

The Politics of Iraqi Reconstruction: A Case of Foreign Policy Bureaucratic (non)Learning*

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Abstract

The Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR) claims it has learned from Iraqi reconstruction and is using this “new” knowledge for policy recommendations and current activities. Yet, is there evidence for this learning? By defining bureaucracies as a technology, science and technology literature can supplement the bureaucratic literature to help better understand SIGIR’s apparent lack of learning. Using this theory of non-learning, I hypothesize that H1: there will be little evidence of major changes in SIGIR’s bureaucratic culture before or after the point of learning, H2: changes in bureaucratic culture will be limited to first-order, simple learning around the means of reconstruction, while third-order, philosophical/diagnostic learning will only occur early in a bureaucracy’s life since the latter requires structural change in the organization, and H3: there will be mixed results when breaking down to different dyad interactions as the politics between SIGIR and agencies vary. I employ operational code analysis (specifically the Verbs in Context system) to uncover SIGIR’s beliefs through its leadership (Stuart Bowen) about the political universe’s nature and the most effective means to achieve goals. The resulting operational code profiles is used to predict tactical and strategic typologies that show the consequences of SIGIR’s non-learning specifically and foreign policy bureaucratic non-learning generally.

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Introduction

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” (Santayana, 1980, p. 284). Merely recalling the past, however is insufficient to avoid past mistakes; avoiding repeated mistakes requires *learning* from the past. Such a sentiment is common within the foreign policy literature and among policymakers. But, who is to learn? Foreign policy is not generated by a monolithic state led by a single executive.¹ Rather, foreign policy is an output of a complex system of bureaucracy and actors that each insert their influence at some level. Foreign policy literature has overlooked the bureaucratic hindrances to changing after learning and provides no alternative on if and when non-incremental changes in foreign policy can occur. Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR) provides a perfect opportunity to analyze foreign policy as it is still a relatively young bureaucracy allowing for a complete analysis of bureaucratic outcomes yet old enough to have learned from and acted on its failures.

After Iraq’s Coalition Provisional Authority dissolved, a congressional amendment in October 2004 created and charged SIGIR to oversee reconstruction programs and operations in Iraq. While reporting directly to both the Department of Defense (DoD) and State Department, SIGIR’s responsibilities revolve around the coordination and oversight of the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Funds (IRRF) specifically and all obligations, expenditures, and revenues connected to Iraqi reconstruction and rehabilitation in general. Beyond the detection and reports of fraud, waste, and abuse to the U.S. attorney general, SIGIR was to be very agency to report on progress and recommended policies around the efficient and effective management of reconstruction (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009; United States Congress, 2004). Having completed their first major review in 2009, SIGIR has claimed to have learned from the Iraqi experience lessons that require deep, philosophical changes and continues to provide policy recommendations based on them. Yet, *is there evidence for such learning?* Without such learning, the required changes for improved reconstruction policies cannot happen.

In the next section I present an argument on the necessity of learning for future reconstruction programs. I then develop a theory of bureaucratic (non)learning, which is used to derive hypotheses on SIGIR’s philosophical and instrumental learning. To test my theory, I employ Operational Code Analysis to 37 testimonies given by Inspector General Stuart Bowen covering a timespan between 2005 to 2011. The statistical results of this analysis demonstrate the lack of learning in SIGIR across time. Subjective games and resulting tactical and strategic predictions are constructed from these operational code profiles, which demonstrate how the complex politics of umbrella foreign policy bureaucracies prevent learning at large but not at the individual

¹Often to the frustration of the Executive (see President Obama’s comments one the sequestration).

dyad level. The final section provides a discussion of the implications of this study for foreign policy analysis and policy.

The Need to Learn

National infrastructures² form the bedrock for economic growth, social security and a lower risk of conflict—citizens expect their government to provide some basic level of these goods for public use (see: Abadie, 2006; Salehyan and Gleditsch, 2006; Rotberg and West, 2004; Gompert et al., 2009; Sen, 1999). Viewed this way, infrastructure is a quintessential public good—its intrinsic characteristics of communal consumption and non-excludability garner little incentive for private actors to provide these goods—and the state must step in if their citizens are to have access to such goods. Few have the ability to employ the necessary resources beyond the state. Yet, public goods provision becomes exceedingly more difficult as states begin to fail (Olson, 1971; Rhoads, 1985; Brown et al., 2001; Pierson, 2000). Especially in conflict prone and post conflict areas, therefore, states and international organizations tend to invest (politically, financially, physically) heavily in infrastructure reconstruction efforts, believing that infrastructure provision will increase political stability and legitimacy—as seen in Iraq.

Iraqi reconstruction after the Iraqi War was the largest foreign assistance program since the Marshal Plan (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009). As the Hussein regime toppled, the Iraqi state was not providing (nor could it provide) basic public goods. The United States deemed this politically unacceptable. Because public goods embody the expectations of the people and the obligations of the state (Rotberg, 2003), the United States deemed the inability of the Iraqi government to provide public goods as politically unacceptable. Any new government could not legitimately control Iraq without providing public goods like infrastructure. Thus, the U.S. saw reconstruction intervention as necessary to maintained their new client state. In the words of Majeski and Sylvan (2009), Iraq went from an enemy where military intervention was the appropriate tool (which is rare by itself) to a client state that needed to be maintained via reconstruction. The perceived successes of the European and Japanese reconstructions post-World War II led to those plans being used as a model for Iraqi reconstruction (Agnew and Entrikin, 2004).

This is guidance is seen in action when examining Iraq reconstruction preparations. After World War II, U.S. policy makers commissioned a social scientist to report on and help plan Japanese reconstruction. A comparable Future of Iraq Project was created for Iraqi reconstruction, but it was ignored. Instead, West

²The hard technologies (both structures and facilities) that are essential for economic endeavors and quality of life. Examples of such infrastructure include: roads, electrical power networks, clean water, and telephone systems (American Society of Civil Engineers, 2012).

German and Japanese reconstruction reports were read by the Coalition Provisional Authority (Caldwell, 2011, p. 119-120) Moreover, policymakers were hesitant to set aside the needed level of financial investment for reconstruction, on which the success of the Marshall Plan depended. These decisions fed into a contradiction: though the worst-case humanitarian situation was prepared for in Iraq, the best-case reconstruction situation was expected. This is all the more puzzling as the causes of poor humanitarian situations are often the same that lead to the need of reconstruction (i.e. security) (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009). This contradictory approach has exacerbated the political instability in Iraq.

Based on its experiences on the ground, SIGIR provided some lessons learned to help better plan and execute future reconstruction projects. Though many of these recommendations focused on reforming the means of reconstruction (i.e. how contractors are managed and how to plan reconstruction efforts in a unified fashion), SIGIR does recommend larger, philosophical adjustments. To begin with, the client/defeated state cannot be viewed as an enemy. Soft programs that develop the capacity of people and systems through the local population are just as important as programs that address local needs and priorities to avoid a crisis of sustainability. Yet, security is also necessary in order to protect those doing reconstruction work and should not be assumed as it was before Iraq. In short, “reconstruction [must be viewed as] an extension of political strategy.” All of the above requires better connecting infrastructure rebuilding to the greater goal of democratization (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009, p. 333). Finally, as foreign policy decisions tend to be sticky over time, what occurs with Iraqi Reconstruction will set the stage for future reconstruction projects. It is then of great interest for foreign policymakers that we learn from Iraq and make the needed changes earlier rather than later.

Learning in the Bureaucracy Literature

This paper focuses on the bureaucracies involved in foreign reconstruction policies. Foreign policies are unique in that they are less likely to be influenced by domestic actors, and agencies must cooperate as no single bureaucracy has a domain monopoly (Zegart, 2000). SIGIR itself is an umbrella bureaucracy that reports to both Congress and the State Department while overseeing the actions of the DoD, State Department, USAID, and contractors hired by various U.S. agencies. Nonetheless, why talk about bureaucracies if they are merely extensions of state power? Though bureaucracies are agents of states, agents are by definition separate entities allowing for conflict between an agent’s desires and the principal’s desires. This is not to say that the president/executive does not voice an opinion and stack the deck in their favor via appointments

and budgets to control for bureaucratic drift (Art, 1973; Krasner, 1872). As agents, however, bureaucracies can be autonomous, powerful, dysfunctional, and inefficient.

Studying bureaucratic learning is not easy, especially in foreign policy, as they are mainly procedural entities with invisible outcomes—only their outputs are visible (Wilson, 1989). A bureaucratic approach provides one avenue to understand foreign policy analysis and begins its analysis not at the state (as realism does) but at the interplay of bureaucracies, executive leaders, and political actors that influence foreign policy decisions (Zelikow and Allison, 1999). While actors here includes many rational individuals acting within a rational choice framework, this paradigm recognizes the need to “open the black box and look within the state actor to its disaggregated moving parts” (Zelikow and Allison, 1999, p. 9). Krasner (1872) and Art (1973) are partly correct though in stating that bureaucratic interpretation cannot account for non-incremental change in foreign policy, as it views large decisions to be an amalgamation of numerous smaller decisions filled with non-state objectives and interests.

Drezner (2000) does provide a promising alternative in understanding bureaucratic learning. In his ideational approach, Drezner focuses on how new ideas are spread through bureaucracies via bureaucratic culture and preference. Ideas become embedded into institutions (Sikkink, 2012). Ideas commonly spread through new institutions, but are at risk of bullying, power seizing and manipulation from established bureaucracies. To protect these missionary bureaucracies, Drezner (2000) demonstrates that insular bureaucracies thrive long enough to spread their ideas when allowed to grow their own organizational culture. Yet, learning here (seen in the form of new ideas) is exogenous to the theory and seemingly come changes in the external policy environment (Waltz, 1979). Yet, there are few alternative theories that address learning and subsequent change while stressing the importance of foreign policy bureaucracies.

(Non)Learning in a Foreign Policy Bureaucracy

Whereas Allison’s bureaucratic model operates in the classical rational actor framework, bureaucratic culture tries to explain bureaucracies’ bounded rationality. Being a synthesis of the rational and cultural, it is created as people interact to create a set of solutions to problems that they commonly share. Initial decisions set a precedent for future decisions. It is organizational culture that affects that bureaucracy’s interpretation of information, preferences, and behavior and is one reason why an outsider might view an act as irrational while insiders view the same act as completely rational (Zelikow and Allison, 1999; Legro, 1995; Vaughan, 1996; Destler, 1974).

Nevertheless, this cultural nature of bureaucracies (what Barnett and Finnemore (1999) call the “human stuff”) creates susceptibilities for dysfunctional behavior and inefficiency. An institution’s culture can “create unreflective, routine, taken-for-granted scripts that become part of an individual worldview” (Ferguson, 1990; Vaughan, 1996, p. 37) where decisions come at the result of negotiations and routinized procedures. Confounding this, organizational culture also happens to be path dependent as positive feedback loops form that are unpredictable yet inflexible (Legro, 1995; Pierson, 2000). In short, there can be an incremental descent into making poor decisions due to conformity as deviance is normalized and failures become the norm. This bureaucratic culture has visible consequences (see: Goldman, 2005; Horowitz, 2010) that allow for the examination of changes in a bureaucratic culture. This inference brings me to my first hypothesis about the existence of SIGIR’s learning:

Hypothesis 1: There will be little evidence of major changes in SIGIR’s bureaucratic culture before or after SIGIR claimed to have learned.

The preceding discussion does not mean that change is impossible. Shifts and revolutions in bureaucratic culture do occur and often (if not always) follow learning by experimentation, success, and/or failure. Learning as defined by Levy is “a change in beliefs (or degree of confidence in one’s beliefs) or development of new beliefs, skills or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience” (Malici, 2011; Levy, 1994, p. 154). Learning is not a dichotomous variable. The various types of learning can be grouped under two umbrella terms of social and experiential learning. Social learning is behavioral change in response to a stimulus while experiential learning is cognitive change in response to a stimulus. Within experiential learning, diagnostic learning is the deliberate attempt to adjust fundamental. Within experiential learning, diagnostic learning is the deliberate attempt to adjust fundamental goals and philosophy in response to a combination of feedback loops, perception changes, and increased information (Hall, 1993; Sabatier, 1988; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Such learning involves shifts in philosophical beliefs and can be deterministic in policy solutions. The most common type of learning within a bureaucratic culture appears as simple learning: the adaptation of necessary tools and/or change in the perception of the environment as the result of experience and interpretation. Contrary to diagnostic learning, simple learning encompasses smaller changes that do not require a radical change in beliefs and the overarching policy goal remains unchanged (Levy, 1994).

It becomes clear why diagnostic learning is rare (but possible) as compared to simple learning when

viewing a bureaucracy's structure (norms, rules, and standard operational procedures) as a type of technology operated by rational actors (Weber, 1947).³ In the realm of technological momentum, a technology enters the world in a society-determined environment where it is relatively easy for actors to influence the shape and use of said technology. However, as time passes and momentum is gained, the technology begins to push back and creates an environment that is technology-determined. In this new world it is difficult, if not nearly impossible, for society to influence the technology and decide how it will be shaped by the technology. As dependency on the technology increases, the users will identify with the technology more, and it will become part of the society (Hughes, 1994). When initially created, a bureaucracy is malleable and often changes as it learns from initial experiences and tries to find its role in the current political structure. However, as time passes and the bureaucracy settles, a path-dependent bureaucratic structure forms and works against the deep changes that diagnostic learning entails. The actors within the structure, though also operating within a bureaucratic culture, are rational and have the power of agency to learn from their experiences.

Here it is the bureaucratic structure/technology and not the culture that leads to stasis. This distinction is crucial as still allows for actors to learn. If the culture creates stasis, learning would not be possible as they are stuck within the same culture. As various actors work their way through their institutions, they are professionalized into the culture leading to a narrowing of the actor's vision and a resistance to change. Reconstruction policymakers would then view the world through this culture; the problems they see are the ones the culture allows them to see and the solutions are ones that this culture chooses. Yet, SIGIR has seemingly broken away from bureaucratic culture and recognized what it needs to learn as stated and revealed in its policy recommendations. But this learning is hidden or obscured by a focus on the bureaucracy's structure.

Hypothesis 2: Changes in bureaucratic culture will be limited to first-order, simple learning around the means of reconstruction, while third-order, philosophical/diagnostic learning will only occur early in a bureaucracy's life since the latter requires structural change in the organization.

In reconstruction zones, SIGIR interacts with many bureaucracies that all work towards the same goal but not necessarily together. Though united under a single federal umbrella and executive leader, each agency interacting with SIGIR has its own bureaucratic culture and unique history. In fact, SIGIR claims that fragmentation during Iraq reconstruction planning occurred as a result of both bureaucratic reasons and higher-level strategic judgment: each institution involved held different pre-war evaluations shaped by

³For more discussion on defining technology see Mitcham and MacKey (1983). For now, this article employs a broad definition of technology as the material and immaterial tools and systems used to achieve some goal/end-point/desire.

“historically rooted conceptions of defense, diplomacy, and development” (Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009, p. 325). Though this fragmentation proved problematic in reconstruction coordination and programs, this fragmentation does allow for learning at the sub-structure level: between dyads. Though a bureaucratic culture might appear as opaque when viewed at the structural level, it can be quite flexible at the substructure level.

Hypothesis 3: There will be mixed results when breaking down to different dyad interactions as the politics between SIGIR and agencies vary.

Methods

Language and utterances count as something and can be a tool to analyze and measure an actor’s beliefs (Kratochwil, 1989, p. 43). Following this, I employ operational code analysis and specifically the Verbs in Context System (VICS) in order to capture various types of learning. In VICS, sentence syntax and verb-subject interactions are used to assign quantitative values to various philosophical and instrumental beliefs ((for a more in depth discussion on this method see: Walker et al., 1998, 2011). This at-a-distance method allows me to connect the external world of events to the internal world of beliefs to discover SIGIR’s beliefs about the nature of the political universe and the most effective means to achieve goals (Post, 2003).

Policymakers are driven by theory (Simon, 1985; Walker et al., 2011) as a way to simplify a complex world. These theories’ beliefs act as guideposts and heuristics for a decision maker (Tetlock, 1998; George, 1980). Similar to political leaders, bureaucracies like SIGIR hold both philosophical beliefs about the way the world works and instrumental beliefs on how best to operate. These beliefs are powerful motivators, and are often held as reality. Information is filtered through these beliefs, which is then used for risk management and allows for predictability. When aggregated together, a bureaucracy’s or actor’s belief system comes with an expectation of certain tools for success as beliefs and actions converge (Walker, 2003). Learning within a bureaucratic structure occurs through changing beliefs and/or is restricted by rigid belief systems (Holsti, 1977; Walker et al., 1998; Jervis, 1976).

Experience can nevertheless change beliefs. When instrumental beliefs change, previous hypotheses are thrown out and theories are updated to reform new hypotheses that ‘better fit’ the data. On the other hand, when philosophical beliefs changes, theories are thrown out and new ones emerge about the world at large. Not all changes though signify learning. As such, substantive, statistically significant changes of beliefs must

be demonstrated to show that any difference between beliefs between time periods can be seen as learning and not the result of random fluctuations.

To test the aforementioned hypotheses, this analysis will be conducted through a focus on SIGIR's leadership by Special Inspector General Stuart W. Bowen, Jr. This is a justified unit of analysis as "leaders are individuals-as-actors with cognitive, emotional, and motivational subsystems that constitute an interior system of psychological relations comparable in complexity to the exterior system of states as actors and the social relations in which they are members" (Walker et al., 2011, p. 4). In short, Bowen's words represent a consensus of those making policies in SIGIR and will capture bureaucratic learning at large. Bowen frequently provides testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate committees on reconstruction effort in Iraq. There have been critiques about whether prepared, public statements represent beliefs, but research has converged on the idea that public statements do reflect true beliefs (see: Walker et al., 2011; Renshon, 2009). From SIGIR's website, 37 testimonies given by Bowen were pulled (the one testimony done under the name of SIGIR but not done by the Inspector General himself was thrown out to maintain consistency). In these testimonies, the culmination of learning is pinpointed to the release of *Hard Lessons: The Iraqi Reconstruction Experience*, an in-depth report written from the perspective of Inspector General that covers Iraqi reconstruction and openly declares the need to change and learn for future reconstruction projects.

The testimonies were put in chronological order and grouped into two periods: (1) Pre-Lessons Learned and (2) Post-Lessons Learned.⁴ For each category, a random number generator was used to select a starting page and every fourth page was pulled to form a sample of 82 pages (25% of the population). The sample was then hand coded by the authors. For more details of the hand-coding procedure, see Appendix A and Walker et al. (1998) and Walker et al. (2011). Sentences not containing transitive verbs were removed from the sample. To address H3, "the other" was also coded and included in the data set. Though there are computerized systems available for VICs, the resulting precision comes at the price due to a limited dictionary. The testimonies used in this article were given to congressional audiences. As such, they are written in "bureaucratic language" with frequent use of third tense and neutral sounding verbs, both of which a computerized system cannot decipher without refining its dictionary. Hand coding also allows for the sophisticated use of surrounding context when coding. This feature does come at a risk of inconsistency across contexts. To combat risk this, I maintained an active list of self, others, verbs, and their codes. This allowed for greater inter-context reliability, ensuring some verbs were not coded differently at different time

⁴There was a third category created for "Lessoned Learned" testimonies. These were deemed uncodable, as there were very little politically motivated transitive verbs due to its technical focus.

points. Using this list, I performed an intracoder reliability test where I drew a random sample of 10 sentences and coded them in 3 interactions six months apart. The results indicated the initial code maintained a 98% accuracy rate (an inconsistency error appeared in the form of the wrong tense being used).

Results

To test if SIGIR had learned at large (H1 and H2), I compared the Pre- and Post-Learning operational code results. Table 1 shows the operational code results for the two phases. If H1 is valid, then there will be very few if any statistically significant major changes in each belief—major changes defined as changes that cross the mid-point (0 if -1 to 1 or .5 if 0 to 1 is the range).⁵ If H2 is valid, then there will be more changes in the instrumental beliefs (I1-I5) than philosophical beliefs (P1-P4). As shown in Table 1, four beliefs (24%) significantly changed, but not one of them crossed the mid-point. Moreover, of those four changes, three changes are instrumental (I5d, I2, and I1) while only one was a philosophical belief (P4 other). Not only does this confirm H1, but the changes make intuitive sense. Philosophically, SIGIR seems to believe that it lost a little bit more control to the perceived “other” (though SIGIR never had control in the beginning). As a result of this, SIGIR changed its strategy and tactics to become even more cooperative than it was before. In short, SIGIR learned from its experience and tried to improve the means to its goals with little evidence of actually changing their philosophy and thus their goals.

—Table 1 about here—

The above analysis has not addressed the time component in H2, which states that changes that do occur will occur earlier rather than later. How the sample was divided above does not allow for testing this hypothesis. Iraqi reconstruction began in 2002 and the data collected only covers the period between June 2005 and December 2011. During this period, there were significant changes of foreign policy in Iraq. To begin with, there was the troop surge that began on January 10, 2007. The security situation in Iraq was worsening, and it was becoming hard to do non-military projects (including reconstruction projects). Policymakers thought the troop surge would not only bring about better security situations, but allow reconstruction to be completed faster and more efficiently. As the surge did succeed in bringing better

⁵Midpoints in the beliefs represent the division between two ‘opposite’ beliefs (i.e. control vs. lack of control or conflict vs. cooperation).

security, SIGIR was freed up to act upon the lessons learned and change. Almost three years later, President Obama announced on August 31, 2010 the end of the Iraqi combat mission and the transferring of duties to Iraqis. Reconstruction was no longer connected to a combat mission, which would theoretically require shifting attention and priorities (read philosophical beliefs). Such changes and learning coming as a result of these policy shifts are missed when aggregated together. Thus, the sample must be further disaggregated into four phases: (1) pre surge, (2) post surge, (3) pre announcement, and (4) post announcement.⁶ Table 2 contains the operational code for each of the different phases.

—Table 2 about here—

here are two criteria that must be met in order to confirm H2. First and as previously discussed, most of the major, significant changes that occur must be in instrumental beliefs. Second, the philosophical changes that do occur should occur in the early phases when the bureaucracy is still relatively young and flexible enough to change. As seen in Table 2, when moving from pre surge to post surge, the most change is seen (two philosophical and three instrumental beliefs—all of them crossed the mid-point and thus were major changes. While SIGIR viewed the world as much more hostile, it was also more certain of the future. Instrumentally, SIGIR was more risk acceptant, had less flexibility between words and deeds, and rewarded the other a lot more. This matches the situation on the ground. Iraq was experiencing an uptick in violence and was thus more hostile. At the same time, SIGIR was gaining experience on the ground and saw what worked based on experience. Moving from the post surge phase to the pre announcement phase, there were no significant philosophical belief changes. Of the three instrumental changes that occurred, none of them were major changes. SIGIR became more conflictual in strategy and more risk acceptant. SIGIR also threatened more—threaten here is indicated by the future tense of negative action verbs. Moving from pre announcement to post announcement, there were no significant changes at all. These results seemingly confirm H2. There were many more significant instrumental belief changes than philosophical beliefs changes; the philosophical beliefs and major belief changes that did occur happened early; and changes decreased in frequency as time went on.

Yet, operational code analysis uses an actor's perception of self and an 'other.' Foreign policy bureaucracies must contend with both foreign and domestic other. SIGIR not only interacted with Iraq (a foreign other), but had to contend with a multitude of domestic others (ranging from Congress, DoD, the State

⁶The dividing line between phase 2 and phase 3 is the aforementioned "culmination of learning".

department, and USAID to civilian contractors). To confirm that the above results did not come as a result of vastly different perceptions of foreign and domestic others, I split my sample into those verbs that address foreign others (operationalized as Iraq, Iraqi population, or Iraqi government) and those that address a domestic other.⁷ When comparing the foreign and domestic results for the four phases, there were few major differences.⁸ Those that did exist were again in the early phases and mostly all in the instrumental beliefs (2 out of 9 was a philosophical major difference). When disaggregated into pre/post learning, there were no philosophical major changes. As this matches the previous results, I can be confident that the above confirmation of H1 and H2 did not come as a result of different foreign and domestic belief systems.

—Table 3 about here—

Testing H3 required separating the domestic actors into different U.S. based others. To avoid splitting the sample into too small, meaningless groups, the domestic others were separated into: civilian agencies, military/DoD, and contractors/contracting (for further justification of these groupings see: Destler (1974) for the strong civilian corps culture and (Wilson, 1989) for the strong military culture). These three groups best represent the largest aggregate domestic others that have theoretically different policy relationships with SIGIR. Table 3 shows the various operational code profiles of domestic others (Iraq's/foreign's profile is included here for comparison of all actors). When disaggregated, civilian others differed majorly from the other two domestic others 5 times (4 were philosophical), military differed 8 times (4 were philosophical), and contracting differed 8 times (1 was philosophical). These major differences occurred across the four phases. It seems as though SIGIR did experience complex learning (both simple and diagnostic) in certain dyad relationships. However, SIGIR was not able to aggregate these lessons learned to the higher, bureaucratic structure

Tactical Consequences of Non-Learning

By plotting operational code profiles, subjunctive games can be constructed that predict both tactical sequences and strategic direction (Maoz, 1990). In Figure 1, the actor's scores for Strategic Orientation (I-1) for self and Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) for other are represented by the vertical axis while the

⁷Those verbs that broadly addressed reconstruction and not a specific other actor were coded as NA here and removed for this analysis.

⁸T test scores were not available here. When dividing the sample into the phases, the separate others and then by page, lead to 'dividing by 0' problems when running T tests.

horizontal axis represents the adjusted Historical Control score (Self: P4d = P4a-P4b; Other: P4d = P4b-P4a).⁹ When plotted, different strategic and tactical orientations become visible. Mapping the location for Self and Other within these coordinate plane leads to predictions about what moves and tactics the actor is likely to use when interacting with others and what moves and tactics the actor expects others to use.

— Figure 1 about here—

In Figure 2, it can be seen how the significant philosophical changes between the first two phases did move the perceived other into a new typology quadrant (active cooperation to passive cooperation) while tactical or strategic changes for SIGIR itself did not. Smaller instrumental changes throughout all phases did move SIGIR's and "the other's" around the respected typology without major changes to their preferences. The bureaucratic structure kept SIGIR within the same preference set and tactical orientation even though SIGIR's leadership did try to act upon lessons learned.

— Figure 2 about here—

A more dynamic prediction of tactics can be seen in Figure 3 where the various others' operational code profiles are plotted on the coordinate plan. Throughout these four different predictions, the tactics of the self remain somewhat constant and all end within the active conflict quadrant. In short, SIGIR does not seem to have learned about itself or its role in the dyad relationships. Other perceived strategies of the others tell a different story that represents each dyad's history. Though SIGIR initially scoffed at the assumption of security, SIGIR perceives the military as generally cooperative. After the surge, the military moves from active to passive cooperation as their attention shifts from stabilization to active counter-insurgency. Yet, when the military's presence nears an end, SIGIR suddenly views them in as more active help. This counters the strategies of civilian agencies who were initially perceived in active conflict. As time passed and civilian agencies took a larger role in post-war Iraq, civilian agencies became more cooperative.

The SIGIR-Contractor dyad is a bit different as a large portion of SIGIR's role is to audit and oversee reconstruction, which was primarily done by contractors. Contractors were seen as passively cooperating (reconstruction could not have as quickly as it did occurred without them). The sudden shift in the contractor's conflictual nature comes during a peak of criminal investigations into corruption, bribery, and failed

⁹So that a unit change in P4 is equivalent to a unit change in the vertical axis.

projects. When Inspector General Bowen discusses the lesson's learned in Iraq and the needed changes to combat these failures, many times he references how strategies toward the local population and reconstruction as a democratization tool need to be altered. However, SIGIR's own beliefs about how the world is and how actors behave in the world do not change past the first phase.

— Figure 3 about here—

Conclusion

Existing literature does not provide guidance on how to structure infrastructure investments so that the long-term dynamics will favor political stability. Current policy discussions and solutions revolve around the means of reconstruction (instrumental beliefs) by preventing structural misallocation of public goods and/or focus on bureaucratic competition, efficiency, and democratization (see: Dobbins, 2003; Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, 2009; Orr, 2004). These solutions underestimate how infrastructure reconstruction connects to the greater goal of democratization and stability.

Knowing why current reconstruction policies have not reduced political instability is particularly important as infrastructure's consequences are initially indistinguishable from other plausible outcomes before implementation and only become apparent afterwards.¹⁰ Yet, the ability for actors to guide technology towards specific goals (like SIGIR is trying to do with its lessons learned) decreases as time passes after implementation. Political elites need to be cognizant from the beginning of infrastructure's long-term consequences, which involves forecasting and forecasting requires planning. Policymakers do have long-term goals but their focus remains on immediate goals that have built-in tools for implementation, which this paper supports (Majeski and Sylvan, 2009).

SIGIR has recognized past failures and is trying to include some learned lessons in future reconstruction policies via instrumental changes. Yet, it is not enough to only point out something needs to be learned and adapt in light of failures. Philosophical beliefs must change if the long term lessons learned are to be implemented and better foreign policy decisions made. This paper has shown that bureaucratic structure has prevented SIGIR's philosophical beliefs concerning place reconstruction from changing. If these cores beliefs do change, so can the world be "qualitatively transformed and quantitatively enriched" (Kuhn, 1962,

¹⁰For more on the Collingridge Dilemma, see Collingridge (1980).

p. 7). This paper has shown that a new framework can provide better insight into why foreign policy bureaucracies cannot seemingly learn from history. By defining bureaucracies as a technology, it becomes clear how bureaucratic structure prevents actors from bringing learning to the system of policymaking at large. As such, blind faith in bureaucracies—just like blind faith in technology—does not automatically lead to progress or competence.

Appendix A: Steps in the Verbs in Context System

1. Identify the subject as:

SELF or OTHER

2. Identify the tense of the transitive verb as:

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

3. Identify the category of the verb as:

POSITIVE (+) or NEGATIVE (-)

4. If 'words' verb, assign following codes:

APPEAL, SUPPORT (+1)	OPPOSE, RESIST (-1)
or	or
PROMISE BENEFITS (+2)	THREATEN COSTS (-2)

5. If 'deeds' verb, assign following codes:

REWARDS (+3) or PUNISHMENTS (-3)

6. Identify specific other and place in context

AN EXAMPLE

A quote taken from President Carter's January 4, 1980 address to the nation: "Massive Soviet military forces have invaded the small, non-aligned, sovereign nation of Afghanistan..."

1. Subject. The subject is "Massive Soviet military forces" which is coded as other, that is, the speaker is not referring to his or her self or his or her state.
2. Tense and Category. The verb phrase "have invade" is in the past tense and is a negative deed coded, therefore, as punish.
3. Target and Context. The action is directed toward Afghanistan; therefore, the target is coded as Afghanistan. In addition, we designate a context: Soviet-Afghanistan-conflict-1979-88.

Table 1: SIGIR's Operational Code Profiles Pre and Post Learning

		Pre Learning	Post Learning
P1: Nature of the political universe (Friendly +1/Hostile -1)		-0.32	-0.39 (0.68)
P2: Realization of political values (Optimist +1/Pessimist -1)		-0.39	-0.41 (0.67)
P3: Predictability of Future (Uncertain 0/Certain 1)		0.56	0.57 (3.26)
P4: Historical Control	Self	0.35	0.22 (0.29)
	Other	0.65	0.78* (0.29)
P5: Role of Chance (Low 0/High +1)		0.80	0.88 (.21)
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>			
I1: Strategic Approach to Goals (Cooperate +1/Conflict-1)		0.31	0.90* (.35)
I2: Tactical Pursuit of Goals (Cooperate +1/Conflict-1)		0.30	0.75* (.33)
I3: Risk Orientation (Risk averse 0/Risk Acceptant +1)		0.44	0.58 (.24)
I4: Timing of action (Low Flexibility 0/High Flexibility +1)	Coop. vs. Cft.	0.69	0.10 (.35)
	Words vs. Deeds	0.47	0.70 (.40)
I5: Utility of Means (Infrequent 0/Frequent +1)	a) Appease/Supp	0.06	0.20 (.36)
	b) Promise	0.07	0.10 (.35)
	c) Reward	0.53	0.65 (.44)
	d) Oppose	0.04	0.00* (0.00)
	e) Threaten	0.23	0.05 (.18)
	f) Punish	0.23	0.00 (0.00)
N pages		58	65
N verbs		255	92

* indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$

Standard errors are listed in parenthesis

T Tests compare Post Learning to Pre Learning phase by page.

Table 2: Learning Between Phases

		Pre Surge	Post Surge	Pre Announcement	Post Announcement
P1:		0.04	-0.67* (.78)	-0.18 (.68)	-0.48 (.68)
P2:		-0.09	-0.67 (.77)	-0.17 (.69)	-0.52 (.66)
P3:		0.36	0.74* (.21)	0.37 (.31)	0.66 (.28)
P4:	S	0.29	0.40 (.40)	0.33 (.39)	0.15 (.21)
	O	0.71	0.60 (.40)	0.67 (.39)	0.88 (.21)
P5:		0.90	0.70 (.28)	0.89 (.26)	0.90 (.19)
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>					
I1:		0.03	0.47 (.83)	1.00* (0.00)	0.78 (.5)
I2:		(0.04	0.466 (.84)	0.88 (.33)	0.59 (.35)
I3:		0.13	0.62* (.23)	0.78* (0.00)	0.33 (.30)
I4:	Co v Cf	0.97	0.53 (.31)	0.00 (0.00)	0.22 (0.50)
	W v D	0.97	0.18* (.22)	0.36 (0.00)	0.89 (0.500)
I5:	a)	0.09	0.04 (.07)	0.18 (0.50)	0.22 (.17)
	b)	0.15	0.02 (.14)	0.00 (0.00)	0.22 (0.50)
	c)	0.27	0.68* (.47)	0.82 (0.50)	0.44 (.42)
	d)	0.12	0.00 (.04)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
	e)	0.12	0.04 (.04)	0.00* (0.00)	0.11 (.25)
	f)	0.24	0.23 (.41)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
N pages		17	41	7	17
N verbs		114	141	33	59

* and bolded indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$

Standard errors are listed in parenthesis

T Tests compare that phase to the previous phase by page

Refer for Table 1 for belief details

Table 3: Operational Code Profiles of Reconstruction Others

	Civilian				Military				Contractors				Iraq			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
P1	0.09*	<u>-0.57</u>	<u>0.20</u>	<u>-0.63</u>	<u>-0.10</u>	<u>-0.33</u>	<u>-0.14*</u>	<u>1.00*</u>	<u>-0.20</u>	<u>-0.94</u>	1.00	<u>-0.500</u>	.18	<u>-0.82</u>	<u>-1.00</u>	<u>-0.46</u>
P2	<u>-0.05</u>	<u>-0.43</u>	<u>0.17</u>	<u>-0.68</u>	<u>-0.20</u>	<u>-0.38</u>	<u>0.00*</u>	<u>1.00*</u>	<u>-0.34</u>	<u>-0.88</u>	1.00	<u>-0.57</u>	0.01	<u>-0.84</u>	<u>-1.00</u>	<u>-0.52</u>
P3	0.29	<u>0.49*</u>	<u>0.28</u>	<u>0.78</u>	<u>0.46</u>	<u>0.60</u>	<u>0.32</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>0.52*</u>	<u>0.86</u>	<u>1.00*</u>	0.70	0.26	<u>0.87</u>	1.00	0.56
P4	0.41	<u>0.52*</u>	<u>0.44</u>	<u>0.23</u>	<u>0.38</u>	<u>0.40</u>	<u>0.42</u>	<u>0.14</u>	<u>0.19</u>	<u>0.28</u>	<u>0.60*</u>	0.17	0.32	<u>0.35</u>	0.00	0.21
O	0.60	<u>0.48*</u>	<u>0.56</u>	<u>0.77</u>	<u>0.63</u>	<u>0.60</u>	<u>0.58</u>	<u>0.86</u>	<u>0.81</u>	<u>0.72</u>	<u>0.40*</u>	<u>0.83</u>	0.68	<u>0.65</u>	1.00	<u>0.79</u>
P5	0.88	<u>0.75</u>	<u>0.88</u>	<u>0.82</u>	<u>0.83</u>	<u>0.76</u>	<u>0.87</u>	<u>0.86</u>	<u>0.90</u>	<u>0.76</u>	<u>0.40*</u>	<u>0.88</u>	0.92	<u>0.70</u>	1.00	<u>0.88</u>
I1	<u>-0.20</u>	<u>0.73</u>	1.00	<u>0.75</u>	<u>0.00*</u>	<u>0.40</u>	1.00	1.00	<u>-0.43</u>	<u>0.54</u>	1.00	<u>1.00.25</u>	0.42	—	—	0.33
I2	<u>-0.24</u>	<u>0.69</u>	<u>0.83</u>	<u>0.58</u>	<u>-0.06</u>	<u>0.43</u>	<u>0.73</u>	<u>0.67</u>	<u>-0.33</u>	<u>0.44</u>	<u>0.78</u>	0.67	0.17	<u>0.42</u>	<u>-0.44</u>	—
I3	0.20	<u>0.68</u>	<u>0.70</u>	<u>0.40</u>	<u>0.20</u>	<u>0.64</u>	<u>0.52</u>	1.00	<u>0.32</u>	<u>0.45*</u>	<u>0.60</u>	<u>0.40*</u>	0.18	<u>0.65</u>	—	0.60
I4	0.80	<u>0.27</u>	0.00	<u>0.25</u>	1.00	<u>0.60*</u>	0.00	0.00	<u>0.57</u>	<u>0.46</u>	0.00	0.00	.75	<u>0.58</u>	—	0.67
Co v Cf	0.80	<u>0.40</u>	<u>0.50*</u>	1.00	1.00	0.20	<u>0.80</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.29*</u>	<u>0.62*</u>	<u>0.67</u>	<u>1.00*</u>	0.88	<u>0.00</u>	—	<u>0.67</u>
W v D	0.07	<u>0.07</u>	<u>0.25</u>	<u>0.25</u>	0.00	0.00	<u>0.40</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.14</u>	<u>0.15</u>	<u>0.33</u>	<u>0.50</u>	0.13	<u>0.00</u>	—	0.00
a)	0.27	<u>0.07</u>	0.00	<u>0.13</u>	<u>0.33</u>	0.00	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>0.14</u>	<u>0.08</u>	0.00	<u>0.00*</u>	0.19	<u>0.00</u>	—	0.00
b)	0.07	<u>0.73</u>	<u>0.75</u>	<u>0.50</u>	<u>0.17</u>	<u>0.70</u>	<u>0.60</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.54</u>	<u>0.67</u>	0.50	0.19	<u>0.00</u>	—	0.00
c)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	<u>0.14</u>	<u>0.00</u>	0.00	0.00	0.06	<u>0.00</u>	—	0.00
d)	0.27	<u>0.07</u>	0.00	<u>0.13</u>	<u>0.17</u>	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.43</u>	<u>0.08</u>	0.00	0.00	0.06	<u>0.00</u>	—	0.33
e)	0.33	<u>0.07</u>	0.00	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.33</u>	<u>0.20</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.14</u>	<u>0.15</u>	<u>0.00</u>	0.00	0.25	<u>0.29</u>	—	0.00
f)	17	41	7	17	17	41	7	17	17	41	7	17	17	41	7	17
N pages	37	29	18	35	32	25	12	7	37	47	10	24	50	69	1	59
N Verbs																

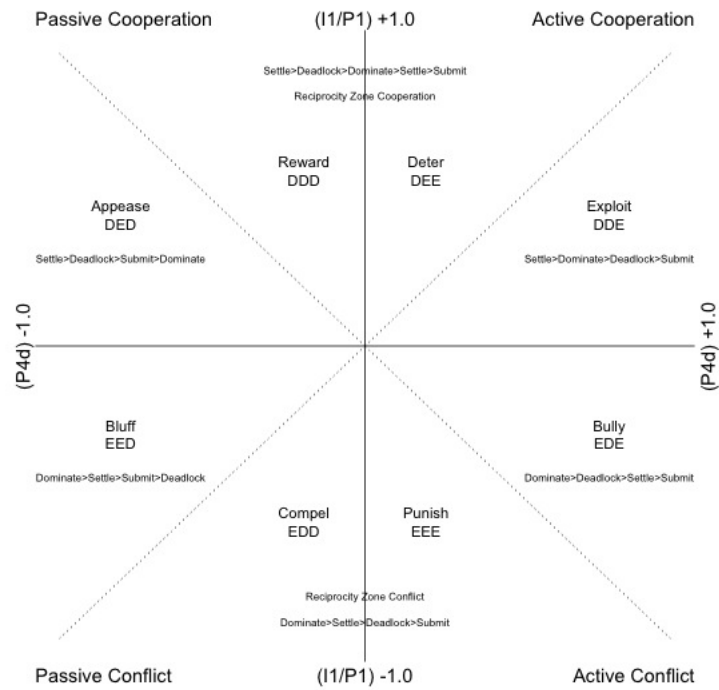
* represents a major difference from other two domestic actors on that belief in the same phase.

Underlined belief scores represent those beliefs that differed majorly from previous phase.

— in Iraq's operational code profile represents those beliefs that are not calculable due to the small sample size. These beliefs require variation of the self coded verbs, which a sample of 1 does not provide.

Notes: Refer for Table 1 for attribute details.

Figure 1: VICs Prediction Typology for Tactics and Strategies



Note: Diagonal lines represent the break between unconditional tactics in which an actor initiates either an escalatory/de-escalatory and conditional tactics based on the perceived historical control. The points at the extremes of the horizontal axes are unconditional and those that are not are conditional.

Figure 2:

Tactical Effects of Non-Learning Across for SIGIR

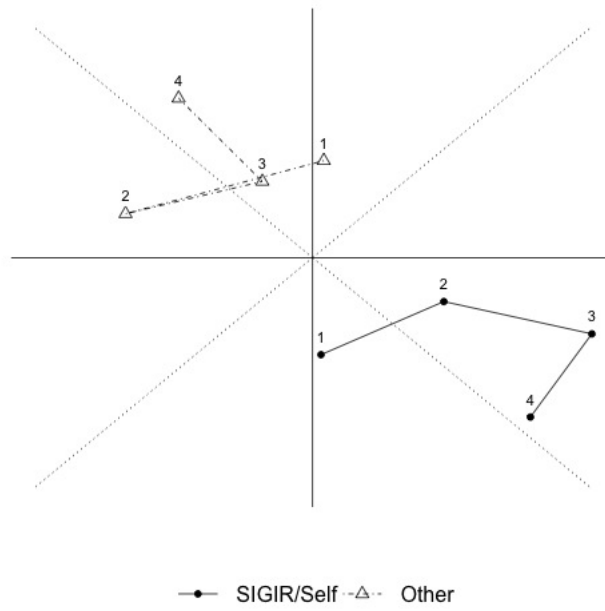
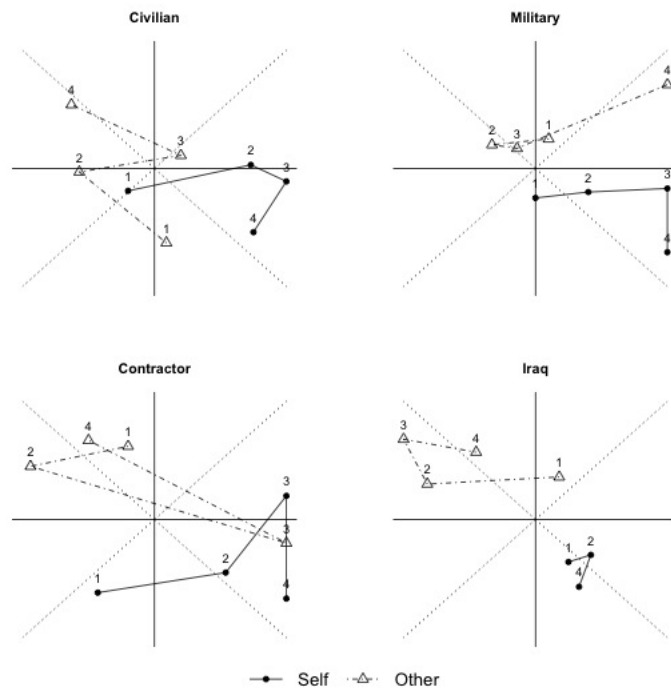


Figure 3:
Change of Tactics and strategies Across Time



Note: Others refer to the non-SIGIR actor in each Dyad

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