An Analysis of the War Police Assemblage: the Case of Iraq (2003-2015)

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An analysis of the war-policing assemblage: the case of Iraq (2003-2015)

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Introduction:

In recent years, wars have taken on a policing function, with military might considered a way to respond to terrorism (especially after 9/11), to stop human rights violations and to contain or prevent humanitarian crises across borders. This new function of war troubles our understanding of the use of violence by the sovereign; war and policing used to be seen as two separate mechanisms of defence, one to be used inside the state and the other outside. Since the 1990s, however, military interventions are often followed by efforts to restructure the security sector to re-build the state, making evident the link between the two (Ryan, 2011).

Scholars argue that recent military manifestations of violence can be seen as a way by which some sort of sovereignty is being re-articulated at a quasi-global level (most prominently Agamben, 1998; 2005; Hardt and Negri, 2000). Failed and rogue states, which are characterised as threatening the security of the liberal world, are militarily targeted and re-configured according to the western-liberal model of governance (Dillon and Reid, 2009; Duffield, 2007). As a result, military power is perceived as a policing practice with an overarching goal of governing societies through a type of imperial sovereignty.

Although the conjunction of war and policing has not been closely examined in criminology, international relations scholar Mark Neocleous argues the military and the police are linked by their use of coercive measures to regulate, shape and produce the social world, managing the disorderly and the dispossessed by consolidating capitalism and its techniques of exploitation (Neocleous, 2006; 2014). Others read military operations as assemblages of intervention, in which war and police are variously combined to produce

either order or legitimacy (Bachmann, Bell and Holmqvist, 2014). Building on this understanding, I consider the link between war and policing within the context of political theory to excavate the ways violence and coercion were conceptualized as useful to the sovereign. By examining the conjunction of policing and military intervention, I look at policing as the exercise and use of force, while remaining aware that the concept includes a variety of other actions (Tomlins, 2006). Rather than accepting war and policing as purely means of sovereign power, as we usually conceive them, I consider the specific relations they set in motion as power delegated to various nodes (Valverde, 2006; De Landa, 2006; see also Bachmann, Bell and Holmqvist, 2015). I emphasize the need to look closely at how war and/or policing enacts power on the ground, as this is likely to have an effect on the social body. To develop my argument, I look at the war in Iraq and the policing operations to which it gave rise, as this case presents interesting challenges for an understanding of war and policing as an enactment of some sort of global sovereignty or global governance. Although policing was part of the project of reconstituting the sovereignty of Iraq, after the military invaded and decoupled the governing regime, the polity of Iraq was transfigured as the practices of violence on the ground opened up the field to new forms of significations. The case of Iraq suggests the powerful role of policing in drawing the borders and forming the order of our political communities, but it also reveals the difference the police make in the assemblage of violence.

The chapter proceeds in the following manner. I first analyse how classical sovereign theorists have systematised the use of violence in relation to its stated objective of protecting the population against a threat. I go on to show how policing can be understood as the way the sovereign function is performed on the ground and how sovereign violence is exercised as law, while going beyond the law in discretionary and rational ways. Finally, I discuss the

case of the military intervention in Iraq as emblematic of how military operations and policing are intertwined in producing (in)security.

On sovereignty and the utility of violence

In traditional political theory, war is at the heart of the social pact. According to Hobbes, sovereignty is the result of the human desire *to avoid the war of all against all*. With this in mind, people agree to subject themselves to a superior authority, the sovereign (either another person or a council), who has the power to define and declare laws. This is necessary as "men's opinions differ on what is just or unjust, profitable and unprofitable" (Hobbes, 1972: 178). In a traditional view, sovereignty ends internal war by establishing order through law, determining what is right or wrong, and subjecting its citizens to it.

To this end, the sovereign must hold both the sword of justice and the sword of war. The latter is to protect from outside threats by arming the citizens; the former is to make law effective, sanctioning through punishment and enforcing law (Hobbes, 1972: 177). Violence is not eliminated by the social body; rather, it is seen as a *useful tool* to keep the social under control: war, policing, and, by extension, punishment are ways the sovereign *manages* violence in order to eliminate violence, in accordance with its determination of right and wrong as sanctioned in law.

This understanding of sovereignty was fine-tuned by Enlightenment thinkers who determined subjugation to law was simply subjugation to the common good (Rousseau; 1994 Montesquieu, 1949), and this constrained the sovereign itself. The right to coerce others and inflict death became legitimated as the tool to subjugate people to the greater good, based on the premise that political authority would also be constrained by law. In this understanding, law guarantees punishment and violence are inflicted for just cause, following the determination of all people; law also regulates order. It is in this particular configuration that

sovereignty acquires its appeal: as representative of the aspiration of the multitude and as the regulation of power. The problem of plurality of will is solved with reference to a common sensibility, some sort of public understanding (Montesquieu, 1949: 292), what we now call national culture. Thus, law fundamentally sanctions some violence for the common good while seeing other violence as threatening.

This relationship was reconsidered after the tragedies of two world wars. Critical theorists turned their attention to the darker side of sovereignty, highlighting the paradox of sovereignty, whereby sovereignty can function as a protector but may, problematically, take life as a way of doing so. This paradox is at the heart of contemporary ambiguities about war.

Benjamin, in his critique of violence, highlights the ambiguities inherent in the functioning of violence in conjunction with the law (2004 [1939]). In his view, the uses of violence by the sovereign are seen as legitimate as they are inserted in a justice framework. They are considered a pure means to achieve the ideal of justice. Yet this idea of violence as a pure means is problematic. It is not possible to evaluate what violence is right and what is wrong without examining the whole justice framework in which it is inserted. Further, violence, even when exercised in conjunction with the law, is not only maintaining a specific order; it is also affirming a new law. In military and police violence, this conflation of violence and law is particularly apparent.

Agamben recently revised Benjamin's analysis in light of Carl Schmitt's theory of the political by which the sovereign determines who constitutes the enemy and who the friend and when to enact exceptional violence to remove a threat (1998; 2005), as a way of tying the community to its power. By so doing, the sovereign identifies some subjects as outside its protection and, thus, under threat of being killed. In this frame, law and the rule of law do not guarantee violence will be exercised for the common good; they conceal how the sovereign can unilaterally decide, on the premise of exceptional circumstances (identified as such by

the sovereign itself), when certain people can be killed with impunity. To Agamben, sovereign's exceptional violence is constitutive of the polity and the law, even if it is also somehow referred to as law.

Contemporary thinkers have followed Agamben's understanding of sovereignty and pointed out the paradox on which our political imagination rests: the establishment of violence as the way to maintain and re-define the community, even as our subjectivities are shaped as belonging to a specific body politic. This paradox is particularly evident when we consider the function of the army and/or the police. These institutions enact the violence which is the means of protection held/withheld by the sovereign/state to include/not include citizens in the body politic. Inevitably, it is a definitive instrument to negate the right to live or to draw boundaries between forms of life. Law is the tool by which we sanction the violence that demarcates our sociality from the violence that is allegedly likely to destroy it. This particular use of violence is not so much a tool to protect the population as it is a tool to maintain the architecture of power called sovereignty. In this view, sovereign is the one who determines what violence is right and useful and what violence is instead wrong.

In contemporary conflicts, however, there is not a single sovereignty involved. In Iraq, military violence exercised by foreign troops and outside sovereigns was followed by policing operations directed as well by a plurality of forces and countries, but these did not contribute to reinstate the sovereignty of Iraq. This suggests we need to consider more closely how police operate on the ground and possibly to reconsider the role of the police within the polity.

On Policing: between public order and crime control

In political theory, policing is among the sovereign's legitimate uses of force (Weber, 1965). Generally, policing is seen as having the function of crime control and keeping the peace and

public order within the state. While the first relates more directly to the use of force, the second is related to activities of persuasion and negotiations, the regulative services of social life. Both are crucial, but the use of force is preponderant (Bittner, 1970; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993). Even though the police may be required to solve matters not directly linked to crime fighting, their power to negotiate is directly related to the possibility of using coercion (Bittner, 1970; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993).

In operations not directly related to considerations of legality, the police exercise discretion and are not supervised in any way (Bittner, 1967; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993). It is left to the individual officer to determine the appropriate level of use of force or the applicability of the law, after due consideration of opportunity, legitimacy and negotiation (Bittner, 1967; Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993). In this sense, the discretionary element allows the individual police officer to determine whether the persons in front of him/her present a threat, or whether they can be reasonable, whether they can be treated as "property" or with due respect (Lee, 1981). In fact, in their daily on-the-ground dealings, police officers perform the role of the sovereign as part of their discretionary role: they sift enemy from friend; they determine which actions need the sword of justice and which merit the sword of war.

In this context, the dictum of law enters the picture, but it is countered by questions of police efficacy. In the end, both professional acumen and military prowess are required. In some instances, discretion has to be exercised swiftly, and complexity may be difficult to assess. Police officers have to demonstrate an ability to discern the seriousness of the threat in a heated context; at the same time, they must be resolute in dealing with crime. Even if there is a supervisor available, he/she will generally evaluate the management of a situation after the fact (Skolnick and Fyfe, 1993: 119). In sum, the police hold both jurisdictional and executive power. They wield power over people's lives solely on the basis of their judgment. In turn, their actions are most of the times affirmed as law.

The police are not simply a repressive and coercive institution; they also produce social order and wealth. In the Anglo-Saxon context, the concept and practice of policing was established in the 19th century when crime was rising and political protests such as the food riots in England and or control of Black communities in the US were of concern (Emsley, 2008; Rowlings, 2002; Platt, et al 1975:20-21). A new model was necessary to prevent the raising crime, control insurrection, and defend private property. It was equally crucial to distinguish between the violence exercised by the police on the dispossessed and the enslaved and the violence of the rioters and the slaves, as the former was legitimate and the latter illegitimate, aimed at destabilizing the condition of production and violating property rights. The professionalization of the police represented a crucial way to legitimate their use of force and demonstrate their difference from the military; this also ensured that the police, traditionally recruited from the working class, fought on the side of private enterprises and the state (Platt, et al, 1975).

In short, in this type of scenario, police violence is exercised as a way to produce a specific form of social order, with some defined as subordinate subjectivities owing respect to more powerful others. This violence is accepted, seen as a justified reaction to the illegal and criminal violence of riots and uprisings of the dispossessed. In this instance, police determine in a specific context what is criminal and they decide whether to use violence, which will then be expressed as the law, even when it does not remain within the dictum of the law. Rather than law being a tool to keep the police in check; policing forces are able to claim a special relation to the law, determining within the specific circumstances what constitutes a violation of it, and by so doing, they impose onto people a specific understanding of order.

In the international arena, Levi and Hagan (2006) suggest the police and the law are in tension, despite being intertwined: they function as alternative discourses of governance. On

the one hand, the law can present an obstacle to police and justice, as it confirms the untouchable nature of sovereignty. On the other hand, the police can promote the values engrained in law, without being constrained by it. Thus, the police stand for good administration or the "smooth running of society" (Levi and Hagan 2006: 210). They are a fundamentally pragmatic mechanism to obtain peace and, therefore, they should be disconnected from legal rules.

Some military actions are seen as policing operations as they are used to stop human rights violations and to make states follow liberal rule. These ventures are often linked to colonial enterprises, with the difference between the military and the police mostly quantitative (Valverde, 2006). But underscoring the continuum between war and police, *de facto*, supports government policies and adopts the language of power (Bigo, 2015; Aradau, 2015). Indeed, while, it is undisputable that policing, especially in a colonial context, has emerged from the military, to be effective, policing must be different from war (Ryan, 2011). The military has the aim of annihilating and destroying the enemy; the police have to govern uncertainties without generating conflict. The police is tasked with an ability to negotiate to tackle disorder and re-establish peace. This difference was evident in Iraq.

The Case of Iraq

Despite its blatant disregard for international law, the war in Iraq was officially launched as a policing operation by a coalition of countries, most prominently the US and the UK, who invoked UN Resolution 1441 to legitimise their campaign. They claimed the operation was necessary to pre-empt the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by the murderous dictator, Saddam Hussein. The military operation "shock and awe" was launched on 19 March 2003 and was officially declared accomplished on May 1. When troops entered Baghdad on 9 April 2003, the statue of Saddam Hussain was brought to the ground,

signalling the achieved change in sovereignty. The dictator was later brought to trial and executed to seal this change in the simulacrum of justice.

The sovereignty of the new Iraq was initially vested in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and, thus, directed mostly by the US. An Iraqi interim government was later established by the US to provide an Iraqi representative for their operations. The US maintained a crucial role in directing and providing resources for the reconstruction of the state. For example, in the process of establishing Iraq as a sovereign nation, the US, at times, prohibited the hiring of some officials, while supporting others (Dawisha, 2009: 270; El-Shibiny, 2010: 183). For the success of the operation, it was important that Iraq be turned into a democracy; this was articulated as "juridical democracy" (Esmeir, 2007). New transitional laws were issued in agreement with Human Rights principles; training for judges and lawyers was provided by the US, and a central court was established (Esmeir, 2007). Paul Bremer, the head of the CPA, determined that all regular military forces were to be dissolved, and all Baath Party members were banned from taking part in public life to bring security and peace to the Iraqis (CPO, 2003). The previous ruling elite, part of the Sunni population, was purged, as they were considered responsible for the violence the country had suffered.

As a result, Iraq was left with no working security force or governmental institutions. The only remaining one was the police, but this force was poorly trained, corrupt and violent. The looting that immediately took place demonstrated the short-sightedness of the CPA plans and showed the US was not in control.

Simply stated, the US plan failed to recognise the history and social stratification of the country and adopted a "one size fits all" approach (Ellison and Pino, 2012). Sunnis were historically the elite of the country, controlling the government, the bureaucracy, the educational system and the military; Shias and Kurds were minorities and generally less well educated (Hashim, 2007: 148). Although many Sunnis did not like Saddam and some had

suffered under his regime, they felt completely disenfranchised; Coalition forces did not consult with them or with Iraqis in general, until quite late into the occupation (Hashim, 2007, 147-162; El-Shibiny, 2010). Similarly, Shias and Kurds resented the killing and the damage the war had brought about (Hashim, 2007; Cordesman, 2008).

The US articulation of the government as necessarily representing all communities provided the foundation for the institutionalization of sectarianism: all elections ended up retaining sectarian and ethnic divisions. In addition, a composite insurgency emerged almost immediately, with Islamist fighters and Al Qaeda groups joining to fight the US on the ground. They carried out bombing attacks and targeted religious and government figures, thereby reinforcing sectarian distinctions. Iraqi security forces had been disbanded, and given police weaknesses, US troops were left to provide security in the country, a task they were not equipped to handle. Responses were harsh and carried out in military style; the killing of civilians and the wanton destruction that followed is well documented. Not surprisingly, this fuelled people's anger and strengthened resistance (Hashim, 2007; Cordesman, 2008).

Particularly problematic was Coalition engagement with the Sunni Al Anbar province, a traditionally nationalist and conservative area from which much of the previous ruling elite had come (Hashim, 2007). In Fellujah, two disastrous operations killed thousands of people and involved the use of depleted uranium and other damaging chemicals. As a result, the local Sunni population ended up supporting the Islamists, some of whom were hiding in the area, against the common enemy. At first, the attacks were directed against the US Forces and those who had agreed to take on governmental roles, but they soon moved to target the police as representative of a specific sovereign plan[1]. In turn, the US came to associate the Al-Anbar province with terrorism and engaged in particularly destructive policing tactics throughout the conflict.

In 2005, the targeting of religious leaders and shrines by Islamists had increased sectarian tensions. The state was unable to provide security, as police forces were fleeing difficult situations. Militias such as the Kurdish Peshmerga, the Shiite Badr Bridate, and the Al Mahdi were mostly providing protection, notwithstanding the CPA order which banned them. To people in Iraq, the militias were feared, or seen as heroes, or simply accepted as those providing some level of security (Aikins, 2015; Dawisha, 2009).

The war exacerbated the scarcity of resources and weakened the already insufficient infrastructure; although these were certainly the result of Saddam's policies, the UN economic sanctions did not help the situation. Electricity and water were provided only for a limited time in Bagdad and other main cities (Jamal, 2007). The Madhi Army cashed in, astutely devoting itself to social work in poor neighbourhoods of largely unemployed people. In so doing, it gathered support from the general population as well as the young combatants, quickly becoming a strong political force. Put otherwise, the Madhi Army filled the void left by malpractices in governance by the state and the imperial power; it clearly understood popular support means more than violence.

A politics of territorial partition followed; specific territories were defined as pertaining to one or the other group, and militias and insurgents dragged people out of mixed areas. This tension was more visible among Sunnis and Shias, as Kurds managed to achieve a level of autonomy in the north. In brief, sectarian violence was the product of Sunni insurgents and Shia militia leaders having their own political agendas (El Shibiny, 2010: 126), but also to the foreign forces need to generate some level of control. The violence was most persistent in mixed cities such as Baghdad. Ethnic and sectarian lines, clearly evident in election results, were now prominent features of society, with threats and killing having an impact on territorial reformulation.

Partitioning was another feature of the government. After 2005, it was mostly Shia in charge of government. They controlled the Ministry of Interior, placing policing in the hands of militia groups and death squads. These, in turn, engaged in abuses of power, such as kidnapping, torture and murder, mostly of Sunnis (Perito, 2011). To some extent, these police forces were representing the state, responding to the violence initiated against them by Islamists, but they were also advancing their own particular politics within the state, against the contingent threat or enemy, thereby drawing the outline of a different political community and determining specific power relations. What followed was defined a civil war, even though a portion of the violence was initiated not to change the politics on the ground but to attack the US.

In US reports, the situation was usually framed as a lack of police training. Thus, training was repeatedly provided by the US, its various allies, and other forces, including private corporations and international organizations. Initially under the auspices of the US Justice Department, the Iraqi police were trained in community policing (provided by DyanCorp in Jordan), but this did not equip them to face insurgency. The Defence Department later assumed leadership of the project: the police were militarised and asked to complete training in combatant situations with the army. Even with this military training, the police kept deserting crucial battles and engaging in sectarianism. Clearly, the training was a failure. Tellingly, however, Iraqis were never consulted. In addition, issues such as lack of language skills and poor instructions were repeatedly noted. For instance, an American police instructor told a class of Iraqi trainees there were two clues to indicate someone was planning a suicide attack: a large bank withdrawal and heavy drinking. The problem with that advice was that few Iraqis have bank accounts and an extremist Sunni Muslim bent on carrying out a suicide attack is likely to consider drinking a cardinal sin (Arango, 2012). Moreover, those joining the army or the police were doing so for opportunistic reasons (money rather than

anything else)[2]. By way of contrast, those in militias were either supported by their religious creed and sense of belonging or by their loyalty to their tribes and families.

A salient issue was the fundamental disconnection between the role of the police as the enforcer of order, law and state sovereignty and what the practices of those policing forces stood for. First, police forces and militias, with their clear connection to the US power and the Iraqi state, produced ambivalent effects. While playing on their alliances to regional or global power, such as the US, Iran, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, they also acted for their local groups; and this certainly complicated the politics. Additionally, training was provided by various forces and countries, sometimes following their indigenous models to provide security. The loyalties on the ground amplified the discretion of the police, making possible for them to use violence against their local or regional or global enemies/threats at different times and in specific circumstances.

The use of military and police forces in Iraq could not be about maintaining national order and the consolidation of sovereignty; it had to be about the borders of the polity to come and, crucially, those to be considered in command, even if every move could be interpreted differently. The political ground in Iraq was (and still is) constantly shifting, manifesting the complex interrelation of sovereignty and policing, politics and loyalties.

In 2006, under the Shia Al Maliki government, while violence was high, the leadership of the Iraqi Interior Ministry was given to a technocrat, al-Bolani. Yet his predecessor Jabr retained influence over the police force in his new role as the Minister of Finance. The Interior Ministry was divided: every floor belonged to a different faction, with people killed on the premises (Parker, 2007). At this point, the police were radically re-trained as Iraqi National Police (INP), and a new uniform was issued. This does not seem to have been particularly helpful: 159 academics were kidnapped by persons in uniform, the police and Shiite were firing at Sunnis homes and neighbours, and car bombs continued to

kill people in Sadr City in Baghdad. Despite being renamed and retrained, the police were still largely perceived as an enemy by the Sunni population; training could not change the social situation or alter political alliances (Perito, 2011).

Importantly, in 2007, the Coalition revised its military strategy: the "shock and awe" operation was to be turned into a counter insurgency/policing operation in which troops were asked to mingle with Iraqis and show a human face, while anthropologists and sociologists were recruited as "culturally sensitive people" to win the support of the general population (Kilcullen, 2006). Basically, it was recognised that military forces had to be aided by the police, as a way to both gain legitimacy in front of the situation and to gather a more nuanced way of exercising control.

As part of this move, the INP was placed under General Hussein-al Awali. He fired corrupt commanders, eliminated some brigades engaged in sectarian attacks, and reintroduced Sunnis, who had served under Saddam's special forces, along with some Shias (Perito, 2011). More training was provided with the aim of transforming INP into a constabulary force, renamed Iraqi Federal Police (IFP). The training was provided this time by the Italian Carabinieri on their militarised model of policing, again demonstrating the patchy character of training provided, due to the number of forces engaged in the re-building of the Iraqi sovereignty.

Violence had declined by the end of 2008, but it was not the product of the more rigorous training or the changes in leadership supported by the US. Rather, it was the result of fortuitous circumstances and changing political relations on the ground. For one thing, the Sunni Awakening in Al Anbar Province sided with the UC Coalition Forces against Al Qaeda after attacks by Islamists on some members of their tribes (Cordsman, 2008: 512). Similarly, in the South, US and Iraqi forces managed to gain some control when Al-Sadr disbanded its army.[3]

Overall, after a relatively quick military victory, the US spent as much as 1.7 trillion dollars on Iraq reconstruction, with 8 billion dollars going towards police training (Jakes, 2012). Police training was a crucial aspect of this form of security at a distance: it was, in part, about showing the symbolic change of sovereignty, but it was also tactical in the effort to rebuild the sovereignty of the Iraq state, and crucially about providing some level of legitimacy to the military operations, producing an "order effect".

Again, efforts seem to have been futile: after up to 10,000,000 deaths (Iraq Body Count, 2015), the state disintegrated. The remaining police and security forces are deserting when faced by ISIS[4]. Shia and Kurds militias are providing security against ISIS, but the Shia militias are reportedly kidnapping, abducting and killing many young men who live in Sunni areas; they are destroying entire Sunni areas even after ISIS has fled (Amnesty, 2014; Human Rights Watch 2015; ABC, 2015). Now, the US is backing the attempt to defeat ISIS but may have allied itself to forces beyond its control. Sunnis who do not join ISIS remain unprotected, and commentators believe their radicalization is inevitable (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Arguably, the US-led policing war has *de facto* stirred the population to insurgency against the sovereign power led by outside forces; the ensuing violence has not produced a democratic state, but a fighting monster – ISIS - which is now destroying the configuration of Iraq as a state, including its borders.

On the military and the police assemblage in Iraq and the difference the police makes
This work traces the connections between military power and policing to shed light on some critical aspects of the use of violence within our societies. The case of Iraq illustrates the connection of the military and the police in the a context of sanctioning a deviant state and rebuilding its sovereignty to produce security at a distance (Dubber and Valverde, 2006; Rose and Miller, 1992; Duffield, 2007; Aas, 2012). The US-led Iraqi military operation turned into

a broad campaign to rebuild the state through establishing a juridical democracy and restructuring the police and security sector. Foreign sovereign forces at a distance planned the sovereignty of Iraq, with power delegated to some local people and to some private agencies. These external actors were heavily involved in policing, not only setting up laws and training police according to human rights standards, but also establishing which troops and forces were to operate on the ground, what sort of training they were given, and who conducted the training. In this sense, Iraq can be seen as a modality of rule typical of colonialism, where military and police forces play a similar function, but with different intensities, and where the sovereignty in action remains the colonial power. Yet the relationship between these sovereignties is not so simple. For a start, multiple agents have been involved in producing sovereignty, not only the US-led coalition, but also EU, NATO, private security contractors, and, crucially, the various militias. The latter groups represent and work for various Iraqi sects; not least the strong regional powers who back both militias and private agencies. Further, insufficient coordination between the agencies and powers involved did not produce a unified effect, leaving policing and security fractured. This is commonly recognised as one of the causes of failure in Iraq (Flanagan quoted in Ellison and Pino, 2012).

In Iraq, the military and the police were assembled on a continuum of coercion, each with its own limitations. On the one hand, police forces trained in community policing failed to provide order in the midst of the insurgency; on the other hand, military forces and militarised police failed to pacify the country. Worse yet, the violence both forces produced helped escalate the conflict, with their efforts becoming something other than an operation to re-build state sovereignty. In Iraq, the military and the police were used by those seeking to govern at a distance; the police were used to prop up the military and considered a tool to re-legitimate the use of violence, to sanitize it as a measure against disorder, even if it was about submission of the population. Policing was meant to affirm the sovereignty of the state by

ensuring the security of its citizens and, thus, to contribute to the security of international order. At the same time, policing was militarised so to be to fight and annihilate the enemy, when the circumstance required it. Police and military forces are increasingly used as an assemblage and asked to perform each other's function, as the terrain in which they operate can present enemies or threats that cannot easily be assessed at a distance.

As Deflem and Sutphin (2010), following Weber (1965) point out, policing is possible only in a pacified society. But looking at the role of policing in the context of war, helps to understand the crucial function police forces play in society. The situation in Iraq reveals the impossibility of the police as both a developing institution in the context of instability and an institution aimed at developing peace and sovereignty. Policing cannot work until the state has the monopoly on the use of force, and the Iraqi government does not have that in the current context. Yet, the concept of the state as a political relatively peaceful unity is specific historical European configuration of power. In Iraq, militias become alternatives to the state in providing protection. To some extent, fear and scarcity may have contributed to people relying on militias rather than the state to provide security and other goods. But it is quite evident that state policing, did not belong to a single state or indeed sovereignty. Further, these sovereignties, have failed to provide those other goods or, indeed, to manifest forms of belonging which do represent *another form of security*.

As we have seen, militias and police forces have been players in different political games and have changed their alliances at different times, with institutions and players not only limited to the Iraq territory. In so doing, they materially claim different political communities and shape different borders by selecting the reliable citizen and/or the enemy on the ground; those considered dangerous are killed or imprisoned, while those considered citizens are treated with respect. In this case, the violent practices enacted by various nodes

have fractured the battlefield, suggesting sovereignty is the result of specific practices, and these are not always constrained by law or a definitive political plan.

Local actors have their own policing agendas, which may conflict and/or interact with the colonizer's agenda. Iraq appears to be in the midst of the "war of all against all" typical of the state of nature before the body politics is formed; its borders are no longer clearly demarcated. This case reveals the versatility of violence in the constitution of political communities and its capacity to be embedded within specific frameworks. The violence has been seen as pertaining to the fight between religious-ethnic groups, and, as such, when exercised, it has caused the emergence of forms of belonging that challenge our understanding of sovereignty and current geopolitical arrangements. More specifically, the resurgence of religion as a powerful identifier of belonging has confounded the lines of friendship and enmity upon which the Iraqi state was formerly based. In this context, new allies and new friends appear on different fronts, producing a multiplication of layers of conflict, not easily disentangled.

Both war and policing theoretically manifest the sovereign's ability to use force to defend the community and maintain the common good, but they are not necessarily tied to a unique plan. They may do the work of the sovereign and project sovereignty, selecting the dangerous threat from which citizens must be protected and setting up an internal order to control a deviant population. But in delivering violence, they open the field to new forms of signification. They inevitably express, manifest and embody the ideals, ethos, and diversity of agencies employing violence. Although their violence may be inserted into a justificatory framework (of law or religion), however, that violence, in turn, is established as law. In other words, the military and the police cannot simply be conceptualised as forces at the service of the state to create order; they must be recognised as independent forces capable of creating a

new order, complete with new forms of affiliation and belonging and new hierarchies within that belonging.

A basic assumption in the concept of war as policing is that it is possible to plan states and dominate societies through force, with the help of technological advancements and economic superiority, even from abroad. In theory, people will be "awed" by the violence and submit to the power signified by the uniform. Yet this has not happened in Iraq, or in other places for that matter. Violence has pressed people to react to the invasion and attempt to take back control of their lives. It does not matter that the state has been reorganised in a democratic fashion. Rather, the projection of a specific form of order onto the Iraqi geographical space has enraged many; they see the Coalition plan as arrogant and oblivious of their history and social structure. They find it humiliating – and so they rise up in protest.

Foot Notes

[1] The police suffered 12,000 casualties, including 4000 killed between 2004 and 2006 (Deflem and Sutphin, 2010).
[1] "It's not about religion or politics; it's about money" says Hosham who joined the army in 2006' (Aikins, 2015).
[1] The disbanding is believed to have been a political move, typical of Al-Sadr's history and tactics (Hagan, Keiser and Hanson, 2013).

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[1] The police suffered 12,000 casualties, including 4000 killed between 2004 and 2006 (Deflem and Sutphin, 2010).

[2] "It's not about religion or politics; it's about money" says Hosham who joined the army in 2006' (Aikins, 2015).

[3] The disbanding is believed to have been a political move, typical of Al-Sadr's history and tactics (Hagan, Keiser and Hanson, 2013).

[4] ISIS stands for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria