U.S. COIN Doctrine: Betting the Future on a Too Distant Past

A Monograph
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13. ABSTRACT *(Maximum 200 Words)*

While the outcome of the Iraq war seems to have validated the U.S. Army's counterinsurgency manual, FM 3-24, the war in Afghanistan seems to indicate there are fundamental problems associated with its historical principles and concepts. Dr. Kilcullen and Dr. Gorka in "An Actor-centric Theory of War: Understanding the Difference Between COIN and Counterinsurgency" claim that the historical cases upon which the COIN doctrine was based were too limited and do not represent contemporary insurgencies.

To evaluate their claim, the research sought to answer three key questions. First, is FM 3-24 based upon theories and concepts derived in the context of the 20th century? Second, is the doctrine too reliant upon customary scientific principles to be relevant in addressing complex human and social phenomena such as insurgency? Lastly, in light of a historical contemporary conflict, is the doctrine an adequate guide for action in the apparently uncertain and more complex 21st century?

The evidence showed that FM 3-24's writers relied heavily on well-documented 20th century insurgencies to define COIN principles that guide action in the 21st century. As a result, FM 3-24 emphasizes principles and practices derived from post-colonial and Marxist contexts, not from conflicts occurring in the 21st century. The manual's over reliance on general principles indicates that the writers used a scientific approach to understanding and describing complex human and social phenomena. Examination of the Algerian Civil War further revealed that understanding context is an important factor in insurgencies because the principles codified in the manual may not be relevant to insurgencies occurring in the 21st century. These findings are troubling because they imply that the U.S. Army and other COIN forces may initiate future counterinsurgency campaigns with an inadequate guide to action.

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Abstract

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While the outcome of the Iraq war seems to have validated the U.S. Army's counterinsurgency manual, FM 3-24, the war in Afghanistan seems to indicate there are fundamental problems associated with its historical principles and concepts. Dr. Kilcullen and Dr. Gorka in "An Actor-centric Theory of War: Understanding the Difference Between COIN and Counterinsurgency" claim that the historical cases upon which the COIN doctrine was based were too limited and do not represent contemporary insurgencies. The research, therefore, was directed at verifying their claim.

To evaluate their claim, the research sought to answer three key questions. First, is FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency based upon theories and concepts derived in the unique context of the 20th century? Second, is the doctrine too reliant upon customary scientific principles to be relevant in addressing complex human and social phenomena such as insurgency? Lastly, in light of a historical contemporary conflict, is the doctrine an adequate guide for action in the apparently uncertain and more complex 21st century?

The evidence collected showed that FM 3-24's writers relied heavily on well-documented 20th century insurgencies to define COIN principles that would guide action in the 21st century. As a result, FM 3-24 emphasizes principles and practices derived from post-colonial and Marxist contexts, not from conflicts occurring in the 21st century. The manual's over reliance on general principles indicates that the writers used a scientific approach to understanding and describing complex human and social phenomena. Examination of the Algerian Civil War further revealed that understanding context is an important factor in insurgencies because the principles codified in the manual may not be relevant to insurgencies occurring in the 21st century.

These findings are troubling because they imply that the U.S. Army and other COIN forces may initiate future counterinsurgency campaigns with an inadequate guide to action. Doing so could potentially mean assuming unmitigated risks to time, capital, lives, and political will. The debate over the relevance of COIN doctrine has dwindled. Now, rather than when or after the next COIN campaign gets underway, is the time to seriously reexamine it.

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Introduction

It is difficult to dissociate the resurgence of the Army's counterinsurgency or COIN doctrine from the apparent success that a change in strategy and tactics yielded in the war in Iraq. In many ways, the war in Iraq represented a complex problem that thoroughly vexed Army and national political leaders. Acceptance of counterinsurgency doctrine, its widespread application in Iraq and Afghanistan, the resultant conditions leading to the United State's drawdown of forces and the conclusion of the Iraq war in December of 2011 all seem to confirm the soundness of the doctrine and the wisdom of its champions.

Going into the war, the U.S. theory of victory was that a quick, decisive military operation would topple Saddam's regime and lead to a similarly, quick rise of a new government that would properly reflect the will of its people. Essentially, a new government would rise from the ashes of a brutal, authoritarian regime. The new government also would not repress and murder its people, as the Hussein regime had done, but would instead accept international humanitarian norms. Thus, the Iraqi people would welcome the U.S.-led coalition as liberators and American troops would return home shortly after the conclusion of open hostilities. What really happened or what most people think happened is well known and will not be retold here. There are many accounts of the reversal of events in Iraq after the surge and the adoption of a new strategy with counterinsurgency at its center. Currently, focus has shifted to Afghanistan where the outcome, despite the adoption of a similar strategy and surge, appears to be far from decisive. In that light, it is perhaps more important to reexamine the U.S. Army's understanding of counterinsurgency and from that reexamination, derive the implications for creating a clearer understanding of the operational environment.

Although, the Combined Arms Center (CAC), the Army's Training and Doctrine Command's (TRADOC) proponent for doctrine, is actively rewriting counterinsurgency doctrine as part of a comprehensive doctrinal redesign, the Army's most dangerous course of action

mimics that of the post-Vietnam Army. The "Nixon Doctrine" placed the initiative squarely on nations beleaguered by insurgencies and unrest to take on the brunt of military action while the U.S. fulfilled an advisory and support role.[1] That shift in policy not only heralded a significantly diminished role for counterinsurgency in the Army's operating concept but also precipitated a renewed focus on the defense of Western Europe and Cold War conventional strategy. Arguably, given the constraints, the Army did what was required at the time to support the national policy.

The Iraq war has ended and the war in Afghanistan is quickly approaching its newly announced 2013 deadline.[2] Budget and personnel cuts aim to responsibly restructure the military to meet the shifts in policy and strategy. All of these factors indicate that COIN will likely be given less attention and resources. Meaning the Army, as it did after the Vietnam War, may neglect COIN and hence, could begin its next counterinsurgency campaign with doctrine ill-suited to the operational environment and the insurgent threats.

In a January 2011 article entitled "An Actor-centric Theory of War: Understanding the Difference Between COIN and Counterinsurgency," Dr. Kilcullen and Dr. Gorka argued for expanding the scope of counterinsurgency studies used to inform U.S. Army COIN doctrine. They claim that if U.S. Army COIN doctrine writers had adopted a more scientifically rigorous approach and expanded the span of COIN cases considered to include other examples of irregular warfare that occurred in the 20th century, U.S. doctrine might be far more relevant."[3] Additionally, they maintain the doctrinal principles that were eventually codified in FM 3-24, were shaped not by the lessons of past decades of war against nonstate actors but by the limited

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[1] Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2006), 477.

[2] Jim Garamone, "Transition to Afghan Control a Prudent Step, Officials Say," *American Forces Press Service* (2012). http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=67032 (accessed February 1, 2012)

[3] Sebastian L.v. Gorka and David Kilcullen, "An Actor-Centric Theory of War: Understanding the Difference between COIN and Counterinsurgency," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No. 60 (2011): 16.

experiences of Western nations during the 20th century. Specifically, the lessons excluded other incidents of irregular warfare typically classified as revolutions or civil wars and were "limited to cases where a colonial or post imperial government was fighting on the territory of its dependent (ex)colonies."[4] Furthermore, they assert that these narrow foundations upon which classical COIN doctrine was developed have distorted U.S. understanding of current insurgent threats and dangerously limited U.S. ability to defeat current and future enemies.[5] Thus, if Dr. Kilcullen and Dr. Gorka are correct, the U.S. COIN doctrine is inadequate. Are they correct?

To assess whether Dr. Kilcullen and Dr. Gorka are correct requires answering three questions. First, were the authors of FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* influenced primarily by Western experiences in counterinsurgency operations conducted in a post-colonial context during the 20th century? The answer to this question is significant because doctrine derived from past experiences in a 20th century post-colonial context may not adequately address current and future insurgent threats. Counterinsurgent forces planning campaigns that rely upon inadequate doctrine may not correctly interpret the threats they face.

The second question flows from the answer to the first. If the doctrine was narrowly drawn, what insurgencies were omitted and what were the characteristics of those wars? Identifying military experiences other than those used by doctrine writers makes it possible to compare current or future insurgent conditions and to properly classify the type of insurgency. Lastly, the question is, are there lessons from those additional experiences that need to be considered? If there are, then the current doctrine is inadequate.

The method used to answer the research question consisted of three fundamental steps. Firstly, to determine whether U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine has neglected, to its detriment, the dynamics of revolution, it was first necessary to determine how counterinsurgency doctrine

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[4] Gorka and Kilcullen: 16.

[5] Ibid., 15.

defines the conditions of insurgency and the historical cases that informed the doctrine. This was difficult given that FM 3-24's authors did not specifically cite their sources. However, the manual provides a broad bibliography, which offers clues to the sources of its theoretical and doctrinal underpinnings.[6] It was also necessary to determine which factors the doctrine identifies as important in counterinsurgency operations. The manual explicitly states those factors, but discovering the reasoning behind them involved investigating the theories and experiences that influenced U.S. COIN doctrine and practice. Answering these questions established the context within which the doctrine was developed.

Secondly, it was necessary to identify other incidents of armed conflict to assess whether those incidents fit into the COIN definition and if so, how those other incidents differ from those actually considered in preparing the doctrine. To do this, the research aimed to uncover insights into the theoretical foundations of COIN doctrine starting with its development within the RAND Corporation in the late 1950s as well as several theories on the social origins and aspects of revolutions and insurgencies. This step provided a theoretical basis for examining the manual's people centric focus as well as to provide a basis for the case study analysis.

Finally, it was possible to assess a study of an excluded conflict and thereby identify factors not previously considered by the doctrine writers. Drs. Kilcullen and Gorka pointed out that the Algerian Civil War of 1992-2002 was one such case not considered by the manual's writers. The civil war pitted a factionalized Algerian government, supported by Western nations, against several insurgent factions. The insurgent factions formed what amounted to a tentative coalition dedicated to gaining power. Nonetheless, they each held differing concepts for framing a new government once they achieved power. The conflicting visions posed significant challenges for insurgent and counterinsurgent alike. Specifically, the aim was to determine if

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[6] FM 3-24's authors created three separate categories within the manual's Annotated Bibliography: The Classics, Overviews and Special Subjects In Counterinsurgency, and Contemporary Experiences and the War on Terrorism.

contemporary conflicts are more or less like those the manual's writers considered, such as the Maoist insurgency in China or the Algerian war of liberation in the 1960s.

The evidence thus assembled indicates that Dr. Kilcullen and Dr. Gorka's assessment is accurate. U.S. Army COIN doctrine developers relied heavily on classical COIN examples and excluded modern examples of revolutions and civil wars. The principles codified in current doctrine are drawn specifically from classical COIN operations - those occurring in a post-colonial context – and, in many ways, do not relate to 21st century threats. Regardless of context, Army COIN doctrine and the works used to inform it emphasize efforts to reconcile grievances between people and their governments by taking a population centric approach. This involves providing security from insurgent attacks while trying to improve the host nation government's capacity for effective governance. By far, past and current COIN doctrines have heavily emphasized this approach to defeating insurgency. It reflects heavy influences of historical cases of Maoist insurgency. The central problem of doctrine is that it does not adequately address context while it over emphasizes what amounts to a scientific approach to countering insurgency, stressing the application of general rules and principles; rules derived in the 1950s and 1960s. Because the manual inadequately addresses context, it does not account for current threats that differ significantly from the cases that informed the doctrine. The manual's authors highlight the importance of context throughout the document but do little to explain its importance or to provide practitioners with analytical tools.

Furthermore, there is little objective evidence to indicate that America prefers to avoid insurgency in the context of revolutions and civil wars. There are indicators that doctrine should include a better framework for examining the causes of revolutions and insurgencies, the types of insurgencies and their corresponding political motivations, and the strategies insurgencies use to attain their objectives. Given the scope of this study it was not be possible to assess whether these additional factors would have made a difference in the U.S. actions in Iraq and Afghanistan since

they were not known, not observed, and not acted upon. At best the research suggests additional considerations for employing forces in the contemporary military environment.

Examining U.S. COIN Doctrine and Theory

FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* serves as the Army's capstone doctrine for COIN operations and represents a distinctive development in doctrinal design. The manual was a collaborative effort between the Army and the Marine Corps, civilian academics, COIN practitioners, and various social scientists. Neither of these methods are normal features of Army doctrinal formulation. Furthermore, faced with an urgent need for comprehensive doctrine to support ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2006, the Army invited a broad collaborative to speed FM 3-24's development. The context of the doctrine's development partly explains why it may simply represent a re-hashing of concepts rooted in the 1950s and 1960s.

Doctrine plays an important role in how the United States Army sees the security environment and operations in that environment. JP 1-02 *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines doctrine as "fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives."[7] *JP 1-02* also states "doctrine is authoritative but requires judgment in application." *ADP 3-0: Unified Land Operations* highlights another distinct aspect of doctrine. It states that "[c]apstone doctrine establishes the Army's view of the nature of operations, the fundamentals by which Army forces conduct operations, and the methods by which commanders exercise mission command."[8] Capstone doctrine also provides the basis for making decisions concerning factors such as force organization, the training of forces, and the development of leaders.[9] Doctrine, shaped by the

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[7] Joint Publication (JP) 1-02: *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2010), 102.

[8] Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) No. 3: *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2011), 1.

[9] Ibid.

Army's understanding of the environment and its resulting operating concept for how best to operate within that environment, can also have immense impact in counterinsurgency operations. If doctrine writers fail to adequately account for that environment, the corresponding doctrine may prove to be an inadequate guide for action. For this reason, doctrine remains a contentious point in assessing the Army's effectiveness in COIN operations.

The manual acknowledges that while each insurgency has unique contextual aspects, all insurgencies are "wars among the people" that "use variations of standard themes and adhere to elements of a recognizable revolutionary campaign plan."[10] It addresses COIN in general with the aim of providing soldiers and marines with a solid foundation for understanding and addressing specific insurgencies through the development of an adaptive campaign plan.[11] The manual frames COIN operations for counterinsurgent forces as a counter revolutionary campaign to be conducted among the population. It also subtly suggests that all insurgencies share common characteristics while acknowledging the importance of understanding the context of the insurgency and taking the appropriate actions within that context. Despite its authors' attempts to communicate the need for flexibility and adaptability, the manual, nevertheless, has a heritage rich in classical conceptions of insurgency and COIN.

JP 1-02 defines *counterinsurgency* or COIN as "comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and address any core grievances."[12] It also defines *insurgency* as "the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force a change of governing authority."[13] This explanation is remarkably similar

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[10] FM 3-24: *Counterinsurgency (Field Manual No. 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), Foreword.

[11] Ibid.

[12] JP 1-02, 77.

[13] Ibid., 163.

to the definition David Galula provides in his 1964 book *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*:

> On the other hand, an insurgency is a protracted struggle conducted methodically, step by step in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing order.[14]

Galula's experiences fighting insurgents in China, Greece, Southeast Asia, and Algeria influenced his characterization of the political nature of insurgency and also resonate strongly with the authors of *FM 3-24*. Accordingly, the manual highlights the political context of insurgencies by emphasizing the protracted politico-military struggle that insurgents carry out to weaken the legitimate control of an established government while strengthening their own control.[15] Further, the manual states that COIN is "military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency."[16] However, this does not answer the question of why do insurgencies develop? The manual offers a historical explanation for why insurgencies develop, which will be discussed and critiqued later. For now, a quick review of the social science perspective on the causes of insurgency will serve to introduce the importance of context in addressing insurgencies.

The Social Sciences Perspective

In *A Primer in Theory Construction* (1971), Paul Reynolds states that scientific knowledge is useful because it provides a typology, a predictive and explanative capability, a sense of causal relationships, and the potential to control events. Examining Reynolds' discussion of scientific knowledge illuminates the inappropriate use of scientific knowledge in FM 3-24 to study social and human phenomena such as insurgency and revolution. Insurgencies are political and social phenomena and hence, not fully amendable to scientific methods.

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[14] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 2.

[15] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, p. 1-1.

[16] Ibid.

According to Reynolds, the desirable characteristics of scientific knowledge are abstractness, intersubjectivity, and empirical relevance. Without these characteristics, a concept may not be useful as scientific knowledge. Abstractness means that a concept is independent of a particular time or space. Concepts or theories that correspond to a particular time or space are not generalizable and hold no predictive value. Intersubjectivity, or shared meaning, has two components. The first is explicitness, which means that there is sufficient description and use of terminology to ensure the audience understands the concept. Rigor is the second component, which means that logical systems are shared and accepted within the relevant scientific community to ensure mutual understanding of the predictions and explanations of a particular theory. [17] Empirical relevance means other scientists can assess the correspondence between a given theory and their own empirical research.

While the social sciences offer an alternative to FM 3-24's explanation of revolution and insurgency, Reynolds points out five problems, which demonstrate the field's challenges. First, a scientific body of knowledge relating to social and human phenomena is inherently more complex than the science of physical phenomena. However, it is possible to identify principal causal processes and establish their interrelations. Second, many theories of social and human phenomena cannot be used to predict or explain events because their occurrence cannot be verified and measured. Third, observation can lead to unintentional interaction with the social phenomena and sometimes observation and analysis produces conflicting views of the outcomes. Fourth, personal biases and value judgments relating to social phenomena prevent the social scientist from achieving complete objectivity. Finally, ethical considerations place a limit on the social phenomena that can be studied as well as the methods used.[18] Notwithstanding social

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[17] Paul D. Reynolds, *A Primer in Theory Construction*, Allyn and Bacon Classics (Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 1971), 13-19. Reynolds also notes that usefulness for the goals of science is the "final test" of a theory or concept.

[18] Reynolds, 161-163.

sciences' challenges, in comparison it still appears better suited than pure scientific method for examining social and human phenomena.

Because insurgency is a form of warfare and war is a distinctly human activity, the social sciences offer a suitable body of work for examining the causes of insurgency. Social revolutions are powerful transformations that tend to remap political and social structures within a nation or society. However, context is an important factor in determining the combination of factors required to initiate revolution. The context also shapes the methods used by an insurgent or revolutionary movement and the legitimate government's response. The main reason the context is important may simply be that different societies and cultures respond to similar circumstances in different ways. Therefore, it seems reasonable that broadening the understanding of revolutions would help counterinsurgents grasp these complex, social phenomena.

Theda Skopcol, social scientist and Harvard professor, offers an interesting perspective on the causes of insurgency in *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*.[19] Skopcol posits that "[s]ocial revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below."[20] She further states that social revolutions "are set apart from other sorts of conflicts and transformative processes" chiefly due to the "coincidence of societal structural change with class upheaval" and "the coincidence of political with social transformation."[21] Social revolution's uniqueness stems from the complementary manner in which changes in both the social and political order occur and the important role class conflict plays in effecting change. They are complex phenomena requiring holistic study; and social

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[19] Harvard University, "Harvard University Department of Sociology Faculty Biographies," Harvard University, http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/soc/faculty/skocpol/ (accessed February 12, 2012).

[20] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 4.

[21] Ibid.

revolutions are successful only if there is actual sociopolitical change. The basic premise of her argument is that social revolutions should be analyzed from a structural perspective, devoting significant attention to international contexts and the sociopolitical situations at home and abroad that contribute to the breakdown of old regimes and the buildup of new, revolutionary ones.[22]

Also, Dr. Skocpol offers an insightful critique of four common methods for analyzing revolutions, by arguing that each method has a shared image of the revolutionary process:

> First, changes in social systems or societies give rise to grievances, social disorientation, or new class or group interests and potentials for collective mobilization. Then there develops a purposive, mass-based movement – coalescing with the aid of ideology and organization – that consciously undertakes to overthrow the existing government and perhaps the entire social order. Finally, the revolutionary movement fights it out with the authorities or dominant class and, if it wins, undertakes to establish its own authority or program.

She identified four theoretical methods: *Marxist*, *aggregate-psychological*, *political violence*, and *value-coordinated social system* approaches.[23] She takes issue with this shared or purposive image because it attempts to put insurgency neatly into a box.[24]

Her critique of the Marxist approach is relevant to this study for two reasons. First, the classical COIN texts that appear to have had the most influence on FM 3-24's authors detail approaches to countering distinctly Marxist influenced insurgencies. People's war, Maoist insurgency, and protracted struggle are nearly synonymous with Marxist revolutionary thought. Second, the doctrine's definition of governance assumes that government acts for the good of the state and its people while disregarding its own interests. Marxist theorists posit that the state exists to maintain coercive power over the polity for the sake of that society's dominant class. The dominant class is important because it is generally regarded as the chief producer of economic activity and economics are vital to the state. Marxists also acknowledge that the state

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[22] Skopcol, 5.

[23] Ibid., 6.

[24] Ibid., 14-15.

can maintain control without having the broad consent of the populous. In FM 3-24, politics and control of the populace are the ends of revolution, while alternative sets of interests are afforded minimal consideration. Skopcol argued that this understanding of governments is too limited. She further suggested that state rulers, like the insurgent or revolutionary forces they oppose, might actually be operating in their own interests and their interests may even conflict with those of the dominant class and the polity.[25] What this means for COIN doctrine is that the legitimate government's interests may not be congruous with the United State's understanding of societal norms and accepted behavior. However, FM 3-24 offers no substantive guidance for practitioners who may come face to face with such a situation.

Two other notable social science theorists, Misagh Parsa and Barrington Moore, Jr., use methods and hold views similar to Skopcol's. Yet, their interpretations and explanations of what causes revolution and insurgency differ substantially. In *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines*, Misagh Parsa also underscores the role that structure plays in social revolutions. *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions* (2000) is a comparative study of revolutions in the Third World and a theoretical vehicle for explaining how the formation and mobilization of broad coalitions and their collective action is critical to revolutionary success. He also argues that while "structural variables set the stage for conflicts, they do not determine the occurrence, timing and the process of conflict."[26] Parsa explains that the presence of similar variables or conditions may not lead to the emergence of expected outcomes and processes. Analyzing other factors such as "the role of opportunities, organization, mobilization options, the likelihood of coalition formation, and disruptions of social structure" help in understanding the actual dynamics of revolution.

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[25] Skopcol, 27.

[26] Misagh Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Parsa further argues that, notwithstanding other differences, the revolutions in Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines followed a general pattern. Each of the governments he studied practiced internal political exclusiveness, rigorously repressed the opposition, and directed economic development and investment. Next, social and economic inequality widened. The increasing disparities raised the level of discontent. Raised levels of discontent coincided with external pressure that weakened the government and lessened its ability to repress dissenting factions, thereby creating an environment conducive to political mobilization. In all three cases, the coalitions consisted of a variety of social groups each with different interests and ideologies but collectively mobilized for action against the government.[27] In Iran and Nicaragua, the revolutionaries overthrew the existing government in successful social revolutions while the opposition in the Philippines carried out a successful political revolution. Parsa, like Skopcol, emphasizes the importance of structure and process in revolutions, but he claims that the ability of revolutionaries to form broad coalitions with diverse interests and ideologies remains critical to success. Of equal importance is the government's ability to prevent the formation of broad coalitions in order to counter revolutions successfully.

Writing in 1966, Barrington Moore, Jr. charted the evolution of agrarian nations into industrialized ones in his book titled *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. He argued that the landed upper class and peasants have played a critical role in the revolutionary transformation of countries such as England, France, China, and India.[28] Moore defined agrarian societies as ones in which the majority of the population depends on the land to extract a living.[29] Moore claims that agrarian societies took one of three routes to modernity: a bourgeois revolution from below resulting in a democratic leaning

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[27] Parsa, 25.

[28] Ibid., 26-28.

[29] Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), xvii.

government and capitalism; an abortive bourgeois revolution from above leading to fascism, or a communist revolution brought on by peasant mobilization.[30] His findings point to the importance of revolutionary movements in transforming society and how and why similar conditions present in two different countries can produce dramatically different outcomes. Again, these works and Reynolds' critical examination of scientific knowledge underline the importance context plays in social and human phenomena.

Classical Concepts for Modern Insurgency

FM 3-24 provides some of the theoretical background for how insurgencies evolved over time, the different typologies, and their respective motivations and methods. Additionally, the manual details some of the dynamics of insurgencies. However, it does not overtly state what or which theories the manual is based upon. First, FM 3-24 separates the evolution of insurgency into two distinct periods, pre- and post-World War II, and describes the trends within those periods. In defining these two periods, the manual emphasizes that the characteristics of today's environment are a variation on previous trends or themes. The manual condenses this description neatly into two periods, whereas the research indicates the history of insurgency is a far more complex phenomenon.

The manual goes on to describe the post-World War II period as the modern era of insurgencies and internal war.[31] This historical description of insurgency points to changes in social conditions as a key factor in the change in insurgency motivations. However, FM 3-24 scarcely identifies specific trends that contributed directly to that changing nature or the countries in which these changes took place. The manual implies that the resistance movements that opposed the German and Japanese invasion and occupation forces seeded the insurgencies that

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[30] Moore, xvii.

[31] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-4.

occurred after the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945. Further, the rise in nationalism and communism combined with the decline of imperial power provided the motivation and conditions for people to form governments that were more responsive to their needs. The manual's authors give the impression that these movements were altruistic when they may not be generalizable phenomena. Specifically, the decline of the French and British colonial empires led to the emergence of nation states through violent political action. In Algeria, this led to what was essentially an autocratic regime, which exploited the young nation's oil wealth and intense social and political divisions to remain in power. Corresponding trends in technology such as advancements in the portability and lethality of weapons systems and the news media's ability to reach the global audience put new and more powerful tools in the hands of insurgents. According to the manual, the results were that insurgencies became national and transnational revolutionary movements with the potential to achieve decisive outcomes. It is also important to note that the modern era is credited for spawning the Maoist, focoist, and urban approaches to insurgency.[32] However, the manual does not mention the influence of geography, initial internal social conditions, or external influences on the development of different insurgent approaches in different regions and countries. As emphasized by Reynolds and noted by Skopcol, abstractness in the social sciences may be impossible to achieve, which partly explains why FM 3-24's broad, sweeping summation of the post-World War II environment seems inadequate.

In searching for other clues to aid in understanding the influence of the classics on the manual, a search of the bibliography revealed an indicator of the typology its authors used. FM 3-24's Annotated Bibliography divides sources into three categories: *The Classics, Overviews and Special Subjects in Counterinsurgency*, and *Contemporary Experiences and the War on Terrorism*. The definition of each category is unknown, but the labels suggest the bibliography divides the works based on publication date, focusing on when the work was written or the period

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[32] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-4.

of history covered by a specific study. *The Classics* includes works by authors such as Frank E. Kitson, French army officers Roger Trinquier and David Galula, and others such as T.E. Lawrence. The works of Robert Taber, John A. Nagl, and Bard E. O'Neill were placed in the second category, while the *War on Terrorism* category contains a variety of articles and books written in a roughly two to four year period after the March 2003 Iraq invasion.

This classification of sources may also indicate that Drs. Gorka and Kilcullen were right when they claimed that the stalemate in Iraq was the motivation for renewed interest in classic counterinsurgency texts.[33] They maintain that the military was attempting to relearn that which it once knew and FM 3-24 is representative of that process. If Gorka and Kilcullen have a valid point here, it is important to understand some of *The Classics* and their influence on COIN doctrine. The classics heavily influenced COIN doctrine while the other categories appear to provide the basis for the manual's tactics.

Enduring Classical Influences

David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare* clearly reflects his experiences fighting insurgents in several contextually different environments, each exhibiting similar characteristics. Although he provided an eight-step guide for countering insurgency, he also cautioned against a doctrinaire approach to counterrevolutionary war and highlighted the importance of context.[34] However, it is evident that the author's of FM 3-24 did not heed his warning and relied heavily on his and other classical works in formulating COIN doctrine. The manual's reliance on Galula's and the other classical COIN texts' characterization of insurgent motivations, aims, and methods partly explain why Drs. Gorka and Kilcullen are critical of the doctrine.

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[33] Gorka and Kilcullen: 15.

[34] Galula, xiii and 107. In Chapter 7: Operations, he again reminds the reader to "be more concerned with principles than with actual recipes."

In creating an insurgency typology, FM 3-24 attempts to establish a spectrum of irregular conflict with coup d'état and revolution as the extremes and insurgencies generally falling between the two. Galula also provides a critical distinction between revolutions, plots (coup d'état), and insurgencies. *Insurgency* is a protracted struggle conducted methodically to attain a series of specific intermediate objectives leading finally to the overthrow of the existing government or order.[35] He further states that insurgency *is* civil war. FM 3-24 makes a similar distinction concerning insurgency by depicting it as a type or form of internal war. Internal war occurs primarily within a single state, not between states, and involves some elements of civil war. The manual implies that civil war is an outgrowth of an insurgency and occurs when insurgent forces are capable of providing for the population and are powerful enough to successfully wage conventional warfare.[36] The manual discusses revolutionary warfare but does little to explain the dynamics of revolution. While FM 3-24 offers no definition for revolutionary war, Galula defines it thusly:

> A revolutionary war is primarily an internal conflict, although external influences seldom fail to bear upon it. Although in many cases, the insurgents have been easily identifiable national groups…this does not alter the strategically important fact that they were challenging a local ruling party controlling the existing administration, police, and armed forces. In this respect, colonial revolutionary wars have not differed from the purely indigenous ones, such as those in Cuba and South Vietnam.[37]

According to FM 3-24, the central aim of insurgencies and counterinsurgents is political because each side attempts to get the people to accept its authority as legitimate. The manual also cautions counterinsurgents that insurgents can adapt to use conventional battle when conditions favor such operations.[38] This is a reference to the Maoist form of communist inspired protracted war wherein

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[35] Galula, 4.

[36] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-2. Joint Doctrine, JP 1-02, does not provide a definition for civil war.

[37] Galula, 1.

[38] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-2.

insurgencies cycle through three distinct stages. The third stage is mobile warfare on a scale and degree sufficient to rival that of the legitimate authority. This conceptualization also draws on the Maoist model of insurgency reflecting the influence that 20th Century events have on current doctrine.

The model for legitimate government is a representative government, which Galula points out, is responsive to the needs of its people. JP 1-02 defines governance as:

> The state's ability to serve the citizens through the rules, processes, and behavior by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in a society, including the representative participatory decision-making processes typically guaranteed under inclusive, constitutional authority.[39]

This definition is in agreement with Galula's description. The insurgent aims to overthrow the existing authority while the counterinsurgent aims to sustain the existing or emerging government and reduce the chances of another crisis. FM 3-24 also emphasizes the need to address and eliminate as many root causes of insurgency as possible including those insurgents who refuse to reconcile with the existing or emerging authority. Over time, counterinsurgents attempt to create conditions that allow the existing authority or emerging regime to provide for its own security, rule of law, social services, and economic activity. However, the manual does not account for the possibility, and indeed the probability that the incumbent government or counterinsurgent may have internally and externally incongruent aims preventing it from acting consistently. FM 3-24 also acknowledges that long-term success of COIN operations relies on the people taking responsibility for their own affairs and consenting to the government's rule.[40] This assertion may also be based on an assumption that is inconsistent with the insurgency's context.

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[39] JP 1-02, 141.

[40] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-1.

FM 3-24 specifically states that the military alone cannot achieve the aims of COIN and further emphasizes the need to use all elements of national power.[41] In short, COIN forces and insurgents use similar politico-military methods and have the same objective, that of gaining or retaining political power and controlling the population. Counterinsurgents act to create the conditions needed by the host nation government to establish and maintain effective governance. Those conditions include security, a sense of law and order, common welfare, and gainful economic activity for the population. These conditions lead to effective governance.

T.E. Lawrence's classic *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph*, details Britain's use of indigenous tribes within Arabia during World War I to conduct irregular warfare aimed at limiting the freedom of action of Turkish occupation forces.[42] He also describes the aims of the relatively few Arab elites who sought not only to expel the Turks, but also to create conditions favorable to autonomous rule following the war. In the book, Lawrence details how Arabia's geography, its religion, and culture combined to influence how the Arab forces should best be employed to accomplish British aims. Correspondingly, Lawrence's theory of victory combined a thorough understanding of the terrain, the enemy, and the friendly force with a sound plan for capitalizing on the Arab strengths to accomplish the British and the Arab elite's aims. However, the majority of the Arab leaders involved did not have self-governance as their aim. For most of them, earning prestige and saving face at the lowest cost possible mattered more. Although Lawrence's often quoted expression that compared insurgency to eating soup with a knife still resonates today, his insurgency experience related more to a war of national liberation than to the challenges nations face in the 21st century.

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[41] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-1.

[42] T. E. Lawrence, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1962), 197-202. Lawrence describes the unique *Algebraical, Biological*, and *Psychological* elements of the complex problem he faced. His approach reflected those considerations.

Frank Kitson wrote *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, and Peacekeeping* in 1971 to convince British policy makers and military leadership to invest in programs to improve counterinsurgency preparedness. Kitson used a variety of insurgencies and counter insurgent operations to make his case. However, the most striking feature of his work is its coverage of insurgent causes and motivations. He posits, as does Trinquier, that popular support is essential to victory. Accordingly, he states that insurgents will either advocate a pre-existing cause that will garner broad popular support or devise one that will.[43] Using force to co-opt the population was the other method. Furthermore, he acknowledges that the aims and the means of insurgent movements are usually political in nature. For instance, focoists led by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro in Cuba spurned the supremacy of the official communist parties in Latin America, because they wanted power to rest in the hands of the focoists after victory was achieved.[44] In Cuba, Castro has clearly benefited from that arrangement and his autocratic regime has survived for over thirty years.

While the doctrine maintains that it is essential for counterinsurgents to understand the type of insurgency they are facing and the approaches it may employ, it makes it clear that not many "insurgencies will fit neatly into any rigid classification."[45] In addition, FM 3-24 clearly lays out the terms of reference for the subject, but it reveals only a glimpse of the origins of counterinsurgency doctrine. In contrast, the manual treats insurgency in great detail, enumerating its causes, typology, motivations, and possible counter strategies. However, the discussion of insurgents neglects contextually unique and immutable characteristics. For instance, the manual's authors' preoccupation with the primacy of the insurgent's political objective may lead readers to believe that all, or at least most, insurgents have a political objective. The evidence strongly

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[43] Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping*, Paperback ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 29.

[44] Ibid., 42.

[45] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-5.

suggests that other motives may be at play. Still, the manual and the classical works that influenced it only reveal part of the problem with using broad, abstract concepts extrapolated across time and space to describe complex social and human phenomena and to guide action in a time and space that may be far different from the original context. Looking at the work done at RAND Corporation in the fifties further reveals the foundations of U.S. COIN theory and doctrine.

Intellectual History of U.S. COIN Theory

In *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*, Austin Long summarizes the intellectual history of United States COIN theory. His work underlines the influence scientific approaches developed in the 1950s and 1960s have on current COIN doctrine. It also brings to light some of the internal debates at RAND over how theory might be applied to counter insurgency while conveying the difficulty associated with applying purely scientific approaches to understand and to counter insurgency.

Following World War II, military and government leaders understood the need to continue to harness academia's intellectual resources to solve military problems. As the war ended, they feared that scientists and intellectuals would return to universities depriving the military and government access to this valuable resource. In October of 1945, General Henry "Hap" Arnold and others in and out of government established RAND as an interdisciplinary think tank focused on the problems of the emerging Cold War. In its early years, RAND focused primarily on Air Force problems such as nuclear readiness, basing plans for bombers, and prevention of surprise nuclear attack.[46] RAND first addressed the problem of counterinsurgency in 1958 during a set of war games known as Sierra. Based on U.S. experiences in Korea and the French in Indochina, Sierra anticipated limited war in Asia in which fighting was semi

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[46] Austin G. Long, *On "Other War": Lessons from Five Decades of Rand Counterinsurgency Research* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, National Defense Research Institute, 2006), 5.

conventional. Sierra's inclusion of scenarios below the threshold of nuclear war also reflected the feeling of many scientists at RAND and others in government that reliance on strategic nuclear forces would not be adequate to deter the Soviets.[47]

In some ways, Sierra also anticipated President John F. Kennedy's policy of "Flexible Response." As a strategy, "Flexible Response" aimed to combat problems in Third World countries such as insurgencies and limited wars. While, it may not be possible to discern whether Sierra and its advocates influenced President Kennedy's decision to adopt this strategy, it is likely that the administration's affinity to the sciences led to closer governmental ties with RAND.[48] This relationship would become important as the United States attempted to stem the spread of communism by supporting an independent South Vietnam in 1961.

Despite U.S. support and military assistance to the South, North Vietnam supported insurgents continued to gain control of the South's population and territory in 1962. The Kennedy administration enlisted RAND to assist with the problem. RAND analysts studied previous counterinsurgency campaigns, interviewed participants in those campaigns, and conducted symposiums to discover patterns in insurgencies and counterinsurgencies in efforts to derive lessons.[49] In 1962, one such symposium included COIN practitioners Frank Kitson and David Galula.

In trying to derive lessons, RAND faced one of the central problems confronting the social sciences. Insurgency is complex with a great number of variables at play that often interact in indiscernible ways.[50] The problem becomes one of choosing appropriate case studies and recognizing how the cases are similar yet unique, and why. Only then is it possible to derive

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[47] Long, 6.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 6-7.

[50] Ibid., 7.

general conclusions or lessons from those cases while acknowledging the vital role that context plays. Skopcol highlighted the shortfalls of this type of approach in *States and Social Revolutions.* She observed that this approach focuses almost exclusively on derivation of general principles when each insurgency is contextually unique. This subtle point, whether lessons from previous counterinsurgencies apply to current ones regardless of context, is at the heart of Kilcullen and Gorka's argument and was not lost on RAND researches at the time. Long maintains that RAND researchers adopted an open-minded yet skeptical approach to counterinsurgency and acknowledged the limits of their research methods and conclusions when trying to derive lessons for future application.[51] The lessons that RAND analysts and others learned combined with other theoretical approaches to inform the development of counterinsurgency or COIN theory.

Insurgency Theory at RAND

Beginning in the 1950s, early COIN theorists believed that the process of modernization and economic development when combined with other factors made governments vulnerable to insurgencies. According to this theory or understanding, the collapse of colonial empires spawned new nations that, unlike developed nations of the world, were forced to deal with the negative consequences of economic development over the course of a few years. Changes in economic conditions placed additional pressure on society, which in turn placed pressure on the young governments to provide effective governance. Instability also made societies susceptible to communist influence, because communism offered a more attractive alternative. By providing stability and order that the government could not, insurgents were then able to gain popular support. As insurgents gained more support and grew more powerful, they could form their own

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[51] Long, 14.

armies and wage war against the government. However, this understanding of insurgency is problematic.[52]

In essence, this description of the problem closely approximates the *neat* description of social revolution that Skopcol critiqued in the previous section. By characterizing the threat as essentially Marxist in nature, it necessarily narrows the focus to principles and characteristics that may not necessarily apply to the situation at hand. It also highlights Skopcol's critique of how theorists overlook the international context and effects of modernization by focusing on the phenomena or issues as purely internal to the state. She further argues that nations dealing with modernization may also diverge in how they adapt depending on the particular context.[53] Lastly, the description implies that governments need popular support to remain in power, which runs counterintuitive to the existence and continued viability of authoritarian regimes. FM 3-24 adopts a similar description of insurgency and also emphasizes the importance of popular support.

Two Early COIN Theories at RAND: H.A.M. and Cost/Benefit

After identifying the problems that modernization posed for post-colonial governments and the insurgent's need for popular support, two basic theories were developed to remedy these problems. Of the two theories, winning hearts and minds is most closely associated with counterinsurgency operations during Vietnam. However, British army officer Sir Gerald Templer actually coined the phrase "winning the hearts and minds of the people" during the Malayan Emergency. "Hearts and Minds" theory or H.A.M. as it came to be known was a deliberate approach to restoring the population's confidence in the legitimate government. Counterinsurgents had to secure the population from insurgents and governmental abuses of

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[52] Ibid., 22.

[53] Skocpol, 19.

power, improve the people's political rights, and enhance the standard of living by easing the course of economic development.[54]

RAND economist Charles Wolf refuted H.A.M. theory and put forth cost/benefit theory in 1965. He argued that increasing the population's standard of living, as H.A.M. theory prescribed would simply lead to more resources in the hands of insurgents. Insurgents could buy these resources from the population or extract them using coercion. Instead, he maintained that the population must cooperate with the legitimate government in exchange for benefits and resources thereby depriving the insurgents of support.[55] He also argued that successfully countering an insurgency requires a detailed understanding of how the system functions in specific context, indicating that generalizable principles and rules may not be applicable in every situation.[56] Although both theories emphasized the importance of influencing the population's behavior, Wolf's theory appears more in line with RAND's scientific approach to analyzing problems, developing solutions, and measuring results.

Essentially, Wolf sought to use RAND's systems analysis and econometrics approach to address the COIN problem. Systems analysis implied that there were two competing systems, insurgency and COIN, with the population virtually serving as the object of that competition.[57] The population, composed of rational actors, would respond in mostly predictable ways to positive and negative inputs from the insurgency and COIN systems. From a utilitarian standpoint, populations and the individuals that comprise them, make decisions that maximize their opportunity to profit. The purpose of econometrics was to test and measure the effectiveness of COIN approaches using mathematics and statistics. According to cost/benefit theory, an

[54] Long, 23.

[55] Charles Wolf, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: New Myths and Old Realities* (Santa Monica, Calif.,: Rand Corp., 1965), 6-7.

[56] Ibid., 14.

[57] Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (Chicago: RAND Corporation, 1970), 32-33, R-462-ARPA.

effective COIN effort was one in which the benefit of the outputs was incommensurate with the

cost of the insurgent's inputs. Simply put, the counterinsurgent must increase the costs

(persuasion and coercion) incurred by the insurgent while decreasing their outputs (popular

support and guerilla fighters). The converse could also be true. An economic study conducted in

1965 suggested that economic development efforts should be directed towards urban South

Vietnam citizens rather than rural ones seems to support cost/benefit theory's premises. The study

implied that because the government could control urban populations more easily than rural ones,

resources bestowed on that segment of the population were less likely to end up in insurgent

hands.[58] Although cost/benefit theory had a strong following within RAND, it also had its critics.

Criticism stemmed from the notion that escalation or commitment of resources and

efforts by counterinsurgents and insurgents had limits. The most substantial resource was the use

of violence to repress undesired behavior on the part of the population. Critics argued that

escalation by both sides would lead either to further escalation or to eventual conflict termination

due to exhaustion. Escalation of the use of violence by the counterinsurgents would breed bad

feelings among the population leading to the creation of more insurgents.[59] Cost/benefit theorists

countered this argument by re-stating that feelings are irrelevant and the population's behavior

matters more.

The population's preferences constituted a second contentious point of cost/benefit

theory. Critics argued that cost/benefit theory overlooked the population's preferences. A basic

assumption of cost/benefit was that the population would make choices based solely on the value

it attached to incentives and disincentives and that it did not have a specific preference for the

insurgent or counterinsurgent. Albert Wohlstetter, a RAND analyst and a leading critic of

cost/benefit theory, added that population preferences could vary widely. More importantly, he

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[58] Long, 25.

[59] Ibid., 26.

claimed that counterinsurgent activity, especially repressive violence, could alter those preferences. While repression might increase the costs to insurgents, it might also negatively affect the population's preferences causing them to prefer and support the insurgents. Additionally, the costs to insurgents might actually decrease as the population's preferences shift to their side. This point is closely related to the notion of the legitimate right to rule. Wohlstetter claimed that the insurgent and counterinsurgent should exercise restraint when using force to avoid undermining their own legitimacy.[60] Failure to do so would lead to the continued use of repression even after conflict termination.

Stathis Kalyvas identified this same dilemma in *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Indiscriminate violence may prove counterproductive and leave lasting feelings of resentment once the conflict has ended. The challenge becomes identifying insurgents and applying violence in a consistent manner.[61] In the long term, the cost of using repression could ultimately be much greater than the expected benefit and negatively affect legitimacy. For this reason, Kalyvas argued that the counterinsurgent must be very accurate when applying violence so as to avoid the unnecessary and counterproductive effects of collateral damage. FM 3-24 addresses the same issue in a section titled *Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency Operations* and notes that applying force discriminately strengthens the rule of law presumed to follow the conflict.[62] FM 3-24 referenced the conditions for rule of law again in its section titled *Historical Principles for Counterinsurgency*. The manual indicates that politics are primary and that political implications should always bear on military actions. Some at RAND did not believe that democracies could

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[60] Dan Ellsberg and other unknown recipients, by Albert Wohlstetter, August 30, 1968, Comments on the Wolf-Leites Manuscript: "Rebellion and Authority", RAND Corporation. Washington D.C.

[61] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 151-153. Kalyvas cites several examples of COIN operations where the counterinsurgents observed the negative effects of indiscriminate violence. Namely, indiscriminate violence on their part served to create more enemies by influencing the populace to support the insurgent's cause.

[62] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-26 - 1-27.

tolerate the costs, especially if they appeared extreme, although the use of repression would likely

defeat the insurgency in the end. Long argues that the British came to grips with this issue by

granting colonial holdings Malaya and Kenya full independence, while granting Northern Ireland

increased autonomy, thereby avoiding those costs.[63] France opted to use repression in Algeria and

its uneasy relationship with its colony certainly did not improve during the Algerian Civil War.

It is also important to note other underlying theoretical divisions within RAND

concerning the population's preferences versus their valuation of incentives and disincentives.

This separation centered on how the people that make up a population make decisions. James

March, noted decision theorist, posited that people apply either a "logic of consequences" or

"logic of appropriateness" decision-making model.[64] For a person using the logic of consequence,

an appraisal of the possible positive and negative outcomes drives decisions. A person using the

logic of appropriateness bases their decisions on rules consistent with their identity. These rules

or norms determine what actions are acceptable for representative members within a society.

However, it is important to note that humans can and often do make decisions based on context

and cannot be expected to rigidly adhere to rules and norms. Thus, March's theory is insightful

but not very applicable. Further theoretical discussion regarding what motivates people to act is

important, especially for the two COIN theories discussed here. H.A.M. theory, developed in the

fifties, places a premium on popular support and still resonates with FM 3-24's authors and

others. Cost/benefit theory emphasizes insurgent operating costs and population behavior

modification in the short-term to support the attainment of long-term attitudinal changes. It is

pragmatic in its approach but overemphasizes analytical methods for measuring counterinsurgent

progress. Analysts at RAND could not decide which model dominates decision-making within a

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[63] Long, 27-28.

[64] James G. March and Chip Heath, *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 101.

population. Moreover, it does not appear that they seriously entertained the possibility of employing a combination of both theoretical approaches.

Case study: The Algerian Civil War, 1992-2002

Instead of highlighting a single factor as contributing to the outbreak and course of the Algerian Civil War, it is more useful to consider how the interplay of several key factors contributed to and influenced the character of the conflict in Algeria. In Algeria, those factors were, in the main, social, political, and economic. Combined with internal and external pressures, these factors led to a brutal ten-year conflict in which the Algerian government survived by brutally repressing opposition groups and accommodating those who demonstrated the desire to reconcile. Historically, various actors have continually struggled for power while benefiting from and contending with external pressure from Western nations seeking to protect their economic interests, primarily interests in Algeria's oil resources. Radicals seeking to gain support and safe haven for Jihadist purposes also exerted considerable pressure in this conflict by supporting the Islamist factions that opposed the government.

Examination of the Algerian Civil War revealed that FM 3-24 might not be an adequate guide for action in this contemporary conflict. From a theoretical standpoint, it is unlikely that using a "winning hearts and minds" approach as prescribed in FM 3-24, would be useful. Recall that doctrine argues that insurgency is "the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force a change of governing authority."[65] Contrary to FM 3-24's characterization of insurgencies, the history shows that the Algerian conflict was not a political struggle for control of the population. The opposition groups displayed little interest in advancing a unified political program that addressed society's grievances or offered a solution to the dire economic straits. The one organization capable of such a feat was neutralized early in the

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[65] JP 1-02, 163.

conflict. Whenever the opportunity to win political power in one of the government's specious elections presented itself, the opposition groups promptly engaged in them hoping to win the right to advance their own faction's agenda. The Algerian government understood this dynamic and used it with considerable effect.

COIN is "comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and address any core grievances."[66] The highly factional nature of Algerian society suggests that winning the population's support would be extremely difficult as support for any one issue or side shifted rapidly and unpredictably. Improving governance in areas controlled by the opposition groups simply would have made additional resources available to opposition groups per Wolf's critique of H.A.M. theory. Consequently, the Algerian elite, ever mindful of retaining their autonomy, appeared to favor repression over governmental services. Furthermore, the façade of reform and democratic processes was more useful to the Algerian elites because it allowed them to continue to extract wealth from the country, keep opposition groups divided, and draw financial support from Western governments. That is to say, the Algerian government, and its ruling elites, exploited the highly factionalized nature of the Algerian society to serve their continuance in power and extraction of wealth.

Indeed, the conflict may not even be a civil war or classifiable according to the manual's scientific typology. Although there were similarities between this conflict and the war of liberation, the civil war was not a struggle to shake off the yoke of colonial rule but more of a conflict to determine the character of the Algerian polity. Unlike most of the cases that informed FM 3-24, the conflict in Algeria was not caused by a difficult transition to modernity. Actually, Algeria had emerged from the war of liberation with the political and economical infrastructure and attendant processes needed to become a developed state. A burgeoning economy further complemented these positive attributes. The catalyst for the conflict was the social transformation

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[66] JP 1-02, 77.

that the elites tried to effect and the resistance by various factions when their socialist designs produced more harm than good. Examination of the Algerian Civil War, therefore, reveals that FM 3-24 does not provide an adequate doctrinal foundation that would guide the action of counterinsurgent operations. FM 3-24's concepts fail to account for this complexity because it relies heavily on generalities derived from conflicts occurring in dramatically different contexts.

Primacy of the Military in Algerian politics

The National Liberation Front (FLN) was formed in response to the struggle against French colonial rule and established the National Liberation Army (ALN) as its principal military arm.[67] In November of 1954, the FLN launched a war of national liberation and after eight years of violent struggle emerged in 1962 as the dominant political group and remains dominant to today.[68] Military leaders from the ALN who had risen to critical positions within the FLN-led government played a key role in shaping the Algerian polity. Indeed, it was the FLN that served as the *legitimate* front for the military regime that controlled the country.[69]

On the surface, the FLN seemed to be a single party in which its class of ruling elites dictated politics and controlled the country. Nevertheless, the ruling elite was divided and groups within the FLN had differing views about how to run the state because they came from diverse social backgrounds. This dominant feature of Algerian society—high prevalence of factionalism—forever linked the struggle for independence with the civil war. While this may indicate that the civil war and the war of liberation developed under similar circumstances, the

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[67] Anthony H. Cordesman, *A Tragedy of Arms: Military and Security Developments in the Maghreb* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 108.

[68] Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook." Central Intelligence Agency. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ag.html (accessed 15 February 2012).

[69] Hugh Roberts, *The Battlefield Algeria 1988-2002: Studies in a Broken Polity* (London: Verso, 2003), 205. Roberts argues that the FLN was not an autonomous party but a mechanism for providing legitimacy to the military. The military pretended to subordinate itself to the FLN and the people, which allowed the military to appear to conform to society's expectations of legitimacy.

truth is that the contexts are dramatically different. In the war of liberation, the FLN led a coalition of the country's various anti-colonial factions in what amounted to a unified fight for independence. Similarly, alliances were formed and disbanded during the civil war as matters of convenience. However, highly factional competition between numerous groups in the ruling class as well as the opposition defined the civil war. External COIN forces would find it extremely challenging to understand this dynamic with any degree of accuracy, let alone pick the side with a legitimate claim to govern.

Beginning in 1962, the elites generally believed that the state should exercise its power to create a nation. Hugh Roberts suggests that the Algerian elite, like the Soviet communist elite, needed to create a social basis for their rule.[70] By methodically stripping away the country's colonial legacy in the 1960s and 1970s, they sought to create and control disorder in order to prepare the way for a new order and a new nation. However, the FLN elite mismanaged the transformation and Algeria suffered socially, politically, and economically because of it. Furthermore, the nation they envisioned was an abstraction because it was not based on the extant characteristics of the people, their geography, or their experiences. As a result, the state could not advance any unifying themes or bonds with which to mobilize the population in support of its national socialist program or against the threat of the Islamists. While FM 3-24 specifies that politics and control of the population are the ends of revolution and insurgency, it is clear that that the Algerian elite had other motivations.

The military was determined to act to influence the country's political processes to retain autonomy and economic prosperity for the ruling elite, but it was also internally divided over how the country should be governed. In 1965, the military carried out the first of a series of coups and coup attempts when Minister of Defense Houari Boumediene overthrew Algeria's first president,

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[70] Roberts, 27.

Ahmed Ben Bella.[71] Boumediene's expressed aims were to unify the various factions within the Algerian government and end the previous regime's abuses of power. It is ironic that he consolidated the power to govern in the Council of Ministers, which he controlled.[72] Again, this indicates that the government and the elites pursued their own interests above those of the Algerian people. In this context, Islamists offered Sharia or Islamic Law as the only option for righting the societies' injustices.[73]

Importance of Religion

Most of Algeria's population is Muslim, and like other religions, the Islamic faith is not uniform in its beliefs regarding certain doctrines and acceptable state behavior. The fact that Islam is a politically charged religion is often overlooked or misunderstood.[74] However, there is considerable consensus within the community of believers, the *umma*, that the Islamic state should govern justly in accordance with Sharia or Islamic law and an attendant court system.[75] Leaders should be chosen by the people and are, therefore, charged with the duty of making Islamic law operable. Shura gives the people a voice in the Islamic state. Every Muslim has a calling to oppose the tyranny of dynastic and despotic rule.[76] "To command that which is proper and forbid that which is reprehensible" is a central principle of Islam. This moral imperative can be used to justify the use of violence to restore Islam's autonomy from the state and the exercise

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[71] Cordesman, 109.

[72] Roberts, 205. One of his first moves as president was to establish the Council of the Revolution, which was comprised of his inner circle of senior military leaders and was designed to remove this threat to his regime.

[73] Ibid., 28.

[74] Beverly Milton-Edwards, *Islam and Politics in the Contemporary World* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004), 16-17. Milton-Edwards describes the Shi'a-Sunni split as an unresolved political matter over who should rightfully succeed the prophet Mohammad as leader of the umma.

[75] Roberts, 5.

[76] Milton-Edwards, 19.

of political power once the state has been brought back into harmony.[77] In this way, Islam is revolutionary, responding to perceived injustices and opposing an Islamic state founded upon secular principles.

However, the issue of what form and how such a government should function, to include who has the legitimate mandate to govern, has plagued the political aspects of the religion since its inception. This issue is a source of concern for Western governments because Islam's revolutionary nature is not easily explained or understood.[78] The Algerian Islamist movements, like other groups in Algeria are also highly factionalized.

In Algeria, the Salafiyya movement, which called for a purification of the Islamic faith by removing "all blameworthy innovations," influenced Islamist Reformers to found the Association of the Muslim 'ulama in 1931.[79] This group also sought to revive Arabic language and culture and opposed a growing political movement that sought to integrate Algerians into the French system as full citizens. The Association's teachings quickly spread across the country to the rural, uneducated Muslim Algerian masses and provided the religious basis for a national Muslim identity that outstripped social barriers and produced the momentum needed for revolution.

A faction called Al Qiyam (The Values) association, split from the Reformist camp and emerged in Algeria in January of 1964.[80] This movement was in fact the predecessor of radical Islam within Algeria and represented a significant threat to the FLN-led government. Subsequently, in the late 1970's, the Algerian government suppressed the Al Qiyam association.

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[77] Roberts, 20-21. The Islamists contended with four other rival groups, however the other groups did not figure as prominently in this study, because they did not appear to benefit from political favor from within the FLN-run government nor did they use violence to advance their goals, as did the Islamists.

[78] Douglas J. MacDonald, *The New Totalitarians: Social Identities and Radical Islamist Political Grand Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 5-6. MacDonald explains how Western rationalism has hindered understanding of Islam's religious and political mandates.

[79] Roberts, 6.

[80] Ibid., 9. The Al Qiyam association never openly challenged the Algerian government's rule, it did openly demand state support for Islamic rituals and religious practices.

Role of Social Reforms

In late 1971, the Boumediene government began a series of unpopular and unsuccessful social and economic reforms that reopened previous religious divisions.[81] Through social reforms that standardized language and education and nationalized methods of production such as agriculture and oil, the Boumediene government sought to transform Algeria into a socialist state. For the time being, the government continued to use a portion of the revenue from oil profits to subsidize the population's income. The government invested heavily in industry, but work force training did not keep pace. The result was a highly inefficient and a globally uncompetitive industrial sector. Another unfavorable consequence was the implication that the military should be stripped of its political influence and subordinated to the new socialist state. The potential threat these developments posed to the interests of members of the ruling elite and the military caused considerable tension.[82]

Still, another and most troubling effect of the regime's social engineering was an Islamist revival resulting from the government's transformation of the private agriculture sector to a collective farming system at the expense of private landowners. These changes led to inefficiencies and resulted in higher unemployment and urbanization as Algerians left the countryside to seek employment in the cities. Private traders in the agriculture wholesale business met with a similar fate in 1974 when the government took over that sector. Understandably, the public perceived the affront to private property as an affront to Islam because scripture calls for protection of private property by the state.[83] Unsurprisingly, these perceived injustices mobilized the Islamists. By December of 1974, Islamists were demanding shura to redress nationalization of private business. Islamists also voiced their disapproval of the government's insistence that the

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[81] Roberts, 18.

[82] Ibid., 13.

[83] Ibid.

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nation *needed* the Boumediene regime to remain in power to ensure a successful socialist transformation. Despite discontent, the regime and the FLN party still had complete autonomy, because the Algerian people did not have a constitutional process for influencing state policy. President Boumediene, nonetheless, answered the call for shura and executed a series of deft political moves that allowed him to continue his socialist agenda for Algeria.[84] Notwithstanding the government's superficial attempts to appease the Islamists, the Islamist movement gathered momentum.

Economic Emergency

After President Boumediene died on December 27, 1978 an army Colonel, Chadli Bendjedid, succeeded him. Although Chadli reversed many of Boumendiene's social and economic policies to liberalize private business and, thereby, encourage more foreign investment, the economic situation continued to worsen. As noted earlier, the Algerian state relied heavily on oil revenues. Oil revenues accrued directly to the state and the state used them to fund foreign investments and to enrich important elites. Reports estimate that Algeria's oil reserves were 9.2 billion barrels in 1988.[85] The low sulfur and low metal content of Algerian oil make it highly prized because these characteristics reduce refining costs. The country also ranks in the world's top ten for natural gas reserves, making it a significant global energy supplier.

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[84] Roberts, 17. He retained his autonomy by arranging a presidential election and by expanding his power via a duplicitous National Charter (June, 1976) and constitution (November, 1976).

[85] British Petroleum, "Statistical Review of World Energy 2011," British Petroleum. http://www.bp.com/assets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2011/STAGING/local_assets/spreadsheets/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_report_2011.xls (accessed April 1, 2012).

The international recession in 1982 and the 40% drop in global oil prices from 1985-1986 caused oil revenues to drop by 50%.[86] The Algerian state had previously used earnings from oil revenues to subsidize its citizens' income but these developments in the global economy influenced the government to suspend payouts. Algeria's population had nearly doubled in less than 20 years, topping 20 million in 1980. Employment did not grow as dramatically, thus, a disproportionate number of young people were entering the labor force at the same time the economy was shrinking. Accordingly, there was a high number of unemployed youth available for mobilization while the national unemployment rate climbed from 16.2% in the 1980s to 20% in the 1990s.[87]

The dramatically reduced revenues, poorly managed agricultural and industrial reforms, and state debt combined to create a dire economic situation for most. Consequently, the population had ample reasons to question the government's poor performance. The growing economic crisis is of particular importance, because its circumstances run counter to Marxist theory's description of the influence of economics on the development of insurgencies. When France left Algeria, it left a viable economy, which the Algerian government deliberately experimented with in pursuit of its interests to transform society. The economic discontent that resulted did not result from modernization, as Marxist theory argues and FM 3-24 suggests. It is true that economics were a major source of discontent in this conflict, however, the principles within FM 3-24, which were informed by campaigns to counter Marxist and Maoist inspired insurgencies, are not relevant to the specific context of the Algerian civil war.

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[86] Miriam R. Lowi, "Algeria, 1992-2002: Anatomy of a Civil War," in *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis, Volume 1: Africa*, ed. Paul Colier and Nicholas Sambanis (Herndon, VA: World Bank Publications, 2005), 224.

[87] Ibid.

The Appeal of Insurgency

In a climate of a worsening economy, perceived injustices, and government ineptness, the citizens were open to the Islamist appeals for change. In 1992, unemployment among Algeria's youth soared to 50% while the government spent 70% of oil and gas revenues on food imports. National debt climbed to $25 billion.[88] The factions' appeal to the population was also partly due to honor—the freedom fighter is a revered, cultural figure. The government's history of failed social and economic reforms, combined with its leanings toward a more secular government, advanced the Islamist opposition's message that a return to Islam would restore order to Algeria.

In October of 1988, the Chadli government responded to six days of violent protests and demonstrations in Algiers by conducting a repressive crackdown, killing an estimated 500 to 700 and arresting thousands of protesters. This action generated sharp internal and external criticism of Chadli's government.[89] Chadli responded by introducing new political and economic reforms in 1989; reforms that were designed to make the economy more capitalist, to decrease the military's role in politics, and to establish the legal basis for the creation of multi-party electoral system.[90] He also opened up national elections to those newly created political parties; seemingly opening the door for Islamists and other factions to vie for power. However, these reforms, like previous and subsequent ones, simply presented a facade of democracy to internal and external audiences alike.

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[88] Cordesman, 117.

[89] Ibid., 114.

[90] Roberts, 107. These reforms were ineffective and had little chance of success due to the already weakened economy and the high levels of corruption at all levels of government. Roberts suggests the military may have complied because its popularity had also suffered during the October riots and in the meantime, discretion was necessary for it to posture for future opportunities.

The FIS (Islamic Salvation Front), representative of the radical Islamist movement, was motivated to win the legitimate right to rule in accordance with Islamic Law.[91] FIS won a major victory in municipal and regional elections against the FLN. Reacting to the FIS electoral victory, the Army forced Chadli to resign and cancelled the next round of elections scheduled for January of 1992. Despite a repressive military crackdown, FIS won the majority of the seats in the legislative elections in December of that same year.

In the wake of Chadli's ouster, the military placed 72-year-old, FLN veteran Mohammed Boudiaf in charge of the country. He outlawed the FIS and overturned the election results.[92] The government subsequently arrested FIS leaders and interned them in concentration-style camps in the Sahara.[93] However, FIS would reemerge when, in August of 1994, the Algerian government sought negotiations with FIS and other political parties. Interestingly, the government's moves away from Islamic law and towards a more secular government did not prevent FIS and other Islamist groups from seeking to attain their goals through the country's disingenuous electoral system.

It must also be noted that none of the Islamist factions, FIS included, communicated an alternative plan to address the government's gross mismanagement of the economy. FIS did, however, use the situation created by the poor economic environment to rally supporters and resources. This is significant because it highlights FIS' dual pronged strategy. The FIS used insurgency to attract the populace to its cause and simultaneously used the electoral system to compete for political power in the local, regional, and national elections. This behavior reveals that the FIS and the rest of the Islamist movement did not constitute an uncompromising, all out

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[91] Roberts, 65. The political party was legalized on September 14, 1989 and gained popularity when it rushed aid to victims of the October 1989 earthquakes while the government's relief efforts foundered.

[92] Cordesman, 116.

[93] Roberts, 369.

assault on the Algerian government, or the FLN for that matter. Rather these movements sought

to advance their various agendas within the state's political participation framework.

Although FM 3-24 primarily characterizes insurgencies as monolithic, politically

motivated entities, the history of this conflict indicates this core principle may not be valid. It is

readily apparent the Islamists did not intend to overthrow the government regime. Nor does it

seem that, given the highly factionalized nature of the Islamist movements, they were capable of

developing and advancing a coherent vision for the Islamic state, which lay at the heart of their

appeal to the populace. Accordingly, the absence of an effective political movement indicates that

politics were not primary as suggested in FM 3-24.

The Insurgent/Opposition Approach

There were at least ten major, armed Islamist groups and movements involved in the civil

war. FIS' military power was overtly manifested in three principal armed groups. The Armed

Islamic Militant (MIA) group became operational in 1985 and was later subsumed into the Armed

Islamic Group (AIG) in September of 1993. The Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) later emerged

from what began as MIA and served as the military wing for FIS from 1994 forward.[94] MIA and

other militant groups struck first on January 20, 1992 by attacking government security forces. It

is worth noting, the opposition's approach included brutal raids on secular villages, guerilla-style

attacks on government holdings, assassinations, and extortion to obtain resources from the

population.

For the purposes of this study, it is more important to understand how the principal armed

groups related to FIS rather than delve into the individual history and motivations of the various

groups. The dismantling of FIS had meant that the various armed factions or groups were, for a

time, without a coherent political component. A political organization would have helped them, in

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[94] Lowi, 227.

any case, to combine efforts in a coalition against the government. Lacking political direction, the different factions relied on violence as the principal means with which to attract attention and lure supporters away from rival factions. Coercion by armed groups also contributed to the support and cooperation from the civilian populations. Control of the population was not gained by providing effective governance to gain support in areas where the government could not but was more a function of violence to extract resources and coerce support. Violence reached new and alarming levels following Boudiaf's assassination on June 29, 1992. While the military accused the Islamists, it was unclear what group was actually behind the act.[95] The military effectively appointed Defense Minister Liamine Zeroual as president in January 1994.

The Algerian Government's Approach

The government's approach to countering the insurgency consisted of a two-part strategy. First, the government seems to have used reconciliation and eradication to restore a sense of order in Algeria and to preserve the regime. Elections and political negotiations aimed to peacefully dismantle the various opposition groups. Second, the military physically pressured or eradicated Islamist supporters and groups. Military tactics included torture, execution, and detention to target and reduce the various Islamist groups and factions.

As part of the military plan, the state recognized that specialized forces were required to carry out counterinsurgency operations. In 1993, the government created an anti-guerilla operations unit consisting of 15,000 troops. Its numbers swelled to 60,000 by 1995. The government also armed civilians and created two types of anti-Islamist militias. GLD (*Groupes de legitime defense*) tended to be composed of villagers charged with territorial surveillance and were often connected to regional political parties or associations. The *Patriotes* or Patriots were

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[95] Roberts, 122. The assassin, dressed in a riot security officer's uniform, was believed to have Islamist sentiments but no association to a particular group was established. There were indications that factions within the government arranged the assassination.

veterans of the war of liberation and worked more closely with the state's security forces. Although these armed elements had affiliations with state and regional officials, they were not accountable under any legal framework. Due to the deplorable economic conditions, the government created militias also used violence to obtain wealth from the populace. They also sought to avenge family and friends killed by Islamists. As such, these armed elements employed considerable violence under the auspices of the government but there were also reports that some militias profited from violence against the populace.[96]

Repression as applied by the state was counterproductive and served to increase resistance. However, it appears that the government clearly preferred this method to improving governance and addressing grievances at the local level. Again, this approach is not consistent with the prescriptions in FM 3-24 for COIN operations. It also highlights a potential incompatibility between Western nation's acceptable standards of legitimate government and the likely host nation partner. It could be that the Algerian government saw extending governance and governmental services as enabling the opposition groups; therefore, it would not be in their interest to risk helping the opposition become stronger. During the period from 1994 to 1997 the armed Islamist groups escalated the violence and continued to conduct midnight raids on secular Muslim villages around the capital Algiers. Insurgent forces also grew, going from as few as 2,000 in 1993 to as many as 27,000 in 1995.[97] Islamists sometimes killed all the inhabitants of a village, frequently disemboweling, or decapitating their victims.[98] In this way, the opposition

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[96] Lowi, 234-235. The state had an estimated 160-200,0000 soldiers, over 100,000 *gendarmes*, and 125,000 police, totaling around 450,000 security forces. Lowi also discussed the impact of the parallel, illicit economy, which emerged in Algeria and how individual economic decisions in a legally permissive environment led to abuses.

[97] Ibid., 235.

[98] Cordesman, 120. Estimates for the year 1997 put the death toll at 6,000 to 7,000 people, while casualties since 1992 ranged from 60,000 to 80,000.

groups may have unintentionally undermined their collective cause by over reliance on violence

at the cost of neglecting efforts to ameliorate the social conditions in the contested areas.

International Response and Influence

Algeria's oil resources were a significant part of the global oil trade. However, at no time

during the civil war was oil production and distribution to the international market in jeopardy. It

is remarkable that the opposition never seriously attempted to interrupt the flow of oil, since such

an interruption could have inflicted considerable political and economic damage on the

government. What probably motivated Western nations to act was their misinterpretation of the

various factions and their adoption, based on that limited understanding, of a de facto position in

support of the reformists, represented in Algeria's case by the government.[99] As it was, the

Algerian government understood that it could secure financial support from Western nations

provided it could appeal to pro-democratic sentiments by promising democratic reforms that

simultaneously served to secure the government's control of the state.

Financially, the Algerian government relied heavily on the European Commission (EC)

for loans to help manage the country's severe debt repayment problems.[100] After the Algerian

government overturned the 1991 elections and suppressed FIS, the European Parliament placed

political stipulations on future loan payments. Although the EC had previously approved a 400

million ECU loan, it withheld the final installment of 150 million ECUs on the basis that Algeria

should respect human rights and provide for pluralism in its political system.[101] Despite these

political preconditions for further financial aid, the EC finally released the balance of the

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[99] Roberts, 228.

[100] Lowi, 237. In all, various European institutions likely made approximately $20 billion of much needed capital available to the Algerian government during the civil war.

[101] Roberts, 323-325. Other loans paid out to Algeria during this time include: a $200 million loan, a 70 million ECU structural adjustment loan, and various undisclosed loans for housing and infrastructure projects.

September 1991 loan in 1993 but only after Algeria agreed to a structural rescheduling of its debt as dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It is astonishing that at the time of the installment's release, Algeria was entering its second year of undemocratic rule following Boudiaf's assassination in June of 1992. This indicates that the stipulations for financial aid may have had less to do with democratic reform and human rights and more to do with debt security.

The desire to support pro-democratic institutions necessarily pits the West against the opposition, represented by the Islamists and other factions. The indiscriminate nature of the Islamists' violent resistance further reinforced the prevailing Western inclination to side with the Algerian government. Indeed, the Algerian government ensured that it portrayed the civil war as a struggle against terrorism. This ill-informed stance did nothing to advance democratization because the Algerian government was responsible for suppressing *true* democratic processes. FM 3-24's conception of legitimate government and its disregard for the likelihood that government and its ruling elites may have their own interests at heart would make it difficult for COIN forces to collaborate with states behaving as Algeria did. Indeed, before becoming involved in such a conflict, Western nations may need to thoroughly vet the democratic practices of potential COIN partners rather than assume their methods and objectives are similar.

Resolution and Implications

The government's two-pronged approach to resolution, reconciliation and eradication, continued, but demonstrated meager results at times. Under Zeroual and later Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the government would continue to alter the political landscape over the next seven years of the conflict, while struggling mightily with social and economic aspects. Starting in 1994, Zeroual began implementing measures to continue liberalizing political processes.[102] In

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[102] Cordesman, 118. The new structures allowed multiple political parties to exist and compete for positions within government. In 1996, he successfully restructured the nation's constitution ensuring that

another move to secure his power and continue democratization efforts, Zeroual reinstated multi-party, democratic parliamentary elections on June 5, 1997. The elections were not without controversy, as the various political parties protested the elections' results as fraudulent.[103] Key military leaders did not embrace Zeroual's efforts because they felt he was too compromising and did not take a firm enough stance against Islamists.[104] For reasons unknown, on September 11, 1998, Zeroual announced that he would step down. With the backing and influence of key figures within the military, former Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika was chosen as the FLN party candidate and went on to win the presidency in the April 25, 1999 contest.

Bouteflika's ultimate aim was to legitimate his presidency by securing popular support, which served as a hedge against the military's proclivity for affecting political change by military coup. In July 1999, he announced his civil concord initiative, which he intended to use to mobilize popular support and offer amnesty to opposition forces. AIS accepted full amnesty and completely disbanded in 2000, while AIG refused amnesty and continued its campaign. Bouteflika followed up with his Civic Concord plan, which he implemented via a national referendum that, predictably, some 98% of voters supported.[105]

According to FM 3-24, "victory is achieved when the population consents to the government's legitimacy and stops actively and passively supporting the insurgency."[106] Given this limited definition and the history of the conflict, it would appear that the Algerian

two thirds of the Parliament was popularly elected with the remainder appointed by the president. However, the power to appoint the upper houses' deputies gave him veto power over parliament.

[103] Ibid., 119-120. Over 39 parties participated, but his newly created party, the National Democratic Rally (RND), and the FLN secured more than half of the 380 seats. Local and regional elections yielded similar results. On October 30, 1997 30,000 assembled in Algiers to protest the results while some political parties called for national strikes aimed at shutting the government down.

[104] Ibid., 121.

[105] Ibid., 124. The referendum succeeded in exposing the army's human rights practices to public and international scrutiny, which served to keep the military in check. It was also controversial within the military and the government because it freed Islamist prisoners that had committed minor offenses and threatened to address governmental corruption.

[106] FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 1-3.

government achieved a measure of victory. However, the Algerian government never truly

defeated the Islamist factions or resolved the internal conflicts within the government. Today,

Algeria is still primarily an autocratic regime with a democratic façade. Economic and social

reforms are a continuing challenge for the government despite prodding from the West and

internal pressure from the populace on the government. With the Algerian economy still primarily

dependent on hydrocarbon revenues, global energy market fluctuations will likely continue to

contribute to an unstable economy that fuels social and political unrest. One of the major Islamist

groups joined with Al Qaida in 2006. The group continues to target Algerian government and

Western holdings using kidnappings and bombings.[107] Bouteflika is in the midst of his third

presidential term having won 90.2% of votes in 2009. The state continues to control the economy

and to use subsidies to address economic disparity [108]

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[107] *World Fact Book.*

[108] Ibid.

Conclusion

This monograph sought to determine whether current U.S. COIN doctrine is relevant to contemporary insurgency threats. FM 3-24, the U.S. Army's capstone counterinsurgency doctrinal manual, reflects a scientific approach that reduces the elements of these complex social phenomena to principles and guides for action removed from their original contexts. The evidence supports the conclusion that theories developed in the 1950s and 1960s still resonate in today's doctrine despite the fact that the context of 21st century conflict is distinctly different from that of the 20th century. Examining the Algerian Civil War further indicates that COIN doctrine may be too narrowly defined and that assumptions about the motivations and objectives of potential host nation partners need serious evaluation. Specific to the Algerian case, the military was the key political player and its interests lay in regime perpetuation, not effective governance or winning popular support. Furthermore, a guide to action, premised on such assumptions may not be useful given the manual's description of all insurgencies as variations on a common theme.

Expanding the scope of cases used to inform doctrine, as Dr. Kilcullen and Dr. Gorka suggest, may be one way to improve the doctrine. Introducing contemporary conflicts could reveal additional factors that the doctrine writers may not have considered—factors that may provide the counterinsurgency practitioner with better analytical tools and insight. It may prove considerably more difficult to develop a scientific method that addresses the complexity of social and human phenomena, even though such a method would be better suited to studying insurgency. However, leveraging civilian academics and think tanks like RAND Corporation, in ways similar to the efforts undertaken to craft FM 3-24, may be an effective approach to solving this problem. Articles like the one that inspired this monograph and numerous other critiques of the doctrine could point the way. As the U.S. continues to prepare for transition out of the war in Afghanistan and pivots to address the pacific theater, there may be no better time than the present

to reexamine COIN doctrine before the country faces another such conflict exacting similarly

high costs in blood and treasure.

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