Neutralities, safeguards, „accommodements“: Micro-history of local arrangements alleviating experiences of war and occupation

Veranstalter: Christian Windler, Historisches Institut, University of Bern; Jean-François Chanet, Université de Lille III
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Bericht von: Tilman Haug, Alexander Keese, Carine Neuenschwander, Nadir Weber, Historisches Institut, University of Bern

Swiss neutrality has been a fascinating topic, since being explicitly formulated as a diplomatic rule at the Congress of Vienna and since its academic discovery through the works of Edgar Bonjour. However, it is tempting to ask if (and to which point) the Swiss case is really particular in early modern European practices. This brings us to the phenomenon of neutralisation and safeguards, which were a common strategy of non-participation in armed conflict during the war-torn period of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The conference addressed those issues including examples from maritime spaces and mountainous Franco-Spanish border zones, but also from the main war theatres such as Burgundy, the Spanish Netherlands, Northern France, and from different territories of the Holy Roman Empire.

SERGE BRUNET's (Montpellier) paper discussed the loyalties of subjects in the valleys of the Pyrenees. The mountain range in the early modern period appears as a space whose definition as a frontier region was persistently challenged by the border populations. Given the reliance of villagers' welfare on the success of regional transhumance, locals attempted to protect their cattle herds from seizure in the case of an outbreak of war. In the framework of the *lies et passeries*, the villagers engaged in a behaviour of mutual respect for the neighbours' possessions. This included warnings given to the same neighbours regarding the presence of troops, and even mutual help. The special relations survived well the religious turmoil and inner-French warfare to the 1590s, and disappeared only slowly and against local resistance in the 17th century, due to an increase of the crowns' fiscal and military activities that led to a stronger fortification of the borderline.

PIERRE POUJADE (Toulouse) pointed to the role of long-distance trade in those relations of Pyrenean valley-men. As merchants utilised the smuggling networks in the valleys, the border populations initially had a stake in the trade. Such commerce was particularly successful in periods of warfare, with peaks of commercial profit in the war years from 1636 to 1647 or at the restart of war in 1651/52. It had an important impact when it came to providing support for 'hostile' armies. In the second half of the 17th century, it was, however, increasingly the long-distance merchants, which profited most from the maintenance of such connections, to the detriment of the valley-men. In total, practices of local 'neutrality' expressed a wish of non-participation in one's ruler's military activities in the interest of local economic well-being.

The papers of CHRISTIAN WINDLER (Berne) and MARTIAL GANTELET (Metz) shifted the focus to questions of local elite politics in the County of Burgundy and in the region of Metz in the 16th and 17th century. Windler held that the County of Burgundy, although being part of the Spanish monarchy, attempted its best to remain explicitly neutral in the conflicts between the French and the Spanish monarchy. In spite of increasing anger of the court of Madrid, such practices were feasible in the framework of a composite monarchy. Moreover, the payment of large contributions as safeguard to the French crown from the 1640ies possibly prepared the transfer of power in Burgundy, as becoming inevitable through the French conquest of 1674.

The study of 17th-century Metz, a badly defended French semi-enclave close to Spanish Luxemburg, shows similar mechanisms. Gantelet illustrated that peasant communities relying on an established system of defence positions pursued nonetheless the conclusion of safeguards with the Spanish governor of Thionville. From 1642, the city of Metz monopolised the formerly unsystematic local arrangements in a collective system. Through payment of a general contribution, this secured as well the lucrative commerce towards Treves and Frankfurt. Although the French go-

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vernor protested strongly against the neutralisation practices, he did not have a clear-cut intention to disrupt the system. In spite of a royal interdiction, 17th-century elites of Metz continued to protect themselves through safeguards from the potential ravages of Spanish incursions.

The case of Spanish and French Flanders in the 16th century as discussed by JOSÉ JAVIER RUIZ IBÁÑEZ (Murcia) shows patterns of neutralisation as extraction of contributions. Under the impression of Spanish military advance against the armies of Henry IV in the 1590s, many towns under French rule attempted to protect themselves through the means of safeguards. As in the case of the city of Guise, the measure could integrally save an urban centre from destruction; while Calais, whose council and crown agents-on-the-spot could not consent to such a strategy, was pillaged and destroyed in 1595. The safeguards transformed the North of France in a neutral zone spared from looting and in a pillage zone further south that was severely plundered by Spanish troops. Nonetheless, the safeguarded cities had to pay dearly for their safety: in the end, the Spanish military leaders relied on French practices of taxation like the *taille* to extort the contributions.

The analysis of SANDRINE PICAUD-MONNERAT (Berne) focusing on the towns of Hainault Province – then under Austrian rule – during the War of Austrian Succession, shows a slow but visible moderation of war practices. Safeguards and *accommodements* play a prominent role in this, as they allowed in the cases of French conquest of towns like Charleroi, Namur or Mons, to take over the urban centres without plunder. The concession of passports was also generously practised. Outrageous practices of violence continued to exist, as during the pillage of Bergen-op-Zoom. However, the latter event was a dramatic exception in a region where war against civilians became now less brutal.

The same sacking of Bergen-op-Zoom is taken by CATHERINE DENYS (Lille) as an important turning point in the treatment of civilians in the Southern Netherlands. Protection of cities through safeguards and better treatment of conquered populations became prevalent. Denys argues that such practices correspond to increasing regulation of *individual* violence in the early modern period. However, the Southern Netherlands are an extreme case. Local populations living in this near-permanent war region had an obvious know-how to lead negotiations; and the high level of urbanisation gave mostly urban subjects a strong position. Moreover, French commanders were eager to show the benevolence of their king as potential future ruler over the territory.

Attempts for neutralisation are also typical regarding maritime space as between the French and the Spanish in the Bay of Biscay. ELIZABETH TINGLE (Plymouth) discussed relations between the port cities of Nantes and Bilbao. In the 1560s, hundreds of French merchants were based in Bilbao, and a growing number of Spaniards, mostly Basques, settled in the French port at the Loire River. However, Philipp II's attempts to make Brittany a duchy under Spanish control during the French Wars of Religion undermined maritime neutrality.

In the Channel, the situation tended to be more stable concerning agreements about fishery rights and trade. RENAUD MORIEUX (Lille) characterised the engagement of port cities at both sides of the Channel to protect themselves from the seizure of ships and goods. Port cities such as Harwich and Dunkirk negotiated on different levels, including crown agents and members of Parliament, and the courts of London and Versailles respectively. The existence of vast smuggling *réseaux*, between Devon and Cornwall and Brittany and Normandy and between the Channel Islands and the Pas de Calais, complicated matters. It was not untypical that a smuggling ship under British flag had a French-speaking captain and a majority of French-speaking seamen! Finally, neutralisation as a method to facilitate everyday life on the Channel was contradicted by corsairs of both sides using the neutralised zones as hideouts.

'Untrusted credibility' was also essential for relations between Christians and Muslims in the Mediterranean. WOLFGANG KAISER (Paris) highlighted the ongoing process of regulation in commerce between North Africans and subjects of European crowns. Those rules allowed for a certain freedom of movement. Goods could be transported by ships

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under ‘neutral’ flags. Even more, Christians having converted to Islam obtained occasions to meet family members at the Italian coast! Improved conditions of exchange of prisoners transformed some places in neutral zones, while Lampedusa Island even became a safe haven for refugee galley slaves from both religious camps.

MICHAEL KAISER’s (Cologne) view on the Brandenburg territories of Cleves and Mark discussed the relation of long-term occupation and neutralisation to the dynamics of state-building. After 1609/1610, Brandenburg formally secured territorial rule over the two territories. However, both fell under permanent Dutch occupation, mostly with the consent of the regional estates. The costly Dutch presence spared the territories from the conflicts of the 17th century, and left to their estates a large political autonomy towards the Brandenburg dynasty. The attack of Louis XIV against the Dutch Republic in 1672 brought Cleves and Mark under the control of the „Great Elector“ Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg. The inhabitants of Mark and Cleves would regard the presence of Brandenburg troops as the occupation of a foreign army.

For the city of Hamburg, a neutral position in the conflicts of the 17th century was vital for issues of trade. According to THOMAS LAU (Fribourg), during the wars from 1676 and from 1689, the imperial court demanded the city to join campaigns against France. The Hamburg council, unwilling to cut the links to an important partner in trade like France, refused to comply and maintained de facto neutrality, in spite of internal fissures in Hamburg’s elite and society. The Hamburg magistrate emphasised the city’s position as a „republic“ to defend its neutral attitude. Even in the 1690s, when Hamburg would have to pay at least lip service to the anti-French campaign, the limits of Hamburg’s engagement were clearly visible.

The papers of FRANK KLEINEHAGENBROCK (Würzburg) and HORST CARL (Giessen) focused more strongly on concrete practices of neutralisation in Imperial territories in cases of war. The counties of Wertheim and Hohenlohe during the Thirty Years War, as analysed by Kleinehagebrock, attempted to negotiate safeguards with the French occupiers. Bailiffs of the ruler would now play a rather influential role in those processes. Nonetheless, local initiative was still dominant in the negotiation of safeguards, as they depended on the interplay between local populations, local elites and French officers.

Horst Carl demonstrated that in the territories of Hesse occupied by the French during the Seven Years War, the authority of the ruler was maintained only on the official level. Contributions were paid locally to an official French exchequer. This minimised violence against civilians, including looting and pillages. However, in contrast to the Southern Netherlands, Hesse lacked a tradition of negotiating such safeguards, which added to difficulties in the process. According to Carl, there are no signs of such tendencies increasing in the course of the 18th century, as French Revolutionary armies were not less violent than their royal predecessors. It is important to emphasise that in both cases practices of co-operation were locally found and cannot be termed as ‘collaboration’ with the enemy, nor were they regarded as such by the protagonists of the period.

The last part of the conference focused on the Swiss Confederation. The discussants revised the popular idea that Swiss neutrality was a voluntary principle chosen after military defeat at Marignano in 1515. They refuted as well the hypothesis that Swiss neutrality was an invented tradition of the 19th century as held by Andreas Suter. The discussants saw the roots of the Swiss concept of neutrality in constellations of the 17th century.

ANDRÉ HOLENSTEIN (Berne) regarded Swiss neutrality as a product of particular experiences made with the political polarisation during the Thirty Years War. While biconfessionalism had become a principle of the confederation in 1531, it was threatened by confessional alliances among several cantons. Moreover, by their very central geographic position, the cantons were interesting allies for the European powers. Consequently, in the 1630s, the Swedish crown led secret negotiations with the Protestant cantons. In 1632, Zurich’s plans for a Swedish alliance pushed the confederation to the brink of a rupture on confessional lines. A declaration of the cantons guaranteeing neutrality and prohibiting

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the passage of the confederation's territory by foreign troops helped to avoid an open crisis. Many cantonal statesmen believed that only the commitment to neutrality secured the autonomy of the cantons. This decision broke the confessional deadlock, while forestalling as well the confederation's evolution towards becoming a more centralised territorial unit.

The territory of Neuchâtel was ruled from the 16th century by a part of the French family of Orléans-Longueville. As shown by ALEXANDRE DAFFLON (Neuchâtel), Swiss guarantees allowed the citizens of Neuchâtel to remain neutral during the Thirty Years War, in particular with regard to its relations to the County of Burgundy attacked by the French. The members of the confederation even considered integrating the territory in the Helvetic ensemble, which was, however, impossible, due to the paralysis of Swiss political structures.

THOMAS MAISSEN (Heidelberg) complemented Holenstein's analysis referring to the evolution of Swiss neutral behaviour as a consequence of the Thirty Years War. A pragmatic decision became, thus, an integral part of the raison d'être of Swiss elite society. At the same time, Swiss and foreign observers had distanced themselves from the general idea of a „bellum iustum". While still in 1632, pamphleteers in the Swiss cantons had discussed the „shameful and horrible false neutrality", the tone changed until the end of the 17th century. The concept of neutrality was traced back to founding events, like the defeat of 1515, and supported by recourse to moral authorities such as Niklaus von Flüe or by metaphors of political intelligence. Neutrality had finally become a fully legitimate option for the sovereign republic.

The closing debate repeated the fact that in European war theatres, safeguards frequently were a sort of blackmail and financial extortion. Switzerland was clearly identified as a case whose outstandingness can be explained from the needs of the confederation's members to maintain an advantageous minimal cohesion. This motive does not exist in the other cases. Finally, discussants concluded that the cases treated have to be compared to examples regarding practices between European and non-Europeans, as the enlargement of the perspective could generate interesting comparisons on the details of the interaction.

Conference-overview:

Neutralities, safeguards, „accommodements": Micro-history of local arrangements under conditions of war and occupation

I. Frontier spaces between the kingdom of France and the Catholic Monarchy, 16th-17th century
Serge Brunet, Entre pastoralisme, commerce et défense mutuelle: les *lies et passeries* des Pyrénées et la genèse de la frontière (XIVe-XVIIe siècle)
Patrice Poujade, Les réseaux marchands pyrénéens et la pratique du commerce en temps de guerre
Christian Windler, Les pratiques de neutralisation et de sauvegarde dans l'espace bourguignon (Comté et Duché de Bourgogne)
José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, La guerre, les princes et les paysans. Les pratiques de neutralisation et de sauvegarde dans les Pays-Bas et au Nord du royaume de France au XVIe et au début du XVIIe siècle
Catherine Denys, Quelques réflexions sur la violence de guerre aux Pays-Bas méridionaux aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles
Martial Gantelet, Réguler la guerre entre la France et l'Espagne au XVIIe siècle. La naissance empirique du droit des gens sur les frontières champenoises et lorraines
Sandrine Picaud-Monnerat, Accommodements locaux, sauvegardes, contributions: le cas des campagnes de Flandre de la guerre de Succession d'Autriche (1744-1748)

II. Practices of neutralisation, maritime commerce and fishery in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean
Elizabeth Tingle, Conflict and Commerce: Nantes, Bilbao and Atlantic Trade during the French Wars of Religion c. 1555-1598
Renaud Morieux, Les gens de mer, « amis de toutes les nations »? Les pratiques de neutralisation en Manche au XVIIIe siècle
Wolfgang Kaiser, Pratiques de neutralisation entre Chrétiens et Musulmans en Méditerranée

III. The Holy Empire in the conflicts of the 17th and 18th centuries
Michael Kaiser, Times of Occupation – Times

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of Freedom? The estates of Cleves and Mark during the 17th century
Frank Kleinehagenbrock, The Population of the Holy Empire during the Thirty Years' War: A Case Study on the Counties of Wertheim and Hohenlohe
Thomas Lau, The Politics of Neutrality of an Imperial City: Hamburg at the End of the 17th Century
Horst Carl, Des ennemis familiers: arrangements avec les Français pendant la Guerre de Sept Ans et les guerres révolutionnaires

IV. Neutrality as a political and juridical practice in the Swiss cantons
André Holenstein, Pratiques de neutralisation dans le Corps helvétique pendant la Guerre de Trente Ans
Alexandre Dafflon, Neutralité et appartenance au Corps helvétique. Neuchâtel à l'épreuve de la « Guerre de Dix Ans »
Thomas Maissen, Pratiques et discours de la neutralité dans le Corps helvétique

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