ISSUE 4 Michaelmas Term 2014

- South Africa, 2014: the Iceberg Election
- War and Remembrance: The Case of Finnish Covert Operations in the First World War
- ‘Six characters in search of an author’: Fear, Art, Identity and Contingency
- The Paradox of Postcolonialism: The Chains of Contingency
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Foreword

The changes and adjustments implemented in the overall structure and workings of Strife over the past few months are not, perhaps, immediately apparent from the present Issue. These changes, however, have only improved Strife in general and Strife Journal in particular. In October of this year Strife formalised further and expanded its editorial structure, with newly appointed members of our editorial team eagerly contributing to the overall Strife experience. New people, new ideas, new directions within our beloved theme, that of conflict, ensure that Strife continues to move forward vigorously, to stably grow in a field of academic discourse which is as demanding as it is thrilling. On the other end of the scale, the importance of continuity is not being overlooked either, especially when it comes to the Journal, the publication process of which is, to some extent, less straightforward that that of the blog. In this context, the thoughts and suggestions of veteran members are instrumental in the smooth publication process. The Journal Editors could not have done it without the rest of the team, veterans and new-comers alike, and for their help we owe them our gratitude.

The near future holds some more changes which are to further formalise Strife’s presence among other peer-referred academic journals. The creation of a dedicated website for Strife Journal is being undertaken, a website which will, of course, remain in close contact and alignment with Strife Blog (at www.strifeblog.org), safeguarding and, hopefully, boosting the unified, cross-format Strife initiative. Although the present issue does not include a dedicated extract from our online counterpart, features of blog series are planned for several of the forthcoming issues, series which will provide multiple and interesting vantage points into the study of conflict.

It is a particular personal pleasure for us to see how the Book Reviews section, introduced in Issue 2 and formally established in Issue 3, continues to expand. In the present Issue, five reviewers are engaging with recent works on medieval and early modern history, on war in literature and on myths surrounding conflict. The core of Strife Journal remains its extended pieces. The six articles herein contained, by Callum Petty, Andreas Haggman, the fraternal duo Pablo and Tally de Orellana, Alexandra Gallovisova, and Oluwaseun Bamidele examine conflict from interesting and original perspectives.

As always, many thanks are due to the Department of War Studies at King’s College London, which has provided unceasing support. The Editors would especially like to thank Prof. Theo Farrell, Prof. Joe Maiolo, Dr Christine Cheng, Prof. Vivienne Jabri, Dr Alan James, Dr Oisin Tansey, Prof. Mats Berdal and Dr Kieran Mitton. Thanks are of course also owed to all our contributors, who have handled our editorial demands with grace and rapidity, as well as our reviewers. Finally, we offer our enthusiastic thanks to Tally de Orellana for the design of the cover of the present Issue.

We are always on the lookout for interesting perspectives on conflict for both the journal and the blog. We welcome ideas, suggestions and contributions from all interested in conflict history, conflict studies and conflict resolution.

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Alister Wedderburn

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South Africa, 2014: The Iceberg Election*

Callum Petty

The South African election of 2014 was a case of how ‘the political scene is both much the same and considerably transformed’\(^1\). The election ‘will change nothing, and everything’\(^2\). The result itself was expected - the incumbent African National Congress (ANC) easily won the election. Yet, this belies intriguing trends reshaping social and political life. It was South Africa’s iceberg election: a result that displayed ANC power yet hid cracks beneath the waterline. The ANC vote held strong even if melting away, as the party moves into uncharted, politically uncertain waters.

It makes sense to analyse the election as part of a greater social and political journey; there are many core and inescapable issues bubbling beneath the surface. Many key themes are beyond a single election and will continue to affect South Africa into the future. Put concisely, high unemployment, poor working conditions and inadequate service delivery have long affected South Africa and will continue to do so. Broadly speaking, these issues fuel the country’s endemic protests. Such themes should be taken into account when analysing the election holistically.

However, we must also remember the details of the election. The botched Agang SA-Democratic Alliance (DA) merger had potential to become a serious challenge in the election. Such an alliance could have convinced many black South Africans to vote DA. The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) mining strike was another key detail concurrent to the election. Although not specifically electoral, it revealed how dissident labour is an increasingly relevant theme.

The party campaigns themselves are rich for analysis. Not only were the core issues widely addressed, like the need for jobs, but also party tactics. The ANC relied on its organisational history to sell itself, while the DA tried to counter such claims of continuity, instead promoting itself as the true party of post-apartheid South Africa. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) were the latest left-wing ANC breakaway to challenge for power, and in this sense it represents growing dissatisfaction of the ANC with its once core support of poor, black South Africans.

The period itself revealed key themes of South African politics that intensified during the election, namely the ANC’s control over state broadcasting and its unfair campaign tactics, in addition to the continuing relevance of direct action even during voting season.

While the ANC comfortably won the election, and the DA consolidated its vote, deeper analysis of the election sheds light on developing social and political issues. These are many, but of very high significance is the ANC’s steadily decreasing urban vote and low rates of registration and electoral engagement. Again, the demons affecting South African society are all too clear to see.

The article ends with a section on dissident labour, particularly focusing on the trade union powerhouse The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). Connected to intensifying work strikes, this organisation looks to set itself up as a workers’ platform soon. Industrial relations are set to polarise and this could split the ANC trade union federation Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The ANC power

* My deepest thanks to Professor Jack Spence, OBE, who supervised my research for and advised on the preparation of this paper.
structure could collapse in such a situation, although the outcome would be bitterly contested by various powerbrokers. Concisely, the election was not a game-changer. It was, however, certainly part of a serious ‘end of the beginning’ for ANC hegemony.

A summary of the election’s results – The ANC dominate

The election for the National Assembly and provincial assemblies happened on 7 May, 2014. It was based on a closed-list proportional representation system, with the President chosen by the newly-elected Parliament. This system is quite idiosyncratic although not unique to South Africa, combining both Presidential and Prime Ministerial functions. In practice, given the ANC’s clear electoral majority, the Presidency was the ANC’s choice. Thus Jacob Zuma, the incumbent, was re-elected.

A breakdown of vote

The number of registered voters was 25,390,150 out of a voting age population (VAP) of 32,687,600 (2013 official estimate). Therefore, 78% of voters were registered. This is more accurate than the Independent Electoral Commission’s (IEC) VAP data, given how the latter is based on the 2011 census. Here, the number of registered voters was 31,434,035, an apparent 81%. Thus, there is a gap of 3% between the data. This ‘registration gap’ is something to bear in mind, for it is part of a broader problem which will be examined in more detail later. The turnout of registered voters was 73.5%, i.e. 57.1% of the greater VAP.

The ANC won a clear majority, winning all provinces bar the Western Cape. The DA is the main opposition, although the strength of this varies from their stronghold of their Western Cape to their third placed results in North West Province and Limpopo. The EFF is the official opposition in these provinces and also the third party nationally. However, this is not the case in every province, for other parties beat them in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. It should be remembered that other parties bar the current main three do have noticeable presences in South African politics, despite their poor showings in this election.

Ongoing and longstanding social issues, which broadly affected the election period

Firstly, there is the issue of ‘jobs, jobs, jobs’. High unemployment has troubled since apartheid. This has been exacerbated by the late-2000s global recession. The unemployment rate was 25.2% in the first quarter of 2014. This was even worse for young workers; 36.1% of those aged 15-34 were jobless. As well, that many of the existing jobs poorly paid or contracted for a limited duration. Again, this problem is worse for young workers. While there is a large informal sector in the South African economy, which deserves greater attention if township enterprise is to be developed rather than ignored or stereotyped, the wish for life-affirming, well-paid jobs is widespread.

Secondly, there is the issue of service delivery – the supply, provision and maintenance of amenities, like water, electricity and housing. As with jobs, improved service delivery has been top of the agenda since the end of apartheid – as the ANC promised in 1994, a ‘better life for all’. To a great extent, the ANC has delivered.
The National Vote

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>11,463,921</td>
<td>62.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>4,091,584</td>
<td>22.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFF</td>
<td>1,169,259</td>
<td>6.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,704,733</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
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The Provincial Vote

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>The Vote (1st, 2nd, 3rd)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>ANC (1,528,345 – 70.09%), DA (353,316 – 16.20%), United Democratic Movement (134,280 – 6.16%), EFF 4th-placed with 75,766 votes, 3.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>ANC (708,720 – 69.85%), DA (164,672 – 16.23%), EFF (82,674 – 8.15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>ANC (2,348,564 – 53.59%), DA (1,349,001 – 30.78%), EFF (415,318 – 10.30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>ANC (2,475,041 – 64.53%), DA (489,430 – 12.76%), Inkatha Freedom Party (416,496 – 10.86%), EFF 5th-placed with 70,823 votes, 1.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>ANC (1,149,348 – 78.60%), EFF (156,982 – 10.78%), DA (94,724 – 6.48%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>ANC (1,045,409 – 78.23%), DA (138,990 – 10.40%), EFF (83,589 – 6.26%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>ANC (733,490 – 67.39%), EFF (143,765 – 13.21%), DA (138,521)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>ANC (272,053 – 64.40%), DA (100,916 – 23.89%), EFF (20,951 – 4.96%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>DA (1,259,645 – 59.38%), ANC (697,664 – 32.89%), EFF (44,762 – 2.11%)</td>
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The vote in the metropolitan municipalities (metros)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro (Province)</th>
<th>The Vote (1st, 2nd, 3rd)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ekurhuleni [East Rand] (Gauteng)</td>
<td>ANC (622,192 – 55.07%), DA (328,143 – 29.05%), EFF (119,919 – 29.05%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannesburg [Johannesburg] (Gauteng)</td>
<td>ANC (821,109 – 52.28%), DA (508,362 – 32.37%), EFF (159,105 – 10.13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tshwane [Pretoria] (Gauteng)</td>
<td>ANC (517,741 – 49.31%), DA (354,403 – 33.75%), EFF (120,849 – 11.51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo City [East London] (Eastern Cape)</td>
<td>ANC (194,615 – 66.93%), DA (55,628 – 19.13%), EFF (15,956 – 5.49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Mandela Bay [Port Elizabeth] (Eastern Cape)</td>
<td>ANC (212,862 – 48.81%), DA (177,952 – 40.80%), EFF (18,077 – 4.15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eThekwini [Durban Metro] (KwaZulu-Natal)</td>
<td>ANC (909,111 – 64.59%), DA (308,078 – 21.89%), Inkatha Freedom Party (52,409 – 3.72%), EFF with 34,337 votes, 2.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manguang [Bloemfontein] (Free State)</td>
<td>ANC (187,553 – 64.44%), DA (60,725 – 20.87%), EFF (24,995 – 8.59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Town [Cape Town] (Western Cape)</td>
<td>DA (872,117 – 61.50%), ANC (441,488 – 31.13%), EFF (35,615 – 2.15%)</td>
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** Ibid
In 1994-2010, 2.4 million houses were built for the homeless. The number of household electricity connections increased from 36% in 1993 to 82% in 2010. Sanitation has generally improved. However, the quality and maintenance of services has been questionable at best. Additionally, service provision has struggled to keep up with rapid urbanisation, particularly in the Gauteng and Western Cape metros. Therefore, despite a high absolute provision of services, the ‘expectation-reality gap’ has not successfully closed.

A final theme that encapsulates both these issues is that of direct action. This is increasingly prevalent as political expression, encompassing frustrations that the jobs and services promised are not being delivered. Illustrating this, the number of protests correlated with the hard(er) times brought on by the recession – between 2008 and November 2011, South Africa had averagely 8.5 significant protests a month. Direct action is not just social, but power-political also. Merle Lipton particularly emphasises how protest is a battle for resources in a society that’s patience is wearing thin and how direct action is not just an engagement of the masses, but a tool used in intra-elite struggle. There are aspects of ‘I want that job, I want that patronage to dispense, I want that tender’. This is accompanied or countered by those suffering by being outside the circles of patronage, in a cycle of unrest which at its core has the basic issues of jobs and quality of life.

Interestingly, foreign policy was not a key theme prior or during the election. While certain international events or relationships, such as South Africa’s involvements with the BRICS, generally got media coverage, these things were not electoral battlegrounds. Domestic issues, as outlined above, were far more prevalent.

Specific events immediately prior to the election period

Bar the ongoing themes mentioned above, there were two specific events that manifested themselves during the election period. The first was the proposed link-up of Agang SA with the DA in early 2014. This would have put Agang’s leader, well-known anti-apartheid activist Mamphela Ramphele, as the DA’s presidential candidate. This was a brief period in which it seemed like the ANC could be seriously challenged – Ramphele was ‘somebody who had been sympathetic to the ANC but was not ANC and yet had the credentials that the ANC could claim’. If this merger had attracted wavering members of COSATU, it ‘could have been the embryo of something’. As it happened, the link-up acrimoniously collapsed – Ramphele pulled out and Agang refused to be incorporated into DA structures. On its own, Agang did abysmally in the election, receiving just 52,350 votes (0.28%).

Issues of deeper significance were the mining strikes and rumblings from powerful trade unions, particularly the National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA) and the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). Many mineworkers felt, and continue to feel, exploited by the great mining companies, such as the Lonmin or Anglo American. Since the 2012 Marikana massacre, increasing tense mining industrial relations have been now more visible and pressing than ever. Earlier in the year, from 23 January to 25 July, AMCU led a strike of 70,000 platinum miners in Rustenburg, demanding a wage increase to R12,500 (approximate £700) a month. It was the longest and most expensive strike in South Africa to date.

13 Ibid., p. 338. 
14 Ibid., p. 337. 
16 Merle Lipton (Visiting Research Fellow at King’s College London and ex-Associate Fellow at Chatham House), interview with the author. 
17 Ibid.

18 Keith Somerville (Lecturer, Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Kent, and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies), interview with the author. 
19 Ibid. 
21 The Marikana miners’ strike lasted from 10 August-20 September 2012. On 16 of August, police opened fire on protesters, killing 34 and injuring 78. 
It is not just in the mines where dissident labour threatened political insurgency, but in splits in COSATU also. This could mean a fragmentation of a key pillar of ANC support, while producing a political rival that could actually challenge for national power. In December 2013, NUMSA, the largest trade union in South Africa, split from COSATU and refused to campaign for the ANC in the election. Led by Irvin Jim, it now seeks to convince COSATU affiliates to join it, promoting a new left-wing, trade unions-based movement. If the head of COSATU, Zwelini Zuma, re-joins NUMSA in its criticism of the ANC, then this could auger a COSATU split. While this development was too late to affect the election, it is an ongoing, pertinent issue, which will be further examined below.

The election campaigns

The ANC launched their campaign in January, while the DA and the EFF launched theirs in February. The key commonality between all campaigns was a focus on jobs, or ‘work opportunities’, and the promotion of distinctive macroeconomic plans which had jobs and improved living conditions at their cores. All parties had their own election strategies, but the ANC’s and the DA’s were the most developed, and the most interesting considering that they were attempting to counter the other. Summarily, the ANC focused on its struggle credentials and tried to highlight its grand heritage, particularly the manufactured image of Mandela. It tried to eschew President Zuma or the last five years in office. On the other hand, the DA’s strategy was to acknowledge the ANC’s past, to reassure black South Africans of their political orthodoxy, while trying to undermine the current government as squanderers of the ANC’s legacy and in turn promoting the DA as the best party of a modern, inclusive South Africa.

The ANC

The ANC was conscious that focusing on President Zuma would be a strategic weakness. His record the past five years has been mixed, while Zuma’s corruption charges make him an easy target for opponents. Zuma has also been booed in public events on previous occasions, so much so that the ANC had to intricately stage-manage the party’s manifesto launch in Nelspruit to stop this happening. Zuma was booed at ANC rallies in Gauteng, Nelson Mandela Bay and Limpopo during the campaign.

The ANC therefore focused on a trusty selling card – their liberation credentials and their pantheon of political heroes, most notably Mandela. Thus, the ANC manifesto was ‘dedicated to Tata Madiba’, and their election advert repeated Mandela’s promise of 1994 of a ‘better life for all’. The ANC attempted to call forth the loyalty and respect that many have for Mandela and the ANC heritage; it was an image of ‘continuity’ papering over recent cracks in the ANC edifice. To quote their manifesto: ‘Twenty years ago we began a new journey to eradicate the oppressive legacy of colonialism and apartheid … Our journey continues’.

The DA

The DA began its campaign with the debacle of the Agang-SA merger. This took the wind out of their sails, ensuring that the ANC performed best early on. It questioned DA leader Helen Zille’s political nous, while also granting the ANC a cheap race card to exploit. Indeed, ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe disparaged Ramphele’s candidacy as ‘rent-a-black, rent-a-leader’.

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25 ANC TV advert - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVMWcrRP_7s (last accessed on 28/7/2014).
26 ANC manifesto, p. 3.
The DA tried to convince black South Africans that theirs was an inclusive party, not just for whites or the middle classes. Indeed, given this entrenched image, the DA even had to state that it was anti-apartheid, before elaborating with its particular strategy. This acknowledged the ANC’s legacy as the main party of liberation, but then nuanced this by stating that today’s ANC is different from the past ANC. This opposed the ANC’s ‘continuity’ line. As written in the DA manifesto: ‘Under Presidents Mandela and Mbeki, we made important progress towards social justice … it is undeniable that life in a democratic South Africa is better than it was under Apartheid. However, as we approach the 20th anniversary of democracy, the progress we have made is being reversed. Under Jacob Zuma, the ANC has changed.’ Indeed, the DA’s election broadcasts were entitled ‘Ayisafani’ – ‘It’s not the same’ in Nguni.

Another key aspect was the furore surrounding the South African Broadcasting Company’s (SABC) banning of both the DA’s election adverts. The first ‘ayisafani’ advert was banned on 11th April. It was an attack ad, criticising the corruption and mismanagement of the ANC government, accompanied by images of police brutality in Bekkersdal (a township riven by violence and political instability). The SABC said the ad unfairly criticised Zuma and promoted violence against the police service. The DA unsuccessfully challenged this ban, so created a modified version of ‘ayisafani’, which removed the references to police violence and instead had a positive spin. This too was banned by the SABC, exacerbating widespread anger at such ‘censorship’. This was because the DA presenter, star politician Mmusi Maimane, began with ‘So, they tried to silence us…’ However, the SABC capitulated and broadcast the advert on 1 May.

Summarily, the SABC was accused of hindering freedom of speech and fair political discourse, while the DA ultimately benefitted as both of its adverts received hundreds of thousands of views online. The ban created more interest in them, which easily spread via social media. The quality of the adverts was commended too - the adverts helped the DA appear ‘less uncool’.

The EFF

Following the EFF’s manifesto launch in Tembisa, Gauteng on 22nd February, the EFF ran a national campaign even with comparatively few resources and structures, holding rallies in every province. Their campaign was one based on Malema himself, and a cultivated image of revolutionary struggle against a corrupt and failing government – EFF supporters wore red overalls and berets, with Malema as ‘commander-in-chief’. Their policies were meant to appeal to the poorest Africans in South Africa, increasing wages and social grants, nationalising the ‘commanding heights’ of the economy and expropriating white land without compensation. Just as 20 years ago ‘was the dawn of political freedom ... NOW IS THE TIME FOR ECONOMIC FREEDOM!’

Despite Malema saying that he is ‘not racist, just honest’ in his policies (‘If white people want a permanent holiday, they must return the stolen property’), many commentators feared EFF success. Many see the EFF as racist and fascist, promoting ‘populist politics, à la Zanu-PF in Zimbabwe’.

The EFF, like the DA, suffered a SABC ban of their first electoral advert. This was because it

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28 Martin Plaut interview.
30 DA TV advert, ‘ANC Ayisafani’ - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6jU2bZxGKI (last accessed on 28/7/2014).
‘incited violence’ due to its promise to ‘destroy e-tolls physically’!36 Again like the DA, this ban was unsuccessfully challenged by the EFF, but had the unintentional effect of making the advert viral. In contrast, the second, unbanned advert had far less online views.

A final aspect of the EFF’s campaign was their constant chiding of the ANC, and of Zuma particularly, beyond a mere oppositional stance. Given the history of the ANC’s enfant terrible Julius Malema, a former ANC Youth Leader who went from saying ‘he would kill for Zuma’ to routinely mocking him with his shower-head gesture (a reference to Zuma’s rape trial and past ignorance of how AIDS spreads), this bad blood unsurprisingly made and continues to make relations between the two parties especially sour.

### Noteworthy aspects of the campaign period

**The ANC-bias of the SABC**

The banning of the DA and EFF adverts in April was roundly condemned by academics, journalists and media watchdogs. It revealed the ANC-bias in the SABC, so much so that it was labelled as a ‘key weapon in the ANC’s arsenal’.37 Its leaders, particularly its Chief Operating Officer, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, are close to the ANC, while its questionable output – such the ANC’s insistence on ‘sunshine news’38 – undermines its claims to neutrality.

A CityPress article further illustrated the ANC’s control of the SABC. Three senior news executives in the SABC – all insisting on protective anonymity – spoke about various restrictions and blatant political interference. This ranged from being ordered not to broadcast footage of the crowds attending opposition elections rallies, Motsoeneng ordering that ‘violent’ service-delivery protests should not be covered, and a new instruction that denied live coverage to parties that lacked representation in Parliament – a deliberate move to prevent the coverage of the newly-established EFF.39

The ANC’s control of state broadcasting is not a new phenomenon, yet this was undoubtedly demonstrated during the campaigns.

**The ANC’s dirty campaign tactics**

The ‘dark side’ of the ANC was not limited to infiltrating the SABC. Disparate elements of the ANC acted in violent, unethical and often undeniably illegal ways. This ranged from intimidating and beating up voters and activists to the (mis)use of state resources to bolster the ANC’s campaign.

A 112-page report by the civil society group Community Action for Social Enquiry (CASE)40 rigorously detailed the ANC’s intimidation and manipulation of voters – although varying in different localities, ‘intimidation and other forms of manipulation are systemic feature of political life in South Africa’,41 with the ANC as ‘the primary source’.42 Martin Plaut has expanded upon this, listing examples ranging from the ANC’s hijacking of the government-run ‘End Hunger’ campaign for party-political benefit43, to the ANC directly contravening IEC rules by campaigning on election day.44

The election was pronounced ‘free and fair’ by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), yet this judgement does not take into account

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38 Martin Plaut interview.


41 Ibid., p. 91.

42 Ibid., p. 3.


44 Ibid., p. 12.
informal, unrecorded threats of violence, aggressive *toy-i-toying* or partisan use of government resources. As the CASE report comments: ‘Political coercion [and manipulation] has instead been adapted to the terrain of democratic South Africa, and frequently manifests in the guise of practices that, superficially at least, may appear to be lawful and legitimate.’

The continuance and relevance of direct action

The election period also displayed the strength of direct action politics. Both of which directly link to aforementioned social divides and deprivations.

Bekkersdal, of the old West Rand of Gauteng, continues to be a case in point. Still troubled by its protests late last year – although it has been a consistent protest hotspot since 2005 – anti-ANC unrest again erupted in March and on Election Day. The March protest was indeed a serious issue, with running battles between police and protesters. Gun-wielding ANC members had to disperse protesters, yet it was also claimed that the ANC helped instigate the violence.

‘Bekkersdal represents a microcosm of what is happening in our townships ... a frustrated community, a cauldron of boiling anger about legitimate grievances and weakened community leadership ... herein lays the kernel of the protest challenge in South Africa.’

Direct action continues to be a most relevant undercurrent in South African politics, even in the height of the election season. Indeed, a powerful metaphor of this was the burning of voter registration booths in the township in February.

The other major instance of direct action was the ongoing AMCU-led platinum minerworkers’ strike outlined above, which began in January and only ended in late June. It was the longest and most expensive strike in South African history; the economy shrank by 0.6% in Q1 due to the strike alone. Indeed, it cost the big platinum mining houses approximately $2 billion. Strikers demanded better working conditions and a wage increase to R12,500 (£700) monthly. These are in fact the conditions demanded by the miners of Marikana. The AMCU strike was a huge issue in South African politics, again going beyond the electoral process. It pointed – and continues to point – at deep rifts and highly-charged grievances in South African society.

Analysis of the election results – the parties

A comfortable ANC victory – the ‘brand’ holds firm

The ANC comfortably won the election. This was unsurprising. They won over 60% of the vote and 8 out of 9 provinces. The closest opposition, the DA, managed just 22%. It is true that the ANC will now be sending 15 less MPs to Parliament and that its majority has been cut in several provincial legislatures. However, it benefitted from the collapse of the Agang SA-DA merger and contained the populist challenge of the EFF. Overall, despite a scandal-stricken president, the ANC’s focus on its organisational history was successful; the election refrain of ‘Vote for the party, not an individual’ paid dividends.

A noteworthy if ultimately limited consolidation of the DA

The DA happily claimed that this election was successful. They increased their share of the vote – from 16.66% in 2009 to 22.23% in

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45 Bruce, *Just singing and dancing?*, p. 96.
50 Ibid.
2014. This is also an increase in the share of the vote from all eligible people of voting age. The DA strengthened their hold over the Western Cape. They also made inroads in the metros of Gauteng and Nelson Mandela Bay; hovering around the 30% mark in the former and achieving 40.8% in the latter. Finally, they won a solid number of black African votes (approximately 760,000), even if this needs improvement if the DA are to become potential national leaders. It must be born in mind that so far the DA’s successes represent a steady increase rather than a seismic shift. It mainly won votes from its competitors, such as COPE, rather than the ANC.

Furthermore, it has a problem attracting enough rural votes – its next task would be to break into the countryside. In 2004, 2009 and 2014, its vote composition has stubbornly remained at a ratio of 1:4 rural/urban.

A third-placed finish for the EFF, yet an uncertain future

As for the EFF, they fared worse than previous major ANC breakaway COPE did in 2009. However, their percentage of the vote was sizeable enough at 6.25%. It is how the EFF’s vote is concentrated that is of interest. The EFF managed to become the opposition in the Limpopo and North West legislatures, while becoming a major competitor in Gauteng. However, it is yet to be seen that the EFF’s ‘personality politics’ will be sustainable. It is dependent on the charismatic leadership of Malema. While Malema faces no internal opposition presently, his erratic style and allegations of tax fraud may derail him and his party in the future. The EFF will need to build more permanent and sophisticated structures if it wishes to build on its success. The EFF also faces the challenge of other leftist ANC breakaways vying for power in the future (this will be elaborated below). Yet, it can be said that the EFF knows how to annoy the ANC and was able to actually convince long-term ANC voters in the election. As such, the EFF is part of the zeitgeist of burgeoning opposition – how ‘any threat to supremacy of [the] ANC will come from within’.

Analysis of the election – key themes

An increasing urban/rural divide?

A major election theme was the ANC’s decreased vote in urbanised areas. This is particularly true of the Gauteng metros and Nelson Mandela Bay. The ANC’s vote has dropped in every metro since 2009, in varying degrees. This trend is increasingly being examined by media commentators and think tanks.

Broadly speaking, the ANC’s falling urban vote is explained by its failure to deliver services. This dovetails with Holden’s analysis mentioned above. As Faul of the ISS explains, ANC-led local governments have struggled to provide in urban areas, whereas in rural areas the national government has adequately provided services. These are basic programmes yet bring a greater perception of life improvement, while Holden’s ‘expectation-reality gap’ is increasingly the standard perception in crowded urban areas. ‘If you live in an Eastern Cape homestead, electricity is a revolutionary occurrence. You change someone’s life … The ANC has been able to deliver more effectively in rural [ones].’ Further analysis, like of that ‘microcosm’ Bekkersdal, confirms this situation. It has a high standard of absolute poverty generally, but it is also its sense of relative poverty (the ‘expectation-reality gap’) that fuels its discontent.

54 Faul, Slicing and Dicing.
56 E. Fakir, Circling the square of protests: Democracy, development, delivery and discontent in Bekkersdal – 12th annual Ruth First Memorial Lecture 2014 - http://uscdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/510
The disparity between ANC urban and rural support is increasingly clear. A key example is Nelson Mandela Bay [Port Elizabeth] in the Eastern Cape. The ANC won 70.1% in the Eastern Cape, but only 48.9% in Nelson Mandela Bay. Such disparity is also clear, albeit to a lesser extent, between the votes of Manguang and the Free State, and also the sizeable local municipality of Polokwane in Limpopo province. Beyond dissatisfaction over the ANC’s service delivery, we must be aware of local political factors. The ANC of the Western Cape is struggling to deal with an increasingly entrenched DA for instance. While in Port Elizabeth, the country’s automotive centre, the principle automotive union and labour organiser – NUMSA – decided not to campaign on behalf of the ANC. Port Elizabeth has been also been a key DA target for some time, with many resources pumped into campaigning there. Given the unusually close result, all of these specific factors must have influenced local politics. This point is worth bearing in mind generally, for while analyses of the election focused on broad topics, we cannot forget local influences in different areas.

**The significance of KwaZulu-Natal to the ANC**

Another important theme is the significance of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) to ANC fortunes. It has remained an ANC stronghold – as it has done under Zuma, whose Zulu origins can be easily sold there. It won 2,474,041 votes here out of its total of 11,463,921. With growing opposition, KZN is becoming ever more vital to the ANC – the growth of the KZN vote has strongly correlated with Zuma’s presidency, and as such, the growth of the KZN has performed as a vital stopgap for the ANC’s slippages nationally. Despite the ANC’s majority of over 60%, it is now at its weakest level since 1994; as Faul argues, the rise of the KZN vote has ‘disguised problems elsewhere for the party’.

To put it starkly, on average 6% fell from the ANC’s vote in its traditional strongholds of Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West. KZN held firm. Its metro of Durban provides the one example of the ANC’s urban vote holding up.

**Gauteng – an increasingly embattled province**

Furthermore, there has been a drop in ANC votes in Gauteng (the country’s most populous and urbanised province), particularly in its metros of Johannesburg and Tshwane [Pretoria]. The election here bloodied the nose of the ANC – from a 64.04% vote in 2009 to a 53.59% in 2014, with the Johannesburg and Tshwane levels of support both dropping over 10%. Indeed, support in Johannesburg is now less than 50%, while it hovers just above that mark in Tshwane. Not only that, but both the DA and EFF gained much ground at the expense of the ANC. The DA won over 1,400,000 votes there, while the EFF won 415,318 votes out of its grand total of 1,169,259. Eyes will be on the 2016 municipal elections, where Gauteng will be a most important battleground between the parties.

**The small impact yet rising potential of the ‘Born-Free’ cohort**

The ‘Born-Frees’ are the demographic that was born after the end of apartheid, so have only known ANC rule. Just over 600,000 South Africans were born in 1994, with a similar number over the following two years. Not all of them are registered to vote, but they are seen as a growing political force – and by no means stubbornly loyal to the ANC. As Keith Somerville has explained, the ‘Born Frees [are

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60. [Business Day, 14/5/2014](http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/2014/05/14/opposition-needs-to-reflect-on-why-anc-still-appeals) (last accessed on 20/7/2014).

scaring] Zuma.\footnote{Ibid.} This is because they have not lived through the anti-apartheid struggle and so are less likely to be overawed by the ANC’s struggle credentials. Furthermore, the problems facing this generation are hard indeed. Not only are they struggling to live through the structural legacies of apartheid (and the ANC’s erstwhile attempts to solve them), but joblessness is especially acute. In late 2013, 51% of 15-24 year olds were unemployed.\footnote{Ibid.} However, despite interest in their development and actions, the Born-Free cohort did not play a pivotal role in this election. They will undoubtedly in future contests, but many of them remain unregistered to vote or uninterested in the electoral process. Both of these points are growing in significance in South Africa.\footnote{Keith Somerville interview.}

Indeed, the declining pool of voters was a factor in this election – and makes the ANC’s comfortable victory look far less impressive.

Poor registration, declining turnout – disillusionment and lack of interest in the electoral process undermine the strength of the ANC victory

The election result masked the fact that there is a declining pool of voters in South Africa. Out of a VAP of 33 million, only 25 million are registered, and from that turnout was 19 million. So despite a superficially high official recording of 73.5% voting (registered voters), the turnout of the VAP was only 57.1%. Not only does this seriously question the importance of election to political life, but it also reveals that the ANC goliath is not what it seems. Despite a majority of 62% from the votes of those who registered, this translates into only 35% of the VAP voting for the ANC. When compared to previous elections, this indicates a steady decrease in national elections of the vote the ANC actually receives from eligible voters. In 1994, the ANC won a similar percentage of the vote – 63%. However, this was from a much higher proportion of the VAP – 54%\footnote{All data here from Schulz-Herzenburg, ISS post-election analysis.}. Indeed, if one considered the number of new voters added on to the electoral roll between 2009-2014, the ANC has lost approximately 10.41% of support.\footnote{Daily Maverick, 3/6/2014 - http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-06-03-iss-analysis-digging-deeper-into-the-2014-election-results/#.U_W6tWOKWSp (last accessed on 16/7/2014).}

Furthermore, turnout is generally decreasing election-by-election. Troublingly for the ANC, this is increasingly the case in heartland provinces with large rural populations. Rural turnout has decreased from 77.64% in 2004 to 69.88% in 2014, whereas urban turnout has remained solid: from 75.95% in 2004, to the modest increase of 76.28% in 2014.\footnote{Faull, Slicing and Dicing.} Moreover, urban votes, as mentioned earlier, are increasingly being targeted and channelled by oppositional parties.

There are cracks in the KZN axis also. Votes here are ‘running dry’ for the ANC.\footnote{Daily Maverick, 3/6/2014 - http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-06-03-iss-analysis-digging-deeper-into-the-2014-election-results/#.U_W6tWOKWSp (last accessed on 16/7/2014).} The growth of the ANC’s KZN vote exploded under Zuma, yet this groundswell has stymied.

The growth in the ANC vote was an increase of 71.87% in 2009, yet it was just 12.17% in 2014.\footnote{Faull, Slicing and Dicing.} It is unlikely that the ANC will experience another surge of votes in KZN like it saw on Zuma’s ascendancy, as those who voted for Zuma because of his Zulu origins have already added their numbers to the ANC, while the main competitor from which the ANC poached these votes – the Inkatha Freedom Party – is steadily becoming smaller.

Generally, falling electoral voting figures indicate disinclination with the orthodox political process. This takes us back to the key themes that continue to trouble South Africa: unemployment, deficient service delivery, and connected to all this, direct action. The ANC may be able to count on a large amount of votes, but this is not a simple endorsement of support. Indeed, it seems like ANC hegemony is beginning to wither away. This is not a simple or straightforward prognosis however.
Electoral attitudes are often complex and entangled. Bekkersdal, despite its many troubles and chronic instability, still voted ANC. This was no simple vote of confidence, but comprises many factors, such as loyalty to the ANC’s history from older generations, elements of youth dissatisfaction channelled through voting for other parties, to the faithful votes organised by ANC community leaders through to the silent political apathy as characterised by Schulz-Herzenberg’s ‘what’s the point syndrome’. When deeply examined, the 2014 election gave no clear vindications. Below the surface, it epitomised how ‘conflicted and furious’ South Africa is under ANC hegemony.

The importance of NUMSA and other trade union-based opposition to come

As previously laid out, the opposition set to come from various trade unions, particularly those who have split from the ANC, is a burgeoning issue. This has been fomenting for some time.

Future development depends on whether the NUMSA builds a broad base to challenge the ANC politically. It will need a ‘Lula moment’. By this, it should build itself as a well-supported workers’ party, along the lines of former Brazilian President Ignacio Lula da Silva’s Partidos dos Trabalhadores. In a recent interview, Irvin Jim spoke of the need of any potential workers’ party to include the middle classes, not only those who are ‘red’, but those who to contribute to ‘advancing humanity’. It will remain to be seen whether NUMSA will be able to build a wide coalition with its clear leftist aims, yet it will continue to be a key player into the foreseeable future. Developments of this kind speak of the primacy of recent politics beyond the 2014 election.

The AMCU strike finally ended on 23rd June. The mineworkers did not achieve their original aim of a r12,500 monthly basic wage plus bonuses, but a deal where the lowest paid workers got an increase of r1,000 a month. While a compromised success, it was hailed as a milestone nonetheless: ‘This is the first big action taken by a non-ANC force … in which black people were in the van that led to very real change.’

Such action indicates the likely future political scene in South Africa, with dissenting labour increasingly fighting against the status quo. This points to a society not only enraged over South Africa’s endemic inequality, but feeling let down, lacking trust in government, and having nothing to lose. As Jim Nichols, a lawyer representing the victims of the 2012 Marikana massacre, puts it: ‘People are interested in self-worth and dignity. For the workers, going on strike for long is economic suicide. But it’s about saying, ‘Actually, I’m worth something,’ And in South Africa today, that’s an incredibly important statement.’

Despite widespread dissatisfaction, times ahead will not be easy for dissenting labour. The ANC alliance may be splitting, but that still means that a sizeable remnant of loyal labour remains with the ANC. An example would be the powerful National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which condemned AMCU’s settlement as a ‘hollow victory whose sham is shrouded by exhaustion and rhetoric’. A successful trade unions-based challenge would need a ‘united front’, which NUMSA has not yet achieved. The ‘NUMSA moment’ may be in the ascendancy, but the ANC will not simply allow a decline. Bitter political brawling will

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71 Fakir, Circling the Square.
characterise the future.

Conclusion

The ANC won the election, the DA consolidated their vote and the EFF gained a foothold. Zuma remains President, while Helen Zille and Co. continue a steady, if not game-changing, rise. The EFF may mature, or it may collapse like the UDM or COPE.

Yet, there are changes brewing for the future. Key urban battlegrounds, like Gauteng, are becoming open. These may change hands in the 2016 municipal elections or the next general election. If that happens, ANC power will be dealt a hard blow. The ANC will need to keep hold of its rural heartlands and KZN – it has been its strength here that has disguised slow, insidious decline.

A younger, irreverent demographic coming of age and increasing voter apathy represent more long term threats to ANC power. How such politics will be channelled in the future will be of absolute importance.

The old problems of South African society surfaced in the campaign period, for example, in the unrest of Bekkersdal. High unemployment and poor service delivery remain issues top of the agenda. In the future, the ANC will be able to rely on its struggle heritage less and less and if key grievances are not rectified.

The continuing rise of dissident labour, eroding away the ANC’s trade union support, sets to direct the ANC iceberg into stormier waters. If NUMSA and others form a coherent ‘united front’, the heat will rise on the status quo. Cracks in the ANC edifice could soon develop into irreversible fissures.

Stephen Grootes summarises this election well: ‘If Elections 2014 have been fairly boring, it may be because they’re the last of this type of election. Where it’s the (mostly black) ANC against the (not mostly white but tagged with that anyway) DA. This is probably what you could call the last post-1994 election. Because next time will probably be quite different. And

will possibly signify the start of a new era.’

Introduction

No era and no continent have been untouched by war. From ancient times to the present day, thousands of wars of different sizes and natures have been fought in diverse geographic locales. It is regrettable that despite voluminous academic endeavour in the discipline of military history, many conflicts do not receive much attention. For various reasons, some wars, or parts thereof, have not lived on in national or international consciousnesses and can therefore be said to be ‘forgotten’. It is the purpose of this article to examine one such ‘forgotten’ conflict: Finnish covert operations in the First World War.

The article will be divided into three sections: firstly a historiographical exposé justifying that these covert operations are indeed a ‘forgotten’ aspect of WWI; secondly an analysis of why they have been ‘forgotten’, both in Finland and in Britain; and thirdly an outline of the reasons why these operations merit further academic coverage. British scholarship has been selected for comparison partly because in this centenary year of WWI it seems appropriate to situate this article in close relation to the various remembrance activities taking place in this country, and also because Finland’s participation in WWI did pose a very real policy problem for contemporary British statesmen.

To conclude, the article will assert that the daring – sometimes outrageous – character of the Finnish covert operations make them particularly worthy of study from a military history perspective. Furthermore, this article will claim that the actions of the Finns had effects far beyond their immediate locales, were inexorably linked with the Russian Revolution, and laid the foundations for the Finnish declaration of independence in 1917.

A ‘Forgotten’ War

Finland’s history is dominated by its involvement in the Second World War. This is the case both internally, in the Finnish national consciousness, and externally, in international attention. Occupying a cold and desolate corner of Europe, Finland only ‘broke into the world’s awareness on 30 November 1939 when she was subjected to Russian land, air and naval attack.’

Until she was unceremoniously accosted by her enormous eastern neighbour, Finland had maintained a relatively low profile in international war history. However, it would be a grave mistake to assume this means Finland’s past is not wrought with war. While the present article does not offer scope for a detailed history, in summary, after the Finnish War of 1808-1809, Sweden was forced to cede its Finnish territory to Russia, with Finland becoming an autonomous region of the Russian Empire. Therefore, Finland as a state did not exist until 1917, when she opportunistically declared independence, a movement which had been brewing for more than a decade prior, on the back of the Russian Revolution. Finnish participation in WWI is inexorably linked with this independence struggle.

Despite a history tarnished by war, WWI is conspicuously absent from Finnish national collective memory. In a recent conversation this author had with six Finnish adults in ages ranging from 25 to 75, no one was aware of the covert operations which took place almost literally on their doorstep during WWI. They were all knowledgeable about similar activities during WWII, with the eldest male even being able to give a guided tour of precise locations.
in the Ostrobothnian archipelago where weapons smuggling had taken place. Weapons smuggling was also a significant aspect of WWI covert operations, and memorial plaques have been placed in locations where such actions were performed. However, even with these attempts to commemorate operations conducted in WWI, the anecdotal knowledge exhibited by the local populace offers evidence that it is the WWII operations which endure in Finnish memory.

The evidence offered by Finnish oral history is corroborated by commemorative monuments. In the local church in the small village of Pörtom, where the aforementioned individuals reside, the war memorial and cemetery are dedicated to fallen WWII heroes, with hardly any mention of WWI. Pörtom’s situation is typical of both the Ostrobothnian region specifically and Finland in general. Memorials throughout the country have been erected in honour of those who fought and died in WWII, with WWI remaining a secondary consideration, almost an afterthought. This is in stark contrast to Britain, where war memorials dedicated to the 1914-1918 conflict are hugely prominent and the trenches occupy a privileged place in the national memory. It can be argued that the efforts exerted and sacrifices made by Britain in WWI are comparable to those exerted by Finland in WWII (in terms of the high proportion of families who were directly affected) and this has in turn dictated how the respective wars are remembered, a point to which we will return further below.

A statistical analysis of relevant National Library databases reinforces the idea that Finland’s involvement in WWI has been overshadowed by the monumental efforts exerted and the surprising results achieved in WWII. Research was conducted by using the term ‘Finland World War’ to search the catalogues of the British Library, National Library of Finland, National Library of Russia, and National Library of Sweden – for which the localised ‘Finland Krig’ ['Finland War'] was used as search term. It was found that out of a total of 862 catalogue items, 281 items covered WWII, and only 37 items pertained directly to WWI (see Appendix A). While by no means a perfect quantitative study, the basic results illustrate that Finnish participation in WWI is virtually forgotten in the historical literature. Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to assume that very few, if any, of the 37 items are dedicated specifically to the covert operations which are the focus of this article. By comparison the British Library catalogue returns almost 10,000 search results regarding WWI in general and covert operations involving the larger belligerent nations have received due treatment by historians. Consider the well-known names of Mata Hari (92 results) and T E Lawrence (13,634 results), both of whom were engaged in covert-style operations, and even John Buchan’s swashbuckling hero Richard Hannay (16 results).

The preceding paragraphs demonstrate that Finland’s part in WWI, including covert operations, has been largely ‘forgotten’, at least in the official literature of other key states involved. There is therefore scope to uncover some of this lost history and bring to the forefront one of the remote corners of the Great War. However, before exploring the nature and impact of the operations which makes them alluring for academic study, it is first worth analysing the reasons why this aspect of WWI has not been remembered to the extent it deserves.

**Why ‘Forgotten’?**

Despite WWI playing such an integral role in the formation of Finland as the modern state we know today, it is also understandable why this episode of the country’s history has been ‘forgotten’. This study posits that there are a number of reasons for this; some relevant to Finland itself and some to British scholarship.

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3 K-G Olin, Tärningskast på liv och död [Rolling dice on life and death] (Olimex, 2008), pp. 336, 362, 368

The covert operations were conducted both to hamper Russian involvement in WWI and as part of an independence movement against Russia's occupation of Finland. With the Russian revolution in 1917 and an increase in left-wing political activism in Finland, it became inevitable that the struggle for independence would simultaneously mean a civil war against Finnish 'Reds', who were supported by the Bolsheviks. Like many civil wars, the Finnish conflict from January to May 1918 was bitter and it seems resentment associated with this may have contributed to WWI being deliberately 'forgotten'. The dearth of Finnish literature on this period of their history may reflect a desire in Finland to leave the civil strife, including flirtations with communism, behind and move forward as a modern democratic state (perhaps comparable to modern Germany’s active distancing from the Nazi regime, or Japan’s reluctance to engage with its imperial past). This disdain for the Reds was aptly demonstrated when, in 1918, Yrjö Eriksson – a Red who had been executed for treason – was not afforded a proper burial and relatives were not allowed to erect a gravestone until several decades later. A desire to actively forget this dark episode in Finland’s history has therefore contributed to covert operations in WWI being left out of the national consciousness.

It was briefly mentioned above that the proportion of Finns affected by WWII was greater than WWI. During WWI, due to Finnish resistance, Russia was never able to mobilise Finns to fight in the Russian army. Despite incentives, only a mere 544 Finns volunteered to fight for Russia. Adding to this some 2000 Jägers who were trained at Lockstedt in Germany and saw action with the Kaiser’s army on the eastern front, we find a relatively modest sum of Finns who fought in WWI. In WWII, by comparison, there was a general mobilisation against the Soviet invasion resulting in 295,000 Finns taking up arms. This huge disparity in the amount of people who directly participated in the conflicts goes some way to explain why WWII has left an indelible mark on Finnish history, whereas WWI has been relatively forgotten. This effect is increased when we take into account those who indirectly participated – families of combatants and civilians caught in the fighting. Given the enormous scale of the Soviet invasion – comprising their 7th, 8th, 9th and 14th Armies totalling some 470,000 men – it is not surprising that a large portion of the Finnish population were in some way affected. The differing levels of participation and amount of people affected therefore account for why WWII has had a stronger effect on the Finnish national consciousness than WWI.

If WWI as a whole has been largely omitted from Finland’s history, the covert operations conducted during the course of the war have been even more so. The secretive nature of these operations may well account for this. Due to their extralegal nature, activities such as weapons smuggling were often undertaken using false names and passports as to mislead both authorities and intelligence agencies. With such precautions, it is only natural that protagonists could not write about their activities in diaries or letters. There is therefore a lack of written records of these covert operations. If the history is only preserved orally, there is a danger of it disappearing once the participants die, or if they are unwilling to discuss their experiences. This certainly seems to be the case with Finnish covert operations in WWI, because while we are privy to some of these operations, there are almost definitely many more which we do not have any knowledge about. Reluctance of participants to discuss their experiences later on, for example in interviews or memoirs, most likely stems from any combination of four reasons: an active desire to repress memories, both personally and nationally (as elucidated above); upholding official secrecy classifications; fear

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5 Olin, p. 293  
6 Ibid., p. 470  
7 Ibid., p. 521  
8 Ibid., p. 80  
10 Tillotson, p. 127; Anssi Vuorenmaa (b), ‘Defensive strategy and basic operational decisions in the Finland-Soviet Winter War 1939-1940’, in Seppinen, Aspects of Security, p. 77  
11 Vuorenmaa (b), Ibid.  
13 Ibid., p. 232.
of reprisals or prosecution for illegal activities; and career objectives (many Jägers rose to high commands in the Finnish armed forces). The very nature of the operations therefore makes them prone to be ‘forgotten’, both in national consciousness and scholarly work.

In Britain, Finland’s participation in WWI was a difficult issue, as it endangered the entente with Russia. In the build-up to the war and until the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed in March 1918, British policy was therefore to largely ignore the ‘question of Finnish autonomous rights’, lest the alliance with Russia be disturbed. Later in 1918, Britain was trying to get Russia back into the war, or at least nullify the positive effects of the Revolution for Germany. It took some time for British policymakers to realise that the Finnish Whites could be useful allies against the Bolsheviks; so by the autumn of 1918 before the full effects of cooperation could materialise, the war ended and Finland fell by the wayside of more pressing British post-war priorities. So, after being purposefully ignored at the beginning of the war despite apparent knowledge of the Finnish struggle for independence, once Finland achieved this she became a forgotten northern outpost. As we have seen, this continued until the Soviet invasion in WWII, where Scandinavia was a much more prevalent theatre and Finland is much more remembered.

The British experience on the Western front in WWI was so monumental and so generation-defining that there is little room in the historical literature for works on other theatres of that war. Indeed, it has been pointed out that ‘we are apt to forget many of the smaller and less important campaigns...especially those in which this country held only a watching brief’. This is similar to the Australian experience, which is entirely dominated by the Gallipoli campaign and the dawning glory of the ANZACs. In Britain, almost every battle in Flanders has been subject to a number of military history works, analysed from different perspectives, perhaps taking into account new, obscure pieces of evidence that may or may not alter our understanding of events. This preoccupation with the Western front has meant that literature about other theatres of the Great War has become rare. This is of course understandable, as people want to read about where their relatives and countrymen fought. In WWII, British troops fought in geographically dispersed locales, leading to a corresponding breadth of historical literature. In WWI, by comparison, very few British troops left the confines of Europe and those who did often did so in secret, like Major General Dunsterforce’s ‘Hush-Hush Army’ operating in Mesopotamia. The key point here is that in Britain there is a dearth of literature about any other theatres than the Western front as this was such an integral part of Britain’s experience of WWI. Because it bore very little influence on the outcome of the war and in no way affected the average Tommy, Finland’s participation in WWI is unsurprisingly not remembered in British scholarship.

Finally, when historical literature does turn eastward during this time period, it is inevitably to discuss the Russian Revolution of 1917. Of course, this remains one of the defining events of modern history, the effects of which are still resonant today. The wealth of primary and secondary sources on the subject makes it attractive to a scholar compared to the lack of material on Finland. However, here it is argued that Finland’s participation in WWI deserves further study not only by its own merit, but also because it is inexorably linked with the Russian Revolution.

**Why Remember?**

The above sections have outlined the extent to which Finnish covert operations in WWI have been ‘forgotten’ in Finland and neglected in Britain, and provided analysis of the reasons why this is the case. This section will offer evidence to justify why these operations deserve to cast off their ‘forgotten’ status and assume a more prevalent position in academic literature. Further, this shift towards greater recognition of Finnish covert operations in WWI will not only address the aforementioned scholarly shortcomings, but also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the war and its impact on Europe.

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15 Ibid., p. 198.
military history literature. Four key arguments will be employed to achieve this: the character of the operations, their influence on the course of WWI beyond Finland's borders, their links to the Russian Revolution, and their role in the shaping of Finnish independence.

Before looking at these specific issues, it is worth making the general point that one should remember more than one's own country. With regards to the British scholarly literature's approach to WWI, we would do well to recall Robin Winks' assertion that 'until we fully understand that he who only his own country knows, knows not his country, we will remain locked in the castle of our exceptionalist historiography.' The British fascination with their own experience has led to a very narrow bibliography of the war and it would be beneficial to widen this conservative approach. Though the total inclusiveness of the Annales School of history is not attainable given the lack of source material in the Finnish case, there is certainly scope to consider national experiences other than those of the Anglosphere and the Western front. This will result in a more comprehensive understanding of the war, and perhaps a greater appreciation of the finer nuances of the conflict and modern history.

While each nation will argue that their particular experience of WWI deserves further study, the Finnish covert operations are so exceedingly daring and tenacious they merit academic coverage on the basis of their character alone. This article does not offer scope to outline the particulars of every operation conducted during the course of the war, but one especially exemplifies Finnish boldness and endurance, and represents the acme of covert warfare. The operation in question is Otto von Rosen's expedition into the Finnish wilderness in the winter of 1916. Leading a trio of German-trained Jägers, von Rosen set out with a 'varied array of explosive devices' with the aim of penetrating into Russia as deep as the White Sea coast and detonating a railway bridge. The journey, potentially covering some 500 kilometres, was to be undertaken entirely by foot and ski. If this mission was not ambitious enough, von Rosen's arsenal contained small vials of anthrax disguised inside sugar cubes, with which he intended to wage biological warfare. Though ultimately unsuccessful in both demolishing the bridge and spreading a deadly disease, von Rosen's expedition is a tale of raucousness and audacity. An indication of these traits can be seen in the group's repeated avoidance of border patrols by the employment of field craft and skiing abilities; duping of officials with coolly told tall-tales, falsified documents, and even with a bout of vodka drinking; and an improvised Christmas spent with indigenous Samis. However, perhaps the most memorable episode occurred when von Rosen managed to axe himself in the foot while chopping firewood. In typical dry Finnish manner he utters: 'Yep, this feels nice, call the doctor.' The joke, of course, was that the quartet was out in the wilderness, in minus twenty degrees Celsius temperature, several days skiing from nearest civilisation. The tale of von Rosen's expedition exemplifies the spirit the Finnish Jägers displayed throughout the war Finland should celebrate characters and actions such as these, as they reaffirm perceived Finnish character traits.

Though fighting in a remote frontier of WWI, the covert operations performed by Finnish Jägers did affect the course of the war for other, more prominent, nations. For example, despite spending over 1.1 billion roubles on armaments in the years leading up to the conflict, the Russian armed forces were woefully unprepared to make war on the Triple Alliance. For this reason Russia was reliant on

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21 Ibid.


supplies from her Entente allies. With the Dardanelles being closed off, the only transport route was therefore via Murmansk in the north. The key location here was the port of Archangelsk, which Finnish operatives targeted with explosives twice in late 1916 and early 1917, causing ‘almost unfathomable’ destruction resulting in upwards of 3000 deaths and material damage estimated at several hundred million roubles. While the effect on Russia was direct, the most momentous results were the indirect effects it had on Romania. Despite the distance between them, Allied supplies from Archangelsk were ‘critical to Romania’s survival’ due to Finnish covert operations the Romanian army was severely undersupplied. K-G Olin deems that the operations in Archangelsk were of ‘decisive significance’ in this matter and eventually led to Romanian defeat in three months. While the ultimate outcome of the war may not have been swayed one way or the other, the influence of Finnish covert operations on Romania’s participation in the conflict shows that these operations had effects far beyond Finland’s immediate locale. By influencing the course of WWI, the operations have therefore helped shape not only Finland’s history, but also those of other nations involved in the conflict.

As mentioned above, the most important event of 1917 was the revolution in Russia, which first overthrew the Tsarist regime and later saw the Bolsheviks seize control of the country. Finland, as an autonomous region of Russia, got swept up in these events, causing ‘serious divergence in political opinion’ and ‘brought forth demands for an armed rising and revolution’. In the ensuing civil war, the Finnish leftists strongly identified with the Bolsheviks and received aid from them in the form of weapons and Russian troops stationed in the country. The Finnish Jägers, the perpetrators of the covert operations outlined above, fought for an independent Finland and strongly opposed the leftists. In this they joined Finnish Whites who strove against communism and the influence of Russia in Finland. This conflict between Reds and Whites is therefore a precursor to the civil war which engulfed Russia in the years following the Revolution. Unlike the Russian civil war, in the Finnish conflict the Whites prevailed and this opens up possibilities for comparative studies between the two.

It can be argued that the single most important long-term consequence of the covert operations and the Jägers who conducted them were in securing Finnish independence from Russia. Olof Enckell has stated that ‘for the happy outcome of the war of independence, the Germany-travellers [the Jägers] played an enormous, even decisive, role.’ Two key contributions were made by Jägers in this regard. The first was the successful covert reception of the steamship Etnity which, after a perilous journey from Germany, arrived in the Ostrobothnian archipelago at the end of October 1917 carrying 150 tonnes of rifles, machine guns, pistols, ammunition and other war materials. Though not a huge volume, the weapons were sufficient to give the Whites the edge in a war where resources were scarce. The second contribution was the Jägers themselves who, with their German training, returned to their homeland as heroes. General Gustaf Mannerheim, commander-in-chief of the Whites, proclaimed that ‘Finland welcomes you as its best sons. In the creation of Finland’s army we will look to you as leaders and teachers.’ Forming the nucleus of the officer corps, the Jägers were instrumental in building the prevailing White army, and later in leading the armed forces of independent Finland. The evidence for this lies in post-WWI careers of

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29 Lieutenant Colonel J.O. Hannula, Finland’s War of Independence, Faber and Faber, 1939, p. 32.
30 Lytinen, p. 87.
32 Ibid., p. 337.
33 Ibid., p. 429 [Original Swedish: ‘Finland välkomnar er hennes bästa söner. I skapelsen av Finlands arme kommer vi se till er som ledare och lärare.’, author's own translation].
Jägers, of whom 800 became officers and no less than 50 reaching the rank of General. Many of these were still in service when the Soviet Union invaded in 1939 and therefore helped secure a free Finland in both World Wars. For their decisive role in attaining and maintaining Finnish independence, and helping create the Finland we know today, the Jägers should be remembered.

Conclusion

In military history, Finland is most known for its stalwart defence against the Soviet war machine in WWII. Whilst this is certainly warranted, it is truly a shame that Finland’s involvement in WWI, particularly the covert operations by specially trained Jägers, have been relatively ‘forgotten’. These operations had effects far beyond their immediate targets, and they deserve more coverage in academic literature. Intimate links to one of the twentieth century’s most monumental events, the Russian Revolution, is further justification for this. More importantly for Finns, however, the manner in which the operations were conducted reaffirms the perceived character traits of the Finnish people, and covert actions during WWI laid the foundations for the independence of Finland. In conclusion, therefore, to gain a broader appreciation of WWI as a whole and to understand the origins of modern Finland, we ought to look back at this period of history and remember those who battled against the odds and elements in this remote north eastern corner of Europe.

Appendix A

Table 1

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34 Ibid., p. 513.
‘Six Characters in Search of an Author’: Fear, Art, Identity and Contingency
(A philosophical graphic essay on who we look like, identifying fear, war and death.)
Pablo de Orellana

How do we know who ourselves and the other are? What is it about an identity that allows us to situate it in a context that we can comprehend? Identification of an identity is the process by which we recognise certain markers that allow us to make the unknown known. This is, however, a most imperfect process. It depends on which elements of identity are most salient, which are themselves dependent on which referents we are predisposed to know and recognise. This paper posits that art can assist in understanding the constitution of identity. Art deals with characters from observation by decontextualising and reconstituting them in artworks. We thus find them retrieved, isolated, deconstructed and reconstructed, which opens new analytical possibilities.

A nearly infinite range of knowledge sustains this process of identification. That pre-existing knowledge shapes how we understand identities. It codifies how we understand ourselves and the other -and the two are intricately linked. It is because society has taught me to recognise hostility in terrorism, for instance, that I might recognise a man with packets and wires strapped to his chest to be a terrorist. This identification thus clearly depends on what I knew about terrorists in the first place. Because of the vast number of possible combinations of such knowledge we are stuck with a great deal of uncertainty as to what common processes of identification recognise more and recognise less.

One possible approach to limiting the vast range of possible identifications is to focus on widely-shared concerns and assess how identification of political identity responds. Returning to our terrorist, I am likely to identify him as such because of our existing and widely articulated concerns about terrorism –and because I know our society and myself to be a potential target. Such an approach retrieves the constitutive nature of the identification process, where the terms of the openly stated concerns of some actors become part of the international vocabulary of recognition. We find here an explosive growth in how terrorism has defined (and shifted) the vocabulary of identity recognition in Western political discourse since the early 2000s, with actors as varied as Gadhafi, Assad, Netanyahu, Bouteflika and even the king of Morocco, all defining their particular wars and struggles in terms of the War on Terror. This might be for a variety of reasons, from a calculated choice to throw one's enemy into the camp of the global bogeyman to the desire to have local issues recognised internationally. Terrorist activity itself, as we have seen with recent atrocities by IS, has been greatly affected and constituted by this problematic and wide identification of terrorism in the international. This is partly because the Islamophobia unleashed in the West by the War on Terror has pushed many into unavoidably confrontational positions and has made Islamic terror a more credible and better-known threat. Since the ways in which we recognise and identify are so difficult to account for, we should problematise and inquire into the means through which we identify identity.

Art has a special role to play at this juncture. An artist not only recognises a terrorist, he also reconstitutes him on a medium. How artists treat identities and populate stages with recognisable images and characters holds special lessons for the student of politics. In no other context can a student find these
characters intentionally de-contextualised, re-contextualised and treated as artistic elements that hold their own independent meaning in explicit isolation. And that is the greatest favour we could ask for: to find identities unnaturally isolated and individually treated for the sake of the intellectual indulgence of art. Art can isolate elements, objects, characters, and entire identities with their corollary referents. It is this power to constitute meaning and identity that led Iconoclasts to damn 'the evil art of painters'.

In order to do this, the language of this essay must change, turn into the florid, descriptive and adjective-indulgent speech of art critics that ignores the pressing needs of determining causality. The reason to delve into academic art treatments of identity is their capacity to retrieve the unspeakable -emotion, love, hatred, and those other descriptive and figurative matters that escape rationality. These require a language that retrieves their own terms: emotion, spirit, fear and entirely aesthetic and often metaphysical aspects of existence.

This paper takes five works of art and a documentary photograph as starting points for an informal treatment of identity. I say informal because the manner in which artists digest and produce characterisation is far from systematic. There is much to be said for exploratory ventures into worlds that do not make claims as to causality or analysis but rather hold observation and the portrait as an exercise that has its own value. At such instances art ventures into the illogical, into observations, treatments and individualisations that do not need to make empirical sense. In these few precious moments art challenges the structures and dynamics of the present to which it makes reference, among them the classifications that identity it depends upon. Not only does the canvas offer a specially isolated identity that we would never see otherwise; it also highlights cracks into our lack of understanding of what lays beyond. When we challenge the fabric of how we believe the world to be, we are reaching out to the metaphysical, to the unreal. The metaphysical dimension of what is illogical and yet so very human comes to play: impossible for science to contemplate, and yet remaining with every one of us, call it spirit, soul, love or hatred.

This is a feeble attempt to walk along the unmarked paths of otherworldly existence, along the way retrieving how entity is constituted through means of human cognisance. The piece does not offer a formal conclusion, instead opting for the adventure of these six characters in search of an author, who will speak of their own identity and impart their lessons as to how to recognise it.

1. Phobos

Francis Bacon, *Study After Velazquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, London, 1953

When considering the sober and stately nature of the original portrait of Innocent X by Velazquez, Bacon's study of it is a reflection on fear. Fear is enacted through this character via a number of visual moves achieving a breathtaking effect. This study is most interesting for most of the defining traits are retrieved from

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the Velázquez original. These include the chair, an undefined background (a curtain in the original), the clothes and pose of the character. The defining differences are the striped, bar-like paint gloss on top of the composition, the purple of the robes and evidently, the ripping scream.

The scream is the only element explicitly denoting fear. By proposing an anthropomorphic and uncanny expression of fear, not to say by incarnating this feeling, Bacon forces the viewer to take part, forcing the viewer's unstable empathy. The artist shows us that fear is recognisable and identifiable when possessing another person. It is the screaming pope that inspires horror, not any idea or speculation as to why he is screaming. Bacon poses a problem for us seeking to identify the origin of this reaction: that it is irrelevant, what is scariest is the sensitive approach to pain and fear itself wrecking another person: fearful empathy. Myths from Antiquity have a lesson to add. The god of fear Phobos was a demon responsible for confusion and terror. Whist Ares sharpened his sword, Phobos preferred to sow doubt, and lack of certainty. Phobos is the unknown, the uncertain, what might or might not come to pass, what might or might not be, whom you and I are and might not be. Bacon reminds us that fear requires incarnation to be recognisable, much like we require familiar signs of fear like a scream to recognise that emotion and its expression. This character is not in search of an author or narrative —he needs neither to let us identify his horror.

2. The universal

Conversely, these two-plane cubist characters are not looking for an author or a story; what they lack is their own characterisation. They are nameless; they are half a dozen no-ones, they could be yourself if you were ever to be caught in the violence of war. The horse, the characters screaming in agony and the scene of destruction we perceive have nothing in particular to identify them as Guernica the town. In other words, there is nothing of Gernika (to use its Basque spelling) in this painting.

Nonetheless, this painting has become Gernika the town, the day, the horror. Few have ever considered why Gernika was bombed in the first place, but Picasso’s painting and the experience of this 1937 bombing raid have become universal. The horse and the people are universal. They speak of an experience that within two years came to be shared by most of Europe; bombing, pain, and, indiscriminate killing of thousands of anonymous victims, and the broken sword of impotent defeat. In the Roman epic The Aeneid Virgil does the same, two young (up to that point unmentioned) heroes sacrifice themselves to protect their people. These scenes are types, containing characters that because of their lack of explicit identity can become symbols of a universally shared experience —the young hero in the case of Nisus and Euryalus, of victims of violence in Guernica.

The context is therefore a scene—not to say a scenario—, a stage that we can come to recognise. The characters do need to be anybody, in fact we can understand them and relate to them precisely because they are nobody, and therefore potentially encapsulate everybody. It is the existence of their bodies in a recognisable scene that makes us aware of their plight. It is therefore left to the broken sword at the lower centre to clarify that the characters are not victims of another type of disaster, but rather of war. They are Dante’s everyman, their plight is that of ‘our life’. Again, we find that it is the plight of other people, especially when

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2 see Diego Velázquez Papa Innocenzo X, c 1650, http://www.doriaamphil.it/ukinnocenzo.aspx
3 Rights to the MNAC Reina Sofia, Madrid, included under fair use for critical and scholarly purposes. From

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unrecognisable as individuals that brings the identification of horror and pain to our doorstep.

This highlights another problem in the process of identifying identity: there is no need for specificity or detail — no need for truth but of a medium and process of contextualisation. This painting is forever associated with that bombing raid for reasons that are outside of the painting itself. The name of the painting, its original participation at the 1937 World Fair to highlight the plight of the Spanish Republic and the intervention of the Axis Powers, the 1930s novelty of bombing population centres are the universal referents that frame this piece. This painting depicts the atrocities of bombing; it is the frame of knowledge that has long surrounded it that makes *Guernica* the symbol of Gernika.

### 3. ‘Bare-ass reality’

What makes the characters in *Interrogation III* recognisable is a series of elements of identity that provide guidance as to who they are and what they are doing. These referents are in themselves at the same time narratives, judgements and arguments. I call them *topoi* following from Cicero’s identification of *topoi* as ‘shorthand arguments’, images names and references that are linked in the public imaginary to a specific context and people.

The victim of torture does not need to be named. It suffices for him to be a victim and for his torturers to hurt him for a narrative to emerge. This narrative, this brutally depicted ‘bare-ass reality’, as Golub said, is constructed from simple *topoi* of war, victims, torturers, violence and the terror of impotence in the case of the victim on the chair. This is no longer the *everyman of Guernica*, it is much more specific in its depiction of this act of violence.

These characters pass from nameless characters unknown in most ways to specific recognisable *topoi* replete with narratives, feelings and politics thanks to visible accessories, much like the world of fashion relies upon accessories to signify identity. Hipsters in London, for instance, can lately be distinguished by East German-looking military or lumberjack clothing. The uniforms in the painting play a crucial role: they signify that some organisation or government ‘officially’ condones this act of violence. The power relation between the characters is violently apparent: it is highlighted by the clothes of the victim on the table, the gun strapped to the interrogator’s waist and the victim’s powerless position. Golub’s accessories are few but salient, full of meaning and narrative: uniforms contrasted to the naked body of the tortured victim highlight that the violence is set up, planned and staged as an ‘official’ act. This last characteristic reveals much about politics: that ‘the state’, its conceptualisation, is brought about by signifiers as simple as uniforms, and yet its shadow weighs heavily upon the work as a whole. It speaks of injustice and cruelty in governance, and of course makes the piece an unavoidably political statement.

### 4. Contingent Identity

Through the tribulations of art we now reach a character that is stripped of almost any referent that might enable identification. Nothing is known about this individual. He is simply in what appears to be quick motion, his head

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hidden under a patterned cloth. There is no explicit scene here like we find in Guernica, no accessories like in Golub’s haunting painting, only one colour and tone. Besides the character’s human figure only his headgear provides a hint as to possible identification.


In this space, between ignorance of anything about this character and the presence of a single salient element of identity, identification provides poor insight. The headdress, similar to a keffiyeh or Middle Eastern headscarf, emerges as the sole referent we can grasp. Furthermore, it subjugates all other potential knowledges we might have about this character, proposing itself as a element of identity that adds meaning to all others. If the headscarf links the character to people such as those that took part in the intifadas, Hezbollah or other incarnations of violence in the Middle East, we can quickly interpret his movement as part of that violence, the position of his arms as a battle-ready defensive or offensive stance.

We find therefore that ignorance about this character, coupled with knowledge already existing about those that wear keffiyehs, allows for an identity to be constructed and to emerge. This identification is built around the risk that this character might belong to a political identity that Western discourse has previously identified as dangerous. In other words, it is built around the contingency that he might be associated with what we fear. If, as aforementioned, fear is hollow in that it stems from lack of certainty and needs anthropomorphic substantiation to be recognisable, then fear of this character directly depends on ignorance about him. The danger is, of course, that such identifications might be carried forward as interpretations of political will, still replete with the ignorance that was their initial condition of possibility.

5. Visible Darkness

To a London preparing its Sunday best for the Olympics, Banksy brought the phantom of the 2011 London Riots. They were a moment of unusually large-scale violence for the city, only matched by the animosity in the interpretations of its source. Banksy’s stencilled graffiti highlights that these coexist in the same political public spaces. In 2011, the political responses to the riots which emerged framed them as vandalism, crime and looting on the one hand or protest about police violence, rising inequality and lack of opportunity in the UK on the other.

There is, inherently, scope for this to be

9 CC license photograph. Banksy does not claim rights on his own works, which can be obtained free from http://www.artofthestate.co.uk/Banksy/banksy.htm.
interpreted as party propaganda and opportunism. I would argue, however, that a further analysis lies beyond propaganda, which mostly implies some form of adaptation, obfuscation or substitution of the truth. Since both interpretations rely on exactly the same facts, this difference of interpretation is choice, a political choice. Unlike Orellana’s character who offers so little information, facts about the riots were well at hand for UK politicians. However, much like the Orellana piece, the identity of the rioters derived from the political choice one makes is politically fruitful. For the right it reified the image of young self-entitled dangerous scroungers leeching on society. For the left it was yet another manifestation of a class struggle turned violent by poverty and lack of social mobility.

This is the politicisation of identification, of figuring out who we and the other are. It is also an exercise in de-politisation, where for instance the rioters and the reason for the riots were framed as engaging in crime, rather than politics. To have one or the other identification believed pays huge political dividends. In the case of the riots, it reaffirms the visions of society offered by right and left. For the character in the Orellana painting it could mean that he is killed before we know what he was up to. It is not, therefore solely ignorance that plagues our attempts at identification. Political choice, the choice of different epistemes or world-views as to how society works, radically affects identification even when its referents and facts are clear and known.

**Darkness Visible**

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of Islamic State, Mosul has quickly become a global emblem of danger and fear. Seen here at the Great Mosque of Mosul preaching, he adds to our previous observation on choosing how to see the world. His is a different vision of the world that we deem extreme and unreasonable. Yet over 30,000 of his volunteer fighters do see the point of that vision: it is one of Islam in danger, of believers hounded out of every western society, of the need to protect a righteous vision of society. They are now uncontestably a new global risk and a policy priority that this picture—along with shots of ‘Jihadi John’.¹⁰

This photo points to another difficulty of identification. Its identity, apparently very clear as an individual (al-Baghdadi) and as a collective (IS), risks becoming universal, like the victims of Guernica. Despite the photo depicting an individual, we are at risk of de-individualising him and IS, subsuming many other Muslim identities within this identity exacerbated by this new threat. I would hazard that this picture presents a comparable universalisation to his followers: Al-Baghdadi as a symbol of the plight of Muslim believers, imprisoned by Coalition forces in Camp Bucca and now rising to defend the faith. In this way, the image risks being universalised from both perspectives and, like Guernica, absorbing many other identities in the process. This photo has additionally participated in the constitution of a particular political identity of the West (if such a collectivisation is possible) as peacekeeper, moderate, anti-terrorist and concerned about containing global threats. This identity is emerging as I write, from the US, France, UK, Italy and other states, an image of responsible

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¹¹ Despite the original video being copyrighted, I do not expect IS to enforce rights over this image.
understanding of the need for civilised countries to contain the threat of ‘these barbaric killers’.12

The aesthetic constitution of identities in the context of the Levant seen through this analysis points to a further ordeal of identifications. This is intertextual, constituted by the interaction of different and sometimes conflicting or anachronous texts that is. Some of these scripts are older and have come to form identification of Middle Eastern subjects. During the Arab Spring for instance, identification of friends and foes by Western states was partly constituted through the socialist, anti-Western, authoritarian or Arab Nationalist identities built in the previous four decades, not necessarily in terms of contemporary and local context. We were so sure, for instance, that Assad was the worst evil that we might have facilitated the rise of IS. This is no surprise considering that Mubarak, Gaddafi and Ben Ali had also labelled their opponents terrorists. However, despite opinions of Assad, some of his enemies we would fight ourselves. It is time we seek to problematise how we identify political actors and weigh the politicisation of identity.

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Analysis of art can, as has been shown, at least provide warnings as to the pitfalls and intersubjective complexity of identification. Art can help retrieve the most salient elements through which a specific understanding of an identity is reached. Through this process of deconstructing the elements that make up the constitution of identity it is also possible to individuate how our own previous knowledge contributes to the final identification. These are not a coherent set of understandings; they are a construction that is scattered in time, including figures from ages past, and incoherent in their contradictions. These paintings, not unlike political identities, contain emotional appeals. As such, they trade in emotion, the exposition of humanity in pain, fear, destruction and hope, both through ostensible individuals and universally relatable characters. Bacon, Picasso and Golub have shown us that the presence of the body brings universality and the potential to relate, entering our own understanding through the –difficult to conceptualise- means of incarnating feeling in individuals. Orellana’s running headscarfed character demonstrates the danger of ignorance and how the latter can allow contingency, the potential for risk that is, to entirely dominate identification. We have found that not all identities relate to their authors and audiences in the same way: some like Bacon’s pope offer no narrative, others like the victims in Guernica have no individuality, but live in an aesthetic context replete of narrative. Their variety attests to the myriad ways in which different and often contradicting knowledges come to constitute identities. Art is essential to capture, visualise and understand these elements that are metaphysical, emotional and abstract. For such is the nature of many parts of the constitution of an identity: fear, the universally relatable, the crude spectacle of reality, identities caught by contingency, the obvious made dark by ideas chosen, and the obvious escaping because one was chasing other phantoms.

Acknowledgements

Heartfelt thanks are due to my most artistic family for their endless intellectual inspiration help and constructive observations; to my art-loving supervisor Prof. Vivienne Jabri; to Claire Yorke for wielding the knife to my overindulgent prose, and to the very tolerant editors at Strife for indulging my intellectual fishing trips. Finally, a thank you is due to Brian and Arêtes, who played the tunes to which this paper was written. The paper is dedicated to all artists who ‘are destroying a wall with [their] small fingers, so that people might see the solitude of the sea, so that the reflections of the world and its adjoining tribes might one day reflect upon the loss of certain forms, upon the realisation of their own solitude that one day made them human.’


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The Paradox of Postcolonialism: The Chains of Contingency
Natalia de Orellana

Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination.

Michel Foucault

Not so long ago, whilst the last bricks of the Berlin Wall were symbolically being chipped and demolished, Francis Fukuyama declared the glorious advent of Western Democracy, mostly known under the – undoubtedly modest – utterance: ‘The End of History’. It did not take long for Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri to get back to this statement: ‘Empire is materialising before our very eyes […]. Empire is the political subject that effectively regulates [these] global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world’. In other words, ‘The Empire strikes Back’. Although arguable, Hardt and Negri had a point when denying the idea of a universal reciprocity – globalisation’s main meme. As Michel Foucault articulated in the opening quote of this paper, a procession of political, economic and cultural dominations might be worth considering, unless one is willing to perceive the world in a point of perfect equanimity - after all, globalisation could be approached as the flattening of the globe. Indeed, if the notion of ‘universal reciprocity’ implies a universal status quo, Foucault argues that the systems of rules that might seem increasingly to have replaced military sovereignty – also named rules of democracy, so to speak – are in fact vehicles for domination. To take a less theoretical approach to the French philosopher’s writing, one can easily apply this idea in relation to everyday society, where active systems of interpretation and judgement are overtly present, from the glossy magazine re-defining why the so-called ‘alternative’ fashion trend is worth considering, to the political relations of cultural domination maintained between France and Algeria.

In this procession, the directions that cultural narratives have taken are emblematic of the views of dominant perspectives, which have shifted and re-emerged following the logic stated by Foucault. Looking at how art history has been articulated in the West – bearing in mind that the latter is a western concept – demands an analysis on how this system of hierarchies have been organised and re-interpreted throughout the years. Because of its poststructuralist methodology and critical ethos, Postcolonial theory has offered a way to reflect upon relations of cultural domination and subordination. In return, looking at how Western-centred art history has been shaped provides an enlightening paradigm on the systems behind the construction of sovereignty and dominant discourses.

This article aims to trace both the practical and theoretical limits of postcolonialism through the lenses of contemporary art production in order to expose the condition of contingency in which the non-Western – call it the subaltern – postcolonial artist is still placed. By ‘condition of contingency’, I mean the socio economic constructs behind the production and reading of artworks that tie the artist to a

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4 Expression from *The Empire Strikes Back*, dir. by George Lucas (20th Century Fox, 1980).
state of dependence, limiting him to set actions and interpretations. Via this cultural approach, I intend to establish a representative example that would identify general assumptions and outline the main implications on how discourses shaping the socio and political ‘Other’ are constructed.

This theoretical analysis unfolds from 1936, the date of publication of Alfred Barr’s chart of modernism, until the early 2000s. This paper fails, however, to tackle more recent approaches, for doing so would require an account of recent socio-economic changes at global scale.

The first section will discuss post-modern thinking on which academic postcolonialism has drawn to lay down its critical claims and conclusions. The second section intends, however, to highlight the need to alert postcolonial studies to its complicities with the still hierarchic capitalist word system, which affect its critique. Last but not least, I will focus on presumed facts of origins that still shape western readings of non-western art. Following these facts, the artist, which is defined as ‘Other’ – or in more current terms; the ‘exotic’ – is kept chained to a system of western-centred cultural references within a seemingly intangible - and yet effective - sphere.

I. On postcolonialism

The developments that led the once-geographically colonised subaltern to be incorporated within a larger, so-called ‘equitable’ narrative are not only manifested within the cultural sphere but are also an intrinsic part of the expansion of both cultural institutions and a capitalist driven art market. Indeed, whilst these institutions of the West have shown during the past fifty years an increasing interest in the non-western artist, one could ask where such an interest originates. The latter might testify of an increasing concern with equality, or maybe, the forms of identity struggles have changed in their shapes and expression.

Let us recapitulate: European Modernity provided the West with an exclusive role in the production of avant-garde art. Whilst the European creator was introduced as an active subject of history, his autonomous ‘Self’ was dependent on the ‘Other’, the primitive, presented as passive object of transformation. This binary system of inclusion-exclusion is visible in 1936 Alfred’s H. Barr Junior diagram made at the occasion of the exhibition ‘Cubism and Abstract Art’ (MoMA, New York). The latter illustrates the developments of modern art through a western centred and Hegelian vision of history, where non-Western influences are presented as passive, timeless and external frames of reference in which Western artists assimilated image references (IMAGE 1).

The definition of Postcolonialism as given by Bart Moore-Gilbert analyses and questions cultural forms that challenge relations of subordination and domination. It draws from post-structuralist methods of analysis that reveal the constructs, dynamics and actors of dominant narratives. The next two frames of analysis, Foucault’s post-structuralism and Said’s Orientalism, are the cornerstones of postcolonialism. Both expose rhetorics of domination disarticulating the system of hierarchies and advocate a logic of counter-centrism. Ideally, the application of postcolonial thought to the sphere of the visual arts should thus entail the possibility of a critical and fairly equitable reading of the cultural production of all nations. The growing literature and rising popularity of postcolonialism might be explained by such ideals.

Firstly, the binary systems for understanding identity derive from Enlightenment ideas defining it as a Western phenomenon. Hegel’s oppositional model of the master/slave dialectic can be seen as model for what, from the nineteen sixties onwards, was to be called ‘identity politics’. This organisation of identity


8 See B. Moore-Gilbert; also, the ‘Introduction’ in Huggan, The Postcolonial Exotic.

consequently led to larger binary structures of belief where the self (European and North American) and the other (from ex-European colonies and/or outside the industrialising process) would maintain a similar oppositional relation. A system that has been questioned by ‘post-structuralists’: what was given as universal, as the binary structure embracing identity, was shown to depend upon historical contingencies. Foucault’s project was to uncover ‘the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think’. He used the term ‘genealogy’ to describe the analytical method used to articulate the notion of history as a constructed expression rather than as an authoritative and universal entity. Grand narratives, such as modernism, were critically re-articulated, allowing the uncovering of the conditions that made western-based authoritative discourses to be seen, accepted, and thought of as they were.

Secondly, Edwards Said’s Orientalism starts with the premise that the post-colonial age is one of continued imperial structures. He sought to expose the link between culture and imperialism, to reveal culture as imperialism, for the former plays an essential role in keeping the later intact. An essential argument is that the relationship between both is invisible, as opposed to geographic and physical domination during colonialism, and yet renders cultural domination effective. The term Orientalism denotes the Western construct of an idea of the exotic oriental subject; the Other. Said offers to contrapuntally read Western literature produced on the post-colonial subject, a method that aims to offer a counter-narrative that penetrates beneath the surface of individual texts in order to articulate the ubiquitous presence of western cultural imperialism. The dissolution of the occidental system of discursive representation as well as of its imaginary constraints shall thus allow the emergence of enunciations outside western categories.

The issue that needs to be raised is based on the risk of both of the methods when they are taken as tools destined to re-phrase historical self-justifications, rather than a path towards the understanding of cultural preconceptions; thus consolidating and re-articulating an actualised version of Orientalism rather than criticising it. It is worth noting the fact that Said himself raised this contradiction in Orientalism: ‘I have found myself writing the history of a strange, secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism’.

II. Colonialism re-visited and the space in-between

The theoretical postcolonial lenses seem blind to the fact that ‘late-modernist values, aesthetic-judgements, and assumptions about quality’ - as James Elkins stated – still describe contemporary art at the global scale: ‘The art of all nations continues to be interpreted using the toolbox of 20th century Western European and North American art-history: structuralism, formalism, style analysis, iconography, biography’. Elkins’ critical approach manifests that an interest towards the ‘Other’ that, genuine as it might appear, is processed through the very same tools that have shaped Western thought. He denigrates in this way post-colonial theory as an applicable lens through which to approach non-western cultures. This is not just a representative case of art-history drama, far from it; the reading of cultural production is in fact reflective of how one might approach the individual as independent being.

This point can be further developed through Olu Oguibe’s interpretation of Zaire native painter Chéri Samba. According to the former, the latter ‘satiates(s) the inebriate desires of Western patrons for a cataclysmic narrative of the postcolonial condition’. So is Samba’s work recognised in the West because he tells what the Occidental subject wants to hear? Is his imagery purposefully easily adaptable to the

12 Ibid, 90.
Western art historical toolbox? Oguibe sees in the painter’s images a cliché of postcolonial society directly aligned with those to be found in Western media. ‘Defense Populaire’ (1998) can be taken as visual example of this imagery (IMAGE 2). The work embraces both ideas of struggle in the socio-political sphere within the country as well as it offers an authentication of the cliché of postcolonial debasement. Samba plays the role of the ‘Other’. His imagery is shaped for the occidental subject, ready to be consumed through the latter’s lenses formed by pre-conceived historical assumptions. The advantage of this reading is that the painting offers the adequate visual elements to lay bare and have thus the potential to lead to further speculations. This idea can be detailed firstly, by what the spectator sees: the somehow parodic assumption – also articulated in nineteenth century literature - that presents the African subject as barbarian, or, in any case not ‘as advanced’ as the Western individual. Similarly, ‘Defense Populaire’ offers a scenario characterised by cartoon-like elements; round faces and the naked breast female character are some examples. The military dressed individual, set in bitter torture so as to unveil the conflict between the army mutiny and the people of Congo since its independence in 1960. Secondly, how the reading of Congolese politics is here generated: whilst the French title might call to Congo’s colonial past, the work situates the scene in context of strife exclusively related to the internal struggle. Indeed there are not white faces in his depiction. That being said, this exemption does not mean that this imagery alienates altogether the situation of the western viewer. Quite the opposite, this is intrinsically related to the discourse of the post-colonial, for the situation of struggle surrounding the Democratic Republic of Congo presents a welcoming scene vis-à-vis interventionist policies. The western eye remains external and the ‘other’ chained to her condition of struggle.

One might ask whether Samba didn’t intend to operate within the Western frame of expectations in order to build a constructive critique. However, Samba’s participation as narrator in a documentary film on Zaïrean painters and directed by Belgian film-maker Dirk Dumon suggests otherwise. Indeed, the film offers a scenario centred in a Zaïre in crisis, where disorder and spectacle form a constructed stage of action.

Secondly, what happens if one moves to the other side of the spectrum? When the western man attempts to see what his pre-conceived idea of the post-colonial subject should be; virtueless, corrupted and, ultimately, absurd? The encounter narrated by Oguibe between Ivorian painter Bakari Ouattara with critic Thomas McEvilley articulates this idea. The latter emphasises the impossibility of the artist of free enunciation for the interview was regulated by McEvilley’s insistence on a specific set of questions focused on the artist’s provenance and habits rather than on his art.

And so McEvilley drives his conversation with Ouattara towards realization of his preferred narrative, with questions not intended to reveal the artists as a subject, but rather to display him as an object, an object of exoticist fascination.

The fact that this conversation took place in 1995 potentially leads to the conclusion that McEvilley strongly embodied the continuation of cultural otherness. And yet he does so through novel strategies. There is no exclusion of the subaltern artist from the main cultural scene, for he is physically taken inside. Ouattara’s works were indeed exhibited in western institutions and events (Milan and Kassel’s Documenta are a few examples), and he was himself being interviewed by a western art critic, which are tokens of this logic of inclusion. However, the Ivorian artist is also being parcelled to suit the West’s artificial ideas and taste, and thus fit within a frame of preference. The subaltern might not be outside, but he is not inside either: he is in an in-between space.

Here comes the major paradox. The idea of a

16 Ibid., pp. 18-32.
17 Maitres des Rues (16 mm colour film), dir. by D. Dumon (COBRA Films, Kinsasha, 1989).
18 Oguibe, The Culture Game, p. 12.
20 Oguibe, The Culture Game, p. 15.
common ‘other’, which postcolonialism aimed to dissolve in the first place, risks becoming reified due to the vagueness of the concept. Indeed, when relations between domination and subordination -which have shaped the history of Modern European colonialism and Imperialism- are not analysed and specified, they will continue to be apparent in the present area of neocolonialism. Franz Fanon articulated this danger through the idea of a common black culture in ‘The Wretched of the Earth’. Uniting “black entities” might have been necessary in a first instance in order to attack – and from the outside - the dominant. And yet, if black culture comes exclusively and undifferentiated recognised as such, it will lead to a ‘blind alley’ where no individual freedom comes to be recognised.\footnote{F. Fanon, \textit{The Wretched of the Earth} (New York, 1963), p. 173.}

The binary functionary opposition between the western subject and the other is thus revised and extended, barely hidden and justified by the postcolonial assumption of equality. The subaltern has been geographically liberated, yes, so he has been given a voice, but one that postulates and eternalises him as the post-colonial subject, or, as Fanon would have it in the case of the African entity; as a ‘black mirage’. What results are neo-colonial, rejuvenated and justified structures of power where the subaltern has not been rejected but domesticated.

III. The chains of contingency

The case of ‘African’ Art, (or rather, art made by artists whose origins are African) questions whether one might ask if all of these artists realise demonstrations of blackness through their practise. In that case, all of them are to be positioned within the sphere of ‘black art’, without arguing whether blackness wouldn’t in fact represent an obstacle ‘for those seeking change’.\footnote{Questions raised in Darby English, \textit{How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness} (Cambridge, MA, 2009).} The so-called black artist is thus chained to the sphere of blackness for which he is being recognised, remaining contingent to a set of representational and recognition habits when it comes from external identification.

This positioning of both the maker’s identity and cultural objects within specific already-made spheres does not apply to only the African example. In fact, this is just an example among many classifications. Frida Kahlo reads as ‘Mexican’ via the decorum of her dresses, Ai Wei Wei as ‘Chinese’ for the cultural visual references that are purposefully read in his work (which is arguable, since what he speaks is the very occidental visual language of conceptualism, and yet critics seem to fancy to guarantee the Chinese-ness of his pieces). It seems however that the dynamics leading this process are in fact part of a larger socio-political spectrum. One that - as I mentioned above - is manifested through the lenses of visual creation as well as in the way through which the product and its maker are received and classified. Surely more relevant, the art product is introduced within the sphere of a specific and pre-established otherness. It is in fact socialised through a process where perception has been replaced by already-made conceptions.\footnote{Ibid.} Inevitably, it follows that so is the identity of the author. And yet, black culture might be an illusion, a socially constructed one. In ‘Black Skin, White Mask’ (1952) Fanon offers a way to understand this representational and interpretative limitation. What he shows is that ‘blackness’ results from a constructed narrative that organises knowledge and conducts biased interpretations. ‘It is’, Fanon said, ‘a definitive structuring of the self and the world […] Below the corporeal schema I had sketched a historico-racial schema’\footnote{F. Fanon, \textit{Black Skin, White Masks}, (Paris, 1952), p. 83.}. To Fanon, the black subject doesn’t define himself as much as he is being defined by the white subject via anecdotes and stories: call it historicity.\footnote{Ibid., p. 84.} The former is imprisoned within a sphere shaped by the later throughout the years. The black skin is not, \textit{per se}, what imprisons the subject, it is the historicity that uses as reference the black body and which is based on an entire ensemble of constructed narratives, that demarcates this rift. Consequently, whatever comes from the minds of these subjects will be read through the same lenses. This may be crucial in the way one understands or approaches an artwork. I believe, however,
that the visual examples here described serve rather to unveil the necessity to understand the systems that shape our approach to difference. A system that, as Fanon described through his own experience operates in the most basic of human approaches. More importantly, a system that is presented only as a fact, as a ready-to-consume message, as unquestionable knowledge that thus operates within larger socio political systems.

On another hand, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak pointed out that postcolonial studies needs to be aware of its potential complicities with the capitalist world system that it seeks to critique. The domestication process described in the first part implies a process in which the culture good is taken from the margins in order to be re-absorbed. It does not necessarily do so by benevolent humanistic impulses or open-minded curiosity (which does not imply that they do not exist). Rather, I would argue that what is at stake is a process of adaptation destined to firstly commodify what has been segregated in the ‘space in-between’, and then to insert within the logic of mass-market consumption such cultural products.

The cultural difference, as seen through the example of the interview led by McEvilley, can be maximised revealing unequal relations of power. At the same time, cultural differences are measured in terms of exoticism. The latter should not be approached as an inherent value of the object but as something constructed and given to it. The relevance of this point lies in the fact that the product of the subaltern creator is converted into spectacle, and not necessarily a critical one. The exotic attributed quality of the work disguises any construct of power behind. In this sense cultural exoticism derives from the commodified discourse of cultural marginality. This system can be resumed as follows: there is a dialectic and constantly adapting process of ‘exoticisation’ – the object is estranged from its context and at the same time rendered familiar through its circulation in the market- that forms an essential part in the processes of cultural otherness and difference. Indeed, cultural differences are not only manufactured but also disseminated and consumed. From there one could argue a theory on the postcoloniality of the universal market.

So what are the conditions of the postcolonial artist? Postcolonial methodology aims to re-trace her steps so that to lay bare that the latter, as ‘other’, has been situated within an outside space. And yet, the lenses offered by such methodology can also be used to re-formulate and assert actualised systems of division. In all this I hardly believe that the postcolonial artist has much of a choice but that he is rather in a situation of contingency. From the view of the artist, the way he shapes his art has consequences; his gestures are the key to success, but according to specific paradigms. Simply put, his success -as previously exemplified by the case of Samba- depends on how he or she externalises his or her identity *via a vis* the clientele. From the view of the ‘clientele’, the latter’s expectations and most important, conclusions, need to be intrinsically related to the constructed narrative forming the vision of the postcolonial. And the sphere in which the artist, her artwork and the observers are situated is not unique to the artistic realm but one in tandem with larger structures that follow the exact same dichotomous – *me* and the *other* - and hierarchical logic.

The art world is certainly dependant and in constant dialogue with the socio political and – unavoidably – economic spheres. In this sense, the way in which the social ‘Other’ is approached in, say, political terms, is in fact aligned, not to say *in tandem*, with the way in which the cultural product of the ‘Other’ is read. To further develop this idea, one can admit that the art object can even serve as a tool for differentiation since it offers a tangible object that can be read in a self-justifying and asserting fashion. Returning to the case of Cheri Samba, who was introduced within the Western exhibition structure at the occasion of ‘Magiciens de la Terre’ (Pompidou centre, Paris, 1989), although his works do not claim a

27 Ibid., p. 20.
28 Ibid., p. 10
29 Oguibe, *The Culture Game*, p. 18.
Western flavour, they were made for the Western eye. Samba himself stated: ‘There is only one solution, which is to be accepted in France. It is true that an artist who is accepted in France will undoubtedly be accepted everywhere in the world’. So the reader could ask himself, does this recognition only apply to the artist/ the art world? I believe it can be brought down to the everyday basis. Although Samba may have been given a voice, it is a voice that is in reality chained. The expectations of the individual ‘Other’ are contingent to the acceptance from the dominant voice whilst the acceptance of his work is contingent on how the latter is read and how he exposes himself. This consequential chain shapes not only cultural but human relations at large. Thinking in terms of conflict, what I named ‘chains’ relates to a dominant logic; the identity image of a group of individuals is contingent on a set of readings that shape the approach - and consequently, the behaviour - of those who approach it. In sum, this identity is contingent on the artist’s geographic, political and especially third-world origin. Indeed I posit that this identity is chained to these referents. This dichotomous and hierarchical logic establishes a divide that, because of its visual nature, seems more apparent in the fine arts sphere, but applies in fact to the recognition of an identity per se. That is what I previously named under the expression ‘larger structures’.

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_Foucault’s remark illustrates the core of post-structuralist theory where a narrative is taken and made speak. Both of the terms ‘groan’ and ‘protest’ might indicate a radical and subversive action departing from Western philosophical thoughts, assimilations and assumptions. And yet, as this paper has tried to suggest, the factual development of the western cultural discourse_linguistic judgment_ the other firmly maintains a step of superiority. It does so by defining the cultural work under the definition of an object as well as by maintaining the later and the corresponding artist within a conceptual specific sphere. The way in which the art of the postcolonial artist is read is contingent to the social construct embracing the postcolonial subject. Such a construct can be defined as a narrative formed by past historicities as well as presently maintained assumptions linked to the exotic origin of the artist. The re-formulated construct is furthermore asserted by the capitalist aim to marketise the ‘other’ art as exotic object valuable for its representation of the foreign native. The others are reduced to a group of stereotypes and, if postcolonial theory managed to question the value given to such stereotypes, it seems also essential to bear in mind that the very same postcolonial methodology has been apt to reformulate an actualised neocolonial rhetoric. As result, as Spivak would have it, the subaltern cannot speak. What could be proposed is to return to Fanon’s initial analysis on the formation of a segregational space in between, for there are these very same intangible segregational dynamics that I believe that have been in constant repetition throughout the last centuries._

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my painter father, who helped me find the strength to build a constructive reasoning, to lose the fear of facing judgements, to lift my eyes when trapped in insecurity. Also, Pablo de Orellana, currently a researcher at King’s College London, from whom I have learnt the value of writing boldly. Thank you for sharing with me those endless enthusiastic conversations on human, ethical and aesthetic values.

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Image 1. Alfred Barr Jr., Chart of the Development of Abstract Art (Museum of Modern Art Catalog, 1936, MoMA archives)

Image 2. Cheri Samba, Defense Populaire, 1998, acrylic on canvas, 80×100 cm.
Enemies of Rationality, Mirrors of Intent? The Role of Images in International Relations, 
Part II 
Alexandra Gallovičová

Following up on part I of the present article on the role of images in international relations, we will in this essay turn our attention to a recent case study regarding the influence of images on IR. Decision-making in international politics is a process often affected by images actors hold of themselves and one another. The 2011 Libyan Civil War represents a significant example of what happens when a major decision influences the image a country holds of another country. Though disagreement from Russia and China regarding the issue of the Libyan no-fly zone would not have been surprising, the abstention of Germany, one of the EU Big Three and temporary UNSC member, was very much unexpected. However, Germany has long been recognised as a reluctant collaborator in military operations, in accordance with its ‘never again’ philosophy adopted after World War II. Why, then, was its abstention in the UNSC vote touted as the moment that killed the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy?

The intention of this article is to outline the effect of the German UNSC abstention on the images of Germany in French media in order to determine their impact on the French and British images of Germany. Media are a key factor in disseminating information and influencing individual and collective public opinions – hence they are a key component in the process of socialisation, which imprints the national identity on an individual and thus integrates them into a particular group. Images in media representation are themselves the result of the perception-creation process; thus they are subject to selective perception in their information-gathering phase and undergo further distortion through perception by the world. Media images exist in symbiosis with the human network of opinion leaders. They may increase the social status of the latter, whereas the human network rejects messages, passes them on or lets them die, endows them with credibility and social support or destroys them by ridicule and scepticism.

As Germany’s abstention is considered highly significant to the credibility of a united European security and defence policy, the image being studied is one of Germany as a security and defence actor within the CSDP, thus from reunification onwards.

The sample of articles studied spans from 17/03/2011, the day of UNSC1973, to 16/01/2013, the last day a significant article regarding the subject was published at the time of writing. The articles were selected on the basis of containing mention of ‘Libya/Libye’, ‘Germany/L’Allemagne’ and ‘no-fly zone/zone d’exclusion aérienne’.

The article attempts to encompass a wide range of political opinions in its sample sources, which are limited to nationally circulated newspapers and, in one instance, their mentions of images in a French radio station. Articles which do not mention UNSC1973 or do not express an opinion regarding it were ignored. Perceptual change will be measured through the use of positive/negative keywords to describe Germany or the abstention.

The CSDP and pre-UNSC1973 Franco-German relationship

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Cooperation under the CSDP has always been based more on an expectation of unity rather than trust among the Big Three (France, Germany and the UK). The relationships between the countries were shaped in part due to their stance towards NATO and European integration. The Franco-German tandem represented a major counterweight to the ‘special relationship’ between the US and the UK. France and Germany were the ‘hard core’ acting as the main decision-making and operational centre of EU security and defence due to a strong commonality of security interests, high operational and military credibility.4

According to Stanley Hoffmann,5 the duo created an ‘équilibre du déséquilibre’, with French political strength compensating for German economic power. Its key bargains have defined the structure of opportunities and constraints for other EU states. In terms of security and defence, this seemed like a match made in heaven. They were the ‘hard core’ acting as the main decision-making and operational centre of EU security and defence due to a strong commonality of security interests, high operational and military credibility.6

What France wanted out of the CSDP project was very clear from the outset – an autonomous policy outside of the NATO framework, but united under a European banner.

The end of the Cold War and German reunification ended the limits on German sovereignty, partly shifting the image of Germany as a ‘dependant ally of the perceiver’s state’ towards the ‘ally’ image. Despite the emphasis on the commonality of the Franco-German destiny from 1984 onwards, formerly mutual interests began to diverge.7 The 1992 French offer to Europeanise its nuclear forces to make the CFSP more flexible and compete with NATO on political territory.8 France was ready to allow the CSDP to become part of the EU defence structure. Full German convergence with France or the UK had not been achieved, and with President Mitterand gone, President Chirac’s attempts at reasserting the French leadership position were met with concern from the German side. German suspicions were further raised by Chirac’s outline for a wholesale reform of the French military in order to be more effective in multilateral out-of-area missions. However, a major breakthrough came in 1996 in Nurnberg, where the new Common Franco-German Security and Defence Concept took military cooperation between the two countries to new levels.9 Despite steady progress, the existing gaps in the cooperation began to widen. For example, firm pressure was exerted by France to get Germany to agree to take part in the EU ARTEMIS mission in the DR Congo when the gap about thinking regarding pre-emption in issues of international defence and security between the two countries became too wide.10

The transformation of Germany from a reluctant ‘ally’ to a near-‘neutral’ state is related to the French perceptual change regarding the German national self-image post-unification. France assumed that Germany would quickly resume nationhood through pursuing its own objectives, which was ironically a notion viewed with apprehension by the Germans themselves. The layer of distrust and fear served to heighten the differences in goals between the two countries. In the end, it was the difference between

la grande nation and a nation that had had greatness thrust upon it by its status in wider Europe.11 Up until the UNSC1973 vote, France still maintained its leadership position in the duo.

**Libya and the perceived ‘death’ of the CSDP**

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11 Ibid., p. 71.
The Libyan intervention was portrayed as the big moment of the CSDP to contribute to the resolution of a major international crisis. The policy had previously been deemed an ineffective, not widely known project without proven relevance. Britain and France campaigned vigorously to demonstrate that the EU was prepared to act militarily in Libya under conditions approved by a European Council summit on 11 March 2011. The final declaration of the EU was a compromise that did not mention a no-fly zone, contrary to the wishes of Paris and London. Moreover, the German hesitance towards intervention became obvious, whereupon French representative François Baroin had to voice his regrets. Moreover, German hesitance towards intervention became obvious. The centre-right L’Express was quick to express their regret at this continuing lack of German support in its article a day after the UNSC1973 vote, pointing out a lack of enthusiasm for Germany from even prominent MEP Daniel Cohn-Bendit, leader of the European Greens. The French media gained great enthusiasm for echoing the outrage of former Chancellor Joschka Fischer at the German abstention.

After this unsuccessful attempt to organise the European effort on the EU level, French President Nicolas Sarkozy became the figurehead of the pro-intervention camp in the UNSC. In effect, he put the finished decision in front of German policy makers and took a stance of ‘with or without you,’ which served to alienate German policy-makers who viewed it as a ‘very spontaneous decision by a very impulsive president’. This time, Germany chose ‘without us’, which was labelled a bitter blow to the French by British newspapers. German Foreign Minister Guido Westervelle proclaimed in Beijing that ‘the Libyan situation cannot be resolved through military means’. The assurance that Germany ‘understood’ the need for intervention, yet offered no support angered the French. This understanding was also dubious, particularly as Germany not only refused to participate but actively withdrew its forces from the area, thereby denying the mission even support from the side-lines. It was an active move on the German part, but a move away from participation in a major crisis. In private, Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Defence Minister Thomas de Maizière justified the withdrawal by claiming the naval blockade was ineffective as weapons and foreign mercenaries were arriving overland.

The French, British and even the formerly wavering Americans did not conceal their dejection. The German refusal to allow their NATO AWACS aircrews to fulfil their mission had Le Monde condemning Germany for being back ‘twenty years ago, when it had the same problems securing German support during the First Gulf War and in Bosnia.’ The hope for greater solidarity was directed towards the German Socialist or ‘even’ the Green party, as the newspaper places the blame for having the majority of European states refuse to participate in UNSC-legitimised military operations squarely on Germany’s shoulders. In effect, the Le Monde article is blaming Germany for damaging the entire NATO setup. Moreover, UNSC1973 has revealed the deep divisions regarding the future of the CSDP, on the level of the debt crisis in terms of severity.

19 Le Monde, 31 August 2011, ‘Une nouvelle répartition UE/Etats-Unis’. 
The newspaper goes on to say that it is the inability of Paris and London to ‘train Germany and other countries in their own image’ that illustrates the difficulty of forming a true CSDP.20

The German abstention marked a significant divergence from its previous patterns of ‘compliance with reservations’, such as its participation in the UN peacekeeping operation ARTEMIS in the DR Congo. Within the span of one decision, Germany was re-categorised from reluctant to obstructive ally in the French media’s perception. In fact, it can be said that France began actively vilifying the German decision, as most easily summarised in the quote by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé in *Le Monde*: “The common security and defence policy of Europe? It is dead”.21

The clear implication here was that Germany was the cause for the failure of the CSDP – for refusing to participate in Libya. Furthermore, Juppé told *Europe-1* that Europe ‘had procrastinated on the decision to stop Gaddafi from winning and thus let slip by a chance’.22 This once more suggests short-sightedness on the part of those opposing intervention. Germany was the only one out of the European countries to do so. According to *Le Monde*, the Libyan crisis was on a smaller scale compared to interventions in the Balkans, the Gulf or Afghanistan, but ‘will have severe strategic consequences for NATO and the EU’.23

Westerwelle made it clear that military participation would only be a last resort for Germany and that he continually ‘respects France’.24 Ironically, the abstention and subsequent withdrawal allowed Sarkozy to lead the military effort much more prominently and glean international recognition for himself and France. The role of French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy in Sarkozy’s decision-making is not to be underestimated.25 Lévy had urged the president to intervene and afterwards became an ardent critic of the Germans. ‘We have lost a lot of time because of the Germans. This is a disaster, for the Libyans, but also the Germans, who will pay dearly for their abstention. What happened will leave traces in Europe. And Germany will have great difficulty in satisfying its legitimate ambition to have a permanent UNSC seat’.26

French newspapers also stress the divisiveness in Germany over the abstention and the general unpopularity of Westerwelle and even Merkel because of this decision. Their harshest critic is Lévy once more, claiming that Merkel had thrown all the foundations of German post-war foreign policy overboard and calling for Westerwelle’s resignation while remarking that he does not seem to be ashamed of his decision.27 It is difficult to determine whether Lévy speaks for himself, or for Sarkozy, as *Le Monde* admits. It stresses the division of German parties, including the ruling coalition, with the lone exception of Die Linke, who is ‘delighted to see the country turn its back on its Western allies’.28 *Le Nouvel Observateur* stated that 62% of Germans believe that a military intervention was justified; however, 65% remained behind the decision of the Merkel government not to participate.29 The surveys of *Le Monde* suggest that about 80% of Germans...

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27 Ibid.
are opposed to intervention. In comparison, the centre-right daily \textit{Le Figaro} claims 56\% of Germans supported Merkel, 36\% of the 1,000 respondents were against the decision. The leftist press thus focused more on the cultural difference between the French and German opinion, whereas the right-wing press argued/stated that the government had only the slightest majority of supporters for its decision. Ultimately, \textit{Le Monde} voiced the strongest condemnation – ‘the Germans seem as clueless as their leaders’. The tone calmed down after Juppé’s visit to Germany on 14/04/2011, with the decision to launch a ‘political process’ at a meeting of the ‘contact group’ created to help resolve the Libyan crisis, which according to \textit{Le Monde} provided a means of reconciling points of view. Including Germany in the group was a gesture on the part of the French, which was returned by Westerwelle stating that Germany had no objections regarding an eventual European military operation to ‘secure humanitarian corridors’ with UN authorisation. On the whole, however, the answer remained: no.

In its assessment of the case six months after UNSC1973, \textit{Le Figaro} openly calls the diplomatic politics of Germany a failure. In contrast, the newspaper quotes the very decisive statement of Alain Juppé: ‘The EU cannot only be an NGO. It must have proper capacity for intervention, outside of NATO’. The divergence between long-term ideas about the role of the EU in security and defence policy is thus leaning heavily in favour of France. Germany is portrayed – not entirely inaccurately – as a state that puts more weight on economic than military power. This is supported by the Merkel government’s intention to use economic sanctions against Libya rather than military force. According to \textit{Le Monde}, this leads to France and the UK being naturally pushed towards having sharper elbows in matters of defence and security; \textit{Le Figaro} praises the cooperation with London as ‘perfect’. The cooperation with Berlin differed on the means, not the ends, according to Alain Juppé. As \textit{Le Monde} states, the Franco-German engine had restricted itself to economic issues, leaving military issues to the second, Franco-British partnership.

The image of Germany in France has suffered considerably, despite Parisian arguments that it is not in Europe’s interest to isolate Berlin or make it pay. The French UN representation claims this incident will not make them renounce support for the German desire to become a permanent UNSC member. However, the Quai d’Orsay snidely remarks that ‘if we consider that the membership of the Security Council should serve effectiveness, Germany is not the best candidate’. If France measures effective policy by not ‘dithering about’ and engaging a crisis that has the potential to evolve into a full-scale military conflict as soon as possible, Germany is indeed not the ideal example. German gestures such as signing a letter of commitment to European defence policy in 2010 along with Poland and

\[30 \text{Le Monde}, 19 March 2011, ‘Berlin, hostile à une intervention, s’abstient à l’ONU’, by F. Lemaître, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=e634287d144d240b9be75a5e65a1be94960617e4b8a0994.
37 \text{Le Figaro}, ‘Franche explication…’.
38 \text{Le Monde}, 3 April 2011, ‘Le malaise allemande’.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 \textit{Le Monde}, ‘La question libyenne…’.
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France seem empty in conjunction with the abstention. In the view of *Le Monde*, Libya represents a *coup de grâce* to the CSDP. ‘We are faced with the reality of today’s Germans, who have returned to an organic egoism: preoccupied – like France! – with their national interests. And there is no more Joschka Fisher to counterbalance them,’ concludes socialist former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hubert Védrine.

**Breaking the bonds**

In order to analyse the change of the German image, as seen in the French press during the sample timeframe, we will now split the image of Germany into Kelman’s three components of an image, as outlined in our previous theoretical study – cognitive/inherent characteristics (strength-weakness axis placement), affective/approval characteristics (friendship-hostility, threat-enemy), and the action component (a set of responses to the object that the person deems appropriate in light of its perceived attributes). We can clearly see that France views Germany as increasingly on the weak side of the strong-weak spectrum due to its refusal to participate in military intervention. This cognitive component of the new image of Germany does not necessarily mean that France believes the Bundeswehr, if fully utilized in combat operations, would be a weak actor. Rather, the German mentality of ‘never again’ is perceived as weak in comparison to the supposedly universal ‘responsibility to protect.’

Its prevalence over R2P in German foreign policy has led to the creation of the French perception that Germany is embracing an ‘un-European’, ‘Sonderweg-ish’ attitude that has no place in a ‘Europe of Defence.’ This has naturally led to the affective component being influenced, as the French liking for German foreign policy and perceived negative attitude towards the CSDP dropped sharply. As a result/subsequently, it is logical that the action component of the image has turned into an amalgam of disappointment, outrage, and disdain. Furthermore, the open vilification of the German response to the crisis can be read as an attempt to gain legitimacy for the Franco-British pro-interventionist policy, which was not shared by other EU-27 countries, doubtless partly due to the German abstention.

This response to the newly-created perception of Germany served a double-purpose; championing further development for European intervention in military crises in its immediate neighbourhood and distancing France from the passive German reaction in order to gain international support. Ultimately, both sides have emerged from the crisis with new and unflattering perceptions of the other, which may lead to the hardening of images of one another. As shown here, the French image of Germany has undergone a more sudden shift than that after the 1980s and German reunification (from dependent of the perceiver’s state to ally). The transformation of Germany from ally to neutral state in French eyes will serve to further tarnish CSDP unity, not to mention international credibility. However, the transformation allowed France to identify itself as the active, pro-CSDP EU member state, in comparison to the passive, meandering Germany.

**Analysis of the shock factor**

UNSC1973 has led to a significant change in foreign perceptions of Germany, particularly due to past misperceptions. It is still too early to determine whether this issue was highly situation-bound or whether it is a symptom of a disagreement that will continue to produce friction even if the initial dispute is settled. However, it can be argued that the decision to press Germany into accepting the no-fly zone was based on an inaccurate perception of how Germany would react. France succumbed to epistemological (overlooking the German historical experience in favour of viewing the current situation as one where support cannot be denied – heuristics misuse) and subconscious (overlooking significant but unobservable actors that may be inherent in past events) errors when creating their perception of how Germany would react to the UNSC1973. They underestimated not only the strength of the domestic-policy dimension of German decision-making, but also the normative and commitment dimension of
German politics (never again war). This failure created relevance and evaluation gaps in their judgment, which led to the image of Germany. France had held previously changing to accommodate the new information based on the German abstention from the vote.

On the other hand, the escalating crisis in Libya might have simply resulted in information overload among the other states, which is a natural occurrence when the volume of accumulated information grows rapidly in such an unanticipated crisis. The information-gathering phase of the perception creation was already heavily biased and the evaluation phase was rushed and seemed straightforward. In order for information to be effectively processed, it must be integrated both horizontally (fused into a coherent and comprehensive picture) and vertically (fusing all the decision-relevant information into the decision process). The multiplicity of actors involved in decision-making leads to a large number of stimuli flowing into the information processing systems of the participating actors, creating difficulties in allocating attention and absorbing and systematically decoding information. This reinforces the idea of relevance and evaluation gaps in the French and British judgment.

Interestingly, in the case of the UNSC1973 abstention, it is not only the partner countries, but Germany itself that might need to adapt, given the discrepancy between the governing coalition’s ambition to hold onto its power, public opinion and that of the German diplomacy. Germany has realised the need for an adjustment if it wants to be taken seriously as a partner in international politics, as evidenced by its readiness to support the international community in Mali. This suggests that the adjustment process has already been triggered by the Libya case. The specific adjustments to be implemented have not been chosen, but with the recent emergence of ISIS and the need for an international response to the crisis, they might be implemented in the coming five years. However, we can clearly see that the national and international response to UNSC1973 was the starting point of the change. It is highly doubtful that the reaction will be one of non-adaptation, but whether the end result will be maladaptation or positive adaptation still remains to be seen. However, it is certain that Germany – and, for that matter, any actor in the international system – cannot attempt to escape from the existing environment into one where the required characteristics and behaviour patterns are compatible with its ostensive preferences.

Conclusion

The Franco-German ‘hard core’ of European security and defence have been hardest hit after UNSC1973. Neither the beliefs nor the values of the two states seem to coincide anymore when it comes to the CSDP; certainly not when it comes to troop deployment in international crises. The trio of attributes - a strong commonality of security interests, high operational, and military credibility - that made them the decision-making and operational centre of the CSDP - is mostly gone. Germany does not support the French idea of a ‘Europe of Defence’, an attitude which led to an increasingly reluctant partnership at first and ultimately the ‘death’ of the CSDP. It was particularly the failure to let the CSDP shine during the intervention in Libya that led the French to view Germany with increasing dismay and scorn after UNSC1973. This attitude was wide-spread across the full spectrum of French news media. The credibility of a future European security and defence policy was not tarnished, but the credibility of Germany being part of it sank more in a few months than it had in the previous decade. In contrast, the popularity of the Franco-British partnership grew considerably.

The shock and resulting perception adjustment was visible, as the image of Germany rapidly transformed from dependent ally to neutral state. Judged through the heuristic lens of the new images, German motivation, capability, and decision-making no longer matches those of the UK and France. In terms of security and defence, it has become ‘the degenerate’, a country in which the perceiver sees no opportunity for cooperation or mutual benefits, which will be damaging to future Franco-German relations. Overall, the image of Germany among the studied countries
worsened after Libya, as have the chances for the CSDP superseding NATO as the primary tool for European security and defence. The German abstention from UNSC1973 has thus had a profound impact on inter-European security and defence relations, the CSDP, NATO, the German potential to ascend to permanent membership of the UNSC, and, not least of all, the image of Germany in international relations.
Defeating Boko Haram Terrorism: Who is Winning this War?
Oluwaseun Bamidele

Introduction

Peace, security, and stability continue to evade Nigeria despite the presence of foreign intelligence, satellite imagery, counter-terrorism teams and a burgeoning Nigerian national army and police force. Even though the country has received billions of dollars in aid and assistance to fight terrorism which is ravaging the northern part of the country, its social, economic, and political systems remain in a dire state, with Nigerians themselves showing little faith in the search-and-rescue efforts of the 276 Chibok girls abducted in 15 April 2014 at Chibok Government Girls School, Chibok local government, Borno State. In April 2014, supported by the international community (France, Israel, Iran and China), had three aims. The first was to capture or kill Abubakar Mohammed Shekau, the leader of the Boko Haram group ‘Jama’atu Ahsnun Sunnah Lidda’Awati Wal Jihad’ (People Committed to the Prophet’s Teachings for Propagation and Jihad). The second was to rescue the abducted Chibok school girls held by Boko Haram. The third aim was to end Nigeria’s incessant instability in the north-eastern region. The strategy initially seemed to work with Boko Haram leader Abubakar Mohammed Shekau calling for dialogue with the federal government by exchanging the abducted Chibok schoolgirls with the imprisoned members of his group, thereby creating the impression that the strategy was correct and appropriate. The ‘counter-terrorism and search-and-rescue operations’ effort also appeared to be back on track, following international meetings in the White House and in Los Angeles (16 May 2014). The process of assisting Nigeria also appeared to be moving forward, as preparations for elections in 2015 continued.

However, this optimism masked the fact that things were slowly unravelling, as disparity between the mission’s goals and what was possible became clearer. Mr Shehu Sani, a human rights activist, pointed out that the search-and-rescue operations efforts in Nigeria were never likely to succeed because the strategies and tactics pursued by the international community were incompatible with our local strategy of rescue operations.

As of June 2014, there appears to be no end to the terrorism in Nigeria. So great is the frustration that several contributing countries have called for a strategy that includes such ideas as starting a dialogue with ‘Moderate Boko Haram’ or withdrawal. Jacob Zenn, a Boko Haram expert in a US counter-terrorism unit declared: ‘I think a rescue is currently unlikely and unfeasible.’ Shehu Sani and others stress that the Nigerian Boko Haram terrorism is a heterogeneous force, raising the prospect that one could persuade some Boko Haram members to switch allegiance, with Islamism giving way to post-Islamism. Linked to the desire to speak with ‘Moderate Boko Haram’ is the growing unpopularity of the Nigerian Boko Haram terrorism among the contributing countries and the belief that terrorism as a tactic cannot lead to victory. These changes compelled John Kerry, the U.S. Secretary of State, to engage in a ‘media blitz’ to persuade Americans, the largest contributors to the search-and rescue operation, not to abandon Nigeria so that it would not revert to being the

2 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid., p. 19.
terrorist sanctuary that it was under the Boko Haram. Although this is a laudable consideration, it fails to reflect a number of realities. First, Islamist terrorists no longer need Nigeria, as there are many other locations that they can use for their camps and campaigns, starting with Cameroon's northern region located next to the Nigerian border. Islamist terrorists also have bases around the Chad and Niger borders in the north-eastern region of Nigeria. In other words, there are plenty of ‘ungoverned territories’ providing Boko Haram Islamist terrorists with places from which they can launch attacks against Nigeria, particularly states in the north-eastern region (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe etc).

Second, it remains unclear how much of a threat Islamist terrorism of the Boko Haram kind poses to the international community, especially coupled with the increase in home-grown radicalism. Third, it is doubtful whether the international community can salvage the situation in Nigeria with the tools at its disposal: continuous reliance on Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (Nigerian president); a commitment to fight the insurgency within the parameters of the US law that prohibits the US military from working with Nigerian military units, and a policy of counter-terrorism that centres on show rather than functionality. This last point was shown with the April 2014 US operation to transport equipment to the northeastern region, which created much fanfare but has limited value in the rescue mission of the Chibok girls.

Ultimately, these issues require a look at how the international community has approached search-and-rescue and counter-terrorism operations in Nigeria. To that end, the analysis opens with the US search-and-rescue approach, even though the US has a minimal role in Nigeria. The US search-and-rescue mission to Nigeria is quintessentially a political mission, even though Security Council Resolution 1401 made US counter-terror teams the focal point for international assistance to Nigeria in the Boko Haram period. In addition, the US model for counter-terrorism can be helpful, as the US is a leader in the search and rescue operation. The second section reviews some of the key issues affecting Nigeria to better appreciate the challenge that Nigeria poses to those wanting to undertake successful search and rescue operations against Boko Haram Islamist terrorists. The focus is on three main issues: Nigeria’s geography and history, its ethnic composition, and the legacy of the Nigerian jihad.

The final two sections explore the ‘search-and-rescue mission’ strategy in Nigeria to understand why the situation remains so dire in the country, before concluding with some general observations as to likelihood of success of the search-and-rescue efforts.

The US Search-and-Rescue Operation Approach

In Nigeria, 2014 was the year of intervention for the US counter-terrorism team and international community. The US counter-terror specialists who arrived in Nigeria started deploying high-grade surveillance technologies to track down the voice, location and the fire power of the Boko Haram terrorists who kidnapped over 200 girls from a secondary school on 14 April 2014 in Borno State. By the end of April, however, serious questions emerged regarding the search-and-rescue approach, since many of the operations had failed in rescuing the girls. Extensive reforms in the US anti-terror team led to a reduction in operations, although it did not reduce the international community’s enthusiasm about getting ‘positive results’—eliminating the root causes of Boko Haram terrorism as actors in counter-terrorism using other (non-violent) tools to rescue the abducted schoolgirls. Thus, ironically, although the international community reduced its multilateral interventions, its rhetorical commitment to active intervention and the need to reduce conflict remained. The issue of intervention and the search for peace gained greater importance following the

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10 Ibid.

11 Ibid
abduction of the schoolgirls, intensifying the debate regarding the circumstances under which military intervention was legal and moral.

Nigeria encapsulates many of the issues affecting search-and-rescue and counter-terrorism activities, since one of the mission’s goals is to transform Nigeria into a viable, functioning state free from terrorism. The US’s Nigeria campaign centers on the belief that in order to achieve sustainable peace in Nigeria, the country has to be rebuilt not only structurally, but socially and culturally as well, developing a political system that embraces Nigerian diversity. Such an approach seeks to remove the conditions that had encouraged Nigerians to turn to Boko Haram – chaos, lawlessness, and insecurity. This is why the US demanded that the program be Nigerian-led. Nigerian Major General Olukolade, argued that ‘Neither the US nor anyone else, no matter how sincere, may substitute themselves for the Nigerians and solve the problems of Nigeria for them’. Olukolade added that ‘if the Nigerian authorities and their international partners set realistic objectives, if the international community has the determination and patience to do what it takes to really help the situation, if, at the same time, we have the humility to realize that we are no wiser than Nigerians about what is better for Nigeria, then there is every reason for optimism.

Bolstered by international help, US officials claim that the Nigerian-led search has now expanded to include an ungoverned area of desert that crosses the porous borders into neighbouring Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. According to reports however, the girls’ locations are still unknown. Meanwhile, mounting US frustration with the case spilled into the open at a US Senate hearing, where US officials complained of a lack of decisive actions on what had been harvested so far. ‘It is impossible to fathom that we might have actionable intelligence and we would not have the wherewithal - whether by the Nigerians themselves or by other entities helping the

Nigerians - to be able to conduct a rescue mission’, said Senator Robert Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Understanding Nigeria and Boko Haram

Nigeria’s geographical location has made it one of the most important countries in the world, yet its topography has made it one of the hardest to govern. The country’s rough terrain – high mountains, isolating fertile valleys, deserts, and wild rivers – has led to isolation between groups of an ethnically diverse population, augmenting separation in place of unity. In addition, the harsh climate (brutal winters and very hot summers) requires that groups keep within their settlements instead of expanding to other areas. This has led to strong internal loyalties within north-eastern communities, they do not withstand these conditions, but overcome their harshness as less important and protects the group from any invaders seeking to take control of the area. So limited is access to the outside world in many parts of north-eastern Nigeria that I have elsewhere argued that individuals in Nigeria live and die in their home valleys unaware of what is around them. When globalization and modernization came to Nigeria, they created many problems for a society that fostered traditionalism by challenging the communal codes the society lived under. For example, modernization allowed young men to leave the village to work in the towns, where they could earn more money. Upon their return, their new status undermined the position of the elders, for examples the Emirs, Ikimis and the village heads. Linked to Nigeria’s population and its dispersion are the country’s porous borders, another core reason for Nigeria's instability. In the north-eastern region of the country there are Hausa, Kanuri, and Fulani people who have more in common with the peoples of Cameroon, Chad and Niger than with their Northern brethren. In fact, they used to live as part of a single province known as Emirate council.

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
Nigeria has major ethnic and religious cleavages that undermine unity and Nigerian nationalism, leading the noted Nigerian academic Professor Toyin Falola to declare that 'the Nigerians are neither one people nor one political community, while the state itself is broken-backed and the country divided between two rival governments (northeastern states government and the federal government): a Hausa-Fulani-ruled state competes for control of northern regions under mutually rival warlords. Ethnic, tribal and sectarian divisions have worsened and further fragmented the country.18 This state of affairs is a result of the way Lord Lugard created the Nigerian 'state' through conquest, guile and indirect rule. However, Nigeria's long history of ethnic, religious and communal armed conflicts dated back to the military era between 1966 and 1999, which though suppressed, came to the fore despite the heavy-handed tactics of the military junta. The best example of this was the 1980's violence in and around the city of Kano that was associated with a Muslim preacher and self-proclaimed prophet, Mohammed Marwa or 'Maitatsine' (a Hausa word meaning 'the one who damns'). After thousands of deaths caused by Nigerian military, including Marwa, his movement was largely wiped out in the early 1990s, although some maintain that Boko Haram is an extension of the Maitatsine riots.19

Many domestic conflicts and the groups that fight them found more freedom after the return to civilian rule in Nigeria in 1986 and 1987.20 One such group is Jama'atu Ahsus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad, which became the Boko Haram sect. ‘Boko Haram’, which translates as ‘Western education is forbidden’ in Hausa, originated in and around Maiduguri, the largest capital city of Borno state. Starting out as a radical group at the Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri about 2002, they regarded society, particularly the government of Mala Kachalla, as irredeemably corrupt. So, in the middle of 2002, the group, under its founder, Mohammed Ali, embarked on a hijra to Kanama in Yobe state. In Islam, a hijra is a journey from the bad world to be closer to God, like the hijra the Prophet Muhammad undertook in 622, going from Mecca to Medina. Usman dan Fodio, the Fulani religious and political leader of the early 1800s, also undertook his own hijra, to Gudu, when Yunfa, a king in Hausa land, wanted to kill him.21 The hijra to Kanama is likely where Mohammed Ali and his group had their first foreign contact with other Islamic militant groups. While in Kanama, more members joined; some of these new members were the children of influential Northerners, such as the son of Yobe's governor at the time, Bukar Abba Ibrahim. Bukar Abba Ibrahim is now a senator, and his son's involvement meant that the group was, more or less immune from punishment in Kanama.22

Towards the end of 2003, Boko Haram group had a communal clash with the Kanama community over fishing rights, which led to police intervention. In the crisis that followed, they defeated the police, which in turn led to the Army getting involved, and the revolt was crushed. Mohammed Ali was killed and the group scattered. A few of the survivors, including one called Shekau, went north to training camps in the Sahara desert run by Islamic militants in the region. The other survivors of the Battle of Kanama returned to Maiduguri and reintegrated into the Ndimi Mosque, where they were now led by Mohammed Yusuf (former leader of Boko Haram), and embarked on the process of establishing the group's own mosque in Maiduguri. This new mosque, named the Ibn Taimiyah Masjid, was built on land north of Kanama in Yobe state.

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22 Yunfa (reigned 1801 - 1808) was a king of the Hausa city-state of Gobir in what is now Nigeria. He is particularly remembered for his conflict with Islamic reformer Usman dan Fodio. Yunfa appears to have been taught by Fulani religious leader Usman dan Fodio as a young man. Though dan Fodio helped Yunfa succeed Nafata to the throne in 1801, the two soon came into conflict over dan Fodio's proposed religious reforms. Fearing dan Fodio's growing power, Yunfa summoned him and attempted to assassinate him in person; however, Yunfa's pistol backfired and wounded him in the hand. The following year, Yunfa expelled dan Fodio and his followers from their hometown of Degel.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.
the centre of town, near the railway station. Baba Fugu Mohammed, Mohammed Yusuf’s father-in-law, donated the land on which the new mosque was built. Baba Fugu Mohammed was an influential, but moderate, figure, who was never a full member and was later murdered by the group. His crime was to attempt to negotiate with former President Obasanjo after things got out of hand in 2001.

After the death of Baba Fugu Mohammed, Boko Haram was apparently left alone by the authorities, and it expanded into other states, including Bauchi, Yobe, and Niger state. During that time, they started a farm, provided employment for their members, provided welfare for those members who could not work, and gave training to those who could. In short, they provided a viable alternative to the government of the day, which attracted more members and a lot of zakat (the practice of taxation and redistribution) donations from prominent members of the Northern elite. The incident that brought them to national prominence happened in 2007; Sheikh Ja’afar Mahmoud Adam was murdered. Ja’afar had started criticising the group, and predicted that someday, because of their extremist ideologies, they would clash with the government. It is generally believed that Mohammed Yusuf ordered his murder. For another two years after the Ja’afar assassination, the group was largely left alone, growing and attracting more followers from other Islamic extremism associations.25

Then, in 2009, the government of Ali Modu Sheriff banned riding bikes without the use of helmets. This seemingly innocuous event is what triggered the meltdown. Five months later, in July, a prominent member of Boko Haram died and a large number of them were on the way to bury him. They were stopped by police, who quizzed them about their lack of helmets as the new law dictated. An argument began, and in the process shots were fired. People on both sides were injured and violence escalated. Boko Haram attacked in Bauchi, Borno and Yobe states, killing several policemen. In Maiduguri, they took over the town, and controlled it for three days, until the army was called in to resolve the situation. Eventually, the army regained control and arrested many Boko Haram members, including Mohammed Yusuf.

However, while Mohammed Yusuf was in police custody, he died. According to the police, he died ‘while trying to escape’. Boko Haram, on their part, says that he was murdered extrajudicially, in cold blood.26 There is evidence that Mohammed Yusuf’s arrest and an eventual trial would have exposed some prominent people. One of the Boko Haram members killed at that time was the former Borno state commissioner Buji Foi, who was shot in the back by policemen. Besides Yusuf and Foi, a large number of people were also shot by the police without trial. For Boko Haram, these police attacks were the beginning of a war for revenge and survival. Abubakar Shekau, who had returned to Nigeria and had become Mohammed Yusuf’s right hand man, relocated the group to Northern Cameroon. Abubakar Shekau adopted the Al-Qaeda model of organisation, and broke the group into cells that are largely independent from each other.

Sometime in 2010 Boko Haram returned to Maiduguri and started a campaign of assassinations. This campaign began with hit-and-run attacks against police checkpoints in Borno and Yobe. The group’s favoured method was to steal a motorcycle, then ride against a police post, kill the policemen there and seize their weapons. Gunmen also forced their way into the homes of local leaders who had cooperated with the police by naming Boko Haram members. The people who had taken over houses formerly belonging to escaped Boko Haram members were also killed if they refused to leave.

Although they have been committing atrocities since 2009, Boko Haram eventually grabbed world headlines in 2014. In February, the group killed more than 100 Christian men in the villages of Boron Baga and Izghe, and later also killed 59 students in the same village’s Federal


Government College in north-eastern Nigeria. In April 2014, Boko Haram gained international notoriety by kidnapping an estimated 276 female students from a government school in Chibok, a Christian village in Borno State. They broke into the school around 3:00 am, shooting the guards and killing one soldier. The students were taken away in trucks, possibly into the Konduga area of the Sambisa forest where Boko Haram is known to have fortified camps. Houses in Chibok were also burnt down in the incident.

Britain, the United States, France and other members of the international community, including civil society groups (BringBackOurGirls Group, Vigilante Group etc), have pledged to support search-and-rescue efforts aimed at rescuing the kidnapped girls. This search-and-rescue approach helped to undermine the peace and counter-terrorism program in Nigeria, since a number of those who had committed egregious human rights violations in the past – including during the Nigerian jihad (Maitatsine riots of 1986-1988) - could not be prosecuted because most of them belong to the country’s religious-political elites. Human Rights Watch argues that the Joint Task Force (JTF) was designed to manoeuvre between the demands that the international community and US support the Nigerian government and to ensure that nothing derails the search-and-rescue process.27 This means that human rights concerns must take a subsidiary role, as they may undermine the US’s two-pillar approach.

**Conclusion**

In many respects, counter-terrorism in Nigeria is a doomed mission. Although there has been some substantive change in the infrastructure – the building of schools, hospitals, sewage, as well as construction of roads and availability of electricity – the reality remains that despite billions of dollars in assistance and an increased international presence, security continues to elude Nigeria. As of 2013, the Nigerian government is unable to exercise power in about two-thirds of the country, the Nigerian army and police are heavily dependent on coalition forces (JTF), corruption pervades all aspects of Nigerian society, and crude oil, the production of which appears to be on the wane, is still the major natural resource for the Nigerian economy.

A core problem with the counter-terrorism operation in Nigeria is that Nigerian leadership, which speaks to two different audiences, domestic and foreign, severely impedes the counter-terrorism effort. Incidents of corruption, such as the alleged irregularities that marred the 2011 general election in Nigeria, make it difficult to determine what Nigerian leaders stand for, besides protecting their own interests.28 This makes it hard for the international community to devise a strategy for counter-terrorism and search-and-rescue operations, especially when it has pinned its hopes on the current leadership, which not only fails to deliver, but arguably benefits from Nigeria’s lack of progress which guarantees international presence and aid. The leadership’s reaction and attitude makes it seem fickle, divisive and ultimately untrustworthy.

Second, it is clear that the Nigerian political system is corrupt and inept. Those living in the countryside, who form the majority of the population, are rejecting the Goodluck Ebele Jonathan government, which they see as corrupt, inept, and Western-dominated.29 This is why the insurgency is more than simply Boko Haram-led, but is a reaction to the ineffectiveness of the federal government. Third, as most commentators agree, economic poverty and poor social conditions are a root cause of the Nigerian insurgency.30 Due to the high-level of corruption, Nigerians often do not receive the international aid that has been allocated to them. This is exacerbated by the lack of security, which also prevents aid from being fully distributed in locations where the insurgency is raging. Moreover, if aid is

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delivered, insurgents often seize or destroy it. Ordinary Nigerians may appreciate the challenge of distributing aid, but ultimately their view is that hundreds of NGOs have been in the country for almost a decade, yet their conditions have not improved. Thus, they are weary of the intervention.

Real counter-terrorism in Nigeria requires a debate regarding the role of Chad, Cameroon and Niger and the development of a Nigerian economy. These states must change some of their policies to ensure effective counter-terrorism in Nigeria, as Nigerian dependency on Chad, Cameroon and Niger stems from its geography, land-locked as it is in the North-Eastern region. Such a move could also prove beneficial to those countries, since when a problem affects one country it impacts the others. For example, in the 1990s, when there were tensions between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi Peninsula, Cameroon simply closed the border. This had a huge impact on the Nigerian economy. This situation is as true today as it was in the 1990s. Thus, the Nigerian-Cameroonian trade agreement in the 1990s was a positive development, but as long as Nigeria lacks basic infrastructure, many Nigerians will not feel the benefits of the agreement. It also discourages the millions of Nigerian refugees living in Cameroon from returning, as they would rather live in the relative squalor of the border region than face the insecurity of Nigeria’s northern region.

The final issue affecting counter-terrorism and search-and-rescue operation efforts in Nigeria from a domestic perspective is human rights. As of 2009, Nigeria’s human rights record remains one of the world’s worst. Many military officers have participated in gross human rights abuses. While it is unlikely and unrealistic for Nigeria to place all those individuals on trial, these violations need to be addressed. The international community excuses such violations, despite the talk of protecting and developing universal human rights norms. On the international front, the counter-terrorism process has been undermined by many shortcomings. The US counter-terrorism team is simply trying to do too much and faces conflicting tasks. As a consequence, security conditions have deteriorated while coalition teams seem to suffer from low morale. Ultimately, the approach of the international community has suffered from the typical post-Cold War ‘liberal peace’ arrogance, misunderstanding, lack of appreciation of the specific local political context, and the poor allocation of resources. Unless this is remedied, the program will continue to provide very little return on investment and even less reason to hope for an improved situation in Nigeria.

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The title of this book is a misleading one. One would expect to find here an account of the last war between Henry VIII and Francis I, almost forgotten by laymen and seemingly insignificant to historians. Contents of such books are predictable: diplomacy, preparations and planning for campaigns, army organisation, blow by blow battle operations, logistics, supply, warts and all. Everything mentioned above is present here, but then David Potter unexpectedly delves deeper down the rabbit hole. The narrative is so detailed, so precise that it is no longer a mere list of events meant for referencing rather than for pleasure reading. As one dives into the minutiae of the struggle for Boulogne, The Final Conflict emerges as a vivid portrait of an enigmatic era in the history of warfare, an explanation of so much more than simple reasons for victory or defeat in a single campaign. The author has definitely succeeded in his declared intention to show the war as a far wider and more destructive conflict than it looks at first sight, as well as to define its long-term implications. (p. 1) This is a good illustration of the whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. When the author gathers information for some narrow theme, he has more control over the result. When, however, the aim is to provide as much information as possible about some significant events, the text usually gains the ability to express more than the author intended. It was a very interesting experience to read this book, because different unconnected things are described here chronologically as they happened, while we are used to visible causal structures. However, that level of detail creates the liveliest picture of early modern diplomacy and warfare one can imagine.

The chapter structure of the book is both chronological and thematic, which is a sensible approach for this particular, rather compact campaign. We start with diplomacy that was required to forge an alliance amidst mutual suspicions. Then the French game in Scotland gets the necessary attention, as well as the cautious slide towards war. Finally, there are chapters on the actual invasion into France, English military organisation, renewal of the war, a chapter on English-French competition for landsknechts in Germany, a chapter on naval warfare, and finally the chapters on the mediation and the peace treaty. In the end there is little to criticise about the narrative itself. It is very dense and the theme is masterfully researched. No one has ever written about this war in such a way. But there are bigger issues that come to mind after finishing the book.

The first lesson we learn here is to restrain ourselves from judging wars by their direct results. On the surface the final ‘hurrah’ of the two archetypal Renaissance monarchs seems botched. The joint invasion of France by Henry VIII and Charles V didn’t happen as intended, Francis I wasn’t brought to his knees as was the plan, and the whole affair lacked large-scale pitched battles, something that automatically scares away most traditional military historians. The operations ran on a very limited geographical scale, the English preferring to fight for tangible results rather than to charge into the heart of France; and in the end Charles V made a separate peace, forcing Henry to do the same and be satisfied with the capture of Boulogne. Furthermore, soon afterwards the city was sold back to France and the status quo was reinstated. Certainly, in terms of material success this is
not even close to Henry V’s glittering campaign of 1415; but the result speaks nothing of the forces in play and the stakes in that game of thrones.

Francis I faced the most dangerous threat of his reign while Henry VIII launched the most ambitious English force of the sixteenth century. The fact that comparatively poor and backward England waged war on such a grand scale demands our attention no less than the French efforts required for organising defence on two fronts and breaking the Tudor-Habsburg alliance. Every military undertaking has its challenges but in the sixteenth century rulers had to operate in unique circumstances. Organization of society and government were tuned to wars of the previous era for the large part, while mentality and weaponry demanded more complex methods. It seems that sieges and skirmishes of the campaign in question by themselves are less interesting than the challenges of bringing together such numerous forces and supplying them with bread, beer, wood, gunpowder, and ammunition. All of it required considerable efforts due to the cumbersome institutions of the day. Particularly useful are the frequent comparisons between English and French practices that show a clear distinction between a country that for the previous years had largely stayed out of major wars and a country that had endured decades of bitter struggle continuously since 1494. Since the medieval retinues of the summoned lords had become outdated, they had to be supported by veteran mercenaries. However, to hire these mercenaries Henry VIII had to send agents with little experience to negotiate with German princes while skilful French agents with extensive connections in lands of the Emperor did everything to thwart English efforts. In many ways the wars of the sixteenth century required more skill from rulers and commanders than wars of subsequent centuries.

The book is also very helpful at explaining why simplistic views on Renaissance diplomacy fail to help us understand these conflicts. John R. Hale and Frank Tallett\(^1\) have written a lot about different causes for early modern wars with special attention to dynastic ambitions. ‘Rivalry of kings’ or ‘royal sport’ have long been a staple summary of sixteenth century wars for many other authors. However, it is better to study these wars one by one instead of attempting to grasp them at a glance. Potter explains Henry VIII and Francis I’s quarrel less by their personal competition and more by strategic ideas that dominated the royal minds: these wars were ‘not simply the outcome of royal personality traits and the pursuit of kingly honour’ (p. 10). Dynastic claims, so cherished by many authors, were just a *casus belli*, so ‘like a litigious landowner, Henry could invoke them as and when he saw fit’ (p. 11) (as an aside, the present quotation is a fine example of the author’s style, which made even the most tedious places highly readable). When we read about the diplomatic ‘dance’ before the war we see that although economic profits were far from a major concern of the monarchs, as Hale and Tallett have correctly argued in the aforementioned works, Henry VIII was mostly worried about victory of either side of the Habsburg-Valois struggle as well as about the perils of neutrality that could lead England to isolation and threats from both Charles and Francis. The same fears drove Francis I and Charles V into the war. The three kings were caught in a web of anticipatory attacks. Renaissance geopolitics seems to be surprisingly close to our modern understanding international balance\(^2\), considered wise by some and paranoid by others. Similar ‘defensive’ reasoning can be applied to many other early modern wars (especially the wars of Philip II) and as usual the true cause of war seems to lie in irrational suspicions.

As you may see, most merits of this book stem from it being a thorough narrative instead of a general overview or a narrow thematic research work. In recent years we’ve seen too many attempts to build theories and explanations using as foundations narratives created decades ago, which is almost akin to gathering fruit from a poisonous tree.\(^2\) Potter’s own overview

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2 A notable example is Bert S. Hall, *Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe: Gunpowder, Technology and Tactics*.
of the French military organisation was a superb example of a cautious approach to generalisations and the creation of a solid base for conclusions. Now we have a monograph of a different kind, but one which is still not confined to narrow issues and is extremely thought-provoking: a mark of a true historian’s work. There is a lot more to learn from this book about early modern state, society and warfare, than one would imagine from its title.

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One of the most recent examples from the popular history genre, Henrik Lunde, A Warrior Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of Sweden as a Military Superpower, 1611-1721 (Havertown, PA, 2014) heavily relies on a number of outdated studies, including Delbrück. 3 David Potter, Renaissance France at War: Armies, Culture and Society, c. 1480-1560 (Woodbridge, Eng., & Rochester, NY, 2008).

‘Literature does not define human nature so much as exemplify it’ (p.183). In his latest book ‘Men at War’, Christopher Coker explores this theme, using war literature to elucidate key aspects of human nature. In so doing, he draws widely on both classical and contemporary works of fiction to examine what he calls the ‘existential codes’ that comprise war as a cultural phenomenon.

In spite of the material it uses, this is not a book about war literature. In a similar way to Charles Hill who examined the ideas and principles of statecraft in his book *Grand Strategies* (2010), literature for Coker provides a unique source of insight into the essence of war and the dynamics, struggles, and values that make it a fundamentally human experience. As he eloquently puts it: what war tells us about the men who fight is ‘that they are violent, but never fully in control of their emotions; that they are heroic but often only in the last resort; that they are weak, fallible beings but capable of moments of great strength of will’ (p.297).

These traits form five character types, each of which constitutes a separate chapter that is seen to represent the prominent and recurrent types of the great works: warriors, heroes, villains, survivors and victims. Within these categories Coker’s analysis of twenty-five characters incorporates familiar names including Homer’s Achilles, Ernest Hemingway’s Robert Jordan, Joseph Conrad’s Colonel Feraud, Joseph Heller’s Yossarian, and Kurt Vonnegut’s Billy Pilgrim. Among them, Stanley Kubrick’s Dr Strangelove is the only screenplay character to feature, though references to film adaptations such as Master and Commander contribute to the wider analysis of how war resonates within contemporary culture.

Nonetheless, the book is not an abstract study of characters, and it consciously connects them to contemporary themes. The chapter of ‘Victims’ touches on the long lasting effects of conflict, relating it to PTSD (p.244) and its treatment in history. Similarly, the chapter on ‘Warriors’ links the concept of warriors in Ancient Greece to what it means today in an age when technological warfare is growing and widening the distance between combatant and the battlefield (p.22). The work is therefore rooted in the modern experience of war and its continuing evolution. As part of this he highlights that it is typically men depicted at war, while women are its victims. This, however, is a trend that can be seen to shift slowly as more women join the armed services. Though it is a book of predominantly male characters, the traits it reveals are universal:

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heroism is no more masculine than victimhood is feminine.

Through the literature, and the context within which it was written, Coker reflects on the changing sensibilities to war over the years – from the epics of Homer’s time, when the virtues of war would have been lauded, to contemporary literature following the devastation of two world wars and ongoing operations.

The existential experience of warfare for both character and reader stands out from this work. The analysis of these characters is not just an examination of what makes them memorable, but is skilfully deployed by the author to highlight the feelings the characters and their stories provoke from the reader. This interplay between the real and the fictitious provides a compelling dimension to this book. These figures bring war to life, impressing on the reader the enduring experiences of both combatant and civilian.

In his book *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning* Chris Hedges argued that it was the exhilaration, addiction, and even the destruction that war brought which gave those involved purpose. As Coker demonstrates in this book, it is often through warfare that an individual is most tested, and perhaps most alive, at the extremes of one’s strength or vulnerability.

In the same way that human experience can be both bitter and sweet, so too, Coker argues, there is an inherent irony in war: that in spite of its destruction, it retains an appeal precisely because to some it is kind. Each character has a different experience and takes away something different from war: the same is true for each reader. In his conclusion Coker highlights the significance and transformative nature of literature on war. It is through knowing war and through connecting with experiences of warfare, real and fictional, that one can seek to transform it. In this manner, literature has an enduring relevance to how we understand it.

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This is an absorbing and well-crafted work. Throughout its pages it weaves together literature, warfare, political philosophy, and an examination of self and what makes us human into its analysis. For this reason it has an appeal beyond academia. For lovers of literature, it is a book that will make you want to add further to your reading list and explore the wider canon of work on warfare. For students of conflict, it provides further insight into the human dimensions of war and its enduring legacy.

Claire Yorke
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Carl von Clausewitz has been no stranger to criticism post-9/11; the centrality of Politik to his ideas on warfare was a prime target for those who argued that politics did not account for other bellicose motivations, including culture and religion. Debates in Strategic Studies and International Relations rage about whether or not politics are a timeless component of warfare or merely the one that was most relevant to Clausewitz, with wars of religion as key examples in this line of criticism.¹ Setting the merits of this argument aside, it is clear to see that much attention has been paid in recent years to so-called religious warfare, but little, if any, has been paid to its logical counterpart: what Stacey Gutkowski terms ‘secular war’.

Rather than looking at issues such as how evangelical Christianity influences American conservative security policy or what effect extreme variants of Islam might have on suicide bombers, Gutkowski focuses instead on the impact that secularism has on the security strategy of an increasingly areligious society. Gutkowski looks specifically at the British participation in the 9/11 wars (Afghanistan, Iraq, the larger War on Terror, and domestic security) through the lenses of both religion and the lack thereof, highlighting certain ‘myths’ about religion that she believes exist in the largely secular United Kingdom (UK) and the way in which these myths drive security policy. She argues that the British secular habitus (using Pierre Bourdieu’s terminology) was initially not equipped to deal with issues of religion and Islam in the aftermath of 9/11, and this contributed to many blunders in Iraq and Afghanistan and at home. However, the UK was able to adapt, gaining a better understanding of these issues and changing its policy to accommodate this new understanding.

But this process was not a one-way street: the 9/11 wars also prompted greater reflection in the UK about the role of religion and secularism in British society.

At the heart of this argument, however, lie the titular ‘myths’ that Gutkowski claims inform the British secular habitus. The primary myths that she identifies are as follows: first, ‘[t]hat Westerners are not the kind of irrational people to fight wars in the name of religion’ and that war ‘should only be fought over the politics of the state’;² second, ‘[t]hat non-Westerners have a tendency towards forms of religion that can be dangerous or unruly’ which ‘demands the firm hand of the state or even “the West” to keep them in line’;³ and third, ‘[t]hat, with the exception of the Vatican, it is better for religion to be confined to and kept under the control of states’ for the good of the ‘global order’.⁴ She links the genesis of each myth with ‘three particular “war moments”: intra-European wars after the Peace of Westphalia; the European imperial “small wars”; and the development of the current international order in the wake of the Second World War.’⁵ Using the example of Northern Ireland (1968-75), Gutkowski shows how these historically-conditioned myths operated in British security policy both during the Troubles and then again in the early days after 9/11, creating three tendencies in this policy area: marginalizing the role of religion as cover for politics; seeking political settlements through the guarantee of the state; and seeing religious leaders as important but tangential in the settlement process.⁶ All of these tendencies, she argues, can be shown working in the early years of the 9/11 wars when the UK faced many setbacks.

¹ Perhaps the most trenchant critic in this regard is historian John Keegan. See: J. Keegan, A History of Warfare, Pimlico, 1994.
³ Ibid, p. 38.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid, pp. 55-56.
Gutkowski’s work is an important interdisciplinary study that is relevant to many key debates in Strategic Studies and International Relations, but also helpful for those more interested in Foreign and Security Policy Analysis. As mentioned above, it fits squarely, if incidentally, into the fundamental Clausewitzian debate about the nature of war and strategy. It shines an even brighter light onto the way in which religion or the lack thereof, in addition to other cultural factors, can shape why and how actors go to war. Furthermore, her utilization of Bourdieu’s concept of ‘hysteresis (or time lag)” to illustrate the learning curve that policymakers face when confronted with fundamentally new circumstances should be of interest to those working on areas of foreign and security policy decision making in response to crises. But perhaps most significantly, Gutkowski’s study illuminates how we as ‘Western’ scholars might think about warfare, pointing out the potential biases faced by those who have spent a significant amount of time in the UK or similarly secular societies. Like the military officers and policymakers interviewed in the book, scholars reading this publication may well view warfare through the lens of these same historically-conditioned myths.

However, this leads to one potential flaw of Gutkowski’s work: an underestimation of the transatlantic differences in ‘secularism’. Although Gutkowski takes great pains to stress the fundamental differences between American and British/European patterns of secularism, the former largely characterised as the ‘freedom to’ practice religion and the latter as the ‘freedom from’ religious practices, this difference seems central to her argument. It is possible that, if she had conducted a similar study on the American experience, she would reach startlingly different conclusions, even though the United States suffered similar setbacks in the same time period in Afghanistan and Iraq. The myths that she identifies have been held by the British because of their own historical experiences, and she would have to drastically expand her argument to convincingly claim that they are held by the Americans to the same extent. However, this qualm with the potential application of her study does not negate the important contribution that her work makes by opening up the idea of ‘secular warfare’ in the first place.

A second criticism has more to do with focus and style, which is seemingly trivial but ultimately important when undertaking interdisciplinary work. As Gutkowski is charting new intellectual territory, it is understandable that new and exciting lines of inquiry and argument emerge. However, this adds up to a somewhat unfocused narrative that makes it difficult to identify the central arguments from the emerging or tangential ones. In addition, the language that she employs is laden with jargon. The great appeal of Gutkowski’s work is its interdisciplinarity and broad appeal across the social sciences and possibly into the humanities, but with this potential comes a responsibility to use language that is easily understood in a wide range of discourses. This is by no means a fatal flaw, and hopefully it will not hinder the book’s reception beyond the confines of War Studies.

One final question to pose regarding Gutkowski’s work is to what extent recent events in Iraq challenge her thesis. Among the myths already discussed, Gutkowski also challenges the ‘myth’ of the Clash of Civilizations, arguing that the threats of ‘jihadist political Islamism’ and ‘non-jihadist political Islamism’ have not materialized in the way feared by many.9 Indeed, ‘the neo-caliphate has not been realized’.10 Although far from the caliphate envisioned by so-called Islamic State, this rapid development might lend more credibility to an idea that she could confidently dismiss less than a year ago.

Ultimately *Secular War* is an important interdisciplinary contribution that challenges assumptions made not just by British policymakers but perhaps also by actors in the wider politico-military and academic discourses concerned with warfare. Gutkowski suggests it is not just that the religious fanatic ‘other’ is

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7 Ibid, p. 17.
8 Ibid, p. 25.
9 Ibid, p. 18.
10 Ibid.
motivated by religion; rather, it is also the case that our secular societies are conditioned by a (Protestant) Christian past and an increasingly a-religious present. This is a worthy and crucial line of inquiry for future scholarship.

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IB Tauris’ recently inaugurated ‘Short Histories’ series provides readers, be they lay people or practitioners, with detailed surveys combined with perspective-altering analysis. In the foreword to *A Short History of the Byzantine Empire* (hereafter referred to as *The Byzantine Empire*), the publishers set out a pithy goal for their series: to be ‘introductions with an edge’. This is an apt description for Stathakopoulos’ book; in nine chapters he takes the reader through more than one thousand years of history, dealing with issues of current and past scholarship as he goes. The author skilfully adds new relevance, detail and clarity to an important period of history.

*The Byzantine Empire* by Dionysios Stathakopoulos is a compelling survey of the history of the Byzantine Empire. The work takes the reader from the fourth Century AD when the Empire was still very much the sister of the Western Empire, through the fall of the West in the fifth Century and up to 1453, the year the Byzantine Empire fell. This period, spanning more than a century, contains within it a fascinating story of imperial fluctuation in territorial and ideological terms, European development and state formation.

Stathakopoulos sets out to challenge the popular western-centric perspective on this period. In so doing he challenges attitudes of historians such as Edward Gibbon, who afforded Byzantium little respect or spilled little ink in their works on this period. In the final chapter of his book, Stathakopoulos makes a prognosis for a bright future for Byzantine studies, highlighting the attendance of over one thousand scholars at the International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Sofia in 2011.

In order to achieve a marrying of two goals, to be a short history and to provide what is described in the publisher’s foreword to the series as an ‘edge’, the author, in his nine chapters containing a series of vignettes succeeds in combining synoptic analytical discussion and chronological survey. Each chapter has a vignette covering the basic chronology followed by a series of conceptual discussions on key facets of the given period. While this approach certainly helps the author achieve his aim of surveying the period, providing edge and adding clarity, sometimes the narrative is lost in the to-ing and fro-ing across several vignettes. This system does, however, facilitate the use of this work for period- or concept-specific research. One can easily locate sections pertaining to any aspect of Byzantine history and read it in isolation. In this sense, the work is a successful marriage of analysis and survey.

There are, however, a number of issues touched on by the author that are left, due to the work aiming to be a ‘short history’, unresolved. The medieval period, especially its earlier stages, is rife with semantic debate. The two primary issues are on the nature and identity of groups, particularly those on the move, and the nature of polities. The debate over how to define the Byzantine Empire is one that is touched on in this piece but are not fully resolved. Modern interpretations of the word ‘Byzantine’ meaning notwithstanding, this term carries a number of issues. Primarily, the challenge to the term is one of anachronism. The fact that contemporaries did not refer to themselves as ‘Byzantines’ but rather ‘Romans’, is a problematic one. Historians cannot rightly name this polity ‘Roman’ as Rome was not the capital of the Empire, nor was it a permanent fixture in its holdings. Stathakopoulos does not reveal a solution to these issues, but, one could argue, a degree of academic pragmatism is necessary. Choosing the lesser of two inaccuracies is often the nearest one can get to an ideal solution.

The author’s use of sources is an important
yardstick in medieval history. The impressionistic attitude to contemporary scholarship creates a kaleidoscopic perspective of this period. However, as the survey progresses into the later stages of the empire, sources become increasingly rich in the reference to specific authors and individuals. The author, in spite of the issues of sources at certain points in the Empire’s history manages to construct a highly vivid representation of characters and events. Yet, despite this excellent representation of fascinating characters and their schemes throughout this work’s nine chapters, the historiographical angle to the use of sources is somewhat wanting. If this work were a dedicated piece of historiography, as opposed to a combination of survey and analysis, then there is no doubt that historiographical arguments would come to the fore. However, in this specific work, despite an excellent discussion of eschatology, the historiography plays a minor role. This is not to criticise, however, this piece is a ‘short history’ and, as such, is to be admired for marrying survey and excellent analysis.

This survey is, largely speaking, a total approach to the period. There are, for example, no chapters or sections dedicated to economics or politics. Rather, the author tackles each ‘theme’ as and when they are perceived to be important within a chronological structure. As a result, the survey aspect of this piece is all the more strengthened; the narrative is not lost in the winding roads of a thematic approach. On the other hand, some historical ‘themes’ come up less than others. Although certainly down to considerations of sources and approach, sociology, for instance, receives little attention. The discussions of demography, particularly in the early stages of the work, are centred on the scepticism one must take with contemporary records. Conversely, ideological and political elements are rich and fascinating. The discussions on iconoclasm, for instance, dispel many myths.

The definitional issue, one unresolved in early chapters, continues to be a problem throughout the work. One instance of a definitional shift that takes place is that of the ‘Bulgars’. This group becomes identified as ‘Bulgarian’ with their polity defined as ‘Bulgaria’. This is a fundamental shift in definition which is not properly explained; there is no discussion of the reasons for a change in definition and the relative development of Bulgaria in this period is left un-established. This, whilst an issue for all of medieval scholarship, is one that should be set out in a historiographical manner; one can acknowledge the limitations of a definition while continuing to use it. Moreover the definitions in this work often interchange between ‘new’ and ‘old’ terms.

Stathakopoulos captures perfectly the atmosphere of an Empire besieged. Despite a relative lack of strategic or tactical detail, the geopolitical state of affairs is described so well that the reader gets a real sense that Byzantium was, at times, beleaguered. That said, there are some excellent discussions of the Empire’s defensive measures. For instance, the explanation of the theme system of dividing up frontier regions into individual, semi-autonomous military commands is particularly strong. This general atmosphere fits in well with his discussions of iconoclasm and broader dogmatic dispute. The people of the Empire looked in on themselves for the divine reasons for their relative lack of military and political success. This, in turn, fed religious division within the Empire and in the broader Christian world. Stathakopoulos sets out the reasons for the division for the East and Western churches clearly. This, a particularly complicated issue that pervades to this day, is laid out in clear, engaging terms.

Dionysios Stathakopoulos’ *A Short History of the Byzantine Empire* marries survey and analysis together to form an extremely engaging and informative piece of scholarship. The salient semantic and definitional issues of the period notwithstanding, Stathakopoulos has constructed and excellent survey whilst providing plenty of ‘edge’. Reading this work of history has been a pleasure and one that has, I am pleased to say, increased my thirst for knowledge of all things Byzantine.

Louis Mignot
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This fictional dialogue between the Genoese Cristóbal Colón and a Spanish-Castilian minister conveys, with the dramatic lyricism appropriate in a popular movie epic about the discovery of the Americas, the idea which forms the core argument of Henry Kamen’s provocative study of the Spanish empire, one of several penned by him. The thematic core of this book is the essence and meaning of empire, as exemplified by the largest such formation of the early modern period. At the same time, it is not so much about Spain itself, as the author readily admits. As we shall see, the observations made within the context of this paradigm, whether we agree with them or not, are equally applicable to any empire. This book aspired to be a novel and provocative contribution to the ways we see empires in general, and early modern empires in particular, and it is an analysis of early modern empires which is still influential today, especially in the context of independence movements in Spain and abroad.

Kamen gives out elements of his working definition of ‘empire’ in various parts of his work. To him it is a territorial, multinational, multietnic state, which in essence revolves around property - over people, resources and most of all of land. Certainly this is not new in the discourse of empire, despite examples of empires where territory was not the dominant parameter (the Portuguese or the Dutch empire). Where Kamen differs is in his suggestion that an empire is the result of an equal collaboration (presumably unconscious) of its naciones, and that one people can not claim it as its own. In short, the Spanish empire is not Spanish, because Spain was but one of the collaborators in its creation. ‘Spaniards’, he writes, ‘particularly Castilians, Basques and Andalusians, made their own distinctive contribution, and enjoyed the honour of being managers of the enterprise. But the enterprise itself belongs to all.’

If stating the obvious is less of an issue, a problem which immediately arises when Kamen proceeds to his analysis is one of consistency. For reasons which will soon become apparent, Kamen clearly elects Castile as his bête noire. He readily, and somewhat artificially, divides the Spanish Iberians and their respective contribution to empire building where it suits his argument, observing, for example, with an air of insinuated importance that Philip IV’s army in Aragon in 1643 consisted by at least a half of Aragonese, Valencians, Neapolitans, Walloons, etc (p. 488). Yet at the same time, in attempting to illustrate the ideological domination of the concept of a Spanish empire, he presents us with quotes from Frey Benito de Peñalosa, who speaks of Spaniards in a much more inclusive way than Kamen himself, and usually denotes thus Iberians in general. It is this artificial division into two which makes Kamen’s argument weak and inconsistent. It would have been, perhaps, more useful to make a division of three (if that task has a meaning at all), based on relative
power distribution and potential for influence: Castilians and their immediate subjects (say, Andalusians); Iberians enjoying significant autonomy (Aragonese, and later, Portuguese, to an extent) and the élites of European dominions (Italian factions, Flemish nobility), that is, forces with potential to influence policy; and the overseas dominions, whose contribution, though very real and essential in both monetary and ideological terms, remained largely an abstract in empire-building politics.

Deconstructions such as the one the author attempts are certainly useful in exploring some themes – when comparing relative strengths and weaknesses in the interior, assessing the empire’s cohesion, analyzing the effectiveness of integration, political or other. Invaluable it would be again as a starting point in exploring the particulars of internal balance of power, political trade-off as a feature of a nascent ‘absolutism’, the quid pro quo between administrative centre and local privilege. But why deconstruct when speaking of an empire as a whole, or of its impact? Why forcefully hammer down the obvious and uncontested, as if from a tribune?

Kamen’s views are often considered controversial, and containing a great deal of politicised argumentation, sometimes subtle, sometimes much more vivid and provocative. That the work has a political agenda is evident and even more or less explicitly stated (p. xxiii). That it is not immediate and active advocacy of Catalanist ideology, but a more passive and subversive strike against Castilianism (either extreme or mild) and a pan-Spanish perception, does not make it less biased.

It has been suggested that Kamen, with personal and familial links to Catalonia, where he lives and works, often tries to put historical scholarly methodology of which he is a masterful user, in the service of a specific anti-Castilianism fashionable among modern advocates of the Catalanismo ideology. In a sense this work is a historical justification of the political deconstruction advocated by the Catalanismo movement in modern and contemporary Spain, as much as similar works elsewhere discuss Latin American political breach with the historical metropolis, Scottish and Irish – with the British tradition, and that of former Soviet or Eastern European socialist states – with their Russian-dominated past.

Certainly ethnic Spaniards, more so, ethnic Castilians, did not build the Spanish empire single-handedly. What Kamen denies to the Spanish however, brushing it off as unimportant, is the significance in the balance of things of the leading role in administration and coordination, in defining and directing policy, in administering manpower and resources, wherever they come from, in imposing (or negotiating) Spanish will upon subject territories and dominions. Kamen’s argument could hold water when speaking of the Union of the Crowns of Castile and Aragon – a true collaboration between two monarchies unified dynastically, but separate administratively. It could hold water, though somewhat tentatively, for the times of Charles V, even though one might retort that the Spanish empire was not yet in place, at least not until the final stages of his reign. But as soon as Philip II’s program of bureaucratization and gradual centralization is in place, Kamen’s argument begins to disintegrate. Not only did Spain (and more so, Castile) become the truly dominant force in the empire, but in some cases, notably, during Philip II’s reign, the insistence of the administration to settle all issues at the central seat of government, in the Madrid councils or at the Escorial, was such that created massive problems of crisis management.

Once at the head of an empire the Spanish monarchs and their ministers struggled to preserve it as the proverbial Hapsburg patrimony of Charles V; or augment it (conquest of Portugal and its dominions, or the Philippines); fight for (Philip IV’s push towards the retention of Portugal in the mid XVII
century); and push it forward into a new age (Bourbon social reforms and administrative restructuring). That the kings of Spain were doing it using soldiers of many nations, ships with masts from the Baltic, money from Italian bankers, and administrators with familial or other ties to non-Iberian Spanish dominions is as irrelevant as it is analogous of other such experiences in any state, be it a realm, republic or empire. In the end, it was all in the name of the Spanish King and in the service of the Spanish central government, the top of the administrative hierarchy, a hierarchy complex, to be sure, but controlled by, and in the service of, Castilian (or broader Iberian) élites.

It is not, however, just the ‘who paid for what’ issue, nor whether the hand that wielded, figuratively speaking, the sword of empire was in reality Portuguese, Andalusian, Flemish or mestizo. In a very real sense, it is also the outward image which plays a significant part here, whether the empire projected an image connected with a particular nation (the imperial nation, if you will). That the tercios of the Army of Flanders were predominantly non-Castilian, and even non-Spanish, did not matter to the Dutch, who spoke of Spaniards, Spanish power, Spanish victories and Spanish defeats. That viceroys and ambassadors, ministers and tradesmen might come from Italy, Aragon, Valencia, Navarra or Andalusia, made little difference to their counterparts, who saw them as agents of Spain and Spain’s rulers. That bankers were German, Flemish, Genoese or Florentine did not change the colour of their gold, nor the goals for which it was earmarked. Finally, that arguably the most feared and celebrated of Spain’s rulers, Philip II, was by birth half-Austro-Flemish and half-Portuguese did not change in the imagination and perception of both contemporaries and historians, his identity as the most Spanish of the Spanish kings.

In the end, if we are to use Henry Kamen’s argumentation in a lighter tone, we might ask ourselves – is this book really Henry Kamen’s? Because after all, he did not produce the paper it is printed on, nor the ink it is printed in, nor did he perform the actual printing, binding or even funding of it. Yet it is the idea that matters, and how it is developed, and by whom.
Contributors

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