



War, 'strategic communication' and the violence of non-recognition

Caroline Holmqvist

To cite this article: Caroline Holmqvist (2013) War, 'strategic communication' and the violence of non-recognition, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 26:4, 631-650, DOI: [10.1080/09557571.2013.837427](https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2013.837427)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2013.837427>



Published online: 19 Dec 2013.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 293



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 3 View citing articles [↗](#)

War, 'strategic communication' and the violence of non-recognition

Caroline Holmqvist
Swedish National Defence College

Abstract *Contemporary Western war-fighting is animated by the fictitious imagination of a war free from antagonism. In this logic, winning wars is about winning the 'hearts and minds' of local populations, about persuasion rather than confrontation. In recent years, the concept of 'strategic communication' (SC) has been elevated to the top echelons of strategic thinking in United States military circles, focusing attention on how to communicate 'effectively' with local populations. Via an analysis of the concept of SC, this article examines the ethico-political dimensions of contemporary Western-led 'population-centric' war. Through a reading inspired by Judith Butler's recent work in *Precarious life* (London: Verso 2006) and *Frames of war* (London: Verso 2009), and an analysis that turns on the link between ethics and ontology, I reflect on the significance of the 'communications turn' in warfare for our study of war in ontological terms.*

Introduction

This article is about the way in which human beings relate to one another, and, more specifically, how they relate to one another in times of war. It concerns the *ethical relation*—what is sometimes conceptualized in terms of how people deal with 'difference', the view of 'the Other', and what an 'encounter' with the Other might be.¹ The ethical relation is thus understood as an ethico-political position, a position that necessarily underpins specific ideas, actions and practices. Conversely, ideas and concepts that form, inform and motivate behaviour in war—military strategy and doctrine—can be read in terms of their ethico-political content and implications. This article zooms in on one such idea: the idea of 'strategic communication' (SC), which has risen to prominence in recent years, especially within the United States' (US) military establishment.² Via the concept

¹ The work of Emmanuel Lévinas is central here and has inspired writers from Zygmunt Bauman and Simon Critchley to Judith Butler. For an introduction, see Hutchings (2010, esp 70–71). On the 'problem of difference', see Inayatullah and Blaney (2004).

² Given that I am investigating the very concept 'strategic communication(s)' and the particular function it serves as part of a wider discursive structure, its every use should really be accompanied by inverted commas. I choose not to do so, however, for stylistic reasons. The acronym 'SC' should thus be read in this text as meaning precisely 'strategic communication', in inverted commas. The concept is retained only temporarily in order to examine its use and function, but is by no means 'accepted' or essentialized. The same goes for other concepts that constitute part of the military discursive structure investigated (for

of SC, this article examines and analyses the ethico-political dimensions of contemporary Western-led 'population-centric' war.

Contemporary 'population-centric wars' are wars that take place 'amongst the people', informed by the notion of 'winning hearts and minds' (Finel 2010; Kilcullen 2006, 2009; 2010; Nagl 2002; Smith 2006). Embedded in the hearts-and-minds logic is a set of assumptions about 'local populations' and the way in which they can be 'known' in the context of war. Strategic communication epitomizes the ethico-political stance inherent in contemporary Western-led wars; wars, I will argue, that are guided by the fictitious imagination of a war free from antagonism. The logic of SC, in essence, is that if only populations received the right message about what the intervening forces are attempting to do in Afghanistan/Pakistan, they could be made to support the mission. In this article, I take issue with the advocates of a 'communications turn' in warfare and expose the assumption that a message can indeed be communicated to the populations as revealing of a relationship between intervening forces and local populations which is deeply troubling in both ethical and political terms.

To demonstrate how and why this is so, I draw on Judith Butler's *Precarious life: the powers of mourning and violence* (2006) and *Frames of war: when is life grievable?* (2009), wherein Butler departs from the view that the ethical relation is necessarily derived from an ontology of the human. In simple terms, who we see as 'human' and what we deem to be a 'life' condition the way in which we ethically relate to one another. Ethics occurs, then, as we recognize the mutual vulnerability that comes with being human: 'the precarity of life imposes an obligation upon us' (Butler 2009, 2). Yet, the question of who is recognized as 'living' and what counts as 'life' is politically saturated: the epistemological problem of framing is one where the frames through which we apprehend someone as living (or not) constitute 'operations of power'. So too is the ontological question at stake—'What is a life?'—a social ontology, dependent on socially and politically articulated forces (2009, 1–3). In other words, the normative production of ontology produces the epistemological problem of apprehending a life (2009, 3).

Understanding the mechanisms of power through which life is produced as 'recognizable' and therefore apprehended as living (or not) is Butler's quest. This quest is central also to the present analysis. Through a reading of the use and function of the concept of 'strategic communication' in contemporary US military discourse, I unpack the logic of SC by showing *not what it is* but *what it is not*: a properly ethical relation or ethical encounter. Rather than being indicative of a relationship between intervening forces in Afghanistan/Pakistan and local populations which would allow for mutual recognition of each other as *human*, the very idea of SC as a means of war instead eschews recognition of alterity and testifies to an extreme instrumentalization of the lives of others. This makes the logic of SC one of *non-recognition*, in Butlerian terms, and that non-recognition is highly violent. This violence is worth examining in some detail, for it is obscured by the complicity of SC in a broader trend in Western warfare: that of denying the existence of any 'real' political opposition to liberal intervention. The second part of the article thus takes a closer look at the understanding of populations inherent

Footnote 2 continued

example, 'counterinsurgency' or 'liberal intervention'). See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's preface to Derrida (1976, xiv).

in the concept of SC—understandings that coalesce around the construction of local populations as markets, as consumers and commodities at once—to discuss the political dimensions of (ethical) non-recognition.

The final section addresses the broader question of how we might think of the study of war in critical terms: here, I turn to calls by Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton for enquiry into the ontology of war, and ask how we may understand this call in light of a Butlerian critical ontology of 'the human' (Barkawi 2011; Barkawi and Brighton 2009; 2011; Brighton 2011). This closing discussion of ontologies in and of war thus anchors the present discussion of the discursive structure of SC in a wider debate about how the phenomenon of war may be critically studied.

To begin, the next section will introduce the main elements of SC as the concept has developed in US military circles.

The ascent of SC in the US security establishment

The present analysis is based on documents emanating from the US defence establishment: policy, strategic and doctrinal-type texts that constitute the concept, as well as examples from the 'policy-oriented' debate (Betz 2011; Borg 2008; Helmus et al 2007; Tatham 2008).³ By focusing on the written documents that establish SC as a key priority for the US defence establishment, insights are gleaned into the constitutive parts of the concept of SC, and the way in which it fits in with the discursive structure of military strategy more broadly.⁴ Policy documents thus constitute the empirical materials of the present analysis. There is, in the official documents invoked, no established set of SC practices. On the contrary, proponents of the concept maintain that not only archetypal communication campaigns using leaflets, billboards or radio broadcasts but everything that occurs in the location in question—from aerial bombardment to officers' tea-drinking with villagers—has a 'communication dimension' (Tatham 2008). Moreover, SC campaigns may occur under the radar in the sense that they double up with other purposes. The creation and funding of new media outlets in Afghanistan represent one such instance: the establishment of independent radio stations has been advocated by activists from international NGOs offering support to journalists, but stations have equally been used to broadcast messages on behalf of the international forces in the country.

Strategic communication was identified in the US Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of 2006 as one of five 'areas of particular emphasis considered critical to the Department of Defense's (DOD's) ability to act in a strategic environment 'characterised by uncertainty and surprise' (US DOD 2006b). The QDR identified SC as a matter of concern for all levels of decision-making and implementation, and argued that cognizance of SC should be made endemic to the DOD itself, part of its general culture. Plans were laid out for a follow-up 'Strategic

³ US DOD (2006a; 2006b; 2008); US Department of State (2007); US Department of the Army Headquarters (2006); US Deputy Secretary of Defense (2006); US Joint Forces Command Joint Warfighting Centre (2010); US White House (2009).

⁴ 'Discursive structure' is thus understood as more than 'merely' language, and by necessity encompasses both 'discourses' and 'practices'.

Communication Execution Roadmap' (published in 2008) to ensure the institutional embodiment of the concept (shared by 'all departments and agencies throughout the US Government') and the case made for ensuring availability of adequate resources for this purpose (US DOD 2006a; US Deputy Secretary of Defense 2006).

'Strategic communication' is defined in the DOD's Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (standard for all DOD components) as follows:

Focused US Government processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen and preserve conditions favourable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs, and actions synchronized with other elements of national power. (US DOD 2010, 294)

This standard definition establishes three key features of the concept. To begin, the notion of identifying different 'audiences' constitutes a key element of SC thinking. Strategic communication is generally described as being directed at the domestic (home) population; local populations in areas of operation; and a general global audience. This categorization is in itself, of course, a construct in the sense that the three purported 'categories'—or the messages directed at them—are not separate or distinct in any 'objective' sense. Nonetheless, the main focus and interest in this paper relate to the strategies adopted vis-à-vis the second category, which situates SC as part of contemporary US counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy (here I draw on the US Army and Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency field manual* 3–24 of 2006, hereafter 'FM 3–24') (US Department of the Army Headquarters 2006). Second, the impetus to 'create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favourable to advance national interests and objectives' establishes a basic tenet in the policy debate around SC: the conviction that communication efforts *ought* and *can* change the hearts and minds of the recipient audience. Third, it reflects the wider understanding that a communication effort can be 'synchronized with other elements of national power'; in other words, that communicating effectively with local populations can, in fact, legitimately and successfully take place in tandem with the use of force.

Elevation of SC to top-level debates about national security has also come from the US State Department. Karen Hughes, Under-Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs under President George W. Bush, oversaw the publication of the US National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication in 2007, outlining objectives of 'providing vision of hope and opportunity' and 'marginalizing violent extremists who threaten peace and security' through 'effective communication efforts' (US Department of State 2007; See also Luce 2007). Under Hilary Clinton, the State Department has further securitized information/communication under the stated objective of 'improving the integration of information as a vital element of national power' (US DOD 2006a, 2).

In March 2009 President Barack Obama proclaimed 'effective strategic communication' 'crucial' to the mission in Afghanistan and for his broader 'AfPak' strategy; in August the same year Obama instructed the creation of a new unit within the State Department dedicated to SC and declared US\$150 million (£92 million) available yearly for SC activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan (US White House 2009). Activities specified as eligible for these funds were, inter alia,

the training of Afghan and Pakistan journalists, the establishment and funding of up local FM radio stations (to counter 'illegal militant broadcasting'), the production of pamphlets, posters and CDs denigrating 'Islamist militants' and their messages, and the expansion of mobile phone services across Afghanistan and Pakistan (enabling direct communication with local populations via text-messaging) (Nasaw 2009; Shanker 2009). In 2010 the most elaborate statement hitherto on SC by the US military was released: the Joint Forces Command *Commander's handbook on strategic communication and communication strategy*, totalling over 200 pages of text, intended to serve as 'a bridge between current practices in the field and the migration into doctrine' (US Joint Forces Command Joint Warfighting Center 2010, i). US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates issued a memorandum in January 2011 to further 'heighten the US Government strategic emphasis on countering violent extremism through effective strategic communications' (US Deputy Secretary of Defense 2006).⁵ In tandem with the ascent of SC in US military circles, SC has received similar attention in both NATO and British military circles. In 2008, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) issued an Allied Command Operations (ACO) directive on SC, establishing the concept as central to NATO operations, and included instructions for the creation of a NATO StratCom Office (NATO Supreme Headquarters 2008). In British military circles, the issue has received similarly increasing attention in recent years, with doctrinal guidance issued in its most recent version in January 2012 (United Kingdom Ministry of Defence 2012).

The ethical relation and the possibility of encounter

'War', wrote Carl von Clausewitz, on the first page of *On war*, 'is an act of force to compel the enemy to do our will' (Clausewitz 2007). Clausewitz's statement establishes antagonism as essential to war: whatever else war *is*, it is antagonistic, confrontational, coercive. The phenomenology of war that Clausewitz attempted is what has compelled others, dealing in utterly different historical circumstances, to engage with *On war*. Drawing on Hegelian phenomenology, Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton see 'fighting' as having 'ontological primacy' for understanding war. The 'fighting' Barkawi and Brighton refer to, however, is *more than* mere kinetic exchange (or its imminent possibility). Rather, it is fighting's *excess* that is of interest from a phenomenological as well as a critical ontological point of view; this is what makes war both 'constitutive' and 'generative' (Barkawi and Brighton 2011, 136). From the vantage point of studying war in terms of *experience*, Christine Sylvester points to a sense of 'war' as 'a transcultural social institution that aims to solve or seek to prolong disputes through collectively violent, armed techniques of injury'—injury being at the centre of the phenomenon (Sylvester 2011; 2012, 492). In seeking to understand war in something other than purely instrumental terms, these writers all point to confrontation and coercion as being somehow central to what war *is*.

⁵The memorandum also instructed replacing the concept 'psychological operations' with 'military information support operations'.

The view of war as essentially confrontational and coercive constitutes a good place to start in unpacking the relationship between intervening forces and local populations epitomized by the strategic concept of SC. Arguably the distinguishing feature of COIN strategic and doctrinal thinking is its proposition that war is 'won', not through the defeat of a known or knowable enemy, but through the winning of the support of the populations among whom war takes place. War 'amongst the people' (Smith 2006) is the contemporary reincarnation of the quest to 'drain the sea' of insurgents through conquering the population among whom they 'swim like fish' (a formulation generally attributed to Mao). It is population-centric in that it assumes that this is where the key to success lies: in winning their hearts, their minds. Thus David Galula's 1964 COIN classic identifies 'the winning of the support of the population' as the number one objective of COIN war; David Kilcullen's *Counterinsurgency* (2010) posits the governance of populations as central to the war effort and the key objective of COIN as 'out-governing the enemy'. FM 3-24 refers to 'governance' 45 times and 'legitimacy' 88 times and memorably invokes the idea of 'armed social work' (US Department of the Army Headquarters 2006, A-7). In COIN logic, war is 'civilianized' through and through (Bell 2011). Marginalized from COIN thinking, it appears, is antagonism: war, in COIN logic, is about *persuasion*, a task that demands engagement with all levels and aspects of societal life, from social and economic development to political and administrative structures to psychological dimensions. It is, in short, a politics of life in life's totality. This, of course, is not to suggest that killing is excised from war: 'kinetic' elements, often in the form of special forces' operations and drone attacks, are, the rhetoric of persuasion notwithstanding, integral to contemporary COIN strategy (Niva 2013). Rather, it is the *rationalization* of killing that is altered in COIN logic. The only antagonistic element acknowledged in this war is towards enemies unrecognized in political terms in one of two ways: either as beyond the realm of politics ('terrorist') or assumed amenable to persuasion—the object of SC.

The shift from enemy-centric to population-centric war has garnered much attention and FM 3-24, reportedly downloaded over two million times a year since its release (Khalili 2010), has been heralded for its purportedly 'intellectual' approach to warfare. In fact, General David Petraeus, lead author, was voted 'public intellectual of the year' by the British magazine *Prospect* in 2008 (triumphing over names like Noam Chomsky, Francis Fukuyama and Slavoj Žižek), with the motivation that FM 3-24 constitutes 'the first actively humane war fighting doctrine ever to come out of the Pentagon, enshrining the ideas that winning a modern war requires ensuring the security and wellbeing of the civilian population' (Crabtree 2008; 2009). The COIN way of warfare, it appears, is in tune with the zeitgeist: with its emphasis on social, economic and political 'governance' it constitutes the most recent reincarnation of 1990s liberal interventionism; indeed, as has been wryly noted, it reads like a World Bank report (Stewart 2009).

Strategic communication is both a product of COIN thinking and exceeds it. The question of whether 'winning populations' is a reasonable goal of military activity is relinquished through the very concept of SC, refocusing attention on the *means* of attaining this objective through the strategizing of communication itself, its technicalities and technologies. Following the articulation of SC in the 2006 QDR, the DOD released a document entitled *Principles of strategic communication* in 2008, saturated with references to 'credibility', 'trust', 'dialogue'

and so on.⁶ The reference to these 'principles' is interesting for what they tell us about the pretensions of SC: they assume that the sender of SC, the US military, can in fact, almost unproblematically, establish trust as *part* of fighting a war.

Veiling confrontation as persuasion essentially obscures the difference between coercion and consent. Instead the very notion of war as persuasion *strategizes* consent as parallel to Clausewitz's phenomenological understanding of war as coercion, or to Barkawi and Brighton's understanding of 'fighting' as intrinsic to war's ontology. Nikolas Rose highlights precisely this process in his discussion of 'pastoral power': Rose shows how ethical principles are 'translated into a range of micro-technologies for the management of communication and information. These [microtechnologies] blur the boundaries between coercion and consent' (Rose 2001, 18). The conflation of coercion and consent is central to the concept of SC: by strategizing war as persuasion, the essential antagonism of war is obscured. What, then, does this refusal to accept political opposition or incommensurability, epitomized by SC, tell us in ethico-political terms about the relationship between intervening forces in Afghanistan and local populations ('insurgents' or not)?

'We can kill you, but you will still want to be like us'

Most immediately, it reveals a deeply embedded assumption about the quest of COIN war: that use of overwhelming military might featuring over 100,000 international troops and a large-scale shadow war of special forces and robotic technologies does not, in fact, work against the pursuit of a 'deep comprehension of others', the establishment of 'comprehension' or 'trust'. On the contrary, it is assumed that these pursuits can be attained not only in the context of war, but *through* war. Far from the antagonism described by Clausewitz as intrinsic to war, this is a story of 'consensual war' in the sense that the military effort itself is construed as being about the positive creation of 'legitimacy' and 'governance', objectives assumed to be shared by the intervening forces and local populations. As a result, the possibility of a genuinely dissenting view, an actual antagonistic position that is genuinely and positively held, is left entirely unpursued. The fundamental assumption of SC, and what makes it an interesting concept to pursue in ethico-political terms, is that any opposition to the message communicated is conceived of as a *communication problem*, not a problem of *genuine difference or dissent*. In the question of how to strategize communication efforts, the 'problem' to be dealt with is simply an instrumental one of how hearts and minds can be won most effectively, not whether those hearts and minds can, in fact, be won in the first place. As such, contemporary COIN strategy in general, and its offspring SC in particular, essentially undermines and abrogates the possibility of difference. The 'other' of this present-day war, in other words, is not thought of as an Other, but rather as a different version of the self. In this sense, it mirrors Tzvetan Todorov's 'double movement', by which difference is interpreted as inferiority and equality demands assimilation (Todorov 1984; see also

⁶The nine principles identified are as follows: 'Leadership-Driven; Credible; Understanding; Dialogue; Pervasive; Unity of Effort; Results-Based; Responsive; Continuous' (US DOD 2008).

Inayatullah and Blaney 2004, esp. 93–125). The basic assumption is that ‘they [the Afghans] want what we want’, or even ‘they want what we want them to want’.

A politics of difference that refuses to admit ‘difference’ in real terms is not new, of course; rather, it is endemic to much of Western modern thought. Attempts to manage difference over the history of international relations (and IR as a discipline) can be grouped into two main strands: the first a spatial strategy of separating ‘difference’ with boundaries (the inside/outside of inter-state politics); and the second a temporal strategy, relying on temporal ideas of ‘development’ and ‘modernization’ (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004). Accordingly, ‘difference’ is interpreted as a problem to be dealt with through physical separation, generally along territorial lines, or in terms of instigating ‘development’ in linear temporal terms. Others are seen not as ‘properly different, just behind’.⁷ What makes the politics of difference at work in the war in Afghanistan particular is that the fetishization of ‘communication’ makes for a considerably subtler and more subversive effacing of difference than that embedded in strategies for killing. The non-recognition embedded in SC is a violent non-recognition. It is doubly violent: it paves the way for a distinct ethics of non-encounter, or non-ethics of encounter. In Judith Butler’s terms, it testifies to a failure to apprehend life as living in the first place (Butler 2006). ‘We can kill you, but you will still want to be like us.’

The ethical relation that Butler explores in *Precarious life* and *Frames of war* begins with her concept of precariousness. ‘Precariousness’, Butler tells us, ‘implies living socially, that is, the fact that one’s life is always in some sense in the hands of the other’, a position she arrives at from her engagement with Emmanuel Levinas, who himself uses the term ‘precariousness’ (Butler 2009, 9). From her reading of Levinas, Butler invites a ‘consideration of the structure of address itself’ in order to develop a sense, ethically, of what is going on around us. The *structure of address* thus helps us to understand the way in which moral authority works, but only if we accept ‘that in some way we come to exist, as it were, in the moment of being addressed’ (Butler 2006, 130). In a sense, the choice of SC as object of analysis can be seen as a response to Butler’s call for consideration of the structure of address: we are, here, considering the structure of a very particular address, one that takes place in war that lays claim to being about ‘protection’, a simultaneous killing and protecting, all under the guise of ‘understanding’, ‘trust’ and ‘comprehension’.

For Butler, the fundamental sociality of life is what makes us able to think and act ethically; we are ethically bound to one another because we are ‘undone’ by one another. Butler invokes the Levinasian notion of the ‘face’ to make the point that representation and humanization always are linked. For Levinas, ethics has no ‘essence’: ethics occurs through the relationship with the Other; the Other calls you (Levinas 1985, 10). Enquiring into the ways in which we relate to one another—problematizing subjectivity—is a central element of Butler’s work, allowing us to interrogate the way in which ‘abjected, excluded beings’ are created (Jabri 1998, 611).⁸ Turning to Butler and the questions of *who counts as human* and *what counts as a liveable life* thus allows us to begin unpacking the ethico-political

⁷ I borrow this last formulation from Astrid Nordin, unpublished paper presented at the Swedish National Defence College, Stockholm, December 2011.

⁸ Jabri also quoted in Edkins and Vaughan-Williams (2009, 115).

dimensions of a contemporary mode of warfare that claims to 'protect populations', yet understands those 'lives' as possible to efface through effective communication strategies. In the world of SC, where the 'message' of the war can unproblematically be 'communicated', we see only the exact opposite: utter non-recognition, an essential non-recognition. This evading of the Levinasian 'face' is not a matter of 'choice'; it is not wilful non-recognition. The non-recognition implicit in focusing simply on 'how' and ignoring altogether the 'whether' of in the competition for hearts and minds is 'intuitive'. As such, it testifies to a mode of subjectivity.

Modes of subjectivity

In the violence done to difference, recognition and the possibility of 'apprehending a life', SC thus constitutes the mirror image of its kinetic counterparts in war. For, as Butler explains, whether or not a life is 'apprehended' is question of 'how power forms the field in which subjects become possible at all or, rather, how they become impossible' (Butler 2009, 163). This is the link between Butler's ontology of the human and her ethics: who we see as a being/person decides who we can ethically relate to. The *norm* of the human, according to Butler, 'is not something that we must seek to embody, but a differential of power that we must learn to read, to assess culturally and politically' (Butler 2009, 76–77). Further,

our capacity to respond with outrage, opposition, and critique [to human suffering] will depend in part on how the differential norm of the human is communicated through visual and discursive frames. There are frames that will bring the human into view in its frailty and precariousness, that will allow us to stand for the value and dignity of human life, to react with outrage when lives are degraded or eviscerated without regard for their value as lives. And then there are frames that foreclose responsiveness. (Butler 2009, 77)

The frames invoked in SC thinking constitute formidable examples of how responsiveness is foreclosed: by strategizing populations, reducing them to 'targetable audiences', responsiveness to the plight of the *real people* that make up the 'populations' is eviscerated and the 'Other' instrumentalized, reduced to vehicles for the aims of (the) war. Butler invokes Talad Asad's discussion of subjectivity: 'paradoxically, what holds the subject together for Asad', she states, 'is the capacity to shift suddenly from one principle (reverence for life) to another (legitimate destruction of life) without ever taking stock of the reasons for such a shift and for the implicit interpretations that condition these distinct responses' (Butler 2009, 160). Strategic communication and its embeddedness in war very neatly illustrate the dissociative disorder omnipresent in modern political subjectivity—a dissociative disorder also similarly encompassed in the affinities between *killing* and *effacing* through the logic of SC.

What I draw from Butler here is thus a way of exploring representations of others (in war), the way that specific representations bring with them a (non-) ethical relationship between the observer and the observed, and how that affects the politics of intervention and war. As Cristina Masters reads Butler, 'the subject is always in process, always becoming'; accordingly, 'performativity is a *reiterative citational activity* that simultaneously "produces" and "destabilises" subjectivity

... But because it must be constantly re-enacted through citational claims to the norm, what is exposed are the fissures, gaps, fractures, and instabilities of subjectivity' (Masters 2009, 119). In this way, representations of women in Afghanistan have reduced them to 'singularities', disregarding the complexity of motivations, ambitions, what they may become. Much as the repeated displaying of photos of veiled/unveiled Afghan women strategizes these women as 'victims' to be saved by intervening forces forces their 'figural death from the realm of the political' (2009, 121), the very notion of SC *flattens the political* by obliterating difference and pathologizing resistance. There is no 'encounter' in an ethical sense to be found in the logic of SC. Rather the logic of SC entails an eschewal of encounter, and an eviscerating of the political through the utter negation of difference or resistance. There is, in other words, striking affinity between the eschewal of encounter in ethical terms and the obliteration of 'the political' through the presumption of *consensus* as described by, for example, Chantal Mouffe (2005). For Mouffe, conflict and antagonism are constitutive of 'the political'; and the description of the contemporary era as 'post-ideological' or 'post-adversarial' conversely a way of effacing the political. The emphasis on 'persuasion' in contemporary COIN war similarly effaces the political in war by conceiving resistance either as pathological or as possible to overcome through 'more effective' communication strategies.⁹ A closer look at the ways in which populations are strategized and 'produced' in SC thinking allows us to pursue the ethico-political dimensions of COIN war a step further.

Stratifying and strategizing populations

An absurd feature of COIN strategy and doctrine is its recourse to metaphors of pathology and disease. As Colleen Bell has shown, in this vernacular, populations are depicted as 'degenerate', suffering a 'malady' of insurgency, while the 'counterinsurgents' are described as dealing in a politics of 'rehabilitation' (Bell 2012). The invocation of the biological body in warfare can indeed be seen as merely the last turn in a rise of the 'social question' in politics, constituted through, inter alia, cultural/identity engineering and social regulation. For Patricia Owens, the 'modern social realm' has its own ontology, expressed by Hannah Arendt as the 'life process' being 'channelled into the public realm and 'life itself' made to depend on it' (Owens 2012, 15). In Michel Foucault's terms, 'biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem' (1997, 245). Thus Michael Dillon and Julian Reid have pointed out that under biopolitical control 'specific populations do not come pre-formed'; they are produced and re-produced through particular pre-conceptions (Dillon and Reid 2001, 48). Pivotal to SC is the constituting of local populations into distinct 'audiences'. From the general ethico-political stance of non-recognition and non-encounter shown in the first section to be intrinsic to SC, we can now go on to see how violent non-recognition is strategized in biopolitical terms, aimed at *changing minds*, one by one—or, rather, group by group.

⁹ For further exploration of this idea, see Holmqvist ([forthcoming](#)).

Strategizing 'audiences'

A closer look at how official documents produce the populations among whom war takes place reveals the stratification of populations as a key instrument. The US National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication of 2007 identifies three 'strategic audiences' among local populations: 'key influencers', 'vulnerable populations' and 'mass audiences' (US Department of State 2007). Youth, women and girls are identified as 'vulnerable populations', whilst 'clerics, educators, journalist, physicians, women leaders, business leaders, scientists and military personnel' are characterized as 'influencers' (US Department of State 2007). The *Commander's handbook* advocates compiling biographical data, including 'character trait data' on leaders' core beliefs and values, 'perceptual biases' and decision-making style, for psychological profiling use (US Joint Forces Command Warfighting Center 2010). The same document conceives of key individuals as 'conduits' for the message to be communicated: if the message is 'effectively communicated' to those individuals, the reasoning goes, it will be spread along the lines of the ink blot metaphor commonly invoked in COIN literature. A study by the RAND Corporation commissioned by the Joint Forces Command invokes the following 'categories' in local populations: 'die-hards', 'sceptics', 'uncommitted', 'reformers' and 'bandwagons'; and advocates the devising of SC activities accordingly. The focus on 'influencers' and 'conduits' is indicative of the stratification of the population at hand with the explicit purpose of changing 'minds' and societal structures. The invocation of 'die-hards' represents the other extreme, the more archetypical Othering familiar from the trope of terrorism and the politics of proscription and designation (Bhatia 2007; Salter 2002).

This quest is part forensic, about attempting to lay claim to 'knowledge' about the audience at hand, 'taming' them, so to speak, through the gathering of 'cultural knowledge' and 'expertise'. As Alan Cromartie demonstrates, FM 3–24 relies on a view of the 'culture' of the populations among whom war takes place as composed of a set of identifiable human 'motivations' and 'beliefs'; a 'culture', it is assumed, that can successfully be 'altered' (Cromartie 2012, 104–105). Notable practices in this regard have included the deployment of Human Terrain Teams and the use of so-called 'culture smart cards'. Yet in other cases, the stratification is more sinister, involving overtly racist profiling and feminization (Enloe 2007). A stark example in this regard is a graphic presentation of the 'cognitive attributes of Arab male' drawn from the *Commander's handbook*—an astounding example draws up a scale of 'cognitive attributes' including 'approach to understanding—thinking to feeling', 'religious beliefs—critical to irrelevant', 'concern about honour—low to high' and 'concern about shame—low to high', and plots the 'middle aged, well educated US' against 'well-educated Arab males <29' and 'poorly educated Arab males <29' (US Joint Forces Command Warfighting Center 2010).¹⁰ Unsurprisingly, the schema ranks the representative 'middle aged, well educated US' highly in terms of 'rational thinking': the category of 'epistemology/ways of knowing' finds the US male to be at the far end of the spectrum at 'empirical', whereas the 'poorly educated Arab male' is seen to garner his

¹⁰ This schema ('cognitive attributes') is also used in Tatham (2008).

knowledge in 'authoritarian' ways; the US male is found to be 'thinking', while the 'uneducated Arab' is guided by 'feeling'; and so on.

This construction of the 'Arab male' in terms of generalizable 'cognitive attributes' is beyond orientalizing, yet its inclusion in the most elaborate statement of the US defence establishment on SC should come as no great surprise. It is quite in keeping with the non-recognition described above, whereby killing alongside 'persuading' is taken to be unproblematic, and lives are not apprehended as living and therefore are not eligible for mourning in death. This stratification of lives and their utter instrumentalization is precisely what *unites* killing through the use of military force with the ostensibly 'non-violent' communication campaigns, the 'kinetic' with the 'non-kinetic'. They are bound by the same negation of difference and discounting of any 'real' resistance as pathological.

*The Mad men approach to warfare*¹¹

The concept of 'strategic communication' emerges as a consequence of the forces of commercial advertising on strategic thinking and the conduct of war. War, as understood in SC logic, has become a branding exercise. The *Commander's handbook* draws very heavily on a RAND study the Joint Forces Command had commissioned to kick-start thinking on SC. Ominously, the RAND study bears the title *Enlisting Madison Avenue: a marketing approach to earning popular support in theatres of operation* (Helmus et al 2007). *Enlisting Madison Avenue* takes as its starting point the US military's need to 'influence resident populations' in operational theatres and that the (US) business community, with its ample experience in influencing consumers, offers important lessons. Accordingly, the study as a whole presumes that local 'resident populations' can be conceptualized as 'consumers'. These consumers, according to good marketing logic, can be differentiated into different 'segments', and 'targeted' accordingly, and are liable to be influenced by different 'branding' concepts (2007, 57–128). The operative term of the study is 'shaping', through which the authors forge a revealing fusion of marketing and military lingo: with a 'marketing approach to segmentation', 'applying business positioning strategies to the development of meaningful and salient end states' and 'updating the US military brand', the study argues that 'shaping efforts' should be 'designed, war-gamed, and conducted as a campaign' (2007, 1, 57, 64, 74). The authors concede that the US military does indeed face 'challenges' in its 'shaping' work, such as the adversaries' shaping tools (which, contrary to those of the US, are cited as 'intimidation', 'disinformation', 'the provision of humanitarian assistance to undermine US assistance efforts'), the 'mistakes' that US soldiers may sometimes make in the form of 'collateral damage', or the 'perception' of US cordon-and-search operations as 'heavy-handed' (2007, xiv–xvi). From the Afghans, it is 'customer satisfaction' that is sought (2007, xvi–xvii).

Virtually every sentence of the RAND study could be productively analysed. What *Enlisting Madison Avenue* does is to lay bare the connections between the concept of SC, contemporary hypercapitalism and contemporary warfare. The

¹¹ *Mad men* is a critically acclaimed television series created by Matthew Weiner and first aired in 2007. The series is set in the 1960s and centres on life at a fictional advertising agency on Madison Avenue.

connections between war and capitalism have been studied extensively and will not be pursued here; suffice to acknowledge that the distinctiveness and salience of communication in the contemporary world and its 'strategic use', whether in commercial or war contexts, cannot be fully understood in the absence of an understanding also of globalized hypercapitalism, its processes and powers. The 'marketing approach' to populations thus constitutes further testimony to the instrumentalization of populations under the concept of SC. Though they are conceptualized as consumers in the RAND study, a more apt reflection of the view taken of 'resident populations' is 'commodities'. Hearts and minds are open to purchase, under SC logic, not despite the war effort but because of it.

The 'cognitive dimension' and having the 'right theory of change'

In addition to the pathologization of those deemed 'beyond redemption' ('die-hards' in the RAND study) two broad trends are apparent in the construction of local populations in SC documents: the view of populations as weak and backward; and/or as dangerous, every individual the potential radical terrorist. Nosheen Ali refers to this trend as a 'palatable, therapeutic narrative of "their" terror and "our" humanitarianism', a narrative deeply embedded in the US presence (military as well as civilian) in Afghanistan and northern Pakistan (Ali 2010, 552).¹² The strategizing of populations here described takes this logic one step further. In 'Afghan hearts, Afghan minds', an interview-based study from 2008, the authors conclude that 'social transformation efforts to control communities move the war from the frontlines deeper into communities, as every individual becomes a potential supporter or combatant of AOGs [armed opposition groups] ... The identity of any individual—fighter, victim, patient, source of intelligence—becomes contested territory, with varying outcomes and consequences depending on whom (s)he comes into contact with' (Azerbaijani-Moghaddam et al 2008, 66). This notion of *people* as 'contested territory' is illustrative of how the biopolitical nature of contemporary war also brings with it a different ethics—one that starts with an eschewal of encounter and moves further to appropriate the life world of the populations among whom war is executed.

Changing hearts and minds is seen in the world of SC to require attention to 'cognition', to shaping the cognitive faculties of local populations—in short, influencing their capacity to reason and think. The *Commander's handbook* specifies, 'To properly support SC, understanding the operational environment must include the cognitive dimension ... In particular, the JFC [Joint Forces Command] and staff must attempt to understand what people think, how they perceive the operational environment, and why. It may require analysis of the informational and cognitive dimensions that permeate the local social, political, economic, and information networks' (US Joint Forces Command Warfighting Center 2010). In near parodic language, the *Commander's handbook* conceives of 'networks' inside the minds of actual people:

the JFC must understand that these are complex adaptive systems [the minds] that are much more difficult to understand than closed systems, such as air defense

¹² For another excellent discussion along similar lines, see Biccum (2006).

network. This is a challenging undertaking, complicated by factors such as the audience pre-existing bias, cultural lens, stimulus–response patterns, motivation, expectations, and view of current situation. (US Joint Forces Command Warfighting Center 2010)

The shift from seeking to influence minds to changing behaviour is seamlessly effected. We can see this logic at work quite clearly in the promotional literature of Wise Strategic Communications, a company that has been contracted by the US military in Afghanistan for SC tasks. According to the company website, ‘What distinguishes Strategic Communication from ordinary communication is the ability to apply a holistic approach to achieve *sustained behavioural change* in the target audience(s).’¹³

The notion of ‘sustained behavioural change’ testifies to the utter amalgamation of commercial and military logics. Indeed Andrew Mackay and Steve A Tatham in a recent book draw on behavioural economics to make the case that winning wars in the future will be about changing people’s actual behaviour (Mackay and Tatham 2011). This turn represents an important shift in the debate, bringing into stark relief the extensiveness, profundity and radicality of the SC logic. Instrumentalizing individuals as ‘influencers’, ‘conduits’ and ‘message multipliers’, ‘change’ is sought in thoroughly biopolitical terms: changing hearts, minds and behaviour. Crucially, it is assumed that there can be no ‘real’ resistance: local populations can be successfully moulded not only to embrace the message of the intervening forces but also to change their behaviour and live accordingly. Those few who are impervious to the message are conceived as beyond redemption—the fundamentalists, the ‘die-hards’, the demonized. For the rest, it is just a matter of having the ‘right theory of change’.¹⁴

In this sense, enquiring into the ethical relation takes us beyond biopolitical analysis. The logic of liberal governance or liberal war as biopolitics is that it ‘works’, that populations *are* in fact controlled and life is produced. This biopolitical ambition is endemic to population-centric war and SC thinking: it aims for control, for the production of life—with the fundamental assumption that there *can be* no difference; *they must want what we want*: a good, liberal life. There is no room in SC reasoning for that which is *beyond* control; that which cannot be controlled. All this is conceived as the momentary lapse of communication not being sufficiently and correctly strategized (‘shaping’ gone wrong) or its strategies not properly implemented.

Aestheticizing war

Gilles Deleuze warned in 1990 that ‘compared with the approaching forms of ceaseless control in open societies, we may come to see the harshest confinement [of disciplinary societies] as part of a wonderful happy past. The quest for “universals of communication” ought to make us shudder’ (Deleuze 1995). The eschewal of encounter encompassed in the SC logic indeed centres on the aggrandizement of communication; and concern for the ethical relation that

¹³ My emphasis. Wise Strategic Communications company website: <<http://www.wisestrat.com/>>.

¹⁴ Conversation with SC consultant, London, November 2011.

guides the present analysis shows Deleuze's trepidation to have been prescient. As the present analysis shows, lament of the failure to attain 'proper coordination' of a 'compelling narrative' in Western-led war-fighting creates the impression that the greatest impediment to success lies precisely in the failure to communicate. The entire debate around SC is premised on this skewed focus: rather than attention being directed at the political aim, conduct, function or effect of military intervention, we are witness instead to a conflation of 'methods and objectives' (Cromartie 2012, 108) in contemporary COIN campaigns, of means and ends in war.

The positing of war as a communication enterprise is an acute illustration of this wider trend but it also exceeds it. The logic of SC is accompanied by a distinct logic of *events* in war, positing real-life events of killing and dying as instances of communication. Thus, events are assessed in communication terms. This is the sinister logic that allows instances of misconduct and abuse perpetrated by US forces to be presented as sending the 'wrong' message. So goes much of the official response to misconduct by US forces—abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, US Marines urinating on dead Taliban fighters, the massacre of 16 civilians in Kandahar in early 2012. These and other similar events are consistently referred to in official debates as events with 'adverse communication effects' prompting the US military to 'correct' the image into the 'right' one. This is the logic that informs the military–market merger: any adverse impact on the US military 'brand' is posited as the result of 'mistakes', 'disinformation' and wrongful 'perceptions', which must be 'corrected' through a 're-marketing' or 're-positioning' of the brand. As a consequence, the *reality* of these events is circumscribed: as instances of atrocity or abuse are treated as branding problems in the aesthetic logic of SC, it is as if these events were not *real* events with real-life consequences. In this sense, the communications turn represents an aestheticization of the very experience of war.

Critical ontologies: of the human and of war

'We come to exist', Butler tells us, 'in the moment of being addressed' (Butler 2006, 130). Butler refers to Levinas's 'ontological imperative' here: 'to expose myself to the vulnerability of the face is to put my ontological right to exist into question' (2006, 132). In Butler's account, we *become* human through the encounter with others, as we are *undone* by one another through our mutual vulnerability. This is never fully accomplished; it is an ongoing quest: recognizing the precariousness of the other, and the precariousness of life itself, depends in Butler's account on our *willingness* to become undone. This is 'our chance' (Masters 2009, 124), and Butler's ethics fully embraces her ontological account of what being or becoming human really entails. The recent communications turn in war can be studied in various different ways. Invoking Butlerian ethics centred on the notions of precariousness and encounter, we are able to analyse the ethico-political dimensions of SC through a return to the ontology of the human.

With the broader quest of exploring the critical study of war in mind, there is an important link to explore here, I believe, between 'undoing' as an ontological centre to the 'human', and the study of war in ontological terms. When Barkawi and Brighton write of the '*excess of fighting*', they refer to '[fighting's] ability to

draw in and disrupt wider certitudes and coordinates of human life', to "'cast into motion" subjects who are then alienated from themselves and come to *know themselves and the world* in new ways' (Barkawi and Brighton 2011, 136, my emphasis). Indeed, they find the essential nature of war to be both an actual and potential *undoing*: crucially, 'an undoing of all that stands as essential in human orders' (2011, 139). Both the 'ontological structure' and the 'ontological status' of war, in Barkawi and Brighton's view, centre on the 'undoing of certitudes and ... in the generation of new ones' (2011, 139).

The invoking of the idea of 'undoing' by Barkawi and Brighton in this context is striking. Being undone by one another is a fundamentally human condition, we learn from Butler; it is what being human ontologically *means*. In an analogous move, Barkawi and Brighton invite us to consider the condition of the undoing and unmaking of certitudes, 'casting into motion', as being *intrinsic* to the phenomenon of war. Their notion of 'war/truth' captures the intricate way in which 'truths' in the form of established social and political *orders* are necessarily undone by war (Barkawi 2011). Thus, the bombardment of a village, for instance, is never 'simply' that attack—its human and material cost in the shape of lives lost or homes or livelihoods destroyed—but always and necessarily *more* than that: consequences upon which we can only speculate, in psychological terms for survivors, for the social cohesion of the community in question, for the political beliefs of those affected, and so on, and so on.

One way of taking seriously the quest of research into war in ontological terms would be to take seriously research into *the human in war*—to ask, fundamentally, what it means to be a human being living the condition of war. This is precisely what Christine Sylvester implores us to do as she considers what it means to study war in terms of *experience* (Sylvester 2011; 2012). Undoing, unmaking, casting into motion—these ought to be core tenets in the exploration not only of war in ontological terms but also of the human in war. What I suggest, in other words, is that conceptually linking ontologies of war with ontologies of the human holds worthwhile prospects for a renewed study of war. In this project, studying the experience of war would need to be centrally concerned with the *experience of uncertainty*—uncertainty as to what social and political orders will shape the future; uncertainty as to what forces, structures and technologies, human and non-human, will condition our existence and life together; and uncertainty, ultimately, as to what it means to be human.

Conclusion

A final point should be stressed as regards the case here that 'antagonism' ought to be recognized as somehow fundamental to war: the highlighting of war's essentially antagonistic nature is not a question of idealization/essentialization of a specific notion of war, and even less nostalgia for a 'different' type of war (as renditions of 'Clausewitzian' versus 'post-Clausewitzian' war might have it). Rather, the point of invoking a phenomenological understanding of war that places coercion, confrontation and violence at the centre is the light it sheds on the contemporary liberal view of war as somehow not 'war'—that is, as somehow not involving a *clash* or conflict in the political sense. Carl Schmitt's critique of the 'discriminating concept of war' is central here (as well as obviously influential on

Mouffe's theorization of the political) (Mouffe 2005; Schmitt 2011); and indeed my critique of SC situates that concept within the wider discursive structure of liberal attempts to claim that their war-fighting is not, in fact, *war*. However, a tension clearly exists between Butlerian ethics and the Schmittian tradition of accepting conflict as foundational to political life—a tension that cannot be fully explored in this article. For present purposes, however, my point is simply to say that, based on Butler's ethics, we can see that there is something fundamentally *unethical* about the refusal to accept the existence of political conflict, and thereby 'difference', in war—and this refusal is particularly stark and sinister in the invention of the concept of SC as a means of war.

Thus, in this article, analysis of contemporary military discourse is used to interrogate the ethico-political dimensions of contemporary Western-led wars that claim to focus on local populations. Using the concept of SC as an entry point, I have enquired into the structure of address on the part of intervening forces vis-à-vis populations in Afghanistan/Pakistan. The initial part focussed on the violence of non-recognition—a non-recognition shown to be endemic to SC thinking. 'Enlisting of Madison Avenue' sounds like fiction but really isn't: the appropriation of marketing logics by the US military is revealed again and again in the official documents, encompassing notions of 'audiences' to be appropriately 'targeted' and the US military 'brand' to be protected. Populations in SC literature are transformed into *objects*, conduits for messages, amenable to change, both in attitude (what they think and feel) and in behaviour. This notion of people as 'contested territory' is illustrative of how the biopolitical nature of contemporary war reflects non-encounter—one that starts with an eschewal of difference and moves further to appropriate the life world of the populations among whom war is executed, wherein events lose their ontological status as events and become 'communication failures'. The conflation of coercion and consent is central to the concept of SC: by strategizing war as persuasion, the essential antagonism of war is obscured. SC purports to be *different* from killing; in this article, I show this difference to be one of degree, not of kind.¹⁵

Via the analysis of a strategic concept, that of SC, this article also invites reflection on the way in which we study the phenomenon of war itself, its ethics and politics. We are capable of ethical reasoning, Butler argues, only if we accept the ontological uncertainty that comes with being human. This ontology centres on uncertainty, vulnerability and the way in which we as human beings are necessarily undone by one another. This undoing is mirrored in the 'casting into motion' of certitudes that war itself intrinsically causes: the unmaking and undoing of social and political orders. Coupling an ontology of the human with enquiry into the ontology of war is almost intuitive; indeed it is surprising that more hasn't been made of it already. After all, as Butler herself points out, the nonviolence that Levinas calls for 'does not come from a peaceful place, but rather from a constant tension between the fear of undergoing violence and the fear of inflicting violence' (Butler 2006, 137). This article seeks to contribute to the debate of how war can be studied critically by proposing that the study of war demands a backtracking from ideas and practices in war to the ontological grounds of ethical and political reasoning. Thus, the ontology of the human recovered through

¹⁵ On different 'modalities of violence', see Butler (2009, 3).

analysis of the communications turn in warfare in a more fundamental way furthers our understanding of war in ontological terms: towards a critical and open ontology centred on the (human) experience of uncertainty. Now engrained with the wider politics of war/humanitarianism, SC is poignant because it draws on the same frames as that other formidable eschewal of encounter in contemporary warfare: the use of automated weapons systems, or, more popularly, of drones and robots. Strategic communication is a less conspicuous form of non-recognition, yet no less violent. Ultimately, this non-recognition seems *life denying*: it denies the people/populations their ontological status of being.

Notes on contributor

Caroline Holmqvist is a visiting fellow at the Centre for International Studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science and senior lecturer at the Department for Security and Strategy at the Swedish National Defence College in Stockholm. She works on issues of war and intervention, with an interest in philosophy and critical and poststructuralist theory. Caroline has recently authored 'War ontologies and the materiality of drone warfare', *Millennium*, 41:3, and *Policing wars: military intervention in the 21st century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in 2014). Email: caroline.holmqvist@fhs.se

References

- Ali, N (2010) 'Books vs bombs? Humanitarian development and the narrative of terror in northern Pakistan', *Third World Quarterly*, 31:4, 549–559
- Azerbaijani-Moghaddam, S, M Wardak, I Zaman and A Taylor (2008) 'Afghan hearts, Afghan minds: exploring Afghan perceptions of civil–military relations', Research conducted for the European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan (ENNA) and the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG)
- Barkawi, Tarak (2011) 'From war to security: security studies, the wider agenda and the fate of the study of war', *Millennium*, 39:3, 701–716
- Barkawi, Tarak and Shane Brighton (2009) 'Powers of war: critique, armed force, and the sociology of knowledge', Paper presented at International Studies Association Annual Convention, New York, 15–18 February
- Barkawi, Tarak and Shane Brighton (2011) 'Powers of war: fighting, knowledge, and critique', *International Political Sociology*, 5:2, 126–143
- Bell, C (2011) 'Civilianising warfare: ways of war and peace in modern counterinsurgency', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 14:3, 309–332
- Bell, C (2012) 'Hybrid warfare and its metaphors', *Humanity*, 3:2, 225–247
- Betz, D (2011) 'Communications breakdown: strategic communications and defeat in Afghanistan', *Orbis*, 55:4, 613–630
- Bhatia, MV (ed) (2007) *Terrorism and the politics of naming* (London: Routledge)
- Biccum, A (2006) 'Development and the "new" imperialism: a reinvention of colonial discourse in DFID promotional literature', *Third World Quarterly*, 26:6, 1005–1020
- Borg, L (2008) 'Communicating with intent: the Department of Defense and strategic communication', Incidental Paper, Centre for Information Policy Research and Harvard University
- Brighton, Shane (2011) 'Three propositions on the phenomenology of war', *International Political Sociology*, 5:1, 101–105
- Butler, Judith (2006) *Precarious life: the powers of mourning and violence* (London: Verso)
- Butler, Judith (2009) *Frames of war: when is life grievable?* (London: Verso)
- Clausewitz, C von (2007) *On war* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Crabtree, J (2008) 'Public intellectual of the year: David Petreaus', *Prospect*, 17 December

- Crabtree, J (2009) 'An intellectual surge', *Prospect*, 17 January, <<http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/anintellectualsurge/#.UoYS7iSth6E>>
- Cromartie, A (2012) 'Field manual 3–24 and the heritage of counterinsurgency theory', *Millennium*, 41:1, 91–111
- Deleuze, G (1995) *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, transl Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press)
- Derrida, J (1976) *Of grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press)
- Dillon, M and J Reid (2001) 'Global liberal governance: biopolitics, security and war', *Millennium*, 30:1, 41–66
- Edkins, J and N Vaughan-Williams (eds) (2009) *Critical theorists and international relations* (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge)
- Enloe, C (2007) *Globalization and militarism: feminists make the link* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield)
- Finel, B (2010) 'A substitute for victory: adopting a new counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan', *Foreign Affairs*, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66189/bernard-finel/a-substitute-for-victory>>
- Foucault, M (1997) *Society must be defended: lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, transl David Macey, ed Mauro Bertani (London: Penguin)
- Galula, D (1964) *Counterinsurgency warfare: theory and practice* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger)
- Helmus, TC, C Paul and RW Glenn (2007) *Enlisting Madison Avenue: the marketing approach to earning popular support in theatres of operation* (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation)
- Holmqvist, C (forthcoming) *Wars without end: policing logics of 21st century intervention* (Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan)
- Hutchings, K (2010) *Global ethics* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press)
- Inayatullah, N and DL Blaney (2004) *International relations and the problem of difference* (London: Routledge)
- Jabri, V (1998) 'Restyling the problem of subjectivity in international relations', *Millennium*, 27:3, 605
- Khalili, L (2010) 'The new (and old) classics of counterinsurgency', *Middle East Report*, 255, 14–23
- Kilcullen, D (2006) 'Twenty-eight articles: fundamentals of company-level counterinsurgency', *Military Review*, 83:3, 103–108
- Kilcullen, D (2009) *The accidental guerilla: fighting small wars in the midst of a big one* (London: Hurst)
- Kilcullen, D (2010) *Counterinsurgency* (London: Hurst)
- Levinas, E (1985) *Ethics and infinity: conversations with Philippe Nemo* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press)
- Luce, E (2007) 'Bush ally hopes to win over Islamic world', *Financial Times*, 15 January
- Mackay, A and S Tatham (2011) *Behavioural conflict: why understanding people and their motivations will prove decisive in future conflict* (Military Studies Press)
- Masters, C (2009) 'Judith Butler' in J Edkins and N Vaughn-Williams (eds) *Critical theorists and international relations* (London and New York: Routledge)
- Mouffe, C (2005) *On the political* (London: Routledge)
- Nagl, John A (2002) *Counterinsurgency lessons from Malaya and Vietnam - learning to eat soup with a knife* (Praeger: Westport)
- Nasaw, D (2009) 'Mullen blasts US "strategic communications" efforts in Afghanistan', *The Guardian*, 28 August
- NATO Supreme Headquarters (2008) 'Allied Command Operations', (ACO) Strategic Communications, 15 September
- Niva, S (2013) 'Disappearing violence: JSOC and the Pentagon's new cartography of violence', *Security Dialogue*, 44:3, 185–202
- Owens, P (2012) 'From Bismarck to Petreaus: the question of the social and the social question in counterinsurgency', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19:1, 139–161
- Rose, N (2001) 'The politics of life itself', *Theory, Culture, Society*, 18:6, 1–30
- Salter, M (2002) *Barbarians and civilization in international relations* (London: Pluto)

- Schmitt, C (2011) *Writings on war*, transl and ed Timothy Nunan (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press)
- Shanker, T (2009) 'US plans a mission against Taliban's propaganda', *New York Times*, 16 August
- Smith, R (2006) *The utility of force: the art of war in the modern world* (London: Penguin)
- Stewart, R (2009) 'An irresistible illusion', *London Review of Books*, 31:13, 3–6
- Sylvester, Christine (2011) *Experiencing war* (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis)
- Sylvester, Christine (2012) 'War experiences/war practices/war theory', *Millennium*, 40:3, 483–503
- Tatham, SA (2008) *Strategic communication: a primer* (Shrivenham, United Kingdom: Defence Academy)
- Todorov, T (1984) *The conquest of America: the question of the other* (New York: Harper & Row)
- United Kingdom Ministry of Defence (2012) Joint Doctrine Note 1/12: Strategic communication: the defence contribution, January
- US Department of State (2007) 'Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy', Policy Coordinating Committee for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication
- US Department of the Army Headquarters (2006) *Counterinsurgency field manual* (FM 3–24) (Washington DC)
- US Deputy Secretary of Defense (2006) Memorandum for the secretaries of the Military Departments, 25 September
- US DOD (2006a) *QDR execution roadmap for strategic communication* (Washington)
- US DOD (2006b) *Quadrennial defense review* (Washington)
- US DOD (2008) *Principles of strategic communication* (Washington)
- US DOD (2010) *Dictionnary of military and associated terms* (Washington)
- US Joint Forces Command Joint Warfighting Center (2010) *Commander's handbook for strategic communication and communication strategy*, Version 3.0 (Suffolk, VA)
- US White House (2009) 'White paper of the Interagency Policy Group's report on U.S. policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan', 27 March, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf>