

Government Responses to Asymmetric Threats: The State of the Literature on Counterinsurgency from 2002 to 2022

Global Responses to Asymmetric Threats Report

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

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Introduction and Project Background

In the 1950s, RAND pioneered the study of counterinsurgency as a viable strategy of limited war with a geographical focus on Asia due to the U.S. involvement in Korea and the French presence in Indochina.¹ Since then, research on counterinsurgency specifically—and irregular warfare more generally—has grown extensively, spurred by an evolving geopolitical context, the availability of new data, new areas of study, and novel methodological approaches. In this report, we present an overview of the existing state of research on state responses to asymmetric threats, with a specific focus on counterinsurgency strategies from 2002-2022. This report is based on research conducted for the Global Responses to Asymmetric Threats project, which is part of a broader research effort, Irregular Warfare Net Assessment Data Structure (IW-NEADS).

The goal of IW-NEADS is to create a data resource that is highly relevant to assessment, analysis and prioritization across all five pillars of irregular warfare (IW), to include identification and aggregation of relevant variables in existing datasets, review of the theoretical frameworks associated with unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID), counterterrorism (CT), counterinsurgency (COIN), and stability operations (SO), and identification of research gaps, both in terms of available data and existing analysis.² IW-NEADS will produce a knowledge matrix that: 1) systematically summarizes existing research; 2) makes available data tools to integrate new and existing data into customized datasets for analysis; 3) facilitates gap analysis by enabling scholars to identify and fill prioritized research gaps; and 4) provides pedagogical resources for training and practitioner education in the utilization of the aforementioned outputs in congruence with the goals of the IW Annex of the National Defense Strategy.

This report is the first in a series of reports that provide a comprehensive review of academic and policy-focused studies on counterinsurgency (COIN), defined as “those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.”³ The report details the methodology we employed to extract the literature on government COIN responses to insurgencies. We outline the rigorous coding scheme developed to systematically classify a diverse corpus of scholarly, professional, and practitioner literatures. Next, we present major summary findings, from the key dependent variables that have been analyzed by scholars and explored by practitioners to the major methodologies deployed in empirical studies. We then discuss the geographic coverage of existing research, the major targets of state strategies, and the deployment of different levers of state power in COIN.

Based on our analysis, we discuss existing research gaps and potential pathways for future research. Following this report will be a series of companion reports on the use of specific levers of state power with a focus on the key findings on the effectiveness of government strategies within each lever, data

¹ Long (2006).

² Irregular warfare is defined as a violent struggle between state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over target populations (Irregular Warfare, Joint Operating Concept 2007).

³ Appendix B2, Irregular Warfare, Joint Operating Concept 2007.

availability on dependent and independent variables, and research recommendations unique to each source of national power. Finally, a concluding report will synthesize our findings from the companion reports, consider next steps for the future direction of research on counterinsurgency as it relates to the future of great power competition, and outline the next phase of the Global Responses to Asymmetric Threats research effort.

Methodology

We developed a three-stage process to create a knowledge matrix to analyze the existing state of research on state responses to asymmetric threats. The process consists of identifying relevant sources, developing a bibliography, and extracting data from the literature (see Figure 1 below).

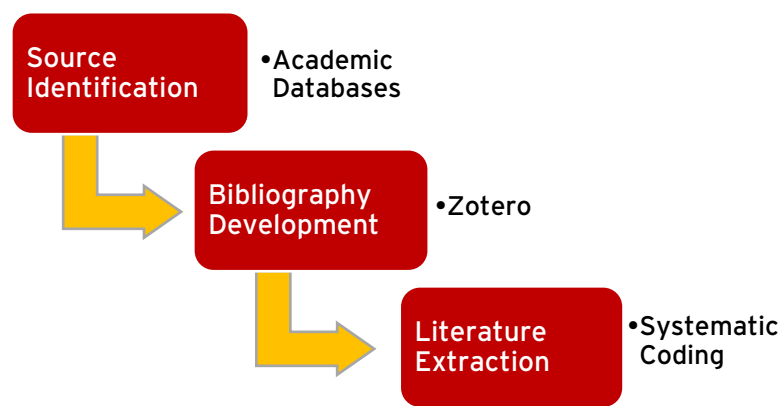


Figure 1: Knowledge Matrix Development

Source Identification

To identify relevant sources, we concentrated on literature published between 2002 and 2022 to maximize the relevancy of the findings to the contemporary global context. We used “counterinsurgency” and “COIN” as search strings in academic search engines (e.g., Google Scholar) and online databases (e.g., JSTOR, Academic Search Ultimate). Our focus was on peer-reviewed journal articles, trade magazine articles, book chapters, and reports, ensuring a wide coverage of literature that captures empirical studies as well as pieces evaluating policy conundrums and recommendations. Moreover, we limited our search to literature published in the English language.

Source Inclusion and Prioritization

While the search strings identified a wide range of literature related to counterinsurgency, even if tangentially, for this phase of the project, we focused on those pieces specifically theorizing or analyzing government responses to asymmetric threats in the context of COIN. In addition to including relevant COIN pieces from search string searches, we also conducted manual checks of the top political science journals to increase reliability and collected literature cited by scholars that were relevant to COIN but

not captured by the string search. This process yielded 404 unique pieces of literature for data extraction and analysis.⁴

Bibliography Development

All the relevant literature sources were transferred to a collaborative Zotero library, an open-source reference management software, to create a dynamic bibliography encapsulating journal articles, book chapters, reports, and policy magazines. Each bibliographic entry in Zotero was assigned a unique system-generated key and contained a PDF copy of the publication. Additionally, each Zotero entry contains metadata about each publication, such as the author, year of publication, type of publication, among other features. The bibliography forms the basis for the final step in the knowledge matrix development: literature extraction.

Literature Extraction

To facilitate planned analysis of the literature, the project lead drafted a literature extraction guide, which the team then collectively improved on through an iterative process (see Appendix A: Literature Extraction Guide). Each coder received instruction on how to properly extract relevant information from the literature, and when discrepancies arose, these were resolved in cooperative team meetings. All coding took place in a shared spreadsheet managed by, and exclusively accessible to, the research team. The spreadsheet was reviewed for completeness and accuracy by senior research personnel.

Each piece of literature was coded across several pertinent dimensions. For social scientific literature (academic journals), we recorded the hypotheses, research questions, and the dependent, independent, and control variables (which can be qualitative or quantitative) used to test the hypotheses (for empirical studies) or suggested for the testing of the hypothesis (for theoretical studies). For quantitative studies, we also recorded any datasets utilized in the study.⁵ We summarized the finding for each hypothesis, while also indicating the method used to produce that finding. When a publication was policy-focused, we recorded the problem statement(s) of the piece, as well as the policy recommendations per problem statement.

For all publications, we include indicators capturing the temporal and geographic scope of each piece. For publications with a temporal focus, we record the start and end years of the analysis. To examine studies' geographic focuses, we noted the presence or absence of each UN geographic sub-region and the DoD's Combatant Command areas of responsibility (AORs). Finally, for studies that concentrated on five or fewer specific countries, we coded for the presence of specific countries using the country codes from the Correlates of War (COW) country list.⁶

⁴ These journals included: American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Conflict Resolution, International Interactions, Security Studies, World Politics, International Security, International Organization, International Studies Quarterly, International Studies Review, Civil Wars, Journal of Peace Research, Conflict Management and Peace Science, British Journal of Political Science.

⁵ This field will heavily inform our efforts for the second goal of the project, surveying relevant datasets for the study of responses to irregular warfare.

⁶ Correlates of War (2022).

We also coded the characteristics of irregular warfare being analyzed, to include the actor type conducting IW, the IW pillar of focus, and targeted populations. For the latter two categories, variables are dichotomous to allow, for example, coding of multiple target populations. We also coded for the national lever of power employed in the response, using an expanded DIMEFIL schema. These levers include diplomatic, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, law enforcement, development, and governance. In addition to a dichotomous yes/no coding for each lever of power, we included text fields to describe the specific tactic or strategy employed.

Findings

Research Type

We distinguish empirical research publications from theoretical, review, and policy publications based on whether the publication focuses on testing hypotheses or empirically examining relationships between variables—qualitative or quantitative—and those that postulate possible variables and relationships without testing them (theory), summarize past knowledge about a topic (review), or identify policy gaps and recommendations (policy). Most of the published literature on counterinsurgency comes from articles or publications that are theoretically oriented, review articles, or focused on policy and greatly outnumber empirical research publications (Figure 2). Just over half (54 percent) of the literature represent empirical research publications, while 46 percent are policy focused, review essays, and theoretical pieces.

- Empirical Research Publications
- Theoretical, Review, & Policy Publications

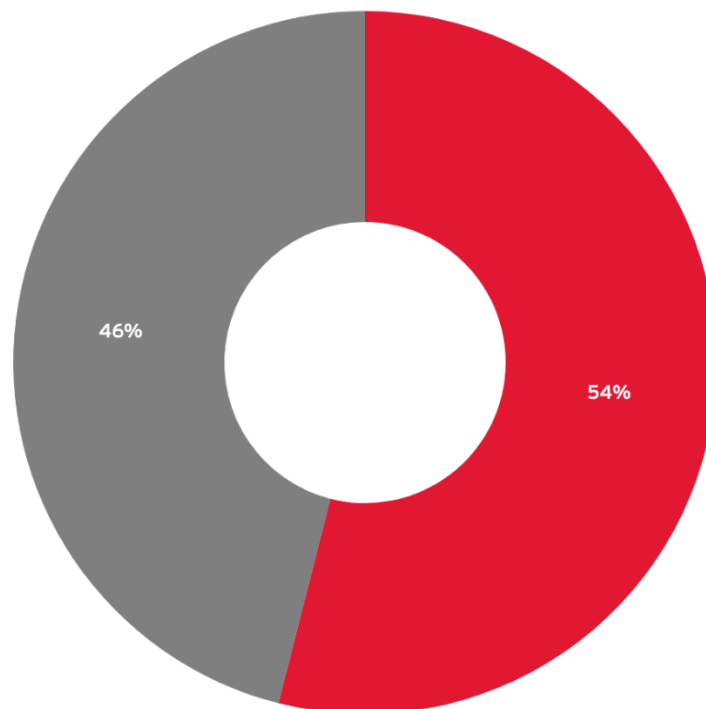


Figure 2: Distribution of COIN Literature Categories

Publication Venue

Despite the significance of the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, research on government responses to insurgency is understudied by major academic journals. The journal *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, which usually focuses on qualitative research, is the most dominant source of COIN literature as shown in Figure 3, which plots the frequencies for the top 10 most prevalent publications. Considering just the top 10 publications in our dataset, *Small Wars & Insurgencies* generated 42.5 percent of all studies, followed by *Journal of Strategic Studies* (8 percent), and *Civil Wars* (7.5 percent). Like *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, both the *Journal of Strategic Studies* and *Civil Wars* lean heavily towards publishing qualitative research. *The Journal of Peace Research* and *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, which are more likely to publish large-sample data analysis and rank in the top 15 of all political science journals, generated less than 20 percent of studies.⁷

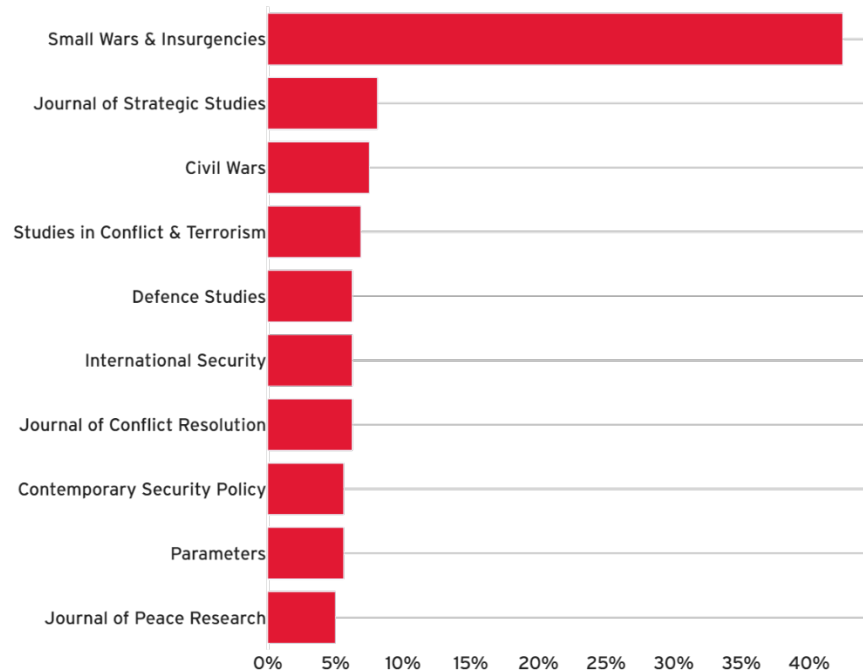


Figure 3: Top 10 Most Frequent Publication Outlets

Frequency of Publications over Time

The frequency of published literature over the twenty-first century reflects major counterinsurgency developments since 2002. As Figure 4 shows, since 2002, the distribution of publications has followed a relatively normal distribution, with the lowest frequencies occurring in the early stages of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, peaking as these conflicts intensified, and decreasing towards the final years of both conflicts. As we will show in the next section of this report, there has been a significant geographic focus on both countries in the COIN literature, allowing us to infer that these two conflicts are

⁷ Ranking is based on Scimago Institutions Ranking.

significantly responsible for generating the upward trend in publications that started in 2007. Two other frequently studied insurgencies are Vietnam and Malaysia, which took place from 1948 to 1975, yet it is likely that an interest in these insurgencies has remained strong because of the developments in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, studies of these conflicts have often used the two cases to apply lessons to Iraq and Afghanistan.

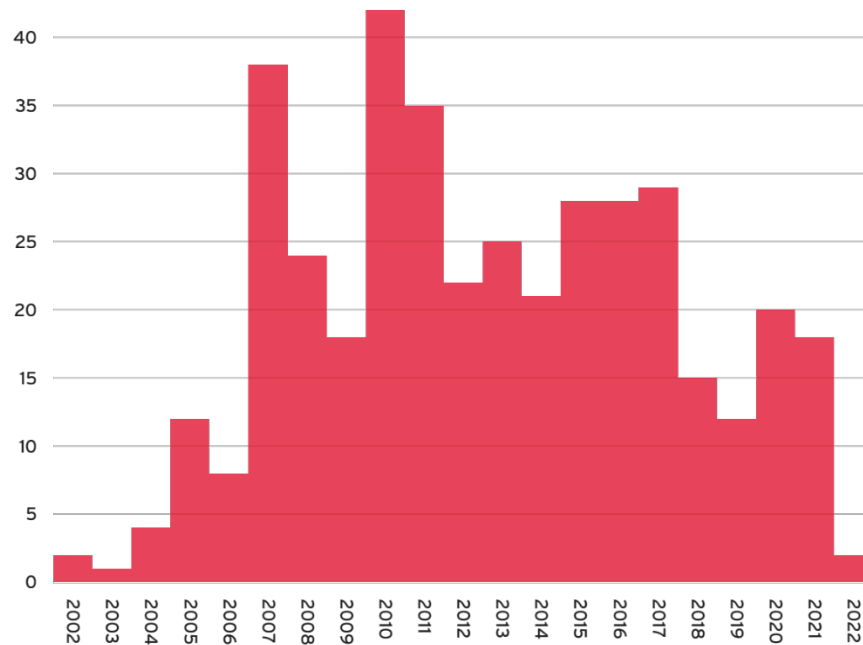


Figure 4: Distribution of Publications Over Time (2002-2022)

Methodological Focus

Overall, existing findings on counterinsurgency skew more qualitative than quantitative. Considering only our sample of empirical research publications, over 67 percent of these publications contain qualitative empirical methods while just over 28 percent contain quantitative methods. Importantly, these categories are not mutually exclusive, meaning that articles do sometimes combine both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, although this is still less common. Formal mathematical models have also been used in the study of COIN. However, these models are only present in less than 4 percent of our empirical research articles.

Qualitative research concentrates heavily on single COIN case studies, with particular emphasis on historical analyses. Most case studies rely on secondary qualitative sources, such as previously published books and articles. In qualitative research, original analysis of documents and data from interviews or field observations is rare. This is somewhat expected given the complexity and danger associated with obtaining such data in conflict environments.

When quantitative research is conducted it most frequently involves data analysis in the context of a single country, either at the national or subnational (e.g., district, region, or village) level. Subnational and country-level data usually comes from government agencies and NGOs. On a rare occasion, authors

utilize their own micro-level data from original surveys. Subnational studies frequently rely on panel data to analyze dynamics across multiple units at different time intervals.

Global analysis of insurgencies across time and space is not common. In fact, we find that less than 9 percent of all publications provide insights from a truly global sample of observations. Data for this type of analysis mostly comes from existing data sets on the presence and duration of insurgencies and civil wars collected by scholars from secondary sources such as newspapers, websites, and books. At the subnational level, quantitative analysis of COIN strategies helps assess the effect of variables across multiple observations over time, but limits generalizability beyond one country. Often, this is because large-sample analyses of subnational units do not allow us to understand how variation across countries affects the impact of independent variables.

There is considerable variation in the use of quantitative methods in published research, which reflects a growing interest in selecting appropriate approaches to address the diversity of dependent variables in COIN studies and improve causal inferences. The use of statistical methods is common. Logit and Probit models account for the most frequent quantitative approach and have been used to explain binary or categorical variables such as COIN outcome (e.g., defeat, victory, draw). Ordinary Least Square models (OLS) are the second most common method along with regressions that account for possible bias coming from omitting variables (for example, fixed effects models). Other quantitative approaches include the use of agent-based modeling and simulations (Table 1).

The most notable finding in research methodology on COIN is the increase in reliance on quasi-experimental methods to explain the effect of treatment on outcome. This involves looking at the average change in outcome over time for a treatment group compared to the average change in outcome for the control group (e.g., matching or difference in differences techniques). For example, such an approach has been used to study the impact of development aid in Colombia on the level of civilian violence committed by FARC. In this study, the author examines differences in violence in comparable municipalities on a yearly basis, with some municipalities being the recipient of aid while others serving as the control group.⁸ This approach is frequently used to study subnational outcomes due to the granularity and availability of municipal and district-level data.

Overall, we find that there is greater methodological diversification in quantitative approaches to the study of COIN than has been the case for qualitative studies. This is evident in a growing number of quantitative studies emphasizing the application of new methods to improve causal inferences. This trend, however, should not obscure the finding that large-sample quantitative research is less common than research based on qualitative methodologies.

⁸ Weintraub (2016).

Method	Percentage of all literature pieces
Logit, Probit or Tobit	5
OLS and fixed effects models	3.5
Quasi experimental methods (matching or difference in differences)	3
Survival/Event analysis	2.5
Count models (e.g. Poisson, negative binomial)	2.5
Other statistical models (e.g. competing risks, time series)	2.5
Simulations and Agent based modeling	2.5

Table 1: Most frequent quantitative methodologies in the study of COIN

Geographic Focus

Our analysis shows that studies' geographic focus is limited in scope and biased towards Western COIN experiences. Existing research mostly concentrates on Asia, as shown in Figure 5. As may be expected, there is a strong emphasis on Iraq and Afghanistan. Together, these two countries have been analyzed in nearly 40 percent of all literature pieces. Vietnam is the third most studied country in counterinsurgency (included in 6 percent of the studies), while Malaysia ranks fourth in the extent to which it is researched (included in 4 percent of all publications) within the context of British COIN operations. Overall, South America and Africa are underrepresented in existing studies despite the prevalence of insurgencies on both continents. This suggests that COIN research is predominantly interested in Western approaches to asymmetric threats. When non-Western COIN practices are examined, the literature disproportionately concentrates on India, Russia, Nigeria, and Colombia.

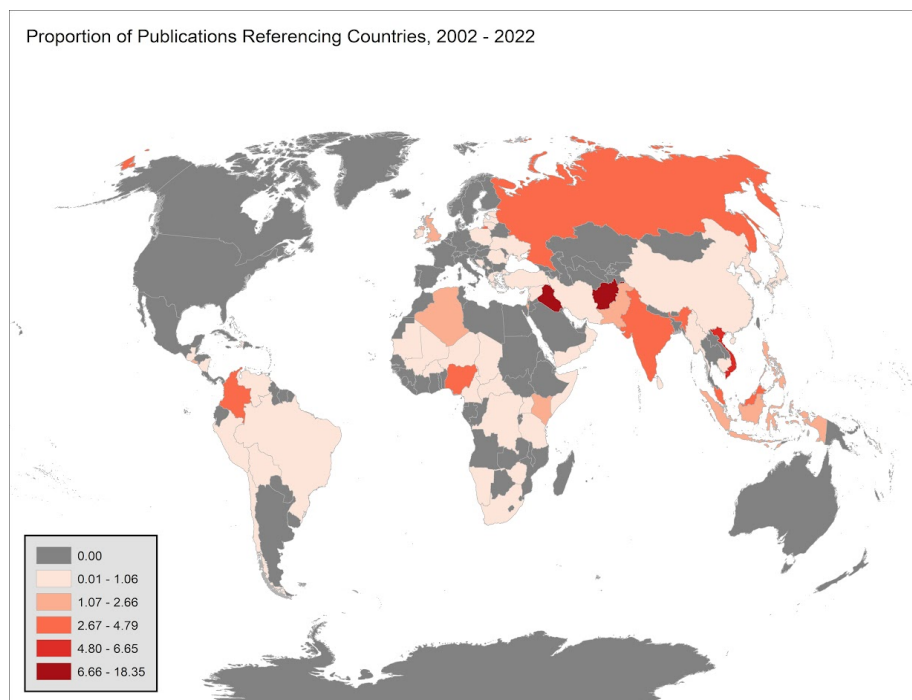


Figure 5: Geographic Coverage of COIN Literature

We also find that only 20.5 percent of all literature pieces consider multiple countries in multiple regions or incorporate a truly global analysis. While 10.6 percent of publications include analysis of multiple countries in the same region, 39.6 percent of pieces include analyses focusing on a single country, 18.3 percent of pieces consider subnational levels of analysis, and 16.6 percent of pieces include analyses without any geographic focus at all.⁹

What is Explained—COIN-Relevant Dependent Variables

Existing research seeks to explain or address dependent variables—i.e., variables that measure the outcome of some intervention, factor, or set of factors—that fall into six general measures of COIN effectiveness:¹⁰ 1) security;¹¹ 2) socio-political-economic factors involving the state;¹² 3) socio-political-

⁹ Given that the literature we analyzed can have multiple hypotheses, multiple research questions, and multiple levels of analysis, it is possible for a single piece to have multiple levels of geographic coverage. For this reason, the proportions summarized exceed 100 percent, as they are estimated on multiple observations across each publication. That is, geographic scope is not mutually exclusive.

¹⁰ We grouped every dependent variable into one of six general categories. For variables that were not explicitly noted as dependent variables, we inferred those variables. This was mostly the case for policy and theoretical literature pieces. We also include a category for ‘Other’ to capture variables that did not fit into one of the main categories. For example, variation in government’s compliance with external patrons’ policies (Ladwig 2016).

¹¹ For example: Stanton (2015).

¹² For example: Eikenberry (2013).

economic factors involving the public/individual;¹³ 4) duration of conflicts;¹⁴ 5) COIN outcomes;¹⁵ and 6) the sustainability of COIN practices.¹⁶ Security factors focus on explaining the levels of violence, such as violence targeting civilians,¹⁷ levels of violent insurgent activity, or the ratio of insurgents killed to COIN forces.¹⁸ Indirect measures of security, such as the presence of tactical innovation,¹⁹ the formation of indigenous military units,²⁰ disruption of insurgent supply lines,²¹ or the degree of public fear of militias,²² also fall into this category.

Socio-political-economic factors at the state level explore the development of state institutions (non-military) and include, for example, an analysis of the success or failure of state building initiatives broadly defined or specific institutions such as the rule of law at the federal level.²³ Socio-political-economic factors at the population/individual level focus on addressing the success or failure of COIN initiatives aimed at the public, the type of initiatives undertaken, the scale of the initiatives, and the variation in public attitudes towards socio-political and economic issues, among others.²⁴ These include, for example, an analysis of the success or failure of the hearts-and-minds campaigns,²⁵ public opinion towards the government and insurgents, and perceptions of state legitimacy.²⁶

Studies also seek to analyze the duration of conflicts.²⁷ In this context, they often measure duration in years, to explain what factors account for the time taken to reach conflict termination or negotiated settlements.²⁸ Another category, COIN outcomes focus on measuring the effectiveness of COIN practices. They account for whether the government or the insurgents achieved victory in conflict, but also whether there was a draw, stalemate, or a negotiated settlement.²⁹ This category also encompasses the overall success or failure of a specific operation.³⁰ Finally, COIN sustainability focuses on long-term

¹³ For example: Charbonneau (2021).

¹⁴ For example: Akcinaroglu & Radziszewski (2013).

¹⁵ For example: Kozera (2018).

¹⁶ For example: Briggs (2014).

¹⁷ For example: Tkach (2020).

¹⁸ For example: Lyall (2019); Wells (2013).

¹⁹ For example: Kilcullen (2006).

²⁰ For example: Giustozzi (2007).

²¹ For example: Jacob (2015); Marks (2005).

²² For example: Gosztanyi, Koehler & Feda (2015).

²³ For example: Bizhan (2018); Monten (2014).

²⁴ For example: Böhnke & Zürcher (2013); Bhatia, Jareer & McIntosh (2018).

²⁵ Hearts-and-minds campaigns are a COIN strategy that focuses on winning over the population through a combination of development aid, improvements in governance, and provision of local security (de Visser, 2013).

²⁶ For example: Gawthorpe (2017).

²⁷ For example: Enterline, Stull & Magagnoli (2013).

²⁸ Only one piece of literature focuses on the duration of a unit other than a conflict, specifically the duration of a campaign (Allen, 2007).

²⁹ For example: Estancona (2022); DeVore (2012).

³⁰ These include campaigns other than hearts-and-minds. For example: Miroiu (2015).

effectiveness.³¹ Studies with dependent variables in this category examine the endurance of peace over time, as well as those related to measuring how tenable security operations are across time and space.

For each piece of literature in our database, we extracted every unique dependent variable contained within a publication and assigned it to one of the categories detailed above. This process resulted in the annotation of 461 dependent variables. Within this sample of dependent variables, as Figure 6 shows, the literature's most dominant focus is on COIN outcomes (53 percent of all variables). The next largest group of dependent variables are those related to security (19 percent of all variables) followed by socio-political-economic factors involving the population (8 percent of all variables). The most surprising finding is the dearth of research exploring the presence or absence—or the success or failure of—socio-political-economic initiatives undertaken at the state level. Indeed, dependent variables relevant to state capacity building make up only 1.3 percent of all variables. Finally, both the duration of conflicts and COIN sustainability are vastly understudied. Together, these categories constitute just over 5 percent of the dependent variables in our sample.

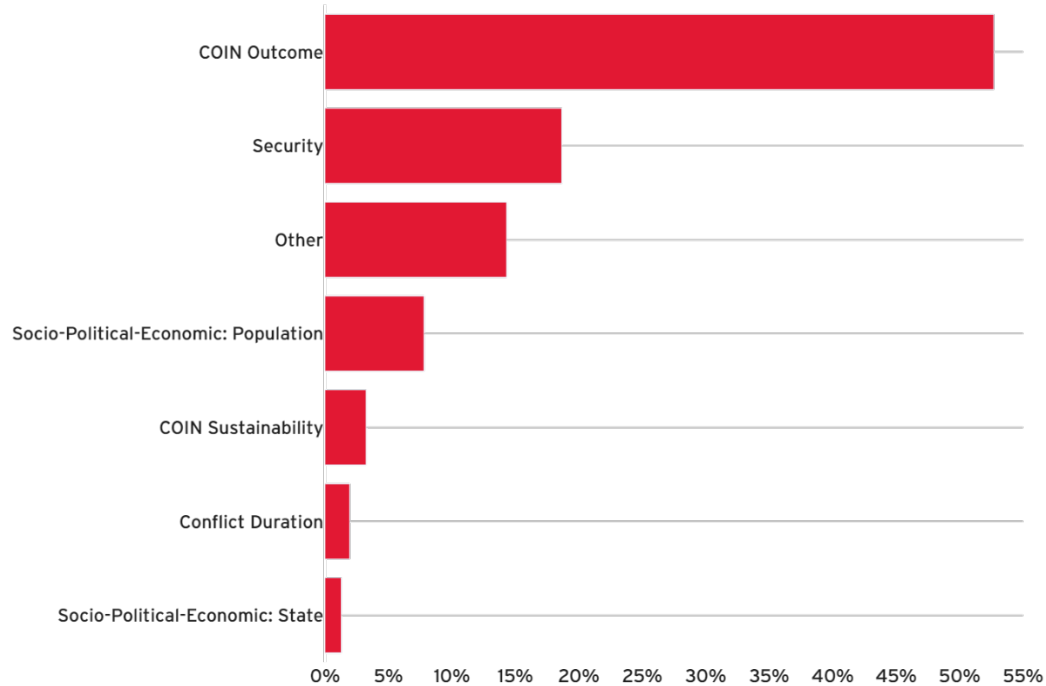


Figure 6: Prevalence of Dependent Variable Categories Across Publications

Lever of power

Type and the Extent of Focus

Research investigating global responses to insurgencies is predominantly anchored around the state's military lever of power, as Figure 7 shows. At the article level (n=404), we find that a very large

³¹ For example: Fishel (2008).

proportion of articles—86 percent—engage in analysis relevant to the military.³² This lever includes, for example, research on the surge in Iraq, the training of indigenous forces, improvements in military adaptability in COIN, search and destroy tactics, and bombing campaigns.

While the intelligence lever of power often works in tandem with the military lever of power, intelligence is either discussed or analyzed in a much smaller proportion (37 percent) of literature. An example of intelligence-focused methods include research on the Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation Program that was created in Vietnam as part of the CORDS program.³³ Another example is a piece that looks at the role of small talk in gathering intelligence in Afghanistan.³⁴

The soft-power category of development assistance is the second most covered lever of power in the literature on global response to insurgencies, covered in 42 percent of our sample, which suggests a growing interest in exploring the role of non-military strategies in asymmetric conflicts. This category includes, for example, articles that analyze the impact of development funds, such as DoD's CERP funds,³⁵ or explore the significance of U.S. soldiers' work on infrastructure projects.³⁶ Another soft-power category, governance, constitutes 40 percent of our sample, and includes, for example, studies that examine how regime type, institutional inclusiveness, and the integrity of the nation's electoral systems impact COIN outcomes.³⁷

³² Many pieces of literature are coded for more than one lever of power if they addressed different levers. For example, a study like the one by Paul et al. (2013) that analyzes the impact of different COIN strategies on COIN outcomes focuses on a variety of military approaches as well as on hearts-and-minds strategies that may include development and governance. This study would then be coded in our dataset for many different categories of levers of power.

³³ Andrade and Willibanks (2006).

³⁴ Norrman and Mikael (2020).

³⁵ For example: Silverman (2020).

³⁶ For example: Eikenberry (2013).

³⁷ For example: Asal et al. (2016); Griffin (2016).

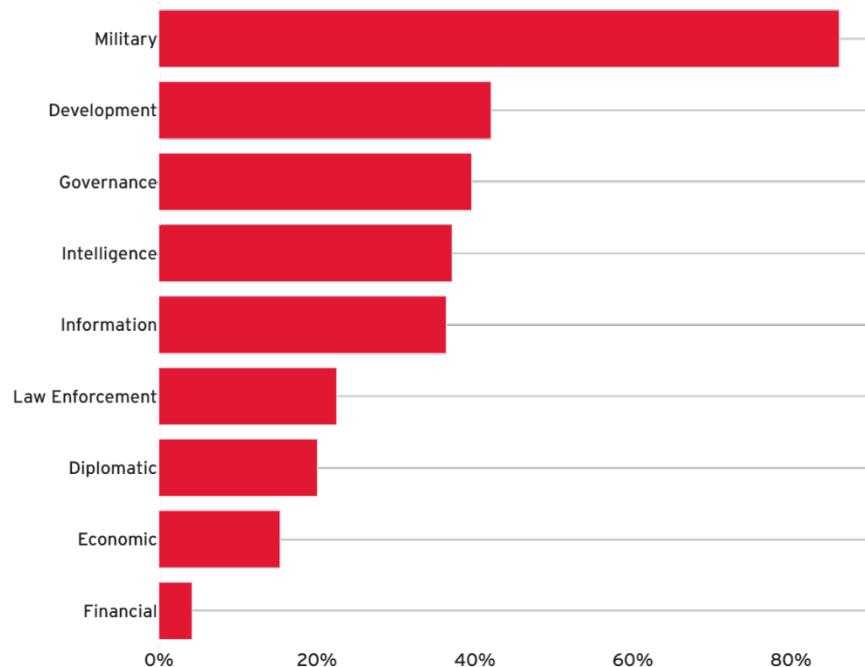


Figure 7: The Extent of Literature's Focus on Different Levers of Power

Considerations of information as a national source of power, which is used to enhance military campaigns and complement soft-power approaches, appear in 36 percent of our sampled publications, a figure comparable to the coverage that the intelligence lever of power receives in our sample. The somewhat limited focus is surprising given the current interest that information operations garner in the realm of irregular warfare.³⁸ Within this type of literature, there is a considerable emphasis on non-digital propaganda, which is somewhat expected, given that most of the insurgencies examined took place either pre-digital revolution (e.g., the Vietnam War, the Malayan Emergency) or in societies where access to online information sources among the ordinary population is scarce outside of the urban setting (e.g., the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq). Prevalent forms of information operations studied include, for example, radio propaganda,³⁹ the dropping of leaflets, and interpersonal face-to-face interactions⁴⁰ designed to win trust.

Law enforcement, financial, economic, and diplomatic levers of state power are the most understudied. Specifically, discussion of the macro and micro economic policies, the presence and management of formal and informal financial institutions, the reliance on dialogue and negotiations or legal frameworks during conflicts as COIN strategies are overshadowed by other levers such as the military, development, and governance. Together, these four levers of power are present in 62 percent of the literature, compared to the military one which was represented in 86 percent of the sample. More specifically, law enforcement is mentioned as a lever of power in 23 percent of the literature. The articles' most frequent

³⁸ Wald et. al (2021).

³⁹ For example: Andrade and Willibanks (2006).

⁴⁰ For example: Anderson (2011).

interests are either the role of police forces in the implementation of the broader hearts-and-minds campaigns⁴¹ or the establishment of legal institutions to build legitimacy.⁴²

When the literature discusses financial tools, which comprises only 4.4 percent of our sample, the focus is on the use of monetary rewards as a tactic to buy off insurgent supporters⁴³ or reliance on cash condolences payments to mitigate the feelings of revenge and support for insurgents,⁴⁴ among others. The financial lever of power is the most understudied of all levers of national power in the literature. The economic lever of power, on the other hand, makes up 16 percent of the sample. Examples of the literature's interest in this source of power included an analysis of coalition forces' use of local employment projects to stimulate economic growth⁴⁵ or blocking insurgents' access to the black markets.⁴⁶

Most of the literature that touches on diplomatic tools of power in COIN (20 percent of the sample) does so predominantly in the context of peace negotiations and policies designed to offer concessions, establish reconciliation procedures⁴⁷ or engage in talks with other countries to secure assistance in fighting the insurgents.⁴⁸ We did not see a systematic interest in exploring diplomatic engagement with the insurgents in the early stages of conflict and aside from peace negotiations. Rather than an omission by scholars, however, this might be because such cases are likely to be rare as leaders strategically anticipate that talks in the early stages of war might demonstrate weakness and thus avoid diplomatic overtures.

Lever of Power and Geographic Units Distribution

When we delve deeper into the literature's focus on levers of power by introducing geographic factors, we find that, for all levers of power, they are most frequently examined within the context of a single country. Table 2 shows the proportion of hypotheses (for research articles) or research questions (for all other publication types) that examine different levers of power at various geographical scales. Each observation therefore corresponds to the fraction of hypotheses or research questions in our dataset relevant to a given lever of power.

While global focus is rare for all levers of power in general, it is the greatest for the military (11.4 percent) and the smallest for legal (2.2 percent), economic (3.4 percent), development (3.6 percent), and financial (none). The most surprising finding is that there is no study that examined or discussed the state use of financial tools in a global context, with 60 percent of literature pieces examining financial approaches at a single country level.

State use of tools to improve development, which represents the core focus of hearts-and-minds approaches in COIN, has been considered in a global context by less than 4 percent of the hypotheses or research questions in the literature. This contrasts sharply with emphasis on a single-country analysis of

⁴¹ For example: Syailendra(2016).

⁴² For example: Ouellet (2011).

⁴³ For example: Day (2011).

⁴⁴ For example: Silverman (2020).

⁴⁵ For example: Nagl and Weitz (2010).

⁴⁶ For example: Watts (2015).

⁴⁷ For example: Ucko (2013).

⁴⁸ For example: Syailendra(2016).

development (40 percent). Considering hypothesis and research question coverage across multiple countries within multiple regions, we find that an equal share explores development and governance (21.5 percent), 17.2 percent consider military tools, 16.2 percent consider economic tools, and similar proportions focus on diplomatic (14.5 percent) and information (14.3 percent) sources of power while the remainder (law enforcement and financial) are considerably lower. Yet it is important to note that these numbers are still relatively low for coverage across multiple countries, with no lever of power exceeding 22 percent of hypothesis or research question coverage.

	Diplomatic	Development	Economic	Financial	Governance	Intelligence	Information	Law enforcement	Military
Global	8.40%	3.64%	3.42%	0.00%	7.96%	6.52%	4.02%	2.22%	11.37%
Multiple Countries - Multiple Regions	14.50%	21.52%	16.24%	8.00%	21.45%	14.35%	14.29%	9.63%	17.20%
Multiple Countries - Same Region	9.92%	8.28%	11.97%	16.00%	6.92%	11.30%	12.05%	7.41%	7.73%
No Specific Focus	10.69%	8.61%	7.69%	8.00%	11.42%	11.74%	16.07%	12.59%	13.70%
Single Country	38.93%	40.07%	53.85%	60.00%	38.06%	39.57%	38.84%	47.41%	35.42%
Subnational	17.56%	17.88%	6.84%	8.00%	14.19%	16.52%	14.73%	20.74%	14.58%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

$X^2 = 94.44$, $p < 0.001$, $df=54$.

All observations at the hypothesis/research question level.

Multiple regions refer to DoD combatant commands.

Table 2: Levers of Power Across Geographic Units

Target

A core component of our analysis concerns the target of COIN strategies pursued by counter-insurgent actors split into two groups: state targets and nonstate or adversary targets. When considering state targets, we find that over 57 percent of the publications in our sample consider the general population as a target followed by military targets (37.9 percent) (

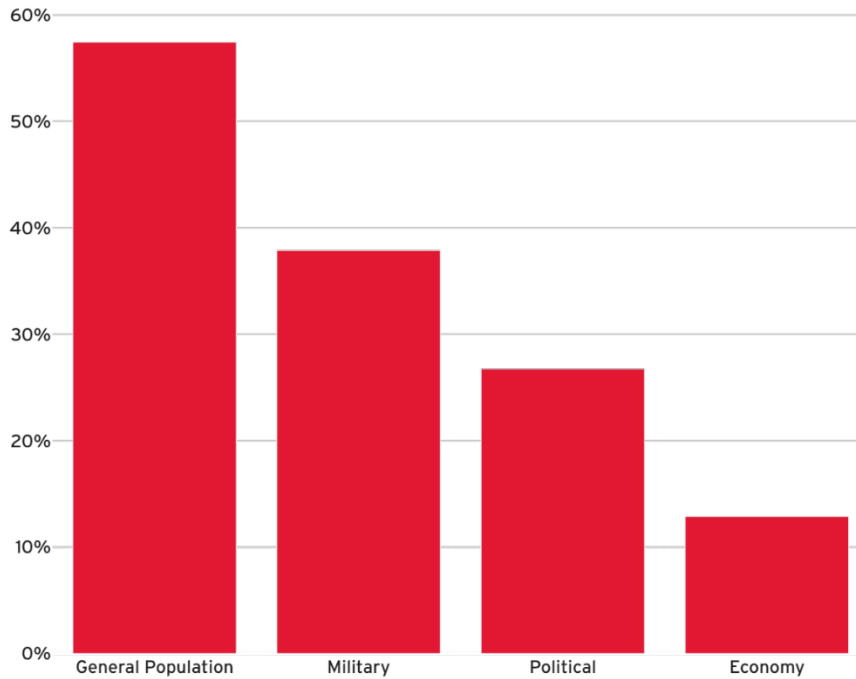


Figure 8). Just over a quarter of publications focus on political institutions, and a much smaller set—12.9 percent—explore economic targets. When we consider our previous finding on the literature’s dominant focus on the military lever of state power with insights on target exploration, we can infer that when the government focuses on targeting the population or reforming its institutions, these approaches are also studied in connection with military strategies.

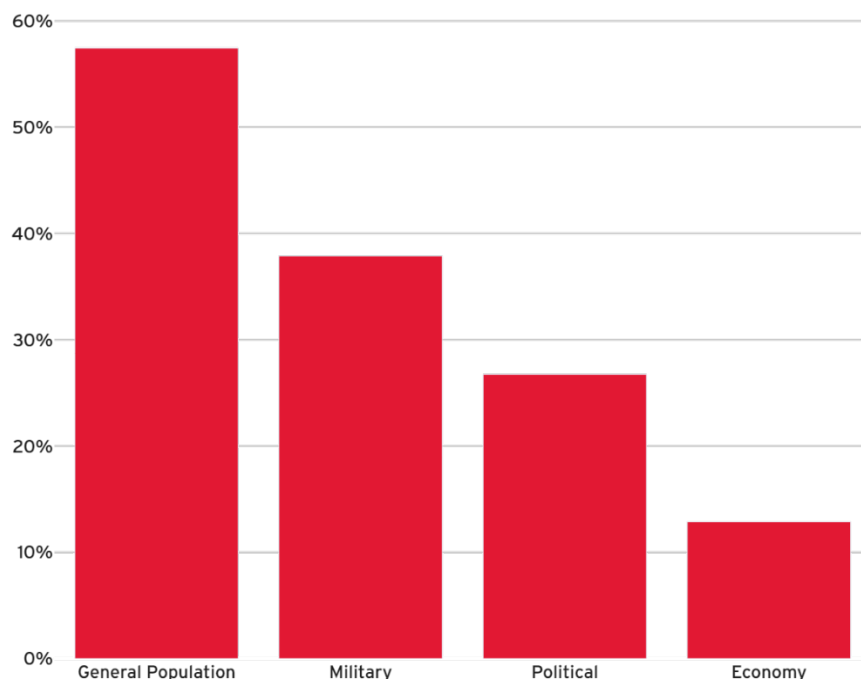


Figure 8: State Targets of COIN

Turning attention to non-state targets, we observe that nearly 70 percent of publications consider strategies targeting the membership of nonstate groups, including their leaders (Figure 9). Strategies targeting sympathizers are also prevalent (54.2 percent), as are strategies targeting constituents (54.5 percent). Indeed, every nonstate target category has coverage across most publications, outpacing the coverage of most of the state-centric targets. This suggests a significant emphasis on non-state targets in the COIN literature. However, we also find a growing interest in the literature in exploring both state-targeting strategies and nonstate-targeting strategies simultaneously. Over 46 percent of the literature touches upon both target types, recognizing that states often pursue both policies in lockstep or at different times but within the same insurgency.

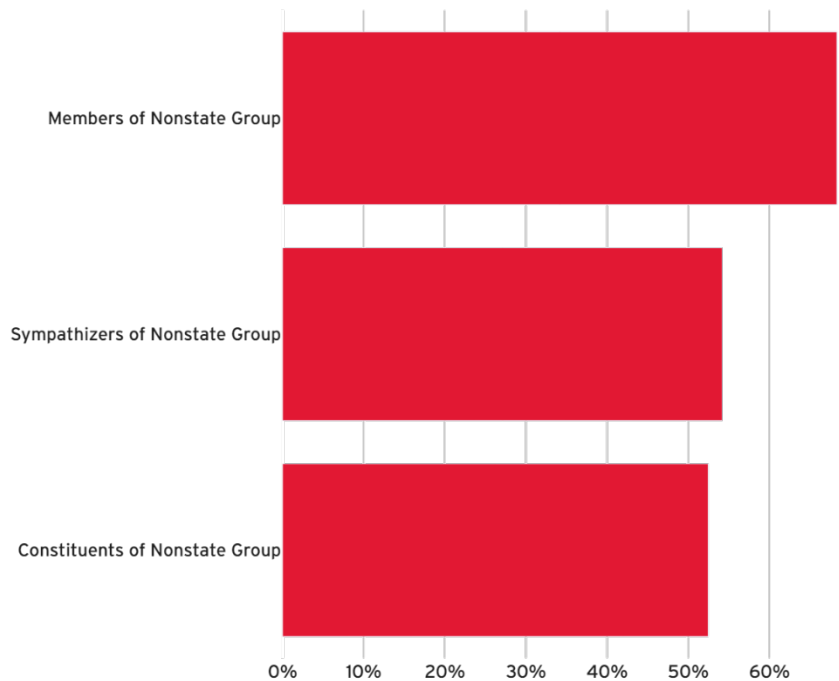


Figure 9: Non-state Targets of COIN

Research Gaps & Recommendations

Research Focus & Methodology

Our analysis of the extracted literature on state responses to asymmetric threats in the context of insurgency reveals several research gaps. *First*, although half of the reviewed literature consists of empirical pieces, given the large number of variables examined in the literature, greater emphasis should be placed on encouraging research that derives findings from hypotheses testing. One approach is to encourage the exploration of new research ideas that are grounded in scientific testing or test insights discussed in policy, review, and theoretical pieces to evaluate their relevance across multiple COIN contexts.

Second, quantitative research examining relationships between large sets of variables is underrepresented in the COIN literature. This is true across the entire sample of articles and within the empirical research articles sub-sample as well. Access to large sample data has improved, particularly for countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, due to availability of resources such as the U.S. government's Significant Activity Database (SIGACT) and data on reconstruction spending, as well as data sets on civilian casualties in Iraq since 2003 that come from Iraqi Body Count.⁴⁹ Yet, the bulk of existing insights with respect to COIN comes from qualitative case analysis. Scholars should be encouraged to pursue novel data collection from surveys, field research, and events databases.

⁴⁹ Holshek (2014).

Third, and closely related to the issue of data availability, existing studies that rely on qualitative methodologies are limited in the use of primary data to analyze relationships between variables and explore causal mechanisms. These studies primarily utilize historical sources. Greater emphasis on collecting data from field research observations and interviews would enable scholars to evaluate the impact of COIN practices on the population in ways that cannot be easily captured with secondary sources or even surveys. For example, different events in active conflicts may have a varying impact on the response rates of surveys, decreasing during bombing events and increasing during major political events at the national level, therefore creating problems for validity.⁵⁰ Observations from field research might overcome these limitations, supplement large-sample survey collection, and enhance our capacities to identify and analyze causal mechanisms that affect COIN outcomes. Field research and interviews were vital in showing how a very specific combination of socio-military tactics employed by Russia during its policy of Chechenization affected the country's ability to succeed in taming the Chechen insurgency.⁵¹ Overall, the benefit of field interviews and observations, while challenging in any conflict or post-conflict zone, offers unique opportunities for advancing COIN research.

Fourth, while quantitative studies have deployed diverse statistical methodologies, there are nevertheless new methods that could be beneficial in improving existing understanding of COIN effectiveness. One such approach is network analysis, which has been used, for example, to study economic and military interconnectedness between states and the impact of connectivity on state behavior towards adversaries.⁵² Others have turned to network analysis to explore relationships within terrorist organizations as a strategy of combating terrorism.⁵³ Network analysis could be used to map various types of social, political, and military connections between different COIN strategies across districts, cities, and villages to identify most central (or widely linked) strategies that may not be obviously detected without creating a wider map of relations. This type of analysis would also be useful in empirically examining the role of local actors in enhancing or co-opting governments' COIN policies by identifying influential figures based on levels of connectivity to other actors.

Methodological innovation can also be undertaken by turning to fields outside of political science, international relations, and economics that study similar problems that government officials and military forces might encounter as they seek to win popular support and target the non-state enemy. Insights from methodological approaches used by other disciplines might be applicable to COIN settings and offer a new lens through which COIN effectiveness and limitations could be analyzed. Sociologists, for example, have used natural language processing (NLP) and computational text models in conjunction with network analysis to show that the social networks constituting radical armed groups affect the rhetoric and motivations they espouse, critical information when considering how to effectively counter these threats.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Axinn, Ghimire, and Williams (2013).

⁵¹ Ratelle and Souleimanov (2016).

⁵² Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski (2017).

⁵³ Ressler (2006).

⁵⁴ Karell and Freedman (2019).

Fifth, improvements are needed in the current geographic scope of analysis, which poses challenges for the generalizability of findings. Global analysis that moves beyond one country or a small sample of countries is underrepresented in the literature. While there is a debate as to whether global analysis is preferable over single case analysis due to the idiosyncrasies of each insurgency, especially those that took place in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 era, Long⁵⁵ nevertheless argues that “these differences should not obscure the fundamental similarities between past and present insurgencies. Insurgency is a method of war, in the same way that combined-arms blitzkrieg is one. The context of the method and some elements of the method may change, but the fundamentals do not.” Existing studies with a global dimension have contributed valuable knowledge that suggest improvements in how to conduct military operations to enhance COIN success. Research by Lyall and Wilson (2009) on insurgencies from 1800-2005, for example, shows that high levels of mechanization of the military increase the likelihood of government’s defeat because mechanization hinders intelligence gathering from the population and the state’s capacity to forge connections with the locals to win their trust. Studies like this show the importance of prioritizing improvements in intelligence gathering strategies among the population because the finding holds across time and space.

When it comes to assessing the impact of specific variables on COIN outcomes, greater availability of data at the subnational level has improved generalizability of findings within specific nation-states, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. These studies rely on analysis of many districts and employ matching techniques to control for unobservable variables. However, while sub-national large-sample studies improve generalizability within a country, they do not address country-level variations that are found in global studies of multiple insurgencies. Therefore, future studies should focus on examining the effectiveness of various COIN practices across a larger number of insurgencies to derive their explanations and do so while controlling for alternative explanations.

Large sample analysis is also beneficial in studying the effectiveness of different COIN approaches in the context of enduring insurgencies, or conflicts that have continued for an extended period of time and where the combatants have an expectation of a long-term struggle (for example, the Kurdish insurgency in Turkey). Because of a long-history of fighting, these insurgencies become locked-in and intractable. The international relations literature on enduring rivalries, which focuses on pairs of states with a history of militarized disputes,⁵⁶ provides a useful analytical framework for identifying conflict-management conditions under which intractable rivalries can be terminated that can be applied to the empirical study of enduring insurgencies. This, in turn, would shed light on the varying impact different COIN strategies may have on insurgencies contingent upon the stage of conflict the insurgencies have reached.

Geographic Focus

Sixth, non-Western perspectives are underrepresented in the study of COIN, as most research analyzes the U.S.-led efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Vietnam or the colonial and postcolonial experiences of Britain. Future research should place greater emphasis on government responses to asymmetric threats

⁵⁵ Long (2006), p.18.

⁵⁶ For example: Diehl and Goertz (2000).

in Africa and South America. While there is a stronger reliance on the use of excessive force by non-Western governments in their counterinsurgency practices, we also find instances when these governments deploy other, unique approaches that have proved effective in reducing the insurgent threat, such as relying on gamekeepers to help with intelligence gathering.⁵⁷ Collecting more systematic data on such “non-Western” approaches would be useful in understanding the extent to which they could be adopted and modified by Western militaries. Better knowledge of such approaches and their effectiveness would also improve DoD’s ability to train non-Western militaries by syncing Western strategies with non-Western ones.⁵⁸

Dependent Variables

Seventh, existing studies focus predominantly on explaining certain aspects of COIN outcomes, such as government victory over an insurgency or success in an operation. Sometimes the outcome is identified when there is an end to hostilities or broadly defined as the government retaining control of an area. There is also emphasis on measuring COIN effectiveness by looking at standard dimensions of security. However, standard security measures such as levels of violence or the number of casualties may not always capture the effectiveness of a COIN approach. For example, a reduction in casualties or insurgent activity, variables that are frequently analyzed in quantitative research, do not automatically translate into improvements in people’s perceptions of safety or support for the government. If perceptions remain unaltered, there is a chance that the population may not fully side with the government, rendering the reduction of violence alone as an insufficient strategy of success. Thus, greater emphasis on explaining variation in people’s perceptions of safety and government legitimacy is a useful way of capturing the extent to which COIN strategies are working and of gauging their sustainability. While such studies currently exist, they are rare and limited to Afghanistan.

Eighth, the sustainability of COIN policies is understudied yet vitally important to assessing the effectiveness of governments’ COIN campaigns. Few studies attempt to examine how policies used by governments during the conflict affect durability of success over an extended time, especially beyond the two-to-three-year period following a policy in an ongoing conflict when looking at district level dynamics. Peace agreements are notoriously shaky in civil wars (including insurgencies) in general.⁵⁹ While there is a vast literature that addresses the role of state capacity, power sharing agreements, and the nature of the peace agreements themselves, there is also a recognition that some states’ COIN practices during conflicts leave a legacy that contributes to the long-term success or failure of peace agreements while others do not. For example, Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski (2020a)⁶⁰ show that while governments’ use of private military and security contractors has been beneficial in helping to secure

⁵⁷ Stapleton (2016).

⁵⁸ Inclusion of English-language research in our extraction of the literature may result in missing articles with non-U.S. and non-U.K. focus.

⁵⁹ Walter (1997).

⁶⁰ Seden Akcinaroglu and Elizabeth Radziszewski, *Private Militaries and the Security Industry in Civil Wars: Competition and Market Accountability* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

gains against insurgents and, in turn, shorten conflict duration, they demonstrate that such contractors do not play a major role in helping the governments sustain peace.⁶¹

In the context of a more sustainable success of a specific strategy, Souleimanov and Siroky (2016) show that Russia's use of indiscriminate violence in Chechen villages was initially considered to be successful in reducing insurgent activity. However, after six to nine months, violence returned. The strategy resulted in a negative spillover effect: the insurgents began to carry out attacks against the government forces in villages that were not their own to avoid inviting reprisal attacks on their co-villagers. Studies such as these need to be encouraged in the context of different levers of state power as they improve our understanding of strategies' benefits and limitations by examining their short and long-term effects.

Lever of Power

Ninth, the analysis of state use of power shows a significant gap in research on the role of finance, economic tools, information operations, law enforcement, and diplomacy in counterinsurgency. Future research should expand its focus on non-military tools of state power beyond governance and development work. Studies could examine, for example, how variation in law enforcement practices and economic programs designed to stimulate growth affect popular support for the government across geopolitical contexts. To expand our understanding of the role of diplomacy, studies could explore the type of diplomatic tools that states have used to influence third party actors' involvement in conflicts. Current research finds that external state support for insurgents has a negative impact on COIN success.⁶² This creates opportunities for states to rely on diplomacy, economic and financial tools, as well as information campaigns to alter third-party preferences regarding their relationship with insurgents.

Lastly, as empirical analysis of states' use of multiple levers of power is limited, it would be useful to explore how the three main levers of power analyzed—military, development, and governance—or any combination of the three interact with states' decision to employ any of the four other sources of power. How does the sequence and timing of strategies from different sources of power then impact conflict dynamics? And what kind of combination of strategies is most effective in reducing violence, improving public perceptions of the government, and sustaining the peace? Given that states frequently use more than one strategy in COIN, understanding the relationship between multiple strategies and various measures of COIN effectiveness over time would be beneficial.

⁶¹ Radziszewski and Akcinaroglu (2020).

⁶² Sullivan and Johannes (2015).

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Appendix A: Literature Extraction Guide

Each piece of literature will have a single line initially. Extractor may add additional lines, as needed, to properly reflect the number of research questions and associated hypotheses in the publication.

Identification Variables:

1. **Extractor** (Extractor Name): Text entry. Enter your name to “claim” the work for extraction.
2. **Key**: Alphanumeric. Unique ID linked to Zotero
3. **Publication Type**: Text. From Zotero.
4. **Publication Year**: YYYY. From Zotero
5. **Author**: Text. From Zotero
6. **Publication Title**: Text. From Zotero

If publication is academic, record the following:

7. **RQ** (Research Question): text entry. If multiple research questions, add additional rows(s), duplicating the identification variables. If no research question is explicitly stated, but one or more can be inferred, enter here and follow with (inferred).
8. **H** (Hypothesis): text entry. If multiple hypotheses, add additional row(s), duplicating the identification variables. If multiple hypotheses are “mirrors” (i.e., same relationship is hypothesized to be both negative and positive, based on different theoretical considerations), enter as a single hypothesis.
9. Variables: What variables (qualitatively or quantitatively) are included in the analysis to test the hypothesis?
 - 9a. **DEPV** (Dependent variable): text entry. Brief description of the measured dependent variable for the hypothesis.
 - 9b. **INDV** (Independent variable): text entry. Brief description of the measured independent variable for the hypothesis. If proxy variable used, describe what is being measured by the proxy and then put proxy in parentheses. For example, if infant mortality is being used as a proxy for level of economic development, you would write “Economic development (infant mortality).” If the independent variable is significant, bold the text.
 - 9c. **CONV** (Control variables): text entry. Brief description of measured control variables used during the empirical test of the hypothesis. If proxy variable(s) used, describe what is being measured by the proxy and then put the proxy in parentheses. (See example above.) If any control variables are significant predictors of the dependent variable, bold the text.
10. **THEORYONLY**: Is item theoretical only (i.e., does not include any empirical tests)? Y/N
11. **REVIEWARTICLE**: Is the publication a review article? Y/N
12. **FINDING**: text entry. If multiple findings related to a single hypothesis, can add rows here.
13. Method of analysis: What method(s) are used to test the hypothesis being coded?
 - 10a. **QUAL** (Qualitative): Y/N

- 10b. **QUALDES** (Qualitative Method Description): Text entry for specific method(s)
- 10c. **QUAN** (Quantitative): Y/N
- 10d. **QUANDES** (Quantitative Method Description): Text entry for specific method(s)
- 10e. **MATHMOD** (Formal mathematical modeling): Y/N
- 10f. **MATHMODEDES** (Formal mathematical modeling description): Text entry for specific method(s)
14. **UNIT** (Unit of analysis): Text entry
- If publication policy-focused with no research question or hypotheses, record the following:**
15. **PROB** (Problem statement): text entry
16. **REC** (Recommendations): text entry. If more than one recommendation, include a row for each one.
- For all publications, record the following:**
17. Temporal coverage
- 14a. **START** (Start Year): YYYY entry. For theoretical and/or policy pieces with no stated temporal focus, enter -99.
- 14b. **END** (End Year): YYYY entry. For theoretical and/or policy pieces with no stated temporal focus, enter -99.
18. Geographical coverage
- 15a. **GEOSCOPE** (Scope of geographic coverage): Categorical
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Subnational in a single country |
| 2 | Single Country |
| 3 | Multiple countries in a single region (defined as DOD region) |
| 4 | Multiple countries in multiple regions (defined as DOD region) |
| 5 | Global |
| -99 | No specific geographic focus (e.g., in some theoretical and policy publications) |
- 15b. **UNGEO** ([UN Geographic Subregion](#)): Y/N for each region
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 015 | Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Western Sahara) |
| 014 | Eastern Africa (British India Ocean Territory, Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, French Southern Territories, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Reunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe) |
| 017 | Middle Africa (Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe) |

- 018 Southern Africa (Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa)
- 011 Western Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo)
- 029 Caribbean (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Curacao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands)
- 013 Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama)
- 005 South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Bouvet Island, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Falkland Islands, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela)
- 021 Northern America (Bermuda, Canada, Greenland, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, United States of America)
- 010 Antarctica
- 143 Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)
- 030 Eastern Asia (China, China-Hong Kong, China-Macao, North Korea, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea)
- 035 Southeastern Asia (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar/Burma, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam)
- 034 Southern Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)
- 145 Western Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, UAE, Yemen)
- 151 Eastern Europe (Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine)
- 154 Northern Europe (Aland Islands, Channel Islands, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands, Sweden, UK)

- 039 Southern Europe (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Gibraltar, Greece, Holy See, Italy, Kosovo, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain)
- 155 Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Switzerland)
- 009 Oceania (American Samoa, Australia, Christmas Island, Cocos Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Heard and McDonalds Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Island, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna Islands, U.S. Minor Outlying Islands)
- 99 No specific geographic focus (e.g., in some theoretical and policy publications)

15b. **DODGEO** (DOD Combatant Command AOR): Y/N for each region

- 1 AFRICOM (Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe)
- 2 CENTCOM (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Iran, Turkmenistan, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan)
- 3 EUCOM (Albania, Germany, Montenegro, Andorra, Greece, Netherlands, Armenia, Holy See (the Vatican), Norway, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Azerbaijan, Iceland, Portugal, Belarus, Ireland, Romania, Belgium, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, San Marino, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia, Latvia, Slovakia, Cyprus, Lichtenstein, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Spain, Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden, Estonia, Macedonia, Switzerland, Finland, Malta, Turkey, France, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Monaco, United Kingdom)
- 4 INDOPACOM (American Samoa, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Christmas Island, Cocos Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Heard and McDonalds Islands, Hawaii, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue,

- Norfolk Island, North Korea, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timore-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Wallis and Futuna Islands, U.S. Minor Outlying Islands, Philippines)
- 5 NORTHCOM (continental United States, Alaska, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Turks and Caicos)
- 6 SOUTHCOM (Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Falkland Islands, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Netherlands Antilles, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, U.S. Virgin Islands, Venezuela)
- 99 No specific geographic focus (e.g., in some theoretical and policy publications)

If five or fewer countries included in the analysis, please enter the relevant COW country code (list starts on next page) for each included country:

15c. **COUN1**

15d. **COUN2**

15c. **COUN3**

15d. **COUN4**

15e. **COUN5**

State Name	CCode	State Name	CCode	State Name	CCode
Afghanistan	700	Grenada	55	Panama	95
Albania	339	Guatemala	90	Papal States	327
Algeria	615	Guinea	438	Papua New Guinea	910
Andorra	232	Guinea-Bissau	404	Paraguay	150
Angola	540	Guyana	110	Parma	335
Antigua & Barbuda	58	Haiti	41	Peru	135
Argentina	160	Hanover	240	Philippines	840
Armenia	371	Hesse Electoral	273	Poland	290
Australia	900	Hesse Grand Ducal	275	Portugal	235
Austria	305	Honduras	91	Qatar	694
Austria-Hungary	300	Hungary	310	Republic of Vietnam	817
Azerbaijan	373	Iceland	395	Romania	360
Baden	267	India	750	Russia	365
Bahamas	31	Indonesia	850	Rwanda	517
Bahrain	692	Iran	630	Samoa	990
Bangladesh	771	Iraq	645	San Marino	331
Barbados	53	Ireland	205	Sao Tome and Principe	403
Bavaria	245	Israel	666	Saudi Arabia	670
Belarus	370	Italy	325	Saxony	269
Belgium	211	Ivory Coast	437	Senegal	433
Belize	80	Jamaica	51	Seychelles	591
Benin	434	Japan	740	Sierra Leone	451
Bhutan	760	Jordan	663	Singapore	830
Bolivia	145	Kazakhstan	705	Slovakia	317
Bosnia and Herzegovina	346	Kenya	501	Slovenia	349
Botswana	571	Kiribati	946	Solomon Islands	940
Brazil	140	Korea	730	Somalia	520
Brunei	835	Kosovo	347	South Africa	560
Bulgaria	355	Kuwait	690	South Korea	732
Burkina Faso	439	Kyrgyzstan	703	South Sudan	626
Burundi	516	Laos	812	Spain	230
Cambodia	811	Latvia	367	Sri Lanka	780
Cameroon	471	Lebanon	660	St. Kitts and Nevis	60
Canada	20	Lesotho	570	St. Lucia	56
Cape Verde	402	Liberia	450	St. Vincent & Grenadines	57
Central African Republic	482	Libya	620	Sudan	625
Chad	483	Liechtenstein	223	Suriname	115
Chile	155	Lithuania	368	Swaziland	572
China	710	Luxembourg	212	Sweden	380
Colombia	100	Luxembourg	212	Switzerland	225
Comoros	581	Macedonia	343	Syria	652
Congo	484	Madagascar	580	Taiwan	713

Costa Rica	94	Malawi	553	Tajikistan	702
Croatia	344	Malaysia	820	Tanzania	510
Cuba	40	Maldives	781	Thailand	800
Cyprus	352	Mali	432	Togo	461
Czech Republic	316	Malta	338	Tonga	955
Czechoslovakia	315	Marshall Islands	983	Trinidad and Tobago	52
Dem Republic of the Congo	490	Mauritania	435	Tunisia	616
Denmark	390	Mauritius	590	Turkey	640
Djibouti	522	Mecklenburg Schwerin	280	Turkmenistan	701
Dominica	54	Mexico	70	Tuscany	337
Dominican Republic	42	Modena	332	Tuvalu	947
East Timor	860	Moldova	359	Two Sicilies	329
Ecuador	130	Monaco	221	Uganda	500
Egypt	651	Mongolia	712	Ukraine	369
El Salvador	92	Montenegro	341	United Arab Emirates	696
Equatorial Guinea	411	Morocco	600	United Kingdom	200
Eritrea	531	Mozambique	541	USA	2
Estonia	366	Myanmar	775	Uruguay	165
Ethiopia	530	Namibia	565	Uzbekistan	704
Federated States of	987	Nauru	970	Vanuatu	935
Fiji	950	Nepal	790	Venezuela	101
Finland	375	Netherlands	210	Vietnam	816
France	220	New Zealand	920	Wuerttemberg	271
Gabon	481	Nicaragua	93	Yemen	679
Gambia	420	Niger	436	Yemen Arab Republic	678
Georgia	372	Nigeria	475	Yemen People's Republic	680
German Democratic	265	North Korea	731	Yugoslavia	345
German Federal Republic	260	Norway	385	Zambia	551
Germany	255	Oman	698	Zanzibar	511
Ghana	452	Pakistan	770	Zimbabwe	552
Greece	350	Palau	986		

19. **ACTOR** (Actor type conducting IW)

1. State
2. State-sponsored/state proxy
3. Non-state

20. IW Pillar

17a. **CT** (Counterterrorism, activities aimed at preventing, mitigating the consequences of, or punishing the perpetrators of terrorist attacks): Y/N

17b. **COIN** (counterinsurgency, activities aimed at defeating insurgents/irregular forces): Y/N

- 17c. **FID** (foreign internal defense, the deployment of resources by one country to bolster the capabilities of another country to protect itself from insurgency, terrorism, or other irregular warfare): Y/N
- 17d. **SO** (stability operations, efforts undertaken to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, including the provision of essential services): Y/N
- 17e. **UW** (unconventional warfare, a broad range of activities involving external support indigenous, surrogate, or proxy forces, including subversion, sabotage, intelligence operations): Y/N
21. Target population if target is a state actor:
- 18a. **MIL** (Military): Y/N
- 18b. **POL**(Political): Y/N
- 18c. **ECON** (Economic): Y/N
- 18d. **GEN** (General population): Y/N
22. Target population if target is a non-state actor:
- 19a. **LEAD** (leadership, target is part of the formal leadership of the non-state target group): Y/N
- 19b. **MEMBER** (members, target is a member of the non-state target group): Y/N
- 19c. **SYMP** (sympathizers, target are sympathizers but not members of a non-state target group): Y/N
- 19d. **CONSTIT** (constituents, target is the population the non-state target group claims to represent): Y/N
23. National Lever of Power
- 20a. **D** (Diplomatic, the use of negotiation and dialogue and resulting treaties or policies to advance interests): Y/N
- 20a.1. **DDES** (Description of diplomatic tactics): Text entry
- 20b. **IN** (Information, the deployment of information and narrative to shape events, strategies, and perceptions to advance interests): Y/N
- 20b.1. **INDES** (Description of information tactics): Text
- 20c. **M** (Military, the coercive application or threat of force in order to compel): Y/N
- 20c.1 **MDES** (Description of military tactics): Text

20d. **E** (Economic, the use of economic instruments and policies, including macroeconomic policy, trade policy, and foreign aid, to advance interests): Y/N

20.d.1. **EDES** (Description of economic tactics): Text

20e. **F** (Financial, involving the use of financial systems, either formal or informal, and typically the denial of access to such systems, to advance interests): Y/N

20.e.1. **FDES** (Description of financial tactics): Text

20g. **I** (Intelligence, the conversion of diverse data related to the environment, future capabilities and intention, and relevant actors into coherent information to allow decision advantage to advance interests): Y/N

20.g.1. **IDES** (Description of intelligence tactics): Text

20h. **L** (Law Enforcement, the use of international, foreign, or domestic legal frameworks and their enforcement to advance interests): Y/N

20.h.1. **LDDES** (Description of law enforcement tactics): Text

20i. **DEV** (Development, activities designed to enhance the capacity of the recipient, typically but not exclusively the economic capacity): Y/N

20.i.1. **DEVDES** (Description of development tactics): Text

20j. **GOV** (Governance, activities designed to enhance the efficacy and legitimacy of institutions): Y/N

20.j.1 **GOVDES** (Description of governance tactics): Text

ABOUT START

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is a university-based research, education and training center comprised of an international network of scholars committed to the scientific study of terrorism, responses to terrorism and related phenomena. Led by the University of Maryland, START is a Department of Homeland Security Emeritus Center of Excellence that is supported by multiple federal agencies and departments. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and effects of terrorism; the effectiveness and impacts of counterterrorism and CVE; and other matters of global and national security. For more information, visit www.start.umd.edu or contact START at infostart@umd.edu.

ABOUT ARLIS

The Applied Research Laboratory for Intelligence and Security (ARLIS), based at the University of Maryland College Park, was established in 2018 under the sponsorship of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (OUSD(I&S)). As a University-Affiliated Research Center (UARC), ARLIS' purpose is to be a long-term strategic asset for research and development in artificial intelligence, information engineering, and human systems. ARLIS builds robust analysis and trusted tools in the "human domain" through its dedicated multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teams, grounded both in the technical state of the art and a direct understanding of the complex challenges faced by the defense security and intelligence enterprise. For more information, visit www.arlis.umd.edu/about-arlis or contact ARLIS at info@arlis.umd.edu.



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