

ANTHROPOLOGY, ETHICS, AND THE U.S. MILITARY: A HISTORY AND
POSSIBILITY FOR CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

by

Kathryn Moss
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts
Sociology and Anthropology

Committee:

_____ Director

_____ Department Chairperson

_____ Dean, College of Humanities
and Social Sciences

Date: _____ Spring Semester 2020
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

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Engagement

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Arts at George Mason University

by

Kathryn Moss
Bachelor of Arts
Utah State University, 2006

Director: Rashmi Sadana, Associate Professor
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Spring Semester 2020
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to all of my family, friends, professors, and colleagues who have enthusiastically (and patiently) listened to me muse (and at times complain) about my schoolwork and this research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have had a lot of cheerleaders throughout this process. I would especially like to thank my committee, Dr. Rashmi Sadana, Dr. Christopher Morris, and Dr. Susan Trencher for their constant encouragement, enthusiasm, and good ideas as I planned and shaped this thesis. My colleagues and friends in the U.S. military have also been very supportive of my education, my research interests and my contrarian perspective, of which I am extremely grateful. I would especially like to express my love and gratitude to my parents, Fred and Deon Moss, and sisters Kim, Liz, and Emily, and their families for their continuous love and support.

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ABSTRACT

ANTHROPOLOGY, ETHICS, AND THE U.S. MILITARY: A HISTORY AND POSSIBILITY FOR CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Kathryn Moss, M.A.

George Mason University, 2020

Thesis Director: Dr. Rashmi Sadana

This thesis describes the history of the engagement between the discipline of anthropology, its ethical principles, and the U.S. military. This history reveals how the lack of a constructive engagement between anthropology as a whole and the military has been shaped by the discipline's evolving engagement with the U.S. military, from direct support to reimagined or exaggerated ethical crises. With the discipline's tradition of reflexivity, whereby anthropologists analyze their own relationship to their research object, anthropology has begun to open the aperture on a potential subdiscipline of military anthropology and accepting the work and narratives of the anthropologists duly involved. In the process of researching and writing this thesis, the author conducted a literature review and interviews with anthropologists and members of the U.S. military. This thesis is intended to be part of the conversation for anthropologists in all subdisciplines who have concerns about anthropological ethics and working with the U.S.

military, as well as members of the U.S. military who are interested in continued engagement with the discipline of anthropology.

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, PhD candidate Chris Varhola published an article in *Practicing Anthropology* about the U.S. military's failure to understand Iraqi culture, a failure that contributed to further conflicts, from miscommunication to violent encounters, during the reconstruction phase of the 2003 Iraq invasion (2004: 39). These conflicts were experienced and sometimes perpetuated by some U.S. Army Civil Affairs units, which are tasked with advising commanders on working with local populations. Civil affairs units are generally aligned to specific regions and trained in local cultures and language. Yet due to an overwhelming demand for their expertise during the 2003 Iraq invasion, many civil affairs team members were quickly deployed to Iraq from Europe and Latin America, with little to no training in Middle Eastern cultures or even the Arabic language (Varhola 2004: 40).

Varhola provides several examples of how a lack of cultural expertise within the U.S. military overall contributed to discontent among local populations in and to U.S. military decisions to take violent action against Iraqis. For example, some military commanders categorized anti-American rhetoric among Iraqi religious leaders as an indicator of potential violence, advocating for their arrest. Varhola argues military commanders should instead have seen this rhetoric as an opportunity to engage with the population, identify the sources of discontent, and attempt to resolve the issues peacefully

(2004: 40). Other military commanders ordered women and children to be detained as hostages to induce their male family members suspected as terrorists to surrender, arguing “this was an extremely effective practice” (Varhola 2004: 40). Varhola did not only criticize American troops (2004: 42), but these problematic perspectives and behaviors of the U.S. military leave little wonder why the U.S. has not achieved its goals of “winning hearts and minds” after nearly two decades.

Varhola’s fieldwork was part of his doctoral research in anthropology at Catholic University (2004: 42), but Varhola was not only a student — he was one of these Civil Affairs officer in the U.S. Army Reserves (2004: 39). His status as both student and soldier provided him unique perspectives on, as well as access to, both the local population and the military. Even today his perspective is unique and perhaps under-appreciated in a large U.S. Army, and an even larger joint force.¹

Varhola’s article is one example of how “cultural competency” (a term used by the military to describe the development and assessment of cultural skills) could be applied in the U.S. military. Yet Varhola argued that most U.S. Army service members (and likely the joint force overall) received little cultural training, as most of their training was unsurprisingly focused on combat (2004: 39). This lack of cultural training contributed to a lack of appreciation for the distinctions in Iraqi culture, and a failure to consider various culturally appropriate approaches to solving problems and accomplishing missions. Varhola’s own cultural competence allowed him to bridge the

¹ “Joint force” refers to U.S. military personnel from each of its Service departments or branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

gap between his military experience and his educational experience to better understand both U.S. and local perspectives. Varhola's experiences also show how cultural competency, specifically the application of cultural competency that includes an appreciation for the culture, was essential for not only civil affairs units, but also for a host of other activities performed by all U.S. military personnel.

On the surface, it may appear that an anthropologist could have much to contribute to such cultural competency training and education. However to others, the goals and the nature of the U.S. military appear so divergent from the discipline of anthropology that there is no possibility for a constructive, ethically-sound engagement. Yet to restate lessons learned from the Varhola vignette, there are indications that the military needs increased cultural competency among its ranks. What is the source of this tension? Is there a possibility for a mutually beneficial relationship between anthropology and the military? In this thesis I will examine these questions and the possibility for a constructive engagement by reviewing the history of the anthropological-military engagement: analyzing the literature and conducting personal interviews on this history, and describing the evolution of anthropology's principles of ethics as codified by the American Anthropological Association (AAA). Anthropology is a diverse discipline, with its students and practitioners coming from a wide range of perspectives and practices. I use the term "anthropology" to refer to the discipline overall, as well as the official positions of the AAA as the professional organization has played a major role in constructing and reinforcing anthropological ethical principles.

The discipline of anthropology and the military have a complicated history that has challenged a constructive engagement. Anthropologists historically supported U.S. military and government institutions, but over the course of time the discipline has come to view this support as ethically problematic. Referring to anthropology's birth as the "stepchild of colonialism," anthropologists once provided cultural information to colonial militaries and governments, which in turn used this knowledge to dominate indigenous populations (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007: 20; see also Asad 1973). Anthropologists have also shown how ethnographic data was used to suppress Native Americans during the U.S. colonization of North America (Borneman 1995). During World War II, some anthropologists assisted the U.S. military by participating in the administration of Japanese American internment camps (Gusterson 2007: 156). Others have documented that anthropologists were persuaded or coerced to study communist societies in the 1950s "with great delicacy" or avoid them all together for fear they would be investigated by the FBI as communist sympathizers (Price 2016: 86; see also Price 2004, Shankman and Thieman Dino 2001, Peace and Price 2001).

As anthropological theory grew increasingly reflexive, the discipline also began to view how providing its distinctive methods to the government, which were so valuable for administration and control, violated the anthropologist's ethical obligations to with their interlocutors, ultimately contributing to the detriment of the people they studied. Instead of studying people from afar, anthropology's unique research methods involve living in a society and among a group of people in a very intimate nature, earning trust to gain access to people who are often already politically and socially marginalized and

often vulnerable to exploitation (Gusterson 2007: 49). By working hand in hand with military and government institutions, anthropologists were betraying the trust they sought for to access such experiences and information. Thus in subsequent years, anthropology's ethics standards fueled an increasingly critical posture toward U.S. military and government programs. In the 1960s, anthropologists condemned Project Camelot, a social science research project sponsored by the U.S. Army (Trencher 2000). The so-called Thailand affair of the early 1970s was a scandal of a similar nature: anthropologists were accused of conducting clandestine research in Thailand on counterinsurgency activities for U.S. military. These incidences have been very controversial among anthropologists and the discipline as a whole, arguing that military's misuse of anthropology is a gross violation of anthropological ethics in military efforts to manipulate, coerce, control, destroy, or kill.

Project Camelot, the Thailand affair, and other controversies were major drivers for the AAA and other anthropological associations to adopt a formal code of ethics which then discouraged, vilified, and essentially prevented anthropologists from working with the military at all. Yet overall, only a small proportion of anthropologists have or continue to work with and for the U.S. military today. Nevertheless, the controversies of engagement between the anthropology and the military has continued to play a dominant role in the discussion and formulation of anthropological ethics.

By contrast, U.S. military theory has historically emphasized culture as an important aspect of warfare, but in practice has only sporadically implemented cultural competency training and education, whether based on anthropological research or from

other social science disciplines. Several popular military theories attribute the essence of war not to guns, ships, tanks, or airplanes, but to human will and other cultural factors (Connable et al 2018). Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* (1832), a seminal text for U.S. military strategists, defines and describes war as a contest of wills, or "politics by other means" (1968: 118). Chinese theorist Sun Tzu advised "Know thyself and know thy enemy." More recently, then-Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Paul Selva noted the "centrality of human will in war" in its *Joint Concept for Human Aspects of Military Operations* (2016). Yet despite this formal recognition of the importance of understanding culture (people's values, motivations, ethical contexts, for instance), the U.S. military has not broadly institutionalized anthropological knowledge or research into its education and training programs for the majority of the joint force (Interview 1, Interview 2).

Nevertheless, a few years after its wars of the 2000s began, the U.S. military began to recognize the cultural gaps between themselves and the people in Iraq and Afghanistan, and began looking for ways to increase its cultural competency. In 2007, the U.S. Army instituted a radical program called the Human Terrain System, also known as HTS. This program embedded small groups of social scientists, including anthropologists, into Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) with U.S. Army brigade combat teams in Iraq and later Afghanistan to provide cultural knowledge and insights on the local population to military commanders conducting counterinsurgency operations. Adam Silverman, a social scientist and member of an Human Terrain Team in Iraq, wrote that his role was to analyze the sociocultural information of the population, and to "represent

the population to promote nonlethal planning and operations” (2009). This information was designed to help U.S. Army commanders make better informed choices about their missions, avoid civilian casualties, and foster better relationships between the local populations and Americans. Silverman cites several areas where the Human Terrain Teams positively influenced relationships in Iraq, including advising commanders to avoid destroying important cultural landmarks, advocating for civilian medical issues, and promoting better civil-military relationships (Silverman 2009), the kinds of relationships that Varhola also recognized were severely lacking. “Had this information been available when Operation Iraqi Freedom was conceptualized,” Silverman argued, “there would have been a greater chance of the initial stabilization and reconstruction being done in a better informed, more productive, and less lethal manner” (2009).

Despite the claims that the Human Terrain System was beneficial to both local populations and to the U.S., the broader anthropological community was figuratively up in arms over the use of its methods so close to the “the tip of the spear” (Jaschik 2015). The AAA was already in the midst of a related investigation; its Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the U.S. Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC) was conducting research on the ethical considerations of anthropologists’ work in the intelligence community and national security sector when the Human Terrain System was established. CEAUSSIC was later directed to study the Human Terrain System specifically. In their 2009 final report, CEAUSSIC discredited the Human Terrain System, yet left the door for overall anthropological-military relationship slightly open: “...while we stress that constructive engagement between anthropology and the

military is possible, CEAUSSIC suggests that the AAA emphasize *the incompatibility of HTS within disciplinary ethics and practice*...and that it further recognize the problem of allowing HTS to define the meaning of ‘anthropology’ within the [Department of Defense]” (AAA CEAUSSIC 2009: 3, emphasis added). Despite this disapproval from anthropology, the Human Terrain System continued until it was cancelled by the U.S. Army in 2015 (González 2015, Davies 2016). Many inside and outside of anthropology welcomed the end of the program, citing that the program’s problems, from its lack of trained professionals, inability to gain informed consent in a war zone, and its potential to harm research subjects, had doomed the program from the beginning (González 2019).

As the Varhola case reminds us however, the Human Terrain System was neither the beginning nor the end of the U.S. military’s pursuit of, and need for, cultural competency. The U.S. military still conducts counterinsurgency operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Yet counterinsurgency is also one of many different missions where the military has cultural contact with populations other than Americans. From pre-deployment briefings, intelligence gathering, key leader engagements, or Foreign Area Officer development requirements, the military is involved in a variety of activities where increased cultural competency would be benefit for all soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

Additionally, despite the concerns of the AAA, the Human Terrain System and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were not the beginning nor the end of anthropologists’ employment with the U.S. military. Anthropologists are employed by various different military service departments and other Department of Defense institutions, teaching and

training in cultural competency, conducting research, providing program management, among other jobs (CEAUSSIC 2007). Even as military anthropology has emerged in the anthropological jargon, anthropologists working for the military still report experiencing discrimination or shunning by their colleagues and the discipline as a whole (Fosher 2011). Some anthropologists have argued that the goals of the military are so contrary to the ethics and purpose of the discipline that there is no way an anthropologist could ethically perform work with the military or the DoD (Interview 4). This may well have contributed to some military anthropologists, who were interviewed by CEAUSSIC, reporting that they had disengaged with AAA and the broader anthropological community, feeling estranged from their colleagues or fearing discrimination by revealing their work (CEAUSSIC 2007: 56).

These dichotomies between the military and anthropology bring up numerous questions. What potential knowledge is left undiscovered when military anthropologists are not publishing their work? What potential knowledge is undiscovered by the military if, when seeking cultural knowledge, there are few anthropologists who offer their expertise? Are anthropological ethics truly prohibitive for engagement with the military? Or are there ways that a constructive anthropological-military engagement can be achieved and broadly accepted throughout both the discipline and the military?

A history of the AAA's ethics guidelines and its connection with the anthropological-military engagement provides a different look at how anthropological ethics have been shaped and evolved largely by crises, or supposed crises, du jour. This kind of ethics as response to crisis has over-emphasized the AAA's engagement with the

military. The result of this overemphasis has been detrimental to anthropology's engagement with the military as well as the discipline as a whole. Some of the other repercussions of this ethics emphasis includes a lack of proactive ethics guidelines for anthropology as a whole, and in some ways demonstrating how the AAA has demonstrated characteristics which anthropology attributes to institutions of power, as its own institution of power over the discipline and its ethical principles. Yet over time the AAA ethics guidelines has evolved, both shaped by and shaping increased anthropological-military engagement. These changes in the AAA ethics guidelines illustrate both the potential for both continued evolution of anthropological ethics and more anthropological-military engagement.

The lack of constructive anthropological-military engagement has come even after Laura Nader made the case for anthropologists to begin "studying up in their own societies" to help understand "the processes whereby power and responsibility are exercised in the United States" (1972: 285). "How has it come to be, we might ask, that anthropologists are more interested in why peasants don't change than why the auto industry doesn't innovate, or why the Pentagon or universities cannot be more organizationally creative?" she questioned (Nader 1972: 289). Subsequently, anthropologists have taken up this call and gained significant insights into the inner workings of the military and national security sector, yet have acknowledged they had limited access by working on the "outside" of these institutions (Gusterson 1997). Of course, conducting anthropological research *on* the military is also not the same as conducting anthropological research *for* the military (Lucas 2009: 81). Yet a closer

engagement *with* the military may also lead to a greater understanding both *of* the military, and greater cultural competency *for* the military. Varhola's story is one example of how increased cultural competency within the military, even by one Army officer, brought a different perspective on how to conduct tactical operations and activities Iraq. If this kind of cultural competency was more widespread throughout the U.S. military, infused with the depth of perspective available through anthropology research, it has the potential to create a positive ripple effect on other military operations and activities, from the tactical up to the strategic level as culturally competent officers move up in the ranks, and therefore up in influence (Interview 4). The U.S. military and its practices, and the work or challenges of military anthropology cannot be adequately analyzed if it is uninvestigated, unpublished, and therefore unknown. In the famous words of G.I. Joe, "and knowing is half the battle" (YouTube.com 2014)².

Methods

The objective of my research is to explore the potential for anthropological-military engagement by reviewing the history of anthropological ethics. First I will review the anthropological theories on militarization and the militarization of anthropology that have framed the challenges of disciplinary ethics in anthropology as

² This catchphrase was stated at the end of the children's G.I. Joe cartoon, along with a tip to avoid talking to strangers or to play fair on the schoolground. After a brief scenario, G.I. Joe would appear to stop a near-catastrophe. Once the kids learned the lesson, the children who chorus, "Now we know!" after which G.I. Joe would chime back "and knowing is half the battle!" These images conjure up several different meanings that could be further explored about the military, such as the processes of militarization, and the military's pursuit, production, and distribution of knowledge. It also speaks to the cultural norm of the military to take knowledge and put it into action, versus an academic perspective of pursuing knowledge for the sake of knowledge. These concepts are important and should rightly be reviewed further, but they are not explored further in this paper.

established by the AAA and the U.S. military. I then review how the evolution of anthropological ethics, through each iteration of published ethics guidelines by the AAA, has been disproportionately focused on the military, and the alleged controversies from anthropological-military engagements over the course of the time. I analyze the principles and the language of each formal iteration of the AAA's ethics guidelines, as well as the historical context and events that shaped them. Finally, I will review some of the new literature of military anthropology, and provide the perspectives from interviews with some of the anthropologists working in this field, the ethics challenges they face, and how they address them. In addition to the literature and interviews, I also weave in some of my own experiences, both as a graduate student in anthropology, and as a contractor working for and with the Department of Defense in various positions.

This thesis combines literature review, historical and theoretical analysis of this literature, and personal interviews with military anthropologists and members of the U.S. military, as well as personal observations and experiences among both communities. The majority of this research and experiences took place in the Washington, D.C. metro area, as well as at the joint AAA-Canadian Anthropology Society/Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA) 2019 Annual Meeting in Vancouver, Canada.

Participant Observation

In a similar way to several anthropologists (Rubinstein et al 2013), I became interested in military anthropology as a result of my educational and professional experiences. In multiple ways this research is a culmination of several of my work assignments and scholastic opportunities. Thus, it is appropriate for me to relate my

experiences here and throughout this thesis to allow for transparency about my potential bias, or what may be more accurately described as multiple potential biases. These biases are varied enough that I often feel I am mediating between points of view, at times advocating for one perspective, while simultaneously providing a devil's advocate approach on another. I acknowledge that these conflicting perspectives may not result in as neutral a tone as some would expect, and could potentially provide blind spots to other perspectives yet to be examined.

I have long been fascinated with learning about other cultures as well as international politics. While I had taken a course on anthropology during my undergraduate studies, I was more connected to the university's political science department, and looking back, I had a better grasp of what political science was; I knew relatively little about anthropology or how it was applied outside of academia. When I had the opportunity to study strategic culture in the political science department, I was excited at the prospect of applying a passion of mine – cultural understanding – into “the real world” and I could see how this could result in a viable career.

All of this took place only a few years after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. One of my political science professors at the time believed the U.S. military did not understand Iraqi or Afghan culture, which contributed to the military's problems on the ground and at the strategic level. We studied and debated how the U.S. intelligence and national security communities could better study and apply culture to improve foreign policy. All the while, I never remember thinking or discussing the potential ethical

challenges that could arise from the research or application of cultural knowledge for either the military or intelligence communities.

Sometime after graduation, I found an internship and later full-time work as a contractor for the Department of Defense, a story I will delve into more later on. Many of my assignments included socio-cultural related programs and research. Yet there were few if any discussions on the ethical considerations of the work we were providing, aside from general business ethics practices. If these conversations occurred, there were not poignant enough to stay within my memory.

One of my projects involved research and development of expeditionary cultural field guides (ECFGs) for the U.S. Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) of Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama. The project lead had a doctoral degree in anthropology, and directed a small team on the techniques and content required by the client. I studied several nations in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, writing on topics such as family and kinship relationships; aesthetic culture; time and spatial considerations; religion and spirituality; food and health; and other “non-kinetic” topics, all from non-classified, openly available sources.

These field guides became very popular, and the project grew. The guides were published as physical pamphlets for the military, as well as downloadable PDFs and web-based application accessible to the general population (AFCLC website 2019). I felt the project was overwhelmingly positive, worthwhile, and rewarding. It never occurred to me that there could be ethical issues with providing the military with this kind of information, or that the information itself could potentially be used to enact violence or

any other type of harm. Yet I was concerned about the efficacy of such a project. While the anthropologist directed and reviewed our research, and the research was also reviewed by an independent scholar before being presented to the client, I wondered if it was possible to effectively reduce an entire culture into a few distinctive categories, in a few very succinct paragraphs. Were these products leaving out valuable, essential information? Were we perpetuating stereotypes or simply regurgitating other available research? Few if any of us primary researchers had first-hand experience in these regions. While the project overall seemed benign (i.e., I did not think about how this information could be used for violent or manipulative ends), it seemed to me there was the potential for spreading misconceptions to the consumers of these field guides, ironically the exact opposite of the purpose of the project. As I have later learned, anthropologists have had similar concerns and critiques on “smart cards,” a similarly brief, but even more compact document of cultural information for the military (see Nuti 2006; Davis 2010b; Gusterson 2010).

A broader consideration of ethics and cultural knowledge did not come into my mind until I began a graduate degree in anthropology. As discussed previously, I did not have a good sense of what anthropology was when I started the program, let alone its history, theoretical foundations, or its relationship with the military. I had always been drawn to learning about and experiencing various cultures, from traveling, my courses in international politics, and living in an international dorm during my freshman year of college. Working on the field guide project with an anthropologist made the discipline appear to be a practical way to diversify my skillsets, as well as a desirable way to deepen

my expertise on the culture concept. If I wanted to better understand cultures, anthropology seemed to be the most in-depth, academically rich discipline to pursue.

During this time, I also transitioned to work for a new client on a U.S. military staff, the first time I felt truly “embedded” with the military. Most of my previous projects had been “remote delivery,” meaning I worked at my firm’s office and created and distributed products to clients electronically, only occasionally traveling to military installations and meeting with Department of Defense clients for conferences or workshops. My primary role with this client was first as an interlocutor of sorts between Department of Defense and other US government departments and agencies. I saw great value in assisting the U.S. military and Department of Defense as a whole to better communicate with the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), or the Department of Homeland Security.³ Yet as I progressed in my anthropological studies, I gradually became more aware of the problems with the massive institution that I served, one that was flawed even at its best, and massively, terrifyingly destructive at its worst.

To make matters more complicated, my job responsibilities with this client soon transitioned towards studying and understanding the kinetic side of the U.S. military to a greater degree. At about the same time, I began to dive deeper into anthropological theory and its examination of institutions of power, the problems of neocolonialism and neoimperialism, and other topics. Anthropology pushed me to question my comfortable

³ If I had an earlier background in anthropological methods, I probably would have taken descriptive notes on my experiences and written an interesting ethnography on the different cultural interactions of these different government departments and agencies, as each has a unique history, identity, role, and perspective of the world.

assumptions and throw many of my personal perspectives at the wall like spaghetti, and left me waiting to see what would stick. Yet I also felt that anthropology neglected the study of issues that I worked with on a daily basis, such as how to address terrorism, or how the U.S. should respond to or prevent other types of military attacks. Anthropology always seemed to have a problem with what the military did and how the military conducted its work, constantly criticizing but rarely proposing potential solutions. I felt academically, professionally, and personally divided. During the workday, I often felt like the extreme liberal in the office, and I discussed and defended the concepts I was studying in the classroom with my colleagues and friends. When I attended evening classes, I felt extremely conservative, as I was one of the only people in the room who would challenge the narrative of my fellow students or professors. It made me question equally my employment and my educational pursuits. “What on earth am I doing working for the military?” I would say to myself some days, yet on other days I wondered “Is anthropology really what I imagined – and do I want to continue to study it?”

Despite some exhaustion from being flung mentally to and fro, I began to be more comfortable with the discomfort, with continuing to question without having an answer, and recognizing ambiguity in each of these diverse settings. All the while, the ethical considerations of these issues continued to return to my mind. I was still curious about the extent of scholarship for these types of education and training perspectives across the Department of Defense, and my understanding of the ethical dilemmas these programs presented grew. I also could not avoid learning more about the Human Terrain System as it is still in anthropology’s recent memory; I have been fascinated by the passionate

perspectives of both anthropologists and military personnel involved in this program, and the heated debate between the two. I was heartened to see that I was not the only one with varying and conflicting perspectives (they certainly existed here too), and I felt some relief by accepting some ambiguity as I dove further into the topic.

I am still unsure of where I am on the spectrum of the benefits or evils of the anthropological-military engagement. My lack of a solidified judgment on this engagement perhaps give me a sense of bias towards both sides of the debate, allows me to mediate between the two without flinging accusations of deceit on the part of the military, or a lack of citizenship on the part of anthropologists (in fact, both disciplines could be accused of each of these criticisms). I have become more comfortable with not knowing the answer and accepting that there could be multiple answers in varying contexts. However, the reader will find that this thesis leans towards the side of critiquing anthropology over the Department of Defense. This is probably for two reasons: first, this is a thesis in anthropology on anthropological ethics. Despite my initial intentions, it does not focus as heavily on military education and training programs, though I strongly believe that an anthropological research project on these programs would be very enlightening to the Department of Defense and to anthropology. Second, my previously mentioned devil's advocate nature is bent on critiquing the critics, and there is far more critique by anthropology on the military than there is praise. I suppose if I was writing this paper specifically for the Department of Defense, I would have taken an opposite approach.

The realities of being a part-time student while being a full-time employee made extensive research challenging. The resulting thesis is not the project I envisioned when I began. Yet like Chris Varhola, my employment and my education have allowed me to view these different perspectives from multiple angles, be a part of numerous conversations, and gain access to peoples and places that would be much more difficult for a full-time student outside of the military, or of a full-time employee without time to engage in academic pursuits. Others have also argued the benefits of bridging this divide (Fosher 2019). Thus, while there have been many challenges and limitations, my research has also opened otherwise closed doors. My goal is that these ideas contribute to emerging anthropological work on the military, and on anthropological ethics in a positive and constructive way.

MILITARIZATION

“Welcome to the military-industrial complex,” read the opening line in an email from my recruiter. I had just signed the paperwork formally accepting a position with a large consulting firm based in the greater Washington D.C. metropolitan area, one with a large presence within the Department of Defense. I knew what each of these words meant, but at the time I did not have an appreciation for their context. I knew that my recruiter was being slightly tongue-in-cheek. Yet looking back, it is telling that this email did not read “Welcome to the firm!” or “Great to have you on the team!” or “Congratulations on finally getting a paycheck!” There was an underlying heaviness to the words that I had not experienced when thinking about accepting the job. Perhaps I was naïve to the implications of what I had literally just signed on the dotted line.

I was introduced to this consulting firm while I was interning at a Department of Defense institution for joint professional military education (JPME). At this internship, I coordinated a program that provided short-term training courses for military personnel who were being assigned to staff assignments overseas. The purpose of this program appealed to me. We brought in speakers to discuss some of the challenges and benefits of working globally, of partnering with other nations, as well as working for an organization culturally distinct from the U.S. military. There were lectures on security-related topics, such as ballistic missile defense and counterinsurgency operations, but there were also

sessions on cultural dynamics: from considerations of time and space (e.g., American “work ethic” compared to the “laziness” of other nations both as ethnocentric perspectives), to the importance of interpersonal relationships (e.g., how the “real work” in an international military environment often happens in the coffee shop and not behind a desk). All of these seemed like very worthwhile topics of study for U.S. military personnel stationed around the world. Shouldn’t all U.S. military personnel who deploy around the world and interact with the military staffs and citizens from a variety of nations be more aware of the cultural nuances of their colleagues, and consider their own ethnocentric biases? Additionally, these were all desk jobs, working on policy or planning; the course was not focused on weapons or killing. In a very real way these service members would be de facto military diplomats wherever they were stationed. To me, the entire mission of the program was interesting and worthwhile.

Lest this story convey an overly idealistic mindset, I also really needed a job. I had already tried the stay-at-home-and-apply-for-jobs-online approach following the completion of a previous internship, to no avail. While the thought of accepting this unpaid internship would have seemed akin to highway robbery in another life, I was not getting paid staring at a computer at home either. I realized this job would provide a valuable type of currency, a highly coveted exchange rate between words and salary potential for my resume: *experience* and *networking*.

Thus I happily accepted this internship, working in retail most nights and weekends to pay the bills. My boss, Charles⁴ was ever my supporter, introducing me to

⁴ Name has been changed.

everyone we met with “she’s looking for a job!” and encouraging me to always have business cards handy. Then a day came when Charles could offer me a paid position – not as a government employee, but through a contract with a consulting firm. I did not know much about the consulting firm, other than that they were going to pay me for a job I was already enjoying. It was more than appealing to quit the part-time gig and continue to work for Charles with a paycheck. It did not take much convincing.

Less than a year later, it became clear that Charles had unknowingly done me a true favor. The DoD buzzwords of the time were *austerity* and *sequestration* and – most dreaded of all – *budget cuts*. The funding for our program was part of that cut, and Charles retired. However, instead of losing my job, I was pulled back to the fold of the consulting firm. Instead of being back at square one in the job market, the firm helped me find another DoD client so I could be “billable,” which meant I could keep my job, and the consulting firm could continue generating profits. My internal search for a new client was the beginning of an eye-opening journey into the vast network of the U.S. military and the Department of Defense consulting world that had previously been invisible to me, both before and even during my internship. For me the experience began an informal examination on how the military has influenced society, a process called militarization.

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The broader anthropological work on militarization and its impacts on society is an underlying theme in the ethical issues of the anthropological-military engagement. The tension created by these ethical issues provides some insight into the current debate on military anthropology and the history of the anthropological-military engagement. Yet it

also highlights some inconsistent approaches anthropologists have taken toward military and related subjects.

A relatively limited and consistent group of anthropologists have broached the subject of militarization in recent years (e.g., Gusterson 2007; Price 1998, 2011; Bickford 2008, 2011, 2015). Hugh Gusterson, one of the anthropologists of CEAUSSIC and the Network of Concerned Anthropologists (NCA), produced an early literature review on the anthropology of militarization for a 2007 *Anthropological Review* essay. He describes militarization as a state in which “war is always on our minds, even if we are technically at peace” (Gusterson 2007: 156). Andrew Bickford, also an NCA member, wrote a comprehensive summary and bibliography on militarization and anthropology for the International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences (2015). A new book titled *Militarization: A Reader* (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019) was compiled by several members of the NCA to address several issues characteristic of militarization today. These topics include global U.S. military bases that produce “ingrained patterns of local economic dependence” (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019: 8); patriotism defined as military service (Astora 2019: 38); gendered concepts of militarization, passivism, and militarized humanitarianism (Bestement 2019: 197); media depictions and the glorification of war and violence (Van Buren 2019: 243); the militarization of knowledge in the education system (Price 2019: 249); and militarized effects on and perceptions of the body (Ford and Glymour 2019: 291), among others. Several anthropologists have studied how the militarization of U.S. government immigration and border security, specifically through flawed “prevention through deterrence” policies

espoused by multiple presidential administrations, has increased violence and death at the U.S.-Mexico border (see Dunn 2014; Palafox 2000; De León 2016).

Militarization is not a concept that concerns anthropologists alone. The *Militarization* reader, for example, pulls excerpts from the writings of historians, journalists, and others. The editors borrow their definition of militarization from Robert Kohn, a former U.S. Air Force chief historian who calls militarization “the degree to which a society’s institutions, policies, behaviors, thought, and values are devoted to military power and shaped by war” (2019: 6). Linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have similarly commented on the how American English is full of war and militaristic metaphors (1980). The “military-industrial complex” introduction to my professional career was coined by no less than former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a retired five-stars U.S. Army general and Supreme Commander of Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe during World War II. Then-President Eisenhower used his 1961 farewell address to warn Americans about the dangers of this growing trend, arguing the U.S. military establishment had grown so large that “it bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peace time or, indeed, by the fighting men of World War II or Korea” (2019: 37). Though he felt that the U.S. was left with little choice but to build up its military, Eisenhower cautioned that “we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society” (2019: 37). That a decorated military general led this caution is

5 A five-star general officer or flag officer is a rarity; a fifth star is only bestowed on a general or admiral who is the lead commanding officer during wartime. See U.S. Department of Defense 2020 (<https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Insignias/>).

instructive; perhaps more than most, Eisenhower had at a bird's eye view of the first modern global war and its potential to advance militarization on a global scale.

Despite his warning, anthropologists argue militarization has only grown in American society since the 1960s (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019: 7). Some have argued the United States has surpassed the phenomena of militarization and reached a point of *militarism*, “the *domination* of war values and frameworks in American thinking, public policy, institutions, and society...rather than influencing or simply shaping American foreign relations and domestic life” (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019: 6, emphasis added). Catherine Lutz previously distinguished militarism as having “a narrower focus on ideology, referencing a marked social emphasis on martial values” (2018). Both of these perspectives imply that while war and the military were once more ancillary aspects of American life, their presence is widespread and pervasive, so much so that it may be difficult to recognize the influence of militarism. Yet once one starts to look, examples of militarization or militarism are everywhere. Take for example, technological advancements that have been shaped through defense investments (think the Internet or global positioning systems), an education system that categorizes historic periods with an emphasis on major wars, the popularization of the Humvee as a civilian vehicle, or even fashion trends that include camouflage and other military-inspired styles.⁶

⁶ Take for example the 2020 Netflix reality mini-series *Next in Fashion*, where up-and-coming designers compete for a cash prize by designing clothing. The series dedicates an entire episode to producing military-inspired fashion.

Due to its hegemonic status, both in defense expenditures and in global influence, the U.S. has influenced militarization globally as well as on the homefront (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019: 6). Viet Thahn Nguyen explores militarization in his critical account of the American war in Vietnam and the politics of memory (2016). Nguyen argues the American “war machine” includes its cultural and economic global presence, from Hollywood and the media, to industry and economics, to the English language, and is so dominant that the experience of Vietnamese military service members and civilians, as well as any other nations fades into the background (Nguyen 2016: 283). Anthropologist Nick Turse categorized this expansion by revising Eisenhower’s term to the “military-industrial-technological-entertainment-academic-media-corporate complex” to accurately capture the scope of U.S. militarization’s influence today (2019: 5). Thus while other social science disciplines have studied militarization, anthropology provides an important and unique contribution:

The discipline *combines empirical methods with culturally informed perspectives* and can offer *a long-term historical perspective* stretching back thousands of years. It can provide valuable information about the *biological consequences of militarism, both on human bodies and on ecosystems*. Finally, its methods include both *cross-cultural comparison and ethnographic approaches based on long-term fieldwork and participant observation*, which can provide *a ground-level view* of how militarism is experienced by those who are most affected by it (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019: 8, emphasis added).

Anthropology is thus unique in both its breadth and depth; it can provide additional understanding of the human influences of data gathered in the “hard” sciences, cultural comparisons of the “soft” sciences, from macro- and micro-level perspectives.

Anthropologists also reject the political science theory of war as a biological, natural part of human nature, arguing that warfare is a social construct, or the result of social processes. In other words, war is a learned experience and not an inevitable part of human society. Margaret Mead’s 1940 research suggested that in some societies, even where theft, murder, and cannibalism were present, the concept of “warfare” as a state-sponsored institution with rules, norms, and funding streams, was not (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019: 13). “...The idea of warfare, of one group organizing against another group to maim and wound and kill them, was absent. And without that idea passions might rage, but there was no war...” (Mead 2019: 337). Anthropologists argue that the large-scale nature of warfare developed as a by-product from the rise of nation states, where national identities led to a sense of pride and belonging to defend; and conversely, the emergence of in-groups and out-groups, marginalized populations, and an “other” to be combatted (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019: 13). Mead also argues that war is an invention that may not be discarded unless an alternative takes its place to resolve conflict, but “people must recognize the defect of the old invention, and someone must make a new one” (Mead 2019: 339). Thus studying militarization is perhaps an initial step to understanding how “to pave the way toward a future where war is less common” (González, Gusterson, and Houtman 2019: 13).

Militarization and Anthropology

Militarization in society has simultaneously influenced anthropology, including a direct relationship to the birth and development of anthropological ethics. It was not until the late 1960s that anthropology began to turn more inward, arguing for the greater study of the history of the discipline and its early involvement with Western colonial powers (Asad 1973: 15). A textbook on the history of anthropology summarizes this relationship in this way:

[Anthropologists] began to realize that a large majority of the ethnographic texts composed in the first half of the twentieth century had been written by white European-American men, whose work was often made possible by the political and military subjugation of the peoples they studied...Many anthropologists came to believe, with horror, that their discipline had been the unwitting accomplice of the colonial endeavor and that it had profited from the oppression of the very peoples whom many well-intentioned ethnographers sought to frame in a sympathetic manner (Erickson and Murphy 2017: 146).

Anthropologists have decried a militarization of anthropology (see for example Lutz 2018, Price 2016, Ferguson 2011), in such a way that the military is attempting to “weaponize” anthropology for its own use (for example Forte 2011, Gonzalez 2009, The Network of Concerned Anthropologists 2009, Price 2011). Yet others argue the discipline has still grossly neglected studying militarization’s relationship to anthropology. Diane Lewis famously shined a light on how the discipline was once disillusioned to its relationship with colonialism (Lewis 1973). Similarly, Gusterson has argued that

anthropology has been similarly blind to its relationship with militarization, from how the military has provided many funding sources for anthropological research, to supplying topics or locations for ethnographic fieldwork (2007: 156). On the other hand, David Price has argued that the dilemmas between anthropology and the military and other institutions of national security have existed since the discipline's conception (Price 2011). For example, Price has discussed how university students were and continue to be secretly recruited by the CIA and other national security organizations (Price 2011, 2016). This recruiting is not always secret — I have personally received an email from George Mason University, through the Sociology and Anthropology Department, about a CIA employment information session (personal email, March 2019).⁷ Whether openly or clandestinely, anthropologists largely agree that the processes of militarization have had a major impact on the discipline of anthropology. This perspective has thus shaped the discipline's overall response to engaging with the U.S. military.

⁷ It is important to note that the military does not equal the CIA, nor the intelligence community. Each military service department has its own intelligence wing, and the DoD also has a separate Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). These and other members of the intelligence "community" have their own purposes and perspectives, and they do not always agree. This can also be said of the U.S. government as a whole, with its various department and agencies. I include references to the CIA and intelligence agencies as well as national security institutions in this paper's focus on the military because of their historical connections (e.g., the precursor to the CIA, the Office of Strategic Services, was aligned to the U.S. War Department until after World War II).

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ETHICS AND THE U.S. MILITARY: CRISIS AS THE STATUS QUO?

The processes of militarization in society at large and its influence on anthropology have heavily influenced how anthropologists have approached their engagement with the military, and have subsequently informed how anthropology has defined its standards of ethics. Yet these standards have largely been based on controversies and crises with the anthropological-military engagement, which some argue were frequently exaggerated, at times when there was little to no engagement at all. Even as the AAA's ethics standards have adjusted over time, the changes to these standards were largely influenced by the discipline's current relationship and perspectives on the military. As the AAA's ethics standards has greatly influenced the ethics standards of the discipline in the United States, this disproportionate focus on the anthropological-military engagement prevented a holistic and preventative approach to ethics standards that could have applied more broadly the disciplines and to individual anthropologists, the majority of which do not study or work with the military.

On the one hand, given its history and theoretical perspectives on militarization, it is understandable that anthropology as a discipline would attempt to nip apparent ethics violations in the bud, and respond to contemporary issues where its ethics standards are at risk of being compromised. It is also logical that the AAA would adapt its official

statements on ethics over time and in response to some of these challenges, as ethics standards work in the medical field and in other disciplines. While addressing contemporary issues is necessary, it appears that for the majority of its history, anthropology has *only* been responding to crises instead of proactively addressing ethics of the broader community (Fluehr-Lobban 2013: 77). This reactionary and disproportionate stance has simultaneously closed the door on the anthropological-military engagement. As a result, the discipline left neglected what could have been a more specific, proactive, and preventative set of ethics guidelines more broadly applied to anthropologists engaged in a variety of subdisciplines.

That the majority of anthropologists have thus worked without specific ethical guidance from the AAA is concerning, although they may be getting this guidance from other forums in the discipline such as their graduate training and the Institutional Review Board, a formally designated body that reviews all proposals for academic and professional research with human subjects, including in anthropology. Yet one anthropologist related to me that they have been surprised at the lack of understanding or experience with ethics principles among newly graduated anthropologists (Interview 4). Whether this is a trend across anthropology and how the AAA Code of Ethics influences students and practitioners alike would require additional study and is not within the scope of this paper.

A brief recounting of the history of the AAA ethics guidelines illustrates the intertwined relationship of anthropological ethics and the military, as well as the transformative nature of ethics. Reviewing each of the formal ethics guidelines up to the

current AAA Code of Ethics illuminates how these ethics standards were adapted with specific emphasis on the military and the government, and thus lacked specific ethics guidelines for other areas of the discipline. It also reveals a reactionary approach to ethics, and a stigmatization of anthropological-military engagement. What is the risk or danger in always reacting to ethical challenges instead of proactively looking to prevent a challenge? Or of focusing too much on what appear to be major ethical challenges, while ignoring the small, day to day issues that may be a greater part of anthropological research in general? Interestingly, a similar criticism is often levied against and within the DoD, where it is often been accused of “being prepared to fight the last war” instead of the wars of the future.

As anthropology is concerned with ethnocentrism and unearthing cultural relativism, there is also much that anthropology can learn about the military as the military can learn from anthropology. Much like the founding fathers of the discipline (Lewis Henry Morgan, Edward Burnett Tylor, Herbert Spencer), became known as “armchair anthropologists,” anthropologists today are in danger of commenting on the military from too far a distance to see the nuances of the U.S. military and to adequately provide insights in a manner to affect any change, whether in cultural competency training or other areas. “If you have spent no time in the community, how can you completely critique its practices?” some have questioned (Interview 5). A broader view of anthropological ethics could thus provide room for more opportunities to “study up” as Nader has suggested.

1948: Ethics and the Government

Established in 1902, the AAA has not always had a formal stance on ethics. Its first official statement on ethics was published in 1948, and was focused on a single ethical issue, as reflected its title: *The Resolution on Freedom of Publication* (AAA website n.d.). The language of the resolution includes a preamble of exceptions, similar to the text of an official Congressional statement; acknowledging that although an institution may have a “need or preference” for withholding information, the AAA:

(1)...strongly urge[s] all sponsoring institutions to guarantee their research scientists complete freedom to interpret and publish their findings without censorship or interference; provided that (2) the interests of the persons and communities or other social groups studied are protected; and that (3) in the event that the sponsoring institution does not wish to publish the results nor be identified with the publication, it permits publication of the results, without use of its name as sponsoring agency, through other channels (AAA website n.d.).

Many of these concepts are still prevalent in anthropology today, including preserving academic freedom, transparency, and safeguarding the identities and interests of research subjects. Yet the AAA’s 1948 resolution includes other implicit assumptions which are very different from its subsequent ethics statements, exemplifying the malleable, subjective nature of and shifting potential for anthropological ethics.

First, the fact that anthropologists have “sponsoring institutions” is benign in the 1948 resolution. There is no mention of or even allusion to a stigma against any non-academic institution providing sponsorship for an anthropologist’s work. There is not

even so much as a caution against governmental collaboration, so long as the principles of transparency and freedom are safeguarded. In fact, the 1948 resolution identifies anthropologists as “theirs,” implying the anthropologists as “research scientists” *belong* or are subject to these institutions, and not specifically the AAA. By contrast, the current AAA Code of Ethics does not create a distinction for any type of anthropologists, addressing them all simply as “anthropologists,” leaving their affiliation independent of any institution, academic or otherwise (AAA 2012). The tone of the 1948 resolution is a firm but gentle plea, an urge and not a requirement. The AAA is asking for respect to its values, not for conformity to its resolution. Since the AAA also did not “own” these anthropologists, the resolution cannot require individuals or the institutions to comply with its demands, only respectfully ask them to follow its ethical standards.

Second, the 1948 resolution assumes anthropologists have the professional freedom to disperse certain types of information, and the freedom to withhold other types to protect “the interests” of various groups being researched. The resolution is so succinct and singularly focused that it does not include specifics on what types of information qualify for this protection, nor who makes the judgment call. Without any additional qualifiers, this presumes that these interests are defined by the anthropologist and perhaps the institutions involved. There is no mention of the research subjects having a voice in defining their interests.

Perhaps at the time anthropologists did not generally think they needed to consult their subjects to understand their interests. Such a reflexive viewpoint in anthropology coincided with the overall American cultural revolution that did not take off until the

1960s, although some anthropologists accused American ethnographies as ethnocentric as early as the 1950s (Trencher 2000: 4). Anthropologists today widely acknowledge that there is added insight to be provided by an outsider looking in on a community. Yet local interlocutors are vital to helping anthropologists carry out their research and understanding local meanings of culture and society. Ironically, this manner of judgment on the sensitivity levels of different types of information is similar to how the U.S. government determines what information it disseminates or keeps secret; in other words, what it *classifies*. I will review this subject in more detail later on.

Lastly, the 1948 resolution's focus is solely on freedom of publication. The statement is brief, direct, and with a singular topic. It does not include the multiplicity of issues referenced in later AAA ethics statements. As we will see, later editions specify several populations and topics for anthropologists to consider when conducting research, including research subjects, students, foreign governments, and the discipline itself. In fact, the 1948 resolution is not directed at anthropologists at all, but to institutions. It is primarily concerned with ensuring organizations that "sponsor" anthropologists allow them to do their work, not whether or not the work anthropologists are doing, and the manner in which they are doing it, is ethical. It assumes the anthropologists do not need a specific code or guideline to make this determination. This is reflective of the reactionary nature of anthropological ethics and standards of ethics in other disciplines as well; the AAA does not identify a need for specific ethics guidelines until there was a situation that demanded a response.

This is not to say that individual anthropologists were not concerned about ethics issues prior to 1948. However, formal ethics guidelines have varied based on political attitudes, both within the AAA and in American society as a whole. These political attitudes have also disproportionately reflected supposed scandals in anthropological-military engagements. The story of Franz Boas is an oft cited story in anthropology of the discipline's legacy advising against secretive, military-related research. Nearly thirty years before the AAA's first ethics statement, Boas accused unnamed anthropologists of performing clandestine work for the U.S. government during World War I (Hill 1987, Fluehr-Lobban and Lucas 2015: 240). Yet it was Boas whom the AAA censured for "unprofessional behavior" (Lucas 2009: 51). Instead of conducting further investigations of these accusations, the AAA revoked Boas' membership on its governing council (Hill 1987). This may have been a political move on the part of the AAA, which appears to have been mostly supportive of the U.S. war efforts during this time. Or it could have been an attempt to bury the controversy and avoid public scandal, as at least one anthropologist privately suggested (Hill 1987). Whatever its reasons, the AAA's actions towards Boas were the opposite of its stance on anthropological-military engagements in later years.

The Boas example also illustrates how anthropological ethics and the military have been imagined within certain narratives. This story is frequently articulated in anthropology with Boas as a crusader against military activities (see for example Brown 2008; Low and Merry 2010; MacClancy and Fuentes 2013; Bickford 2015). Yet in his article, Boas does not disparage the U.S. military or intelligence activities as a whole,

only that anthropologists were involved in this secretive work, what he called the “prostitution of anthropology for espionage” (Lucas 2009: 51). Perhaps Boas was more open toward work with the military or espionage because he had a brief stint in the military as a young adult; or perhaps he was more sympathetic towards espionage because as a German Jew, Boas later debunked many of the Nazi’s racist theories, and was thus more open towards supporting military activities against Germany (Tax 2019). Boas even justifies the actions of spies, who he argues operate under their own codes of ethics (Lucas 2009: 52). Whatever the influence, Boas was arguing not that espionage was ethically problematic, only that as scientists, anthropologists should not comment on political matters, but should remain neutral. Yet at the time, there was no unifying code of anthropological ethics. Boas’ objections were a personal perspective on anthropological ethics and anthropological engagement with the military. As previously stated, the AAA did not have a formal code or statement of ethics, and thus censured Boas for acting unprofessionally. Additionally, as its ethics guidelines continues to suggest, the AAA had a more supportive stance towards the military and the government up through World War II; thus it may not have believed that anthropological espionage was problematic. While the AAA’s perspective on anthropological ethics and the military changed in later years, the anthropological-military engagement as a whole was not the original focus of the critique.

1967: Ethics and Project Camelot

The 1948 resolution was officially “reaffirmed” in 1967 when the AAA published a more holistic approach to ethics. Its title, the *Statement on Problems of Anthropological*

Research and Ethics makes obvious the focus on a reaction to problems instead of a proactive practice to identify ethics policies. The 1967 statement expanded the AAA's stance on ethics, yet included nuances that reflect the somewhat contradictory approach that anthropologists took towards engaging with the military and government, and how the statement evolved based on cultural and political perspectives.

The 1967 statement institutionalizes Boas' early critiques by including a rebuke on clandestine research ("Constraint, deception, and secrecy have no place in science"), and specifically intelligence work ("Academic institutions and individual members... should scrupulously avoid both involvement in... and the use of the name of anthropology, or the title of anthropologist, as a cover for intelligence activities") (AAA website n.d.). Yet it also promotes more anthropological-government engagement at the highest levels. In the section titled "Anthropologists in United States Government Service," the 1967 statement campaigns for anthropology to "be made more readily available to the Executive Office of the President" and in early planning stages of projects "where the services of anthropologists are needed in agencies of the Government. Only in this manner is it possible to provide skilled and effective technical advice" (AAA website n.d.). It even thanks members of Congress and other government institutions for supporting anthropological research (AAA website n.d.).

The 1967 statement specifies that this anthropological-governmental engagement should occur in an academic capacity, but with one caveat: "*Except in the event of a declaration of war by the Congress*" (AAA website n.d., emphasis in the original). It does not provide details on what a declaration of war would change for anthropology, whether

anthropological research would then naturally or legally be provided to the military, or whether anthropologists would have a patriotic duty to provide their expertise in military service. Yet it implies at minimum a level of tolerance, if not acceptance of anthropological-military engagement during warfare.

The language of the caveat illustrates a common level of support the AAA and individual anthropologists provided both openly and without shame to the U.S. military during these decades. David Price's research asserts that hundreds of anthropologists, along with other social scientists, openly collaborated with the U.S. military and the government during World War II, whether from "teaching 'strategic languages,' writing intelligence assessments, and managing War Relocation Authority camps to conducting dangerous secret missions for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)" (2019: 249, see also Low and Merry 2010). Other anthropologists provided their skillsets openly, including Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and others, without censure or reprimand by the AAA (Erickson and Murphy 2017: 78). Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), an ethnography on Japanese culture is a well-known and controversial example of research conducted during this era.⁸ These anthropologists believed the nature of the conflict justified the use or exploitation of their skills (Price 2008). In the postwar period, Price also indicates many anthropologists continued to receive funding from U.S. military organizations, though not quite as openly (2004). This level of support for anthropological-military engagement as

⁸ For instance, Benedict never traveled to Japan before writing her famous piece.

stated in the 1967 statement has never again been repeated with such specificity in subsequent AAA ethics guidelines.

On the other hand, the language of the 1967 statement rebuking clandestine and intelligence work for anthropologists reflects some of the events of the mid-1960s which continue to loom large in anthropology's ethics and history: Project Camelot. This code name referred to a U.S. Army contract with American University to study sociopolitical factors in Chile and other countries in the Americas (Hill 1987). The U.S. Army and other Department of Defense institutions were accused of using this program to secretly employ anthropologists to perform data collection and research to help the U.S. understand insurgencies and plan counterinsurgency activities in Latin America (Hill 1987).

Many anthropologists condemn Project Camelot as a glaring violation of the discipline's ethics and an example of military exploitation of anthropological research and skillsets. Gusterson called Project Camelot "a lavishly funded initiative to mobilize anthropologists and other social scientists to investigate the origins of peasant radicalism and insurgency and devise strategies to preempt, contain, and repress revolutionary movements" but also acknowledged that proponents of Project Camelot viewed it as "an enlightened attempt to reduce the use of military firepower by using social science to forestall the emergence of insurgencies in the first place" (Gusterson 2009: 48).

Many also claim that the project was blatantly dishonest about its sponsors and goals. A letter uncovered during the Project Camelot investigation claims that the anthropologist who petitioned Chileans social scientists to support the project insinuated

that the work was funded by the National Science Foundation, and did not identify the U.S. Army as the ultimate sponsor (Galtung 2019: 263). When the program came to light, Andres Aylwin, a member of Chile's House of Representatives, publicly stated:

In this project, one pretends to make an analysis of the problems of man, of hunger of unemployment...However, these vital problems are not studied because of the significance they have in themselves but only insofar as they can be causes of rebellion or revolution. Said in other words, in Project Camelot one does not analyze unemployment to find its causes or study its solutions, it is not a question of studying human needs to try to satisfy them. Social problems are only important insofar as they can lead to tension...only to avoid revolution (quoted in Chilean House of Representatives, Special Investigation Committee 1965) (Galtung 2019: 261).

Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung called this project an example of "scientific colonialism" described as follows:

A major aspect of scientific colonialism is the idea of unlimited right of access to data of any kind, just as the colonial power felt it had a right to lay its hand on any product of commercial value in the territory. How might the United States react to a commission of Soviet social scientists investigating the assassination of President John F. Kennedy? Or investigating the roots of the Cuba invasion? Or investigating the interests behind the Santo Domingo intervention? (Galtung 2019: 262).

These examples of contemporary events would have been close in the historical memory for Galtung's audience for his 1967 article. Today one may ask similar questions as to how the United States may react to an international body conducting secretive research on U.S. internal instability due to election interference; the impeachment of President Donald Trump; the lack of available testing for the U.S. populations in the 2019-2020 coronavirus outbreak; or the U.S. armistice with the Taliban in Afghanistan and its agreement to withdraw; and so forth.

After the program was discovered and heavily protested in both international and U.S. media, the Department of Defense cancelled Project Camelot (Horowitz 1967: 14), and the U.S. presidential administration stated that "no government sponsorship of foreign area research should be undertaken which, in the judgment of the Secretary of State, would adversely affect the United States' foreign relations" (Galtung 2019: 260). Even this statement reflects Galtung's description of scientific colonialism: the U.S. is openly acknowledging Project Camelot was cancelled not because it was a violation of anthropological ethics, or that the research damaged the sovereignty and rights of people of Chile, but because it damaged the United States. Others claim Project Camelot was not shut down because of these societal pressures but due to the infighting between the Department of Defense and the Department of State on how the project was an overstepping of the Department of Defense's roles and responsibilities (McFate 2018:36). These accusations are not uncommon among U.S. government departments and agencies, a practice often called "mission creep," when one unit or organization appears to step out of its mandate to accomplish its activities. Thus, perhaps the protests of ethics violations

may have had little to do with the closing of Project Camelot, and instead reflected the US government's internal challenges.

Project Camelot is referenced almost universally in anthropology as an example of a violation of anthropological ethics. However, while many agree there were serious flaws in the program, some researchers argue that Project Camelot as an example of anthropological espionage has been exaggerated, oversimplified, or is more myth than fact (Hill 1987; see also Horowitz 1967; Deitchman 1976; Wax 1978). American philosopher George Lucas, writing on anthropological ethics, argued that Project Camelot was neither the watershed moment described by CEAUSSIC nor “the social sciences’ equivalent of the Manhattan Project” that the anthropological narrative frequently portrays (2009: 56). Montgomery McFate’s description of Project Camelot suggests the questions the U.S. government was exploring were relatively nonthreatening. McFate states that the project was designed to “test over eight hundred untested and often contradictory hypotheses about internal war, such as were these wars generated by poverty? Or did they result from rapid economic progress?” (2018: 36). While McFate has become a controversial figure in anthropology for some of her views on collaboration with the U.S. military, she notes that the research questions of Project Camelot could have been the basis of research for academic anthropologists and students alike (2018: 36). Yet because it was done by the U.S. military, Project Camelot was automatically viewed as a tool of oppression, of scientific colonialism, and thus did not merit even a review or modification.

British social scientist Maja Zehfuss brought another perspective to the anthropological debate on Project Camelot. She argued that examining this and other examples of anthropological-military engagement only in terms of ethics limits the totality of the discussion. Instead of providing a thorough analysis of the merits and drawbacks of programs like Project Camelot, the discussion is only framed in what *anthropologists* should or should not do, not whether the project had any merit in and of itself (Zehfuss 2012: 179). Thus, if the only conclusion is that anthropologists should not participate in such a program due to competing ethical standards, it leaves open a door for others to participate, instead of critiquing, modifying, or if necessary, cancelling a project on its own merits. Both Zehfuss and Lucas highlight a well-documented yet frequently unreported fact that few anthropologists were involved in Project Camelot (Zehfuss 2012: 178, Lucas 2009: 60). Anthropologist Robert Albro, a member of the CEAUSSIC committee, reviewed Lucas' book and appears to agree with this sentiment (2011). Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, who has also written extensively on anthropological ethics, refutes other claims about Project Camelot, arguing it was never a covert program, but its purpose and sponsorship were open from the beginning (Lucas 2009: 58; Fluehr-Lobban 2003).

Irving Horowitz wrote an extensive history on the Project Camelot (1964), providing details illuminate this counter narrative. Horowitz recounts how the Johan Galtung mentioned previously was invited to an open planning conference for Project Camelot in the United States. Galtung objected to the project in part due its sponsorship by the U.S. Army and the "asymmetric" research design that failed to include Latin

American goals and interests, which he communicated to the project directors in a letter (Lucas 2009: 59). Thus, even while Galtung criticized Project Camelot's design and management (Lucas 2009: 58), the project itself was neither secret nor clandestine; the information Galtung criticized was included in the conference agenda.

Somewhat ironically, Project Camelot became a scandal only when its organizers reached out to Chilean social scientists for collaboration on the project. Horowitz discusses how Hugo Nuttini, who was an assistant professor of anthropology, an informal consultant for Project Camelot, and a former citizen of Chile, "somehow" managed to arrange a meeting with high-level representatives at the University of Chile to discuss their participation in Project Camelot. Instead, Horowitz describes obtusely how Nuttini "radically misconstrued the true nature" of Project Camelot "... as a vast continental spy plan" (Lucas 2009: 59). Nuttini was confronted by Chilean university faculty members with the conference agenda and Galtung's original letter in opposition to the conference, and demanded an explanation (Lucas 2009: 59). When this meeting became public, the Chilean government and international media heavily protested, and the rest became history. Thus, the actions and perspectives of one anthropologist construed Project Camelot as an international scandal. Ironically, this information is not often discussed in the anthropological literature on the topic; Project Camelot is mostly just referred to as another U.S. military program to inappropriately co-opt anthropological research methods and expertise, and another example of U.S. neocolonialism.

Yet some of the same arguments used to object to Project Camelot and the role of anthropological research for the U.S. military are applicable to anthropological research

as a whole. Even Galtung acknowledges that his arguments against scientific colonialism by the military are similarly applicable to other types of anthropological research: “One is to claim the right of unlimited access to data from other countries. Another is to export data about the country to one’s home country to have it processed there and turned out as ‘manufactured goods’ as books and articles...” (2019: 261). Some have critiqued the discipline as a whole during the time of Project Camelot in a similar manner.

Anthropologist Stephen T. Boggs assessed that in the mid 1960s “American anthropologists viewed ‘the world as their oyster’ and gave nothing back to those among whom they did research” (Trencher 2000: 137). Nader pointed out that anthropologists have long benefitted from “a certain power relationship: and then questioned whether “such dominant-subordinate relationships may not be affecting the kinds of theories we are weaving” (1972: 289). Anthropologist Susan Trencher, who has written on this history of anthropology as well as on the U.S. military, argues these perspectives in American anthropology expanded into the 1970s:

They defined themselves as powerful and dominant in fieldwork settings just as the United States had been in the political ones [in South America and Southeast Asia]. As these anthropologists tried to make sense of their activities in relation to public politics and policies, they claimed themselves as powerful through association with dominant colonialist political forces a power they simultaneously claimed to reject (Trencher 2000: 137).

Robert Albro has also commented that anthropology has had “its own just-so stories about the history of this problematic relationship [between the military and

anthropology] ...Often this did not seem to be a good-faith dialogue, but instead too narrow in scope, often politicized, on occasion even inquisitorial, and self-serving” (2012: 42).

Turning back to the ethics of anthropology as a whole, the 1967 statement is also exemplary of these perspectives of the anthropologist-subject relationship. “To maintain the independence and integrity of anthropology as a science, *it is necessary that scholars have full opportunity to study peoples and their culture, to publish, disseminate, and openly discuss the results of their research, and to continue their responsibility of protecting the personal privacy of those being studied* and assisting in their research” (AAA website n.d., emphasis added). This language presumes anthropologists have an inherent right to study other people or groups. No mention – besides the “responsibility” of anthropologists to protect them – is given to the research subjects. This framed research subjects as passive participants instead of acknowledging their autonomy and ability to act and speak for their own protection and rights. It assumes that the peoples anthropologists wish to study even want to be studied at all. It also presumes that anthropologists and anthropology in general have a right to form bonds with those they study, that these bonds are inherently good, and that the bonds – whether inside or outside a military context – are always in the best interests of the population being studied.

While more inwardly focused than the 1948 resolution, the 1967 statement also maintains an emphasis on academic institutions and their relationships with the government, rather than direction towards individual anthropologists or the discipline as a

whole (AAA website n.d.). It warns against government institutions who attempt to require clearances from anthropologists who are “responsible scholars” and that these should be given the “greatest possible opportunities” for research and collaboration (AAA website n.d.). Without turning the ethical approach inward, the 1967 statement continues the trend with an assumption that anthropologists themselves are conducting their work ethically. The 1967 statement does discuss the potential for some ethics violations for individuals, specifically for those anthropologists who have worked for the government or used their position as a cover for espionage (AAA website n.d.). However, there is little explicit direction for anthropologists in other areas of the discipline on ethical issues.

The 1967 statement also includes an idea that is frequently attributed to the Department of Defense and other institutions of power: that the sole focus of ethics for AAA is the perpetuation of the discipline. In Department of Defense parlance, this kind of activity is sometimes described as a “self-licking ice cream cone” (Worden 1982). The 1967 statement states its purpose as a safe-guard for anthropology as a whole: “Although the Department of Defense and other mission-oriented branches of the Government support some basic research in the social sciences, their sponsorship may nevertheless create an *extra hazard in the conduct of fieldwork and jeopardize future access to research opportunities in the areas studied*” (AAA website n.d., emphasis added). In other words, the AAA 1967 ethics statement implies that its primary objective is to perpetuate itself instead of working towards solutions to problems or achieving any stated goals. This is not to argue that ensuring the survival of anthropology is surprising for a

professional organization meant to uplift and bolster the discipline. The inclusion of these statement however highlights characteristics of the AAA that are comparable to other institution of power.

Comparable is a key word in this instance. The AAA, including its ethics guidelines, is not the same as institutions of power like the U.S. military. The AAA ethics guidelines have never been binding, nor has the AAA had or claimed the ability to strip an anthropologist of their degree or credentials for an ethics violation as might occur in the medical or legal fields. In terms of power in a general sense, few institutions compare with the Department of Defense, whether in terms of the size of its budget, or the size of its widespread presence and influence globally. The comparison is admittedly a molehill to a mountain. Yet in the anthropological realm, the AAA has symbolic power over anthropologists, at least in anthropological ethics in the United States, as this thesis reviews. Hugh Gusterson has argued himself that is beneficial to evaluate those who have less power in relation to institutions of national security, especially those who may have “privileged insights” to such information (2017: 4). Gusterson was speaking specifically about activists who were struggling with “flimsy resources” as compared to nuclear weapons scientists. “Were activists such delicate creatures that I was supposed to spare them the respect that comes with debate and discussion?” (Gusterson 2017). Similarly, I do not believe the AAA or the discipline of anthropology to be delicate creatures. Thus this comparison between the AAA and the U.S. military is meant to identify characteristics that are similarly displayed by institutions of power as examined by the

discipline of anthropology itself; it is a reflexive view of the discipline, a critique of the critiquers.

Turning back to Project Camelot, both Lucas and Zehfuss's discussion on the anthropological response to the controversy mimics characteristics of the state and its need to self-perpetuate. Project Camelot was a threat because it damaged the institution of anthropology in Latin America first (Lucas 2009: 6), but by implication, the institution of anthropology itself. Zehfuss commented that "Without the trust of those they study, anthropologists are unable to do their research; hence, the stakes are high if this trust is placed in jeopardy" (Zehfuss 2012: 178). Speaking of Project Camelot, Galtung echoed that if the program had continued, "it would have led to the end of Latin American social science for say, ten or twenty years" (2019: 261). Hill also acknowledges that one objection to Project Camelot was a warning "that anthropology's bad reputation would close off future field opportunities abroad..." (1987).

Certainly anthropology should not be portrayed as supportive of activities which do not accurately reflect its stated purposes, or its ethics. The 1967 ethics statement addresses this by declaring "The international reputation of anthropology has been damaged by the activities of unqualified individuals who have *falsely claimed to be anthropologists*, or who have *pretended to be engaged in anthropological research* while in fact pursuing other ends" (AAA website n.d., emphasis added). This observation on self-preservation is not necessarily a criticism, but a comparison of the AAA to other institutions of power. Although a natural and logical goal, self-preservation is also a criticism of large institutions, particularly of government. Instead of focusing the goals of

the institution to address problems, and adjust to change as necessary, institutions self-promote and prevent major changes that may disrupt the organization (Interview 5). In other words, instead of promoting anthropology for the purpose of simply asking questions, or of proposing solutions to social issues, it is focused on research for research's sake.

That anthropology has characteristics as an institution of power became apparent during my participation in the joint AAA-CASCA 2019 Annual Meeting in Vancouver, Canada. On the first days of meetings, I checked in and received a large cloth lanyard that included a pocket for a name badge. This was used to identify conference members, and we were instructed to wear them in each of the sessions, so that the participants, presenters, and the convention center staff could easily identify paid participants of the events. On the second or third day, I left my badge back at my Airbnb accommodations. Rather than take the hour round-trip walk to retrieve it and risk missing some of the panels I had planned on attending, I went to the registration desk to ask for a temporary badge. The staff at the registration desk look puzzled when I gave them my information. "What color is your original badge?" they asked. "Uh, blue" I responded, hardly remembering its color. The staff realized that my original badge was a mistake – because I was not currently a paying member of the AAA, I should have received a red badge, which is what they gave me as my replacement for the day. I was also instructed to return the blue badge, not the red temporary badge to receive my deposit back for this temporary badge. I had noticed these two different colors throughout the previous days, but had not discovered what they meant: blue was for AAA member, red for non-AAA

member, and yellow for CASCA member. The fact that there had to be distinctions made me chuckle: why did the AAA or CASCA or any of the panelists or attendees need to know whether I was a paying member? Why was there any such a distinction? It was very ironic that a discipline that studies power dynamics and social processes across cultures had labeled us attendees for seemingly no real purpose. If I asked a question of a panel with my red, non-AAA badge, would I have been viewed in a different light than a blue, AAA-member badge? Additionally, how did the CASCA members feel about being distinguished from their U.S. counterparts? One of the post-meeting discussion groups included accusations by a few anthropologists (and some who boycotted the meeting all together) that the Annual Meeting included only a small number of Canadian panelists, alleging discrimination by the meeting's organizers. One of the CASCA-affiliated joint meeting organizers rejected claims of bias, stating that presenters were chosen by both members of both the AAA and CASCA executive committees, and that the submission review process does not take nationality into account (personal email 2019). Yet it was intriguing to watch some of these power dynamics play out in this international anthropology setting, to see some of anthropology's theories played out by some anthropologists themselves. Understanding some of these characteristics displayed by the AAA as an institution of power in its own sphere of influence is instructive for a greater understanding of its influence on anthropological ethics, and how this influence has shaped the anthropological-military engagement.

1971: Ethics and the Thailand Affair

The Project Camelot scandal spurred more discussions on ethics in anthropology. In 1968, the AAA created an Interim Committee on Ethics (Hill 1987) and subsequently adopted its first formal Code of Ethics in 1971⁹ (AAA website n.d.). This title as a “code” marked a significant transition to a more permanent, institutionalized set of ethics from its previous “statement” or “resolution.” Yet the 1971 Code of Ethics was not the final word on the AAA ethics guidelines, nor was it free of its own controversy. One of the Interim Committee’s purposes was to “explore means by which any standards of ethics could be enforced,” although this goal never came to fruition (Hill 1987). Other adaptations to the 1971 Code of Ethics show increased reflection in anthropology, and stronger language that condemned work for the U.S. military and other governmental organizations.

In addition to the title change, the 1971 Code of Ethics structure was also fundamentally altered. This structure shows a broader, more reflexive focus and directive approach towards individuals within anthropology than previous ethics statements. The 1971 Code of Ethics was organized into principles, each “deemed fundamental to the anthropologists’ responsible, ethical pursuit of the profession” (AAA website n.d.). These principles are grouped by categories of “relations with those studied” and “responsibilities” to the public, the discipline, students, sponsors, and to governments (both of the anthropologist and of those being studied). It also acknowledges the

⁹ This 1971 Code of Ethics was amended in 1986, though the nature of these amendments are not specified on the AAA website.

inevitability of ethical “dilemmas” in a “field of such complex involvements” (AAA website n.d.).

The 1971 Code of Ethics charge on secrecy was more specific than ever before, reading more like a zero-tolerance policy than a guideline to avoid. Its first section on “Relations with those studied” read: “In accordance with the Association’s general position on clandestine and secret research, no reports should be provided to sponsors that are not also available to the general public and, where practicable, to the population studied” (AAA website n.d.). This condemnation of secrecy is repeated numerous times through the 1971 Code of Ethics, in each of its newly created sections.

While it does not advocate for a direct relationship with the military or governments, the 1971 CoE does advise that “As people who devote their professional lives to understanding people, anthropologists ... bear a *professional responsibility to contribute to an ‘adequate definition of reality’ upon which public opinion and public policy may be based*” (AAA website n.d., emphasis added). This responsibility however was not extended for public policy as it pertains to the Department of Defense and by extension the U.S. military, despite its appetite for anthropological knowledge.

Anthropologists were once again accused of spying for the government, erupting into another ethics scandal that contributed to the strict language of the 1971 Code of Ethics. The fact that it occurred on the heels of Project Camelot is also instructive; anthropology was still reacting to events, still reeling from the accusations of the 1960s, and rejecting additional involvement with the Department of Defense.

In March 1970, approximately five years after the Project Camelot scandal, the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, “a self-proclaimed national radical student group” sent documentation to the AAA Interim Committee on Ethics that appeared to show some anthropologists were again performing clandestine work for the U.S. government, this time supporting research for counterinsurgency efforts in Thailand (Trencher 2000: 134). These anthropologists were accused of contracting with the Department of Defense as well as the Department of State to gather data on tribal villages to “aid” or “develop” these villages, in an effort to prevent village members from joining insurgent groups (Chis et al 1970).

As with Project Camelot, there are various accusations on the nature and intent of anthropologist’s involvement in what was deemed “the Thailand affair.” While some alleged that the data the researchers collected was kept secret and was not subject to peer review, anthropologists who participated in the Thailand project claimed neither was true (Hill 1987). Additionally, several researchers have documented that “many of the anthropologists were aware of the counterinsurgency activities, and felt that their best recourse was to remain associated with the agencies in an effort to “put them straight” or make them “see the light,” so to speak (Hill 1987; see also Beals 1970; Moerman 1971; Davenport et al, 1971). Thus, they argued the research was not secretive or clandestine, and was motivated by an intent to aid the Department of Defense and provide policy guidance.

Eric Wolf, chair of the Interim Committee on Ethics, wrote a report for the AAA Executive Board on these accusations. However, in a similar manner to the Boas

controversy, Wolf and the Interim Committee were publicly rebuked, not specifically because the AAA Executive Board disagreed with the charge of the ethics violations, but for acting outside of its current mandate. At the time, the Interim Committee was only tasked with writing a proposal to define its role as a committee, and not to begin adjudicating ethics accusations (Trencher 2000: 134, Hill 1987). The anthropologists accused in the Thailand affair were cleared of any wrongdoing by the Executive Board, citing insufficient evidence (Trencher 2000: 134).

Anthropologists exploded in disagreement with the AAA Executive Board's decision at the 1970 Annual Meeting. Student protestors demonstrated outside the meetings, and many others demanded a response (Trencher 2000: 135). The AAA Executive Board created another committee, led by Margaret Mead to further investigate the affair (Trencher 2000: 135). This ad hoc committee delivered what came to be known as the Mead Report the following year at the 1971 Annual Meeting. The Mead Report condemned the Interim Committee on Ethics for acting unethically by denying due process to the accused, and also determined it could not prove the accused Thailand affair anthropologists were guilty of misconduct (Hill 1987). The Mead Report was rejected "by vocal hisses in the crowd" (Trencher 2000: 136). Mead later ordered the ad hoc committee to destroy all 7,000 pages of information it had collected to create its report, purportedly to prevent the issues from being rehashed in the future. Yet these actions further alienated those who disagreed with the report and paralyzed any further action on the issue (Trencher 2000: 136).

When one examines the various events of this controversy, there are multiple ethics violations, as well as some illegal activity. The original documents were allegedly stolen from personal files, and published in *The Student Mobilizer* newsletter after they were given to the Interim Committee (Chis et al 1970, Hill 1987). There appears to be little if any condemnation of this theft. Some also claim Wolf publicly condemned the accused anthropologists without their prior knowledge (Hill 1987), and others claim that Wolf first sent notices to them asking for rebuttals (Trencher 2000: 134). Is it an ethical problem when the Interim Committee provides hasty recommendations without additional investigation, let alone a mandate to make these accusations? Are these actions ultimately deemed as ethical because they uncovered other, more serious ethics violations? Hill wrote that the Committee's decision split AAA members among those who believed the events of the Thailand affair to be "unethical and punishable" and those that did not (Hill 1987). Did the AAA violate the spirit of ethics, if not its contemporary ethics statement, by rejecting the serious accusations in light of a procedural foul?

Yet while each of these could also be considered an ethics violation, the narrative of the Thailand affair is cemented in the activities of the unnamed anthropologists supporting the military, and Mead's actions in destroying the documents (Lucas 2009: 67, Fluehr-Lobban 2003, Price 2016). While only a handful of anthropologists were actually involved in the Thailand project, "they have come to represent all of anthropology" (Lucas 2009: 65).

The Thailand affair again illustrates the interpretive nature of ethics, and how politics (both internal and external to anthropology) have shaped the narrative of

anthropological ethics. It is also a reminder that anthropologists, and thus the discipline as a whole, cannot be separated from the politics of the day, or that it is difficult if not impossible to separate personal political attitudes from professional activities. As Trencher observed, “Fragmentations within the public realm thus contributed to and mirrored those in the profession as challenges to meaning and experience rose in a series of political crises which, despite “ending” remained essentially unresolved” (2000: 136). That these events remained “unresolved” is evidenced by their reappearance in discussions on anthropological-military engagements in subsequent years.

1998: An Outlier in the AAA Code of Ethics

Perhaps further evidence of how anthropological-military engagements have fueled the crises of ethics in anthropology is how they did *not* influence the next set of revisions. The 1998 Code of Ethics did not occur in the wake of a military-related controversy in anthropology, and consequently resulted in one of the more expansive statements on ethics in the AAA’s history.

As it was not responding to an anthropological-military crisis, the 1998 Code of Ethics revision was less urgent. Drafts for the 1998 version circulated over the course of several months, and were discussed AAA Annual Meetings from January 1995 – February 1997, one of the longest periods of review for any ethics code or statement. Several different AAA subcommittees were able to provide comments, as well as the AAA membership in general (AAA Code of Ethics 1998: 6). The 1998 Code of Ethics has a softer tone, less specific direction on secretive or clandestine work, and the broadest application to all anthropological subdisciplines. For example, the 1998 Code of Ethics

includes both a preamble as well as an introduction, with the additional text providing more guidance for the discipline in general, and to anthropologists as individuals. It specifically mentions some of anthropology's subdisciplines, and describes itself as "a multidisciplinary field of science and scholarship, which includes the study of all aspects of humankind - archaeological, biological, linguistic and sociocultural" (AAA Code of Ethics 1998: 1).

The broad language of the 1998 Code of Ethics includes guidance applicable for all anthropologists. After repeating the language from the 1971 Code of Ethics that reminds anthropologists the AAA's purpose is not to "adjudicate claims for unethical behavior," it states "Because anthropologists can find themselves in complex situations and subject to more than one code of ethics, the AAA Code of Ethics provides a framework, not an ironclad formula, for making decisions" (AAA Code of Ethics 1998: 1). Instead of including words like "secrecy" and "clandestine" it reminds anthropologists to be open regarding their research, funding sources, and so forth. In referencing governments, the 1998 Code of Ethics says only that "In working for governmental agencies or private businesses, they should be especially careful not to promise or imply acceptance of conditions contrary to professional ethics or competing commitments" (AAA Code of Ethics 1998: 5). The 1998 Code of Ethics also first introduces the idea that "doing nothing" can also be unethical: "Proactive contribution and leadership in seeking to shape public or private sector actions and policies may be as ethically justifiable as inaction, detachment, or noncooperation, depending on circumstances" (AAA Code of Ethics 1998: 2).

Perhaps the additional time to write, discuss, and revise the 1998 Code of Ethics led to its broader and inclusive tone. Conversely, one could argue that the broad language set the stage for additional ethical dilemmas in the 2000s. Yet a different examination of the events continues to highlight the double-standard to which Department of Defense and the military are treated in anthropology, in the ethics issues that occurred among both supporters and critics of anthropological-military engagements.

2007 and 2009: The CoE and the Human Terrain System

The following personal vignette is an example of thoughts that frequently passed through my head during my graduate level coursework. Following a similar style to Jason De León's composite during his fieldwork for *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*, this "semifictionalized ethnographic" account (2015: 43) combines multiple experiences and thought processes that have occurred to me over the past few years.¹⁰

I'm getting irritated. I'm sitting in class listening to my peers, and it seems like the conversation is, once again, one-sided. Whether we are talking about anthropological theory, border security, immigration, abortion, sex and gender relations, human rights, social class theory, or the U.S. military, the group-think phenomenon is overwhelmingly present. It seems to me that everyone has the same underlying assumption that the government, and any institution of power for that matter, is always corrupt and abusive.

¹⁰ I was able to take courses in variety of disciplines and at other institutions in accordance with departmental and university policies; thus the vignette is not solely representative of anthropology courses.

Even when I see the merits of some of these arguments, the contrarian in me can see that we are not learning if there is no diversity of thought in the room.

Yet I hesitate. My contrarian attitude, and the conflicting information I sometimes see from both my educational and my professional experiences means I am not completely persuaded about the perspective I am about to present, or whether I am just arguing for argument's sake. Yet I feel like someone needs to bring up another perspective for the sake of argument, and to "check ourselves."

In today's class, I wonder about the discussion of border patrol agents and the Department of Homeland Security deterrence policy to prevent illegal immigration. The perspective of De León and others in my class is that the government is purposefully, deliberately, and knowingly sending immigrants to their death in a harsh and unforgivable climate. Yet my personal experience with the military and the Department of Defense in general leads me to believe that in reality, there is no sinister intent. I do not perceive these policies to be a blatant, purposeful act of violence as it is often portrayed. The government is not full of evil persons, just human beings. Realistically there is probably a lack of understanding on the effects of these policies within Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense and that this is not akin to premeditated murder. A tremendous lack, an inexcusable lack, but a lack nonetheless. What I do think is there is a sense of a real threat in these organizations that those in the field of anthropology rarely if ever appear to share. It is difficult to know which side is more accurate: how real are the security threats that the Department of Defense insists face

our nation? Are we foolish to ignore them, or not to take a proactive stance against potential threats?

There is a sense that institutions like the military are trying to control everything in society, and it sometimes seems akin to a conspiracy theory. Is it that the state, including the military, is really as powerful and in control as some believe? I do not believe that the Department of Defense is laughing behind a curtain, wringing its hands as a power-hungry demon discussing its own diabolical plan to destroy the “other.”

But what if I am also part of the problem? Am I so connected to the military, so embedded at this point that I am failing to see the outside critiques? Am I too close to view these issues critically? Or am I close enough that I can point out the inconsistencies on both sides of the argument? Why am I taking the assigned readings and classrooms discussions as if they are a personal attack? Sometimes anthropology and other social sciences discuss the military like it is a blood thirsty, soulless organization, when in fact the military is not soulless because it never had a soul – there could be no absence of one because it never existed. It is made up of the souls of those who comprise it – thousands and hundreds of thousands of individual souls.

These souls, these members of the military, are my clients, my colleagues, and have become my friends. They have joined the military for various reasons, from patriotism to family traditions to their own viable job opportunity. There is also a real sense of danger and of duty among them; there is something to protect and they have volunteered to protect it, that being the national security.

I also hesitate to bring in a contrarian perspective because of the sometimes visceral attitudes of my classmates, and even a few professors, as manifested in both spoken rhetoric and unspoken assumptions. If there are other people in the room who disagree with any of themes in the classroom, no one else has dared to voice them. Since I am not sure how they will react, I couch my words with a caveat to any prevent direct attack: “Let me play devil’s advocate for a minute...” I begin.

Yet when I go to work, I challenge the narrative there as well. Maybe the problem is that we are not questioning the underlying assumptions: perhaps the only threat to national security is our perception of the threat. When discussing hypothetical responses to a hypothetical military threat to the United States, I once posed the question “What if we just chose to ignore that provocation? How do we think they would respond?” I was told that this had been discussed as a potential course of action. Would the U.S. actually choose to “do nothing?” I am not so sure.

In my courses, I also speak up when it appears we are only talking about problems. When are we going to starting talk potential solutions? I wonder. Anthropology often criticizes those that are trying to implement some solutions to social problems. I understand that a critique of methods is important; I greatly credit the discipline for opening my eyes on my own assumptions, which I have brought up in numerous work settings. Yet it seems like many of these articles and texts levy more accusations instead of engaging with those responsible to correct their mistakes and propose alternative approaches. This is a general theme in the anthropological critique of the U.S. Army’s Human Terrain System and the few anthropologists who were

involved in the program. The majority of literature includes scathing critiques of the process, and rarely suggesting alternative solutions to the problem the Human Terrain System was trying to address. So where does this cycle end? How can the military or the national security state improve if helpful information and tools to bring new light to these issues are not provided to the military, which is frequently charged with executing foreign policy?

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The U.S. Army's Human Terrain System dominated the conversation on anthropological ethics in the early 2000s. I will not review the history of the Human Terrain System in detail, as there is much already written in anthropology, security studies, and the media on the topic (for example, see Davies 2019). Additionally, my purpose here is to approach the literature on the Human Terrain System from the same angle that I have used with the previous instances of anthropological-military engagement: to describe events that reveal similar double standards on anthropological ethics when applied to the U.S. military. This angle also somewhat ironically highlights some of the characteristics the AAA displays similar to institutions of power; raises questions on whether ethics principles outweigh an examination of a research proposal holistically; and whether anthropological ethics should be applied in advance of critical evaluation of these activities.

It is no secret that the AAA initially dismissed the Human Terrain System before conducting any significant research on the program. The first report on the Human

Terrain System by the AAA was an appendix to the 2007 Final Report by the Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC). The CEAUSSIC 2007 Final Report acknowledges that Commission was not initially chartered to study the Human Terrain System. Yet because the Human Terrain System came to light in the middle of the its research, CEAUSSIC added the appendix and recommended that the AAA Executive Board provide “preemptive public statement to the end of helping to constructively frame further discussion of the Human Terrain System and related issues” (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007: 32).

However, the AAA Executive Board released its own statement even before receiving the CEAUSSIC 2007 Final Report. The Executive Board statement argues that the Human Terrain System leaves potential conflicts in relation to AAA’s standing Code of Ethics, specifically violating anthropology’s tenets to do no harm, to receive voluntary informed consent, and to provide full disclosure of sources and purposes of its research (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007: 1). It also expressed concern that anthropology as a whole could be harmed by association with the Human Terrain System “given the existing range of globally dispersed understandings of U.S. militarism” (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007: 2). When its 2007 Final Report was released to the AAA Executive Board less a month later, CEUASSIC acknowledged its initial research on the Human Terrain System was limited (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007: 29), but it knew only a few anthropologists were currently employed by the Human Terrain System (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007: 30). The CEAUSSIC 2007 Final Report then recommended the AAA engage with the Human Terrain System

leaders to “communicate our concerns and our position” and remove its association with “anthropology” (2007: 32).

The question is not whether the AAA should have had concerns with the Human Terrain System, or sought to clarify its the association with the discipline of anthropology. Yet with admittedly minor research on the program as a whole, or what individual human terrain teams (HTTs) and the limited anthropologists they employed were actually doing in the field, was it possible to make a balanced, ethical judgement of the program? This rush to judgment and condemnation followed the trends of Project Camelot and the Thailand affair described previously: evidence was unearthed, accusations were made, anthropologists were blamed, and anthropological-military projects were cancelled.

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and George Lucas called this historical memory of anthropological-military engagement part of anthropology’s “litany of shame” defined as an “unconscious, unreflective, ceremonial, indeed cultic manner in which principal elements of factual history are highlighted, recited, and collectively renounced in their entirety by the disciplinary community” (2015: 239). The Human Terrain System fell into this pattern, denounced before “even a shred of concrete evidence, one way or another, concerning how the program itself would work, and what its participants would be expected to do (let alone whether it would in fact prove to yet be another episode in this unfortunate historical narrative)” (Fluehr-Lobban and Lucas 2015: 241).

This brings up another point in the discussion of anthropological ethics and how it relates to anthropological-military engagement: should ethics principles be preemptive,

used as preliminary guidelines for which types of activities anthropologists should or should not do before they commence research? Or is it ethical to commence a research project when one is not entirely certain if the project will result in insurmountable ethical dilemmas?

On the one hand, ethics principles are meant to influence broader decision making, to guide decisions without having to determine in each new situation what choices one should make. On the other hand, each situation is unique. It begs a larger question of how anthropological ethics principles should be applied prior to research, and whether ethical principles are preemptive to an event; or how ethics principles should allow for a more thorough investigation of a project, whether for the military or elsewhere, before delivering a decisive judgement. For example, political science researcher Michael Davies criticized anthropologist Roberto González for providing multiple accusations on “the potential harm [the Human Terrain System] might bring to Iraqi and Afghan civilians—and to future generations of social scientists who might be accused of being spies when conducting research abroad” (González 2016). Davies argues that these criticisms are provided without any evidence or examples (2016). Is González ethical in his premonition that the Human Terrain System would cause potential harm? Or is Davies acting ethically in insisting for evidence and proof before making a determination on the ethics of the Human Terrain System?

It is certainly logical that anthropologists would view the Human Terrain System in the context of historical anthropological-military engagements. Yet if there are misrepresentations and errors in the collective memory of anthropology, this could lead

to the same conclusions and the same results as previous activities, preventing growth in knowledge and understanding. In the context of the history of previous anthropological-military controversies, this may have been jumping in too early before a clear assessment could be made. Should the Human Terrain System have been condemned early for potential violations of anthropological ethics, thereby preventing any further engagement? Or was the critique premature and unfounded, and akin to throwing the baby out with the bathwater; in dismissing an anthropological-military engagement wholesale, was there a missed opportunity for the anthropological community as a whole to recommend improvements, provide stronger ethical guidelines, and potentially create a viable program?

These reactions also reflect the prevalence of the anthropology of critique. Anthropologist Sherry Ortner argues that anthropology began to shift to this mode of inquiry, what she calls “dark anthropology” in conjunction with anthropology’s interrogation of neoliberalism beginning in the 1980s (2016: 48). During this time, American anthropology also increasingly turned to theories of social structure within power constructs, both from Marxist theories on inherent inequality and class struggle, and Foucault, who viewed power as universally pervasive (Ortner 2016: 50-51). Within these theoretical contexts, plus the increased study of the anthropology of colonialism (Ortner 2016: 51), anthropologists have thus been more prone to study the “dark” side of society, and to critique of institutions of power like the U.S. military rather than to engage with them.

However, these critiques lacked imagination within anthropology of the U.S. military's internal diversity and potential for adaptation. Anthropologist Keith Brown wrote in *American Anthropologist* on the U.S. military's diverse and evolving use of cultural knowledge, both overtime and among the different Service departments. The title of his article "All They Understand Is Force" is a play on how the U.S. military mistakenly viewed Middle Eastern societies, but also how anthropologists have also mistakenly viewed the military (Brown 2008: 443). Though he morally disagreed with the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Brown 2008: 443), Brown and others believed anthropology's overarching analysis of the military often resulted in "over-essentialized views of a singular military mindset" (2008: 450; see also Eyal 2004, Rubinstein 2003). Some anthropologists have also critiqued Gusterson's views on structures of power in national security institutions as similarly monolithic (Low and Maguire 2019: 10).

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In the end, the initial critiques of the Human Terrain System discouraged many anthropologists from joining the program (Forte 2011: 152). In the intervening years between the two CEAUSSIC investigations, several anthropologists joined together and formed the Network of Concerned Anthropologists (NCA). The NCA took several steps to speak out against the Human Terrain System, including the circulation of an online pledge for anthropologists to boycott its requests for employment (with over 1,000 signatures); the publication of *The Counter-Counterinsurgency Field Manual, or Notes on Demilitarizing Society* (2009), as well as media interviews and opinion pieces

(National Public Radio 2007, NCA website). When CEAUSSIC completed its investigation into the program in 2009, the Human Terrain System still only employed a few anthropologists. The 2009 CEAUSSIC Final Report records that of the 417 Human Terrain System employees, eleven were anthropologists, six with doctoral degrees and five with master's degrees (AAA CEAUSSIC 2009:12).

There are competing claims and contradictory information on whether the Human Terrain System compromised anthropological ethics as specified in the AAA Code of Ethics. Critics argued that "HTS provided cover and even legitimacy for espionage operations that contravened basic ethical obligations" (Erickson and Murphy 2017: 181). Human Terrain Team member Adam Silverman, argued that his methods of research for the Human Terrain System followed normal protocols of participant observation, including identifying oneself and asking for consent, and that most of the information provided to commanders was unclassified and published for peer review (Silverman 2009). "We do not do targeting, intelligence collection, or engage in any part of lethal and kinetic operations, although we do, like everyone, retain the right to self-defense. Contrary to the program's most vocal critics, we are not using social science methodology to enable the Army to kill more Iraqis and Afghans" (Silverman 2009).

Yet others have argued that it would be impossible for any information collected in a war zone by the military to at minimum have the potential to be classified, or used for alternative purposes (Interview 3, The Diane Rehm Show 2007). Anthropologist Brian Ferguson also reasoned that because the Human Terrain System provides information that can be used to kill and could lead to a worldwide monitoring, that it

automatically excludes the work from the ethical considerations of anthropologists (2011: 101). Ben Connable, former U.S. Marine officer and critic of the Human Terrain System (see Connable 2009), argued that the Human Terrain System operated in a U.S. government regulatory space between intelligence and social science research which created problems with the program, from even inadvertently providing intelligence information and failing to complete an academic review through an institutional review board (2011).

Others argued whether it was possible for Human Terrain Teams, accompanied by armed military service members, to be able to gain true voluntary informed consent from research subjects. In an interview with National Public Radio, Montgomery McFate argued that Afghans are intelligent, that they can tell the difference between different U.S. military units, such as those that are specifically involved in civil affairs, and thus are able to provide consent (The Diane Rehm Show 2007). On the other hand, Patricia Omidian, who conducted anthropological fieldwork in Afghanistan both prior to and following the September 11 attacks, never carried a weapon, which she claims helped distinguish her from the U.S. military and other international organizations (2009: 7).

Yet many of the critiques from anthropologists and others against the Human Terrain System have little to do with anthropological ethics but were general issues of corruption and poor implementation of the program. These ethics issues they cite are often alleged or preemptive; anthropologists did not always have evidence that an ethical violation had occurred, but that one could potentially occur. With the anecdotes and experiences from the Human Terrain System designers and Human Terrain Team

members that claimed otherwise, was it too early for anthropologists to condemn it? Or could the broader discipline of anthropology have intervened and modified the program?

Many from within and without the Department of Defense argued that the root of many problems with the Human Terrain System were institutional, bureaucratic, and administrative in nature (for example, see Price 2011, Gezari 2013, McFate 2016, Davies 2016, Simms 2016). Some of these criticisms include: poor implementation plans that allowed the project to expand too quickly (Simms 2016); poor hiring practices; negligent oversight of contractors; abuse of personnel reporting systems; (Davies 2016). Other administrative and contractual issues (Price 2011, Gezari 2013a); sending social scientists to locations where they had never studied (Gezari 2013a); corruption and abuse of funds; the death of two Human Terrain Team members, and another charged with murdering a detainee (Price 2011:101); and confusion from a lack of a uniform mandate for Human Terrain Teams within the brigade combat teams (Gezari 2013a).

There was also conflicting testimony on whether Human Terrain Teams were as successful and useful as intended. Several researchers have noted anecdotal testimony with positive remarks on Human Terrain Teams from the participants themselves (McFate 2016, Davies 2016). Some argue the Human Terrain System ultimately “failed to deliver” what it promised to the military (Simms 2016), and yet others argue that the Department of Defense took shortcuts to accomplish a task, then “wonder[ed] why it did not work as anticipated” (Interview 5). One participant noted that her Human Terrain Team was successful because it “convinced the Army to refurbish a mosque on the American base—a project that was credited with cutting insurgent rocket attacks” (Gezari

2013a). This Human Terrain Team also advised the Army to support job-training initiatives in Afghanistan, thereby reducing the number of people who joined violent insurgent groups (Gezari 2013a). Yet another of my interviewees related to me that for every good news story, there were a dozen negative responses; and even some of the positive remarks in public were negative in private (Interview 4). David Price criticized the testimony of U.S. Army Colonel Martin Schweitzer for estimating that his Human Terrain Team reduced combat operations by 60-70%, after Price conducted research and discovering the percentage was a judgment call “who had simply given figures that expressed what seemed to be occurring” (Price 2010).

Others have criticized the Human Terrain System critics as having spent little actual time researching among the U.S. military, or of spending time around service members in general (Interview 5). This may have contributed to some inaccurate reflections of the Human Terrain System. Anthropology should be well aware of this criticism. Ironically, this was a similar critique of the pioneers of anthropology that have also been criticized as so-called “armchair anthropologists”: those who wrote anthropology without conducting any fieldwork (Miller 2011: 28, Erickson & Murphy 2017: 29). For example, some cite a general lack of understanding the U.S. military culture including its jargon, which made some Human Terrain Team activities sound lethal (Simms 2016). For example, “going on patrol” may mean to deliver humanitarian aid or assess infrastructure. Likewise, “targeting” may refer to engaging with local leaders, as in “a target of opportunity” (Silverman 2009). Silverman also argued that other institutions have adopted the language of “human terrain” that were not involved in

the Human Terrain System, such as Afghanistan's Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) that were operated by the Department of State and not the U.S. military.

Silverman argues that in an interview on the Human Terrain System, anthropologist Roberto González erroneously combined information about the Human Terrain System and PRTs, confusing the purpose and activities of the two (Silverman 2009).

Even for its downfalls, some researchers have claimed that the Human Terrain System's problems are actually a case study in cultural and organizational improvement (Green 2015). Clifton Green wrote an in-depth look at the Human Terrain System's oft-cited structural and organization problems, and how the Human Terrain System addressed the management and bureaucratic issues of its early days, and made significant improvements in eliminating waste, corruption, and contractual issues. "The Human Terrain System is a remarkable turnaround story and should serve as a case study for how organizations can implement fundamental organizational changes" he concludes (Green 2015: 61). Michael Davies and other political scientists completed one of the Department of Defense assessments on Human Terrain Teams, published by the National Defense University (NDU) as *Human Terrain Teams: An Organizational Innovation for Sociocultural Knowledge and Irregular Warfare* (Lamb et al 2013). Davies in particular has continued to write on the Human Terrain System, largely to respond to repeated critique of the program by numerous voices in the anthropology and the media. He has kept a chronological bibliography of articles and books, (which include a large number of often quoted anthropological pieces) written before, during, and after the Human Terrain System; the most current bibliography dated January 2019 includes 128 pages of

references (Davies 2019). Many of the changes Davies and Green identify are not frequently acknowledged by the critics of the Human Terrain System (Davies 2016).

Some of Davies' research on the Human Terrain System disclose some of the double standards that have been applied to the military by anthropologist in the past as well as the present. For instance, Davies critiques some anthropologists for neglecting academic standards in their articles on the Human Terrain System, including frequently cited misleading or inaccurate information on the program (Davies 2019). In one article, Davies provides detailed, historical evidence to debunk the reporting of *USA Today* journalist Tom Vanden Brook for repeatedly mischaracterizing Human Terrain Teams, and for failing to follow basic journalistic standards for research and analysis (Davies 2016). For one example, Vanden Brook's claims of the ineffectiveness of the Human Terrain System derive from the testimony of only one Army brigade commander, while Davies' research highlights an aggregate of studies where most commanders' assessed Human Terrain Teams as highly valuable, successful, effective (Davies 2016).

Yet anthropologists continue to quote Vanden Brook as an authoritative source, including in Roberto González's recent chapter for *Exotic No More: Anthropology for the Contemporary World* (2019). In this chapter, González says that Vanden Brooks' information was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request; but Davies provides specific details on how Vanden Brook obtained an unauthorized copy of the draft National Defense University manuscript, published the draft online without permission, then quoted it out of context (Davies 2016). Is it ethical for anthropologists to cite information as authoritative that journalists or others obtain without "informed

consent”? Additionally, if anthropologists make errors in citing erroneous research, is there an obligation for the anthropologist to print a redaction or an update to their own work?

By contrast, David Price is not shy when acknowledging that he received a personal email from Julian Assange that Wikileaks had published a “leaked” unclassified copy of the *Human Terrain Systems Handbook*, and specifically asked Price to write a review (Price 2011: 100). Price follows anthropological ethics by openly stating his sources, but does not seem to be concerned about the ethical considerations for receiving and commenting on unauthorized copies of government documents. Is it justified because of the ethical problems that may be revealed when the documents are investigated? Price and others have criticized several media outlets and journalists for uncritically publishing about the Human Terrain System (Price 2011), yet without also critically analyzing the sources of their own research.

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As was the case with previous anthropological-military engagement controversies, the Human Terrain System led to a charged atmosphere in anthropology, and another update to the AAA Code of Ethics. During the AAA Executive Board Business Meeting in 2007, anthropologist Terrence Turner recommended rewriting the Code of Ethics to include the section of the 1971 code that prohibited all secretive research (Low and Merry 2010: S205). Other anthropologists argued against Turner’s specific proposal, but offered recommendations for other revisions, and the Committee on Ethics created a subcommittee to review several proposals (AAA Code 2009: 5). A

new edition Code of Ethics was adopted in February 2009, dated 8 months before the CEAUSSIC committee released its final report on the Human Terrain System. The 2009 AAA Code of Ethics included stronger and more specific guidance for anthropologists on secretive research and the dissemination of their results. While the Human Terrain System controversy is not named in the Code of Ethics, its influence is clearly reflected in the text.

The 2009 Code of Ethics kept the same format and retained nearly all of the 1998 Code of Ethics language, adding language and removing only a few words. Language prohibiting secrecy is not repeated as frequently as in the 1971 edition, but the references are increased from the 1998 Code of Ethics. In the Responsibility to scholarship and to science section it states:

4. Anthropologists have a responsibility to be both honest and transparent with all stakeholders about the nature and intent of their research. They must not misrepresent their research goals, funding sources, activities, or findings.

Anthropologists should never deceive the people they are studying regarding the sponsorship, goals, methods, products, or expected impacts of their work.

Deliberately misrepresenting one's research goals and impact to research subjects is a clear violation of research ethics, as is conducting clandestine research (AAA 2009: 2-3, emphasis added).

The "Responsibility to the public" section also specifically states an anthropologist's relationship with the government: "... an anthropologist should be honest and candid. Anthropologists must not compromise their professional

responsibilities and ethics and should not agree to conditions which inappropriately change the purpose, focus or intended outcomes of their research” (AAA 2009: 3).

With regard to the principle of harm, the 2009 Code of Ethics states “In conducting and publishing their research, or otherwise disseminating their research results, anthropological researchers must ensure that they do not harm the safety, dignity, or privacy of the people with whom they work, conduct research, or perform other professional activities, or who might reasonably be thought to be affected by their research” (AAA 2009: 3, emphasis added). The use of “ensure” in the 2009 Code of Ethics is a stronger directive to anthropologists on harm than the AAA had previously published. It later adds that, although acknowledging that there are areas where “restricting” disclosure is “appropriate and ethical,” anthropologists should “weigh the intended and potential uses of their work and the impact of its distribution” (AAA 2009: 5). Previous versions instructed anthropologists to “avoid” harm; now the Code of Ethics asked for something that would be virtually impossible to implement: even when taking the necessary precautions, an anthropologist is unable to predict the full ramifications of one’s work and the harm or the possibilities it could create.

THE 2012 CODE OF ETHICS AND MILITARY ANTHROPOLOGY

As was the case of the earlier anthropological-military controversies, the Human Terrain System became a watershed for changes in anthropological ethics, notwithstanding the limited number of anthropologists involved in the program. Yet one of the repercussions of the CEAUSSIC report is that it brought a greater general awareness of the U.S. military and national security apparatus, and eventually to a greater general awareness of and tolerance for the work of military anthropologists. The literature and rhetoric from the mid-2000s onward show a greater openness in the discipline towards studying with and for the military, providing military anthropologists space to discuss their work, the ethics challenges they face, as well as providing opportunities for others to review and critique military anthropology on its own merits. This has led to – and has been led by – an even broader view of anthropological ethics as displayed in the 2012 AAA Code of Ethics.

The CEAUSSIC investigation also contributed to breaking down barriers among the anthropologists with varying opinions on anthropological-military engagement. As mentioned previously, tensions were high during the Human Terrain System discussions. Robert Rubinstein, Kerry Fosher, and Clementine Fujimura described how the animosity towards military anthropologists was the catalyst for their compilation *Practicing Military Anthropology* (2013: ix). During the 2007 AAA Annual Meeting, an

anthropologist openly condemned Rubinstein, Fosher, and others for their work with the military, proposed they were guilty of war crimes, and called for each to be banned from the AAA (Rubinstein et al 2013: ix). These remarks were accompanied by applause, and without any response or rebuke from those presiding at this meeting (Rubinstein 2013: 127).

The CEAUSSIC investigation and the conversations that followed revealed misunderstandings and misconceptions in anthropology about the military and the work of military anthropologists. Some military anthropologists have noted that anthropologists often lacked basic understanding about the Department of Defense and the military in general. Some did not understand the differences between military personnel and DoD civilians and contractors (Fosher 2010). One military anthropologist related to me that they had to explain to their colleagues that a DoD civilian or contractor would not be categorized as going AWOL¹¹ if they showed up late for work (Interview 4).

The CEAUSSIC report and the conversations also led to not only civil but friendly relationships among anthropologists with viewpoints at opposite ends of the anthropological-military spectrum, calming the tensions that were prevalent early in the Human Terrain System era and breaking down barriers to collaboration (Interview 3). “Even though some of CEAUSSIC’s early exchanges were quite intense, these conversations created an atmosphere of trust in which we gradually came to understand and appreciate each other’s positions, despite deep differences of opinion” said Robert

¹¹ A military acronym for “absent without official leave.”

Albro, the CEAUSSIC chair (Albro et al 2012: 8). In my observations and conversations at the 2019 AAA Annual Meeting, it was apparent that anthropologists had developed friendships among themselves, as well as with some counterparts at the Department of Defense that go beyond polite references to “colleagues.” The engagement that these anthropologists undertook allowed them to find some common ground, even if that common ground was simply one of respect of an opposing opinion, and thus opening the door for research and publication on military anthropologists and their work.

Like the 1998 edition, 2012 AAA Code of Ethics revision fundamentally altered the structure and approach to anthropological ethics. This edition is divided by specific principles instead of situations or entities to which anthropologists should give ethical consideration. This has the dual effect of making the ethics code clearer and more specific, while simultaneously allowing for broader interpretation and application among all subdisciplines of anthropology. The 2012 Code of Ethics identifies what is most important for anthropologists upfront in clear, digestible statements “which can be easily remembered for use by anthropologists in their everyday professional lives” (AAA 2012). Each principle includes a broadly focused description on the intent of the principle. The seven statements, called Principles of Professional Responsibility (PPRs) are as follows:

Principles of Professional Responsibility

1. Do No Harm
2. Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work
3. Obtain Informed Consent and Necessary Permissions
4. Weigh Competing Ethical Obligations Due Collaborators and Affected Parties
5. Make Your Results Accessible
6. Protect and Preserve Your Records
7. Maintain Respectful and Ethical Professional Relationships

Past editions of the AAA ethics guidelines included these principles; there is no revolutionary information in this 2012 edition. Yet each principle was previously buried in the Code of Ethics text, emphasizing the “who” instead of the “what” of anthropological ethics. This appeared to make an arbitrary distinction between the ethics of research subjects or of students or of the public, as if applying the ethical guidelines for each of these groups might somehow differ. The 2012 Code of Ethics removes such invisible distinctions, emphasizing that the same ethical principles apply to all groups of people, animals, materials, or institutions. This removal of distinctions then allows anthropologists to determine the “how” of ethics in their particular situations, still providing greater clarity about what each of these principles are and what they entail. This broad applicability allows inclusion of military anthropology in ways that previous editions of the AAA ethics guidelines explicitly excluded.

Like the 2009 edition, the 2012 Code of Ethics also includes an introductory statement which opens up with the following: “Among our goals are the *dissemination of anthropological knowledge and its use to solve human problems*. Anthropologists work in the *widest variety of contexts* studying *all aspects* of the human experience, and face *myriad ethical quandaries* inflected in different ways by the contexts in which they work and the kinds of issues they address” (AAA 2012, emphasis added). This statement does a few things differently from previous versions, particularly from the 2009 Code of Ethics. First, it specifically points away from a purely academic goal of anthropology and clearly encompasses the applied, public, and advocacy approaches to anthropology as part of the larger goals of the discipline. This hearkens back to the breadth of the 1998

Code of Ethics. The change also highlights a growing trend in anthropology where the AAA may anticipate fewer job opportunities for up-and-coming anthropologists than educational institutions can accommodate (Rubinstein et al 2013; Interview 4). The “myriad ethical quandaries” is also notably included as a statement of fact, not a possibility. The 2012 Code of Ethics emphasizes this point later by stating its purpose is to “assist anthropologists in tackling difficult ethical issues or the new situations that *inevitably arise* in the production of knowledge” (AAA 2012, emphasis added). Both statements provide inclusion for military anthropology, whether one debates it is part of the applied or public subdiscipline, or due to the U.S. military’s involvement to in “human problems” globally. Perhaps the fact that the military’s link to human problems – both in creating them and helping to solve them – should be one of the main arguments for the existence of a military anthropology.

Each principle’s description in the code leaves ample room for military anthropologists – as well as all other anthropologists – to navigate the ethical challenges they will face in their work, and several have provided explicit, reflexive information on their thought processes and self-adjudication. These personal experiences are largely available because there have been more publications over the past two decades on their work; more explorations and ethnographic accounts on what military anthropologists are doing in a more open, relaxed, and inclusive climate. As some of these principles intersect, I have grouped some of the principles together for ease of reading.

Do No Harm and Weigh Competing Ethical Obligations

The 2012 Code of Ethics advises that “each researcher think through the possible ways that the research might cause harm” yet reinforces that anthropologists have “ethical obligations” to consider the consequences of their action or inaction (AAA 2012). Graduate students of anthropology provided this rationale early in the Human Terrain System debate, arguing that doing no harm is not the same as “doing nothing” (Serrato, Laporte, and Dhanu 2009). Several military anthropologists have also described this rationale in their approach to their work. Kerry Fosher, an anthropologist at the Marine Corps University wrote,

If I do nothing about a situation where I can help mitigate harm or give people more options, where does that fall in the terms of the ‘do no harm’ guidelines? The nine-year-old girl in Kabul and the nineteen-year-old Marine do not have the luxury of waiting for us to sort out our national debate on foreign policy. I believe their lives matter. In terms of my overall employment, I have decided that I have a personal ethical obligation to engage under these circumstances (2010: 267).

Paula Holmes-Eber also described a similar thought process as she considered work for the Marines Corps: “Did I have the right to simply sit comfortably on the sidelines as hundreds of thousands of people died, critiquing our government and military for their mistakes without making any effort to improve the situation?” (2013: 60).

Fosher accepts that lending anthropological methods and information to non-anthropologists could lead to unforeseen consequences, from inadvertently contributing to the harm of research subjects, or enabling the military to pick and choose only the anthropology they like “cafeteria style.” She does not argue against these criticisms, but

offers a counterpoint: “This is undoubtedly true, *as it would be if they could only access what we had published*” (Fosher 2010: 267). As one of the other principles emphasizes the importance of making anthropological research open and available to the public, the military is technically free to use anthropological research now. By working *with* the military, anthropologists can shape conversations and offer disciplinary translation: “I believe that engagement offers at least the possibility of interpreting, offering other, non-violent courses of action, and so on, but only if we are willing to accept that we will not always ‘win’ in term of how information is used” (Fosher 2010: 267).

On weighing competing ethical obligations, the 2012 Code of Ethics acknowledges that various groups, from research participants, students, professional colleagues, employers, or funders “may create conflicting, competing, or crosscutting ethical obligations...” among which anthropologists must balance their decisions (AAA 2012). This language is much more open to the reality of anthropologists who work with a variety of groups outside of academia, and allows anthropologists more agency in determining the boundaries of this work. For example, Laura Simons who teaches Special Operations Forces at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School questioned the ethics of presenting too much critical thinking to military personnel, who take oaths to carry out a mission for the U.S. military; how much cynicism or doubt should be introduced to the military personnel who are assigned to carry out a mission, and who are not charged with creating the policy or plans on which these missions are based? (Simons 2012: 36).

Be Open and Honest Regarding Your Work, and Obtain Informed Consent and Necessary Permissions

Instead of stating this principle as negative and reactionary, the 2012 Code of Ethics describes sharing information in terms of *openness* and *honesty*, a proactive, assertive endeavor for anthropologists. One of the converse statements that specifically discusses *secrecy* is defined as compartmented research, or “any research project in which the principal investigator is part of a research project, conducted on behalf of a third party, in which researcher has neither control nor knowledge about the overall goals, structure, purpose, sponsors, funding, and/or other critical elements of a project (AAA 2012). This statement acknowledges are many areas where secrecy is not only acceptable but required for ethical research. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban describes keeping kiva secrets, or keeping some information about a research community hidden to maintain access to that particular group, as a one way anthropologists are able to conduct research within an organization, or a way to “do some good” instead of merely doing no harm (Fluehr-Lobban 2008).

The 2012 AAA Code of Ethics separates classified work from compartmented research by saying that these “may or may not” be one and the same (AAA 2012). This subtle statement provides another crack in the door to allow work for the military. The focus on compartmented research becomes not specifically about whether the research involves secrecy, but rather the intent and effects of the secrecy required. There are legitimate reasons to include this type of secrecy in military anthropology, as well as any other type of anthropology (Fosher 2010: 268). Laura McNamara could openly discuss what information she conceals as well as what she discloses.

I will not write about the satellite systems, nor can I identify the specific geographic regions on which the analysts are focused. However, I can write extensively and openly about the organizational challenges that attend this kind of work, and the strategies that different analytic workgroups employ to balance competing demands on their time and attention (McNamara 2012: 99).

In other words, McNamara is open about the focus of her work, without disclosing sensitive information about her research participants or the specific work they participate in, which is not the focus of her anthropological work. Fosher was also transparent about how information is kept secret during her work with Marine Corps Intelligence. She accepted that concealing some information may negatively affect her career in anthropology, but ethical principles outweigh these potential drawbacks. She compares her work and her ethical dilemmas to the struggle that advocacy or applied anthropologists experience (Fosher 2010: 268). The 2012 ethics principles also provides greater agency and self-reflection for applied and advocacy anthropologists who face issues of proprietary information for businesses or other government or non-profit sponsors.

Ironically, much of the guidance on protecting or the dissemination of sensitive information for anthropologists is similar to U.S. government regulations on classified information, even as some anthropologists are opposed to holding a security clearance or to participating in classified work (Albro et al 2012: 226). Presidential Executive Order 13526 (National Archives 2009) designates certain government officials as original classification authorities (OCAs), who then determine what information is classified and

at what level. There are three broad classification levels¹² that provide guidance for determining whether information could “reasonably be expected to result in damage to the national security” (National Archives 2009). “Top Secret” classification is applied if “the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security that the original classification authority is able to identify or describe;” “Secret” classification when there could be “serious damage;” and “Confidential” when there could be “damage.” (National Archives 2009). It also lists types of information that should be classified in general categories.¹³

Both the types of information to be classified and the classification levels are broad and require a degree of subjective decision-making. Just as anthropologists use individual judgment in determining what information they conceal or reveal in their work (for example, with regards to information which could potentially reveal the identities of their interlocutors), original classification authorities must use their professional judgment to determine whether and how to classify information. Overclassification of information is a widely acknowledged problem in the Department of Defense, and some have recently called for reviewing classification guidelines (Mehta 2020). Yet Rubinstein comments that there exists a similar default among his colleagues: “Anthropologists are

¹² There are also separate designations for special access programs (SAPs), special technical operations (STOs) and Alternate Compensatory Control Measures (ACCM). These classifications, also determined by OCAs, that are much more protected due to the sensitive information that they entail.

¹³ Classification reasons are listed as: (a) military plans, weapons systems, or operations; (b) foreign government information; (c) intelligence activities (including covert action), intelligence sources or methods, or cryptology; (d) foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States, including confidential sources; (e) scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to the national security; (f) United States Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities; (g) vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to the national security; or (h) the development, production, or use of weapons of mass destruction (E.O. 13526 2009).

notoriously secretive in the treatment of their fieldnotes. Indeed, the act of making our data available to other colleagues is the exception in anthropology rather than the rule” (2013: 130). Both original classification authorities and anthropologists must rely on personal judgment and a certain degree of precedence within their own ethical standards to determine the kinds of information to protect and what is disseminated. That the 2012 Code of Ethics appears to acknowledge these are viable reasons for holding such information secret is a major shift in the AAA’s ethics guidelines.

Related to open research, the 2012 Code of Ethics reiterates that “Anthropologists have an obligation to ensure that research participants have freely granted consent, and must avoid conducting research in circumstances in which consent may not be truly voluntary or informed” (AAA 2012). The final clause speaks to the critics’ concerns that even though members of Human Terrain Teams claimed they obtained informed consent before conducting research (The Diane Rehm Show 2007, Silverman 2009), others have argued that it is questionable if not impossible to truly gain consent in a war zone (Connable 2011). This debate was one of the major points of the final CEAUSSIC report (2009). However, some anthropologists have pushed back on this claim, arguing this consists of a double standard that anthropologists may be applying to those in a war zone. Zehfuss writes,

In this thinking, there is no space for Afghans and Iraqis making their own decisions about participating in the Human Terrain System. Anthropologists’ concern over research at gunpoint is ‘grounded in the Nuremberg Code’s insistence that all research be based upon free and informed consent’ (Gusterson, 2010a). Yet,

ironically, this concern privileges the anthropologists' decision over that of potential research subjects: in a bid to protect people from being forced into consent their view – because necessarily constrained by the might of U.S. military power – becomes irrelevant to the discussion” (Zehfuss 2012: 6).

The idea that other seemingly vulnerable populations have more agency than may appear has been studied by anthropologists, such as in Denise Brennan's ethnography on sex workers in the Dominican Republic (2004), and Lila Abu-Lughod's article on the need for cultural relativism regarding the agency of Afghan women (2002). The 2012 Code of Ethics text still provides the space for anthropologists to determine if informed consent can be obtained. Yet the added language in the 2012 Code of Ethics reflects the atmosphere following the Human Terrain System and an example of the varying standards sometimes applied to anthropology for the military.

Make Your Results Accessible, and Protect and Preserve Your Records

This 2012 CoE also emphasizes openness of information in how anthropologists share their final research products. Yet it also provides a nuanced approach that may be more open to military anthropology than has been previously demonstrated. The back and forth between the ethics of accessibility versus safeguarding information is worth demonstrating with the majority of the text from this principle description below. The default guidelines are first listed, followed by exceptions to these guidelines in italicized text below to highlight these linkages:

Results of anthropological research should be disseminated in a timely fashion [underlining in the original]. *In some situations, limitations on dissemination may be appropriate where such restrictions will protect participants or their cultural heritage and/or tangible or intangible cultural or intellectual property. In some cases, dissemination may pose significant risks because once information is disseminated, even in a limited sphere, there is great likelihood that it will become widely available. Thus, preventing dissemination may sometimes be the most ethical decision.* Dissemination and sharing of research data should not be at the expense of protecting confidentiality. Anthropologists should not withhold research results from research participants, especially when those results are shared with others. *However, restrictions on disclosure may be appropriate and ethical, such as where study participants have been fully informed and have freely agreed to limited dissemination, or where restrictions have been placed on dissemination to protect the safety, dignity, or privacy of research participants or to minimize risk to researchers.* Proprietary, classified or other research with limited distribution raises ethical questions which must be resolved using these ethical principles (AAA 2012, emphasis added).

Interestingly, the exceptions take up the majority of the description for this principle; there is more information on when research can be appropriately concealed rather than on when it should be disseminated. This applies to military anthropology, where participants may be in danger of retaliation, or revealing too much information disseminated could compromise their anonymity. Even the emphasis on “timely fashion” lacks further detail,

making this statement a not-so-subtle nudge in a discipline that is familiar with research and publication activities that can drag on for years. Military personnel can relate; research papers are typically subject to classification review prior to publication, which may also prevent dissemination in “a timely fashion.” Finally, even some mention of the potential ethics challenges of classified or restricted work is left open for anthropologists to resolve, without a definitive restriction from the AAA ethics guidelines.

Maintain Ethical and Respectful Professional Relationships

The 2012 CoE also provides specificity on respecting professional relationships: “Anthropologists must not obstruct the scholarly efforts of others when such efforts are carried out responsibly” (AAA 2012). This hints at the atmosphere of contention and the complaints of the initial CEAUSSIC work on anthropologists in the military and national security sectors (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007: 56). Other examples have come to light outside of the Human Terrain System controversy. Laura McNamara conducted independent research to validate an article in *The New Yorker* which accused Raphael Patai’s *The Arab Mind* as heavily influential in the development of torture practices at Abu Ghraib. However, even when her research found no independent connection between Patai and the torture practices (other than the original *New Yorker* article), McNamara’s assertions were disregarded by the anthropological journal editors because she was a military anthropologist at a nuclear laboratory (Rubinstein 2013: 129). In her ethnographic account of her work at the U.S. Marines Corps Headquarters, Holmes-Eber also hints at the animosity she faced in her work, as she watches a group of Marines prepare for an overnight training exercise:

Why would anybody apply to the join the Marine Corps, crawling around on your belly in the early morning dark, testing your leadership through impossible scenarios with [Drill Instructors] constantly shouting in your ears, spending the night camping in thirty-degree weather, all the while knowing that if you make it you'll soon be shipped off to Afghanistan or the Philippines or the Horn of Africa?

Why would anyone become a professor of operational culture, crawling out of bed before dawn every day, struggling to pronounce impossible acronyms to speak so this strange foreign Marine tribe, and worrying about whether the culture curriculum is accurate while falling asleep at night knowing that many anthropologists believe my work to provide cultural understanding to the military is unethical and unprofessional (Holmes-Eber 2013: 58).

On a positive note, maintaining professional relationships can also help military anthropologists and others to prevent or mitigate ethical challenge as they arise. Fosher also described such relationships as her “intellectual bucket brigade,” a cadre of professional relationships in which she can discuss her work, helping her to be “systematically vigilant” to constantly check assumptions and maintain a self-reflexive approach to anthropological work (2010: 27).

MILITARY ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY

I was sitting around a small conference table with seven others. Most were senior mid-level military officers, O-5s and O-6s.¹⁴ There was also one government civilian, and me, a contractor. Sitting at the head of the table, and the focal point of the brief was a general officer (GO).¹⁵ I was the only woman, the only contractor, and the only non-veteran. While these officers and civilian clients have always treated me with great respect, certainly by evidence of this meeting even occurring, I felt intimidated. I was generally comfortable with this GO¹⁶, but the military is a hierarchical structure, and I

¹⁴ The military uses specialized language that distinguishes different ranks and branch of service. There are several different terms that all refer to the same rank. O-5 refers to the paygrade for Lieutenant Colonels in the Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps; and Commanders in the Navy. O-6 refers to Colonels in the Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps; and Captains in the Navy. These are only the distinction for commissioned officers; noncommissioned officers and enlisted personnel also have their own ranking structure, titles, and paygrade distinctions. Rank insignia is worn on military uniforms, and the structure for abbreviating each of the ranks differs. Thus once you understand this language and its symbols, you can look at a military officer or see their name and rank abbreviation in writing and quickly distinguish their rank and service department. Uniforms are also different between the services, but the Army and the Air Force now share the same all combat uniform (ACU) with only a difference in the color of the lettering and rank insignia, making them more difficult to distinguish. I will refer to these distinctions for general officers in the footnote 5. Additional information is available at the following website:

<https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Insignias/>.

¹⁵ General officers refer to generals between the O-7 to O-10 paygrades in the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps; or admirals in the Navy. General officers are also commonly referred to be the number of “stars” their rank receives in the insignia. There are three levels for each of these general officers, and they are also referred to either by the title or rank, that encompasses all service departments: Brigadier General (1-star), Major General (2-star), or Lieutenant General (3-star) in the Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps; and Rear Admiral (lower half, 1-star), Rear Admiral (upper half, 2-star), Vice Admiral (3-star). 4-stars are simply referred to as General or Admiral, and rarely referred to as an O-10. As discussed in the text, a fifth-star is only bestowed upon an officer during wartime <https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Insignias/>.

¹⁶ I chose to refer to this person as “this GO” not only to protect their identity, but to convey that this was one person with an individual perspective. In the English language, using “the” sometimes conveys a

was also cognizant of my place in the room – or rather, my somewhat out-of-place. Perhaps it was also because the idea of the brief and its purpose were mine alone.

A few weeks prior, I had been sitting in the same room but sitting against the wall in a “back seat,” listening, not briefing, role. This GO freely shared thoughts about our current project and the supporting intelligence analysis. This GO lamented the general reluctance of the intelligence community as a whole to provide a clear assessment that goes beyond the intelligence record. Instead, they assess a situation on different levels of “confidence” based on the information available from imperfect intelligence sources. The intelligence community often lacks a high confidence in the motivations, perceptions, or potential behaviors of adversaries, this GO was saying. My ears perked up. I rarely heard military officers talk about wanting, let alone needing, additional information on motivations and behaviors. Especially not senior military officers or during discussions of strategic planning.

I recognized an opportunity to suggest an analytical framework that deliberately incorporated cultural factors into intelligence analysis that I had studied in political science. While intelligence analysts learn the language and many aspects of the culture of different peoples they study, they are not always asked to provide information on specific elements of a culture, and the creator of this analytical framework noted that these assessments may be missing critical information to understanding behavior. This framework incorporated some anthropological ideas, but did not brand itself as

singular, all-encompassing nature of a noun, such as in “*the* opinion” or “*the* president” instead of a more general “*this* opinion” or “*a* president.”

anthropology or ethnography; it was strictly a framework for developing intelligence products. In the moment, I saw a small window of opportunity to apply my education to a real problem and did not consider the potential ethical implications of what I was about to suggest. I was slightly uncomfortable because speaking up now, when this topic was fresh, would require suggesting new ideas to this GO without first discussing them with my direct supervisors in accordance with the norms of military culture and rank, hierarchy, and protocol. Nonetheless, I seized the opportunity.

“If there was a different way to understand the perceptions of these actors, would you be interested in learning about this approach?” I blurted out at as the meeting was ending.

This GO was interested, so I provided a couple of articles and background information as a follow up. This GO read them and asked me a promising follow-up question before our next meeting: “What is the definition of culture that we are using?” Realizing this GO understood the malleable nature of “culture” further encouraged me that this discussion could be a fruitful one.

As I prepared for the discussion, I started to question whether this GO was just humoring me, but as my supervisor reminded me, GOs are busy individuals. They do not waste their time with information or meetings that are unimportant to their duties. As I shared my concerns with other colleagues, they also reminded me that this GO was a scholar who appreciates conversation and encourages discussion among all team members. This GO was just as busy as any other, and certainly would not accept a

wasteful meeting, I reasoned. Perhaps this GO would also see the value of including this cultural analysis in our project.

As I prepared, I did begin to think about the ethical considerations of recommending this analytical framework to the military. The benefits seemed to outweigh the potential and intangible drawbacks. Again, the framework was neither a strictly anthropological nor an ethnographic method. Former intelligence community members developed the method and the process was freely available on the Internet. It was a process, a framework, a method, not a formula for understanding cultures, nor was it meant to provide or recommend lethal targeting. The goal was to provide more nuanced information for decision makers. I saw the potential for this analytical framework to help military planners see through some of the “fog of war.” Ethnocentrism is clearly a part of the fog – if ethnocentrism is part of any other normal human thought process, then surely it is present for military planners and operators.

I felt professionally justified in providing the information as well. Cultural knowledge is not solely owned by anthropology, I reasoned. The military was keenly interested in better understanding this situation, understanding the decision calculus of certain individuals and cultures. Shouldn't I applaud and encourage any attempt by the military to better understand a situation and its intricate nuances that had direct impacts on its mission, and potentially major national security implications? Shouldn't I help if I am in a situation to provide the expertise and assistance? Couldn't this information help to prevent strategic miscalculation, and thus potentially even prevent the need for any operational or tactical involvement entirely? I felt in a similar way to what Paula

Holmes-Eber described in her ethnographic account for Practicing Military Anthropology: “I was surprised that the Marine Corps was genuinely looking for assistance in understanding the culture of the people of Iraq. They were asking me to help them understand and work with the local people. And it occurred to me – if I didn’t step up to do the job, who would?” (2013: 53).

I wanted this GO, my supervisors, and the military writ large to look at how ethnocentrism in the U.S. military could result in serious consequences. Could clearing up some miscalculations avoid or prevent warfare? Could it help the U.S. to better deter violence against U.S. forces, allies, or partners? I was not sure, but I felt confident that “more culture” (understanding its limitations) could do something. I was not an expert in the framework by any means, and if this was to be successful, I would be connecting my clients with the creators of the framework and their analysts. In a way, I was acting as an interlocutor.

I prepared some materials, a summary of the most salient points of the articles along with some updated information on the framework. This brief – yes, in PowerPoint – highlighted how such information could be useful for our project, and some examples of how the analysis had been used by members of the intelligence community. I also presented a few courses of action (COAs) on what we could do to include or encourage this kind of analysis for our project.

As was typical of our meetings with this GO, the brief was more of a discussion than reading a script or, as some may say, “walking through slides.” I thought it went fairly well and this GO was very receptive. Yet when discussing the different COAs,

knowing some would involve additional contract support, this GO asked “But why would I need to look for outside experts when I have an expert right here?”

This GO was looking at me, clearly suggesting I could provide this analysis for our project. I had to explain that I lacked personal expertise in the framework and in the region of interest (I neither speak nor understand the relevant languages). Using this framework and making it successful for our project would require someone with appropriate training, including significant language skills. I realized that I likely did not clarify my lack of skills in these areas before this meeting, and I could not develop these skills on the project timeline. Additionally, we were not required to have this kind of analytical framework to finish the project. The military is accustomed to using the information at hand, however incomplete it may be, and articulating the assumptions to fill in any details necessary for planning. Indeed, this is typically what they must do to execute their assigned missions. I believe the analytical framework I was presenting could have made the project better, whether providing new information or further validating the information at hand.

My response to this GO’s question seemed to take the wind out of the brief. The reality of our timeline and the scope of our office meant we could not hire experts to include this framework and analysis in our project. There was some talk about others I could speak with about using this capability, but there was no clear direction on the next steps, or specific guidance to gather more information and report back. The discussion wound down shortly thereafter. I did contact a couple of people about the framework, but my other duties and the lack of a specific directive held me back from spending a

significant amount of time hunting down additional information. These were after all my clients and my leadership; I could make recommendations, but I had other tasks to accomplish. I did not feel comfortable continuing to invest a great deal of time and resources on tasks that were not specifically part of the mission, especially when the timeline for our project was such a limiting factor.

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I relate this experience for a few reasons. First, as an additional vignette about military anthropology, or the potential for it, and the ethical principles of action and inaction that I considered. Second, it is one of many of my experiences with the military where I have seen an openness to out-of-the-box perspectives; describing the “the military” as a monolithic organization is about as accurate as describing the discipline of anthropology in the same terms. Lastly, like in any large, bureaucratic organization, this experience also demonstrates just a few of the barriers the military face when applying any new process or activity. Deadlines and contract constraints are just some of the hurdles one must clear in this particularly massive bureaucracy.

While I was not able to include this additional cultural analysis for the military as mentioned in my anecdote in the section above, others have been more successful. These small victories are not as frequently celebrated by anthropologists. Adam Silverman’s Human Terrain Team in Iraq identified archaeological sites while on patrol and helped the Army to map these sites and prevent them from being built upon (Silverman 2009). Even the aforementioned Army Colonel Schweitzer is another example. His misleading Congressional testimony on Human Terrain Teams lacked specific data to back up his

claims on reducing his brigade's combat operations (Price 2011:96), but Schweitzer clearly noticed a reduction in the violence. To be sure, it would have strengthened his testimony and the follow-on critiques to have specific examples and hard data. Other reports on Schweitzer's Human Terrain Team also indicate vignettes regarding a reduction in violence perpetrated by the U.S. military (Lamb et Al 2013: 170). But an anthropologist should also be able to relate to the idea that it is not always possible to know the full effects of your efforts; it is difficult to fully measure whether a Human Terrain Team reduced violence towards Americans or other Iraqis, or whether it increased violence. As my interviewees noted, one may not be able to see the successes immediately, but military anthropologists look for small wins and incremental changes (Interview 4, Interview 5). For incremental evidence, I can certainly attest to some interventions; from changing a pronoun in a Joint Staff publication to be gender neutral; and providing anthropology texts in reading lists to officers who were about to become commanders in different areas of the world, one of them a four-star. It may be challenging to know whether these extremely small baby steps contribute any change - but they are steps.

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Although the U.S. Army “quietly” cancelled the Human Terrain System, or at least the deployment aspect of the program¹⁷ in 2015 (González 2015), we have seen that this was not the beginning nor the end of anthropological-military engagement. The term

¹⁷ There are indications that HTS exists as a “program of record” on DoD budgetary documents, manifested as a research cell at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command called the Global Cultural Knowledge Network (Interview 3).

military anthropology has been featured more frequently in the literature, if only for lack of a better term to describe the emerging anthropological-military engagement as an increasingly accepted anthropological subdiscipline.¹⁸ In my conversations and observations with both military anthropologists and anthropologists critiquing the military, I too have noticed a softened rhetoric regarding military anthropology. There is a greater spectrum of perspectives displayed in both the literature and the conversations on military and security studies.

Yet there is still relatively little written on what military anthropologists are doing for the military (Fosher 2010: 262). The 2007 CEAUSSIC report attempted to address some of the range of these experiences by conducting interviews with some anthropologists (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007:56). One anthropologist lamented that they spend most of their time defending their work rather than writing about what they actually do (Interview 4). I admit that I have fallen into this trap as well; it felt natural to first ask some of my interviewees why they were doing what they were doing, how they felt about it, and how others responded to their work instead of first allowing them the space to describe what they are actually doing.

So what are military anthropologists doing now? What ethical challenges arise in their work, and how do they address these challenges? I have reviewed what is currently available in the literature as well as experiences from my interviews during this research. Many of the experiences from my interviews described in the following section are

¹⁸ George Lucas advocated for distinguishing whether anthropology was being done *for* the military, or *on* the military, or *with* the military (2009: 81).

incredibly broad to ensure the confidentiality of these interlocutors. Because the anthropological community that performs this work is relatively small, as well as the community of social science researchers for varying military institutions, even seemingly innocuous information about some of their projects could clearly reveal their identities (Interview 5). This made sense to me, but the level of concern on having their identities revealed did surprise me. One conversation occurred as group setting and in very broad terms, again to prevent any specific information from revealing identities. I did not think my interviewees would be so hesitant to discuss their projects, especially when others wanted to discuss it more. Perhaps the more it is discussed, the more open military anthropologists can be about their work, both in the anthropological community and in the military community.

As early as 2010, Fosher wrote that anthropologists are increasingly working in “shaping roles” in their organizations. Several of these anthropologists were pioneers at their institutions: Jessica Glicken Turnley was the first anthropologist at a nuclear laboratory (Glicken Turnley 2012: 216), Paula Holmes-Eber at the U.S. Marine Corps University (2013: 45), and Clementine Fujimura at the U.S. Naval Academy (2013: 29). One military anthropologist described their role as “giving options that may allow [military personnel] to think about opportunities other than the use of force through these skills, and hopefully giving them skills and knowledge that will be useful in their post-[military] careers” (Interview 4). While working at U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence, Fosher described her role was one that focused on providing advice on broader systems, modeling, or approaches to using anthropological, social science, and education theory,

and findings sustainable ways to institutionalize these practices (2010: 265). She provided education and training for the intelligence analysts, and some “limited guidance on how we can best provide direct support to operations, particularly questions of when it is appropriate to send somebody into a conflict zone to provide analytic support related to culture and when it is not” (Fosher 2010: 265). It is interesting that even post-Human Terrain System, Fosher leaves open the aperture on whether sociocultural analysts could ethically be deployed to conflict zones in the future.

Some publications in the 2010s are evidence of a slowly increasing, internal engagement in anthropology to understand the military as a whole, and military anthropology as a subdiscipline. Military anthropologists have also written and spoken critically about the anthropological-military engagement. *Anthropologists in the SecurityScape* (2012) edited by Robert Albrow and others highlights the work of several anthropologists who work with the military, intelligence, or in other forms of the “securityscape.”¹⁹ Yet this work does a few things that others have not. In the book, the editors allow each contributor a section to describe their work both outwardly and reflexively. The editors provide a commentary on the submission, with language that makes great strides toward neutrality and provide overarching thoughts and not condemnations. Then, the contributor is allowed to respond to the critique. Albrow, who later chaired the 2009 CEAUSSIC report, discovered that few anthropologists seem to understand what their military anthropologist colleagues were actually doing for the

¹⁹ Hugh Gusterson defined securityscape as “asymmetrical distributions of weaponry, military force, and military-scientific resources among nation-states and the local and global imaginaries of identity, power, and vulnerability that accompany these distributions (Gusterson 2004: 166).

military (AAA CEAUSSIC 2007: 56). Thus, this volume expands on its earlier discovery to explore the variety of possibilities and programs their fellow anthropologists are undertaking (Albro et al 2012:10). For example, Jessica Glicken Turnley describes her path, expecting to head into academia with an anthropology degree, only to be faced with the realities of a lacking job market that lead her to marketing and public relations, to an intersection of her experience and background and consulting work with the nuclear research facility Sandia Laboratories, and later for U.S. Special Operations Command (2012: 214-6).

The editors of *SecurityScape* provide a more neutral commentary that reflects the perspectives of the author and less the perspectives of the editors themselves. They write: “Unlike many of the volume’s contributors, Glicken Turnley does not seem overly concerned about her decision to work for a nuclear weapons laboratory. She is frank: nuclear weapons exist. Whether or not she is working for a laboratory is not going to change the fact of their existence. And perhaps in her own way she can contribute to the responsible maintenance of these weapons” (Albro et al 2012: 217). While it is easy to see the natural bias of the editors (i.e., they assume that Turnley’s first response would be to be “overly concerned”), they emphasize the author’s perspective in a way that is more anthropological in nature than previous descriptions of military anthropology.

Likewise, these editors describe their thoughts on Glicken Turnley’s account of receiving a security clearance: “The decision to accept a security clearance seems to be a significant rite of passage into the national security community. It troubled other contributors... [Glicken] Turnley, in contrast, pragmatically accepts the clearance as a

fact of her decision to accept a position at Sandia, asking only if it is something she can drop it at a later date if it puts her in ethical or professional situations that make her uncomfortable” (Albro et al 2012: 226).

Albro describes his own work assisting the Office of Naval Research by putting together a panel on a framework for sociocultural data collection and analysis (2012: 46). As the only anthropologist on a team of other social scientists, Albro was able to provide one of the only contrarian perspectives about the project, namely to help the Department of Defense understand what social science analysis could and could not do for the project (2013: 48). This one perspective made it into the panel summary, something Albro determined to be a “critical intervention” in the process (2012: 49). This seemingly small but significant intervention shows but one example of the benefits that can be afforded when anthropologists wade through some ethical dilemmas as they dip their toes into the unfamiliar Department of Defense waters. The editorial comments of his work²⁰ state “We wished that there were more examples of the forums and relationships in which Albro is engaging in the exchanges the importance of which he stressed repeatedly” (Albro et al, 2012: 52).

Laura McNamara also worked in nuclear weapons laboratories, providing a more traditional ethnographic-like work on the scientists and organizational culture. She also discusses how the laboratory research centers felt more like a university than she anticipated (McNamara 2012: 90). Her work is also typical of anthropological work only with different topics, such as mapping “the distribution of knowledge about propulsion

²⁰ The editors do specify whether Albro provided editorial commentary on his own essay.

and guidance systems for space launch vehicles” (McNamara 2012: 91) and how imagery analysts “interact” with imagery intelligence, and the organizational challenges the analysts face (McNamara 2012: 99). McNamara also describes her role as one to provide an alternate perspective:

In many ways, I think my *raison d’être* workwise is to challenge the technological determinism that permeates so much of the national security community. In the case of computational social modeling and simulation, the technological determinism writes social scientists straight out of the picture. I’m not sure which is worse: when social scientists, including anthropologists, throw their own discipline under the bus insofar as they uncritically present computational modeling and simulation as a useful way for national security experts to assess phenomena; or when computer scientists and engineers tell me that the mathematical formulations they’ve developed are generalizations that will shed light on the social processes in ways that social sciences do not” (2012: 100).

In my interviews, other military anthropologists discussed some of the ethical challenges they face. Some of these include different cultural expectations, such as in regard to timelines and deadlines. In some ways the military is expected to work fast and respond quickly. As some said of the U.S. Marine Corps, “Advance planning is about 72-hours’ notice” (Fosher and Tortorello 2013: 243). An interviewee provided an example that someone may be asked to prepare a six-hour training module, only to be told at the last minute that, due to other requirements or unexpected circumstances, only 1.5 hours was available. What is a social scientist to do? Do you use the time to try and cram in as

much as quickly as possible? In distilling your presentation to less than one-third of the material, are you compromising the integrity of your research? Do you spend then most of the time just trying to convince your students that your current presentation is not sufficient, and hopefully enticing them to do more of their own research? (Interview 5). How worried should the anthropologist be that you are simply feeding into stereotypes by what you choose to remove or include in your presentation? (Interview 5). I recognized this struggle myself as I researched and developed cultural field guides. These are difficult questions for a researcher to work through and difficult decisions to make. Fosher argued anthropologists have to make personal ethical decisions, in addition to the need for discipline-wide conversations (2010: 262).

In another discussion, one researcher related how they spent extra time “scrubbing” data to ensure that their information did not inadvertently reveal participant information and thus breach the confidentiality agreements; the Department of Defense had only required that names were to be removed (Interview 5). These researchers increased their own workload to keep in line with their ethical considerations, going above and beyond the requirements, and provided extra value that the military may not have recognized was needed. Some related that the military is frequently satisfied with the “80-90% solution” as “good enough.” I have also many times heard the saying “perfection is the enemy of good enough” or “good enough for government work.”²¹ This perspective is counter to the critical, comprehensive eye that academics and social

²¹ From my experience in military staff settings (i.e., an office and not a shooting range) these saying are usually tongue-in-cheek. They realize that their analysis is hurried and not as thorough as would be ideal. However military timelines are shorter than in academia, and the demands from leadership have sometimes caused my colleagues to shrug and say “if they want it bad, they’re going to get it bad.”

scientists must have when analyzing data. “The problem with research is that 80-90% is, it’s not just not ‘good enough,’ it’s wrong” (Interview 5). It can thus be a challenge for anthropologists and other social science researchers to have the time they need to collect, organize, analyze, and assess data in a timeline that is acceptable to the military.

Another challenge that several anthropologists and other social science researchers have noted are the military’s broader views on academia. The Department of Defense has a bias or challenge with scientific expertise, especially in the social sciences category. Data that is not presented as hard numbers, or information that can be cleanly fit onto a PowerPoint presentation may be difficult to present convincingly to military leadership. Additionally, it can be difficult to sell science to the Department of Defense when the military is accustomed to assessing capabilities and resources with PowerPoint, pie charts, and budget numbers; “anything that does not use numbers is foreign to them” (Interview 5). While the military wants to see specific information on capabilities, resources, and charts and graphs on a PowerPoint slide, this is not always easy to display with ethnographic data.

Additionally, several of my interviewees expressed the frustration that the military sometimes views all social scientists in the same category, which was one criticism of the Human Terrain Teams, some of which included people with doctoral degrees in criminology, and in one infamous case a flamenco dancer (Interview 3, Interview 5). “Anthropologists are often asked to be cultural experts, or regional experts, or to have background knowledge in what culture is and how to explain it and behavioral traits...this may not or may not be true as these stereotypes and misunderstandings of

anthropologist persist today” (Albro et al 2012: 253). Even among anthropologists there are different schools of thought that could take training and education in different directions, let alone among the subdiscipline such as bioarcheology or linguistics who may be expected to have the same expertise as cultural anthropologist (Interview 5).

Additionally, the military is an incredibly large organization, and a bureaucracy that is resistant to change. Multiple researchers and social scientists related to me that one challenge was to view their success not in tangible products and whether they had a positive effect, but in the processes that slowly change. “It could be very frustrating. You may only move the organizational ball a tiny inch, and you have to get used to the fact that it will not be you who finishes the job that you start” (Interview 5). One person described their excitement when one of their long-standing projects received great attention seemingly out of nowhere. “Yet even then it I knew it did not ‘just happen’ but it was from a seed that had been planted and taken care of for many years” (Interview 5). This seems to be the trend of military anthropology and the anthropological-military relationship; incremental steps, but they are increasingly becoming incremental steps towards greater engagement.

SOME CONCLUSIONS...AND A WAY AHEAD?

I am sitting in on a discussion within the anthropological community on militarization in society. Someone, an anthropologist who had been studying processes of militarization for years, was talking about how in the past, some societies who had once embraced warfare later this institutions and even destroyed their own weapons. The speaker was using this as an example of how the impacts of militarization may be reversible. Once again, I could hold my tongue for only so long. Having worked with the U.S. military for nearly a decade, I was starting to get a greater sense of what I have heard my work colleagues call colloquially “the 800-lbs gorilla in the room” or even better “the drunk octopus.” Both of these expressions convey the massive influence of the Department of Defense, and an influence that is often destructive. The drunk octopus analogy is meant to convey that the “tentacles” of the Department of Defense - its tasks, mandate, budget, influence, etc. - are so numerous, far reaching, and yet so directionless that it smacks and disturbs everything in its path. It seems like an apt description. I raise my hand to ask a question.

“The idea that the presence of the military could decrease in this day and age sounds...cute. Do you really think there is a way in our globalized world, with as large as the U.S. Department of Defense is, that the influence of militarization could actually decrease?”

I was genuinely surprised at the optimism of the anthropologist who replied. Based on what I had read from their work, optimism regarding the military was not what I had envisioned. This anthropologist commented that there is evidence that nuclear weapons production has decreased worldwide, as one example that the world could slowly back away from an acceptance and reliance on war. While I did not necessarily think that the military was all negative, I certainly did not like the idea of war. These positive viewpoints on militarization were unexpectedly comforting coming from this anthropologist.

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In 2018, the Department of Defense published a new National Defense Strategy (NDS). In the unclassified summary, the National Defense Strategy states that “Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security” with the main focus being China and Russia (2018: 1). This is a significant step away from nearly two decades of a focus on counterinsurgency operations and the Middle East. Yet the international arena is constantly evolving. The 2019-2020 coronavirus pandemic could also have major strategic adaptations for the United States military and its global relationships (Donnelly 2020).

Historically cultural training in the Department of Defense has “surged” during periods of intense focus on counterinsurgency operations, but have not generally been institutionalized and persisted in other periods (Mahnken 2016, McFate 2018, Johnson 2018, Connable 2018, Interview 4). It appears that this trend will continue. The Department of Defense announced in early 2020 that the Minerva Research Institute, an

academic program its sponsored, and which has often been critiqued by anthropologists (Price 2011), is being eliminated from the Department of Defense budget (Brumfiel 2020). Other social science research programs are being eliminated as the Department of Defense openly pivots to technology and modernization to focus on the threat of near-peer competitors (Brumfiel 2019).

What does this mean for a continued anthropological-military engagement? Is the U.S. military set to close its doors to anthropologists even while the discipline of anthropology has begun to grow more accepting of sprouting relationships? The U.S. military will continue to have contact with foreign populations and therefore arguably will have a need for greater cultural competency at all levels of operation. In addition to this “great power competition,” the unclassified summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy emphasizes the growing need of the U.S. military to work more closely with its allies and partners (NDS 2018: 1). This need could include a host of new dynamics of, or simply increased, contact with diverse cultures for the U.S. military.

Additionally, an unclassified brief on the Irregular Warfare (IW) annex to the National Defense Strategy says that the Department of Defense needs to “institutionalize” irregular warfare principles into manning, training, equipping, and even budgetary cycles, the key to where program life expectancy lies. “The Department will *prioritize investments in human capital as the primary competitive advantage* in Irregular Warfare over our adversaries” (2019, slide 3 emphasis added). The first “framing principle” is to ensure these lessons are not lost again: “Break the reactive cycle of investment in IW capabilities by *institutionalizing hard lessons learned from past conflicts, preserving a*

baseline of IW-specific expertise and capabilities informed by the long view of the NDS, and supported through the annual budgeting cycle” (NDS 2019, slide 3).

Some anthropologists may find this renewed emphasis promising, a sign that despite a shift within the Department of Defense, there will still be a desire for anthropological-military engagement. Others may see this as a re-branding of old, debunked counterinsurgency theories that are incompatible with the purpose of anthropology and its ethics standards. Still others may refrain from embracing either of these extremes, remaining somewhat cautious and somewhat optimistic. Whatever the response, the continued activities of the U.S. military and the Department of Defense will likely see more fluctuations of anthropological study and engagement.

While the “litany of shame” narrative has persisted in anthropology’s history, the evolution in anthropological ethics and an increased openness towards a military anthropology is a promising trend for continued engagement. Thus far it has led to a greater understanding of the military, and thus destigmatized the work of military anthropologists. Perhaps the more these anthropologists feel comfortable discussing instead of defending their work, the more normalized the relationship will become. If the military is more familiar with anthropology, it may better understand how to involve anthropologists in a way that helps them uphold their standards from the discipline’s Code of Ethics, where anthropological knowledge can best be utilized in the U.S. military, as well as the limitations of this knowledge. Such understandings could lead to better engagement: if the military seeks less ethically problematic activities of anthropologists, more could be willing to engage. Such an engagement could result in

better anthropological understanding *of* the military and *for* the military. As one interviewee, formerly working within the Department of Defense stated, “When the military is asking for help, we [the military] cannot accompany that with demands. We had that problem; we collectively demanded that [anthropologists] understand that our motives were pure when they have been taught that [our motives] are impure... We will not win friends if we tell smart people how to think. We must be better at outreach...” (Interview 3).

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As the literature and current conversations have demonstrated, there will continue to be ethical challenges to review while working with the military, just as there are ethical challenges in all aspects of anthropological work (AAA 2012). Yet there are possibilities for continued engagement. Some of the debate within anthropology has been whether or not anthropologists can do ethical work and provide better insights on the inside or on the outside of the military. When asked this question during a panel discussion, Kerry Fosher recalls her thought process:

I thought about the range of topics and methods that our discipline has been able to encompass. I thought about the diversity of engagements we embrace, from textual analysis that can take place in a university office, to traditional field research, to action anthropology, advocacy, policy advising, and applied work. I thought about the tradition of rigorous debate about and monitoring of ethics that allows this breadth of work. In such a tradition, there is no reason to choose, and, in fact, there may be an imperative to refrain from making a choice that excludes

entire areas of practice from the disciplinary discourse. I replied to her question with what I truly believe to be the best answer for the discipline. ‘Yes, both, absolutely’ (Fosher 2010: 262).

Fosher’s response reflects a wide range of anthropological perspectives on the military: that there is no need for an either/or approach, that there is space, and a necessity in the discipline for anthropological engagement *with* the military and *of* the military. Continuing to build a constructive anthropological-military engagement, military anthropologists may be more able and willing to speak about the work they are performing, increasing the military’s familiarity with the discipline, as well as the discipline’s familiarity with the military. Such an engagement could positively influence the U.S. military as it has influenced the discipline of anthropological ethics.

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BIOGRAPHY

Kathryn Moss graduated from Bountiful High School, in Bountiful, Utah, in 2003. She received her Bachelor of Arts in international studies, with emphases in political science and French, from Utah State University in 2006. She has been employed as a government consultant based out of Fairfax County, Virginia for over nine years.