Pirates, Slavers, Brigands, and Gangs: the French terminology of anticolonial rebellion (1880-1922)

Abstract

During the most rapid period of French colonial expansion (roughly 1880-1914) the French faced regular, often violent, resistance to the expansion of their imperial dominion over people in Africa and Southeast Asia. This article examines the changing terminology that French soldiers, officers and administrators used to describe the anticolonial movements they were called upon to suppress during the course of French conquest and 'pacification' operations. This terminology is gleaned both from archival sources, as well as from the so-called 'grey literature' of books, letters and pamphlets published by members of the French military, which do not exist in traditional libraries and holdings like the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Taken as a whole this analysis grants us insight into how the French thought about themselves, their anticolonial opponents, how these conceptions changed over time, and how these conceptions translated into action and methodology.

After missionaries, soldiers were often the first Frenchmen to enter the African and Southeast

Asian interior. These soldiers (men and officers) at the forefront of French colonial conquest

left behind extensive source material, which gives us a unique perspective into both the

actions and mind-set of French colonisers in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They not only

wrote official reports[1], they maintained correspondence with their relatives and friends[2],

developed stories[3], propaganda texts[4], and sometimes published novels based on their

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[1] For example Lieutenant-Colonel Archinard (1891), *Rapport officiel sur la campagne de 1890-1891* (Paris: Dentu) & Commandant Le Prince (1893), *Étude militaire sur le Tonkin* (Paris: Baudouin)

[2] For example, Orsat, Félix (1893) Au Soudan (1890-1891), souvenirs d'un tirailleur sénégalais d'après sa correspondance intime (Paris: Picard) & Le Commandant Lamy d'après sa correspondance et ses souvenirs de campagne (1858-1900) (Paris: Hachette, 1903). See also, D'Andurain , Julie (2015) « La correspondance privée des coloniaux » in Bérenger, Agnès et Dard, Olivier (eds., 2015), Gouverner par les lettres, de l'Antiquité à l'époque contemporaine, Metz, Centre de recherche Universitaire Lorrain d'Histoire, pp. 95-113.

[3] For example: Lahille, Abel (1910) Mes Impressions sur l'Afrique occidentale française. (Étude documentaire au pays du tam-tam), (Paris: A. Picard)

[4] De Lanessan, Jean (1896) L'Expansion coloniale de la France : étude économique, politique et géographique sur les établissements français d'outre-mer (Paris: Alcan)

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experience[5]. On occasion they acted as journalists, often with support from the directors,

publicists, and politicians of the *parti colonial* in Paris: those military and government men

who advocated for a vast French overseas empire.[6] Taken in its broadest sense, the literature

produced during the most intensive period of colonial conquest (1880-1914) forms today a

considerable mass of documents. In the form of primary sources, secondary sources or 'grey

literature'[7] we can think of these sources as together constituting a 'colonial military

literature'.[8] This literature is a valuable and under-utilised resource in determining how the

French understood the socio-political and military contexts they were operating in. This is

especially true of the changing character of armed conflict between the French and local

populations in Africa and Southeast Asia as initial conquests turned into enduring policing

operations with a wide variety of political, social and military challenges. This article will

examine some of the diverse sources these officers left behind and analyse the evolving

understanding French military personnel had of the anticolonial movements they were called

on to police and supress.

        The military men who undertook the initial conquest and 'pacification' of the French

overseas empire quickly came into contact with resistance, often violent, to the nascent

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[5] For example, Harmant, Jacques (1892) La Vérité sur la retraite de Lang-Son. Mémoires d'un combattant, (Paris: Albert Savine)

[6] D'Andurain, Julie (2017) Colonialisme ou impérialisme ? Le 'parti colonial' en pensée et en action (Paris: Hémisphères éditions/Zellige)

[7] Generally referred to as 'grey literature' these are works beyond the usual circuits of production and distribution and that are not subject to legal deposit (theses, dissertations, reports, etc.). They are not referenced in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Some of these monographs are maintained by the French Africa Committee and a number of others are military books kept by the French military.

[8] Dodille, Norbert (2011)*, Introduction aux discours coloniaux* (Paris: PUPS). For a polemic approach of the concept of colonial literature, see Krapor, Vladimir '*Provocation Versus Performativity: Lauching* la littérature coloniale française *in 1909*', *Modern & Contemporary France*, February 2015, vol. 23, Issue 1, p. 47-64.

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control they had established. When writing about resistance these men generally did not refer to rebels as the 'social bandit' described by Eric Hobsbawn some 60 years ago.[9] This is not to say that the French did not have a varied and nuanced language to describe the regular uprisings they found themselves facing. Indeed, the French deployed a range of terms to describe anticolonial rebels that belie geography, time period, French perceptions of individual movements, as well as their own self-perception as colonisers. French officers often chose their terminology self-consciously to frame situations to their superiors in the colonial capitals like Dakar and Hanoi, or indeed in Paris, in such a way as to either bolster or shield the reputation of the officer in question. Language could either inflate or downplay the actual importance of a given movement in order to prod higher authorities to respond, or at least in the worst case to deflect their own possible responsibility for things getting out of hand. The internal and external political context in which French officers wrote about anticolonial rebellion was paramount.

The French military in this period expressed the idea of 'rebellion' in many different ways, varying in both time and space. French military personnel saw their opponents not quite as 'the enemy' (in the strict military sense), not always as a bandit, rarely as a legitimate soldier, and at least in this period, not yet as a nationalist. In Southeast Asia French officers tended to refer to rebels as 'pirates', reflecting the actual existence of powerful pirate and bandit groups in the region in the 1800s.[10] In African colonial literature there was initially no

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[9] Hobsbawn, Eric (1959) *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press)
[10] For more on 'pirates', the Black Flags and on French activity in Southeast Asia see Finch, Michael P. M. (2013), *A Progressive Occupation? The Gallieni-Lyautey Method and Colonial Pacification in Tonkin and Madagascar, 1885-1900* (Oxford : Oxford University Press)

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talk of 'piracy', but instead of 'bandits'[11], 'slave-chiefs' or *'mahdistes'*.[12] Similar

terminology, arising out of similar political and military pressures, was also prevalent in

British India, among other European overseas colonies.[13] Over time, however, in part

because of the proliferation of anticolonial rebellions and also due to the transference of

colonial officers between different theatres of operation, the terminology surrounding

anticolonial rebellions began to unify. This unification of terminology, to some extent

representative of a unification of French, and wider European, concepts of imperialism and

anticolonialism, underscores a growing awareness of the widespread opposition to

colonization, and the nascent emergence of nationalism in parts of Africa and Asia which has

roots in the struggle against European imperialism. For the French, how they wrote and

talked about rebellion was a critical part of the fight against anticolonialism. They actively

sought to improve their ability to fight against anticolonial, and later nationalist, movements

both in military terms, but also through their speech.

What is a rebel?

In the nineteenth century, the French use of the word 'rebel' designated something of an

instigator; one who must be compelled to obedience. By definition, the rebel is one who

challenges a ruling power. If political opposition exists within a legal framework, the case

becomes one of 'disobedience'. If an individual resists political authority, does not obey, and

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[11] De Vilers, Charles Le Myre d, « L'Expédition du Tonkin : La Passé, le Présent, l'Avenir », La Nouvelle revue, November-December 1884, p. 700-728; « Nous nous proposions seulement de châtier les bandits connus sous le nom de Pavillons Noirs, et nous avons été assez imprudents pour faire la guerre à l'Annam puis à la Chine »
[12] Vasco, Gabriel, « Le Madhisme au Soudan », Revue française de l'étranger et des colonies et Exploration, Gazette géographique, Avril 1896, t. XXI, n°208,p. 231-237 , and more generally Pascha, Rudolph Slatin (1896) Feuer und Schwert im Sudan (1879-1895) (Leipzig: Brockhaus)
[13] Burton, Major Reginald, *'Partisans or Bandits'*, *Royal United Services Institute Journal*, July-September 1897, XVII, issue 128, p. 291-292.

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violates socio-cultural rules or traditions, they became a 'dissident', and so forth. Such

naming conventions can take many forms, and should be instantly recognizable as part of the

basic political framework between the 'rebel' and the 'establishment'. As Stathis Kalyvas put

it in his 2006 book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*: 'incumbents…label their opponents

"bad guys", bandits, criminals, subversives, or terrorists – and describe the war as banditry,

terrorism, delinquent subversion, and other cognate terms'.[14] Kalyvas counts anticolonial

wars as civil wars, and does so for good reason: typically members of the local ethnic

populations do the vast bulk of the fighting and dying, with allegiances very often falling

along pre-colonial lines, or other factors that have little or nothing to do with the presence of

an outside power.[15]

     In the French colonial context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries organised

anticolonial violence could be emblematic of a broader popular resistance that might lead to a

full-blown insurrection, or it may constitute merely the armed resistance of scattered gangs

without any real political objectives beyond survival. The French generally distinguished

between these different types of resistance by referring to them as either 'political' or

'apolitical', albeit often without solid evidence for their classifications.[16] This classification

could be used to make movements seem more or less threatening, as the reporter may desire,

and also had ramifications for what could be done to captured dissidents. There were at times

hotly contested debates over whether actions were 'political' or not in court, and also whether

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[14] Kalyvas, Stathis (2006) *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 17
[15] Ibid., p. 19
[16] Such judgements often relied on the gut feeling of administrators. One example, of many: *Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer* (*ANOM*), Fonds Ministériels, nouveau fonds, carton 28 (dossiers 1-6) *« Extrait du Rapport sur la situation politique de la Cochinchine pendant le 2ème trimestre 1915 »*

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or not Metropolitan law applied to colonial subjects.[17]

The prevailing terminology for referring to 'rebels' or 'rebellion' often related to historical or geographic markers that make the varied regions under French influence different from each other. In Asia French terminology was influenced by the British definitions given to the gunmen of India and Burma, the *dacoit*[18]; *dacoïtisme* having prospered amid weak Brahman institutions. [19] In Annam bandits spread through the support of mandarins hostile to France, many of them supported discretely by China, in a perennial anarchic system which the French chose to call piracy.[20] Of these the Black Flags are undoubtedly the most well-known, although transnational connections between China and Southeast Asia were a common concern throughout the French imperial period (the revolution of Sun Yat-Sen, for example, and other disturbances in China often had significant implications for life in northern Indochina).[21]

Interestingly, the term 'pirate' was not only used by Europeans in Southeast Asia. It was also used by some Vietnamese leaders who refused to accept the French occupation, as evidenced by the papers of Ngé-Dinh, an Annamite chieftain in the region of Than-Hoa and

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[17] ANOM; FM, nf 28 (1-6); « Rapport sur l'affaire des nommés Nguyen Anh Hu et Consorts, dite affaire de Baria »; 14 Nov 1916

[18] The term *dacoit* (used in English and French) refers to highway bandits in India and elsewhere in Asia from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. They are also called 'drivers', 'thieves', 'robbers' at different times and places. They are characterized essentially by their mobility.
[19] Sahita, Hussain Imddad & alii, 'Dacoity is an Organized Crime: A Case Study of Sindh Province', Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences, December 2009, vol. 29, No. 2, p. 301-312. Cited by Harmand, Jules (1887) L'Indo-Chine française, politique et administration. Conférence faite à l'Association républicaine du centenaire de 1789 (Paris: Pariset)
[20] Le Prince, Étude militaire sur le Tonkin, op.cit.
[21] Goscha, Christopher E., 'Building Force: Asian origins of twentieth-century military science in Vietnam (1905-1954)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Oct., 2003), p. 539

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Nge-An between 1886 and 1887.[22] In his text, he wrote that local people considered the

French to be pirates for the way they had subjugated and exploited Indochina. This language

is repeated by other Vietnamese individuals at different times. The concept of French piracy

played a prominent role in the decrees released by rebels in Thai-Nguyen in 1917, one of the

first uprisings in Indochina to position itself in clearly nationalist terms.[23]

Soon, other words became associated with the 'rebel' and 'pirate'. 'Gang' became

synonymous with irregular forces, sometimes even with local militias. All this reflects the

emergence of an unknown war, irregular warfare, but also of French efforts to control, or at

least influence, the political messaging of internal dissent.[24]

'Enemy' or 'rebel'?

Why did the French not simply refer to rebels as 'the enemy', the way they would have

referred to most military opponents? Largely, this was due to the delicate political

circumstances in which the French armed forces were operating. To label rebel forces as 'the

enemy' implies certain political preconditions, and strongly suggests the legitimacy of their

movement (this is the point Kalyvas made in *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*). From a

purely military perspective, talking about 'the enemy' also suggests, and perhaps opens the

door to more conventional forms of warfare.[25] The term 'enemy' could furthermore be

politically inflexible. This could be a serious hindrance in the fluid strategic environment the

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[22] Dinh, Ngé (1890) Une Année de la guerre en Annam, 1886-87, racontée par un chef de rebelle, publié par la Revue du cercle militaire
[23] ANOM, FM, nf, carton 58, dossier 646; « Annexe No 4 à la lettre No du Gouverneur Général de l'Indochine à Monsieur le Ministre des Colonies ; Le 15 du 7ᵉ mois de la Ière année de DAI-HUNG-DE-QUOC »
[24] MacCaulay, G M., '*Irregular Troops*', *RUSI Journal*, 1862, volume V, Issue 20, pp. 637-643.
[25] Un colon, « L'insurrection de Ky-Dong » , Questions diplomatiques et colonials, 15 février 1898, pp. 240-242

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French found themselves in, in which today's enemies may need to be accommodated with

tomorrow (the granting of a small, semi-independent fiefdom to the bandit king De Tham is a

case in point). Keenly aware of the disadvantages that would come with legitimizing their

opponents, French officers tended to shy away from strictly military language, and instead

adopted more the more vague terminology of policing and security.

During the conquest of the bulk of its colonial empire, the French had no official

declared enemy. They instead faced a complicated, messy situation that included everything

from massacres, and robbery, to simple brigandage and even full-blown insurrection. The

concept of a rebel (pirate, bandit, etc.) was often used as a euphemism for any opponent

operating within a non-state framework. In principle, its vocabulary should be more a matter

of debate on the maintenance of order and security, but in the colonial context, it always

confuses 'war' with 'security' and 'policing'. Indeed, the French, both civilian and military,

often referred to their own military operations as 'police actions' when fighting against

anticolonial forces, rather than 'military operations', a term usually reserved for more remote

geographies, or more extreme levels of opposition (such as in Niger and Chad in the early 20th

century).[26] The conduct of this sort of fighting does not typically fit the traditional

'Clausewitzian' model, but rather took the form of the 'small war'[27], that is to say, the war of

ambush and surprise which began to be codified in the mid-nineteenth century, adding to the

development of an agreed upon language for anticolonial uprisings.[28]

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[26] Jeffries, Charles (1952) *The Colonial Police* (London: Max Parrish)
[27] De Decker, Ch. (1845) De la Petite guerre selon l'esprit de la stratégie moderne (Paris: Corréard) & later,
Callwell, Charles (1896) Small wars : Their Principles and Practice (London: HMSO)
[28] Quinteau, A. (1884) *La Guerre de surprise et d'embuscades* (Paris: Lavauzelle)

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The rebel group, an army?

The transition from simple brigandage to rebellion was often expressed by use of the word '*surpris'* (uprising) by French officers; a word that strongly implied a certain magnitude of opposition. [29] It was a much stronger word than the ubiquitous '*troubles*', which typically included riots, bombings, skirmishes and assassination. The uprising in Than Hoa, in northern Tonkin, in 1886 or the Bambara and Fulani in Segou in 1892 were sufficiently large to outstrip the term '*troubles*' and grow into full-blown 'uprisings' in French parlance. This more serious level of discontent ('uprising') was considered especially dangerous if it was backed by a religious movement, especially one associated with Islam.[30]

French officers soon learned to distinguish between the pirate, the rebel, the band, the 'gang' and full-blown rebellious armies. In general, groups were first identified by their leader (for example, Tu Duc or Vinc-Phuoc, both leaders of the Black-flags, or Doi-Van and De Tham in the Yen-Thé region in Tonkin; Lat-Dior, Behanzin, Samory, and Ahmadou were similarly classified in Africa). The French often knew the rough location of these groups, except in cases where the rebels were mobile or nomadic, but at times knew little more than that. In the absence of clear intelligence, the identification of the leader at times acted as a shortcut to describing not just the socio-political motives of a given anticolonial group, but

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[29] Colonel Viotte, « De la surprise », Revue militaire française, septembre 1922, t. 5, p. 347-366. Delmas, Jean, « La surprise », Direction des études d'histoire, cours supérieur d'histoire, École Supérieur de Guerre, Novembre 1973.

[30] Monteil, Vincent, « Lat Dior, Damel du Kayor, (1842-1886) et l'islamisation des Wolofs », Archives de sociologie des religions, juillet-décembre 1963, 8ᵉ année, n°16, p. 77-104. See also Marty, Paul (1920) Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan (Paris: Leroux). For North Africa, see Burke III, Edmund, 'Pan-Islam and Moroccan resistance to French Colonial Penetration, 1900-12', The Journal of African History, January 1972, vol. 13, Issue 1, p. 97-118.

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also their assumed tactics.[31]

Given this spotty intelligence, estimates on rebel troop numbers could vary wildly. In Asia, the French rarely had good intelligence on the number of Black Flags there were, but nevertheless considered it necessary to mobilize at least 20,000 to 30,000 men against them between 1883-1886.[32] For comparison, the Siamese army was estimated to be only 5,000 men in 1893.[33] In Africa estimates also varied wildly. Officers believed that Ahmadou, 'the Jugurtha of Sudan', was able to muster 10,000 warriors against Archinard in December 1890.[34] While unlikely, such large forces were not unknown to the region. The Abyssinians were able bring 30,000 men against the Italians; the Dahomey army has nearly 22,000 men; the Malagasy maintained a force of 25,000 to 30,000 warriors.[35] Samory force numbers were roughly the same (between 20,000 and 30,000).[36] So these are real armies with regular regimented soldiers, and as such their members were often given specific names: the 'Amazons' of Behanzin in Dahomey[37], the '*talibés*' of Ahmadou, the 'sofas' of Samory.[38] In the absence of more complete intelligence the sheer size of these forces was used to intuit

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[31] Commandant Verraux, « Monographie d'un chef pirate au Tonkin : le De-Tham », *À travers le monde*, 16 et 23 juillet 1898, p. 225-228 et 233-236.

[32] Le Prince, Étude militaire sur le Tonkin, op.cit.

[33] « Nouvelles géographiques et coloniales », Revue française de l'étranger et des colonies et Exploration, Gazette géographique, Juillet, 1893, tome XVIII, n° 169, p. 37-45

[34] Valbert, « Le Sultan Ahmadou et la Campagne du colonel Archinard dans le Soudan français », *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er décembre 1890, tome CII, p. 673-686.

[35] Bayol, Jean (1893) Les Dahoméens au Champ de Mars (Palais des Arts libéraux) : moeurs et coutumes : exposition d'ethnographie coloniale (Paris: Herment)

[36] Legassick, Martin, 'Firearms, Horses and Samorian Army Organisation, 1870-1898', *Journal of African History*, 1966, vol. 7, No. 1, p. 95-115.

[37] Topor, Hélène d'Almeida (1984) *Les Amazones. Une armée de femmes dans l'Afrique précoloniale* (Paris: Rochevigne/ editions de la lanterne magique)

[38] Sow, Alioune 'Biography and Colonial Discourse in 'French West Africa'', *Social Dynamics*. A journal of African studies, 2004, vol. 30, Issue 1, p. 69-93.

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their intentions and preferred modes and methodology.

Rebel groups of this size were immediately considered dangerous by the French. Their size gave them power to persist, even after losing an engagement, to replace losses with new recruits, and to pin down European forces which would otherwise have moved on to other trouble areas.[39] Being pinned down severely slowed the advance of European empires, something that was to be avoided at all costs in the mad dash to carve up Africa in the late 1800s. This being the case, negotiation and co-option remained the easiest way to keep moving forward in all territories, especially in Africa where local leaders - Damel, Brach, Bour, Massa, Almamy, Naba - often had to give their consent before French forces could pass through their domains.[40] This consent often came with a price in kind, or in gold. Once paid, European forces could benefit from the protection of the tribe, the *Anaiah*.[41]

By comparison, in East Africa the Germans typically ensure their safety by producing a letter of recommendation from the Sultan in Istanbul.[42] Such appeals to authority were common practice among Europeans operating in Africa. In the late 1880s Gallieni and Captain Binger helped ensure their security in Sudan by circulating letters written on their behalf by the Toucouleur chief Ahmadou, son of the erstwhile anticolonial leader, El Hadj Omar. [43] This was a bold proposal considering the fact that El Hadj and the Toucouleur had conducted a major war against the French 20 years earlier. This practice of seeking out and disseminating letters from important religious or indigenous authority figures persisted with

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[39] Pietri, Capitaine Camille (1885) *Les Français au Niger : voyages et combats* (Paris: Hachette)
[40] Beucher, Benoît (2017) Manger le pouvoir au Burkina Faso. La noblesse mossi à l'épreuve de l'Histoire (Paris : Karthala)
[41] De Foucauld, Charles (1888) *Reconnaissance du Maroc, 1883-1884* (Paris: Challamel)
[42] "Germany and East Africa", *The Times*, December 1888, 28th, p. 3
[43] Binger, Capitaine Louis-Gustave (1892) Du Niger au golfe de Guinée par le pays de Kong et le Mossi (1887-1889) (Paris: Hachette)

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varying levels of success.[44] It was seen as especially useful in dealing with areas that were on

the extreme fringes of French influence, and which could not be kept pacified through the

installation of sizeable permanent garrisons.

Places and modes of rebel action

Not every jurisdiction was conducive to the development of rebellion. Proximity to French

administrative and military power generally precluded the organisation of large-scale violent

resistance. Uprisings more often began in more remote and rugged regions where groups

could operate with relative impunity. Laurent Henninger has referred to these different

geographies as the 'fluid' and the 'solid'.[45] Lyautey, for example, remarked that 'the pirate is

a plant that grows only in certain lands'.[46] Geography had an impact on how the French

understood, and responded to, anticolonial movements. To an extent, the nature of French

forces themselves also influenced the terminology used. Thus, we find marines more likely to

refer to 'pirates' in the Asian littoral, and 'rebels' being referred to by the army fighting in the

African interior. There were also distinctions made between pacified and war torn territories,

which were usually called 'military territories' and administered directly by the French armed

forces. This division between civilian and militarily governed areas was one determined by

the French, but it was not entirely inconsistent with pre-existing realities. In the Arab world,

for example, especially in Morocco, there was a similar distinction between the *bled es-*

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[44] ANOM 14 MIOM 1084 19G1, bobbin 445; « Situation islamique dans le Haut-Sénégal-Niger »; Afrique Occidentale et Afrique Equatoriale, Affaires musulmanes, Dakar, 7 Mars 1915

[45] Henninger, Laurent, « Espaces fluides et espaces solides : nouvelle réalité stratégique ? », *Revue Défense nationale*, octobre 2012, n°753, p. 5-9.

[46] Lyautey, Hubert (1920) Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar (1894-1899), Tome 1, août 1896 (Paris: Armand Colin); « Le pirate est une plante qui ne pousse que dans certaines terres »

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Maghzen, land under the authority of the Sultan, and the *bled es-siba,* areas of only tenuous

influence and control.[47]

The codification of 'rebel' terminology amongst French officers and administrators

had not only a geographic spread, but also a temporal chronology. It began with the French

codification of 'piracy' in Southeast Asia from 1875-1880, and was soon followed by the

realization that similar patterns of unrest existed in Africa from 1882-1885. Joseph Gallieni

was one of the first to speak of African leaders as rebels to the French authority.[48] This

evolution marked a notable change in how the French saw their actions in Africa and

Southeast Asia. On the one hand the French recognised the rights of existing states (like the

still-young Toucouleur empire) to exercise sovereignty and to sign treaties with other

independent political entities (be they the French, or others). On the other, however, many of

these states were (conveniently) considered decadent by the French, leading them to consider

such territories *res nullius*[49] or 'nobody's property': thus, free territories to occupy. Such a

conception led to French forces almost casually claiming lands and territories, which of

course led promptly to the emergence and maintenance of violent resistance against their

claims of domination.

From the 1880s, the French officers came to understand that they were facing a global

phenomenon. Before trying to craft any sort of broader framework for understanding and

responding to outbursts of anticolonial violence they began by thinking about the specificities

of each theatre, and studying patterns of specific actions. These would then be collated

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[47] Burke III, Edmund (1976) Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco. Precolonial protest and resistance, 1860-1912 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)
[48] Gallieni, Joseph (1885) *Voyage au Soudan français (Haut-Niger et pays de Ségou), 1879-1881*, publication de la mission d'exploration du Haut-Niger (Paris: Hachette)
[49] Salomon, Charles (1889) L'Occupation des territoires sans maîtres (Paris: Girard)

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together, compared and contrasted with the intention of finding more generally applicable

solutions to the problems posed by persistent anticolonial conflicts. A comparison of the

geographical and contextual differences between Southeast Asia and West Africa will help

illustrate this point.

Tonkinese dens

        The fighting in Tonkin took on a character that belied simple classification, and sat

outside the prevailing French discourse surrounding anticolonial rebellion. The first military

texts to discuss and attempt to classify the fighting in Tonkin date back to 1885.[50] The war

circulated around the discovery and destruction of 'rebel dens' (the 'den' of Tong-Hoa Phu

was destroyed in November 1894, and that of Phiama in December 1894 by Théophile

Pennequin, for example).[51] Following the destruction of each 'den' the French erected their

own outpost in the region to assert their control and influence over the area.[52] Many of these

'rebel dens' existed in areas like Yen-Thé, a region made famous by the long rule of De

Tham, the bandit king.

        Yen-Thé had an ideal geography in which to base a rebellious or insurrectional

movement. Upper Tonkin is a mountainous area, filled with dense forest: a difficult 'Swiss

Tonkinese'.[53] The area lent itself to the construction of complex fortifications, which the

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[50] C*** P. A., « La guerre au Tonkin », *Journal des Sciences militaires*, mars 1885, tome 17, p. 420-437.
[51] Munholland, John Kim, '"Collaboration Strategy" and the French Pacification of Tonkin, 1885-1897', *The Historical Journal*, September 1981, vol. 24, No. 3, p. 629-650.
[52] Lieutenant-Colonel Durand, « La vie d'un poste militaire dans la haute région du Tonkin *», Revue des Troupes Coloniales*, 1925 (4 articles).
[53] L. Girod (1899) *Dix Ans de Haut-Tonkin* (Tours : Mame et Fils)

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French could not easily break without massing substantial firepower.[54] Such an

organisational effort generally was sufficient to tip off an impending attack, giving De Tham

and his band of 'pirates' ample time to flee into the densely wooded mountains, or slip over

the border into a neighbouring province. Similar areas, be they jungle, mountain or desert,

existed across the French empire and were generally far beyond the reach of meaningful

European control. Such terrain had a magnetic quality that drew a wide range of dissidents to

it, strengthening existing rebel/outlaw bands.[55] For both French and British colonial officers

these spaces were understood and referred to as the 'hinterland'.[56]

On occasions when the French were able to locate and penetrate a 'rebel den', they

were consistently impressed by the 'pirate' defence systems; their organization was often

markedly better than fortifications built by the French.[57] Dens were generally in the middle of

a dense forest hidden by underbrush with camouflaged firing positions producing overlapping

fields of fire protecting the den's few exits and entrances.[58] Alongside such defences rebels

and outlaws in Southeast Asia made use of an array of field defences which would go on to

develop lasting notoriety during the Vietnam War: 'punji sticks' (shallow excavations

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[54] *ANOM* nf 49, dossier 597, *« Note sur les opérations de police dans la région du Yênthé »*; in this particular example from 1909 the French managed to launch a surprise assault on one of De Tham's 'dens' by relying on friendly Tonkinese volunteers as the bulk of their force. Nevertheless De Tham escaped, albeit wounded, and many of his followers were killed or captured. De Tham would not be caught until 1913 when he was betrayed by one of his pirates after some 20 years of living outside the law in Yen Thé.

[55] ANOM, INDO, nf 49, dossier 597, « Annexe No. 1 : Texte de la proclamation adressée par M. Morel, Résident Supérieur au Tonkin aux populations de la province de Bac-Giang ». The same is true for Saharan oases, and the mountains of the Maghreb. McDougall, James (2017) History of Algeria (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 254 (forthcoming)

[56] Lees, Elliott, "The Doctrine Of 'Hinterland'", The Times, August 1890, 15th ; "The Franco-German Treaty and the "Hinterland" of Cameroons", *The Geographical Journal*, May 1894, vol. 3, issue 5, p. 414-415 ; see also d'Andurain, Julie (2012) *La Capture de Samory (1898). L'achèvement de la conquête de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* **(**Saint-Cloud: Soteca) pp. 115-122.

[57] Mat-Goï (1891) *Le Tonkin actuel, 1887-1890* (Paris: Albert Savine)

[58] *ANOM*, INDO, nf 49, dossier 597, *« Note sur les opérations de police dans la région du Yênthé »*; De Tham's primary base was especially daunting in this regard.

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staggered with a large sharp stake driven deep in every hole), fences and bamboo stakes often

masked their fortified hideouts.

Even if the French could locate and clear out a 'rebel den' that was often not enough.

The 'pirates' often escaped French efforts to capture them and break up their ring. They were

aided in this by the seasonal nature of the struggle, with wet seasons limiting the size and

duration of French operations. Weather often made the remote, mountainous regions

unnavigable for French forces, and even in good weather the French could not always scrape

together the funds necessary to create and sustain a column in the field for long enough to

track down rebel bands.[59] In an attempt to get around these substantial operational difficulties

the French relied heavily on what little intelligence they could gather. When good

intelligence came in it was necessary to act quickly, which spurred the rapid installation of

optical telegraphy in Indochina to facilitate rapid communication from military post to

military post.[60] This gave the French an advantage, but it also meant that the telegraph wires

were an obvious and frequent target for anticolonial rebels.[61]

Over time the French also began to use the language of policing and inherent authority

in Southeast Asia. Regarding one attempt to capture De Tham in 1909 the French resident of

Tonkin released a public decree stating that:

'The French Government has granted Hoàng-hoa-Tham [De Tham] for some years [an offer]

to submit, on the condition that he would in future be an honest man. Since this time this

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[59] Gallieni, Joseph-Simon (1899) *Trois colonnes au Tonkin (1894-1895)* (Paris: Chapelot)
[60] Lieutenant Saillard, « La télégraphie optique. Son rôle au Tonkin, son avenir *», Journal des Sciences militaires*, octobre 1886, tome 32, p. 96-116.
[61] ANOM, ALG, CONST, B3 219; « Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916 »

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pirate chief has constantly failed to keep his word. His concession [De Tham had been granted a small fiefdom by the French in return for keeping his brigandage under control] has become the refuge of poisoners, thieves, assassins and brigands. The Government, of which all the honest population knows its sentiments, tired of the odious conduct of this bandit chief has decided: [in order] to support the working population, and assure them tranquillity, to put an end to the current situation in Yen-Thé and place the region under the common rule…. The Government is firmly resolved to go to the end. All is ready. [The Government] will compensate all those who help it. Deliver up De Tham, who has violated all laws.'[62]

By the early 1900s the French were no longer an invading force in Southeast Asia, or there under thin pretences to help the Nguyen Dynasty's legal government. Instead, they had become the government, and spoke as such; a major marker in French colonial supremacy in the region. At this time the French began more and more to refer to rebels as '*insoumis*': those who have not (yet) submitted.[63] Such language not only positioned the French as the legitimate authority, but also assumed the inevitability of their colonial dominance (itself a

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[62] ANOM, INDO, nf 49, dossier 597, « Annexe No. 1 : Texte de la proclamation adressée par M. Morel, Résident Supérieur au Tonkin aux populations de la province de Bac-Giang » ; « Le Gouvernement Français avait accordé à Hoàng-hoa-Tham, il y a quelques années, de faire sa soumission, sous la réserve qu'il serait à l'avenir un honnête homme. Depuis cette époque, ce Chef pirate a manqué constamment à sa parole. Sa concession est devenue le refuge des empoisonneurs, des voleurs, des assassins, des brigands. Le Gouvernement dont toute la population honnête connaît les généreux sentiments, fatigué de la conduite odieuse de ce chef bandit, se décidé ; afin de soutenir la population travailleuse, et lui assurer la tranquillité, de mettre fin la situation actuelle du Yênthé et de placer cette région sous le régime commun… Le Gouvernement est fermement résolu à aller jusqu'au bout. Tout est prêt. Il récompensera tous ceux qui l'aideront. Livrez-lui le Dè-Tham qui a violé toutes lois. »

[63] ANOM, ALG, CONST, B3 219; « Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916 »

term that French officers used self-consciously).[64]

African « tata »

Similar patterns existed in Africa, with the French changing their language as they faced resistance to their imperial ambitions in the African interior. The enduring popular image of this period remains one of vast numbers of brave, but poorly armed, African warriors throwing themselves hopelessly against the full weight of modern firepower brought to bear by Europeans and their local allies. In reality, however, the French very quickly found themselves fighting against forces that relied heavily on firearms, and even modern, quick-firing rifles. This is certainly the case in Dahomey with Behanzin[65], Ahmadou near Segou on the Niger[66], Samory in French Sudan[67], as well as with Rabih az-Zubayr ibn Fadl Allah and al-Zubayr between the basins of the Nile and the Ubangi.[68] This is especially true once the First World War begins and African warriors found themselves with better access to European weaponry than ever before. This was in part due to Turco-German efforts to stoke anticolonial unrest in French and British colonies, but also the ample opportunities for capturing, stealing or being given European weapons sent to Africa during the conflict.[69]

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[64] French references to their own 'domination' are rife in their colonial writings. Just one example here from Niger, 1917: *ANOM*, 14 MIOM 303, 1D216, bobbin 69; *« Rapport d'Operations – Causes qui ont nécessité la Colonne »*

[65] Aublet, Edouard)1894) La Guerre au Dahomey, 1888-1893, d'après les documents officiels (Paris : Berger-Levrault)

[66] See Pietri, Camille (1885) Les Français au Niger : voyages et combats (Paris: Hachette) & Robinson, David (1985) The Holy War of Umar Tal. The Western Sudan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press)

[67] Samori or Samory. Person, Yves (1968) *Samori, une révolution dyula* (Dakar: IFAN)

[68] Dujarric, Gaston (1902) La vie du sultan Rabah : les Français au Tchad (Paris : J. André)

[69] For more on this see: Correale, Francesco (2014), La Grande Guerre des trafiquants: Le front colonial de l'Occident maghrébin (Paris: l'Harmattan)

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Perhaps the most stunning example of anticolonial rebels wielding modern firearms in Africa comes from the so-called 'Kaocen War' in Niger, 1916-1922.[70] The conflict began in December 1916 when a mixture of Arab, Toubou and Tuareg warriors appeared outside the walls of Agadez in central Niger armed with modern Italian rifles, a machinegun and even an 70mm Italian artillery piece, with ammunition.[71] The warriors themselves were no strangers to modern warfare, and included men who had seen action in Algeria at Djanet against the French, as well as Italian *askari* who had deserted in Fez and Tripolitania.[72] Such hard opponents were not rare in French Africa. In fact, it was common for French soldiers and administrators to refer to nomadic raiding parties (*rezzous* or *harkas*) by the number of rifles they had rather than their total number of participants, the same way European forces were frequently counted in the same period.[73]

Siege operations fuelled by modern, industrial firepower may seem surprising in the context of Sub-Saharan African warfare in this period, but in reality French operations in West Africa regularly consisted of siege operations against hardy African fortifications.[74] These fortifications were, needless to say, starkly different from those French forces encountered in Southeast Asia. Due to pre-existing patterns of warfare in West Africa fortified villages - also called tata[75] - covered the entire Upper Niger region from the Bambara

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[70] This conflict was actually part of a much larger Senussi uprising which saw fighting in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Niger.

[71] Idrissa, Kimba, *The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, p. 203 in Abbink, Jon, de Bruijn, Mirjam & Van Walraven, Klaas (2003) *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden & Boston: Brill)

[72] Ibid.

[73] ANOM, 14 MIOM 862, 11G16, bobbin 222; « Copie de Télégramme Officiel; Territoire Niger à Gouverneur Général; Zinder, 13 Octobre 1916 » & « M. Lutaud, Gouverneur Général de l'Algérie à M. Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères »; Alger, 17 Juillet 1916 among many other examples.

[74] Royer, Patrick & Saul, Mahir (2001) West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War (Oxford: James Currey Ltd) p. 162

[75] Gallieni, Joseph (1885) Voyage au Soudan français (Haut-Niger et pays de Ségou), 1879-1881(Paris:

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country to the right bank of the Niger. The outer walls of these village fortifications were made of mud-cement (a mixture of clay and straw which formed sun-dried bricks), and could be several metres high and thick (as at Sikasso in Mali).[76] External defences were built to facilitate flanking fire, while inside the fortifications there normally existed a smaller stronghold used to store men, weapons, ammunition and precious black. These structures, built in the middle of large villages, could often accommodate several thousand people. Such fortresses were sufficiently daunting that they had traditionally been taken by surprise, either by scaling or breaching the walls, with assaults made to the sound of tabalas.[77]

Despite such varied regional differences, the French quickly learned to implement a series of 'standard' measures against insurrections, thus giving rise to a specifically French colonial school of thought. The main feature of this school of thought centred on the importance of ensuring the control of communications.[78] Instead of a policy of having French columns forever chasing faster-moving enemy forces a more steady, concentric method was preferred, and remained the hallmark of uniquely French approach to 'pacification'.

Countering Rebellion: the Creation of 'military areas'

Beyond the French understanding of their opponents and themselves in a colonial context the colonial military literature tells us how the French felt they should go about actually

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Hachette) & Person, Yves, Samori, op.cit., p. 1002. See also Bah, Thierno Mouctar (2012) Architecture militaire traditionnelle en Afrique de l'Ouest, du XVIIᵉ à la fin du XIXᵉ siècle (Paris: L'Harmattan

[76] Sikasso was long the undisputed model of African *tata*, having an outer-wall whose base was 6 metres wide, and 4 to 6 metres deep. Person, Yves, *Samori, op.cit*., p. 945.

[77] African drums, used for war.

[78] In February 1904 in the circle of Upper Chari, interruption to porting because of a rebel band (M'Brans in the Ombella Valley) was seen to justify repression*. Letter of the commander of the circle Chari to Lieutenant-Colonel Gouraud*, 23 février 1904, n°595, *ministère des Affaires étra*ngères (Foreign Ministry*), La Courneuve*, *fonds Gouraud*, PA AP 399, C14.

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countering a rebellion once it occurred. In general, the French responded to prolonged unrest

with a mixture of cartography, ethnography and building works.[79] The initial infrastructural

work was primarily done between 1883 and 1890. It occurred in two steps. The first was an

adaptation of the old method of building staging posts. These were generally every 25

kilometres in Tonkin,[80] while in Africa the distance between posts varied widely (reaching up

to 200 km between certain posts along the Niger River). Post garrisons could be from 30 to

100 men who were supplied by regular mule trains, and kept in contact with other posts via

telegraph. [81] All told, this network eventually formed a more-or-less contiguous line of

bunkers demarcating areas French control. The second phase included the formal designation

of 'military areas', a practice which has its intellectual roots in classic studies of Roman

Africa. [82] This echo of the classical world was brought back due to the intellectual efforts of

Frenchmen like Jean-Louis de Lanessan (civil-military governor of Indochina, 1891-1894) in

his *Principes de colonisation*, published in 1897.[83] There was also intellectual cross-

fertilization with the British and struggle against *dacoïtisme* which saw the suppression of

civil services and their replacement by a military police.[84]

> This principle was applied in Tonkin in April 1891 with the creation of four military

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[79] D'Andurain, Julie « Cartographie, ethnographie, renseignement, essai de typologie d'une science militaire en situation coloniale (1880-1920) » (« Cartography, ethnography, information, typology of military science in a colonial situation »), *Les Administrations coloniales*, contributions aux séminaires 2009-2010 de l'IHTP, janvier 2010, p. 50-60, on line http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/sites/ihtp/IMG/pdf/Contributions_au_prog-_Ad-_col-_2009-2010.pdf

[80] This principle was invented by Colonel Pennequin and Gallieni in Tonkin. Lyautey, Hubert (1920) *Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar (1894-1899),* Tome 2 (Paris: Armand Colin), *lettre du 21 août 1896*

[81] The principle is based on the method of Bugeaud in Algeria and the Arab offices. See Foucher, Victor (1858) *Les Bureaux arabes en Algérie,* Paris, Librairie internationale de l'agriculture et de la colonisation

[82] Boissier, Gaston (1895) L'Afrique romaine, promenades archéologiques en Algérie et Tunisie (Paris : Hachette)

[83] De Lanessan, Jean-Louis (1897) *Principes de colonisation* (Paris: Félix Alcan)

[84] Smith, Vincent (1914) *Early History of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

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territories, which were seen as borders delineating separate war zones. [85] They were

commanded by lieutenant-colonels or colonels who had the powers of a general, and thus

acted as true autocrats in their territories. The map was further divided into cutting circles

and sectors in which act the intelligence units. Combined, these overlapping spaces were

intended to limit the spread of any insurrection, and contain them long enough to be met with

a suitable repression. By 1895, the term '*tache d'huile*' was being used to describe this

'progressive' methodology, generally associated with Joseph Gallieni.[86] The theory was

substantially furthered in Madagascar by Captain Frederic Hellot in 1899. [87]

Identification and Submission

Once the contours of the territories were defined it then became necessary to begin learning

about the populations contained within, in an attempt to discern who might be favourable to

the French, and who were likely to be less favourable.[88] In order to facilitate what was often a

crude analysis, officers of the intelligence service began their own research, including

ethnographic studies (albeit of wildly varying quality).[89] Such studies were frequently

conducted by colonial administrators or officers who saw themselves as there to help lift up

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[85] De Grandmaison, Louis (1898) En territoire militaire : l'expansion française au Tonkin (Paris: Plon-Nourrit)
[86] Lyautey, Hubert (1920) Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar (1894-1899), Tome 1 (Paris: Armand Colin),
Lettre de Lyautey à son frère le 5 février 1895. For more on this and on Madagascar see Finch, Michael P. M.
(2013), A Progressive Occupation? The Gallieni-Lyautey Method and Colonial Pacification in Tonkin and
Madagascar, 1885-1900 (Oxford : Oxford University Press)
[87] Hellot, Frédéric, « La Pacification de Madagascar », *Journal des Sciences militaires*, octobre 1899, p. 5-56.
[88] Samya El Mechat (2009, ed.), *Les administrations coloniales XIXe-XXe siècles. Esquisse d'une histoire
comparée*, (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes) & El Mechat, Samya (2014, ed.), *Coloniser, pacifier,
administrer* (CNRS Editions)
[89] Capitaine du Crosson (1901) *L'ethnographie de la Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris: Comité de l'Afrique française) &
Commandant Lunet de la Jonquières (1904) *Ethnographie des territoires militaires* (Hanoï: Schneider), publié
ensuite sous le titre *Ethnographie du Tonkin septentrional* (Paris: Leroux, 1906)

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colonised populations through French intervention into African and Asian societies and

economies. While the overall use of such frameworks was largely a simple matter of *ex post*

facto justification, the better ethnographies were produced by individuals who did genuinely

see themselves, and their goals, in this light. Such self-conceptions often had tangible effects

on how individuals chose to operate in their overseas duties.

Broad intelligence work, including early ethnographies, led to the identification of

three basic types of rebel bands in Southeast Asia, separated by their predominant ethnic

makeup: Annamese, Chinese and mixed. The French even generated a map and index of

'pirate' bands at the end of 1889 which was kept in brigade headquarters for quick

reference.[90] While these efforts are interesting, and in fact are the source of some of our

earliest ethnographies, especially in Africa, French forces had their best luck when identifying

rebel leaders with whom they could negotiate and potentially convince to submit to French

rule in exchange for clemency, money, or other concessions.

Submission, the act of not only accepting the French presence but also of entering

French dependence, was a highly codified practice in most parts of the French empire. As a

practice it was not wholly of French invention, but drew on existing customs for such

arrangements wherever possible. Many Arabic countries, for example, already had in place

the concept of '*amân*', meaning both to submit and demand peace.[91] In Sub-Saharan Africa,

the 'palaver' operated along similar lines.[92] The submission of a rebel leader generally turned

him into a 'supplier' ('*soumissionnaire*') expected to assist French operations when called

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[90] Le Prince, Étude militaire sur le Tonkin, op. cit.
[91] The term refers to both a pact of non-aggression between a winner and a loser; it is also in some cases a guarantee of safe-passage. « amân », in Sourdel, Janine et Dominique (2004) *Dictionnaire historique de l'islam* (Paris: PUF) p. 77
[92] After all the talking the palaver can also, conversely, be a harbinger of war.

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upon. Such arrangements, perhaps unsurprisingly, were fragile, and indeed fluid. Defections

and recantations were common; for many the act of submission was nothing more than buying

time. In 1889, in Upper Tonkin, Doi-Van feigned submission to better observe the French and

take their weapons before resuming the fight.[93] Similarly, De Tham had 'submitted' and then

defected on many occasions during his 20-year 'reign'.[94]

Before long, the French began requiring a signed treaty with the 'submitted' to clarify

the conditions of the submission.[95] At times the forces of individual leaders (Luh-Vinh-Phuoc

in 1885, Si-Votha in Cambodia in 1890) were wholesale integrated into French armed

colonizers as unequal allies. In Africa, negotiation with village chiefs was so important as to

necessitate the writing of a specific manual to train officers in the art of African diplomacy

(the *Manuel des palabres ou l'art de tenir palabre)*.[96] In many cases, war and peace hinged

on these negotiations; things which most officers had not been formally prepared for before

deployment.[97] In some cases, submission could be had through the promise of a pension for

rebel leaders (whether the leader shared the pension with their followers or not was left up to

them).[98] In Africa, the acceptance of 'submitted' or protectorate status involved a formal

ritual of submission which included the exchange of food[99], the distribution of gifts in kind,

or gold.[100] Despite French self-perceptions as an increasingly legitimate authority, large parts

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[93] Frey, Henry (1892) Pirates et rebelles au Tonkin. Nos soldats au Yen-Thé (Paris: Hachette) p. 31
[94] Lyautey, *op. cit.,* letter 30 septembre 1895.
[95] See act of aman between colonel Gouraud and Mohamed el Fonana Ben M'hammed, head of the djemma of Torch in 1909. PA AP 399, C16-D1, January 1909, 19th.
[96] Angoulvant, Gabriel (1916) *Le Manuel des palabres ou l'art de tenir palabre* (Paris: éditeur inconnu)
[97] D'Andurain, Julie, « Négocier en Syrie en 1920 : Gouraud et Fayçal avant la bataille de Damas » in Vivet, Emmanuel (2014, ed.) *Négociations d'hier, leçons pour aujourd'hui* (Paris: Larcier) pp. 225-238
[98] The chiefs Luong-Tam-Ky and Baky, north of Thai-Nguyen, received a pension in 1893, but revolted once again in 1895 anyway.
[99] This might also include an exchange of *dolo*, a beer made out of millet.
[100] The submission of the Ashanti king Prepeh in 1896 entailed the payment of 50,000 ounces of gold.

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of the empire remained only thinly influenced by the French, and were retained solely through

means of petty bribery or empty threats.

Coercion

When these methods were not enough, French policy switched from one of conciliation to one

of brutal repression. Whilst in Tonkin, Lyautey wrote to his sister describing the

'establishment of a policy of complete liquidation [regarding] piracy of Tonkin' between June

and September 1895.[101] Such conflicts escalated quickly and were often markedly brutal,

with the French often resorting to the kidnapping and torturing suspected dissidents.[102] In

Tonkin in the late 1800s decapitation became a regular occurrence as the French sought to

'pacify' the region. In another one of his letters, Lyautey claimed that it was common to see

heads dangling from trees.[103] Such public performance of violence by the nascent authority,

combined with the propaganda of systematically referring to rebels as 'bandits' and publicly

displaying their severed heads was brutally effective at solidifying, if only temporarily,

French control over their fledgling overseas empire. The practice was found in all theatres all

across the empire.[104]

In Africa, French forces relied heavily on staged ambushes, mimicking ancient

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[101] Lyautey, op. cit., lettre du 30 septembre 1895 ; « La grande idée directrice de ces trois mois a été la mise sur pied d'un programme de liquidation totale de la piraterie du Tonkin »

[102] Commandant Verraux, « Monographie d'un chef pirate au Tonkin : le De-Tham », *A travers le monde,* juillet 1898, p. 225-228.

[103] Lyautey, Hubert (1920) Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar (1894-1899), Tome 1 (Paris: Armand Colin), lettre du 29 avril 1895.

[104] Francis Garnier was decapitated by the Black Flags in 1873, Charles Gordon by Mahdists in the Sudan in 1885; Mamadou Lamine decapitated his chief rival Omar Penda in April 1886; Mamadou's son was executed in the same manner by order of Gallieni in April 1887.

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patterns of warfare in the Sahel.[105]   Here too, the crushing of a rebellion frequently meant

employing radical measures; decapitation was seen as matter of course. The French often

believed that the success of their campaigns relied on such brutality, but some serious study of

these campaigns forces one to take a more nuanced approach. An overabundance of force

could not only engender prolonged, if temporarily latent, opposition, it could sometimes lead

to real political scandals at home as well (Voulet-Chanoine' scandal, in 1898-1899).[106]

Military overreach and occasions of performative violence should not, however, lead us to

assume that the military was the sole purveyor of such harsh measures. Civilian

administrators could be equally violent in repressing dissent, as was the case during the

pacification of Ivory Coast between 1908 and 1915, led by Gabriel Angoulvant.[107] Feeling

that the 'peaceful conquest' or 'commercial conquest' were mistakes, he recommended the

use of 'the hard way', with no outward displays of weakness or sentimentality. The French

experimentation with more coercive methods was broadly applied, and part of the now-

understood inherent violence and brutality of imperialism.

Conclusion

The period of France's most intense colonial expansion (1880-1914) saw French armed forces

thrust into situations that they had not widely experienced before. They did not have a

suitable language for the sorts of opponents they faced, nor for their new-found operational

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[105] Colonel Péroz, « La Tactique dans le Soudan - Première partie quelques combats et épisodes de guerre remarquables », *Revue maritime et coloniale,* 1890, p. 79-129.
[106] Mathieu, Muriel (1995) *La Mission Afrique Centrale* (Paris: l'Harmattan)
[107] Angoulvant, Gabriel (1916) La Pacification de la Côte d'Ivoire (1908-1915) (Paris: Larose)

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and administrative responsibilities. This confusion, and lack of pre-existing models and

experience on which to reflect, led both to conflicting conceptualisations of who they (the

French) were, what they were doing, and to the changing military procedures that came in

response to political challenges. These changes and contradictions are to be found in both the

official correspondence and bureaucratic detritus left to us in archives, as well as the many

works of 'colonial military literature' that survive in the forms of non-fiction books and

pamphlets written for broader consumption. The proximity of official conceptualisations of

events and the more private recollections thereof should leave us feeling confident in our

assessment of how the French understood military challenges to their imperial domination of

Africa and Southeast Asia. These conceptions are important for understanding how and why

the French acted the way they did in this period of 'pacification'.

As the nascent control of the French extended into the Asian and African interior and

solidified its control over pre-existing Asian and African power structures the French began to

see themselves in a different light. The *mission civilisatrice* (and its counterparts of

'economic development' and 'material progress') remained, but the duty to bring 'order' and

'security' grew, leading to increasingly harsh measures taken against the remaining

'*insoumis*': those not (yet) submitted. With no sense of irony whatsoever French officers and

administrators depicted themselves as the saviours of indigenous societies whilst calling for,

or carrying out, brutal acts of repression against anticolonial rebels. A cross examination of

the literature they left behind, and their official correspondence and documentation, helps to

better elucidate this complexity giving us a better understanding of the impact and experience

of French colonialism in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

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Pirates, Slavers, Brigands, and Gangs: the French terminology of anticolonial rebellion (1880-1920)

After missionaries, soldiers were often the first Frenchmen to enter the African and Southeast Asian interior. These soldiers (men and officers) at the forefront of French colonial conquest left behind extensive source material, which gives us a unique perspective into both the actions and mind-set of French colonisers in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They not only wrote official reports[1], they maintained correspondence with their friends and relatives[2], developed stories[3], propaganda texts[4], and sometimes published novels based on their experience[5]. On occasion they acted as journalists, often with support from the directors, publicists, and politicians of the *parti colonial* in Paris: those military and government men who advocated for a vast French overseas empire.[6] Taken in its broadest sense, the literature produced during the most intensive period of colonial conquest (1880-1914) forms today a considerable mass of documents. In the form of primary sources, secondary sources or 'grey literature'[7] we can think of these sources as together constituting a 'colonial military literature'.[8]

This literature is a valuable and under-utilised resource in determining how the French understood the socio-political and military contexts they were operating in. Read critically, and in context, an examination of this literature gives us a unique perspective into the 'French colonial mind' as laid out by Martin Thomas in his two-volume edited collection of essays on

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the subject (*The French Colonial Mind*, volumes 1 and 2). Thomas' edited collection

provides readers with a wide-ranging and stimulating series of snapshots which, taken

together, give readers an excellent sense of both the diverse spectrum of colonial thought and

action, whilst also offering up a few universal threads which tie together a large and diverse

group of individuals and their experiences. Due to the nature of such a scholarly undertaking,

however, the books are not often able to provide a continuing account of the changing

narratives, the evolving identification and self-identification, that wrought the French colonial

mind as the French empire expanded and solidified. In particular, this is true of the changing

character of armed conflict between the French and local populations in Africa and Southeast

Asia as initial conquests turned into enduring policing operations with a wide variety of

political, social and military challenges. This article will examine some of the diverse sources

that French officers left behind and analyse the evolving understanding French military

personnel had of the anticolonial movements they were called on to police and supress.

The military men who undertook the initial conquest and 'pacification' of the French

overseas empire quickly came into contact with resistance, often violent, to the nascent

control they had established. When writing about resistance these men generally did not refer

to rebels as the 'social bandit' described by Eric Hobsbawm some 60 years ago.[9] This is not

to say that the French did not have a varied and nuanced language to describe the regular

uprisings they found themselves facing. Indeed, French officers and administrators deployed

a range of terms to describe anticolonial rebels that belie geography, time period, French

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perceptions of individual movements, as well as their own self-perception as colonisers.
Frequently, the language French officers deployed when discussing anticolonial uprisings
served to denigrate them and their participants, much in the same way that British imperial
officers and agents did. Ranajit Guha's study of this phenomenon in the Raj (the referring to
Muslim protestors and rebels as 'fanatics', etc.) provides a worthy and apt counterpart to
broader European imperial frameworks and conceptions.[10]

French officers often chose their terminology self-consciously to frame situations to
their superiors in the colonial capitals like Dakar and Hanoi, or indeed in Paris, in such a way
as to either bolster or shield the reputation of the officer in question. Language could either
inflate or downplay the actual importance of a given movement in order to prod higher
authorities to respond, or at least to deflect their own possible responsibility for things getting
out of hand. The internal and external political context in which French officers wrote about
anticolonial rebellion was paramount.

The French military in this period expressed the idea of 'rebellion' in many different
ways, varying in both time and space. French military personnel saw their opponents not
quite as 'the enemy' (in the strict military sense), often as a 'brigand' or 'bandit', rarely as a
legitimate soldier, and at least in this period, not yet as a nationalist. In Southeast Asia French
officers tended to refer to rebels as 'pirates', reflecting the actual existence of powerful pirate
and other outlaw groups in the region in the 1800s.[11] In African colonial literature there was
generally no talk of 'piracy', but instead of 'bandits'[12], 'slave-chiefs' or '*mahdistes*'.[13]
Similar terminology, arising out of similar political and military pressures, was also prevalent

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in British India, among other European overseas colonies.[14]　Over time, however, in part

because of the proliferation of anticolonial rebellions and also due to the transference of

colonial officers between different theatres of operation, the terminology surrounding

anticolonial rebellions began to change.　This evolution of terminology, to some extent

representative of the growing unification and solidification of French, and wider European,

concepts of imperialism and anticolonialism, gives us insight into how the French saw

themselves, their objectives, their local collaborators and dissenters within the colonial

context.　How the French chose to write and talk about anticolonial rebellion was itself a

critical part of their attempt to achieve dominion over large swaths of the global south.　They

actively sought to improve their ability to fight against anticolonial, and later nationalist,

movements both in military terms, but also through their speech.

I

In the nineteenth century, the French use of the word 'rebel' designated something of an

instigator; one who must be compelled to obedience.　By definition, the rebel is one who

challenges a ruling power.　If political opposition exists within a legal framework, the case

becomes one of 'disobedience'.　If an individual resists political authority, does not obey, and

violates socio-cultural rules or traditions, they became a 'dissident', and so forth.　Such

naming conventions can take many forms, and should be instantly recognizable as part of the

basic political framework between the 'rebel' and the 'establishment'.　As Stathis Kalyvas put

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it in his 2006 book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*: 'incumbents…label their opponents "bad guys", bandits, criminals, subversives, or terrorists – and describe the war as banditry, terrorism, delinquent subversion, and other cognate terms'.[15] Kalyvas counts anticolonial wars as civil wars, and does so for good reason: typically members of the local ethnic populations do the vast bulk of the fighting and dying, with allegiances very often falling along pre-colonial lines, or other factors that have little or nothing to do with the presence of an outside power.[16]

In the French colonial context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries organised anticolonial violence could be emblematic of a broader popular resistance that might lead to a full-blown insurrection, or it may constitute merely the armed resistance of scattered gangs without any real political objectives beyond survival. The French generally distinguished between these different types of resistance by referring to them as either 'political' or 'apolitical', albeit often without solid evidence for their classifications.[17] This classification could be used to make movements seem more or less threatening, as the reporter may desire, and also had ramifications for what could be done to captured dissidents. There were at times hotly contested debates over whether actions were 'political' or not in court, and also whether or not Metropolitan law applied to colonial subjects.[18]

The prevailing terminology for referring to 'rebels' or 'rebellion' often related to historical or geographic markers that make the varied regions under French influence different from each other. In Asia French terminology was influenced by the British definitions given to the gunmen of India and Burma, the *dacoit*[19]; *dacoïtisme* having prospered amid weak

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Brahman institutions. [20] The French used this term second-hand from the British, who themselves took it from Indian usage. French officers occasionally used English loan words ('gang', for example) in a colonial context for 'colour' and variety. Words like *dacoit* had the added appeal of exoticism, which helped spur its adoption by French officers. In Indochina 'bandits' spread through the support of mandarins hostile to France, many of them supported discretely by China, in a perennial anarchic system which the French chose to call 'piracy'. [21] These small armed bands might at times be simple outlaws, or they might be proto-nationalist fighters, or, more likely, they might drift between the two depending on circumstance. The participation of 'bandits' in revolutionary movements was not new to the region, such groups played a critical role in the Tay Son rebellion in the late 18th century, but the French had difficulty understanding their complex role in Southeast Asian, especially Vietnamese, society.[22]

Interestingly, the term 'pirate' was not only used by Europeans in Southeast Asia. It was also used by some Vietnamese leaders who refused to accept the French occupation, as evidenced by the papers of Ngé-Dinh, an Annamite chieftain in the region of Than-Hoa and Nge-An between 1886 and 1887.[23] In his text, he wrote that local people considered the French to be pirates for the way they had subjugated and exploited Indochina. Unfortunately, we do not have the original text, and so do not know what Vietnamese word was used for 'pirate'. Terminology that might be translated at 'bandit' or 'pirate', however, is not uncommon in Southeast Asia. In his recent book *Imperial Bandits* Bradley Camp Davis translates the Vietnamese word *giac* for 'bandit', specifically in reference to the Black Flags,

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a prominent 'bandit' or 'outlaw' group of the late 19th century.[24] It is possible that Ngé-Dinh

had used this, or an analogous, word. Similar language ('banditry' or 'piracy') is repeated by

other Vietnamese individuals at different times to describe French activity in Southeast Asia.

The concept of French piracy played a prominent role in the decrees released by rebels in

Thai-Nguyen in 1917, for example; one of the first uprisings in Indochina to position itself in

clearly nationalist terms.[25] In addition to the terms 'rebel' and 'pirate', 'band' or 'gang' was

frequently used, and became synonymous with irregular forces, sometimes even with local

militias. All this reflects the emergence of an unknown war, irregular warfare, but also of

French efforts to control, or at least influence, the political messaging of internal dissent.[26]

II

Why did the French not simply refer to rebels as 'the enemy', the way they would have

referred to most military opponents? Largely, this was due to the delicate political

circumstances in which the French armed forces were operating. To label rebel forces as 'the

enemy' implies certain political preconditions, and strongly suggests the legitimacy of their

movement (this is the point Kalyvas made in *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*). From a

purely military perspective, talking about 'the enemy' also suggests, and perhaps opens the

door to more conventional forms of warfare.[27] The term 'enemy' could furthermore be

politically inflexible. This could be a serious hindrance in the fluid strategic environment the

French found themselves in, in which today's enemies may need to be accommodated with

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tomorrow (the granting of a small, semi-independent fiefdom to the proto-nationalist fighter De Tham is a case in point). Keenly aware of the disadvantages that would come with legitimizing their opponents, French officers tended to shy away from strictly military language, and instead adopted the more vague terminology of policing and security.

During the conquest of the bulk of their colonial empire, the French had no official declared enemy. They instead faced a complicated, messy situation that included everything from massacres, and robbery, to simple brigandage and even full-blown insurrection. The concept of a rebel (pirate, bandit, etc.) was often used as a euphemism for any opponent operating within a non-state framework. In the colonial context terminology, and at times strategy, frequently confused 'war' with 'security' and 'policing'. Indeed, the French, both civilian and military, often referred to their own military operations as 'police actions' when fighting against anticolonial forces, rather than 'military operations', a term usually reserved for more remote geographies, or more extreme levels of opposition (such as in Niger and Chad in the early 20th century).[28] These 'police actions' or punitive raids did not typically fit the traditional 'Clausewitzian' model. Instead they took the form of what was at the time referred to as 'small war'[29], that is to say, the war of ambush and surprise which began to be codified in the mid-nineteenth century by writers like Charles Callwell and Albert Ditte. This attempted reconciliation of accepted 'European' warfare with the violence and military operations common in the colonies helped ensure that terms reserved for conventional European wars were not often used for anticolonial uprisings, thus necessitating the invention and use of innovative terminology.[30]

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III

The transition from what European observers considered to be simple brigandage to rebellion was often expressed by use of the word '*surpris'* (uprising) by French officers; a word that strongly implied a certain magnitude of opposition. [31] It was a much stronger word than the ubiquitous '*troubles'*, which typically included riots, bombings, skirmishes and assassination. The uprising in Than Hoa, in northern Tonkin, in 1886 or that of the Bambara and Fulani in Segou in 1892, for example, were sufficiently large to outstrip the term '*troubles'* and grow into full-blown 'uprisings' in French parlance.[32] This more serious level of discontent ('uprising') was considered especially dangerous if it was backed by a religious movement, especially one associated with Islam.[33]

French officers soon came to believe that they were accurately distinguishing between the pirate, the rebel, the band, the 'gang' and full-blown rebellious armies. The generally poor level of knowledge French officers had of their colonial subjects however, let alone the inner workings and motivations of secretive organisations and conspiracies, means that French designations need to be treated with caution.[34] In general, groups were first identified by their leader (for example, Doi-Van and De Tham in the Yen-Thé region in Tonkin; Lat-Dior, Behanzin, Samory, and Ahmadou were similarly classified in Africa). The French often knew the rough location of these groups, except in cases where the rebels were mobile or nomadic, but at times knew little more than that. In the absence of clear intelligence, the

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identification of the leader at times acted as a shortcut to describing not just the socio-political

motives of a given anticolonial group, but also their assumed tactics.[35]

To an extent, the sheer size of a rebellious or outlaw group imbued it with a certain

meaning for French officers. Larger groups were more dangerous, and far more often to be

considered rebellious, if not revolutionary. Of course, given spotty French intelligence,

estimates on rebel troop numbers could vary wildly, and with it the interpretations of given

groups, and thus the terminology applied to them. This did not stop the French from

deploying troops and undertaking operations based on speculation and rumour. In Asia, the

French rarely had good intelligence on the number of Black Flags there were, but nevertheless

considered it necessary to mobilize at least 20,000 to 30,000 men against them between 1883-

1886 (admittedly within the context of the Sino-French War).[36] For comparison, the Siamese

army was estimated to be only 5,000 men in 1893; the French deployment was truly

massive.[37] In Africa estimates also varied wildly. French officers believed that Ahmadou,

'the Jugurtha of Sudan', was able to muster 10,000 warriors against Archinard in December

1890.[38] While this is unlikely, it must be said that such large forces were not unknown to the

region. The Abyssinians were able bring 30,000 men against the Italians; the Dahomey army

has nearly 22,000 men; and the Malagasy maintained a force of 25,000 to 30,000 warriors.[39]

Samory force numbers were roughly the same (between 20,000 and 30,000).[40] These were

real armies with regular, regimented soldiers, and as such their members were often given

specific designations: the 'Amazons' of Behanzin in Dahomey[41], the '*talibés*' of Ahmadou,

the 'sofas' of Samory.[42] Thus, terminology was deployed not only to describe the supposed

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size and intentions of a given local force, it was also a way of implying the strength and rationale of the bonds that tied these forces together. The term '*talibés*' ('Islamic students') is especially interesting here, as it implied not only a sort of mentoring, devotional attachment to Ahmadou, but also a religious fanaticism tinged with cultish leanings. This played directly to long-standing French fears about Islam and its practitioners.[43] Using a loan word originally from Arabic (*talib*, the same basis for the term 'Taliban') had the added appeal of exoticism, thus fixing Ahmadou's followers into a certain French conception about the Muslim world.

French officers did not just apply terminology to rebel forces and their participants, but also to the differing geographies in which rebellious movements most frequently occurred. These geographies ultimately carried with them conceptual, cultural and political baggage in the same way 'the bush', or other similar terms did. To some extent, this is due to certain geographic similarities which manifest across different colonies, or even different continents. Mountainous areas almost always offered refuge for individuals trying to escape central authority, be it in Indochina or southern Algeria.[44] Not every jurisdiction was conducive to the development of rebellion. Proximity to French administrative and military power generally precluded the organisation of large-scale violent resistance. Uprisings most often erupted in more remote and rugged regions where groups could operate with relative impunity. Lyautey, for example, remarked that 'the pirate is a plant that grows only in certain lands'.[45] Writing about more contemporary conflicts Laurent Henninger has referred to these different geographies as the 'fluid' and the 'solid', showing the *longue durée* impact that simple geography has on strategy and politics.[46]

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Geography necessarily had an impact on how the French understood, and referred to, anticolonial movements. Thus, we find French officers and administrators more likely to refer to 'pirates' in the Asian littoral, and 'rebels' being referred to by the army fighting in the African interior. There were also distinctions made between pacified and war torn territories, which were usually called 'military territories' and administered directly by the French armed forces. This division between civilian and militarily governed areas was one determined by the French, but it was not entirely inconsistent with pre-existing realities. In the Arab world, for example, especially in Morocco, there was a similar distinction between the *bled es-Maghzen*, land under the authority of the Sultan, and the *bled es-siba*, areas of only tenuous influence and control.[47]

In Southeast Asia geographic categorization and terminology was applied with pseudo-scientific precision, in part because it delineated where Europeans could and could not (or, at least, 'should' not) focus their agricultural reforms and exploitation.[48] Across the French overseas empire land that was not being cultivated to French satisfaction was considered fair game for expropriation and cultivation under French ownership.[49] This applied even to lands clearly under the command of local leaders, like the Toucouleur empire in West Africa. Many of these states were (conveniently) considered decadent by the French, which in French eyes rendered their territories *res nullius*[50] or 'nobody's property': thus, free to occupy by Europeans.[51] This led to the somewhat absurd development of Joseph Gallieni speaking of African leaders as 'rebels' to the French authority, even in instances when France was invading their land.[52] This evolution marked a notable change in how the French saw

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their actions in Africa and Southeast Asia. From the 1880s onwards any opposition to French

rule, or even French expansion, was typically seen as 'rebellious', even when the French had

no legitimate claim to the land or peoples in question. This implied sense of 'manifest

destiny' belied the growing French belief in their authority not only to conquer, but also to

govern. This development can be seen in how French officials began to deal with, and talk

about, rebellious groups in Southeast Asia and Africa.

IV

The fighting in Tonkin took on a character that belied simple classification, and sat

outside the prevailing French discourse surrounding anticolonial rebellion, despite attempts to

classify fighting in Tonkin from as early as 1885.[53] The French experience of fighting in

Tonkin centred around the discovery and destruction of 'rebel dens' (the 'den' of Tong-Hoa

Phu was destroyed in November 1894, and that of Phiama in December 1894 by Théophile

Pennequin, for example).[54] Following the destruction of each 'den' the French erected their

own outpost in the region to assert their control and influence over the area.[55] Thus, the

conquest of each 'den' brought an increased permanence to the French occupation of the

region; the construction of new fortresses made French domination a physical reality.

Of the different regions of Tonkin that the French slowly attempted to bring under

their rule Yen-Thé is probably the most famous. Yen-Thé had an ideal geography in which to

base a rebellious or insurrectional movement. Upper Tonkin is a mountainous area, filled

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with dense forest; a difficult 'Swiss Tonkinese'.[56] The area lent itself to the construction of

complex fortifications, which the French could not easily break without massing substantial

firepower.[57] Such an organisational effort generally was sufficient to tip off an impending

attack, giving De Tham and his band of 'pirates' ample time to flee into the densely wooded

mountains, or slip over the border into a neighbouring province. Similar areas, be they

jungle, mountain or desert, existed across the French empire and were generally far beyond

the reach of meaningful European control. Such terrain had a magnetic quality that drew a

wide range of dissidents to it, strengthening existing rebel/outlaw bands.[58] For both French

and British colonial officers these spaces were understood and referred to as the

'hinterland'.[59]

On occasions when the French were able to locate and penetrate a 'rebel den', they

were consistently impressed by the 'pirate' defence systems they employed; their organization

was often markedly better than fortifications built by the French.[60] Dens were generally in the

middle of a dense forest hidden by underbrush with camouflaged firing positions producing

overlapping fields of fire protecting the den's few exits and entrances.[61] Alongside such

defences rebels and outlaws in Southeast Asia made use of an array of field defences which

would go on to develop lasting notoriety during the American War in Vietnam: 'punji sticks'

(shallow excavations lined with sharp stakes), fences and bamboo stakes often masked their

fortified hideouts.

Even if the French could locate and clear out a 'rebel den', that was often not enough.

The 'pirates' often escaped French efforts to capture them and break up their ring. They were

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aided in this by the seasonal nature of the struggle, with wet seasons limiting the size and

duration of French operations. Weather often made the remote, mountainous regions

unnavigable for French forces, and even in good weather the French could not always scrape

together the funds necessary to create and sustain a column in the field for long enough to

track down rebel bands.[62] In an attempt to get around these substantial operational difficulties

the French relied heavily on what little intelligence they could gather. When good

intelligence came in it was necessary to act quickly, which spurred the rapid installation of

optical telegraphy in Indochina to facilitate rapid communication from military post to

military post.[63] This gave the French an advantage, but it also meant that the telegraph wires

were an obvious and frequent target for anticolonial rebels.[64]

As French influence and infrastructure began to spread the French began to use the

language of policing and inherent authority in Southeast Asia. Regarding one attempt to

capture De Tham in 1909 the French resident of Tonkin released a public decree stating that:

'The French Government has granted Hoàng-hoa-Tham [De Tham] for some years [an offer]
to submit, on the condition that he would in future be an honest man. Since this time this
pirate chief has constantly failed to keep his word. His concession [De Tham had been
granted a small fiefdom by the French in return for keeping his brigandage under control] has
become the refuge of poisoners, thieves, assassins and brigands. The Government, of which
all the honest population knows its sentiments, tired of the odious conduct of this bandit chief
has decided: [in order] to support the working population, and assure them tranquillity, to put
an end to the current situation in Yen-Thé and place the region under the common rule…. The
Government is firmly resolved to go to the end. All is ready. [The Government] will
compensate all those who help it. Deliver up De Tham, who has violated all laws.'[65]

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By the early 1900s the French were no longer an invading (as opposed to an 'occupying')

force in Southeast Asia, or there under thin pretences to help the Nguyen Dynasty's legitimate

government. Instead, they had become the government, and spoke as such; a major marker in

French colonial supremacy in the region. At this time the French began more and more to

refer to rebels as '*insoumis*': those who have not (yet) submitted.[66] Such language not only

positioned the French as the legitimate authority, but also assumed the inevitability of their

colonial dominance (itself a term that French officers used self-consciously).[67] It is worth

noting that the 1909 attack on De Tham's principal fortress came in the wake of a 1908

attempted mass poisoning of Europeans at a dinner in Hanoi.[68] The poisoning was to be

followed up by an assault on Hanoi itself led by De Tham and his allies. As Michael Vann

has pointed out, attacks on Europeans in Asia and Africa, be they coordinated military

assaults, individual attacks or simple signs of insubordination, were seen as an attack on the

very foundations of colonialism.[69] Even minor acts of subversion were not only considered a

real threat to the colonial order, they also justified brutal retribution on the part of the colonial

authority. This sentiment, and the power to act on it, grew as colonial power and authority

solidified both intellectually and physically in the early 1900s.

V

Similar patterns existed in Africa, with the French changing their terminology as they

faced resistance to their imperial ambitions in the African interior. The enduring popular

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image of this period remains one of vast numbers of brave, but poorly armed, African

warriors throwing themselves hopelessly against the full weight of modern firepower brought

to bear by Europeans and their local allies. In reality, however, the French very quickly found

themselves fighting against forces that relied heavily on firearms, and even modern, quick-

firing rifles. This is certainly the case in Dahomey with Behanzin[70], Ahmadou near Segou on

the Niger[71], Samory in French Sudan[72], as well as with Rabih az-Zubayr ibn Fadl Allah and

al-Zubayr between the basins of the Nile and the Ubangi.[73] Modern firepower became even

more accessible to African warriors during and after the First World War. This was in part

due to Turco-German efforts to stoke anticolonial unrest in French and British colonies, but

also the ample opportunities for capturing, stealing or being given European weapons that

were sent to Africa during the conflict.[74]

Perhaps the most stunning example of anticolonial rebels wielding modern firearms in

Africa comes from the Kaocen War in Niger, 1916-17 (although fighting continued until

1920).[75] The conflict began in December 1916 when a mixture of Arab, Toubou and Tuareg

warriors appeared outside the walls of Agadez in central Niger armed with modern Italian

rifles, a machinegun and even an 70mm Italian artillery piece, with ammunition.[76] The

warriors themselves were no strangers to modern warfare, and included men who had seen

action in Algeria at Djanet against the French, as well as Italian *askari* who had deserted in

Fez and Tripolitania.[77] Such experienced and well-armed opponents were not uncommon in

French Africa. In fact, it was common for French soldiers and administrators to refer to

nomadic raiding parties (*rezzous* or *harkas*) by the number of rifles they had rather than their

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total number of participants, the same way European forces were frequently counted in the same period.[78] The adoption or co-option of Arabic words (*rezzou* or *razzia*) served to typecast opponents to French colonialism, implied their objectives and methodology for them, and also freed the French up to pursue their own invented interpretations of what they thought 'local' warfare meant.[79]

By shielding themselves behind misinterpretations of African warfare French officers, who often referred back to ancient Sahelian war-fighting methods in their writing, tried to justify their brutal punitive columns and the wanton violence they committed.[80] Terminology here was a potent shield against the political, moral and social consequences of their actions. It was not a perfect defence. The well-known barbarity of the Voulet-Chanoine column tried, and failed, to hide behind preconceptions of African brutality. For many other cases, however, such conceptions and terminologies were sufficient to provide cover for a broad range of atrocities and military overreach. This was partially the case during the Kaocen War. After the initial operations to lift the siege at Agadez French troops, some of whom had travelled from as far away as Dakar, engaged in a brutal campaign of repression and retribution. The Aïr region, already wracked by the famine of 1912-1915, lost roughly half of its population due to the war.[81] British onlookers were shocked, stating that the French repression in Niger 'appeared to be little short of extermination'.[82]

Throughout the French empire the crushing of a rebellion frequently meant employing radical measures; decapitation and other gruesome displays were seen as matter of course.[83] While this violence was not 'terminology' as such, it still constituted a form of

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communication. Many French officers believed that the success of their campaigns relied on such brutality, even if their results did not always bear this out. An overabundance of force could not only engender prolonged, if temporarily latent, opposition, it could sometimes lead to real political scandals at home.[84] Military overreach and occasions of performative violence should not, however, lead us to assume that the military was the sole purveyor of such harsh measures. Civilian administrators could be equally violent in repressing dissent, as was the case during the pacification of Ivory Coast between 1908 and 1915, led by Gabriel Angoulvant.[85] Feeling that the 'peaceful conquest' or 'commercial conquest' had been strategic mistakes, he recommended the use of 'the hard way', with no outward displays of weakness or sentimentality. The French experimentation with more coercive methods was broadly applied, and part of the now-understood inherent violence and brutality of imperialism.

<div align="center">VI</div>

Militarily insurrections were often countered in the brutal way that Angoulvant and others advocated: by use of the column, the punitive raid. Beyond purely military responses, however, there were administrative and organisational practices that were intended to contain any possible insurrection. These can tell us a fair bit about the French colonial mind. Areas that were only recently conquered or not yet pacified, for example, were often designated 'military areas'. This principle was applied in Tonkin in April 1891 with the creation of four

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military territories, which were seen as borders delineating separate war zones. [86] They were commanded by lieutenant-colonels or colonels who had the powers of a general, and thus acted as true autocrats in their territories. Designated military territories were further divided into different sectors with designated intelligence units. Within these spheres of influence individual officers often undertook various natural and ethnographic studies to try to learn more about the regions that France had so recently conquered. [87] Combined, these overlapping spaces were intended to limit the spread of any insurrection, and contain them long enough to be met with a suitable repression. By 1895, the term '*tache d'huile*' was being used to describe this 'progressive' methodology, generally associated with Joseph Gallieni. [88] The theory was substantially furthered in Madagascar by Captain Frederic Hellot in 1899. [89]

The practice of setting up 'military areas' nominally had its intellectual roots in classic studies of Roman Africa. [90] This echo of the classical world was brought back through the intellectual efforts of Frenchmen like Jean-Louis de Lanessan (civil-military governor of Indochina, 1891-1894) in his *Principes de colonisation*, published in 1897. [91] This look back to antiquity gives us an interesting glimpse into how at least some French officers saw themselves and their actions. On the one hand, many were clearly amateur historians, classicists, botanists, and ethnographers who wrote about their different subject matters for a mixture of personal interest and possible strategic or economic benefit. [92] On the other hand, pseudo-intellectualism often provided a veneer of respectability which might serve to justify, or at least try to contextualise, barbarous acts of repression. The studies of Octave Depont,

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who compiled substantial reports on Islam in Africa and also the anticolonial uprisings in

Algeria in 1916, are rife with this sort of misappropriated Classical imagery. In Depont's

report on the Batna uprising references to liberty, progress, the benefits of French colonialism,

and reflections on Carthage and the Numidians sit alongside calls for swift and brutal

repression freed from the 'scruples of legality' that he felt typically hindered French efforts in

their fight against anticolonialism.[93]

The mixture of romantic associations with the Classical world and contemporary

severity and xenophobia expressed in Depont's work appear frequently in the written and oral

records left behind by French officers and civilians living in the colonies, giving us an

interesting glimpse into how they saw themselves and colonized people. In court proceedings

from 1916, part of the aftermath from a failed attack on Saigon Central Prison, the Prosecutor

General in Saigon, G. Michel, stated that 'the French, successors of the Greeks and Romans,

always had, in their duties as colonizers, a high and great design. [T]hey never failed to push

back against the exploitation of [non-white] races under their tutelage; the American theories

of Captain [Alfred Thayer] Mahan of 'the incompetence of [non-white] races' will never find

echo in French hearts.'[94] Given what he felt had been the high-minded ideals of the French in

their civilising mission Michel recommended that those accused of taking part in the attack

receive the sternest punishment possible, essentially for their ingratitude and impudence.

While most of the frameworks, judgements and studies of African and Asian people

were largely a simple matter of *ex post facto* justification for French imperialism, some of the

better ethnographies were produced by individuals who genuinely see themselves as working

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toward the betterment of African and Asian people. Such self-conceptions could have

tangible effects on how individuals chose to operate in their overseas duties. Some colonial

officers and administrators opted for relatively more lenient or accommodative measures.

Others, like Depont and Michel, felt that any betrayal of French largesse should be met with

the harshest response possible. Their sense of affront underscores their belief in an

established French colonial authority. As such their calls for retributive violence were

intellectually distinct from that of earlier phases of conquest which resorted to brutality under

pretences of practicality. Between June and September 1895, for example, Lyautey wrote to

his sister describing the 'establishment of a policy of complete liquidation [regarding] piracy

of Tonkin'.[95] Such conflicts escalated quickly and were often markedly brutal, with the

French often resorting to the kidnapping and torturing of suspected dissidents.[96] In Tonkin in

the late 1800s decapitation became a regular occurrence as the French sought to 'pacify' the

region. In another one of his letters, Lyautey claimed that it was common to see heads

dangling from trees.[97] Public performance of violence by the nascent authority, combined

with the propaganda of systematically referring to rebels as 'bandits' and publicly displaying

their severed heads was brutally effective at solidifying, if only temporarily, French control

over their fledgling overseas empire. The practice was commonplace throughout the

empire.[98]

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The period of France's most intense colonial expansion (1880-1914) saw French armed forces thrust into situations that they had not widely experienced before. They did not have a suitable language for the sorts of opponents they faced, nor for their new-found operational and administrative responsibilities. This confusion, and lack of pre-existing models and experience on which to reflect, led to conflicting conceptualisations of who they (the French) were, what they were doing, and to the changing military procedures that came in response to political challenges. These changes and contradictions are to be found in both the official correspondence and bureaucratic detritus left to us in archives, as well as the many works of colonial military literature that survive in the forms of non-fiction books and pamphlets written for broader consumption. These conceptions are important for understanding how and why the French acted the way they did in this period of conquest and 'pacification'.

As the nascent control of the French extended into the Asian and African interior and solidified its control over pre-existing Asian and African power structures the French began to see themselves in a different light. The *mission civilisatrice* (and its counterpart, the *mise en valeur*) remained, but the duty to bring 'order' and 'security' grew, leading to increasingly harsh measures taken against the remaining '*insoumis*': those not (yet) submitted. With no sense of irony whatsoever French officers and administrators depicted themselves as the saviours of indigenous societies whilst calling for, or carrying out, brutal acts of repression against anticolonial rebels. A cross examination of the literature they left behind, and their official correspondence and documentation, helps to better elucidate this complexity giving us

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a better understanding of the impact and experience of French colonialism in the late 1800s
and early 1900s.

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[1] For example Lieutenant-Colonel Archinard, *Rapport officiel sur la campagne de 1890-1891* (Paris, 1891) &
Commandant Le Prince, *Étude militaire sur le Tonkin* (Paris, 1893)

[2] For example, F. Orsat, *Au Soudan (1890-1891), souvenirs d'un tirailleur sénégalais d'après sa correspondance
intime* (Paris, 1893) & *Le Commandant Lamy d'après sa correspondance et ses souvenirs de campagne (1858-
1900)* (Paris, 1903). See also, J. Andurain (d'), *« La correspondance privée des coloniaux »* in A. Bérenger et O.
Dard, *Gouverner par les lettres, de l'Antiquité à l'époque contemporaine,* (Metz, 2015), 95-113.

[3] For example: A. Lahille, *Mes Impressions sur l'Afrique occidentale française. (Étude documentaire au pays du
tam-tam),* (Paris, 1910)

[4] J. Lanessan (de), *L'Expansion coloniale de la France : étude économique, politique et géographique sur les
établissements français d'outre-mer* (Paris, 1896)

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[5] For example, J. Harmant, *La Vérité sur la retraite de Lang-Son. Mémoires d'un combattant,* (Paris, 1892)

[6] J. Andurain (d'), *Colonialisme ou impérialisme ? Le 'parti colonial' en pensée et en action* (Paris, 2017)

[7] Generally referred to as 'grey literature' these are works beyond the usual circuits of production and distribution and that are not subject to legal deposit (theses, dissertations, reports, etc.). They are not referenced in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Some of these monographs are maintained by the French Africa Committee and a number of others are military books kept by the French military.

[8] N. Dodille, *Introduction aux discours coloniaux* (Paris, 2011). For a polemic approach of the concept of colonial literature, see V. Krapor, 'Provocation Versus Performativity: Lauching *la littérature coloniale française* in 1909', Modern & Contemporary France, 23 (2015), 47-64

[9] E. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester, 1959)

[10] R. Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies II: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Oxford, 1983), 59

[11] For more on 'pirates', the Black Flags and on French activity in Southeast Asia see M. Finch, *A Progressive Occupation? The Gallieni-Lyautey Method and Colonial Pacification in Tonkin and Madagascar, 1885-1900* (Oxford, 2013)

[12] C. Vilers (de), 'L'Expédition du Tonkin : La Passé, le Présent, l'Avenir', La Nouvelle revue, (1884), 700-728; *« Nous nous proposions seulement de châtier les bandits connus sous le nom de Pavillons Noirs, et nous avons été assez imprudents pour faire la guerre à l'Annam puis à la Chine »*

[13] G. Vasco, 'Le Madhisme au Soudan', Revue française de l'étranger et des colonies et Exploration, Gazette géographique, tome XXI, 208 (1896), 231-237 , and more generally R. S. Pascha, *Feuer und Schwert im Sudan (1879-1895)* (Leipzig, 1896)

[14] R. Burton, 'Partisans or Bandits', Royal United Services Institute Journal, XVII (1897), 291-292.

[15] S. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, 2006), 17

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[16] ibid., 19

[17] Such judgements often relied on the gut feeling of administrators. One example, of many: *A[rchives]*

N[ationales] d'O[utre] M[er], Fonds Ministériels, nouveau fonds, carton 28 (dossiers 1-6) *« Extrait du Rapport*

sur la situation politique de la Cochinchine pendant le 2ème trimestre 1915 »

[18] *ANOM*; FM, nf 28 (1-6); *« Rapport sur l'affaire des nommés Nguyen Anh Hu et Consorts, dite affaire de Baria »; 14 Nov 1916*

[19] The term *dacoit* (used in English and French) refers to highway bandits in India and elsewhere in Asia from

the mid-nineteenth century onwards. They are also called 'drivers', 'thieves', 'robbers' at different times and

places. They are characterized essentially by their mobility.

[20] H. I. Sahita, 'Dacoity is an Organized Crime: A Case Study of Sindh Province', Pakistan Journal of Social

Sciences, 29 (2009), 301-312 & J. Harmand, *L'Indo-Chine française, politique et administration. Conférence*

faite à l'Association républicaine du centenaire de 1789 (Paris, 1887)

[21] Le Prince, *Étude militaire sur le Tonkin,* op.cit.

[22] G. Dutton, *The Tay Son Uprising: Society and Rebellion in Eighteenth-Century Vietnam* (Honolulu, 2006),

212 & A. Woodside, *Community and Revolution in Modern Vietnam* (Boston, 1976), 35

[23] N. Dinh, *Une Année de la guerre en Annam, 1886-87, racontée par un chef de rebelle,* publié par la Revue du

cercle militaire, (1890)

[24] B. C. Davis, *Imperial Bandits: Outlaws and Rebels in the China-Vietnam Borderlands* (Seattle and London,

2017), 7

[25] *ANOM*, FM, nf, carton 58, dossier 646; *« Annexe No 4 à la lettre No du Gouverneur Général de l'Indochine à*

Monsieur le Ministre des Colonies ; Le 15 du 7e mois de la Ière année de DAI-HUNG-DE-QUOC »

[26] G. M. MacCaulay, 'Irregular Troops', RUSI Journal, V (1862), 637-643.

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[27] Un colon, 'L'insurrection de Ky-Dong' , Questions diplomatiques et colonials, (1898), 240-242 & Davis, *Imperial Bandits*, 9

[28] M. Michel, *Les Africains et la Grande Guerre : l'appel à l'Afrique (1914-1918)* ((Paris, 2014), 9

[29] C. Decker (de), *De la Petite guerre selon l'esprit de la stratégie moderne* (Paris, 1845) & later C. Callwell, *Small wars: Their Principles and Practice* (London, 1896)

[30] A. Quinteau, *La Guerre de surprise et d'embuscades* (Paris, 1884)

[31] Colonel Viotte, 'De la surprise', Revue militaire française, 5 (1922), 347-366 & J. Delmas, 'La surprise', Direction des études d'histoire, cours supérieur d'histoire*,* École Supérieur de Guerre, (1973)

[32] Commandant Bonnier, *Mission au pays de Ségou (Soudan français). Campagne dans le Guénié-Kalary et le Sansanding en 1892,* (Nancy, 1897)

[33] V. Monteil, 'Lat Dior, Damel du Kayor, (1842-1886) et l'islamisation des Wolofs', Archives de sociologie des religions, 16 (1963), 77-104. See also P. Marty, *Études sur l'Islam et les tribus du Soudan* (Paris, 1920). For North Africa, see E. Burke III, 'Pan-Islam and Moroccan resistance to French Colonial Penetration, 1900-12', The Journal of African History, 13 (1972), 97-118. For West Africa see C. Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860-1960* (Cambridge, 1988)

[34] M. Thomas, *The Colonial Mind*, *Volume 2: Violence, Military Encounters, and Colonialism* (Lincoln and London, 2011), 32; In particular this passage refers to Captain Chanoine, of the infamous Voulet-Chanoine affair, who correctly discarded European notions about how Africans might respond to European technology. Chanoine is correct in pointing out one of countless examples of European hubris and misunderstanding, even while making regular errors and ill-founded assumptions in his own interpretations.

[35] Commandant Verraux, 'Monographie d'un chef pirate au Tonkin: le De-Tham', À travers le monde, (1898), 225-228 & 233-236.

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[36] Le Prince, *Étude militaire sur le Tonkin,* op.cit.

[37] 'Nouvelles géographiques et coloniales', Revue française de l'étranger et des colonies et Exploration, Gazette géographique, (169) 1893, 37-45

[38] Valbert, 'Le Sultan Ahmadou et la Campagne du colonel Archinard dans le Soudan français', Revue des Deux Mondes, CII (1890), 673-686.

[39] J. Bayol, *Les Dahoméens au Champ de Mars (Palais des Arts libéraux): moeurs et coutumes: exposition d'ethnographie coloniale* (Paris, 1893)

[40] M. Legassick, 'Firearms, Horses and Samorian Army Organisation, 1870-1898', Journal of African History, 7 (1966), 95-115.

[41] H. A. Topor, *Les Amazones. Une armée de femmes dans l'Afrique précoloniale* (Paris, 1984)

[42] A. Sow, 'Biography and Colonial Discourse in 'French West Africa'', Social Dynamics, 30 (2004), 69-93
[43] Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa*, 30

[44] *ANOM*, ALG CONST B3 219; *« Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916 »*, 5

[45] H. Lyautey, *Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar (1894-1899),* tome 1, (Paris, 1920); *« Le pirate est une plante qui ne pousse que dans certaines terres »*

[46] L. Henninger, 'Espaces fluides et espaces solides: nouvelle réalité stratégique ?', Revue Défense nationale, 753 (2012), 5-9.

[47] E. Burke III, *Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco. Precolonial protest and resistance, 1860-1912* (Chicago, 1976)

[48] M. Cleary, 'Managing the Forest in Colonial Indochina', Modern Asian Studies, 39 (2005), 266

[49] M. Murray, *The Development of Capitalism in Colonial Indochina (1870-1940)* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1980), 179-191

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[50] C. Salomon, *L'Occupation des territoires sans maîtres* (Paris, 1889)

[51] The British empire operated along similar lines. J. Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (London, 2012), 85-86

[52] J. Gallieni, *Voyage au Soudan français (Haut-Niger et pays de Ségou), 1879-1881*, publication de la mission d'exploration du Haut-Niger (Paris, 1885)

[53] C*** P. A., 'La guerre au Tonkin', Journal des Sciences militaires, 17 (1885), 420-437

[54] J. K. Munholland, '"Collaboration Strategy" and the French Pacification of Tonkin, 1885-1897', The Historical Journal, 24 (1981), 629-650

[55] Lieutenant-Colonel Durand, 'La vie d'un poste militaire dans la haute région du Tonkin', Revue des Troupes Coloniales, (1925)

[56] L. Girod, *Dix Ans de Haut-Tonkin* (Tours, 1899)

[57] *ANOM* nf 49, dossier 597, *« Note sur les opérations de police dans la région du Yênthé »*; in this particular example from 1909 the French managed to launch a surprise assault on one of De Tham's 'dens' by relying on friendly Tonkinese volunteers as the bulk of their force. Nevertheless De Tham escaped, albeit wounded, and many of his followers were killed or captured. De Tham would not be caught until 1913 when he was betrayed by one of his 'pirates' after some 20 years of living outside the law in Yen Thé.

[58] *ANOM*, INDO, nf 49, dossier 597, *« Annexe No. 1 : Texte de la proclamation adressée par M. Morel, Résident Supérieur au Tonkin aux populations de la province de Bac-Giang »*. The same is true for Saharan oases, and the mountains of the Maghreb. J. McDougall, *History of Algeria* (Oxford, 2017), 254

[59] E. Lees, 'The Doctrine Of 'Hinterland'', *The Times*, August 1890; 'The Franco-German Treaty and the "Hinterland" of Cameroons', The Geographical Journal, 3 (1894), 414-415; see also J. Andurain (d'), *La Capture de Samory (1898). L'achèvement de la conquête de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Saint-Cloud, 2012), 115-122

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[60] Mat-Goï, *Le Tonkin actuel, 1887-1890* (Paris, 1891)

[61] *ANOM*, INDO, nf 49, dossier 597, *« Note sur les opérations de police dans la région du Yênthé »*; De Tham's primary base was especially daunting in this regard.

[62] J. Gallieni, *Trois colonnes au Tonkin (1894-1895)* (Paris, 1899)

[63] Lieutenant Saillard, 'La télégraphie optique. Son rôle au Tonkin, son avenir', Journal des Sciences militaires, 32 (1886), 96-116

[64] *ANOM*, ALG, CONST, B3 219; *« Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916 »*

[65] *ANOM*, INDO, nf 49, dossier 597, *« Annexe No. 1 : Texte de la proclamation adressée par M. Morel, Résident Supérieur au Tonkin aux populations de la province de Bac-Giang »* ; *« Le Gouvernement Français avait accordé à Hoàng-hoa-Tham, il y a quelques années, de faire sa soumission, sous la réserve qu'il serait à l'avenir un honnête homme. Depuis cette époque, ce Chef pirate a manqué constamment à sa parole. Sa concession est devenue le refuge des empoisonneurs, des voleurs, des assassins, des brigands. Le Gouvernement dont toute la population honnête connaît les généreux sentiments, fatigué de la conduite odieuse de ce chef bandit, se décidé ; afin de soutenir la population travailleuse, et lui assurer la tranquillité, de mettre fin la situation actuelle du Yênthé et de placer cette région sous le régime commun… Le Gouvernement est fermement résolu à aller jusqu'au bout. Tout est prêt. Il récompensera tous ceux qui l'aideront. Livrez-lui le Dè-Tham qui a violé toutes lois. »*

[66] *ANOM*, ALG, CONST, B3 219; *« Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916 »*

[67] French references to their own 'domination' are rife in their colonial writings. Just one example here from Niger, 1917: *ANOM*, 14 MIOM 303, 1D216, bobbin 69; *« Rapport d'Operations – Causes qui ont nécessité la Colonne »*

[68] Thomas, *The French Colonial Mind*, vol. 2, 65

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[69] ibid., 54

[70] E. Aublet, *La Guerre au Dahomey, 1888-1893, d'après les documents officiels* (Paris, 1894)

[71] See C. Pietri, *Les Français au Niger : voyages et combats* (Paris, 1885) & D. Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal. The Western Sudan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1985)

[72] Samori or Samory. Y. Person, *Samori, une révolution dyula* (Dakar, 1968)

[73] G. Dujarric, *La vie du sultan Rabah : les Français au Tchad* (Paris, 1902)

[74] For more on this see: F. Correale, *La Grande Guerre des trafiquants: Le front colonial de l'Occident maghrébin* (Paris, 2014)

[75] This conflict was actually part of a much larger Senussi uprising which saw fighting in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Niger.

[76] K. Idrissa,*The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, 203 in J. Abbink, M. de Bruijn, & K. Van Walraven, *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden & Boston, 2003)

[77] Ibid.

[78] *ANOM*, 14 MIOM 862, 11G16, bobbin 222; *« Copie de Télégramme Officiel; Territoire Niger à Gouverneur Général; Zinder, 13 Octobre 1916 »* & *« M. Lutaud, Gouverneur Général de l'Algérie à M. Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères »; Alger, 17 Juillet 1916* among many other examples.

[79] Thomas, *The French Colonial Mind*, vol. 2, 6

[80] Colonel Péroz, 'La Tactique dans le Soudan - Première partie quelques combats et épisodes de guerre remarquables', Revue maritime et coloniale, (1890), 79-129

[81] Idrissa, *The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, 214

[82] A. Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War* (London, 1979), 160

[83] Thomas, *The French Colonial Mind*, vol. 2, 35

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[84] M. Mathieu, *La Mission Afrique Centrale* (Paris, 1995)

[85] G. Angoulvant, *La Pacification de la Côte d'Ivoire (1908-1915)* (Paris, 1916)

[86] L. Grandmaison (de), *En territoire militaire : l'expansion française au Tonkin* (Paris, 1898)

[87] E. M. Samya (ed.), *Les administrations coloniales XIXe-XXe siècles. Esquisse d'une histoire comparée,* (Rennes, 2009) & E. M. Samya (ed.), *Coloniser, pacifier, administrer* (Paris, 2014)

[88] H. Lyautey, *Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar (1894-1899),* tome 1 (Paris, 1920), *Lettre de Lyautey à son frère le 5 février 1895*. For more on this and on Madagascar see M. Finch, , *A Progressive Occupation? The Gallieni-Lyautey Method and Colonial Pacification in Tonkin and Madagascar, 1885-1900* (Oxford, 2013)

[89] F. Hellot, 'La Pacification de Madagascar', Journal des Sciences militaires, (1899), 5-56

[90] G. Boissier, *L'Afrique romaine, promenades archéologiques en Algérie et Tunisie* (Paris, 1895)

[91] J-L. Lanessan (de), *Principes de colonisation* (Paris, 1897)

[92] For example, Capitaine du Crosson, *L'ethnographie de la Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris, 1901) & Commandant Lunet de la Jonquières, *Ethnographie des territoires militaires* (Hanoï, 1904), publié ensuite sous le titre *Ethnographie du Tonkin septentrional* (Paris,1906)

[93] *ANOM*, ALG CONST B3 219; *« Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916 », 4-9*

[94] *ANOM*, FM, nf, carton 8, dossier 28 (1); *« Affaire dite le 'Complot de Saigon-Cholon', Cour Criminelle de Saigon du 5 au 13 Novembre 1913, Réquisitoire de M. le Procureur Général G. Michel »* ; *« Les Français, continuateurs des Grecs et des Romains, eurent toujours, de leurs devoirs de colonisateurs, une conception haute et grande, ils ne manquèrent jamais de repousser le concert de l'exploitation des races en tutelle ; et la théorie américain du Capitaine Mahan sur 'l'incompétence des races' ne trouvera jamais d'écho dans les cœurs français. »*

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[95] Lyautey, op. cit., lettre du 30 septembre 1895 ; *« La grande idée directrice de ces trois mois a été la mise sur pied d'un programme de liquidation totale de la piraterie du Tonkin »*

[96] Commandant Verraux, 'Monographie d'un chef pirate au Tonkin: le De-Tham', A travers le monde, (1898), 225-228

[97] H. Lyautey, *Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar (1894-1899)*, Tome 1 (Paris, 1920), *lettre du 29 avril 1895*.

[98] Francis Garnier was decapitated by the Black Flags in 1873, Charles Gordon by Mahdists in the Sudan in 1885; Mamadou Lamine decapitated his chief rival Omar Penda in April 1886; Mamadou's son was executed in the same manner by order of Gallieni in April 1887.

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