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Nodal wars and network fallacies

A genealogical analysis of global insecurities

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Abstract

In this article we examine three prominent discourses of security governance and suggest, through a critical review of organizational network theory, that the nodal model can offer theoretical, methodological and ethical benefits over alternative ones. These benefits, we argue, are especially pertinent to the analysis of contemporary global insecurities. The article closes by reflecting on two issues raised in the earlier analysis: how an awareness of discursive contiguity can help inform our understanding of nodal tendencies in global security governance; and how the methodological fallacy of 'nodal-network equivalence' plays out under conditions of the 'war on terror'.



Introduction

In this article we review three models (or mentalities) of governance—the Westphalian model, the ‘state rule at a distance’ model and the organizational networks model. We demonstrate how each of these explanations, though seemingly quite distinct, overlap in contemporary governance, particularly in relation to terrorism. In developing our analysis we consider how attempts to understand networked forms of organization may be undermined by implicit assumptions and conceptualizations that have been developed within Westphalian and rule at a distance understandings of governance.

To avoid this trap we argue that criminologists must insist on the importance of empirical enquiry that scrutinizes a priori assumptions. In particular, we suggest, a nodal analysis should precede a network analysis in order to avoid the fallacy of nodal-network equivalence.

Mentalities of security governance

The Westphalian model of governance has been a defining feature of modern liberal systems of rule. As Krasna (2001: 24) puts it, ‘The Peace of Westphalia which ended the Thirty Years War in 1648, is taken to mark the beginning of the modern international system of sovereign states, each with exclusive authority within its own geographic boundaries.’ The Westphalian idea is best exemplified in Abraham Bosse’s frontispiece to Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (Wood and Shearing, 2007). In this illustration Bosse depicts the sovereign as a giant formed out of the bodies of the citizens who created him as ruler. Looking over his territory, the ruler carries a sceptre in one hand to signify legitimacy, and a sword in the other to symbolize force. This image of governance is later captured in Weber’s classical depiction of the State as ‘a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory’ (Weber, 1946/1958: 78).

Under the Westphalian model, governance—both domestic and international—was conceived according to state-centric principles. At the domestic level, the field of governance consisted, primarily, of relationships within and between the public (state) sector and the private (civil) sector. Within this framework the public realm was seen as a realm of government while the private realm was the realm to be governed. At the international level governance was constituted by relations between autonomous nation states. Thus, under the Westphalian model international conflict was, literally, a matter of inter-state relations, states having the exclusive capacity to declare war and peace using legal instruments (Duffield, 2002).



Latterly, the Westphalian model has been challenged on two fronts.

At the theoretical level, the notion that political affiliations exist exclusively in terms of citizenship, linked with the State and the 'social', has been undermined by an increased awareness of multi-layered governing auspices (Shearing and Wood, 2003). Corresponding limits have also been exposed at the level of practical politics. For example, globalization, in general, and the use of global communication technologies, in particular, have contributed to the construction of terrorist communities *outside* conventional state-territorial boundaries. This begs an obvious question. If terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda, are constituted globally—and, to use a term that we discuss more fully later, 'nodally'—are state-centric actions by individual states, or coordinated actions by groups of states, the right way to respond? Does it make sense to base anti-terrorist strategies on a state-centric model of governance when the objects of those strategies are, increasingly, neither states nor necessarily attached to them?

Recognition of these two problems has given rise to an alternative mentality of governance. The concept of 'state rule at a distance' is closely linked to notions of 'dispersed' or 'distanciated' governance (Giddens, 1990), the object of which is to enhance the efficacy of state rule under 'multi-layered' conditions. Reflecting on these conditions, Osborne and Gaebler (1993: 48) insist: '[We need] a government that can and does govern. This is not a government that "does"; it is not a government that administers; it is a government that governs.' In this view the State retains certain 'steering' functions while devolving responsibility for 'rowing' to external agencies, commercial organizations, voluntary bodies, the community and groups of active citizens. In the context of security governance, the object of 'rule at a distance' strategies is, thus, to enroll non-state security providers—both commercial and civil—in partnerships that remain under state auspices. Such partnership strategies have become increasingly central to the 'wars' against drugs and organized crime (SOCA, 2008) and against terrorism (IACP/ COPS, 2004; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004).

Though the 'steering' and 'rowing' analogy provides useful descriptive insights into *some* governing objectives, it is limited (Johnston and Shearing, 2003). By focusing on the State's capacity to mobilize non-state agents in the pursuit of singular governing objectives, the analogy fails to do three things: to explore the contingent uncertainties of state action; to consider the competing objectives of governing agents; and to examine the extent to which, and the manner by which, governance is constituted in relations between plural agents (Johnston, 2006; see also Latour, 1986). A good example of those shortcomings is revealed by the US government's policy of contracting private military companies to undertake operational and other duties in conflict zones. By devolving 'rowing' functions to private companies in Iraq, Afghanistan and Colombia, the US state has been able to 'steer' controversial operations against drug traffickers and terrorists 'behind the backs' of the public and its representatives. However, the pursuit of such strategies, even when successful, can



have unforeseen and unintended consequences, the effect of which can be to undermine the very objectives strategies of distancing are meant to support. In Bosnia, for example, private military companies exploited contractual conditions to exert control over aspects of US foreign policy (Avant, 2003). In this case, the strategy of 'rule at a distance', far from consolidating state power, in fact compromised it (Perito, 2004).

The two models we have described so far, while comprising distinct governing mentalities are, in practice, far from mutually exclusive. They also intertwine. Hence, the state-centric 'wars' on terror, drugs and organized crime, which sit readily within a Westphalian governing mentality, are combined with distanced strategies when these are deemed appropriate.

Latterly, a third contiguous mentality—the networked model of security— has also emerged to overlap with the other two. In this view, as articulated by former US Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld, war is now fought, less through formal alliances between territorial nations, and more through 'floating coalitions ... which may change and evolve' (Rumsfeld, 2001). Such arrangements are best understood through the concept of the 'network' which in the words of Wood and Dupont (2006: 4), refers to 'continuous, iterative and more or less temporary processes carried out by a range of ... actors (nodes) according to different positions of power¹. This is what we want to explore.

Networked organization joins what have, hitherto, been relatively autonomous sites of action. Take, for example, the relationship between war, terrorism and crime. Duffield (2002) points out that terrorist groups and others involved in warfare have penetrated international financial markets and exploited the loopholes and dubious business ethics offered by the global economy. In that respect, terrorist networks, criminal syndicates and war economies link up with each other and with both the licit and the illicit economy. An illustration of that process may be found in Raeymaekers' (2002) analysis of networked war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Here, the author describes a 'privatised war economy' made up of networks of non-state actors working beyond the conventional competence of territorially defined governments. These networks enabled local warlords to establish a shadow economy which, by further linking local and global networks, blurred conventional distinctions between 'peoples', 'armies' and 'governments'. Central to these activities—and confirmation of the

¹ The concept of network in governance studies owes much to Castells' (1996) work on the network society. Castells claims that globalization, the information economy, computer technology and flexible working have produced horizontally networked, rather than vertically coordinated, companies. The most advanced of these 'network enterprises' constitute cross-border networks in which business *projects*, rather than individual companies, become the operating units.



links between global and local dimensions within networks—has been the criminal exploitation of diamonds and coltan (a mineral used in the production of mobile phones).

Nordstrom (2000, 2004, 2007) demonstrates how these ‘shadow networks’ expose the limits of conventional wisdom about terrorism, organized crime and the global market. Her Angolan research (Nordstrom, 2007) shows that any rural African backwater—what she calls ‘the “proverbial anywhere”’ (2007: 86)—is nowadays integrated into global trade networks; that those living in or passing through such places, and having the means to do so, have ready access to global goods—‘margarine from India, batteries from China, and vacuum sealed packets of sausage from someplace in Eastern Europe or the Philippines’ (2007: 14); and that legitimate local businesses and multinational corporations, just as much as organized criminals, are active participants in illicit activities such as smuggling. Also, the limits of conventional regulation are highlighted by the expanding range of illegal means available to individuals wanting to move and/or launder their money for criminal or terrorist purposes.

Networks and nodes: problems and prospects

The application of networking principles to crime, disorder and conflict has several implications. First, war no longer follows the traditional Westphalian principles of escalation, stalemate and decline; rather, network war is non-territorial. As Duffield (2002) points out, for instance, the first British casualties of the Afghan war were not soldiers but, allegedly, British Muslims fighting for the Taliban. Also, traditional notions of war as a sequential process that ends with ‘checkmate’ (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1996) become untenable in a situation where societal and military elements overlap. Instead, the very possibilities of closure—the distinction between ‘war’ and ‘not war’—are minimized by the potential for new recruits to be mobilized from refugee and migrant diasporas; and by the willingness of regional powers, keen to secure an advantage, to replenish military and other supplies (Duffield, 2002).

Second, this process is exacerbated by the tendency for the world to be ‘criss-crossed’ by networked conflicts with vertical and horizontal linkages through which global actors exploit local groups or local groups connect to transnational ones. Thus, for example, Chechen ethnonationalists have fought for regional autonomy from Russia while, at the same time, Chechens are involved with the Russian mafia which, in turn, has nodes in the former Soviet Union, in Eastern and Central Europe and even in parts of the USA (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 1996).

Third, the power of functioning networks is, potentially, considerable. Duffield (2002: 158) refers to Metcalf's Law,² which states that 'the power of a network is proportional to the sum of its nodal connections'. Twenty-first-century conflicts—such as the involvement of the USA and its allies in Afghanistan, one of the most underdeveloped regions in the world—testify to this power of networks suggesting that in such conflicts 'we' may have technological superiority while 'they' may have the organizational edge. It is for this reason, Arquilla and Ronfeldt (1996: vii) suggest, that netwar is likely to become 'a policy tool of choice for ethnonationalists, terrorists and transnational criminal and revolutionary organisations'.

Finally it is worth bearing in mind that network principles can be applied just as much to peace-making initiatives as to conflict-generating ones. A good example is the International Campaign to Ban Landmines,³ which involved NGOs adopting the principles of networked organization. This campaign had no central headquarters or bureaucratic organization but operated through open communication among a network of national campaigns, which, while remaining independent, coordinated regularly with one another in pursuit of a common aim (Ronfeldt and Arquilla, 2001). As one key protagonist in that initiative put it: 'it proves that civil society and governments do not have to see themselves as adversaries. It demonstrates that small and middle powers can work together with civil society and address humanitarian concerns with breathtaking speed' (Williams, 1997).

Network coherence and nodal analysis

So far, we have commented on networks, and their implications for the way conflicts are conducted and for peace processes, as if they comprised relatively coherent organizational forms. However, such coherence cannot be taken for granted. On the contrary, the idea that networks are 'temporary hubs of practice' (Wood and Dupont, 2006: 4) suggests that organizational coherence can be—and often is—problematic. The overlapping elements that make up networks, far from sharing singular mentalities and objectives, may also be embroiled in conflict and resistance.

Conflict and resistance may arise from power struggles between agents. However, they may also be the product of organizational inertia within networks. In his study of anti-terrorist activity at the February 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City and the July 2004 Democratic Convention in Boston Massachusetts, for instance, Manning (2006: 52) found that the various agencies involved in anti-terrorist activity—state police, secret service, local police and fire

² See <http://www.icbl.org/> (accessed 8 April 2009).

³ See <http://www.icbl.org/> (accessed 8 April 2009).

service—had fixed, and quite different, understandings of what the risk constituted; ‘contingencies imagined as negative risks [were] not shared within and across policing (regulatory) organizations’. It was difficult to assemble temporary organizational networks to defend against an imagined risk. While finally, there were a number of practical issues arising from policing such events that reflect the practices of the ‘*co-operating-competing organizations in the network*’ (Manning, 2006: 52, emphasis added). A related feature of this conservative organizational mentality was a propensity to ‘focus strongly on preventing *another of the last type of terrorist attack*’ (Manning, 2006: 84, emphasis in original). On the basis of these case studies, Manning concludes that the new symbolization of terror increases public fear about possible risks but fails to reconfigure the established thinking or practices of those agencies involved in security networks.

The extent to which networks are coherent entities is, therefore, contingent upon specific conditions. For that reason, theorists of nodal governance question the assumption that the mere existence of contiguous nodes within a site of governance constitutes evidence of their effective networking. Whereas theorists of networked models of governance tend to assume that all nodes are networked, we believe that this issue is a matter for empirical enquiry (Johnston and Shearing, 2003). The nodal approach also puts theoretical emphasis on the nodes that sometimes form networks, rather than upon the networks themselves because, as Wood and Shearing (2007) put it: it is nodes, rather than networks that make governance ‘buzz’.

Critically, these two factors, when considered together, suggest an important methodological principle: that the empirical study of networks should be predicated upon a prior analysis and understanding (‘mapping’) of the nodes that (sometimes) constitute networks. The perils of ignoring this methodological principle are serious. In order to illustrate this point we need to say more about the concepts and principles employed in network/ network analysis.

In recent years social network analysis has become an influential tool in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and organizational studies. Early applications of the network concept in social sciences included Moreno’s (1960) work in the field of sociometry, Glucksman’s (1955) research in post-colonial Africa, Gerlach and Hine’s (1970) study of social movements and Milgram’s (1967) analysis of ‘the small world’ problem. Milgram argued that the chain of acquaintances needed to link together any two arbitrary persons in the world involves a mere ‘six degrees of separation’⁴.

⁴ Debate still continues as to the veracity of Milgram’s claim (see Kleinfeld 2002). For a ‘real world’ illustration of the issue see the ‘Small World Project’. Available at <http://smallworld.columbia.edu/description.html> (accessed Retrieved 8 April 2009).



With the growth of electronic data analysis in subsequent decades, Milgram's thesis has obvious appeal for those concerned to identify and analyse the nodal components of terrorist networks. The product of the marriage of social network theory and communications technology has been contemporary network (and netwar) analysis.

Network theory is predicated upon the existence of three network typologies (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, 2001b, n.d.). Chain or line networks occur (as in a smuggling chain) when people, goods or information move along a line of separated contacts, and where end-to-end communication has to traverse all of the intermediate nodes. Hub or star networks (as in a cartel) occur when a set of actors is tied to a central, non-hierarchical, actor (node) and must traverse that node in order to communicate with one another. All-channel, or full-matrix networks (as in a collaborative network of militant peace groups) occur when each node is connected to every other.

Nodes—which may comprise individuals, groups (and parts of groups), organizations (and parts of organizations) or states—may be large or small, tightly or loosely connected and inclusive or exclusive in membership; they may engage in similar activities, or they may be specialized to undertake particular tasks. They are, in Braithwaite's (2004: 300) words, 'a point in time and space where a cluster of actors collaborate to mobilize pooled resources'. The boundaries of any putative network, or of any node in it, may either be well defined or blurred. Hybrid forms of the three types may also exist. For instance, a protagonist in netwar may have an all-channel directorate but use hubs and chains for tactical operations. Furthermore, though the network form is characteristically 'flat' and decentralized, traditional hierarchies may, sometimes, operate within particular nodes within the network. Of the three network types, the all-channel form has the highest potential for collaborative undertakings but, as a result, is also the most difficult to organize and sustain.

One of the features of networks, as opposed to other organizational forms, is their capacity for 'swarming' (operating, simultaneously, from many different points). However, their overall efficacy is contingent upon a number of factors (Arquilla and Ronfeldt, n.d.): organizational level (what types of organizational design exist?); narrative level (what story is being told?); doctrinal level (what collaborative strategies and methods are deployed?); technological level (how effective are information systems?); and social level (what personal ties assure loyalty and trust?). The more each of these levels is met, the more effective the network can be. Thus, the most potent networks (and netwarriors) are not only those which are highly organized with a capacity to swarm; they will also be held together by strong social ties, will have secure communications technologies and will project a common 'story' about what they are doing.

The message from network theory is therefore two-fold: hierarchical organizations, such as states, are badly equipped to fight well-integrated criminal or terrorist networks; and in order to do so they will need to adopt networked organizational designs and strategies (Arquilla



and Ronfeldt, 2001a). In practice, however, this task is fraught with difficulty. Sparrow (1991) identifies three problems: incompleteness of data due to the absence of missing nodes and links; difficulties in deciding which nodes to include or exclude; and problems arising from the fact that networks are constantly changing. In practice, then, network methodologies may sanction what is little more than indiscriminate ‘trawling’ for information. After 9/11 the US Administration decided to circumvent the Foreign Intelligence Service Court (which grants warrants on a case by case basis) so as to enhance the analysis of some of the 650 million communications intercepted daily by the National Security Agency (NSA). Yet, while the network-based NSA programme certainly involved less intrusion than a court warrant, it also permitted the surveillance of vast numbers of people. As Radden Keefe (2006) grimly observes, the problem is:

that most of us are connected by two degrees of separation to thousands of people, and by three degrees to hundreds of thousands. This explains reports that the overwhelming number of leads generated by the NSA program have been false positives—innocent civilians implicated in an ever-expanding associational web.

This kind of surveillance has obvious implications for civil liberties. It also has methodological ones—notably information overload; thus, the Congressional Research Service stated that the NSA was at risk of being drowned in information. Similarly, the ‘Able Danger’ project, aimed at mapping Al Qaeda suspects by link analysis, produced some charts, covered in small print, that were around 20 feet long.

For these reasons, some proponents of social network theory emphasize its current limits. Krebs (2002), who has applied the technique to mapping the terrorist network involved in the 9/11 attacks, argues that tracing key relationships between protagonists—such as ‘task’ and ‘trust’ ties, or money, resources, strategies and goals—may even be difficult with co-operating clients, let alone with covert criminals. Not surprisingly, then, network analysis is applied more successfully to the prosecution of criminal activities—particularly with evidence-mapping in fraud cases—than to their prevention. As yet, its predictive capacity is unproven and may remain so.

The problem with existing analyses of netwar and terrorism is that they contradict the premise we made earlier: that the empirical study of networks should be predicated upon a prior analysis and understanding (‘mapping’) of the nodes that (sometimes) constitute networks. As a result, existing analyses frequently commit what might be termed ‘the fallacy of nodal-network equivalence’. This occurs when proponents of network analysis assume that the identification of criminal or other terrorist nodes— whether accurately or inaccurately is another matter—of itself constitutes evidence of the existence of criminal or terrorist networks.



Given that shortcoming, there are good grounds for claiming that nodal analysis should be regarded as a precondition of network analysis. Elsewhere (Johnston and Shearing, 2003), we have argued that nodal analysis requires the investigation of the four elements that constitute a node (see also Burris, 2006): mentalities (relating to how nodes think about security); technologies (relating to the methods they might use to facilitate it); resources (relating to the social, cultural, economic or other means they might deploy in its furtherance); and institutions (relating to the structures that enable the mobilization of resources, mentalities and technologies in pursuit of security).

Consideration of these four elements has enabled proponents of nodal analysis to carry out the empirical 'mapping' of security governance. Significantly, Wood's (2006) description of collaborative work undertaken in Argentina begins by asking a series of questions about the mentalities, technologies, resources and institutions that underpin nodal governance (see also Wood and Font, 2004). Which actors participate in the promotion of safety and security? What types of knowledge, capabilities and resources do they bring to the situation? How do these shape their ways of thinking about security? How do they measure success? Only when these issues have been addressed are questions about nodal relationships—and, by implication, the possibility of networked relationships—posed: How do different actors relate to one another? Are nodal relations co-operative, competitive or non-existent? How often, and under what circumstances, do nodes 'inter- face' with one another?

Methodologically, this exercise requires the compilation of data by a variety of means including documentary analysis, observation, qualitative interviews and focus groups, as well as the quantitative techniques, which currently dominate network analysis. In particular, ethnographic methods can provide a greater depth of analysis than is sometimes found in studies with an exclusively quantitative focus.

A good illustration of the process of nodal explanatory 'mapping' may be found in an analysis of organized crime, carried out by Wood and colleagues for an Australian police organization (see Wood, 2006). Drawing on established explanatory frameworks regarding the market-based nature of organized crime, the researchers developed a series of basic research questions about the production, transportation and distribution processes of illegal markets. In respect of production, for example, they included questions about what goods and services were being produced; the manner of their production; the materials and technologies required to produce them; the physical, financial, human and infrastructural resources required; and the knowledge/management information systems called upon. Similar kinds of questions were posed in respect of transportation and distribution.

A similar process could be applied to the analysis of terrorist nodes and networks, drawing upon existing explanations regarding their recruitment, mobilization, training, communication systems, tactics and deployment. In this way, questions could be asked about



the materials and technologies, as well as the physical, financial and human resources, required in the recruitment, training and operational deployment of terrorist nodes.

By undertaking an 'explanatory mapping' of these dimensions, three types of benefits might accrue. First, information may be obtained about the extent of, and limits to, existing knowledge, thereby enabling further research to be directed to areas of greatest necessity. Second, the generation of medium-range empirical evidence—rather than of evidence produced from the indiscriminate 'trawling' of putative networks—should help to produce manageable databases. Finally, by reducing the need for 'trawling', some of the negative ethical implications of existing practices for civil liberties might be obviated.

Contiguity and nodal wars

According to Kaldor (1999), conventional wars between states are becoming an anachronism. The 'new wars', which supplant them, are a mixture of war, organized crime and mass violations of human rights in which the participants are simultaneously global, local, public and private. In contrast to the geo-political and ideological basis of conventional wars, 'new wars' involve conflicts between particularistic identities and deploy tactics of terror and destabilization that are, at least in principle, outlawed under conventional warfare.

Many of the components of the 'new wars' thesis, including its emphasis on the blurring of traditional categorical distinctions (between 'legal' and 'illegal', 'private' and 'public', 'civilian' and 'military', 'local' and 'global', 'internal' and 'external' and 'war' and 'crime'), resonate with our previous analysis. However, there are also some differences. For example, the 'new wars' thesis adheres to what might be called an 'over-sociologized' approach to history: a tendency to view historical change as the product of unfolding structural forces.

Such 'epochal' or 'grand theoretical' accounts (O'Malley, 2009) have two shortcomings. First, they underestimate the importance of specific conditions in shaping outcomes. Second, they ignore the fact that the State remains a significant node of contemporary governance (Johnston and Shearing, 2003; cf. Stenson, 2005; Loader and Walker, 2007). The adoption of a 'genealogical', rather than a 'sociological' approach to governance (Foucault, 1991; O'Malley, 2009)—one emphasizing the role of governing mentalities and their related technologies, institutions and practices (Johnston and Shearing, 2003)—obviates the shortcomings of 'epochal' accounts and permits a more nuanced view of historical change. Thus, rather than conceiving developments in terms of a structural shift from 'old' to 'new' wars, we prefer to identify a drift to 'new wars'—effectively 'nodal wars'—in which two things are apparent: state auspices remain salient under conditions of nodal warfare; and contiguous mentalities of governance continue to rub alongside one another.



Three recent historical examples demonstrate these tendencies.

The Iraq occupation was a stage in a wider nodal-networked war against terror. Yet, despite its 'new wars' format, it was also a conflict 'played out' by its leading protagonist, the USA, in 'old war' (Westphalian) terms. As Kaldor (2005: 8) put it:

The invasion conformed to the dreams of Bush and Rumsfeld. It was showy and dramatic. In fact, of course, the Iraqis did not fight. ... It was more like an exercise than a war. But the Americans behaved as though they had won World War II. They tried to recreate the occupation of Germany or Japan in dissolving the army of introducing sweeping deba'athification measures, humiliating and infuriating those very people who had allowed them their piece of war theatre. And the impact of fighting a reconstructed 'Old War' was not victory over an enemy state but state disintegration and 'New War' ... more private contractors are drawn into the war so it is fought by a network of state and non-state actors.

Consider a second example, the shift that occurred, following 9/11, from an emphasis on 'human security' to an emphasis on 'homeland security' (Lodge, 2004). In this case, a concern with the well-being of global populations defined by underdevelopment was superseded by concerns about the security of domestic ('homeland') populations. In effect, as Duffield and Waddell (2004: 3) point out, the focus moved from emphasizing the consolidation of global populations multilaterally, to emphasizing bilateral issues of global population circuits: in other words, to 'policing the movement of people, weapons, money, commodities, information ... emanating from and flowing across zones of insecurity'. Crucially, this reconfiguration of the 'principles of (subject) formation'—effectively, the re-definition of 'which humans require[d] securing'—was based upon the attempt to marry together nodal and networked mentalities, technologies, institutions and practices with state-centric and 'distanciated' ones. That new governmental complex arising from this aspired to the seamless management of homeland and borderland populations.

This new governing assemblage composed principally of the USA and its European allies, combined Westphalian principles ('the war on terror', 'the primacy of homeland security') with distanciated ones (state-led partnership), and nodal/networked practices. The rationale behind this construction was that because present day insecurities give rise to problems of circulation, new regimes of co-ordination and centralization would be required to fulfil those functions. Predictably, as the OECD's Development Assistance Committee pointed out, these governance regimes draw upon distanciated nodes, the new players in the 'war on terror' including 'financial analysts, bankers, arms control and bio-chemical experts, educators, communications specialists, development planners and religious leaders' (cited in Duffield and Waddell, 2004: 35).

Our third example concerns the politics of oil production in the Niger Delta, an area where 'war', 'energy security', 'public security' and 'terrorism' are increasingly conflated. Following



unrest on the part of indigenous people in the late 1990s—the result of local concerns about the environmental

impact of the oil exploitation being undertaken by global companies, consequent fears regarding the loss of popular control over homelands and ongoing concern about the huge and growing disproportionality between corporate wealth and local poverty—the Nigerian government sent in troops to pacify the area. Since then the authorities have been at war with various militant groups, the most notable of which, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), recently ended an uneasy truce with the Government and recommenced its bombing campaign (All Africa. com, 2010). This case exhibits the precise combination of features described earlier as typical of ‘nodal war’. In particular, while there is an expanded role for non-state agents, such as private security companies, in the provision of both ‘energy security’ (for western states) and public security (for those living and working in the Niger Delta), state auspices continue to have a pivotal security function. The resulting governing complex reveals, once again, an interplay between the contiguous mentalities and practices of the respective partner agencies.

For purposes of illustration, consider the example of security as it relates to the protection of oil installations and facilities in the Delta (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2005). G4S (a security company that presents itself as ‘the world’s leading international security solutions group’), trading as Outsourcing Services Ltd (OSL), provides marine and other forms of security for Chevron Nigeria Ltd (CNL). In pursuit of that end, OSL personnel are closely integrated with both the state police and with the Government Security Forces (GSF), a particularly complex division of labour pertaining between OSL and the latter. Under this relationship a slippage between the ‘formal’ and the ‘substantive’ aspects of security is evident. On the one hand, GSF retains ultimate (formal-legal) authority over security matters. On the other hand, that authority is ‘to a significant extent embedded within structures and procedures developed by OSL and CNL’ (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2005: 14). Thus, the everyday working mentalities and practices of OSL are so deeply embedded in GSF structures that the latter’s actions are significantly circumscribed. Governance of security in the Delta is thus highly conditional. Commercial security practice remains subject to the legal authority of the State. Yet, the parameters of state action are, in key respects, conditioned by the organizational practices of the commercial companies involved.

A similar overlaying of state and non-state auspices, together with their contiguous mentalities and practices, is revealed in a recent analysis of the relationship between US energy security and Nigerian democracy (Lubeck et al., 2007). However, in this instance, the result is different—the authors maintaining that a state-centric discourse (the ‘global war on terror’— GWOT) overrides the various (contiguous) programmes for building civil- society that might, if encouraged and suitably resourced, more effectively minimize terrorist mobilization in Nigeria. In effect, US policy in Africa since 2001 has shifted from ‘training for



peacekeeping' to 'training for counter-terrorism and energy security'. Nigeria has been a particular target

for this shift in emphasis in respect of energy security. However, as Lubeck et al. (2007: 1) point out, like its predecessor anti-community strategies of the past, the GWOT is 'a timeless, borderless, geopolitical strategy' the presumptions of which define all conflicts, insurrections and wars as terrorist threats, regardless of the evidence on the ground.

The Nigerian example, along with the others previously discussed, indicates both the presence of contiguous discourses within nodal governance frameworks and the variability of their effects. Recognition of these two points confirms our earlier suggestion that if we are to understand particular patterns of security governance properly, it is vital to examine the complex of nodal relations and contiguous mentalities/practices found therein.

Finally, it is worth commenting, briefly, on a second issue: how the fallacy of 'nodal-network equivalence' plays out under present conditions. The 'war on terror' is both a reaction to and a manifestation of 'nodal wars'. As such, it is an archetypally nodal-networked concept inasmuch as terrorist organizations—plural, invisible and emanating from the 'proverbial anywhere' (Nordstrom, 2007: 86)—reflect, the 'shadow' economic networks discussed previously (Nordstrom, 2000). As a result, the sources of global terrorism are simultaneously multiple, nebulous, ubiquitous and networked. Predictably, a threat perceived to come from 'anywhere and everywhere' generates demands for an exceptional response from the State (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004). Faced with this problem, the working mentality of governing authorities is captured in the dictum that 'managing insecurity is the only insurance we have' (Coker, 2002: 8).

This mentality has generated vigorous anti-terrorist policies in the USA, where the Patriot Act has been described as 'the most sweeping revocation of constitutional rights [and] civil liberties in the history of the United States' (Cole, cited in Churchill, 2004: 1). While, in the UK, Williamson (2005) has suggested that the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005⁵ exemplifies a shift in British criminal justice from a system based predominantly on law enforcement (where clearly defined charges are dealt with in courts by judges; and where conviction requires evidential standards to be met) to one based on risk management (where there is no habeas corpus, no clear charge and no use of courts; and where sanctions—including

⁵ The Prevention of Terrorism Act received Royal Assent in March 2005 and replaces powers contained in Part 4 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. Such was the controversy surrounding the parliamentary debate that the House of Lords sat for over 30 hours, the longest period in its history.

indefinite detention—are the product of perceived risk level, rather than the outcome of conviction).

In this context, it is significant that commentators on global risks, such as terrorism, have drawn attention to their homogenizing effects. This takes two forms. Terrorist acts are indiscriminate in the sense that anyone, irrespective of class, race or creed, can become their victim. Yet, more than that, risk blurs the distinction between victims and offenders. As Hudson (1996: 154) puts it, when commenting on the criminal justice system, 'The risk that criminal justice now seeks to manage, is the risk of victimization; the target of criminal justice now is not the offender ... but the community of potential victims.' In circumstances where risk-based practices have

already sanctioned the legislative reforms just described the dangers are clear. In particular, calls for the enhanced use of social network analysis in monitoring electronic communications (Ressler, 2006)—especially if that analysis continues to exhibit the 'fallacy of nodal-network equivalence'—pose a threat to human rights.

Conclusion

In closing the article we wish to focus on two matters arising from our previous argument, the first anticipating and responding to possible criticisms of our methodological claims; the second relating to the wider relevance of the nodal-networked approach for an understanding of contemporary insecurities. It might seem that 'nodal mapping' is, in reality, little more than a conventional set of 'who?', 'what?', 'where?' and 'when?' questions similar to those that might be asked by any competent social scientist of a given institutional arrangement. However, this criticism misses the point. Conventional methodologies do pose 'who?', 'what?', 'where?' and 'when?' questions but fail to do so in a way that takes account of nodal developments. By contrast, a key component of 'nodal mapping' is to plot the knowledges and capacities relevant to security governance that are available within a domain (Shearing, 2007). This approach is based on Foucauldian ideas about the ways in which organizations 'problematize' governance tasks in an increasingly nodal-networked environment, and thus poses different questions from those of conventional social science.

A second possible criticism is that we have exaggerated the threats to civil liberties posed when governing authorities succumb to the fallacy of 'nodal-network equivalence'. In particular, it might be suggested that in some jurisdictions—not least in the UK—the extent to which vigorous counter-terrorist laws have been implemented has been limited and that the degree of contestation in respect of such law remains significant. There is much to be said for this view and it is, by no means, our intention to claim a shift towards 'exceptional rule' in respect of criminal justice. On the contrary, there continue to be real and ongoing differences between decision-making authorities and others in respect of counter-terror legislation. Take

the case of control orders in the UK⁶. In June 2009, the Law Lords (now the Supreme Court) declared unanimously that it was unlawful to use secret evidence to place people under a regime that included a 16-hour curfew. Under this ruling the judges also stipulated that everyone was entitled to the disclosure of sufficient material to enable them to answer, effectively, any case made against them (Travis, 2009). Yet, on 1 March 2010, the Commons voted 206 to 85 in favour of the renewal of the Home Secretary's power to issue control orders despite a Joint (House of Lords/House of Commons) Committee on Human Rights report concluding that the control order regime was 'no longer sustainable' (Davis, 2010; House of Lords/ House of Commons JCHR, 2010).

Government commitment to control orders notwithstanding, contestation is certainly evident in respect of this and other aspects of counter-terror law and will, no doubt, continue in the future. It is also noteworthy, however, that while dispute about counter-terror laws in respect of criminal justice remains prevalent, an arguably greater threat to civil liberties arises from alternative sources. One of these is the tendency of European states to subject anti-terrorist suspects to administrative-legal, rather than criminal- legal, processes, thereby circumventing the evidential standards required by the criminal justice process (Fekete, 2009). Recently, in the UK, there has been growing concern about the use of Special Immigration Appeals Tribunals, rather than criminal courts, in dealing with those suspected of terrorism. Under such conditions, the 'fallacy of nodal-network equivalence' continues to pose dangers for civil liberties, not least when governments are investing heavily in organizational network analysis for purposes of countering terrorism⁷.

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⁶ Control orders were introduced under anti-terrorist legislation in 2005 and place restrictions on those subjected to them including tagging, curfews of up to 16 hours a day, removal of passport, removal of Internet access, phone monitoring and daily reporting to the police. In January 2010 there were 12 control orders in force. The most controversial aspect of control orders is that controlees may not know the case against them since the evidence upon which it is based will have been collected covertly by the security services.

⁷ Like their US counterparts, the UK authorities are also heavily committed to investment in various forms of network analysis area (see, for example, Boxell, 2010, Newman, 2010).



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