


Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force

Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



Economy of Force

Retrieving the older but surprisingly neglected language of household governance, *Economy of Force* offers a radical new account of the historical rise of the social realm and distinctly social theory as modern forms of *oikonomikos* – the art and science of household rule. The techniques and domestic ideologies of household administration are highly portable and play a remarkably central role in international and imperial relations. In two late-colonial British ‘emergencies’ in Malaya and Kenya, and US counterinsurgencies in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, armed social work was the continuation of *oikonomia* – not politics – by other means. This is a provocative new history of counterinsurgency with major implications for social, political and international theory. Historically rich and theoretically innovative, this book will interest scholars and students across the humanities and social sciences, especially politics and international relations, history of social and political thought, history of war, social theory and sociology.

PATRICIA OWENS is Reader in International Relations at the University of Sussex. She is author of *Between War and Politics: International Relations and the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (2007) and co-edits the *European Journal of International Relations*. She has held research fellowships at Harvard, Princeton, UC-Berkeley, USC and Oxford.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force

Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force

Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: 139

Economy of Force

EDITORS

Christian Reus-Smit

Nicholas J. Wheeler

EDITORIAL BOARD

James Der Derian, Theo Farrell, Martha Finnemore, Lene Hansen,

Robert Keohane, Rachel Kerr, Jan Aart Scholte, Peter Vale,

Kees van der Pijl, Jutta Weldes, Jennifer Welsh, William Wohlforth

Cambridge Studies in International Relations is a joint initiative of Cambridge University Press and the British International Studies Association (BISA). The series aims to publish the best new scholarship in international studies, irrespective of subject matter, methodological approach or theoretical perspective. The series seeks to bring the latest theoretical work in International Relations to bear on the most important problems and issues in global politics.

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force
 Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- 138 Ronald R. Krebs
Narrative and the making of US national security
- 137 Andrew Phillips and J. C. Sharman
International order in diversity
 War, trade and rule in the Indian Ocean
- 136 Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot and Iver B. Neumann
Diplomacy and the making of world politics
- 135 Barry Buzan and George Lawson
The global transformation
 History, modernity and the making of international relations
- 134 Heather Elko McKibben
State strategies in international bargaining
 Play by the rules or change them?
- 133 Janina Dill
Legitimate targets?
 Social construction, international law, and US bombing
- 132 Nuno P. Monteiro
Theory of unipolar politics
- 131 Jonathan D. Caverley
Democratic militarism
 Voting, wealth, and war
- 130 David Jason Karp
Responsibility for human rights
 Transnational corporations in imperfect states
- 129 Friedrich Kratochwil
The status of law in world society
 Meditations on the role and rule of law
- 128 Michael G. Findley, Daniel L. Nielson and J. C. Sharman
Global shell games
 Experiments in transnational relations, crime, and terrorism

Series list continues after index

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force

Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Economy of Force

Counterinsurgency and the Historical
Rise of the Social

PATRICIA OWENS



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force
Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107121942

© Patricia Owens 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Owens, Patricia, 1975–

Economy of force : counterinsurgency and the historical rise of the social / Patricia Owens.

pages cm. – (Cambridge studies in international relations)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-12194-2 (hardback)

1. Political sociology. 2. Households–Political aspects.

3. Counterinsurgency–Social aspects. 4. International relations.

I. Title.

JA76.O85 2015

303.6'6–dc23 2015014243

ISBN 978-1-107-12194-2 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force
Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

For Bille

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force

Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

When it grew too hot for dreamless dozing, I picked up my tangle again, and went on ravelling it out, considering now the whole house of war in its structural aspect, which was strategy, in its arrangements, which were tactics, and in the sentiment of its inhabitants, which was psychology; for my personal duty was command, and the commander, like the master architect, was responsible for all.

T. E. Lawrence (1922/1991: 181)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i>
1. Introduction: <i>oikonomia</i> in the use of force	1
A social question	12
From pacification to domestication: what kind of work is armed social work?	21
Methodology and overview	39
2. The really real? A history of ‘social’ and ‘society’	49
The autonomous logic of <i>raison de la société</i> ?	
Towards liberalism	54
Marxism and the Social Question	62
Realist reactions: from <i>realpolitik</i> to <i>sozialpolitik</i>	69
Society of states without a history of society	76
Conclusion	85
3. Out of the confines of the household?	88
Classical <i>oikos</i> , feudal households	92
From household status to contract society?	101
The household ontology of the modern social realm	111
Onto the Social Question	118
Conclusion	128
4. The colonial limits of society	131
Civil society meets mutiny	137
Sir Henry Sumner Maine and the patriarchal theory of traditional society	144
Decentralised household despotism: on indirect rule	149
French connection: colonial pacification as <i>raison de la société</i>	154
Progressive housekeeping in the American Philippines	162
Conclusion	170

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force
 Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

x	<i>Contents</i>
5. 'More than concentration camps': the battle for hearths in two late-colonial emergencies	173
'Good government in all its aspects': emergency in Malaya	179
Sociological causes and remedies: rehabilitating Mau	
Mau in Kenya	189
'The gulag never looked so good'	197
Conclusion	206
6. Society itself is at war: new model pacification in Vietnam	209
The end of the Social Question?	214
The passing of traditional society: building the House of Ngo	223
'Those aren't houses. They're just huts'	230
Conclusion	239
7. <i>Oikonomia</i> by other means: counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq	243
The end of the social? Military occupation in a neoliberal age	248
Who's your <i>paterfamiliās</i> ? The household of tribal patriarchs	258
Inside the house of counterinsurgency: coveting and protecting the women	266
Conclusion	275
8. Conclusion: 'it's the <i>oikos</i> , stupid'	278
<i>References</i>	289
<i>Index</i>	342

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force

Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

Numerous individuals and institutions have supported the writing of this book. The first full draft was written as a Fellow of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, a very special place. I'm grateful to Dean Lizabeth Cohen and Associate Dean Judy Vichniac (our Radcliffe Major General), Rebecca Haley and Sharon Lim-Hing for creating utopia. Kim Hutchings, Andy Hurrell, Steve Smith, Justin Rosenberg and Benno Teschke helped to get me there. My Radcliffe Research Partners – Eliza Pan, Wendy Chen and Tyler Cusick – were diligent assistants. The project gained immeasurably from conversations with numerous fellow Fellows, especially David Engerman, Doug Rogers, Caroline Elkins, Katherine Ibbett, Tsitsi Jaji, Glenn Cohen, Jane Rhodes, Renée Poznanski, Ana Mariella Bacigalupo and Kristin Monroe. In the wider Harvard and Boston community, I'm indebted to the kindness and hospitality of David Armitage, Serena Parekh McGushin and James Bernauer.

I feared that returning to British higher education after the luxuries of the private American Ivy League might have negatively affected morale. I shouldn't have worried. The Department of International Relations at the University of Sussex is one of the most intellectually stimulating and collegial places I can imagine, providing a wonderful home for the completion of the book. For comments on the entire manuscript, I am grateful to my colleagues Paul Kirby and Anna Stavrianakis. For typically incisive questions and comments on smaller portions, I thank my colleagues Justin Rosenberg, Jan Selby, Lara Coleman, Kamran Matin, David Karp, Stefan Elbe, Louiza Odysseos, Beate Jahn, Zdenek Kavan and Earl Gammon. Other scholars and friends have generously given their time to read and comment on earlier drafts. I'm especially indebted to Michael Jago, Keith Stanski, Dustin Ells Howes and Helen Kinsella for comments on an entire draft. Tarak Barkawi, Huw Bennett, Catia Confortini, Andrew Davenport, Toby Dodge, Jean-François Drolet, Inanna Hamati-Ataya,

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force

Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Lene Hansen, Lee Jones, Byran Mabee, Elspeth van Veen and Ann Tickner commented on individual chapters or responded generously to requests for advice.

Some of the earliest ideas for the project were tried out while a Visiting Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, and while on sabbatical from the School of Politics and International Relations at Queen Mary, University of London, in the spring of 2010. I'm appreciative of Kirstie McClure, Joshua Foa Dienstag and Beltrán Undarraga at UCLA for their critical comments, Kirstie and Joshua for their hospitality, and Dana Villa and Ray Kiely for helping make the visit possible. I first started thinking about counterinsurgency at the Leverhulme Programme on the Changing Character of War at Oxford University, including during the darkest days of the Iraq occupation. I remain grateful to former colleagues and students at Oxford, above all Hew Strachan and Henry Shue, for my first real interdisciplinary experience concretely grounded in the study of war.

Some of the arguments in the book were first presented at various professional conferences and invited talks. I'm grateful for invitations to present, and questions/comments from discussants and participants at the International Studies Association Annual Conventions in San Francisco and Montreal; the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Cambridge; the School of Humanities at the University of Southampton; the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University; the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles; the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College; the School of Fine Arts at the University of Leeds; the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology; the Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University; the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics; the Department of War Studies at Kings College London; the School of Social Sciences at City University, London; the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster; the School of Politics and International Relations at Queen Mary, University of London; and, of course, the Department of International Relations at Sussex University.

I am also grateful to John Haslam and Carrie Parkinson at Cambridge University Press, the series editors, Nicholas Wheeler

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-12194-2 - Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 139: Economy of Force

Christian Reus-Smit and Nicholas J. Wheeler

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements

xiii

and Christian Reus-Smith, and the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript.

A few paragraphs of the material are reprinted from Owens (2013), 'From Bismarck to Petraeus: The Question of the Social and the Social Question in Counterinsurgency', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19(1): 135–157.