

12-23-2023

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Recommended Citation

Demeure, Nicolas and Lee, Brice Tseen Fu (2023) "France in the Middle East: A Democratic Justification for Military Interventions in Iraq and Beyond.," *Journal Of Middle East and Islamic Studies*: Vol. 10: No. 2, Article 5.

DOI: 10.7454/meis.v10i2.167

Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/meis/vol10/iss2/5>

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France in the Middle East: A Democratic Justification for Military Interventions in Iraq and Beyond.

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Abstract

How did France's refusal to take part in the war on Iraq in 2003 has created the conditions that legitimizes its future military interventions abroad? In this paper, a discourse analysis of the official French Foreign Policy Discourse is done to show why saying no to war in 2003 paradoxically allows France to carry out military interventions in 2015. This paper argues that France, while perpetrating an existing discourse of democracy opposing the civilized against the uncivilized that legitimates Foreign policy as a security tool, by its refusal, transformed military intervention a latent policy *and* legitimized the French Self as the most civilized Self.

Keywords: France, Democracy, Discourse, Foreign Policy

Abstrak

Bagaimana penolakan Prancis untuk berpartisipasi dalam perang di Irak pada tahun 2003 telah menciptakan kondisi yang melegitimasi intervensi militer mereka di luar negeri di masa depan? Dalam makalah ini, analisis wacana terhadap Wacana Kebijakan Luar Negeri Prancis resmi dilakukan untuk menunjukkan mengapa mengatakan tidak pada perang pada tahun 2003 secara paradoks memungkinkan Prancis untuk melakukan intervensi militer pada tahun 2015. Makalah ini berpendapat bahwa Prancis, sambil mempertahankan wacana demokrasi yang ada yang menentang peradaban melawan yang tidak beradab yang melegitimasi kebijakan luar

negeri sebagai alat keamanan, dengan penolakannya, mengubah intervensi militer menjadi kebijakan laten dan melegitimasi Diri Prancis sebagai Diri yang paling beradab.

Kata Kunci: Prancis, Demokrasi, Wacana, Kebijakan Luar Negeri

Introduction

'Given this context, the use of force is not justified at this time'

de Villepin, February 14th 2003

The examination of France's reluctance to employ military force during the Iraq conflict aids in comprehending the legitimacy of military interventions in non-democratic nations. In 2003, when the United States sought the United Nations Security Council's authorization for the use of force against Iraq (Cockayne and Malone, 2008, p.398), de Villepin declared France's opposition to a military intervention in Iraq before the UN Security Council. This declaration, described as a 'poetic and heartfelt speech' (Left, 2003), garnered significant applause from the audience. Twelve years subsequent to this, French President Hollande, in the wake of the Paris attacks, called a special Congress of the French Parliament to justify military interventions in the Middle East as a means of 'combating terrorism', concurrently announcing an escalation of military operations in Syria.

The respective environments in which these speeches were delivered - prior to the Iraq War and following the Paris attacks - and the intended audiences - the UN Security Council and the Congress of the French Parliament - have elicited substantial attention on both national and international platforms. As such, it becomes critical to analyze the discourses these speeches promote and sustain. Discourses serve dual functions of being descriptive and prescriptive, cultivating a world where

certain courses of action are perceived as more appropriate than others. Given their potent influence, it is essential to identify and critically evaluate these discourses.

In instances where a discourse holds prescriptive potency, one would anticipate that varying discourses would culminate in profoundly disparate policy outcomes. However, this study contends that two pronouncements, which ostensibly yield contrasting implications, actually constitute and propagate a uniform discourse of democracy, thereby legitimizing France's foreign military interventions. These two speeches exhibit shared elements that contribute to the discursive construction of multiple identities, thereby normalizing the French Self as a heroic protagonist in the struggle against barbarism, while perpetuating colonial inherited power relationships with the Others, who are destined to be either subjugated or annihilated. De Villepin's address, rather than condemning foreign military interventions, engenders a discursive world in which a foreign undemocratic Other paradoxically requires "cooperation" as "demanded" to preclude a legitimate military encroachment on its territory by France. Moreover, by abstaining from intervention under these conditions, France has successfully distanced itself ethically from other democracies and fortified its legitimacy to initiate military operations beyond its own frontiers.

This research paper will be articulated in three sections. The initial segment will explicate the conventional understanding of discourses and discuss the extant literature concerning democratic discourse in the

realm of Foreign Policy. This will facilitate a thorough explanation of the research question and a delineation of how this study diverges from prior work in this field. The subsequent section outlines the methodologies employed to address the research question. The final section involves the execution of a discourse analysis and a comprehensive discussion on the implications of the findings.

I. How discursively created identities prescribe policies

In this section, this paper will discuss some of the literature about discourses of democracy in the field of Foreign Policy. This will allow the paper to explain the puzzle of this research.

1. Policy discourses as prescriptive descriptions

The subsequent section will provide a detailed exposition on discourses; however, it is beneficial at this juncture to comprehend how discourses are typically construed in academic literature. Discourses are commonly perceived as assemblages of reciprocally reinforcing statements and 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972, p.54). Consequently, discourses are prescriptive in nature as, while elucidating problems or subjects, they are concurrently formulating policies to address those issues (Hansen, 2008, p.19). As an illustration, Michael Katz (2015) elucidates how our strategies for tackling poverty depend upon our understanding of the nature of the problem: if poverty is deemed a problem of personal attributes (e.g., lack of skills, idleness), educational reforms may be proposed (p.44), whereas if it is viewed as a problem concerning conditions in places (e.g., substandard housing), housing reforms emerge as a 'paradigmatic strategy' (p.49).

A nation's foreign policy is both a reflection of and a contribution to its perception of the

world (Jervis, 1976). Thus, the discourses maintained about other nations significantly influence a country's foreign policy. For example, Cathy Elliot (2017) posits that the advancement of democracy in Pakistan is a function of the discourse of democracy held in the UK.

2. The clash between the democratic civilised Self and the undemocratic uncivilised Other

This paper builds upon existing research concerning the discourse of democracy. It's pertinent to note that I refrain from categorizing nations as democratic or undemocratic as a judgmental or normative descriptor. The terms 'democratic' and 'undemocratic' are used to distinguish between nations typically recognized as adhering to the 'liberal democracy model' (Kurki, 2010) and those that do not. Specifically, the countries incorporating 'key liberal democratic procedures - encompassing electoral processes and institutionalization of rule of law, freedoms of expression, press, and association' (Ibid, p. 363). Kurki suggests that this model has nearly attained hegemony - a popularized and diffused world view of the ruling class (Bates, 1975, p. 352) - following the termination of the Cold War era. This hegemonic concept is subject to contestation and the restricted use of 'democratic' to signify 'liberal democratic' does not aim to curtail the breadth of the discourse. Rather, the labels 'democratic' and 'undemocratic' are employed to indicate how a country is identified within the dominant discourse.

For instance, when de Villepin declares: 'Not one of us feels the least indulgence towards Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime,' he is eschewing Iraq as a democratic country where the head of the state embodies citizen representation. This isn't to endorse the view that all countries whose leaders profess democratic status should indeed be considered democratic (Kurki, p.382). However, it illuminates

how the discourse of democracy in Western countries' foreign policy strives to 'define the parameters of discussion in ways that order and limit' (Crewe and Axelby, 2013, p.12) our understanding of democracy. The discursive differentiation between democratic and undemocratic underlines the significance of discursively formed democratic identities in foreign policy discourse, particularly in counterterrorism efforts. Indeed, 'foreign policies rely upon representations of identity, but it is also through the formulation of foreign policy that identities are produced and reproduced.' (Hansen, p.1).

Identities are constructed relative to one another (Campbell, p.352). That is, the Self is created in direct correlation with the Other and vice versa. This identity construction will be a focal point when analyzing discourses. Specifically, the focus will be on the array of attributes assigned to France and how these characteristics differentiate France from other identities.

Huntington's Clash of Civilisations Thesis (1993) postulates that 'great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural' (p.22). He defines civilisations as the 'highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have' (p.24). However, civilisation is also perceived as an 'evaluative-descriptive' term (Skinner, 2002, p.148), establishing societal and individual ideals of civilized conduct (Jackson, 2006, p.83; Hobson, 2008; Elliott, p.58). Consequently, if we possess a civilized Self, it must be defined concerning an uncivilized other (Hobson, p.79).

Hobson posits that democracy has become a standard of civilization, and further suggests that the Democratic Peace Theory is a Janus-faced construct, promoting peace amongst democracies while concurrently encouraging war against non-democratic

others (p.78). Therefore, the conflict in the Foreign Policy Discourse of liberal democracies is not between civilizations per se, but between constructs of Civilization and Uncivilization

3. The othering of the uncivilised and the prescriptions of the discourse

In the third chapter of her book, "Security as a Practice," Lene Hansen introduces a robust analytical framework to comprehend the construction of identities within the discourse of foreign policy. This framework has proven to be instrumental in shaping the methodology of this paper, specifically in terms of the analysis of linkage and differentiation. As briefly elucidated earlier, identity is always relational; for the existence of a Self, there must be at least one Other. In foreign policy discourse, the relationship between the Other and the Self pivots on three discursively constructed dimensions. Hansen proposes that 'identity is always spatially, temporally, and ethically situated' (pp.41-45).

Spatial othering underscores that the construction of identity necessitates boundary delineation, hence establishing space (p.42). The crafting and implementation of foreign policies necessitate a demarcation between national and foreign spaces. Temporal othering, although subtler in its understanding, possesses substantial discursive power, as demonstrated by Elliott. It is associated with 'temporal themes' such as transformation, change, and repetition (p.43). It allows a comparison between how progress unfolds in the national country relative to the foreign Other. For example, the teleological version of British history as a 'logical progression towards democracy' mandates that the UK must modernize any parts of the world posing a threat to democracy – essentially, enabling them to transition from an inferior past to a

superior, more democratic future (Ibid, p.2).

Ethical othering pertains to the variation in responsibilities and the entities to whom a country is accountable when determining a course of foreign policy action. The understanding of democracy promotion as a series of ethical practices (Ibid, p.45) implies that the foreign policy of the United Kingdom is embedded with varying ethical practices directed at distinct levels: national and international. It's worth noting that these ethical responsibilities involve attributing distinct ethical values to various subjects, thereby justifying these different practices. For instance, as per Hobson's illustration of the Democratic Peace Theory as a Janus-faced creature, the duty to protect citizens in the Democratic Self or the duty to liberate the population can surpass the duty to abstain from harming citizens in the undemocratic Other. This imbalance can lead to dramatic consequences, as Butler suggests, certain lives become highly protected, and their sanctity becomes a premise to mobilize forces of war, while others do not elicit such fervent support and are even deemed 'ungrievable' (2004, p.32).

How do the constructed identities and the discourses of democracies in liberal democracies prescribe policies? If the civilized Self clashes with the uncivilized Other, they are perceived as threats to each other. This reciprocal danger, or clash, is integral to each's identity (Campbell, p.353). The critical question then pertains to the strategies liberal democracies employ to address threats to civilization. Echoing Foucault's sentiments (2005, pp.194-197), Elliott distinguishes between two identities of the uncivilized Other – the barbarian or the savage (pp.67-68). The Barbarian serves as the true 'mirror to civilization' (Salter, 2002, p.18). Whereas the savage's existence is independent of civilization, the identities of the barbarian and civilization are interdependent. The savage holds the

potential to be civilized, often perceived as a primitive version of the civilized. Conversely, the barbarian is irredeemable and poses a threat to civilization, necessitating containment or elimination (Elliott, p.67). Elliott asserts that the goal of democracy promotion is to safeguard the civilized Self by 'knowing and controlling an unruly world' (p.69). This involves distinguishing between the barbarian and the savage to civilize the former and contain the latter. Consequently, democracy promotion emerges as a mechanism to manage threats by civilizing the uncivilized.

4. How an enduring democratic discourse leads to two opposite prescriptions?

Analyzing the foreign military intervention of France, this paper drew the conclusion that France military intervention are mostly led in undemocratic countries (*including illiberal democracies*) motivated by the fight against terrorism. This paper initially found the democratic civilizational discourse to be generally consistent with what I have written in this section. One important distinction however was the importance of *National Unity* in the French official discourse - that is as opposed to Britain's multicultural Self (Ibid, pp.165-166), French identity is *unified*. But, in many ways, the identities created were very similar. Discourses are dangerous and it is important to contest them so do not become the unique *modes of thinking* (Ibid, p.1), or *single narratives* (Adichie, 2009). I endeavored to find a counter-discourse – a discourse contesting the hegemonic discourse (Terdiman, 1985, p.117) –. Since discourses are prescriptive, this paper logically sought to look at the discourse that prescribed an opposite policy such as in 2003 when France chose not to take part into the Iraq war that was justified as a *fight against terrorism* (Powell, 2003). But rather than identifying a different discourse this paper found that the condemnation of the Iraq War perpetrated the civilizational

democratic discourse. But if a same discourse leads to two opposite policy prescriptions, how, then, does a refusal to intervene in a foreign country creates the discursive conditions in which a country can legitimize its foreign military interventions? In the following section, I describe the methodology I employed to answer this question.

II. Answering the question with discourse analysis

In this section, this paper would explain the methodology of the research. Firstly, this paper would explain why discourses are powerful and why it is important to analyse them. Secondly, this paper would explain why discursively created identities are so important and how the paper will explicit them. Thirdly, this paper explains why the paper chose to focus on the language in the Official Foreign Policy Discourse. Finally, the paper will explain its choice of material.

1. The power of a discourse

The potency of discourses is deeply rooted in their prescriptive nature, which determines the construction of the social world and subsequently guides policy formulation (Shapiro, 1988). As we will explore, the discourse under consideration carries a particularly perilous weight as it legitimizes foreign military interventions, often bearing catastrophic and enduring ramifications for the intervened country. These repercussions include institutional destabilization, human and material losses, mass migration extending the cost of intervention to neighboring regions, environmental degradation, and the infliction of physical and psychological traumas (Kisangani and Pickering, 2017).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that a discourse need not necessarily culminate in immediate policy action. It can endorse what we term as "dormant policies", those legitimized and available, yet unused. Interestingly, these dormant policies can potentially fortify the discourse, lending it

greater legitimacy and potency by bolstering the discourse's capacity to confine the scope of discussion. Discourses, indeed, serve to 'order and define' the social world (Crewe and Axelby, p.13). Consequently, unchallenged or hegemonic discourses wield immense power, embodying normalizing 'claims to truth' (Ibid, p.12).

These claims to truth exert substantial influence because they dominate the narratives, restricting the emergence of counter-discourses, thereby consolidating themselves as the sole modes of thought that rationalize specific courses of action. Discourse analysis endeavors to unveil the 'political basis of these claims' (Ibid, p.12). It seeks to discern the creation of narratives and the interests they cater to. Through the analysis of discourses, we strive to fathom the channels and mechanisms of power perpetuation.

2. The role of discursively created identities

Comprehending the discursively constructed identities within the foreign policy discourse – that is, the discourse engendered by a nation's foreign policy and the rationale behind it – is integral, as it implies a deep ontological linkage between policy and identity (Hansen, p.19). Foreign policy, by its very definition, necessitates a distinction between a minimum of two identities: a national Self that establishes its foreign policy in interaction with a foreign Other. As Cathy Elliott elucidates, 'identity is only conceivable as a function of difference' (p.ix). In other words, identity is conceived as a collection of negations: an individual is identified as British because they are not French, American, Pakistani, and so forth.

But what does it mean for a British person not to be French? It implies possessing a set of characteristics that the French do not possess and that the British do. Defining our identity necessitates a delineation of what

others are and what they are not, unlike us. Consequently, the way the other and the self are constructed or portrayed puts them in a specific relationship with each other. Within the realm of international relations, this discursive creation of the Other carries implications for the nature of the relationship between the Self and the Other that both influence and are influenced by their interactions – that is, their foreign policy – (Hansen, p.1). As such, identities and the process of othering – the distinction between a self and an Other – are central to the legitimization of power dynamics. If France is constructed as heroic, paternalistic, liberator, it becomes legitimate for France to intervene in a country where a barbaric evil terrorizes a local population awaiting a savior.

Power dynamics can be defined as the asymmetric capacity to exercise power – in its various forms: soft (i.e., cultural) or hard (i.e., military) – between the Self and the Other. They order the world in a particular way. For example, while privileged teenagers from the Global North are encouraged to 'make a difference' in the lives of the 'less fortunate' people (Vrasti, 2013, p.29), people 'from the Global South — typically poor, and often desperate — [...] come to the Global North 'searching for work and a better life.' (Porter and Russell, 2018). Another crucial aspect of identities is their capacity to conceal sub-level identities, excluding them from consideration. Elliott reveals how the gendered discourse of civilized and uncivilized identities leads to the legitimization and replication of conventional gender dynamics (pp.68-69).

In this paper, the paper will therefore strive to elucidate the identities created by the discourse and their spatial, temporal, and ethical interrelationships. Hansen elucidates how identities are constructed through a dual process of 'linking and differentiation' (Ibid, Ch. 2-3). This paper have previously elaborated on how

identities are constructed in relation to each other (differentiation). Yet identities are also constructed as sets of differential signs (linking). For instance, she explains how the identities of the Balkans and Europe are created as opposing sets of signs: if the Balkan identity is constructed as violent, irrational, and underdeveloped, the European identity is constructed as controlled, rational, and developed (pp.37-38). In this paper, the paper will therefore attempt to clarify the 'articulation of identity within a web of signs' (Ibid, p.39). To put it simply, it will analyze how the Self and the Others are discursively constructed by interpreting the sets of signs that position identities in relation to each other.

3. Focusing on the language held in the Official Foreign Policy discourse

This research examination will primarily concentrate on the deployment of language as it facilitates the apprehension of terms and ideas constituting identities within the discourse. It should be acknowledged, however, that spatial, temporal, and ethical othering are often implicit (Ibid, pp.41-42). Consequently, the civilized Self may not be directly labelled as such, but instead alluded to as Guardians of an ideal, which by implication excludes a nation like Iraq that remains treated as potentially hostile.

This post-structuralist methodology is driven by the recognition that language not only transmits ideas and signs, but can also be rapidly reutilized and repurposed due to its extensive application (Berlow and Gourley, 2013). If a term is employed to delineate a concept, it can be encountered in books, in newspapers, in political rhetoric, on news broadcasts, etc. For this analysis, this paper have elected to focus on the official foreign policy discourse of France. The primary objective is to discern whether the French Self is constant across different governing political parties. The secondary reason is more pragmatic. A state's government possesses authority over

policymaking, including foreign policy, but also bears responsibilities. Hence, the justification of foreign policy by the state's official representation is particularly valuable for articulating the relationship between discourse and prescribed policies.

While the official discourse will serve as my central focus of analysis, Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality posits that 'texts are situated within a broader web of writing' (Hansen, p.50). This research intends to expand the scope of intertextuality and demonstrate how the discourse situates itself within a context of cultural representations and non-verbal communication that augment the ethical construction of the French Self. Additionally, this paper will invoke two major policy debate constituents – media and political opposition – to evaluate whether the discourse is hegemonic within France (Ibid, Ch. 4).

4. Analysing the discourse in two official statements with different policy prescriptions

The primary materials selected for my analysis are Dominique de Villepin's speech at the UN Security Council in 2003 and François Hollande's address to the Congress of the French Parliament in the aftermath of the Paris attacks in 2015. The selection of these speeches is informed by the authoritative capacity they possess in the realm of foreign policy, having been delivered by a Minister of Foreign Affairs and a President, respectively (Ibid, p.76). Additionally, they were delivered at critical junctures - in the buildup to the Iraq War and subsequent to terrorist attacks - which commanded both national and international attention (Ibid), offering lucid articulation of identities and policies. Given their temporal distance and divergent policy articulations, they present a valuable opportunity to investigate the question: how does the refusal of violence in 2003 enhance the legitimacy of affirming violence in 2015?

In order to identify potential opposition to this discourse, this paper examined reactions within the French parliament, particularly the Questions to the Government session following U.S. President Bush's declaration of war on Iraq (Bush, 2003) on March 18, 2003, as well as the parliamentary responses during the 2015 Congress of the French Parliament. Moreover, this paper scrutinized online articles published by three French daily newspapers - Le Figaro, Le Monde, and Libération - within a week following the 2015 address. These news media were chosen on the basis of their political alignment (right-wing, centrist, and left-wing respectively), which provides a comprehensive overview of the French political spectrum (The Connexion, 2008), as well as their extensive readerships (Ibid). The potent persuasive power wielded by news media (Ladd and Lenz, 2009) signifies that their failure to contest a discourse allows its hegemony to prevail.

In the subsequent section, I will analyze the identities articulated in these speeches, revealing how France, despite declining participation in a war against terrorism in Iraq, has maintained the discursive conditions enabling it to combat undemocratic elements abroad. This paper proposes that this refusal, rather than functioning as a counter-discourse, ethically distances France from civilized Others and reinforces the legitimacy of its foreign military interventions. This legitimacy is further fortified by the discursive creation of a unified France.

III. Ethical distancing from the civilized and sustained othering of the uncivilized

1. *The Clash of the Civilized against the Uncivilized*

a. The enduring civilization against the temporary barbaric threats

Both speeches employ the 'articulation of danger' in identity construction (Campbell, p.353), echoing the narrative described by Elliott of British Democracy as the outcome of a lengthy historical process of resistance and triumph over threats. France employs the conventional democratic discourse of civilization versus barbarism. The civilized Self is temporally constructed as a resilient entity persistently victorious over the sporadic barbaric Other. Past and present threats to France are intrinsic to its identity formation. De Villepin's speech invokes past threats such as 'terrorism' and 'war, occupation, and barbarity', asserting that they failed to undermine the 'old country's' full mobilization and its ability to 'stand upright in the face of History'. Similarly, Hollande's rhetoric constructs the present 'barbarians' who wish to 'disfigure' France as destined to fail in their attempt to 'destroy the French soul'. Notably, the continuous external threat is a foundational element in the French identity narrative: the national anthem, 'La Marseillaise', is a vivid illustration of 'ferocious soldiers' intent on attacking France's sons and wives, and the blood of these intruders envisioned as fertilizing France's fields (de Lisle, 1792). Consequently, France's identity, as delineated in its historical narrative, is constructed not merely in the face of threats but in their defeat.

De Villepin also attributes a sacred character to the United Nations, envisioning it as a temple where 'we are guardians of an ideal, the guardians of a conscience'. One striking aspect of this assertion is the implicit exclusion of Iraq from these guardianship roles, given the imperative for it to be disarmed, while France – and other permanent members of the Security Council – reserves the option to use force. Hence, while an ideal is to be safeguarded, signifying endurance over

time, Iraq is placed in a position of constant striving for 'progress'. Notably, this progress is portrayed as the consequence of pressure exerted by the civilized Self on Baghdad. The methods employed to contain threats may diverge from the United Kingdom's democracy promotion, yet the goal remains analogous: 'bringing the places [where the threat lies] up to date' (Elliott, p.2) as a protective measure for the 'ideal' of the civilized.

b. The threat to civilization as Foreign

In both speeches, threats to civilization are framed as external, a rhetorical move integral to the constitution of a Civilized identity that precludes the existence of the Uncivilized within its confines. Echoing Elliot's argument, when former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in response to the 2005 London bombings, declared that although the bomber 'may have been born here, his ideology wasn't' (Blair, 2006), he was reinforcing the notion that democratic identity is embodied in the anti-democratic threat against it. Concurrently, he was establishing discursive boundaries in quotidian practices that assist in distinguishing and affirming what is construed as 'foreign'.

Similarly, President François Hollande's rhetoric employs a discursive rejection of terrorism as foreign, but with arguably more perilous implications as it contributes to the stigmatization of French immigrants. While he acknowledges that 'these were French people who killed other French people on Friday', his immediate policy response is 'the immediate reestablishment of border controls.' Moreover, many of the subsequent policy measures he proposes target dual nationals of France. In essence, he paradoxically depicts terrorism as foreign while racially 'othering' terrorists as French nationals who are not wholly French.

Contrastingly, De Villepin did not explicitly articulate terrorism as a foreign threat, yet he acquiesced to the discursive framework advanced by U.S. Secretary of State Powell just ten days prior. Rather than dismissing the potential links between al-Qaeda and the Baghdad regime, he argued that the 'state of [...] research and intelligence' was insufficient to establish these links, and questioned whether the terrorist threat warranted the use of force. He further posited that terrorism thrives on divisions – 'between societies, cultures, and people' – and that intervention would not create, but 'exacerbate' these divides. Therefore, while De Villepin's policy prescription does not yet advocate for foreign intervention, he does not entirely dismantle the notion of terrorism as foreign, since foreign policy – via inspections – remains the suggested approach to combat the threat to civilization. Intriguingly, even as the United Nations stands as a forum for debates concerning the Security Council's endorsement of the war, De Villepin asserts that the 'United Nations, whatever happens, will still tomorrow be at the center of the peace to be built.' This spatial demarcation between danger and peace hints at the Janus-faced nature of the peaceful Civilized Self.

c. The ethical superiority of the civilised

Until this point, this paper have depicted the international community as the unified Civilised Self engaging in combat against barbarism within the discourse. Unity is a precondition for civilisation and legitimacy in this narrative. Indeed, civilisation lays down the standard: the barbarians must be contained or eliminated, and the savages need to be modernised. However, if civilisation implies a normative claim to a standard, it cannot establish more than one standard; it cannot be fractured. This 'unity of the international community' (De Villepin) underpins its legitimacy, as De

Villepin cautions, 'Premature military intervention will bring this unity into question, and that would remove its legitimacy'. Given these circumstances, the construction of the Civilised Self as unified is crucial. But can the international community be genuinely considered unified? And does the Civilised Self encompass the entire international community? The discourse posits them as such, yet it also stipulates conditions for inclusion within the civilised self - countries must accept the standard set by France or concede to its dominance. As delineated above, a significant contradiction arises within the French discourse between the portrayal of the international community as unified, acting in concert, and the actual foreign policy actions.

While crafting the international community as unified, the discourse draws a distinct line between the international community and countries like Iraq and Syria. The inhabitants of these regions are not active participants in the collective effort against terrorism. And the local authorities are clearly ethically othered. Moreover, the assertion that combating terrorism must be a 'shared priority' (De Villepin) and 'concerns the whole international community' (Hollande) helps to discursively foster a shared responsibility and concern among the international community. Terrorism, as a crime, can be considered a legitimate enemy of every nation. But the discourses explicitly associate terrorism with Islamic terrorism (citing al Qaeda and Daesh). In doing so, the French official foreign policy discourse universalises a specific form of terrorism as the world's concern. Thus, it generalises the same threat to construct a unified Self. Recognising a threat to France and other liberal democracies becomes a standard of civilisation. All non-democracies here need not be 'ontologically threatening' (Hobson, p.93). In the battle against the barbarian

threat to civilisation, they can either align with civilisation or 'cooperate' as 'demanded' (De Villepin).

However, the French Foreign Policy discourse does more than merely discursively construct the civilised as unified; it posits the civilised as unified under - or behind - France. Indeed, throughout both speeches, despite the unity's construction, France is portrayed as ethically and temporally distinct from other countries, including liberal democracies. De Villepin's speech, in response to the United States' State Secretary, places France at an ethical and temporal remove from the United States: the civilised self is assigned several values within the speech, yet France can still differentiate itself as an 'old country that [...] has always stood upright in the face of history before mankind' and that has 'values' worth remaining 'faithful to'. France's unique ethical status is also highlighted with regard to its choice of Foreign Policy: in contrast to the United States, France expresses concerns about the populations' safety. When De Villepin states 'we collectively expressed our agreement with the [...] approach proposed by France', he situates France at the heart of civilised unity. To clarify, in 2003, France was not defending unity, but rather defending the unity constructed around itself. This paper argues that by refusing to participate in an intervention that 'would have incalculable consequences for men, the region, and international stability' (De Villepin), France discursively fortified its ethical exceptionalism, which positions the country at the pinnacle of the civilised self.

This French exceptionalism and the relationship between the identities of France and the civilised others are significantly present in Hollande's speech. Indeed, while the terrorist threat is a global concern, it is the French 'we' that is 'fighting terrorism wherever the survival of the state

is under threat', 'seeking a political solution in Syria' and that 'will eradicate terrorism'. The French 'we' is once again constructed as the most civilised self. France transforms into a 'beacon for humankind', 'the birthplace of human rights', and the fight against terrorism becomes a defining aspect of this identity as a civilisational standard: 'We will eradicate terrorism so that France can continue to lead the way'. Hollande also establishes the discursive conditions for the international community's unity to be built around the French Self, stating that 'France has called for this unity, which is so necessary in order to act'.

d. Unified civilized self and divided uncivilized

In both speeches, the identity of the Uncivilised is further subdivided, yielding not only the two typically constructed identities of Savage and Barbarian but also a third category, the Undemocratic Leaders. First, the populations - or Savages - who are either to be spared harm (as per De Villepin) or to be rescued (as per Hollande) by the Civilised Self. These individuals, stripped of value within the discourse, are presented as the current victims. Their regions are portrayed as 'harshly affected' (De Villepin), or they themselves are depicted as victims of 'massacres, kidnappings, rapes, and murders' (Hollande).

Second, the terrorists - or Barbarians - who must be 'mercilessly' combated (De Villepin) or eradicated (Hollande) by the Civilised Self. Third, the Undemocratic Leaders who are ethically distanced from the Civilised Self in both speeches. De Villepin asserts that 'Not one of us [members of the Security Council] feels the least indulgence towards Saddam Hussein', while Hollande pronounces that Bashar al-Assad cannot be part of the 'solution' for Syria. However, these leaders are not slated for destruction by the Civilised Self;

instead, they are tasked with containing the terrorist threat on behalf of the Civilised Self.

In stark contrast, the Civilised Self is presented as intrinsically unified. Indeed, in both speeches, the fight against terrorism is a responsibility shouldered by the 'whole international community' (Hollande), whose 'unity' is touted as an essential condition of its authority (De Villepin). This unified character of the Civilised is logically derived from its very nature, as there can only exist a single standard for civilisation.

Consequently, the identities discursively crafted within the French Official Foreign Policy statements align with those pervasive in the hegemonic democratic discourse. The Civilised is portrayed as enduring, responsible at both a national and global level, advanced, unified, and committed to combating external threats. Meanwhile, the Uncivilised is depicted as divided, locally responsible at most, transient or retrograde, with the threat to civilisation situated within its discursive boundaries (refer to Figure 1). What's more, the identities expressed in the official French foreign policy discourse in 2003 and 2015 remain consistent. Hence, the question arises: what precipitated the change in prescribed policy?

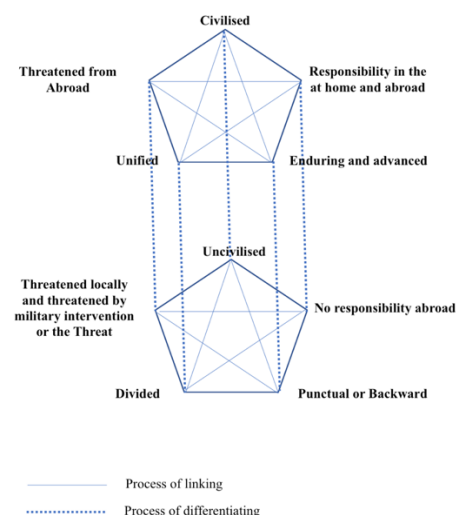


Figure 1. Linking and Differentiation of 'Civilized' and 'Uncivilized'

2. The power of saying 'no' within the civilised self

a. The French Discursive exceptionalism

'France has always been a beacon for humankind' (Hollande)

'And yet France has always stood upright in the face of history before mankind' (DDV).

Up until this point, this paper have been conceptualising the international community within this discourse as a unified, Civilised Self actively engaged in countering the forces of barbarism. Within the context of this discourse, unity is a condition sine qua non for the concepts of civilisation and legitimacy. Civilisation, by its very nature, sets the benchmark: barbarians must be suppressed or eradicated, and savages need to be brought into the folds of modernity. Yet, if civilisation serves as a normalising claim to a standard, it inherently cannot posit multiple standards—it cannot be fragmented. This 'unity of the international community', as articulated by De Villepin, is the crucial element that confers upon it legitimacy. De Villepin cautions that 'Premature military intervention will bring this unity into question, and that would remove its legitimacy'. In these specific

circumstances, the imperative for the Civilised Self to be portrayed as unified becomes paramount.

Nonetheless, questions arise— is the international community in its entirety genuinely unified? And does the Civilised Self encapsulate the whole of the international community? Although the discourse strives to construct them as such, it also sets conditions under which a country is to be considered part of the Civilised Self—countries must either acknowledge and adhere to the standard set forth by France or submit to its dominance. As we have previously noted, a significant contradiction arises within the French discourse between the construction of the international community as unified and acting together, and the realities of foreign policy actions.

While the discourse attempts to construct the international community as unified, it creates a stark contrast between this international community and countries such as Iraq and Syria. The populations within these countries are not depicted as active participants in the shared pursuit of counter-terrorism, and the local authorities are distinctly othered on ethical grounds. Furthermore, the claim that the fight against terrorism must be a 'shared priority' (De Villepin) and 'concerns the whole international community' (Hollande) plays a crucial role in the discursive creation of a shared responsibility and concern within the international community. Terrorism, viewed as a crime, can thus be regarded as a legitimate enemy of every nation.

However, the discourses clearly align the concept of terrorism with Islamic terrorism, citing Al Qaeda and Daesh as examples. By this act, the French official foreign policy discourse frames a particular form of terrorism as a global concern, generalising this threat to construct a unified Self. Acknowledging this threat to France and other liberal democracies becomes a

civilisational standard. Within this construct, all non-democracies do not necessarily need to be 'ontologically threatening' (Hobson, p.93). In the struggle against the barbarian menace to civilisation, they have the option to either align themselves with civilisation or 'cooperate' as 'demanded' (De Villepin).

However, the French Foreign Policy discourse doesn't merely discursively construct the Civilised as unified; it formulates the Civilised as unified with—or under the aegis of—France. Despite the emphasis on unity in both speeches, France is presented as ethically and temporally distinct from other countries, including those identified as Civilised liberal democracies. De Villepin's speech, issued as a response to the United States' State Secretary, creates temporal and ethical distance between France and the United States. Even though the Civilised Self is ascribed a host of values in the speech, France distinguishes itself as an 'old country that [...] has always stood upright in the face of history before mankind' and maintains 'values' worth remaining 'faithful to'. France's exceptional ethical status is further underscored when it comes to choosing foreign policy. Unlike the United States, France vocalises concerns about the safety of the populations. By stating 'we collectively expressed our agreement with the [...] approach proposed by France', De Villepin positions France at the heart of the Civilised unity. Evidently, in 2003, France is not merely defending unity, but defending the unity as constructed around itself. I argue that by refusing to participate in an intervention that 'would have incalculable consequences for men, the region, and international stability' (De Villepin), France discursively amplifies its ethical exceptionalism, positioning itself at the pinnacle of the civilised hierarchy.

This interplay between French exceptionalism and the identities of the Civilised Others is further illuminated in

Hollande's discourse. Despite framing the terrorist threat as a concern of universal proportion, it is the French 'we' that is 'combating terrorism wherever the survival of the state is under threat', 'seeking a political solution in Syria', and that pledges to 'eradicate terrorism'. The French 'we' is consistently construed as the apogee of the Civilised Self. France is reimagined as a 'beacon for humankind', 'the birthplace of human rights', and the struggle against terrorism is integrated into this identity as a standard-bearer of civilisation: 'We will eradicate terrorism so that France can continue to illuminate the path'. Hollande furthers this discursive construction of the unity of the international community, centred around the French Self, posing that 'France has beckoned for this unity, which is indubitably crucial for coordinated action'. Thus, this further nuances the complex dynamics at play in the framing and understanding of France's role within the international community.

This French ethical *exceptionalism* is very present in the cultural representation of France. In Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*, it can clearly be seen that the leading 'Liberty' is represented by two symbols of the French Republic: the national flag and Marianne (personification of the French Republic). When Hollande refers to France as a 'beacon for humankind' he also reenacts the link between the *Lumières* and the French identity.

It should be noted however, that the civilized Identity is not constructed in virtue of its differences, but by its acceptance of French standards.

b. Latent policies and unified France

'Given this context, the use of force is not justified at this time' (DDV)

'France is at war' (Hollande)

In the previous discourse analysis, this paper have elucidated that the concept of the Civilised Self operates as a normative benchmark, thereby by discursively constituting itself as the paradigm of the Civilised Self, France appears to occupy 'the high moral ground' (Vulliamy et al., 2003). If France is ascribed a more substantial degree of responsibility towards populations than the other Civilised Selves, it becomes nearly insurmountable to dispute the presupposition that France's use of force abroad aligns with its morally superior status. This status is unique as France is leading the way (as per Hollande's discourse) and is therefore temporally constructed as more advanced than any other Self.

By reinforcing its identity as a civilisational exception in 2003, France created conditions wherein the legitimacy of its foreign military interventions becomes practically unimpeachable. Expressing a 'no' while perpetuating the Civilised democratic discourse, France effectively conferred upon itself the legitimacy to execute dormant foreign policies. De Villepin's speech in 2003 does not categorically exclude war; instead, it situates it within a reachable domain for France as a dormant (or latent) policy. That is, a policy that has already been legitimised and is readily available for use. I argue that this legitimacy is amplified by the decision to withhold its deployment. Consequently, the 'no' from 2003 discursively facilitated the 'yes' from 2015 by accentuating the ethical superiority of France.

Given that the Civilised Self has been discursively constructed as necessarily unified, France's discursive unity is palpable in both speeches. In De Villepin's speech, the French identity is portrayed as undivided. He primarily employs 'we' and 'France' as subjects when referring to the French identity. Hollande's speech also articulates and exhibits 'national unity' in

the face of terrorism. The executive and legislative powers convene in a Congress. They sing the national anthem together prior to the presidential address, which is a display of national unity and commitment. In a civilisational proclamation of assimilation, Hollande elucidates that France is 'attached [...] to raising France's profile around the world. We will eradicate terrorism so that [...] the mixing of cultures can continue and so that human civilization is enriched.' This construction serves to reiterate the image of France as a beacon of civilization, enriched by its diversity, and steadfast in its commitment to the fight against terrorism.

c. Is France really unified?

The official narrative has been deftly crafted to portray France as an indissoluble entity, but the question of hegemony arises - How pervasive and dominant is the official French Foreign Policy discourse within France? An examination of both the 2003 and 2015 contexts reveals a largely supportive political opposition towards the French stance.

In 2003, during the governance of the right-wing, the French Members of Parliament (MPs) from the opposition endorsed the French position, even adding to the discourse by underlining the French unity and their unique global status as 'listened to in the world' (Assemblée Nationale, 2004). In 2015, unity was symbolised by the unanimous decision of every political party to suspend electoral campaigns, as well as by the collective response during the Congress where every MP participated in the singing of the Marseillaise (Assemblée Nationale, 2015).

It should be noted, however, that some MPs – particularly from the right wing – expressed regrets that some policies were not implemented prior to the attacks or that France is not deploying more troops to

Syria. Despite these regrets, no criticism was directed towards the discourse or the legitimacy of the military intervention. The attacks against 'civilisation' were often repudiated as 'barbaric' (Ibid).

In the digital media sphere, most articles echoed the official discourse, with limited criticism directed towards it. A few articles, which ostensibly seemed to critique the discourse, were found to be inadvertently perpetuating it. For instance, an article discussed the discontent of Belgian people regarding the attribution of blame to Belgium in the attacks, but rather than criticising France's depiction of terrorism as a foreign problem, the article merely expressed their displeasure at being referred to as 'Belgikistan' (Quatremer, 2015). Consequently, the overarching dominance of the official foreign policy discourse in France is evident.

Thus, it can be inferred from the aforementioned analysis that the official foreign policy discourse of France, predicated on its portrayal as a unified, civilised entity, occupies a largely hegemonic position within the national discourse landscape, underscored by its unchallenged acceptance by the political opposition and digital media.

d. The danger of the moral high ground

The French Foreign Policy Discourse exhibits noteworthy perils, warranting closer examination from an academic standpoint. Firstly, it engenders a colonial dynamic reminiscent of tutelage, wherein the French assume a paternalistic role over the "uncivilized" entities, refraining from direct aggression as long as the latter maintain a semblance of barbaric threat (White, p.410). It is worth noting that DDV's speech explicitly underscores the imperative for Iraq to demonstrate

continuous progress as a deterrent against the use of force. Secondly, France, by portraying itself as a valiant guardian of populations, effectively legitimizes its own employment of military force in foreign territories. Thirdly, the discourse of civilization, perpetuated by the 2003 speech, fails to genuinely denounce warfare and foreign interventions. Instead, it contributes to the maintenance of France's ethical exceptionalism, enabling the nation to shape the historical narrative and preserve its image as a civilized entity rather than a barbarous invader of foreign lands. Moreover, the French identity hinges upon unity, yet if France aspires to enhance its global reputation by championing cultural amalgamation, it wields discursive authority to embark on a civilizing mission, coercing other cultural entities to either assimilate or face eradication. Lastly, France's tendency to reject danger as an external threat and its pursuit of unity risk stigmatizing French immigrants.

Conclusion

In 2003, France does not condemn the use of force. Instead, by refusing to use violence *at the time*, France creates and legitimise future military interventions as latent policies. Doing so, it discursively ethically distances itself from the usual Civilised Self in the democratic discourse. Along with the discursive creation of itself and the civilised international community as Unified, France creates a world where the other countries, in order to be civilised, are to follow its lead. This paper is not saying that France is evil and seek to destroy the word. But by discursively strengthening its position as the most civilised country it allows itself to promote its unified identity which perpetuate a logic of *Others* who are to be assimilated or destroyed.

APPENDIX :

News Media:	Date :	Title :	Link :
Le Monde	16/11/2015	Etat d'urgence et article 16 : pourquoi Hollande veut-il réviser la Constitution ?	https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/11/16/etat-d-urgence-et-article-16-pourquoi-hollande-veut-il-reviser-la-constitution_4811353_4355770.html
Le Monde	16/11/2015	Hollande maintient sa position : « La France est en guerre »	https://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/video/2015/11/16/hollande-maintient-sa-position-la-france-est-en-guerre_4811152_4809495.html
Le Monde	16/11/2015	Politique migratoire : François Hollande garde le cap	https://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/article/2015/11/16/politique-migratoire-le-chef-de-l-etat-garde-le-cap_4811347_4809495.html
Le Monde	16/11/2015	La France peut-elle contraindre les pays européens à	https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/11/16/francois-hollande-peut-il-contraindre-les-autres-pays-europeens-a-porter-assistance-a-la-france_4811308_4355770.html

		lui porter assistance ?	
Le Monde	17/11/2015	Depuis 2012, les effectifs des forces de l'ordre ont diminué	https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/11/17/depuis-2012-les-effectifs-des-forces-de-l-ordre-ont-diminue_4811823_3224.html
Le Monde	17/11/2015	Après les attentats, les similitudes entre les discours de Hollande et de Bush en 2001	https://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/article/2015/11/17/bush-en-2001-hollande-en-2015-les-discours-de-deux-presidents-face-aux-attentats_4812188_4809495.html
Le Monde	18/11/2015	Policiers municipaux armés : Hollande recycle une mesure de l'après-Charlie	https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2015/11/19/policiers-municipaux-armes-hollande-recycle-une-mesure-de-l-apres-charlie_4813539_4355770.html
Le Figaro	16/11/2015	Standing-ovation et Marseillaise au Congrès après le discours de Hollande	http://video.lefigaro.fr/figaro/video/standing-ovation-et-marseillaise-au-congres-apres-le-discours-de-hollande/4615900148001/
Le Figaro	16/11/2015	«François Hollande veut rendre constitutionnel l'état d'urgence»	https://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2015/11/16/01002-20151116ARTFIG00392-francois-hollande-veut-rendre-constitutionnel-l-etat-d-urgence.php
Le Figaro	16/11/2015	Ce que contient le «pacte de sécurité» présenté par Hollande devant le Congrès	https://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/2015/11/16/25001-20151116ARTFIG00256-ce-que-contient-le-pacte-de-securite-presente-par-hollande-devant-le-congres.php
Le Figaro	16/11/2015	Attentats : l'évolution annoncée de la légitime défense	https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2015/11/16/01016-20151116ARTFIG00327-attentats-l-evolution-annoncee-de-la-legitime-defense-salucee-par-les-policiers.php

		saluée par les policiers	
Le Figaro	16/11/2015	EN DIRECT - La France bombarde de nouveau Daech en Syrie dans la nuit	https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualites/2015/11/16/01001-20151116LIVWWW00011-traque-attentats-de-paris-bataclan.php
Le Figaro	17/11/2015	«Les frappes en Syrie ont plus l'air d'une vengeance que d'un objectif de guerre»	https://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/monde/2015/11/17/31002-20151117ARTFIG00194-les-frappes-en-syrie-ont-plus-l-air-d-une-vengeance-que-d-un-objectif-de-guerre.php
Le Figaro	17/11/2015	La Garde nationale en cinq questions	https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2015/11/17/01016-20151117ARTFIG00166-la-garde-nationale-en-cinq-questions.php
Le Figaro	19/11/2015	Attentats: le «J'accuse Hollande» de Michel Houellebecq	https://www.lefigaro.fr/livres/2015/11/19/03005-20151119ARTFIG00124-attentats-le-j-accuse-hollande-de-michel-houellebecq.php
Le Figaro	23/11/2015	Le porte-avions français Charles de Gaulle est entré en action en Syrie et en Irak	https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2015/11/23/01003-20151123ARTFIG00157-le-porte-avions-francais-charles-de-gaulle-est-entre-en-action-en-syrie-et-en-irak.php
Libération	16/11/2015	Comment Hollande a préparé son discours du Congrès	https://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/11/16/comment-hollande-a-prepare-son-discours-du-congres_1413822
Libération	16/11/2015	François Hollande annonce une révision de la Constitution	https://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/11/16/francois-hollande-annonce-une-revision-de-la-constitution_1413859
Libération	17/11/2015	«Etat de crise» : une révision improvisée	https://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/11/17/etat-de-crise-une-revision-improvisee_1414213

Libération	18/11/2015	Au Congrès des maires, «une magnifique unité»	https://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/11/18/hollande-fete-par-les-maires_1414424
Libération	18/11/2015	La lettre d'Eric Cantona après les attentats... est en fait celle d'Eric Montana	https://www.liberation.fr/desintox/2015/11/18/la-lettre-d-eric-cantona-apres-les-attentats-est-en-fait-celle-d-eric-montana_1414305
Libération	19/11/2015	Latifa Ibn Ziaten : «Pour que les enfants d'origine maghrébine aiment la France, il faut la mixité»	https://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/11/19/latifa-ibn-ziaten-pour-que-les-enfants-d-origine-maghrebine-aiment-la-france-il-faut-la-diversite-il_1414716
Libération	20/11/2015	Terrorisme:le «belgium bashing» agace Bruxelles	http://bruxelles.blogs.liberation.fr/2015/11/20/terrorisme-belgium-bashing-agace-bruxelles/

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