps – their teachings had no influence. Aside from minor possibilities to directly transfer experiences from the fight against the Native Americans on the Frontier to the Philippines, much of the strategy and tactics in the campaign against the Filipino insurgents relied on adaptation and flexibility. In contrast to the civilian knowledge production process, this was mostly done bottom-up. The field officers became ‘experts’ themselves, developing localised solutions. Although no formal doctrine emerged from this (‘doctrine’ in the modern sense did not yet exist), the inclusion of (local) experts and a focus on learning lessons turned the fortunes of war, which suggested that such a bottom-up approach was usable in the future.

Moreover, I have shown that the way in which the military was used in the Philippines heralded a new role for it in a colonial setting. As the French ‘expert’ Lyautey had stated, colonial officers were defined by their social role and acted not only as soldiers, but also public officials, teachers, architects, and engineers. They were no longer acting as agents of colonial exploitation, but leaders of progress, which was beneficial for both ruler and colonial subject (Porch 1986, 390). Yet, beneath the surface, the whole idea of ‘benevolence’ was more of a public-relations exercise than a workable formula for the Philippines. Whilst the terms of tutelage, “uplift,” “evolution,” “assimilation” were ostensible departures from earlier colonial language, the logic behind them remained the same: like children, the Filipinos had to be supervised and punished if unwilling to submit to U.S. control. As it was implicitly seen by policymakers and ‘experts’,

'benevolence' could easily be replaced with harsher methods when necessary (Rafael 1993).

The patronising attitude, which characterised the U.S. conduct in the Philippines, can also be seen in different ways in the later campaigns. The second case study dealt with expert involvement during the U.S. counterinsurgency campaign in Vietnam (1954-1975). In the wake of decolonisation after World War II, the old European colonial powers lost their hegemonic position to the U.S. Yet, it was immediately faced not only with the superpower rivalry against the Soviet Union, but also by growing dissent in the colonies, which often found expression in insurgent movements. It became clear that European-style colonialism, characterised by direct rule and open suppression, was neither economically nor militarily feasible. More importantly, this open colonialist approach did not match with the democratic and republican principles of the U.S. Thus, finding new forms of post-colonial domination and justification for (military) engagement in now sovereign states provided a major impetus for the production of knowledge which would address concerns about global poverty and decolonisation whilst maintaining in effect U.S. interests. This was enhanced by the success of U.S. domestic and foreign economic programmes before and after World War II, such as Roosevelt's 'New Deal' or the European Marshall Plan.

In Vietnam, for the first time, 'experts' in political science, economics, sociology and anthropology, were used by the U.S. military to give advice on the supposedly new 'challenge' of 'counterinsurgency'. In contrast to the Philippines, the experts now had academic credentials that were meant to be used to stop the growing insurgency in Vietnam. As I have shown, the kudos of natural scientists who had helped to win World War II for the Allies with their new

developments, for example radar technology or the Atomic Bomb, spread into the social sciences. They were keen to show that their research could also make a reliable and significant, policy-relevant impact. It was indeed the case that Vietnam was “the social scientists’ war” (McNamara, quoted in McDougall 1997, 141). These experts had, in fact, great influence in devising the war effort.

The cornerstone of their contribution was the so-called “modernisation theory”. It postulated that the development of societies runs along a continuum, from ‘primitive’, traditional forms of existence to a ‘modern’, industrialised society and that development processes from the former to the latter case could be influenced and sped up. In fact, because the scholars believed that societies, which were in the process of modernising, were vulnerable to the influence of Communism, they pushed for Western involvement in those countries that were under threat from subversion and insurgency (Lerner 1958; Pye 1956). Thus, it was much more than just a political theory or theoretical tool, as theories of race and civilization had been during in the Philippines. In Vietnam, modernisation theory acted as the formative intellectual framework through which the role and actions of the U.S. could be interpreted and legitimised. It was an “ideology” (Latham 2000) through which the self-image of a benevolent and altruistic U.S. could be displayed and which could serve as the basis for foreign policy decisions.

In the Vietnam case study, I traced the development of modernisation theory from a purely academic concept, developed in political science departments and think tanks, to its application as a foreign policy principle. Central to this was President Kennedy, who had been heavily influenced by the ideas of these modernisation theorists who were incorporated into his administration once he took office. Despite the obvious changes in the way that experts were utilised in Vietnam in

contrast to the Philippines, there were also continuities. The basic idea that modernity was inherently 'American' (or 'Western'), links back to older colonial views of Western supremacy. Naming cultures 'underdeveloped' or 'primitive', in contrast to the 'developed' and 'modern' U.S., revealed a socio-anthropological worldview that had equally been apparent in theories of social evolution and Social-Darwinism, which had been used to subjugate other people. Also, the belief that U.S. actions in Vietnam were benevolent mirrored the same assumptions and beliefs that had guided the U.S.'s campaign in the Philippines.

In the analysis of civil knowledge for the Vietnam War, I highlighted that the Kennedy administration considered 'counterinsurgency' as a civil 'grand plan' of giving indirect civil assistance and support not only to South Vietnam, but also to other foreign governments in order to guide them on their path towards modernity as well as to avert the 'threat' of Communism. What is notable is that in its quest for policy-relevant knowledge creation, the Kennedy administration relied heavily on U.S. domestic experiences (e.g. in terms of economics and policing) and tried to apply them to Vietnam. Very much like in the Philippines, there were several commissions and fact-finding missions that were sent to Vietnam. Furthermore, much like the situation at the turn of the century, the 'experts' involved were not really experts on Vietnam or Southeast Asia, but rather high-level U.S. administration officials or academics who were infused by the spirit of modernisation theory. The knowledge that had been created by the U.S. experts was applied bluntly in Vietnam without much consideration for local circumstances. This ultimately led to the failure of both programmes in the face of a war that was worsening.

In the military, there was not much enthusiasm to get engaged with 'counterinsurgency', at least at the beginning of the war. Throughout both World Wars, the military had developed into a professional organisation that favoured conventional, large-scale conflicts, because it felt comfortable with the comparative advantage it had over peer competitors in terms of resources and manpower. When insurgencies began to spread through in the 1950s, the military's role in counterinsurgency became more important. The drive towards knowledge creation in this area was much more targeted and planned than it had been in the Philippines campaign. Unlike that case, where military knowledge creation took place ad hoc and bottom-up, with standard procedures or military theories being dropped or modified to the circumstances of jungle warfare, the knowledge for military action in Vietnam was heavily influenced by a particular vision of counterinsurgency warfare. This had been brought forward by theorists and experts based both on their own experiences in recent Communist insurgencies as well as older, imperial campaigns.

The last case study, which is also the central one of this thesis, concerned the involvement of experts in one of the most recent counterinsurgency campaigns during the Iraq War (2003-2011). In Iraq, COIN entirely transformed into a strategy in its own right or, as I would call it, into an 'ideology' of modern warfare. In the Philippines and Vietnam, counterinsurgency had consisted of a set of operational and tactical methods, driven by the desire to implement ideas of social-evolutionary and modernisation theory, respectively. Yet, in the post-9/11 world, counterinsurgency became the "self-sufficient, technical enterprise" that Morgenthau (1966, 391) had described earlier. Given that the U.S. was failing in Iraq a few years after the invasion – which challenged the policy legitimacy of the

Bush administration – a new approach was needed. In the process of designing and executing a response to the dire situation in Iraq, the U.S. government increasingly relied on civilian and military ‘experts’ who were used to create a politico-strategic narrative of COIN as a different approach to the warfighting. This new approach promised a better, less lethal, and more successful way of waging war, which could be sold to the public via the media.

In contrast to the Philippines and Vietnam, where civilian knowledge production had been at the forefront of the campaign, counterinsurgency in Iraq was almost exclusively a military affair, and the onus for knowledge production was placed on military issues. Hence, in the military realm, specific experts had been consulted by the U.S. administration from the early stages of the war preparations. These experts – some of which were supposedly high-profile Iraqi exiles like Chalabi or Makiya – seemingly corroborated the government’s narrative that Iraq was in possession of WMDs and sponsored international terrorism. This narrative often ran counter to official intelligence estimates, indicating that the expert knowledge production process was heavily politicised. The knowledge and the experts’ voices served a symbolic function to bolster the political decision to embark on the war against Iraq.

When soon after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 the security situation deteriorated, there was little reaction by either the Pentagon or White House leadership to counter this. This was due to the fact that there was not yet enough external pressure on their policy legitimacy to change their approach in Iraq. It was also due to the fact that a turn towards a COIN posture would have evoked images of the failure in Vietnam. Hence, the adoption of counterinsurgency practices in Iraq until 2007 was predominantly a bottom-up process. Whether such tactics and

techniques were adopted or not depended on the individual commanders in the field and on the circumstances of the area under their command. Although there were some initiatives, both by Gen. Casey and the U.S. administration to re-orient the campaign based on some principles of COIN throughout 2005, this was often half-hearted and not followed through. Moreover, most of these measures were mainly aimed at force protection rather than population protecting, indicating the preeminence of U.S. self-interests.

The development of specific COIN knowledge began to form within the military with the publication of the interim COIN field manual in October 2004 and gained significant traction with the publication of *FM 3-24* in December 2006 and with Petraeus' appointment as Commanding General MNF-I in early 2007. What is interesting about this is that in contrast to Vietnam this process was, at first, entirely a bottom-up approach, initiated by 'mavericks' within the military. Through a series of academic conferences, which were crucial in gathering together and creating a community of experts, the development and diffusion of a specific set of knowledge about counterinsurgency took place. Although these experts were proposing alternative ideas about how to wage the conflict in Iraq, which had earned them the term 'maverick', the focus of their work always remained the achievement of U.S. interests in Iraq: that is, securing victory through the elimination of the insurgency given that it was threatening the legitimacy of the U.S. actions in Iraq.

Furthermore, experts were vital in developing and promoting COIN knowledge implementation in Iraq. Whilst in the other campaigns, especially in the civilian realm, the U.S. government had actively called upon and commissioned experts, it was now the other way around, with the experts pushing their idea of COIN as

well as promoting themselves through the levels of command. Here, we can also see the culmination of the phenomenon of 'soldier-scholar', staff officers with advanced university degrees who were central in developing the knowledge, most visible in the group of 'COINdinistas' around Petraeus. Whilst this had existed to some degree during Vietnam (e.g. the participants of the 1962 RAND symposium on counterinsurgency), the soldier-scholars now played a vital role in disseminating counterinsurgency knowledge (in the form of *FM 3-24*) and they were its key sales persons.

In my detailed analysis of military knowledge production – which looked at separation and control of the population as well as the utilisation of indigenous troops – I have shown that expert knowledge was used in a substantiating manner to support the political legitimacy of the COIN campaign itself. In civilian affairs, COIN expert knowledge also had a legitimising function, because it was first and foremost used to enhance the standing of the U.S. government and military amidst a situation of failure rather than to implement an effective long-standing pacification strategy. This is corroborated by the early withdrawal of U.S. forces by the end of 2011.

Looking at the knowledge itself, it becomes clear that it was hardly anything more than old wine in new wineskins. It largely relied (tactically and operationally) on traditional, anti-Maoist counterinsurgency doctrine from the 1960s. In fact, many of the experts involved often rehashed their previous papers and PhD theses without really adapting it to the specific circumstances in Iraq. They believed that there were certain methodological principles within (counter-)insurgencies, which could be extracted and applied to any given conflict. This would make COIN an easily intelligible, seemingly apolitical concept, which could convey to U.S.

domestic public and political decision-makers the necessity and utility of U.S. 'wars of choice'. Given the modern presentation of counterinsurgency campaigns via the global media and the interconnectedness through contemporary technology, a cogent politico-strategic narrative presiding over the campaign was crucial (Roberts 2005). The experts were central actors in providing this narrative.

However, as I have already outlined in the literature review, there were several flaws inherent in this view. It is questionable how useful fifty-year-old maxims are, designed for a completely different enemy on a completely different battlefield in a completely different political setting (Chin 2007, 14). Modern, transnational insurgencies provide a different challenge to the old, territorially-defined Maoist insurgencies of the 1950s and 60s or the colonial uprisings at the turn of the last century (Kilcullen 2005; Mackinlay 2002). Insurgencies as struggles over political supremacy within a specific territory are inherently political enterprises as are counterinsurgencies. They are the prime example of Clausewitz's "war as a continuation of politics by other means". Attempts to depoliticise these conflicts by attempting to derive some seemingly reappearing regularities only thwart any attempts to uncover and tackle the real political problems underpinning them. These two factors – the flawed assumption that (counter-)insurgencies can be resolved through the application of principles devoid of localised political context and the symbolic intake of this COIN knowledge by the U.S. government – were key contributing factors to the eventual failure of the military campaign in Iraq.

Whilst military expert knowledge production was quite extensive, attempts to produce instrumental civilian knowledge in Iraq – both in the lead-up as well as during the Surge – were hardly acknowledged by the U.S. government. Civilian experts were largely disregarded in the civilian area or simply provided a

legitimising addendum to the military part of the campaign. This adds to the general picture emerging throughout the thesis that the focus of expert knowledge production and utilisation in general has shifted since the campaigns in the Philippines and Vietnam from a civilian to a predominantly military focus of pacification.

In these earlier campaigns, COIN had been considered to be a civilian tool to show U.S. benevolence or to enforce ideas of development or modernisation. The use of experts then fulfilled generally an instrumental purpose, which focused on executing long-term civilian reconstruction in the U.S. image. In Iraq, the knowledge production and expert utilisation by the U.S. government and military was centered on the military component. This was even evident before the invasion. There was a clear institutional antipathy between the military and civilian agencies which characterised the lead-up to and the early year of the war. Civilian experts warned of many of the problems that would eventually arise in Iraq and this knowledge could have been used instrumentally to conduct effective and long-term pacification and reconstruction in Iraq. However, the Bush administration had no desire to take in this civilian as it would have undermined the narrative that Iraq would modernise and democratise itself once Hussein had been overthrown.

This attitude began to change when the COINdinistas began to influence the conduct of the war by writing *FM 3-24*. Their argument centered on an enhancement of civilian activities in Iraq as well as on improving civil-military relations. This led to attempts at writing a civilian counterinsurgency manual, bringing together experts from different U.S. government agencies. However, this never fully materialised. I argued that, in contrast to the military, civilian COIN in

Iraq was simply not palatable to U.S. civilian agencies. Given the yearlong wilful neglect of civilian expertise and also the memories of the failure of civilian COIN in Vietnam, joining in on the military's COIN effort could have seriously jeopardized the civilian agencies' policy legitimacy. Thus, civilian COIN measures never really got off the ground.

The analysis of the application of civilian knowledge on the ground reflects this. Crocker, Petraeus' civilian counterpart, relied much on substantiating expertise from his staff to build civil-military cooperation. Yet, these measures were implemented half-heartedly and with constant interference by President Bush personally. Through the analysis of two civilian COIN initiatives in Iraq – the HTTs and PRTs – I have shown, that both of these programmes were neither novel nor were they really humanitarian. Instead, they were tools to superficially quell the insurgency by controlling the population or to showcase short-term propaganda projects, which were supposed to show the U.S. domestic and global audience that U.S. COIN efforts in Iraq were working. The empirical reality of the failure of both the HTS and PRT programmes contributes to the overall picture that the U.S. government did not have an instrumental interest in a long-term engagement in Iraq, which would have required substantial amounts of money and personnel over several years.

In sum, U.S. efforts at civilian COIN in Iraq were too little, too late. Whilst the mechanisms for creating specific knowledge for this aspect of COIN were similar to what happened in the military: the experts were not chosen to deliver instrumental knowledge. Their knowledge was sometimes used in a substantiating way, but mainly to legitimise the U.S. conduct of war in Iraq. Their overall impact was small because of the little interest the U.S. government had in

building long-term, interagency capabilities for COIN. The profligate spending of millions of U.S. Dollars and many disconnected, senseless individual projects contributed to the strategic failure of COIN in Iraq. As argued, civilian capabilities remained underdeveloped in Iraq after the U.S. withdrawal and made it an easier target for IS' attempt to destroy the Iraqi state.

10.3 Theoretical Conclusions

In Iraq, the most recent case of U.S. intervention in a 'war of choice' besides Afghanistan, COIN has been seemingly developed and applied as a comprehensive military approach, acclaimed as a more 'population-centric', less-lethal approach to the conflict. In this process, it was often claimed that experts developed neither new nor "paradigm-shattering" (Sewall 2007a, xxxv) knowledge consisting of apolitical, technical measures, derived from the methodologies of past campaigns. In this depiction, experts and their knowledge are utilised to make real and tangible policy changes. The central claim of this theoretical view – which is in line with Max Weber's (1948; 1947) functionalist view – is that the utility of experts' knowledge is key to the enhancement of the military's output in creating and enforcing concrete strategies and decisions as actions.

However, as I have outlined in the literature review and through empirical observation across the three case studies, modern counterinsurgency methods rehash traditional techniques. More importantly, we see a decoupling between words and actions, particularly in Iraq. Despite claiming to develop appropriate methods and tools, which would be employed in a long-term fashion to enable a stable pacification of the country, the experts' role seems to have been largely

confined to the promotion of COIN as a strategic narrative in the war of ideas vis-à-vis the insurgency. Here, they aided the government's attempts to sell COIN and U.S. intervention in Iraq to sceptical audiences at home and abroad as well as to political decision-makers. In other words, despite the verbal promulgation of the instrumental utility of expert knowledge, the actions taken do not reflect such an instrumental use of the experts' ideas, but rather a symbolic employment of these to support U.S. policies.

On the basis of the cases examined here, I have provided an alternative account of knowledge utilisation, which is based on neo-institutionalist (Boswell 2008; 2009a; 2009b; Brunsson 1985) and systems-theoretic (Luhmann 2003) views of organisational action. The foundation of my argument is that bureaucratic organisations such as the U.S. military are politically vulnerable entities, constantly engaged in trying to secure policy legitimacy. The decision to utilise knowledge in a particular policy area can be theorised through Luhmann's conceptual framework of organisations as self-reinforcing systems, which observe the world and communicate with it in binary codes. DiMaggio's and Powell's (1983) concept of institutional isomorphism helps us to explain why the military might draw on external experts, instead of relying on knowledge already available within the organisation. This denotes the implementation of successful or promising behaviours, processes, or policies observed in the environment, either in a coercive or mimetic way. Finally, Brunsson's (1989) concept of "organised hypocrisy" explains the inconsistent rhetoric and action which can occur within an organisation – hypocrisy – as a result of conflicting material and normative pressures it faces whilst trying to secure legitimacy with internal and external stakeholders. It enables us to understand why, under such multiple

pressures and expectations, organisations such as the U.S. military may have an incentive to use experts not in a purely instrumental, output-oriented fashion, but in a symbolic way in order to please their audiences.

Based on this, I have proposed a 'symbolic' purpose of expert knowledge in order to help us make sense of the disparity between words and deeds of the U.S. government, which we could see in Iraq (and partly in Vietnam). In contrast to instrumental knowledge, symbolic knowledge is not used in a long-term, sustainable fashion, but serves mainly to legitimate and sustain a narrative function. Put differently, symbolic knowledge can be conceptualised as a sphere where a dominant narrative is produced. Also, even if there are actions based on symbolic knowledge, they have a symbolic meaning. Experts play an important role in symbolic knowledge production, because they lend epistemic authority to the policy decision just as much as they would do with instrumental knowledge. Both instrumental and symbolic knowledge, identifiable through specific indicators, served as central theoretical tools to understand the basic motives for utilising experts and their knowledge in U.S. COIN campaigns from an organisational perspective. In particular, they enabled us to understand how experts are an integral actor in the development of COIN as a politico-strategic narrative of warfare in recent times.

Given these empirical observations, this original framework of (neo-institutionalist) instrumental and symbolic knowledge offers a more satisfactory explanation of expert knowledge utilisation in the Philippines case study than traditional approaches. What we have seen in this case is that expert knowledge production and utilisation came largely as a result of the failure to pacify the archipelago with the existing knowledge, which posed severe problems for the

U.S. civilian and military authorities. As an aspiring world power, the U.S. had little experience in colonial administration. Seen through the theoretical lens of the thesis, the actions of Aguinaldo and his followers were, thus, a challenge to the U.S. government's policy legitimacy. This was because they hindered the U.S. in its pursuit of its national interests (in particular vis-à-vis the established European Great powers) to occupy the archipelago and make itself out to be a benevolent Great Power that cared about the well-being and progress of the Filipino population.

To this end, in the civil sphere, the expert knowledge created had generally an instrumental purpose. The knowledge was output-oriented, yet with the ulterior motive of restoring the legitimacy of the U.S. administration, which had been lost due to incompetent attempts to stop Aguinaldo from achieving Filipino independence. It was also motivated by the aim of enabling U.S.'s long-term occupation and exploitation of the country. Moreover, both the utilisation of the experts themselves as well as their knowledge displayed instances of mimetic isomorphism.

Following the U.S. domestic trend of progressive reform and education, the specific policies employed in areas of (political) education and economy were devised by hand-selected experts from the U.S. and directly based on experiences and procedures from the U.S. Although these policies were promoted as helpful for the Filipino population the knowledge had a merely substantiating effect for the real aim of the policies. The locals were not to receive more education than absolutely necessary to make them seemingly enlightened, yet, still obedient servants of U.S. interests. In terms of political education, the aim was to give the impression of Filipino self-determination, whilst real power

actually remained with the Americans. Finally, regarding economic policies, the U.S. experts purported that their knowledge would enable the Philippines to become a thriving, economically successful country and alleviate poverty amongst the population. In reality, the policies, which were ultimately not implemented fully due to Congressional reluctance, would have made the population more even dependent on U.S. capital and investors.

In the military realm, the expert knowledge generally fulfilled a more symbolic aspect, both in a legitimising and substantiating way. On its path to a professional, European-style military, which had begun just shortly before the intervention in the Philippines, military counterinsurgency techniques were little more than a means to an end to show the American public that something was being done about the insurgent threat. Most of the measures developed were 'invented' locally in the field and then, if they worked, passed bottom-up to be applied in other areas. To some extent, especially in the utilisation of indigenous troops and the erection of concentration camps, we can see an isomorphic application of older colonial practices. Yet, there was no interest in long-term utilisation of the military knowledge, as the focus lay on civilian pacification.

In Vietnam, our theoretical framework gives U.S. a better understanding of how the wider societal transformations and concomitant socio-theoretic theories had an important impact on expert knowledge production and implementation, going far beyond what had happened in the Philippines campaign. During the Kennedy and Johnson presidency, modern activist experts came into government positions with the aim of implementing modernisation theory as a key tenet of U.S. foreign policy. Given the development of the situation in Vietnam after the French defeat in 1954, there was the fear that it and other Southeast Asian

countries could fall in to Communism like “domino[es]”, which would have meant a serious defeat in the superpower rivalry with the Soviet Union. Therefore, there was indeed a threat to U.S. national interests as well as to the policy legitimacy of the U.S. government, as they seemed unable to counter this “communist subversion”.

Hence, in terms of the civilian knowledge production in Vietnam, this clearly had an instrumental aim of securing the hegemonic position the U.S. had achieved after World War II, vis-à-vis the emerging threats of Communist-based insurgencies in the Global South. Several key indicators that highlight this have been identified in the case study. The experts were directly commissioned by the government to develop a political agenda imbued with modernisation theory and take care of its implementation in Vietnam. Moreover, the secrecy of the meetings further indicate that the U.S. government had indeed an instrumental interest in developing counterinsurgency as a civil ‘grand strategy’ for the pacification of Vietnam and beyond. This is confirmed by the analysis of examples of civilian knowledge production in Vietnam, i.e. internal security assistance and the Mekong Valley Project. Here, the experts involved were directly chosen by the U.S. government because of their academic and vocational experience in the field. Like in the Philippines, the measures bore a strong resemblance to U.S. practices and procedures. Whilst the internal security assistance force was trained by American police officers, based on U.S. policing rules and regulations, the Mekong Valley Project was modelled upon the New Deal-era TVA and was even led by the former TVA chairman David Lilienthal.

As I have shown, the civilian COIN enterprise in Vietnam started strong, but with the increasing insurgent pressure and the failures of the military campaign, these

policies were not followed through to the end. Moreover, the simple application of U.S. practices in Vietnam without paying attention to local circumstances did not make things easier. Indeed, knowledge production in the military sphere during the Vietnam War had, just like in the Philippines, much more of a symbolic intent. On the one hand, there was a close-coupling of expertise with specific issues as, for example, in the case of the Strategic Hamlets. These were erected not as part of a wider, instrumental, policy initiative, but as a substantiating reaction to the deteriorating security situation. The military medicine programme had a purely legitimising effect and was more of a public relations stunt for the domestic audience in the U.S., rather than having a meaningful intent.

In the Iraq War, we have seen that expert knowledge as a whole fulfilled a mainly symbolic function for the U.S. government, not only in framing and implementing the problem-sets and solutions to the conflict, but also justifying ex-post-facto the success of this campaign. By 2006, the U.S. was obviously failing to pacify Iraq and this affected the policy legitimacy of the Bush administration which had pushed heavily for intervention. For the neocons, expert knowledge by the COINdinistas provided ample opportunity to underpin the emerging strategic narrative of COIN as a solution to the problems in Iraq (and possibly in similar scenarios in other future 'wars of choice'). However, there was a mismatch between words and deeds. Whilst the COIN experts and the U.S. government publicly claimed that COIN as a concept would help with "securing" the population and finally enable a long-term pacification of Iraq, the merely symbolic application of such knowledge indicates that the U.S. was mostly interested in reducing the number of its own casualties and in portraying the appearance of stability. This would allow a quick 'buy-out' of the quagmire the U.S. had got itself into.

Thus, the knowledge that the 'COINdinistas' could provide was appealing. In contrast to the previous campaigns, the experts were not commissioned to develop COIN-specific knowledge from the outset, which indicates a rather legitimising purpose. It was only when the security situation continued to deteriorate that COIN moved into the focus as a possible solution. The proposition of an "escalate-then-exit" approach gave the U.S. administration a new option to turn around U.S. and coalition fortunes in Iraq. This supposedly 'new' COIN 'strategy' was highly publicised, including the public distribution of *FM 3-24* via the Internet, indicating that there was probably a higher interest in garnering public support than finding instrumental solutions to the problems of the Iraqi population.

On an operational level, during the Surge, the COIN measures developed served largely a substantiating function in order to support the overarching policy, but again without the intent or will of long-term instrumentalisation. As a matter of fact, the methods employed were mostly a re-application of traditional counterinsurgency techniques, visible already in the Philippines and Vietnam campaigns. Many of the experts involved simply rehashed their previous papers and PhD theses without really adapting their thinking to the unique circumstances in Iraq. Based on the belief that (counter-) insurgencies were ruled by certain methods, they thought that COIN could be established as apolitical, off-the-shelf concept for Iraq and any other 'war of choice'. What mattered most in this regard were U.S. national and security interests. The Iraqi government was not necessarily a partner for the U.S. government. If U.S. interests were congruent with Iraqi interests, fine. If they were not, however, then U.S. interests were pursued nonetheless even if this proved detrimental to Iraq. Measures that could

have been more beneficial to Iraqi interests were also developed, but mostly implemented half-heartedly. Overall, as the most recent emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq only a few years after the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq has shown, military counterinsurgency, which had been the main strategy of U.S. forces at the end of the war, had traded short-term security gains for long-term political solutions.

This view is corroborated by the civil knowledge production in Iraq. Despite the efforts the 'COINdinistas', especially Kilcullen, put in to initiate a civilian knowledge creation process and to strengthen civil-military cooperation, this eventually failed. Civilian agencies and experts had been side-lined by (Rumsfeld's) DoD in the run-up to, and for most of, the Iraq War. The sudden ensnaring by the COINdinistas probably gave many a sense that COIN was more of a public relations stunt for the U.S. military in which they were to be the civilian fig-leaf. Thus, most of the agencies drafted in to write the civil COIN manual pulled out shortly after joining such an initiative.

In conclusion, even though there were bottom-up attempts to produce instrumental civilian knowledge in the Iraq War – both in the lead-up as well as during the Surge – these knowledge production processes were hardly acknowledged by the U.S. administration. Whilst real or alleged experts were used extensively to support the politico-strategic narrative of military COIN methods, they were largely disregarded in civilian circles. Alternatively, they simply provided a legitimising addendum to the military part of the campaign aimed at boosting the legitimacy of the U.S. conduct of war in Iraq. This adds to the general picture emerging throughout the thesis that the focus of expert knowledge production and utilisation processes in general has shifted since the

campaigns in the Philippines and Vietnam. From an organisational perspective, the U.S. government and military had promoted civilian knowledge production top-down in the Philippines and Vietnam, utilising U.S. domestic best practices isomorphically. In Iraq, top-down civilian knowledge production attempts largely failed and there were not really efforts to adapt domestic best practices.

In these previous campaigns, COIN had been seen mostly as a tool to show U.S. benevolence towards supposedly backward peoples or to enforce ideologies of development or modernisation. In this context, expert utilisation in civilian matters had been predominantly instrumental. They were focused on aiding long-term civilian reconstruction in the U.S. image. In Iraq, COIN turned into politico-strategic narrative of U.S. intervention, a one-size-fits-all approach to the problem of insurgency. It did not rely on underlying theories of development and modernisation anymore, but became itself an 'ideology' of a better form of warfighting. Civilian expert knowledge was used in the campaign to provide largely symbolic knowledge – either in a substantiating or legitimising fashion – in order to support the strategic narrative of military intervention without the governmental willingness to fully carry out a costly, long-term stabilisation and pacification mission.

10.4 Final Conclusions and Implications

In *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (2005), Nagl analysed how armies adapt to changing, unexpected circumstances during conflicts, comparing the performance of the British Army during the Malayan Emergency from 1948 to 1960 to that of the U.S. Army in the

Vietnam War from 1954 to 1975. Nagl's central argument is that due its colonial experience and organisational characteristics, the British Army adapted and successfully extinguished the revolt through the combined use of military, economic, and social measures. In contrast, the U.S. Army did not adapt to the insurgency in Vietnam and, thus, failed. Over time, this historical conflict has become the *locus classicus* of successful counterinsurgency, where the ruling authority can overcome a rebellion by 'protecting' the people and winning their 'hearts and minds'. For modern COIN, this claim not only frames a politically and socially acceptable message for today's conflicts, but contemporary COIN thinkers see the Malayan campaign as a repository of apolitical methods, tactics and 'best practice' rules, which can be taken off the shelf and used in modern insurgencies (see e.g. Kilcullen 2006a; Mansoor 2008; Sepp 2005).

Yet, as I have highlighted, both insurgency and counterinsurgency are highly political issues. It becomes problematic or even paradoxical when COIN advocates concentrate on "second-order questions of grievance settlement and the techniques for resolving them [...] instead of first-order questions of ideology and politics" (Gventer et al. 2013, 19). Contemporary interpretations of COIN principles and thinking defy COIN's inherently political DNA. COIN thinking, at the same time, is used as a propagandistic, politico-strategic narrative, which attempts to sell U.S. intervention to sceptical audiences at home and abroad as well as to political decision-makers.

Given the financial and material resources spent on fighting insurgencies in the last decade and the lives lost in it on both sides, it was important to analyse the origins and the rationale of COIN and why it gained such prominence in recent military and political discourse. This is especially so, because the issue of

(counter-)insurgency not only reappears with troublesome regularity in U.S. foreign and security policy discourse, but in most recent history we have the U.S. governments actions have led to the same poor results.

This thesis has traced the evolution, constitution and use of U.S. counterinsurgency knowledge production over the last century. I have shown that, despite being an operational tool from a technical and military standpoint, counterinsurgency has over recent years been portrayed as a stand-alone strategy of warfighting. It has become an ideology of 'better' and 'less lethal' warfare, providing a feel-good narrative of U.S. involvement in 'wars of choice' to the stakeholders in the political environment and the public at home. Civilian and military 'experts' have been crucial in helping to frame this COIN discourse. Yet, their knowledge was not really 'novel', but relied on experiences from past campaigns that were applied 'text-book-style' to the contemporary insurgency, without making any serious effort to adapt to the local circumstances.

Therefore, as we have seen especially in the last case of Iraq and also to some extent at the end of the Vietnam War, expert knowledge was used by the U.S. military and administration as a fig leaf to provide symbolic justification for U.S. engagement in such campaigns. What is central in determining the need for instrumental or symbolic knowledge is an organisation's quest for policy legitimacy, which it defines through a binary view of the world. In terms of foreign and security policy, the focus is on threats to national security and interests. As shown, if these are really at stake, the government is more likely to commission instrumental knowledge. In the Philippines, it was a core interest of the U.S. to retain the archipelago as its first colony and to show to the European powers that it could act as a (better) colonial player. Similarly, at the beginning of the Vietnam

War, Communist-inspired and (seemingly) Soviet-supported insurgencies around the world challenged the newly achieved superpower status of the U.S. and made the production of relevant knowledge to counter it necessary. By the end of the Vietnam War, as well as in Iraq War, the threat to U.S. national security had waned and the cost-benefit analysis of a prolonged engagement was negative. Here, expert use became symbolic.

This thesis has utilised interviews with sixteen leading experts that were involved in drafting and implementing the counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq. These interviews added an original feature to the thesis. They were very insightful and enabled me to trace the knowledge formation process and the influence the experts had on the utilisation of their knowledge during the Iraq COIN campaign. The scope of this thesis did not comprise the motivations and underlying thoughts of the experts themselves, which would be an interesting avenue for future research. Nevertheless, the insights gained from the interviews seem to underpin what Kuklick has concluded in *Blind Oracles*, in terms of the role that U.S. intellectuals played in Cold War-foreign policy formation: “[w]hile it would be mistaken to argue that ideas are not relevant to policymakers, the evidence repeatedly corroborates the observation that politics trumps knowledge” (Kuklick 2007). In other words, whilst the experts did get chances to bring in experts’ ideas and knowledge, the bureaucratic and political requirements dictated which knowledge was utilised. In Iraq, in particular, the ‘experts’ supplied symbolic knowledge for the seemingly apolitical problems.

Across the different interviews, two issues became particularly apparent. On the one hand, the overwhelming majority of the experts, especially those directly involved in drafting and executing *FM 3-24* had a ‘realistic’ view of U.S.

counterinsurgency in Iraq. If the measures employed supported the Iraqi population and helped their trust that was great. If not, the measures, such as walling off entire suburbs, were implemented anyway, because they helped protect U.S. forces. This paternalistic attitude towards the local population is also a transcending characteristic across all three cases under examination. For example, the winning of “hearts and minds”, which was a core slogan of Petraeus’ propaganda efforts during the vital transformation of *FM 3-24* to a national strategy or policy of warfighting in Iraq in late-2006/early-2007, was negated by many of the experts interviewed (e.g. Crane 2013; Mansoor 2013b; Nagl 2013). On the other hand, hardly any of the experts critically reflected upon their involvement in the Iraq War (Kilcullen being the notable exception, Kilcullen 2013a). Whilst many maintained that they had been against the initial invasion of Iraq, they saw it as their duty to get involved to find better solutions to the problems the U.S. faced in Iraq. Yet, as I have shown throughout the Iraq case study, this did not really happen. As a matter of fact, as a result of the U.S. invasion in 2003 and the early withdrawal of forces in 2011, the emergence of ISIS in recent years makes Iraq’s future look even worse.

The alleged purpose of the counterinsurgency knowledge production in Iraq and its application during the ‘Surge’ was to create a more peaceful environment, in which the country’s warring factions could reach a political settlement of their disputes (Garamone 2007). In hindsight, we know now that the ‘Surge’ had only superficially pacified the country. Not only do we see a consolidation of power by the majority Shia factions, which brings true ‘reconciliation’ further out of reach than ever, but we can also witness the fragile US-trained and equipped security apparatus being overrun by ISIS extremists (Cunningham 2014). Seen through a

contemporary lens, the development of the situation in Iraq after the end of the Surge in 2008 and the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces in 2011 surely cannot be considered a strategic success for the US. As I have shown, the knowledge created for the campaign and epitomised in *FM 3-24* and the Surge, served its symbolic purpose through the epistemic authority of the experts, combined with an aggressive strategic communications campaign. It allowed the U.S. government and population to view the war not as lost. Such a propaganda effort, rather than helping the Iraqi population, was the real contribution to the campaign. This is aptly summarized by Gventer (2014, 250):

[...] the manual and associated hullabaloo must also be seen as a product of its time: a failing American campaign, an Army and a nation desperate not to 'repeat' Vietnam, and an imperative to silence the increasingly vocal opposition to the war on the American political scene. *FM 3-24*'s 'we are here to help' formula and its pretensions to deep historical roots usefully muffled critics on both sides of the political aisle. If the manual became a curious amalgam of idealist humanitarian maxims, democratic platitudes, graphs and diagrams without units or apparent evidentiary foundation, irrefutable teach-a-man-to-fish apothegms, and a tincture of 1960s modernization theory, well, it served a certain purpose.

With the end of NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan at the end of 2014, the "new counterinsurgency era" (Ucko 2009) has seemingly ended. In the U.S. and the Western world in general, the appetite for such adventures has certainly diminished after so many casualties and trillions of dollars spent. With Russia as a re-emerging player in international affairs that has recently committed the first annexation of foreign territory in Europe since the end of World War II, as well as China becoming a dominant player, the U.S. military seems to be, once again, realigning itself for 'conventional' operations (Serena 2011).

The emergence of IS is not only a result of the U.S. failure in Iraq, spawned by the merely symbolic application of COIN knowledge whilst, in reality, not really caring about the Iraqi population. It is also a glimpse into the future that seems to

confirm the belief of many of the experts that in a modern, multipolar world, insurgencies and counterinsurgencies are here to stay (Kilcullen 2013b; Nagl 2014). If this is the case, then this thesis has shown that the genuine development and application of instrumental expert COIN knowledge, whilst is by no means a guarantor of success, can make a difference. As we have seen in the Philippines, the intent of occupying the Philippines long-term (which is certainly feasible in today's world), led to an instrumental production and implementation of expert knowledge. In contrast, the mere symbolic utilisation of expert knowledge at the end of Vietnam and, in particular, in Iraq arguably had an impact on the failure of the campaigns. Unlike their imperial predecessors, the contemporary 'COINdinistas' were not able to give a long-lasting, instrumental input to the Iraq campaign. This was not necessarily their 'fault', because ultimately, the U.S. government and military as powerful bureaucratic organisation(s) decided to utilise their knowledge symbolically rather than instrumentally.

Overall, this thesis provided the first formal assessment of the development of and rationale for expert knowledge utilisation over a century of U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns. It combined a historical analysis of primary and secondary sources with a comprehensive range of interviews with sixteen key counterinsurgency experts, most of whom were directly involved in developing and implementing COIN strategy in Iraq. These interviews were an original feature of this thesis and gave us an insight into their values and beliefs as well as their motivation to participate in the knowledge production process during the Iraq campaign. Whilst we had to rely on bibliographic resources in the Philippines and Vietnam cases, we had the unique chance to 'hear' the voices of the experts themselves.

Through the analysis of the evolution and the role that 'expert knowledge' has played in the three seminal U.S. counterinsurgency campaigns in the Philippines (1898-1902), Vietnam (1954-75), and Iraq (2003-11), this thesis has contributed to academic knowledge by showing the critical role that military and academic 'experts' have played in framing the problem-sets and solutions to counterinsurgencies to enable the preservation of U.S. hegemony. The existing literature has not treated the influence and utility of experts in the formation and execution of 'counterinsurgency' knowledge sufficiently. In the Philippines and at the beginning of Vietnam, expert knowledge was of instrumental utility for the U.S. government and military. The knowledge was used to substantially improve the U.S. conduct of war in these campaigns.

However, towards the end of the Vietnam campaign and during the Iraq War, expert knowledge increasingly served a symbolic rather than instrumental purpose. In other words, experts were utilised to give U.S. intervention in general and COIN in particular a veneer of intellectualism without the instrumental will to utilise such knowledge in order to implement policies that would have effectively improved the security of the population and pacified the country. Therefore, counterinsurgency, like insurgency, is a "continuation of politics by other means". Thus, it is essentially a conflict over political grievances. Yet, U.S. COIN has increasingly developed into a politico-strategic narrative or even an 'ideology' of warfighting. It brings together several (often contradictory) features, e.g. civilian measures to "win the hearts and minds" as well as repressive military techniques, in a single discursive framework. This then serves as a reassuring and, thus, legitimising narrative for both the U.S domestic population and decision-makers about the necessity and utility of U.S. engagement in so-called 'wars of choice'

abroad. In Iraq in particular, experts were key contributors of symbolic knowledge, which acclaimed the campaigns' ex-post-facto justification of success. In this sense, the experts were a vital part of the framing and justification of contemporary COIN as a humane and palatable conflict. The reality, however, has often been radically different and brutal.

Therefore, the role of the experts in Iraq, as well as during the last few years of the Vietnam War, was more that of propagandists that branded and sold counterinsurgency to the sceptical domestic and international audiences in the age of a 24/7 media-infused world. These audiences were (and still are) the target of the strategic communications surrounding the U.S.' COIN enterprise. Meanwhile, the seemingly biddable populations in the conflict zones are subject to paternalistic theories that expect the gratitude and support from the local population for seemingly improving their living conditions. If this was not already enough, the main problem that arises with this, as Morgenthau (1966, 391) has stated, is when such symbolic counterinsurgency knowledge is disconnected from a larger foreign policy vision. If this policy is non-existent, COIN becomes an end or ideology in itself, which is likely to fail, because it does not consider underlying political grievances. In this sense, COIN is not the apolitical silver bullet panacea that Petraeus and his COINdinistas believe it to be. Instead, through its application in a symbolic, and ultimately, self-serving way, counterinsurgency in Iraq led to the protraction of the conflict and did not manage to resolve the political grievances it sought to tackle. It, in fact, brought about in the long run greater cause for instability to the detriment of the Iraqi people.

Glossary

AEI	American Enterprise Institute
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
BIR	Bureau of Insurgent Records
BRIAM	British Advisory Mission
CAC	Combined Arms Center
CENTCOM	US Central Command
CCP	Committee on Comparative Politics
CENIS	Center for International Studies
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CG	Commanding General
CO	Commanding Officer
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CWCP	Civilian War Casualty Programme
DOD	Department of Defense
DMI	Division of Military Information
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
DSR	Department of Social Relations
FOA	Foreign Operations Administration
GO	General Order
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HTS	Human Terrain System
HTT	Human Terrain Team
HUAC	House of Un-American Activities Committee
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
ID	Identification
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IR	International Relations
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISG	Iraq Study Group
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JDG	Joint Development Group
JSAT	Joint Strategic Assessment Team
LIC	Low-intensity conflict
FM	Field Manual
FOB	Forward Operating Base
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MEDCAP	Medical Civic Action Programme
MID	Military Information Division
MILPHAP	Military Provincial Health Assistance Programme
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MOOTW	Military Operations other than War
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps – Iraq
MNF-I	Multi-National Force – Iraq
MSU	Michigan State University
MSUG	Michigan State University Group

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NDU	National Defense University
NLF	National Liberation Front
NSAM	National Security Action Memorandum
NSC	National Security Council
OIDP	Overseas Internal Defense Policy
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPS	Office of Public Safety
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PROVN	Pacification of the Republic of Vietnam
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RAND	Research and Development Corporation
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
SIGACT	Significant Activity
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SF	Special Forces
SGCI	Special Group Counter-Insurgency
SORO	Special Operations Research Office
SOSH	Department of Social Sciences, U.S. Military Academy
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
TRADOC	US Army Training and Doctrine Command
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USAMHI	US Army Military History Institute
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USMACV	US Military Assistance Command Vietnam
VC	Việt Cộng
WIEU	Weekly Intelligence Estimate Update
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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