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## **The Forgotten Way: An Analysis of Dutch and US Counterinsurgency Policies in the Java and Philippine War**

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# The Forgotten Way

An Analysis of Dutch and US Counterinsurgency Policies in the Java and Philippine War

Master Thesis

|             |                    |
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**Abstract:** This paper contributes to the counterinsurgency literature by examining what the most effective strategies, tactics and conditions were that led to victory in the counterinsurgency campaigns of the Dutch against the Javanese in the Java War (1825-1830) and the US against the Filipinos in the Philippine War (1899-1902). I will analyse the cases using the comparative method (Most Different Systems Design) and the congruence method. The analyses show that the most influential causes in winning the war were that the Dutch and US forces had a high level of interaction with the local population, decentralised their military and civil policy, and successfully balanced a strategy of winning an influential part of the population over with benefits while using punishments to sever the bonds between insurgents and their supporters. My findings will cast doubt on whether contemporary Western Democracies can and should engage in counterinsurgency warfare, seeing the high moral and human cost necessary to win the war.

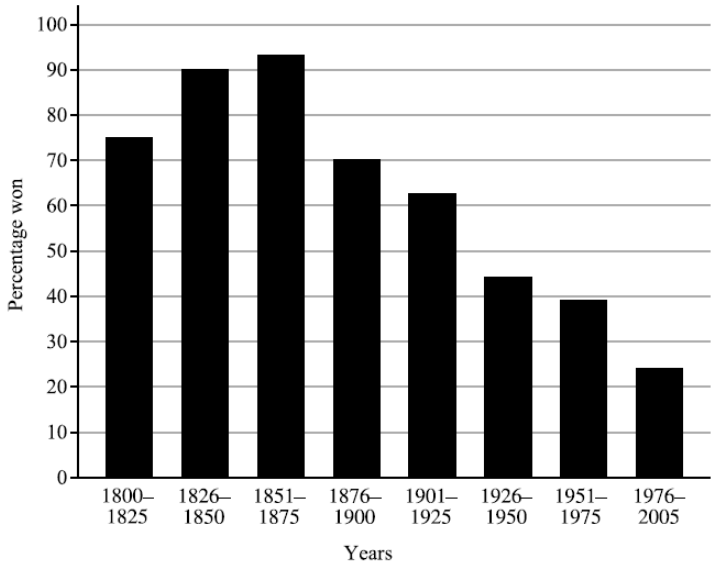
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# Introduction

Why are democratic Western states unsuccessful in conducting contemporary counterinsurgency wars? That is the central question that authors researching asymmetric warfare in the last two decades have been trying to answer. The question regained renewed interest after the start of the Iraq war (2003) as the international US-led coalition achieved little progress in Iraq and Afghanistan despite a considerable human and financial cost. The question becomes even more prominent when considering that a wealth of historical material and experience is available, as more than 300 counterinsurgency wars have been fought since the 1800s (Lyall and Wilson 2009, 67). Western states have conducted a large share of these wars as counterinsurgency warfare was required to expand and maintain their large colonial empires.



Note: N = 286. Draws are considered losses here.

FIGURE 1. The puzzle: Percentage of conflicts won by incumbent, 1800-2005

Figure 1 (Lyall and Wilson 2009, 69)

If one looks at the data (figure 1), it shows that states worldwide have been losing the ‘art’ of conducting counterinsurgency warfare in the last century (Lyall and Wilson 2009, 69). The victory rate of the conventional forces has experienced a massive drop between the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and current times. Where around 80% of the asymmetric wars ended in victory for the conventional forces in the last quarter of the 19th century, the success rate steadily dropped to around 25% between 1976 and 2005. A 55% drop in success rate is a rather significant difference, and the question of why, in particular Western democratic, states

were so much better is a central question that scholars such as Mack (1975), Merom (2003), Feron and Laitin (2003), Arreguín-Toft (2005) and Lyall and Wilson (2009) have been trying to answer.

My paper will contribute to this literature by answering the following research question: what were the most effective strategies and tactics that led to a victory in the counterinsurgency campaigns of the Netherlands against the Javanese in the Java War (1825-1830) and the US against the Filipinos in the Philippine-American War (1899-1902)?

Answering this question is relevant as both cases are examples of two Western states that obtained long-lasting victories in colonial wars in different countries and contexts. Comparing how these wars were won gives valuable insights, as the analyses clarify what elements made colonial powers successful in waging counterinsurgency wars in differing contexts.

My analysis will try to support the following hypothesis:

*H: The most influential factors in winning the Java and Philippine War were that the counterinsurgency forces a high level of interaction with the population, decentralised their military and civil policy, and successfully balanced a strategy of winning an influential part of the population over with benefits, while using punishments to sever the bonds between insurgents and their supporters.*

I will structure my argument in six parts. The first part will review the literature on general theories of counterinsurgency warfare and the mechanisms of colonial warfare. In the second part, I will introduce my methodology and why I selected the Java and Philippine Wars as cases. Third, I will describe how the two colonial regimes annexed Java and the Philippines. In the fourth part, I will compare the cases following the Most Different Systems Design to obtain potential independent variables present in both cases. In the comparison, I will use congruence analysis to determine which concepts and theories within the literature best support the observations within the cases vice versa. The last part will conclude and provide suggestions for further research.

## Literature Review

### Definitions

The concepts mentioned frequently below, do not have well-established definitions and need to be defined to prevent misinterpretation. I will define the concepts success, insurgency, guerilla warfare and asymmetric conflict.

This paper will use a narrow interpretation of success. Success are wars in which the conventional force defeats the insurgent forces in such an overpowering way that after the conventional force can rule over acquired territory with relative ease. It is crucial to define success, as every warring party pursues a different war goal and is willing to spend different amounts of resources to achieve this goal. Therefore, a goal pursued by an attacker in one war – e.g. capture a goldmine – can be too little for attackers in other wars. Additionally, it is important for this paper to define what success means as the case selection is done based on the dependent variable – success. Thus, defining success is important, as the range of cases that fit the dependent variable will change depending on how broad or narrow success is defined.

For insurgency and guerilla warfare, I will use the definitions that Lyall and Wilson (2009) propose in their paper *Rage Against the Machines*. They define an insurgency as “a protracted violent struggle by non-state actors to obtain their political objectives ... against the current political authority” (Lyall and Wilson 2009, 70). Additionally, they recognise that insurgencies should, at least, have 1,000 battle deaths and should have adopted guerrilla warfare strategies. The authors define guerrilla warfare as "a strategy of armed resistance that (1) uses small, mobile groups to inflict punishment on the incumbent through hit-and-run strikes while avoiding direct battle when possible and (2) seeks to win the allegiance of at least some portion of the non-combatant population".

Furthermore, it is important to differentiate it from the closely related concept ‘asymmetric warfare’. Asymmetric warfare simply means that one of the parties uses conventional methods (well-defined forces who fight against other military forces in open confrontation) while they fight against an opponent who uses unconventional methods (guerrilla warfare). The concept of asymmetric warfare lacks the substantial political and territorial component that is embedded within the concept of insurgency.

## Theories

There are various theories on what is needed to defeat an insurgency. These theories are often adjacent and use elements of each other, but because they concentrate on different elements they tend to arrive at different conclusions. Many theories seem to be constructed next to each other rather than that they improve upon each other. For this reason, I will discuss a more diverse range of theories than is typically expected. The fact that such a variety of explanations remain accepted shows how important it is to test the theories outside the 'usual' case studies (e.g. Iraq, Vietnam). It is also indicative of that 'small wars' are understudied even though they have great value for understanding historical processes (Benton 2024).

The following paragraphs will first review theories that discuss the effects of the organisational structure of the armed forces and their methods of conduct on the capability of the conventional force to fight insurgents. Second, I will discuss theories that focus on the effects that the incumbent's government form and its societal morality has on its methods and the willingness to do what is necessary to win a war.

### *Organisational Structure and Methods of Conduct*

#### Mechanisation Theory

In their paper, Lyall and Wilson (2009) argue that higher levels of mechanisation negatively affect the armies' ability to conduct counterinsurgency missions. The ability of counterinsurgent forces to distinguish insurgents from the local population heavily depends on local information. For two reasons as soldiers most effectively gather this information when they meet and mingle with the population. Firstly, more personal interaction often leads to greater trust between the population and the counterinsurgency forces and, secondly, more moments of contact lead to more opportunities to gain information. The authors argue that improvements armies have made to fight conventional wars, such as more armour and less dependency on the local population, have undermined the ability of armies to conduct counterinsurgency missions. The authors suggest that armies must increase their use of foot patrols and interaction with the populace.

#### Strategic Interaction Theory

Arreguín-Toft (2005) argues that there are two patterns of strategic interaction. The stronger actor will win when the actors adopt the same strategy, while the weaker actor will win when



they adopt different strategies. There are two types of strategy: direct and indirect. When an actor employs a direct strategy, his primary goal is to destroy the enemies' physical capacity to wage war (Arreguín-Toft 2005, 34). Examples of direct strategy are conventional attacks or defences.

In contrast, an indirect strategy targets the enemy's will to fight or to resist. Examples of indirect strategies are barbarism – murdering and torturing people until submission – or guerrilla warfare. Arreguín-Toft argues that employing an indirect strategy can be especially effective for the weaker actor. When the weaker actor succeeds in creating a protracted conflict with constant costs for the stronger actor, the public of the stronger actor will force it to pull back as the state fails to deliver a quick win on a weak opponent. Arreguín-Toft notes that there are limitations to the indirect-indirect interaction. He believes that it is unlikely that the stronger actors nowadays can employ barbarism to such an extent that it breaks the will of the population as Post-World War II nations generally find it hard to employ barbarism adequately. Furthermore, it is almost always politically counterproductive, even if they could employ it militarily effectively (Arreguín-Toft 2005, 35).

### Intelligence is key

Many authors who write about the British experience of counterinsurgency warfare focus on the effect that collecting good intelligence has on the likelihood of winning a counterinsurgency war (Moreman 1996; Beckett 2008; Charters 2009; Kitson 2011; Malkin 2019). The range of the arguments differs between "the key to success in dealing with bandits or with a full-scale rebellion"(Jeffery 1987, 118)<sup>1</sup> and "intelligence contributes to the effective application of other counterinsurgency actions" (Charters 2009, 66). However, all agree that good intelligence is a requirement for a successful counterinsurgency war. Investing in good intelligence-gathering capabilities is vital as intelligence enables the conventional force to distinguish the insurgent from an innocent citizen and uncover unknown wants and needs of the population. When collected and analysed correctly, intelligence enables the security forces to anticipate trouble and apply political, economic and military measures precisely and effectively (Charters 2009). When intelligence is of a high enough grade, it will also allow the conventional force to manipulate and disrupt insurgency movements from within, as the

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<sup>1</sup> General The Lord Bourne (1964) cited in Jeffrey (1987)

conventional force can start to operate moles or even complete pseudo-insurgent groups. Ideally, the police forces gather intelligence and the army or secret services support the police when necessary. It is, however, important that one director is appointed to ensure coordination between the different groups.

#### All Counterinsurgency is Local

Gawthorpe (2017) argues that micro-level factors drive the legitimacy dynamics determining whether the local population accepts an occupying power. This is because irregular warfare can segment space in a crazy-quilt patchwork over who has the political authority and military control over the territory (Gawthorpe 2017, 842). In reality this means that who is in control during irregular warfare can differ per village. Sometimes, it is even unclear who controls an area at a particular moment. For liberal counterinsurgents, this has been a complex concept to grasp as liberal counterinsurgency doctrine promotes a top-down strategy that wants to increase legitimacy by introducing monolithic ideas such as rule of law and good governance in decentralised and heterogenic communities. These ideas often fail as they lack room for proper translation to what local civilians need or view as legitimate. Instead, counterinsurgents can attempt to co-opt local leaders who enjoy legitimacy. However, co-opting has its problems, as the interests of local leaders often do not align with the order that national governments seek to build, thereby creating the national government's future instability and problems.

#### *Regime type, morality and methods*

##### Liberal counterinsurgency operations

The US-led counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan were heavily based on liberal concepts such as winning the hearts and minds and promoting good governance (Ucko 2016, 39; US Army and Marine Corps 2007). This doctrine focuses heavily on expanding the central government's legitimacy among the local population by improving security, restoring essential services and developing the central government's governing capacity (US Army and Marine Corps 2007). The doctrine's key site of struggle is the contest between the incumbent and the insurgent to establish their legitimacies in the eye of the population (Gawthorpe 2017, 840). This battle is conducted by improving your own legitimacy by building effective governance while actively attacking the legitimacy of the other. This focus makes the key goal of the incumbent to provide security and development while hampering the insurgents as much as possible to provide effective governance.

The most important work promoting the US counterinsurgency doctrine is *Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency* (shortened to FM 3-24) (US Army and Marine Corps 2007). This manual provides the prevailing understanding of how US forces should conduct COIN operations.

It identifies three distinct stages that the incumbent should progress through:

- Initial Stage: "Stop the Bleeding": The initial stage aims to protect the population, break the insurgents' initiative and momentum, and set the conditions for further engagement. Stability operations must complement offensive operations focussed on providing civil security (clear-hold-build approach). Counterinsurgents will start shaping the information environment and the expectations of the local populace.
- Middle Stage: "Inpatient Care – Recovery": The main focus of this Stage is to establish stability. The foreign nations (FN) forces develop the capacity of the home nation's (HN) government and security forces. After security is assured, the FN and the HN government jointly focus on improving governance, providing essential services and promoting economic development. Successful provision will strengthen the relationship between the HN government and the local populace. This, in turn, will lead to more intelligence, improving subsequent offensive operations' effectiveness.
- Late Stage: "Outpatient Care – Movement to Self-Sufficiency": The main goal is to transition the responsibility for COIN operations to the HN forces. The HN forces will start to assume a leading role and assume more functions, whereas the foreign forces take up an increasingly diminishing supportive role. The goal is that the host nation has established systems that provide an effective and stable government and rule of law. The citizens are secured, while the government succeeds in building its legitimacy, thereby isolating the insurgency and eliminating its support among the population.

#### Authoritarian Counterinsurgency

Ucko (2016) argues that successful authoritarian counterinsurgency is – similar to their democratic counterparts - based on mobilisation, creating narratives and using military advantages to obtain political advantages. Popular perceptions that authoritarian regimes are uniquely positioned to use political violence to control the populace hide the significant effect that the particularities of individual regimes have on the effectiveness of their counterinsurgency operations. However, he identifies five methods authoritarian regimes seem particularly well-placed to employ if the other conditions are right. I will discuss these in

more depth below as the methods of colonial states in their colonies might resemble these more closely than their liberal counterparts.

According to Ucko (2016), successful authoritarian counterinsurgency is often based on five elements.

- **Prohibition of Dissent:** Prohibition of dissent is often a central part of authoritarian counterinsurgency campaigns. Authoritarians tend to suppress criticism within their peaceful (own) population and the insurgency-affected population. By suppressing criticism, regimes try to increase their country's ability to sustain fatalities and high costs without the population demanding another government.
- **Mass mobilisation:** Authoritarians often have the confidence of the masses and can mobilise an enormous political will through "nationalism, ideology or a cult of personality" (Ucko 2016, 39). Often supported by their monopoly on information, they will sell the narrative that the insurgents threaten the nation.
- **Mass violence (clearing phase):** Authoritarian regimes employ different forms of mass violence intending to render the insurgents unable to respond. Regimes will often target entire communities 'known' to hide insurgents, as identifying individual insurgents is too tricky. Either they will employ indiscriminate mass violence to create a fearful population that is less favourable to hosting insurgents, or they will try to break up insurgent-favour communities by causing mass dislocations and depopulation of insurgent areas. Both methods make it easier for the state to move in and take control.
- **Holding, Suppressing and Controlling:** Holding usually involves the mass deployment of security forces to saturate the area to such an extent that any sense of insurgency mobilisation seems futile.<sup>2</sup> When sufficient control is established, control will be reassigned to police forces and intelligence agencies to create an all-seeing, all-hearing police state. The police state will deter the population from voicing dissent as dissidents are swiftly and severely punished. The climate of fear and the permanent presence of security forces will discourage collective action and compel cooperation (even if this is only passive).

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, the ratio of Russian troops stationed in Chechnya in 2002 and 2003 was 1:9 (Ucko 2016, 45).

- Hearts and minds (build phase): Similar to their liberal counterparts, authoritarian regimes undertake significant efforts to win over relevant populations by providing security and economic development. The impact of these trust-winning efforts is often minimal as they are undertaken against a backdrop of killings, disappearances and torture. A policy that tends to reap more rewards is the state permeation of civil society. In this approach, the state co-opts and purges (unfavourable) institutions to permeate all public life. For instance, education is appropriated to teach norms in line with the regime, while religion and culture are co-opted and repressed in such a way as to legitimise the rule of the regime.<sup>3</sup> The state will insert itself into matters of public health, education, and employment to create a system that has a double function: responding to the community's interests while at the same time functioning as a monitor to detect starting dissidents. Lastly, potential vehicles—e.g., trade unions and student/women movements—are banned and repressed.

#### Democratic Squeamishness Theory

The central claim in Merom's argument (2003) is that strong democratic states cannot win small wars because of their societies. The educated middle class, in particular, is unwilling to sacrifice the resources or moral principles necessary to win the war. States can win counterinsurgency missions if they are either willing to incur significant casualties and monetary costs or if they are willing to inflict severe forms of violence – national annihilation / targeted violent coercion. According to Merom, a balance exists between the usage of resources and violence, making effective enforcement either expensive or violent. Democracies are unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices, making a loss the possible outcome in counterinsurgency wars.

#### Asymmetry of Interest Theory

Mack (1975) argues that strong actors are particularly likely to lose a conflict when they (partially) occupy another nation. The difference in relative interest that both actors have in the war causes a higher likelihood of a loss by the occupying side. The weaker actors are highly interested in winning the war because they want to establish their nation/ideology and

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<sup>3</sup>The Chinese government pushes religion out of the public space, whereas the Saudi Arabian government uses religion to legitimise the rule of the Saudis.

because a loss could seriously threaten the group's survival. Due to the high stakes, leaders are less politically liable for their actions and have long-term horizons for accomplishing their goals. In contrast, political leaders of the stronger occupying nation have a strong political liability to deliver a relatively quick and cheap victory. The stakes of the occupying actor are far lower as the actor engages in a limited war that poses no existential threat. This makes the political leader of the stronger state vulnerable, as citizens are not often willing to support costly, protracted, low-stakes wars that are fought in faraway countries. Therefore, the weaker side will win if it can impose steady costs on the stronger opponent over a long period as the anti-war factions within the occupying state will grow, causing the inevitable pullback of forces.

## Research Design

### Methods

In my research, I will investigate what successful strategies, tactics and conditions the Dutch and US counterinsurgency campaigns have in common. Starting, I will conduct a comparative historical analysis based on the Most Different Systems Design. After, I will conduct a congruence analysis to determine which theories, or parts of, discussed above support the observations within the cases and vice versa.

I will first conduct a comparative historical analysis following the Most Different Systems Design (MDSD). In the purest form, research based on MDSD focuses on comparing case studies that share the same dependent variable (Y) and differ on all but one independent variable (X) (Mahoney 2004; Anckar 2008; Caramani 2011; Falleti and Mahoney 2015; Pennings and Keman 2020). In the best-case scenario, the method eliminates all other potential independent variables except one. From this follows that the remaining independent variable likely has a causal relationship with the dependent variable.

The method works well in eliminating alternative explanations, but it has various limitations if it is not combined with another method. Firstly, the method suffers from the reality that only a limited amount of historical cases can be analysed worldwide (Pickvance 2001). In other words, it is nearly impossible to find cases that share the dependent variable and differ on all independent variables except one. This impossibility causes that other potential independent variables will need to be controlled for through other methods. Secondly, the method focuses

on eliminating what are not sufficient or necessary variables (Falletti and Mahoney 2015).<sup>4</sup> Due to its small-n design and focus on elimination, the MDS method can say nothing about whether the causes identified are necessary or sufficient in all other cases (limited external validity). Lastly, the independent variable that caused the corresponding outcome in both cases can disappear after the occurrence. Seeing the method is relatively agnostic to time, it can lead to a failure to include independent variables that disappear after chains of events that have a larger time dimension. Concluding, the researcher must use additional methods to check whether the identified independent variable causes a change in the dependent variable.

After eliminating various variables, I will analyse which concepts and theories within the literature best support the observations within the cases (Mahoney 2004; Blatter and Blume 2008, 325; Blatter and Haverland 2012). A researcher conducting congruence analysis tries to predict ex-ante how competing theories in the literature are supposed to operate in the studied cases. Subsequently, the deduced abstract concepts are tested against the observations and internal consistency within the empirical case studies. This will result in an inductive process where the researcher reflects on which of the competing theories makes the most sense for the specific observations. This is an iterative process as the abstract concepts are afterwards further refined based on the observations.

Congruency analysis relies primarily on the discriminatory power that specific observations have in analysing what internally coherent frameworks are best in explaining the outcomes (Blatter and Blume 2008, 325). The analysis can test a broad spectrum of prediction and is primarily based on the interpretation of empirical observations. It can test the validity of large coherent theories with less of a need for the establishment of causal relations through rich and thick empirical causal process tracing. Also, it takes into consideration that the boundaries of abstract concepts/variables are often fuzzy and that their meaning is not necessarily determined by the properties of the concept/variable itself, but by their relation in the wider theoretical context. This in contrast to more positive methods such as co-variation.

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<sup>4</sup>Necessary causes are factors or conditions that must be present for a change to occur. Sufficient causes are independent variables that are sufficient to cause a change in the dependent variable if they are present.

## Criteria of the Case Selection

I have selected the cases based on four criteria.

First, I scoped the viable case studies to the category “Western colonial annexation wars”. This scope is relevant as I am interested in the question of how Western countries conducted their wars.

Second, I selected the cases on the value of their dependent variable to research what successful annexation wars have in common (i.e. the independent variables that lead to success). Although selection on the dependent variable is controversial when using other methods, it is appropriate when a researcher uses MDS to explain questions such as "Why did (Y) occur?" (Blatter and Haverland 2012).

Third, the cases are selected to differ in as many potential independent variables as possible (table 1). Having as many variations as possible is important as it reduces the number of competing causal relationships I must investigate with congruency analysis.

Lastly, the cases are selected based on whether one of the parties in the war has a native language that I can read.

## Sources

For my research, I will primarily use secondary sources, such as historical analyses, books and bibliographies, to construct historical narratives and detect causal processes. I will use primary resources to check the validity of claims and enrich the historical narratives in places lacking them. The benefit of my research comes from comparing the historical courses of the wars. Finding commonalities in both wars and tracing whether they are influential can be done well by comparing narratives constructed with secondary sources.

To construct the case of the Philippine War, I am primarily relying on two books of Linn (1989; 2000). I do this as his works are of high quality and because most of the other work on the Philippine War either does not fit my focus on military strategy or is partial (imperialistic or revisionist).<sup>5</sup> This in line with the nickname “America’s true forgotten war” that some authors give the war.

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<sup>5</sup> See the bibliography of Linn (2000) of an extensive review of the current body of literature on the topic.



## Selection of Cases

The Java War (case 1) and the Philippine War (case 2) differ on the following variables:

|             | Form of government Coloniser | Political Strategy | Military Strategy             | Extreme violence         | Religion Coloniser | Prior occupying entity | Way of the prior ruler   | Religion of colonial nation | Experience of coloniser | Period    |
|-------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| Case 1 (NL) | Western Autocracy            | Divide and Conquer | Clear + Decentralised Control | Used, but not systematic | Protestant         | VOC                    | Influential trading post | Islamic                     | Medium                  | 1825-1830 |
| Case 2 (US) | Western Democracy            | Divide and Conquer | Clear + Decentralised Control | Used, but not systematic | Various Christian  | Spain                  | Central government       | Catholic                    | Minor                   | 1899-1902 |

*Table 1: Comparison on Common Independent Variables*

## Definition of Variables

I will examine the case studies for observations that allow me to score a selection of independent variables. The variables are:

### *V<sub>1</sub>: Level of interaction with the local population*

Lyall and Wilson (2009) and Ucko (2016) theorise that close interaction with the populace is essential if a counterinsurgency mission is to succeed. Lyall and Wilson argue that the ability of counterinsurgent forces heavily depends on local trust and intelligence. The soldiers can only gather this when they meet and mingle with the population. Ucko also identifies this as an important factor. However he additionally argues that the mass deployment of security forces throughout the country is vital as this will create a climate of fear in which resistance seems futile.

### *V<sub>2</sub>: (De)centralisation of policy*

Gawthorpe (2017) argues that all counterinsurgencies are local. Micro-level factors drive the legitimacy dynamics determining whether the local population accepts an occupying power. Although decentral policy-making seems like a natural answer to this, it often has its own problems.

### *V<sub>3</sub>: Success in winning an influential part of the population*

Most counterinsurgency doctrines mentioned in the literature review recognise that a foreign force cannot rule a country by itself. You need substantial help from an influential group to rule a country effectively.

### *V<sub>4</sub>: Success in cutting the ties between insurgents and supporters*

Authors such as Ucko, Merom and Arreguín-Toft assert that the counterinsurgent needs to employ more forceful and punitive methods than 'winning the hearts and minds' to break the ties between the insurgents and the population that support them. This variable will change based on the usage of punitive measures.

### *V<sub>5</sub>: The quality of intelligence*

Many authors believe acquiring good intelligence is essential if the counterinsurgent wants to win the war. Others believe that intelligence is a force multiplier as it contributes to the more effective and efficient application of other counterinsurgency measures.

### *V<sub>6</sub>: The type of government*

Theories of democratic, liberal and authoritarian counterinsurgency (Merom 2003; US Army and Marine Corps 2007; Ucko 2016) argue that the form of government affects the willingness to spend resources and employ specific 'immoral' measures.

### *V<sub>7</sub>: Barbarism as a strategy*

A notion in Ucko's and Arreguín-Toft's argument is that counterinsurgents can use barbarism as a strategy to intimidate the occupied populace into submission.

## Case Studies

### The Java War (1825-1830)

The Java War, which ended in a victory for the Dutch, was fought between the Netherlands and Javanese rebels between 1825 and 1830 (Ricklefs 2008).

#### *Background*

The direct rule of the Dutch state over Java started in 1799 when the Dutch government took over the debt and the territorial possessions of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie; VOC) (Carey 1976; Groen et al. 2021; Ricklefs 2008). Before this takeover, the VOC had significantly influenced the island as the company was the leading Western trading partner from the early 1600s onwards. The VOC traded extensively with Javanese kingdoms, the two most powerful being Yogyakarta and Surakarta Sultanate (Carey 1976). To obtain this right, the company forcefully conquered the land near the shore to set up fortified trading posts. To do this, it relied heavily on its navy.

Once established, the VOC allied rulers of different kingdoms on the island to obtain trading rights and local soldiers to strengthen their position (Groen et al. 2021; Ricklefs 2008). The VOC could do this as many rules existed on the island that ruled over their subjects in a feudalistic manner. The power of these rulers was not determined by land but instead by the power a ruler had over their subjects. The abundance of rulers and the changing relationships the rulers had towards each other created a space where the VOC could broker favourable deals based on divide and rule tactics. Furthermore, seeing that the VOC viewed itself as a trading company, it would primarily wage war to enforce more favourable trading terms on local princedoms.

In the late 1700s, the strength of the VOC started waning as corruption, rising costs, and debt plagued the company (Groen et al. 2021). In 1799, the Dutch state took over control of the various trading posts in Indonesia. The Dutch state paired this takeover with a change in attitude towards the people living in Indonesia. The Netherlands no longer saw the princes and their subjects as relatively equal trading partners; instead, the Dutch state saw them as subjects that should be 'civilised' and ruled directly.

Governor-General Daendels (1808-1811) was tasked with laying the foundation for an 'enlightened' modern colonial state (Carey 1976). In order to achieve this, he instituted a European style of district governance in which the local princes were given the role of regional administrators serving the colonial state. Instituting direct rule combined with the ruthless quelling of the following revolt provided a deep antagonism towards the colonial regime. This unrest, combined with a system of land taxes the British introduced under their rule between 1811 and 1816, the inability of the Dutch to quell extortion by Chinese 'toll men', the annoyance that Prince Diponegoro had with the relaxation of religious observance at court and plans that the Dutch government had to annex more land of the Indonesian princes led to a potent cocktail (Ricklefs 2008). The dissatisfaction erupted into rebellion when the Dutch tried to build a new road over Diponegoro's estate close to the tombs of his ancestors. Diponegoro declared a Jihad against the Dutch rulers and the Sultan of Yogyakarta with the support of a significant part of the population and the Yogya princes.

#### *The start of the rebellion*

The rebellion started successfully in 1825 (Carey 1976; Ricklefs 2008). The rebellion spread through central and east Java, with the most fervorous support in the Yogyakarta area. 15 of the 29 princes and 41 of the 88 courtiers joined Diponegoro (Ricklefs 2008, 141). Surakarta remained neutral, but the court seemed willing to join the rebellion if it succeeded. The rebels enjoyed widespread support among the population (Groen et al. 2021). The rural population supplied the rebel forces with soldiers, food and intelligence. They cared for the wounded and dead while aiding them by destroying strategic bridges and roads. All these advantages resulted that in August 1825, Diponegoro's forces were ruling the countryside of central and east Java and were sieging the city of Yogyakarta. The Dutch only broke this siege when they pulled back a force of 2500 colonial soldiers and 5000 Javanese and Madurese from their deployment in Southwest Sulawesi.

Diponegoro's forces would continue to rule inland Java until 1927. The colonial forces could drive out the rebel forces from certain places, but the rebels would quickly return to power as the colonial forces were not strong enough to hold the conquered areas. Besides that, Diponegoro undertook guerilla operations that were highly effective in whittling down the Dutch forces. The training of the Dutch had not prepared them for counterinsurgency operations (Carey 2014). Additionally, the soldiers were hungry due to low rations and were battered by high attrition rates due to disease. 27% of the soldiers were dead by the second year of the conflict (Carey 2014, 257). Lastly, the low number of European troops (Approximately 8000) made it hard for the commanders to undertake effective offensive operations.

The colonial government's fortunes started to change when, in October 1826, the Dutch king sent 3145 professional Dutch soldiers to support the war effort (Carey 1976). With these soldiers, De Kock succeeded in destroying Diponegoro's ability to wage conventional war by employing the newly developed *benteng-stelsel* (fortification system), extreme violence in the form of burning crops and villages, and terrorising villagers. This forced Diponegoro to fully transition to the guerilla warfare that had been so effective for him in the past.

#### *The Dutch adopted countermeasures to guerrilla warfare*

The Kock knew that holding Java would be a long-term commitment that could not succeed without bringing the cleared areas under long-term colonial control. De Kock employed two main strategies to obtain long-term control. Collaboration with the Javanese elite and the usage of military force.

#### *Collaboration*

A central goal of the Dutch state was to ensure the collaboration of the Javanese elite (Groen et al. 2021; Carey 2014). The collaboration between the Javanese and the wide Indonesian elite was needed as they supplied the legitimacy and the necessary soldiers for the Royal Dutch-Indies Army (KNIL) to rule over the 2 million Javanese.

The Dutch tried to ensure the collaboration of the Javanese in various ways. After the start of the rebellion in 1825, the residents of Yogyakarta pre-emptively locked up various princes and administrators suspected of joining the rebellion (Louw 1894a). Other princes and aristocratic administrators remained loyal to the Dutch-supported sultan of Yogyakarta. The Sultanate of

Surakarta also remained loyal to the Dutch and provided the colonial forces with troops to fight the war. This difference in allegiances made the Java war as much a civil war between the different Javanese aristocratic factions as well as a colonial war. The aristocrats fought for their position in the post-war rule as the Dutch would reward their loyalty with titles, land and money.

Money, titles and land are also what commander De Kock promised every rebellious aristocrat that would defect to the Dutch side (Louw 1894b, 3:22). This is in contrast to those who continued the rebellion. They would be banished or killed. The tactic was only partially successful. Only 13 princes and courtiers had defected to the Dutch side at the war's end. However a few influential princes were among these. In September 1829, Diponegoro's uncle Pangeran Mangkubumi surrendered under the condition that he could return to Yogyakarta as a prince. The deal succeeded as he would become one of the most senior princes at the court (Ricklefs 2008, 142). The leading commander of Diponegoro, Sěntot, also surrendered in October 1829, after which he was given the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the KNIL. In this role, he was sent to Sumatra in 1831, where he fought on the side of the Dutch.

For two reasons, military cooperation with the indigenous princes was necessary for the Dutch (Groen et al. 2021). First, the allied princes provided the soldiers (Barisan) that were necessary for the Dutch to defeat and occupy princedoms in the whole of the Dutch Indies. The view of the king and the generals was that the colonies were firstly a way to raise extra revenue for the homeland. Considering this, only a small part of the KNIL was of European descent, as European soldiers were of high quality but also very expensive. For example, 7000 of the soldiers of the KNIL that participated in the war in 1828 were of Javanese or Madurese descent, and only 1000 soldiers at that time were of European descent (Groen et al. 2021, 50). Participation of native forces was also necessary as the European forces heavily suffered losses because of disease and battle. Of the 3145 European soldiers sent in 1826 as part of the expeditionary division, only a bit more than one third were alive in 1828.

Second, the need for Javanese allies was also vital as they delivered the necessary knowledge and intelligence on how to fight battles (Groen et al. 2021). The Javanese princes would identify which villages most supported Diponegoro, after which the Dutch would destroy them. At the same time, they pleaded for leniency in situations where angering the population would contradict the Dutch cause.

### *Military Force*

A second essential component of the Kock strategy was using a system of strategic fortification called the *benteng-stelsel* in combination with the mobile column (De Klerck 1894; Ricklefs 2008; Carey 2014; Groen et al. 2021). To fully understand how the Dutch combined the two methods, I will first explain what the concepts entail.

The *benteng-stelsel* was a system of fortified posts that the Dutch spread over Java from which mobile columns could conduct offensive operations and police the local population. De Kock describes the *benteng* as follows: "they are redoubts made out of clapper tree, with two or three bastions that are strengthened with two or three cannons, and based on how important and how stretched the fortification is, manned by Europeans and natives" (Kock 1829). The Dutch started to build these fortifications because the main supply roads over which they transported food and military equipment needed to be protected (Groen et al. 2021). The Dutch needed this protection as attacking transports and destroying roads and bridges was a major part of Diponegoro's strategy. The fortifications were, however, so effective in protecting assets and project power in the near area that they became an essential part of the Dutch counter guerrilla efforts from 1827 onwards (De Klerck 1894).

The *benteng-stelsel* was also crucial as it supported a more effective usage of the mobile columns. A mobile column is a group of soldiers with a strength of between a couple of hundreds to thousands of European or Indonesian infantry soldiers with rifles, swords and daggers. The distinctive characteristic of the mobile column is that it brings all the people and supplies - food, ammunition, personnel and horses - necessary to operate independently in the field. It was typical for a column of 650 soldiers and 150 carriers (*koelies*) to use 65 horses to carry the supplies. This migration of people and animals made it so that the column was not, as its name suggests, mobile and responsive. Instead, the columns depended on their superior tactical discipline and firepower to defeat the enemy in their engagements. The main benefit of the columns was that they could operate freely for an extended period, making them more mobile to use than regular troops operating from set fortifications.

### *Development of the 'mobiele-colonne- en bentengstelsel'*

The Dutch forces had been on the defensive from the start of the war until the reinforcements from the rest of Indonesia arrived in 1826 (Groen et al. 2021). The reinforcements allowed the forces to start offensive operations with six mobile columns. The columns would often be

victorious against the rebel forces in regular combat, but as soon as the columns would leave the areas, the rebels would return to take the land back. This Dutch failure to hold the conquered area allowed the Diponegoro's troops to move freely throughout the Middle of Java without fearing capture. The accessibility that the rebels retained meant they could keep returning to the rebel-favoured towns and villages to strengthen themselves by recruiting new men, levying taxes and stocking up on food and ammunition.

The Dutch leadership found a solution to the guerillas' 'slipperiness' when they noticed that constructing *bentengs* in strategic towns and agricultural areas had a pacifying effect on the area (Louw 1894; Groen et al. 2021). The *bentengs* allowed the Dutch to project power in a few new ways.

Firstly, the *bentengs* allowed the Dutch to control the food supply to the Javanese population. The Dutch would only allow people close to the *benteng* if they subjugated themselves to their colonial authority. The *benteng* "force[d] the citizens to resist the rebels as they would otherwise also be fired upon by the Dutch troops" (Louw 1894, 3:228). This combined threat was effective as most heads of the villages (*Desa's*) would subsequently pledge their allegiance to the Dutch. Louw (1894) reports that the heads in cases would even help the Dutch to find the non-conforming heads of other villages. Furthermore, the *bentengs* formed the physical representation that the Dutch controlled a particular area. In return for their subjugation, the Dutch would offer the local population work animals, ploughs and seeds to improve the cultivation of their lands.

Secondly, the *bentengs* functioned as posts from which the Dutch soldiers could easily spot the standing conventional forces of Diponegoro (Louw 1894; Groen et al. 2021). Whereas before Diponegoro forces could easily hide in the rural areas due to the permanent travelling nature of the *mobiele-colonne*, the *bentengs* gave the Dutch a permanent military presence and, therefore, a far better understanding of where the troops of Diponegoro travelled. Furthermore, the *bentengs* made it harder for Diponegoro's tax men to collect weapons and resources from the local population as the Dutch now had permanent supervision (De Klerck 1894).

Lastly, the *bentengs* also functioned as logistics posts from which the *mobiele-colonne* could replenish itself and from which the Dutch ran their informant network.



The *bentengstelsel* and the *mobiele-colonne* were a match that highly increased the effectiveness of the Dutch forces (De Klerck 1894). The *mobiele-colonnes* would first clear a new area. After this, they would build a line of *bentengs* to subjugate the population and defend the area against attacks from Diponegoro's forces. To effectively do this, they would leave 20 to 50 people behind. Something that cost a lot of manpower, as two-thirds of the army in 1929 was used for the occupation or supply of the *bentengs* (Groen et al. 2021, 53). These occupying forces would consist of both European and Barisan forces. After the *mobiele-colonnes* built the line, they would push up further to clear new areas while ensuring they could fall back to assist a *benteng* timely if Diponegoro's forces attacked it. The end goal of pushing the line forward was to enclose Diponegoro and his forces between the rivers Progo and Bogowonto.

Diponegoro understood that the new Dutch permanent presence undermined his position by cutting ties with the population he relied on (De Klerck 1894). Therefore, Diponegoro tried to prevent the construction of the *bentengs* by force when possible. An example of this is the *benteng* by Pasar. Diponegoro is personally present to coordinate and motivate the daily attacks against the constructing *mobiele-colonne* between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1827 (De Klerck 1894, 4:228–32). Only on the 27<sup>th</sup>, were the Dutch forces able to break the attack and route the attackers when De Kock and a significant part of the Dutch forces reinforced the defenders.

#### *The Colonial Regimes Starts Taking Control*

Convinced of the success of the *bentengstelsel*, the Kock kept ordering to build more (Carey 2014; De Klerck 1894). Dutch forces would, in the end, build 258 *bentengs*, with 90 being built in 1828 (Carey 2014, 260). The Dutch government also keeps supplying De Kock with more manpower (Groen et al. 2021, 53). At the start of the campaign season of 1829, the Dutch forces on Java comprised more than 23.000 men; 5417 were European, and 17.905 were Indonesian. 7380 of these men would form 12 mobile columns. The other two-thirds defended the *bentengs* and controlled the population. The combined result is that the Dutch forces succeeded in their objective of driving Diponegoro's forces in the area between the rivers Progo and Bogowonto in November 1828 (Carey 2014, 262). Here, the Dutch kept succeeding in convincing the population to turn their allegiance by a combination of the promise of free ploughs, draught animals, seeds, lower tax rates, lower corvée demands and higher wages

(Carey 2014, 263) and the threat going out from newly build *bentengs*. By the end of September 1829, the organised resistance in South-Central Java was over. Diponegoro fled into the jungle of West Java, where he would reside with a small following while being chased by mobile columns, wounded and sick of malaria. In the end, The Dutch forces arrested Diponegoro on 28 March 1830 during negotiations for a cease-fire that he had with General De Kock. It is unclear whether the Dutch betrayed him or whether his surrender was an honourable submission.

#### *The Years following the Rebellion*

The victory enabled the Dutch government to gain control over almost all of the island and to institute the *Cultuurstelsel* (Carey 2021). The *Cultuurstelsel* required the Javanese to dedicate a portion of their land to government crops for export, or if you were a peasant, you had to work on government-owned plantations 60 days a year. Lastly, the government introduced a clear racial hierarchy, something that had only existed to a far lesser extent during VOC rule.

#### *The Philippine War (1899-1902)*

The US and the First Philippine Republic fought in the Philippine War from 4<sup>th</sup> February 1899 to 4<sup>th</sup> July 1902 (Linn 1989; 2000; Silbey 2008). The war ended in a victory for the US, after which the Philippines became an unincorporated territory of the US.

Before discussing the war, it is good to explain how the social hierarchy in the Philippines worked during Spanish rule (Linn 2000). The native elite of the Philippines are called *Principales*. *Principales* is a collective name for local chiefs, landowners and prominent businessmen who effectively controlled all local politics. The authority of the *principales* was almost absolute as the peasantry relied on their patrons for land, seeds, protection against the state and the lawless, and support in the case of a bad harvest. In return, the peasants had to yield a part of their crops, do numerous small chores and pay public homage. It is this elite – including the revolutionary leader Aguinaldo – of which the revolution primarily consists when Spain tries to strengthen their control. Spain tries to do this to make the Philippines more profitable after losing much of its empire in the Americas.

#### *Conventional Warfare*

Before the Philippine War, The US and the Revolutionary Army of the Philippines were allies in their shared struggle against Spain (Linn 1989; 2000). The US joined Cuba in its war of

independence against Spain on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1898. To destabilise Spain, the US started to support the Revolutionary Army in the Philippines, which had been making good progress in liberating the Philippines. Two decisive moments in this war in the Philippines were after the US Navy attained a large victory over the Spanish Navy in Manila Bay and when it subsequently conquered Manila with the support of the Revolutionary Army.

The underlying reason why the US seized the Philippines after winning battles against the Spanish is hotly debated (Linn 2000). Due to the unwillingness of US President McKinley to confide his reasons to paper or his advisers, it is unknown whether it was in a quest for imperialism and Asian markets or that the involvement was accidental and incremental. What is known is that McKinley wanted the US Army to conquer as much as possible of Manila to keep his options open. He believed that Manila could either be used as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Spain or, at most, could serve as a starting point for the permanent American occupation of the Philippines.

To maximise the utility of Manila, General Merritt devised a plan to conquer as much as possible of Manila while keeping the allied Revolutionary Army out (Linn 1989; 2000). Merritt agreed with the Spanish commander that the Spanish forces would surrender after token resistance, thereby allowing the occupation of Manila to the US. This largely succeeded as the US was able to capture everything in the Walled City as well as a part of the suburbs. The Philippine President Aguinaldo captured most of the suburbs, and for the time being, both sides were content with this stand-off.

The Treaty of Paris between the US and Spain was signed on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1898 (Linn 1989; 2000). In this Treaty, Spain seceded control over the Philippines to the US. On 21<sup>st</sup> December, Otis – the new general leading the mission – got instructions to start the occupation and administration of the Philippines. The army was to do this in such a way that it would win the respect and affection of the inhabitants. “The mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule” (McKinley 1898). To achieve this, however, the army was permitted to “[maintain] the strong arm of authority to repress disturbance and to overcome all obstacles to the bestowal of the blessings of good and stable government” (McKinley 1898).

This reflected the informal pacification doctrine that the US Army had derived from its experiences in the Civil War and the Indian Campaigns (Linn 2000). Officers sought to separate the non-combatants from armed opponents, restore order and make reforms that prevented future outbreaks. Those who continued to resist were punished hard. Their homes and crops were destroyed, while the combatants themselves were subjected to imprisonment, expulsion and death. This doctrine also had a legal justification in “Instructions for the Government of Armies of the US in the field” (Linn 2000, 9).

The war between the Revolutionary Army and the US started on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1899 when a US sentry shot at a Philippine patrol (Linn 2000, 46). The circumstances surrounding the shot are contested, but it is clear that the start was not a planned attack by either party. However, this local fight caused a chain reaction as soldiers all along the fire lines started fighting, thereby putting into motion the US contingency plan of launching an all-out attack when attacked. The US forces won this engagement surprisingly easily due to their tactics, discipline and marksmanship superiority. A decisive moment in this engagement was that the Americans sent three regiments of Provost Guards out into the streets of Manila as soon as the fight started to arrest or kill every person who was suspected of joining the insurrection. Aguinaldo had been recruiting insurgents and had been smuggling weapons into the city. A significant chance existed that without the swift action of the Provost Guards, the revolutionaries would have taken over the city, thereby surrounding the US firing lines. During the Battle of Manila, the American soldiers were successful in inflicting a substantial number of casualties on the revolutionary army.

After the Battle of Manila, Otis quickly realised that the roughly 21,000 men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Corp were insufficient to carry the war into the interior while also guarding the city (Linn 2000, 90). He knew, however, that in the fall of 1899, he would have far more men to his disposal as Congress voted to increase the size of his forces to 100,000, of which 70,000 would be available in the fall. In the spring, Otis ordered the capture of Pasig, Pateros, and Taguig, which would cut Luzon and the revolutionary forces in two. After this, Otis ordered the capture of the republican capital of Malolos.

To reach this city, the 8<sup>th</sup> Corp experienced how hard it was to campaign in many areas of the Philippines as they had to pass jungle, bamboo, rivers without bridges, marshes, shrub thickets and rice paddies (Linn 2000). On top of this, the soldiers would often suffer from severe

diseases and ailments such as typhoid, cholera, chronic dysentery, rotting feet, diarrhoea, parasites, tropical ulcers and malaria (Linn 2000, 90). Sustained campaigning led to the breakdown of regiments, as one twenty-day campaign shows. While including several long rests, the campaign resulted in 2600 of its 4800 soldiers being on sick report, with most of them never fully recovering.

The US forces captured Malolos on 31<sup>st</sup> March (Linn 1989; 2000, 99). The battle for it had been a disaster for the republican army. The forces' effectiveness rapidly decreased as their experienced soldiers became casualties and were replaced by inexperienced farmers. Furthermore, the army lost irreplaceable resources such as weapons and ammunition, something that would significantly hamper the later guerrilla war. Lastly, Luna, the highest general of the Philippine army, ordered the destruction of every village that the Philippine army needed to give up to the enemy. Something that was a minor convenience to the US, who got their food supplied, while it condemned hundreds of Filipinos to poverty, thereby undermining the support for the revolution.

The summer monsoon restricted the 8<sup>th</sup> Corps to conduct only minor operations (Linn 2000). The US army was on the defensive and had to wait until reinforcements arrived. The US Navy maintained a blockade that they started in the spring; This made it slowly impossible for the Philippine government to feed their military forces, decreasing their morale. This decrease, combined with the lost battles, led to the steady erosion of the political and military power of the Philippine Republic. The reduction of ministers in Aguinaldo's cabinet came to a climax when president Aguinaldo arranged the assassination of his highest general Luna. The most severe consequence of this murder was that Aguinaldo no longer had anyone who could unite the revolutionary forces. The result was that after the summer, the Revolutionary forces were little more than a collection of free companies who only felt allegiance to their direct commander but seldom somebody else.

On 9<sup>th</sup> October, Otis started his campaign to conquer the North (Linn 2000, 143). Reinforcements would not arrive until November, but Otis was committed to starting the campaign even though he did not have the soldiers to support it. The most important operation of this campaign was that the US tried to encircle Aguinaldo and his army by surrounding it with three fast-moving columns. However, the operation failed due to communications issues and being too complicated for the available manpower. During this

period, Aguinaldo realised that the conventional war was lost, leading him to declare the start of the guerrilla war on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1899 to disband his forces and flee into the mountains. The conventional war was over, but the resistance was far from beaten.

### *Guerrilla Warfare*

The following guerilla war was a series of regional struggles (Linn 1989; 2000). Aguinaldo had fled to the mountains in northeastern Luzon, where he spent most of his time avoiding patrols and searching for food and shelter. Aguinaldo could not coordinate a nationwide insurgency as local commanders either did not get his orders or simply ignored them. Consequently, the highest military authority in the different regions was the regional *jefes* who directed every region's political and military strategy, thereby making the nature of insurgency and the response of the Americans different per region. Furthermore, the insurgency continued in a small majority of the regions, as there was no fighting at all in "thirty-four of the seventy-seven provinces (44 per cent)" (Linn 2000, 185).

### Benevolent Assimilation

Since the beginning of the war, the US pursued a strategy of benevolent assimilation (Linn 2000). They adhered to this strategy in war as well as during the occupation phase. The US pursued a benevolent assimilation strategy primarily during the earlier years of the war. Senior officers went to great lengths to ensure that prisoners were well treated and that the troops behaved themselves. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade, there were stringent orders that there must be no burnings, lootings or destruction (Linn 2000, 100). Soldiers generally followed these orders except for stealing food to feed themselves.

During the US occupation, the US tried to win "the confidence, respect and admiration" of the population "by assuring them the rights and liberties that are the heritage of free peoples" (Linn 1989, 20). The McKinley administration recognised that the US could not rule the 7 million people archipelago by itself without substantial help from the Filipinos themselves. That is, Otis restructured the army to focus on nonmilitary methods of pacification. Otis set up a system of districts in which every military commander became the head of the Military division and the governor (Linn 2000, 199). In the first role, the commander would coordinate the operations against the armed resistance. In the second role, the commander would establish civil government, develop codes and procedures, improve public health, build

schools and roads, and hold free municipal elections. To carry out both responsibilities, the commanders gained considerable autonomy to act as they saw fit.

The new strategy was controversial. The number of garrisons expanded rapidly from 53 on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1899 to 639 by the end of the year (Linn 2000, 199). Many officers were critical of the strategy as it tied down most troops and eliminated the mobile reserve that could carry out large expeditions. Others, however, believed that establishing garrisons throughout the country was essential as the key to pacification was to learn the identities of the combatants, and this could not be done if the troops would not live among the population for an extended period.

One of the central tenets of Otis's pacification policy was the provision of a representative municipal government (Linn 2000, 130). The plan was as follows. Each town would get a municipal council. This council would have a chosen *presidente*, *vice president* and a leader from every neighbourhood. The council was charged with the maintenance of public order, running the police, and the promotion of hygiene and prosperity in the town. The *council* also had the power to set taxes. The success of the elections differed highly among regions. Where some regions established a representative municipal council in the first months of the war, others would fail due to either people not showing up to vote or because the local commander just gave the illusion of holding elections. In these regions, the local commander would nominate a *principale* favourable to the local US military regime – called *americanista*. These *americanistas* would often become entirely tied to the American regime for favour and protection as the insurgents often tortured and killed them as punishment for their cooperation.

#### Punitive Actions

MacArthur succeeded Otis in May 1900 as the supreme commander in the Philippines (Linn 2000, 208). According to MacArthur, the pacification campaign had, until that moment, been successful but unbalanced. The benevolent assimilation strategy propagated by Otis was successful and won over many sympathetic Filipinos. The prosperity of the people increased as government services resumed, and the US built roads, bridges, and schools throughout the country. However, MacArthur also recognised that military suppression of the armed resistance was slowing down, resulting in an upsurge in fighting. The level of fighting in April 1900 escalated to such an extent that the number of troops engaged and casualties reached

the same level as during the conventional operations a year earlier. To turn these misfortunes, many in the US army turned to more punitive counterinsurgency methods that had proven themselves during the Indian wars.

The change started when many district commanders reinterpreted General Order (GO) 100 1863 (Linn 2000). Before the fall of 1900, the US Army had emphasised the humanitarian sections of the GO, but many believed the punitive sections needed to be applied. The application of the punitive sections meant that the Filipinos could be punished by the suspension of civil rights, confiscation, deportation, property destruction and summary execution if it was militarily necessary (US War Department 1898). This sentiment was supported by the Judge Advocate when he ruled that martial law applies throughout the archipelago (Linn 2000, 211). Many commanders and soldiers within departments started to perform the abovementioned punishments on people suspected of being or helping insurgents, even though MacArthur had not yet endorsed them. This authorisation came on 19<sup>th</sup> December when MacArthur decreed that all those who committed hostilities or supported those who did would be subjected to exemplary punishments. Where before perpetrators were treated relatively conciliatory, this would now be over.

Two methods that strengthened each other brought about the final pacification of the troubled regions.

First, friendly Filipinos had political and military success in convincing guerrillas to put down their arms (Linn 2000, 215). *Principales* and former revolutionary officers favouring American rule founded The Federal Party on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1900. These Federalists successfully went into the villages and mountains to convince guerilla leaders that recognising American rule was the only way to establish a representative government. Similarly, MacArthur approved the founding of a Native Scout force, which led to a massive increase in the number of natives serving in the auxiliaries and the local police forces. These were some of the most effective counterinsurgency forces the army raised in the war. However, Otis had made it hard to recruit them as they were effective but also tended to use a disproportionate amount of violence and terror.

Second, MacArthur encouraged his forces to sever the connection between guerilla-friendly civilians and guerillas by using methods such as the destruction of crops and property



(burnings) and the separation of civilians into protected zones outside of which the US regarded everyone as an enemy (concentration). He removed restrictions on the courts that started to give the death penalty to far more prisoners than before (Linn 2000, 215). The war became much harder. By focusing on destroying suspected food supplies and shelter and confiscating weapons, the US forces took away an essential base for the guerillas. District commanders never sanctioned the use of extra-legal repression methods such as torture, but it became much more common as senior officers favoured a 'don't ask, don't tell policy' (Linn 2000, 224). Mass executions also became more common as soldiers grew hardened and frustrated. These executions were, however, retaliatory instead of torture, which was, in general, functional.

Advocacy by the natives and increased punitive action against people suspected of helping the guerillas work. In the early months of 1901, many of the most rebellious revolutionary leaders capitulated (Linn 2000). The choice to keep fighting or surrender was a calculated decision based on the local situation in the region of the particular leader (Linn 2000, 275). What did help the US cause was that they captured Aguinaldo, who subsequently surrendered on 19<sup>th</sup> April with the proclamation that all guerillas needed to put down their arms. Although Aguinaldo's effective influence had been minimal since he had fled into the mountains two years earlier, the acceptance of US authority removed a stigma for other leaders to surrender.

## Comparative Analysis

|                     | Level of interaction with the local population | (De)centralisation of policy | Succes in winning an influential part of the population | Succes in cutting the ties between insurgents and supporters | The quality of intelligence | Type of government | Barbarism as a strategy |
|---------------------|--|------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
|                     |  |                              |   |  |                             |                    |                         |
| Java War 1826       | Centralised military presence                  | Decentralised                | Medium  | Low  | Medium                      | Autocracy          | Medium                  |
| Java War 1829       | Decentralised military presence                | Decentralised                | High  | High   | High                        | Autocracy          | Medium                  |
|                     |  |                              |   |  |                             |                    |                         |
| Philippine War 1899 | Centralised military presence                  | Decentralised                | Low   | Low  | Low                         | Democracy          | Low                     |
| Philippine War 1902 | Decentralised military presence                | Decentralised                | High  | High   | Medium                      | Democracy          | Medium                  |
|                     |  |                              |   |  |                             |                    |                         |
|                     | Necessary cause                                | Necessary cause              | Necessary cause   | Necessary cause  | Force multiplier            | No evidence        | No evidence             |

Table 2

I have scored the case studies on the different variable categories identified earlier. I will discuss why I scored them as I did and I will use congruence analysis to compare how theoretical frameworks relate to the sequence of events and observations in the next section.

## Influential Causes

### *High level of interaction with the Local Population*

The case studies show that counterinsurgency forces must be spread out and interact with the population. Counterinsurgency forces must understand how they can provide benefits for the occupation-friendly population and punitive measures for insurgents and their supporters. Additionally, local presence allows for accumulating experience and intelligence collection, thereby improving local decision-making. It is a manpower-heavy strategy, but according to De Kock, it is the only one that can pacify an insurgency.

In 1827, Lieutenant-General De Kock had a bitter argument with the Dutch-Indies Governor-General Du Bus about the Dutch military strategy in Java (Louw 1894). Governor-general Du Bus was vehemently against De Kock's policy as he envisioned that the war could be easily won by directly fighting the insurgents in a series of European-style "*en masse*" conventional battles (Louw 1894, 3:20). Kock defends his policy of clearing a region with the columns after which the columns built a system of fortifications to maintain the rest in the respective villages and regions. This policy was costly in terms of time, men and money but it enabled the Dutch forces to maintain control over and gain regional experience. The soldiers that stayed behind in the fortification helped friendly villagers by protecting them and giving them seeds and ploughs to work the land. At the same time, they built intelligence networks, hunted insurgents and restricted the food supply to villagers who pledged allegiance. This way, they created a situation where they could reward cooperation and punish rebellion. The fortifications immediately had a "healing effect" (Louw 1894, 3:218). De *bentengs* were so successful that De Kock constructed 300 *bentengs* during the war.

The US used the strategy of stationing troops among the population during the Philippine War. Otis believed that the troops needed to live among the population if they were to learn the identities of the insurgents and secure their weapons. That is why he rapidly expanded the garrisons from 53 on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1899 to 639 by the end of 1901 (Linn 2000, 199). Furthermore, the sustained local presence of the commanders helped them learn how the local community and its environment functioned. This understanding, in turn, aided them in figuring out which local needs they had to provide for and how they had to structure public services so that they met the local needs in the best possible way. That is partially why local

government organisation, taxes, policing and the provision of schools and health services differed per region.

### *Decentralisation of Policy*

The cases show that decentralised military and civilian policy-making authority was effective, as local commanders were better equipped than Manilla to understand and respond to the population's local needs and opportunities to disturb local guerilla activity.

At the start of both conflicts, decentralised decision-making was a given. Communication between headquarters and local commanders would often take days or weeks, making it impossible for the higher commanders to steer missions actively. Lower commanders would get instructions on what to achieve and roughly how to achieve it, but once they set out, they had a high autonomy to decide the most appropriate course in every circumstance.

In the Java War, this autonomy can be seen in that every column roughly remained in the same area. This regional focus was to ensure that the district commander and his soldiers would build knowledge and experience in a particular area to equip them to make the most appropriate decisions for that particular area (Louw 1894). Additionally, this was done to ensure that the local village knew the commanders and troops in their area and would lose their *"timidity and fear"* (Louw 1894, 3:15). Lastly, it is clear that the approach on how to subjugate a village differed per commander and village. Where in some villages, commanders focused on winning legitimacy by aiding the population with farming equipment; in others, there was a focus on burning the crops and houses of assumed insurgent collaborators. De Kock favoured a decentralised approach as his directives increasingly became more like suggestions during the war and because he defended this approach vis-à-vis Du Bus.

When the US army was protecting Manila, Otis and his general staff influenced the coordination of the city's defences. After the US army had beaten the Revolutionary army at Manilla, the influence over the movements of columns decreased as the commanders increasingly started to operate further away from the headquarters in Manilla with poor means of communication. Otis also intentionally devolved powers during the occupation phase. As mentioned earlier, he set up a system of districts where district commanders had far-reaching civilian and military powers to respond to challenges as they saw fit. The result

was that the American civil and military interventions differed per region based on what was necessary.

The set up of civil governments is an excellent example of this (Linn 2000). In some districts, it was easy to get people out to vote and to get *principales* to candidate themselves for civil offices. In others, district commanders would run elections in which they appointed the *principale* who would give them the most leverage in a region. Similar differences can be seen in how the police forces were structured. In some districts, commanders primarily rely on their troops to provide security; in others, they set up auxiliary forces made up of locals. These locals were often more effective counterinsurgents although the Americans were often also shocked by their methods.

#### *Success in Winning an Influential Part of the Population*

Both armies understood they had to win over an influential part of society, as colonising nations could never control a country alone. The Dutch and American strategies differed in which part of society they wanted to convince. However, both succeeded in convincing an influential part to support their rule by legitimising it and exercising control in the name of the colonising country over other citizens.

The Dutch forces primarily focused on buying the support of local princes. Many of the princes on Java benefitted from 200 years of trade with the VOC. They remained favourable to the Dutch side when the Dutch wanted to institute their centralised colonial government. These princes included influential figures such as the rulers of the two most powerful sultanates, Yogyakarta and Surakarta. During the war, the Dutch were also relatively successful in persuading rebellious princes; they were offered titles, land, and money within the new order if they joined the Dutch side. If the princes continued the fight, they would be stripped of their aristocracy, deported or killed. The regime reached out to civilians by giving them safety and farming equipment but primarily used repression and fear to maintain themselves.

The US forces primarily focused on gaining the population's support by 'winning the hearts and minds'. They focused on winning over the population by organising local government, education and health services and building roads, bridges and schools. This strategy worked as many of the civilians started to support US rule. However, a hard core of rebellious *principales* and collaborators kept resisting despite improving services. It should be added that

the Philippine Revolution was, first and foremost, a revolution by the *principales* who wanted to profit from the weakness of the Spanish (Linn 2000). During and before Spanish rule, the peasantry had always suffered as the *principales* had ruled over them as feudal lords. Therefore, the peasants viewed the arrival of the Americans not as a liberation but as an incrementally better rule than before. The *principales* had much to lose from American rule. During the revolution, they took over the power in society from the Spanish, but American rule threatened this power. To mitigate this loss of power, the Americans allowed only *principales* to run for local positions and, in some districts, directly appointed *principales* favouring US rule.

*Focus on forcefully cutting ties between insurgents and the supporting population.*

Next to 'winning the hearts and minds', counterinsurgents need to employ forceful punitive methods to break the ties between the insurgents and the population that supports them. Only focussing on gaining support from an influential part of the population is essential, but insufficient. The punitive measures can be effective even if the occupying nations only have suspicion about who affiliates with the insurgents. The Dutch and US campaigns only started to have a resounding effect when they could sever the local ties between the insurgents and their supporting populations. The Netherlands and the US used methods that are generally not accepted nowadays. The punitive measures were most effective as a means to an end (e.g. starving insurgents) and ineffective when used as retribution.

The importance of forcefully cutting ties is displayed in the Philippine War. Before MacArthur was appointed supreme commander, he warned local leaders that local secret governments supported the guerrillas with food, weapons, and recruits (Linn 2000) — something that Otis had never realised. After receiving an analysis in June 1900 that confirmed his suspicions, MacArthur implemented punitive measures similar to those the Dutch implemented.

I want to highlight two measures: punitive measures against insurgents and their suspected supporters and the strategic control of the food supply.

An influential change in the US case is that its punitive approach became strict and targeted suspected supporters. Before MacArthur's appointment, the US had a conciliatory approach towards known and suspected insurgents, hoping they would accept American rule. MacArthur introduced martial punishments such as confiscation, deportation and summary

execution and the lock up of insurgents until all their accomplices were caught. US troops expanded punishments and burnings to suspected supporters. The troops found it difficult to prove that specific individuals were aiding insurgents. They had suspicions however, and under MacArthur, it became possible to confiscate or destroy (burn) homes and crops that the soldiers suspected of being used to aid insurgents. These measures accomplished two things: they struck fear among supporters and destroyed resources for the insurgents. The measures worked as within six months, most of the rebellious leaders surrendered.

Both cases saw the strategic control of resources to undermine the insurgents and their supporters. The Dutch often placed their *bentengs* close to rice fields and other food sources to ensure that only citizens who favoured them could farm them. On top of this, they often controlled food storages to ensure that the food would not supply insurgents. Additionally, during operations outside of the area under control, they would destroy food supplies to hunger the insurgents and force civilians to move to areas under their control. The Americans operated similarly. The US Navy blockaded Luzon and other Islands to block the supply of food and weapons. The US only distributed food to the civilian population that supported them. The unavailability of weapons became a significant problem for the insurgents as they had lost most during the conventional battles and they could not be resupplied from other islands or countries due to the US Navy blockade. The weapon shortages led to the formation of forces equipped with bolo, a single edged knife, which were ineffective in affecting many deaths among the US soldiers.

### Alternative Explanations

#### *Good intelligence is essential*

Many authors believe acquiring good intelligence is essential if the counterinsurgent wants to win the war. The cases in this thesis are inconclusive on whether the acquisition of good intelligence is essential. They are conclusive that good intelligence is a force multiplier that allows more precise and calibrated measures. The gain in precision means that measures are more effective and efficient in targeting insurgents and their supporters instead of innocent citizens. However, to a large extent, countries can make progress in wars without the best intelligence if they are willing to take risks, spend resources and have the appetite to punish and suppress innocent citizens. In other cases, insight into the situation is crucial when the situation asks for a completely different approach.

Both instances happened in the Philippine War. During the conventional and irregular war, there were moments when the US had poor insight into the situation. In April 1899, when the US was trying to enclose Aguinaldo's forces in the North, Otis was desperate (Linn 2000). No maps that the Americans had showed what the Philippine interior looked like. Lawton, commander of a column, decided against the wishes of Otis, to push on into the jungle to capture two villages. Doing this, he barely knew what enemy or geography he was facing. Otis succeeded in capturing the villages, but while doing this, he lost half his troops, primarily due to disease and fatigue. In the end, Otis succeeded but took a massive risk by blindly attacking and spending serious resources to succeed.

An instance where intelligence was crucial was when a report outlined for MacArthur how the shadow governments supported the guerillas. For almost 1.5 years, the US forces had not properly understood how the guerillas were supported. The report was crucial as it allowed the US forces to improve their methods and sever the connection between the shadow governments and guerillas.

The Dutch profited greatly in the Java War from the intelligence they gained through the networks they set up from the *bentengs*, the native forces they employed and the princes that were favourable to them (Louw 1894). They often roughly knew where Diponegoro was travelling with his forces as other princes or native spies signalled this. This intelligence also allowed De Kock to push Diponegoro into a particular area where he could quickly destroy Diponegoro's forces.

### *Type of Government*

Theories of democratic, liberal and authoritarian counterinsurgency (Merom 2003; US Army and Marine Corps 2007; Ucko 2016) argue that the form of government affects the willingness to spend resources and employ specific 'immoral' measures. The cases show that this willingness is never solely based on the form of government. Both countries were willing to spend considerable resources and apply immoral measures to attain their goal, regardless of whether they were an autocracy (NL) or a democracy (US). Instead, the populace of democratic countries has likely become more sensitive to human costs due to the internalisation that human rights are universal and the increased perceived worth of human life. This sensitivity contrasts with many current autocracies where human rights are not self-evident and the value of lives is lower.



### *Barbarism as a strategy*

Arreguín-Toft (2005) argues that stronger actors will only win if they can apply an indirect strategy to break the will of a population to resist. My sections on "winning an influential part of the population" and "forcefully cutting ties" support this theory. However, a notion in Ucko's and Arreguín-Toft's argument is that counterinsurgents can use barbarism as a primary strategy to intimidate the occupied populace. This notion is, however, only partially supported by the cases. In general, barbarism (burning crops and torture) was used on suspected supporters of the guerillas and not on the general population. When Dutch or US forces used it, it often has the goal to hunger and deprive the guerillas of shelter or to find weapons and the guerillas themselves. Out-of-control lower-level soldiers primarily killed indiscriminately rather than it being part of a successful strategy. Therefore, forms of barbarism including burning and torture were used as a means to an end; inciting widespread fear through barbarism was never a primary strategy by itself. De Kock and MacArthur understood that indiscriminate barbarism leads to losing support among native supporters.

## Discussion

### *Limitations*

My analysis has focussed on identifying whether and how the Dutch and American forces have applied counterinsurgency strategies that the broader literature theorises as being effective. This analysis supports that specific strategies worked better than others. However, because of the congruence method I used, my analysis could only produce limited insight and evidence on how the different variables exactly interacted. To establish a proper causal explanation, future research should focus on exploring the exact nature of the interactions. This can be done using empirically focused methods such as causal process tracing. Causal process tracing will provide a deeper understanding that can subsequently be used to refine the theoretical counterinsurgency models.

Another avenue for further research is to test the external validity of my research. Conclusions based on small-n comparative research have significant internal validity but limited external validity. Other methods, such as large-n comparative or statistical research, can test the extent to which the conclusions apply to other cases.

### *Relation to the Contemporary Literature*

This paper provides insight into how colonial counterinsurgency wars were fought by imperial powers. This insight is a valuable addition to the literature, as most of the literature focuses on contemporary counterinsurgency wars in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. This focus is short-sighted as many counterinsurgency wars were fought and won before this time period. My research supports Benton's statement (2024) that small wars are understudied while they have great value for understanding historical processes. Therefore, I would recommend a closer study of earlier counterinsurgency warfare.

My research also casts doubts on the ability of most Western democracies to do what is necessary to win counterinsurgency wars.<sup>6</sup> The cases studied show that winning counterinsurgency wars is a costly long-term commitment. To understand the population and exercise control, soldiers have to go out on the streets to interact with civilians, thereby running a high risk of injury. Some Java and Philippine War units returned from deployment, with casualties nearing 50% of the force. Nowadays, these numbers would never be accepted.

Additionally, insurgents and their supporters must be punished to make it costly to rebel against the counterinsurgents' control. It seems nearly impossible to do this without hurting innocent civilians in the process. Western forces subsequently err on the side of caution, viewing the human rights of innocent civilians as more important than their ability to deprive insurgents of food and weapons. This is a morally correct choice but it is questionable whether Western countries can make it costly enough for insurgents to stop the resistance.

Lastly, the cases also shed doubt on liberal counterinsurgency operations that want to apply monistic doctrines. In these cases, the organisation of police forces, local government, services and punishment regimes differ per region and town as it needs to respond to local problems and needs. The blank application of one set of 'good governance' or human rights rules by Western forces seems to inhibit an adequate local response. Therefore, Western forces should look more at what is needed and possible on the ground and less at transforming countries in their image.

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<sup>6</sup> The current Israel-Palestina War is an exception to the trend.

## Conclusion

This paper contributes to the counterinsurgency literature by examining the most effective strategies, tactics, and conditions that led to victory in the counterinsurgency campaigns of the Dutch against the Javanese in the Java War and the US against the Filipinos in the Philippine War. The analyses show that influential causes in winning the war were that the Dutch and US forces had a high level of interaction with the local population, decentralised their military and civil policy, and successfully balanced a strategy of winning an influential part of the population over with benefits while using punishments to sever the bonds between insurgents and their supporters. More research is needed to test whether similar causes exist in other colonial counterinsurgency wars and whether they can be extended to contemporary times. My current findings, however, cast doubt on whether Western Democracies can and should engage in counterinsurgency warfare, seeing the high moral and human cost necessary to win the war.

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