# Empire

### Link - DoD Policing

#### DoD action is visually representative of Empire – lays the groundwork for a constant network of policing that subjects us to imperial biopolitical control

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A central argument of this book is that police are integral to our conception of the modern state in ways both practical and theoretical. In the practical sense, police are the most direct experience of government for many people. This is evident in places like Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, where the police were used to directly carry out dictatorial commands but is just as much the case in well-established constitutional democracies like the United States, where each year roughly one out every five citizens has face-to-face contact with the police.1 The modern democratic state famously has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and the police are its certified representatives wielding this legitimated force. Police are where the rubber meets the road in terms of a significant amount of government power, as which laws the police choose to emphasize and which they choose to ignore (to say nothing of how they enforce these laws) has a far greater impact on how the law functions than do the actual statutes themselves.

The police are also central to the ability of the state to garner legitimacy and establish hegemony as a primary repository of social, political, and physical power. This perspective builds off the work of Gramsci, who argues the state is how a ruling class both consolidates and, much more importantly, legitimizes its control through “a combination of coercive force and intellectual-moral leadership.”2 However, state legitimacy is not a static phenomenon; it must be actively constructed and reproduced.

While the ruling classes of some states survive by outright repression, democratic states vastly prefer securing hegemony through the consent of the governed. Yet even within states that principally earn their legitimacy through consent, there will always be a need for coercive power to enforce discipline on those groups who do not consent to state rule. In the modern state, the police are centrally responsible for this line between consent and coercion.

For the police occupy much more than just a narrow law-enforcement role; while this is part of their mandate and dominates public perception of them, democratic police actually spend the majority of their time on order maintenance and social service tasks, filling a wide variety of roles.3 The ability of police to fulfill these many functions in a fair and legitimate manner is a central factor in the strength of a democracy and the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens.4 The failure on behalf of those leading the reconstruction of Iraq to recognize the importance of the many varied roles played by police in a constitutional democracy, and the subsequent fragmentation of these roles to a wide variety of public and private actors, has played a major part in the rise of violent nonstate actors like the Islamic State, who have exploited their ability to provide what the state and police currently cannot.

Ignoring the many service and order maintenance functions police fill is but one of a litany of well-established practices ignored by the United States and coalition authorities. Despite the extensive experience of the United States with police reconstruction in postconflict and developing nations, those responsible for police training in the new Iraqi state ignored nearly all prior knowledge on the subject. Instead, they have opted for creating the appearance of a legitimate police force, with training focusing almost exclusively on self-presentational matters to the detriment of nearly anything police-related. While this “cultural performance” of policing may assuage short-terms concerns of police capacity, the lack of knowledge regarding policing practices as well as the human and civil rights guaranteed to the populace by the new constitution means the police as constituted are very unlikely to become the type of force needed for a democratic state, something confirmed by ongoing, widespread documentation of corruption and brutality.5

This lack of relevant police training is in no small part due to the unprecedented decision to place the reconstruction of the police under the auspices of the Department of Defense. Treating police as part of the military not only departs from the long history of democratic societies moving to divorce the two but contradicts the scholarly consensus that treating the police as part of the military “works against every principle of democratic policing.”6 The DoD’s approach to policing focused on force generation and questions of equipment and capacity over the core aspects of policing, and the coalition’s own initial report on the status of Iraqi police forces found them “better trained in counterinsurgency tactics than civilian policing.”7

Although being led by the Department of Defense is unprecedented, the arming of a police force to act as a counterinsurgency force is not. The United States has long used police training and reconstruction programs to advance nation-building strategies that favor American geopolitical concerns over those of the nation they are supposedly helping. These programs have often minimized or outright ignored crime control, order maintenance, and social service functions in favor of developing intelligence networks oriented toward countersubversion programs to create the internal security and order necessary to implement larger political and economic plans. As such, rather than establishing democratic order or respect for human and civil rights, these police reconstruction programs have served to modernize the repressive apparatus in nations that have served the interests of the United States.8

### Empire immigration

#### Multilateral operations solidify the existence of Empire – globalized exchanges and dominance over nation states condition the biopolitical control of Empire

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The dehumanization of immigrants in the present moment (e.g., policies separating families, detaining them in concentration camps, and shooting immigrants with impunity; Abramsky, 2019; Grandin, 2019) and the U.S. government interference in other countries (Vossoughi et al., 2020) augment a pressing need for education scholars and practitioners to recognize one particular silenced history more acutely: the U.S. empire. I define U.S. empire1 as a nation-state that has devised a sociopolitical process for domination beyond its settler-colonial borders through threats of military force and/or interference in foreign nation-states for its own benefit. Imperialism is an oppressive mechanism that irrupts into people’s lives, pressuring some to flee their homelands and become immigrants, peoples of diaspora (Brah, 1996; J. González, 2011).2 In using the terms empire/imperialism, I refer to the American settler-colonial nation-state (Calderon, 2014; Coloma, 2013) as an oppressive force that also operates outside of its borders and affects foreign populations—with dire consequences for the Othered.

### AT: Resistance Checks

#### Empire is ever present, materializing and legitimatized by crisis that demand multilateral action in the same direction.

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It would be difficult to deny that the United States, at one time or another, has acted in an imperialist manner. If empire is defined as the domination of one people by another state separate and alien from it, then assuredly there have been episodes in which one can speak confidently of an American empire. In the 1830s an opponent of ~~Indian~~[Indigenous] removal, Congressman Henry Storrs, declared that he would not sacrifice the reputation of America’s founders, who had counselled just treatment of the native inhabitants, ‘for all the ~~Indian~~[Indigenous] lands that avarice ever dreamt of, and all the empire which ambition ever coveted.’ Of course he lost that argument.12 The Cherokee and other southern tribes were removed. So, too, America undoubtedly acquired an empire in the war against Spain at the end of the nineteenth century. The regeneration of the Philippines and the acquisition of protectorates over various Caribbean islands followed an imperialist script. ’Has it ever occurred to you,’ asked the Missionary Journal in 1899, ‘that Jesus was the most imperial of imperialists?’13 When facing peoples outside the society of states (then European and Christian in character), the United States did indeed act so as to displace peoples in its path. Thus far, then, those who would insist on a long imperial pedigree for America are adducing facts that cannot be denied. It is also true, however, that when America faced towards Europe and the society of states, its message was avowedly anti-imperial.

Several pertinent distinctions, moreover, are lost if the Bush Doctrine is seen as simply the latest instalment in a long imperial project. If it is true that there are precedents for an American imperialism, it is also true that Bush raised the empire business to an entirely new level. At its core, the Bush Doctrine proposed that the United States extend the position of military domination that fell to it as a consequence of victory in the Cold War; and that same doctrine was unafraid and unapologetic when it came to using force to reshape the international system. In embracing a doctrine of preventive war, the United States was abandoning the policies of containment and deterrence that it had followed during the Cold War. In announcing that it intended to preserve against all rivals its pre- eminent military status, it was jettisoning its previous commitment to arms control. In its insistence that it would no longer be bound by the laws traditionally governing the use of force – laws that forbid preventive war, torture, and the violent overthrow of regimes for the purpose of changing their political form – the United States had come to breathe a spirit of defiance towards international law. Especially in the early years of the Bush administration, America seemed recklessly indifferent to the views of traditional allies and airily dismissed the importance of showing a decent respect for the opinion of mankind.

In its pure form, as it were, the distilled essence of the Bush Doctrine was undoubtedly an imperial project, one that was far in advance of America’s Cold War policy. It proposed a mastery of the state system by one power that recalled what Schell termed ‘the hoary old nightmare of the ages, the always feared but never realized project of universal empire.’14 Whereas empire signifies the domination of one people by another, universal empire had traditionally signified the domination by one power of the state system as a whole. This vision could only really take root in circumstances of unipolarity. In this regard, a new vista had opened after the collapse of the Soviet Union that created an entirely different milieu from that which existed during the Cold War. Those observers (among both supporters and critics) who insisted that the Bush Doctrine represented a revolutionary change in American policy were closer to the mark than those who emphasized continuity.

### AT: Anthro Turn

#### Empire’s concept of biopower and biopolitical control rests in a complex thesis centered around nature

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The concept of “biopolitical production” stands here for a dual trend of capitalist socialization. It refers first of all to the dissolving of divisions between economics and politics that denotes a new stage of capitalist production. Here, in Hardt and Negri’s view, the creation of “life” is no longer something both limited to the realm of reproduction and subordinated to the labor process; to the contrary, “life” now determines production itself. Consequently, the difference between repro- duction and production increasingly loses significance. If biopower at one time stood for the reproduction of the relations of production and served to secure and preserve them, today it is an integral component of production. Empire is a “regime of biopower” (2000, 41) in which economic production and political constitution tend to overlap. The consequence of this is a wide-ranging convergence and parallelism between discourses and practices that have traditionally been separated from one another but that are now drawn into correlation:

Production becomes indistinguishable from reproduction; productive forces merge with relations of production; constant capital tends to be constituted and represented within variable capital, in the brains, bodies, and cooperation of productive subjects. Social subjects are at the same time producers and products of this unitary machine. (2000, 385; see also 2004, 334–335)

Second, “biopolitical production” for Hardt and Negri also denotes a new relationship between nature and culture. It signifies a “civilization of nature” (2000, 187), “nature” here meaning everything previously external to the production process. Life itself becomes an object of technological intervention, and nature “has become capital, or at least has become subject to capital” (ibid., 32). Biological resources are the object of juridico-political regulation, while “natural” processes are opened up to commercial interests and potential industrial

use. Nature thus becomes a part of economic discourse. Instead of being simply about exploiting nature, the discussion in the era of “sustainable” or “environmental capitalism” is about translating the biological and genetic diversity of nature into economic growth and opening it up to the development of profitable products and forms of life: “Previous stages of the industrial revolution introduced machine-made consumer goods and then machine-made machines, but now we find ourselves confronted with machine-made raw materials and foodstuffs—in short, machine-made nature and machine-made culture” (ibid., 272).

Hardt and Negri see this double disappearance of demarcations as the transition from the modern to the postmodern. When economics and politics and nature and culture converge, then there is no longer an external standpoint of life or truth that might be opposed to Empire. This diagnosis grounds the perspective of immanence that underlies the authors’ analysis. Empire creates the world into which it unfolds:

Biopower is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it. Power can achieve an effective command over the entire life of the population only when it becomes an integral, vital function that every individual embraces and reactivates of his or her own accord. (Ibid., 23–24)

To the degree that the imperial order not only rules over subjects but also generates them, exploits nature but also produces it, we are dealing with an “autopoietic machine” (ibid., 34) that reverts to immanent justifications and rationales that it creates itself. Owing to this new biopolitical reality, it is no longer possible to uphold a dual perspective that operates on the basis of binary oppositions such as basis/superstructure, material reality/ideological veil, and being/ consciousness.