Introduction

While the United States has not lost its appetite for war, the way in which its conflicts are being waged has changed dramatically. Over the past few decades, US warfare has lost much of its cruelty on two particular fronts. First, thanks to advances in military technologies and the gradual loss of the popular belief in war as a force that requires sacrifice, US warfare has become 'post-heroic'.[1] 'Post-heroic' means that the American people no longer affirm their humanism through violent acts but have instead become unwilling to accept the risk of dying in combat.[2] Humanism had previously turned war into an experience that gave meaning and authenticity to American citizen-soldiers.[3] Yet today, very few Americans still conceive war as a source of asserting one's existence and as a source of individual transformation.[4] This growing 'post-heroic' attitude manifests itself in the so-called 'body bag syndrome' and in a general casualty-aversion among US political and military decision makers.[5]

Second, due to technological innovations and the growing acceptance of universal legal restraints on the use of force, US warfare has largely come to comply with the legal principle of non-combatant immunity.[6] The protection of innocent civilians in target states has become a central concern in US military operations. As a result, the prevailing concern for the lives of US soldiers and enemy civilians has come to normatively underpin contemporary American warfare.[7]

[1] Luttwak 1995, 109–122; Luttwak 1996, 33–45.
[2] Luttwak 1995, 109–122; Luttwak 1996, 33–45; Ignatieff 2000c; van Creveld 1996; Coker 2002b; Gelven 1994; Ehrenreich 1998.
[3] Van Creveld 1996; Hedges 2002, 3–17; Gelven, 1994; Nietzsche 1981, 74.
[4] Chapter 2 will provide a detailed definition and analysis of the aspect of humanism in general and in the context of contemporary American warfare in particular.
[5] Record, 2000; Mann 1988, 184–185; McInnes 2002, 69; Shaw, 1991.
[6] Coker 2001, 1–45; Ignatieff 2000c, 197–201; Shaw 2005, 4–28; Farrell 2005, 177–179; Bacevich 1996, 37–48; Wheeler 2000.
[7] Renz and Scheipers 2012, 17–43.

Yet, this new mode of warfare faces a fundamental problem because of the inherent tension that exists between the two norms of casualty-aversion and civilian protection. This could be seen, for instance, during the 1999 Kosovo War, where casualty-averse attitudes categorically ruled out the deployment of ground forces and lead to a bombing campaign from such high altitudes which (while it made US pilots safe from Serbian anti-aircraft fire) significantly reduced the precision of the 'smart bombs' and thereby exposed Serbian civilians to larger risks.[8] Conversely, allowing US fighter pilots to fly at lower altitudes would have increased the risks to American military personnel but would also have resulted in lower numbers of 'collateral damage'.[9]

Most importantly, once the particular interactive dynamics of asymmetric conflicts are taken into account, this inherent tension turns into a devilish dilemma: The two norms have opened new areas of vulnerability that have been systematically exploited by non-state adversaries, who have identified the two norms (casualty-aversion and civilian protection) as the centre of gravity of US warfare.[10] Here, the US norm of casualty-aversion has translated into a renewed conviction among non-state adversaries that killing even a handful of US soldiers can trigger political repercussions and can ultimately lead to US withdrawal. And the perceived need for US warfare to comply with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) has lead non-state adversaries to systematically manipulate these norms by deliberately placing non-combatants in harm's way. It is this strategic behaviour by non-state adversaries that exacerbates the tension inherent in these two norms, forcing US decision-makers to have to choose between exposing enemy civilians to larger risks and increasing the combat risks to its own soldiers.

Against this backdrop, this book examines the origin and nature of this dilemma. It investigates – through interviews with key stakeholders in these conflicts – the ways in which the US has responded to this dilemma, and assesses the legal, moral, and strategic consequences. Has the US military been able to wage its post–Cold War asymmetric conflicts in ways that achieved highest levels of casualty-aversion while also safeguarding enemy civilians? Or did the asymmetric strategies employed by its non-state adversaries force US decision-makers to decide on one norm at the expense of the other? And if so, what were the legal, moral, and strategic consequences of such decisions?

[8] Cornish 2003, 121; Walzer 2004, 17.
[9] See for example, Münkler 2004; Habermas 1999; Wheeler 2003, 197–198.
[10] Bohrer and Osiel 2013, 747–822; Cordesman 1998; Gentry 2011, 243; Cornish 2003, 121.

It is with a view to addressing these issues that this study first develops a novel conceptual framework, drawing on the existing literature on the rise of 'post-heroic' American warfare, the solidification of norms of IHL, and the growth of unconventional asymmetric security challenges. This framework is then applied to three detailed empirical cases examining the asymmetric conflicts between the US military and non-state actors in Somalia (1992–1994), Afghanistan (2001–2002), and Iraq (2003–2011).

Examining these issues is significant because they have been at the forefront of contemporary asymmetric conflicts (of which conflicts between the US military and its non-state adversaries constitute the most extreme constellation). Such a focus provides answers as to why many of the post–Cold War conflicts unfolded and ended in the way they did – something the existing literature in International Relations has not yet been able to do.

Existing Literature

The last two decades have seen the release of several important studies that address – to varying degrees – the three core concepts on which this book focuses: the rise of a post-heroic, casualty-averse American mode of warfare;[11] the strengthening of and increasing compliance with the principle of non-combatant immunity within US warfare;[12] and the nature and particular interactive dynamics generated by asymmetric conflicts between state and non-state actors.[13] While drawing inspiration from and building on the insights of these essential works, this book is distinguishable from them in two important ways.

First, while most sources have provided good insights into the socio-historical causes behind this recent transformation of American warfare and the specific interactive nature of asymmetric conflicts, they have tended to place their emphasis on only one of the three key concepts. Put differently, instead of examining and critically contextualising all three phenomena, they focused on either the rise of US casualty-aversion, the strengthening of the principle of non-combatant immunity, or the interactive nature of asymmetric conflicts.

For instance, the body of literature presented by Andrew J Bacevich, James Der Derian, Edward Luttwak, Jeffrey Record, Charles Moskos,

[11] Mann 1988; McInnes 2002; Shaw 2005; Coker 2002b; Ignatieff 2000c; Der Derian 2001; Bacevich 2005; Singer 2009; Enemark 2014; Buley 2008; Münkler 2004.
[12] Thomas 2001; Ignatieff 2000c; Shaw 2005; Farrell 2005; Coker 2001; Walzer 2004; Crawford 2013; Bellamy 2006; O'Driscoll 2008; Renz and Scheipers 2012, 17–43.
[13] Arreguin-Toft 2005; Strachan 2007; Münkler 2014; Chaliand 1994; Van Creveld 1991b; Griffith 1992.

Martin Shaw, Michael Mann, Karl W Eikenberry, Christopher Coker, Michael Ignatieff, and Colin McInnes has made a groundbreaking contribution to the socio-historical understanding of the rise of US casualty-aversion over the last decades – insights on which the book will draw.[14] Yet, while generating valuable understanding and developing a consensus that the American military – following the Vietnam War – has tended to wage riskless wars, this subsection of the International Relations literature has generally failed to relate its research findings to, and discuss them in the context of, the simultaneous strengthening of the principle of non-combatant immunity and how it is impacted upon by enemy behaviour.

At the same time, the body of literature that has focused on the humanising trend underway in contemporary US warfare has tended to do so without contextualising its findings in light of the rise of casualty-aversion.[15] For instance, Ward Thomas's *The Ethics of Destruction*, Theo Farrell's *The Norms of War*, Michael Ignatieff's *Virtual War*, Neta Crawford's *Accountability for Killing*, and Maja Zehfuss' *Killing Civilians* all have generated very valuable understanding of the socio-historical reasons as to why American military operations in recent decades have come to comply with IHL – and the book will draw on these extensively.[16] With its particular research focus, however, this existing material has stopped short of discussing its findings in relation to the simultaneous rise of casualty-aversion and in the context of the interactive dynamics of asymmetric conflicts.

While such a focus on the dynamic interaction at the heart of the nature of war tends to be marginalised by the body of literature reviewed above, it can nevertheless be found in the strategic studies literature. From the work of Carl von Clausewitz, Thomas Edward Lawrence, Mao Zedong, and Vo Nguyen Giap to more contemporary thinkers such as Martin van Creveld, Herfried Münkler, Christopher Daase, or Ivan Arreguin-Toft, strategic studies has explored the nature of interactions between adversaries.[17] Yet, these insights have rarely departed from the realm of hard strategy to the issues of law and morality as pertaining to American warfare.

Thus, while generating valuable understanding of each of these three phenomena in and of itself, the majority of the existing literature has failed to relate its research findings to, and discuss them in the context of

[14] Record 2000; Moskos 2002; Eikenberry 1996; Mann 1988; McInnes 2002; Shaw 2005; Coker 2002b.
[15] Thomas 2001; Wheeler 2002; Shaw 2005; Farrell 2005; Bacevich 1996; Ignatieff 2000c.
[16] Thomas 2001; Ignatieff 2000c; Farrell 2005; Zehfuss 2012, 423–440. See also Thomas W Smith 2002, 355–374; Boot 2003; Coker 2001, 1–45.
[17] Clausewitz 1984; T.E. Lawrence 1994, 880–891; T. E. Lawrence 1962; Griffith 1992; Giap 1977, 23–55; Arreguin-Toft 2005; Münkler 2004; Daase 2003, 17–35.

the other two concepts. This is problematic, this book argues, because today's asymmetric conflicts are essentially contestations – by both sides – over the two norms of casualty-aversion and civilian protection. On the one hand, the legitimacy and ultimate success of US warfare hinges on its ability to wage 'humane' or 'costless' wars (with lowest levels of risks to both enemy civilians and American military personnel). On the other hand, the strategies of non-state adversaries – compelled to adjust due to their military inferiority – have aimed at preventing the United States from waging war in this way; here, the two norms of casualty-aversion and civilian protection have become the core target. In other words, contemporary asymmetric conflicts are essentially conducted over and decided by the ability or inability to wage these wars in ways that are costless to both American soldiers and enemy civilians. Therefore, if we seek to fully understand the legal, moral, and strategic nature of contemporary conflicts, we need to combine and critically address all three elements together: the norms of casualty-aversion and civilian protection and how they are impacted upon by the interactive dynamics that are inherent in asymmetric conflicts.

The book rectifies this by examining the relationship between all three concepts. It thereby demonstrates that any systematic theoretical as well as empirical investigation into the trade-off between US casualty-aversion and civilian protection cannot afford to ignore the particular dynamics generated by the interactive nature of war. By not taking the role of the adversary – and the notion of the interactive nature of war – into account, most of the literature has implicitly assumed that the trade-off inherent in US warfare is immune from the actions taken by the adversary. Yet, by ignoring this important aspect, it has failed to explore how the balance between these key American values has been exacerbated by the behaviour of US adversaries. During the Bosnian War and NATO's campaign against Serbia over Kosovo, for example, Slobodan Milosevic deliberately placed command posts and military anti-aircraft guns into the densely populated residential areas of Belgrade or chained unarmed UN monitors onto military equipment during the siege of Sarajevo in order to deter US bombings.[18] Such an intentional exploitation of the American compliance with the principle of non-combatant immunity by ruthless and indiscriminate adversaries has generated severe challenges for US strategy. More will be said about these types of challenges in detail; these examples merely serve to illustrate that war is never waged upon a lifeless mass, but always on an animate agent who responds.[19] In the

[18] Skerker 2004, 29–30; Ignatieff 2000c, 28, 195, 200; Dunlop 1999, 29.
[19] Clausewitz 1984, 77.

unpredictable, non-linear, and interactive nature of war, 'the enemy has a vote, too.'[20]

Not to take this aspect into account significantly distorts any analysis of the conflicting values within contemporary US warfare in the same way that an analysis of a football match would be limited if it tried to explain the performance of one side without reference to the performance of the opposing team. Such an analysis would be insufficient as one side's performance can always only be as good as the other side permits. In other words, the interaction between the US military and its adversaries has to be addressed because the character of a conflict is not shaped autonomously or independently of the adversary, but in response and in reaction to the latter. In war, both adversaries act according to their strengths, they respond to their opponents' actions and adopt their own strategies accordingly. They are seeking to shape the character of the conflict and the responses of their adversaries, but are also, in turn, being shaped by the changed character of the conflict.

Furthermore, the book argues that the lack of focus on these interactive dynamics is particularly problematic in conflicts waged under conditions of asymmetry. These conditions have highlighted another central feature of American warfare as there are no adversaries resembling the level of US military might in the post–Cold War world.[21] This means that all warfare involving the American military superpower (especially when waged against semi-/non-state actors in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq) cannot be described in any other way than as highly asymmetric in character.

Conditions of asymmetry are inherently unstable because they compel the disadvantaged side to adjust its strategy and tactics accordingly. They therefore generate a qualitatively different interactive dynamic between adversaries than would be the case in symmetric wars.[22] Not to take these particular dynamics into account distorts the analysis of whether it has been possible for the United States to wage war in ways that produced low American casualty rates while at the same time ensuring high levels of civilian protection.

Second, while a handful of publications in the field of International Relations have begun to explore some forms of relationship between these three concepts (casualty-aversion, civilian protection, and the interactive dynamic of asymmetric conflicts)

[20] Clausewitz 1984, 86; Beyerchen 1992, 59–90; van Creveld 2000, 116; Skerker 2004, 27–39; Arreguin-Toft 2005.
[21] Bacevich 2005, 16; Kennedy 2002; Kahn 1999, 1–6.
[22] Kahn 2002, 2–9; Bacevich 1996, 45; Van Creveld 1991b, 58.

and thereby have generated extremely valuable insights,[23] such analyses nevertheless have been deficient in the following ways: they have either not provided a systematic and comprehensive engagement with this trade-off; have focused specifically on a single empirical case; or have remained purely theoretical by not relating innovative conceptual ideas to empirical cases. As a result, they have often remained so narrowly focused on one particular military campaign that they have failed to generate theoretical knowledge beyond one particular case – something this monograph rectifies by cross-examining three empirical case studies. Furthermore, a number of theorists, most notably Michael Walzer, Martin Shaw, and Paul W Kahn, mainly tend to be exclusively interested in theoretical reflections upon these questions that their theoretical strength is at the detriment of a detailed empirical focus. Thus, they tend to lack empirical evidence as a means to test, and thereby substantiate, their theoretical findings.[24]

And finally, some of existing sources have focused very broadly on the 'West' and the 'Western way of war' rather than pursuing a specific focus on contemporary American warfare.[25] This book, on the other hand, is not concerned with the notion of 'Western' warfare, but merely with the specific theoretical and empirical aspects of contemporary asymmetric conflicts involving the United States and non-state actors in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Given the importance of the specific interactive dynamic generated by asymmetric conflicts, focusing on US warfare allows the monograph to examine these dynamics under the most extreme constellations available in world politics today: where the world's most powerful military state actor (the US) is fighting with non-state military actors (warlords in Somalia, terrorists and insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq), these specific interactive dynamics become visible most clearly.

Building on the existing literature, this book rectifies the shortcomings identified in the sources above by bringing together the strategic and legal/moral strands of the available literature to develop a systematic theoretical framework to assess and analyse the trade-off at the heart of US warfare before applying this framework to the three comparative case studies of the US interventions in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

[23] Walzer 2004; Crawford 2013; Bellamy 2006; Duffield 2001; Thomas W Smith 2008, 144–164; Bohrer and Osiel 2013, 747–822; Walzer 2009, 40–52; van Creveld 1991b; Kaldor 1999; Coker 2002b; Ignatieff 2003c; Walzer 1992; Coker 2001; Shaw 2005.
[24] Walzer 1992; Kahn 2002, 2–9; Shaw 2005.
[25] Münkler 2004; McInnes 2002; Van Creveld 1991b; Shaw 2005; Coker 2001.

Detailed Chapter Synopsis

Chapter 1 examines how – by breaking with the historical double standards regarding civilian protection in conflicts – by the end of the 20th century, US warfare has come to comply with IHL. Yet, civilians are still being killed. This has sparked controversies over what constitutes legitimate targeting practices and as to whether higher levels of civilian protection could be achieved. Through an engagement with these debates, including an exploration of the evolution of the norm of non-combatant immunity with specific reference to US warfare, the chapter shows how IHL does not provide fully satisfactory answers to these issues as it is too permissive in relation to the killing of civilians. The chapter proposes that more stringent moral guidelines, such as those underpinning the idea of 'due care', have the potential to go much further in providing protection for the innocent in war. By drawing on the moral idea of 'due care', the chapter asks whether the US military has made a positive commitment (including an increase in combat risks to its soldiers) to spare enemy non-combatants or if other factors, primarily American casualty-aversion, have compromised the level of protection afforded to civilians in target states.

Chapter 2 explores the socio-historical reasons as to why the American willingness to sacrifice large numbers of its citizens in modern wars has been replaced by the rise of casualty-aversion following the Vietnam War. And yet, the chapter also shows, in contrast to the general intolerance among military and political leaders towards exposing American military personnel to the risks of combat, Special Forces continue to view war in heroic terms, that is, as a source of individual transformation. Considering the central roles played by these Special Forces in contemporary US warfare in general, and during the interventions in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq in particular, the chapter identifies the tensions between the heroism of US Special Forces and the general casualty-aversion among US leaders: Does the prevailing political quest for minimum casualties override the warriorhood of US Special Operations forces? Or, are they permitted to expose themselves to larger risks than the rest of the American military personnel?

Having identified the rise of the casualty-aversion and civilian protection as key norms of contemporary US warfare, Chapter 3 focuses on the inherent tension between these two norms. Crucially, however, it argues that this inherent tension is exacerbated further by US adversaries, who have identified US concerns for body bags[26] and collateral damage as the centre of gravity of US warfare and have adjusted their strategic behaviour

[26] 'Body bags' originally were a way through which militaries measured progress towards victory: a way to count the numbers of enemy soldiers or men killed. Because of the way in

accordingly. In other words, US war is never waged upon a lifeless mass, but always on a living agent who responds. Enemy behaviour is a factor external to and yet crucially affecting the US ability to wage its wars with both features of civilian protection and casualty-aversion intact. Therefore, to answer the book's overall question of whether the US military has been able to wage its wars in risk-averse and humane ways, the particular dynamic interaction between the US and its non-state adversaries needs to be taken into account. How have non-state adversaries, in the face of overwhelming US military might, adjusted their strategies accordingly? And how have these strategic adjustments exacerbated the tension between US casualty-aversion and civilian protection, thereby forcing US decision makers to choose between saving US soldiers and enemy civilians? And what were the legal, moral, and strategic consequences of such decisions?

The empirical, in-depth case studies (Chapters 4 to 6) of the volume answer the above questions by comparing and contrasting the US military interventions in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. By selecting these three cases over other interventions, the book deliberately explores cases in which the United States waged war against semi-state and/or non-state actors rather than states. This allows the book to investigate the interactive dynamics generated in asymmetric wars under the widest possible gap between two military actors. In these cases, the particular interactive dynamics generated by asymmetric wars have been most profound, thereby providing a rich field through which to explore the book's main research questions.

Chapter 4: Somalia (1992–1994)

Besides being the first major asymmetric conflict the US was involved in since Vietnam (and Lebanon), the importance of focusing on a case like Somalia is that in contrast to other US interventions throughout the 1990s, US ground forces were directly placed in harm's way. American soldiers (especially Special Forces) were inserted into a strategic environment where the technological might of the US military could not as easily secure the goal of casualty-aversion as was the case with, for example, Bosnia, Kosovo, or Libya.

which this measuring became discredited in Vietnam, the US military at least officially stopped counting enemy bodies. Instead, 'body bags' have since referred to the number of US soldiers killed in conflict. While this change will be addressed in passing in Chapters 2 and 3, this manuscript uses the term 'body bags' with reference to killed US soldiers and therefore to the norm of casualty-aversion.

The case study covers the period from the beginning of the US intervention in December 1992 until the loss of eighteen US Rangers in October 1993. It thus focuses on the American-led United Task Force (UNITAF), also known as 'Operation Restore Hope', and the pre-eminent US role in the UN-led United Nations Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM II).

Drawing on new primary interview material with key stakeholders, it examines how the asymmetric strategies employed by Somali warlord Muhamed Farah Aideed compelled US commanders to choose between saving US soldiers and Somali civilians before investigating the legal, moral, and strategic consequences of this choice.

Chapter 5: Afghanistan (2001–2002)

By drawing on extensive and new primary interview material, the case study covers the US decision-making process in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and 'Operation Enduring Freedom' from October 2001 until 'Operation Anaconda' in April 2002 (when major American military operations ceased for over half a year).

The case study explores how the asymmetric strategies by the Taliban and Al-Qaeda brought about the dilemma for US commanders – the inability to wage Operation Enduring Freedom with low risks to both US military personnel and Afghan civilians. Focusing on the US response to this dilemma, the case study examines the legal, moral, and strategic consequences of US operations.

Chapter 6: Iraq (2003–2011)

This third and final case study empirically evaluates the violent clash between American military forces and its adversaries in Iraq. The chapter distinguishes between three combat phases over the course of 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' (OIF): the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime (19 March–1 May 2003), the insurgency (May 2003–December 2006), and the so-called 'surge' (December 2006–December 2011). The case study advances our understanding of how the strategies of US adversaries exacerbated the US ability to operate in ways that ensured low risks to American military personnel and high levels of civilian protection. The chapter critically evaluates US military operations through the prism of IHL and examines whether American forces started prioritising casualty-aversion over the safeguarding of Iraqi civilians. Finally, the chapter examines whether lower numbers of Iraqi civilian deaths could have been achieved if marginal increases to the risks faced by US soldiers had been accepted and if different military strategies had been chosen.

Why Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq?

The empirical part of the book answers the central research question by comparing and contrasting three US military interventions: one in the immediate post–Cold War era and two since 9/11. The three case studies have been chosen to provide a comparative investigation of the legal, moral, and strategic challenges facing the US military when it intervenes in conflicts where the local actors are not sensitive to international norms of civilian protection in war.

The types of intrastate conflicts encountered in Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq posed a major challenge to American warfare. This challenge has arisen from the specific operational environments that tend to give advantage to unconventional forms of warfare such as guerrilla tactics and hit and run strategies.[27] The United States is likely to find itself increasingly operating in urban settings (as experienced in Mogadishu and Iraq) and in mountainous environments (such as the campaign in the Hindukush). In other words, urban and mountainous guerrilla warfare has become the predominant theatre of operations in the twenty-first century.[28] In that sense, Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq are likely to resemble the type of strategic environments in which the US military will conduct operations in the years and decades to come.

Furthermore, because of the focus on the dynamic interactions under conditions of asymmetry, these cases were selected over other US interventions in the post–Cold War world such as Bosnia, Kosovo, or Libya. Admittedly, the American armed forces have maintained military capabilities so far in excess of those of any would-be (state- or non-state) adversary to the extent that it easily dwarfs the capabilities of a number of competitors combined.[29] This historically unprecedented level of asymmetry is unbridgeable in conventional terms and seems to render any American adversary, whether state or non-state actor, to a status of military helplessness.[30] By selecting the cases of Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq over other interventions, the book deliberately explores cases in which the United States waged war against semi and/or non-state actors rather than state actors. This allows the monograph to investigate the interactive dynamics generated in war under the widest possible gap between two military actors: it is in these cases that the particular interactive dynamics generated by conditions of asymmetry should become most profound.

[27] Griffith 1992; Giap 1977, 23–55; Laqueur 1977, 187–243.
[28] Lieven 2001, 1–8; Kaplan 2000, 8–58. [29] Bacevich 2005, 16.
[30] Kahn 2002, 2–9; Münkler 2006, 60.

Part of the empirical research focuses on the immediate post–Cold War era because it is generally regarded as a period of 'disinterested' wars, that is to say wars that were not justified and legitimised in terms of vital US security interests.[31] Instead, humanitarian rationales were a prominent feature of US interventionism in this period (Northern Iraq from 1991 to 1993, Somalia from 1992 to 1993, Bosnia from 1992 to 1995, and Kosovo in 1999).[32]

The importance of focusing on a case like Somalia is that it sets up a framework for comparison with US military interventions after 9/11. The latter have taken place in a period of 'interested' wars.[33] These are wars which are not fought for humanitarian purposes (even though humanitarian rationales were in play) but – at least according to the Bush and Obama Administrations – for purposes of self-defence against the forces of terrorism with a global reach.[34] The question guiding these cases is whether 9/11 has changed the context for US casualty-aversion and civilian protection from the era of humanitarian interventions: Did the US military in Afghanistan and Iraq adopt a different approach to force protection than in Somalia given that the US was fighting both wars with perceived vital national interests at stake? How far were military operations conducted in a *less* casualty-averse manner? And what were the implications of this for civilian protection? Was everything done to reduce the level of harm for enemy civilians? Or, could more civilian lives have been saved by accepting higher levels of risk to American military personnel? What was the strategic reasoning of American adversaries? And to what extent did the asymmetric strategy employed by al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Iraqi insurgents exacerbate the US ability to wage these wars in a riskless and humane way?

By considering – through the cases of Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq – the reality and nature of the conflict environments into which the US has intervened, the research critically examines how enemy behaviour impacted on the trade-off between US casualty-aversion and civilian protection.

Methodological Orientation

Instead of following one overarching qualitative social science research method, the monograph is rather eclectic in its choice of methodological approaches.

[31] Mueller 1996, 31; Krauthammer 2002; Bacevich 2002, 143.
[32] Walzer 2004, 100–101; Wheeler 2000. [33] Krauthammer 2002.
[34] Elshtain 2003, 1–45; *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), p. xvi.

Chapters 1 and 2, for instance, illustrate the socio-historical evolution of American casualty-aversion and civilian protection by employing a genealogical approach as pioneered by Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault. This permits the book to critically investigate and explain the conditions under which certain values or practices emerge, grow, and change.[35] A genealogical approach absolves the research from the need to recount the entire history of a phenomenon and restricts itself to historical episodes that are of decisive importance in understanding a phenomenon in terms of its key issues. For that reason, a genealogical methodology is concerned with questions of 'how' rather than 'what'. It asks how the norms of casualty-aversion and civilian protection have originated, changed, and finally evolved into their respective forms. By principally focusing on the causes of change, a genealogical method provides the most appropriate approach in order to achieve the objectives set out in Chapters 1 and 2.

Due to the focus on the dynamics that occur during US conflicts with semi-/non-state actors and on how the interaction impacts on the trade-off in US warfare, Chapters 3 to 6 employ a methodology which broadly fits within the school of social constructivism. Yet, these chapters neither follow any specific strand of social constructivism, nor aim at making any original contribution to the debates in which social constructivists are currently engaged. Instead, these chapters expose a conception of the interactive nature of war that is generally in line with constructivists' claims that agents and structures are mutually constituted.[36] Stressing the socially constructed nature of agents and structures, constructivists emphasise how agents can shape, reproduce, and change their material and ideational environment, yet are constrained and shaped by it.[37] In other words, the constructivist premise of agents and structures, interests and identities, ideas and beliefs being 'mutually constituted' underlines the basic understanding of war's interactive dynamic as being mutually constituted by both adversaries.

The material for the empirical research is drawn mainly from two sources. On the one hand, the analysis makes extensive use of the diverse secondary literature on the nature of the local conflicts in Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and contemporary US warfare. Besides drawing on existing secondary and web-based sources of these American interventions, the research draws on new primary source material which has been gathered through thirty-eight semi-structured interviews with former and current American military planners, service personnel, and foreign policy

[35] Nietzsche 1995; Foucault 1977, 139–164. [36] Wendt 1992, 391–425; Giddens 1984.
[37] Price and Reus-Smit 1998; Zehfuss 2001, 54–75; Wendt 1992, 391–425.

makers. In addition to that, sources have been collected from journalists (print media and television) who reported on Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq during the respective operations and who therefore have directly experienced the reality and nature of US interventions on the ground (*Christian Science Monitor*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Reuters, CNN, NBC, BBC). Finally, sources have also been collected from the vast pool of experts and scholars in US East Coast universities (Brown University, Georgetown University, George Washington University), think-tanks, research centres, and public policy-focused institutions (RAND Corporation, The Brookings Institution, United States Institute of Peace, The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The International Peace Academy, The Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, and The Project on Defence Alternatives).[38]

[38] For details of the interviewees, see list.