

Nuova Rivista Storica

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Abstracts

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The essay focuses on the difficulties to define what an irregular conflict is, in order to do so the essay is divided into three sections. The first one presents an overview as complete as possible on the theories about how conflicts have changed since the end of the Cold War. The second section will try to highlight how such theories, while taking the credit for a kind of originality, have many forerunners in last three centuries which face similar tactical and strategic issues. To this end, the essay examines the concept of Counterinsurgency (COIN) as it has developed in the mid-twentieth century and then it analyzes some theories between the eighteenth and nineteenth century colonial conflicts relating to the petite guerre. Third section examines the recent conflict carried out by the Islamic State between Syria and Iraq thus highlighting which aspects of the theoretical debate are more pervasive in modern warfare.

Keywords:

Irregular War

Counterinsurgency

Islamic State