

Dangerous Liaisons: a ‘Big Four’ framework that provides a ‘hint’ to understanding an adversary’s strategy for influence

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Dangerous Liaisons

A 'Big Four' Framework that Provides a 'Hint' to Understanding an Adversary's Strategy for Influence

Neil Verrall, Mark Dunkley, Toby Gane and Richard Byrne

Beliefs, attitudes and behaviour can be influenced in myriad ways. History has consistently demonstrated the struggle between protagonist and antagonist to win over 'the people', often through the simultaneous promotion and destruction of places, icons, myths, symbols and stories. Neil Verrall, Mark Dunkley and Toby Gane, three army reserve officers, and Richard Byrne, an independent geographer, describe four interconnected ways in which hostile state actors or non-state terrorist groups might attempt to influence their target audiences as part of strategy.

This article emerged from a colloquium on 'the will to fight', an event held at the UK's Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 2018 by Specialist Group Military Intelligence, a unit of specialist expert reserve personnel within the British Army. Audience members and presenters came from technical, academic and professional backgrounds across the arts, humanities and social sciences to discuss how national myths, places and icons could impact the will to fight (or not to fight). Emerging from two days of presentations and discussion was a high-level, four-factor theoretical framework. This framework interconnected four superordinate constructs: cultural heritage (H); iconoclasm (I); narratives (N); and socio-political timing (T).

According to NATO doctrine, 'influence' is defined as 'the capacity to have an effect on the character or behaviour of someone or something, or the effect itself'.¹ Information Activities (IA) are a subset of influence and are defined as '[a]ctions designed to affect information and/or information systems. Information activities can be performed by any actor and include protection measures'.²

Within IA are Information Operations (IO), which are 'a staff function to analyse, plan, assess and integrate information activities to create desired effects on the will, understanding and capability of adversaries, potential adversaries and NAC [North Atlantic Council] approved audiences in support of Alliance mission objectives'.³ Therefore, influence, IA and IO work in concert, and are predominantly underpinned by knowledge from psychology and the social sciences.

Much of the underpinning knowledge explaining the mechanisms of persuasion and influence has focused on models, such as Robert Cialdini's six principles of persuasion,⁴ or the compendium of behaviour change theories,⁵ or reference documents.⁶ This research, and associated insights, tend to sit within distinct academic disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, behavioural economics or human geography, and as such they tend to focus on specific behavioural constructs and phenomena. All of this subconsciously focuses attention downward to the tactical delivery of influence for activities such as leaflet drops, radio

1. NATO, 'Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations', AJP-3.10, December 2015, p. 1-2. The definition quoted is from the Concise Oxford English Dictionary.
2. *Ibid.*, Lexicon-6.
3. *Ibid.*, Lexicon-6. The definition quoted is from NATO, 'NATO Military Policy on Information Operations', MC 422/4, 2012.
4. Robert B Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, revised edition (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2007).
5. Susan Michie et al., *ABC of Behaviour Change Theories* (Sutton: Silverback Publishing, 2014).
6. James Pamment et al., *Countering Information Influence Activities: The State of the Art* (Lund: Lund University, 2018).

The Great Mosque of Al-Nuri in Mosul after its destruction by Daesh, December 2018. Courtesy of PA Images/Khalil Dawood



broadcasts, television programmes, music, posters, graffiti, key leader engagement, and presence, posture and profile. One explanation for this focus on the tactical is that the military likes to be proactive and be seen to act, and because it does not tend to have behavioural science subject matter experts in uniform and in specific roles, it can more easily deliver relatively simplistic activities than have a higher and deeper appreciation of behavioural strategy; therefore, less emphasis has been placed on understanding and articulating the higher-level and interdisciplinary processes that may provide insights into influence as a *strategy*. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach that uses insights from the arts and humanities as well as the sciences (especially the psychological and social sciences) will provide a more rounded and considered appreciation and understanding of how beliefs, attitudes and observable behaviour can be shaped, motivated and expressed. Once one ponders the arts and humanities and their provision of understanding

and behavioural expression, an interesting, expansive and inclusive model of influence begins to take shape. This is evident within the latest Delivery Plan from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, which highlights issues such as understanding cultural value, languages in war, interdisciplinarity for contemporary challenges, and how to improve the reciprocal relations between science and the arts and humanities.⁷

It is assumed that better appreciation of social and cultural variables is important for contemporary warfare, especially given the lessons identified from recent counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, a review of published reports on the foundations,⁸ framing strategies,⁹ lessons,¹⁰ and future needs¹¹ of influence and information operations shows that there is a distinct absence of the requirement for higher-level understanding on topics such as heritage, iconoclasm, socio-political timing and compelling stories (narratives), although the term 'narrative' has become increasingly popular

7. Arts and Humanities Research Council and UK Research and Innovation, 'Delivery Plan 2019', 2019.
8. Eric V Larson et al., *Foundations of Effective Influence Operations: A Framework for Enhancing Army Capabilities* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2009).
9. Clifford T Howard, 'Influence Operations in Insurgencies: Identifying Framing Strategies for Special Warfare', master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 2014.
10. Michael Kofman et al., *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2017).
11. Eric V Larson et al., *Understanding Commanders' Information Needs for Influence Operations* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2009); Christopher Paul, 'Enhancing US Efforts to Inform, Influence, and Persuade', *Parameters* (Vol. 46, No. 3, Autumn 2016), pp. 88–97.

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Table 1: Mentions of Key Terms Within Relevant Military Doctrine

| | Heritage | Iconoclasm | Narrative | Timing* | Culture |
|--|----------|------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| NATO AJP 3.10 Information Operations (2015) | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 3 |
| NATO AJP 3.10.1 Psychological Operations (2014) | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 1 |
| US FM 3-13 Inform and Influence (2013) | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 18 |
| UKJDN 4/13 Culture and Human Terrain (2013) | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 155 |
| UKJDP 04 Understanding (2010) | 0 | 0 | 27 | 0 | 32 |

*Relates to political zeitgeist (of the moment) rather than the timing of military planning activities.

and regularly used since the late 2000s. To illustrate this point, Table 1 presents a keyword search of relevant influence-related doctrine, which finds no mention of the words ‘heritage’, ‘iconoclasm’ or ‘socio-political timing’, but numerous mentions of ‘narrative(s)’. One reason posited for this is that where the doctrine, reports or articles on influence, IA or IO refer to such high-level topics, the terms may be covered by the over-simplistic catch-all of ‘culture’ as well as being tacitly implied within subordinate frameworks such as: TAA (target audience analysis); PMESII-PT (political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, information systems, physical environment and time), ASCOPE (areas, social structure, capabilities, organisation, people and events), STEMPLES (social, technological, environmental, military, political, legal, economic, security) or PESTEL (political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal). Therefore, the aim of this article is to explicitly highlight topics such as heritage, iconoclasm, narratives and socio-political timing (HINT), and discuss them in relation to a strategy-level framework for understanding influence pathways.

Cultural Heritage

In January 2018, a Turkish airstrike destroyed much of the 3,000-year-old temple of Ain Dara during an attack on the Kurdish-held area of Afrin, in northwest Syria, 30 kilometres south of the Turkish border.¹² The temple is an important piece of late Bronze Age and Iron Age religious architecture and is one of the largest and most extensively excavated ancient structures in Syria. Famous for its intricate stone sculptures, the temple is protected under international law (as both Turkey and Syria are signatories to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict), but it was either deliberately targeted or was the victim of collateral damage by Turkish air forces during the offensive to sever Kurdish fighters’ access to the Turkish border. The irreversible damage at Ain Dara is yet another episode in the tragedy of the targeted destruction of standing archaeological remains at places such as the Mar Elian Monastery in Syria, and Nineveh in Iraq, as well as the frenzied and systematic iconoclasm and looting at Iraq’s Mosul Museum between 2014

12. *The Telegraph*, ‘Turkish Bombing Damages 3,000-Year-Old Temple in Northern Syria’, 29 January 2018.

and early 2018, which brought cultural heritage back to the centre stage of modern armed conflict.

Cultural heritage, as defined by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), comprises the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from *past* generations, maintained in the *present* and bestowed for the benefit of *future* generations. Examples of tangible artefacts include buildings, monuments, literature and art, while intangible examples include folklore, traditions, language and knowledge. One can also include semiotics as part of heritage because it is the study of signs, symbols and their meanings, which is highly relevant to heritage.¹³ In October 2016, the UN special rapporteur in the field of cultural rights asserted that cultural heritage is a human rights issue which requires a human rights approach. Beyond safeguarding a cultural object or historic building, such an approach obliges actors to take into account the rights of individuals and populations in relation to them; it is impossible to separate a people's cultural heritage from the people themselves and their rights.¹⁴

The weaponisation of cultural heritage is not a new phenomenon and conflict is rarely kind to art and antiquities. However, while Ahmad Al-Faqi Al-Mahdi's destruction of nine mausoleums and a mosque at Timbuktu in Mali in 2012 was a recognised tool of war and prosecuted as a war crime, state actors have conversely sought to preserve, promote, restore or simply invent cultural heritage in order to legitimise their actions.

An example of a preserved heritage is falconry in the Gulf Arab states. In 2010, the UAE led an initiative to have falconry registered under UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.¹⁵ Forming part of a romanticisation of the Arabian Peninsula's Bedouin past, falconry is described as a heritage sport but,

in contrast to their Bedouin ancestors, today's falconers in the Arabian Peninsula understand it as a distinctly *elite* sport where some birds have cost over \$80,000.¹⁶ The efforts to promote falconry have been part of a recent geopolitical trend to preserve and embrace heritage across the region where Arab falconry normalises the idea that only Gulf citizens belong on the Arabian Peninsula, as opposed to everyone else in the region who cannot claim falconry as their heritage or as part of their cultural identity.¹⁷ The heritage of falconry is therefore being used within a nationalist narrative about who truly belongs in the Arabian Peninsula.

In contrast, Russia is actively promoting cultural heritage as a means to achieve national security. The trend of the Kremlin's tilt towards anti-Western nationalism increased after massive protests against Vladimir Putin's third election in 2012 – the so-called Snow Revolution – which, some have argued, has turned Russia into a colonial prison of nations that takes a hardline approach to assimilating national minorities.¹⁸ As a result of this, Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020 addresses culture in two ways – domestically and externally.¹⁹ Domestically, there is recognition that social cohesion is improved by fostering the cultural unity of the federation's multi-ethnic peoples, while simultaneously resisting the historic cultural needs of 'marginal strata' (who are viewed as a threat to security in the cultural space). Externally, there is a will to use Russia's cultural potential to reach out to the 'near abroad', the international diaspora as part of the 'Russian world',²⁰ as well as in support of multilateral international cooperation.²¹

Maritime archaeology may seem an unlikely vehicle for claims of sovereignty, but there is evidence that China is promoting underwater cultural research to strengthen claims to disputed areas in the South China Sea. Since at least 2013, China

13. Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics, the Basics* (London: Routledge, 2017).

14. Karima Bennoune, 'Karima Bennoune: Cultural Heritage is a Human Rights Issue', UNESCO, 25 October 2016, <<https://en.unesco.org/news/karima-bennoune-cultural-heritage-human-rights-issue>>, accessed 21 February 2019.

15. *Gulf News*, 'UNESCO Registers Falconry as a Live Human Heritage', 18 November 2010.

16. Natalie Koch, 'Gulf Nationalism and Invented Traditions', memo presented as part of a workshop by the LSE Middle East Centre, 13 June 2018, <<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/08/03/gulf-nationalism-and-invented-traditions/>>, accessed 21 February 2019.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Paul A Goble, 'Russia was and Remains a "Prison of Nations", Moscow Writer Says', *Euromaidan Press*, 4 July 2016, <<http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/07/04/russia-was-and-remains-a-prison-house-of-nations-moscow-writer-says/>>, accessed 16 June 2019.

19. Keir Giles, review of 'Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020', NATO Defence College Research Division, pp. 7–8.

20. Mikhail Suslov, "'Russian World' Concept: Post-Soviet Geopolitical Ideology and the Logic of "Spheres of Influence", *Geopolitics* (Vol. 23, No. 2, January 2018), pp. 330–53.

21. Giles, review of 'Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020', p. 7.

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has been conducting underwater archaeological operations in the Spratley Island chain which it disputes with the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.²² Coupled with this, Chinese maritime units are enforcing the protection of underwater cultural sites by chasing away ‘unauthorized’ investigations in China’s claimed waters.²³ As such, China is using underwater archaeology as a means to strengthen its historical claims within the nine-dash line in the South China Sea. Another Chinese strategy to illustrate the promotion of cultural heritage is the restoration at the Angkor Archaeological Park in northern Cambodia, one of the most important archaeological sites in Southeast Asia, which has led to direct financial investment and military cooperation with China (such as the *Golden Dragon* joint exercise held in March 2019).²⁴ The park is a World Heritage Site and contains the remains of several capitals of the Khmer Empire. In 1992, the site was identified as being in danger due to damage and structural instability. The International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC-Angkor) was organised a year later by the UNESCO framework.²⁵ China, one of the members of ICC-Angkor, has since participated in international projects to help Cambodia preserve the historic ruins. Together with local officials, Chinese experts have spent eight years restoring the Ta Keo Temple – one of the most culturally representative buildings at the complex.²⁶ Restoration was completed in September 2018 as a way to celebrate both the 25th anniversary of ICC-Angkor and the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Cambodia. Both governments recognise that the Angkor ruins are a part of Cambodian identity and that ‘cultural tourism’ is a vital source of income

for many; after textiles, tourism is Cambodia’s most important industry, providing 28% of Cambodia’s GDP and 25% of employment (in 2017).²⁷ As US influence in the region weakens, the two countries are forming ever-closer ties – China has stepped in to provide billions of dollars in loans and new infrastructure projects, receiving in return diplomatic support for its quest for dominance in the South China Sea region.²⁸ The two countries also formed closer military ties and strategic partnerships following a 15-day joint exercise in central Cambodia in March 2018. The restoration of elements of Cambodia’s cultural heritage by China has opened the way for the Khmer nation to become a client state of Beijing.²⁹

Alternatively, the ‘Bosnian pyramid complex’ provides a useful case study of completely invented heritage. Since 2005, a Bosnian businessman has claimed that a cluster of natural hills in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the predominantly Bosniak region of Visoko, is the largest human-made ancient pyramids on Earth, providing evidence of a once-great civilisation.³⁰ The claims have been overwhelmingly refuted by experts, but the businessman continues to promote the area as a tourist attraction. Excavations in 2006 reshaped one of the hills, making it look like a stepped pyramid. Archaeologists have condemned the work as a hoax and are concerned about damage being done to the layers of genuine cultural heritage.³¹ However, the increased tourist footfall associated with the ‘complex’ has aided the economy of the region, located near the former front line of the war that destroyed so much of the country between 1992 and 1995, and many scholars have noted that the claims have been used for serious ideological, political and economic gains by various factions in Bosnia.³² At

22. Andrew S Erikson and Kevin Bond, ‘Archaeology and the South China Sea’, *The Diplomat*, 20 July 2015.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Mao Pengfei and Li Jiansu, ‘China, Cambodia Kick off Golden Dragon-2019 Joint Military Exercise’, 16 March 2019, *China Defence Blog*, <<https://china-defense.blogspot.com/2019/03/china-cambodia-kick-off-golden-dragon.html>>, accessed 16 June 2019.

25. *China Daily*, ‘China Helps Others Restore Heritage Sites’, 12 September 2018, available at *The Nation*, <<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/detail/asean-plus/30354277>>, accessed 21 February 2019.

26. *Ibid.*

27. World Bank Group, (2017) *World Bank East Asia and Pacific Economic Update October 2017: Balancing Act* (Washington DC: World Bank Publications, 2017), p. 91.

28. GlobalSecurity.org, ‘Cambodia - China Relations’, <<https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/cambodia/forrel-prc.htm>>, accessed 21 February 2019.

29. David Hutt, ‘How China Came to Dominate Cambodia’, *The Diplomat*, 1 September 2016.

30. Colin Woodward, ‘The Mystery of Bosnia’s Ancient Pyramids’, *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2009.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

least one prime minister and two presidents,³³ and many Bosnian news outlets, have welcomed the theory which appeals to Bosnian nationalists at a time of continuing economic and social difficulties since the war. Those in Bosnia who have attempted to expose the project as a nationalist hoax have been accused of being anti-Bosnian.³⁴

For state actors, cultural heritage has, to a greater or lesser extent, been weaponised as a component of a hybrid warfare campaign. Russia, for example, has projected state cultural policies to gain ideological influence and extend cultural soft power as part of a hybrid (or full-spectrum) approach, initially in Crimea, then in eastern Ukraine, and latterly in Syria.³⁵ In Ukraine, tangible cultural heritage has been used as a proxy for the protection of the cultural identity of ethnic Russians while increased recruitment into far-right volunteer battalions, such as the Azov Battalion which forms part of the military reserve of the National Guard of Ukraine, has coalesced around notions of identity and intangible cultural heritage. These groups comprise ethnic nationalists who wish to bring the fight to Kiev, while the erosion of the cultural identity of some Muslim communities has also been witnessed.³⁶ At the same time, and as means to create a new heritage narrative, the annexation of Crimea by Russia has seen the Ukrainian Orthodox Church specifically targeted; individual churches have been singled out and looted with only those demonstrating fealty to Moscow enjoying religious freedom.³⁷

Folklore is linked to cultural heritage by the UNESCO definition as previously cited, and as an intangible attribute of cultural heritage. It is worth briefly mentioning in this article because it is also subject to preservation, restoration and invention, as well as undermining and repurposing through

a form of cultural iconoclasm. Folklore can be broadly described as the traditional, yet dynamic, expressive culture of an ethnic and cultural group through informal person-to-person means. The methods of expressive culture are myriad and can relate to words, beliefs and objects (including signs and symbols, or semiotics) as projected through songs, jokes, poetry, music, legends, superstitions and tales.³⁸

Folklore can be used to provide legitimacy and to mobilise people, cognitively and physically. For example, it was used in the construction of national identity in 19th century Russian literature,³⁹ and has been assessed to contribute to the mobilisation of Russian cultural identity both at home⁴⁰ and abroad (both the 'near abroad' and the 'Russian world'). Between 1991 and 1995 as part of the Yugoslav Wars, the heroic Serbian warrior tradition, the *hajduk*, was used to construct perpetrator and victim identities, and to help encourage and justify the levels of violence.⁴¹ Folklore can be co-opted for political purposes,⁴² whereby politicians exploit the currency of nostalgic fantasy, ergo: 'politicians, both national and local, project [folklore] upon the territories they propose to govern'. 'Nationalist, populist, revolutionary, and colonialist scholars ... produce cultural objects in the hope of modeling social futures'.⁴³ Folklore is also used for revitalising movements⁴⁴ (whether they be social, political or socio-political) and this is evident in the revitalisation of Russian national identity in geopolitics.

Tangible and intangible cultural heritage is therefore being weaponised in three principal ways. First, public diplomacy and soft power are being employed through the preservation and restoration of heritage. Second, cultural heritage is being weaponised by extending the media influence of national and international state-owned, -funded

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. Mark Dunkley, 'The Russian Weaponization of Cultural Heritage', *British Army Review*, forthcoming.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Tony Wesolowsky, 'Struggling To Believe: Ukrainian Orthodox Church Under Pressure in Crimea', 18 April 2018, *Radio Free Europe*, <<https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-russia-struggling-to-believe-ukrainian-orthodox-church-in-crimea-struggles-to-survive/29175307.html>>, accessed 16 June 2019.

38. Regina F Bendix and Galit Hasan-Rokem (eds), *A Companion to Folklore* (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2012).

39. Jessika Aguilar, 'Folklore and the Construction of National Identity in Nineteenth Century Russian Literature', PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2015.

40. Ekaterina Khodzhaeva et al., 'Mobilizing Patriotism in Russia', *Russian Analytical Digest* (Vol. 207, 26 September 2017).

41. Stevan Bozanic, 'Masculinity and Mobilised Folklore: The Image of the Hajduk in the Creation of the Modern Serbian Warrior', MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2013.

42. Felix J Oinas, 'Folklore and Politics in the Soviet Union', *Slavic Review* (Vol. 32, No. 1, March 1973), pp. 45–58.

43. Dorothy Noyes, 'The Social Base of Folklore', in Bendix and Hasan-Rokem (eds), *A Companion to Folklore*, pp. 13–14.

44. Wendy Reich, 'The Uses of Folklore in Revitalization Movements', *Folklore* (Vol. 82, No. 3, Autumn 1971), pp. 233–44.

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Table 2: Forms of Iconoclasm

| | Destruction | Alteration |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Malevolent (Harm Against You) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Damnatio memoriae</i> • Disfiguring, damaging, sabotaging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft, hiding, burial • Disinformation (negative narrative) |
| Benevolent (Preservation for Me) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repurposing/redefinition • Acquiring / taking custody of • Disinformation (positive narrative) |

and -directed media networks that may be required to promote constructions of heritage or invent plausible cultural heritage with links to folklore. Finally, it is being weaponised by the protection of compatriots in the near abroad and wider diaspora, including access to appropriate cultural, ideological and patriotic information and education, which has been enforced through the application of hard(er) power – this is used to promote particular constructions of a given cultural heritage.

Current trends indicate an escalation in the weaponisation of heritage, both in terms of destruction and preservation as part of long-term national strategies and geopolitics. Heritage is also a fundamental resource for certain human rights including the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as the economic rights of the many people who earn a living through heritage-related tourism. Cultural heritage can also play a part in post-conflict stabilisation and the re-establishment of normalcy. The familiarity of local cultural assets provides an important part of social infrastructure and one that is often overlooked when faced with other pressing humanitarian needs. In this way, cultural heritage can, where used appropriately and sensitively, help people find home again.

Iconoclasm

The second contributing factor to the framework relates to the use of iconoclasm by state and non-state actors to alter or destroy elements of competing heritages. In contemporary geopolitics, iconoclasm can be seen to play a role in what is often referred to as the era of ‘constant competition’.⁴⁵ The etymological basis of the term ‘iconoclasm’ literally means ‘image breaking’⁴⁶ and was historically focused on the physical destruction of religious objects: sculptures; paintings; artefacts; and other material. A central thesis within iconoclasm is that objects and material point to meanings, which speak to the sacred or transcendent values of a particular group or culture (that is, symbolism). Therefore, iconoclasm seeks to damage an object’s materiality, meaning and legitimacy. It must also be deliberate and intended.

However, iconoclasm is not only about destruction. Iconoclasm can be viewed as a multidimensional construct along two axes (Table 2). The first axis refers to levels of destruction and covers iconoclastic activity that ranges between irreversible loss of physical integrity (that is, destruction or *damnatio memoriae*) and alteration, such as theft, disguise, and cultural repurposing

45. Michael Fallon, speech given at the RUSI Landwarfare Conference, 28 June 2017, <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/rusi-landwarfare-conference>>, accessed 16 June 2019.

46. Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay (eds), *Iconoclasm: Contested Objects, Contested Terms* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2007), p. 8.

and redefinition. The second axis refers to the iconoclast's intent and ranges between the intent to harm (malevolent iconoclasm) and the intent to preserve (benevolent iconoclasm).⁴⁷

Examples of these extremes include the rather hard-lined *damnatio memoriae* or the 'condemnation of memory', which seeks to eradicate a person from history and was particularly favoured by the Romans as a way to discredit and dishonour somebody. All signs of one's existence were removed from texts, paintings, statues and money. Extreme scenarios included the slaughter of the person's staff and supporters, as happened to the 3rd century Roman Emperor Septimius Geta Augustus, where it is estimated that 20,000 of Geta's staff were murdered and his memory nearly eradicated from history by his brother Caracalla.⁴⁸ The more subtle forms of iconoclasm (that is, soft malevolent or hard benevolent) can be viewed as 'draining away' meaning.⁴⁹ This includes tactics such as 're-purposing' – for example, building Christian churches on pagan sites, which is a form of destruction by restoration, and increasingly, the use of disinformation (the deliberate dissemination of false information with the deliberate intent to deceive or mislead).⁵⁰ Disinformation can be seen as a form of 'information iconoclasm' because, by its nature, it seeks to alter the representation and meaning of an image or text, as well as destroying competing information's value and position within the contemporary digital information space; this is also known as 'deepfake'.⁵¹

In recent armed conflict, the use of iconoclasm endures: for example, the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamyán in 2001 by the Afghan Taliban; the looting and destruction of the ancient site at Palmyra in 2015 by Daesh (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS); and, as mentioned earlier, the Turkish airstrike on the temple of Ain Dara in 2018, as well as the targeted destruction of

the Mar Elian Monastery in Syria, and Nineveh in Iraq. In Myanmar the military government has been accused of conducting *damnatio memoriae* against the Rohingya – a 2017 report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights suggested that the government was attempting to 'effectively erase all signs of memorable landmarks in the geography of the Rohingya landscape and memory in such a way that a return to their lands would yield nothing but a desolate and unrecognizable terrain'.⁵²

Iconoclasm has also played a role in recent resistance movements: for example, as part of the Arab uprisings in 2011, the 'Egyptian Mount Rushmore', a series of statues on the outskirts of Cairo, was defaced and damaged after the arrest of President Hosni Mubarak and the Soviet Army monument in Sofia has been the focus of attention on several occasions (Figure 1). In 2012 the depictions of soldiers were turned into ones of Superman, Santa Claus and other comic book characters. In 2013, activists painted the monument pink to apologise for the support that Bulgarian soldiers gave to the Soviet Union when it suppressed the Prague Spring in 1968, and in 2014 the monument was painted with the colours of the Ukrainian flag as a protest against Russian interventions in Ukrainian political affairs. It has even received a 'Pussy Riot' makeover to bring attention to the anti-Putin band and its harassment.⁵³

However, recent iconoclasm does not just relate to 'them'. The US Army helped Baghdad locals with the symbolic tearing down of a Saddam Hussein statue in Firdos Square in 2003, and also demolished a bronze statue of a mounted Saddam Hussein in his hometown of Tikrit. In 2000 a student defaced the statue of Winston Churchill in Central London during May Day riots, which for a short time afterwards caused outrage in the British press.⁵⁴ One interesting piece of subtle and benevolent iconoclasm sits in Horse Guards

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47. Fabio Rambelli and Eric Reinders, 'What Does Iconoclasm Create? What Does Preservation Destroy? Reflections on Iconoclasm in East Asia', in Boldrick and Clay (eds), *Iconoclasm*.
48. Eric R Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 168–84.
49. *Ibid.*
50. NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, *Digital Hydra: Security Implications of False Information Online* (Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2017).
51. Alan Zucconi, 'An Introduction to Deepfakes', 14 March 2018, <<https://www.alanzucconi.com/2018/03/14/introduction-to-deepfakes/>>, accessed 16 June 2018.
52. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Mission Report of OHCHR Rapid Response Mission to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh', 13–24 September 2017, p. 1.
53. *BBC News*, 'Bulgaria Soviet Monument in Sofia Gets Ukraine Twist', 25 February 2014.
54. *BBC News*, 'Violence at May Day Protest', 1 May 2000.

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Figure 1: Transformations of the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia



Source: *Original images, in order from top to bottom, courtesy of Spiritia/Wikimedia Commons; Ignat Ignev/Wikimedia Commons; Ignat Ignev/Wikimedia Commons; Ferran Cornellà/Wikimedia Commons.*

Parade in London. The ‘Turkish Gun’ was made in 1524 and captured by the British in Egypt in 1801.⁵⁵ The visual aesthetics of the gun appear to show an ornate Turkish cannon sitting on its carriage, but closer inspection uncovers the fact that the wheel and trail of the gun carriage are of British design and were ‘constructed in the Royal Carriage department founded by J&E Hall, Dartford’.⁵⁶ The hubs on the wheels display the heads of British lions and the trail is adorned with British military coats of arms, along with figures of Britannia reclining on her shield next to a lion while pointing at the Egyptian pyramids. Therefore, the only part of the gun that is Turkish is the barrel.

Additionally, the airbrushing of history has gained socio-political popularity in the West: for example, the removal of Confederate statues in the US as well as the defacing and removal of colonial statues, such as Cecil Rhodes, which began at the University of Cape Town in 2015 and spread through an online campaign (#RhodesMustFall) to reach international universities. Regardless of the socio-political motivations and reasoning for such campaigns, these are still acts of iconoclasm.

Laws can also be used as a legitimate means of conducting iconoclasm, in that they can simultaneously preserve one’s own heritage and curtail one’s opponent’s. The use of legal means to preserve preferred heritage (benevolent) and conduct iconoclasm (malevolent) is not new: for example, in 1643 during the English Civil War William Dowsing was appointed ‘Commissioner for the destruction of monuments of idolatry and superstition’.⁵⁷ Skip forward almost 400 years and the use of law is also being exploited in Russia with

the passing of several new Russian laws, including the non-governmental organisation law (2006),⁵⁸ monument protection zones (2016)⁵⁹ and Yarovaya law (2016).⁶⁰ There have also been recent proposed federal laws on culture and changes to taxation laws in order to recognise contemporary art as art, thereby opening up Russian art to a global market for internal economic benefit, but these laws have not yet been passed.⁶¹ The tightening of treason and terrorism laws has broad effects. These, such as the Yarovaya law: reduce religious freedom; suppress freedom of expression, assembly and association; curtail political opposition and campaigning; and reduce information freedom through wider surveillance and tighter online control.⁶² Russia is no worse or better at iconoclasm than any other nation throughout history. However, the last 100 years of political turmoil in Russia have witnessed iconoclasm used in a continuous cycle for post-Tsarist, post-Leninist, post-Stalinist and post-Soviet purposes. This has led some to suggest that ‘iconoclasm seems so very Russian’.⁶³ When viewed holistically, these legal changes serve a dual purpose of simultaneously preserving preferred heritage (Russian nationalism) while stymying undesired cultural change (Western influence) and could be viewed as a form of ‘pre-clasm’, that is, activities based on proactive prevention rather than reactive destruction, which again, gives intimation towards a strategy for influencing.

In summary, these various forms of iconoclasm point to the emergence of a broader transdisciplinary approach for studying iconoclasm. This is especially the case in a digital age, where images and words mean so much – therefore, if one changes the

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55. London Remembers, ‘Memorial: Turkish Gun’, <<https://www.londonremembers.com/memorials/turkish-gun>>, accessed 16 June 2018.
 56. Harry Miller, *Halls of Dartford, 1785–1985* (London: Hutchinson Benham, 1985).
 57. Trevor Cooper, *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia During the English Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001).
 58. ‘Federal Law #18-FZ, On Introducing Amendments into Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation 2006 (Russia)’.
 59. ‘Federal Law from the 5th of April 2016 N 95-FZ, On Introducing Amendments into Federal Law “About the Objects of Cultural Heritage (Monuments of History and Culture) of the Nations of the Russian Federation” and into Article 15 of the Federal Law “On the State Cadastre of the Real Estate / Real Property” 2016 (Russia)’.
 60. ‘Federal Law from 6 July 2016 N 374-FZ, On the Introduction of Amendments to the Federal Law “On Combating Terrorism” and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation to Establish Additional Measures to Combat Terrorism and Ensure Public Safety 2016 (Russia)’ (also known as the ‘Anti-Terror Law’ or ‘Yarovaya’s Law’).
 61. Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, <<http://www.mkrf.ru/en/>>, accessed 21 June 2019.
 62. Secretary General of the Council of Europe, ‘State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law: Populism – How Strong are Europe’s Checks and Balances?’, April 2017, p. 64.
 63. Richard Stites, ‘Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and Preserving the Past’, in Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez and Richard Stites (eds), *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 18.

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context, one may also change the meaning.⁶⁴ Iconoclasm still plays a part in contemporary conflict, as well as regional politics and geopolitics. The traditional form of iconoclasm as destruction is still evident, but the world is watching more closely than ever. Therefore, nuanced forms of iconoclasm are emerging as nation states seek subtler ways of changing or removing the value and meaning of competing heritage and cultural identity in an era of constant competition.

Narratives

The penultimate factor in the framework relates to the use of compelling and powerful stories in order to promote heritage and conduct iconoclasm. Narratives are part of storytelling, and storytelling is part of human evolution and the oral tradition. This is suitably captured by Brian Alleyne:

Narrative is ubiquitous to the human. It makes us human as well as being made by humans. The human is a storytelling creature. The passage of time shapes and is shaped by narrative, but how time is conceived varies socially and culturally. The creation and retelling of stories is found across societies and cultures.⁶⁵

The classical narrative structure of storytelling refers to the three-part framework of start–middle–end and reflects the basics of essay composition as taught in schools. This three-act structure is often attributed to Aristotle's *Poetics*⁶⁶ which introduces the concept of balance–imbalance–balance, possibly as a way of resolving psychological and social tension invoked by the emotional mechanisms that underpin the act of, and the reaction to, storytelling. The academic study of narratives is known as 'narratology' and has spawned a number of academic journals, research centres and annual conferences; and there are recognised structural

analyses for conceptualising the building blocks of narrative structure:⁶⁷ for example, Vladimir Propp's Character Theory, Tzvetan Todorov's Equilibrium Theory, Gustav Freytag's Pyramid, Roland Barthes's Hermeneutic Code, William Labov and Joshua Waletzky's Narrative Clause, and Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey.

The scientific study of narratives has improved over time, especially with the contribution of neuroscience.⁶⁸ The concept of narrative 'transportation' has been described as 'immersion or absorption into a narrative world' and research experiments have been conducted in order to closely study this phenomenon.⁶⁹ Transportation is a way of understanding how humans become emotionally and psycho-physiologically engrossed into a story. The best moviemakers understand transportation very well because they optimise the psychophysiological arousal mechanisms in humans through the combined use of image, word and sound to emotionally transport the viewer, thereby providing the viewer with a stronger and better experience, which is encoded into memory.⁷⁰

History is replete with narratives that may be less accurate or 'true' than some might assume

While it is accepted that narratives can extol a hegemonic tone and exert powerful feelings, this does not necessarily mean that historical or entrenched narratives need to be accurate or true. History is replete with narratives that may be less accurate or 'true' than some might assume. For example, it is assessed from historical research that the complement of Welshmen at the Battle of Rorke's Drift in 1879 was only about 20% Welsh,⁷¹

64. Megan E O'Neil et al., 'The New Iconoclasm', *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* (Vol. 10, No. 3, September 2014), pp. 377–85.

65. Brian Alleyne, *Narrative Networks: Storied Approaches in a Digital Age* (London: SAGE, 2014), p. 1.

66. Aristotle, *Poetics*, translation, introduction and notes by Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

67. Alleyne, *Narrative Networks*.

68. Raymond A Mar, 'The Neuropsychology of Narrative: Story Comprehension, Story Production and Their Interrelation', *Neuropsychologia* (Vol. 42, No. 10, 2004), pp. 1414–34; Paul J Zak, 'Why Inspiring Stories Make Us React: The Neuroscience of Narrative', *Cerebrum* (January/February 2015), pp. 1–15.

69. Melanie C Green and Timothy C Brock, 'The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (Vol. 79, No. 5, November 2000), p. 704.

70. Frederick Luis Aldama, 'The Science of Storytelling: Perspectives from Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, and the Humanities', *Projections* (Vol. 9, No. 1, 2015), pp. 80–95; Veerle Ros and Miklos Kiss, 'Disrupted PECMA Flows: A Cognitive Approach to the Experience of Narrative Complexity in Film', *Projections* (Vol. 12, No. 1, 2018), pp. 71–96.

71. Rorkesdriftvc.com, 'Popular Myths', <<http://www.rorkesdriftvc.com/myths/myths.htm>>, accessed 20 September 2018.

whereas the common assumption (reinforced by the famous 1964 film *Zulu*) is that they were a unit that was predominantly Welsh. Although the regimental depot had been established at Brecon, South Wales, in 1873, the county designation of the 24th Regiment in 1879 was the 2nd Warwickshires, who recruited from all over the UK, and they did not change their title to the South Wales Borderers until 1 July 1881, almost exactly two years after the Anglo-Zulu war had ended. Independence Day in the US is celebrated on 4 July annually; however, the vote by Congress was on 2 July 1776. Similarly, the UK voted to leave the EU on 23 June 2016 but its final leaving date is yet to play out; therefore, it will be interesting to see how history treats these dates and the associated narratives. In this way history can act as a form of false memory syndrome or self-deception because identifying with a powerful and compelling narrative fulfils one's desire for what one *wants to feel true* (emotions and feelings) rather than objectively assessing what one *knows to be true* (fact and truth). This is a form of cognitive dissonance where disinformation and misinformation can manifest through psychological mechanisms such as groupthink, confirmation bias and belief bias. Therefore, heritage can be exploited and iconoclasm can be maximised through the use of powerful and compelling narratives that may be less than completely accurate and honest, or complete fabrication.

Within a military context, the idea of narrative-led operations⁷² has been gaining traction in recent

years as it becomes increasingly recognised that narratives can help the military to understand and shape operations in complex conflict environments,⁷³ especially in an era of constant competition. The concept of a 'strategic narrative' can be used not just for national steerage as part of soft power,⁷⁴ but also for defence engagement at the strategic level of the military.⁷⁵ The US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency spent between \$20 million and \$30 million on its Narrative Networks Program 2012–16, which aimed to understand the underpinning neuroscience as to why narratives resonate with humans. Its main aim was to support the study of post-traumatic stress disorder in injured military personnel and veterans, but the study has broader application to the influence domain. Additionally, the US Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office is currently funding work into identifying and countering non-autonomous disinformation efforts as part of its irregular warfare programme. This research seeks to determine how, where and why adversary narratives reach and influence online.⁷⁶

Analyses and lessons from influence activities by other states show that stories and narrative play an important part in their strategy: for example, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru,⁷⁷ and China.⁷⁸ Russia is particularly steeped in the folklore and storytelling genre and several analyses have looked at how Russia uses narrative for global means,⁷⁹ regional means,⁸⁰ to mobilise compatriots,⁸¹ how it delivers narrative via social media⁸² and how narratives form part of

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72. Thomas Elkjer Nissen, 'Narrative Led Operations', *Militært Tidsskrift [Danish Military Journal]* (Vol. 141, No. 4, January 2013), pp. 67–77.
 73. Kathryn Tomlinson, 'Profiling and Influence Analysis: Storytelling for Change', Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, DSTL/TR34113, 2009; David Betz and Vaughan Phillips, 'Putting the Strategy back into Strategic Communications', *Defence Strategic Communications* (Vol. 3, Autumn 2017), pp. 41–70.
 74. The origin of the term 'soft power' is equivocal and has been attributed to both Joseph S Nye, Jr and Suzanne Nossel between 2003 and 2004.
 75. Laura Roselle, Alister Miskimmon and Ben O'Loughlin, 'Strategic Narrative: A New Means to Understand Soft Power', *Media, War & Conflict* (Vol. 7, No. 1, 2014), pp. 70–84.
 76. Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office, 'Broad Agency Announcement 18-S-3001', 4 January 2018.
 77. Christina Meyer, 'Underground Voices: Insurgent Propaganda in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru', RAND Note, RAND, 1991.
 78. Jyrki Kallio, 'Towards China's Strategic Narrative: On the Construction of the Historico-Cultural Roots of China's National Identity in the Light of the Chinese Debate Relating to the Rise of Traditional Schools of Thought', dissertation, University of Lapland, November 2016.
 79. Alister Miskimmon and Ben O'Loughlin, 'Russia's Narratives of Global Order: Great Power Legacies in a Polycentric World', *Politics and Governance* (Vol. 5, No. 3, September 2017), pp. 111–20.
 80. Ants Laaneots, *The Russian-Georgian War of 2008: Causes and Implication*, ENDC Occasional Papers 4/2016 (Tartu: Eesti Ülikoolide Kirjastus, 2016), pp. 1–108.
 81. Vera Zakem, Paul Saunders and Daniel Antoun, 'Mobilizing Compatriots: Russia's Strategy, Tactics, and Influence in the Former Soviet Union', Center for Naval Analyses, November 2015.
 82. Todd C Helmus et al., *Russian Social Media Influence: Understanding Russian Propaganda in Eastern Europe* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2018).

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long-term strategy delivered through various agents of influence (both knowingly and unwittingly).⁸³ By looking at the Western military's own effects-based language, effects terms can be identified that may be part of an adversary's influence objectives: for example, compel; convince; encourage; deceive; deter; discredit; empower; frighten; harass; induce; manipulate; mislead; prevent; protect; reassure; shape; and undermine. Therefore, it should be evident that heritage (physical and intangible) and iconoclasm can be used for political, social and cultural change, and that this is achieved through compelling stories and narratives that emotionally transport and influence the target audience.

Socio-Political Timing

From its first incarnation in Ireland in the 1790s through to today, Irish Republicanism has looked to Ireland's rich mythology to sustain and promote its cause. For many in the republican movement, Irish mythology embodies the movement's spirit and fortifies them in their struggle. It raises and embellishes both mythical and historical figures to support its political aspirations and adopts media, be it poetry, literature, drama or social media, to promulgate its message. Its strength is seen in words that promote deeds, belief and actions. Republican ideals and powerful rhetoric cannot be separated in this context and it is a heady mix which motivates people to acts of violence and political activity in equal measure. This is being 'refreshed' in the contemporary social and digital climate where images and identity are being weaponised alongside words and narrative.

The Celtic wondertales are based on four cycles: the Mythological Cycle; the Ulster Cycle; the Fenian Cycle; and the Historical Cycle.⁸⁴ These cycles contain tales of great heroes engaging in fantastical acts, but at their core is the theme of resistance against invaders and oppression.

The Mythological Cycle is the least well preserved of the four cycles and establishes the stories of the gods and the origins of the Irish. It begins the tales of the Irish struggle for

independence with *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* or *Book of Invasions*. The 1st century Ulster Cycle, based in the counties of Ulster and Connacht, contains arguably the most famous of Irish heroes, Cú Chulainn. The Ulster Cycle is at one level a heroic tale of friends, lovers and enemies but very much focuses on the struggles of small numbers of Irish fighting against overwhelming odds, with great sacrifice. For the republican movement this is a recurring theme. The 3rd century Fenian Cycle is concerned with the deeds of Irish heroes predominately in Leinster and Munster. This collection not only tells the tales of Irish-speaking Fionn mac Cumhaill and his band of soldiers, the Fianna – again reflecting the republican tenet of the impact of small groups of active resistance⁸⁵ – but also the reality that the struggle for Irish independence is a long game. The final cycle, the Historical Cycle or Cycles of the Kings, is largely mythological, but weaves historical figures into it, including the legendary warrior Brian Boru. Its core message is one of unity, which resonates with contemporary republicanism. Like many of the ancient European wondertales, such as the Welsh Mabinogion, they have been subject to medieval rewrites and revisions over time, which gives a glimpse into the way in which stories and history are adapted at different periods in time.

The Irish Republican movement arguably began in 1778 with the establishment of the first Irish Volunteers.⁸⁶ This 18th century movement gifted the modern republican movement its first 'modern' heroes of resistance. In 1791 the Society of United Irishmen was founded by Theobald Wolfe Tone and Thomas Russell.⁸⁷ Subsequent uprisings drew on the cumulative ideals of the cycles and Tone, inspiring the 1803 Irish Rebellion, under Robert Emmet. Despite being considered military failures, these figures entered the lexicon of Irish Republicanism and modern Irish mythology. Indeed, failure and tragedy, which would have crushed many movements, gave strength to the republican cause. The 1845–49 Great Famine brought republicanism to the fore as a political movement and internationalised the cause. Migrants from Ireland went to the US, predominantly New York, and were housed in crowded ghettos where a shared sense

83. Vladimir Sazonov, Kristiina Müür and Igor Kopõtin, 'Methods and Tools of Russian Information Operations Used Against Ukrainian Armed Forces: The Assessments of Ukrainian Experts', *ENDC Occasional Papers* (Vol. 6, 2017), pp. 52–66.

84. Frank Delaney, *Legends of the Celts* (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1991).

85. Lesa Ní Mhughhaile, 'Ossian and the Gaelic World', in Dafydd Moore (ed.), *The International Companion to James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2017).

86. Robert Kee, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism* (London: Penguin, Books, 2000).

87. Peter Neville, 'The Origins & Development of Irish Republicanism: Peter Neville Surveys the Growth of Republicanism in Ireland up to the Present Day', *History Review* (Vol. 40, 2001).

of survival and need for cultural unity drew upon tales from the ‘old country’ in order to influence a new generation of trans-Atlantic republicans. In 1858 Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa began organising the Phoenix National and Literary Society in the US;⁸⁸ with a focus on literature and the politicisation of wondertales, this helped to found the Fenian Brotherhood in the US, a powerful fundraising force linked to the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Ireland.⁸⁹

Irish Republicanism has looked to Ireland’s rich mythology to sustain and promote its cause

During the 20th century republican ideology faced many challenges. The economy was weak after the famine and was heavily dependent on both trade and remittances from Irish workers in Britain.⁹⁰ In addition to large-scale migration to both the US and Great Britain, those remaining were generally of low literacy and were exposed to British counterinsurgency activities.⁹¹ Again, the republican movement used the oral tradition in order to reach out to the diaspora. However, people were tired of the old heroes: they did not resonate with individuals’ present situation. Therefore, new myths were created to fill this need. The mythical Kathleen Ni Houlihan stepped into this role. Created by William Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory in 1902, she came to personify Ireland to such an extent that many believed she was a real figure.⁹² She is portrayed as a poor homeless woman who encourages the young men to sacrifice themselves to free and redeem Ireland. She became a powerful mother figure seeking to deliver a future Ireland through sacrifice in the present.

The 1916 Easter Rising by the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic, *Saorstát*

Éireann, and the Army of the Irish Republic gave the republican movement not only the ‘Proclamation’ but a new Fianna and a new set of martyrs. Patrick (Pádraig) Pearse was a co-author and signatory of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, which was read out aloud on the steps of the Dublin General Post Office on Easter Monday, 24 April 1916. Pearse, a student of Irish literature, was deeply influenced by the Ulster Cycle of legends and myths associated with Cù Chulainn.⁹³ He was acutely aware of the power of the press and this ‘performance’ on the steps was key to reaching out not only across Ireland’s population, but across the Atlantic. Pearse was executed on 3 May 1916 at Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin. The execution of Pearse and his compatriots by the British authorities added more martyrs to the republican cause and created a further link with the mythical Fianna.

The solidification within republican ranks was the legacy of the 1916 uprising. While heroes were important, the creation of small independent units, collective resistance, unity and loyalty became the dominant narrative.⁹⁴ The bloody Irish Civil War split the country yet it reinforced the notion of gender equality within the republican movement, as the role of women in the movement transitioned from being *supporters* to *fighters*, with women contributing to the full range of roles, such as combat, logistics and intelligence.⁹⁵ This not only addressed a shortage of male fighters but also supported a section of the proclamation, which mentions gender equality.

Following the Second World War, the republican movement in Ulster saw a return to the past to promote the cause. Just as the British Army looks to its history for its identity and cohesion, so did the Provisional Irish Republican Army. The spirit of Kathleen Ni Houlihan was once again invoked in a call to offer her sons to ‘the cause’.⁹⁶ The language of the period clearly invoked not only Cù Chulainn but also Tone and the martyrs of 1916.

88. Seán Ó Lúing, trans. Patrick McWilliams, *O’Donovan Rossa: An Irish Revolutionary in America* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016).

89. Shane Kenna, *Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa: Unrepentant Fenian* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2015).

90. Edward J O’Boyle, ‘Classical Economics and the Great Irish Famine: A Study in Limits’, *Forum for Social Economics* (Vol. 35, No. 2, Fall 2006).

91. Frank Rynne, ‘The Great Famine in Nationalist and Land League Propaganda 1879–1882’, *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain* (Vol. 12, 2015).

92. Michael Cox (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Chronology of English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

93. Sean Ferrell Moran, *Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption: The Mind of the Easter Rising, 1919* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997).

94. Joseph McKenna, *Guerrilla Warfare in the Irish War of Independence, 1919–1921* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2011).

95. Cal McCarthy, *Cumann na mBan and the Irish Revolution* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2014).

96. Stephanie J Pocock, ‘Artistic Liminality: Yeats’s Cathleen ni Houlihan and Purgatory’, *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* (Vol. 12, No. 3, Fómhar/Autumn 2008), pp. 99–117.

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The resurgence of Irish Gaelic within the H-Block prison system among republican prisoners further drove their identity, separating them linguistically as well as ideologically from their fellow Unionist prison population.⁹⁷ Outside of the main republican movement, the identity with the Republic of Ireland manifested itself through the flying of the Irish Tricolour. This was a direct challenge to the British state – the 1954 Flags and Emblems Act effectively banned the flying of the Irish tricolour in Northern Ireland. Again, the authorities miscalculated the response, and this fed into the republican psyche of being a victim of oppression and martyrdom. As the numbers of interred men increased, the republican movement looked to women again to fill its ranks. In Irish mythology women have been variously cast as heroes and victims. The 1916 uprising had demonstrated the value of women for paramilitary undertaking, with women like Constance Markievicz taking leading roles in the fighting and being subsequently mythologised. Women now moved to the fore, being portrayed as fully part of the resistance rather than victims, effectively putting Kathleen Ni Hoolihan to rest.

The HINT framework also helps to uncover strategy and/or stratagem

The Good Friday Agreement arguably ended the armed conflict in Northern Ireland; however, terrorist and organised crime activity undoubtedly continues, and republicanism has not ended. It has morphed and adapted into ‘social’ republicanism. It is now a far more female-focused movement which has returned to the Proclamation for its inspiration.⁹⁸ As a movement it now talks of equality, human rights, development and education – replacing the language of resistance with the language of civil society. Just as Kathleen Ni Hoolihan was created to appeal to a new base, the current incarnation of the republican movement is looking to the past to give credibility and historical provenance to its current policies. Gone are the images of the cycles, which are now replaced by Markievicz. Social media memes promote a vision of a free, equal, unified Ireland. The martyrs of the uprising

and the hunger strikes have not gone entirely, but they have largely been eclipsed by more palatable and contemporary socio-political messages from history, which appeal to a new target audience of a new and different generation. Sacrifice is no longer portrayed as making the ultimate sacrifice; rather, a message that political aims are achievable through civil and liberal society is being pushed.

Republicanism has survived and been sustained by being flexible and adaptable. This requires an ability to spot shifts in socio-political feeling and makes use of adroit socio-political timing. It has used heritage and narrative skilfully, when the socio-political climate provides the opportunity to communicate and act. When used smartly, this can be a powerful motivational and recruiting tool. While not always successful, republicans have learned and adapted.

Realising the HINT Framework

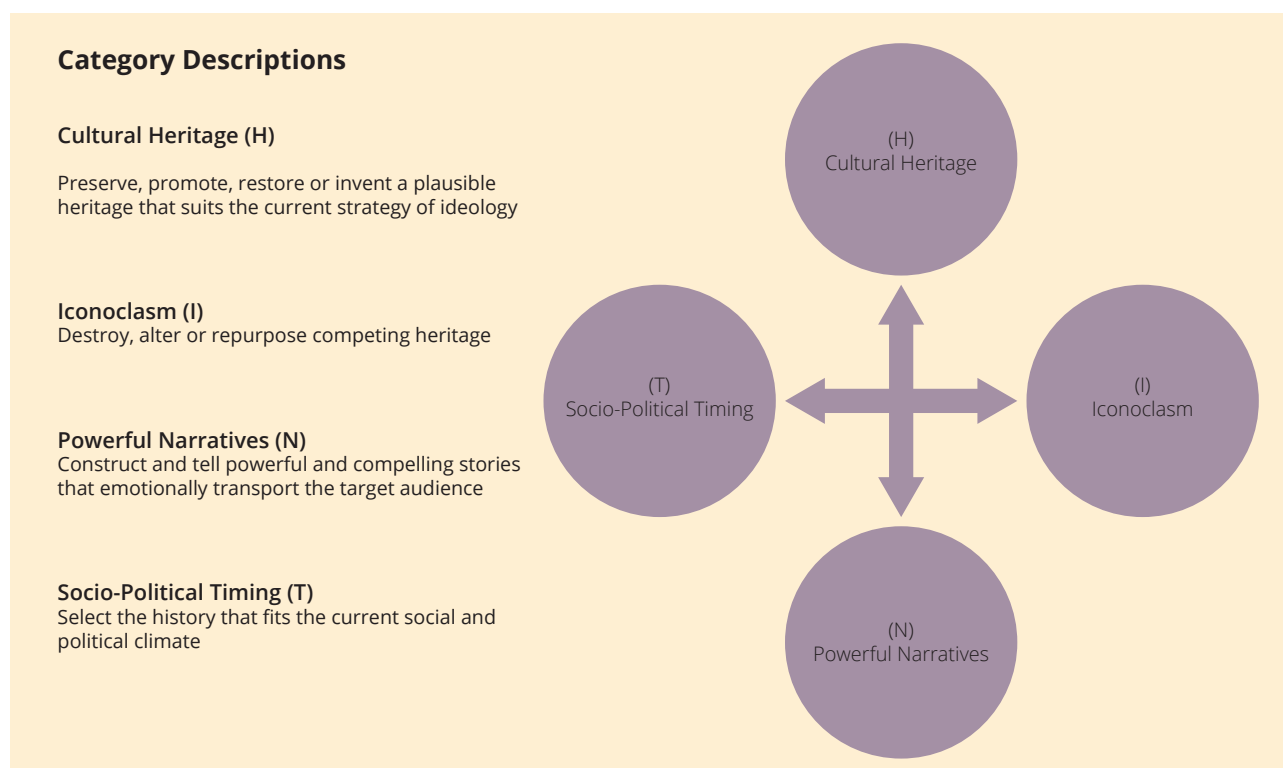
Figure 2 illustrates HINT. It describes four key influence pathways that occur at a high level: what a group *promotes* (cultural heritage); what it *destroys* (iconoclasm); *how* it does it (compelling stories); and *when* it does it (socio-political timing). The dynamic interrelationship between these four factors creates a powerful framework to influence populations in terms of their beliefs (what they strongly believe), perceptions and attitudes (what they think), and, ultimately, behaviour (what they do). When laid on top of other existing frameworks (such as TAA, PMESII-PT, ASCOPE, STEMPLES or PESTEL) it acts as a useful handrail to inform various forms of assessments and analysis, such as human terrain analysis, joint effects analysis and intelligence assessments.

The HINT framework also helps to uncover strategy and/or stratagem. Individual activities conducted under the constituent parts of HINT may appear independent and unconnected to the untrained or unfocused eye, but when monitored and analysed in concert, a pattern of interconnected activities and behaviours starts to uncover a strategy. This strategy will likely show a range of activities conducted by disparate disciplines and approaches, via multiple channels, across physical and virtual/

97. Feargal Mac Ionnrachtaigh, *Language, Resistance and Revival: Republican Prisoners and the Irish Language in the North of Ireland* (London: Pluto Press, 2013).

98. Danielle Roberts, “‘Mum-of-Two, 40’: But Women Rise to the Top in Northern Irish Politics”, Democratic Audit UK, 4 November 2017, <<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/80407/1/democraticaudit.com-Mum-of-two%2040%20but%20women%20rise%20to%20the%20top%20in%20Northern%20Irish%20politics.pdf>>, accessed 10 June 2019.

Figure 2: The HINT Framework



Source: *The authors.*

digital space and across the longer term (strategic), medium term (operational) and short term (tactical). Adopting HINT to consider strategy ‘suggests an ability to look up from the short term and the trivial to view the long term and the essential, to address causes rather than symptoms, to see woods rather than trees.’⁹⁹

HINT also supports the information advantage doctrine.¹⁰⁰ This doctrine reflects the view that credible advantage can only be gained through the continuous, adaptive, decisive and resilient employment of information and information systems. This is especially the case in an era of constant competition, where information must be weaponised if it is to be used from strategic to tactical levels for competitive advantage. In support of this, the individual HINT factors directly contribute to two of the four pillars of the doctrine: (1) information as an enabler (Enhance Understanding); and (2) information as an effector (Behavioural Analytics). Consequently, HINT also seamlessly supports the army’s contribution to information advantage – which is its information

manoeuvre concept – whereby HINT also contributes to the four outputs of understand, communicate, persuade and protect throughout the physical, virtual and cognitive dimensions.

Finally, it should be remembered that this is a *theoretical* framework and not a scientifically proven model. It is meant to act as a handrail in order to help develop a better level of understanding, and as such it can be edited or ignored, but it is hoped that it can be easily remembered and used to guide subsequent analysis and understanding.

Implications for Fighting Power

If successfully considered, designed and delivered, HINT should influence character and behaviour by affecting will, understanding and capability. This undermines an opponent’s fighting power by striking at the moral component of fighting power (the will to fight), whereby HINT contributes to the demotivation of opposing forces and target audiences, as well as motivating one’s own force to

99. Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. ix.

100. Ministry of Defence, ‘Information Advantage’, Joint Concept Note 2/18, November 2018.

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fight and galvanise its own population: what works for one's own forces works against those of the enemy, and vice versa. In reference to the human component of fighting power, the UK Defence Doctrine (JDP 0-01) asserts that:

Fighting power may be enhanced by applying scientific expertise relating to the social, psychological and behavioural aspects of human behaviour. Understanding group dynamics and people's motivations supports assessments of likely behaviour in complex situations

...

[w]hen assessing the situation, our commanders must understand the context in which they are applying fighting power.¹⁰¹

To support fighting power, JDP 0-01 identifies several areas that require socio-cultural and socio-technical understanding in order to address 'the vagaries of human nature'¹⁰² that shape the likelihood of success on operations:

- The character of the situation.
- The environment.
- The opponent.
- Allies, partners and other agencies.
- Culture and history.

Therefore, it can be seen how HINT has a role to play in both influence and counter-influence; and in the case of Western and/or coalition operations the use of HINT is kept in check by legal considerations within the Law of Armed Conflict,¹⁰³ the UNESCO Protection of Cultural Property Military Manual,¹⁰⁴ and the Rules of Engagement and Targeting Directives. In the counter-influence role, HINT allows firstly for understanding and then disruption of adversary efforts, especially when these efforts are false and/or contravene the rules-based international system.

Conclusion

This new framework has not been created for the sake of it. The original idea was not to create a framework but simply to discuss interesting topics involving the will to fight; however, a framework emerged through debate about topics that are rarely considered in sufficient detail when trying to understand the strategies of adversaries and the beliefs and motivations of target audiences. The evidence and discussion in this article demonstrate that factors such as cultural heritage, iconoclasm and socio-political timing are as relevant to influence as are narratives, yet they are not adequately reflected in existing doctrine and frameworks. Thus, it is insufficient to refer to these factors under broad umbrella terms such as 'culture' because they involve independent but highly related topics through which all other aspects of culture and behaviour operate.

Finally, HINT also allows senior decision-makers to expose the false or inappropriate use of heritage and stories, as well as acts of iconoclasm. This counter-activity could be enabled through the use of open source units and citizen analysts such as StopFake, *Bellingcat* and other 'digital detectives',¹⁰⁵ as well as established 'in-house' specialist units and intelligence analysis. Regardless of who conducts it, there is a requirement to broaden the skills base to include people from the arts and humanities community. This is already underway with the forming of the British Army's Cultural Property Protection Unit and the employment of specialists within Specialist Group Military Intelligence, the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit and 77th Brigade. ■

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101. Ministry of Defence, 'UK Defence Doctrine', JDP 0-01, 5th edition, November 2014, pp. 26–27.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

103. Ministry of Defence, 'The Joint Service Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict', JSP 383, 2004 edition.

104. Roger O'Keefe et al., *Protection of Cultural Property: Military Manual* (Paris: UNESCO, 2016).

105. Eliot Higgins, 'New Generation of Digital Detectives Fight to Keep Russia Honest', *StopFake.org*, 15 July 2016.