MĚSTA, VÁLČENÍ A BEZPEČNOST CIVILISTŮ
Koncepty a praxe bojových operací v urbánním prostředí

CITIES, WARFARE AND CIVILIANS' SECURITY
Concepts and Practice of Military Operations on Urban Terrain

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Abstrakt

Tato studie, se zaměřením na válečné operace v urbánním prostředí, si klade dva hlavní cíle. Prvně nabízí shrnutí existující literatury a konceptuální rámec pro analýzu bezpečnosti civilního obyvatelstva v městských bojových operacích. Válčení ve městech přináší řadu taktických, operačních a strategických výzev, a to hlavně v souvislosti s civilním obyvatelstvem. Druhým základním cílem studie je tedy analyzovat bezpečnost nebojujícího obyvatelstva z pohledu současných městských válečných doktrín.

Abstract

In discussing military operations on urbanized terrain, the objective of this article is two-fold. First, it reviews the existing literature and offers a conceptual framework for analysis of non-combatants' security in urban warfare. In the context of increasing urbanization and existing demographic trends, urban military operations entail a set of tactical, operational and strategic challenges. This is especially true regarding the issue of non-combatants. Thus, the second key objective of this article is to analyze security of civilians as addressed in current urban military doctrines.

Poděkování

Klíčová slova

MOUT; urbánní válčení; bezpečnost; města; civilisti; nebojující obyvatelstvo.

Keywords

MOUT; Urban Warfare; Security; Cities; Civilians; Non-Combatants.

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INTRODUCTION

"Warfare, like everything else, is being urbanized."

Stephen Graham 2011: 16

Cities are increasingly becoming theaters and objects of armed combat. Examining theoretical and practical context of this phenomenon, the purpose of this study is two-fold; first, to offer a conceptual framework regarding the role of non-combatants in urban military operations. In doing so, the study reviews academic literature in the field of urban warfare. The second objective is to compare doctrinal approaches of the United States', Spanish and French Armed Forces in addressing a 'civilian security issue' in such operations. Urban combat operations have received considerable academic as well as media attention throughout the last decade. One of the reasons is the scope and pace of urbanization that poses serious challenges for sustainable development, while theory and practice of contemporary security become increasingly related to cities. At the same time, current asymmetrical conflicts often take place within urbanized zones, which leads to complications on tactical, operational and strategic levels.

On the level of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), the above mentioned trends have led the Allied Command Transformation to pursue strategic foresight initiatives with an 'urbanization' label. Involving military and civilian experts from the NATO countries, new concepts and strategies are being developed. Future urban scenarios are being explored in order to assess capacities and capabilities of the NATO militaries to cope with urban challenges expected within a 25 year timeframe.

Civilian and military technological development has not only produced new weapons specialized for urban combat, but it has also provided powerful communication tools to all participants in this context. It is evident that information constitutes a decisive variable in present-day urban combat, conditioning capacities of all their actors, such as regular troops, insurgents, terrorists, all the way to civilian population that finds itself implicated. Just as was demonstrated by the Vietnam campaign forty years ago, the mass media play a tremendously important role in shaping the public opinion, which can have strategic consequences. Prolonged conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as Syrian civil war and the rise of ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) have come to reflect these phenomena, in addition to serve as evidence of human suffering inherent in urban warfare.

The article offers a theoretical and conceptual framework for analysis of non-combatants' security, based on existing literature related to the urbanization of armed conflict. Subsequently, it develops a comparative thematic analysis of the military doctrines for urban combat, centered on the civilian component in this type of operations. The principal research questions are the following:

What is the role of the civilian population, or non-combatants, in military operations that increasingly take place in cities? What are the implications of these operations regarding security of civilians?

How do current doctrines of urban combat address the civilian component inherent in military operations on urbanized terrain (MOUT) in its principal phases (understand, shape, engage, sustain, and consolidate)?

What are the similarities and differences between the analyzed doctrines with respect to the previous question?

Research design

The methodological framework adopted for the purposes of this study is interpretive in nature, offering a *thematic comparative analysis* of the mentioned doctrines. Instead of formulating certain hypotheses implying causal relations between the studied phenomena, this method favors proposing research questions and interpreting the patterns within the compared texts. Among principal components inherent in a research design are theoretical framework and conceptualization,[1] which are presented in the following sections. According to Yanow, interpretive comparative analysis is based on investigation and comparison of material and linguistic evidence involving multiple cases.[2] The textual component of the present study is based on military doctrines of urban combat operations of the United States, Spain and France. In conducting the analysis, the issue of security of non-combatants in cities is examined using a chronological phasing framework explicit in the given doctrines, distinguishing five principal phases of military operations on urban terrain. Security implications of urban operations regarding civilian and non-combatant population are critically examined. The pragmatic and technocratic approach inherent to the doctrinal sources is therefore enriched by human security-based considerations regarding urban populations, whose passive and active role is emphasized within each of the five phases. The effort to integrate the existing military-tactical orientations with practical implications of urban warfare constitutes a novelty and aims for a holistic approach towards the issue of non-combatants in cities.

It is necessary to emphasize that in interpretive studies, subjectivity of a researcher influences the formulation of research questions as well as the selection of concepts, theories and empirical material which serve as a basis for analysis.[3] The author considers an interpretive approach as the most convenient in order to address the proposed research questions within a wider context of non-combatant security in cities. As mentioned above, the novelty and the most important contribution to the existing academic works in this field stems from contrasting the doctrinal base (military principles and declared objectives) with considerations regarding security of implicated non-combatant populations. Given a limited extension of this study, some references regarding current urban conflicts are made in the first part, while the subsequent comparative analysis is limited to an interpretation of the doctrinal documents with regard to the research questions.

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[1] ROWLANDS, Bruce H. Grounded in Practice: Using Interpretive Research to Build Theory. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methodology.* Vol. 3:1, 2005, pp. 85-86

[2] YANOW, Dvora. "Interpretive Analysis and Comparative Research" in *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and methodological challenges*, ENGELI, Isabelle y Christine ROTHMAYR, eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014

[3] THORNE, Sally; Sheryl REIMER KIRKHAM; Katherine O'FLYNN-MAGEE. The Analytic Challenge of Interpretive Description. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods.* Vol. 3: 1, 2004, article 1

Review of sources and existing literature

Military operations in urbanized zones can in no way be considered a novelty; starting with the development of city-states, cities came to represent strategic objectives in countless wars and conflicts throughout history. Focusing on contemporary conflicts, this study compares the approaches towards the 'civilian issue' within the doctrines of urban combat of the United States, Spain and France. The principal documents of reference are *Combined Arms Operations in Urban Terrain* from 2011[4], *Joint Urban Operations* from 2013[5], *Orientaciones: Combate en zonas urbanizadas* from 2003[6], and *Doctrine d'emploi des forces terrestres en zone urbaine et periurbaine* from 2012[7]. Before presenting the comparative analysis, a brief review of literature in the field of urban military operations is offered, with a particular focus on works regarding security of civilian populations.

The topic of *urbanization of conflicts* has increasingly appeared in interdisciplinary research within a broad-based theoretical context whose academic field extremes are military studies on one hand and urban geography on the other. Military victories and, above all, failures, have been analyzed by military professionals like Evans, citing and comparing examples of Vietnam, Somalia or Chechnya.[8] The allied campaign in Iraq, above all its post-intervention phase, provided ample empirical material for analysis in this respect, most notably in the case of Fallujah (see for example Chang)[9]. Other authors have developed a systematic approach to analyzing and categorizing urban armed conflicts in general. In this vein, Crisis States Research Center at London School of Economics led by Professor Jo Beall distinguishes urban conflicts as sovereign, civil and civic, and emphasizes the role of civilian population within them.[10] Similarly rigorous in terms of conceptual and analytical profoundness, although adopting a critical lens, Stephen Graham, Professor of Cities and Society at the Newcastle University, has developed the concept of *new military urbanism*.[11] Criticism of employing military technologies and practices in urbanized areas has, perhaps not surprisingly, mostly come from university departments in countries which boast the most technologically advanced Armed Forces in the world. Thus, some discrepancies between declared principles of liberal regimes and actual realities of urban warfare have been discussed

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[4] Department of the Army. *Combined Arms Operations in Urban Terrain. 3.06-11.* Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2011

[5] Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Urban Operations. Joint Publication 3-06.* Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013

[6] Directory of Training and Doctrine of the Spanish Armed Forces (hereinafter MADOC). *Orientaciones: Combate en zonas urbanizadas. OR7-023.* Granada: MADOC, 2003

[7] Armée de Terre. *Doctrine d'emploi des forces terrestres en zone urbaine et periurbaine. EMP 20.422.* Paris: Ministry of Defense, 2012

[8] EVANS, Michael. City Without Joy: Urban Military Operations into the 21st Century. *Australian Defence College Occasional Series*, Occasional Paper no. 2, ADC, Canberra, 2007

[9] CHANG, Tao-Hung. The battle of Fallujah: Lessons Learned on Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) in the 21st Century. *Journal of Undergraduate Research*, Vol. 6: 1, 2007, pp. 31-8

[10] BEALL, Jo; Tom GOODFELLOW; Dennis RODGERS. Cities, Conflict and State Fragility. Working Paper no. 85, CS Working Papers Series no. 2. Crisis States Research Centre, London, 2011. Available at: http://goo.gl/IKmYUx

[11] GRAHAM, Stephen. *Cities Under Siege. The New Military Urbanism.* London: Verso Books, 2011

within the US academic field by authors such as Alice Hills.[12] Former advisor to General Petraeus David Kilcullen takes the hypothesis about future conflicts one step further, arguing that sprawling third-world metropolises located on the *coasts* of oceans and seas are to be their primary theaters,[13] while the concept of failed state reaches an alternative level – a *failed* or *feral city*, as emphasized by Richard Norton[14]. The principal argument of the cited authors and institutions is that to a large extent, future wars will have an important urban component, or they will be entirely urban in their very nature. Apart from the academia, a growing volume of urban warfare literature has been produced within defense sector with a clearly pragmatic (some would say technocratic) approach[15]. The latter also applies to government-funded research centers and think tanks, most notably RAND Corporation in the United States.[16]

This study is focused on wars of asymmetrical nature involving a regular army on one side, given the fact that the military operational doctrines analyzed are related to (and designed for) this type of operations. The objective is to synthesize and compare in a systematic manner the principal phases of urban operations, with particular attention paid to their implications regarding security of non-combatants. As argued by Peters and many others, one of the key characteristics of cities is density of population and that of civilian infrastructures.[17] It is clear that military operations normally lead to elevated collateral damage in this respect.[18] The civilian question therefore constitutes an indispensable part of study of urban conflicts, representing an important aspect in planning and conducting military operations as well as in the post-conflict reconstruction.[19]

With regards to humanitarian activities which are necessary to mitigate far-reaching impacts of wars in urban environment, this effort suffers a lack of resources and willingness by some relevant actors. One of the reasons is a 'legal vacuum' regarding humanitarian interventions on urbanized terrain, as humanitarian efforts normally take place in rural areas. As argued by humanitarian professionals like Lucchi, a lack of legislation in theory is accompanied by complications and risks in practice.[20]

Recent developments in countries like Syria, Iraq, Ukraine or Yemen have turned the attention of military strategists back to urban warfare. Still, on the doctrinal level, since the times of Sun Tzu, military-oriented studies and works traditionally share

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[12] HILLS, Alice. *Future War in Cities. Rethinking a Liberal Dilemma.* London: Frank Cass, 2004.

[13] KILCULLEN, David. *Out of the Mountains. The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2013

[14] NORTON, Richard J. Feral Cities. *Naval War College Review*, Vol. LVI: 4, 2003, pp. 97-106

[15] See MADOC, ref. 5; Armée de Terre, ref. 5; Department of the Army, ref. 4; Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4

[16] See GLENN, Russell W.; Jody JACOBS; Brian NICHIPORUK; Christopher PAUL; Barbara RAYMOND; Randall STEEB and Harry THIE J. *Preparing for the proven inevitable: an urban operations training strategy for America's Joint Force.* Santa Monica (CA): RAND Corporation, 2006

[17] PETERS, Ralph. The Human Terrain of Urban Operations. *Parameters*, spring of 2000, pp. 4-12

[18] VAUTRAVERS, Alexandre. Military Operations in Urban Areas. *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 92: 878, 2010, pp. 437-452

[19] HILLS, Alice. *Policing Post-Conflict Cities.* London: Zed Books, 2009

[20] LUCCHI, Elena. Violence in Urban Settings: A call for action to humanitarian organizations. Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection, 13.01.2014. Available at: http://goo.gl/AI6GDX

a generally unfavorable vision of operations in urbanized areas.[21]. In spite of this attitude, regular armies are bound to operate in this type of environment. This is due to strategic and symbolic value of towns and cities, and the fact that dense urban areas often constitute a 'safe haven' and a resource base for 'enemies' in the broadest sense of the term.

Tactical and doctrinal dimensions of military interventions in urbanized areas are arguably well elaborated.[22] Nonetheless, academic experts like Hills have criticized insufficient theoretical and conceptual rigor, as well as an absence of a strategic dimension in planning for urban military operations.[23] The 21st century warfare has definitely blurred traditional distinctions between internal and international security and war, as well as between theoretically clear-cut military and civilian dimensions. The above mentioned Graham argues that military operations that, in the past, used to take place in a geographically limited territory *(battlefield)*, have now extended to cover a virtually limitless space of combat *(battlespace).*[24] One of the related phenomena is the general militarization of public space, particularly in cities, in which intense human activity, information and infrastructure converge with supposed omnipresent risks and threats to national and individual security.

Interstate, internationalized conflicts and urban insurgency

As previously mentioned, armed conflicts over and inside cities by no means constitute a new phenomenon. Since the end of the Second World War, warfare of this kind took place in multiple cities in the Palestinian territories, Cyprus, Suez, Algeria, Aden or Northern Ireland, all the way to more recent operations in the Philippines, Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, Somalia and Georgia.[25] Important cities and towns simply constitute strategic military objectives,[26] as has been yet again reaffirmed by the spatial pattern of the ISIL activity in Iraq and Syria. Some experts argue that, from the perspective of the 'Western' Armed Forces, asymmetrical conflicts in urbanized zones represent the most significant military challenge of the present century.[27] Although different types of operational environment continue to be in the picture, current conflict tendencies indicate an increasing probability of conducting military operations within cities.

The US doctrine from 2013 defines urban terrain as a tremendously complex one for carrying out military operations and emphasizes factors such as location, history, economic development, climate, construction materials, natural terrain and culture of the residents. Urban environment has come to be defined as the 'urban triad': a complex artificial and natural terrain, extensive population and socio-cultural groups, and urban infrastructures[28]. From a tactical-military perspective, what is atypical is

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[21] EVANS, ref. 5, p. 3
[22] Department of the Army, ref. 4; Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4
[23] HILLS, ref. 5, p. 5
[24] GRAHAM, Stephen. When Life Itself is War: On the Urbanization of Military and Security Doctrine. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 36: 1, 2012, p. 138
[25] HILLS, ref. 5, p. 4
[26] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. I-1
[27] GRAHAM, ref. 5, p. 19.
[28] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. VII

a three-dimensional battlespace that poses challenges with regards to mobility, observation, efficiency of arms used and logistics in general.

The most powerful countries in terms of military capacities boast a number of highly sophisticated military training centers specially designed for urban combat. One of the most important places of this kind in the United States is Fort Knox in Kentucky. With an extension of thirty acres it serves for simulations of fifteen hundred troops and hundreds of actors who represent armed rebels and civilian population. Fort Knox was constructed in a way to resemble a real Middle Eastern town with typical infrastructure, including mosques, cemeteries, petrol stations, garbage dumps, sewers, train tracks, bridges and other installations.[29] Other similar centers in the US include Joint Readiness Training Center Fort Polk in Louisiana or Fort Irwin in California.[30] In any case, Israeli military is perhaps the most trained and equipped in this respect, given the nature and form of its daily engagement.

The wars of Iraq and Afghanistan, in addition to other recent conflicts above all in the Middle East, have shown the importance of cities for insurgency. The classic concept of urban guerilla developed by Marighella in the 1960s[31] has been adapted to the present-day circumstances. The military-technological dominance of some powerful countries has forced insurgents to look for alternatives and, as a consequence, traditional urban combat continues to take place in dense urbanized areas, combining old tactics and instruments with new ones.[32] At the same time, the very nature of urban environment entails a broad range of complications for those who engage in combat, as well as for civilian populations caught in the conflict. Critics point out that the human suffering and property loss are in contrast to liberal imperatives the Western governments are supposed to represent.[33]

Conceptual framework

Instead of answering the question of why urbanization of conflict occurs, this study is concerned with implications of this tendency from a viewpoint of non-combatants. For this purpose, I introduce a number of concepts used within the literature, summarized in the previous section. Keeping in mind the objective to offer a systematic comparison of how the civilian component is addressed within the analyzed doctrinal documents, the following concepts are referred to:

The notion of *human security*, developed particularly in the 1990s as a conceptual basis of the UN development policy agenda, incorporated a human element into the security debate which had previously been dominated by a state-centric approach.[34] In addition to broadening a concept of security to include its economic, social and environmental dimensions, its deepening led to incorporating new actors and referent objects

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[29] GRAHAM, ref. 5, p. 189
[30] Ibid. p. 190
[31] MARIGHELLA, Carlos. *Mini-manual of the Urban Guerrilla*. 1969. Available at: http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/marighella.htm
[32] HILLS, Alice. "The Grammar of Urban Military Operations." In: *Cities, War and Terrorism: Towards and Urban Geopolitics*. Ed. Stephen Graham. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, p. 237
[33] Ibid. pp. 236-8
[34] AXWORTHY, Loyd. Human Security and Global Governance: Putting People First. *Global Governance*, Vol. 7: 1., 2001, p. 19

of security, for example institutions and social groups, all the way to individuals.[35] Simply put, human security is understood as an absence of threats to life and well-being of individuals.

For the purposes of this study, this concept is geographically limited to the context of urban conflicts. Human security in urban environment has been widely studied within research initiatives financed above all by the Canadian and British governments[36] and global development programs such as those of the UN.[37] Security of civilian populations in cities is conditioned by multiple phenomena ranging from natural disasters and terrorism to armed conflicts of different types.[38]

Non-combatants' security is the central focus, in particular the impacts of the above mentioned urban warfare with respect to civilian population. The term *non-combatants* refers to civilian population residing in a city and not actively participating in armed hostilities. In conducting military operations, it proves difficult to distinguish insurgents from non-combatants, which often contributes to substantial collateral damage. Although the presence of civilians is something inherent in cities, it is usually approached as a strategic, operational and tactical complication in studies within the military field.[39]

Military operations on urban terrain or MOUT, a commonly used abbreviation in military literature, are *'operations that are planned and conducted in or against topographical complex and natural terrain which are characterized by artificial constructions and population density'*.[40] In other words, it refers to military operations in cities which entail a variety of challenges when compared to an open terrain kind of combat. In the following thematic comparative analysis, principal phases of MOUT are addressed in detail in order to answer the research questions proposed.

THEMATIC COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The urban doctrines analyzed in this section correspond to three "Western" militaries. While the documents' composition differs in each case, the logic of described operations reflects a similar approach. Each of the documents contains – implicitly or explicitly – five principal phases of MOUT: *understand*, *shape*, *engage*, *sustain* and *consolidate*. Keeping in mind the current conflicts mentioned above, the analysis is

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[35] PEOPLES, Columba; Nick Vaughan-WILLIAMS. *Critical Security Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 5
[36] See for example MUGGAH, Robert. *Researching the Urban Dilemma. Urbanization, Poverty and Violence*. International Development Research Center, Canada, 2012
[37] UN-HABITAT. *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security. Global Report on Human Settlements 2007*. London: Earthscan, 2007
[38] COAFFEE, Jon; David MURAKAMI WOOD; Peter RODGERS. *The Everyday Resilience of the City. How Cities Respond to Terrorism and Disaster*. London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009, p. 67
[39] WONG, Yuna Huh. *Ignoring the Innocent: Non-combatants in Urban Operations and in Military Models and Simulations*. Santa Monica (CA): RAND Corporation, 2006
[40] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. I-1

mainly concerned with offensive operations from a viewpoint of regular military forces in combat against an irregular or asymmetrical adversary in a city.[41]

The dual role of non-combatants becomes evident in each of the phases. On one hand, a mere passive presence of civilians constitutes an operational obstacle, as mentioned above. On the other hand, urban population is capable of actively influencing preparation, conduct of operations as well as post-conflict reconstruction. As becomes evident in the analysis, security of non-combatant civilian population is one of the most decisive aspects for the combat units to keep in mind, for both its tactical and strategic consequences. An imperative of reducing human suffering should be central to conducting military operations in dense urban terrain, and indeed is inherent to each of the doctrines analyzed.

The discrepancies between the Western moral imperatives and the reality of urban combat have already been mentioned. The "Orientations" reflect their doctrinal nature -characteristics, objectives and problems are defined in a pragmatic manner and generally avoid any normative stance. In other words, tactical and operational procedures of MOUT are described without paying particular attention to human security. A critical evaluation throughout the study is therefore subjective, in line with the principles of interpretive comparative analysis described above.

The Doctrine of the US Army from 2011 clearly identifies five phases of MOUT and distinguishes between offensive and defensive operations. The Joint Urban Operations doctrine from 2013 represents the most recent document of this kind in the US and elaborates on civilian aspects of urban combat in great detail. The document by the Command of Training and Doctrine (MADOC) of the Spanish Armed Forces from 2003 has a different composition, although its considerations regarding civilian populations are very similar. It does not name the five phases of urban operations; however, it refers to specific aspects inherent in each of them. The doctrine of the French Army from 2012 divides urban operations in five consecutive phases as follows.

Phase 1: Understand

The first phase of MOUT can be defined as a process of observation, estimation and visualization of a city and its components using the available techniques and information.[42] Understanding a city requires the most detailed information available, with regards to both material and social aspects, that is, from physical infrastructure to intangible social interactions, dynamics and power structures. In offensive operations, the MADOC states that an 'external offender suffers a lack of knowledge about urban configuration and the enemy forces' within the city.[43]

Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment is considered decisive in this regard, as noted by the US doctrine.[44] This includes a definition of the operational environment and its impacts, evaluation of the adversary and their capacities.[45]

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[41] It refers to operations that aim to take control of a particular city that serves as a refuge to insurgents; the two-phase campaign of Fallujah can serve as an example.
[42] Department of the Army, ref. 4, p. XIX
[43] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 3-6
[44] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. II-4
[45] Ibid. p. III-12

The French consider understanding perceptions and relations among residing social groups as critical, as those will act and respond to the military intervention.[46] According to the US doctrine, civilian population constitutes a significant source of human intelligence (HUMINT) which in many instances matters more than information collected by technical means.[47] At the same time, physical and psychological vulnerability of the 'sources' is a major concern in the French doctrine.[48] The Spanish document mentions the cooperation and 'good relations' with civic leaders inside the city in order to obtain intelligence.[49] While this approach can be highly beneficial for the intervening force, it can only materialize in case that the mentioned leaders do not oppose the operation (or are not completely hostile to begin with). Most of the time, however, intelligence regarding the human terrain is collected by other means, such as (but not limited to) open source intelligence (OSINT),[50] which allows creating 'maps' of human dynamics in given citie.[51]

Phase 2: Shape

Having understood the operational environment, the second objective is to create a set of favorable conditions in support of the operation's success. *Shaping* is based on the 'activities of reconnaissance, security, information and influence' which, according to the US Army, can take several months to complete.[52] The doctrines consider the human terrain as the key, noting that civilians that are seemingly hostile to the intervening force can be influenced or incentivized to cooperate.[53]

At the core of this phase are psychological operations, with the aim to minimize civilian exposure to collateral damage, although the *psyops* are conducted throughout the entire operation.[54] The French doctrine refers to a 'communication campaign to inform the population' with a double objective: evacuation of residents or their favorable actuation.[55] The second objective is of particular importance for intervening militaries, while the tools used to this end often include strategic communication using the media in some shape or form, 'tailored' for local contexts to achieve maximum effect on populations. An ideal scenario from the viewpoint of the Spanish Army would be a total absence of civilian population in the area of combat.[56] However, the French note that due to the very nature of cities (especially big ones), a complete and timely evacuation is extremely difficult.[57]

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[46] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 53
[47] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. III-16
[48] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 187
[49] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 1-9
[50] Ibid. p. 8-1
[51] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. II-5
[52] Department of the Army, ref. 4, p. XIX
[53] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. II-6
[54] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 8-2
[55] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 55
[56] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 10-2
[57] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 25

The ability to 'convince municipal governments and population groups to cooperate' with the intervening forces is considered essential.[58] Influencing political officials as well as powerful groups, often based on clan leaders and family loyalties in their particular contexts, is generally seen as a 'tool' to influence local populations.[59]

One of the principal objectives is to isolate the enemy – in physical and moral terms – from the operational terrain. Disruption of the 'disinformation campaign' of the adversary is inherent in *psyops*, as emphasized in the US doctrine.[60] It becomes clear that the same logic applies from the enemy's point of view; the ability to influence perceptions, win over 'hearts and minds' and discredit the enemy are the objectives of both conflict parties.

When it comes down to communication technologies and intelligence, technological superiority of well-equipped armies can seem as an insuperable advantage.[61] However, as noted in the Spanish Orientations, there are limits in this respect, as a defender inside a city enjoys a favorable position in comparison to the attacker.[62] Familiar with the local terrain and population, the enemy takes considerable advantage of their linguistic and cultural knowledge, and even with 'low-key' tools they can be very effective in their communications and operations. As a result, certain forms of communication can only be intercepted with great difficulty, in spite of the technological sophistication of the "Western" forces in place.[63]

Phase 3: Engage

The key phase and, from the non-combatant perspective, the most problematic one is the *engagement*, or carrying out an offensive military operation in a city. MADOC notes that the attitude of civilian populations present in the zone of combat is one of the determinant factors for the operation's success.[64] The French doctrine reaffirms that technical, tactical and psychological limitations in urban combat are in a large part related to considerations regarding the non-combatants' safety.[65] Any adversary is capable of taking advantage of the local population's frustration to provoke hostility and unrest.[66]

Security of civilian populations is at the core of rules of engagement (ROE), which are described by all three doctrines as focused on minimizing life loss and property damage. A capacity of discrimination and principles of proportionality and precaution are emphasized[67]. Non-lethal weapons are listed in the Spanish document as one of the ways to reduce civilian casualties,[68] despite the fact that indiscriminate use of these weapons can have substantially damaging consequences when employed in densely

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[58] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. I-12
[59] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 133
[60] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. III-18
[61] Ibid. p. III-19
[62] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 2-7
[63] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 41
[64] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 3-10
[65] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 27
[66] Ibid. p. 41
[67] Ibid. p. 47
[68] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 2-9

populated areas. In practice, urban warfare is complex, dangerous and often chaotic due to the nature of cities defined by material and non-material obstacles and inevitably leads to collateral damage, according to the US doctrine.[69] As noted before, urban combat is by no means a preferred way of fighting; the choice of engaging or not in cities is usually not for militaries and their commanders to make. Insurgent groups and terrorists – termed as 'embedded adversary' by the doctrines[70] – use cities as refuge and seldom use any ROE with respect to civilian lives. In any case, it is clear that moral imperatives (liberty, security, human rights) are severely compromised in urban combat regardless the kind of armed actor implicated.

The Spanish doctrine is the most explicit one in identifying non-combatants as operational obstacles that can possibly 'impede the operation', which means that certain 'control over the population is necessary'.[71] It also notes the connection between a grade of collateral damage and public opinion.[72] In this regard, presence of the media and general connectivity of urban populations is considered as a powerful factor[73], on both domestic and international levels.[74]

Phase 4: Sustain

Protection and maintaining of initial gains, reorganization and repositioning of units, complete isolation and elimination of the adversary and immediate aid to local population constitute the basis of a *sustainment*[75] phase.

In addition to protection of essential routes and installations, the French document emphasizes protection of refugees, prisoners of war and non-combatants.[76] In this regard, military units tend to provide immediate humanitarian aid to alleviate human suffering and deprivation, distributing food, water and basic appliances.[77] The US doctrine notes that the logistical support of urban populations requires allocation of sufficient resources to this end.[78] From the viewpoint of the Armed Forces, this is a temporary role of the military until agencies whose primary mission is provision of humanitarian aid are able to begin (or resume) their operations.[79] The variety of actors participating in humanitarian efforts to alleviate civilians' suffering requires a great deal of coordination, which is sometimes lacking due to absence of a reliable civilian authority, or simply because of the grade of damage to both public institutions and infrastructures that sustain them.

Top-down control measures of urban population and resources include 'roadblocks, curfews, convoys, restricted and prohibited zones', as specified in the Spanish

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[69] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. II-8
[70] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 31; Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. I-10
[71] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 10-1
[72] Ibid. p. 1-9
[73] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. I-7
[74] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 133
[75] Department of the Army, ref. 4, p. XX
[76] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 209
[77] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 2-1
[78] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. III-21
[79] Ibid. p. III-25

document.[80] It also mentions the need to occupy key terrain, strategically important buildings and installations.[81] The US, for its part, includes maintaining control of a city and denying access and resources to the enemy among the objectives in this phase.[82] The French document exposes principal elements of the sustainment phase in a similar way. Improvement, dissemination and strengthening of the military logistics and control of essential routes are considered as the key.[83]

These efforts are indeed complex and costly to carry out in a context of what is often just a temporary ceasefire. Yet, they are indispensable in order to create conditions to commence the fifth and final phase of MOUT, whose ultimate objective is a successful termination of an operation.

Phase 5: Consolidate

Provided that the tenets of the previous phase are upheld in a medium term, the phase of consolidation can be commenced with an ultimate objective to create a stable and secure environment. Guarantees of order, judicial presence and a local government fully capable of managing civil reconstruction are the basic prerequisites to declare a 'mission accomplished'.[84] In post-conflict cities, citizen security and public order are considered to be a responsibility of Armed Forces, especially if local authorities are incapable of fulfilling their functions.[85] However appealing in theory, this principle is often very difficult to implement in practice, which is due to a lack of resources, coordination, political will or a combination thereof.

Post-conflict initiatives in cities are further complicated by a variety of public, private, local, national and international actors and interests, as noted by the US Army.[86] This point represents a rare occurrence of consonance between the US military doctrine and critical academic literature. The capital of Afghanistan, for example, has come to represent a symbol of the national reconstruction, while urban development and interests of local actors are deemed secondary.[87] Thus, the city of Kabul could serve as an example of negative impacts on local interests in a context dominated by national and international security dynamics. In addition to the Afghan capital, maintaining order and security turned out to be immensely problematic in Baghdad, Mogadishu, Monrovia or Sarajevo.[88]

When it comes down to securing a post-conflict city, quality of local governance and security can substantially vary inside a particular city in a given moment.[89] All of the doctrines emphasize a central role of local authorities in handling security in

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[80] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 2-3
[81] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 3-16
[82] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. III-26
[83] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 59
[84] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. III-14
[85] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 10-2
[86] Department of the Army, ref. 4, p. XX
[87] BEALL et al., ref. 5, p. 8
[88] HILLS, ref. 6, p. 1
[89] Joint Chiefs of Staff, ref. 4, p. III-13

determined geographical sectors, noting that the necessary time for a successful transition depends on the grade of collateral damage produced.[90]

In all of the analyzed documents, the phase of *consolidation* receives the least attention when compared to the other phases. This is probably due to the nature and purpose of the doctrines which logically emphasize different aspects of MOUT. The documents mention an indispensable role of civilian humanitarian organizations, which can require assistance from the Armed Forces in order to distribute aid or help secure a given territory. The latter is, according to the French, the most important function that corresponds to military forces in place.[91]

Political and judicial sovereignty is to be reassumed in this phase. The legal aspect is dealt with in detail in the Spanish and French doctrines. MADOC emphasizes the need to respect rights and dignity of local populations and protect them from any kind of abuse, with special considerations towards women and children.[92] A section dedicated to the legal aspect in the French document also refers to the existing challenges with regards to protection of non-combatants after military operations are concluded.[93]

Comparison and the research questions

This part contains a summary of the three research questions posed in the introductory section of this study. The first question concerned the role of civilian populations in military operations on urban terrain. It is clear that perceptions, attitudes and actions of civilian populations in areas of combat can condition all aspects of military operations, from tactical to strategic. Understanding a *human terrain* of a city in its complexity is therefore crucial, as further discussed below.

The arguments exposed in the existent literature, as well as characteristics of urban combat in each of the five operational phases imply a dual role of non-combatants. On one hand, civilians can and do *actively* participate, and their actions and behavior can substantially affect an operation – the fact that is recognized by each one of the analyzed doctrines. On the other hand, a *passive* presence of non-combatants – as cities are difficult or impossible to fully evacuate – leads to restrictions and limitations above all in the phase of engagement. Despite efforts to attain maximum discrimination and proportionality, collateral damage in dense urban terrain is irreducible to zero, and non-combatants tend to be negatively affected by destruction of infrastructures, homes and livelihoods. Civilian population also tends to suffer injuries and loss of life, regardless of the form of intervention, from air bombardment to special land operations in cities.

The second and the third research questions referred to ways in which the analyzed documents address 'non-combatant' and 'civilian security' issues in the five phases of military operations in cities. The analysis conducted allows a formulation of principal *differences* between the doctrines and, subsequently, a summary of their *similarities*.

The doctrine of the US Army is particularly focused on tactical aspects of urban operations and elaborates on their organization and procedures in great detail. The

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[90] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, p. 61
[91] Ibid. pp. 113-15
[92] MADOC, ref. 5, p. 2-3
[93] Armée de Terre, ref. 5, pp. 45-7

civilian question is only addressed in a marginal form; presence of non-combatants is reduced to an operational complication and a possible source of information. For its part, the document concerning joint urban operations analyzes the civilian issue in a profound manner. The role of civilians in each of the operational phases is clearly defined and security implications are pragmatically exposed. The mentioned differences are due to the nature and purpose of the respective documents.

The Orientations of the Spanish Armed Forces have a substantially distinct composition when compared to the rest of the documents. The document does not explicitly divide urban operations into five consecutive phases, although it does address aspects and procedures inherent in each of them. Unlike the US military documents, the Orientations contain a section dedicated exclusively to legal considerations, emphasizing security of the non-combatants in urban military operations. In addition, the doctrine dedicates a sub-section to non-lethal weapons, the principal objective of which is to reduce collateral damage. The civilian question is approached using the above mentioned tactical and operational framework; the human aspect appears implicitly or explicitly in a majority of the document's sections.

The doctrine of the French Army divides urban operations into understanding, shaping, engaging, sustaining and consolidating. Among its distinctive elements are sections concerning a continuous human presence, actions of civilian support and an indispensable role of sustainment units, non-material dimensions of combat and a special emphasis on the issue of collateral damage. Similarly to the Spanish doctrine, the French document dedicates a separate section to legal considerations in urban combat. Furthermore, it offers a list of sources and studies of reference – certainly not a usual supplement to this kind of documents.

In addition to specificities of each of these doctrines, it is possible to identify a set of similarities with regards to civilian security aspects. Among the ones that stand out in particular is a *human dimension of urban environment* which leads to operational and tactical complications, as detailed in each one of the analyzed documents. The 'human terrain' is complex in nature and thus not susceptible to direct military control, regardless of technological supremacy. Human dimensions of cities are composed of different people, groups and their constant mutual interactions that, from the viewpoint of an intervening force, substantially shape the operational environment and can ultimately determine strategic success or failure. Different cities' human networks reflect different cultures, beliefs, value systems, identities and attitudes which would be puzzling enough in their static form; still, the mentioned social dynamics tend to change overtime, as interests and loyalties shift or completely revert. The ability to navigate the human terrain poses a considerable challenge for armed forces operating in dense urban environments.

The second major point is *non-combatants' security*, which becomes a major concern in urban operations. Due to constant presence of civilian residents in cities, military forces are required to respect rules of engagement in order to minimize the risks involved. Effectiveness of close combat is often at odds with security of people who happen to be in immediate proximity, which is a problem magnified by urban density. Also, there is a great difficulty in distinguishing combatants that consciously aim to blend in with civilian population. For their part, an asymmetrical adversary operating within a city is capable of exploiting their strategic advantage using cultural and linguistic knowledge

and tools of different types, while their considerations regarding non-combatants' security are minimal or non-existent.[94]

Related to the previous point, the third of the general tenets of the doctrines relates to destruction and loss of life, which are inherent to most kinds of warfare, referred to in military terms as *collateral damage*. Combat in densely populated and globally connected cities is no exception. Civilian casualties and widespread damage of urban infrastructures, including private homes, tend to make headlines in the media very quickly. This is often followed by a public outcry from civil society groups and different reactions from political leaders. While highlighting high-precision weapons and proportionality, all the doctrines state that collateral damage is to some extent *inevitable* due to the complex nature of urban environment. While this argument stems from a pragmatic and tactical-oriented nature of the studied documents, it hardly can be accepted from a broader viewpoint of human rights and security.

Summarizing the answer to the second and third question, comparative analysis of the doctrines makes it evident that the civilian population factor plays a key role throughout all operational phases. It is inestimable for obtaining quality intelligence about a given city and its social reality. It is the object of psychological operations aiming to prepare, inform and influence civilian population, its behavior and perceptions. It is the motive of operational limitations from the viewpoint of military forces in the phase of engagement. Equally, it plays an essential role in stabilization efforts immediately after cessation of hostilities as it is the principal recipient of humanitarian aid. Finally, civilian population is an irreplaceable actor in a post-conflict urban transition, success of which has long-term implications as for public safety and security.

CONCLUSION

Recent developments in the ISIL-controlled region in Iraq and Syria, as well as other conflict zones around the world, indicate a growing relevance of cities in analysis and practice of warfare. While in most cases the choice of combat in cities is not for regular militaries and their commanders to make, it is clear that 'warfare is becoming increasingly urbanized'.[95] This is due to the nature and form of combating asymmetrical adversary on one hand and persistent urbanization and demographic trends on the other. Challenges of military engagement in cities have lead many nations and armies to pursue specialized technologies, training centers, operational doctrines as well as strategic initiatives tailored for this type of environment.

Respecting the rules of engagement which is required from professional soldiers does – at least in theory – guarantee a minimal grade of legitimacy in case of offensive urban interventions. At the same time, characteristics of urban terrain and a constant presence of civilian populations complicate preparation, conducting of operations as well as post-conflict reconstruction. The previously cited critics insist that conducting of urban warfare is in conflict with moral imperatives of 'liberal' and 'Western' societies, referring to (in)security of non-combatants.

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[94] Treatment of civilians in the cities captured by ISIL can serve as a case in point.
[95] GRAHAM, ref. 5, p. 16

In any case, in order to effectively engage an armed adversary, it is necessary to employ lethal weapons which, albeit of high precision, inevitably lead to elevated collateral damage due to a density of urban infrastructure and population. The focus on non-combatants' security adopted for the purposes of this work is to a great extent based on a critical approach towards the practice of urban warfare. Still, instead of questioning a necessity of combating within cities, the objective was to evaluate critically the implications of the described tendencies from a viewpoint of civilian security. Contrasting of the military doctrines makes evident a grade of consonance between the United States, Spain and France when addressing the issue of non-combatants in urban operations. The civilian security factor is taken into account in each one of the operational phases, while the doctrines obviate a prevalence of tactical and pragmatic approach to urban populations in combat situations.