

The Hearts and Minds in Conflict and Peace

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6.1 TO VALORIZE

(This addendum on valorization is added in accordance with article 23.5 of the “Regulation governing the attainment of doctoral degrees at Maastricht University” decreed by resolution of the Board of Deans.)

There are several policy lessons based on the findings documented in the dissertation, which can be of interest to policy makers. I have highlighted them in the introduction and delved into them in the corresponding chapters. To recap,

- One of the major findings in Chapter 2 is that insurgents can benefit from foreign aid through different channels such as looting and corruption. Donors need to bear in mind the ties between aid recipients and other actors. They should also be more selective in choosing partners. Whenever possible, they should also provide assistance that is less likely to be looted, so that it can be handed to the needed.
- Chapter 3 addresses a convenient assumption made in policy evaluation, that counterinsurgency effectiveness is usually tied to indicators that reflect only the local situation without taking possible spillover effects into consideration. In this regard, Chapter 3 introduces a theoretical framework and a practical tool to assist the monitoring of counterinsurgency efforts.
- Chapter 4 looks at disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and examines why some ex-combatants choose to fall outside the policy net and what are the possible consequences. It warns that the mental health condition of ex-fighters can potentially relate

to further radicalization and hence contribute to regional security threats. However, it also notes that early intervention can be counter-productive as the debate over involuntary treatment is still active in the psychological literature. *Primum non nocere* (First, do no harm).

- Chapter 5 challenges a common belief probably shared by many people in the policy world, that government can buy trust with public services. In fact, Lake (2010) observes that the US government is 'field-testing' a new approach to state building in its foreign policy: build legitimacy for new states by providing essential public services to their people. The findings from the chapter imply that the question is not really about what to provide. Instead, it is about the way of deciding what to be provided. Although the enhancement of public services may carry certain strategic or normative values, if trust is considered to be a crucial step in state building, the strategy is unlikely to be effective through the trust building mechanism. Listening and responding to the locals are the most effective ways of restoring trust and peace, a finding that echoes with the agenda of 'local ownership' in the policy world.

These policy lessons have been shared on different occasions, including international conferences, workshops and meetings attended by policy makers. For example, the annual conventions of International Studies Association in Toronto and Atlanta; the Asian Political Methodology Meeting at Academia Sinica, the national academy of Taiwan; the Workshops at the Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (German Development Institute) in Bonn, organized by the European Network for Conflict Research (ENCoRe) under the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action. Some of the findings have also been disseminated via social media (i.e. the Conversation and the YouTube channel of United Nations University - Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology). While Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are under review at journals for publication, Chapters 2 and 3 have already appeared in the UNU-MERIT Working Paper Series, and are freely available to the public. Chapter 5 is published in the *Journal of Peace Research*. And thanks to the *Universiteitsbibliotheek en de Koninklijke Bibliotheek* (UKB, or the Dutch Library Consortium), the article is made open access.

The target group of the research includes policy makers working in governments, international agencies such as the United Nations, and research and policy institutes. The policy value of the findings appears to

be well-received. For example, Chapter 3 is listed as the Top 10 Reads by the Stabilisation Unit of the UK Government.¹

¹ <http://sclr.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/top-10-reads/geographic/iraq>.