AN AMERICAN STORY OF INSURGENCY: NARRATIVE, DISCOURSE, AND POWER IN KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

by

Michael L Rupert
A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Conflict Analysis and Resolution

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Date: ____________________________ Fall Semester 2013
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An American Story of Insurgency: Narrative, Discourse, and Power in Knowledge Production

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to all the others who have travelled down this lonely road.
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I would like to thank my dissertation committee; Sara for providing advice and support for my dissertation and other challenges in my life over the last ten years, Solon for his continued support, and Jessica for taking on the challenges of being a committee member in the final stages of the process.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Center for Irregular Warfare ................................................................. CIW  
Counterinsurgency ............................................................................... COIN  
Field Manual (US Army) ...................................................................... FM  
Host Nation ............................................................................................. HN  
Irregular Warfare .................................................................................. IW  
Joint Publication ..................................................................................... JP  
Long War Setting .................................................................................... LWS  
Marine Corp Warfighting Publication ....................................................... MCWP
ABSTRACT

AN AMERICAN STORY OF INSURGENCY: NARRATIVE, DISCOURSE, AND POWER IN KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

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George Mason University, 2013

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Advancement in counterinsurgency research, doctrine, and practice is hindered by discursive boundaries established in part by institutional narratives within the COIN community. Applying a narrative analytical approach, the boundaries set by the insurgency narrative are explored by dismantling claims and evaluations of the insurgent; it’s setting, and the central themes of prominent COIN scholars. Reconstructing the definition of insurgency reveals the role of the institutional narrative in suppressing less biased understandings of insurgents and their setting; hindering analysis, and acting as an ideational resource of power.
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of military doctrine is to establish a common operational picture, conception of battle, or a means to defeat an enemy. Counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine serves the same purpose: to create a common operating picture to unify efforts. In 2011, as part of the doctrinal review for 2015, the Army determined that the Army Field Manual FM 3-24 needed revisions incorporating the COIN experiences of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations (FM 3-24, 2006). Several COIN experts at the COIN academy in Afghanistan noted that a central problem in current Coalition Forces COIN material, as well as the draft FM 3-24 revision, was a lack of common definitions on the components of COIN (Murray & Campbell, 2012). It may, however, be impossible to develop a common set of definitions in COIN doctrine. The definitions are embedded in social and political organizations and structures that have an interest in how COIN is defined and understood. This paper will explore the relationship between defining the terms of COIN, the discourses in which they are embedded, and the production of knowledge.

Three interrelated concepts are important in understanding the problems in developing definitions in COIN doctrine. First, COIN doctrine is embedded in expediency. Defining and understanding COIN is shaped by the experiences of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, their need for doctrine, and defeat of the insurgents. Second, COIN
doctrine is embedded in the political and social structures of the coalition forces. Each member state of the coalition brings its distinct historical, political, and social structures in defining and understanding insurgency. Third, COIN doctrine is embedded in the terrorism discourse of the West, particularly the New Terrorism narrative that defines the insurgency in Afghanistan as motivated by an apocalyptic religious ideology.

The best approach to explore the challenges in defining insurgency is based in post-modern, post-structuralist and narrative methodologies. Post-modernism and post-structuralism provides a research foundation in that it recognizes social reality as a construct determined by mutually supporting concepts, practices, and structures that are liable to change. Narrative provides a means of analyzing the discursive production of knowledge; Foucault proposed that we look for the various ways that knowledge is produced, how it produces power, and how it is produced through power. In such research the focus should be on the “technologies” of power and knowledge production and how they are embodied in local, regional, and material institutions (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). In understanding the definitional challenges facing the developers of COIN doctrine, a focus on institutions and their narratives, as a discursive technology, will highlight the “technologies” at play in the development of COIN doctrine.

The interest in narratives also lies in how they include and exclude explanations and data in the production of knowledge. Narratives are essential in establishing knowledge, such as counterinsurgency doctrine. Popper argued that the creation of any scientific discipline starts with mythic paradigms or narratives (Popper, 2002). These narratives, however, set the boundaries of COIN doctrine and this can limit the discursive
space necessary for further development of the field. Critics of current COIN doctrine argued that particular institutional narratives within the military have limited the discursive space necessary for developing COIN doctrine (Gentile, 2009).

The co-production of knowledge recognizes that scientific knowledge embeds and is embedded in social and political practices (Jasanoff, 2004, p. 316). Therefore, it is worth considering that the boundary of COIN doctrine is also a political boundary in regards to understanding insurgency and dealing with insurgents. Accepting that narratives are a discursive technology in setting the boundaries of COIN doctrine, these narratives must reside in an institution and that as a coalition there are several institutional narratives and agendas at play. This leads to the initial question of this research proposal: What is the relationship between the major organizations involved in COIN, their institutional narratives, and the development of COIN doctrine?

The literature review will sharpen the research question by further defining the problem and exploring the relevant concepts on discourse, narrative, and their relationship in knowledge production. The literature review will also explore the role of expediency in the production of knowledge, the role of institutions in research, and the role of terrorism narratives in shaping COIN doctrine. The literature review will conclude with a discussion on the ahistoricism of insurgency thought. The Methodology will discuss the application of narrative methods in the analysis of the relationship between expediency, social structures, and terrorism narratives in COIN doctrine. The Analytical section will present the findings from the analysis of data, followed by a discussion of possible implications for counterinsurgency research and affiliated disciplines.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Derrida stated, “There is no outside-text” in that there was no vantage point external from a text, narrative, or discourse that gave unmediated access to the truth (Derrida, 1978). The world is always ‘mediated’ and contextualized. The focus of the literature review is to explore contextualization in the development of COIN doctrine by briefly looking at the definition of insurgency, and the concerns in how insurgency is defined and understood. Next, narrative theories and structures that set the boundaries of understanding in insurgency and counterinsurgency, primarily expediency, epistemic communities, and institutional narratives, will be explored. The literature review will conclude with a discussion of the ahistoricism within COIN doctrine.

Defining Insurgency

Central to this research is understanding how the definition of insurgency shapes counterinsurgency research. Several prominent texts and authors have defined insurgency under various concepts. Joint Publication 1-02 defines insurgency “as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of the constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict” (JP 1-02, 2013, p. 134). FM 3-24 defines insurgency as:

A form of internal war, one that occurs primarily within a state, not between states, and one that contains at least some elements of civil war… it is directed and
focused violence aimed at achieving a political objective...insurgencies are protracted by nature (2006, p. 1:2).

Kilcullen’s definition states:

Insurgent movements are grassroots uprisings that seek to overthrow established governments and societal orders. They are a popular uprising that employs subversion, guerrilla tactics and terrorism against the established power of states and conventional military forces. Many, including the Islamic jihad, draw their foot soldiers from deprived socio-economic groups and their leadership from alienated radicalized elites (2005, p. 603).

Bymen in ‘Friends Like These’ defines insurgency as:

A protracted political-military activity directed toward completely or partially controlling the resources of a country through the use of irregular military forces and illegal political organizations. Insurgent activity—including guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and political mobilization, for example, propaganda, recruitment, front and covert party organization, and international activity—is designed to weaken government control and legitimacy while increasing insurgent control and legitimacy (2006, p. 84).

And, Noetzel and Scheer states:

Insurgency can be perceived as an organized rebellion against an existing government, with the intention of overthrowing that government and replacing it with another through a combination of subversion and armed conflict. The aim is to win over the population to its side against the government. Insurgencies are
driven by long-term political goals. They can involve many different tactics and forms of operation, including guerilla warfare, riots, organized regular warfare, propaganda, terrorism, kidnappings, and attack on infrastructure such as roads or water supplies (Scheer; 2008, p. 215).

The above definitions are just a few, but are a relatively comprehensive set of examples of the definitions of insurgency in the COIN community. Despite differences in specific wording, there are common concepts among the various definitions. All the above definitions allude to insurgency as some form of armed political struggle by a non-state actor against the state. Several of the authors identify the protracted nature of insurgency and most identify the violence involved in insurgency in one way or another.

The most interesting element of most of the definitions, however, is the characterization of the insurgent, while not actually defining the insurgent beyond a non-state actor who possesses less political power. The characterization manifests through the tactics and operations an insurgent is willing to employ. Subversion, irregular warfare, propaganda, and terrorism are all tactics employed by the ‘illegal political organization’ identified as insurgents. This is not to argue that these may or may not be qualities of the insurgent, but to recognize that this characterization of the insurgent, if carried into the analysis of insurgency, creates at least two distinct issues for research in counterinsurgency.

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1 COIN community in this text is representative of all the individuals, organizations, and institutions involved in American research of insurgency, regardless of national origin. In this work COIN community, scholars, and institution will be used interchangeably.
First, terms such as illegal, propaganda, terrorism, and subversion are almost exclusively valued within Western society, or any other society for that matter, as negative social qualities. The negative characterization of insurgents potentially impacts the analysis of insurgency. This does not necessarily mean that these are not defining qualities of an insurgent, but it does require that these qualities be recognized, understood as possibly being subjective, and potentially distorting scholarly analysis. This leads to the second issue of insurgents being analytically exceptional.

Analytically exceptional should be understood as the idea that insurgents are assumed, constructed, defined, and/or analyzed as being an exceptional or distinctive political or military organization. As analytical exceptions, the tactics and operations that insurgents conduct are ‘assumed’ to be distinctive from other political or military organizations. Hence, the employment of guerilla and terrorist tactics are assumed to be exclusive or distinctive of insurgents from the beginning. The use of propaganda, the presentation of one side of a proposition, is also assumed to be the exclusive mode of communication for insurgents. Even how insurgents conduct military operations are exceptions to the norm. Galula’s distinction in the use of forces illustrated this point:

**Insurgency is the pursuit of the policy of a party, inside a country, by any means. It is not like an ordinary war—a ‘continuation of policy by other means’—because an insurgency can start long before the insurgent resorts to the use of force (1964, p. 3).**

Arguably, this is what is described as a false dichotomy. The ‘continuation of policy by other means’ implicitly recognizes that there are other means at the disposal of the
political actor to achieve their goal. The fact that it is a ‘continuation of policy’ argues that the use of forces is not the only or initial path towards achieving a political goal, but a continued effort to achieve a political goal possibly after other ‘means’ have failed. Hence, the distinction made by Galula that an insurgency could start to achieve its political goals long before the use of force is no distinction at all.

The potential analytical exception in regards to insurgents, along with the potential uncritical characterization of insurgents at least indicates that other factors may be involved in defining and understanding insurgency. Defining a concept, idea, or phenomena is more than “a statement of the meaning of a word or word group or a sign or symbol” (Merriam-Webster.com, 2013). Arguably, what or how the particular words within that definition are understood, the ideas and concepts associated with the phenomena, and the frames placed around a particular word or idea have a role in shaping the understanding of that word or idea. This is apparently true for the concept of insurgency in COIN literature, and the need for a different approach to understand insurgency. A narrative approach, as part of a discourse, looks at the various means that an author, organization, or society makes meaning by understanding the relationship between narrative components. A narrative approach will also allow an exploration of some of the other factors that shape the understanding of insurgency within the COIN community.

**Narrative**

Narrative, as a discursive technology of knowledge and power production, differs from discourse. Discourse is the linguistic boundary defining what can be communicated
about a specific topic. It sets the limit of acceptable speech or what can be considered truth (Butler, 1997). Narrative is one mode (technology) that creates, defines, maintains, and changes that boundary through the use of a theme, plot and evaluation—the structuring of events, agents, and actions in socially meaningful ways towards some point. Narratives are the focus because of the discursive work they do in creating the boundaries of COIN doctrine. Narratives support the development and maintenance of constructive forms of social reality through the accrual of narratives within individuals, institutions, and communities that create the culture, history, and traditions for each (White H., 1987; Brunner, 1991; Freeman, 1999). Furthermore, it is through narrative that commonality of intentions in shared meanings are maintained. Narrative provides the "mental model" for a society that uniquely plots people, events, and actions over time (Brunner, 1990; Searle, 1995; Gergen & Gergen, 2003). It is an approach that views those narratives as constitutive of a discipline and its experts (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997).

A focus on narratives also re-conceptualizes the social and political space in which COIN doctrine is developed. Traditional political realism views the political social space as a complexity of self-interested agents acting according to a standard of rational decision-making (Morgenthau, Thompson, & Clinton, 2006). An approach focused on narratives and discourses recognizes that the political space of an organization, community, or state is a discursive boundary of inclusion and exclusion that determines the standards of rational decision-making. Therefore, what is considered political, how it is practiced, and how it is understood is a result of political discourse. Wendt advanced this conception in that people, states, and organizations act politically towards objects,
including other actors, predicated upon the meaning that the objects have for them and that these meaning are created inter-subjectively through their discursive interaction with each other (Wendt, 1992). A narrative approach recognizes that COIN scholars, as actors in a political space, are subjected to and constitutive of these discursive productions.

**Defining Narrative**

There are a number of definitions of narrative that are often reflective of the narrative's analytical function within any particular discipline (Reid, 1997). Common to most of these definitions are four features that point to the structure, function, and power of narratives. First, narratives are temporal in that they represent a sequence of events (Abbott, 2008, p. 19). Second, narratives are interpretive in that they create meaning (Brunner, 1990). Third, narratives are social in that they occur in a context of narrators and audiences (Abbott, 2008, pp. 20-22). Fourth, narratives can be identified as consisting of actors, actions, and settings, which are arranged through a plot in meaningful ways towards a theme (Abbott, 2008, pp. 13-21).

Labov and Waletzky applied this conception of narrative analysis to understanding the social world, where they studied the relationship between language and reality by looking at narrative clauses. The narrative clause, according to this strategy, is the defining component of a narrative, which is “one method of recapitulating past experiences by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which really occurred” (Labov & Waletsky, 1967). Narrative clauses were essential to any narrative as a change in the temporal order of any two clauses could change the interpretation of the narrative; thereby, changing the meaning of the story. Embedded in
this approach was the idea that there was an observable objective order of events to which the narrative ordering of events, through clauses, could be compared to in determining meaning. The issue, as later recognized by White, was that there was no objective ordering of events outside the rationality of the organization, institution, or community in which the narrative was told.

White illustrated this point in his critique of history studies. According to White, the distinction between histories, as an account of the past, and other forms such as annals or chronicles, is interpretation (White H., 1987). History is more than a recording of events; it interprets the events and relates them to other social actors to create meaning. Similar to authors of fiction, White discovered that a historians’ choice of important events, situations, and individuals were driven by the need to create a good story acceptable by the discipline and the community at large. Keller emphasized this point in recognizing that all the events, actors, and locations are meaningless until the historian puts meaning to them. Hence, on what basis do they create that meaning? (Keller, 1989) The meaning of history comes from the culturally based discourses and discursive technologies used in the production of the history.

The primary point of White and Keller’s approach to narrative was that there was no ‘privileged’ objective plotline, which is partially correct. There is no ‘objective’ fact based narrative to which other narratives can be compared; however, as social constructionists demonstrated, there are widely dispersed communally shared narratives to which everyone within a community subscribes. An established and widespread narrative with its corresponding plotting of events, agents, and actions in a meaningful
way towards a theme is essential to the functioning of any society as it provides the boundaries of interpretation that individuals can employ in understanding each other’s actions. These dominant communal narratives tend to be given priority as objectively real and beyond the need for empirical validation. The capacity of narratives to organize experience and create meaning points to their function in the current research (Polkinghorne D., 1988). Narrative is a discursive mode that plots past, present, or future events, agents, and actions towards a theme by which they are evaluated. Narrative is an interpretive mechanism in that it provides a means for a group to understand and give meaning to the actions of others through evaluation and theme. Narrative plots structure events, agents, and action in a socially meaningful way towards a theme.

Greimas (1983 [1966]) represents another model for understanding meaning within narrative. Building on the work of Jakobson (1960) and Propp (1968), the actantial model is a device that can be used to analyze any real or thematic action, but particularly those depicted in literary texts. In the actantial model, any action may be broken down into six components, called actants. Actantial analysis consists of assigning each element of the action being described to one of the six actantial classes.

The six actantial classes are divided into three oppositions, each of which forms an axis of the description. The first opposition is the axis of desire that consists of the subject and object actants. The subject is what is directed toward the object and the relationship established between them is the junction. The junction can be described as a conjunction, a desire by the subject to move towards the object, or disjunction, which is the desire of the subject to move from the object. The second opposition is the axis of
power that consists of the helper and opponent. The helper assists in achieving the junction between the subject and object, while the opponent hinders the same. The third opposition, the axis of transmission or knowledge consists of the sender and receiver. The sender requests the establishment of the junction and the receiver benefits from the junction. Together, these model the basic actions and relationships of actants within a narrative (White & Taket, 2000).

The actantial model provides a useful model for exploring the relationship between actants, actions, and meaning; however, there are limitations to this model. The actantial model is structural; “it describes the relations between different kinds of phenomena, not primarily the phenomena themselves” (Soderberg, 2003). The actantial model assumes that these relations between classes of phenomena form the basis of the narrative. As a structural approach, modeled on language, the actantial model focuses on the binary opposition within a text, a self-sufficient binary structure that mediates between the real world and the abstract world through which meaning can be ascertained (Gilles, 2004, pp. 171-173). Similar to the Labovian model (Labov & Waletsky, 1967), the actantial model alludes to a real world to which a structure can be compared for meaning. An idea that social constructionism and post-structuralism reject because history and culture condition the study of underlying structures and both are subject to biases and misinterpretations. In addition, a post-structuralist approach argues that to understand an actant or text, it is necessary to study both the object itself and the systems of knowledge that produced the object; something that actantial model fails to do.
The ‘systems of knowledge’ that the actantial model fails to recognize is the setting element of a narrative. The setting is the physical, social, mental and/or temporal space in which narrative occurs and it places conditions on an actor’s action. As such, the actantial model while identifying relationships does not recognize the contextualization in the form of setting that condition those relationships. The evaluation model addresses this shortfall of actantial analysis.

The following terms are defined to establish a common basis for understanding the problem, methodology, and analysis in this research project. Similar to other social science terms with political implications, these definitions reflect the bias of the researcher, his methodology, and discipline.

- **Discourse:** The linguistic boundary defining what can be communicated about a specific topic. It sets the limit of acceptable speech or what can be considered truth. It sets the boundaries of understanding and knowledge.

- **Narrative:** A discursive mode that sets the boundaries of discourse, by plotting past, present, or future events, agents, and actions in a meaningful way towards a theme; a narrative consists of constructed forms and processes for creating meaning.
  - **Theme:** the central topic, proposition, concept, or meaning of a text. The plot is the structuring of actant, events, and actions in meaningful ways towards the theme.
  - **Plot:** The structuring of setting, actors, and events in meaningful ways towards a theme.
• Setting: The physical, social, mental, and/or temporal space in which a narrative occurs. The setting may place conditions on the actor’s actions.

• Actant (Actor/Character): A participant of a situation that carries out an action within the narrative.

• Act (Event): The change or transformation from one state to another of an actant, setting, or situation within the narrative.

• Evaluation: A claim expressing the narrator’s attitude, stance towards, viewpoint on, or feeling about objects or propositions that he or she is narrating.

• Institutional Narrative: A dominant narrative located in an institution that sets the boundaries of its identity, understanding of its actions, and the actions of others outside the institution.

**Evaluation in Narrative**

Labov’s concept of evaluation provided a starting point for understanding evaluation in narrative (Labov & Waletsky, 1967), but evaluation is much more. Evaluation is the author’s attitude, stance, viewpoint or feeling about objects or propositions that he is writing or speaking about with any number of associated values (Thompson & Hunston, 2000, p. 5). This definition of evaluation not only identifies the components of an evaluation, but it identifies the important functions of evaluation and it points to how an evaluation is structured, all of which are important in understanding narrative as a discursive technology.

Evaluation, in narrative, can be understood as consisting of four parameters that establish its function and how it works (Thompson & Hunston, 2000, pp. 22-25). The
The first parameter of evaluation is the positive-negative (good-bad) parameter. An evaluation establishes or makes a claim towards positivity or negativity of an object or proposition. It should be noted, however, that the positivity or negativity of an object or proposition is dependent on the value system underlying the text (Thompson & Hunston, 2000, p. 22).

The second and third parameters of evaluation are interconnected. Certainty indicates the narrator’s trust in the information or claims towards an object or proposition, while expectedness relates to how obvious or expected his claim towards an object or entity should be to the audience. Interestingly, academic narrators have a tendency to ‘hedge’ their claims of certainty in the social construction of knowledge as a means of moderating knowledge claims, maintaining relations among their community, or as a means of making a claim that is not accepted by the larger academic community (Myers, 1990, p. 48). Finally, the fourth parameter of evaluation is the importance or relevance of the claim towards some object or proposition. This may be established through evidence in the narrative or through the narrative itself that is deemed important. While all four parameters are part of an evaluation, primacy belongs to the positive-negative (good-bad) parameter to which all the others are related to in some form (Thompson & Hunston, 2000, p. 25).

The importance of evaluation and why it will be an analytical focus lies in the three functions that it has as a discursive technology. First, it expresses the narrator’s opinion and correspondingly his or her values regarding an object or proposition. Encapsulated in an evaluation are reflections of the communal values of the narrator, his or her ideology, and a system of communication structures between the narrator and the
audience. Second, evaluations maintain or construct a relationship between narrator and audience by assuming shared attitudes and values, which can be used to manipulate or persuade the reader by evaluating an object or proposition in a particular way (Carter & Nash, 1990; Hoey, 1983, p. 95). Or, as mentioned earlier, it can adjust the certainty of a claim through hedging, thereby maintaining a polite relationship between narrator and reader. Third, evaluation organizes narrative or discourse. The establishment of an evaluation requires that the narrator structure the narrative to indicate that this is the beginning, this is how the interactions fit together meaningfully, and this is the end of the narrative and/or interaction between the narrator and audience. Recognition of the parameters of narrative and its important functions in narrative allows us to explore how evaluation unfolds within a narrative.

Evaluation unfolds on two discursive planes: the interactive plane that involves evaluations of structures within the narrative and the autonomous plane that involves evaluations of something else (Hunston & Thompson, 2000, p. 191; Sinclair, 1981). On the interactive plane, the distinction in evaluations lies in the “variable alignments of ‘world’ and ‘statement” or in another words, the state of affairs in the ‘real’ or ‘factual’ world and the assertion that something is the case in that world (Hunston & Thompson, 2000, p. 183). On the autonomous plane, the distinction in evaluation lies in labeling the world and things in that world. It is through the intersection of these two planes that the tools for analyzing narrative evaluations are established.

The narrative evaluation method identifies the status and value of statements to determining meaning. Status relates to the alignment of statement and world, which
determines, or at least constrains, the audience’s reaction to the statement and subsequent evaluations. To analyze status in a text, two sets of categories are useful: these being the type of statement and the source of the statement (Hunston & Thompson, 2000, p. 186). Statements fall into one of two categories. The first category, world-reflecting statements, makes a claim of reflecting some ‘true’ element of the world through facts, interpretation/hypotheses, or assessment. Facts, in this case, are elements that are verifiable, whereas assessments are not, although they may be expressed as such (Hunston & Thompson, 2000, p. 188). Between fact and assessment lies interpretation/hypothesis in which the narrator makes a claim that something might be true. This is prominent in academic writing where a distinction is made between what is known and what is verifiable.

A narrator can also make world-creating statements that do not make a claim to reflect the world, but assume or hypothesize about the world. World-creating statements involve assumptions, the hypothetical, and recommendations. The ‘truthfulness’ of these statements in relationship to the ‘real’ world is not important because they make no such claim. Assumptions and hypothetical claims ask the audience to accept a particular idea, concept, or world as true for the sake of discussion, while recommendations are narrative statements of advice. Both world reflecting and world creating statements have an additional important impact in that they create categories and labels of objects and propositions in the world.

The second category of status involves the source of the statement, which includes not only the origin of the statement, but responsibility for it. Sources fall into
two general categories of ‘self as source’ and ‘others as source.’ Self as source may be straightforward, but it can also be hidden in the text to which the narrator refers to or attributed to a general community or organization. Alternatively, the author can attribute the source to another along with the responsibility. This sourcing may come in many forms, ranging from direct sourcing to an individual or a group to sourcing a speech act rather than a person or group (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). The narrator may also attribute a claim to another, but maintain responsibility for the source by indicating agreement with the source.

Status, which each statement in a narrative possesses, makes each element in a narrative a thing that can be valued. The primary parameter of evaluation is the positive-negative [good-bad] one, however, the certainty, expectedness and importance of a statement also determines its value. The relationship between the claim and the stated evidence also influence the positive-negative evaluation. A discrepancy between claim and support can result in a negative evaluation. Similarly, the certainty, expectedness, and importance of ‘statused’ statements, which all statements are, attach value to them. This is the basis for the value element of status.

The value component of each statement stems from a number of sources. As noted, the act of giving a statement status gives it value. The capacity of status to create labels for objects and propositions, thereby limiting the values that can be assigned to it is a valuation in itself. For example, the statement \(X\) is a terrorist has status because it places a label on an individual, but it also limits how \(X\) may be valued. It is nearly impossible to place a positive value on that individual because the status-label limits the
values that can be attached to the individual. The value status of a statement may be constructed through a single word, such as terrorist, but more likely it is constructed through shared conceptions that are employed with other statements in the text to create a value for the statement or text. A narrative approach that views narratives as a discursive technology that sets the boundaries of discourse seeks to identify the evaluations within a narrative that constructs and limits our understanding on a particular topic.

**Power, Politics, & Expediency in Social Research**

Two concepts are important in understanding power. First, what is power and specifically what political power needs to be defined. Political anthropology provides a useful understanding of power that incorporates the myriad forms that it can exist in and the myriad forms that can be employed. Second, how should we approach an analysis of power within an institution, organization, or state? Foucault provides an interesting approach by not trying to identify who has power, but instead the structures within which power exists and how it exists.

In general, Weber provided an understanding to power that is widely accepted in that power is “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance” (Weber, 1964, p. 152). In other terms, it is the ability of one individual or group to bend another individual or group to its will despite resistance. In the case of political power, however, this creates an interesting dynamic since:
Politics is all about power: about how political agents create, compete for, and use power to attain public goals that, at least on the surface, are presumed to be for the common good of a community (Kuntz, 2001, p. Ch. 2).

Despite this understanding of political power, there still exists within the academic community elusiveness in the definition of power.

Much of this elusiveness in defining political power stems from the attempt by political scientists and sociologists to identify the specific categorizations in which power is created, maintained, and employed (Kurtz, 2001). Both groups recognize the importance of resources to political power. Some, such as Lasswell and Kaplan, suggested that resources include affection, enlightenment, wealth, respect, and skill among others (1950, p. 87); while others such as Dahl suggested popularity, information, job control, and cash distribution among others (1961, p. 229). Kuntz argued that “these ideas of power fail to illuminate the idea of resources as power because they are too Eurocentric, modern, and situationally particular” (Kuntz, 2001, p. Ch. 2). The numerous forms in which political power can take, along with the obviousness within the societies that political scientists and sociologist are involved within the “finer distinctions of power itself may not be perceived to be necessary” (Kuntz, 2001, p. Ch. 2).

An effective, cross-cultural and social constructionist conception of power resources that is not reductionist consists of two forms of resources: material (tangible, human) and ideational (ideological, symbolic, informational) (Kuntz, 2001). The creation, maintenance, and employment of these resources provide political agents with power; this power is the control of these resources. As such, political agents who control
more resources tend to defeat opponents who control less; although, how a political agent expends its resources is equally determinant in who is victorious. With this understanding of power, Foucault’s insight into power and how it may apply to COIN research becomes relevant.

In the discursive production of knowledge, Foucault proposed that we look for the various ways that knowledge is produced, and how it produces power and is produced through power (Foucault, 1980). Since it is impossible to determine who has power, the focus should be on the “technologies” of power and knowledge production and how they are embodied in local, regional, and material institutions (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). Considering Foucault’s theory on the relationship between power, discourse, and practice in the production of knowledge, expediency in this research can be explained. Foucault determined that the discourse of criminology was “of such utility, is needed so urgently, and rendered so vital for the working of the system, that it does not even seek a theoretical justification for itself” (Foucault, 1980, p. 47). In another words the practice of punishment under the law was subject to general forces in society that reflected the dominant forms of social and political power—the power to threaten, coerce, suppress, destroy, transform—that prevail in any time or community. The concepts of punishment, its stated goals, and the need for laws to constrain punishment masked other intentions and goals within the criminal justice system. For example, opposition to capital punishment should not be viewed as the result of rational utilitarian calculations, but by the disenchantment with public execution. A distinction that is important as the shift from public executions “did not change the nature or locus of power wielded over criminals by
society” (Bedau & Kelly, 2010). The result of Foucault’s concept of punishment was that what passed for the justification of punishment (as with any other social practice) was inextricably tied up with assumptions, beliefs, and ideology that had no independent rational foundation. Expediency should be understood as the pursuit and advancement of a discipline without utilitarian function or theoretical framework as it serves other outside purposes. This research, in part, seeks to determine if other outside purposes such as maintaining a system of security against insurgents similarly drives the development, expansion, and continuance of COIN doctrine.

From this perspective the development of counterinsurgency research does not necessarily stem from a gap in the disciplines of political science, security studies, or any other theoretical framework. The research continues to be developed because it potentially meets some external purpose, such as the needs for the U.S. military to have doctrine. Counterinsurgency research, as a discourse, is a production of power and functions to maintain power. The power lies in that discourse is “a system of thought composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of actions, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subject and the worlds of which they speak” (Lessa, 2005). What is or is not included in the discourse of counterinsurgency, how inclusion and exclusion are maintained in its discourse, and why they are maintained are also questions that this study will explore.

Social, political, and research institutions

Identification of the dominant narrators who create, maintain, and alter the discursive boundaries of COIN knowledge is central to this research. Reid discovered in
her analysis of U.S. terrorism experts that the terrorism research community is dominated by a small informal, but interconnected group of researchers, which has a limited number of academics and was dominated by a few primary knowledge-producing scholars. For example, Schmid and Jongman identified 32 leading terrorism scholars in 1988 (Schmid & Jongman, 1988). Almost twenty years later, Edna Reid and Hsinchun Chen’s study found that the number of dedicated researchers had only increased slightly to 42 researchers, many who were counted in the Schmidt and Jongman research (Reid & Chen, 2006). Among the 42 researchers, twelve were considered highly productive and dominated the field while authoring the most influential and cited works (Reid, 1997). Terrorism research, therefore, represented the interests of a few highly influential scholars who, as Reid, Gordon, Schmid, and Jongman pointed out, created a closed and circular research system that relied on each other’s publications, media reporting, and government publications, thereby creating a reinforcing feedback loop (Avishag, 2001). Although Reid found this “invisible college” of terrorism researchers to be an academic problem, she did not believe that the U.S. terrorism community posed the threat of an epistemic community that possesses the authority to define and evaluate policy issues (Reid & Chen, 2006).

Reid's conclusion is considered problematic because it de-emphasizes the importance of U.S. terrorism experts to the production of terrorism knowledge for policymakers, and it fails to recognize the nuances of Haas's concept of principled and casual beliefs, both of which would challenge her conclusion that the U.S. terrorism community is not an epistemic community. Haas defined an epistemic community as "a network of
professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area” (Haas, 1992, p. 3). The importance of an epistemic community lies in the conditions of uncertainty under which policy makers must make decisions without adequate knowledge; the epistemic community reduces that uncertainty by making the problem understandable to policy-makers. The epistemic community also provides policy recommendations and evaluates the effectiveness of policy decisions enacted by policy-makers. U.S. terrorism experts have a significant influence on how any particular organization is narrated and how its actions are interpreted. They set the boundaries of terrorism discourse by managing their community, policy makers, and the American populations’ understanding of terrorist organizations.

The authority of one group to define the problem set, recommend policy solutions, and then evaluate those policies is what Haas meant when arguing that epistemic communities share normative, principled, and causal beliefs. The epistemic community's shared normative and principle beliefs 'provide a value-based rational' for their social action (Haas, 1992, p. 3). Shared casual beliefs that stem from a shared understanding of the problem set and linked to policy outcomes that are accepted by policy makers is what makes an organization an epistemic one. This does not imply that dissention does not exist in defining, understanding, and evaluating the problem set, but that the discursive boundaries of the problem are set and maintained by the epistemic community.
Similar to terrorism studies, COIN research is conducted by a few authoritative authors and groups that define, recommend, and evaluate policy solutions. Unlike terrorism studies, the epistemic community of COIN research consists predominantly of military research centers and a few highly productive independent authors often associated with those centers.

A network of professionals with recognized expertise in a particular domain, and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge defines the two primary organizations in the U.S. military responsible for counterinsurgency: the Army COIN Center at the Combined Arms Command and the Marine Corp Center for Irregular Warfare Center (CIW). The Army’s COIN Center is part of the Army Irregular Warfare Fusion Cell and the Mission Command Center of Excellence, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center. “Its mission is to provide Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leader Development and Education, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) solutions applicable to counterinsurgency environments in order to improve ground forces’ capability to execute and succeed in counterinsurgency operations globally” (US Army Combined Arms Center, 2011).

The Army’s COIN Center was established in 2006 by LTG David Petraeus (USA) and Lt. Gen. James Mattis (USMC) to better educate and train all U.S. ground forces on the principles and practices of counterinsurgency. The organization’s other task is to facilitate the implementation of COIN doctrine through education, outreach, collaboration, collection and dissemination of COIN lessons learned (US Army Combined Arms Center, 2011) (USMC Center for IW). Since its establishment, the
COIN Center has expanded its focus from Iraq and Afghanistan to the study and analysis of current and emerging insurgencies worldwide.

The Center for Irregular Warfare (CIW) is the central Marine Corps organization for identifying, coordinating, and implementing irregular warfare capability development initiatives across all elements of the Corp in order to increase, improve, and enhance Marine Corps capabilities and capacities to conduct operations across the spectrum of war against irregular threats (USMC Center for IW). The CIW improves IW and COIN across the entire operational spectrum by focusing on the operational challenges through researching best practices, supporting doctrinal development, and the integration of IW tenets into training and education programs and curricula. Together, these two organizations identify the problem, provide and train solutions, and analyze the solutions. The Army COIN Center and CIW create a one-stop shop for all things COIN related for the U.S. military.

In many studies on terrorism, including Reid’s, the institutional organization of U.S. terrorism experts was established through organizations such as Rand and their publications. In their study, Rand’s establishment of professional expertise and maintenance of an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge is provided through the two most prominent English language journals in the field of terrorism studies: *Terrorism and Political Violence* and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. RAND scholars authored a significant number of articles in both publications and controlled the content as editors. Hence, part of the epistemic community of U.S. terrorism experts located in RAND possess the authority to define the problem of terrorism, how it should be
understood, and recommend what actions policy-makers should take in dealing with terrorism (Burnett & Whyte, 2008).

No single journal represents the U.S. military, academia, or Coalition communities’ authoritative concepts of COIN more than FM 3-24. This field manual was downloaded more than 1.5 million times from Army and Marine Corp websites in the first few months of its release in 2007. “This unclassified document has since then become one of the key tools in what, since the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, was rechristened ‘The Long War’” (Sloan & Gorka, 2009). FM 3-24 is a combined product of the U.S. Army and Marine Corp based on the most famous “successful” cases of COIN in the last century, the concepts of a select number of COIN authors, and current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. FM 3-24 defines COIN, how to defeat insurgents, and how to assess success. In short, it creates the discursive boundaries of COIN. This is not only a discursive boundary for the U.S. military, but for coalition partners such as the Afghan National Security Forces, whose COIN doctrine is literally a Dari translation of FM 3-24.

A casual review of the concepts and principles of counterinsurgency in FM 3-24 identifies the central authoritative authors shaping the COIN doctrine among U.S. counterinsurgency experts. FM 3-24 divides its annotated bibliography into three sections: The Classics, Overview and Special Subjects in Counterinsurgency, and Contemporary Experiences and the War on Terrorism. A review of the bibliography reveals a number of the principle authors who have defined U.S. COIN discourse. David Galula’s Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice is based on his observations of insurgency and counterinsurgency in Greece, China, and Algeria. This text has been a
basis for understanding counterinsurgency for the last forty years. More recent authors and text include Thomas Hammes’ *The Sling and the Stone* and several works by David Kilcullen. In fact, Kilcullen’s articles “Countering Global Insurgency” (2005), “Twenty-eight articles” (2006), and “Counterinsurgency Redux” (2006/7) could be considered the most prominent voice on counterinsurgency in Western militaries.

These primary authoritative authors are supported by a number of “classic” authors on revolution, rebellion, terrorism, and Islam. All of the abovementioned authors use Mao’s *On Guerrilla Warfare* as a case study of a successful revolution (insurgency) and the starting point for understanding how to counter Mao’s and others success. Nagl’s *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* incorporates the successful British experience in Malaysia and the unsuccessful experience of the U.S. in Vietnam as an extension of the means of defeating Maoist insurgency. Gurr’s *Why Men Rebel* provides a theoretical basis for insurgency through deprivation theory, which arguably is the basis for the grievance concept in COIN doctrine.

The supporting authors on Islam and terrorism in FM 3-24 provide additional discursive boundaries in which the Army wants counterinsurgency doctrine to be understood. Starting with T.E. Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, describing his attempt to organize Arabs, and ending with Gilles Kepel’s *The War for the Muslim Mind* in which counterinsurgency is an element of political Islam and its challenge to the West. In addition, despite terrorism only being a component of insurgency, terrorism studies provide much of the theoretical framework for COIN doctrine. FM 3-24 identifies the
contemporary experiences with insurgency as part of the War on Terrorism, citing Bruce Hoffman’s *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq* and Rohan Gunaratna’s *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* as a means for understanding the rise of insurgency. The discursive boundaries set by U.S. discourse on terrorism and Islam is particularly important because any understanding of counterinsurgency is limited by the dominant narratives of terrorism and Islam; namely the New Terrorism Narrative and Political Islam.

**The ‘New’ Terrorism Narrative**

Scholars of the emerging field of critical terrorism studies claim that since 9/11, a new narrative of terrorism has become one of the most important and enduring institutional narratives among U.S. national security experts, as their failure to predict specific asymmetric threats such as 9/11 “wiped the slate clean of the conventional wisdom on terrorists and terrorism”, leading researchers to re-orient their studies (Silke, 2004, p. xvii). This ‘new’ terrorism was more than a re-orientation of terrorism wisdom. It changed the characterization, setting, and actions of the ‘traditional’ terrorists of the Cold War period by the introduction of a new institutional narrative of terrorism that redefined the boundaries of terrorism knowledge. The ‘new’ Terrorism narrative introduced new characterizations of terrorists, the setting, and their actions; in short, terrorists were re-plotted and re-evaluated in this narrative (Burnett & Whyte, 2008).

The first change in ‘new’ Terrorism narrative was a re-characterization of terrorists and terrorist organizations in their motivations, goals, and rationale. The 'traditional' terrorist organizations of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, were motivated by
secular, albeit, leftist ideology, unlike the terrorists of today who are inspired by religious dogma (Hoffman, 1989, pp. 362-363; Juergensmeyer, 1997, pp. 22-23; Laqueur, 1996, pp. 32-33). The primary concern with acts of terrorism from the late 1960’s to the early 1980’s was with the societal threat posed by radical leftist organizations in a Cold World era (Hoffman, 2006). In the influential works *Terrorism and the Liberal State* and *Time of Terror* both Wilkinson and Bell, respectively, analyzed the relation between terrorism and liberal democracies. Wilkinson and Bell were concerned with how terrorism undermined liberal democracies. Their studies focused on totalitarian governments and leftist organizations, both of which were the primary political concerns of Western politicians in the Cold War era. Bruce Hoffman’s 1998 *Inside Terrorism* transited the ideological threat of a ‘comprehensible’ leftist/socialist radicalism of the 1970/80’s to the ‘incomprehensible’ religious terrorism of today. He argued that leftist terrorists motivated by a cause of ‘social justice,’ while still a threat to Western society, were “heavily constrained…and…highly discriminate” in their attacks because of their concern for maintaining political support among their constituents (Hoffman, 2006, pp. 88-89). In contrast, the ‘new’ terrorist is motivated by religious imperatives influenced by radicalized interpretations of religion and apocalyptic prophecies (Cilluffo & Tomarchio, 1998, p. 441). The impact of this new characterization is twofold in that it evaluates the ‘new’ terrorist as an irrational actor who is difficult for outside observers to understand and it obscures local political motives of terrorist organizations to an overarching religious motivation.
The irrationality of terrorists and terrorism has always been a central characterization of terrorists in terrorism literature. The irrationality of ‘traditional’ terrorists was a secular and individual irrationality. The basis of this evaluation was that terrorist violence was so contrary to acceptable social standards that it must be the result of abnormality (Jager, Schmidtchen, & Sullwold, 1981). Psychopathic, narcissistic, and paranoid personalities were all applied to terrorists because of their utility within the prevalent narrative of what was socially acceptable (Schmid & Jongman, 1988). Pearce argued that terrorists were “aggressive psychopaths” who used terrorism as a focus for the problems within their lives (Pearce, 1977). Post and Sullwold argued that the lack of regard for life was indicative of a narcissistic personality (Post, 1987; Jager, Schmidtchen, & Sullwold, 1981). In addition, paranoia was claimed as the motive behind the terrorist need to strike at the state. The problem with the psychopathology model was that it was based on anecdotal evidence with limited quality research. In contrast, there were increasing numbers of quality studies demonstrating the normality of terrorists (Sageman, 2004).

Despite the challenges to the psychopathological model, the pathological terrorist evaluation continued as the ‘New’ Terrorism narrative asserted that terrorists possessed many of the pathological traits, but not the actual disorder. The result was the development of a narrative characterization that placed the aura of pathology on the terrorist without any way to easily test or refute the characterization (Silke, 1998). Today, this aura has expanded as security experts assign pathological producing processes to
religious, societal, and cultural factors within a community that are difficult to understand by outsiders, but exist nonetheless.

The ‘new’ terrorist characterization as singularly motivated by pathological religious dogma at the expense of local political interests, compromise, and strategic discernment is also a central evaluation of the ‘New’ Terrorism narrative. Terrorism is no longer to be understood as a local or domestic phenomenon, but as a loose affiliation of transnational actors with international reach and impact (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1999, pp. 194-195; Jenkins, 2001, p. 324; Gunaratna, 2004, p. 51; Sageman, 2004, p. 61; Takeyh & Gvosdev, 2002, p. 97). Divinely inspired ‘new’ terrorists seek change beyond their local region and desire to change the entire international system under a new religious order ordained by God (Simon & Benjamin, 2000, p. 66). Consequently, terrorists are now characterized essentially as an existential threat to the international community of nations.

The range of responses that the international community can take towards terrorists is limited by the uncompromising quality of terrorist in the ‘New’ Terrorism narrative. This is in contrast to terrorists of the past whose secular and local interest allowed them to negotiate with the state actors. As the political situation changed, terrorists in the past could adapt to the political changes, form new goals, and still negotiate with the state. The ‘new’ terrorists, however, because of divinely sanctioned absolutist religious agendas are unwilling to compromise on their goals, let alone negotiate for their objectives.
The unwillingness to compromise, joined with a global agenda of change has led 'new' terrorists to employ violence differently from ‘traditional’ terrorists. No longer is terrorism a tactic in a larger political strategy where terrorists calculated the impact of using terrorism in their political goals (Simon & Benjamin, 2001, pp. 65-66). The ‘new’ terrorist "views violence as an end in itself;" especially considering their religious duty to destroy ethnic communities, religious opponents, and secular states (Hoffman, 1989, p. 363). Under this narrative, the social and political pressures that constrained the activities of ‘traditional’ terrorists have been removed and the new terrorist no longer feels constrained by any morality outside their own. The result is terrorists who seek to create a large number of casualties in their use of violence and terrorists who seek the instruments to achieve that destruction. The ‘new’ terrorist's desire to create mass casualties as a legitimate means to achieve their goals makes the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction a plausible enterprise in the new terrorism narrative (Hoffman, 1993, pp. 22-24; Laqueur, 1996, pp. 32-33; Simon & Benjamin, 2000, p. 71).

Equally important in the ‘New’ Terrorism narrative was a change in the political and security discourse. The clearly defined Cold War discourse between the East and the West changed to a post-Cold War discourse of an undefined environment in which terrorist organizations operated. Like so many phenomena during the Cold War, the identity and corresponding interests, concerns, and issues of sub-state actors such as terrorist organizations were, at least, ignored and in many cases subsumed under the Cold War rhetoric. Hence, the identification of an organization as ‘terrorist’ and the legitimacy of its cause were determined by where it was positioned vis-à-vis the interests of the
major Cold War adversaries. The new political and security discourse that eventually emerged at the end of the Cold War was an environment where sub-state actors freed from the pressures of Cold War adversaries now pursued ethno-religious agendas that were constantly destabilizing the international community. The former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Zaire, and Rwanda all demonstrated that tribal, religious and ethnic identities were reemerging as counters to national identities and that such actors were willing to engage in genocide against their opponents. The influence of these new sub-national actors was amplified by the emerging post-Cold War world where technology, mass media, and interconnectivity between states, individuals, and corporations allowed terrorist actions to gain global attention. The new environment (setting) in which the ‘new’ terrorist operated resulted in a new interpretation (evaluation) of the intentions and actions of terrorist organizations.

For example, in a post-Cold War world where Russia could not account for its nuclear arsenal and states such as Pakistan and North Korea were charged with nuclear proliferation, the possibility of a terrorist organization obtaining nuclear material was plausible. Terrorists of the past did not have access to WMD and correspondingly, did not seek to obtain such weapons because their issues and goals were about local change. The ‘new’ terrorists with their divine sanction, however, presumably see WMD as a means to achieve their extremist ends (Hoffman, 1993, pp. 22-24; Laqueur, 1996, pp. 32-34). Accessibility to nuclear weapons, along with a narrative of terrorist divine sanction has made nuclear proliferation a major concern of international relations, political science, and terrorism scholars (Cilluffo & Tomarchio, 1998, pp. 440-2; Jenkins, 2001, p. 324;
Laqueur, 1996, p. 218). Such a concern is not only alarmist in nature, but it deflects attention away from any political objective of a terrorist organization to the larger existential threat that they pose to the international community.

COIN doctrine is comprised of and embedded in terrorism studies, therefore the characterizations of insurgency and insurgents are bound by the characterizations of terrorists, terrorism and the ‘New’ Terrorism narrative. This should be expected, as there are relatively few academics involved in counterinsurgency studies and many of those involved have a background in terrorism studies. Furthermore, counterinsurgency, especially in Southwest Asia, is considered part of the Global War on Terror; thereby, implicitly if not explicitly binding the discourse of insurgency within terrorism discourse. FM 3-24 makes a limited distinction between insurgency and terrorism in that terrorism is a possible tactic used by insurgents, especially within urban environments, to achieve their goals. What is of interest in this research is whether there is a distinction between terrorism/terrorist and insurgency/insurgent from a narrative approach. If the two are defined differently, but the setting, actors, and actions of each are narrated, labeled and evaluated the same; does the definition matter in understanding each phenomenon?

**Islam Narrative**

U.S. discourse on Islam in particular, is important because it includes institutionalized narratives of the relationship between religion and the state, the nature of Islam, and U.S. foreign policy agendas such as the export of democracy that not only set the boundaries of Islamic discourse in the U.S. but also shapes the boundaries of COIN discourse. The threat of political Islamic is a primary topic of research among U.S.
political and national security experts; comprising a significant portion of terrorism and insurgency literature. (Jackson, 2007; Silke, 2004) How the U.S. evaluates the relationship between religion and the state frames its understanding of Islam. A foundational and dominant narrative guiding research in Europe and America is the theory of the laical secular state, which plots the relationship between the religious and the political, each of which shapes the boundaries of understanding Islam in the West.

First among these concepts is the existence of a universal morality above and beyond religion. Modern Euro-American social scientists presuppose that a single logical, reasonable, or natural universal moral order has replaced religion (Hurrell, 1990; Connolly, 1995). While it can be argued that social scientists study the enormous multiplicity of religious social orders, the development of the study of religion and its role in modern society is a product of Enlightenment failures. The issues, questions, and approaches to the study of religion, focused on Western Enlightenment issues set the discursive boundaries of the study of religion that only recently have been questioned. (Tayob, 2004; Capps, 1995) Second is the concept of the continually evolving modern laical state; which, since the treaty of Westphalia, has steadily removed religion, religious organizations, and religious influence from the apparatus of the state. (Yamane, 1997; Bruce, 2001; Chaves, 1994; Asad, 2003; Tschannen, 1991) In this view, the separation of religion from politics is the natural state of affairs, whereby the mixture of the two is viewed “as abnormal, irrational, dangerous, and extreme,” making religion an adversary to the state, modernization, democracy, and development. (Esposito, 2000, p. 9) Third, as a threat to stability, religion is confined to the private sphere. Casanova argued that the
privatization of religion is “mandated ideologically by liberal categories of thought which permeate not only the political ideologies and constitutional theories but the entire structure of modern Western thought” (Casanova, 1994, p. 215). This discourse directly supports the ‘New’ Terrorism narrative’s characterizations of religious based terrorist; and insurgents, as being irrational and Islamic societies as a source of that irrationality.

Nationalism by Islamic populations in this view should be rational and pragmatic struggles for secular nationhood rather than an Islamic struggle that is irrational, dogmatic, inflexible, and unresponsive to reality. This part of the narrative focuses on Islam as a value system and its compatibility with Western values that are considered a foundational component for a successful modern state. Part of this discourse lies in Bernard Lewis’s *Islam and the West* and Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations*, both of whom, view Islamic and Western values as incompatible, leading to inevitable conflict between the two societies. In this dominant narrative, political Islam is the next great threat to Western society following in the ideological steps of Fascism, Nazism, and Communism. Islam, and in particular Islamists, are characterized as prone to religious radicalism, violent militancy, and dogmatism all contributing to a ‘new-world disorder.’ (Kramer, 2001)

These characterizations in U.S. Islamic discourse set by institutionalized narratives are in part a result of mythical Orientalist conceptions of Islam that have a long history in Western academia and continue to influence research today (Jackson, 2007). These conceptions are a continuation of Said's concept that the West attempts to understand the region as its political, economic, and military competitor have influenced
Western research on the Middle East (Said, 2003, p. 1). These narratives are so ingrained in academic and policy discourse that research based on popular media, official government reports, and conceptions of Islam lacking empirical evidence are viewed as objective knowledge, leading to the exaggerations of the threat of Islam or anything identified as Islamic (Jackson, 2007, p. 177).

Dissertation Question Revised

Derrida, Foucault, Said, and others viewed knowledge as being produced in contexts of power, history, culture, etc…. This research is not as much about the definition or doctrine of COIN, although that is the research question, but an observation of the interaction of contextualization in the development of a definition of COIN. This observation does not require breaking down COIN doctrine; it only requires that the definition of COIN be stripped down to its most essential element and then queried. In addition, the definition of what is counterinsurgency is wholly or in part dependent on the definition of insurgency. Hence, an understanding of how the authoritative narrators of COIN define and understand insurgency is of greater significance than how they define counterinsurgency. So this research will focus on understanding a deconstructed yet functional definition of insurgency, which arguably could be defined as:

**Insurgency is the efforts of X to defeat Y in Z**

This refines the research question from “What is the relationship between the major organizations involved in COIN, their institutional narratives, and the development of COIN doctrine?” to “What does reconstructing the basic definition of insurgency within
its organizational, social, and discursive constructs reveal about the relation between narratives, organizations, and expediency in knowledge production?”
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between organizations, institutional narratives, and political expediency in knowledge production. To this end, the study required a methodology and methods that support the collection and analysis of data that provided insights into their relationships in knowledge production. A social constructionist and post-structuralist methodology employing narrative methods best provided the tools for exploring these relationships.

A social constructionist methodology was best suited to explore this relationship. Social constructionism views social life as constructed by active and creative agents through their interactions with others. Positing that human beings act towards an object, institution, or phenomena based on the inter-subjective meaning they ascribe towards those entities. This methodology explicitly acknowledges that the development of COIN knowledge is embedded in organizational discourses that set the boundaries of understanding COIN and those discourses are maintained by institutional narratives of an organization, community, or state.

A post-structuralist methodology rejects the self-sufficiency of the structures in structuralism that mechanically reproduces meaning. Post-structuralism interrogates the binary oppositions critical to structuralism but rejects the self-sufficiency of the structures that structuralism posits and questions the binary oppositions that constitute those
structures (Edwards, 1998, p. 597). Post-structuralism is also important to this study as it offers a way of studying how knowledge is produced in the contexts of culture and history that condition the underlying structures. Post-structuralism distinguishes between historical (diachronic) and descriptive (synchronic) reading (Saussure, 2001). From this basic distinction, post-structuralist studies often emphasize how cultural concepts have changed over time to understand how readers in the present understand these same concepts.

A narrative methodology views narrative as a discursive technology that shapes the boundaries of meaning for individuals, organizations, and societies. It recognizes that narratives shape the boundaries of acceptable speech (Butler, 1997), are constitutive in creating social reality (White H., 1987; Brunner, 1991; Freeman, 1999), and maintains common intentions of shared meaning i.e. social or organizational culture (Brunner, 1990; Searle, 1995; Gergen & Gergen, 2003). This approach views narratives as constitutive of a discipline and its experts through organizational culture (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). As such, narrative provided an opportunity to observe and analyze what individuals and organization incorporate into their knowledge surrounding a phenomenon. Through observation and analysis, the researcher can identify internal and external institutional narratives incorporated into knowledge production. The research may also discover how, what, and possibly, why individuals and organizations privilege one set of knowledge over another.

Narrative analysis was chosen as a methodology because it was aligned with constructivist and post-structural concepts in that it challenges the philosophy behind
quantitative data collection and questions the idea of ‘objective’ data (Boje, 2001, pp. 83, 98). Narrative analysis was also relevant as it focuses on narrative as a powerful tool in the transfer or sharing of knowledge among individuals, groups, and organizations. Narrative analysis has been adopted by several disciplines, with each narrative researcher building on the others in illustrating the role of narrative as a discursive tool in shaping meaning. Labov’s synchronic approach assisted in understanding the major events of a narrative and the effects those events had on the individual constructing the narrative (Smith C. P., 2000). Polkinghorne’s sociology-focused diachronic approach explored the contexts of relationships, history, and environment in which narratives were constructed (1995). Bruner’s functional psychological approach viewed narrative as the way individuals construct and make sense of reality as well as the ways in which meanings were created and shared (1991). Gubrium and Holstein’s analytical approach to narrative was based in ethnographic methods and sought to identify narrative in everyday contexts of family, care settings, and other organizational structures (2008). Boje argued that narrative was the critical feature in the identity of organizations setting boundaries on who they are, how they operate, and how they wanted to be understood (1995). Each of these narrative approaches was important in determining the analytical approach to the research question of this study.

The research question of this study was “What does reconstructing the basic definition of insurgency within its organizational, social, and discursive constructs reveal about the relation between narratives, organizations, and expediency in knowledge production?” The incorporation of the abovementioned approaches to narrative analysis
provided methodological and corresponding methods to address this question. Labov and Bruner’s work demonstrated that narrative could provide meaning and set boundaries for how the COIN community understood insurgency. Gubrium and Holstein’s research expanded where one can find narrative elements to analyze while Polkinghorne’s research recognized that any institutional narrative of insurgency must be understood within social, political, and historical context. In addition, Boje’s work indicated that any institutional narrative of insurgency among the COIN community not only sets the boundaries of insurgency discourse, but also shapes the organizational identity of the community. It was the research of these authors that led to the application of Hunston & Thompson (2000) evaluation model in conjunction with Greimas actantial model in the analysis of insurgency knowledge.

**Methods**

The exploration of the relationship between narrative, power, and expediency in knowledge production required analytical methods that could identify the primary elements of narrative in non-narrative texts, extricate meaning from the elements of narrative, and provide the information necessary to build definitions of insurgency that allowed exploration of the relationship between narrative, meaning, and the entities that hold those narratives. The basic elements of narrative were plot, character, action, and setting (Abbott, 2008, pp. 13-21) oriented to an author intended theme. These elements were identified by the qualities associated with each; however, all the elements were not necessary.
Three narrative elements were necessary for establishing the existence of a narrative and providing the data for this research. The character element was important, as it is the entity that takes action and causes a change in condition within itself, others, or the setting. The setting was the second element that required identification as it sets conditions on the characters and actions within a narrative. The third element was the theme, including the plot as the two are interrelated. The theme was the central point or meaning behind a narrative and the plot was the arrangement of character, action, and setting towards that meaning. Without identifying the plot within a narrative it would be difficult to accurately identify the theme of the narrative.

Actions or events while a defining element of a narrative in general were not necessary to the exploration of the data or building alternative definitions of insurgency. The concept behind this research was to identify the institutional narrative within the COIN community and explore how it created discursive boundaries on the understanding of insurgency. Through the theme, plot, character, and setting established through an institutional narrative, the actions of any character identified as an insurgent were readily understood within any narrative of the COIN community. In a similar vein, the focus on this research was on one character, the insurgent. Within the data numerous characters were identified, however, they were all auxiliary or supporting characters. Only the insurgent and government were necessary for insurgency as a phenomena or a narrative. As the focus was on understanding the insurgent and insurgency, the insurgent was the character focus of this research.
Narrative analysis uses field texts, such as stories, autobiography, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos and other artifacts as the units of analysis to research and understand the way people and organizations create meaning through narratives. Two analytical methods used together allowed the collection and analysis of non-narrative texts in understanding insurgency. The primary analysis employed the narrative evaluation model based off the work of Hunston & Thompson (2000). The evaluation framework provided the means to analyze character, setting, and theme independently and as a whole. The secondary analysis was based on actant analysis, which provided a means to analyze the relationship between author’s intent, narrative, and audience. Together, these provided insight into the relationship of narratives, knowledge production, and power.

**Data Collection**

There are hundreds of journal articles, books, and research papers on insurgency and counterinsurgency in the U.S.; however, these texts do not have equal influence in shaping the discursive boundaries of insurgency/counterinsurgency research. In Reid’s research into terrorism as a discipline, she discovered that terrorism studies were dominated by a small informal, but interconnected group of researchers (Reid, 1997, p. 17). Schmidt and Jongman identified only 32 leading terrorism scholars in 1988 (Schmid & Jongman, 1988). Edna Reid and Hsinchun Chen’s study, almost twenty years later, found that the number of dedicated researchers had only increased slightly to 42 researchers (Reid & Chen, 2006). Among the 42 researchers, twelve were considered highly productive and dominated the field through authoring the most influential and
cited works (Reid & Chen, 2006). This research, however, focused on the narratives contained within the texts; hence, the most cited and influential texts were identified as data sources.

Four sources were used in the determination of the most influential texts to analyze for identifying narrative elements and evaluations shaping insurgency/counterinsurgency research. As the U.S. Army and Marine Corp are the central organizations involved in counterinsurgency, their recommendation on the important texts in understanding insurgency and counterinsurgency provide the first three sources. FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 Counterinsurgency provided an annotated bibliography of fifty-four texts to assist leaders in their understanding of insurgency and counterinsurgency (FM 3-24, 2006). In addition, FM 3-24.2 Tactics in Counterinsurgency provided a list of twelve texts for COIN tactical leaders in a time-constrained environment (FM 3-24.2, 2009, p. B:1). The third military source was the thirteen texts of the United States Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) Counterinsurgency Knowledge Center’s top reads for understanding COIN (Combined Arms Center, 2013). Added to this were the twenty most cited texts on insurgency and counterinsurgency (2002-2012) as identified by the Web of Science Citation Index (Thomson Reuters). These four lists were aggregated into a single matrix and were cross-referenced. As all the texts were identified by their sources as being relevant to understanding counterinsurgency, any text that had multiple references was considered highly influential. Cross-referencing the texts resulted in the identification of the fourteen texts in Appendix A used as data sources.
Data Analysis

The objective of this proposal is to shed light on the relationship between organizations and institutional narratives, such as the discursive boundaries of COIN knowledge. Two analytical methods were used in conjunction in exploring this relationship. One was the narrative evaluation framework based on Hunston & Thompson that identifies the relationship between characters, settings, theme, and the evaluation of those narrative components. The identification of evaluations across texts in COIN provided insight into how organizations and authors narrate and understand COIN. Actantial analysis, the other analytical framework, assisted in understanding the relationship between narrative and power by identifying the intended audience of the author, what he wants them to understand, and what hampers that understanding. Through actantial analysis and narrative evaluation, the act of privileging knowledge was identifiable.

Application of Narrative Analysis to Nontraditional Narratives Discourse

Narrative analysis looks at the relationship between the basic elements of narrative: character, event, and setting together with plot and evaluation towards a theme to create meaning. Narrative analytical methods cannot be applied to other modes of discourse if there is no narrative or narrative elements explicitly or implicitly in the other forms. However, few social, military, or political texts are absent of narrative elements; therefore, narrative analysis was applicable to these texts. Each of the other discursive modes has texts that can be analyzed with narrative approaches, although, not being narrative discourse. News, letters, reports and textbooks are forms of exposition discourse.
that contain narrative elements. Similarly, resumes, job evaluations, and legal arguments of argumentation discourse and prose of descriptive discourse contain narrative elements that can be analyzed with a narrative method.

**Narrative Evaluation Framework**

A narrative evaluation framework provided a construct for identifying the point of a narrative and the structures used to create that point by applying the evaluation concepts of Hunston & Thompson to the general elements of narrative: character, event, setting, and theme (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). While this approach typically focuses on smaller narratives that are broken down into Labovian clausal categories of abstract, orientation, complication, result, evaluation, and coda, it can also be the basis for analysis of larger textual narratives by identifying the central narrative elements and connecting them to the corresponding evaluative statements that create meaning for each of the elements and the narrative in general.
The collected texts were read to identify the author’s central point (theme), primary characters (actant), and settings. Second, the texts were read for the evaluations of the narrative elements by identifying the central evaluative statements or concepts associated with each. Looking at their status by identifying the type of statement and the source of the statement assessed the evaluative statement. The end result of employing the narrative evaluative statement to texts was a series of relationships of object and propositions with evaluations and their supporting statements. These provided meaning not only for the text they were contained within, but if institutionalized within organizational discourse, they became contextual evaluations for COIN knowledge.


**Actantial Analysis**

The actantial model was beneficial to the analysis of COIN texts as it assisted in the narrative analysis of the texts. The actantial model when applied to a ‘non-narrative’ text still provided useful insights. Identification of the subject, object, and junction of text along with the identification of the sender and receiver assisted in identifying who the text was for, what was the objective or meaning of the text, and what a reader was expected to gain from it. The actantial classes, when applied to the texts, also assisted in determining who the authors considered important in terms of making a character within a text a subject, object, helper, or opponent.

An important consideration in applying the actantial model to COIN texts is in the context of a social constructed world there are numerous arrangements that can be applied. Depending on who is the observer, when the action is occurring, and where, the same action can be viewed, understood, and classified differently. Despite this difficulty, the actantial analysis in this research took the approach that the author intends their text to be understood and have a specific audience and theme.

**Analytical Process**

*Step I: Multiple Readings* - All of the text was read multiple times with the intent of familiarizing the researcher with the texts and the author's intent. Author’s intent should be understood as modest intentionalism in that meaning of a text was not the sole propriety of the author, but the author does have a special authority with respect to its meaning (Irvin, 2006, p. 119). During these readings, the researcher identified and annotated any issues with the text. These issues consisted of two types: analytical and
subjective. Analytical issues consisted of researcher-identified failures in logic or faulty conclusions within the text. Subjective issues consisted of identifying the researchers ideological, political, or cultural biases towards the text. The identification and annotation of these analytical and subjective issues allowed the researcher, upon additional reading, to better access the text and author intent. Additional reading of the text focused on identifying the intent of the text, general themes, and the central understanding the texts attempted to establish.

Critical to gaining a deeper understanding of the text, a brief actantial analysis was conducted on each text. The actantial analysis looked at the function that each actant (including author and audience) had in the narrative. The identification of sender, receiver, subject, object, helper, and opponent within the text assisted in identifying the goal and audience of the texts, which further assisted the researcher in accessing the text in subsequent steps in the analytical process.

Step II: Coding (Narrative Elements) - After the initial reading of the text and the identification of multiple actors and plots, the research was further narrowed to the analysis of one character: the insurgent, the setting in which the insurgent operates, and the theme related plots points that make sense of the insurgent, setting, and relationship between the two. The texts were then coded on criteria appropriate to the narrative element.

- Setting—the criteria for setting codes in this analysis focused on the space where insurgency occurs. This excludes geographic claims of setting, as these
were for the most part case specific and tactical in nature. Setting, however, did include political, social, and intellectual spaces.

- Actant [Character/Actor] (Insurgent)—the actant coding criteria were based on Pratt & Foreman’s theoretical framework of organizational identity, which views organizational identity as the characteristics of an organization that are considered central, distinctive, and enduring. That was, characteristics that were fundamental (central), uniquely descriptive (distinctive) of the organization, and persist (enduring) over time (2000, p. 20).

- Theme—coding for theme was based on the identification and coding of plots. The focus of coding on plots was based on their importance in shaping meaning through the arrangement of character, setting, and action in service to the theme of a narrative or discourse, as this was the point or meaning.

Step III: Coding (Element Claims and Evaluations) – In the third step, each data set of coded narrative elements were analyzed to identify element claims and their corresponding evaluations. All of these claims were considered as potential sub-claims and evaluations for a particular element. The coded sub-claims were then grouped based on similarity of claim and became a new sub-set of codes that were applied to the texts. It should be noted that it was possible for a claim or sub-claim to be important, but posses a neutral evaluation. For example, a space discourse may have a setting claim or sub-claim of ‘no gravity.’ The evaluation of this setting claim could be positive, if beneficial in the discourse, negative if harmful, and neutral if considered just an element of the setting.
Step IV: Identified Primary Sub-claims and Evaluations – Recoded, the primary sub-claims for actant and setting were identified. This identification was based on the core criteria of each element. The strength of the sub-claim was determined by the depth and breadth of the sub-claim and evaluation. For example, a strong sub-claim would have both depth (a distinct and strong proposition, with limited hedging) and breadth (included in at least half the texts directly or indirectly). Additionally, the sub-claims were analyzed for relationships to other sub-claims within the narrative element.

The primary sub-claim for themes was determined differently, as the basis of any thematic sub-claim is based on the plot that structures the other elements in meaningful ways. Therefore, the thematic sub-claims were identified by similarity of themes, which as plots, were structured differently. The thematic sub-claims were then analyzed for depth and breadth of claim.

Step V: Identified Element Claim and Evaluation—The final analytical step was to identify the primary narrative element claim and evaluation independent of any particular text. For character and setting narrative elements, this analytical task consisted of reconstructing a single claim and evaluation comprising of the interconnected sub-claims within a particular element and re-evaluating the element claim. Basing the element claim on the interconnected sub-claims and independently evaluating the claim was important. First, arguably, any claim is ‘understood’ to contain various sub-claims within it. Hence, any reconstructed claim from a sub-claim most was interrelated. Second, the reconstructed claim at times resulted in a different evaluation. For example, insurgents possessed a positive character sub-claim evaluation as an adaptive
organization. When incorporated into the other sub-claims, the positive adaptive aspect was re-evaluated as negative as it was viewed as adaptive as an omnipresent threat to the world. The thematic claim and evaluation was determined by breadth and depth of the claim in the form of plot structures that supported the theme. Additionally, most texts have a direct or indirect stated theme; this may or may not coincide with a theme identified through the analysis of the texts.

**Methodological/Method Concerns**

There were two issues or concerns that need to be addressed regarding the research methodology and methods. First, the issue of internal and external validity in discursive based qualitative research needs to be addressed. Second, the difficulty in the identification of claim evaluations needs to be addressed.

Internal and external validity are central issues in employing a social constructivist and discursive based method in analyzing the relationship between organizations, institutional narratives, and expediency in knowledge production. Internal validity looks at the truth of cause-effect. Typically, in quantitative sciences internal validity relates to whether the findings of the research relate to and are caused by the phenomena under investigation and not some other influence. For the social sciences in general and a social constructivist based methodology in particular, the ideas of the physical sciences may not be applicable. In a narrative methodology, the question is “are they a truthful source for a casual effect?” The answer to this depends on two interrelated questions. The first question regards transparency in do the narratives reflect experience or give meaning to it? Arguments have been made for the transparency and
corresponding ‘truthfulness’ of narrative data. One argument stated that narrative data empowers the author to tell a whole story, as he or she understands it, thereby empowering them to describe an experience as they see it (Mishler, 1986; Smith S., 1996; Cox, 2003). Others argued, however, that narrative data does not transparently convey an authors’ experience, but that it gives meaning to it (Ferber, 2000). Through reflection, authors choose the important elements of an experience and create meaningful narratives. Narrative data in this view are not just told, but they are told to create a point. For researchers with this view the internal validity stems from understanding the world perspective and meaning making structure of the respondent.

Second, is meaning created outside the research process or is it part of the research process? Is data privileged access to the subject’s feelings and thoughts or a response to the particular situation? If created during a process, this raises questions on whether the data is a research artifact. These questions of internal validity are for the most part dependent on the type of research questions being asked and the type of information sought (Kvale S., 1989; Kvale S., 1996). Portelli’s oral history study on the murder of a young steel worker by the police in 1949 reflects this point (Portelli, 1991). During his interviews of Northern Italian steel workers, he discovered that many of the narrative accounts were ‘factually’ wrong. Many respondents gave the date of the murder as 1953 rather than the actual date of 1949. In a research project with the goal to obtain an accurate historical account of what happened in 1949, the workers’ faulty narratives would undermine the internal validity of this data source. However, if the focus was to understand the meaning that the workers attached to the incident then the internal validity
was maintained. Portelli argued that workers associated the murder with the unrest in the area in 1953 to give meaning to the death. The strength of the narrative data source in this case stems from the meaning narrators attach to it, not the historical accuracy of it—an important point for this study.

The research topic of this study has an analytical basis in the conception that narratives create meaning and the maintenance of a narrative is the maintenance of meaning making on any issues associated with that narrative. Hence, while the institutional narratives within an organization may have factual flaws that potentially undermine its internal validity as an accurate historical data source, it does not undermine that it as a source of data in the meaning-making process of organizations involved in COIN. Identifying and collecting the institutional narratives, narrative elements, and evaluations of individuals and organizations involved in COIN and identifying how they maintain the discursive boundaries of COIN knowledge through privileging maintains the internal validity of narrative methods of data collection for this study.

External validity is an issue for qualitative studies in general and discursive methodologies in particular because the applicability of in-depth subjective individual or group data to a larger generalizable finding is questionable. In-depth interviews, for example, are used in qualitative studies because they result in a deeper understanding of the life experiences, perceptions, or worldview of an individual or group. The problem is that if it does not have applicability in suggesting anything beyond itself how does it increase our understanding of the world? An additional problem is that although most qualitative researchers identify the issue of limited external validity, it has not limited the
practice of using the results of qualitative studies as generalizable knowledge. (Elliot, 2005, pp. 26-8). An implied common sense approach is applied to the research in that others can use their own reasoning to determine if it has applicability beyond the particular research project.

This study took a theoretical stand presented by Charles Taylor in that the focus was on the inter-subjective meaning constitutive of the COIN community as an epistemic one (Taylor, 1987). The focus of the research was not on the individual beliefs of COIN experts, although the individual was a data collection site, but on the inter-subjective meaning among the various COIN organizations. Furthermore, with the U.S. Army and Marine Corp, COIN centers as epistemic communities with the right to define insurgency and counterinsurgency, the inter-subjective meanings created and sustained through their institutional narratives as the research focus of this project has implications beyond their organizations.
ANALYSIS

The central aim of this research was to understand the relationship between narratives and power in the production of COIN knowledge. This was accomplished by applying a narrative approach to the data to identify different, new, or hidden understandings of the essential components in COIN. The employment of a narrative evaluation model identified claims made towards a person, object, or proposition and the evaluation of that claim. The analytical process identified new claims in some cases and confirmed old claims or common conceptions. In all cases, it identified the meaning of those claims that had ramifications beyond any single text. The result of this analysis was a new understanding of insurgency.

Setting

There is a geographic element to the Long War setting (LWS) discourse, but it is secondary and case specific. The central setting discourse in the LWS is the population. The population is not viewed as a physical actor, but as a set of shifting social-cultural perceptions in a networked structure. The whole concept of winning the hearts and minds is a population-focused effort to change the setting in the counterinsurgent’s favor by gaining the support (hearts) of the population through a rational choice based on security (mind) in a networked world of other actors competing for those same hearts and minds. Beginning to understand the LWS requires dismantling the setting into the antecedent
setting claims, analyzing the evaluations contained within the claims, and recognizing the implications of those evaluations. To gain a full understanding of the LWS and its claims and evaluations, the results from antecedent claims were reconstructed into a single claim of the environment in which insurgency occurs.

As stated previously, the process for setting, character, and plot analysis consists of four steps. First, the data was coded to identify the setting; the social, temporal, cognitive, or physical space in which insurgency occurs. This mostly excluded geographic claims of setting, as these were, for the most part, case specific and tactical in nature. Second, the data was read to identify and distinguish all the narrative settings. These settings were then compared to identify common concepts and themes among the settings. The result of this analysis was the identification of four antecedent settings that provided the basis for a second set of codes. Third, the setting data was re-coded with the antecedent setting codes and reviewed to identify primary claims of the setting. The claims were then analyzed to identify their evaluations and the implications of those evaluations. The fourth and final step was the reconstruction of the primary setting claim, the Long War setting, from the antecedent setting, along with its evaluations and implications.

Sub-claim: Rational Choice is Security

What an actor considers a rational choice is dependent, in part, on the setting or contextual foundation for evaluating that choice. In COIN, that choice is founded upon the self-interested physical survival of the actor. The ‘actor’ in this case, is the population, which is the constitutive element of the setting. The very condition in which
the population exists makes the almost exclusive focus on security paramount. Trinquier stated that:

In the street, at work, at home, the citizen lives continually under the threat of violent death. In the presence of this permanent danger surrounding him, he has the depressing feeling of being an isolated and defenseless target (1964, p. 32).

Existing in such a condition, political ideologies are not the determining factor in shaping the Long War setting—it is survival. Galula stated that the basis for the choices of the population is “dictated not so much by the relative popularity and merits of the opponents as by the more primitive concern for safety” (1964, p. 10). Hoffman extended this rational security choice of the setting in the following statement:

The motivation that produces the only real long-lasting effect is not likely to be an ideology, but the elemental consideration of survival. Peasants will support [the guerrillas] . . . if they are convinced that failure to do so will result in death or brutal punishment. They will support the government if and when they are convinced that it offers them a better life, and it can and will protect them against the [guerrillas] . . . forever (2004, p. 114).

The result is “a truism of counterinsurgency that a population will give its allegiance to the side that will best protect it” (Hoffman, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004, p. 113).

The implications of rational choice is security as a claim setting in COIN can be better understood when applying the evaluation model to the claim. The rational choice claim is presented by the authors as world-reflecting statements of fact, not world
creating; hence, the statements are to be understood by the audience as being true and certain reflections of how the world is. The source for the rational choice claim is the authors’ themselves; however, as they do not present any evidence of their claims or others, the source for this claim is best understood as hidden, general attribution.

A population with the rational choice towards security as a central element of the COIN setting is evaluated as positive by the authors, as the pursuit of security by a government or COIN forces can lead to success in counterinsurgency. FM 3-24 supports the rational choice of security claim to the extent that other elements of what the West considers good governance may not be necessary to successful COIN.

“(M)ight makes right.” And sometimes, the ability of a state to provide security—albeit without freedoms associated with Western democracies—can give it enough legitimacy to govern in the people’s eyes, particularly if they have experienced a serious breakdown of order (2006, p. 1:21).

The ability of COIN forces prevailing is also dependent on the positivity of the rational choice towards security claim. Access to intelligence, which Trinquier et al stated is vital to successful COIN, claims:

To succeed, we must never lose sight of the fact that we will receive information only from people who can give us information without risk to themselves. We must assure our agents of this indispensable security (1964, p. 73).

In addition, FM 3-24 states, “without a secure environment, no permanent reforms can be implemented and disorder spreads” (2006, p. 1.25).
There is an implication of the rational choice is security setting that should be briefly stated. A rational choice towards security by the population, as a positive setting in counterinsurgency, makes a claim and evaluation of insurgents. Accepting the claim that security is beneficial for the population and the successful efforts of the government and COIN forces; the creation of insecurity becomes a basis for success of insurgent efforts; a claim that is substantiated in the authors’ claims and evaluations of insurgents.

**Sub-claim: Population as Human Terrain**

In the Long War setting the population “represents the new ground” in counterinsurgency conflicts (Galula, 1964, p. 6). The population, however, does not consist of individuals, groups, and organizations (at least as narrated by COIN authors) but as a human terrain consisting of cultural perceptions shaped by religion, anti-modernism, and anti-capitalism that serves as a source of grievances the counterinsurgents must overcome and the insurgents can exploit.

The whole concept of winning the hearts and minds in the COIN data is based on the concept that creating favorable perception towards COIN forces by the population is the key to victory. FM 3-24 states, “Insurgent warfare is largely about perceptions” (2006, p. 6.16). Kitson continued the claim that “it is only necessary to stress once again that wars of subversion and counter subversion are fought, in the last resort, in the minds of the people” (1991, p. 78). The issue for the counterinsurgent is that perception is based in culture and for most of the non-Western world where insurgencies are fought, the culture of the population is narrated as problematic. In many ways culture, and the perceptions that it engenders, is an opponent to rational choice.
Starting with statements in the past, such as those by T. E. Lawrence, “Arabs form their judgments on externals that we ignore” or “their minds work just as our do, but on different premises” (1917, p. 1) to statements of today by Kilcullen that “culture imbues otherwise random or apparently senseless acts with meaning,” cultural perceptions are obstacles to the ‘norm’ or the ‘rational’\(^2\) in the Long War setting (2005, p. 612).

Cultural perception as an obstacle stems from the anti-Western values and beliefs that are held by populations in the counterinsurgency setting. Anti-Western is being religious and anti-modern in that “the war is truly a global counterinsurgency against a movement that seeks to overthrow the existing world order in favor of a pre-modern Islamist super-state (Kilcullen, 2005, p. 610). It can be anti-capitalist in that a “local revolutionary war is part of the global war against capitalism and imperialism” (Galula, 1964, p. 36) and, to a certain extent anti-Christian (Lawrence, 1917, p. 2).

Evaluating the claim of the population as a terrain of cultural perceptions identifies several significant implications of this claim in the Long War setting. Concerning the type of claim, the authors present ‘the population as a terrain of cultural perception’ as a world-creating assumption. In looking at statements such as Kitson’s, intentionally or not, he compares a real world that is “random and senseless” with a world given meaning through a group’s culture (1991, p. 78). The authors attributed this claim to others, but only took partial responsibility for the claim in that they recognized that the claim is how others saw the world, not necessarily themselves. A negative evaluation of

\(^2\) Norm and rational here are meant to be taken as discussed before in that choices should be made in economic fashion of advantage/disadvantage used throughout most of Western society.
the claim is a result of the disconnection between the world ‘as it is’ and the world created through cultural perception. The truthfulness and the certainty of the claim are significant in determining the positivity or negativity of the claim. Cultural perception of a population does not reflect the ‘real’ world; this undermines its trustworthiness. The variation of cultural perceptions also undermines the certainty of the claim. Each of these evaluations results in the claim being evaluated negatively.

The implications of this evaluation are significant both analytically and operationally. Analytically, uncritical application of the concept of cultural perception distorts and potentially compromises analysis. Consider Hammes brief analysis of Somalia:

A warrior society thrives on and exists for war. Often, the young warrior has everything to lose (except his life) if he stops fighting. Consider the young clansman in Somalia. As a member of a fighting clan, he has prestige and income. They combine to give him access to money, food, property, and women. If he puts his weapons down, he loses that prestige and the income—and with them everything else. Although the risk of death from fighting is always present, it is actually less than the risk of death from starvation if he stops fighting (2004, p. 39).

This analysis, regardless of the accuracy of the author’s claim, reduces the actions of the Somali clan member to a cultural perception of the warrior society. The analysis ignores or silences important factors to why a clan member may fight. The analysis ignores the political conditions that led to Somalia reverting to clan-ism. More
importantly, the analysis ignores that in Somalia, fighting, stealing, and pirating are the only options for survival. In short, the application of the cultural perception explanation overshadows models with better explanatory power.

The cultural perception frame not only affects the analysis of individuals or groups, but of whole societies. Kilcullen, in “Countering Global Insurgency”, stated:

For Muslims in much of the world, there is no middle way: only a stark choice between jihad and acceptance of permanent second-class citizenship in a world order dominated by the West and apparently infused with anti-Islamic values. For many self-respecting Muslims, the choice of jihad rather than surrender is both logical and honorable (2005, p. 612).

How Kilcullen made this statement is analytically telling. What Kilcullen stated is that unwilling to be ‘permanent second-class citizens’, what is (or should be) an unreasonable and illogical choice for Muslims, now becomes “both logical and honorable.” It assumes that if Muslims were first-class citizens, the choice for jihad would not be an option. Furthermore, the claim of ‘no middle way’ leaves no other possible solution. Muslims cannot compromise, nor can they become first class citizens in a Western world as Kilcullen narrates. The application of the cultural perception setting in this case completely obfuscates the multitude of Muslims who are finding a ‘middle way.’

Operationally, the population to some extent is dehumanized, as it becomes a terrain of cultural perceptions that the insurgent and counterinsurgent must successfully navigate. Similar to the advantage gained by holding the high ground in conventional
warfare, the side that holds the population has a decisive advantage. Trinquier stated that not only is the “inhabitant in his home is the center of the conflict,” but those involved “are compelled to make him participate in the conflict” (1964, p. 41). A concern, however, is how does the negative evaluation of the claim impact the operational understanding of the environment. Arguably, the negative evaluation of the population as a cultural terrain setting extends not only to the relationship between the population, insurgent, and counterinsurgent, but it extends to how the population prefers to operate.

Throughout the data, the population is seldom-considered neutral or favoring the counterinsurgent. The population is narrated as actively supporting the insurgency as in the following claims:

It is the inhabitant who supplies the guerrilla with his food requirements on an almost daily basis, thereby enabling him to avoid setting up cumbersome supply points-so easily identifiable and difficult to re-establish. It is the inhabitant also who occasionally supplies him with ammunition. The inhabitant contributes to his protection by keeping him informed. Our rest and supply bases are located in the midst of a populace whose essential mission is to keep an eye on them. No troop movement can escape the inhabitant. Any threat to the guerrilla is communicated to him in plenty of time, and the guerrilla can take cover or trap us in profitable ambushes. Sometimes the inhabitant's home is the guerrilla's refuge, where he can disappear in case of danger (Trinquier, 1964, p. 64).

Trinquier further stated:
As we have seen, the people among whom our troops live and move have as their mission the informing of the guerrillas, and no movement of troops can escape them. The noose is never completely tightened...nothing could escape the numerous agents among the population surrounding us, who spied upon us unceasingly (1964, pp. 58-59).

In addition, if the population is passive in the conflict, the authors attribute that to the population supporting the insurgency. The population provides the source of grievances, which the insurgents can exploit in that “virtually all the grievances and energies that circulate within it are culturally determined” (Kilcullen, 2005, p. 613) and “any residual grievance within a population, no matter how localized and lacking in scope, will surely be brought by determined adversaries into the framework of the great world conflict” (Trinquier, 1964, p. 24).

This claim and evaluation of the population as a setting of cultural perceptions implies more than a foundation for insurgency and an obstacle to counterinsurgents. It minimizes the advantages the counterinsurgent possesses, the role the counterinsurgent has in formulating insurgency, and the recognition that a passive population does not assist the insurgent any more than the counterinsurgent.

This is, despite the only insurgent author, whom all the other authors recognized, clearly stating several times that the population had to be mobilized to act if insurgency is going to be successful (Zedong, 1965). Only Kitson recognized that the insurgent had just as difficult a job in mobilizing the population as the counterinsurgent.
It is rare to find large numbers of people who are so interested in a political cause that they are prepared to abandon their work and sacrifice their recreational time merely to stand around in a group being troublesome to the government on the off chance that it will make concession in some direction which will probably bring them little personal benefit or satisfaction (1991, p. 84).

He concluded this part of the narrative by saying that mobilizing the population is much harder than armed struggle itself (1991, p. 37).

**Sub-claim: Post-Cold War Instability**

Important antecedents of the Long War setting are the Cold War and post-Cold War setting claims. These are, namely, the misplaced belief in the development of colonial states into modern nation-states in the backdrop of the Cold War rivalry between the U.S. and the USSR and the impact on the political space at the end of the rivalry. At the conclusion of World War II and European colonialism, an “idea of development...emerged in the 1940s out of the crisis of colonialism...(that)...increasingly assumed that all colonial subjects could operate as modern subjects” (Berger & Borer, 2007, p. 202). The problem with this idea was two-fold. First, new nation-states had to deal with the legacy of colonialism. Artificial borders, over empowered ethnic minorities, and continued dependency on former colonial powers all made the transition to nationhood difficult. Hammes, among others, raised this point in the following:

Also, because the borders are artificially imposed by the Russians and the British the tribes are not contained within Afghanistan but straddle the borders with surrounding nations, most of which have a direct stake in Afghanistan. Thus,
Afghan politics are simultaneously tribal and international. Further complicating the situation are internal migrations, so even inside Afghanistan, the tribes are mixed. A tribe may be a majority in one area and a minority in another (Hammes, 2004, p. 84).

Second, the former colonies had to develop into nation states in an environment of competition among the Cold War adversaries. The aim of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. was focused on gaining allegiance of nation states; hence, their focus was on development and maintenance of states at the expense of intrastate issues.

The primary axis of the Cold War remained centered on inter-state rivalry rather than addressing the specificities of revolution and counter-revolution (the local roots of conflict and instability) in the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Middle East (Berger & Borer, 2007, p. 200).

The marginalization of intrastate issues of the former colonial states was more than a result of political expediency between the Cold War rivals—it was in part a theoretical and ideological element of the Cold War paradigm.

In fact, it needs to be emphasized that the specificity of insurgency and counterinsurgency (revolution and counter-revolution) were marginalized by the wider imperatives of U.S.–Soviet rivalry during the Cold War by mainstream scholars, pundits, and practitioners alike (Berger & Borer, 2007, p. 199).

Hence, the grievances, ethnic rivalries, political and social conflicts are obfuscated by the political expediency of the U.S. and USSR. Moreover, the blindness to these issues is more than political; it is a result of ideological influenced theory.
The importance of the Cold War setting lies in the role it plays in the establishment of the post-Cold War claim in the Long War setting. The stability and interstate focus maintained by the U.S. and USSR during the Cold War gave way to increased political instability, numerous state and non-state actors, and a rise in insurgency because of these factors.

The end of the Cold War resulted in a loss of political, economic, and military support for a number of developing post-colonial states. Without superpower support, many of these states for the first time had to deal with the intrastate conflicts that the Cold War had suppressed. The result of this was an increase in the number of collapsing or failed states. All of which made the post-Cold War era one of increasing political instability and insurgency.

The end of the Cold War both contributed, and drew greater attention, to the increasing number of nation-states mired in civil conflict and/or civil war, which were increasingly displaying an almost complete absence of political stability and social order (Berger & Borer, 2007, p. 199).

This is a post-cold war order in which instability, terrorism and criminality in the marginalised regions and failing nation-states in various parts of the world have precipitated the emergence of a renewed emphasis on the connection between security and development (Berger & Borer, 2007, p. 208).

Increased instability and the break-up of states increased the number of state and non-state actors operating in the political space. Greater numbers of political actors and
greater diversity among them created a setting in which the influence of nation-states was decreased. This had a direct role on the influence of the U.S. in global affairs.

The cumulative effect of this proliferation of players on the international scene is a distinct reduction in the power and freedom of action of nations. Although they remain the primary players in international affairs, the wide variety of new players places restrictions on these states that simply did not exist at the beginning of World War II. The multitude of players also provides additional avenues for our enemies to influence U.S. policy (Hammes, 2004, p. 37).

The authors evaluate the post-Cold War instability claim as a world reflecting fact as indicated by the increase of political instability, civil conflict, and the increase in insurgency and terrorism. Any evaluation of the post-Cold War instability claim, must take into consideration the impact that the end of the Cold War had on the West and the U.S. in particular. Namely, a post-Cold War world emerged, which was centered on the U.S., but in which the ability of the U.S. to influence the world diminished. This results in the negative status value. The second reason for the negative value status is the primary implication of the post-Cold War instability claim. Increased instability decreased U.S. and nation-state influence, which led to a rise in insurgency, further destabilizing the world.

**Sub-claim: A Networked World is Dangerous**

No other setting claim in the insurgency data initially play as large a role in understanding insurgency as the claim associated with the concept of a networked world. Globalization, digitalization, and information technology; at least as described by the
data, are important in that the result of these processes and technologies are a networked world. The authors, through various terms and concepts, argue that access to information and the speed at which it moves has networked the actors in the political, economic, and social worlds. Hammes described this networked 4G world:

In contrast, today’s communications revolution has completely changed how people get information. In the same way governments, businesses, and trade associations are becoming networks rather than hierarchies, so are relations between people of different states (2004, p. 38).

Kilcullen described a networked world as a result “of the links provided by tools of globalization like the Internet, global media and satellite communications.” (2005, p. 602) Even Kitson, in 1971, recognized that technology of that day and in the future was changing the relationship between actors. In discussing the potential for insurgency in the 1970’s, he stated, “there is no doubt whatsoever that the means of fanning it and exploiting it are infinitely greater than they used to be, because of the increase in literacy and the introduction of wireless and television sets in large numbers” (1991, p. 17). Information technology from wireless radios and television sets to satellite phones and the Internet has created a networked world. These comments describe how the networked world came to be and that it has created change; however, it is not a description of what a networked world is according to the data. A networked world is a setting where information is a commodity that is difficult to control with serious implications for insurgency.
Information is more than a commodity in the form of knowledge, it is the digital data, patents, copyrights, and host of other data that can be sold, traded, or stolen. Hammes underscored the concept of information as a commodity and how it shapes the networked world:

Today, the most rapidly growing sector of the international economy is information. Unlike industrial plants, these wealth-generating assets are easily moved--and are often part of geographically distributed networks in their day-to-day operations. Nations can no longer compel compliance from companies by threatening their physical assets--simply because many of a company’s most important assets exist only in cyberspace and can be moved anywhere in the world virtually instantaneously (2004, p. 37).

The importance of information, as commodity in the networked world setting, stems from its support of the primary premises of the networked world setting, the difficulty in controlling information, and its implications in the insurgency discourse. The difficulty in controlling information stems from three interrelated aspects: who can put out information, who can receive information, and what information can be put into the network.

Herein lies the problem, as narrated by the authors: everyone has the capability to send out information and everyone has the ability to receive that information. Because of telecommunication technology, actors of all sizes can put out theirs or others’ information. It ranges from individuals, where the “demeanor of a single soldier or official instantaneously communicates more about the state of a campaign than any
public information operation” (Kilcullen, 2006b, p. 6), to organizations, regardless of legality or legitimacy have access to the networked world and can send out their information. “The same technology that enables Greenpeace and the International Committee to Ban Land Mines also facilitates organizations such as Islamic fundamentalist groups” in sending out their message. (Hammes, 2004, p. 38).

This ability to send information quickly and rapidly creates the networks that concern COIN authors. FM 3-24 states that because of the ability of insurgents to send information anywhere in the world, they can create connections across traditional boundaries:

Insurgencies may turn to transnational criminal elements for funding or use the Internet to create a support network among NGOs. Ethnic or religious communities in other states may also provide a form of external support and sanctuary, particularly for transnational insurgencies (2006, p. 1:16).

This in turn allows organizations to operate transnationally and influence events beyond the scope of what these organizations would traditionally have.

Today, outside actors are often transnational organizations motivated by ideologies based on extremist religious or ethnic beliefs. These organizations exploit the unstable internal conditions plaguing failed and failing states” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:4).

The ability of anyone to send out information is only one part of the networked world; another part is that anyone can send information and receive information.
Kitson realized in 1971 the expansion of who could receive information because of increased literacy rates and that the spread of radios and televisions would change the nature of politics and insurgency (1991, p. 17). Since the 1970’s, the spread of telecommunication has increased, creating an environment where everyone has some form of access to information. Hammes stated:

At the other end of the spectrum, citizens of even the poorest nations have access to television and magazines that portray the riches of the developed world. Although a generation ago the most they could hope to see was the next village, now they can see Park Avenue (2004, p. 39).

The result of the global population’s access to networked information is its transformation into a global audience: an audience whose interests, attitudes, and support are at play for governments, corporations, and organizations such as insurgents.

A key factor to remember in targeting a 4GW campaign is that the audience is not a simple, unified target. It is increasingly fragmented into interest groups that shift sides depending on how a campaign affects their issues (Hammes, 2004, p. 155).

The third component of the network world is what information can be sent. In a networked world, any piece of information can be disseminated. Individuals, organizations, and other actors can receive the information and training online to create a bomb and never meet an explosive expert. Hammes stated that in a networked world where corporations have distributed networks of productions, so do other organizations such as insurgents:
The knowledge of how to conduct an attack is developed in one country, then that knowledge is combined with the raw materials, personnel, and training available in other countries, which can include the target country, to create a weapon in the target country (Hammes, 2004, p. 37).

Hammes explained that this is what occurred in Madrid and London and expects that it will be part of the future of warfare. Despite the capability to disseminate and access technology for weapons, the real concern of what information can be disseminated is information that can influence the actors who make up the global audience.

The loss of control that is the fundamental element of the networked world claim is based on the decreased ability of state actors to control the message that their population receives and correspondingly the influence that they have over that population. Kitson argued that nuclear weapons and resistance to authority, combined with “the development of techniques by which men can influence the thoughts and actions of other men” would increase the trend towards insurgency (1991, p. 15). The networked world, especially the media, according to the authors, is the means that can influence the thoughts and actions of other men.

The media, according to the data, is the medium through which inaccurate information and propaganda is disseminated to the global audience. As profit organizations, the need for the media to produce ratings may result in them providing inaccurate information to the global audience. “In the absence of official information, some media representatives develop stories on their own that may be inaccurate and may not include the COIN force perspective” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 5:11). The authors
recognized that the media would continue to have a significant role in the future of warfare; however, largely, the media, and correspondingly the networked world, is a setting that favors exploitation by non-state actors. Kilcullen stated:

Media penetration has reached unprecedented levels, largely through the emergence of insurgent mass media, with every incident in Iraq, and many in Afghanistan, Palestine and Chechnya being recorded for propaganda purposes by insurgent video teams (2005, p. 602).

Hammes argued this idea further:

Every significant attack is immediately broadcast to the world. In addition to the primary goal of weakening U.S. will, it also impacts potential allies’ political decision making concerning additional aid and forces for Iraq (2004, p. 135).

It is these concepts that form the basis of the central setting claim of the networked world as a setting in which information is a commodity that is difficult to control.

Applying the evaluation model to the setting claim that in the networked world information is a commodity that is difficult to control identifies implications that are foundational in the Long War setting. Despite a networked world being a virtual world of relationships between individuals, organizations, and other actors, the authors present the networked world as reflecting reality. This networked world reflection is an assessment of the technological changes that have occurred throughout most of the world as we all “now live in a networked international community” (Hammes, 2004, p. 39). The authors employ a number of sources in their networked world-setting claim. Kitson and Kilcullen averred their own observations, while Hammes combined his self-sources and the sources
of others such as Thomas Friedman. All of the authors to some extent sourced the claim to general knowledge.

The authors evaluated a networked world negatively. This negative evaluation is not a result of the truthfulness or the certitude of the claim; the negative evaluation stems from the lack of truthfulness and certitude as a result of the setting. The primary concern with the networked world setting is that one cannot control information in terms of who sends the information, who receives it, or its accuracy. Combined with a global audience of ‘shifting allegiances’ a networked world provides a setting for deception, propaganda, and influence by a variety of actors, including insurgents at the expense of legitimate state actors such as represented by the counterinsurgent.

This negative evaluation of the networked world setting is evident in the implications stemming from the networked world. The all-encompassing implication is that a networked world not only facilitates the propaganda of insurgents, but that it increases their emergence and survivability. The likelihood of people believing information from their government is decreased:

This creates a much greater sense of relative deprivation and unrest in those nations. Along with the Internet, it also eliminates the government’s monopoly on information. No longer can any state assume its citizens will believe only what the government tells them (Hammes, 2004, p. 39).

3 It may be of interest that while Friedman is a respected author, he might not be considered a futurist or technologist, and is thereby not a strong source for the claim.
Incorporating the setting fact that anyone can send information and receive it, the networked world creates an environment that, because of the links provided by tools of globalization like the Internet, global media, and satellite communications, a new class of regional or theater-level actors has emerged (Kilcullen, 2005, p. 602). This actor in COIN is the insurgent and because of the networked world, the likelihood of the population being receptive to insurgent messages is increased:

One of the most significant “globalization effects” is the rise of a worldwide audience, giving insurgents near-instantaneous means to publicize their cause. Globalized Internet communication also enables moral, financial and personnel support, creating a strategic hinterland or “virtual sanctuary” for insurgents (Kilcullen, 2006b, p. 3).

Propaganda, virtual sanctuaries, and a susceptible population are the results of a lack of control of information in the networked world setting.

In a world where insurgents can easily spread propaganda alters the role of the media in warfare. The media is viewed as having a significant role in modern warfare and insurgency in particular. In comparison to previous insurgencies, “one of the biggest differences between the counterinsurgencies our fathers fought and those we face today is the omnipresence of globalized media” (Kilcullen, 2006b, pp. 28-32). The U.S. military believes that the media and the information it disseminates is of such importance that FM 3-24 states, “The omnipresence and global reach of today’s news media affects the conduct of military operations more than ever before” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. A:5). The implication for the media as an actor in the networked world-setting claim is similar to
the implications for the population in the human terrain-setting claim. Passive reporting on insurgency is passive support for the insurgency.

**Setting Claim: The Long War**

The term ‘the Long War’ was first applied to America's post-September 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2001 conflicts in 2004 by Gen. John P. Abizaid, then head of the U.S. Central Command, and retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs of State, Gen. Richard B. Myers, in 2005. The Long War doctrine states that there is an "arc of instability" caused by insurgent groups from Europe to South Asia that will last for the next 50 to 80 years (Hayden, 2009). Afghanistan and Iraq are just parts of this longer conflict. While the concept of the Long War as a military doctrine is debatable and has its detractors,\textsuperscript{4} analysis of the data indicates that the Long War is a setting that is part of a narrative that shapes the analytical and academic discourse of insurgency research. The central claim of the Long War setting is that insurgency occurs in an increasingly unstable networked environment of shifting sociocultural perceptions of an exploitable irrational population.

The Long War setting, in conjunction with its antecedent settings, constructs a dominant setting claim that provides cognitive, socio-cultural, temporal, and physical context in understanding insurgency. The ‘rational choice as security’ setting claim asserts that rational choice is founded upon self-interested physical survival of the actor; the absence of rational choice because of socio-cultural perceptions provides the cognitive setting for the insurgency narrative. Population as ‘human terrain’ defines the ‘population as a terrain of shifting cultural perceptions which insurgents can exploit. This

\textsuperscript{4} See Andrew J. Bacevich’s *The Long War* and *The New American Militarism*
antecedent claim provides the socio-cultural context of the Long War setting. The ‘post-Cold War instability claim’ not only provides a temporal space for contextualizing insurgency but it also contextualizes the socio-cultural space in that the instability of the setting in part is a result of ‘shifting cultural perceptions.’ The ‘networked world is dangerous’ antecedent claim serves two roles. First, it provides the geographic context of the insurgency narrative by negating geography as a contextual element in a networked world. Physical space has a limited role in a virtual networked world. Second, ‘the networked world is dangerous’ claim brings all the other claims together. Rational choice is the only viable ‘logic’ in a world of varying social-cultural values. A human terrain of shifting cultural perception is in part a result of a networked world that provides the means for more actors to influence the population. In addition, the instability of the post-Cold War is the result of a proliferation of actors who would not be able to survive if it were not for a networked world.

The in-depth analysis of the setting data revealed the antecedent claims that establish the Long War setting; however, there is an additional setting consideration, not directly part of the setting data, which is important to the Long War setting. As stated earlier, the authors’ definition of insurgency provided the initial discursive boundary in understanding and researching insurgency. Those definitions in varying degrees all set the setting boundary by identifying insurgency as a form of conflict. Specifically, it is warfare within a state. Regardless of who (actor) is involved, why (theme) it occurred, or what (action) has happened, the first distinguishing setting element is the concept of warfare. There is a significant amount of research of the nature of warfare that is beyond
the scope of this study. For the purposes of this study, “warfare remains a violent clash of interests between organized groups characterized by the use of force” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:1). The Long War setting is where this violent clash of interests occurs.

**Figure 2: Long War Setting Claims & Evaluations**

The analysis and identification of the four antecedent claims, their evaluations, and implications supports the Long War claim that the setting of insurgency is an increasingly unstable networked environment of shifting sociocultural perceptions of an exploitable irrational population by a growing number of state and non-state actors. The Long War setting claim is comprised and supported by the antecedent claims. The Long
War setting, however, is a claim in its own right, with a corresponding evaluation and implication.

The evaluation of the Long War setting is more than the amalgamation of its antecedent claims and their evaluations; it is the result of integration of the Long War setting into a single distinct claim. The ‘rational choice is security’ antecedent claim is evaluated as a positive world-reflecting claim sourced by the authors. The claim, however, takes on a negative evaluation in the Long War setting, due to its absence as a result of the irrationality imposed on the setting by the ‘population as human terrain’ claim. Together, the two claims result in a negative evaluation of an irrational population that is not guided by rational choice, but by shifting cultural perceptions. The integration of the ‘post-Cold War instability’ and ‘networked world is a dangerous world’ settings further alter the evaluation of the Long War setting. The ‘post-Cold War instability’ claim is evaluated negatively as a world-reflecting fact evidenced by the increase in the number of actors that undermine stability at the cost of the positive stability provided by nation-states. In addition, the ‘networked world setting’ is evaluated negatively because of the loss of control of information in terms of who sends the information, who receives it, or its accuracy. The result is that the Long War setting is evaluated as negative. However, there is a caveat that has an important implication.

The Long War setting is evaluated as being negative as a result of a shifting population that makes irrational socio-cultural choices that favors insurgency in a networked world. A shift by the population towards a rational choice, in the form of security, changes the whole setting from negative to positive. A population that makes its
decision based on rational-choice is no longer difficult terrain for the counterinsurgent. Post-Cold War instability would be minimized, as rational-choice would override socio-cultural choices of religion and ethnicity. Furthermore, it can be argued that a networked world where the audience guided by rational-choice is less susceptible to the negative effects of a networked world. The implication of this caveat is the focus by counterinsurgents on the establishment of security as the primary focus on COIN.

**Actant (Insurgent) Claim**

Trinquier identified the counterinsurgent in *Modern Warfare* with the term ‘forces of order’; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that he considered the insurgents as ‘forces of chaos’ (Trinquier, 1964, p. 10). The analysis of the sub-claims, elements, and evaluations of the insurgent in the data supports the primary claim and evaluation that insurgents, as actant, are the forces of chaos narratively speaking. In the narrative analysis of insurgents as an actant, five sub-claims with their associated narrative elements and evaluations had a significant role. First, the insurgent organization is an adaptive organization, which is important to its efficiency and survivability. Second, the insurgent is a propagandist and propaganda is important in its efforts to create ideational and material resources and power. Third, the insurgent is an agent of insecurity in the use of unrestrained violence based on irrational ideas and goals. Fourth, the insurgent is an omnipresent threat to global security. Fifth, the insurgent associated with the label of terrorist is nearly impossible to evaluate as positive. Together these five sub-claims support the primary actant claim of insurgents as forces of chaos.
The process for analysis of the actant (insurgent) claim consisted of the same four steps employed in analyzing the setting and plot; however, the concepts of Pratt & Forman were employed in identifying the claims of the insurgent character. Pratt & Foreman’s theoretical framework on the management of organizational identity views organizational identity as the characteristics of an organization that are considered central, distinctive, and enduring. That is, characteristics that are fundamental (central), uniquely descriptive (distinctive) of the organization, and persist (enduring) over time (2000, p. 20). Using this framework, the data was read to identify all the actant claims, thematically place them into sub-claims, and evaluate them. Finally, the actant sub-claims were reconstructed into the primary claim that insurgents are forces of chaos.

**Sub-claim: Adaptive Organization**

The adaptive organization claim, albeit minor compared to the other character claims, is important as it creates the basis for the threat element in the primary insurgent character claim. The adaptive organization claim is constructed of two interrelated sub-claims. These sub-claims are that insurgent organizations are weak and learning organizations, each of which assists in the development of insurgents as an adaptive organization.

Several texts outside of the research data make a claim towards the political, economic, or military weakness of insurgent organizations in the face of the capacity of the host nation or foreign power, such as the United States. While there is limited direct reference to the weakness of the insurgent, arguably, it is strongly implied in the definitions and the few direct references made within the data. Insurgency, to a certain
degree, is based on the political weakness of a party, ethnicity, or other political group in comparison to the government in attempting to achieve its political aims. This is especially the case when such organizations become violent.

The insurgent who “lacks sufficient strength at the outset” is also heavily implied to within the texts, when defining the origins of insurgency, their formation, and their strength compared to the state (Galula, 1964, pp. 7, 30). The weakness of the insurgent organization starts with their limited resources and political strength in the face of Western powers. FM 3-24 states that the insurgents “know that they cannot compete with U.S. Forces on those terms. Instead, they try to exhaust U.S. national will, aiming to win by undermining and outlasting public support” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. ix). This weakness forces the insurgent organization to adapt a “strategy (that) will naturally aim at converting his intangible assets into concrete ones” (Galula, 1964, p. 6). The insurgent has limited means to create tangible assets from intangible ones. First, the insurgent can make a limited number of mistakes and that requires an adept learning organization. Second, the insurgent must not place any limits on how it operates; it becomes unbound by ‘normal’ or traditional conventions. Together, these three qualities make insurgents adaptive.

The Long War setting makes a claim that the world consists of a shifting population that makes irrational socio-cultural choices in a networked world. In such a world, argue organizational theorists, only learning organizations (organizations that are flexible, adaptive, and productive) will excel. Peter Senge identified a learning organization as:
Organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together (1990, p. 3).

According to Senge, a learning organization exhibits five main characteristics: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, a shared vision, and team learning (1990). The authors, their texts, and the data collected was not focused on identifying these five characteristics within an insurgent organization; however, the data does support that insurgents are at least rudimentary learning organizations.

There is no indication within the data that insurgents employ systems thinking within their organizations; however, there are indications that insurgent organizations possess the other characteristics of a learning organization. Hoffman indicates personal mastery, commitment by the individual to learning, in the following statement:

Unconventional opponents in guerrilla groups or terrorist organization, who consciously study and learn both from their own mistakes as well as from the successful operations of their enemies. This is no less true among insurgents in Iraq, than it has been for guerrillas and terrorists elsewhere (2004, p. 107).

The apocalyptic political Islamic nature associated with the insurgents by most of the modern texts, along with the networked quality of the Long War setting, provide not only shared meaning within an insurgent organization, but it is also a team learning environment. The employment of the networked environment for team learning among
insurgents is one of the primary aspects of the Long War setting that results in the negative evaluation of the setting.5

Mental models refer not only to the assumptions held by an organization, but the challenging of those assumptions. Several references indicate this learning process among insurgent organizations. Hammes stated that insurgent organizations are agile because of their distributive decision making system that is only limited by their ideas (2004, pp. 143-4). Furthermore, they are willing to keep “trying new approaches until they found something that worked” such as the application of a “venture capital approach” by Al-Qaeda in its conflict with the United States (2004, pp. 65, 104).

The adaptive quality of an insurgent organization, as indicated in the data, is a result of the necessity of the organization to be a learning organization as a result of its weakness in relation to the state, host nation, or occupying power. Most of the texts refer to the adaptive quality of insurgents. Kilcullen argued, “The enemy is adaptive, resourceful, and probably grew up in the area where you will operate” (2006a, p. 29) and the jihadist enemy has “proven adaptiveness” (2005, p. 611). Hoffman stated that the enemy “is adapting, it is adapting to our tactics, techniques, and procedures” and “the insurgent, it has been observed, had ‘become more sophisticated.” (2004, pp. 107, 113)

FM 3-24 notes:

Effective insurgents rapidly adapt to changing circumstances. They cleverly use the tools of the global information revolution to magnify the effects of their actions...Insurgents use all available tools--political (including diplomatic),

5 See Long War setting
informational (including appeals to religious, ethnic, or ideological beliefs), military, and economic—to overthrow the existing authority (2006, p. x).

Trinquier defined the enemy as ‘fluid’ and Hammes claimed that the enemy is “a more agile, intellectually prepared enemy (Trinquier, 1964, p. 92; Hammes, 2004, p. 146).

Independently, the adaptive organization sub-claim is evaluated as positive according to the limited data within the text. Unlike other claims, the adaptive organization is world reflecting and world creating. The adaptive nature of insurgent organizations and the benefits of being an adaptive organization are repeatedly claimed within the data. The assessment of what has occurred in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other parts of the world and the survivability of insurgents in these regions demonstrated the truthfulness and certitude of the claim. The assessment is self-sourced in most of the cases from the authors’ personal experiences in dealing with insurgency. The notable exception being FM 3-24, which sources many of the texts mentioned above.

The claim is world creating as the texts indicated that the counterinsurgent must also become an adaptive organization if it is to defeat the counter insurgent. Just as the insurgent “is adapting to our tactics, techniques, and procedures, and we’ve got to adapt to their tactics, techniques, and procedures” (Hoffman, 2004, p. 107). Hammes claimed that in the Long War setting that “insurgents, revolutionaries, and terrorist have been more adept at learning this new style of war than militaries” (Hammes, 2004, p. 19). If U.S. military doctrine outside of counterinsurgency is taken into consideration, positive evaluation of the adaptive organization claim is further supported (FM 6-22, 2006). Together, the data support a positive evaluation of the adaptive organization actant sub-
claim; however, in combination with the other actant sub-claims, the adaptive organization claim takes on a different aspect.

**Sub-claim: Propagandist**

The character sub-claim of insurgents as propagandists is based on the vital role propaganda has for the insurgent. Propaganda is what enables the insurgent who “lacks sufficient strength at the outset” to gain the strength to engage in insurgency (Galula, 1964, p. 7). By using propaganda, the insurgent creates ideational power, which it can turn into the material resources necessary to conduct subversion and insurgency. This task is accomplished through the transformation of grievances into causes, population manipulation, and the establishment of ‘false’ organizational identities for the insurgent and counterinsurgent by using propaganda. Propaganda, however, as defined through the texts, has come to be defined by deception.

At the basic level, propaganda is a form of communication aimed toward influencing the attitude of a community toward some cause or position by presenting selective information or only one side of an argument. Propaganda was originally viewed as neutral and could refer to the selective presentation of information to persuade a community on any variety of issues that the propagandists desired, such as public health recommendations, election and census participation, or the reporting of crimes to officials, among others. Richard Allen Nelson provides a more comprehensive definition:

Propaganda is neutrally defined as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes.
through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels. A propaganda organization employs propagandists who engage in propagandism—the applied creation and distribution of such forms of persuasion (1996, pp. 232-3).

As opposed to the impartial provision of information, propaganda, presents information primarily to influence an audience through an emotional rather than rational response to the information presented. Considering that that the Long War setting views the population as a terrain of cultural perceptions wherein the people make irrational political choices based on cultural perceptions and a networked world where anyone can distribute information, propaganda and propagandists become increasingly problematic in counterinsurgency.

In the Long War setting, as in the above definition and demonstrated in the data, the truthfulness of the disseminated information is the defining aspect of the insurgent character sub-claim. The concept of propaganda, originally neutral in character in the early 20th century has acquired a negative connotation in Western countries as the deliberate dissemination of often-false claims in support of political actions or ideologies. Arguably, this redefinition arose because both the Soviet Union and Germany's government under Hitler admitted explicitly to using propaganda favoring, respectively, communism and Nazism, in all forms of public expression. As these ideologies were repugnant to liberal Western societies, the negative feelings toward them came to be projected into the word "propaganda" itself (Nelson R. A., 1996). The concept of
propaganda as a form of deception, hence propagandists as deceivers, is a significant sub-claim towards the character of the insurgent and its organization.

Support for the concept of propaganda as the dissemination of false information to influence an audience appears in the data in two forms. First, it appears directly in the classification of the type of information that insurgents produce. Galula stated that:

The asymmetrical situation has important effects on propaganda. The insurgent, having no responsibility, is free to use every trick; if necessary, he can lie, cheat, exaggerate. He is not obliged to prove, his judged by what he promises, not by what he does (1964, p. 11).

FM 3-24 further states that “Insurgents are not constrained by the truth; they create propaganda that furthers their aims. Insurgent propaganda may include lying deception and false causes” (2006, p. 5:8) and that “insurgent broadcast need not be factual; they need only appeal the populace” (2006, p. 3:17). Baker stated that insurgents “are quite adept at spinning information in adverse ways to further their objectives” and “disinformation and rumor” are the insurgents’ means of waging warfare (2006, p. 18).

Support for the concept that ‘propaganda is deception’ also appears in the information tasks that counterinsurgents must conduct in defeating the insurgency; namely, revealing the ‘truth.’ Kitson placed the isolation of extremists by “exposing their motives and by discrediting them” as a priority in defeating subversion and insurgency (1991, p. 85). FM 3-24 identifies that one of the primary roles of information operations “should (be to) point out the insurgency’s propaganda and lies to the local populace” (2006, p. 5:8). The revelation of the deception within insurgent propaganda assists in
defeating the insurgency as it undermines the insurgent’s ability to develop ideational power and shape its identity, the counterinsurgents’, and the political space.

Several of the authors assert that the initial task of any successful insurgency is finding a cause that can attract and mobilize support. Propaganda serves this purpose according to the data through the creation and manipulation of ‘false’ causes; as unresolved grievances are viewed by many as a source for social unrest or conflict. Insurgents, as propagandists, create artificial grievances, transform existing ones, and share them across communal lines. Insurgents as propagandist often create and manipulate problems. FM 3-24 states that political “contradictions are based on real problems...However, insurgents may create artificial contradictions using propaganda and misinformation” (2006, p. 1:10). FM 3-24 further states, “Effective insurgent propaganda can turn an artificial problem into a real one” (2006, p. 1:10). Insurgents have political objectives and are motivated by grievances; “the grievances may be real or perceived” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:10).

Insurgents, as propagandists, also manipulate grievances and causes to maintain their organization. FM 3-24 states, “A movement may be tempted to go to almost any extreme to attract followers. To mobilize their base of support, insurgent groups may use a combination of propaganda and intimidation” (2006, p. 1:18). The propaganda to attract supporters is through the manipulation of grievances and causes. FM 3-24 further states:

By selecting an assortment of causes and tailoring them for various groups within the society, insurgents increase their sympathetic and complicit support...Insurgents employ deep-seated, strategic causes as well as temporary,
local ones, adding or deleting them as circumstances demand. Leaders often use a bait-and-switch approach. They attract supporters by appealing to local grievances; then they lure followers into the broader movement (2006, p. 1:10).

This process allows insurgents “across the jihad (to) contribute to a common flow of propaganda materials, supporting each other’s local causes and sharing grievances” (Kilcullen, 2005, p. 601). The result is a system of artificial or inapplicable causes and grievances that the insurgent can exploit at the local and international levels.

Propaganda, as deceptive communication, which allows the insurgent to exploit grievances and create artificial causes, is not the only function it has for the insurgent as propagandist. Insurgent propaganda allows the insurgent to represent itself falsely and the counterinsurgent. The texts have already established that the insurgent has no responsibility to the truth (Galula, 1964, p. 49) and this extends to who or what it represents to its supporters or the public.

Insurgents, as propagandists, attach themselves with legitimate organizations and subvert their cause and ideas from within. FM 3-24 states that insurgent organizations “organize or develop cooperative relationships with legitimate political action groups, youth groups, trade unions, and other front organizations” (2006, p. 1:6). Kitson indicates that insurgent organizations will infiltrate other organizations associated with peaceful activities for violent purposes.

Assumes that an overt political party or movement such as a Civil Rights Association has been partially penetrated by a subversive group, which in turn
controls terrorist and sabotage section either at the city level as was the case in Nicosia (1991, p. 127).

In either case, the insurgent, as propagandist, provides a means for the insurgent to develop a relationship with legitimate organizations, falsely allowing them to represent who they are and what their intentions are.

The counterinsurgent is the other target of insurgent false representation. As in the case of grievances and causes, identification of a host nation, occupying force, or counterinsurgent’s weaknesses is expected. What the texts claim is that the insurgent, as propagandist, will use deception and false claims in representing the counterinsurgent. FM 3-24 points to the continuous attempts by the insurgent:

(To) broadcast their successes, counterinsurgent failures, HN government failures, and illegal or immoral actions by the counterinsurgents or HN government. Insurgent broadcasts need not be factual; they need only to appeal to the populace (2006, p. 3:17).

This false propaganda by the insurgent includes “twisting...images into evidence of bad intentions by counterinsurgents” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 8:5) and the portrayal of “military activities as brutal” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:27). The end, according to the data, is an attempt to represent the insurgent and counterinsurgent falsely in the eyes of the population.

The insurgent, as propagandist, sub-claim is evaluated negatively by the authors. The character sub-claim is viewed as a world-reflecting assessment of the facts. Deception is evaluated as negative on the good vs. bad spectrum in most societies,
propaganda as a concept is deceptive, and the practice of propaganda by insurgents is especially deceptive and hence negative. The authors’ certitude towards the insurgent as deceptive propagandists is high as well as the expectation that the audience will understand and expect this. The importance of the sub-claim to counterinsurgency discourse is high, as several authors viewed the revelation of insurgent propaganda as important in the defeat of insurgents. The source for the negative evaluation of the insurgent as propagandist comes from self as source in self-attribution based on the experiences of counterinsurgent authors. The texts also attribute the negative evaluation to others, in the obvious negative evaluation that results from deception. The negative evaluation of deception on the good-bad spectrum is the primary source for the authors’ evaluation; however, this is problematic on two counts.

First, as mentioned previously, a social-constructionist approach to this research recognizes social life (including research) as constructed by active and creative agents through their interactions with others. This posits that human beings act towards an object, institution, or phenomena based on the inter-subjective meaning they ascribe towards those entities. A negative evaluation of propaganda and propagandists in part is a result of the inter-subjective negativity on the part of the West because of experiences with propaganda of Nazi Germany and the Cold War. Arguably, the application of a negative evaluation of propaganda and insurgent propagandists is an extension of this experience. Second, the negative evaluation of insurgent as propagandist actant sub-claim is based on the world-creating assumption of how information should be presented, an assumption that is based on how a counterinsurgent/host nation presents ‘truthful’
information. The concept of if they do it then that is propaganda, while if we do it then it is informational and educational, has been reviewed and critiqued by others.

The insurgent, as deceptive propagandist, has three interrelated implications that should be addressed. First, analytically, counterinsurgency analysts and operators call the intentionality of insurgent’s motivations into question. The motivations, causes, and grievances of insurgents as a result of this sub-claim may not only be questioned but may be uncritically dismissed. The idea that “clever insurgents strive to disguise their intentions” becomes the norm (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:2). Analysts and operators may start from the position that insurgent’s statements and claims are false. This results in analysts ignoring legitimate statements; it provides a more conducive space for the analyst to introduce personal, organizational, or political biases into their analysis.

Second, in part, this claim removes some of the counterinsurgent/host nation responsibility for its actions. Insurgent ‘information’ on the behavior of the counterinsurgent or host nation now all becomes part of the deceptive propaganda. Falsely arresting people, shortcomings of the government, and excessive violence is the result of insurgent propaganda (Galula, 1964, p. 87; FM 3-24, 2006, pp. 1:2, 1:3). The counterinsurgent or foreign power may recognize that the host nation is not addressing grievances aggressively; however, the concept that the insurgent falsely aggravate or create the grievances relieves the government some of the responsibility of adequately addressing the issues.
Associated with this concept is that all actions by insurgents are done to maintain their deceptive propaganda. Deceptive intentions and information does not suffice; the insurgent employs violence to maintain their propaganda. Kilcullen stated:

When the insurgents ambush your patrol or set off a car bomb, they so not to destroy one more track, but because they want graphic images of a burning vehicle and dead bodies for the evening news (2006a, p. 32).

Hammes claimed:

The Palestinians often interposed women and children between Israeli security forces and the men they wished to arrest. This technique was effective only if it was covered by international media (2004, p. 41).

Baker (2006, p. 18), FM 3-24 (2006, p. 1:25), and Kilcullen (2006b, pp. 4-5) repeated this idea that the insurgent conducted violence not for a physical advantage on the battlefield, but as part of a deceptive propaganda effort to shape the political space positively toward its interest and negatively to the counterinsurgents’. In this political maneuvering between adversaries, the issue is not the attempt of the insurgent to discredit the counterinsurgent, but the idea that it is based on deception.

The third consideration is that victory for the insurgent is partially achieved by pointing out the insurgents’ deceptive propaganda. Politically, this may not be problematic, but analytically and operationally this idea is an area that should concern the counterinsurgency researcher. Pointing out the deception in counterinsurgent propaganda, at the minimum requires identification of the ‘truth.’ Identification of truthful information is difficult when all insurgent information is identified as propaganda and all
counterinsurgent information is identified as ‘truthful.’ In these circumstances, there is no analytical space for the analyst and operator to identify ‘truth’ in insurgent information.

**Sub-claim: Agents of Insecurity**

Insurgent, as agents of insecurity, is tied into the setting conception that rationality is security and the associated plot of victory for the counterinsurgent through the maintenance or creation of security. Correspondingly, victory or survival of the insurgent is based on creating or maintaining insecurity. An important element of the agent of insecurity actant sub-claim is the concept of the insurgent as a strategic spoiler. The insurgent as strategic spoiler seeks to create a climate of insecurity by threatening the population and separating the population from the government, with the end-state of undermining or retarding the development of the government.

Understanding the insurgent as strategic spoiler should not be limited to what the insurgent has done. It should include who is the insurgent and the insurgent as strategic spoiler, spoils for the sake of spoiling. Kilcullen stated, in regards to the insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan:

For example, in Iraq multiple groups are seeking to paralyze and fragment the state, rather than to gain control of its apparatus to govern. Insurgents favor strategies of provocation (to undermine support for the coalition) and exhaustion (to convince the coalition to leave Iraq) rather than the displacement of the government...Afghan insurgents act as “strategic spoilers”, seeking to discredit and undermine the government by targeting coalition forces, officials and
President Karzai’s support base in the Durrani tribal confederation (2006b, p. 115).

The insurgent, as this sub-claim posits, has a goal of disrupting the “forces of order” in accomplishing its tasks, but as a spoiler only “fights to preserve the status quo of ungoverned spaces” (Kilcullen, 2006b, p. 113).

The success of an insurgent is based on their ability to “gain strength and foster increasing disruption through the state or region” and their ability to “sow... chaos and disorder anywhere” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:2). According to the data, this is accomplished through threatening the population directly or indirectly through depriving the population of their sustenance. Direct threats are predominantly in the form of violence and coercion. Hoffman argued that:

The highest imperative of the insurgent is to deprive the population of that sense of security. Through violence and bloodshed, the insurgent seeks to foment a climate of fear by demonstrating the authorities’ inability to maintain order and thus highlight their weakness (2004, p. 114).

FM 3-24 supports this idea of creating insecurity in discussing the insurgent’s basis for using terrorist tactics:

This approach uses terrorist tactics in urban areas to accomplish the following: sow disorder, incite sectarian violence, weaken the government, intimidate the population, kill government and opposition leaders, fix and intimidate police and military forces, limiting their ability to respond to attacks (2006, p. 1:6).
In addition, Trinquier continued this claim in that the insurgent has the “task of carrying out assassinations and of continually presenting a threat to the inhabitants of the town” (1964, p. 68). Arguably, the basis for the agent of chaos sub-claim focused on threatening the population is tied to a plot of victory for the insurgent through insecurity.

The insurgent actant sub-claim element, as threatening strategic spoilers, stems not only from directly threatening the population, but also from the indirect threat to the population by diminishing their sources of sustenance. “Without security the insurgent who can insert itself among the people, will always try to deprive the inhabitants of their means of subsistence” (Trinquier, 1964, p. 50). The insurgent not only threatens internal subsistence efforts, but external efforts also. “With very few carefully targeted killings, the AGF have halted international aid operations in many areas of the country” (Hammes, 2004, p. 124).

The insurgent as strategic spoiler character sub-claim element is not without purpose. The insurgent seeks to spoil the relationship between the government and the population. Unable to provide security, the government provides an opportunity for the insurgent. “By threatening the population, the insurgent gives the population an excuse, if not a reason, to refuse or refrain from cooperating with the counterinsurgent (Trinquier, 1964, p. 50).

This arguably is the key task of the insurgent to break the ties between the people and government and establish their own credibility (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:13). The strategic spoiler character sub-claim element is only one in defining the insurgent as an
agent of chaos. The use of violence by the insurgent and its lack of restraint are equally important.

Arguably, in any form of armed civil conflict, a certain amount of violence is to be expected. The distinction in understanding violence, in regards to insurgents, lies between the act of committing violence by an insurgent and the violent insurgent. Soldiers, security personnel, and police may conduct acts of violence and these acts of violence are typically carried out within a framework of laws and regulations. The insurgent on the other hand has a violent character and intentions. Insurgent violence is based on irrational premises and is unrestrained by any acceptable moral framework. Together, they establish an element of the insurgent character claim that the insurgent is violent without rationality or restraint.

Violence is innate to the insurgent in that it is a component of almost all of their actions throughout the process of conducting an insurgency. The insurgent is the one that initiates violence within an insurgency (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:2). The insurgent uses violence at the beginning of a conflict for three purposes. First, it uses violence in conjunction with propaganda to gain and maintain public attention and support (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:2). Kitson stated that:

...violent coercion of elements in the population opposed to the party, attacks on weak government forces such as the Home Guard or Militia units who job it is to protect loyal sections of the population, and ambushes or attacks on small bodies of the government’s forces to the extent necessary for keeping the campaign in
the public eye as part of the business of harnessing world opinion or for the purpose of getting hold of government weapons or equipment (1991, p. 41).

The insurgent will also employ violence if subversion and propaganda efforts alone have failed to achieve its goals. Galula claimed that this is not only the next step for the insurgent, but that “armed struggle is the logical continuation” for the insurgent (1964, p. 36).

Second, it uses violence to demonstrate government incompetence and to force the government to overreact. In all of the various insurgent approaches identified by FM 3-24 violence against the government is a key component in weakening the government, sowing disorder, and intimidating the population (2006, p. 1:6). Once again, Kitson stated that:

Tasks may also include acts of sabotage and terrorism designed to ensure that the government deploys disproportionately large bodies of its own forces on protection duties and searches, and carefully calculated acts of brutality designed to bring excessive government retaliation on to the population thereby turning them against government (1991, p. 41).

Not only does this separate the government from the people, but it assists the insurgent in maintaining control of the people through the constant threat posed to them (Trinquier, 1964, p. 56; FM 3-24, 2006, pp. 1:6, 1:9). In short, violence becomes an equal partner in the insurgents’ efforts to control the population and achieve its political goals. Moreover, if they fail to achieve their goals then violence becomes the means of keeping their cause alive.

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Third, the insurgent employs violence when subversion and propaganda alone have failed. Failing to achieve their political goals, the insurgent resorts to using violence in maintaining public awareness of the insurgent cause. Violence is the “logical continuation if political play and subversion fail at the beginning of an insurgency” (Galula, 1964, p. 6) and violence is the approach taken later in the insurgency when other methods have failed. Hammes argues that the failure of Palestinians to capitalize on their initial political victories resulted in them regressing to “the earlier, incoherent, ineffective approach of pure terror” (2004, p. 97). Kilcullen echoed this claim where he stated that “by threatening to displace them from the environment, that they (insurgents) have to attack you and the population to get back in the game” (2006a, p. 34).

The employment of violence by the insurgent during all phases of the insurgency and the employment of violence as one of the primary means of political influence supports the violent nature of the insurgent as opposed to violent acts committed by the insurgent. The violent nature of the insurgent, however, is not just a result of the insurgent’s effort, desire or need to cause physical, social, or political damage. The violent nature of the insurgent is made more so because of the irrationality behind insurgent violence and the lack of restraint in the employment of violence.

Central to the irrationality behind insurgent violence is an all-encompassing worldview that is ideologically rigid and uncompromising. Rigidity, in this case is that the “worldview of such extremist groups means that friendly actions intended to create good will among the populace are unlikely to affect them” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:15). The irrationality is uncompromising in that “insurgents generally view popular support as a
zero-sum commodity; that is, a gain for the insurgency is a loss for the government, and a loss for the government is a gain for the insurgency” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 3:15). Arguably, the result of such rigidity and lack of compromise influences the decision making of the insurgent. The rigidity and the lack of compromise inherent in the insurgent’s worldview shape all other issues. There is no conceptual space for debate and dialogue, and hence no space for rational thought or dialogue.

FM 3-24, in particular, affirms this idea that the rigidity, uncompromising, and zero-sum position of insurgent ideology prevents many forms of progress in resolving the insurgency. This stems from the belief in the inevitability of their ideology, thereby making change from that ideology problematic at best (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:15). FM 3-24 states that “violent extremists resist changing their worldview, for them, coexistence or compromise is often unacceptable, especially when the movement is purist (like Al Qaeda), in an early stage, or small” (2006, p. 1:15). The result being that the group’s ideology is so strong that it “dominates all other issues, dialog and negotiation prove unproductive” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:15). In the data, nothing captures the concept of insurgent irrationality better than the all-encompassing worldview created through religion, Islam in particular.

As discussed previously, modern Euro-American social scientists presuppose that a single logical, reasonable or natural universal moral order has replaced religion (Connolly, 1995; Hurrell, 1990). The concept of the continually evolving modern laical state, which since the treaty of Westphalia has steadily removed religion, religious organizations, and religious influence from the apparatus of the state, has become the
basis of political rationality (Yamane, 1997; Bruce, 2001; Chaves, 1994; Asad, 2003; Tschannen, 1991). In this view, the separation of religion from politics is the natural state of affairs, whereby the mixture of the two is viewed “as abnormal, irrational, dangerous, and extreme,” making religion an adversary to the state, modernization, democracy, and development (Esposito, 2000, p. 9). As a threat to stability, religion is confined to the private sphere. Casanova argued that the privatization of religion is “mandated ideologically by liberal categories of thought which permeate not only the political ideologies and constitutional theories but the entire structure of modern Western thought” (Casanova, 1994, p. 215). Insurgent organizations in this view should be rational and pragmatic struggles for secular nationhood rather than an Islamic struggle that is irrational, dogmatic, inflexible, and unresponsive to reality.

Insurgents, however, are not identified as a pragmatic secular political organization, but as being embedded in religious cultures, practices, and ideologies as of the last twenty years. Many of the current insurgents have an origin in Islamic faith or culture. Kilcullen argued that most insurgents have socio-cultural origins in that “they are connected through a nested series of links into an aggregated pattern of global jihad...links include common ideologies, shared languages, cultures and a common Islamic faith” (2005, p. 601). FM 3-24 describes this as an identity focused approach and it is based on religious identity either separately or as part of other tribal or ethnic identities (2006, p. 1:8). Islam is not limited to the cultural and religious origins of insurgents; it is part of the historical religious struggle of Islamic organizations. Kilcullen, in defining the origin of insurgents in the global jihad, stated:
Many fought with the Soviets together in Afghanistan. Many studied under Wahhabi clerics in Saudi Arabia and maintain relationships with these mentors. Later generations of mujahidin fought together in Kosovo, Bosnia, or Chechnya. Many went to school together, fought together in sectarian conflicts and trained together in terrorist camps (2005, p. 600).

This places modern-day insurgents as part of a cultural and political web of historical and social relations that define the identity of insurgent groups. Furthermore, with political Islam so deeply incorporated into the character of the insurgent, the political goals of the Islamic insurgent are shaped by the Islamic concepts and worldviews that by their nature in the Western tradition are irrational.

Islam, as a source of political ideology, is problematic within the data for the ideological goals that it sets for the insurgent which are rigid, uncompromising, and unrealistic. FM 3-24 states the following concerning the strength and power of these goals:

Religious extremist insurgents, like many secular radicals and some Marxists, frequently hold an all-encompassing worldview; they are ideologically rigid and uncompromising, seeking to control their members’ thought, expression, and behavior. Seeking power and believing themselves to be ideologically pure, violent religious extremists often brand those they consider insufficiently orthodox as enemies (2006, p. 1:15).

FM 3-24 further states:
Many religious extremists believe that conversion, subjugation, or destruction of their ideological opponents is inevitable. Violent extremists and terrorists are often willing to use whatever means necessary, even violence against their own followers, to meet their political goals (2006, p. 1:15).

The result is a claim of intractable ideological romanticized opponents who view themselves as holy warriors pursuing a divine goal (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:9). The tenacity of the insurgent, however, is only part of the problem; the goals of Islamic insurgents are claimed to be unrealistic.

The goals of the Islamic insurgent are focused on local political or religious control of an area in support of larger movements in the development of a worldwide caliphate (Hammes, 2004, p. 124). In each case, part of the goal is the transformation of cultural, political, and social society, more often than not as defined by the data—a worldwide transformation. This ranges from Kilcullen’s concept of a global jihad that “seeks to transform the entire Islamic world and remake its relationship with the rest of the globe” (2005, p. 604) through violence and subversion to Hammes claim that Islamic insurgents seek to destroy Israel and re-establish a caliphate (2004, pp. 91, 124). They are all viewed as unrealistic goals of an uncompromising insurgent and this is reflected in the following claim:

But this assumes the insurgent has real-world objectives, and a practicable strategy that can be defeated by denying these objectives. The religious ideology of some modern insurgents creates a different dynamic (2006b, p. 115).
Restated, the point is that an irrational, rigid, and uncompromising insurgent with an unrealistic goal is difficult to defeat as the goals are ephemeral, but the insurgent is intractable in the pursuit of them. In addition, this becomes even more problematic when considering that the divine or ideological sanction of the insurgent removes any restraint on their actions.

The third element of the violent insurgent sub-claim is that insurgent violence is unrestrained. Unrestrained should be understood as the insurgent having no responsibility or restraint based on any moral, legal, or ethical considerations outside of their own ideological framework (Kilcullen, 2005, p. 614). As their ideology is radical, extreme or religious it is considered by many of the authors as having no boundary of any type. The primary reason, according to the texts, for the insurgents’ lack of restraint is their lack of responsibility. The insurgent has no responsibility to the law or normal conventions, the population, or life for that matter.

The weaker insurgent, according to this sub-claim element, has to use all the tools available to overthrow their adversary (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:1). Along with their belief of the inevitability of their goals, “using unlimited means is appropriate” to achieve their goals (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:15). This is not to make a claim that the insurgents are cowards or “afraid of a ‘fair fight’; insurgents use these tactics because they are the best means available to achieve the insurgency’s goals” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 3:18).

The best means, in this case, is whatever is expedient without consideration of any greater morality outside of the insurgent’s own ideology or political goals. The result is that:
Insurgents are constrained by neither the law of war nor the bound of human decency, as Western nations understand them. In fact, some insurgents are willing to commit suicide and kill innocent civilians in carrying out their operations—and deem this a legitimate option (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:28).

Even if the insurgent employs subversion and non-violence, this is not a result of moral restraint. Consider Kitson’s following statement:

The first one is that the initiators of non-violent action have not always been opposed to the use of force on moral ground, but have often employed non-violence because they consider it to be better suited to the prevailing circumstances (1991, p. 82).

The importance of this sub-claim element is that the insurgent, regardless of the employment of violence or not, is not held by any acceptable moral framework by which to limit the actions they take during the insurgency.

In conflict, the insurgent, not bound by a moral standard, may operate as they wish either in his role as soldier, perpetrator of violence, or as a propagandist. As a soldier, he can make claims of honor while rejecting the obligations of the soldier. The insurgent:

Not only does he carry on warfare without uniform, but he attacks, far from a field of battle, only unarmed civilians who are incapable of defending themselves and who are normally protected under the rules of warfare. Surrounded by a vast organization, which prepares his task and assist him in its execution, which assures his withdrawal and his protection, he runs practically no risk neither that
of retaliation by his victims nor that of having to appear before a court of justice (Trinquier, 1964, p. 18).

In his fight, he can use the population as he sees fit, even putting their lives in danger to succeed in affecting the enemy (Hammes, 2004, p. 97). This same lack of moral restraint applies to the insurgent as a propagandist in drawing attention to the cause, attracting supporters, or demonstrating the weakness of the government; there are no restraints on insurgent activities.

The purpose is to get publicity for the movement and its cause, and by focusing attention on it, to attract latent supporters. This is done by random terrorism, bombings, arson, assassinations, conducted in as spectacular a fashion as possible, by concentrated, coordinated, and synchronized waves (Galula, 1964, p. 36).

The lack of restraint of the insurgent, their innate violent nature, and the irrationality behind their actions comprise how the violent insurgent actant sub-claim is understood and evaluated by the authors.

The violent insurgent character sub-claim is evaluated negatively within the texts. Violence in general is viewed as negative (bad) within the text; specifically, irrational and unrestrained violence is viewed negatively. All the authors indicated the truthfulness and certitude of the claim and there is an expectation that the audience will accept and agree to the claim. This is indicated through the self as source for many of the authors, but more importantly the irrationality and lack of restraint of insurgents has a hidden attribution to the texts themselves or to general knowledge. The violent insurgent sub-claim is considered a world-reflecting assessment of the facts; however, as in previous
incidents, the world-reflecting facts gain their status based upon the socio-cultural framework of Western thought. This thought posits that violence perpetrated on the premise of religion or ideological extremism is inherently irrational. The result being that any violence, regardless of the degree, that is conducted by any form of ideological or more specifically religious ideology is deemed a quality of an irrational and unrestrained actant.

**Sub-claim: Omnipresent Threat**

An important implication of the Long War setting is that of the networked world that facilitates the propaganda of insurgents and their survivability. Kilcullen claimed that because of the networked world “a new class of regional or theater-level actors have emerged” (2005, p. 602). In short, the environment has changed the nature or character of the insurgent into an omnipresent threat. Kilcullen is the primary narrator of the insurgent, as omnipresent threat actant sub-claim element, but the idea is supported by a number of the other texts. The primary concept of this claim is that insurgents are connected in such a way that while not a single global entity they are a “complex phenomenon”— a phenomenon that allows the insurgent to threaten the security of society at the local, regional, national, and transnational levels (Kilcullen, 2005, p. 599).

According to Kilcullen, the insurgent as omnipresent threat, is a result of the social structures, cultural behaviors, and insurgent experience (2005). Socially, the insurgent is structured on tribal lines and clientelism and is held together through marriage and financial relations. Kilcullen identified insurgents as “multifarious, intricately ramified web of dependencies that—like a tribal group or crime family—
behave more like a traditional patronage network than a mass guerrilla movement” (2005, p. 611). He further claimed that:

The Jihad is a variant on a traditional Middle Eastern patronage network. It is an intricate, ramified web of dependency and, critically, the patterns of patronage and dependency are its central defining features, rather than the insurgents’ cells or their activities (2005, p. 603).

These tribal clientelistic ‘webs of dependency’ are solidified partially through the culture of the society, but also through marriage and family ties. The result is a confederation of “independent networks and movements, not a single unified organization...that allow the jihad to function as a global entity” (Kilcullen, 2005, p. 603).

Many of the other narrators support the claim of the omnipresent threat of the insurgent. Galula noted “the insurgent who, on his part, is organized not only on the local but also the national scale, with all intermediate levels” (1964, p. 95). FM 3-24 recognizes that insurgencies are often localized; however, most have national or international aspects to them (2006, pp. 1:18, 3:1, 3:33). Hoffman, in discussing the nature of insurgencies, stated:

In this loose, ambiguous, and constantly shifting environment, constellations of cells or collections of individuals gravitate toward one another to carry out armed attacks, exchange intelligence, trade weapons, or engage in joint training and then disperse at times never to operate together again (2004, p. 115).

All of these narrators from Galula to Kilcullen claimed that the omnipresent threat of the insurgent is an enduring quality of the insurgent. This, in combination with the networked
world, makes the insurgent a threat to all of global society from the local to international level.

The insurgent, as omnipresent threat, is evaluated negatively within the data. The evaluation is a result of an actor that threatens the whole of society. The claim is considered truthful with a strong element of certitude, as the claim is in alignment with the world as it is. The claim is a world-reflecting assessment of the facts; however, like many of the claims towards the qualities of an insurgent, the sources are more problematic. In the case of Kilcullen in particular, self is source, but it is hidden within the text and general attribution. The general attribution in this case is arguably based on the political institutional narratives of political Islam, terrorists, and religious radicals. Most of the other claims are self as source based on their experiences with insurgencies.

**Labels as Claims**

In identifying and analyzing the character claims, sub-claim, and evaluations it became apparent that labels played an important role in understanding the evaluation of insurgents. In the discussion of Hunston & Thompson’s (Hunston & Thompson, 2000) evaluation model, labeling was discussed in terms of the discursive boundaries it places on understanding a concept, item, or actant. The capacity of status to create labels for objects and propositions, thereby limiting the values that can be assigned to it is a valuation in itself. For example, the statement \(X\) is a terrorist has status because it places a label on an individual, but it also limits how \(X\) may be valued. It is nearly impossible to place a positive value on that individual because the status-label limits the values that can be attached to the individual. The value status of a statement may be constructed through
a single word, such as terrorist, but more likely, it is constructed through shared conceptions that are employed with other statements in the text to create a value for the statement or text. In the analysis of insurgent claims and evaluations, the label of terrorist was significant in creating the discursive boundary of insurgent identity.

The terrorist label was applied to the insurgent organizational identity in nine of the thirteen texts through the interchangeability of the term terrorist with the term insurgent or through the formation of a conjunctive identification through the joining of the terms insurgent and terrorist. For example, Hoffman (2004), FM 3-24 (2006), Hammes (2004), and even Trinquier (1964, p. 17) used the terms insurgent and terrorist interchangeably throughout their works. The conjunctive identification is through the employment of the terms in conjunction. For example, Sepp (2005) used the term ‘terrorist insurgent’ throughout his text in addition to using the terms terrorist and insurgent interchangeably. Petraeus, (2006) Baker (2006), and Kilcullen (2005) conjoined the terms by using the conjunctive ‘and’; so ‘insurgent and terrorist’ were often employed as one term within the texts.

While the terms guerrilla, revolutionary, and rebel were also used interchangeably with the term insurgent in several of the texts, arguably these terms are neutral in that as labels they do not influence the evaluation in one direction or the other. Moreover, if these terms are considered influential in the evaluation of insurgents, the expectedness of that influence is reasonably outside most authors’ intent. With the term terrorist, on the other hand, evaluative expectedness is within the authors’ intent and that evaluation is a negative one. While there have been discussions on whether an individual or organization
should be labeled as a terrorist or something else such as a revolutionary (Jackson, 2009; Sageman, 2004; Silke, 2004), the terrorist label has always had a negative evaluation, hence the effort to avoid the terrorist label. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, it is nearly impossible to apply a positive evaluation on the label terrorist.

To a lesser extent, the label of criminal is also applied to insurgent identity. This label is applied in direct identifications, such as Kilcullen’s claim that insurgents are “little distinguishable from bandits” (2005, p. 602) to FM 3-24’s claim that “insurgent groups are more similar to organized crime” (2006, p. 6:20). Indirectly, the label is applied either in the way insurgents operate or in the relationships that they maintain. Kilcullen (2005, p. 602) and Galula (1964, p. 37) claim that the way that insurgents operate is similar to the way that bandits or criminals operate. FM 3-24 (2006, p. 1:11) claims that insurgents, either due to necessity or opportunity, create and maintain relationships with criminal organizations. In either case, similar to the terrorist label, it is difficult to have a positive evaluation of a criminal identity.

The importance of the terrorist and criminal label in the evaluation of insurgents as an actant lies in the initial discursive boundary created through the labels. Regardless of how a terrorist, and to a lesser extent criminal are defined or narrated, they are evaluated negatively. The employment of the label of terrorist to understanding the insurgent forms a negatively evaluated discursive boundary for the insurgent identity, actant claims, and evaluation. In another words, the application of the terrorist label results in a negative (bad) evaluation regardless of the claims and evaluations within the
text towards insurgent character—a boundary that must be considered in identifying the final insurgent character claim and evaluation.

**Claim: Insurgents as Forces of Chaos**

As stated previously, the primary actant claim is that insurgents, in contrast to counterinsurgents, are Forces of Chaos. A clearer understanding of what this claim means and how it is evaluated is achieved when reconstructing the actant sub-claim into one claim of what are the central, distinctive, and enduring qualities of the insurgent. Each of the sub-claims provides insight into how the insurgent is evaluated narratively and the possible implications of those evaluations on the military, political, and social analysis of insurgency.

The insurgent as an adaptive organization sub-claim is significant as it makes a claim toward the capability of the insurgent to turn its weakness into strength by the organization’s commitment to learning from its mistakes, taking new approaches, and constantly assessing their effectiveness. While the learning approach may be necessary if the insurgent is to survive, it proven capacity to adapt constantly has not only allowed it to survive, but to become an elusive target.

The insurgent as propagandist sub-claim is equally significant in the insurgent’s capability to turn its strength into weakness. Through propaganda, the insurgent is able to manipulate or create grievances that give the organization its first ideational source in the form of a cause. Propaganda is also important as it provides the insurgent with the means to ‘shape’ the population, create a positive organizational identity, and explain their organization’s goals and activities, while providing a negative quality to their adversary
and its actions. The problem, however, with insurgent propaganda is that for the most part it is deception.

The third sub-claim is of the insurgent as an agent of insecurity, specifically that the insurgent uses unrestrained violence based on irrational premises that undermine security. Violence was identified as what the insurgent does, in that violence plays an essential role in conducting insurgency as it threatens security at the local, national, and international level. Violence, however, is also part of who the insurgent is, as violence is ‘necessary’ in starting, maintaining, and finishing an insurgency. The insurgent has no escape from the employment of violence. Insurgent violence and the threat it poses to security is made more troublesome by the narrative fact that the insurgent is not bound by ethical, moral, or legal standards. In addition, the ideological basis for insurgent violence stems from irrational, rigid, and compromising religious worldviews of inevitable victory.
The fourth and final sub-claim, while small, is important in the reconstruction of the insurgent actant claim and that is the insurgent is an omnipresent threat. The capacity of an adaptive insurgent who uses propaganda and unrestrained violence in an irrational effort to disrupt the world order is made more important because of the omnipresent threat sub-claim. This claim asserts that the insurgent threatens security at the local, national, and international levels; hence, no one is safe from the insurgent threat.

Insurgents, as forces of chaos, are more than a metaphor or symbolic representation of the insurgent. The insurgents, as the forces of chaos, strike directly for what the narrators want the audience to understand are the central, distinctive, and enduring elements of insurgent organizational identity. Insurgents, as forces of chaos, are...
a threat to political, economic, and cultural stability through their use of deception and violence. The claim that they are adaptive is more than efficiency of operation, but it means that the insurgent will survive and continuously present a threat to order.

As presented in the analysis of labels placed on the insurgent, any analysis of the narrators’ evaluation of insurgents as forces of chaos starts with the evaluative boundary created by the label of terrorist, and criminal to a lesser extent. The term terrorist academically, socially, and culturally has a negative evaluation. The application of the term terrorist to the insurgent creates the initial evaluative boundary. This means, independently of the claims and sub-claims identified through an analysis of the texts, the application of the terrorist label to insurgent identity results in a negative evaluation for the insurgent.

Accepting this limitation on the evaluation of insurgents as forces of chaos, insurgents are still evaluated negatively. Arguably, the positive evaluation of insurgent adaptability, when added to the negative evaluations of insurgent as deceptive propagandist and violent agent of insecurity, actually takes on a negative aspect as the adaptability improves the insurgent’s capability to deceive, destroy, and threaten order. The certitude and trustworthiness of this evaluation is high as it is viewed as a world reflecting assessment of facts that are obvious to the general audience. The source of this claim is self-as-source in the experience of all the narrators and the general expected knowledge of the audience and is in no small part as a result of the terrorist label applied to the insurgent.
An analytical note should be taken into consideration in understanding the actant claim of insurgents as forces of chaos. At one level, this claim and evaluation on what is an insurgent is not analytically interesting or significant as an analysis of statements, texts, and other forms of discourse from politicians, political pundits, and news media most likely would result in the same characterization claims. What are analytically interesting are the data sources for this claim. Unlike politicians, pundits, and the media, which arguably have a bias or motivation for such a characterization, the data sources for this research came from academics and social researchers who made a claim to objective research and analysis. It is interesting, but it is a basis for concern within the security studies community that such characterizations of insurgents are so readily identifiable.

**Thematic Claim**

The aim of this research is to apply a narrative approach to the analysis of counterinsurgency literature by dismantling the texts into three components of setting, character (insurgent), and theme. The other component of narrative, plot, while important in shaping meaning through the arrangement of character, setting, and action is ultimately in service to the theme of a narrative or discourse as this is the point or meaning. In other words, the plot is the arrangement of the other components to meet the thematic claim of the texts. Data was collected and analyzed to identify the thematic claims within the texts.

Methodologically, thematic claims are divided into three types: thematic claims and evaluations based on author’s stated intent, thematic claims and evaluations identified as a result of narrative analysis, and claims and evaluations resulting from the integration of narrative components back into a single alternative narrative or discourse.
The focus on this research is on thematic claims on insurgency resulting from narrative analysis and integration, which may or may not have a greater role in how the security studies community understands insurgency. However, some analysis of the author intended thematic claim is required. Actantial analysis, as stated previously, identifies the subject, object, and intended beneficiary within a text. This secondary analysis, conducted on the data sources, allows the establishment of the primary actors (subjects), primary points (objects), and audiences (beneficiary/receiver) of a text or group of texts.

All of the source texts, except Mao, identify the counterinsurgent commander, operator, and analyst as the primary subject of the texts in how counterinsurgents in the past, present, and future have conducted or should have conducted counterinsurgency operations. The counterinsurgent is also the primary audience (beneficiaries/receivers) of the texts, except for Mao where the insurgent is the audience. The thematic claim (object) of the texts is to improve understanding by rectifying faulty, outdated, and culturally bound misunderstandings of COIN. The improved understanding is accomplished by focusing on specific elements of COIN research. Hoffman (2004), Petraeus (2006), Sepp (2005), and Berger & Borer’s (2007) thematic claims were focused on historical lessons learned as the objective to improved understanding. Coppock (2008), Lawrence (1917), and Kilcullen’s Twenty-eight Articles (2006a) thematic claims were centered on increasing the effectiveness of tactical and operational capabilities. The rest of the authors’ thematic claims were centered on an approved understanding of conducting COIN through the development of a more accurate understanding of COIN, updating
COIN concepts, or recognition of a changing world and concept of warfare. The following are arguably the author intended thematic claims of each text:

- Low Intensity Operations—Kitson (1991): Subversion and insurgency are the future of modern warfare as a result of ideology, communications, and nuclear weapons.
- The Sling and the Stone—Hammes (2004): Warfare is now networked, interdependent, increasingly decentralized, and population focused.
- Countering Global Insurgency—Kilcullen (2005): Global war on terrorism should be understood as a global jihadist insurgency.
- Modern Warfare—Trinquier (1964): Need to adapt to modern warfare, an interlocking system of political, economic, psychological, and military that exploits internal tensions.
- Counterinsurgency Warfare—Galula (1964): The aim of counterinsurgency is to gain the support of a neutral population through progressive enforcement.
- The Decisive Weapon—Baker (2006): Information Operations (IO) is key in countering insurgent propaganda used to sway the population.
- Twenty-eight Articles—Kilcullen (2006a): Tactical lessons learned to improve mental and situation awareness in real-world influence operations.
- Counterinsurgency Redux—Kilcullen (2006b): Insurgency has transitioned from ‘classic’ form to a ‘modern’ one.
- Learning Counterinsurgency—Petraeus (2006): Improved soldier effectiveness through the application of lessons learned from Iraq.
• The 27 Articles—Lawrence (1917): Cultural lessons learned to improve social awareness within ‘foreign’ societies to increase influence.

• COIN Cliff Notes—Coppock (2008): Provide abbreviated guide to the essential counterinsurgent techniques for successful operations.

• Best Practices in Counterinsurgency—Sepp (2005): Counter the concept that counterinsurgency is predominantly political and economic.

• Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq—Hoffman (2004): Understand the political and population component in counterinsurgency.

• The Long War—Berger & Borer (2007): Recognize the failure of ‘conventional’ strategy in light of a networked war of non-state actors.

The constructed thematic claims above are the point or meaning of the texts; hence, the meaningful arrangement of characters, settings, and action—otherwise, the plot. In addition, the plot of a text is in service to the theme or its claim. The data collected and analyzed does not contradict the constructed thematic claims; however, it does indicate that there is a thematic claim that arguably is more central in understanding insurgents and insurgency. The data indicates the political mobilization of the population by a political actor while political separation of the population from his adversary is the thematic claim running throughout the texts. The political nature of insurgency and the population as a resource of power sub-thematic claim further define the direction of the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim.
Sub-claim: Political

As discussed in the literature review, this study bases its conception of power in the ideas of Weber, Foucault, and political anthropology. Together, these create a concept of power in general and political power specifically. Power in general is the ability of Agent A to bend Agent B to A’s will despite B’s resistance through the possession and skillful use of ideational and material resources. Politics, which is about power, is about how political agents create, compute, and use power to attain ‘public goals’ for the common good. Considering the ideas of Foucault, that power is embedded in social structures, discourses, institutions, and the narratives within those institutions, the concept that insurgency/counterinsurgency is political within the data must take the above-mentioned ideas into consideration. Namely, if insurgency is political, then it is a competition for ideational and material resources that allow one party to exert its influence over the other in the name of public goals. The data suggests that insurgency is political and that it is competition for ideational resources that can be used to gain material resources or exert power.

The thematic sub-claim and evaluation that insurgency is political is present in the data in two forms. First, there are the direct statements of the political nature of insurgency. Most of the authors make a claim to the political nature of insurgency. Many directly state this claim in stating that insurgency is a “political process” (Sepp, 2005, p. 10), “political factors have primacy in COIN,” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:22) and “that the struggle is primarily political” (Hammes, 2004, p. 55). Others, such as Berger & Borer claimed in part that the failures on counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq are a result of the counterinsurgents not recognizing the political nature of insurgency (Berger & Borer,
2007, p. 210). In the other cases, the claim is made that operationally counterinsurgency efforts must contain a political element. Galula states:

The objective being the population itself, the operations designed to win it over (for the insurgent) or to keep it at least submissive (for the counterinsurgent) are essentially political in nature. In this case, consequently, political action remains foremost throughout the war (1964, p. 7).

This linkage is also expressed by Kilcullen (2005, p. 605), Hoffman (2004, p. 106), Kitson (1991, p. 6), Trinquier (1964, p. 70), and Hammes (2004, p. 8); all a direct claim of the political nature of insurgency.

The political thematic sub-claim is more than the direct statements towards the political nature of insurgency. Throughout the data, various claims are made to the importance of grievances, causes, and legitimacy to the insurgent and counterinsurgent. Sepp stated “grievances based on the failure of the government to meet the basic needs of its population is the root cause for insurgency” (2005, p. 9) and Kilcullen claimed that ‘state failure’ precedes insurgency (2006b, p. 2). For Galula, a weak national consensus (legitimacy) unable to deal with existing problems gives the insurgents an exploitable cause to attract the population (1964, pp. 13-33). The cause may be based on nationalism or it may be as a result of communist pressure, or a combination of both (Galula, 1964, p. 99). In either case, the cause once accepted by a part of the population allows the insurgent to build power, which is essential to its victory (Galula, 1964, p. 36).

According to FM 3-24, “unresolved contradictions existing within any society or culture” can be a cause for insurgency (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:10). These contradictions can
be deep-seated strategic causes (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:10), religious based causes (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:6), anti-Western sentiments (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:14), or a response to local problems (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:10). In any case, there are a variety of grievance-based and cultural-based causes that insurgents can use to attract exploited or repressed groups if the government does not have legitimacy. Furthermore, economic disparity can also result in actionable causes that insurgents can exploit (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:10).

Considering the conception of political power and politics, the data suggests that the authors’ attempted to provide a list of categories to explain that the political nature of insurgencies is similar to what political scientists and sociologists have done according to Kurtz (2001, pp. L:400-404). In relation to the claim that grievances and causes are necessary for the insurgent to gain support and that legitimacy is necessary for the counterinsurgent to maintain support, it becomes apparent that all these are ideational resources that the political actors create, maintain, and use to gain power.

At one analytical level, therefore, it is irrelevant whether communism, religion, ethnicity, or economic inequality is at play. What matters is that they are all ideational resources that insurgents and counterinsurgents each need to have in order to bend the other to their respective will. Insurgency is political as it is a contest between the insurgent and counterinsurgent for these ideational resources—ideational resources that become material resources and hence power. In addition, the data suggest that the primary resource is the population and this leads to the principle thematic claim in the data of ‘to mobilize and separate.
**Sub-claim: Population as resource**

The thematic sub-claim that COIN is political in that it is a competition for ideational and material resources of political power leads to the next thematic sub-claim. The primary resource in insurgency/counterinsurgency is the population. The population, as a resource, allows the political agent (insurgent or counterinsurgent) to act. The population is both an ideational and material resource. Ideational resources are arguably not useable unless there is a significant portion of the population who are willing to act on those ideas it holds. Acting on those ideas in any number of forms transforms the population, in part, into a material resource. In either case, the data shows that the population is the primary resource of political power in an insurgency.

From Galula (1964, p. 42) to Hammes (2004, p. 70) the importance of the population as the critical element in victory for the insurgent and counterinsurgent is constantly repeated. Galula stated that:

> If the insurgent manages to dissociate the population from the counterinsurgent, to control it physically, to get its active support, he will win the war because in the final analysis, the exercise of political power depends on the tacit or explicit agreement of the population or, at worst, on its submissiveness (1964, p. 6).

In addition, FM 3-24 further states that victory for the government, “in COIN depends on the people taking charge of their affairs and consenting to government rule” (2006, p. 1.24).

Petraeus argued that the population is still a terrain that the military must study and navigate (2006, p. 8); however, like the physical terrain, the human terrain is a resource that can be used for victory. Kitson repeated this claim to the importance of the
population as a resource to victory (1991, pp. 41, 49), as did Trinquier (1964, p. 8), Hammes (2004, p. 43), and Kilcullen. (2006a, p. 29) Herein lies the importance of the population: power is important to victory and that requires resources that allow a political agent to act collect, maintain, or exert their power. The data indicates that the population, as a resource, provides distinct capabilities for the insurgent and the counterinsurgent.

For the insurgent, the population is key to the insurgent’s survival, political and military strength, and victory. Trinquier stated that “the support of the population is essential to the guerilla” (1964, p. 55) so much so that the insurgent “cannot live among a populace he has not previously organized and subjected to his will, because it is from it that he must draw his sustenance and protection” (1964, p. 63). Sepp reinforced this claim in that “insurgents rely on members of the population for concealment, sustenance, and recruits (2005, p. 10). In addition, Galula claimed that the population is the insurgent’s only real source of strength and that this allows the insurgent to act politically and militarily against the government (1964, p. 61).

The control or acquiescence of the population allows the insurgent to transform the resource into power for political and military action (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:6). Politically, it provides the insurgent with the possibility of defeating the government without resorting to violence. Kitson stated that:

If the organizers of the campaign can obtain the support of a large enough portion of the population, and demonstrate the fact to the government be means such as strikes and protest marches, they may be able to persuade the government to give in without using force at all (1991, p. 4).
Kitson continued to discuss this concept of the role of the population in that a successful campaign relies “on the people to overthrow the government once they have been properly indoctrinated and organized (1991, p. 29). Failing to overthrow the government non-violently, the support of the population allows the insurgent to initiate armed political action.

A supportive population allows the insurgent to engage in violent activities to obtain victory. Sepp (2005, p. 10), FM 3-24 (2006, pp. 1:6, 1:13), and Hammes (2004, p. 43) claim that the population provides the support and recruits necessary for armed action. Kitson stated that only with support of the population could the insurgent even consider armed political action.

In most cases there is unlikely to be any violence until the idea has caught on to some extent, because until there is a modicum of support in some areas, it would be too dangerous for anyone to indulge in the use of force. Only after the idea has been accepted by a portion of the people can its further spread be accompanied by violence (1991, p. 67).

Kitson further stated:

But urban terrorists like other insurgents suffer from an important weakness in that their actions must be related to a purpose, which in turn involves building the support amongst the population, at the same time causing it to act in accordance with a programme designed to achieve the aims of those running insurgency (1991, p. 127).
In short, the insurgent needs the support of the population to engage in violence as to do so would threaten its existence and any violent actions it does take is shaped or limited by the support or understanding of the population of the insurgent’s actions. The importance of the population in the survival of the insurgent and its ability to act in achieving victory correspondingly makes the population important to the counterinsurgent’s victory and the data supports this claim.

For the counterinsurgent, the population is also key as the population provides the intelligence and information necessary to identify and defeat the insurgent. It is with the support of the population that an area is secured, preventing the return of the insurgent. The importance of the population to counterinsurgency was established by the claims made by Petraeus and others. The importance of the population stems predominantly from the population as a source of intelligence. Galula succinctly stated that:

Intelligence is the principle source of information on the guerrillas, and intelligence has to come from the population, but the population will not talk unless it feels safe, and it does not feel safe until the insurgent’s power has been broken (1964, p. 53).

Trinquier echoed this claim in the following:

To succeed, we must never lose sight of the fact that we will receive information only from people who can give us information without risk to themselves. We must assure our agents of this indispensable security (1964, p. 78).

These two claims identify the importance of intelligence, but they also demonstrate a conundrum for the counterinsurgent in gaining intelligence from the population, at least
to the authors. To gain access to the intelligence that the population provides, the counterinsurgent must provide security to the population. To secure the population from insurgents, the counterinsurgent must have access to the population. Arguably, in this relationship, along with the rational choice is a security setting sub-claim and concept of power consisting of ideational and material resources, the concept of security changes. Security, along with grievances and causes all become ideational resources that give the political actor power.

Almost every author, despite a particular focus within the insurgency phenomena, identifies the importance of a cause to the insurgent. It is through a cause that an insurgent is able to attract the population to an idea, transforming the population into a resource of political power. Kitson, for example, claimed that:

> In this connection the most important factor is that the immediate object of those organizing subversion is to gain control of the population, and that the normal system for doing this is to select a cause and then form a party, which can project it into the population... (1991, p. 48).

Galula continued this claim that a cause is critical to an insurgency in the statement:

> The insurgent cannot seriously embark on an insurgency unless he has a well-grounded cause with which to attract supporter among the population. A cause, as we have seen, is his sole asset at the beginning, and it must be a powerful one if the insurgent is to overcome his weakness (1964, p. 10).

FM 3-24 (2006, pp. 1:10, 1:14) and Kitson (1991, pp. 29, 34) also identify the need of a cause for an insurgency to be established. It is through the employment of a cause that the
insurgent can attract the population and the source of that cause is usually a contradiction within the body politic.

FM 3-24 states, “Causes often stem from the unresolved contradictions existing within any society or culture” (2006, p. 1.10). The source of the cause is the unresolved political, economic, or social contradictions within a society, and more often than not, the cause can be developed due to the inability of the government to solve such contradictions; or at least the population’s belief in the government inability to solve the contradiction. These unresolved contradictions can become grievances that the insurgent can then exploit in establishing their cause (Hoffman, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq, 2004, p. 115).

The sources of societal contradictions (grievances) are numerous and in many claims involve to some extent the inability of the government to resolve the contradictions and address the grievances. For some authors such as Kilcullen, insurgency requires a failure of the government in some form before an insurgency can occur (2006b, p. 2). Galula stated that the failure is the result of the government’s inability to bring the various political forces together and create a national consensus (1964, p. 19). However, the data, while limited, does point to three factors in the failure of the government: rights recognition, security, and opposing ideologies.

The failure to meet the rights of the population are equally varied and can be ethno-cultural in nature (FM 3-24, 2006, pp. 3:11, 3:12), political (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 3:12), economic (Hammes, 2004, p. 66), ‘basic’ human rights (Sepp, 2005, p. 9), or more likely a combination of the these rights. FM 3-24 states:
Any country ruled by a small group without broad, popular participation provides a political cause for insurgents. Exploited or repressed social groups--be they entire classes, ethnic, or religious groups, or small elites--may support larger causes in reaction to their own narrower grievances. Economic inequities can nurture revolutionary unrest (2006, p. 1:10).

Along with these rights, the government is responsible for the security of its population; FM 3-24 claims:

In the eyes of some, a government that cannot protect its people forfeits the right to rule. Legitimacy is accorded to the element that can provide security, as citizens seek to ally with groups that can guarantee their safety (2006, p. 3:11).

Considering the setting sub-claim of ‘a rational choice for security’ and the insurgent character sub-claim of ‘agents of chaos’, security failure on the part of the government becomes a significant component in understanding the thematic claims within the data.

Arguably, rights failure along with security failure by the government creates revolutionary situations that allow or strengthen oppositional ideologies such as nationalism, communism, or religion. Galula claimed that:

The cause of most recent insurgencies can easily be attributed to revolutionary situations that might have exploded into spontaneous revolutions but bred instead a group of leaders who then proceeded to organize and conduct insurgencies (1964, p. 13).

Revolutionary situations allow the introduction of revolutionary ideologies. Galula further claimed that:
Insurgencies in the recent past have stemmed from two major causes: (1) the rise of nationalism in colonial territories, and (2) Communist pressure, the latter sometimes inspiring and directing the insurgency alone, sometimes combining with the former, but always present and active (1964, p. 99).

This combination of government rights and security failure, along with an ideology, provides the necessary cause for an insurgency to begin. In the last few decades, especially since 9/11, religion as a cause has become more prominent.

If role of a cause is to serve as an ideational resource that attracts and holds the population, transforming it in a material resource of power; the effectiveness of the cause is in part based on the contradictions (grievances) the cause a claim to address and the population’s belief in that explanation. Religion, in particular political Islam, within the data has already been viewed as problematic in understanding the population as a setting and the insurgent as a character. As a response to a social contradiction, religion can have a significant role. In defining the role that a religious cause can have, FM 3-24 states:

The insurgent group channels anti-Western anger and provides members with identity, purpose, and community, in addition to physical, economic, and psychological security. The movement’s ideology explains its followers’ difficulties and provides a means to remedy those ills. The most powerful ideologies tap latent, emotional concerns of the population (2006, p. 1:14).

Hammes reinforced this idea in discussing the cause presented by Osama bin Laden:

In addition, he appealed greatly to the masses of Muslims who were puzzled and frustrated that the great Islamic civilization should have fallen so far behind the
West. He provided some answers, several scapegoats, and a possible, if drastic solution to the West’s domination of the Middle East (2004, p. 111).

In both cases, the contradiction is the imbalance of political, social, and economic power of Islamic or Arabic society compared to the West and the employment of political Islam as a cause is effective because it addresses these contradictions and attracts the population. Understanding the thematic sub-claims that insurgency is political, population based, and requires an unresolved contradiction that can form a cause, the central thematic claim of insurgency can be analyzed, which is to mobilize and separate.

**Claim: To Mobilize and Separate**

The political nature, population focus, and necessity of cause thematic sub-claims are important in shaping an understanding the data; however, the core thematic claim is to ‘mobilize and separate.’ Every author at least alludes to the necessity and the importance of the insurgent/counterinsurgent mobilizing the population towards their goals and separating the population from their opponent’s goal. Taking into consideration the understanding of political power established in this research, the mobilize and separate claim is better understood as mobilizing the population as a resource of political power for one political actor, while separating the population as a resource of political power from that actor’s opponent. Together, with the thematic sub-claims regarding politics, population, and cause, an in depth understanding of the ‘mobilize and separate’ claim can be developed. First, however, the primacy of this claim needs to be established along with the various ideas that are contained within the ideas of mobilization and separation.
From Galula to Hammes, all of the authors make a claim to the importance of mobilization, separation, or more often both. Galula stated that:

If the insurgent manages to disassociate the population from the counterinsurgent, to control it physically, to get its support, he will win the war, in the final analysis, the exercise of political power depends on the tacit or explicit agreement of the population or, at worst, on its submissiveness (1964, p. 6).

Galula further stated that:

The objective being the population itself, the operations designed to win it over (for the insurgent) or to keep it at least submissive (for the counterinsurgent) are essentially political in nature...throughout the war (1964, p. 7).

For Galula, the employment of a favorable minority to mobilize the population for the insurgent or counterinsurgent was key (1964, p. 57). Equally important was the need to separate the population from the opponent (Galula, 1964, p. 57). In short, any and all actions by insurgents and counterinsurgents should be focused on this task.

Trinquier and Kitson continued to illustrate the importance of the mobilization of the population for one side while separating the population from the other side. Kitson stated, “It is the interplay of operations designed by both sides to secure the support of the population and at the same time to damage their opponents, that constitutes a subversive campaign” (1991, p. 48). Trinquier argued, “Victory in modern warfare is achieved by the group that can gain the unconditional support of a population” (1964, p. 8). Trinquier indicated that it is important that each side’s organization parallels the other in achieving these goals (1964, p. 30).
FM 3-24 brings together the concept of these authors and others in making a thematic claim towards the concept that insurgency/counterinsurgency is to mobilize and separate. First, FM 3-24 reestablishes that the setting is population and the role of the population, government, and insurgent in that:

A populace containing an active minority supporting the government and an equally small militant faction opposing it. Success requires the government to be accepted as legitimate by most of that uncommitted middle (2006, p. 1:20).

In contrast, for the insurgent the “key tasks are to break the ties between the people and the government and establish credibility for their movement” (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:13). Essentially, for both sides the key tasks are to mobilize support for their side while separating support from their opponent. The data from the texts of Galula, Kitson, Trinquier, and FM 3-24 all support the thematic claim of ‘to mobilize and separate’.

Many of the other texts, however, support the claim by focusing on either the mobilization aspect or the separation aspect for either the government or the insurgent.

Beyond the support for the claim ‘to mobilize and separate’ Galula (1964, p. 42) and FM 3-24 (2006, p. 1:2) make claims to the importance of mobilization distinctively from the separation claim, as do several of the other texts. For the most part, the insurgent is the focus for the mobilization component of the thematic claim. FM 3-24 states that the goal of the insurgent is to “transform mobilized individual and communities into an effective force for armed political action” as the final “result is a contest of resource mobilization and deployment” (2006, p. 1:13). Kitson made the same claim toward mobilization in that:
The production of news sheets by illegal printing presses and making of broadcasts by illegal wireless stations. These activities for a most important part of any subversive campaign particularly in the early stages when the population is being mobilized to support the cause (1991, p. 17).

Kitson also stated that mobilization of the population was important to Mao’s conception of insurgency and was a prominent theme (1991, p. 4).

Kitson contributed two additional components in understanding the idea of mobilization for the insurgent. First, Kitson was one of the few authors who recognized that “mobilization of the population is much harder than the armed struggle itself” (1991, p. 37). This should not be unexpected taking into consideration the overwhelming thematic sub-claim that insurgency is political in nature. The second contribution is the recognition by Kitson was that mobilization extends beyond the local population to the international community. External support for an insurgency arises from an external population that is mobilized towards the insurgents cause. (Kitson, 1991, p. 37).

The importance of mobilization is not limited to the insurgent alone; mobilization of the population towards the counterinsurgent’s efforts is equally important. Victory for the counterinsurgent stems from its ability “to find the favorable minority, to organize it in order to mobilize the population against the insurgent minority” (Galula, 1964, p. 57). Kitson continued that the “aim of the government is to regain if necessary and then retain the allegiance of the population.” (1991, p. 49) In addition, Kilcullen concluded that the most important actions that counterinsurgents can take are those that rebuild trust and mobilizes the population. Kilcullen stated that:
The most beneficial actions are often local politics, civic action, and beat-cop behaviors. For your side to win, the people do not have to like you but they must respect you, accept that your actions benefit them, and trust your integrity and ability to deliver on promises, particularly regarding their security (2006a, p. 29).

Establishing this relationship with the population mobilizes it toward the counterinsurgent cause and “hard-wires(s) the enemy out of the environment” (Kilcullen, 2006a, p. 33).

Separation of the population from one’s political opponent is the other component to the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim. Galula, FM 3-24, and Kitson, as above, provided the best examples of this component. FM 3-24 states that a primary task of both sides is “discouraging support for their adversaries” (2006, p. 1.40). For the insurgent, separating the population from the adversary consists of two primary means. First is the use of violence. Galula stated that:

The purpose is to get publicity for the movement and the cause by focusing attention on it, to attract latent supporters. This is done by random terrorism, bombings, arson, assassination, conducted in as spectacular a fashion as possible, by concentrated, coordinated, and synchronized waves (1964, p. 43).

This is not the sole, or possibly the principle role, for employing violence as Galula further stated that:

Since legal changes are slow, the counterinsurgent may attempt to go a step further and act beyond the borders or legality. A succession of arbitrary restrictive measures will be started, the nation will soon find itself under constraint,
opposition will increase, and the insurgent will thank his opponent for having played into his hands (1964, p. 49).

Kitson and Trinquier indicate the same role of violence. Kitson stated that:

Tasks may include acts of sabotage and terrorism designed to ensure that the government deploys disproportionately large bodies of its own forces on protection duties and searches, carefully calculated acts of revolting brutality designed to bring excessive government retaliation on to the population thereby turning them against the government (Kitson, 1991, p. 41).

Trinquier further stated that:

The fact that public authority and the police are no longer capable of ensuring his (population) security adds to his distress. He loses confidence in the state whose inherent mission is to guarantee his safety. He is more and more drawn to the side of the terrorist who alone are able to protect him (1964, pp. 16-17).

Each of these texts make a claim to the use of violence, in a variety of forms, as a means of separating the government or counterinsurgent from the population either through demonstrating the ineffectiveness of the government or by causing the counterinsurgent to overreact.

Insurgents also separate the population from the government through political practices, although the texts do not identify the means beyond the advertisement of violence and the use of deception. FM 3-24 states:

These actions are executed to attract high-profile media coverage or local publicity and inflate perceptions of the insurgent capabilities. Resulting stories
often include insurgent fabrications designed to undermine the government’s legitimacy (2006, p. 1:3).

FM 3-24 further states:

In an urban-based insurgency, guerrillas operate clandestinely, using a cellular organization. In the political arena, the movement concentrates on undermining the people’s support of the government and further expanding areas of control (2006, p. 1:7).

In addition,

Insurgents broadcast their successes, counterinsurgent failures, HN (host-nation) government failures, and illegal or immoral actions by counterinsurgents or the HN government. Insurgent broadcast need not be factual; they need only appeal to the populace (2006, p. 3:97).

The essential sub-claim of FM 3-24 and the others is that the insurgent uses the political process, failures in the legal system, propaganda, and the political and moral failures of the government and counterinsurgents to create that separation.

The separation efforts of the insurgent are not limited to the government and counterinsurgent forces alone; they extend to the political actors supporting the government and counterinsurgents. FM 3-24 indicates, “A key part of any insurgent’s strategy is to attack the will of the domestic and international opposition” (2006, p. 7:5).

An idea that Hammes reiterated in discussing the key to the U.S.’s defeat by the Vietnamese was diminishing the political will of the American population (2004, p. 55). Hammes continued the claims:
They showed the insurgents how to use a wide variety of information channels to directly attack the will of external powers. These great power, the United States and France, thought they were protected by oceans from direct enemy action--and found out too late that they had misunderstood the nature of the war they were fighting (2004, p. 61).

Hammes claimed that later political actors such as Osama bin Laden also attempted to separate the external populations from their governments through the use of the open media and information technology (2004, p. 110). Arguably, this is a result of a networked world in which all populations can serve as an ideational and material resource of political power for the insurgent or the counterinsurgent.

Separation of the insurgent from the population is equally important for the counterinsurgent. The existence of the insurgent, as presented previously is due to a cause and the mobilization of at least an active minority from within the population. The growth of the insurgency depends on the continued mobilization of the population; hence, the goal of the counterinsurgent is to separate the insurgent from the population. Victory for the counterinsurgent is dependent on this (Galula, 1964, p. 57; FM 3-24, 2006, p. 1:3). According to the data, the best way to do this is through providing the population with the ‘truth’ about the insurgents (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 3:17), providing security, a positive political environment (Petraeus, 2006, p. 9), and timely concessions (Kitson, 1991, p. 87).

The thematic claim of ‘to mobilize and separate’ was identified as the primary theme in the COIN data. Individually, all the texts made different thematic claims, but the narrative approach identified what could be considered a larger and hidden thematic
claim. What an analysis of the data did not reveal was any evaluation of the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim that could be substantiated. A neutral evaluation is not unexpected considering the source of the claim.

The thematic claims of each text were structured claims in that the author of the text had an intentional meaning and structured the texts towards that end with an evaluation of some sort. In contrast, the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim, as a result of the analysis of the data, is unstructured in that it is a theme that arose from the decoupling of the texts from authorial intention, setting, and character. The claim is considered neutral as opposed to nonexistent because despite the lack of a positive-negative evaluation, the universality of the claim is indicative of the certitude of the claim. The ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim can also reasonably be understood as a world reflecting claim that although not emphasized is sourced to common knowledge.

In another words, the ‘mobilize and separate’ claim could be considered a hidden claim, knowledge, or understanding of insurgency that is revealed through the narrative analysis of the texts. A thematic claim that may prove to be significant in understanding COIN as the presence of the ‘mobilize and separate’ claim throughout the data sources may indicate that despite or along with each author’s constructed thematic claim, the ‘mobilize and separate’ claim is also being received by the audience. With the setting and character (insurgent) claims, along with the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim, a new understanding and definition of insurgency/counterinsurgency emerges. In addition to the definition and understanding of insurgency created by the author and the understanding of insurgency from the narrative analysis of the data, emerges an
institutional narrative definition and understanding of insurgency that arguably shapes how insurgency is understood.

The final analytical step in this research is reconstruction of the data into a single whole to gain a deeper or new understanding of the texts beyond what the author’s may intend. This insight was achieved through the identification of claims towards insurgent identity, the space in which they operate, and the theme behind theirs and the counterinsurgent’s activities through narrative analysis of the texts. These claims are supported by the texts; however, as argued in the Literature and Methodology sections, dismantling through narrative analysis without seeking alternative narratives is of limited use. Hence, the integration of the claims into a whole is an important task in understanding and defining insurgency. There are multitudes of ways that the components can be reconstructed into a whole and as such places the reconstruction of the elements outside the boundaries of analytical findings. However, the reconstruction of the character, setting, and theme, does provide an opportunity to discuss the reconstruction of the narrative components and the insight gained from that task.
DISCUSSION

The initial findings of this research centers on the claims and evaluations of select narrative elements within the texts of the most prominent counterinsurgency authors within the U.S. counterinsurgency discipline. This section provides a space to discuss the findings, build a definition of insurgency, and explore the potential of an alternative narrative understanding of insurgency to the COIN community. The findings, as a result of the research, consisted of expected findings identified in the literature review and unexpected or new findings as a result of the narrative analysis. Both of these findings were explored.

SETTING

The setting, as mentioned previously, is the physical, social, mental, and/or temporal space in which a narrative occurs and it may place conditions on the actor’s actions or the way they are to be understood. The findings resulting from an analysis of the setting data consist of two expected sub-claims of ‘post-Cold War instability’ and ‘population as human terrain. The other two sub-claim findings of a ‘rational choice is security’ and a ‘networked world is dangerous’ were initially expected, but deeper reflection on the data provided new and unexpected findings which indicate not only is there a narrative ‘substructure’ in COIN research, but that narrative may serve a purpose outside of research.
The ‘post-Cold War instability’ setting sub-claim was expected as international relations, the security studies field, and military studies have cited the changes in the world since the end of the Cold War, and this has been in part viewed as instability from the rise of problematic religious or ethnic political organizations. The central sub-claim and evaluation of the post-Cold War setting was a negative evaluation based on the emergence of a world centered on the U.S. and the West, but with a diminished ability to influence the world because of the increased instability from a multitude of ethnic and religious political organizations. The resulting decreased U.S. influence and increased influence of multiple political actors created an environment with an increased possibility of insurgency.

As stated, this initial finding was expected considering the current thinking in the political and military sciences; however, it is useful to ‘tease’ out other meanings and implications of the post-Cold War setting claim. First, arguably the post-Cold War era is not the beginning of a new era, but the end of an old one and a transitory space until the next yet unidentified era. Similar to the interwar period between the World Wars, it is a period of changing political ideologies, structures, and relationships such as a system of great power to a system of two superpowers. Changing social and economic structures, such as industrialization and communism, also mark it. Today a similar situation exists as the world transitions back to ‘great’ powers, a new social and economic system of globalization emerges, and industrialization is supplanted by digitalization and environmentalism. What was important about the interwar period that may apply to today
is that a time of transition is a creative but vulnerable space as governments, populations, and societies look for guidance or a vision of the future.

The Interwar Period started with high hopes of a new system of international relations that was undermined by political needs and security threats that eventually led to the spread of communism and the growth of fascism. The post-Cold War era began with high hopes of cooperation and the spread of democracy that was undermined by the threat of formerly suppressed ethnic identities that led to the global threat of political Islam. The idea that the importance of post-Cold War setting claim lies not in what was lost by the Cold War, but what was allowed by its demise—the threat of political Islam.

The result is that the post-Cold War setting sub-claim is not one claim, but two claims, both negative in evaluation. The original finding of instability, decreased state influence, and increased non-state influence increased the possibility of insurgency. In addition, a second claim of a transitory period marked by the loss of an organizing principle of political order that not only breeds insurgency, but also becomes the precursor for a destructive ideology in the form of political religion, namely Islam. This secondary claim, while debatable, should be taken into consideration considering the other expected sub-claim of the population as human terrain.

The central sub-claim and evaluation of the population as human terrain is that the population should be understood as a set of obstacles the insurgents and counterinsurgents must navigate: obstacles of cultural norms and grievances. The evaluation of this claim was negative, because culture concepts become the basis of choices rather than ‘rationality’ based on security. From statements from Petraeus to the
establishment of the Human Terrain Program by the U.S. Army, the idea of viewing the population as another form of terrain was expected, as were many of the noted implications of the sub-claim.

The primary problematic implication of the population as human terrain sub-claim lies in how it reduces the population to a set of cultural norms and biases which are then set against a rational ‘thinking’ process of the host nation, counterinsurgent, or the author’s experience. This is exactly what White was arguing against in his study of narrative and history. There is no objective ordering events for history, in his case, outside the rationality of the organization, institution, or community in which the narrative was told. Hence, the finding that COIN scholars understand the population as a set of cultural norms in contrast to objective rational thought is just as misguided as the belief in the objectivity of history.

The population as human terrain does more than reduce the population to an obstructive set of cultural problems. As identified in the analysis, the population as human terrain sub-claim states the population does not understand the ‘real’ world. The claim also allows the application of uncritical and often Western developed cultural stereotypes, such as warrior or tribal on whole communities, as was the case of Hammes’ claim towards Somalis or Kilcullen’s claim towards the Muslim community. The results of these claims limit the decision making process of the population as a whole often to cultural binary choices, suppressing what in actuality is more likely an array of choices.

The population as human terrain, as stated was an expected sub-claim; however, the variety of implications from the sub-claim required deeper reflection and led to the
finding that this claim is central to the Long War setting. All the other setting sub-claims are part of or a result of the claim towards the population. The post-Cold War sub-claim, as discussed, consists of two claims of instability and transition. The instability is a result of a transition where great powers or superpowers are no longer able to retain ethnic populations, which as understood by the population as human terrain sub-claim are just cultural obstacles and sources of instability. In short, the post-Cold War setting sub-claim becomes the precursor for a world where populations as human terrains become relevant. Arguably, populations have always existed as ‘cultural terrains’ but only with the end of the Cold War and its suppression of these cultural terrains do they become a ‘challenge’ for the international community.

The population as human terrain is also essential to the two unexpected setting sub-claims of rational choice is security and a networked world is dangerous. Each of these claims is predicated on the ‘truth’ of the human terrain claim. A rational choice is security, as will be discussed, is dependent on and in contrast to the irrational choice of cultural norms. Similarly, a networked world is for the most part a dangerous world because of the easy access that insurgents, terrorists, and other non-state actors have to a population that makes its choices based on emotional cultural pleas rather than rational economic and security concerns. Recognizing the central role of the human terrain claim makes it possible to understand the claims of rational choice and a networked world better.

At first glance, these findings were expected in that globalization has been a dominant theme in economic, political, and social sciences, while Western thought could
be viewed as shaping those sciences. A deeper reflection of these findings, however, shows that the setting sub-claims of a ‘rational choice is security’ and a ‘networked world is dangerous’ are actually narrow applications or conceptions of broader concepts.

The rational choice is security sub-claim at first appears to contradict the human terrain sub-claim; however, they are complimentary. The rational choice is security has, as its central finding, that the primary rational choice is for survival: physical survival, and to a lesser extent economic survival. Providing security, under this sub-claim, aids survival and results in the allegiance of the population, which is necessary for the counterinsurgent to gain the intelligence necessary for victory. The authors’ present this as a world reflecting fact, but support it through general hidden attribution. This appears to be in contrast to the human terrain sub-claim, which posits that populations are cultural perceptions that make choices, often irrational, based on those perceptions. The distinction between the two that makes them complimentary lies in who is the subject. A rational choice of security based on physical and economic survival is part of Western thought as opposed to ‘others’ who more often than not make choices on irrational cultural perceptions.

The initial implications for the rational choice sub-claim addressed the analytical and operational problems that this claim could cause in that it casts insurgents as agents of insecurity; more precisely, physical and economic insecurity. However, other considerations should be discussed. First, this is a case of analytical exceptionalism or a false dichotomy, not in a lack of distinction between Western culture and others as a whole, but the idea that one is rational and objective and the other consists of ‘irrational’
cultural perceptions. As far as social constructionism goes, both are rational and objective within their irrational cultural perceptions. This idea should be taken into consideration in any social, political and especially security research that potentially crosses cultural boundaries.

Second, what is meant by security and why focus on the economic and physical security? Arguably, the concept of security within the data is based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, with a focus on meeting basic needs and security (Maslow, 1943). The issue, however, is that Maslow argues that security consists of several elements, of which physical and economic security are only a part. The same level of needs included security of employment, resources, morality, family, health, and property (Maslow, 1943). Furthermore, assuming the ideas of security are at least partially based in Maslow, critics of his have noted a relevant issue.

Maslow’s work is essentially based on and written for Western societies that tend to be individualist oriented rather than collectivist oriented (Hofstede, 1984). Maslow's hierarchy of needs fails to distinguish between the social and intellectual needs of those raised in individualistic societies and those raised in collectivist societies. Needs, including security, tend to be more self-centered than those of collectivist societies. The result being that in collectivist societies, needs of acceptance and community outweigh the needs for freedom and individuality (Cianci & Gambrel, 2003). It is also implies that when considering security needs of a population, acceptance and community may shape what is considered security.
The focus on rational choice as security (physical and economic) may be more than a result of Western-oriented research; it may be from a certain perspective all that an external counterinsurgent can practically provide in an insurgency. What type of security can a foreign power provide as opposed to the host government? Differences in culture, values, religion, and other ‘cultural perceptions’ mean that the external counterinsurgent cannot provide any other form of security other than physical or economic. Foreign or external counterinsurgents or supporters of counterinsurgency, such as the U.S. in Iraq or Afghanistan cannot provide moral security to a population with different, and to a certain extent dismissed, cultural values. Neither can such an external actor provide family, identity, or any other form of security that is tied into values and norms based on ‘cultural perspectives.’

The final setting sub-claim is a networked world is dangerous and the unexpected finding of this claims lies in the narrow and arguably biased conception of globalization, which is the larger conceptual framework within which this claim lies. The central sub-claim of a networked world is that information is a commodity that is difficult to control. The difficulty in controlling information is that anyone regardless of standing, status, or legitimacy can put anything out to anyone in the world for the most part. At one level, this makes the networked world dangerous because lethal technologies can be dispersed indiscriminately; however, the real issue is that influential ideas can be sent anywhere in the world.

Ideas that can be sent anywhere, as this sub-claim findings posits, result in the disintegration of traditional boundaries and not only the expansion of non-state
transnational actors, but increases the survivability of such actors. The most significant finding, however, is the loss of influence of state actors. This is a result of the expansion of the media and its penetration into communities throughout the world, which allows for the indiscriminate spread of information. Alternatively, more problematic as far as counterinsurgency goes, it allows for the indiscriminate spread of insurgent propaganda. The combination of these elements of the sub-claim increases the difficulty for legitimate states to maintain order, which results in a negative evaluation of this claim; however, there is a significant issue in regards to this claim. Deeper reflection on this claim, along with the claims towards insurgents, reveals a more important finding in that the networked world sub-claim is a narrow claim towards what is obviously a larger globalized world setting.

The suppression of the larger, or possibly more analytically applicable, setting claim of a globalized world is more readily identifiable in looking at a few definitions of globalization, some issues related to it, and comparing it to the understanding the networked world claim establishes. The SUNY Levin institute defined globalization as:

Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among the peoples, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process has effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical well-being in societies around the world (The Levin Institute, 2013).
Albrow and King defined globalization as "...all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society" (Albrow & King, 1990). In addition, the IMF identified four basic aspects of globalization: trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people, and the dissemination of knowledge (International Monetary Fund, 2000). Each of these definitions points towards the ease of information flow and the integration of populations as a result of information technology that networks individuals and groups across the world.

The interconnectedness created by globalization has several effects that may be viewed as either beneficial or harmful. Proponents of globalization view it as beneficial in that it spreads liberty and capitalism (Sachs, 2005). Others argue that it lifts countries out of poverty, (Bhagwati, 2004) provides comparative advantage, (Bhagwati, 2004) and economic liberation. Politically, it is argued to spread democracy, increase cooperation militarily, environmentally, (Lengfelder) and increase civil society. (Hakan, 2010). Opponents of globalization argue that it expands corporate power, (Morris, 2004) exacerbates the digital divide, (Emily, 2013) and increased income inequality among others. The arguments over globalization are not important for this discussion except for one phenomenon. Liberty, capitalism, economic liberation, and civil society are Western concepts and structures; expanding corporate power and digitalization are hallmarks of Western power and influence. Together, proponents and critics, recognize that globalization benefits Western societies in no small degree because they are best able to exploit it for their political and economic ends. The obvious advantage that Western,
information oriented, and technological states possess in a globalized world are suppressed in the COIN networked world is dangerous setting sub-claim.

The real issue with or in the networked world is dangerous setting sub-claim is if the insurgent should have any voice at all. Considering the information technology of Western states compared to the insurgents, Western states have an overwhelming capability to put anything (information) anywhere when compared to insurgents. Incorporating the setting sub-claim ideas of early COIN scholars such as Galula, Kitson, and Trinquier, who wrote their works before the technological advances that created the current conception of a globalized or networked world, the real issue within the sub-claim is whether the insurgent should have a voice at all.

The suppression of the globalized world as a setting in favor of a dangerous networked world as a setting has another implication. The role of a setting within a narrative is to set the condition in which actors must act. It also helps to shape how the actor and their actions are understood. The suppression of the globalization setting alters how one views the insurgent and the counterinsurgent. Now the insurgent is understood as having the advantage because of its capability to network and disseminate information to gain influence at the expense of the counterinsurgent according to the networked world is dangerous sub-claim. This is despite the overwhelming capability of the counterinsurgent that would be recognized if not for the networked world sub-claim. In fact, when reconsidering and reflecting on the other setting sub-claims, especially the population as human terrain, the Long War setting may have as one of its discursive tasks the presentation of the counterinsurgent as the disadvantaged party within the conflict.
The Long War setting claim is a combination of the antecedent claims into a single overarching setting claim and evaluation. This claim posits that the setting of insurgency is an increasingly unstable networked environment of shifting socio-cultural perceptions of an exploitable irrational population by a growing number of state and non-state actors. This claim is evaluated negatively because of a shifting population that makes irrational socio-cultural choices that favor insurgency. The setting discussion in light of the findings from the character and thematic claims, however, bring new insights into understanding the Long War setting.

The discussion and reflection on the setting sub-claims resulted in new unexpected findings. The post-Cold War setting sub-claim is now understood to represent not only a period of instability, but a transitory period that acts as a precursor for a new political model of international relations: destructive political religion, namely Islamic. The population as human terrain is now understood to be more than an obstacle to counterinsurgency efforts; along with rational choice, it establishes the setting as shifting cultural perception in opposition to rational choice and this gives an advantage to the insurgent. Furthermore, a networked world is now understood to be more than a dangerous space that favors insurgents, but the suppression of a globalized world-setting claim that arguably is more accurate in recognizing the advantages of the counterinsurgent in an information age world. All of these sub-claims and new insights illuminate a possibly more accurate understanding of the Long War setting claim and evaluation.
Setting places conditions on how an actor and their actions are understood by defining the physical, temporal, social, political, or cognitive space in which actions must take place. The Long War setting does this, but as will be discussed in an explanation of the findings not to the benefit of objective scholarship. The Long War setting successfully attempts to level what is obviously, upon a more critical inspection, an unequal balance of power and capability between the insurgent and the counterinsurgent, including their supporters. The setting establishes the conflict between the counterinsurgent, who for the most part is ‘modern,’ Western, and rational against an insurgent who has the advantage of operating in a world that for the most part is not modern, not Western, and irrational due to cultural perceptions. In an information-oriented, globalized world that is increasingly interconnected the Long War setting takes all the advantages of counterinsurgents (HN and supporting nations) and reduces it to one advantage of military power, especially in the case of the U.S.. The LWS takes the information, economic, political, and the cultural dominance of the U.S. and Western backed counterinsurgents and reduces it all to a military advantage. In contrast, the insurgent, who by definition is the weaker of the two, now has all the setting advantages. A networked world, a cultural perception based human terrain, and a post-Cold War setting provide the insurgent the space to spread a destructive ideology, propagandize the population, and become an omnipresent threat to the world. In short, the Long War setting assists in creating the character claims and evaluations of the insurgent.
Character

The overall negative evaluation of the insurgent was expected, as were the specific evaluations of the insurgent as a propagandist and as an agent of insecurity. Both of these claims were in line with three concepts presented in the literature review: the definition of insurgency, the New Terrorism Narrative, and the concept of political Islam. By definition, insurgency is more than the statement of what it is; it is the employment of labels and their associated meaning. As argued previously, terms and associated concepts such as terrorist, illegal, and subversive all have negative connotations, at least in Western thought. The application of the terms in the case of illegal and subversive and the intermixing of the term terrorist and criminal with insurgent led to an expected negative evaluation of the insurgent.

Similarly, the literature review argued that contained within the definitions and research of insurgency was an analytical exception or false dichotomy. A false dichotomy is based on making an unwarranted distinction between two objects or propositions as part of an argument; an analytical exception is the extension of that concept to the assumptions upon which the analysis is based. In the literature review, Galula’s distinction that insurgents may use other political means before using force as compared to the Clausewitizian nation-states employment of force was no distinction at all. This unwarranted distinction equally applies to the finding of insurgents as propagandists and agents of insecurity.

Propaganda, neutrally defined, is “a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence...specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through...one-sided messages” (Nelson R. A., 1996, pp. 232-33). As evident by
the research of Jowett & O’Donnell (2011), Sproule (1997), and Wolfgram (2008) the use of propaganda is not exclusive of insurgent groups. The United States, NATO, and other political organizations in general employ propaganda as a theory or technique to influence their own population and others. Some such as Sproule (1997) and Wolfgram (2008) argue that it is essential in a democracy where information is viewed as essential to the political process and governance. The point, however, is that the use of propaganda should not be considered distinctive of any political organization as part of the political, economic, or social process in an information dominated and networked world. The analytical distinction applied to insurgents is unwarranted; furthermore, as it is a false distinction, it undermines the analysis of insurgency based on that assumption and counterinsurgency operations resulting from such flawed analysis.

In hindsight, insurgents as agents of insecurity should also be expected. The principle sub-claims and evaluations behind the insurgents as agents of insecurity arise from the evaluation of the insurgent as an irrational strategic spoiler who is violent and employs violence in the pursuit of political goals. Once again the literature review indicated the possibility of this negative evaluation when considering that counterinsurgency research is comprised of and interconnected with two dominant institutional narratives within the security studies community of the New Terrorism narrative and political Islam.

As discussed, the New Terrorism narrative posits that since 9/11, a new type of terrorist has come into existence that is no longer motivated by secular ideology or constrained by pragmatism. In its place has emerged a terrorist that is motivated by
irrationality, most often based in a religious ideology and a messianic mission. The ‘new’ terrorist, in part, due to the messianic mission, is no longer pragmatic nor does the ‘new’ terrorist attempt to constrain its violence. This characterization of the ‘new’ terrorists arguably may have been limited to defining only terrorists; however, the placement of the Iraq and Afghan wars within the context of the Global War on Terrorism placed the insurgents within those states in the category as terrorists. Kilcullen’s widely accepted concept of transforming the Global War on Terrorism into a Global Counterinsurgency, along with the application of the terrorist label onto insurgents, solidified the connection between the two and the insurgents’ negative evaluation as an agent of insecurity.

The Western conceptions of political Islam in the modern world further lead to an expected negative evaluation of insurgents as agents of insecurity. The introduction of religion into the political process of governance is deemed dangerous and irrational in Western political thought; hence, political Islam as an ideology is not only dangerous and irrational, but also disruptive to the modernization of a society. The idea that most current insurgencies occur in Muslim dominated societies creates a linkage between political Islam as an ideology and insurgency. Similar, or accompanying the terrorist concept, an expectation of creating insecurity was attached to the insurgent. The finding of the claim that insurgents are agents of insecurity is in alignment with these institutional narratives.

The alignment between the findings of insurgents as agents of insecurity, the negative evaluation of terrorists, and practitioners of political Islam in the literature review was not unexpected. What was unexpected, however, was that some of the sub-claims of the insurgent as an agent of insecurity are not analytically distinctive; at least
not as presented in the data. The irrationality of insurgents, their use of indiscriminate violence, and acting as strategic spoilers may not be that distinctive, especially considering that the tasks for both insurgent and counterinsurgent is to mobilize the population towards your goals while separating the population from your opponent’s. All of this calls into question the concept of insurgents as agents of insecurity.

Beyond the scope of this research, the relationship between governance, including political activity, religion, and rationality should be viewed as problematic. While the concepts of the laical state, separation of religion from governance, and ‘inherent’ irrationality of religion are theoretically or ideologically abhorrent in Western thought, the fact remains that religion plays a significant role in governance in Western countries, particularly the United States. This stems from the religious basis for many Western legal systems to the specific use of religion in most of the American political, social, and military conflicts up to the present day (Lambert, 2010).

In the case of the United States, despite the constitutional separation of religion and politics, religion is a significant portion of the American political landscape. A Pew survey showed that religion played a significant role in Americans’ lives compared to other wealthy industrial nations. In fact, the survey showed that religiosity of the U.S. was more aligned with developing countries in Africa and the Middle East (Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, 2002). The work by Lambert (2010) illustrates that religion has played a significant role in American politics both domestically and internationally. In a similar vein, the anti-Islamic prejudice in Europe has increased, even prior to the attacks of September 11 (Strabac & Listhaug, 2008). The
relevance of the religiosity of the U.S. and the anti-Islamic sentiment in Europe lies in that the irrationality attached to political religion while having an origin in the political experience of Europe, may have more to do with Said’s concepts of Orientalism.

Said’s argument is that as contested societies and cultures, Western concepts and research of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa are shaped by social and political objectives. In this case, the irrationality of mixing religion and politics is only irrational and relevant in the case of Islamic organizations and societies and is not as relevant when reviewing Western cases of political religion. Consider the case of the conflict in Northern Ireland; religion is viewed as being a significant element of the conflict in terms of ethnic or national political identity where religious fundamentalism contributed to the continuance of the conflict. What is interesting, however, is that political actors both Catholic and Protestant, despite their fundamentalism, are never considered irrational actors in the Northern Ireland case. In fact, some scholars, while recognizing fundamentalism and religion as problematic, also view Christian fundamentalism in the case of Northern Ireland as being pragmatic and transformative of the conflict (Gladys & Dixon, 2008). What this means is that the irrational element of insurgent identity arguably has more to do with a conflicted relationship between the insurgent and Western counterinsurgents as opposed to some objective criteria of rationality.

The sub-claim of insurgents as violent is also an expected result. The violence of the insurgents’ stems from two interrelated issues; first, the use of force is viewed in modern political thought to be the preview of the state. To a certain extent, it identifies a political entity as the state. The use of force by any other political organization by default
would be illegal and such illegal force becomes a characteristic of the organization that uses force illegally. The illegal use of force by a political organization makes that organization criminal. The claim of criminality changes the concept of the use of force to a negative evaluation. Second, the insurgent as a criminal or terrorist uncritically takes on the negative evaluation on any force that it takes regardless of the circumstances, which shapes any political actions that employ force. Once again, this is not a claim that insurgents are not violent, but a question of how you determine if an insurgent is violent. Can an organization be characterized as being violent solely on its political opponent defining the organization as such?

The concept of the insurgent as a strategic spoiler, in hindsight, should have been expected as the thematic claim to mobilize and separate means that the primary task of the insurgent is to act as a strategic spoiler of the government’s or counterinsurgent’s goals. Likewise, the counterinsurgent’s primary task is to be a strategic spoiler to the insurgent’s goals. Similar to the insurgent as propagandist, the insurgent as a strategic spoiler is not a distinctive feature of insurgents at all; it is an essential task for any party in a politically based civil conflict.

The final two findings regarding the identity of the insurgent through narrative analysis were in part unexpected because of how they were transformed. The first finding of the insurgent as an adaptive organization was initially positive. The ability of the insurgent to adapt by creatively learning from its experiences and others’ experiences received a positive evaluation in the findings. Hammes even states that insurgents, among others, are more adept at adapting to new types of conflict compared to most modern
This quality of insurgents, however, is transformed when considering the other claims and evaluations, especially the claim of the insurgents as an omnipresent threat.

The other finding regarding the insurgent was a claim to the insurgent as an omnipresent threat. Individually, the authors place the threat of insurgency at various levels of social organization. While insurgency was considered a form of civil strife, involvement in that strife extended to external actors and violence was not contained to a single state. Kilcullen arguably transforms insurgency even more by making it a global phenomenon to which everyone is at risk. This transformation of insurgency from local or regional to global transformed the overall organizational identity of the insurgent. As stated previously, now the insurgent is a deceptive propagandist, irrationally violent, and a global threat, each claim of which a negative evaluation could be expected. These negative evaluations, however, also transform the single positive evaluation into a negative one. This is because now the insurgent organization is adaptive in the service of deception, violence, and presenting a threat to the global community.

The overall negative claim and evaluation of the insurgent as an agent of chaos should be expected considering the negative evaluation of three of the character sub-claims and the transformation of the fourth sub-claim from positive to negative. A discussion situated in a narrative evaluative approach reveals that the basis for these claims and evaluations are problematic because the support for the claims and evaluations are limited or weak. First, most of the organizational distinctive features applied to insurgents by the authors are not that distinctive when compared to other political
organizations. The use of propaganda against your political opponent is not, as
characterized, distinctive. The claim of insurgents being agents of insecurity is also not as
distinctive when considering how you objectively define a party as violent in an armed
conflict. On the other hand, how do you identify an insurgent as an irrational actor
because of political religious ideology, typically Islam, but do not identify others,
typically Christian, as not being irrational for holding a political religious ideology?

Second, most if not all of the claims and evaluations have a reliability or
credibility issue regarding insurgent claims and evaluations. The narrative evaluation
approach of this research considers the evaluation of a claim based on the good-bad
dimension but also considers the type and source of the claim. A deeper look at the
finding shows that for most of the claim-evaluations the source was a self-attribution of
the author based either on their experiences or on a hidden general attribution to ‘known’
knowledge. Each of these findings presents greater challenges for the claims and
evaluations regarding an insurgent organization’s identity or character. Each source is
arguably subjective. Anecdotal evidence from an author’s experience in the field not only
decreases the ‘objectivity,’ however you may define it, of the research, but if applied
uncritically is arguably only an opinion, albeit, an educated one. The objectivity of their
work may be further weakened if the experience that led to their claims and evaluations
of insurgency were developed while they were part of Western, English-based security
studies institutions.

The lack of distinction between identifications and activities other political
organizations may do in comparison with insurgent organizations, along with limited or
generalized sourcing for the claims and evaluations raises the question of on what basis these evaluations are made. Further reflection on the insurgent-as-character findings starts to shed light on a narrative sub-structure or discursive boundary that shapes and limits the understanding of insurgency. This is because the culturally based institutional narratives of the COIN and security studies community are more relevant in determining the character of insurgents than ‘objective’ theoretical frameworks. In fact, as it will be argued shortly, it may be that within the COIN community analysis, facts, and findings are not only based on the institutional narrative, but are determined by it. Before the role of institutional narratives can be discussed, it is important to take a deeper look and discuss the thematic findings.

**Theme**

Setting, character, and their arrangement, plot, are all in the service of the thematic claim, a claim towards the point of the narrative, its meaning, and evaluation. For analytical purposes, thematic claims were divided into three types of claims: the author intended thematic claims and evaluations, claims as a result of narrative analysis, and claims resulting from the integration of claims. The focus was the claims identified through the analytical process, as these attest to the central point, meaning, and evaluations within counterinsurgency research. Two of the sub-claims, political and the corresponding claim that the population is a resource were expected. The central thematic claim of ‘to mobilize and separate’ was not expected.

The political and population based nature of insurgency was expected considering the current literature that insurgency is political and about the population. The political
thematic sub-claim was established by direct statements and claims made toward the importance of grievances, causes, and legitimacy to each side. The relevant element of grievances, causes, and legitimacy lies in their capacity as ideational resources that are necessary for attainment, maintenance, and use of political power.

The population is the source of that power in two forms. First, ideational power comprised of the ideas, concepts, and symbols, among other cognitive material that reside within population that hold these concepts. It is only through a population that holds these concepts and then acts on them that material resources are created. Politics or the political is the competition for these resources of power. Hence, the population, which is often discussed as to key to victory, is viewed as a source of power as expected. Understanding these two sub-claims led to the primary and unexpected finding of ‘to mobilize and separate.’

Narrative analysis identified a common theme throughout the texts regarding the need of the insurgent or counterinsurgent to mobilize the population towards their ends while separating the population from their opponents’. The existence of this claim was expected, however, the breadth of the claim was not. Equally unexpected at first was the absence of an evaluation; however, after further consideration the fact that the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim is a hidden claim and thereby not the claim of the author a neutral evaluation is reasonable.

The findings of the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim pointed to the important role that mobilization and separation have in insurgency. The finding demonstrated that this process or task is important internally within the state and
externally with state and non-state actors. Furthermore, the findings identify that many, if not most, of the actions taken by insurgents and counterinsurgents are in the service to these tasks. Information operations or insurgent ‘propaganda, insurgent violence, government concessions, grievance creation and mitigation, and infrastructure construction and demolition are within an insurgency all in service to this theme of mobilizing and separating. Understanding this claim sets a framework for defining insurgency, but it also creates a problem, which in part is solved by the setting and character claims and evaluations that are arguably part of an institutional narrative within the COIN community.

A framework for defining insurgency is reconstructed from essentially the non-evaluated thematic claims within the data. In this light, the starting point for defining insurgency follows:

The mobilization of the population as a resource of political power for the insurgent, while separating the population as a resource of political power from the government (counterinsurgent) in order to bend the latter to the former’s will or intention within a shared political space.

Counterinsurgency, for the most part, is countering and reversing this process. Issue may be taken with the absence of terms or concepts such as the period of insurgency, the size, strength, and legitimacy of non-state insurgents, the role of ideology, propaganda, terrorism, culture, and economics and the ‘transformation’ or ‘new’ warfare often associated with insurgency. While some of the ideas, terms, and concepts may be part of insurgency and counterinsurgency, they are not necessary. The above framework for a
definition is necessary; however, there is a more significant issue with this draft definition of insurgency.

The above draft definition, while a necessary element of insurgency, is not necessarily distinctive of political actors or processes. Democratic, communistic, autocratic, or theocratic governments all require ideational and material resources to govern. The process for how those resources are gained may be different, as may the internal political processes within each type of government in regards to the allocation of such resources. Inevitably, regardless of the type of government within that government is a process or function by which politics in the form of controlling political resources occurs. Herein lies the problem. The above framework definition is not distinctive from any other actions a political actor may take. A simple change of political actors in the draft definition illustrates this point. Victory in American politics for Republicans occurs when:

The mobilization of the population as a resource of political power for the Republican Party, while separating the population as a resource of political power from the Democratic party in order to bend the latter to the former’s will or intention within the United States.

For the most part, this is describing the democratic process in the U.S. Recognizing this lack of distinction is problematic at first; however, it provides the basis for potential new insights into counterinsurgency research by addressing how distinctiveness is established within the COIN community, how the means of distinctiveness are established hinders scholarship, and a possible way out.
**Absence of Mao**

The absence of Mao was one of two additional unexpected finding in the data. Mao is identified as one of the prominent authors by the data sources and is one of the most cited authors in counterinsurgency literature; however, the claims of Mao are absent in the institutional narrative. In almost every case, with mobilize and separate being the notable exception, Mao’s claims towards insurgents and the setting were always outliers from the institutional narrative held by the others. In many cases, the institutional narrative claim referred to Mao, but in fact was a distortion of Mao.

The most famous saying of Mao is that the population is ‘likened to water’ and the insurgents are like ‘the fish who inhabit it.” This often quoted and paraphrased statement is an example of a distortion. The whole paragraph states:

Many people think it impossible for guerrillas to exist for long in the enemy's rear. Such a belief reveals lack of comprehension of the relationship that should exist between the people and the troops. The former may be likened to water and the latter to the fish who inhabit it. How may it be said that these two cannot exist together? It is only undisciplined troops who make the people their enemies and who, like the fish out of its native element, cannot live (Tse-tung, 1937/1989, pp. 92-93).

Arguably, Mao is arguing that *if* the insurgent has the population on its side it may survive behind enemy lines. Mao is also making a statement that there needs to be a relationship between the insurgent and the people, one that is negative if the insurgent is undisciplined. Hence, the insurgent must strive to establish a positive relationship if it is to survive behind enemy lines.
The prominent authors, with the notable exception of Kitson, have transformed this understanding of the population and its relationship to the insurgent. According to the findings, the population has been transformed from a neutral setting that challenges both insurgent and counterinsurgent into one that favors the insurgent. An arguably rational population with interests, in this case the removal of occupation forces, now becomes an irrational set of cultural perceptions easily manipulated by the insurgent. The very existence of the insurgency in the Long War setting is understood as the tacit support of the population for the insurgent.

Mao, in many ways, is the straw man in the COIN community. Mao is recognized as a prominent author on how to conduct insurgency both ideationally and materially at the tactical and strategic level; however, his voice is absent in the claims and evaluations towards character identity and setting environment. The prominent authors, as seen, reference him but either ignore or distort his claims. The result is the absence of Mao from the discourse except in name and as will be discussed, this may be because the institutional narrative of insurgency serves another purpose as an ideational source of power.

**Ahistoricism in Insurgency Research**

The other unexpected finding was the ahistoricism in counterinsurgency research regarding the setting of insurgency and the character of the insurgent. Ahistoricism in general refers to a lack of consideration for history, historical development, or tradition in analysis or research. Ahistoricism can also be described as the failure of a person, organization, or discipline to frame an argument or issue in its historical context or to
disregard historical fact or implication (Pepper, 1993, pp. 143-144). As a post-structuralist and constructivist study this research attempted to distinguish between historical (diachronic) and descriptive (synchronous) readings (Saussure, 2001) of insurgency and the context in which it occurs. However, the findings from the data showed that both insurgents and the setting of insurgency were outside of synchronous and diachronic frames and the contextualization of history.

In the case of the insurgent, the claims and evaluations were synchronous, diachronic, and non-contextualized at the same time. For example, a synchronous reading of insurgents revealed a claim of violence at a particular time. However, a diachronic reading of insurgency along with the synchronous reading revealed that at all periods of time insurgents were considered violent. The same was true in that claims of insurgent’s character were not contextualized or more precisely context was irrelevant. The claim of insurgent as agents of insecurity existed outside of historical contextualization; it existed in opposition to organizations trying to maintain colonial power or gain power as part of the Cold War. In this light, researchers’ analysis of insurgents as disrupting the forces of order did not consider or distinguish that the forces of order were representative of colonialism, communism, or neo-imperialism in a particular time period.

The same ahistoricism was found in the counterinsurgency claims towards the setting. The incorporation of the term ‘human terrain’ into the current military lexicon did not negate the idea that from Galula to Hammes the population was viewed as a terrain of shifting cultural perceptions that the counterinsurgent had to navigate. Similarly, the setting claims identified in the data that the rational choice was for security and a
networked world was dangerous were ahistorical. The advance in communication technology did not alter the networked world was dangerous claim it only emphasized the claim. The only exception to this was the post-Cold War setting claim, however, even this claim upon closer inspection was ahistorical. The more interesting element of the post-Cold War setting claim was not the claim itself, but the function that it had in creating a transitory space. A transitory space that at first glance allowed the introduction of a new type of insurgent, insurgency, or insurgency setting, however, under further review it created a transitory space to reintroduce ahistorical conceptions of the insurgent and their setting. Arguably, the ahistoricism within insurgency literature and research allowed the rapid application of the institutional narrative of insurgency to many political phenomena without recourse to history, theoretical frameworks, or other contextualizing elements and this suggest that the narrative may have another role beyond knowledge production.

**Reconstructing Insurgency**

A discussion on the findings is one component of developing a better understanding of institutional narrative, COIN knowledge, and power. The second part is the reconstruction; in this case a definition, taking what has been discovered from the analysis of the data. The initial findings identified character and setting claims throughout the text, which are indicative of a common understanding of the identity of insurgents and the location from which they operate. The initial findings also identified a dominant theme throughout the COIN research that sets the foundation for understanding insurgency. Deeper reflection on the initial findings, however, revealed new findings that
make several of the initial character and setting claims and evaluations analytically problematic. These two sets of findings (initial and secondary) provide the tools to reconstruct a definition and understanding of insurgency.

The purpose of reconstructing the definition of insurgency is to develop a better understanding of the power, knowledge, and narrative relationship within COIN. The process of reconstructing the definition of insurgency, while artificial, is useful in providing deeper insights into this phenomenon. This process will consist of five steps. First, the foundational definition as identified in the thematic findings will be restated. Second, ‘safe’ assumptions will be applied to the definition. These are assumptions, which are viewed as analytically safe based on concepts and ideas in the larger security studies community and a result of logical assumptions stemming from the initial framework definition. Third, the ‘institutional narrative’ will be incorporated into the definition. This is the addition of the character and setting findings identified through the data analysis. These are the initial findings. Fourth, that institutional narrative definition will be dismantled. Dismantling consists of applying the secondary findings, which identified initial findings that were false analytical distinctions, distorted, or biased claims. The fifth step is the advancement of ‘better’ definition of insurgency.

This research is taking the ubiquitousness of the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim and its limited practical reducibility along with its sub-claims toward the political and population as resource focus as the basis for a framework or foundation definition of insurgency. The ubiquitousness of the claim is relevant in that all the authors in some form allude to it, and arguably accept it. The limited reducibility of the framework
definition stems that simplifying the framework definition any further has limited usefulness in understanding the phenomena. Therefore an understanding of insurgency through developing the framework will start from the assumed acceptable definition of insurgency.

The mobilization of the population as a resource of political power for the insurgent, while separating the population as a resource of political power from the government (counterinsurgent) in order to bend the latter to the former’s will or intention within a shared political space.

**Safe Assumptions**

Safe assumptions are additions to the foundation framework definition that are assumed to be critical to understanding insurgency because they are extensions of the primary concepts that distinguish insurgency or are extensions of the foundation definition. First, insurgency is a conflict; at a minimum, it is specifically a political conflict. It is a conflict because it is comprised of groups that wish to carry out mutually inconsistent acts concerning their wants, needs, or obligations and have escalated it beyond disagreement, which is a prerequisite for a conflict (Nicholson, 1992, pp. 11, 17). As insurgency is political in nature as determined by the framework definition, so is the conflict; thereby insurgency is a political conflict. This does not imply, however, that insurgency is a military or violent conflict.

Second, insurgency is a civil conflict in which one of the parties to the conflict is the government and/or external supporting government within a shared space, most likely a state. While it is a civil conflict, it is not necessarily a civil war, which is defined as a
"violent conflict within a country fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the center or in a region, or to change government policies" (Fearon J., 2007). Violence may be a part of insurgency, as will be discussed, but it is not necessary and civil violence is a defining characteristic of a civil war.

Insurgency is also, by definition, a civil conflict because it occurs between two groups within a state or regional boundary, who have some historic and continuous claim to that state. The involvement of external actors, while a potential requirement for an insurgent to initiate and win an insurgency or a counterinsurgent to survive and win, is not necessary in general. In addition, supporting a counterinsurgency does not make you a counterinsurgent, although the supporting state may suffer consequences for its support. In this light, the French in Indochina from 1887 to 1954 fought several insurgencies, as they were the government of Indochina, albeit the center of their government was in France. In contrast, the United States was not a counterinsurgent in Vietnam (Indochina) because they were not the government of Vietnam, nor did they have a socio-historical tie to the country. The U.S. was supporting the Vietnamese government’s counterinsurgency. This also means that the U.S. supported or supports counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but is not the counterinsurgent.

Insurgency as a civil conflict of which one party is the government, by default means that the other party is a not the government. What this means is difficult to define. A party that is the permanent opposition that has no real power within the government could be understood as ‘not the government’ as easily as a rebel or resistance organization. The point is that insurgency involves at least one group or organization in
power, presumably the government, against one or more groups that are not in power or have no power.

Third, insurgency involves means and methods of mobilizing and separating the population. In a non-evaluative or biased understanding, this is taken as any means, method, technique, or process to mobilize the population as a political resource of power for the insurgent’s end and separating of the population from the government or counterinsurgent. From this definitional element the distinction between truth, deception, propaganda, and information operations are irrelevant as they are all tools and means of mobilizing or separating the population. In the same vein, violence, terrorism, and coercion are also tools that insurgents or counterinsurgents may use to mobilize and separate the population.

Taking all of these ‘safe’ assumptions into consideration, the framework definition of insurgency can be advanced to the following:

Insurgency is a civil political conflict that has escalated beyond a political disagreement in which the insurgent; a non-governing organization(s), employs any variety of means and methods in mobilizing the population as a resource of political power for the insurgent, while employing a variety of means and methods in separating the population as a resource of political power from the government; a governing organization(s), in order to bend the latter to the former’s will or intention within a state.

The above definition provides a non-evaluative definition of insurgency, but begins the processes of distinguishing insurgency from other types of internal political
processes. This definition, however, does not contain any of the initial findings. Findings that are important because they are representative of the institutional narrative within which American counterinsurgency scholarship develops and provides the distinctiveness to defining insurgency.

**Insurgency Institutional Narrative & Its Dismantling**

The point of this research is to explore the relationship between narrative, power, and knowledge production in the particular case of insurgency knowledge. Central to this research is the idea that narrative, as a discursive tool, creates a boundary on knowledge production by limiting what is part of that knowledge. Discursive boundary limitations may be necessary for distinguishing disciplines, but there needs to be a concern on how the boundary, an institutional narrative, may hinder research. Initial findings demonstrated the existence of a shared institutional narrative of insurgency. Further reflection of the findings determined that many of the setting and character claims were problematic. Despite this, from the thematic claim arose a central unreducible framework definition of insurgency to which ‘safe’ assumptions were added to advance the framework definition and further distinguish insurgency from other political processes.

To understand how the institutional understanding of insurgency hinders research, it must be incorporated into the advanced framework definition of insurgency. The incorporation of the two does not make a claim towards how the COIN community defines insurgency, but it does make a claim to how the COIN community understands insurgency despite their definitions of it. The incorporation of the two is also illustrative of how the institutional narrative of insurgency, through its discursive boundaries,
hinders knowledge production of insurgency. The narrative, when applied to the advanced framework definition, limits or shapes understanding by creating discursive boundaries on where and to a lesser extent when insurgency occurs, who the insurgent is, and what tools and means the insurgent employs. Considering the issues with the initial findings, which represent the institutional narrative, a discussion on how the narrative hinders can begin.

The advanced framework definition of insurgency makes two statements regarding where insurgency occurs and when it occurs: where insurgency occurs is in a shared political space of the state and when insurgency occurs is after a political conflict has escalated beyond disagreement. The institutional narrative, however, states that insurgency occurs in the Long War setting that is a human terrain of irrational cultural perceptions that challenge rational choice in a networked environment that gives an advantage to the insurgent and makes it an omnipresent threat.

The institutional narrative does not necessarily disagree or counter the framework definition in regards to where, but it does alter how it should be understood. The institutional narrative, through the networked and omnipresent threat claims, makes an insurgency an international issue because of the ‘threat’ the insurgent poses to the international community despite the focus of its political goal towards a government or state. The institutional narrative transforms the rational choice of a population within the socio-cultural contexts of the political space and conflict into an irrational choice of global implications. The institutional narrative also makes claims to when insurgency occurs. Insurgency is temporally located in the period after the Cold War, which the
findings identify as a period of global instability, increased non-state actors, and the spread of their disruptive ideologies. Together, these claims not only transform how insurgency is understood, but hinder how it is researched.

The institutional narrative transforms an insurgency from a civil conflict between two or more parties within a state into a broader conflict, more often than not, between ideological adversaries with the West, the U.S. and its allies on one side, and an adversarial ideology on the other. Adversarial ideologies have the advantage because of the susceptibility of an irrational population and the increased interconnectivity of a networked world. Now, a new adversarial ideology is present because of the end of the Cold War. This new ideology is culturally based and is typically considered Islamic in nature.

This understanding of where and when hinders scholarship in several ways. Arguably, the Western focus on ideologies such as fascism and communism were a result of the challenges that these ideologies presented to Western ideas. Less arguable is how many conflicts, especially insurgencies were studied and analyzed under the paradigm of these larger and broader conflicts to the detriment of understanding insurgency. Vietnam is only one example of many where a national conflict was suppressed under a Cold War understanding, resulting in distorted research, analysis, and operations. This is not a claim that the conflict between the West and communism was not part of the Vietnam conflict, but it is a claim that the conflict between the West and communism should be considered part of the variety of means and methods that an insurgent may employ, as well as a counterinsurgent.
An argument was also made that the post-Cold War setting claim, in part, allowed the transition to another international political arrangement. The setting findings, along with the current Western fixation on political religion posits that political Islam, as an adversarial ideology, is the new broader ‘conflict’ which suppresses the civil nature of insurgency. The result of this element of the institutional narrative is that the insurgencies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines along with organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah are too often in the West researched as part of the Global War on Terrorism or Global Jihadist Insurgency, rather than the specific context in which they occur.

These spatial and temporal boundaries that shape how insurgency can be understood are reflected in the scholarship. Several texts on COIN listed by the data sources, but not identified as prominent, focus on the broader conflict of West versus an adversarial culture, society, or ideology. Lawrence identifies the ‘other’ (1922; 1917), O’Loughlin & Witmer (2011) and Hahn (2008) look at the effect of adversarial political Islam in former Soviet states. Hoffer (2002) focused on mass movements; in general its inclusion by the community transforms the ‘others’ all into ‘true’ believers. Other texts focus on the global aspect of insurgency, which is argued as just another form of suppression of the core location of insurgency within the state. Barno (2006) and O’Neil (2005) reaffirm insurgency as global and Sageman (2004) emphasizes the networked aspect of insurgency. Others focus on the problem with dealing with the susceptible irrational minds of the human terrain, which the insurgent may exploit. This ranges from modernity-tradition conflicts of the Muslim mind (Kepel, 2004) to the ability to change the minds of an insurgent influence population in the work of Fitzsimmon (2008) and
Kalyvas (2008). The hindrance that the institutional narrative has is not in the quality of
the scholarship, but as seen above is in the questions it leads scholars to ask, most of
which are contained within the spatial and temporal discursive boundary of insurgency.

The Insurgent, its Means and Methods

Who the insurgent is and the actions it takes are two interrelated concepts. The
advanced framework definition makes one claim towards insurgent and one claim
towards its actions. The insurgent is a non-governing political organization in an
escalated conflict with the government. The insurgent also may employ any variety of
means and methods to mobilize the population as a resource of political power for itself
while using the same to separate the population from the government with which it is in
conflict. As with the space where insurgency occurs, the institutional narrative is not in
conflict with the framework definition, but alters the understanding of who the insurgent
is and the types of actions it takes.

The institutional narrative posits that the insurgent is an agent of chaos and that
this is reflective of its organizational identity and the actions it takes. As an agent of
chaos the insurgent is irrationally violent, most likely, due to adherence to a religious
ideology, which is deemed irrational by the West. The insurgent is a deceptive
propagandist that easily deceives an irrational human terrain to its ends. As a result of the
networked world and the insurgent’s adaptability, the insurgent can wreak havoc
anywhere in the world.

The means and methods of the insurgent are in alignment with what it is. As a
propagandist, the actions are deceptive, but the true nature of insurgent actions is
violence. Of the variety of means and methods that an insurgent may use, violence by far is the most common or preferred according to the institutional narrative. The insurgent employs violence to start an insurgency, maintain an insurgency, and to end it. Furthermore the insurgent, as a terrorist according to the narrative, is indiscriminate in the use of its violence targeting civilian, government, and external actors alike. The adaptive quality of the insurgent only makes its more dangerous as now it can better exploit the networked nature of the world to its own ends.

Together, these character claims elaborate and suppress the identity, means, and methods of the insurgent beyond the advanced framework definition. Possibly the most significant impact of the institutional narrative is that the variety of means and methods that the insurgent may use to mobilize and separate the population are limited to deception and violence. The adherence to this limited means and methods of mobilizing and separating the population by the COIN community is readily apparent in the published research works of the community and is possibly the greatest hindrance to the production of a knowledge of insurgency.

The discursive boundaries created by the institutional narrative of the insurgent and its actions are apparent in the research question of insurgency from the prominent texts and the COIN source texts lists. Far too many texts, constrained by the institutional narrative, focus on the violent nature of insurgents and their employment of violence, namely terrorism. A significant number of texts focus on the deceptive nature of insurgents and their use of propaganda. Within these boundaries, democratic processes, persuasion, grievance mitigation, and any other means or methods for mobilizing and
separating the population are disregarded or suppressed. Arguably, the strength of the institutional narrative regarding the identity of the insurgents and its actions are so strong that without reference to the claims, texts still adhere to the established discursive boundary.

The initial findings, the discussion of those findings, and the reconstruction of the definition of insurgency not only proves the existence of an institutional narrative of insurgency within the COIN community, but that it does acts as a discursive boundary that limits how insurgency is understood. The following institutional definition is not a specific definition held by any one author or organization within the COIN community but is representative of the understanding of insurgency within the COIN community and is illustrative of how the narrative alters meaning.

Insurgency is a civil-political conflict in which the insurgent; an adaptive, omnipresent, deceitful and violent non-governing organization(s), employs propaganda and violence as its primary means and methods in mobilizing an exploitable and irrational population as a resource of political power for the insurgent in an ever increasingly networked world that benefits insurgency; while employing similar means in separating the population as a resource of political power from the government; a governing organization(s), to further destabilize the government and international community in order to bend the latter to the former’s will or intention within a state.
New Definition of Insurgency

The above institutional narrative of insurgency is indicative of the discursive boundary that the narrative places on the understanding of insurgency. The removal of the problematic components of the institutional narrative of insurgency demonstrates what might be a better starting definition for understanding insurgency and new lines of research for COIN scholarship. Both the setting and character claims and evaluations of the institutional narrative had issues; a review of the problems and their removal lead to a new understanding of insurgency.

The setting claim consisted of four sub-claims on the space in which insurgency occurs. The complimentary sub-claims of a ‘rational choice is security’ and the ‘human terrain’ sub-claims upon reflection and dismantling were demonstrated to be analytically problematic as what is a rational choice is contextually bound in a social-cultural structure in which in the comparison of two or more cultures neither can make a claim to objective rationality. Additionally this claim was problematic as there was no reason to assume that security meant physical and economic beyond the Western tradition. The networked world was also problematic in that it suppressed the globalized-world setting claim, which is arguably a more accurate conception of the world. The acceptance of the more accurate globalized world recognizes that a globalized world is accessible and exploitable by all. Furthermore, the counterinsurgent, especially one supported by the West, has the advantage in that setting. Finally, the post-Cold War claim provided a precursor for the other setting claims.

The characters setting claim consisted of four sub-claim and two labels. The adaptive organization was the only positively evaluated sub-claim and was not
problematic except when evaluated negatively as a result of its incorporation with the other sub-claims. The insurgent as propagandist proved to be an analytical exception, since all political organizations are involved in propaganda. The insurgent as omnipresent threat was also problematic as the basis of this claim lies in the networked world-setting claim and the relationship of the insurgent to the West as the ‘other.’ Equally problematic was the insurgent as an agent of insecurity, in no small part because it is based on the problematic conceptions that the West has with political Islam and the attachment of irrationality to religious ideologies. It is also problematic because the violence of the insurgent is in part defined by the idea that only the state has the right to the use of force (violence). The violent character of the insurgent, however, is more strongly established by the application of the labels of terrorist and criminal, which are not necessarily applicable to insurgents or insurgency.

The removal of these problematic institutional narrative claims ‘rescues’ insurgency from the analytical hindrances the narrative places as a discursive boundary, but it still leaves issues that need to be accounted for. First, although it is inappropriate and most likely unproductive to uncritically identify the insurgents as violent in nature or label them as terrorists, an element of violence is inescapable in insurgency. So, how does one account for it? Second, although not a primary claim or finding, several of the texts discuss the idea of how long insurgency lasts, often as part of a mistaken discussion of how long the counterinsurgent is willing to fight the insurgent. Mistaken, because the counterinsurgent has to continue until they succeed or fail, so the discussion of how long is really about how long should an external actor, namely the U.S., expect to be involved
in supporting a counterinsurgency effort. Third, the space that insurgency occurs in is a shared political space that by definition does not include external actors; however, some account of the role of external actors must be taken into consideration. This research takes the position that the first and second issues are related and the third issue requires the addition of a contextual clarification onto the definition of insurgency.

The first and second issues are clarified when placed in a continuum of political conflict, where insurgency starts when a political conflict has escalated beyond disagreement and ends when the conflict returns to a state of disagreement, escalates to civil war, or one or more parties are removed from the political conflict. The advanced framework definition has already identified escalation beyond disagreement as a starting point so no further discussion is required. Equally, a cessation as a result of returning to a state of disagreement and/or the removal of a party, regardless of means does not require a discussion, as they are self-evident. What briefly needs to be addressed is civil war.

Civil war as a political phenomenon is fraught with as many analytical, political, and ideological problems as insurgency and terrorism, especially when it comes to defining civil war. Small and Singer defined a civil war as "any armed conflict that involves (a) military action internal to the metropole, (b) the active participation of the national government, and (c) effective resistance by both sides" (1980, p. 210). Fearon and Laitin add to the typical understanding of civil war in that the following additional criteria must be met (d) involved fighting between agents of (or claimants to) a state and organized, non-state groups who seek either to take control of a government, to take power in a region, or to use violence to change government policies, (e) at least 1,000
over its course, with a yearly average of at least 100 on both sides of the conflict (2003, p. 76). These definitions and criteria of civil war are typical of the community, but Sambanis points out they are operationally problematic as it is indistinguishable from other forms of political violence, in particular insurgency (2004, pp. 815-816).

In fact, many civil war scholars use the terms insurgency and civil war interchangeably and correspondingly understand them to be the same. The proposed definition of civil war in this research does not counter the above, but it does incorporate a component of the International Committee of the Red Cross commentary on the Geneva Convention, which states:

(4) (a) That the insurgents have an organization purporting to have the characteristics of a State. (b) That the insurgent civil authority exercises de facto authority over the population within a determinate portion of the national territory. (c) That the armed forces act under the direction of an organized authority and are prepared to observe the ordinary laws of war. (d) That the insurgent civil authority agrees to be bound by the provisions of the Convention (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1949).

The distinction identified in this commentary is that the insurgent has reached or attained the functions of a state, or a counter-state within the same state to be more accurate with all the capacities of a state such as territorial control and organized armed forces. Accepting this definition of civil war, insurgency is a transitory phase of political conflict between escalations beyond disagreement, but short of civil war, which is in part defined by its use of organized violence.
The third issue accounting for external actors is not a new issue, but the impact of globalization on communication, politics, and economies must be addressed. In short, external actors including governments, their populations, and other non-government and international organizations are ideational and material resources that both the insurgent and counterinsurgent seek to use. Similarly, an insurgency itself can be a source of ideational or material power for external actors. For example, the East-West conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was a source of ideational and material resource in numerous insurgencies across the globe. At the same time, however, each of these insurgencies, such as Vietnam served as an ideational resource of the U.S. in its conflict with the Soviets. Globalization has just shortened the communication timeline and increased the number of political actors that can use and be used by an insurgency.

Considering these issues and the removal of problematic institutional narrative claims a potentially stronger definition of insurgency can be created:

Insurgency is a transitory process of political civil conflict that has escalated beyond political disagreement, but has not reached the status of civil war. A process in which the insurgent, a non-governing organization(s), employs any variety of means and methods in mobilizing the population as a resource of political power for the insurgent, while separating the population as a resources of political power from the government in order to bend the latter to the former’s will or intentions within a state. As a transitory process beyond political disagreement, there is an increased likelihood of the conflict becoming violent. In
addition, in the pursuit of power to obtain goals and interests, the insurgent, national government, and external actors can be expected to exploit the situation. This definition of insurgency should be understood as an alternative and potentially more useful approach to understanding insurgency. Considering the claims, evaluations, institutional narrative, its definition of insurgency, and this new definition, the relationship between narrative and knowledge production has been established. Narratives can provide a starting point and can lead to insights such as the ‘mobilize and separate’ thematic claim upon which an understanding of insurgency for this research was founded. Narrative, however, when institutionalized has also demonstrated to be a hindrance to scholarship by setting uncritical boundaries that shape and limit the questions asked in knowledge production. Understanding these relationships, two questions can be asked. After recognizing the problems of the institutional narrative in hindering scholarship of insurgency, why does it persist? Two, where is power in the relationship of narrative and knowledge production?

Explaning and Applying the Findings
An explanation of most, if not all, the findings lie in understanding why the institutional narrative of insurgency in the COIN community persists despite the obviously problematic claims it contains. To answer this question and understand the role of power in knowledge production, two ideas need to be considered. One, what do Kuhn and Foucault say about narrative and power? Two, what other role does the institutional narrative possess?
The ideas of Kuhn and Foucault are relevant to understanding the relationship between narrative, power, and knowledge production. Kuhn’s basic premise is that scientific change occurs when the current paradigm guiding a scientific discipline fails as a result of its inability to adequately ‘puzzle-solve’ (1962/1970, pp. 35-42) along with other factors. Despite Kuhn’s apprehension to call the social sciences ‘real’ science (1991) and his concern over search for hermeneutic re-interpretation in the social sciences, he did not make a claim that the social sciences were not paradigmatic or susceptible to outside influences (1991). A central claim of Kuhn was that scientists do not make their judgments as the result of consciously or unconsciously following rules, but they are tightly constrained by a guiding paradigm. This understanding of the social science of science recognized as social constructionism posits that social and political factors external to science that influenced scientific debates were not marginal but central to accepted theories. In application to the COIN community, Kuhn posits that the community holds a paradigm that it is susceptible to external factors, and changes paradigm when it cannot adequately puzzle-solve insurgency.

Foucault, however, brought in an idea that is equally important in understanding the relationship between power, narrative and knowledge production. Foucault viewed narrative as a discursive technology that shapes the boundaries of a particular discourse. Furthermore, Foucault argued that if a discourse was “of such utility, is needed so urgently, and rendered so vital for the working of the system that it does not even seek a theoretical justification for itself” (1980, p. 97). If paradigm and discourse are understood
as relating to the same concept then the ideas of Foucault alter Kuhn’s ideas and start to explain the additional role of the institutional narrative of insurgency.

Combined with Kuhn, Foucault’s concept of utility alters how scientific change occurs. A scientific community is not only susceptible to external influence in the establishment and maintenance of a paradigm or discourse of their discipline, but if the discourse or paradigm is viewed as having utility, or urgent, or vital to a system then even if it fails to puzzle-solve it most likely will persist. Arguably, this explains what has occurred in the COIN community. Despite all the problems within the institutional narrative that guides COIN scholarship, it continues. Moreover, it continues because of the utility that it has as an ideational resource of political power.

As identified in the new definition of insurgency, a complex relationship between insurgent, government (counterinsurgent), and external actors, all of which are seeking power to influence the others, results in the continuous exploitation of material and ideational resources. The findings identified the power of labels to shape how you understand who the insurgent is and narrative is a way of setting discursive boundaries that shape how one understands the world or a phenomena. In the end, if held by a population, all of these ideas and concepts become ideational resources of power.

The idea is simple, but significant. The ability to name a thing, to define it, to shape the boundaries of how it is understood is in some measure to gives one power over it, if the scientific community supports the claim so much better. This is not a claim that the COIN community intentionally maintains an institutional narrative that hinders the advancement of their discipline, but that they are part of a structure that finds expediency
in the current way they approach insurgency and counterinsurgency. Concern for the COIN community lies within the expediency implied in their knowledge, which may shape if not hinder its advancement.

Expediency in this research was understood as the pursuit and advancement of a discipline without utilitarian function or theoretical framework as it serves other outside purposes. In the case of insurgency/counterinsurgency research, the purpose lies in the power of the institutional narrative as an ideational resource of political power. Identifying an organization such as the Taliban, Hamas, Hezbollah, or any other number of insurgent groups as violent, irrational, and a threat to global security and prosperity provides ideational power to the opponents of such groups. In a similar way, casting the ideologies that these groups hold, such a political Islam as also dangerous to democracy, modernization, and liberty further provides ideational power for the opponents of these ideas. The institutional narrative of insurgency within the American COIN community supports these identifications and thereby provides an ideational resource for opponents of such groups and ideas.

While it is beyond the purpose of this research to identify who outside the COIN community might find expediency in the institutional insurgency narrative and according to Foucault fruitless (Foucault, 1980), it is important to recognize the impact of that expediency. Rather than trying to 'prove' a pattern of expediency, for discussions sake, it may be useful to provide some of the ways that the institutional narrative serves as an ideational resource. Arguably, the institutional narrative of insurgency is in line with how the U.S. military wants the American population and its forces to view the wars in
Afghanistan and Iraq. An argument can be made that along with narratives of terrorism and political Islam, the threat of the Taliban and other insurgents provides an ideational resource in that it maintains American support for these wars, although that support is diminishing. In a similar vein, the request for other nations to continue to support efforts against the Taliban, and other organizations by the American government is in line or supported by the primary claims of the institutional narrative of insurgency. These examples just illustrate the way the insurgency narrative may be shaped by expediency.

The analyses, findings, and discussion regarding how insurgency is understood and the development of an alternative definition of insurgency is conceptually, analytically, and operationally relevant to those conducting counterinsurgency operations. Conceptually this alternative definition of insurgency shifts the debate on the political nature of insurgency versus the military nature. Current doctrine views insurgency on a military spectrum of conflict that is divided into a spectrum of peace and combat (Army, 1996, p. 5). This spectrum consist of the types of military operations that the U.S. Army might take in any conflict ranging from domestic disaster relief at one end to strategic nuclear war at the other. At the intersection of the spectrum of peace and the spectrum of war lies support for insurgencies and counterinsurgencies and this category consists of the types of military action that the military may take. This is not unexpected considering the martial nature of U.S land forces; it is problematic as the types of actions listed under insurgency and counterinsurgency support are not unique to insurgency. Counterterrorism, raids, and strikes occur as much outside of insurgencies as it does
within insurgencies. Arguably the types of actions that a military take is not constrained by the categories of war, but by the political nature and consequences of war.

Clausewitz who is often viewed as the father of modern military warfare and often quoted with the U.S. military community stated:

We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse carried on with other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of its means. (Clausewitz, 1832 [1984], p. 87)

In another words ‘war is the continuation of politics by other means.’ While this is often quoted among military and counterinsurgency scholars, analysts, and operators, in practice it is not accepted in the conceptualization of insurgency. The debate within the COIN community on whether counterinsurgency is primarily military or political demonstrates how the institutional narrative further hinders practical research into the insurgency phenomena. The alternative definition corresponds with Clausewitz’s conception of the relationship between politics and war.

Application of the alternative definition of insurgency returns the phenomena of insurgency back to Clausewitz’s conception and requires a small, but important and difficult change. Rather than understand insurgency on a military spectrum of conflict, insurgency should be understood along a spectrum of political conflict. A spectrum of political conflict focuses on the range or evolution of conflict from disagreement to full-scale war. This is a small change in that there already exist a conception among COIN scholars that insurgency is in part political in nature; the military also understands that
insurgency is political in nature. The application of the alternative definition is important because of how it changes a principle question within insurgency and counterinsurgency research. Arguably, the question shaping counterinsurgency thought is “What are the political implications of military actions?” However, the question should be “What military actions should be taken to achieve a political goal?” This simple shift reaffirms the focus of military action is just an extension of political action towards a political goal. The alternative definition is difficult as the political nature of insurgency may require the military, which is often at the forefront of counterinsurgency operations to take a step back in favor of organizations better suited to political activities.

The alternative definition analytically broadens the approach to understanding insurgency and correspondingly broadens the possible solutions to insurgency. As discussed the removal of unsubstantiated labels and stereotypes of insurgents and the setting that they operate in allows a clearer analysis of the phenomena of insurgency. Removal of the discursive borders of insurgents as violent terrorist open analysts to recognizing other means and methods the insurgent may be using to mobilize the population and correspondingly support or counter those actions. In addition, the understanding of ideational and material resource of power re-conceptualizes the actions, military or not, of the actor as part of their efforts to achieve political goals.

Finally, the alternative definition of insurgency as a result of reconceptualization and analysis leads to possibly more effective operations by counterinsurgents and their supporters. The application of the alternative definition, along with it implications to an important operational concept within the U.S. military and COIN community illustrates
the potential impact of the definition. A central concept of Clausewitz in the U.S. military is the center of gravity concept (Clausewitz, 1832 [1984]). Center of Gravity (CoG) as defined by Joint Doctrine is “the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act” (JP 1-02, 2013). A primary purpose of operations is to attack and degrade an adversary’s center or centers of gravity and that requires identification of those centers. The alternative definition recognizing that insurgency is a political transition that requires increasing resources of political power, without the arguably cultural and expedient discursive barrier allows the counterinsurgent to better identify the insurgents’ centers of gravity. Specifically in the case of COIN where the population is viewed as the center of gravity (FM 3-24, 2006, p. 3:16) the alternative definition undermines discriminatory cultural conceptions of the population that hinder effective analysis and operations. The potential result of the application of the alternative definition is a analytically and operationally more effective counterinsurgency organization.

**Terrorism, Security Studies and Conflict Resolution**

The central findings of this research identified an institutional narrative among the prominent authors of the COIN community that shapes how insurgency is understood and researched. This research found through the institutional narrative that certain concepts, ideas, and potential avenues of research were suppressed and this hindered the advancement of counterinsurgency knowledge. Also, discovered in the findings and discussion of this research, is that the institutional narrative persists despite the problems within the narrative and it persists most likely for the utility that it has as an ideational
resource of power. The focus of this research was on the COIN community’s understanding of insurgency. However, the findings are applicable to other disciplines; namely, terrorism studies and by extension security/military studies, political science and international relations, and finally conflict resolution.

Considering the relationship between terrorism studies and counterinsurgency research, the applicability of the findings of this research to terrorism studies is expected. The relationship is more than the application of the terrorism label, but the common perspective of the last decade that insurgency is part of the Global War on Terror or terrorism is part of the Global Jihadist Insurgency. In many ways, this research is a continuation or builds off the ideas in the emerging sub-discipline of critical terrorism studies.

Critical terrorism studies looks at the variety of ways in which terrorism research has been compromised. Mainly it looks at the problems of the New Terrorism Narrative (Silke, 2004), how terrorism studies are biased towards Western ideas (Jackson, 2009), how terrorism studies suppress particularly helpful lines of research such state terrorism (Avishag, 2001), and how it is used as an ideational resource. (Jackson, 2007). Critical terrorism studies recognized the existence of an institutional narrative of terrorism, but this research explores some of the ways that an institutional narrative is intertwined within a discipline and actually hinders the development of a discipline. This study can further terrorism studies by showing the relevance of a narrative and deconstructive approach that helps distinguish between the mythical narrative elements and more analytically useful concepts, ideas, and theories.
In a similar vein, this study is applicable to political science especially in the sub-disciplines of security, military, and international relations. The contribution to this work goes beyond the recognition of institutional narratives within any particular sub-discipline in political science. It reveals that science, in particular the social sciences, can serve as ideational resources of power. As sources of power, that have utility, social scientists must always be wary of how their research may be used as an ideational resource and how as an ideational resource their research may be compromised.

As part of security and military studies, what insurgency is may need further consideration in relation to military operations. Currently, insurgency is viewed as part of a continuum of warfare or military operations; it may be more useful to study, analyze, and plan based on the idea that insurgency is part of a continuum of political conflict. This may be a minor re-orientation, but it may prove useful in that it emphasizes military operations as material and ideational resources that create power that assists or hinders the insurgent and counterinsurgent.

This research may also be helpful in that it approaches the continuing discussion on whether insurgency is political or military as irrelevant, because at one level it is unproductive to deny that insurgency is political. The origin of insurgency is political, the goals of insurgency are political, and the result of insurgency will be political in nature. The military, the capacity to make war, or start an insurgency are all just manifestations of resources of power for a political goal.

In the field of conflict analysis and resolution, this analysis provides insights into conflict and the study of conflict within this growing discipline. The new definition of
insurgency provides an alternative approach to understanding insurgency with conflict analysis and resolution by viewing it as an escalation of political conflict beyond disagreement. It may be useful for the conflict resolution discipline to focus on what moves conflicted parties beyond disagreement, and how to get them back to that state if they have gone into insurgency.

The other insight that it provides to conflict resolution is the role of utility. Utility is not limited to the power it may provide an actor; it can also be in the service to an agenda. Although the conflict resolution discipline has broadened its concepts of conflict, the pacifist ideas that are associated with conflict resolution should be consider an agenda, which may have its own institutional narrative. Hence, like the COIN community, the conflict analysis and resolution community should be constantly aware of what institutional narrative they are developing and how it may help or hinder the advancement of the discipline.

**Future Research**

There are numerous paths of future research that can result from the analysis, findings, and discussion of this project. Three are of particular interest as a continuation of what has been discovered so far. First, this research established the existence of an institutional narrative by analyzing the prominent COIN authors identified through promotion, popularity, and citations of their works in the COIN community. The identification of the institutional narrative and the demonstration of how it influences research do not necessarily mean that the institutional narrative limits the analysts and
operators of COIN. It may be worthwhile to explore how far the claims and evaluations of the narrative spread through COIN literature and among COIN practitioners.

The research also pointed to the idea that the institutional narrative of insurgency is only one among others that shape the COIN community’s understanding of insurgency. It would be a useful line of research to explore how these institutional narratives interact with others, possibly with each narrative reinforcing the other and its continuing existence. It is possible that the resiliency of the COIN narrative is not only because it is an ideational resource of power, but also because it is intertwined with other institutional narratives such as the New Terrorism, Political Islam, and civil war narratives.

The third avenue of future research associated with others is how the COIN community manages information that conflicts with the institutional narrative. In several of the claims identified in the findings, the problems were readily identifiable, but they persist. In part, this may be because the narrative is an ideational resource or because it is intertwined with other narratives, but as an institutional narrative, individuals hold it. How do these individuals and organizations manage conflicting information?
CONCLUSION

The focus of this research was to explore the relationship between expediency, power, and narrative in knowledge production by applying narrative analysis to the texts of primary authors in the COIN community. From this analysis an institutional narrative of insurgency was identified. This narrative sets discursive boundaries on how insurgency is understood by limiting how insurgency is discussed, researched, and analyzed, especially the organizational identity of insurgents and the space that they operate in. Despite discrepancies in the institutional narrative it persist as a discursive tool because of its capacity as an ideational resource of power.
APPENDIX: PROMINENT AUTHORS

The following four sources were used in the determination of the most influential texts to analyze for identifying narrative elements and evaluations shaping insurgency and counterinsurgency research: FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 Counterinsurgency, FM 3-24.2 Tactics in Counterinsurgency, Combined Arms Center (CAC) Counterinsurgency Knowledge Center’s Top Reads, and Web of Science Citation Index’s twenty most cited texts on insurgency and counterinsurgency. A matrix comprised of the texts listed from these sources identified eleven prominent text to which Mao and FM 3-24 were added.


Lawrence, T. E. (1917). The 27 Articles.


International Committee of the Red Cross. (1949). *ICRC Commentary on Third 1949 Geneva Convention, Article III, Section A. Cases of Armed Conflict*. ICRC.


Lawrence, T. E. (1917). The 27 Articles.


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BIOGRAPHY

Michael L Rupert graduated from Monterey Bay Academy in 1985. He served in the US Navy for six years before receiving his Bachelor of Arts at the American University in Cairo in 1991. He received a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy at the Fletcher School at Tufts University in 1999. He has worked in the Washington DC area as a scenario developer for military and intelligence simulations and a subject-matter-expert and instructor for information operations. He was recently deployed to Afghanistan as a social scientist where he supported US and NATO forces.