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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE:** Territorialization of the Megacity: A Study in Exploiting Social Borders

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**AUTHOR:** Major Alexandra V. Gerbracht

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## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** Territorialization of the Megacity: A Study in Exploiting Social Borders

**Author:** Major Alexandra V. Gerbracht, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** Physical constraints, grievances, and collective behavior in a megacity define territories, which affect dynamics of a crowd and identify targets of collective violence. Mapping these informal networks within a dense environment allow maneuver around and through crisis areas. Understanding grievances allows for target identification and protection. When governments see territories, they can limit the impact of a crisis.

**Discussion:** Collective behavior and grievances drive the creation of physical territories. The physical attributes of a city can influence collective violence by allowing fluidity of influence around territories supporting collective behavior. The attributes associated with territorialization from collective behavior enable a military force attempting to minimize the impact of conflict. These territories have borders and targets exploitable for military operations. Drawing borders around these territories and identifying targets allows for maneuver of security forces within an area plagued by collective violence.

**Conclusion:** Knowing the ground and the social terrain keys the security forces to possible targets, available resources, and maneuverability corridors. An emphasis on understanding the social terrain of the urban battlefield is imperative to minimizing the long-term impact of conflict. If social violence is a continuation of resistance to policy through other means, then the military must understand the cause of resistance to combat the violence. Understanding of the social environment and how existing grievances and boundaries form territories allows effective maneuver on the battlefield by a security force.

## Preface

*I participated in the Advanced Studies Program because I was curious about approaching the problem of warfare in a megacity, and participating a group project was more enticing than researching alone. As the group discussed the problem of operating in a population dense environment, I gained a respect for the challenge a modern security force has operating amongst so many people and resources. There are numerous reasons to avoid fighting in a city, but none of that matters if the enemy and the fight are in a city. I found transient mass creation significantly interesting and I wanted to explore its relation to conflict in a megacity. The sociology behind a riot or social uprising is fascinating. Riots can be particularly destructive, and I explored more about those topics, specifically the two cases of the Los Angeles and Paris riots. These conflicts matter because they are the least predictable. However, the more I studied I realized the conflicts are predictable. Security forces can take advantage of that predictability. This research matters to all security forces from law enforcement to formal militaries. When the state understands social dynamics, they positively influence the outcome of conflict in a megacity.*

## Introduction

*Within a megacity, grievances exist, stemming from social anxiety marinating over months and years. These grievances translate into a heated argument and marginalized sectors of the population wait to take action. Then it happens. An event sets off the frustrated masses of a densely populated area. Crisis and chaos amplifies. However, through preparation, understanding the social map, and the foresight to draw boundaries, a national security apparatus can limit the impact of a potentially costly uprising.*

Megacities have a density of population, networks, resources, and life support systems. Influencing possible security events or by defining territories of informal social and economic similarities, civil structure, and identifying grievances is a challenge. How are megacity conflicts that arise from collective behavior limited? The governmental influence must limit turmoil by identifying and protecting targets while also enabling mobility. Physical constraints, grievances, and collective behavior in a megacity define territories, which affect dynamics of a crowd and identify targets of collective violence. Mapping these informal networks within a dense environment allow maneuver around and through crisis areas. Understanding grievances allows for target identification and protection. When governments see territories, they can limit the impact of a crisis.

Megacities foster collective behavior territoriality.<sup>1</sup> This behavior reflects political and economic grievances. Existing physical constraints limit and define behavior. Collective behavior and group dynamics develop into collective violence. Violent actions, like riots, result

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this paper, territories are networks associated in time and space, the physical boundaries of a group of people, places, and/or things.

in rational targets, which stem from grievances. Transient masses and belligerent actions of collective behavior identify boundaries of a crisis. By understanding group formation and grievance development within a densely populated area, state agencies identify territories. Exploiting these territories limits conflict impact and increases state influence. Identification of collective violence targets and territorial boundaries creates mobility corridors and allows state forces maneuver space and access resources. States need boundaries and maneuver space for logistical operations, to set up blocking forces, to channel the enemy, and provide relief.

This paper links territoriality-based collective violence to exploit maneuver space and define targets. The research applies to physical and non-physical targets, and across international borders. Territoriality is not restricted to the megacity geography of dense human population. In order to combat an unconventional (informal) enemy, formal networks must influence the informal networks that define the territories. Collective behavior is by definition an informal network. When collective behavior turns into crisis, the state forces must limit the collective violence by mapping and estimating targets. The case studies of the 1992 LA Riots and 2005/6 Paris riots will look at collective behavior, existing territories, transient mass generation, security responses, and targets. The intent is to use the cases to develop a concept for defining territories of collective behavior threats and exploiting the boundaries to increase state influence and protect targets. Identifying key territories and targets before or at the onset of a conflict in a densely populated environment will shorten that conflict and reduce the amount of collateral damage.

## Literature Review

The basis of this research revolves around several key definitions which link progression from grievances and collective behavior to territorialization. The linkages are broad and have a variety of factors. Understanding the process and theories behind the social actions of collective behavior through transient mass to collective violence clarifies the creation of territories.

### Grievances

Political and economic grievances set the stage for conflict in a megacity. These grievances develop in megacities through marginalization of ethnicities and economic classes and limited opportunities<sup>2</sup>. There is a large body of work in the political economy and sociology fields comparing greed versus grievance as motivation for conflict. Self-enrichment incentives<sup>3</sup> as motivation to continue conflict (to include access to resources) is a form of greed.<sup>4</sup> The intent of this study is to look at the horizontal inequality grievances side of that dichotomy to identify territories created by grievance. These grievances relate back to resource availability<sup>5</sup> and social groups. Physical and economic resources define both territories and the grievances created therein. A specific example of resource boundaries is tenement house far from public transportation. Physical transportation capabilities limit employment opportunities, creating cleavages in opportunity. This paper will focus on physical territories but apply to both physical and non-physical boundaries and targets. Grievances also derive from physically separated

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<sup>2</sup> Ballentine, Karen and Heiko Nitzschke. "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Policy Lessons from Studies in the Political Economy of Armed Conflict", *International Peace Academy: Program on Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*. Oct 2003.

<sup>3</sup> The International Peace Academy's Program on Economic Agendas in Civil Wars case studies compiled by Ballentine and Nitzschke place both greed and grievance into the category of "incentives for self-enrichment and/or opportunities for insurgent mobilization" p 2.

<sup>4</sup> This study focuses on grievance vice self-motivated greed, but both play into targeting and collective violence.

<sup>5</sup> Aspinall, Edward. "The Construction of Grievance: Natural Resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict" *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 6 (Dec 2007)

marginalized groups, as reflected in architecture and urban-enclavization <sup>6</sup> or imposed territorialization.

## Collective Behavior

The predominant theory on collective behavior stems from Professor Neil Smelser's book *The Theory of Collective Behavior*. That book defines collective behavior as the spontaneous emergence of social groups outside of the norm, but other definitions break out collective behavior between both institutional (Dr. Smelser's "norm") and emergent behaviors. Professors Jack Weller and E.L. Quarantelli claim collective behavior links to emergent and institutional social relationships and norms.<sup>7</sup> As seen in Figure 1, three out of the four quadrants of collective behavior lead to some level of violent masses.

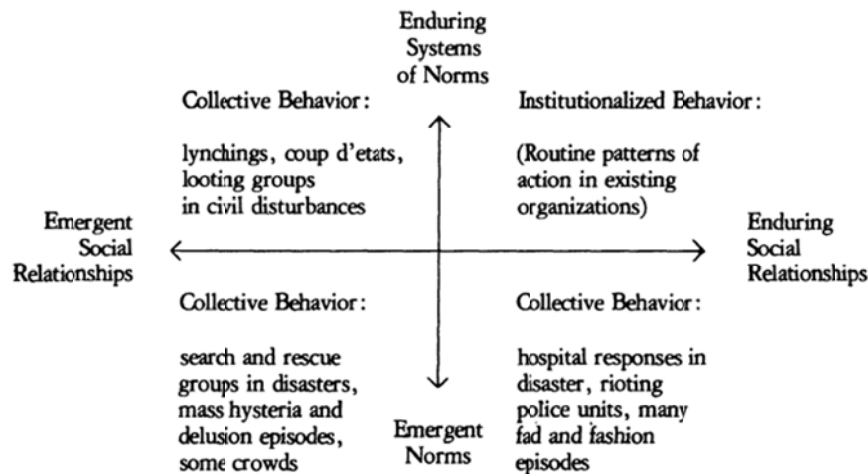


FIG. 1.—Institutional and collective behavior collectivities

<sup>6</sup> Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. Vantage Books, New York. 1990. Mike Davis describes enclavization in Los Angeles as the separation between economically disparate communities. The Hollywood neighborhoods wall themselves off and host to armed private guards. Short distances away are severely low-income areas. The author describes how the obsession in Los Angeles with physical security has led to these walled private communities. Enclavization is evident in any modern city and "gentrification" often emphasizes the separation. Southeast DC is the perfect example. The neighborhood immediately adjacent to the Marine Barracks at 8th and I Sts and the Navy Yard is upscale with expensive boutiques and bars, but just a few blocks away is frequent street crime.

<sup>7</sup> Weller, Jack and E.L. Quarantelli. Neglected Characteristics of Collective Behavior. *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 79, No. 3 (Nov., 1973), pp. 665-685

Dr. Richard Berk noted evidence of rational decisions in a riotous environment as a manifestation of collective behavior. Dr. Berk studied group decision-making by looking at the underlying causes behind collective violence. Using game theory and an action list Dr. Berk determined violent acts were based on rationality and personal cost of involvement.<sup>8</sup> Selection of targets is not a result of mass irrationality, there is conscious and subconscious thought behind collective violence. Although the target (vehicle, store window) may be the closest object to a crowd, the target may be the neighborhood itself or symbols of economic prosperity. His case study looked at an anti-Vietnam protest at Northwestern University in Chicago. The event incited enough fervor that protestors blocked off major roads as a form of immediate protest.<sup>9</sup> That was an act without a well-defined goal, however the participants shared a grievance against the Vietnam War, and blocking off a main road is an immediate announcement to non-participants of the grievance. The protesters targets access to resources, specifically main roads. Targets can deal directly with the grievance or simply be an unlucky target of opportunity.

## **Transient Mass**

This paper argues that collective behaviors define territories when they lead to collective violence. Roberta Senechel de la Roche agrees that collective violence deviates from social control and common norms. Collective social actions can form a cohesive group, also known as transient mass. These manifestations of transient mass can happen quickly or be cultivated over time using a common grievance or black swan event to activate the mass. The mass may not be violent but will behavior similarly to collective behavior and shared information drives its action. Collective violence manifests in the form of violent crowds, riots, lynching, vigilantism, and

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<sup>8</sup> Berk, Richard. "A Gaming Approach to Crowd Behavior". *American Sociological Review*, Vol 39 (June 1974)

<sup>9</sup> Berk 355

terrorism.<sup>10</sup> The latter two tend to be well-organized and longer in duration although all may be evident in a megacity environment. Collective violence is destructive harm caused by a group, can be of any duration, and is a form of protest to grievances. For the state to best react to these acts of violence, it must define the space around them.

## Territories

The Oxford English Dictionary defines territories as an area of knowledge, activity, or experience, or as land with a specified characteristic.<sup>11</sup> Representations of regions or territories discussed at length in conflict studies. The most prevalent border disputes are interstate,<sup>12</sup> but those same definitions and historical associations of social borders apply to enclaves within a densely populated environment. In the context of this paper, territory is much more fluid than state borders, and reflects social vice formal lines. The changing role of boundaries at the national and megacity level is the subject of formal research. Frederick Kratochwil researched territorial social organizations and their effect on the international system. His research revealed how modern attempts of creating functional regimes better managed conflicting uses of resources and political interest.<sup>13</sup> This meant that the social organization borders were better at managing resources and changed the formal definitions of territory to a more social focus. Another study on territories looked at social and economic borders in Los Angeles. Mike Davis' book *City of*

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<sup>10</sup> Senechal de la Roche, Roberta. "Collective Violence as Social Control". *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Mar., 1996)

<sup>11</sup> Oxford English Dictionary. Accessed 21 March 2015.  
[http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/territory](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/territory)

<sup>12</sup> Rasler, Karen A. and William R. Thompson. "Contested Territory, Strategic Rivalries, and Conflict Escalation" *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Mar 2006)

<sup>13</sup> Kratochwil, Friederich. "Of Systems, Boundaries, and Territoriality: An Inquiry into the Formation of the State System". *World Politics*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Oct., 1986), pp. 27-52

*Quartz* aptly describes a physical representation of enclavization is in Los Angeles where luxury lifestyles are physically defended to create a culture of physical security.<sup>14</sup>

Professor John Ruggie defines territory in relation to collective behavior as "spatial extension" and "the social facility of any spatial extension in turn implies some mode of differentiating human collectivities from one another."<sup>15</sup> Many sociology and political science studies on territories relate directly back to group collective behavior. For the sake of this research, territories are any definable physical area containing multiple possible targets and avenues for maneuver.

## **State Influence**

This paper frequently mentions the goal of state influence. In a densely populated environment, collective behavior often leads to state security losing the ability to influence or minimize the negative impact of a violent situation. The case studies discussed below are two such examples of local legitimate security forces losing control of a situation. Control is not the goal in a densely populated area, as one group may never have complete control. However, influencing the action of collective behavior groups to protect resources and property is the goal of state security influence.

Megacities have numerous variables when it comes to transient mass populations and collective behavior; to clarify the case studies there are a number of assumptions. Megacities exist in a state strong enough to have existing political and economic systems in place and these systems have the capabilities to respond to grievances and threats to security. In the Los Angeles and Paris riots, the existing security system was the local police force. Megacities will have a

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<sup>14</sup> Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. Verso, New York, NY 1990

<sup>15</sup> Ruggie, John. "Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations". *International Organization*, Vol. 47, No. 1. (Winter, 1993), p. 148

breadth and depth of character, meaning there will exist, in relatively small spaces, a variety of social and economic classes. Territories already exist within densely populated areas, and they are capable of fostering collective behavior.

Collective behavior and grievances drive the creation of physical territories. The physical attributes of a city can influence collective violence by allowing fluidity of forces or influence around territories supporting collective behavior/violence. The attributes associated with territorialization from collective behavior enable a military force attempting to minimize the impact of conflict. These territories have borders and targets exploitable for military operations. Drawing borders around these territories and identifying targets allows for maneuver of security forces within an area plagued by collective violence.

The case studies illustrating territorialization include the 1992 LA riots and the Paris riots of 2005/6. The cases will cover how collective behavior developed because of existing grievances, territorialization, and transient mass formation after specific events and will finish with an assessment of state security responses and the specific targets of the collective behavior. These cases amplify the patterns of collective behavior based on grievance, and translate the grievances into territories. In both cases, the initial security response did little to quell the riots. Using these examples a military concept develops that will use territorialization to minimize impact of collective violence and maximize state security influence.

## **Case Studies**

On April 29, 1992 in Los Angeles, the results of the Rodney King trial were released. The court had found the four white police Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officers not guilty of beating and unarmed black man, Rodney King, the previous March. Bystanders

videotaped the entire attack. The court decision met with protests that spread across the city, eventually causing the mayor to request military assistance.

On October 25, 2005 in the outskirts of Paris, the city of Clichy-sous-Bois, a group of teens on their way home from playing soccer were loitering near their homes and a concerned citizen called the police. As squad cars approached, the youths fled from the officers and three were electrocuted when they hid at a nearby power substation. Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré both died. The unrest began in Clichy-sous-Bois in the form of rioting crowds. The riotous behavior spread around the country in the following weeks, causing a state emergency. By January 2006, the French government passed legislation addressing the grievances over unemployment for immigrants identified during the riots. French citizens repealed the legislation in April 2006 after massive opposition.<sup>16</sup>

The intent of delving into these two cases is to correlate empirical observations about each of the events. The existing grievances and territories relate directly to how the events unfolded and what the violence targeted. Building a military concept around this logic illustrates the combat of these types of conflicts in a population dense environment. The case studies highlight six specific observations: collective behavior, existing grievances, existing territories, transient mass generation, security responses, and targets of violence.

## **Collective Behavior**

Professor Neil Smelser breaks down social tenets in detail in his book *The Theory of Collective Behavior*. He describes collective behavior actions as taking place in a cluster of time and in specific cultural areas. These collectivities can be broken down into physical and temporal

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<sup>16</sup> Murphy p 977-8

collectives.<sup>17</sup> Groups coalesce through social, cultural, and proximity behaviors and collective behavior will stem from some level of communication and interaction. This aspect of his theory aligns with the concept of territorialization of social behaviors. Shared grievances facilitate common understanding among individuals. With numerous grievances and already existing physical or social commonalities territories form.

Los Angeles and France had existing marginalized populations who attempted to address economic and social marginalization through the political system. Modern megacities are a hybrid of networks that link people with similar interests and backgrounds. LA and Paris had populations in contact with shared grievances. In both cases, the grievances stemmed from systemic economic discrimination of immigrant and minority populations resulting in physical territorialization. These obvious physical boundaries are the first step in territorialized collective behavior, similarly aggrieved people in one area.

The combination of aggrieved and compressed populations in territories leads to collective behavior, but that can manifest into collective violence in the form of riots or civil disturbance with the right window of opportunity for transient mass creation. Both the LA and Paris events are examples of collective behavior turned to violence. Population dense environments facilitate collective behavior through territoriality.<sup>18</sup> Collective violence is a form of social control to get a group to mimic each other's behavior. Mobs are a manifestation of grievances to vent anger.<sup>19</sup> Mobilizations are representative of local social or kinship bonds. Creation of groups bound by collective behavior by spatial proximity or grievance identification set the stage for collective violence.

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<sup>17</sup> Smelser p 1-5

<sup>18</sup> Ruggie p 150

<sup>19</sup> Senechal p 98

## Grievances

Socio-political differences lead to grievance, population dense environments have territories of vastly different social classes in close proximity, which can exemplify the differences and make grievances more prominent. The physical resources of public transportation or accessibility to jobs create grievance. Lack of proximity to green space of recreation areas can build into grievance. Grievances develop when a population or territory does not have access to life support systems or resources. These resources can be as complex as economic opportunities, political differences, and education or as simple as clean water and sewage systems.

Grievances are also related to structures and existing territories. Common grievances are the bricks that build territories from commonalities between the actors. The immigrant populations in Paris had similar religious views.<sup>20</sup> With continued immigration, both legal and illegal, and a slowing economy, the jobs dried up and some areas had up to thirty percent unemployment.<sup>21</sup> Attempts at integration policies intended to curb Islamic radicalism,<sup>22</sup> but ended up limiting Islamic identity. In March of 2004, the Chirac government passed a secularization law banning religious symbols in public primary and secondary schools (Islamic girls could no longer wear traditional headscarves).<sup>23</sup> Despite continued cultural integration of second and third generation immigrants, there was a general dissatisfaction with the unfulfilled promise of economic and political integration.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Burke, Jason. Fires of 'civil war' erupt in Paris, *The Guardian*. October 29, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, Craig. Immigrant Rioting Flares in northern France for Ninth Night. *The New York Times*. 5 November 2005

<sup>22</sup> Whitol de Wenden, Catherine. "Urban Riots in France" *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*; Vol 26, No 2, (Summer 2006), p 51

<sup>23</sup> Law #2004-228 of March 15, 2004, concerning, as an application of the principle of the separation of church and state, the wearing of symbols or garb which show religious affiliation in public primary and secondary schools.

<sup>24</sup> Canet, Raphaël and Pech, Laurent and Stewart, Maura, France's Burning Issue: Understanding the Urban Riots of November 2005, *Social Science Research Network*, (November 18, 2008). <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1303514>

## Territorialization

The creation of territories, identifying borders and targets can be from social, non-social, physical, and economic borders. The area between public transportation stops or a neighborhood and business area that shares a language form physical borders. States can define territories in megacities through civil planning: zoning, property taxes, and services provided. Examples of non-social territorialization: public transportation is a physical representation of network pathways and avenues of approach. These avenues can define territories and used for maneuver during a conflict scenario. Space plays a central role in social change and collective action and defines perceptual avenues for action.<sup>25</sup> Social space includes physical resources like businesses or essential services. Perpetual avenues for action would be the major highways defining neighborhoods, causeways or canals form physical borders.

Territory creation in megacities happens through geographic, ethnic, economic boundaries, and common grievances; which all lead to collective behavior. A common grievance might be poor access to employment due to lack of public transportation. Unemployed people from one territory use the same limited resources, and frustration with the limited resources leads to collective behavior. Access to life support resources (like sewer, water, electricity, and transportation) defines these territories. Territories are complicated, like *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*, the populations live amongst each other but divide socially or politically.<sup>26</sup>

Territorialization began in France in the 1960's with an influx of immigrants from North Africa and the Maghreb regions during reconstruction. These marginalized newcomers lived in large-scale public housing projects and subjected to the French form of cultural integration. Many of the second and third generation immigrants had culturally assimilated but remained on

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<sup>25</sup> Beaugard p 365

<sup>26</sup> Tilly, Charles. *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK 2003. p 99

the outskirts of society (both physically and figuratively) because of deep-seated anti-immigrant racism and economic discrimination. These districts were economically isolated and not connected to public transportation and far from city centers. In 2005, there were constant conflicts between police and Muslim youth. Segregated neighborhoods compounded the problem by discouraging assimilation with the French population.<sup>27</sup> Failed attempts at engaging political tools left the North African and Arab populations frustrated and intentionally territorialized. Earlier in the month of October 2005 Nicholas Sarkozy, Minister of the Interior at the time, had begun a new offensive against 25 tough neighborhoods across France.<sup>28</sup>

Like Paris, there was a history of racial and economic segregation in Los Angeles. In 1992 Los Angeles, the LAPD responsibilities broke down by regions, bureaus, and divisions.<sup>29</sup> These divisions aligned with the relative economic classification of the neighborhood. Mike Davis discusses the lack of public spaces (literal lack of public restrooms kept non-residents away from certain commercial areas) for all the classes to commune due to a defense of luxury lifestyle and obsession with physical security.<sup>30</sup> Los Angeles developed along lines of economic distribution. Black gang culture developed in the 1970's along clear territories. Decades of gang and drug violence had partitioned off the city into small social and economic territories.<sup>31</sup> Figure 1 below represents established territories. Gangs as social groups act as motivation for collective behavior and collective violence.

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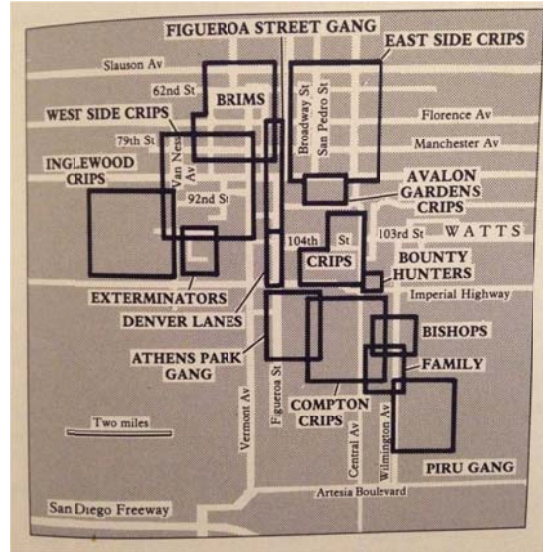
<sup>27</sup> Wihtol p 47-50

<sup>28</sup> Burke

<sup>29</sup> Useem p 362

<sup>30</sup> Davis p 266

<sup>31</sup> Davis p 267



1972 Gang territories in South Central Los Angeles<sup>32</sup>

In both Paris and Los Angeles, the violence happened in the vicinity where the belligerents lived, and the people involved in the crimes did not leave the area. In both cases, the existing territories affected how the crowds reacted and where they operated. Decades of segregation and marginalization festered beneath the surface of a population ripe for action.

### Transient Mass Generation

*"We respect the republic; the republic has to respect us."* -Siako Karne, brother of a teenager whose death sparked the 2005 riots.<sup>33</sup>

Mobilizing agents exploit critical events and manufacture windows of opportunity. They seek to leverage a shocking event to mobilize other citizens. Professor Smelser describes collective behavior actions as taking place in a cluster of time and in specific cultural areas.<sup>34</sup> Physical territories created by the geographic containment of specific social and immigrant groups in both Los Angeles and all over France defined areas ripe for collective behavior. The timing was a specific event, which generated action against the formal government security.

<sup>32</sup> Davis p 301

<sup>33</sup> Burke

<sup>34</sup> Smelser

Windows of opportunities for collective violence were the release of the results of the case against the officers who beat Rodney King, and the death of innocent Muslim teens outside of Paris. The collective behavior actions in both cases were transient mass generation, which evolved into collective violence.

The Los Angeles Riots spread because of the immediate news coverage of action that began at Florence Ave and Normandie Av in South Central. The Los Angeles habit of live broadcasting of unfolding crimes had the unintended effect of being a call to action for other rioters. When they arrived to the scene, crowds targeted and drove out the police officers. The actions at that intersection were the flashpoint for the riot and by early evening of 29 April the intensity of the protests prevented the LAPD from gaining control.<sup>35</sup>

The Paris Riots also spread quickly but were not limited to that city. The North African and Muslim populations had an existing social network and the fervor spread throughout the social organization of marginalized peoples. News articles were kindling for the fuel of years of frustration with a system that focused on socialization and not racism (citizenship would provide for integration regardless of ethnicity was the thought but not the reality<sup>36</sup>). France met Smelser's time and space requirements in spades for the collective behavior of October 2005 to spread throughout the country.

The transient mass generation in both cases had much to do with the population density in small areas with groups sharing grievance. The shared narratives lead to collective action through information sharing. The aggrieved people needed just one event to set off the collective behavior and turn it into civil disobedience. The territorialized grievances separating populations and denying opportunities are the necessary condition; windows of opportunity for civil

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<sup>35</sup> Useem p 364

<sup>36</sup> Whitol p 51, Murphy p 981

disturbance are *the black swans*.<sup>37</sup> However, the government's reaction to the violence informs how fast the violence spreads.

## **Security Responses**

Collective violence is coordinated destruction in which groups specialize in the deployment of coercive means to "undertake programs of action that cause damage" according to the Charles Tilly.<sup>38</sup> Riots are a perfect example of social or political grievance manifesting to action. Social violence is a continuation of the politics of resistance with other means. The response of the governmental security forces is imperative to understanding how territorialized collective behavior can shift.<sup>39</sup>

In 1992 Los Angeles the police responded to their first calls about rioters and protesters at 5:20 pm at Florence Ave and Normandie Ave. It was a primarily residential area and the two cross streets were main thoroughfares. There were about 100 people gathered and the police responded within minutes of the initial call with 20 officers. The officers and their vehicles immediately became the target of physical assaults and projectiles. The officers withdrew to the 77th St station just over a mile away.<sup>40</sup> As the civil disturbance grew across numerous neighborhoods over several days the LAPD and mayor asked for help. The National Guard mobilized and Joint Task Force-Los Angeles (JTF-LA) formed with active duty military forces

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<sup>37</sup> I use Nassim Nicholas Taleb's definition of black swan: an event that comes as a surprise, has a major effect, and is often inappropriately rationalized after the fact with the benefit of hindsight.

<sup>38</sup> Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*. p 26

<sup>39</sup> Not all collective violence is between citizens and authorities but for the purposes of this paper that is the only case that will be addressed.

<sup>40</sup> Useem p 363

from the region. The military forces assigned to the civil disturbance mission conducted mostly point and area security missions.<sup>41 42</sup>

The immediate response to the uprising in Clichy-sous-Bois merited the action of over 200 riot police officers who were fighting a street battle. The French police also requested support from the Army as they had little training for riots.<sup>43</sup> In Paris and Lyon, police banned public gatherings, and the government declared a state of emergency in Paris and 30 other areas. The Paris police brought in 2000 additional officers.<sup>44</sup> After almost three months of violence, the French government responded with legislation addressing economic grievances caused by lack of access to job. This law was similar to America's affirmative action and intended to allow the immigrant North African and Arab populations more access to the job market by encouraging employers.

The significant challenge to the security forces in both the LA and Paris cases was the requirement to respond to multiple areas of disturbance simultaneously. This required significant coordination efforts beyond that of just local law enforcement. Engagement from national security forces is often required for collective behavior events that spread beyond just once area or city. Regular law enforcement officers do not trained to deal with large violent crowds, and the military had to step in for both cases. Aside from coordination efforts for security missions, the forces must be concerned with the targeting of the collective violence. In both cases the state security apparatus were grievance targets.

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<sup>41</sup> The 1990's Army Doctrine on "Mass Acts of Civil Disobedience" included a large spectrum of operations to combat possible insurgent operations (snipers, bombing, hostage situations). JTF-LA was outside of the expected Civil Disturbance mission.

<sup>42</sup> Center for Army Lessons Learned. *Operations Other Than War Volume III: Civil Disturbance LA Riots*. U.S. Army Combined Arms Command Newsletter No 93-7, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Nov 1993

<sup>43</sup> Burke

<sup>44</sup> BBC News, "Riot erupts in French city center", BBC News, November 13, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4430540.stm>

## Targets

Collective violence can have specific targets.<sup>45</sup> Targets in the Los Angeles Riots started out as the police officers responding to protests and their vehicles. The collective violence spread to looting, assault, robbery, and assault with a deadly weapon. An unfortunate target of opportunity was Reginald Denny, a white construction truck driver, who came to a stop at the corner of Florence and Normandie due to the crowd of people. Rioters pulled him out of his stopped vehicle and beat him, and a news helicopter hovering above caught the entire scene on camera for a live broadcast.<sup>46</sup> The mob mentality exacted revenge for the beating of Rodney King by conducting the same kind of attack.<sup>47</sup> The Paris riots also saw over ten thousand cars burned, and over 200 public buildings damaged.<sup>48</sup> In this case, the destruction of public buildings was a representation of grievances with the governmental system that marginalized these "outer city" areas. The Paris riots also resulted in makeshift barricades canalizing any security response and accentuating existing territories.<sup>49</sup>

The initial targets, police and their vehicles, were obvious symbols of the LAPD, whose actions were the cause of social distress. Grievance symbols are an easy target. The "Occupy Wall Street" campaign was a transient mass targeted against the wealth distribution in America. They targeted and physically occupied near the symbol of American wealth, the New York Stock Exchange.<sup>50</sup> Sharing information on how the target applied to the grievance is important to targeting transient mass. In Los Angeles, privately owned vehicles and storefronts were symbols of the economic prosperity not enjoyed by the marginalized populations in the South Central

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<sup>45</sup> Martin, McPhail, McCarthy.

<sup>46</sup> Useem p 363

<sup>47</sup> Greed will come into play in collective violence targeting and looting is unavoidable in transient mass.

<sup>48</sup> Murphy p 978

<sup>49</sup> Burke

<sup>50</sup> Gitlin, Todd. Occupy's Predicament: the moment and the prospects for a movement. *The British Journal for Sociology*. Vol 64, Issue 1 (March 2013) pp 3-25

area. It is easy for transient mass to exploit targets out in the open. Self-enrichment- looting or greed- is also behind the targeting. A collective behavior event exacerbates looting because the perceived cost of self-enrichment is low. The news helicopters were showing numerous incidents of theft and burglary and no repercussions from law enforcements so other individuals make the conscious decision to conduct similar behavior.

## **Security Application**

If social violence is a continuation of resistance to policy through other means, then the military must understand the cause of resistance to combat the violence. Understanding how both the social and physical environment form territories allows effective maneuver on the battlefield by a security force. This operational concept establishes principles for combat in population dense environments during conflicts of collective violence to minimize damage and quickly regain state influence. Operating a military force in a megacity requires understanding social territories to use available resources and minimize conflict. Understanding the social environment and grievances in a population dense environment will make the conflict easier to fight. Megacity conflicts stemming from collective behavior are difficult to predict, limit, and fight. Difficult, but not impossible. Military units operating in dense environments can identify targets of collective violence and conflict territories as key terrain. Understanding these features of the battlefield allow maneuver. Knowing the key terrain allows the security force to take advantage of resources. Fighting in megacities requires an understanding of social grievances, overlaid with the physical terrain people inhabit, to see territories. Grievances against the government manifest as threats to government buildings or infrastructure. Territories defined by grievances can be as simple as one side of the train tracks with all the industry and no

commercial venues. Territories can be as complicated as small neighborhoods of a few square blocks that share a language. Military operations must exploit these territories by understanding how to move around them, through them and use the resources within.

A megacity houses vast swaths of social identities with disproportionate resource distribution. Socio-political differences can lead to grievance,<sup>51</sup> especially between the haves and the have-nots. Many of these groups in close proximity share grievances. Grievances develop when a population or territory does not have access physical, political, or economic resources.<sup>52</sup> Urban areas have territories of different social classes in close proximity, which amplify the experience of difference. Social identity theory states that individuals will categorize with a specific group or groups as part of a social identity, and will act on behalf of that group.<sup>53</sup> Territories of social difference define urban terrain, and within these territories exists the possibility of collective action. Collective behavior territories evolve from common grievances and existing social boundaries. Understanding key terrain allows militaries to narrow operations in a megacity conflict. Physical territories created by the geographic containment of specific groups defined by grievance are ripe for collective behavior. Collective behavior is the spontaneous emergence of social groups outside the norm.<sup>54</sup> These groups can evolve into

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<sup>51</sup> Ballentine and Davis

<sup>52</sup> Ballentine: justice-seeking grievance, versus loot-seeking greed.

<sup>53</sup> Stets, Jan E. and Peter J. Burke. Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (Sep., 2000), pp. 225 Through the process of self-categorization or identification, an identity is formed. Social categories in which individuals place themselves are parts of a structured society and exist only in relation to other contrasting categories (for example, black vs. white); each has more or less power, prestige, status, and so on. Further, these authors point out that the social categories precede individuals; individuals are born into an already structured society. Once in society, people derive their identity or sense of self largely from the social categories to which they belong.

<sup>54</sup> Smelser, Neil. *The Theory of Collective Behavior*. New York: The Free Press, 1962

collective violence in the form of violent crowds, riots, and terrorism.<sup>55</sup> Look at the megacity battlespace from the physical map perspective to understand the territories as operating space.

The Marine Corps concept, *Expeditionary Force 21*<sup>56</sup> embraces fighting in small units in a distributed fashion. Fighting in a megacity against collective violence requires fighting in a dispersed manner. Security operations during a conflict in a population dense environment would mimic local policing in many ways. Local law enforcement has the advantage of understanding the local environments, grievances, and existing territories. Community based policing focuses on understanding the low-level local dynamics of a neighborhood. Crime prevention and quality of life improvement are the focus of community oriented policing.<sup>57</sup> However, information gained from close involvement with a community would be invaluable to determining territorial borders, grievance targets and resources available during a collative violence event. When defining territories, take advantage of existing knowledge on environmental resources, use digital foraging to find information. Take advantage of existing law enforcement relationships and command and control assets. Coordinate with community-oriented police officers, and use existing police facilities when possible. Coordination with local law enforcement or community organizers is imperative to any security action taken in a megacity.

## Warfighting Functions

Meeting the demands of combat in a population dense environment requires in-depth understanding of social terrain and locally available resources. The concept of fighting amongst

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<sup>55</sup> Senechal de la Roche, Roberta. "Collective Violence as Social Control". *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Mar., 1996)

<sup>56</sup> United States Marine Corps, *Expeditionary Force 21*. Washington, DC: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 4 March 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Chappell, Allison Taylor. Learning in Action: Training the community policing officer. *UMI Dissertations Publications*, ProQuest, University of Florida 2005.  
<http://search.proquest.com/lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/304996018/fulltextPDF/5A373FF0F6464CBAPQ/1?accountid=14746>

your resources by knowing the ground is important in a population dense environment. The below principles tailor specific warfighting functions to operating in a population dense environment by taking advantage of collective behavior territories. This concept does not affect all of the warfighting functions, but some will operate differently according to this concept of a territorialized battlespace.

**Intelligence:** *Maximize human terrain mapping.* Identification of grievances, collective violence targets, and existing physical boundaries (a bad neighborhood) creates territories within a megacity. An Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) must include social groups, income levels, age of neighborhoods, and assessments of horizontal inequality (ex. existing gang territories). Investigate local grievances or historical protests to better identify possible targets (local government buildings, schools or police stations if there is a grievance with government representation). Understanding the culture and the specific identifying symbols of social groups<sup>58</sup> will help the force identify individuals as part of the conflict. Additional cultural understanding symbols prevent a force from offending the local population or preventing positive influence.

**Maneuver:** *Move in small units from different assembly areas and simultaneously converge on one objective.* Territory borders form from social, non-social, physical, and economic borders. Examples include racially or economically exclusive neighborhoods, or areas physically confined by infrastructure, neighborhoods with shared traits for marginalization. Establish maneuver corridors between neighborhoods and factions.

**Logistics:** *Use lines of communication that flow between territories and take advantage of existing resources or create your own.* Take the road that runs between two rival factions. Lack

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<sup>58</sup> Stets p226

of coordination between groups works in favor of military forces. Use all the dimensions of an urban environment for resupply. Small, unmanned aerial delivery systems (KMAX or CRUAS)<sup>59</sup> provide fast resupply without long supply lines. Using three-dimensional printing or existing resources -like water sources that can be purified or local food- additionally minimizes resupply requirements and can improve maintenance and repair part requirements. Conduct a SWET (sewer, water, electricity, transportation) assessment on resources to understand what actors control what resources, and how can the security forces best influence or access those resources.

## Concept Application

These principles for combat in megacities are reachable with minimal adjustments to existing acquisition plans. The Department of Defense has already invested in developing the technology needed for improved logistics.<sup>60</sup> There are a number of strategic and operational implications associated with operating under this concept. Doctrine, organizational, training, materiel, leadership, education, personnel, and facilities changes are minimal with this operating concept.

The intelligence community, who builds the operating environment picture, would be conducting the majority of the research to define territories. Additional training in sociology as part of intelligence school would help better define the ethnic resiliencies and network connections. Accessing open source intelligence on existing grievances and using academic subject matter experts would further enhance the social terrain picture. Digital foraging and using

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<sup>59</sup> Scott, Richard. Unmanned K-MAX wins praise for Afghanistan cargo resupply operations. *Jane's Navy International*. Posted July 25, 2012. <https://janes-ihs-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=News&ItemId=+++1515633&Pubabbrev=JNI>

<sup>60</sup> Brown, Nick, Marina Malenic and Huw Williams. Make and mend: the revolutionary promise of 3-D printing. *International Defence Review*. Posted Sept 16, 2014 <https://janes-ihs-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=News&ItemId=+++1722299&Pubabbrev=IDR>

social media further feeds into social terrain mapping. Applying these tenets does not require additional equipment just asking additional questions when building the IPB. For example:

-Where are each of the gang territories? In what areas does control overlap? Where is state influence greatest?

-Where is there the most sympathy for the collective action? Where were previous actions?

-What are the major population grievances? What is trending on social media?

-Are there any existing major limitations to Sewage/water/ transportation/electricity resources?

For the logistics aspects of distributed operations in a territorialized environment, there will be additional equipment requirements. The unmanned KMAX and CRUAS delivery platforms must continue to develop and be small enough to operate in population dense environments. Three-dimensional printing must continue development for use in forward environments to meet the maintenance needs for military equipment. Before operating in a new environment, knowing what logistical resources are locally available will aid in distributed operations. Is local food acceptable, is local fuel compatible with security equipment, and are additional water purification resources necessary? Training for drivers would need to incorporate population dense environment skills. The US Marine Corps is already moving toward distributed operations and logistics in a territorialized population dense environment must be a part of that evolution.

## Conclusion

Concepts like *Expeditionary Force 21* and the new *Army Operating Concept*<sup>61</sup> note the character of conflict in dense urban environments, but it will take more than simple tactics to win in a population dense environment. Knowing the ground and the social possibilities keys the warfighting into possible targets, available resources, and maneuverability corridors. An emphasis on understanding the social terrain of the urban battlefield is imperative to minimizing the long-term impact of conflict. If social violence is a continuation of resistance to policy through other means, then the military must understand the cause of resistance to combat the violence. Fighting in a megacity requires an understanding of the social environment and how existing grievances and boundaries form territories. Knowing what the territories hold, allows effective maneuver on the battlefield by a security force, thus minimizing the impact of a conflict formed by collective violence.

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<sup>61</sup> TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1

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