‘A Brighter and Nicer New Life’: Security as Pacification

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Abstract
The article argues that the process of securing the insecurity of capitalist accumulation might best be understood as a process of pacification. Pacification is closely connected to the Vietnam War, but the article suggests that pacification has a much longer history, linking the original accumulation in the colonies with the movement towards capitalism in the West. Read in this way, pacification is a form of police power, securing the insecurity of capitalist order. This helps us make sense of the permanent ‘wars on . . .’ being declared by capitalist states, from the war on drugs to the war on terror, and suggests that ‘pacification’ is a crucial concept for understanding security.

Keywords
pacification, police power, securing accumulation, security, security as pacification

Early in The Manifesto of the Communist Party Marx and Engels make the following claim:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are

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swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air. ([1848]1984: 487)

Understood in terms of what has become the most important political trope of contemporary politics, the suggestion seems to be that at some fundamental level the order of capital is an order of social insecurity. Yet Marx also notes that this permanent insecurity gives rise to a politics of security, turning security into the fundamental concept of bourgeois society (Marx, [1844]1975: 163). It is through this politics of security that the constant revolutionizing of production and uninterrupted disturbance of capitalist order are fabricated, structured and administered (Neocleous, 2000, 2008).

This need to ‘secure insecurity’ is fundamental to every aspect of capitalism, from the everyday life of the citizen-subjects of capitalist polities through to the global reach of capitalist corporations. On the one hand, it reaches into the minutia of our personal, social, economic and cultural acts, and the security practices through which ‘everyday insecurities’ are policed: neighbourhood watch schemes, gated communities, CCTV; security guards, doormen, bouncers; stop and search, passport control, identity cards; the securitization of workplaces, public spaces and private spheres. On the other hand, it also points to the security practices through which international insecurity is managed: power balances and international treaties, diplomacy and world order, the clash of civilizations and the nomos of the earth.

This has posed a serious problem for those working on questions of security. The existence of such vastly different ‘worlds’ of security – and worlds of insecurity – has been the basis of various and enormous disciplinary splits surrounding the concept over the years, splits which have made it rather difficult to connect the work of criminologists with those in strategic studies, or the sociology of policing with international studies. Such splits have come to the fore with the ‘war on terror’, which if nothing else has been a salutary reminder of the extent to which the international and the domestic are always already entwined. Yet despite this entwinement, and despite the concepts shared across the disciplinary fields, such as deterrence, risk, intelligence, information, surveillance, resilience (Aradau and Munster, 2009), the connections between security as understood by criminologists, sociologists, international relations, strategic studies and political theory are still rather loose and undeveloped. As loose and undeveloped, it might be said, as the connections between ‘everyday life’ and its insecurities as a core category of socio-cultural theory and ‘strategic power’ for governing global insecurity as a core category of international studies. This is perhaps only to be expected given the dreary world of ‘models’ within the intellectual universe, a world which often generates equally dreary attempts to bring the ‘models’ together and then leaves little more than confused smiles when it turns out that they probably can’t be brought together and that the reason for this might lie in the ‘models’ themselves. Hence, for example, the range of work which starts with crime-fighting and war-fighting as distinct processes – that is, the ‘criminological model’ and the ‘military model’– and then struggles to work out how they might be connected (e.g. Andreas and Price, 2001; Chesney and Goldsmith, 2008; Simon, 2001, 2007: 280). Or, as a further example, witness the recent attempts to bring together the criminological and sociological issues concerning ‘pre-crime’ and the IR/strategic issues concerning ‘pre-emption’ (McCulloch and Pickering, 2009;
Zedner, 2007): interesting as these are, in many ways they only serve to highlight the distance that remains between the very different ways in which security has been dealt with in the academy. I want to therefore try to think about the process of ‘securing insecurity’ without succumbing to either of these ‘sides’ of the security divide. I want to do so through the idea of pacification.

Little is said about ‘pacification’ in the huge volume of scholarship on security. Indeed, little is said about pacification at all these days. This is perhaps because of the association of ‘pacification’ with the America–Vietnam war. Following its adoption by the US state in 1964–65 as a substitute term for ‘counterinsurgency’, ‘pacification’ became key to US strategy in Vietnam, and thereby gave the term very strong imperial-military connotations and made it appear best suited to the world of IR and strategic studies. Yet even military terminology has now shifted away from ‘pacification’ towards more ‘gentle’ terms such as ‘low-intensity conflict’, ‘operations other than war’, and the ‘gray area phenomenon’ – the recently revised *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (US Army and Marine Corps, 2007), for example, makes passing reference to pacification then subsumes this under the broader targets which counterinsurgency is meant to achieve: police and security.

So why try to think of ‘securing insecurity’ through a category which once scored so highly on the military register but which even the military register has now replaced? General William C. Westmoreland (1976: 68), reflecting on his experience of the pacification efforts during Vietnam, once noted that: ‘fundamental to pacification is security’. This is a far from an unusual comment for the period. Robert McNamara, US Secretary of Defense during the same war, described the war as a ‘pacification security job’ ([1966]1971: 596), and Robert W. Komer, Special Assistant for Pacification from 1966 to 1968, suggested that ‘security is the key to pacification’ (nd/1971: 570). It has been easy for scholars to pass over such comments as specific to the conflict in Vietnam or as just one more assertion of the abstract idea that war is conducted in the name of security. In fact, I think there is more at stake. Because if, as has been argued elsewhere, we need to understand security not as some kind of universal or transcendent value but rather as a mode of governing or a political technology of liberal order-building, then perhaps the category of pacification can help us make more sense of this process. To see security as a constitutive power or a technique deployed and mobilized in the exercise of power is to read it as a *police* mechanism (Foucault, 2003, 2007): a mechanism for the fabrication of a social order organized around a constant revolutionizing of the instruments and relations of production and thus containing the everlasting uncertainty and agitation of all social relations that Marx and Engels define as key to capitalism (Neocleous, 2000, 2008); a mechanism, I suggest, in which the key task is pacification.

But we can flesh this argument out further. One of Marx and Engels’s points in the passage with which this article began, but developed by Marx at far greater length throughout his work, is that capitalism is not a spontaneous order. The point of departure for understanding the history of capital is what Marx calls original accumulation. Original accumulation is the process that constitutes capitalist social relations as the separation of the bulk of the population from the means of production (Marx, [1857–58]1973: 489). This process is of obvious crucial historical importance, since without separating workers from the means of production capital could not have come into being; without such separation there could be no capitalist accumulation. Central to this process is
the exercise of violence: ‘in actual history, it is a notorious fact that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, force, play the greatest part’ (Marx, [1867]1976: 247, 873–874). From the birth of world trade in the sixteenth century this violence moved back and forth between the colonies and the domestic scene. The native hunters and gatherers which the colonial powers either exterminated, enslaved or turned into workers had their counterparts in the hunters and gatherers of England and other major powers who were in turn branded and whipped into a docile labour force at home. These moments of original accumulation depend in part on brute force and in part on a range of powers of discipline and regulation, but they all ‘employ the power of the state, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hasten . . . the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode’ (Marx, [1867]1976: 915–916; [1853]1979: 221). This creation of capitalism is the violence ‘securing insecurity’; it is the process of pacification.

I therefore want to tease out of the language of pacification an argument concerning the power of the state in securing the insecurity of capitalist accumulation. In so doing I want to make a wider theoretical suggestion: that for tactical purposes critical theory really needs to re-appropriate the term ‘pacification’ to help grasp the nature of security politics.

**Pacification: Model**

In 1970, a report was published by the RAND organization called *Organization and Management of the ‘New Model’ Pacification Program*. Written by Komer and detailing the developments in Vietnam from 1966 (when the ‘new model’ programme replaced the ‘old model’ of counterinsurgency), the report highlights the relationship between pacification and security, but notes that this concerns much more than territorial security. Rather, the relationship incorporates ‘a series of interlocking programs’ concerning land reform, economic development, roads and communications. The idea of the ‘restoration’ of security was important, then – ‘pacification required first and foremost the restoration of security’, noted Komer – but the restoration was to be a civil–military joint action affecting the everyday life of the Vietnamese (Komer, 1970a: 168, 257; see also Komer, 1970b: 5–6). The military struggle against insurgency was only one dimension of a much larger project to ‘create a socio-political environment in which future insurgency would not flourish again’; an environment in which Vietnamese life would have to be restructured in order to prevent communism (Komer, 1970b: 3, 10). In other words, pacification touches on the fundamental nature of security in its most expansive sense, involving ‘police-type actions and constructive politico-economic programs as security is restored’ (Komer, 1970a: 257).

I will return to the American pacification of Vietnam in a moment. But let me just briefly note here that the US went into Vietnam on the back of French failure in the same region and that France had been there for a century as part of its contribution to the European colonizing spree of the nineteenth century. During this time the French did more than their fair share of thinking about what makes for successful colonization. In this regard, an article called ‘Du rôle colonial de l’Armée’ by Lieutenant Colonel Lyautey and first published in 1900 played an important role; so important, in fact, that
when half a century later the French were failing in Vietnam and the Americans were
gearing up to step in, French colonial thinking was still dominated by the article (Got-
mann, 1943: 240, 246). Much of the article consists of quotes from the set of instructions
on colonial rule issued in 1898 by General Galliéni, the governor of Madagascar and a
leading strategist of French colonial warfare, and the instructions themselves were
published by Galliéni in *Rapport d’ensemble sur la pacification, l’organisation et la colo-
nisation de Madagascar* ([1900]1994). Note the connection in the title between
pacification and colonization.

‘The best means for achieving pacification in our new colony is provided by combined
application of force and politics’, notes Galliéni. By ‘force’ and ‘politics’ he means
‘destruction’ and ‘reconstruction’ respectively.

It must be remembered that, in the course of colonial struggles, we should turn to destruc-
tion only as a last resort and only as a preliminary to better reconstruction. We must always
treat the country and its inhabitants with consideration, since the former is destined to
receive our future colonial enterprises and the latter will be our main agents and collabora-
tors in the development of our enterprises. Every time that the necessities of war force one
of our colonial officers to take action against a village or an inhabited center, his first con-
cern, once submission of the inhabitants has been achieved, should be reconstruction of the
village, creation of a market, and the establishment of a school.

Destruction and ‘reconstruction’ go hand-in-hand. Yet although ‘it is by combined use of
politics and force that pacification of a country and its future organization will be
achieved’, it is ‘political action [that] is by far the more important’, deriving as it does
‘from the organization of the country and its inhabitants’. Thus it is the politics/recon-
struction that counts, because this is where real pacification lies.

As pacification gains ground, the country becomes more civilized, markets are reopened,
trade is re-established. The role of the soldier becomes of secondary importance. The activ-
ity of the administrator begins. It is necessary, on the one hand, to study and satisfy the
social requirements of the subject people and, on the other hand, to promote the develop-
ment of colonization, which will utilize the natural resources of the soil and open the outlets
for European trade.

Moreover, circumstances inevitably impose these obligations. A country is not con-
quered and pacified when a military operation has decimated and terrorized its people. Once
the initial shock passes, a spirit of revolt will arise among the masses, fanned by a feeling of
resentment which has been created by the application of brute force.

Note: as ‘the role of the soldier becomes of secondary importance’ so ‘the activity of the
administrator begins’. Or as Lyautey puts it in his gloss on this argument: ‘during the
period following the conquest, the part of the troops is reduced to policing, a function
which is soon taken over by special troops, the military and civilian police’ (Galliéni,
[1900]1994: 813–815; Gotmann, 1943: 243–244). By the mid-twentieth century the
French had perfected these practices and used them in both Indo-China and Algeria, estab-
lishing a Centre for Instruction and Preparation in Counterinsurgency-Guerrilla Warfare
(CIPCG), through which approximately 10,000 officers were educated in ideological warfare, psychological manipulation and police action. The lessons learnt were the same as those learnt by the British in their pacification of Malaysia, Cyprus and Kenya.

Thus by the time the Americans were ready to rethink their war in Vietnam as a war of *pacification*, they had to hand a long history of thinking about this process as a principle of social reconstruction and as the conjunction of military and police functions. In 1963, the RAND Corporation commissioned David Galula to write about the French pacification of Algeria. Galula had been a Captain and then Lieutenant Colonel in the French Army and overseen a large part of the pacification of Algeria, having previously experienced similar wars in China, the Philippines, Malaysia and Greece. In his report on the pacification of Algeria, he had made much of an approach based on ‘the carrot in our left hand . . . the stick in our right hand’ (Galula, [1956]2006: 269). The opportunity created by RAND allowed him to expand on this:

The general directives from Robert Lacoste, the Minister-Resident in Algiers . . . insisted on the need to win over the population. In my zone, as everywhere in Algeria, the order was to ‘pacify’. But exactly how? The sad truth was that, in spite of all our past experience, we had no single, official doctrine for counterinsurgency warfare. Instead, there were various schools of thought, all unofficial, some highly vociferous . . . At one extreme stood the ‘warriors’, officers who had learned nothing, who challenged the very idea that the population was the real objective, who maintained that military action pursued with sufficient vigor and for a sufficiently long time would defeat the rebels . . . At the other extreme were the ‘psychologists’, most of them recruited among officers who had undergone the Vietminh brainwashing in prisoner camps. To them, psychological action was everything, not merely the simple propaganda and psychological warfare adjunct to other types of operations, conventional or otherwise. ‘You use force against the enemy’, one of their leaders told me, ‘not so much to destroy him but in order to make him change his mind on the necessity of pursuing the fight. In other words, you do a psychological action’. They were convinced that the population could be manipulated through certain techniques adapted from communist methods. (Galula, [1963]2006: 64–65)

The report thus spends the majority of its time talking about the struggle to gain the control and support of the population through ‘pacification units’ based in ‘pacification zones’ and using medical, educational and ideological efforts, all in the name of ‘security’. A year later, Galula developed his arguments into a book called *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* ([1964]2006). But my main concern is not how much experience of other colonial powers was known to the Americans, but how we might think of the relationship between pacification and security. For as much as the term ‘pacification’ to describe American actions in Vietnam might in one sense be ‘a dishonest misnomer . . . [for] a policy characterised by repression, torture and murder’ (Greiner, 2007/2009: 60), the fact that it was thought of and understood in terms of a myth of reconstruction, and a myth of reconstruction centred on ‘security’, is nonetheless still important.

‘Pacification had to be productive’, notes William Gibson (1986: 281) in his history of the US ‘Technowar’ war in Vietnam. ‘Productive’ in the sense that it had to imply the
construction of a new social order as well as the crushing of opposition to that construction. To this end, soldiers became ‘pacification workers’ organized as Combined Action Platoons (CAPs) as part of the strategy known as Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS). Working on a broad principle of security and led largely by personnel from the American security elite, such as William Colby of the CIA, CORDS went about trying to reorganize the whole of Vietnamese society. This included efforts to protect and develop rural areas, revive the economy, and provide health and educational services. Much of this involved very ‘American’ assumptions about what might count as ‘peace and security’ – the country was saturated with ideological slogans and advertisements for commodities, cultural and ideological production was transformed in the attempt to win ‘hearts and minds’, the economy was to be ‘modernized’ and even sexuality was to be mobilized through the use of ‘erotic’ pamphlets showing the beauty of western liberty. But the real point is that this was a huge effort to express the ‘productive’ dimension of what President Johnson called ‘the other war’: ‘a war to build as well as to destroy’ (cited in Jones, 2005: 104). ‘Nation building’, as the 1970 RAND report put it (Komer, 1970a: 120).

This explains the various names under which pacification was conducted: Reconstruction, Rural Construction, Revolutionary Reconstruction, Land Development, Civic Action, and so on. Some of these were even run together with ‘pacification’, on the lines of ‘Rural Construction/Pacification’ or ‘pacification/rural development’. One contemporary comments that ‘in the term’s most common meaning – physical security – most of South Vietnam is pacified’, but then discusses pacification as including ‘general living conditions’ such as housing, food and clothing, schooling, health, village life, and compares the everyday life of the Vietnamese under the Viet Cong and American rule (Popkin, 1970: 662–663). This is a theme that runs through the secondary literature of the period too. Geoffrey Fairbairn, to give just one example, comments on pacification in terms of the ‘problem of security’, but adds that this problem was to be dealt with through a panoply of measures ‘producing radical and constructive change in the lives of the people’ (1974: 239, 240). Hence in summing up the ‘Eleven Criteria and Ninety-Eight Works for Pacification’ in Vietnam, Gibson notes that ‘the list sounds like a program for the construction of a liberal welfare state’. A liberal welfare state indeed, but one in which the violence of the state power underpinning its construction was far more apparent. So apparent, in fact, that it should be understood as a ‘militarized market regime’ intent on producing a ‘modern’ distribution of persons and commodities (Gibson, 1986: 290–291, 299).

The ‘pacification security job’ in Vietnam can thus certainly be understood as military violence to crush a people and secure a nation; the terror bombing resulting in an estimated 1.5 to 2.5 million dead Vietnamese and involving some 7 million tons of bombs and artillery grenades dropped by 1975 is ample testimony to that. But it also has to be understood in terms of the ‘security measures’ – liberal security measures – through which the people were to be ‘reconstructed’ and the nation ‘rebuilt’. As with many practices carried out under the banner of ‘security’, the pacification programme in Vietnam embodied a fairly standard mixture of tough-minded force and a far more amorphous liberal rhetoric of construction and reconstruction: ‘touchy-feely domination’, as Jacobsen (2009: 87) calls it. This domination through ‘hearts and minds’ and the reconstruction of
the nation around bourgeois notions of order is a key dimension of most forms of imperialism (Kolko, 1986: 236). It is pacification as a political technology for organizing everyday life through the production and re-organization of the ideal citizen-subjects of capitalism. Or as one minister of Revolutionary Development in Vietnam put it, pacification aims not only at destroying ‘the present, gloomy old life’, but also ‘replacing it with a brighter and nicer new life’ (cited in Gibson, 1986: 313, emphasis added), the kind of brighter and nicer life identified by Marx and Engels as the animating feature of the bourgeois world: the constant disturbance of all social conditions, the unremitting uncertainty and agitation of all human ties, the melting away of all that is solid into air. As they also note in the same section of the Manifesto, so powerful is the bourgeois need for this form of social order that it chases the dream over the whole surface of the earth, creating a world after its own image (Marx and Engels, [1848]1984: 487–488). The pacification of Vietnam is but one instance of this creation.

Pacification: History

Because of its predominance during the US actions in Vietnam, ‘pacification’ is a term closely associated with that war. In fact, the first real extended treatment of pacification comes in Captain Bernardo de Vargas Machuca’s Milicia Indiana, published in 1599. It is notable that this text, which is to all intents and purposes the world’s first manual of counter-revolutionary warfare, appears amidst the so-called ‘military revolution of the sixteenth century’, since Machuca’s arguments identify pacification as a feature of war that has been omitted from the standard accounts of the military revolution, which focus on the centralization of violence and the bureaucratization and discipline of standing armies. The Spaniards, like all major powers of the sixteenth century, were indeed immersed in a world of large-scale military engagement; yet, also like the other major powers, they were simultaneously immersed in the colonization of other lands. This colonization required a very different kind of political violence. It is in this light that Machuca writes his manual of Indian military encounters. As one of the few writers to note the significance of the manual states:

Machuca dismissed as irrelevant the entire pattern of European warfare, with its hierarchical tactical units, linear formations, and permanent garrisons. Instead he advocated for the Americas the creation of commando groups to carry out search-and-destroy missions deep within enemy territory for up to two years at a time. (Parker, 1996: 120)

Success required knowledge and experience as much in ‘planting survival crops and curing tropical ulcers as about laying ambushes and mounting surprise attacks’. Through ‘the adoption of native methods, the colonial frontier . . . was steadily consolidated, and warfare there became “nothing but a manhunt” (in the phrase of a Jesuit contemporary), in which the settlers hunted down recalcitrant Indians with mastiffs and knives’ (Parker, 1996: 120). Machuca’s concern was not that of one militarily organized national unit facing another, but of an Empire confronting recalcitrant and rebellious indigenous populations. To fight these populations Machuca advocated adopting their fighting methods, learned by him ‘after twenty-eight years . . . employed in pacifications in the Indies’
(Machuca, [1599]2008, 7, see also 77). The manual thus describes a world of skirmishing and ambushing, of fighting on the move, of a 24-hour ‘hunt’ against enemy ‘hunters’. This is the war of militias as part of an expanding global empire. It is war for the pacification of those peoples which empire would necessarily have to destroy or control (Machuca, [1599]2008: 26, 56, 111, 116, 148).

The pacification in question is thus, on the one hand, brutal and bloody, with what we now know to be fairly standard atrocities associated with colonialism, including the burning alive of rebels, summary executions and the occasional drowning of babies, all justified by Machuca in the familiar terms of colonial conquest – according to the Indians being ‘a people with no reason, depraved and without honor’, ‘even more brutish than irrational animals’. On the other hand, Machuca insists that ‘fair treatment’ must be granted the Indian: the ‘distributing and assigning the Indians to their encomiendas’ must be done with the approval of the native lords of the land, the Indians should be granted herds, gifts, and care, commanders must carry out censuses. Most of all, they must be governed in ‘peace’ (Machuca, [1599]2008: 148, 155–158; [1603]2008: 248–249).

Why did such a text emerge at this historical moment? The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the Edicts of Pacification of 1563, 1570 and the Edict of Nantes in 1598 as the first examples of the word ‘pacification’, where it describes the powers used by a prince or state ‘to put an end to strife or discontent’ and ‘to reduce to peaceful submission’ a population. The dates are important, since they are deep into the period of global accumulation and the history of capital, or, in other words, the point of departure for the period in which the insecurity of bourgeois order had to be secured. In this context, Philip II came to believe that the violence being meted out in the conquest of the colonies was causing a certain discontent among his own people. He therefore proclaimed in July 1573 that all further extensions of empire be termed ‘pacifications’ rather than ‘conquests’:

> Discoveries are not to be called conquests. Since we wish them to be carried out peacefully and charitably, we do not want the use of the term ‘conquest’ to offer any excuse for the employment of force or the causing of injury to the Indians . . . Without displaying any greed for the possessions of the Indians, they [the ‘discoverers’, ‘conquerors’] are to establish friendship and cooperation with the lords and nobles who seem most likely to be of assistance in the pacification of the land. (cited in Todorov, 1984: 173)

The history of ‘discovery’ as an ideological gloss on conquest and dispossession is too well known to bear repeating here. But Philip’s use of the term ‘pacification’ is historically significant. Witness the ordinances issued in this regard, since they set in train the kind of practices that would still be running over 400 years later:

> They [the pacifiers/conquerors] are to gather information about the various tribes, languages and divisions of the Indians in the province . . . They are to seek friendship with them through trade and barter, showing them great love and tenderness and giving them objects to which they will take a liking . . . In order that the Indians may hear the faith with greater awe and reverence, the preachers should convey the Cross in their hands and should be wearing at least albs or stoles . . . The preachers should ask for their children under the pretext of teaching them and keep them as hostages; they should also persuade them to build
churches where they can teach so that they may be safer. By these and other means are the Indians to be pacified and indoctrinated, but in no way are they to be harmed, for all we seek is their welfare and their conversion. (cited in Todorov, 1984: 173–174)

Is this a military act? Clearly yes, in the sense that the armed force behind it is obvious. Yet it also concerns the gathering of information about the population, the teaching of trades, education, welfare provision, ideological indoctrination, and, most importantly, the construction of a market. These activities concern the practices of everyday life constitutive of human subjectivity and social order. They are the practices we associate with the police power: the dispersal of the mythical entity called ‘security’ through civil society and the fabrication of order around the logic of peace and security. This is pacification through the policing of the everyday insecurities of life organized around accumulation and money, which would, from this point on, remain central to the colonial enterprise.

And not just the colonial enterprise. It is pertinent that at this very moment historically the structural transformation of the state and original accumulation were having a ‘domestic’ impact. The growth of towns generated concern over forms of behaviour made possible by urbanization: gambling, drinking, adultery, blasphemy and, of course, the ‘wandering’ poor causing disorder and insecurity. Fears were increasingly expressed about a ‘dissolute condition of masterlesse men’, as Hobbes puts it, created from the collapse of feudal order, ‘without subjection to Lawes’, and thus wandering in a disorderly fashion with no ‘coercive Power to tye their hands’ ([1651]1991: 128). Worse, such creatures were thought to be behind the rise of popular disturbances throughout Europe. In the terms of the new political discourse emerging around the state and the new regime of accumulation, this conjunction of ‘disorderliness’ and ‘criminality’ was connected to the idea of ‘rebellion’ against the very structures of life and modes of being that were being imposed and even against the political order itself. Together, the ‘criminal-disorderly-rebel’ constituted the lawless creature – according to the Oxford English Dictionary this is the period that ‘lawlessness’ becomes widely used, pertaining to ‘disorderly’ and ‘disobedience’ as well as the absence of law. And this lawless creature constituted the security problem of the age. It is at this moment that the process of internal pacification begins, a process fabricating a ‘peace and security’ within the social order to match the ‘peace and security’ imposed on colonial subjects. As Max Weber has shown, the increased concentration of military power that comes with the bureaucratic military structure and professional standing armies was necessary not only for warfare against distant enemies similarly organized, but also for the permanent pacification of the internal territory (Weber, 1978: 972, 981). Which is to say: it has to be understood in terms of the logic of security as a whole: the construction of elaborate security structures targeting civilian populations in general and ‘suspect communities’ or the ‘enemy within’ in particular.

Now, this process was worked out in different ways in different states, but the general tendency is clear: the process as a whole facilitated a functional integration of the pacifying powers of the modern state, with the military and police powers unified around the logic of pacification. This logic of internal pacification is not just about the violent crushing of opposition (though it certainly involves that) or a question of which ‘force’ does
the crushing (military, paramilitary, police?). It is also very much about the shaping of
the behaviour of individuals, groups and classes, and thereby ordering the social relations
of power around a particular regime of accumulation. In other words, what is at stake in
pacification is the kind of security measure that lies at the heart of the fabrication of
social order. The growth of bureaucracy and the rise of pacification went hand-in-
hand as ‘order’ and ‘security’ became the key terms around which the bureaucracy was
organized and the pacification carried out. The idea of security became key to the cre-
ation of what Elias calls the ‘durable pacified social spaces’ and the transformation of
social behaviour into ‘self-constraint’ (Elias, [1989]1996: 174, 176) and is perhaps one
of the key features of bourgeois modernity, reiterated as such by bourgeois modernity’s
most important ideological tradition, namely liberal contract theory (see Neocleous
2008, 2010). At the same time, violence is gradually eradicated from the dominant
economic relations as feudal forms of power and authority are gradually replaced by the
economic compulsion of the far more ‘peaceful’ bourgeois labour contract (masking, of
course, the real violence of class war) (Marx, [1867]1976: 899).

What we have, then, is a thread connecting the US project in Vietnam to nineteenth-
century European colonialism and beyond, all the way back to the European colonization
of America in the sixteenth century: the thread of pacification. And this thread grasps
pacification as a security job, understands that this security job reverberates through the
everyday lives of the pacified, and sees this as oscillating from the colonies to the domes-
tic scene and back again. The thread, in other words, reminds us that pacification con-
cerns the police power and its central role in the fabrication of social order
(Neocleous, 2000; also Dubber, 2005), that the core logic of police power is peace and
security, and that the war machine that is the state and capital is to be organized around
this logic. It reminds us that the insecurity of bourgeois order must be permanently
secured.

**Pacification: Present**

I realize that it is a thread that many will find too speculative. So let me push the
speculation even further and bring the argument forward to the ‘war on terror’. But let
me do so via a consideration of the gamut of ‘wars’ declared against enemies within,
such as the wars on drugs, crime and poverty.

Criminologists in particular have too often approached this gamut of wars by treating
them as metaphorical, relying on a very conventional conception of what ‘counts’ as a
war, namely, militarily organized states fighting each other (e.g. Kraska, 2001; Moore
and Haggerty, 2001; Ruggiero, 2005; Steinart, 2003). In fact, and not least because of
the ways in which such wars slip and slide from the foreign into the domestic and back
again, we might be better off thinking of such wars as ‘pacification security jobs’.

It has long been the case that warfare abroad is linked, politically, ideologically, tech-
nologically, and industrially, to the maintenance of order at home; conversely, that order
abroad often means warfare at home. This is not, however, some by-product of war but
is, rather, a deliberate ploy to ensure that the state can keep its own citizen-subjects paci-
fi ed in what is, essentially, a full-scale war against its own people (Quinney, 1973: 132).
The war on drugs, for example, has always been a series of related conflicts, some of
which might centre on the production and use of drugs and the dictators who oversee the centres of production, but most of which involve crushing political opposition movements, disciplining subjects and justifying to the public new forms of warfare and the new technologies by which this warfare is to be conducted. In Columbia the war on drugs (and now the war on terror) has long provided a pretext for a permanent counterinsurgency strategy. The war on drugs there has been used to justify the continued funding of the Columbian military by the US ‘so that it can pacify those armed groups and unarmed progressive social forces that potentially threaten a stability geared towards US interests’ (Stokes, 2005: 3). Thus in Columbia, as elsewhere, the war on drugs has at various moments slipped into and out of the war on communism, the war on terror and the war on crime in general (though these are never entirely distinguishable). In essence, however, the main purpose of this permanent and permanently shifting war has been to ‘secure those parts of the country which are rich in natural resources for Colombian landowners and foreign multinationals’ (Monbiot, 2003). The main function of the Columbian army has been making the country safe for business. ‘That is why, over the past ten years, the paramilitaries it works with have killed some 15,000 trades unionists, peasant and indigenous leaders, human rights workers, land reform activists, leftwing politicians and their sympathisers’ (Monbiot, 2003). With this broader remit the drugs war is always already incorporated into the global system of war (Gray, 1997: 31–32), carried out through direct military engagement with nations, ‘drug lords’ and drug smuggling gangs but also employing an array of measures once part and parcel of colonial warfare: the pacification of the US–Mexico border in the war on drugs in the 1980s and 1990s, for example, had its roots in the dispossession of the Mexicans more than a century earlier and the attempt to control labour in the region in the early twentieth century (Dunn, 1996).

Seen in this light, it is unsurprising that the dominant strategic theme of the war on drugs has been security, as David Campbell has noted. Nixon, Reagan and Bush all thought and fought the war on the grounds of security, and more recent politicians have followed suit. Drugs were formally defined as a national security problem (for example, in the 1986 National Security Decision Directive signed by Reagan) and the ‘security services’ have been centrally involved in the war. At the same time, we need to note that the security logic underpinning the war on drugs means that the war slips from the inside to the outside and back again, folding the foreign and domestic, the international and the everyday, into one another. The drugs war is a means by which the ‘low-intensity conflict’ of pacification is brought back into the domestic frame, via a replication of one of the fundamental tropes of security discourse: the articulation of an ‘emergency situation’ with a ‘clear and present danger’ threatening the fundamental fabric of society (Campbell, 1992: 210, 214; Dunn, 1996; Klare, 1988: 72; Kuzmarov, 2009: 103, 109; McCoy, 2003: 391, 443, 446). Playing heavily on the ‘law and order’ agenda, the war on drugs provides a rationale for coercive powers exercised within and across the face of civil society, for extensive penal control of categories of population regarded as dangerous, and for the growth of exclusion zones, social fortressing and the militarization of urban spaces. With the declaration of martial law in drug-producing countries replicated by the increasing use of emergency powers within liberal democracies, the war has paved the way for the pacification of groups perceived as the least useful and most dangerous parts of the population, of regions regarded as
‘ungovernable’ and borders regarded as ‘insecure’. The outcome has been nothing less than a ‘guerrilla campaign of penal harassment’ directly targeted on dispossessed neighbourhoods in the decaying urban core (Wacquant, 2009: 61–62, 158; also Christie, 1994: 69). In effect, a guerrilla war against the poor and any categories of population thought problematic to bourgeois order.

This targeting was heavily mediated by sets of assumptions about race and class. The race issues endemic to the military and diplomatic battle with non-Western states and political formations filtered into every stage of the pacification process – legislation, arrest, conviction and sentencing (Miller, 1996: 83). Writing about the drugs war in the US interior, Michael Tonry notes that the Generals in the war knew from the outset that drug use was falling among the vast majority of the population, but not among disadvantaged members of the urban underclass. As drugs increasingly came to be seen as dangerous and deviant, the danger and deviance came to be associated with sections of the working class and the racial ‘underclass’:

in the 1920s, it was blacks and cocaine. In the 1930s, images of Mexicans and marijuana were prominent . . . In the anti-drug hysteria of the 1980s, crack cocaine, the emblematic drug of the latest ‘war’, is associated in public imagery with disadvantaged minority residents of the inner cities. (Tonry, 1995: 94)

Thus ‘anyone who knew the history of American drug policy could have foreseen that this war on drugs would target and mostly engage young disadvantaged members of minority groups as the enemy’ (Tonry, 1995: 94; see also Tonry, 1995: 104; Miller, 1996: 2) Unsurprisingly, as in any war, countless lives were destroyed as the whole range of state power was used to arrest, prosecute, convict and imprison the offending enemy. The range of measures taken means that the war on drugs can only be understood if one understands it as a form of low-intensity urban warfare carried out by the state in the name of security. That is, the war on drugs can only be understood as a war for the pacification of the city.

Such low-intensity conflict is also apparent in the wider war on crime, the real impact of which is felt hardest by those at the wrong end of the new police measures in the city and which also appears to be identical to the war on drugs: to increase the prison population, especially of working-class and black people. Even the war on poverty can be read as a pacification measure activated through the power of ‘social security’: ‘a war waged with many weapons’, notes one of the war’s historians, weapons ‘such as withholding the opportunities for decent jobs, schools, housing’. But, he adds, ‘sometimes it is also a killing war’ (Gans, 1995: 1). Hence the conclusion of the 1996 Report of the National Criminal Justice Commission, after two years research and 200 pages of analysis, that the criminal justice system seems to be ‘front line’ in the war on drugs and crimes, and that ‘the enemy in this war is our own people’ (Donziger, 1996: 218).

These are wars in which the battleground is the security of everyday life; wars in which the ‘gloomy old’ everyday practices of some lives must be destroyed and replaced with ‘brighter and nicer new lives’; wars against suspect communities defined as such by the state itself and said to be making the territory insecure; wars in the form of acts of security in which the state reasserts its being as a state by insisting on itself as the political mechanism for the fabrication of social order; wars as ‘pacification security jobs’.
What then of the latest ‘war on x’: the ‘war on terror’? As is well known, many have suggested that this is an absurd war, since: (a) one cannot conduct war against an abstract noun; and (b) one might never know when the war is won. But this misses the point, which is that the ‘war on terror’ is a war of pacification and thus not a war in the terms of the ‘grand wars’ of the twentieth century. The continual oscillation over the extent to which the ‘war on terror’ is a war conducted against an enemy which also exists as a ‘suspect community’ within, an enemy which figures as military threat but which commits criminal acts, an enemy which is a war criminal but also a criminal at war, opens the door for the state to ratchet up police powers and remodel expectations about political rights, individual liberties and social freedoms, all in the name of security. The fact that one might never know when the war is won is thus not some kind of intellectual or political error on the part of the states conducting the war but is in fact a deliberate strategy, since it creates the need for permanent pacification. The ‘war on terror’ can thus be read as a mode of political administration for managing ‘problem’ subjects, a prime example of the global scope and intent of pacification as a security project, one so broad and ambiguous that it has to include not just the occupation of cities and nations across the earth, but also the incarceration of people without trial, the practice of torture, and the eradication of fundamental liberties and hopes of resistance at home. Because the suspect communities are always already among us, we are all under suspicion, all potentially guilty, in ways which impact on our everyday lives: the requirement that we continually engage in patriotic acts; the ‘information awareness’ projects involving our bank accounts, insurance policies, travel arrangements and car rental agreements; the CCTV cameras monitoring our movements across towns and cities; the new rules for workplaces requiring us to act as ‘immigration’ (namely ‘security’) officers as much as workers; the expectation that our use of libraries and the internet might be under permanent surveillance; the generalized cultural acceptance of security guards here there and everywhere; the moulding of social intercourse so that friends, families and lovers might report each other for any ‘unusual’ behaviour; the list goes on and on. These are the changes connecting everyday insecurities with the nomos of the earth; changes enabling the production of political docility in the name of security; changes revealing the ‘war on terror’ to be a war of pacification securing capital accumulation and thus the insecurity of bourgeois order; changes, that is, for the permanent pacification ... of us.

Coda

If this argument has any weight, then it suggests that ‘pacification’ should be a crucial term in helping us grasp what takes place as ‘war’, what passes as the current configuration of state power, and what is imposed as the political management of (in)security. I am therefore suggesting that far from being an idea whose time has past with the closing of the American war in/on Vietnam, the category of ‘pacification’ in fact carries a powerful theoretical charge, linking as it does the military to the police, the foreign to the domestic, the colonial to the homeland. In other words, I am proposing as a tactical move that critical theory re-appropriates ‘pacification’ to help grasp what takes place under the rubric of security politics. Perhaps this is the very reason why the US Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual mentions pacification in passing but then...
quickly circumvents any discussion of it; maybe the US state knows that the concept ‘pacification’ really does reveal too much about modern power. On that note, let me close with two observations-cum-suggestions.

In her introduction to the University of Chicago Press edition of the Manual, Sarah Sewall notes that the Manual ‘incorporates insights from French counterinsurgency guru David Galula’ (Sewall, 2007: xxiv). We have already noted Galula’s work as an intellectual link between the French pacification of Algeria and Indo-China and the American pacification of Vietnam, and noted that his work was published in two documents in 1963 and 1964. Here, we might add that Galula’s long RAND article of 1963 was republished as a book in 2006 by Praeger in the US. In the same year the same publisher also reissued Galula’s 1964 text Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice. My first closing observation is thus that the movers and shakers of the US state know full well that pacification is back on the agenda and are mining the historical sources for insights. I suggest that critical theory needs to do the same.

Done properly, such mining can unearth some real gems about security as pacification. Take the ‘new’ terminology in the field, such as Human Terrain System (HTS). HTS is much the rage these days in debates about the nature of military action, suggesting as it does that military work really needs to engage on the ‘human’ as much as the ‘physical’ terrain and encouraging us to believe that it is ‘human security’ that is ultimately at stake. HTS has been described by Army historians and military personnel as ‘a CORDS for the 21st century’ (Kipp et al., 2006). It too is based loosely on Galula’s work, and has its own history in imperial warfare. But as a category, ‘human terrain’ was first placed on the political agenda in terms of guerrilla warfare on the domestic front. In May 1968, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) published a report called Guerrilla Warfare Advocates in the United States. What did the HUAC suggest, in those heady days of revolutionary fervour? It suggested that the kind of guerrilla warfare advocated by Mao in China and Giap in Vietnam was also found at home: in the struggle of communists and black liberation movements. It included an appendix by Geoffrey Fairbairn, whom we encountered above writing about the pacification of Vietnam as a security measure, which suggested that guerrilla warfare is a form of warfare ‘carried out by irregular forces’ and in which the real struggle concerns ‘control of the human terrain’ (HUAC, 1968: 62). Four years later Robert Moss of the International Institute for Strategic Studies published a book in which he criticized the guerrillas for ‘their failure to study the human terrain’ (Moss, 1972: 154; see Gonzalez, 2010: 114). Much as his book was concerned with the guerrilla war against the US, his real concern was the need to pacify the radical elements of the American population. Hence the title: The War for the Cities – a war at home to match the war for the countryside abroad. My second observation-cum-suggestion, then, is that subsumed under the new language of military intervention is nothing less than the pacification of domestic as well as imperial resistance, the ‘enemy within’ as well as the ‘enemy without’, as security moves back and forth between the national and the international. Critical theory needs the concept of pacification to make sense of this; it needs the concept in order to understand that in the violent process of accumulation through which bourgeois order is constituted, security is pacification.
References


