Socio-Cultural Analysis: Lessons for a Canadian Capability

Prepared by:

David Last

Anthony Seaboyer

Will Chalmers

Royal Military College of Canada,
PO Box 17000, Station Forces, Kingston, Ontario, CANADA K7K 7B4

Prepared for:
Matthew Lauder, Defence Scientist
DRDC Toronto, 416-635-2000

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Principal Authors

Original signed by David Last, Anthony Seaboyer and Will Chalmers

David Last, Anthony Seaboyer and Will Chalmers

Approved by

Original signed by Matthew Lauder

Matthew Lauder
Contract Scientific Authority

Approved for release by

Original signed by Stergios Stergiopoulos

Dr. Stergios Stergiopoulos

Acting Chair, Knowledge and Information Management Committee

Acting Chief Scientist

Defence R&D Canada – Toronto

Abstract

This paper explores lessons to develop a permanent Canadian capability to conduct socio-cultural analysis (SCA) in support of operations. SCA is defined as a set of tools to guide policy in ways that are sensitive to and effective in indigenous environments. The US Army has dominated the discussion of SCA based on its recent counter-insurgency (COIN) experience. However, SCA has its origins and many applications outside military operations, less fraught with controversy than the American military experience. These are relevant to Canadian needs, and include rapid assessment process (RAP) and culturally sensitive program evaluation tools developed by international organizations to be applied to health, education, agriculture, and development projects in unstable environments since the 1990s. The American experience of the Human Terrain System (HTS) and public-private partnerships in the "Small Worlds" project provide useful examples of capabilities to support military operations. International, governmental, and non-governmental agencies have also developed systematic capabilities for social and cultural analysis that can be integrated with military capabilities and requirements. In the Canadian context, it is never clear whether military operations will lead or be in support, so a Canadian SCA capability must cater to any of the ways in which it might be applied. As a way ahead, the paper concludes with a three-dimensional space in which Canadian SCA capability might be plotted: from strategic to tactical; from militarized to governmental to contracted civilian; and from specific and temporally bounded to generic and continuing. Only some parts of this space represent a permanent SCA capability, but all represent options for evolution of Canadian capability.

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David Last, Anthony Seaboyer and Will Chalmers; DRDC Toronto CR 2011-179; Defence R&D Canada – TORONTO.

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores lessons to develop a permanent Canadian capability to conduct socio-cultural analysis (SCA) in support of operations. The lessons are drawn primarily from recent military experience, and this is dominated by American operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, both in the quantity and quality of the information available. We should be cautious about this evidence on several counts. The interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan are not unequivocally successful; while their shortcomings might be attributed to inadequate SCA, it is not obvious that the evolving SCA solutions hold all the answers. Iraq and Afghanistan are less salient when we consider socio-cultural analysis outside military operations, including the socio-cultural analysis undertaken by development banks, project-evaluation teams, and human geography data services amongst others. These may be more relevant than capabilities developed specifically for counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, which may recur but are unlikely to be a permanent feature of Canada's foreign and defence policy. They have the added advantage of being applicable to domestic operations the Canadian Forces (CF) might support. On the other hand, a SCA capability must be applicable to non-permissive (hostile, deceptive, or dangerous) environments if it is to be useful for the CF.

A SCA capability consists of people with particular attributes and skills, organizations that combine, develop and deploy these people effectively, and a sustainable and evolving suite of tools and processes that respond effectively to operational demands. SCA is primarily used to guide policy and operations in ways that are sensitive to, and effective in, indigenous environments. Most SCA capabilities are therefore environment-specific (contingent upon knowledge of specific language, culture, and local circumstances) while some are generic (analytical capabilities and knowledge of specific processes and tools, for example). The analytical component – socio-cultural analysis itself – consists of a set of tools to guide policy and action. Sources and methods for SCA are drawn primarily but not exclusively from the ethnographic research tradition.

US COIN doctrine specifies six socio-cultural factors for analysis: society, social structure, culture, language, power and authority, and interests.[1] Reviews of American doctrine broadly accept the framing, while taking issue with some of the implications.[2] Academic critiques are less willing to accept the definitions and assumptions of COIN,[3] and have more to offer by way of alternative frameworks for social and cultural analysis. The World Bank's use of social capital as a framework for understanding resilience and recovery from conflict demonstrates great promise for understanding both protracted violence and recovery from conflict.[4] Sabetti's detailed exploration the concept of democratic culture explains how changing the framing (in this case from culture to social capital) has permitted empirical advances in explanation that evaded the previous half-century of research.[5] The framing within which SCA is carried out is therefore important, and should include political, economic and social tools of analysis in addition to the ethnographic methods, which are its logical foundation.

SCA has its origins and many applications outside military operations, and because they are less fraught with controversy than COIN, these other fields can be useful in developing effective tools and capabilities. Bilateral and multilateral economic development projects in the 1980s were early proponents of cultural awareness to ensure the appropriateness and effectiveness of development projects.[6] Organizations like the International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO), and World Health Organization rely on SCA as components of their mandated programs. The IOM used socio-cultural awareness exercises to build multinational teams as early as 1970, and hired anthropologists in the 1980s and 1990s to map demographic impacts of desertification in Saharan Africa. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) includes SCA as a foundation for funding of infrastructure and health projects.

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[1] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2006): ch. 3.
[2] Jeffrey C. Isaac (ed.), et al, "Review Symposium: Counterinsurgency Manual" *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 6 No. 2 (June 2008): 347-360.
[3] Network of Concerned Anthropologists, *Counter-Counterinsurgency Manual* (New York: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009)
[4] Nat J. Colletta and Michelle L. Cullen, *Violent Conflict and the Transformation of Social Capital: Lessons from Cambodia, Rwanda, Guatemala, and Somalia* (Washington: The World Bank, 2000)
[5] Filippo Sabetti, "Democracy and Civic Culture" in *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan Stokes (London: Oxford University Press, 2007), 340-363.
[6] Irma Adelman, "Fallacies in development theory and implications for policy" in *Frontiers of Development Economics* edited by Gerald Meier and Joseph Stiglitz (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2001), 104-105. "…development policy requires a more complex understanding of social systems, combining economic, social, cultural, and political institutions and their changing interactions over time…"

The United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have commissioned social and cultural analyses in support of literacy, education for girls, vaccination programs, and health clinic development.

Beyond the start-line of initiating a program, however, SCA is regularly applied to assess the progress, appropriateness, and barriers to program implementation. Aid donors, international organizations and field services all engage in program evaluation and assessment, and generally recognize that there is a socio-cultural component to understanding whether a project is having the desired effect. Techniques of culturally sensitive program evaluation are therefore a logical source of inspiration for SCA to support military operations.

RESULTS

The search of operational doctrine, military experience, and SCA applications resulted in both organizational solutions and specific skills and techniques that are relevant to developing SCA. These can be combined as a menu of possibilities for a Canadian SCA capability.

SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS

The first group of SCA tools and technique are drawn from ethnography—the scientific description of the customs of individual peoples and cultures. Cultural anthropology is the methodological high-ground of ethnography, but its evolution to encompass new fields of study (beyond the tribes and peoples of its original application) have led ethnography in general to consist of a rather broad focus on social phenomena and subjective social reality, including both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Ethnography almost always involves fieldwork, and the key methods and techniques in fieldwork include participant observation, direct and systematic observation of behaviour, person-centered interviewing and observation, structured interviews and questionnaires, surveys, pictorializing and visual anthropology. When it does not involve fieldwork, anthropology may rely on analysis of archival or historical records, or documents that give second-hand insight into the sort of narratives that might otherwise have been uncovered in the field.[7]

[7] Russell H. Bernard (ed.), *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology* (London: Sage, Altamira. 1998), 259-548.

Unobtrusive measures in social science research are also relevant to social and cultural analysis, although they have been developed primarily as non-reactive tools to support social and psychological research in circumstances that might otherwise present difficulties. These unobtrusive measures are similar to the archival techniques mentioned above. They can include actuarial statistics, episodic and private records (such as sales records), physical trace measurements from past behaviour (e.g. paths worn in a hillside), or approximations of knowledge based on several alternative sources (rather like triangulation).[8] Taken together, these unobtrusive measures may be the largest single source of data for the serious field researcher facing challenging social and cultural circumstances from which to collect information, but they require imagination, experience and training to develop as effective tools.

Other work for DRDC has identified sources and methods for work in non-permissive environments that would be relevant for a Canadian SCA capability.[9]

The second group of SCA techniques relate directly to project evaluation, but can be applied to a broader understanding of social and cultural environments. Rapid Assessment Process (RAP) or rapid appraisal, insider-outsider research, consultation mechanisms, and culturally-sensitive program evaluation have all been used by various international organizations to understand the environment in which they are operating and improve the quality of their interventions, and are relevant for military commanders and staffs attempting to plan and execute operations, alone or in cooperation with other forces.

Rapid Assessment Process (RAP) or rapid appraisal was developed in the 1990s to support health, education, and agricultural development projects abroad. It is not a single, all-purpose tool, but consists of an emic approach, research teams, triangulation, and an iterative process.[10] A systems approach requires that all the elements of a complex environment are taken into consideration, and emic measures are drawn from the internal elements of the culture or society

[8] Eugene Webb et al, *Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive research in the Social Sciences (*Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966)
[9] David Last, Jordan Axani and Melissa Jennings, *Studying Hostile, Deceptive and Dangerous Surroundings: Report of a Workshop on Social Research Methods for Non-Permissive Environments (*Toronto: DRDC, August, 2010)
[10] James Beebe, "Basic Concepts and Techniques of Rapid Appraisal" *Human Organization* Vol. 54 No. 1 (Spring 1995): 42-51; James Beebe, *Rapid Assessment Process: An Introduction*. (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2001) Beebe's later work replaced "systems evaluation" with the concept of "emic evaluation", reflecting greater reliance on local measures of success.

under study. Short guidelines set the parameters of the research. Field research proceeds through semi-structured interviews,[11] allowing those with indigenous knowledge to shape the categories that determine research effort. Respondents are selected for specific local knowledge, but the research teams also include local participants. Teams are made up of locals, mixed gender, area and subject experts. Everyone in the team should speak the local language but in practice it may be necessary to engage interpreters. Insider-outsider designs can further improve access to local perceptions.[12] The concept of triangulation involves multiple perceptions from mixed methods, different groups of respondents, and different assumptions about outcomes. Small interdisciplinary teams permit the use of descriptive and analytical tools from a variety of disciplines. Triangulation could involve demographic projections combined with local interviews of rural, urban, majority and minority populations speculating about the outcome of a policy like drug eradication. An iterative approach would repeat and refine both the intervention and the evaluation of its impact at intervals – perhaps initially weeks, then months, then years, with an understanding that interventions are experimental, take time, and must evolve with local circumstances.

One of the key themes of RAP, rapid appraisal, consultation, and insider-outsider research is the primacy of local perceptions and objectives over those of an intervening organization. This diminishes in utility if the intervention is not actually compatible with local interests; the closer to total war that we find ourselves on the spectrum of operations, the greater the difficulty we are likely to have in the application of SCA in support of operations. It is not always clear to those living behind hesco bastions and concertina wire how popular they are with the locals, and so the emic focus of RAP, consultation, and insider-outsider research is a particularly helpful counterpoint to the commander's intent in military operations.

LESSONS FROM THE AMERICAN COIN EXPERIENCE

The American experience of COIN provides useful examples of alternative organizations and structures to support a SCA capability, and also individual skills and tactics for the deployment of SCA analysts. COIN doctrine suggests that, "A force optimized for COIN operations would have

[11] James A. Holstein and Jaber F.Gubrium, *The Active Interview*. Sage Qualitative Research Methods Series No. 37 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 1995)
[12] Jean M. Bartunek and Meryl Reis Louis, *Insider/Outsider Team Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996)

political and cultural advisors at company level," but they are normally limited to corps and division, so lower-level organizations must improvise.[13] An advantage of smaller contributors like Canada is that with fewer and smaller units to contribute; specialized cultural and political advice might often reside at battle group level or lower.

A second significant difference is that a smaller resource base is a powerful incentive for a SCA system to encompass whole-of-government objectives, rather than evolving primarily within the security sector. Both FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* and FM 3-07 *Stability and Support* refer to the joint program of the Defence Department, Department of State, and CIA, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) as an example of effectively integrated multi-department efforts.[14] But both refer to the eventual failure of American operations in Vietnam, and other critics have identified CORDS and the related CIA Phoenix program as contributors to that failure.[15] Work within the American military-academic complex has tended to blame other agencies for the failure of interagency coordination;[16] unity of effort was achieved when the CORDS chief, "established deputies for CORDS throughout the command with civilians as leads to reassure the civilian agencies."[17] CORDS was driven by military objectives and the nominal civilian leadership was eclipsed by de facto control of military deputies who were motivated by body count statistics and used the social and cultural information primarily for military intelligence purposes. This surely reinforces the argument that lip-service to the primacy of political goals is an inadequate way to approach complex political, social, and economic phenomena. It was the overwhelming resources of the military and CIA that allowed them to eclipse development objectives, and this should be taken into account designing effective SCA to support Canadian operations.

US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) envisioned the Human Terrain System (HTS) as a comprehensive capability to provide a military commander and staff with an

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[13] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency*, 189-282.
[14] Department of the Army, *FM 3-07 Stability Operations*. (Washington: Department of the Army, 2008), 1-2; Department of the Army, *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency,* 2-12.
[15] Roberto J. Gonzales and Christopher T. Fisher, "The Illusion of Progress: CORDS and the Crisis of Modernization in South Vietnam, 1965-1968" *Pacific Historical Review* Vol. 75 No.1 (2006): 25-51.
[16] Major Ross Coffey, "Revisiting CORDS: The need for unity of effort to secure victory in Iraq." *Military Review* (March-April 2006): 24-34.
[17] Coffey, p. 29, citing CIA Director William Colby's memoir: William E. Colby. *Lost Victory: A Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989), 207.

understanding of the local population, society and culture, and the impact of operational decisions. As a system, HTS extends at least conceptually from Human Terrain Teams (HTT) at the front-line through advisors at regional and theatre headquarters, to reach-back mechanisms that permit the engagement of subject experts in support of front-line decision-making with a short turn-around time. Parts of this system worked effectively in both Iraq and Afghanistan, but as a system, most observers would agree that it never reached its full potential. At one wildly optimistic extreme, a completely effective HTS would obviate the need for combat operations; at another, it would ensure that all combat operations were effectively focused to maximize their contributions to the military mission's objectives.

The paper identifies four principle advantages accruing to a military force served by a HTS, with HTTs integrated at Brigade Combat Team level (BCT).[18] The first is improved interpersonal skills for soldiers in contact with the local population. This results both from prior knowledge of HTT members, and their ability to interpret the local situation to produce simple instructions for soldiers. The second advantage is an analogue of the first at a community level. HTTs should provide a more sophisticated interpretation of political, economic, and social interactions in the community. By accurately identifying important people in the community, the HTT helps the commander shape his actions and engagements to have the desired effect. This is related to the third advantage—better operational planning. Experience of both effective and counter-productive military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq has led to the understanding that good SCA can make the difference between success and failure. The final advantage offered by embedded HTTs is that they can preserve and transfer knowledge between unit rotations—both concrete information like the names and connections of village elders, and more subtle information like the impact of operations over time, so that the measures of operational success extend into the future to include second and third order effects.

All these advantages are closely related to the way in which HTTs are trained, structured, developed and deployed, in other words, whether they are part of an effective system. An effective system would allow for all-way flow of information: from the HTTs on the front-lines to

[18] An American brigade combat team (BCT) of about 4000-5000 soldiers is roughly the equivalent of Canada's three regular brigades. A Canadian brigade normally consists of three regular infantry battalions, an armoured regiment (battalion), an artillery regiment (battalion), combat engineer squadron (company), and other services. Following the American model would involve integrating HTTs into the brigade headquarters.

advisors in higher headquarters; from subject-experts anywhere in the world to the front-lines; and laterally, between different contributors. By the admission of those involved, the HTS never achieved this level of integration. Further, the lateral movement of information between organizations probably presented the greatest difficulty. Military HTTs (or their equivalents) were often not well connected with NGOs or local government organizations active in their areas of operation. Their subordination to military objectives gave them a focus that made them particularly useful to commanders, but often not accessible or desirable partners for development, aid or local government officials seeking some distance from the military interventions.[19] The need for reach-back to subject experts is partly related to the inadequacy of local information, and some kinds of questions are better answered by the local expert than by a university expert abroad for many years.

ALTERNATIVE SCA MODELS

The HTS and its component HTTs should not be seen as the only model for a national SCA capability. Public-private partnerships and contracted models might provide the capability. Analytical cells with a call on a wide range of expertise are resident in many international organizations which boast some SCA capabilities. The American Africa Command (AFRICOM), the UK, and Canada's own Human Effects teams all offer alternative visions of SCA capabilities.

An alternative to the HTS that is still evolving—possibly to become an adjunct or alternative to it—is the public-private partnership of the Small Worlds Project.[20] We can leave aside the question of whether public-private partnerships ever cost less than those delivered exclusively by the public sector; for construction of roads, bridges, hospitals and schools in Canada the answer is unequivocal, so the question tends to be an ideological one. In the spirit of privatizing other aspects of the war on terror, but with perhaps less malign results,[21] the Small Worlds Project was conceived as a collaborative venture of universities, contractors, and other government departments, brought together with US Department of Defence Funding. The HTS in Iraq spent

[19] Andy Tamas & Nipa Banderjee interview with author, 2011.
[20] John Loxley, *Public Service, Private Profits: The Political Economy of Public/Private Partnerships in Canada* (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2006)
[21] Joanna Spear, David Isenberg and Carlos Ortiz, "Privatizing the Battlefield: Contractors, Law and War." *World Politics Review* (June 2011), accessed 24 Oct 2011, http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/document/508/privatizing-the-battlefield-security-contractors-law-and-war

part of its life being developed by BAE Systems as the prime contractor, providing individual sub-contractors to support the operation, but in February 2009 all HTS employees were converted to government term contracts, ostensibly due to problems with the status of forces agreement (SOFA) with the Iraqi government.[22]

Launched in 2008, the Small Worlds Project may have been partly a response to the problems with the existing HTS supporting military operations in Iraq.[23] Its vision was to reduce the need for direct military action, and to enhance support for stability, security, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) operations. Academic outreach provides both virtual support through electronic reach-back, and geographically accessible support from universities near deployment centres, or by relying on academics deployed with troops. The Small Worlds Project sought to be more than simply a source of talent, however, by building a dedicated forum to address the full spectrum of SSTR "cultural activities," including administrative support, centralized access to government, academic, and contractual experts and resources, education and training, information exchange and dialogue, a centralized information repository (though it is unclear what this database might include), means of coordinating research and analysis, and sponsorship of workshops and meetings.[24] From this long list, it is clear that one of the motivations is to provide one-stop contracting support for a sufficiently wide range of activities to make a limited company viable. In March 2010, the Office of Naval Research, at least eight universities, and several private enterprises had already signed up to the concept. Impressively, a tentative division of labour had been established to account for field research and operational support, computational modelling, analytical tools, a crowd-sourcing contractor, data structure, data-management, and technical support.

Geographic Services Incorporated is an example of the sort of database and expert knowledge system that already exists in the private sector, and might be mobilized as a Small Worlds Project

[22] John Stanton, "US Government Takeover of Human Terrain System," http://cryptome.info/0001/hts-bailout.htm, accessed 20 October 2011.
[23] *Ibid*. John Stanton is a freelance reporter who wrote a series of syndicated pieces in 2008-2009 about disarray in the HTS, including details about the value of contracts and the quality of services provided: this is Part V of the Series. Part I is titled US Army's Human Terrain System in Disarray. Part II is titled US Army's Human Terrain System: From Super Concept to Absolute Farce. Part III is titled US Army's Human Terrain System: Madness, Mayhem and Troughs of Cash. Part IV is titled Cleaning UP US Army TRADOC's Human Terrain System.
[24] The following points are drawn from a presentation under Chatham House rule to a workshop on social research methods for non-permissive environments, 26 March 2010.

partner, or to support a Canadian SCA capability. Based in Virginia not far from the Washington beltway, the company aims to "help organizations better understand diverse cultures in critical regions of the world." Founded in 2002 as a geographic names analysis company working with the US National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, it began engaging native speaking linguists, then cultural analysts to understand the people behind the language. Today it claims "deep cultural knowledge" of religious affiliations, tribal locations, hierarchies, leadership, and social networks. It analyses demographic patterns and collects census data, but also offers linguistic analysis and Blog analysis to government and private clients. One of their products, Human Atlas™, is a proprietary database that integrates geospatial, linguistic, and socio-cultural data based on field operators, satellite photography, government and international sources.[25]

The RAP concept of triangulation is useful to explore information flows in a human terrain analysis system. It makes sense to triangulate some kinds of information from local sources (e.g. who are the current players) with other information from abroad (e.g. what is the longer history and context of engagement). However, it probably does not make sense for a smaller player like Canada to try to provide all the analytical capabilities to one organization that can then ignore others in pursuit of a narrow interpretation of its mission. It has taken many wars for infantry, cavalry, and artillery to learn to work together effectively, a process relearned with each new generation of technology, and this process must now be repeated with the social science technology of human terrain analysis.

Major international organizations like the World Bank, the OECD, WHO, and the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) are all aware of the impact of social and cultural characteristics on their operations. As international organizations, one approach is routinely to combine indigenous perceptions in their calculations and planning. Thus many of these organizations will have national offices that employ locals, who can serve as cultural interpreters to validate plans and interventions that affect a particular state or group. The advantage of this approach is that indigenous perspectives are combined from the outset, while the disadvantage is that its cultural assumptions may not be explicit, or may represent a compromise between local and international perceptions.

[25] "Geographic Services, Inc." last modified 2011, www.geographic-services.net, accessed 18 October 2011.

Existing Canadian government capabilities should not be ignored. The Canadian Foreign Service Institute (CFSI) is Canada's centre for expertise related to foreign affairs, including language training in 44 languages. The Canada School of Public Service offers leadership and cultural training courses in cooperation with the CFSI. Canadem and CCIC are Canadian NGOs with databases of individuals and organizations that can be searched for specific competencies, including language, cultural, and area knowledge related to Canadian interests.

At the same time that the HTS was evolving to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, AFRICOM opted for a Social Science Research Centre based in the headquarters, with deployable socio-cultural research advisory teams (SCRAT). In contrast to the HTS-HTT combination, which operated on the assumption that it was supporting combat operations, the SSRC-SCRAT combination made every effort at openness, and sought to conform to academic and ethical standards in its conduct.

The British Defence Science Cultural Unit was established in April 2010 in the UK, to develop cultural advisors and run training courses for headquarters staff. The week-long course for cultural specialists is designed to prepare soldiers who expect to have sustained contact with locals; it includes material on Islamic and Afghan culture and is intended to produce of a pool of specialists who can then advise on operations. Since language is key, and courses are not long enough to master Pashto or Dari, cultural advisors are selected for their linguistic and cultural knowledge. One senior officer serving as a cultural advisor was engaged over an 18 month deployment to map tribal allegiances and dispositions.[26]

Canada has deployed personnel selection (PSEL) officers to work as Human Effects Advisors (HEAs) in Regional Command South in 2008. The Brigade PSEL officer, usually a major, is a resource deployed at the discretion of the brigade commander. The 1CMBG rotation PSEL officer used direct and indirect observation, interviews, surveys, and focus groups to determine the impact of allied operations on local populations. They developed measures of performance from focus groups with locals, and measures of output based on quantitative measures such as the number of IED strikes in the vicinity. Officers found that passive observation was a more fruitful

[26] Danny Chapman, "Military develops its cultural understanding of Afghanistan" *MOD Defence News: Defence Policy and Business* (24 Feb 2010), http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/DefencePolicyAndBusiness/MilitaryDevelopsItsCulturalUnderstandingOfAfghanistan.htm, accessed 21 October, 2010.

collection technique in the early stages of a mission, and that focus groups were more productive when they were divided horizontally, so that senior participants did not dominate the conversation. Because PSEL officers are brigade resources, the subsequent rotation commander used his discretion to focus his team on own troops rather than local effects, and there is no comparative data beyond a single rotation.[27]

CHALLENGES, GAPS AND VULNERABILITIES FOR A SCA CAPABILITY

Perhaps the largest vulnerability in developing a Canadian SCA capability is the concept of cultural support to military operations in the first place. It will not be developed if it is perceived as a liability rather than an asset, and therefore the American experience has to be examined critically. We can then move on to consider specific issues like recruiting, selection, training, organization, and alternative structural solutions that might work for a Canadian SCA capability.

There are serious reservations about the ways in which SCA has been applied in major powers' military operations. The early application of censuses and ethnography in support of colonial ventures that were later perceived as exploitative, along with the mobilization of anthropology to aid military objectives in the Pacific during the Second World War and the use of ethnographic databases in Indochina and the Indian subcontinent. Association with colonialists and soldiers has given ethnographers a bad name that today's anthropologists are anxious to shake off. This is not just about public perceptions, or even ethical standards. It is about effectiveness and claims of utility. Like the argument over torture, some argue that field ethnography in support of military operations is not only wrong, but also fundamentally ineffective, misleading, or counterproductive. Two arguments along these lines should be considered in developing a Canadian SCA capability.

The first is that combat ethnography cannot be done well. Foreign cultural experts in a combat zone don't get out much - HTTs attached to brigades rarely left camp without escorts, and risk-averse commanders insisted that they were always in uniform, in "full battle rattle" (with combat vest, helmet, rifle). Combined with lack of local language skills and the need for interpreters, this physical distancing meant that direct-engagement with the local population was more notional

[27] David Last, Jordan Axani and Melissa Jennings, *Studying Hostile, Deceptive and Dangerous Surroundings: Report of a Workshop on Social Research Methods for Non-Permissive Environments*. Toronto: DRDC, August, 2010.

than real. Canadian HEAs in 2008 had similar observations. Under these circumstances, or those pictured by the Small Worlds Project, good ethnographic research is not possible.

The second argument is that combat ethnography is a bad idea. Wikileaks made available the *Army Stryker Brigade Initial Impressions Report on Operations in Mosul* (2004),[28] and this was influential in the Petraeus rewrite of COIN doctrine. Lack of cultural knowledge weakened day-to-day operations, making patrolling and targeting and interpretation of intelligence less effective. Following this through, the purpose of the HTS was to support military operations by making the combat components more effective.[29] But the military operations themselves should be subordinated to some larger political and social understanding, and herein lies the problem with expeditionary COIN operations like those in Afghanistan and Iraq, particularly as paradigms for Canadian capabilities. Operations against would-be insurgents at home—like the Basques, the IRA, or the FLQ—do *not* use artillery or air strikes, do *not* suffer from lack of cultural intelligence, and *do* epitomize political primacy and police leadership. And they have been generally successful, while wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan have not. If we accept this argument, then the real utility of SCA as a Canadian capability, whether at home or abroad, may not be to increase the effectiveness of military capabilities but to provide better insights into ways of achieving objectives with less reliance on coercive or kinetic capabilities.

We can now consider the specific challenges of developing a Canadian SCA capability. The analysis so far has suggested a fairly extensive suite of potential skills and techniques for SCA analysts, and several levels from unit to theatre and national headquarters (tactical, operational and strategic levels) at which SCA capabilities might be deployed.

A socio-cultural analyst might have several capabilities and attributes, depending on where he or she might be used in the SCA system. Not all have to be taught – the training problem can be stated as a trade-off between selection and development. After three decades in Cyprus, a decade in the Balkans, and a decade in Afghanistan, few members of the Canadian forces have deep knowledge of local language and culture; the Canadian army was not in Cyprus for thirty years, it was there for six months, sixty times. We select and develop soldiers who can be sent anywhere,

[28] Now accessible at http://pogoarchives.org/m/dp/dp-StrykerBrigade-12212004.pdf, accessed 20 October 2011.
[29] David H. Price, *Weaponizing Anthropology* (Petrolia, CA: Counterpunch, 2011), 135.

but have made little effort to tap Canada's cultural diversity in support of operations.[30] It takes six hundred hours to teach rudiments of a foreign language, or we can select for candidates who have the required language capability (and often some prior cultural knowledge that accompanies the language) then spend time teaching SCA tools. Recruiting and selection of appropriate candidates therefore becomes a function of the SCA capability. The potential target languages and cultures are finite, and some risk management can narrow these down to a reasonable number (perhaps a few dozen), but this will still exceed capacity for "on the shelf" skills. There are alternatives to keeping skills on the shelf in case they are needed. Inventories like those of Canadem, and readiness training when policy becomes engaged in a region are alternatives.

Canada's diverse population has often been suggested as a resource to support operations. Far from waiting years for second-generation contributors from a conflict zone, recent immigrants and refugees can be recruited, selected and screened for employment in support of operations. Refoulement is not a problem for volunteers; citizenship can be an inducement to service; and CSIS can help with screening undesirables and mixed motives.

While specialized language and cultural skills might be essential at the tactical level, an ability to integrate into military units, and also to work across organizational boundaries may also be required. This is a function of team building, hence difficult to do before the teams are formed. Building cross-functional teams is therefore an additional SCA capability.[31]

More familiarity with whole-of-government operations might be required at operational and strategic headquarters than in tactical teams. Here, staff training, higher education and professional credibility will be more important than specific language and cultural knowledge, but capacity to build cross-functional teams will still be an essential skill. It will be at this level that competence in applying analytical tools and techniques will also be more important, so here it might be appropriate for a Defence Scientist (DS) classification to be attached to the analysts.

One complaint levied against the HTS was that it was unable to provide consistently good analysts or team members. It was hampered in its recruitment, selection and training, but also in

[30] In fact, for a while there was a personnel policy not to deploy Canadians of Arab or Jewish background to the Middle East, lest it compromise the impartiality expected in UN operations; the same was not true for diplomatic appointments, surprisingly.
[31] Glenn M. Parker, *Cross-Functional Teams: Working with Allies, Enemies, and Others* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992)

the conditions faced by individual team members at brigades and headquarters. Not all commanders accepted the utility of the HTS. This suggests that including SCA in staff training and higher officer education might help in disseminating understanding of its utility and competence in its application.

Rather than finding a doctrinal solution for a single organizational structure to provide Canada with a SCA capability, we can imagine a range of potential organizations that could host a SCA capability, and a variety of ways of fulfilling the function under different circumstances. As a way ahead, we conclude that there is a three-dimensional space in which Canadian SCA capability might be plotted: from strategic to tactical; from militarized to governmental to contracted civilian; and from specific and temporally bounded to generic and continuing. Only some parts of this space represent a permanent SCA capability, but all represent options for evolution of Canadian capability. A generic capability implies competence in the tools and methods of SCA and familiarity with sources and means of exploitation, but it may be divorced from specific language and cultural knowledge for a given theatre of operations. A continuous capability implies permanent staff positions dedicated to a function, while a specific and temporally bounded capability might include an analyst with a detailed knowledge of South Sudan, engaged only for a term contract during which that expertise is relevant.

SIGNIFICANCE – THE WAY FORWARD FOR CANADA?

In the Canadian context, it is never clear whether military operations will lead or be in support, so a Canadian SCA capability must cater to any of the ways in which it might be applied. Although it might be a whole-of-government asset, the field-deployable elements of the SCA capability would logically belong to the armed forces, for the same reason that hostage rescue and emergency response were militarized in the 1980s: cost, accountability, and flexibility of employment. Our experience, however, suggests that efforts to develop a new capability must be supported outside the armed forces. High-level demonstrations of utility and advocacy by champions are two ways of building support in Cabinet and central agencies. Bottom-up approaches can also be tried, by involving other government departments in staff discussions, development exercises, and courses.

Some specific examples of SCA capability can be provided within the general framework described above, based on the evidence provided in the paper that follows. Within a central

agency—possibly in the PCO, or as an advisor to the National Security Advisor—we might expect to find a senior socio-cultural analyst operating as a free-ranging synthesizer, capable of identifying the need for SCA, and mobilizing analytical resources at short-notice or over the longer term. This capability would have to be generic and continuous in order to provide appropriate policy advice under any circumstances. For example, what are the cultural impediments to successful intervention in Syria? Would a large refugee population from Cuba exacerbate domestic tensions if settled in Quebec? Is a Sikh regiment a good idea? Are Canadian Forces aboriginal leadership programs having the desired effect?

In operational-theatre headquarters, we might find generic and continuous SCA capabilities, but also theatre-specific experts, on short-term contracts, possibly engaged through a private sector prime contractor. This combination would not only be supporting operations, but might also be tasked to develop the statements of requirement and possibly the personnel tools for recruiting, selection and development of specialized SCA agents to support the operation over an indefinite period. It would also be responsible for assembling expert systems, evaluating the quality of the research and analysis, and developing information networks to take advantage of other sources of SCA expertise.

At the tactical level, circumstances might dictate a continuously-deployed team, combining human effects coordination, socio-cultural advice to operations, and evaluation of the impact of operations. Under other circumstances, a periodically deployed team employing RAP techniques may be adequate and preferable because it would be cheaper and less invasive to the momentum of the operation.

A final thought about SCA capability for Canada. In the absence of any will to create a new capability, the solution might entail the intellectual equivalent of drilling with wooden rifles: knowing that SCA capability is important, an existing function might be double-tasked to fulfill the new capability. This is an old stand-by: bandsmen become stretcher bearers; surplus artillery observers become civil-affairs officers; reconnaissance platoon is double-tasked for nuclear-biological-chemical duties. PSEL officers would be the obvious choice around which to build a SCA capability. They could begin by recruiting and selecting from amongst the formations' soldiers for the linguistic and cultural capabilities that are in demand, and amongst the better educated (officer or not) for SCA analysts to populate the headquarters. This solution requires

clear vision of the necessary capability and consistent effort over time to produce the right people, properly integrated into the organization.

FUTURE PLANS

This has been an exploratory exercise. In carrying it out, we have been struck by the obvious overlap of SCA capability with Red Teaming decision support, and information operations—two other areas requiring organizational development—and also with special operations, which have long relied on superior knowledge of the local environment.

Sommaire

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REPORT INTRODUCTION

Research Question: *What should a permanent Canadian socio-cultural analysis capability look like?*

This report examines existing socio-cultural analysis units of major western militaries with the goal of producing recommendations for a permanent Canadian capability. To accomplish this task, a thorough and exhaustive examination of existing literature on the subject was conducted and the results analyzed. As interest in counter-insurgency (COIN) warfare has grown in recent years, there is a wealth of research on effective tools, one of which is socio-cultural analysis. Ongoing debate over SCA as a COIN tool has produced substantial research critical of the role and structure of socio-cultural analysis units. This report analyzes these evaluations. Special attention is devoted to discovering the gaps, vulnerabilities and benefits of each country's socio-cultural research capability. The aim is to provide an accurate picture of the advantages and noted weaknesses of a variety of socio-cultural analysis units to further enable a useful comparison. The resulting conclusions are intended to inform the development of a permanent Canadian socio-cultural analysis research capability.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

The conventional view is that armed conflicts within states and accompanying humanitarian emergencies surged upward at the end of the Cold War and continued to increase during the 1990's. That view is not supported by evidence. Taking into account the scope, destructiveness and human costs of conflict, there was a long-term increase in the magnitude of violent, predominantly intrastate, conflict from 1945 to a maximum point in the early 1990's, followed by a decline. The modal (most common) form of violence since the Second World War has been intrastate or civil wars.[32] In many cases ethnicity and religion were prime drivers of these new conflicts as societies were violently torn apart.[33] In others, economic factors were the prime motivators for political entrepreneurs.[34] Intervening western forces found themselves in the midst of intractable conflicts possessing inadequate knowledge of the social and cultural factors[35] driving conflict.[36]

The two most prominent conflicts of the first decade of the 21st century, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, exhibited all the complexity and confusion of the interventions of the 1990's. Additionally, western forces were placed in direct military conflict with a myriad of local and trans-national forces. Pre-conflict assumptions contained flawed perceptions based on a low-level understanding of completely foreign operating environments.[37] In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the rapid initial success of each intervention devolved into complex insurgencies which do not align with the traditional core strengths of western armed forces. Designed, trained and equipped to fight similar opponents, western militaries lacked the vital knowledge and skills to operate effectively in complex asymmetric battle spaces. Without a thorough understanding of the cultural landscape[38] military leaders found themselves operating at a severe disadvantage.

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[32] T.R. Gurr, in F. Hampson and D. Malone, eds. *From Reaction to Conflict Prevention: Opportunities for the UN System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 41.
[33] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 149.
[34] See the World Bank "Greed and Grievance" studies, and numerous works on the economic correlates of civil wars and resource-based conflicts.
[35] Patrick Porter "Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War." *Parameters* (Summer 2007): 49.
[36] Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 293.
[37] Porter, "Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War," 56.
[38] Michael Jones, *The Concept of Cultural Landscape: Discourse and Narratives.* In Palang, Hannes & Fry, Gary (eds.) *Landscape Interfaces: Cultural Heritage in Changing Landscapes* (New York: Springer, 2003), 21.

To address this deficit, the US military devoted considerable effort into developing a new Counterinsurgency Field Manual. The aim was to equip US soldiers with a guide to best practices, tactics and doctrine necessary to confront the challenges of COIN operations. Following the American example, Britain and Canada undertook substantial efforts to develop a formal counterinsurgency doctrine, tailored to their specific political and military needs. Of central importance in the new doctrine is the critical tenet that securing the support of the population should be the number one priority in all military COIN operations. Defeating insurgents militarily or seizing terrain should in fact be secondary goals and can actually hinder efforts to gain popular support.[39] Although this effort was a logical successor to the work of the Small Wars Operational Research Directorate (SWORD) project of US SOUTHCOM in the 1980s, which identified factors correlated with successful counter-insurgency, it also represented a break. The most strongly correlated factor from the SWORD studies was legitimacy, related to restraint, and unity of effort with the host nation or civil authorities.[40]

While the efforts of US TRADOC in the 1990s sought to integrate American understanding of counter-insurgency, wider peacekeeping and peace support operations, the advent of the Global War on Terror (2001) and the American-led wars in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) undid that effort, drawing a sharper distinction between counter-insurgency *war* and legitimacy-based *operations other than war* (OOTW) than had existed in the 1995 American doctrine on peace support operations and OOTW, or in the 1994 British doctrine on Wider Peacekeeping.[41] A fundamental criticism of COIN from outside the military community is that its concepts and doctrine are fatally flawed instruments for achieving what are essentially political, social, and economic development objectives. In this school of thought, COIN's doctrinal assertion of political primacy is empty lip service, unsubstantiated by any useful models of the connection between military action and political, social, or economic change.[42]

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[39] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc, 1964), 95.
[40] Max G. Manwaring and John T. Fishel, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Towards a New Analytical Approach," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* (Winter 1992): 272-305. Manwaring, Max G. *Internal Wars: Rethinking Problem and Response* (Carlysle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2001)
[41] David Last, *Theory Doctrine and Practice of Conflict De-escalation in Peacekeeping Operations* (Cornwallis, NS: Peacekeepers Press, 1997).
[42] David Last, "Transformation or Back to Basics: Counter-Insurgency Pugilism and Peacebuilding Judo," in Kobi Michael, Eyal Ben-Ari and David Kellen (Eds.), *The Transformation of the World of Warfare and Peace Support Operations.* (West Port, CT: Praeger Security International, 2009)

After the reorganization of American-led military priorities to defeat insurgencies, the realization followed, within the COIN community, that a deep understanding of the contested population is absolutely critical.[43] The remedy developed was to equip western militaries with the ability and tools to understand the socio-cultural terrain of their operating environments.[44] Precisely how to develop, structure, fund and deploy these capabilities has sparked an immense debate in military, political and academic circles.[45] This debate has produced a number of different variants of socio-cultural analysis capabilities according to individual national priorities.

The US, Britain and Canada have deployed distinct socio-cultural analysis capabilities to fill the cultural knowledge gap and sharpen the focus of military operations. It is clear that a socio-cultural analysis capability is vital to COIN operations and non-linear peacekeeping operations that have become increasingly common. As these are the types of operations the Canadian Forces (CF) will likely be tasked with in the foreseeable future, Canada would be well advised to bring specific cultural skills to future missions. Through an examination of the different socio-cultural analysis capabilities recently developed by western militaries, potential options for a permanent and lasting Canadian cultural capability can be proposed. It is not clear, however, that military capabilities, rather than whole-of-government socio-cultural analysis capabilities will help to achieve the peaceful political, economic and social change desired by local actors. In developing a lasting socio-cultural analysis capability for the CF, the problems inherent in militarizing the function must be addressed.

[43] Nathan Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook." (Human Terrain System, 2008): 3.
[44] Jeffrey K. Baier, "Mapping the Human Terrain: A Key to Operational Effectiveness for Future Peace Operations," (Peace Operations Training Institute): 14.
[45] Kevin R. Golinghorst, "Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan." *School of Advanced Military Studies*. (2010): 25.

CURRENT IMPORTANCE OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY

The challenges encountered by the US military during the early years of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq led to a re-examining of existing COIN literature. The US military in Iraq especially, abruptly discovered that it was unprepared to effectively wage a high-intensity COIN campaign. Expecting a rapid and decisive conventional campaign followed by a seamless transition to distant over-watch, the US military was unprepared as Iraq was torn apart after the fall of Baghdad.[46] Pre-war assumptions regarding Iraqi society, culture and politics were proven false as Iraq descended into chaos.[47] The policies of de-Baathification and abolishment of the Iraqi military betrayed a lack of understanding of Iraqi society that haunted US efforts for years. Failure at the highest political levels to recognize or officially acknowledge that the Iraq campaign was spiralling out of control added to the challenge of reorienting US forces. While political leaders may not have recognized the facts on the ground,[48] many US military personnel realized that they were not sufficiently prepared and organized to effectively fight a far different war then planned for.[49] While successful adaptation and improvisation occurred on the ground level:

> [T]he U.S. military generally operated with a disregard for the cultural characteristics of the Iraqi population. Without a clearly defined national or theater strategy or a published counterinsurgency doctrine to provide unity of effort, the approach to handling the post-conflict environment was haphazard at best.[50]

As the US military struggled to adapt from the ground up, the military leadership launched a concerted effort to develop new doctrine for modern COIN operations. The process was led by Gen. David Petraeus, who commanded the 101st Airborne Division in Mosul which is largely viewed as one of the few successful early efforts at bringing stability to occupied Iraq.[51] Drawing on expertise from the military, civilian contributors and a review of existing COIN literature,

[46] Porter, "Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War," 47.
[47] Ben Connable, "All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence," *Military Review* (March-April 2009): 59.
[48] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 151.
[49] Grant S. Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," *School of Advanced Military Studies* (2009): 5.
[50] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," 21.
[51] Ricks, *Fiasco,* 227.

Gen. Petraeus produced *FM 3-24, The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*.[52] This work is not without its critics, partly for the loose way in which it uses scholarship, verging on plagiarism, but more intensely because of the normative critique of science in support of war by groups like the Network of Concerned Anthropologists.[53]

[52] Department of the Army, *FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006).
[53] Network of Concerned Anthropologists, *The Counter-Counterinsurgency Manual: or, Notes on Demilitarizing American Society*. (New York: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009)

HISTORY OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY

The 20th century offers many examples of both successful and unsuccessful COIN campaigns from which lessons can be drawn. Revisiting past experiences of this type of warfare by Gen. Petraeus was intended to create a framework for implementing successful COIN campaigns under modern conditions.

Extracting lessons from these conflicts is an important and necessary endeavour but also fraught with challenges. Each conflict occurred in entirely different sets of circumstances. Copying one experience wholesale for use in a separate conflict is problematic. Insurgencies are caused by many different factors - no two being identical. The list of factors fuelling insurgencies can include; religion, ethnicity, anti-colonialism, economics, political ideology and others.[54] However, even a brief survey of COIN literature emphasizes one fixed rule; the necessity to understand the environment, specifically the people.[55] Having a deep knowledge of the people is as necessary today as it was for the French in Algeria[56] or the US military in Vietnam.[57] Current Canadian COIN doctrine rightly emphasizes the paramount importance of popular support.[58]

[54] Taber, Robert. *War of the Flea.* (Washington: Potomac Books, Inc, 2002), 3.
[55] Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 183.
[56] Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice,* 74-75.
[57] Jacob Kipp et al. "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century," *Military Review* (Sept-Oct 2006): 9.
[58] Canadian Forces Publication, B-GL-323-004/FP-003, *Counter-insurgency Operations* (National Defence: Ottawa, December 2008): 26.

ORIGIN & STATE OF US SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS CAPABILITIES

Equipped with new COIN doctrine, the US military grappled with how to radically improve its understanding of the contested population. As Afghan and Iraqi insurgents conducted daily attacks and sectarian violence accelerated, it became rapidly apparent that US forces did not have an adequate level of knowledge regarding the societies in which they were operating.[59] Successes on the ground were attributed to individual units taking initiative, rather than resulting from a comprehensive solution.[60] To bridge the knowledge gap, the US military sought to improve the depth of cultural knowledge of its personnel while also constructing specific units tasked with conducting operational cultural research.[61] Pre-deployment cultural training while an important research subject is not a focus in this paper as the related but distinct socio-cultural analysis units are examined.

The most well known socio-cultural analysis unit is the US military's Human Terrain System (HTS), developed by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). The HTS was designed to deploy mixed-teams of civilian social-scientists and military specialists to assist commanders with cultural research support.

> Specifically, the HTS was envisioned as a capability that would provide a commander and staff with an understanding of the population and the impact of the culture on operational decisions, as well as a system to ensure socio-cultural knowledge and expertise of an area is properly transferred during relief in place operations with follow-on forces.[62]

[59] Montgomery McFate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship." *Military Review* (March-April 2005): 25.
[60] Kipp, "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century," 11.
[61] Christopher H. Varhola & Laura Varhola, "Avoiding the Cookie-Cutter Approach to Culture: Lessons Learned from Operations in East Africa," *Military Review* (Nov-Dec 2006): 78.
[62] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," 25.

HTS is an upgraded version of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program.[63] CORDS, developed during the Vietnam War, provided civilian social science support to COIN operations.[64] A common criticism of CORDS was the lack of reachback capability to support researchers in the field and facilitate dissemination of acquired knowledge laterally across the battle space. HTS addressed this failing by building a US-based Research Reachback Center (RRC) which "provides deep analytical and problem-solving support."[65] The RRC has access to a wide body of open-source academic resources and subject-matter experts (SMEs) that are made available to HTT's upon specific request. Additionally, the Social Science Research and Analysis (SSRA) function can add "…independent research, such as polling and focus groups."[66]

The heart of the HTS is the deployable Human Terrain Team (HTT). Ranging in size from five to nine members, HTT's are tasked to support commanders by "filling their cultural knowledge gap in the current operating environment and providing cultural interpretations of events occurring within their area of operations."[67] Prospective HTT members go through specifically designed pre-deployment training to prepare them for the arduous task of conducting social-science research in a combat zone. Once HTT personnel are trained, they are assigned to a deploying team.

> The optimum composition of the team would include at least one member of the team [who] will speak the language of the area of operation, one member will be a subject matter expert of the area, and one team member will be a female….[68]

[63] Kipp, "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century." 10.
[64] Like HTS, CORDS has its critics in scholars like Gonzalez who argue that it is an abuse of ethical science. Roberto J. González, *American Counterinsurgency: Human Science and the Human Terrain*. (New York: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009)
[65] Golinghorst, "Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan," 4.
[66] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities. "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program." American Anthropological Association. (2009): 60.
[67] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 2.
[68] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 11.

Incorporating female members on HTT's allows access to half the population which in many traditional societies is forbidden to males outside the direct family. Without female participation a great deal of potential research data is inaccessible.[69]

Integrated into brigade combat team (BCT) headquarters', HTT's augment the brigade staff with social science expertise.[70] HTT's address specific requests from commanders while also pursuing general research on socio-cultural characteristics of the area of operations (AO). Deliverables include; a constantly updated, "user-friendly ethno-graphic and socio-cultural database of the area of operations,"[71] focused study on issues that are of specific concern to the commander and acting as a link to the RRC for more extensive research requests. By conducting detailed research on these cultural characteristics, BCT's are able to launch more focused non-kinetic operations, carefully crafted to sway the population.[72]

In 2010 there were approximately thirty[73] HTT's deployed throughout Afghanistan and Iraq with the expectation[74] that the number would increase.[75] These teams have reportedly provided an immensely important value-added service to the US military as it struggles to adapt to the challenging operating environments of Iraq and Afghanistan.[76] Primarily the teams offered specific insight on the socio-cultural aspects of the operating environment which resulted in culturally-aware planning and fewer avoidable mistakes caused by lack of knowledge.[77]

[69] Steve Featherstone. "Human Quicksand: For the US Army, a Crash Course in Cultural Studies". *Harper's* (September, 2008): 1.
[70] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," 1.
[71] Kipp, "The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st Century," 13.
[72] Matthew Arnold, "Improving the Coalition's Understanding of 'The People' in Afghanistan: Human Terrain Mapping in Kapisa Province." *Small Wars Journal.* (2010): 8.
[73] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities. "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 13.
[74] Featherstone, "Human Quicksand: For the US Army, a Crash Course in Cultural Studies,".1.
[75] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities. "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 13.
[76] Golinghorst, "Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan," 44.
[77] Paul Joseph, "Changing the Battle Space? How Human Terrain Teams Define "Success" in Iraq and Afghanistan," Paper prepared for 7th *Interdisciplinary Conference on War and Peace*, (2010): 15.

BENEFITS OF THE HUMAN TERRAIN SYSTEM

The HTS offers many advantages to the US military which had been found woefully lacking in socio-cultural knowledge in the early years of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Intended to rectify these deficiencies, the HTS helps tilt the battle for legitimacy in the eyes of the contested population towards the COIN forces.[78] Research conducted for this paper led to the grouping of noted HTS benefits into four categories; individual relations, community relations, operational planning and knowledge transfer.

INDIVIDUAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

The most basic advantage the HTS supplies are improved cultural relations between the counter-insurgency forces and the population. By providing cultural knowledge to soldiers on the ground, the HTT ensures that local cultural norms are not inadvertently violated during day-to-day interactions. Soldiers receive pre-deployment cultural training but not to the depth or local specificity that a HTT can deliver. Over time HTT research results and knowledge gained on the ground are included in pre-deployment training making it significantly more effective. Goodwill generated by positive interactions on routine patrols is invaluable as the local perception of the foreign soldiers determines how successfully insurgents can be marginalized.[79] As intelligence specialists cannot be everywhere information gained from locals – even if reliability is significant issue – is essential for operational success. The better the relationship with the local population, the more likely they are to share knowledge of insurgent activity.

While the behaviour of ordinary soldiers has a critical impact, a military commander's lack of cultural interest is fatal to the success of a mission. In COIN operations military leaders are required to fill the roles of mayor, building contractor, police chief and more. These additional roles, not considered traditional military skills, require constant interaction with the local

[78] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities. "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 24.
[79] Joseph, "Changing the Battle Space? How Human Terrain Teams Define "Success" in Iraq and Afghanistan," 12.

population and a high-degree of cultural knowledge. By helping commanders avoid self-defeating behaviour HTT's can ensure the best prospect for operational success.[80]

While a HTT helps smooth the interactions between the local population and foreign forces, it can also act to bridge another culture gap, between military and civilians from the international community in the area of operations. The nature of the military has spawned an internal culture which is quite distinct from the civilian world.[81] As the majority of western citizens have little contact with the military there is frequently little depth of knowledge on the role, structure and operations of the military within other government departments.[82] This gulf exists between the increasing numbers of western civilians; contractors, aid workers and government employees whose role is crucial for successful COIN operations.[83]

Extensive cultural knowledge allows foreign forces to prevent miscommunications relating to culture by viewing themselves through the local population's eyes and adjust their behaviour to maximize benefits and minimize cultural misunderstandings.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Another benefit of HTT's is a stronger relationship with the local community. Unlike conventional military campaigns where units pass through civilian areas during advances or retreats, COIN operations involve long-term interaction with the same communities. Therefore, building lasting relationships is fundamental to successful COIN strategy. The social-science research tools of an HTT can assess local civilian attitudes on many critical issues. Through surveys, polling and other methods, HTT's are able to discover pitfalls and potential opportunities for the military. Supported with this data, military commanders can effectively prioritize operations according to local needs.[84] Demonstrating a strong commitment and understanding of

[80] Joseph, "Changing the Battle Space? How Human Terrain Teams Define "Success" in Iraq and Afghanistan," 21.
[81] Robert Edwards et al. "Broadsword or Rapier? The Canadian Forces' involvement in 21st century coalition operations". CDS Critical Topic Number 6 Project Report, CFLI TR 2008-01 (2008): 26.
[82] Edwards et al. "Broadsword or Rapier? The Canadian Forces' involvement in 21st century coalition operations," 36.
[83] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 29.
[84] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 26.

the local community by addressing these concerns forms vital ties to the people.[85] Progressively, building the level of community engagement through productive partnerships further strengthens these ties and cements relationships of trust.[86] Improved relations lead to improved intelligence as local people can see real value and benefits flowing from their relationship with the military. Ideally, this military-civilian partnership will drive a wedge between the insurgents and the population and deprive them of vital support and protection.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING

HTT's, well integrated into military headquarters, have arguably their most important role assisting operational planning. By helping military staff gain improved situational awareness, specifically on socio-cultural issues, operations can be more focused and effective.[87] As cultural awareness[88] is crucial to successful COIN operations, HTT advice, backed by research data adds to the planning process and informs the decision-making.[89] Improved cultural situational understanding benefits military commanders from company and battalion right up to brigade-level.[90] Too frequently in the past, BCT's lacked sufficient analysts to perform this strategically important work.[91] By using tools such as socio-cultural mapping[92], a holistic appreciation of the battlefield is achievable. Designed to compile large amounts of research data into digestible and operationally relevant inputs, HTT's avoid overwhelming commanders with large amounts of individual reports they cannot process.[93]

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[85] Jack Marr et al. "Human Terrain Mapping: A Critical First Step to Winning the COIN Fight." *Military Review* (Mar-Apr 2008): 19.
[86] Arnold, "Improving the Coalition's Understanding of 'The People' in Afghanistan: Human Terrain Mapping in Kapisa Province," 7.
[87] Baier, "Mapping the Human Terrain: A Key to Operational Effectiveness for Future Peace Operations," 11.
[88] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 46.
[89] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 34.
[90] Jonathan Thompson, "Human terrain team operations in east Baghdad." *Military Review*, Vol. 90 Issue 4, (Jul/Aug2010): 78.
[91] Michael T. Flynn et al. "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan." Voices from the Field, *Center for a New American Security.* (January 2010): 7.
[92] Arnold, "Improving the Coalition's Understanding of 'The People' in Afghanistan: Human Terrain Mapping in Kapisa Province," 5.
[93] Arnold, "Improving the Coalition's Understanding of 'The People' in Afghanistan: Human Terrain Mapping in Kapisa Province," 5.

A deeper understanding of the human terrain of the operating environment allows military units to increase non-lethal operations and limit collateral damage during kinetic operations.[94] Collateral damage from kinetic operations, either civilian casualties or property damage undermines the narrative of the positive intentions of COIN forces.[95] Reinforcing the narrative that the COIN forces are worthy of popular support and the insurgents are purely destructive actors is impossible if frequent kinetic operations are occurring. Armed with a superior grasp of the socio-cultural complexities of the operating environment, military planners at all levels can design their operations understanding many 2nd and 3rd order effects. Understanding how the local population will respond to specific operations is of great use to military planners.[96] HTT's have been designed to work cooperatively with Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) units with the goal of improving the planning process through the input of operationally relevant socio-cultural data.[97]

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

A common challenge faced by western militaries in modern COIN or peacekeeping operations is the difficulty of maintaining long-term situational awareness. To avoid burn-out of personnel, modern military practice is to rotate units through operational areas on tours ranging from six to fifteen months. While shorter tours are easier on military personnel and their families, units are just becoming familiar with their operating environment towards the end of the deployment. When a unit ends its deployment much hard-won knowledge and experience is lost and the incoming unit faces a steep learning curve. While militaries have developed solutions to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between incoming and outgoing units, gaps remain.

HTT's are a remedy to these problems as they ensure valuable cultural knowledge is not lost during a relief-in-place (RIP). It has been argued that this is their greatest contribution to "…immature theatres where units are still learning the intricacies of the population."[98] By

[94] Baier, "Mapping the Human Terrain: A Key to Operational Effectiveness for Future Peace Operations," 21.
[95] Emily Spencer & Tony Balasevicius, "Crucible of Success: Cultural Intelligence and the Modern Battlespace," *Canadian Military Journal* Vol.9 No.3 (2009): 44.
[96] Baier, "Mapping the Human Terrain: A Key to Operational Effectiveness for Future Peace Operations," 11.
[97] Thompson, "Human terrain team operations in east Baghdad," 78.
[98] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," 46.

creating lasting databases of socio-cultural research, maintained on separate systems, HTT's help incoming units bridge the knowledge gap and reduce the time required to operate effectively in new cultural terrain.[99] Deliberately staggering HTT tours to cover scheduled RIP's of BCT's allows military forces to facilitate the "transfer of local area knowledge, human terrain understanding, and maintaining momentum during unit Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA)."[100] While HTT's undoubtedly smooth the transition between units, the cultivation of the personal relationships that are crucial to productive partnerships between local civilians and the military, take time.[101] Even with that acknowledged limitation, HTT's are assuredly able to make valuable contributions throughout the process of unit transition.

BENEFITS - CONCLUSION

There is a wealth of opinion and evidence that the HTS deliver significant benefit to military forces operating in COIN or peacekeeping environments. Providing guidance on individual-level cultural relations, nurturing community engagement, improving operational planning and smoothing unit transition are all acknowledged areas where the socio-cultural expertise of the HTS is beneficial. Improving these aspects of COIN operations differentiates between culturally savvy militaries and those whose reliance on conventional tactics leads to failure on complex-asymmetric modern battlefields. In an era of unconventional warfare, increasing the cultural intelligence (CQ), cultural awareness and the socio-cultural analysis capabilities of the military is a necessity.[102]

[99] Arnold, "Improving the Coalition's Understanding of 'The People' in Afghanistan: Human Terrain Mapping in Kapisa Province," 6.
[100] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 46.
[101] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," 31.
[102] See Emily Spencer, "Crucible of Success: Cultural Intelligence and the Modern Battlespace," 41 for a definition of Cultural Intelligence (CQ), see Grazia Scoppio, "The Importance of Culture: Soft Skills for Inter-Agency, Complex Operations." Canadian Forces Leadership Institute – (Canadian Defence Academy Technical Report, May 2011): 4. for a definition of Cultural Awareness

CHALLENGES, GAPS AND VULNERABILITIES

The HTS has been a highly controversial program since its introduction. Numerous critics can be found in academia and also inside the military. While a number of important and valid criticisms of the HTS have been raised it is important to separate those that are politically motivated.[103] Whether the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are legal,[104] mismanaged or strategically advisable are questions that should not have any bearing on the debate over the utility of socio-cultural capabilities. However, the questions raised by Gonzalez and the Network of Concerned Anthropologists are germane in two respects. First, does using social science as a cover for intelligence gathering and targeting (as in CORDS) undermine the legitimacy of development efforts, hence of the intervention itself? If CORDS-like activities undermine legitimacy, then they can be fundamentally counter-productive. Second, even if their use in support of coercive activities is widely perceived as legitimate, is it less effective than "white" use in support of purely non-coercive development objectives? This is precisely the debate that has long raged between NGOs and military units engaged in different activities in the same space. How do organizations with different functions maintain appropriate fire-walls between them in order to prevent one function from undermining another? Perception and legitimacy are essential for success, and an opposing force has a vote in the way in which HTS are perceived by the local population.

The debate over HTS function and agency was fuelled partly because the HTS actively sought to raise its public profile by having senior members conduct numerous interviews with media outlets. The result is a wealth of articles, books and public commentary airing the gaps and vulnerabilities of the current iteration of the HTS. For the purposes of this paper, identified weaknesses of the HTS have been grouped into five categories; training, consistency, organization, relationship with academia and overlap with existing military units.

TRAINING

[103] Pauline Kusiak, "Sociocultural Expertise and the Military: Beyond the Controversy," *Military Review* (Nov-Dec 2008): 37.
[104] Roberto J. González, "Human Terrain': Past, Present and Future Applications," *Anthropology Today* Vol. 24 No. 1 (Feb. 2008): 26.

The HTS has developed a four to five month training and orientation program at Fort Leavenworth to prepare potential HTT personnel for deployment into combat theatres. Until early 2009, screening for potential HTT recruits was conducted by an outside contractor tasked with identifying candidates possessing requisite social science skill sets and suitability for long deployments in harsh environments.[105] Finding the ideal HTT candidate is a difficult task as there are very few people with the right mix of skills and experience.[106] Civilian candidates with social science research experience usually lack military skills while finding military personnel with the requisite academic experience is also difficult. Attempting to give civilian personnel sufficient training to operate effectively in a harsh environment and within the military milieu in only four or five months is a tremendous challenge.[107] The range of skills necessary to perform research work in a combat zone are such that few ideal candidates are available.[108] As a result some military personnel have questioned whether civilian HTT members are well enough prepared to "…withstand the rigors of spending nine months or more under field conditions."[109]

Once candidates are identified, the training program is designed to include instruction for deploying personnel on; the military environment, in-depth country briefings, language and multi-disciplinary social science concepts and methods.[110] For HTT members designated for service in Afghanistan there is…

> A training relationship with the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) was developed with their Center for Afghanistan Studies (CAS) to teach Afghan culture, history, and Dari language classes. This three week portion of the longer 4-5 month training cycle is an excellent example of partnering with a nearby academic institution that allowed for an improved cultural foundation for all HTT members prior to deploying to a specific region within the country.[111]

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[105] George R. Lucas, "Ethics and the Human Terrain: The Ethics of Military Anthropology" Prepared for U.S. Army Command & General Staff College (2009): 189.
[106] Golinghorst, "Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan," 27.
[107] Lucas, "Ethics and the Human Terrain: The Ethics of Military Anthropology," 196.
[108] Lucas, "Ethics and the Human Terrain: The Ethics of Military Anthropology," 191.
[109] Joseph, "Changing the Battle Space? How Human Terrain Teams Define "Success" in Iraq and Afghanistan," 6.
[110] Lucas, "Ethics and the Human Terrain: The Ethics of Military Anthropology," 190.
[111] Golinghorst, "Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan," 27.

Whether the time allotted for training is sufficient to develop adequately trained personnel has been questioned by many observers.[112] Developing credible regional experts with a deep understanding of the local language and culture takes many years. Too often the military has little advance warning of the next mission and finding internal 'off the shelf' knowledge of the cultural environment is doubtful. Others have questioned whether training places enough emphasis on the ethical dilemmas of conducting social-science research in a combat zone while clearly being associated with a combatant.[113]

There are many concerns about the suitability of HTS candidates for work in combat zones and the thoroughness of the training they currently receive.[114] "It has been noted that inadequacies in training inordinately raise the risk of HTT and associated casualties."[115] In response, HTS has taken measures to improve the training curriculum and recently began to perform candidate screening in-house, instead of using external contractors.

CONSISTENCY

A second and related criticism of the HTS program is a reported lack of consistency. An aspect of this is the varying quality and effectiveness of both individual members as well as HTT's as a whole.

The success of a HTT depends also on how well it can integrate into the parent military headquarters.[116] To succeed, an HTT must have buy-in from the commander, and a positive relationship with the BCT leadership is crucial. The BCT leadership must be willing to accept

[112] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 21.
[113] González, "Human Terrain': Past, Present and Future Applications," 26.
[114] Joseph, "Changing the Battle Space? How Human Terrain Teams Define "Success" in Iraq and Afghanistan," 6.
[115] Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 28.
[115] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 22.
[116] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," 41.

advice from their HTT and see the value-added advantages.[117] Successful HTT's have 'sold' themselves to their brigade and proved their worth through improvisation and hard work.[118]

Another factor affecting the consistency of each HTT is the situation on the ground. As HTT's do not have their own security or transportation they are dependent on BCT's providing these elements.[119] In particularly violent areas, travelling in less than platoon strength is extremely risky. If brigade leadership has not bought into the HTT concept then these scarce assets might not be available and thus restrict the amount and quality of research.[120]

As a relatively new program perhaps consistency issues are not surprising, and admittedly in the wider military, quality also varies from unit-to-unit. In the same vein, working relationships between military personnel are just as critical and subject to the same vagaries of human nature.

ORGANIZATION

HTT's are embedded and work consistently with the staff for the BCT commander. The BCT commander will "…determine the extent of the HTT's interaction and relationships with the rest of the staff and subordinate units."[121] This allows HTT members to be present throughout the entire planning process and provide vital cultural input.[122] While an effective HTT undoubtedly improves brigade-level planning some critics have argued that this capability is denied to platoon and company-level commanders who may in fact benefit more.[123] These units are in daily contact with the local population and have to rely on their own experience and improvisation.[124] The current size and structure of HTT's is not sufficient to support both small-unit commanders and the BCT headquarters. Some HTT's have addressed this concern by dividing the team into

[117] Golinghorst, "Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan," 30.
[118] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 28.
[119] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 47.
[120] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 22. and Joseph, "Changing the Battle Space? How Human Terrain Teams Define "Success" in Iraq and Afghanistan," 6.
[121] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 29.
[122] Finney, "Human Terrain Handbook," 37.
[123] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," 40.
[124] Flynn, "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan," 12.

smaller components but the resulting dilution of research efforts is also problematic.[125] A major expansion and restructuring of the HTS program would be necessary if the decision was taken to push this capability down to the tactical level.

MILITARY VS. ACADEMIA

The most controversial aspect of the HTS is the inclusion of civilian academics on HTT's operating in combat environments. Having civilians occupy key roles for the COIN forces is identified numerous times in COIN literature as absolutely essential.[126] The designers of the HTS saw the importance of harnessing civilian social science research experience as a critical element to creating well balanced, effective teams. While there is general agreement that the military benefits from social science research support, the actual implementation has proved controversial for a number of reasons which will be discussed.

CIVILIAN-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

The US military's relationship with academia has gone through many highs and lows. Throughout both world wars, academics contributed to the allied cause in a variety of forms.[127] Academic contributions were likely made easier by general public support for the wars and the nature of the draftee army. What frayed the ties between academia and the military was the Vietnam War.[128] Many academics became fierce opponents of American involvement in Vietnam and opposed any cooperation with the war effort. Montgomery McFate, a senior HTS member argues that academia and specifically "…anthropology shifted after the Vietnam War to distance from government and the powerful towards understanding the less powerful.[129] While the Vietnam War ended almost forty years ago, there remains significant distance between academia and the military.

By recruiting civilian academics for deployment into combat zones, the HTS reignited the debate over academic participation in military operations.

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[125] Thompson, "Human terrain team operations in east Baghdad," 80.
[126] Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla, 266.*
[127] Mcfate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship," 29.
[128] Kusiak, "Sociocultural Expertise and the Military: Beyond the Controversy," 69.
[129] Mcfate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship," 28.

> Since the Army's HTS project burst upon public consciousness with the initial deployment of the first five or so HTS teams in Iraq and Afghanistan during the summer and fall of 2007, the program has provoked vehement criticism from anthropologists affiliated with the American Anthropological Association and its affiliate societies.[130]

Some within the military have argued that this undermines the very relationships with academia the military is attempting to re-build.[131] As well, the controversial nature of the HTS is casting a negative shadow on civilian social scientists working in other areas for the US DoD.[132]

As a result of the troubled history of military-related research and recent controversies, recruitment of qualified academics for the HTS has proved difficult. The danger to civilians working in a combat zone has also been identified as a disincentive for employment with HTS or related units.[133] Montgomery McFate states "...there are few anthropologists either available or willing to play in the same sandbox as the military."[134] Overcoming 'academic discomfort' with the military has proven to be a challenging task for the HTS.[135] Even academics that are generally supportive of the HTS are wary of close affiliation for fear of being ostracized by their colleagues and potentially imperilling future career opportunities. The spectre of permanent association with the military would no doubt reduce the appearance of objectivity and credibility in the eyes of some academic colleagues. As a result, the HTS initiative to recruit civilian academics has run into longstanding opposition by many in the academic community and ameliorating or solving these relationship issues will take considerable time.

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[130] Lucas, "Ethics and the Human Terrain: The Ethics of Military Anthropology," 171.
[131] Connable, "All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence," 58. and Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 47.
[132] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 46.
[133] Lucas, "Ethics and the Human Terrain: The Ethics of Military Anthropology," 171.
[134] Mcfate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship." 27.
[135] Connable, "All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence," 64.

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Another element of the troubled relationship between the military and academia is the culture gap between the two groups. The military exists as a separate and distinct 'tribe' within broader society and the shift towards the all-volunteer force has only accentuated this phenomenon.[136] Combined with the previously discussed academic opposition to the Vietnam War, the consequence is a wide culture gap. As a result there are currently "...very few university professors in social and cultural studies fields that have any real exposure to members of the U.S. armed forces."[137] This is different in some fields such as foreign and especially security policy where academics are dependent on the exchange of information with security institutions. Regional experts on the other hand will often not have had any special form of previous cooperation experience or even a working relationship at all with members of the military. Upon joining the HTS, academics usually do not possess the requisite military skills and experience necessary for dangerous operating environments. Even communicating effectively within a military environment is a considerable challenge for those without prior experience.[138]

OPERATIONAL RELEVANCE VS. ACADEMIC RESEARCH

A further challenge for civilian academics working for the HTS is the different priorities and methods that research in a combat zone demands. Military commanders place considerable importance on producing operationally relevant research for use by the planning staff. Research data that is not operationally relevant and immediately useful to the "…military audience, the program stresses…is worthless."[139] This contrasts with the usual method of research conducted in an academic context, where individual innovation amongst crowded fields of subject-matter-experts is the goal.[140] Researchers may want to collect data for future projects not related to their current mission. The challenge arises to which extent knowledge gathered can be used for academic research beyond the project. How close does the relationship between researchers and

[136] See Andrew Bacevich *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 2005)
[137] Kusiak, "Sociocultural Expertise and the Military: Beyond the Controversy," 72.
[138] Connable, "All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence," 60.
[139] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 31.
[140] Kusiak, "Sociocultural Expertise and the Military: Beyond the Controversy," 71.

military have to be so that trust exists regarding military secrets. The question also remains how objective the academic can be if he or she is strongly restricted in which knowledge can be used. Embedding closely with the military can also compromise the accuracy of the research data gathered. As with many other challenges of the civilian-military relationship, adapting academic research methods and priorities to military realities will take time and understanding from both sides.

ACADEMIC ETHICS

Academics opposing the HTS have raised serious questions surrounding the issue of ethics and military-funded research. As a response to the controversies of the colonial era and more recently Project Camelot[141] and Vietnam War,[142] academic communities have developed codes of ethics to ensure research is not used in an unethical manner.[143] As the HTS supplies research data to military commanders on the battlefield, aiding the planning process, ethical questions are many. Clearly using research data to target individuals for military operations would be in contravention of these codes of ethics. The HTS argues that any research data gathered by HTT's will not be fed into the intelligence targeting system which is the primary concern for academics whose principle of 'do no harm' is strongly held.[144] This defence has failed to sway many in the academic community who feel the links between military intelligence and the HTS are too close to guarantee that research data would never be used for targeting purposes.[145] Efforts by the HTS to publicly defend its work as ethically compatible with academic codes have failed to convince critics.[146]

[141] I. Horowitz, *The rise and fall of Project Camelot: Studies in the relationship between science and practical politics*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967)
[142] Mcfate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship," 37.
[143] American Anthropological Association. "Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association." (June 1998)
[144] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 35.
[145] González, "Human Terrain: Past, Present and Future Applications," 35.
[146] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 33.

> Information collected by HTTs might feed into a database accessible to the CIA, the Iraqi police or the Afghan military for strategic or tactical intelligence, or for use in targeting suspected insurgents for abduction or assassination.[147]

It is probable that no amount of public outreach by the HTS will succeed in eliminating suspicions many in the academic community, especially in anthropology, hold.[148] Quite simply, the wide cultural gulf and different research priorities create an insurmountable obstacle to solving the ethical concerns that have plagued the HTS.

OVERLAP WITH EXISTING UNITS

The final issue of contention with the HTS is how the program fits within the military itself. In an era of impending cuts to the US military budget, determining a permanent home for this capability will be contentious.

HTS AS A TEMPORARY SOLUTION

Developed to fill a glaring operational need in the early years of the Iraq war, observers are now debating how to integrate this valuable capability into the US military long-term.[149] Voices within the military argue that the HTS is an expensive stop-gap measure and should be incorporated into the traditional military structure.[150] As soon as the military can train sufficient personnel to perform socio-cultural research the need for civilian researchers will come to an end. Civilian HTT members command far larger salaries than their military counterparts and the military looses their experience and knowledge when they inevitably return to academia. As a result, the task of building a long-term socio-cultural research capability within the military is undermined.[151]

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[147] González, "Human Terrain: Past, Present and Future Applications," 25.
[148] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in Counterinsurgency: Analysis of the Human Terrain System," 24.
[149] Donna Winslow, "Anthropology and Cultural Awareness for the Military." in *Mission Critical: Smaller Democracies' Role in Global Stability Operations*, C. Leuprecht, J. Troy, and LCol (ret'd) D. Last. (eds.) (Montreal and Kingston: Queen's Policy Studies Series, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010): 20.
[150] Golinghorst, "Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan," 44.
[151] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 45.

'THE MILITARY SHOULD DO IT'

Many within the military argue that transitioning the HTS program into the traditional military structure would be the proper course of action.[152] Several existing military branches such as; Intelligence, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Foreign Affairs Officers already perform work comparable to parts of socio-cultural research. None of these branches perform identical work to the HTS but there is a definite overlap as all focus on interactions with the local population through development projects, aid, influence operations or communications.[153] Building further capacity within these units would provide a better long-term solution and avoid the pitfalls of civilian participation. Closely linking a socio-cultural research capability with military intelligence may be ethically problematic for academics but many in the military would view it is beneficial.[154] The restrictions necessary to placate academia, if removed could perhaps benefit and streamline military operational planning. Others argue that the quality of HTT research does not match what traditional intelligence units routinely produce and therefore the headache of incorporating civilians is unnecessary.[155]

Whatever structural solution is appropriate to an organization as large as the US armed forces, it is far from evident that a country like Canada would logically choose the same model. In particular, smaller countries are not only more resource-constrained, but also have comparative advantages in setting up whole-of-government organizations that cut across service and departmental lines.[156]

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[152] Kusiak, "Sociocultural Expertise and the Military: Beyond the Controversy," 74.
[153] Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, "Final Report on The Army's Human Terrain System Proof of Concept Program," 38.
[154] Connable, "All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence," 63.
[155] Joseph, "Changing the Battle Space? How Human Terrain Teams Define "Success" in Iraq and Afghanistan," 5.
[156] David Last, "Picking up Peaces: Comparative Advantage in Post-Conflict Reconstruction" Over Here and Over There: Canada-US Defence Cooperation in an Era of Interoperability, edited by David G. Haglund, *Queen's Quarterly*, 2001.

HTS CONCLUSION

Since its introduction, the HTS has been at the center of an intense debate over the role of civilians in military operations. The HTS was founded to fill an obvious capability gap in the midst of two wars when the potential for defeat appeared to be very real. Building HTT's to include both civilian and military personnel offered an avenue to introduce this vital capability at a critical point in the conflicts. Recent steps to transfer the screening and recruiting process to the military while lessening the reliance on contractors demonstrate the transition from stop-gap to a permanent capability is underway.

LESSONS LEARNED: THE US HTS EXPERIENCE

Benefits:

- Greater Cultural Awareness at tactical and operation levels
    - Soldiers and commanders more attuned to local culture
- Improved relationship with local community
    - Increased flow of information & intelligence
- Improved Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Awareness throughout operational planning process
    - Fewer kinetic operations
    - Disprove insurgent narrative
- Knowledge transfer during unit rotations
    - Reduce learning curve for incoming units

Challenges:

- Training program not sufficiently developed to produce effective civilian combat-zone researchers
    - Shortage of candidates with requisite skill sets
- Lack of consistency in the quality of individual HTT members and teams
    - Resulting from rushed development process
- Organizational structure of HTS within the US Military
    - Constrained in BCT-level ‘silo’
- Troubled relationship between Academia and the Military
    - Cultural, procedural and ethical differences difficult to bridge
- Overlap with existing military units

ALTERNATIVE US MODEL: AFRICOM - SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTER

When the HTS blazed a trail by bringing socio-cultural research capabilities to the US military in operational zones, other organizations took notice. As an alternative to the controversial HTS, the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has formed the Social Science Research Center (SSRC). The SSRC is intended to "…respond to identified knowledge gaps within U.S. Africa Command and generate research designs that it determines to be of relevance."[157] To avoid the academic furor created by the HTS, the SSRC has placed great emphasis on compliance with academic procedures and codes of ethics.

Adopting a similar structure to the HTS, the SSRC has a core headquarters-based element and deployable Socio-Cultural Research and Advisory Team's (SCRAT). Where the SSRC differs is its considerable effort at openness and stated desire to conform to academic research norms. Research results are intended for publication in academic journals and SCRAT personnel are encouraged to participate in forums and conferences.[158] Maintaining a positive relationship with academia appears to have been given higher priority then producing operationally relevant data for military planners.

AFRICOM's SSRC offers an alternative approach from the HTS by designing and structuring a socio-cultural research capability for the military intended to conform to academic ethical and research norms.

[157] AFRICOM. "INFORMATION PAPER: U.S. Africa Command Intelligence and Knowledge Development Social Science Research Center (SSRC)," 1.
[158] Christopher Varhola, "Guiding Principles and Operating Procedures: U.S. Africa Command Social Science Research Center." AFRICOM (March 2009): 5.

OTHER MILITARY SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS MODELS

Outside of the US, other countries are developing variants of the socio-cultural research capabilities pioneered by the HTS. Having the advantage of observing the positive and negative aspects of the HTS development, these countries have designed their own socio-cultural research capabilities to overcome observed pitfalls and match their own needs.

UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom has a long history with COIN warfare and draws on experience from Kenya, Malaya, Aden and Northern Ireland amongst others.[159] Recent operational experience in Afghanistan and Iraq however, revealed that British forces, like their US colleagues had inadequate knowledge of the local culture and society in their operating area. To address this deficit, the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit (DCSU) was established. Created after thorough consultations with other relevant government departments, the DCSU is intended to support the British government's comprehensive approach to COIN operations.[160]

DCSU relies on deployable military personnel who are given cultural specialist training in relevant academic disciplines.[161] The training of these military personnel is enhanced by a pool of associated cultural advisors based in the UK. In this way, civilian academic expertise is harnessed for training purposes and the issues surrounding deploying non-military personnel to war zones are avoided. DCSU personnel perform largely as cultural advisors assisting the British military while a smaller number are masters level specialists with training in "…anthropology, psychology, sociology and influencing skills."[162]

The downside to this arrangement is that the British military, burdened with multiple responsibilities and shrinking budgets will likely struggle to train sufficient numbers of cultural

[159] Golinghorst, "Mapping the Human Terrain in Afghanistan," 21.
[160] DPB "Specialist unit to advise commanders in Helmand of cultural issues launched." *Defence Policy and Business.* (Apr 1 2010): 1.
[161] Danny Chapman, "Military develops its cultural understanding of Afghanistan." *Defence Policy and Business.* (Feb 24 2010): 4.
[162] Chapman, "Military develops its cultural understanding of Afghanistan," 4.

specialists to meet the need, especially in the short term.[163] Long-term deployments such the British mission in Afghanistan allows the military time to develop and train cultural specialists. Difficulties arise when operations are launched with little or no forewarning. Regional cultural advisors may be able fill the immediate gaps but often do not possess high-level expertise on specific operating areas. The challenge then for DCSU is determining how to develop a ready pool of cultural expertise and analysis capability that can be quickly focused on a specific operating environment with little notice.

In contrast to the HTS and the SSRC, DCSU personnel are in fact located in the military intelligence chain of command.[164] The constraints imposed by academic concern about socio-cultural research data shared with military intelligence are avoided with this type of structure. As well, the challenges of providing sufficient military training to civilian researchers heading into war zones is rendered irrelevant.

The DCSU offers another set of solutions to reduce culture knowledge gap many western militaries are currently grappling with. While DCSU was constructed to focus on Afghanistan, as that mission winds down the intention is to transform into a sustainable units capable of providing cultural research support for future operations.[165]

CANADA

As with its traditional allies, Canada has also seen the need to equip its military with cultural knowledge tools essential to COIN operations. The Canadian military does not have significant historical experience with COIN warfare and the violent and complex cultural terrain of southern Afghanistan forced the CF to learn rapidly. Frustration with the lack of cultural knowledge about southern Afghanistan plagued much of the CF's early efforts.[166] A number of personnel found it

[163] Chapman, "Military develops its cultural understanding of Afghanistan," 4.
[164] DPB, "Specialist unit to advise commanders in Helmand of cultural issues launched," 2.
[165] Chapman, "Military develops its cultural understanding of Afghanistan," 5.
[166] Scoppio, "The Importance of Culture: Soft Skills for Inter-Agency, Complex Operations," 33.

necessary to conduct their own cultural research as pre-deployment training was not of sufficient depth.[167]

Seeking to gain the support of the local Afghan population, the CF understood that individual soldiers who possess a high-level of cultural intelligence (CQ) could provide invaluable insights into a foreign operating environment. However a deeper analytical capability was required to inject cultural awareness into the planning process and directly to the commander.[168] To that end, the Canadian forces have developed their own socio-cultural research capability termed the White-Situational Awareness Team (WSAT). These teams are designed to

> [G]enerate the support of a populace, which has a direct effect upon operations. The support and cooperation of a population will create a more effective operating environment for friendly forces and deny the same to an enemy.[169]

After a pilot project in the summer of 2008, Canada launched its first team later that fall.[170] The WSAT more closely resembles the British DCSU than the US HTS by avoiding the controversy of incorporating civilian academics into the team. The WSAT is comprised of two military intelligence personnel and three Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) staff. As such, all team members are employees of the Canadian government. Through consultations with local Afghans, CF members and other Canadian government personnel in Kandahar, the team is tasked with mapping the social and cultural terrain of the province to improve the overall effectiveness of operations.

As Canada withdraws from Kandahar and transitions to a training role in Kabul, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif it is unclear if a WSAT will accompany the trainers northwards or remain in Afghanistan in another location. What is clear is that maintaining and building a permanent socio-

[167] Spencer and Balasevicius. "Crucible of Success: Cultural Intelligence and the Modern Battlespace," 44.
[168] Emily Spencer, "Brains and Brawn: Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as the 'Tool of Choice' in the Contemporary Operating Environment." *Canadian Military Journal*. Vol. 11, No. 1, (Winter 2010): 16.
[169] Spencer, "Brains and Brawn: Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as the 'Tool of Choice' in the Contemporary Operating Environment," 19.
[170] Tom Blackwell, "Mapping 'White' Afghans aim to end civilian deaths." (*National Post*, November 8, 2008): 1.

cultural research capability for the CF should be a priority.[171] Whether in Afghanistan or a future mission, it seems probable that Canada's hard-won expertise and experience will be in high demand as the international community continues to confront ongoing security challenges worldwide. Creating a lasting capability to operate effectively in complex environments requires both the ability to provide solid pre-deployment cultural awareness training but also more advanced research tools for cultural and regional specialists.[172]

Developing a Canadian Centre for Cultural Studies within the CF is another proposal which has merit.[173] This centre would institutionalize cultural studies within the CF and ensure that Canadian soldiers would be better prepared for the next COIN or peacekeeping operation. The Influence Activities Task Force (IATF) and extensive investment in nuanced understanding of information operations has also called on socio-cultural knowledge, and for small armies like Canada's the obvious connection between human terrain and information operations needs to be carefully coordinated. The hard lessons learned from five years of combat in southern Afghanistan make it clear that significant effort must taken to equip CF personnel with a greater depth of cultural awareness and intelligence for future operations.

[171] Scoppio, "The Importance of Culture: Soft Skills for Inter-Agency, Complex Operations," 66.
[172] Levon Bond, "Speaking the Language and Linguistic Fluency in Counter-Insurgency Operations." *Canadian Army Journal*, Vol.12 No.3 (2010): 78.
[173] Spencer and Balasevicius, "Crucible of Success: Cultural Intelligence and the Modern Battlespace," 45.

MILITARY SCA COMPARISON TABLE

	HTS	SSRC	DCSU	WSAT
Benefits	Greater individual Cultural Awareness at tactical and operation levels Improved relationship with local community Improved Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Awareness throughout planning process Knowledge transfer during unit rotations	Emphasis on compliance with academic procedures and codes of ethics Focused on one region	Close working relationship with Military Intelligence Avoids the challenges of integrating civilian academics into military operations	Increased analytical capability and cultural awareness in planning process All personnel are government employees Avoids the challenges of integrating civilian academics into military operations
Challenges	Training program not sufficiently developed to produce effective civilian combat-zone researchers Lack of consistency Organizational structure/placement Troubled relationship between Academia and the Military Overlap with existing military units	Less focus on immediately operationally relevant data Maintaining credible academic standards and openness	Military will likely struggle to develop sufficient pool of cultural experts Difficult to maintain ready expertise for all possible operations	Military will likely struggle to develop sufficient pool of cultural experts Difficult to maintain ready expertise for all possible operations

SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS MODELS FROM THE CIVILIAN SECTOR

Socio-cultural analysis is not an endeavour unique to the military realm and in fact has its origins in the civilian world. Civilian applications of SCA have not generated the same level of criticism as their military-based counterparts. Used for health, education, agricultural and development projects, SCA components have been applied in unstable regions for several decades. Examining the experience of SCA models from the civilian sector can provide a valuable contribution towards the development of a permanent Canadian capability.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

1) IMPORTANCE OF POPULATION FOR COUNTER-INSURGENCY AND PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

The key concept, emerging from the recent rewriting of the COIN doctrine is the importance of population-centric operations. Revisiting existing COIN literature reinforces this concept as prominent COIN theorists inevitably underline the requirement to first understand and then win over as much of the contested population as possible. The increased emphasis placed on culture by modern militaries reflects the consensus that many conflicts in the foreseeable future will be fought amongst the population. Imbalances in levels of military technology have made conventional warfare between similarly equipped forces increasingly rare. Instead, western militaries are likely to confront adversaries who employ asymmetric tactics intended to nullify technological disparity.

This research shows that, to operate effectively in this environment, a military must equip its soldiers with as much relevant cultural knowledge as is feasible. Through pre-deployment cultural training, non-specialist soldiers can be given a basic understanding of the socio-cultural environment in which they will be operating. Understanding cultural norms and values of the local population will greatly facilitate the establishment of trust-based relationships that are so critical to community engagement, mission success and often even survival of the forces.

At a more advanced level, specialized socio-cultural research units add a deeper understanding and act as a directed research tool. Wielding this capability effectively will help improve operational planning by illuminating opportunities and pitfalls in the socio-cultural landscape of the modern battlefield.

Although this paper has focused on socio-cultural knowledge, the context of political, social, and economic change mentioned at the outset must be the overarching consideration. Perhaps the greatest single source of military error over the last century has been to treat the military instrument as a primary tool in its own right. Adding socio-cultural analysis to a military force capability mix will make it no less secondary to the central goals of political, economic and social change, and if its commanders do not understand their subordinate role, they are ill-equipped to win anything. In the longer sweep of the history of armed and organized conflict, we can see the big conventional wars like the First and Second World Wars, and major conventional phases of discretionary wars like Afghanistan and Iraq as the exceptions rather than the norms for the application of force. While the obituary of conventional warfare should not yet be written, the predominance of asymmetric warfare appears set to continue. Cultural intelligence, cultural awareness and a robust socio-cultural analytical capability are therefore set to remain as key components of effective COIN and peacekeeping operations.

2) GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE VALUE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS CAPABILITIES

While the introduction of socio-cultural analysis capabilities into military operations has proven contentious, there is a general agreement among researchers and practitioners alike that if properly deployed, these units can be crucial to mission success and can help reducing the risks of operating in the combat environment. Many critics of the HTS especially, have focused on structural issues and are not in fact opposed to the operational advantages provided in general. Those who would rather incorporate this capability into the military, rather than as a new competitor for resources, do so because of its tremendous potential.

An effective research team, working seamlessly with the headquarters staff can bring a level of cultural knowledge that would have been largely inaccessible historically. Producing research which fits between what military intelligence and academia each generate; a socio-cultural team

can deliver operationally relevant data at a near-academic level. A military unit receiving such data can identify vital areas to improve relationships with the population. Adapting military operations to minimize disturbances and harm to the people can solidify this relationship. Increasing the opportunity to employ non-kinetic operations based on a solid understanding of the cultural terrain can help drive a wedge between the insurgents and the population.

Recognizing that the local population is crucial in non-conventional warfare, socio-cultural research teams can develop the critical knowledge necessary to successfully swing popular support away from the insurgents to the COIN forces.

3) VARIANTS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

A number of countries have deployed variations of socio-cultural analysis units to assist military operational planning. There is however considerable difference in the design and make-up of these units. Developed in the midst of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq there was an understandable urgency to deploy the capability. In the case of the HTS particularly, urgency was probably the cause of some of the criticism regarding; thoroughness of training and consistency of the product. It appears as if a number of the early criticisms have been considered and improvements adopted. Other countries can learn from the experiences made in the US for building up their own capabilities.

What the HTS example shows however is the need to get the design and implementation of the concept right at the beginning. The fairly public nature of that program and the involvement of non-military personnel ensured that it would receive scrutiny from all angles. Considering the tension between many in academia and the US military dating back to the Vietnam War, perhaps this level of opposition should have been expected.

POTENTIAL WAY FORWARD FOR CANADA

Canada has historically been an important contributor to international security interventions be they traditional peacekeeping, the delivery of humanitarian aid or more recently intensive COIN operations. After twenty years of post-Cold War interventions Canada has the experience and credibility to play an important role in international security issues. Canadians expect their government to protect Canada's interests abroad and leverage the country's considerable wealth and experience to aid those around the world who are less fortunate. Any future missions will likely involve similar complex operating environments, as seen in Afghanistan where society and culture are vital factors.

What should a permanent Canadian socio-cultural research capability look like? Two major Canadian allies, the US and Britain have developed their own socio-cultural research capabilities and each variant provides valuable lessons and direction. Canada's own experience with WSAT offers a building block towards a permanent socio-cultural research capability for the Canadian Forces.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A CANADIAN SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS CAPABILITY

1) DEVELOP CULTURAL RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

Developing a lasting, permanent socio-cultural analysis capability should be a priority for the CF. Basing this capability within the CF avoids many of the problems associated with civilian personnel. Military personnel are able to integrate into planning staff and already possess the training and experience to operate in a combat zone. Many concerns regarding the HTS surround the issue of properly preparing civilians to work as safely as possible in a war zone. Attempting to provide research, cultural and military training in a relatively short period to civilians is perhaps too onerous a challenge. Instead, by training CF personnel to conduct the in-field research, the program can be focused on only the research methods and cultural knowledge required.

Using military personnel also avoids the problems associated with information sharing between units, most notably intelligence. The HTS and SSRC have gone to great lengths to disavow any data sharing with military intelligence. This is an unnatural structure for the military as any information gathered should be available to all relevant units. The British variant, the DCSU acknowledges this problem and readily admits linkages with military intelligence.

The benefits of staffing a socio-cultural analysis capability exclusively with military personnel seem obvious. Training in military skills is unnecessary, data sharing can be unhindered and long-term development will not be compromised though the frequent exodus of civilian research personnel.

2.a) CIVILIAN INPUT DURING PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING

Much of the controversy over the HTS revolves around the inclusion of civilians in military operations in combat zones. Civilian academics have 'off the shelf' research experience and specific cultural knowledge not found to the same degree in the military. The decision to take advantage of this ready experience and skill can be seen as an effort to deploy functioning research teams as quickly as possible especially when the intervention occurs with little forewarning. Developing these research capabilities within the military is a long-term process and the desire to contribute immediately is understandable but short-sighted.

Examining the experiences of the HTS suggests that civilian input in socio-cultural analysis teams should take place outside the battle-space. Integrating civilians into military units in a combat zone is a difficult and perhaps not always necessary process. There is however much room for civilian involvement in the development and training phases of these programs. Detailed socio-cultural knowledge exists primarily in academia and could be sought as the need arises. Preparing prospective military socio-cultural researchers through rigorous training offers the best opportunity to leverage academic expertise. Making use of academic wisdom at this phase avoids the complications of the battlespace while transferring valuable experience and knowledge.

2.b) ABILITY TO PLUG CIVILIAN SME'S IN AS NEEDED

Aside from the training phase, civilian expertise should also be harnessed to provide research support to deployed socio-cultural teams. It is unrealistic to expect the military to be able to develop and maintain detailed cultural knowledge of all potential operating environments – specifically under the current budget cuts we have seen and that could continue to come. Therefore if the military lacks specific knowledge, personnel performing in-field with socio-cultural research could be augmented by civilian expertise based outside the combat zone. The HTS and the SSRC provide examples regarding how this could be configured, through the use of reachback centers. These reachback centres address one of the failings of the CORDS program – the inability to gather, analyze and distribute lessons learned - and act as the bridge between academia and the military. A comprehensive academic support network would allow the military to access a greater depth of cultural knowledge than would otherwise be available internally.

While there are tremendous advantages to using civilian cultural researchers, the problematic example of the HTS and the decision of the DCSU and WSAT to avoid those controversies point to the necessity of locating civilian support outside the combat zone. It is still possible however to make great use of civilian expertise in the form of training and work in reachback centres supporting deployed teams.

3) ALLOW SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS TEAMS TO WORK FLEXIBLY

A thorough reading of the wealth of information on socio-cultural analysis reveals the benefits of this capability and potentially some best practices that enhance effectiveness. The amount of data available on socio-cultural issues is staggering. The key is though to capture relevant data and effectively disseminate it. Any of the numerous actors in the operational area can provide valuable ground level information.

Often though the structure of the local population does not conform to military boundaries and can limit the potential for research. Allowing teams a degree of freedom to work across military boundaries enhances the quality of the research product. With the operational environments becoming increasingly more complex, thinking outside of traditional solutions is essential for mission success. While the local population as a source of information receives the most focus

there are many other streams of socio-cultural data. Small military units gain valuable information over the course of routine patrols that is not used to the greatest effect. Non-military actors such as other government agencies and NGO's are other potential research information sources for socio-cultural analysis research teams. Allowing socio-cultural analysis teams freedom of movement around the operating area ensures that all sources of data are accessible.

Once the data is gathered, the challenge for the team is to provide operationally relevant information to military planners. This involves a mix of short-term and long-term research projects which then can be distilled into manageable inputs. A too heavy focus on either short or long-term projects lessens the utility of the research team's effort to military planners. Much of a research team's success depends on its ability to prove its worth and make positive contributions to planning. Building relationships, demonstrating value are not revolutionary concepts, but are crucial if a socio-cultural research team is to be given the freedom to maximize its effectiveness and provide the best product to military planners.

4) DEVELOP DATA COLLECTION, STORAGE AND DISSEMINATION CAPABILITY

To make effective use of data gathered by socio-cultural analysis teams in the field it must be made readily accessible and digestible to end-users. While each operating area has its own unique characteristics, data gathered by one socio-cultural analysis team is quite often useful to teams in neighbouring areas. Ensuring that data can flow laterally between teams and vertically to and from a reachback centre is critical. Specific software and storage procedures designed to gather and organize data, like those developed by the HTS, enable the vital and timely flow of information. Creating and maintaining a database of accumulated research data - unclassified to ensure accessibility - for military and civilian personnel involved in modern counter-insurgency and stability operations is another critical task. Information gathered, entered into the database and analysed would then be available for a myriad of uses including; mapping, linkage, visualization and monitoring changes in the operating environment.[174] A Canadian effort to establish a permanent socio-cultural analysis capability will require the development of a data collection and storage system tailored to CF requirements and means.

[174] Fawcett, "Cultural Understanding in COIN," 29.

CONCLUSION

The trend in warfare away from conventional towards complex asymmetric conflicts appears likely to continue in the foreseeable future. Western countries will inevitably send military forces into dangerous regions as the international community continues to struggle to limit violent conflict. It is crucial that the lessons of the last two decades of interventions, humanitarian or pre-emptive, inform the planning for any future operations. The critical importance of winning the support of the local population is neither revolutionary nor new but has often been forgotten or ignored. Militaries return to the traditional methods of operating in times of relative peace and this tendency must be guarded against. By continuing to appreciate the importance of culture in warfare, western militaries can ensure they do not undergo the same grim struggle to gain vital knowledge of the human terrain.

Efforts to develop a permanent and lasting socio-cultural analysis capability are an important element in this struggle. Developing this capability within the military will take time and resources, but the perils of failure are too great to ignore. Effectively harnessing civilian knowledge and expertise can greatly assist this effort and if done properly, develop better linkages between academia and the military. The tremendous amount of knowledge and research skill, available in academia should be leveraged to improve all stages of military planning.

As recent events have shown, embarking on costly interventions without a solid understanding of the socio-cultural landscape is a dangerous course of action. Equipping the military with the tools necessary to better understand the socio-cultural aspects of the operating environment should be an integral part of building capable 21st century armed forces.

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This paper explores lessons to develop a permanent Canadian capability to conduct socio-cultural analysis (SCA) in support of operations. SCA is defined as a set of tools to guide policy in ways that are sensitive to and effective in indigenous environments. The US Army has dominated the discussion of SCA based on its recent counter-insurgency (COIN) experience. However, SCA has its origins and many applications outside military operations, less fraught with controversy than the American military experience. These are relevant to Canadian needs, and include rapid assessment process (RAP) and culturally sensitive program evaluation tools developed by international organizations to be applied to health, education, agriculture, and development projects in unstable environments since the 1990s. The American experience of the Human Terrain System (HTS) and public-private partnerships in the "Small Worlds" project provide useful examples of capabilities to support military operations. International, governmental, and non-governmental agencies have also developed systematic capabilities for social and cultural analysis that can be integrated with military capabilities and requirements. In the Canadian context, it is never clear whether military operations will lead or be in support, so a Canadian SCA capability must cater to any of the ways in which it might be applied. As a way ahead, the paper concludes with a three-dimensional space in which Canadian SCA capability might be plotted: from strategic to tactical; from militarized to governmental to contracted civilian; and from specific and temporally bounded to generic and continuing. Only some parts of this space represent a permanent SCA capability, but all represent options for evolution of Canadian capability.

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socio-cultural analysis; Canadian Forces operations; rapid assessment process; Human Terrain System