Performing sovereignty: Civilisation and savagery in the New and Old Worlds.

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Contents

Summary

This thesis explores how sovereignty is performed through appeals to the concepts of civilisation and savagery. In the discipline of International Relations (IR), most scholars still consider sovereignty as a largely unproblematic (if now socially constructed) concept. Following post-colonial scholars this thesis argues that a compelling understanding of the concept requires a questioning of its universality and objectivity. Sovereignty needs to be re-connected to the cultural context and to the civilisational values that contribute to its emergence.

Although they have rightly pointed at the Western origin of the concept of sovereignty post-colonial scholars have rarely engaged with how the civilised and sovereign identity of Western states is produced. In order to provincialise European sovereignty, they have focused their research primarily on the external side of the construction of civilised sovereignty. In other words, their interest has lain in the relations between the Western sovereign states and the 'uncivilised' Rest that was denied sovereignty. References to the contemporaneous internal construction of Western civilisation and sovereignty have been scarce and underdeveloped. What is missing is an explanation of how the Europeans dealt with their own civilisational *doubts* and how they constructed their own civilised sovereignty at the same time as they were denying it to others. Indeed, this specific focus has engendered a disconnection between the analysis of the 'domestic' task of statecraft and the 'international' affirmation of sovereignty.

This thesis offers a non-Eurocentric approach to sovereignty that captures both the internal and international dimensions of 'writing civilised sovereignty'. It reveals the inherent ambiguities and unexpected similarities of the process of statecraft in both spheres. Such a re-integration of the domestic 'colonial encounter' of the West with its own Others is important for our understanding of sovereignty. First, it shows how

sovereignty must be seen as a site of political struggle irrespective of where (or upon whom) it is claimed. In particular, the construction of sovereignty is attached to the differentiation of the civilised with the savage. As such, sovereignty is inextricably and as much bound to savagery as it is to civilisation: actors claiming sovereignty require the presence of a savage that can in turn threaten their very claim and from whom they must differentiate themselves. Second, considering the 'internal' side along the 'external' one enables the identification and comparison of two colonial frontiers, i.e. two demarcations between the civilised and the savage. One is performed 'inside' the sovereign state and one 'outside' of it. These two frontiers function in similar ways and have the same purpose: allocating an indisputable sovereignty to the representatives of the Western state. Because they separate the civilised from the savage, these frontiers are crucial political tools in the legitimation of claims to sovereignty. Finally, and interlinked with the above, juxtaposing the 'internal' and 'international' processes of statecraft reinforces the critique of the image of the sovereign state as unitary and culturally uniform (an image that mainstream IR strives to preserve).

This thesis thus questions the usual and common-sense association between sovereignty and independence and argues that sovereignty promotes (at best) the independence of the sovereign elite adhering to the values considered as civilised in the West. Through the analysis of more than 300 archival sources, I demonstrate how the sovereign agency of the West and the task of statecraft require an appeal to civilisational superiority that can only be established through the identification of familiar (yet degenerated or underdeveloped) similarities between the civilised West and the savage non-West. The discourses of sovereignty in fact represent a resolution of civilisational ambiguities in order to (re)produce the illusion of a unified, civilised and sovereign Self. The theoretical conclusions of this thesis are informed by an extensive exploration of claims to sovereignty in 16th century France. This focus is justified for two reasons: the Age of Discovery is usually taken as the beginning of the modern practice of colonialism (and thus the extension of European sovereignties to new territories) and in Europe claims to sovereignty strengthened and were more often successful during that period.

In essence, then, this thesis provides a richer understanding of sovereignty and of its role in the creation and management of 'difference' in international relations. Through its interrogation of sovereignty this thesis also possesses a broader resonance for some key concepts of international relations and IR as a discipline. As shown in the review of the literature on sovereignty, the role of culture is overwhelmingly silenced by IR scholars through different strategies despite the fact that international relations are essentially inter*cultural* relations. As such, the way cultures perceive each other (as different) is crucial to the functioning of our international 'society'. Looking at sovereignty and at its links with civilisation also highlights the importance of colonial frontiers in international relations. These frontiers correspond to the differentiation established and constantly reproduced between the civilised and the savage. Such frontiers are both internal and external to the

sovereign state, which means that the internal Other is never far from the external one. These civilisational hierarchies are not only relevant for sovereignty: they also shape other international practices such as war or state-building. All these areas are informed by these colonial logics of differentiation and hierarchical ordering. But all are equally troubled by the lack of stability and permanence of these colonial frontiers between civilised and savage. More generally, these international practices seem to create the very problem that they are designed to solve or reduce: difference. This is ironic since difference is also the source of the dangers and problems that these practices are designed to deal with. Finally, this thesis contributes to the literature on encounters and the Age of Discovery and expands upon some of their conclusions, thus building a stronger link between History and International Relations.

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Introduction

Difference seems an inescapable fact of our international reality. Whether it is established between individuals, groups or states, the presence of Others seems to impose itself as an undeniable 'limit' to a wide range of aspirations and desires (harmony, concord or peaceful coexistence). As a result, our international system is built around these irreducible differences and has been designed to manage the existence of self-differentiated units. But difference is not a natural fact; it is constructed and (re-)produced through a variety of practices. In essence, then, this thesis is an attempt at understanding the construction of a difference that subsequently constrains our international imaginary. This is an important task since differences are the building blocks upon which discriminatory politics are based. In this thesis, I try to 'recover' a genuine difference or diversity despite the narrow and self-validating identity usually attached to the Other. I do not seek to transcend differences or abolish them; rather, I want to question the way they are established and maintained. Such an enterprise is informed by a belief in the intrinsic value of difference as a tool for critique or self-reflection. I am thus interested in recovering difference, i.e. in establishing whether the 'different' Other can be perceived in her own terms and as she is. One assumption guiding this thesis is that the Other has always been perceived through (and by opposition to) the Self, which has resulted in a distorted image of what difference really is. But if there is an intrinsic value in diversity, we first need to recover the 'real' identity of the Other in order to benefit from it. This thesis, therefore, is interested in the positive outcomes that could emerge from treating difference on an equal footing.

Whether this objective is imperialist, utopic or realistic will have to be established through this analysis. Nevertheless, and despite all the anti-colonial sentiments of its author, this thesis could be read as yet another instrumental use of the Other for one's own purpose. This thesis is thus at risk of reproducing the imperialist drive towards difference motivated by a necessity to question and/or validate one's own worldview.[1] After all, maybe the Other does not want to be recovered and would rather be left in peace instead of being included in yet another 'scientific' system of beliefs. Furthermore, recovering the Other implies the idealisation of an uncontaminated form of difference. Such a view, however, could prove illusionary in a relational approach to difference, i.e. when the Self is always already involved in the construction of the Other.

This thesis will address these questions – and consider the afferent dangers that they bring – in a reflexive way and by looking at one of the central concepts of the discipline: sovereignty. Sovereignty both serves to differentiate and to manage relations between units (or states) constructed as independent because different. In this thesis, I am concerned with providing a convincing account of the workings of sovereignty thanks to an emphasis on one crucial aspect that most scholars studying international relations have been reluctant to acknowledge: the importance of civilisational differentiation and of cultural hierarchies for the identification of the sovereign state. Building upon the work of scholars interested in the role of culture(s) in world politics (Inayatullah and Blaney, 1996; Jahn, 2000) I thus want to re-assess the way sovereignty participates in and depends on the establishment of difference in what are, essentially, inter*cultural* relations.

Studying sovereignty is hardly a new endeavour in the discipline of International Relations (IR). In the last few decades, sovereignty has indeed been re-assessed as a question rather than as a given. As argued by Cocks (2014: 18) "[a]fter years as a relatively untroubled term of political discourse, "sovereignty" has come to agitate scholars of politics". Linked to a broader questioning of "modernity's accomplishments and prospects" (Onuf, 1991: 425) and to the introduction of new epistemologies and methods in IR, this new wave of studies on sovereignty has undoubtedly been beneficial in refuting the claim that sovereignty is a timeless and universally valid concept. In the past twenty years, numerous analyses have described how sovereignty is historically contingent and depends on the dominant values, ideologies and norms of each period (Thomson, 1995; Philpott, 2001a; Glanville, 2011). Additionally, sovereignty has been shown to be a socially constructed idea influenced by the practices of the agents themselves (James, 1986; 1999; Wendt, 1992; Sikkink, 1993; Biersteker and Weber, 1996b; Zaum, 2007). Nevertheless, these valuable analyses have remained limited in their ability to problematise the use of sovereignty in international relations and IR alike. More specifically, most scholars have overlooked how sovereignty perpetuates exclusions and inequality at the international

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[1] One example of this imperialist tendency can be seen in the 'noble savage' approach to difference in which the Other is idealised in order to question one's own society. Crucially, of course, the qualifying 'noble' does not erase the 'savage' character of the Other.

level and how the identification and construction of the sovereign Self can only be achieved inside of a specific cultural framework. Thus, by leaving "largely unchanged the conventional picture as portrayed by mainstream theorists" (Hobson and Sharman, 2005: 63), most scholars have continued using sovereignty as an unproblematic (if now socially constructed) concept.[2]

The traditional (or minimalist) understanding of sovereignty

In particular, what most of this new wave has failed to reveal and challenge is the traditional, Westphalian, or minimalist definition of sovereignty as a higher authority awarding independence and protecting a population and territory from outside interference. This (almost mythological) conceptualisation of sovereignty is built upon a series of inter-connected assumptions that have become commonsensical in IR. The first is the idea that sovereignty refers to an absolute power or authority which in turn implies an absence of responsibility (in particular towards the population of the sovereign state). Morgenthau (1948/1973: 329 and 318), for instance, writes that "[s]overeignty signifies supreme lawgiving and law-enforcing authority" and that "[t]he individual nation has the right to give itself any constitution it pleases, to enact whatever laws it wishes regardless of their effects upon its own citizens, and to choose any system of administration". Sovereignty here entails "the absence of responsibility or accountability" (Glanville, 2014: 2). This "perfectly unqualified state sovereignty as a natural or original condition" mythology (Morgan, 2007: 26) is so widespread in IR that some have called it the 'traditional' understanding of sovereignty.

As a consequence, and because sovereignty is supposedly not attached to responsibility (or responsibilities) it is also free of internal 'content'. When sovereignty is defined as a "final and absolute authority in the political community" (Hinsley, 1986: 1) it takes on a generic meaning and as such can supposedly accommodate a great variety of political authorities. In this approach arguably any form of political authority and any way of exercising political power could qualify as sovereign. For Spruyt (1994: 56), for instance, "[s]overeignty per definition consists of internal hierarchy and territorial demarcation" but nothing more. In its traditional Westphalian meaning, then, sovereignty is unrestrained and remains unspecified.[3] It is thus supposedly unconditional. The idea of absoluteness also

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[2] This is exemplified, *inter alia*, in the state-building literature: recent and on-going discussions about 'fragile states' continue to take sovereignty as an unproblematic concept and desirable end, thus overlooking its strong normative side and the consequences that follow. For a critique of the 'fragile state' concept see Grimm et al. (2014).
[3] These silences, I argue in chapters 1 and 3, find their origin in the reluctance (and yet inescapability) of looking at the cultural or civilisational content of sovereignty.

implies that sovereignty is equivalent to 'independence from outside interference'. Hence Peters (2009: 518) argues that "[n]on-intervention" in the domestic sovereign spheres is "a corollary of sovereignty". Finally, and because sovereignty is usually understood in its traditional or minimalist sense, "juridical equality can be seen as a logical corollary of sovereignty" (Peters, 2009: 516). Since any form of final political authority exercised over a population and territory can potentially fit with the traditional definition, sovereignty is associated with the existence of an egalitarian international order. Aalberts (2014: 783) criticises how such an approach to sovereignty leads us to see "the universalisation of sovereignty [at the time of decolonisation] as the right to be different and equal at the same time". This is one of the classic assumptions of IR. Morgenthau (1948/1973: 321) supports it when he estimates that "[t]he actual inequality of nations and their dependence upon each other have no relevance for the legal status called sovereignty".[4] The fiction of international equality in turn ascribes to sovereignty its universal character (devoid of any cultural particularities). And as stated by Prokhovnik (2007: 24) "the fact that no political community since the late sixteenth century has in practice had the uncontested power and authority promised by the definition of sovereignty, has not in itself been enough to undermine as a myth the existence of sovereignty" as traditionally understood.

But Morgenthau himself, like most IR scholars, necessarily touches upon another (and arguably more convincing) way of approaching sovereignty. Indeed, he adds that "each nation is free to manage its internal and external affairs according to its discretion, *in so far as it is not limited by treaty or what we have earlier called common or necessary international law*" (Morgenthau, 1948/1973: 318, my emphasis). From this statement it becomes evident that scholars using the traditional definition of sovereignty have to adhere to the fiction of a culturally neutral international legal system (and to the way the rules of 'international' relations are usually described, i.e. as devoid of cultural bias). Doing so necessarily obliterates the long imperial history of international law itself (Koskenniemi, 2001; Anghie, 2005). It is thus "the empirical thesis of a uniform international morality" that makes this "Westphalian commonsense" (Grovogui, 2002: 316) so pervasive.[5] But the mythology of the traditional Westphalian (and universal) meaning of sovereignty clashes with the ways sovereignty is granted or denied in international politics. When the traditional definition of sovereignty is confronted by the reality of international relations contradictions and quandaries are inevitable. Waltz (1979: 95-96), for instance, supports the traditional or minimalist definition of sovereignty: "To say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems". But

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[4] Undoubtedly the traditional approach to sovereignty has largely been maintained thanks to the disciplinary boundary between IR and International Law. Hence, IR scholars have repeatedly turned to International Law to support the view of sovereignty as a supposedly objective, neutral and universal *because juridical* concept.

[5] Some even fail to recognise that 'different' international systems are actually more similar than it seems. Oksenberg (2001: 89), for instance, describes the Chinese international system as follows: "The participants were not equals. Boundaries were not well demarcated. The purpose of the system was to foster virtuous rule". He then concludes that a "stark contrast" exists between the Western and Chinese international systems when most of these 'Chinese' characteristics are equally valid to describe the international/Western system.

he is also forced to recognise the existence of a strong normative international order and thus adds: "To say that states are sovereign is not to say that they can do as they please". This type of contradiction cannot be avoided so long as scholars remain attached to the traditional, minimalist and universalist understanding of sovereignty. This approach indeed obscures some of the key features that characterise the concept and in particular its dependence on a normative (or civilisational) ideal.

Post-colonial approaches and the idea of 'civilised sovereignty'

Following scholars interested in the Western origin on the concept of sovereignty, this thesis argues that a compelling understanding of the concept requires a questioning of its universality and objectivity. Indeed, if sovereignty is to be accepted as the "final and absolute authority in the political community" (Hinsley, 1986: 1), these scholars have shown that this final and absolute authority – i.e. an authority that is worth respecting and that will ensure the independence of the entity concerned – can only be identified inside of a cultural or civilisational framework. As post-colonial scholars have recently argued, sovereignty is based on civilisational elements that celebrate a specific 'model' of statehood (Doty, 1996; Anghie, 2005; Hobson, 2012). More precisely, post-colonial authors have explained how Western states have a 'natural' ability to construct sovereign standards that they allegedly achieve – an ability that subsequently "endows them with the capacity and wisdom to know the standards of conduct to which others must conform" (Grovogui, 2002: 322). For Anghie (2005: 37 and 103), "sovereignty became identified with a specific set of cultural practices to the exclusion of others" and as such has been "aligned with European ideas of social order, political organization, progress and development".[6] The appearance of 'civilised' sovereignty on the international stage is usually associated with the 16th century encounters between Europeans and the Amerindian populations of the 'New World'. These populations were described as living in a 'state of nature' and in need of the 'civilised' teaching of more 'advanced' nations. This intellectual and political construction continues to inform the way we think about sovereignty today (Jahn, 2000; Anghie, 2005; Aalberts, 2014).

The impossibility of separating sovereignty from its civilisational content and the use of the term 'civilised sovereignty' call for some clarifications. I am not arguing here that sovereignty can be defined outside of a civilisational framework (so that there could be a

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[6] On this question, see more generally Seth (2000), Dunn (2003), Keene (2004), Simpson (2004), Pateman (2007), and Suzuki (2009). On the question of sovereignty as an exclusionary concept see more specifically Walker (1993) and Campbell (1997).

'non-civilised' sovereignty). In contrast, this thesis supports the view that sovereignty refers to a 'final form of authority in the political community'[7] but argues that this form of authority is always defined in relation to a specific civilisational framework. Put differently, sovereignty is legitimate (and hence *exists*) only when it is seen to respect a normative cultural or civilisational framework. As such, trying to find a pure form of sovereignty (a minimal and universal concept that would be defined outside of a specific cultural context) is illusionary at best, dangerous at worst. This search for a minimal definition of sovereignty has pushed IR scholars to disregard the discriminatory consequences of treating sovereignty as a culturally-undefined concept. Additionally, it has also fuelled the conviction that sovereignty was not defined in a universal and culturally-neutral way in the past but that such a conceptualisation was achieved or achievable today.[8] As an answer to this misconception, this analysis will reveal how the cultural or civilisational values of particular societies have always been central to substantiate the meaning of – and thus to identify – sovereignty. Unsurprisingly, and given the dominance of the West, these values and the content of sovereignty have mainly been attached to Western notions of good government and civilisation.

Secondly, bringing the concepts of sovereignty and civilisation together does not imply that they become identical or indistinct. Rather, the two concepts are interlinked in two ways. Sovereignty can be defined as a final or superior form of political authority designed to achieve a civilised order, and the political authority that sovereignty refers to is central in identifying Civilisation (i.e. a superior form of society). Civilisation therefore has two meanings. First, it is used to 'describe' the cultural traits of a given population and its socio-political organisation.[9] In this first understanding, a plurality of civilisations can coexist. In its second meaning, civilisation is necessarily singular – there can be only one civilisation – and it is used in a normative way to establish a superior and desirable form of these cultural traits and subsequently to classify societies depending on their achievement of this standard.[10] As argued by Dickason (1997: xi) "[t]he word "civilized" is usually applied to societies possessing a state structure and an advanced technology; the general presumption is that their members must therefore have attained a relatively high degree of refinement in their manner of living". Civilisation is thus at the heart of the division of men "into higher and lower forms of humanity" (White, 1972: 9) due to a strong belief in the superiority of an ideal and universal model that is not achieved (or has been corrupted) by some. As such, the notion of civilisation is intrinsically attached – and necessarily defined by opposition to – the idea of savagery. How the civilised and the savage can coexist is then usually explained by the notions of degeneration (of the civilised into the savage) or

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[7] I purposefully leave aside the idea of 'absoluteness' that Hinsley mentions in his seminal definition. Associating sovereignty to absoluteness is misleading since the 'absolute' lies in the (civilisational) values that support sovereignty, and not in sovereignty itself. See chapter 3 for a more detailed explanation of this argument.
[8] See the conclusion of Glanville's analysis for a recent example (Glanville, 2014).
[9] In this sense 'civilisation' is an equivalent to 'culture'. The concepts of 'culture' and 'civilisation' will be used interchangeably when talking about the French (civilisational or cultural) values.
[10] On the definition of civilisation see for instance Bowden (2009: Chapter 2) and Bettiza (2014).

underdevelopment (of the savage into a civilised state). In this thesis I reflect the widespread use of 'civilisation' in its normative sense and, unsurprisingly, it is the values of Western civilisation and societies that are taken as superior and desirable. It is in this sense that I refer to 'civilised sovereignty'. Crucially, though, distinguishing between the two uses of the concept of 'civilisation' is only possible in theory. In practice, 'describing' social characteristics can hardly be detached from a broader belief in the superiority of one's own societal features. In other words, description and assessment are always interlinked when one uses the concept of c/Civilisation. This is why these two meanings should not be separated too strictly.

Domestic and international constructions of civilised sovereignty

This thesis defends a post-colonial perspective on the concept of sovereignty and supports the view that sovereignty has always been linked to Western civilisation. Sovereignty is inseparable from the civilisational values that make it legitimate, hence true. But I also suggest that despite the large amount of research conducted by critical scholars we still lack a full understanding of the workings of civilised sovereignty. Indeed, post-colonial scholars have rarely engaged with how the civilised and sovereign identity of Western states is produced. In order to provincialise European sovereignty, they have focused their research primarily on the external side of the construction of civilised sovereignty. In other words, their interest has lain in the relations between the Western sovereign states and a (clearly constructed) 'uncivilised' Rest that was denied sovereignty. References to the contemporaneous internal construction of Western civilisation and sovereignty have been scarce and underdeveloped (Jahn, 2000: 63-64; Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 70-73; Anghie, 2005: 22-23). This emphasis on the encounters of the West with the non-West has been fruitful for it has revealed the intrinsic link between claims to sovereignty and claims to civilisation.

But this analytical choice could mislead one into believing that an *internalist* account of the construction of sovereignty is necessarily Eurocentric while only the *external encounter* between Europeans and 'savages' could reveal Eurocentrism. What is missing is an explanation of how the Europeans dealt with their own civilisational *doubts* and how they constructed their own civilised sovereignty at the same time as they were denying it to others. Indeed, this specific focus has engendered a disconnection between the analysis of the 'domestic' task of statecraft and the 'international' affirmation of sovereignty. A 'two-tier' game of sovereignty is thus created with sovereignty being constructed differently in the West and in/over the non-West. 'Domestic' sovereignty has not been

shown to be equally reliant on discourses of civilisation and savagery as 'international' sovereignty. In other words, the establishment of the sovereign Self could be expected to follow different rules in what will become the internal sphere of the sovereign state. The colonial frontier thus established – the demarcation established between the West and Rest – strangely mirrors the colonial discourses of the West. The Western state appears as perfectly in control of civilisational norms so that the 'domestic' task of statecraft does not seem to rely on constructed civilisation. By opposition, the emphasis of the 'international' manufacturing of sovereignty could lead to restrict the savage to the external – hence producing the savage as being a necessarily non-Western entity.

In this thesis I offer a sympathetic critique of post-colonial analyses of sovereignty by revealing how the concepts of civilisation and savagery are at the centre of the 'domestic' and 'international' construction of the sovereign state. Civilisation transcends the internal-external frontier: it is an internal construct influenced by external encounters and applied both internally and externally. As such a focus on the constant re-construction and re-creation of civilisation enables me to question the internal/external divide that emerges from an exclusive focus on the external claims to sovereignty of Western states. Because civilisation is a notoriously ambiguous construct and because civilised identities are never easily or naturally achieved, an exploration of the very construction of civilisation and savagery in the 'domestic' and 'international' spheres reveals the unexpected similarities and doubts that pervade the establishment of civilised sovereignty on both sides. More specifically, this thesis proposes that a non-Eurocentric approach should capture both the internal and international dimensions of 'writing civilised sovereignty' in order to reveal inherent ambiguities and unexpected similarities of the process of statecraft conducted in both spheres.[11] If sovereignty indeed "acquired its character through the colonial encounter" (Anghie, 2005: 29), the internal side of this encounter needs to be reintegrated into the picture so as to account both for the creation of the uncivilised Other *and* of the civilised Self. By focusing on one example of the construction of the civilised sovereign in the West this thesis adds a missing dimension to the post-colonial deconstruction of sovereignty. Indeed, integrating the internal side of civilised sovereignty reveals how a similar grammar of civilisation is used to support claims to sovereignty *inside* the West. Additionally, it reveals how savagery is as much present in the 'civilised' West as in the 'savage' Rest. In other words, colonial encounters also happened 'in' the West and were equally important for the question of the sovereign state. Thanks to the reintegration of the internal side, the establishment of a civilised Western identity is shown to be the fragile and temporary result of a difficult process designed to present savagery as 'outside' the sovereign state. This thesis reveals how a similar (and similarly discriminatory although with different consequences) application of the notion of

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[11] This is all the more important in a context where similarities between the 'civilised' and 'savage' are regularly noticed by scholars. Pagden (1982: 36, 97, 150, 161) for instance repeatedly mentions how, during the 'Discovery' of America, the Spanish drew links and parallels between the Amerindians and the peasants and unschooled masses of Spain. Closer to the case-study of this thesis, the French themselves were classified as barbarians by other 'civilised' societies (Wintroub, 1998).

civilisation is at play in both the West and the non-West when sovereignty is discussed and legitimised. It offers one example of this process and as such rebalances the focus of post-colonial analyses away from the supposed 'exceptional', 'radical' and 'savage' non-West to the day-to-day processes through which the West builds its own (civilised and sovereign) identity over its own Other and over the non-Western Others.

Second, and in order to further deconstruct the Eurocentric character of sovereignty, this thesis emphasises how difference is forged out of a striking number of similarities in terms of institutions and practices between the civilised and savage worlds. A focus on the very process of performing civilisation and savagery reveals that the distinction between civilised and savage is complex and always in need of reaffirmation. An emphasis on the tortuous discourses of civilised sovereignty reveals how ambiguous and contradictory the construction of (un)civilised identities can be. This is primarily due to the civilised/savage nexus, i.e. the required presence of the savage in order to 'identify' the civilised. In fact, the very distinction civilised/savage is in constant need of (re-)creation and (re-)production both in the West and in its encounter with the non-West. I discuss in details how this difference can only be established though the use of inherited and pervasive frameworks for the understand of human societies and their evolution. Building upon some post-colonial insights about the familiarity of the savage Other (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004; Seth, 2001; Nandy, 1983), I explain how civilisational difference ironically relies on the identification of familiar (yet degenerated or underdeveloped) similarities between the civilised West and the savage non-West. The existence of 'colonial frontiers' (or distinctions between civilised and savage subjects) is thus not contested but their very construction is placed at the centre of the analysis and shown to be central for the task of statecraft. Further, my analysis reveals how two colonial frontiers – one 'internal' between sovereign actors and their Others and one 'external' between the civilised and the savage – coexist and reinforce each other in the writing of the sovereign state.

Such a re-integration of the domestic 'colonial encounter' of the West with its own Others is important for our understanding of sovereignty. First, it shows how sovereignty must be seen as a political site of struggle irrespective of where (or upon whom) it is claimed. As discussed in this thesis, establishing sovereignty is a complex process riddled with doubts and ambiguities both in the West and in the non-West. Such a struggle could be restricted to simple political or material gains: different actors would thus compete for sovereignty in the hope of maximising their power. While I do not deny the importance of this motivation, the specific form that this contest for power takes both 'inside' and 'outside' the sovereign state reveals the centrality of civilisation to the task of statecraft and the inherent ambiguities that result from it. Indeed, and because civilisation is an ever-reproduced but always de-stabilised construct, both the 'internal' and 'external' processes of claiming sovereignty are riddled with civilisational doubts. The construction of sovereignty, however, is bound to these ambiguities due to its reliance on civilisation:

actors claiming sovereignty require the presence of a savage that they must also differentiate themselves from (or domesticate and render inoffensive).

Second, and interlinked with the above, juxtaposing the 'internal' and 'international' processes of statecraft reinforces the critique of the image of the sovereign state as unitary and uniform (an image that mainstream IR strives to preserve). In this perspective, the (Western) sovereign state represents a coherent unit implicitly or explicitly unified by its nationality or culture. Thus, most IR scholars would consider looking at the formation of domestic or internal sovereignty is at best futile and at worse an attack on the successful model that Western states are supposed to embody. For mainstream IR, the savage Others are always and only found outside the sovereign state. Re-integrating the 'internal' dimension of civilised sovereignty enables me to counter that view and to discuss how colonial encounters happen inside the protected and advanced Western state. In these instances, the savage Other is portrayed as part of the sovereign state in the same way as the external Other is portrayed as part of the international system: both are relegated to the margins. The presence of the internal Other – which is necessary for claims to sovereignty to succeed – thus contradicts the simplistic view of the sovereign state as coherent and uniform.

Finally, considering the 'internal' side along the 'external' one enables the identification and comparison of two colonial frontiers: one 'inside' the sovereign state and one 'outside' of it. As will be discussed, these two frontiers function in similar ways and have the same purpose: allocating an indisputable sovereignty to the representatives of the Western state. Because they separate the civilised from the savage, these frontiers are crucial political tools in the legitimation of claims to sovereignty. It is thus through the construction and reproduction of these two frontiers that the hyper agency of the West (Hobson, 2012) emerges and is maintained.

Re-assessing sovereignty in an intercultural world

This thesis makes several contributions to our understanding of sovereignty and to international (or rather intercultural) relations more generally. First, it participates in the critique of the Eurocentric assumptions that characterise most IR literature on sovereignty by challenging those scholars who still use the concept as a supposedly pluralistic and accommodating political principle. This is particularly the case when sovereignty is minimally defined as 'independence from outside interference' or as 'final and absolute authority'. By attributing this minimalist meaning to 'sovereignty' these scholars overlook the necessarily Eurocentric definition of this 'independence' and 'authority'. More

importantly, they ignore the way international relations are primarily relations among cultures (as shown by the way sovereignty is always defined by cultural values). I show how the concept of sovereignty always requires a cultural or civilisational framework to acquire its full meaning. As such, the traditional, Westphalian definition is revealed to be highly misleading insofar as it overlooks the Eurocentric content of sovereignty. This thesis also takes issue with scholars who defend the superiority of the successful (Western) sovereign state (Keohane, 2002; Fukuyama, 2004). Defending the success of the Western sovereign model is the result of a normative judgement made from a particular cultural or civilisational viewpoint. As such, the objectivity that these scholars usually claim as the basis of their assessment can be legitimately questioned. Additionally, declaring 'success' and superiority usually obscures the similarities between 'successful' and 'failed' states that are at the centre of this thesis. It thus plays a central role in the glorification of the Western model of statehood that is achieved only by erasing the 'successful' traits of the supposedly 'failed' states and the 'failed' traits of the supposedly successful states.

Third, this thesis criticises scholars who try to establish empirically-produced conceptualisations of sovereignty (Thomson, 1995; Krasner, 2010; Berg and Kuusk, 2010). These scholars maintain that establishing a scientific definition of sovereignty is possible and that thanks to this objectivity their conceptualisations of sovereignty can be applied as a universal standard. They thus associate the supposed objectivity of their conceptualisation to what they identify as a more acceptable way of defining sovereignty. In this thesis these claims to produce empirical conceptualisations of sovereignty are problematised by the recognition that the foundations of sovereignty – and in particular appeals to civilisation and savagery – result from discursive claims. These foundations are not part of an independent and given reality that would be objectively identifiable by anyone looking for the right criteria (that these scholars struggle to identify). As such, these scholars insisting on producing an empirical definition of sovereignty in effect participate in the establishment of the very foundations of what they 'describe'.

Fourthly, this thesis insists on the centrality of the notions of savagery and civilisation in the discursive construction of sovereignty, a point that is omitted by most constructivists. Constructivists usually emphasise "shared norms about what it means to be a sovereign state" (Wendt, 1992: 413) but they overlook the civilisational origins of these norms. More generally, the ways inequalities and hierarchies contribute to the norms of international politics (such as sovereignty) are usually elided in the constructivist literature. I argue that no account of sovereignty can be complete if the role of the West – and of the constructed superiority of its civilisation – is neglected. I also reject the tendency in constructivist works to associate civilised sovereignty to a revolved (because imperialist and colonial) past. By doing so, these works obscures the way colonial logics still influence the construction of a supposedly post-colonial sovereignty.

I thus criticise the varied attempts at making sense of sovereignty that ignore or consider as unproblematic the role of culture(s) in international politics. I argue that the shortcomings of these approaches all originate from this neglect and argue that a renewed emphasis on the cultural aspect of relations between human groups can inform our understanding of 'international relations'. This is why this thesis builds upon post-colonial analyses of sovereignty by arguing that the process of statecraft depends on complex and ambiguous readings of civilisation. This thesis also takes post-colonial analyses of sovereignty one step further by showing how the construction of the unified, sovereign and civilised Self is the (temporary and unstable) result of a difficult process of identity-creation designed to silence ambiguities and doubts. At the other end of the spectrum, I also engage with how the savage and unsovereign identity of the non-West is created out of countless potential similarities with the 'civilised' West. This thesis thus participates in the recognition of the importance of culture (and thus of discriminatory practices based on cultural (mis)recognition) in IR (Jahn, 2000)). When Benton (2009: 279) writes that "[w]e know sovereignty when we see it – at least we think we do", she in fact touches upon a fundamental aspect: we *know* what sovereignty is but cannot articulate a satisfying (i.e. scientific) definition that would be detached from our own cultural background. If we agree that "the exercise of sovereignty is a political fact" (Morgenthau, 1948/1973: 324) our attention should be re-focused on the fundamental questions of politics: what makes a community *political*, what makes a group of people a *society*, and more generally how is *political (good) life* defined? To answer these questions one has to investigate the way these elements are culturally identified when sovereignty is claimed or denied.

In addition, my analysis of sovereignty questions the exclusive focus on the non-West in post-colonial analyses. As argued by Seth (2011: 174):

> This world was not born out of the West having an impact upon and 'awakening' a dormant non-West, but out of both of these being constituted in the course of multifarious (unequal, hierarchical and usually coercive) exchanges, such that neither was left untouched.

One should thus refuse to isolate the West and its evolution from its encounters with the non-West. Nevertheless, exclusively focusing on the non-West creates a risk of separating these two entities too firmly and restricting colonial logics of power and domination (including the idea of 'civilisation') to the colonial world. Anghie (2005: 38), for instance, writes that "sovereignty was constituted through colonialism". One could therefore conclude from this statement that an analysis of the encounter between the West and the non-West is enough to account for the creation and workings of the concept. In contradistinction, this thesis supports the view that if sovereignty is indeed a Eurocentric construct, how it is managed *inside* the West is as important as the way it is denied to the non-West. Additionally, such a focus on the non-West creates the expectation that the

non-West is necessarily different from the West, an assumption that has been rightly criticised by Bilgin (2008). My combination of case-studies in the West and the non-West and my exploration of the way difference has to be produced *out of similarity* enables me to question these assumptions further and to support the view that a post-colonial critique should also encompass the Western dimension of sovereignty.

From sovereignty to international relations: broader implications

Given its focus on sovereignty and the centrality of this concept as an organising political principle, this thesis has direct implications for the way we understand international relations more generally. First, my analysis replaces international relations in the domain of the 'cultural' by emphasising that core concepts such as sovereignty are culturally constructed. International relations are essentially intercultural relations, and as such the way cultures perceive each other (as different) is crucial to the functioning of our international 'society'. Nevertheless, and save for a few exceptions, IR has evaded the issue of cultural as irrelevant and somehow inconvenient for conceptualising international relations.

In this thesis, I discuss how cultural encounters took place when French sovereignty was formed or claimed.[12] I point at the specific limits of such an exercise, namely the difficulty of perceiving the Other in her own terms. Exploring the creation of sovereignty reveals how the Other is read according to the Self's expectations, which results in the creation of a familiar difference. The Other is essentially inscribed into a familiar framework where she becomes an antithesis of the Self. Thus, the possibility of a genuine dialogue between cultures – or civilisations – is reduced to the encounter between a Self and an anti-Self. Because international relations are primarily relations between cultures, the question of how cultures interact with each other – how they constitute themselves, perceive each other and act with or upon them – should be the central concern for IR scholars.

Looking at sovereignty and at its links with civilisation also highlights the importance of colonial frontiers in international relations. These frontiers correspond to the differentiation established and constantly reproduced between the civilised and the

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[12] Interestingly, these encounters also took place 'domestically' or internally. This is due to the fact that the Other is always a politicised construction and can also appear or be constructed inside of supposedly uniform cultures (such as the French one).

savage. Such frontiers are both internal and external to the sovereign state, which means that the internal Other is never far from the external one. These civilisational hierarchies are not only relevant for sovereignty: they also inform other international practices such as war or state-building. Interpreting these practices through the prism of the colonial frontiers on which they rely could clarify some of their logics. State-building, for instance, is informed by a vision of the failed, non-Western local societies as 'young', immature and non-organised politically (all ideas that draw upon the imaginary of savagery). Acknowledging the presence of these colonial frontiers could thus help deconstruct state-building practices. In addition, these hierarchies illustrate the preponderance of the colonial logic of inclusion-exclusion in our international society: the Others are included into the colonial framework – they are assigned a place on the civilisational ladder as underdeveloped or degenerate – but at the same time this very characterisation excludes them by relegating them to the margins of this order. I believe this type of inclusion-exclusion dynamic to be central to the way international (or intercultural) relations are organised and managed. Studying sovereignty thus raises a number of central questions about the way international relations are organised around cultural encounters and about how IR as a discipline deals with – or rather avoids dealing with – some of the problematic aspect of these encounters.

Case-studies and methodology

In order to explore these topics, my work focuses on France in the 16th century. More specifically, three aspects are of interest: the way sovereignty was conceptualised in France at the time, the way France performed its sovereignty over the non-West, and finally the manner in which the French sovereigns ensured their sovereignty internally. For these three topics I rely on 16th century French archival sources in order to explore the conceptual apparatus deployed in the construction of sovereign claims at the time; i.e. how ideas were used and combined in the French conceptualisations of civilised sovereignty. A detailed analysis of the archives allows me to thoroughly explore the complex process of writing civilised sovereignty and the ways doubts and ambiguities were present and dealt with. Readers should be aware that to the exception of one text all of the archives used in this thesis have been translated but also adapted into modern English from the French language used at the time. This adaptation has been made necessary by the difficulty of reading these texts in the original 16th century French. Not only is the syntax different from modern French but the vocabulary and spelling also differ greatly from modern standards. As a result, the only solution was to adapt these sixteenth-century sources into a language accessible to contemporary readers.

Situating this conceptual history in the 16th century is justified for two reasons. First, European explorations of America happening at the time represent a major civilisational encounter. Like the majority of (post-colonial) scholars who focused on the period Todorov (1982: 13) estimates that "the encounter will never reach such an intensity again". That the period of the 'Discovery' of America that happened from 1492 and throughout the 16th century is now considered as the beginning of modern international relations (and of its institutions) is uncontroversial. Anghie (2005: 15), for instance, argued that "international law was created out of the unique issues generated by the encounter between the Spanish and the Indians". The 'Discovery' of America – and, more importantly, of the Amerindians – is thus usually considered as marking the beginning of the (modern) European colonial and imperialistic practices (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2002; Maldonado‐Torres, 2004). This is not to deny that such a statement might be overstated (Pagden, 1986) but it remains widely accepted (Bain, 2003: 13). Although less frequently studied than Spain, France represents a good case-study in the context of this colonial encounter. In particular, the French were involved early on in this process and their attention focused on one area (the Eastern part of contemporary Canada) that they sought to control and colonise.[13]

But the 16th century is also characterised by the intensification of the centralisation of the sovereign power in the hands of the European monarchs. This process required justifications against 'internal' competitors as well as 'external' opponents, and France is a representative example of these struggles. In particular, scholars agree that the end of the 16th century and the advent of Henry IV to the throne mark the triumph of absolutism in France (Weill, 1892). In fact, "[t]he vital influence of [this] period of strife and confusion was to prepare the land for absolutism" (Church, 1969: 303). This thesis thus focuses on one particular example of crisis: the last period of the Wars of Religion (1584-1598). Some historians insist that 'absolutism' can only be associated with Louis XIV in the 17th century (Jackson et al., 1974: 60) but my interest lies not in comparing the 'level' or 'effectiveness' of the French kings' power nor in establishing how much control they exercised over their kingdom but rather in studying how their claims to sovereignty were constructed. The 16th century, and in particular the crises that marked the end of this century in France, are a fertile ground for such an enquiry. Choosing France in the 16th century is thus not an attempt at finding the 'origin' of the establishment of sovereignty in the West. Rather, this historical episode offers an analytically rich example of a 'crisis of sovereignty', i.e. a 'de-linking' of the previous or current holder of sovereignty with the civilisational values that underlie the concept. This is particularly useful since "performances of the state are often more explicit where changes are desired" (Jeffrey, 2013: 2).[14] In other words, this period enables me to put the accepted and institutionalised ideas of the modern state 'at a

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[13] A more specific historical context is given in chapter 4.
[14] This period, however, is not exceptional. Far from being a one-time occurrence, crises of sovereignty were frequent in the process of centralization of the French state. Moreover, if sovereignty is not challenged as strongly once centralization is achieved, it is still in need of being constantly (re)performed.

distance' in order to identify their construction in what is a particularly tumultuous political period (Bourdieu et al., 1994; Bourdieu, 2012; Shapiro, 2002: 615).

France in the 16th century thus offers an interesting case both for the external and internal construction of civilised sovereignty. Following Kalmo and Skinner's advice that "we are sure to go astray if, in studying the nature of sovereignty, history is not given its proper weight" (Kalmo and Skinner, 2010: 7), this thesis contributes to the (supposed) return to History in IR. Challenging the common-sense argument that "[a] great deal of IR displays little interest in history" (Seth, 2011: 169), Hobson and Lawson (2008) have shown that in reality most of the discipline is informed by historical analyses that can take several forms. This thesis contributes to what they term 'historical sociology', i.e. a form of historical analysis that "combine[s] rich historical insights with major theoretical statements" (Lawson, 2010: 210). In order to achieve this goal this thesis makes use of an extensive range of primary sources spanning the 16th and early 17th centuries. In other words, I offer "a focus on the historical details of particular dimensions of international relations, but also an emphasis on causal explanations wherever these were located, specifying how patterns, configurations and sets of social relations combined in particular contexts to determine certain outcomes" (Hobson and Lawson, 2008: 433; see also Trachtenberg, 2006).

In the context of an historical study of state sovereignty archives are particularly relevant. Indeed, they are a form of "informational capital" of the state (Bourdieu et al., 1994: 7). In fact, "there is no state without archives – without its archives" (Mbembe, 2002: 23). In France, the place of their conservation was called 'treasure' during the Middle Ages (Delsalle, 2007: 9) which highlights their importance to the state. I have selected a large number of texts for the three topics under study (the French conceptualisation of sovereignty, the French vision of the Amerindians, and the French political crisis at the end of the century) and I have tried to be as exhaustive as possible. My study relies on more than 100 archival sources (including manuscripts and published works now held in archival collections) as well as on compilations of primary sources. The vast majority of these sources were written by or with the ascent of 'the state'. In other words, they received an authorisation to be published or emanated from individuals in positions of authority. As such, these sources reflect (sometimes in different ways or with different emphases) an official view of the state and of its sovereign character. As will become clear, this does not imply that one cannot identity fragilities and ambiguities in them. Nevertheless, one should also be conscious that these sources are unlikely to reveal dissenting views.

Although exhaustivity is always difficult to establish with certainty, I am confident that my thesis offers a comprehensive analysis of the issues studied. I have also used secondary sources for context and in order to identify sources that I might otherwise not have discovered. I almost exclusively cite from the originals, however, because I believe

that a return to the texts themselves is more fruitful than relying on secondary sources and the interpretations of other scholars. In my chapters I do not discriminate between widespread and confidential works since the fact that a work could be published at all means that it reflects "an element of contemporary opinion" (Dickason, 1997: xv). For the topic of the crisis of sovereignty in France, I have relied on the original pamphlets and declarations reproduced by Goulart and Goujet and complemented them with manuscript sources. Exhaustiveness is more difficult to assert in this case given the sheer amount of archives available to the researcher. My criterion for including archives in the analysis has been their 'publicity': private letters do not perform sovereignty in the same way as public declarations or royal edicts. Pamphlets, for instance, are particularly relevant sources. In addition, letters and documents relating to the tactics of the political crisis (in particular to military strategy) have not been included as they have little relevance when one wishes to explore the conceptual apparatus deployed in the construction of sovereignty claims at the time.

In my use of archives, I am sympathetic to several concerns expressed by critical scholars. First, the need for context is crucial as it enables an evaluation of "the interpretation against the sources" (L'Eplattenier, 2009: 75). I have therefore tried to include as much context as possible. I also recognise the uniqueness of certain documents and do not present them as 'one example among many'. Documents for which the provenance and authorship were impossible to establish with certainty have been excluded from the analysis. I have also deliberately refused to discriminate between important authors (or 'canons') and minor works. Even if some canonical figures can be identified (one can think of Bodin for instance) I have chosen to include what lesser-known actors wrote as well. Such a focus also reveals a fuller picture of the intellectual construction of civilised sovereignty. This is helpful in generalising the findings and showing how the specific construction of a civilised difference uncovered in this thesis was a widespread phenomenon (and not the result of a personal or individual intellectual disposition). Additionally, restricting the scope of the enquiry to the 'canons' runs the risk of focusing on authors and actors that are *nowadays* considered as essential. As this thesis demonstrates other authors are equally important and innovative although less-known today.

Despite being sympathetic to this more reflexive use of archives found in recent methodological texts, there is one aspect that I have disregarded. Critical scholars working with historical material are generally interested in the way archives were produced and what documents were preserved or forgotten (Stoler, 2002). Instead of focusing on the content of the documents, these scholars study how the very process of archiving (certain) documents can reveal interesting dynamics and repressed 'realities' (Mbembe, 2002). Such an analysis, however, requires uncovering texts and documents that were (by definition) excluded or forgotten, or else compare the official records with events as they are described by historians. Given my focus on sixteenth-century sources this process appeared to be extremely complex. In addition, my interest in the ambiguity of these discourses

means that I am able to reveal the alternatives and unrealised potentialities contained in these archival documents despite their archiving by and for the dominant groups.[15]

My reading of these texts is informed – and in some ways limited – by my use of performativity as a theoretical framework. As detailed in chapter 2, I consider that the discourses of sovereignty (like the ones offered by the archives analysed here) create the very realities of the civilised state that they supposedly describe. This is why I agree with Todorov (1989: 14) and his approach to texts:

> I do not consider past doctrines as the pure expression of the *interests* of their author: I recognise in them a certain truth dimension. Going through discourses to access the world is perhaps a convoluted road, but it is a road that leads to the world nevertheless (…) Ideas do not make history on their own: social and economic forces also act. But ideas do not have a purely passive effect either.

In other words, considering ideas as mere consequences of (external and pre-existing) interests would mean abandoning their study and logically refocusing the analysis on these underlying interests.[16] In contrast, my approach does not seek to avoid the idea of interests and power (and of their importance in framing discourses) but rather to show how discursively constructing the world is one of the strategies employed by the powerful (that in turn constrains her actions). As Cocks (2014: 49) writes "[t]he insufficiency of force as a ground for political authority explains why political power invariably tries to root itself in a moral or prudential principle of some sort".[17]

In considering these texts as performative I circumscribe my analysis to what their authors perform (or silence) through their writings. I am thus limiting my understanding to what some consider to be a 'textual' or rhetorical reality. The obvious limit of such an approach is the lack of critical comparison with competing, often non-textual, alternative realities. Despite this limitation, I believe that such an approach can paradoxically bring us

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[15] For a reflection on the intrinsic limits of a focus on dominant discourses see the conclusion of this thesis.

[16] This is what Jennings (1976: 59) proposes. Writing about the English colonial discourses surrounding the 'Discovery' of America he argues that "[a] basic rule was that any given Englishman at any given time formed his views in accordance with his purposes (…) In short, like the most modern of architects, the Englishman devised the savage's form to fit his function".

[17] Material gains or power are therefore insufficient to understand our social or cultural reality (and in particular the issues of domination and colonialism). Nandy (1983: x) explains that "the drive for mastery over men is not merely a by-product of a faulty political economy but also of a world view which believes in the absolute superiority of the human over the nonhuman and the subhuman, the masculine over the feminine, the adult over the child, the historical over the ahistorical, and the modern or progressive over the traditional or the savage".

closer to an historical 'truth'. For the French exploration of Canada, for instance, I rely on the knowledge produced by the travellers, merchants and early ethnographers. However 'artificial' or biased, it is this knowledge (and not the supposedly more complete reality living outside these texts) that influenced the political decisions taken at the time. This direct influence is acknowledged by the French king himself in 1603: "Having known [these lands] for a long time thanks to the accounts of the captains of our ships, pilots, merchants and others who have for a long time sojourned, visited and trafficked with the peoples there" (B.N.F., Dupuy 318: f. 100) .[18] As argued by Dickason (1997: xiii) "[t]he fact that such views had little to do with reality did not mitigate their fundamental importance in colonization". While I agree on the importance of these views for the course of action that the French took, I refuse to compare and oppose their views to a 'more real' reality like Dickason does. This is the 'reality' to which the French reacted and upon which they acted. It is thus far more important to understand it than to describe how the Amerindians were supposedly 'really' living in the 16th century (which, incidentally, would be the result of another discursive process).

Finally, and as much as is possible in any research project, I took an inductive approach and let the archives define the central argument of this thesis. In fact, the long period of archival work wielded surprising results that came to contradict some of my earlier hypotheses. On three central points, the archives proved themselves to conflict with my expectations: first, the Amerindians of Canada were not obviously savage for the French. Instead, their descriptions sometimes lead the reader to the conclusion that they were as civilised as the French.[19] Second, the Amerindians did not figure prominently in the French texts of the period. They were neither central in the intellectual discussions on sovereignty nor in the struggles that took place during the War of Religions. Thirdly and lastly, these struggles revealed that the French were more savage than I had expected. One can indeed find countless 'descriptions' of French savagery despite France being a supposedly civilised place. On these three topics, my (perhaps naïve) expectations proved wrong and the whole picture of statecraft emerged as vastly more complex than I had anticipated. The analysis of the archives collected forced me to rethink some of my assumptions that proved misleading. What the reader will find in this thesis is an attempt to make sense of the task of statecraft that I believe to be as accurate as possible given that it was guided primarily by my 'discoveries' in the archives. Whether my mistaken expectations make this thesis less 'political' than if I had followed my initial hypotheses is dubious; what is clear, however, is that these unexpected results have made this thesis different (including in its political claims).

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[18] Aurigny (1554: f. 162v-163) also mentions the importance of the compilations (*Cosmographie*) published at the time. For him, these books should be consulted by rulers "so that what they cannot see with their eyes they understand in their mind and spirit". These works present rulers who cannot travel themselves with "all the things that are admirable and new in the world" and their description makes us think that "we see them with our [own] eyes". The importance of these discourses is thus not overstated.

[19] I am not referring here to the 'noble savage' idea but rather to elements of civilisation (such as the presence of a social and organised life) performed by the French.

Thesis outline

This thesis starts with the conceptual and theoretical considerations on sovereignty that will subsequently guide the analysis in the four main empirical chapters. These four empirical chapters are designed to explore the links between sovereignty and (Western) civilisation as well as to understand how claims to civilised sovereignty are built and maintained.

Chapter 1 reviews the different approaches to sovereignty that have flourished in IR in the last 25 years. I argue that conventional analyses have not offered convincing conceptualisations due to their search for a universally and culturally neutral concept of sovereignty. Moving away from these shortcomings, I explain how post-structuralist alternatives have emphasised the intrinsic normativity of sovereignty and how post-colonial scholars have rightly identified the importance of Western civilisation for the construction of sovereignty. The end of this chapter explains how this thesis expands upon the insights offered by post-colonial scholars in order to offer a more complete picture of the creation of civilised sovereignty.

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical approach adopted for studying the discourses of sovereignty. In this thesis I consider performativity as the best way to understand these discourses. Performativity allows one to study how discourses help constitute – or enact – reality. It enables me to study how the language of sovereignty is not descriptive but "constitutive for what is brought into being" (Hansen, 2006: 15). As such, performativity transcends the usual binaries between reality and discourse or between nature and culture. This is what makes performativity particularly relevant when it comes to explaining how sovereign discourses are founded on a cultural construction of reality masquerading as a 'description' of a 'pre-existing nature'.

In chapter 3, I explore how sovereignty was understood and conceptualised by the French in the 16th century. This chapter reveals that no conceptualisation of sovereignty could be disconnected from cultural elements (unsurprisingly) referring to French standards of civilisation. It is thus not only a generic or undefined form of higher political authority that French theorists build but a specific form of exercising political power in a community. In particular, the notions of 'progress' and 'evolution' were crucial to help them justify why the French king(s) were naturally sovereign. I also discuss how the idea of 'absoluteness' usually associated with sovereignty in fact lies with the civilisational values

that support the concept. In the concluding section, I explain that French theorists inherited these notions of civilisation and evolution (or progress) from earlier ideological constructs (and in particular from Antiquity and the Middle Ages).

Chapter 3 serves as a basis for the following three chapters. Indeed, the standard of sovereignty established by these political thinkers and their reliance on pre-existing notions of civilisation are then analysed 'in practice'. Chapter 4 focuses on the blurring of identities between the civilised and the savage. Indeed, some perceptions of the Amerindians by the French render them as civilised beings living a social and organised life akin to a sovereign state. This is all the more surprising as the Amerindians of Canada are not part of an 'advanced' (i.e. easily comparable to the European standards of the time) society like the Aztecs. At the same time as civilisation is 'discovered' in America, the sovereignty of the French kings is under attack because of their savagery. Opponents indeed construct an image of the monarchs diametrically opposed to that defended by the theorists. As such, sovereignty is in doubt and (civilised and savage) identities not clearly attributed. In the concluding section I reflect more broadly on the consequences of this instability. In order to situate these events this chapter also offers an extensive historical introduction to the two cases under study.

The following chapter explores how the sovereign is established or re-established. Drawing on ideas of civilisation and savagery the task of statecraft is shown to revolve around the distancing of the sovereign from the savage Others. In the case of the Amerindians, this process takes the well-known form of performing the Amerindians as inferior, pre-social Others living in a state of nature. In the French domestic sphere, it is the French rebels who are characterised as savage and unworthy of sovereignty. In both cases, thus, a similar appeal to civilisation and savagery is used in the task of constructing sovereignty. Two colonial frontiers (one 'internal' and one 'external') thus emerge through and are alimented by the discourses of sovereignty.

In Chapter 6, I discuss how the distinction civilised-savage that is central for sovereignty is naturalised and as such reinforced. Discourses of sovereignty indeed cement the civilisational differentiation on which they rely for their legitimacy. This chapter discusses the different strategies used for this purpose. Performed identities thus appear 'natural' and the co-constitution of the sovereign civilised Self and of the savage dependent Other reinforces the inevitable aspect of the colonial frontier. Sovereignty can thus 'triumph' without obstacles.

Finally, the conclusion draws together the different chapters. I briefly restate my general argument about the centrality of civilisation and savagery in the domestic and external processes of constructing sovereignty and then turn to some of the broader (and

contemporary) implications of my analysis. I also outline some areas for future research and reflect upon the intrinsic limits of this thesis.

Chapter 1

Revealing civilised sovereignty: achievements and limits of (post-colonial) analyses of sovereignty in IR

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the traditional definition of sovereignty has been challenged a countless number of times in an ever growing literature. This widespread dissatisfaction with the conceptualisation of sovereignty has come to form a genuine 'new wave' of analyses of sovereignty: Sørensen (1999: 590) talks about a "renewed interest in sovereignty", Onuf (1991: 425) of "a burst of attention" for the concept of sovereignty, and Weber (1992: 199) of a "revival of academic scrutiny concerning sovereign statehood".[20] For Bartelson (2006:

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[20] As noticed by Blaney and Inayatullah (2000: 29), it is "[o]nly fairly recently has sovereignty appeared to us once again as a puzzle". For Sørensen (1999: 590), "[o]nly a few years ago, sovereignty used to be taken for granted in the study of world politics" whereas it is today "being intensely debated among scholars and practitioners of world politics". And for Prokhovnik (2007: 1) sovereignty "is currently open to positive reconceptualisation".

462), "[t]he concept of sovereignty, once relatively uncontested, has recently become a major bone of contention within international law and international relations theory". This "explosion" (Biersteker and Weber, 1996a: 1; Prokhovnik, 2007: 41), however, should not be overstated. In his history of the discipline, Schmidt has shown that the discourse of anarchy that was central to the development of IR is intertwined with a discourse of sovereignty, and therefore with debates around the precise meaning and implications of the concept of sovereignty. As he observes, "[t]he discipline of political science gained its original identity from the study of the state, and it made the topic of sovereignty one of its paramount theoretical concerns" (Schmidt, 1998: 41). Moreover, and already in 1990, some noticed that "[a] considerable literature [had] accumulated on our inability to respond adequately to the questions that are posed by the principle of state sovereignty" (Walker and Mendlovitz, 1990: 5).[21] But interrogations on sovereignty have nevertheless acquired an unprecedented importance since the 1990s, thus confirming that scholars have recently (re-)directed their attention toward "the elusive concept of sovereignty" (Schmidt, 1998: 240).

Most analyses, however, have proved disappointing for they have neglected the real source of the difficulties in conceptualising sovereignty. Indeed, scholars have identified different reason(s) for the reappraisal of sovereignty: mainstream scholars usually mention the 'evolution(s)' of the international system (like the supposed intensification of globalisation or the presence of 'fragile' and 'failed' states) as the main cause for the new wave of analyses on sovereignty. Indeed, with the presence of globalisation, trans-national actors and decolonised 'states', sovereignty seems to be eroding, transforming if not disappearing altogether. For others, it is the crisis of modernity and of its conceptual tools that is the main reason for the new wave of analyses of sovereignty (Onuf, 1991: 425).[22] It will be argued in this chapter, however, that this explosion is the result of taking the minimalist definition of sovereignty as a starting point. In fact, the constant dissatisfaction with the concept lies in the attachment of most theorists to a minimally defined and supposedly neutral conceptualisation of sovereignty and in their reluctance to question this attachment. Such a conceptualisation finds its origins in the problematic – but still dominant – division in the conventional literature between the fields of IR and Politics and their respective topics. It is this separation "that makes IR theory as a separate body of knowledge possible" (Adler-Nissen, 2013: 180). Through this disciplinary divide external sovereignty (the form of sovereignty that matters in IR) is seen as detached from internal sovereignty, i.e. how communities organise their form of political authority. This is why most IR scholars claim that the traditional or minimal definition of sovereignty presented in the introduction is sufficient to understand international politics. Such a choice is thus linked to the necessity of preserving their disciplinary identity: a concept of sovereignty deprived of what is considered as 'internal' or

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[21] In 1948 Morgenthau (1948/1973: 315) was already noticing that "despite the brilliant efforts of a few outstanding scholars, there is much confusion about the meaning of the term, and about what is and what is not compatible with the sovereignty of a particular nation".

[22] The association between sovereignty and modernity is also noticed by Jackson (1999: 431).

'domestic' (culture) enables IR scholars to safeguard their own academic territory. As a consequence, the notions of 'culture' or 'civilisation' are discarded as domestic and internal and as having no relevance for international relations (and external sovereignty).

This refusal to acknowledge the links between external sovereignty and 'culture' (that is still believed to be restricted to the domestic sphere) means that IR scholars are bound to reproduce the fiction of a 'descriptive gap' – a supposed 'gap' that sparked their interest in sovereignty in the first place. Indeed, and as exemplified below in the analyses of Jackson and Krasner, most conventional scholars try to 'solve' what they identify as a 'lack of fit' or a "growing non-correspondence" (Lipping, 2010: 188) between the classical definition of sovereignty – as a final form of authority of a country guaranteeing freedom from outside interference – and the reality of imperialism, colonialism and interventions in international relations.[23] The belief in this traditional and neutral definition of sovereignty only serves to re-create the same issues these scholars first faced. Indeed, non-Western states always appear as anomalies or deviations from the norm while Western states fulfil the conditions of sovereignty without the analyst being able to enunciate why in scientific/objective terms (recalling Benton's claim mentioned in the introduction that we recognise sovereignty when we see it but are hardly able to articulate why). As Grovogui (2002: 316) argues: "Instead of treating the African condition as evidence that undermines the empirical thesis of a uniform international morality, theorists often construe deviations from the Western state model as a sign of the inability of African states to live up to the requirements of sovereignty". Due to their attachment to the traditional definition of sovereignty conventional analyses are bound to reproduce unsatisfying explanations for the descriptive gap that result from this very definition. The recurrent attempts "to operationalize [sovereignty] into measurable, if not quantifiable, indicators" (Thomson, 1995: 214) can only prove disappointing as long as the role of (domestic) culture(s) is not recognised.

Both conventional and constructivist scholars thus end up deploring the supposed ambiguity of the concept, something that "has itself become a recurring motif in the literature on sovereignty" (Kalmo and Skinner, 2010: 1). They are unable to identify how the 'gap' is in fact the realisation of what sovereignty *is* (a Western-defined concept). They are also unable to recognise the consequences of supporting such a Eurocentric concept (for instance in terms of the inherent lack of independence of the non-West and the arbitrariness of what counts as valid sovereign institutions and values). Hence, "[c]ontinuing to treat the state [or sovereignty] as an unproblematic concept in our

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[23] Lipping (2010: 188) argues that "[t]he classical framework appears to be increasingly unable to make sense of new phenomena and to serve as a reliable model for novel circumstances". This dissatisfaction with sovereignty thus finds its origin in the presence of new and unexplicable phenomena in international relations. Other examples can be found in Cutler (2001) and Peters (2009). This gap is described by Walker (2003b: vii) as "the disparity between purely legal conceptions and sources of authority and actually existing articulations and locations of political authority in the globalizing era".

approaches to international relations (African or otherwise) privileges the dominant Western discourse and blinds us to the complexity of reality" (Dunn, 2001: 62).

In this chapter I support the view that post-colonial analyses of sovereignty are the most compelling approaches. Post-structuralists have rightly emphasised the intrinsic normativity of sovereignty and the resulting need to focus on the discourses of sovereignty rather than on a supposedly 'empirical' and 'neutral' reality. Post-colonial scholars pursued a similar agenda but have more specifically linked this normativity of sovereignty to the Western civilisational values that inform the concept. Their approach, although requiring a break with the usual association between sovereignty and juridical equality, offers a more convincing picture of international relations. Indeed, post-colonial scholars have moved away from the idea of a 'descriptive gap' by accounting for the non-West 'lack' of sovereignty *not as an exception* to the rule of a supposedly universal sovereignty but as a prime example of the Eurocentrism of sovereignty. Ironically, then, it seems that the answer to the puzzle of sovereignty is to be found in an acknowledgement that the concept is intrinsically linked to the idea of dependence and juridical inequality (of the non-West). This thesis builds upon these post-colonial analyses by insisting on the need to look at both the internal and external construction of civilised sovereignty. Only by doing so can we reveal the central role played by 'civilisation' in constructing the civilised Western self against an internal and an external savage (and non-sovereign) Other.

This chapter offers a review of the consequent literature that the discipline of IR has accumulated on sovereignty and explains how such an accumulation reveals more the shortcomings of most of the discipline rather than an intrinsic difficulty of the concept of sovereignty. This chapter argues that by considering international relations as intercultural relations the workings of sovereignty can be explained more satisfactorily. This is why I turn to post-structuralist and post-colonial scholars in order to inform my research. I conclude this chapter by outlining some ways through which these approaches could be complemented and reinforced.

Re-producing Eurocentric blindness: Conventional approaches to sovereignty

Arguably some of the major mainstream contributions to the study of sovereignty have been driven by the impression that new realities are emerging that the old-fashioned concept of sovereignty – or, to be more specific, sovereignty as it has traditionally been understood in the literature – cannot explain. As will become clearer, this so-called gap is in

fact inexistent when we abandon the equalitarian, Westphalian/mythological conception of sovereignty that has influenced a large majority of IR scholars. Two influential authors will be mentioned in this section: Robert Jackson and Stephen Krasner. Although they do not share the same theoretical assumptions, once viewed from a post-colonial perspective their respective analyses appear surprisingly similar due to their attachment to the traditional conceptualisation of sovereignty. This section will discuss how both *have to* resort to Eurocentric (masquerading as universal) ideas in order to define what a *real* sovereign state is. As such, they obscure the role of (Western) culture and civilisation by presenting their conceptualisations as a-cultural or culturally-neutral. This is why their work is representative of how conventional scholars have dealt with the concept of sovereignty.[24]

Both Jackson's and Krasner's most influential analyses of sovereignty start from the idea of a 'descriptive gap'. For Krasner (1999: 51), there is an "empirical inaccuracy of the Westphalian model". In fact, and quite boldly, he argues that sovereignty has always been violated in international relations.[25] His book develops this argument through different themes such as minority rights, human rights and international borrowing. Similarly, Jackson's interest in sovereignty is based on the perceived disconnection between the rights and duties that he associates with sovereignty and the deviance of certain states from this model. For him, this situation is especially obvious since the end of the classical sovereignty game when "[m]any colonial entities were thereby transformed legally into states. In reality, of course, they scarcely changed at all" (Jackson, 1990: 40). Some of these newly sovereign states do not disclose enough (if any) sovereign attributes or capacities. Jackson (1987: 526) indeed affirms that "we immediately notice the extent to which most of them depart from current conceptions and expectations of statehood". This "divorce of entitlement and responsibility" (Jackson, 1990: 138) calls for a renewed analysis of sovereignty.

Following on from their identification of a 'descriptive gap', both scholars resort to the same technique: they separate states depending on their possession of an actual sovereignty. Jackson differentiates a 'real' form of sovereignty from an incomplete one while Krasner divides sovereignty into different components that are possessed differently by different states. Crucially, though, they both believe in the existence of a 'complete' or 'real' sovereignty that would only be possessed by some states. For Jackson, two periods can be schematically identified: before 1960, sovereign states were all positively sovereign, where positive sovereignty refers to "capabilities which enable governments to be their own masters" (Jackson, 1990: 29). After the decolonisations, international relations

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[24] Other examples can be found in the works of Helman and Ratner (1992-1993), Thomson (1995), Jackson (2003), and Fearon and Laitin (2004).

[25] In another article, Krasner (2001: 18 and 22) writes that "[e]very major peace treaty since 1648 – Westphalia, Utrecht, Vienna, Versailles, Helsinki, and Dayton – has violated the sovereign state model in one way or another", although he also acknowledges that "[a] great deal of what takes place is consistent with the sovereign state model".

witnessed the apparition of 'quasi-states'. These 'quasi-states' only possess what Jackson (1990: 27) calls a negative sovereignty, i.e. "freedom from outside interference", but without the capacity to actively defend this freedom or to act 'as' a sovereign state. Negative sovereignty therefore corresponds to immunity, not capacity, and does not depend on the actions and resources of the state (Jackson, 1990: 29 and 30). In other words, "[u]nder negative sovereignty, there is no requirement of substantive control over a territory and its population (i.e. no monopoly of force by the state, no effective control over the state territory, no effective bureaucracy)" (Zaum, 2007: 33). Hence, even if both positively and negatively sovereign states are usually called 'sovereign', Jackson (1990: 3 and 34) argues for a clear distinction between these two categories. 'Quasi-states' are only normatively or juridically sovereign, but not empirically sovereign: they have no "demonstrable reality" and "[t]hey fail to disclose very much if anything in the way of empirical statehood".[26]

In a similar way, Krasner divides sovereignty into four components that are possessed unequally by different states.[27] These four components (just as Jackson's two forms of sovereignty) are usually conflated into the unitary concept of sovereignty. For Krasner (1999: 9, my emphasis) "[t]he term sovereignty has been commonly used in at least four different ways: *domestic sovereignty*, referring to the organization of public authority within a state and to the level of effective control exercised by those holding authority; *interdependence sovereignty*, referring to the ability of public authorities to control transborder movements; *international legal sovereignty*, referring to the mutual recognition of states or other entities; and *Westphalian sovereignty*, referring to the exclusion of external actors from domestic authority configurations". Key here is not the division of sovereignty itself, but rather the assertion that the "various elements of sovereignty have not fit together like some organic whole" (Krasner, 1999: 226).[28]

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[26] Thomson (1995: 220, my emphasis) shares this analysis: "[c]apabilities are central" and "[s]tates are recognized as sovereign when they present *a fact of sovereignty*; that is, states recognize another's sovereignty when the latter has achieved the *capability* to defend its authority against domestic an international challengers". For Thomson as well as for Jackson "European history largely supports this argument but the post-World War II period of decolonization does not".

[27] His other argument – that sovereignty is an 'organized hypocrisy' – will not be developed here. Apart from the internal problem of consistency that this vision of sovereignty introduces (different forms of sovereignty seem to be respected/violated differently, thus undermining the argument that all norms are organised hypocrisy), this argument does not touch specifically on 'sovereignty' as a concept and can be equally applied to other norms.

[28] Some problems emerge with Krasner's typology, especially on the independence of the four components of sovereignty. As acknowledged by Krasner himself, his distinction of four independent components is analytically correct but empirically difficult to sustain as the erosion or reinforcement of one form of sovereignty usually leads to the erosion or reinforcement of the three others (see especially Krasner, 1999: 24, 13 and 14; and for a critique of the separation between the four components Zaum, 2007: 32). The independence of the four components ultimately relies on the separation between power and authority, a separation that is recognised by Krasner (1999: 10) as slippery: "A loss of control over a period of time could lead to a loss of authority". The terminology used by Krasner (and especially his reference to Westphalia) has also been widely criticised (see for instance Osiander (2001: 265) and Simpson (2005)).

Although framed in a scientific and objective manner, both (re)-conceptualisations are nevertheless deeply Eurocentric. In reality, what both Jackson and Krasner do is to re-establish in supposedly more neutral terms a division between civilised and sovereign countries and the uncivilised political communities that have never achieved (the standard of) sovereignty. In effect, and without being mentioned explicitly, their conceptualisations recreate a two-tier system in which some 'naturally' realise the conditions for a 'real' sovereignty while others continuously fail to achieve a standard of sovereignty that is defined from a Western perspective.

Jackson's framework of positive and negative sovereignty, for instance, leads to a civilisational judgement on states' respective value. Although advocated as a neutral characterisation (and not linked to an idea of 'good' and 'bad' sovereigns (Jackson, 1990: 11)), the negative sovereignty of 'quasi-states' is clearly seen as inferior to the positive sovereignty of (Western) 'historical' states, with the former being incapable of mastering the modern political practices that the latter usually exercise (Dunn, 2003: 135). Additionally, the discourse on 'quasi-states' is reminiscent of past colonial practices. In a paternalistic fashion, Jackson (1987: 528) estimates that

> Large segments of national populations [in those quasi-states] – probably a big majority in most cases – cannot or will not draw the necessary distinction between office and incumbent, between the authority and responsibility of officials and their personal influence and discretion, upon which the realization of modern statehood depends.

The plurality of allegiances and identities inside of those states is compared to "medieval Europe". The thinly veiled association of positive sovereignty with a 'civilised' stage recreates a classificatory scheme based on Western values. The long list of adjectives that Jackson associates with 'quasi-states' is particularly revealing of their embodiment of a new form of 'savagery'. For Jackson these 'states' are characterised by their bad governance (5, 47) and their incapacity (28, 29). They are also uncivil (45, 47, 193), illegitimate (47), underdeveloped (47, 177), destitute (112), deficient (168), and technologically backward (177). Perhaps even more importantly, quasi-states' leaders lack the will to do good for their population (9). As observed by Doty (1996: 155), "the quasi state characterized by incompetence and corruption takes up the niche previously occupied by the uncivilized and unfit for self-government". By blaming negatively sovereign states for their under-achievement of a (Western) civilised standard "Jackson [also] popularized the view that negative sovereignty shelters tyrants and disempowers citizenries, particularly the

disenfranchised, politically marginal, and those worn down by the present norms of politics" (Grovogui, 2009: 263).[29]

The logical conclusion of his analysis is that intervention and external 'management' of these 'quasi-states' is both necessary and beneficial. Although Jackson (1998: 12-14) himself seemed to express doubts about this necessity of intervention in a later publication, his analysis fails to provide an unbiased conceptualisation of sovereignty that does not lead to such conclusions. Not only does he "ignore the structural inequities of the present international system in order to conjure up [the non-West] agency after decolonization" (Grovogui, 2002: 321) but his definition of what a positive (i.e. 'real') sovereignty *is* is based on a normative assessment based on Western civilisation and its values. In reality, then, if Jackson himself is not an advocate of imperialism, the unacknowledged cultural specificity of his approach to sovereignty cannot but provide a justification for such a practice.

As argued previously, Krasner also fails to conceptualise sovereignty without incorporating Western values and expectations. Krasner's division of sovereignty is concordant with Jackson's two-tier sovereignty, with some states recognised as sovereign without any internal substance (or what he calls domestic or Westphalian sovereignty). Despite an effort to remain neutral in his definition of domestic and Westphalian sovereignty his four components of sovereignty cannot be defined outside of a cultural or civilisational framework: they variously refer to the presence, ability or effectiveness of political structures or to the 'mutual recognition' of these structures by other (already *sovereign*) states. Krasner (2004: 118) for instance associates "domestic sovereignty" with "governance structures that exercised competent and ideally constructive control over their countries' populations and territory". Krasner's conceptualisation is thus dependent on an (unacknowledged) cultural framework inside which some political structures are recognised by a club or society of sovereign states. The history of 'misrecognition' and complete neglect of pre-existing authority and governance structures by Western states (a process that will be exemplified with the French and Amerindians in chapter 4) and the exclusiveness of the 'sovereign club' that lends recognition to states as part of the 'civilised community' illustrate how normative Krasner's approach really is. Through his division of sovereignty Krasner reintroduces a hierarchy between pre-modern, modern and post-modern states (Krasner, 2010: 100-101) leading to the logical conclusion that an external intervention can violate international legal sovereignty but reinforce domestic sovereignty (this view is most clearly expressed in Krasner, 2004; 2005). In other words, Krasner's

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[29] Such an argument (also supported *inter alia* by Clapham (1998: 147) and Peters (2009: 544)) clearly delegitimises the independence associated with the negative sovereignty of quasi-states. As Koskenniemi (2010: 239) observes "[s]overeignty, it is sometimes claimed, should not stand in the way of producing 'democracy', or 'rule of law' or 'human rights' or 'security', if necessary by the 'transformative occupation' by benevolent (Western) occupiers".

framework leads all too easily to the same classificatory scheme that we encounter in Jackson's analysis.

Hence, Jackson and Krasner insist that sovereignty is different and used differently in the West and non-Western world and that it might mean different things in different places and for different people. This variability of sovereignty is key as it enables a break out of the 'absolute and universal conception' straitjacket. Nevertheless, and because of their refusal to recognise the civilisational values underpinning sovereignty, these authors only touch upon a fundamental idea without revealing its strong normative bias. More importantly, they contribute to the mythology of sovereignty as a culturally-neutral, objective and consequently universal idea(l) that is equally desirable by all and that could be equally exercised by all. Jackson and Krasner participate in the (re)production of yet another supposedly objective conceptualisation of sovereignty that, on closer analysis, reveals itself to be Eurocentric.[30] While they both maintain the fiction of world politics as 'international relations', culture keeps creeping back (and yet is silenced) in their analyses.

Constructivist approaches: sovereignty as a universalised social construct

At the same time as Jackson and Krasner published their analysis, debates emerged among constructivist scholars on the continued relevance of the concept of sovereignty as traditionally understood. Once again, the starting point of their analyses has been the idea of a 'descriptive gap' between a traditional definition of sovereignty stripped of its Eurocentric content and a practice of sovereignty that necessarily revealed the strong civilisational bias of the concept. Crucially, though, constructivists reproduce the problematic idea that a culturally-neutral conceptualisation of sovereignty is possible either by disregarding the normative side of the concept or by restricting this normative content (and its imperialist consequences) to a revolved past. In other words, constructivist scholars either naturalise the major role of Western culture as unproblematic or restrict its influence to a period of European international society (thus postulating that our current international society is truly accommodating to cultural differences).

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[30] This is not to argue that sovereignty could be defined in any other way, i.e. outside of a referent civilisation or culture. As explored throughout this thesis the concept of sovereignty is necessarily attached to a cultural or civilisational content (that has been Western throughout modern history).

Constructivist scholars follow the work of Wendt who in a 1992 article articulated the basis of the entire constructivist literature on sovereignty. By arguing that "[i]t is collective meanings that constitute the structures which organize our actions" (1992: 397), Wendt also touches explicitly on the concept of sovereignty: for him, "[s]overeignty is an institution, and so it exists only in virtue of certain intersubjective understandings and expectations; there is no sovereignty without an other" (412). Hence, sovereignty norms have their origin in practice (413), a premise that an entire generation of scholars working on sovereignty will adopt (in contradistinction with the more abstract or 'transcendental' approach to sovereignty). Accordingly, the focus is on "the ways that the practices of states and nonstate agents produce, reform, and redefine sovereignty" (Biersteker and Weber, 1996a: 11). Sovereignty norms are embedded in society since "they represent shared understandings and expectations that are constantly reinforced both through the practices of states and the practices of nonstate actors" (Sikkink, 1993: 412). Therefore, constructivists consider sovereignty to be

> an inherently social concept that exists and has meaning because it encompasses a set of intersubjectively shared ideas, on which international agents act. If sovereignty is treated as a social concept, its meaning is not exogenously determined; rather, it is endogenous to the interaction of international actors holding beliefs about sovereignty (Zaum, 2007: 2; see also Fowler and Bunck, 1996: 387).

If sovereignty is a "socially constructed" (Glanville, 2011: 237) or "an inherently *social* concept" (Biersteker and Weber, 1996a: 1), it means – and this is fundamental for IR – that sovereignty does not have an eternal essence defined *a priori* and eternally but rather that it "is constituted by a set of historical practices influenced by tacit understandings of legitimate action in particular social contexts" (Adler-Nissen, 2013: 179).

Instead of conceptualising sovereignty in an a-historical fashion, changes, transformations and evolutions are accepted as the "constant, ongoing process" characterising the social construction of sovereignty (Weber and Biersteker, 1996: 282). When sovereignty was considered as eternally fixed and defined, evolutions were seen as violations or departure announcing the end, or, more dramatically, the death of sovereignty. But from a constructivist perspective, sovereignty is a "necessarily historically contingent concept" (Barkin, 1998: 232) that "has evolved over time" (Lake, 2003: 309). In other words, "as the prescriptions for sovereign recognition change, so does the meaning of sovereignty" (Biersteker and Weber, 1996a: 13). Accordingly, the concept is seen as elastic or "pliable" (Barkin and Cronin, 1994: 129), having no particular meaning other than a contextual (or historical) one (Chopra and Weiss, 1992). The task of the analyst is therefore not to find a timeless definition of sovereignty – an impossible task given that "we cannot use definitions to capture the essence of a subject we believe is so deeply

contested and undergoing change" (Biersteker and Weber, 1996a: 2) – but rather the contrary: "to explore the ways in which sovereignty has been socially constructed and reconstructed over time" (Glanville, 2011: 236).[31]

The sovereignty-versus-human-rights debate provides a good illustration of the way sovereignty is being reconceptualised within constructivism. This debate (or deadlock, as aptly characterised by Chopra and Weiss (1992))[32] is problematic for mainstream scholars. For Krasner (1999: 126), "[t]he issue of human rights is but the latest example of a long-standing tension between autonomy and international attempts to regulate relations between rulers and ruled". Thompson also recently expressed this idea by arguing that "[d]uring the first decade after the Cold War, a series of humanitarian interventions appeared to suggest that sovereignty had an increasingly low premium when in conflict with the desire to protect human rights" (Thompson, 2006: 252; for a similar view, see also Keene, 2004: 120). But for constructivists, sovereignty is not 'self-sufficient' or "an independent, self-referential value" (Reus-Smit, 1997: 556). Indeed, the concept is necessarily affected by the context and "it has always been justified with reference to particular conceptions of legitimate statehood and rightful state action" (Reus-Smit, 2001: 520; see also Sikkink, 1993). For Barkin (1998: 229), "the internationalisation of human rights can be seen as an evolution of the constitution of sovereignty, rather than as a challenge to it". In this perspective, sovereignty could (and necessarily does) include the prevalent norms about state behaviour of each period. That is why "sovereignty and human rights are [now] bound together within a single discourse of legitimate statehood" (Reus-Smit, 2001: 538; see also Philpott, 2001a).[33]

Hence, constructivists facilitate our understanding of sovereignty by criticising the usual insistence on a timeless and contextless definition of sovereignty, and by showing how conceptions of sovereignty evolve through time and space. Sovereignty "becomes a material fact through historically variable and contingent social institutions and practices of recognition" (Donnelly, 2006: 151). But constructivists are still attached to the idea of a neutral and thus value-free and universal concept of sovereignty. First, some constructivists still defend the possibility of a *neutral* definition of sovereignty. Peters (2009: 514), for instance, argues that the subordination of sovereignty to human rights is a "dynamic process in which sovereignty is being complemented, and eventually replaced, by a new normative foundation of international law". For her sovereignty has now been "humanized" thanks to the inclusion of the supposedly universal values of international law

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[31] See also Howland and White (2009: 1-2) and Taylor (1999: 563).

[32] Expressions of this 'deadlock' are countless in the literature. On this specific debate, one comment made by Barkin (1998: 231) is particularly helpful: "International Relations theory has had difficulty reconciling the concepts of sovereignty and human rights primarily because it tended to take sovereignty as a given, as a legal absolute, not as something that can vary over time".

[33] For some constructivists, this a new phenomenon – sovereignty was supposedly 'absolute' on its own before this evolution. For others, this change is simply the last one in a long sequence of transformations.

in the concept.[34] In a similar vein, Glanville (2014: 131) explains that the normativity of sovereignty – and in particular its link to Western civilisation – needs to be understood as restricted to a historical moment, a "problematic but crucial chapter of the history of sovereignty". Glanville situates this 'chapter' in the nineteenth century and argues that Europeans suddenly realised their civilisational superiority at this moment (101). This 'bracketing' of the Western normativity of sovereignty is contradicted, however, by his mention of (European) authors writing about civilised sovereignty well before the nineteenth century and by his inability to recognise that the other regimes of sovereignty that he mentions (monarchical, national self-determination, minority and individual rights) are equally defined inside of a specific civilisational framework. Peters (2009: 519) also restricts the existence of a 'normative' or civilised sovereignty to a specific period and estimates that "[w]ith the extension of the *Ius publicum Europaeum* around the globe, the requirement that states, to become full members of the international legal system, must conform to the 'civilized nation' standard, had been abandoned". Generally speaking, the reproduction of a supposedly neutral definition of sovereignty in the constructivist literature could be explained by their (almost exclusive) focus on the seemingly uncontroversial concept of human rights.

Second, constructivists are reluctant to explore the processes of power that necessarily play a part in the construction of sovereignty. As argued by Zarakol (2011: 14-15 and 17), "very few of these [constructivist] works make the power dynamics behind socializing relationships their explicit focus". Consequently the influence of hierarchies and status difference in defining international social norms is usually elided in this literature. Aalberts and Werner (2011: 2187-2189), for instance, link sovereignty to rights and responsibilities originating from 'community interests', as if an international consensus existed on what these interests are. In their article on the evolutions of sovereignty, Barkin and Cronin (1994: 128) similarly conclude that these changes occur "because our understanding of sovereign authority is intersubjective, largely based on the principles and beliefs that a dominant coalition comes to adopt in the process of constructing an international order". Nevertheless, they do not question further who is part of this "dominant coalition" and the effect that this restricted membership can have on the definition of sovereignty itself. Even when constructivists are clear that sovereignty is "grounded in other, higher-order, values, which sovereign states are thought to realize" (Peters, 2009: 518) they do not explore these values or their origins. Controversial expressions such as "standards of conduct" (Heller and Sofaer, 2001: 30), "club" of sovereign states (Glanville, 2014: 24) or "conscience-shocking" situations that must lead to international interventions (Peters, 2009: 535) do not trigger in the constructivist literature an interest in the normativity of sovereignty. Very few constructivists are explicit about this avoidance: only Glanville (2014: 6) justifies his choice by claiming that he does

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[34] This argument, however, overlooks the Eurocentrism of international law. On this question see Grovogui (1996), Koskenniemi (2001) and Anghie (2005).

not seek to pass normative judgement on the historical development of the relationship between sovereignty and responsibility. I claim neither that the various historical constructions of sovereign responsibilities that I trace ought to be celebrated nor that they should be lamented. I simply seek to explore how the relationship between sovereignty and responsibility has developed over time.

Constructivists generally strive to 'describe' the reality of sovereignty but refuse to discuss the origin of the norms that inform sovereignty. Through their analytical choices they avoid questioning the deep inequality of the international system and how this reality impacts on international law (and thus on sovereignty). In doing so they also attribute a certain 'objectivity' and universality to sovereignty and as such participate in the maintenance of the mythology of a neutral conceptualisation of sovereignty. In short, "the recognition [by constructivists] that sovereignty is a dynamic social construct and that its interpretation varies over time, underrates, indeed subordinates, the power dynamics that characterise the international system" (Pourmokhtari, 2013: 1783).

Revealing the discursive and normative nature of sovereignty

Post-structuralist works move away from the idea of a 'descriptive gap' and from the attachment to a traditionally-conceptualised sovereignty. Putting emphasis on the inherent limitations of mainstream approaches instead of blaming the ambiguity of the concept of sovereignty, post-structuralists argue that "the vain attempts of conceptual analysis have less to do with the inherent ambiguities of the concept, and more to do with the philosophical tools utilized to this purpose" (Bartelson, 1995: 18). In particular, the assumption of the neutrality of language for representing reality and the subsequent quest for an objective definition hinder any attempt at understanding sovereignty (Bartelson, 1995: 49). By opposition, post-structuralist works emphasise the discursive nature of sovereignty, which is directly related to the intrinsic normativity of the concept.

First, post-structuralist scholars agree that "the appeal to empirical evidence cannot be decisive with regard to political concepts like sovereignty" (Prokhovnik, 2007: 30). A "descriptive interpretation of sovereignty" insists on finding "corresponding realities" (Werner and Wilde, 2001: 285-286) of sovereignty in international politics, presupposing that the concept of sovereignty is a mere reflection of these realities. For post-structuralist scholars sovereignty is first and foremost a discursive practice. Bartelson (1995: 52), for instance, argues that "[t]here is a discursive practice of sovereignty, but

sovereignty itself is not amenable to empirical political research". For Werner and de Wilde (2001: 292), sovereignty is a speech act, or more precisely, an institutional fact, meaning that it is and remains true and real as long as it is taken for granted inside of a specific framework specifying what sovereign norms are. Hence, "a claim to sovereignty attempts to establish a relation as an institutional fact (the 'fact' of being the supreme or ultimate authority and the 'fact' of being an independent authority) and a set of rights and responsibilities". Here, the usual 'logical' chain is reversed: it is not 'reality' that is reflected in our 'thinking' but rather "[w]hat we think and accept sovereignty to mean" that "structures the real world of political and legal practices" (Prokhovnik, 2007: 18). Consequently, "[d]ifferent conceptions of sovereignty shape political reality very differently" (Prokhovnik, 2007: 21).

The discursive nature of sovereignty is interlinked with its normativity. Indeed, the normativity of sovereignty originates from "the crucial mediation of 'material facts' and action by ideas and values, all developed within particular histories of meaning" (Prokhovnik, 2007: 47). There seems to be no way to 'construct' or talk about sovereignty outside of a highly subjective perspective: as noticed by Bartelson (1995: 3), "sovereignty ultimately is something man-made". It is so because sovereignty provides an answer to questions of political possibilities of a community, an answer that is necessarily specific, historically determined, and that offers "a spatial and a temporal resolution to questions about what political community can be" (Walker, 1993: 62). These answers are not 'naturally' or logically present but first originate from what is considered as desirable when it comes to collective and political organisation. As explored in Chapter 4, these conceptions result from political debates and discourses happening 'within' (and at the same time shaping) a political community. In her own analysis Weber provides examples of how the meaning of sovereignty is stabilised during intervention practices. Sovereignty is constructed through "disciplinary acts of intervention" (Weber, 1995: 124). This leads her to write that "[w]hen state practices do not fit intersubjective understandings of what a sovereign state *must be*, then interference by a sovereign state in the affairs of an "aberrant" state is legitimate" (Weber, 1995: 4 (my emphasis); for a similar conclusion, see Malmvig, 2006). In a similar vein, Prokhovnik (2007: 58) affirms that "the designation of a unit as a state is political rather than automatic and natural". That is why it is necessary to remain sceptical about the possibility of using and studying sovereignty outside of a normative framework, i.e. "without imposing an answer onto the question of state sovereignty" (Weber, 1995: 9).

This insistence on the discursive and normative nature of sovereignty means that the concept should be analysed not so much in terms of its correspondence with a supposedly pre-existing reality, but rather in terms of what it contributes to create or to *call into being*. One way to conceptualise this relationship between discourse and reality of

sovereignty is to argue that sovereignty is a performative concept (Weber, 1998).[35] This 'reorientation' is crucial since it draws attention to the normative nature of sovereignty: by this very act of creation, "'regular subjects' and 'standards of normality' are discursively co-constituted to give the effect that both are natural rather than cultural constructs" (Weber, 1998: 81). Hence, by establishing the (normal) sovereign state as 'naturally' pre-existing discourses of sovereignty contribute to establish what they claim to describe. It is therefore not surprising that a prescriptive or 'directive' grammar – must, ought, should, have to – is very frequently found in discourses of sovereignty. As noticed by Kalmo and Skinner (2010: 9), there is a "close association of 'is' and 'ought' within the sovereignty discourse" which means that what is politically desirable is usually expressed in terms of sovereignty. This is also identified by Werner and de Wilde (2001: 284) who write that "sovereignty plays an important role in normative discourses by – imaginarily – bridging the gap between 'is' and 'ought'". As Walker (2003b: viii) writes

> sovereignty, for all its negative associations, continues to offer an organising frame for the constitution and regulation of old and new – state and nonstate – political communities, and so arguably supplies a necessary precondition for the continuation of the virtues associated with political community – in particular the ideas of effective, citizen-engaging and representative governance.

Sovereignty therefore participates in the establishment of the standard of the good life or of "well-being" (Koskenniemi, 1994: 29) of political communities. As explored in Chapter 3 the discourse of sovereignty is where the ideal state and society are defined and identified. Sovereignty is thus a crucial tool to define "collective life as a *project* – a set of institutions and practices in which the forms of collective life are constantly imagined, debated, criticized and reformed, over and again" (Koskenniemi, 2010: 241). Sovereignty allows for the identification and if possible the realisation of "cultural, historical or ethical principles" (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2012: 125) that lie at the centre of what defines a (sovereign) state. The idea that "the function of sovereignty is to participate in the construction of normativity" (Weber, 1998: 89) is even acknowledged, although usually less explicitly, by mainstream scholars (as seen with the constructivist scholars).

It is clear, therefore, that if sovereignty is inherently normative and cannot be a value-free concept, it is also characterised by its ever-changing aspect. Even more so than constructivists, post-structuralist scholars dismiss any attempt at imposing a definition on sovereignty: for Bartelson (1995: 53), "[a] history of sovereignty cannot be written from the initial assumption of a timeless ontology" or with the idea that one will find a fixed referent. Following her argument that intervention practices participate in the creation of the meaning of sovereignty, Weber (1995: 10) estimates that "[i]n the face of such

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[35] This approach will be detailed in the next chapter.

practices, it is misguided to retreat to an international legal definition of sovereignty as (among other things) a state's absolute authority over its domestic affairs". On the contrary, fixing a timeless definition will only encourage the analyst to forget the "historical and culturally specific character" of sovereignty (Walker, 1993: 166).

The apparent atemporality of sovereignty advocated by conventional in IR theorists can thus be understood as "an effect of complex practices working to affirm continuities and to shift disruptions and dangers to the margin" (Walker, 1993: 163). The constantly evolving conceptualisation of sovereignty reveals that over time – and depending on place as well – there will be a definitional change in sovereignty (Bartelson, 1995: 4). This evolution is sometimes compared to a "slippage in the notion of sovereignty" (Weber, 1995: 16):[36] due to the number of different conceptualisations of sovereignty that have existed and that will arguably exist in the future, the meaning of sovereignty depends on how the concept is used (Prokhovnik, 2007: 8).

Hence, there is a continual process of creation and re-creation of what sovereignty means and entails. It would be impossible in these post-structuralist frameworks to follow IR's traditional story of the creation of a concept at Westphalia in 1648,[37] a concept only now being undermined by globalisation, regional integrations or human rights. For Weber, "[t]his is not a one-time occurrence which fixes the meaning of sovereignty and statehood for all time in all places; rather, this struggle is repeated in various forms at numerous spatial and temporal locales" (Weber, 1995: 3; see also Weber, 1992: 200). Approaching sovereignty from this timeless perspective denies its link to specific practices revealed by constructivists but also its inherent link to *specific forms of collective projects* that necessarily change across time and space. As Grovogui (2009: 263) argues "sovereignty is always grounded in sets of social relationships and attains intelligibility only within a particular social or moral order". That is why "states are constantly maintained, defended, attacked, reproduced, undermined, and relegitimised on a daily basis", and, consequently,

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[36] This is particularly problematic for mainstream scholars. Jackson (2005: 76), for instance, suggests that "[t]here are of course limits to the renovations that can be made to any institution, including sovereignty, beyond which it is changed out of all recognition and it can no longer be said to exist as such". Discussing sovereignty, Keohane (2002: 743) affirms that "[f]rom a scientific standpoint, it is troubling that crucial concepts in international relations theory are subject to redefinition and reinterpretation as situations change". Philpott (2001b: 316) also expresses doubts about the extent to which sovereignty could be redefined:

> Were sovereignty to mean something other than the traditional definition, were it to lose its defining features of internal supremacy and external independence, were it to mean a whole assortment of privileges, it would lose all distinctiveness. It would refer to virtually any type of authority and thus to no type of authority in particular. Indeed, why not simply jettison sovereignty in favor of the broader concept of authority and say that different polities practice different forms of authority?

What these authors emphasise is the need for a 'core meaning' of sovereignty to stay identical over time.

[37] This idea has been repeatedly criticised in recent years. See *inter alia* Osiander (2001) and Carvalho, Leira and Hobson (2011).

that "[t]he principle of state sovereignty is less an abstract legal claim than an exceptionally dense political practice" (Walker, 1993: 168 and 154). Building upon these post-structuralist insights, this thesis supports the view that sovereignty is an inherently political (and thus normative) concept constructed through discourses.

Civilised sovereignty in the construction of unequal intercultural relations

Post-colonial scholars have adopted some of the conclusions of post-structuralist analyses but have focused more specifically on the Western content of the concept of sovereignty. By their rejection of "the apparent innocence of an international legal order based on sovereign equality" (Simpson, 2004: xiv), post-colonial authors insist on the "need to go one step further by recognising that within international theory [and, consequently, within international 'reality'] sovereignty has been grounded in various Eurocentric metanarratives that place the standard of civilization centre-stage" (Hobson, 2012: 334-335). Post-colonial analyses thus provide a compelling way to reveal and question the supposed 'descriptive gap' of sovereignty. But instead of reconstructing a supposedly more valid (because universally applicable) concept of sovereignty they argue that it is the ignorance of the Eurocentric character of sovereignty that led to the 'descriptive gap' in the first place. In other words, if a gap is identified by conventional scholars its origin lies in the refusal to recognise that sovereignty is defined by the West and by Western cultures. As such, it is not surprising that the quest for a universally valid and culturally neutral concept of sovereignty has failed.

The first major insight of post-colonial scholars working on sovereignty is the fact that state and sovereignty, as other analytical tools, are largely Western categories. For post-colonial scholars, the state is a specific form of political organisation forged out of European and Western history, and its use as a universal category is thus highly problematic (Dunn, 2001). Ayoob (2002: 44-45), for instance, observes that state-making in the Third World is "a directed or premeditated" activity insofar as "the trajectory for Third World states is clearly mapped out and unforeseen directions are ruled out". In a similar vein, Seth (2000: 221) estimates that:

> The nation-state, in short, is not an empty container into which anything can be poured; it already has a content. This means that the nation-state cannot serve as the vehicle for expressing those aspirations which do not already accord with or 'fit' the frame of nation, state and modernity; and indeed, it may ill-serve as

the vehicle for recovering and expressing what is autochthonous, rather than Western and derivative, about a political community and culture.

As a consequence, the acquisition of sovereignty by non-Western states should not be interpreted, as in most IR literature, as an empowering and liberating movement, but rather as debilitating and excluding Third World states further, usually requiring them to surrender "important rights in order to achieve independence" (Anghie, 2005: 6 and 215). The dynamic of inclusion and exclusion, of equality and difference (Aalberts, 2014: 774), is at the heart of sovereignty when non-Western entities are reintegrated into the picture not as anomalies or exceptions but as consequences of the way sovereignty has been defined and used by the West. Post-colonial approaches therefore promote a radical departure from the traditional vision of sovereignty as a tool for emancipation and freedom, even more so because accession to statehood or sovereignty meant suppressing alternatives to the states-system (see Doty, 1996: 105; Keene, 2004: 24-25).

Insofar as the state and sovereignty are categories forged by the West, they "became identified with a specific set of cultural practices to the exclusion of others" (Anghie, 2005: 37). In other words, sovereignty is defined according to norms and standards that originate from the West. For Anghie (2005: 103), "[s]overeignty was therefore aligned with European ideas of social order, political organization, progress and development". This is still the case today: when Berg and Kuusk (2010) try to define sovereignty empirically, all they can achieve is a list of attributes reflecting the perceived reality of (successful) Western states. Their other characteristics are all dependent on the idea of 'recognition'.[38] In other words, it is only the already sovereign states that can make these attributes 'real' by recognising them in aspirant sovereign entities. It is thus clear that the West is *essentially* sovereign. For Doty (1996: 97), "[t]he United States was the living norm of sovereignty (...) The United States (and the West more generally) simply *was* sovereign". [39] Dunn (2003: 134) also mentions the "American-defined notions of sovereignty and the state" in the context of the discourse on development and democratisation. Thus, Western states have a 'natural' ability to achieve sovereign standards that they themselves embody.

Conversely, non-Western states are 'naturally' deprived of sovereignty, incapable of achieving the 'objective' standard of sovereign statehood. For Strange (1996: 25), "non-Western sovereignty was actively delegitimated" during the period of colonialism, an observation shared by Dunn (2003: 40, my emphasis) in the case of the Congo: "Traditional, indigenous sociopolitical structures and practices, as well as their autonomy and "*sovereignty*", were viewed as illegitimate and erased". Hence, and according to

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[38] On the idea of recognition and the centrality of 'great powers' in this process see Fabry (2010).

[39] Thompson (2006: 252, my emphasis) recently talked about "the American new sovereigntists' justification of sovereignty as an American *birthright*".

International Law discourses, "non-European states are lacking in sovereignty because they are excluded from the family of nations" (Anghie, 2005: 59), i.e. because they are not Western enough. Standards of civilisation are thus recognised as crucial in constructing and maintaining what sovereignty means: "A chain of equivalences was created between the terms *civilized*, *rationality*, *reason*, and *sovereign*, on the one hand, and *uncivilized*, *instinctual*, and *dependent* on the other hand" (Doty, 1996: 46). Western culture is central in defining what an acceptable sovereign state is and what all sovereign states should aspire to be. Members of the club of sovereign states impose their own requirements based on what they consider as non-negotiable values such as their "conceptions of community, religion, citizenship and property" (Grovogui, 2002: 327). They establish these values as superior and as the only true sovereign values. Ideas of 'barbarism' or 'savagery' are here central in identifying and defining the non-sovereign societies (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 88).

As shown by post-colonial scholars, sovereignty should thus be understood as a mechanism of exclusion working to separate two worlds, one of 'civilised' and 'developed' countries in the West, and the persistent 'uncivilised' or 'barbarous' territories in the Rest. Anghie (2005: 311 and 313) for instance wrote that "[s]overeignty is formulated in such a way as to exclude the non-European" and that sovereignty, along with other basic doctrines of international law, was "forged out of the attempt to create a legal system that could account for relations between the European and non-European worlds in the colonial confrontation". As a result, the non-European (and later non-Western) is always already "discussed outside of the discourse of sovereignty" (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 88). The international order is thus unequally divided by the concept of sovereignty: in one sphere, sovereignty provides "hierarchy and privilege" to the (Western) actors, while in the other it gives rise to "subordination and discrimination" (Grovogui, 2002: 323). This 'two-tier' game of sovereignty has been largely identified by post-colonial authors: Keene talks about a "dualistic nature of order in world politics" combining equality and independence in Europe/the West with colonialism and imperialism beyond (Keene, 2004: xi and 97). Suzuki refers to a "dual mode of interaction" based on the fact that "European International Society has of course been characterised by its notion of sovereign equality, but this was only within the narrow confines of its 'civilized' core" (Suzuki, 2009: 87 and 55). And Simpson insists on the idea that sovereign equality coexists with "special prerogatives" and "constitutional gradation of states on the basis of cultural and ideological traits" (Simpson, 2004: 36).

The concept of sovereignty thus seems to "take on a different form when applied to the non-European world" (Anghie, 2005: 235).[40] At the apex of this argument lies the

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[40] For most of the authors cited here the idea of a 'two-tier' game of sovereignty seems to rely on the assumption that sovereignty (being a concept defined by the West) brings independence and freedom to the West and dependence and a necessity to conform for the non-West. While I agree with this argument I want to emphasise how sovereignty is constructed in a similar way 'across' the

idea that "the relevant powers applied sovereignty regimes to intra- and inter-European affairs that differed fundamentally from those applicable in Africa and other regions" and that to the non-West is applied "another political ethos consistent with a different international morality than applied in Europe" (Grovogui, 2002: 323 and 325-326).

Thanks to a post-colonial approach of sovereignty one can understand why "the European states saw no wrong in violating non-European states' sovereignty to promote the 'civilized' way of governance, and even saw fit to resort to force, if necessary" (Suzuki, 2009: 20). Western interventions in these non-sovereign spheres are portrayed in the traditional discourse of sovereignty as necessarily beneficial for the non-West as it will supposedly enable it to reach the expected sovereign standards. In the end, and "[b]ecause Western states are deemed to be civilized, so they are rewarded with dignity (i.e., sovereignty). Conversely, non-Western polities are deemed barbaric or savage and are therefore unworthy of dignity (i.e., sovereignty is withdrawn)" (Hobson, 2012: 262).

Domestic and international hierarchies, internal and external colonial frontiers

Post-colonial scholars have made a strong and convincing case for linking sovereignty to civilisation: they have revealed that the 'anomalies' usually identified by scholars are in reality the consequence of the Eurocentrism of the concept. As such, they have rightly emphasised the role of culture in a desperately culture-averse discipline. These scholars, however, have focused primarily on the 'external' side of the construction of civilised sovereignty. Their attention has indeed been directed at the creation of sovereignty by Western (civilised) states upon non-Western (and savage) societies. Indeed, in their focus on the 'colonial encounter' between Western states and savage entities lying beyond the sovereign and modern world post-colonial scholars have largely emphasised the *external* side of the colonial encounter, i.e. the denial of sovereignty to non-Western populations. In fact, the colonial encounter is now widely considered as crucial for the understanding of sovereignty (Glanville, 2014: 130). Aalberts (2014: 779) for instance argues that "it is in the colonial encounter that the Europeans are produced as the original sovereign powers who command and impose their universal law vis-à-vis the uncivilised".

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civilised frontier. In both the West and the non-West sovereignty is central for the establishment of a hierarchy based on the idea of civilisation. I am thus not denying that the non-West has suffered from the use of the concept of sovereignty but rather that the concept has had similar effects inside the West. The main difference, therefore, lies in the application in the non-West of a foreign standard (something that the West does not experience, even though some segments of its population are excluded and repressed through sovereignty claims).

Consequently, the way Western 'sovereign' states managed to build their own (internal or domestic) sovereignty and civilisation is generally left unexplored. In post-colonial analyses, then, "Western states are deemed to be civilized" (Hobson, 2012: 262) and thus sovereign. The (supposed) "ability of Western states to live up to Westphalian norms" (Grovogui, 2002: 322) awards them the right to decide and assess the civilised sovereignty of Others. I am not implying here that post-colonial scholars purposefully assign an unproblematic and natural civilised sovereignty to Western states (especially given their insistence on the constructedness of these concepts). Rather, my argument is that the post-colonial literature is guilty of neglecting the internal – and, as we will see, surprisingly problematic – construction of civilised sovereignty. Very few scholars mention this aspect and none explores it in great depth. Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 70-73), for instance, take the well-known example of Léry's use of cannibalism against the Catholics during the religious conflicts in France but they do not explore how such attacks are dealt with in order to perform a sovereign and civilised French identity. Anghie (2005: 21, 22-23 and 30) repeatedly mentions that Spanish civilised identity is "idealised" more than achieved but does not question this aspect of the colonial encounter. Finally, Jahn (2000: 63-64) observes that the Spanish were far from reaching the civilised standards which they used to judge the Amerindians. She explains how such a discrepancy could be maintained by stating that the ideals and standards of civilisation simply needed to be *recognised* and realised by a small (upper class) minority in Spain in order to be valid. Her analysis, pregnant with possibility, nonetheless does not engage with the construction of this Spanish civilised (and thus sovereign) identity.[41]

In this thesis, I juxtapose the 'external' and 'internal' creation of civilised sovereignty in order to compare these processes and to provide a more complete picture of statecraft. In doing so, what is uncovered is the existence of striking similarities that remained unexplored in earlier literatures. Indeed, both the 'internal' and 'external' creation of sovereignty follow the same process of distancing from a savage Other that is domestic or external, degenerated or underdeveloped, rebel or child-like, depending on whether s/he is 'inside' or 'outside' the constructed sphere of the sovereign state. The

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[41] One can only postulate as to why post-colonial approaches have taken this direction. Apart from the already mentioned focus on encounters as a way of 'de-centring' IR, one plausible reason is that exploring the internal construction of civilised sovereignty would reveal the difficulties of the West in achieving the very standards used as the basis for the denial of civilised sovereignty to the non-West. This is why post-colonial scholars tend to remain unclear about the actual achievement of the civilised standards of sovereignty by Western states. Dunn (2001: 48 and 56) for instance writes that "African political entities were considered illegitimate and inferior because they failed to measure up to the standard of the Western nation-state ideal" and that "African states have failed to live up to the standards of their older Western 'brothers'". We are not told, however, if the 'ideal' is achieved and if not how it is maintained despite its lack of 'reality'. Explaining how these standards were not achieved even in the societies promoting them thus creates the risk that these norms could be seen as 'artificial' and instrumentally used by Western states (which in itself would reinforce the argument that sovereignty is an 'organised hypocrisy'). This makes it all the more important to explore the internal side of civilised sovereignty. Another (more prosaic) reason is that Western states are supposed to be in control of the norms of Western civilisation since they establish them and participate in their diffusion.

presence of civilised frontiers is a major element that the sovereign voice must deal with *but that it also benefits from* both 'internally' and 'externally'. It serves as a political tool to establish domination and to legitimise the sovereign ruler. Indeed, sovereignty is shown to be 'internally' and 'externally' reliant on a distancing from (which is also a creation of) savage Others. This is why civilisational difference has to be produced not only during colonial encounters but also domestically in the struggles between different Western actors. References to civilisation thus transcend the sovereign border and the internal-external boundary loses part of its significance. As Glanville (2014: 18) notices – but fails to convey convincingly – "dominant modes of discourse about legitimate sovereign authority domestically and internationally have historically tended to feed into each other". With such an approach, a circular process is uncovered in which internal or domestic standards of civilisation serve to grant or deny sovereignty externally while being themselves constructed on ideas of civilisation that emerge thanks to (internal and external) 'encounters' with savagery. In sum, the hyper agency of the Western state emerges from these combined 'internal' and 'external' encounters with the Other.

Analysing both processes together also shed some light on the way sovereignty is a complex political discourse riddled with doubts and ambiguities. Indeed, the civilised/sovereign and the savage/non-sovereign have an unexpected tendency to appear in unexpected places and peoples. Those that are deemed civilised are very often portrayed as savage, and vice versa. Thus, the task of statecraft becomes to repeatedly re-establish the sovereign as civilised in the face of a threatening savagery that could destabilise *his* status. Taken together, the 'internal' and 'external' dimensions of sovereignty bring to light how the task of statecraft – i.e. the construction of civilised and sovereign identities – requires to perform as 'different' an impressive number of similar traits shared by societies supposedly different. Attributing a savage identity to the non-West – here: the Amerindians – and stabilising the civilised identity of the West (and more specifically of France) are complex but essential tasks for the establishment of the sovereign state. Such an in-depth exploration reveals that 'writing' savagery is as equally ambiguous and complex as writing the 'civilised Self'.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to build upon the insights offered by post-colonial scholars and to add a missing dimension to their analyses. This is important if one hopes to avoid the reproduction of the mythology of the state as a unitary and uniform unit or actor. Juxtaposing the 'internal' and 'external' dimensions breaks this view (that is still dominant in mainstream IR) by showing how Others are also present 'inside' the sovereign sphere. As such, the assumption of an internally unproblematic establishment of sovereignty is contradicted. This argument might not find a receptive ear among mainstream IR scholars: indeed, IR as a discipline relies on the separation and differentiation of 'external' and 'internal' processes in order to maintain its disciplinary identity (and in order to defend its monopoly on knowledge of these 'external' events). And sovereignty plays in a key role in creating this frontier between internal and external.

Postulating this separation as the starting point of the analysis of sovereignty indeed leads mainstream scholars to reproduce the traditional/minimal (and misleading) definition of sovereignty as a highest authority of a territory and population justifying independence. In this approach, culture and civilisation are purely internal standards that have no bearing on relations between states. Minimising the significance of this internal-external divide is thus essential but it collides with the disciplinary identity (or, more dramatically, the survival) of IR as a separate body of knowledge.

Finally, juxtaposing the 'internal' and 'external' also reveals how cultural encounters with the Others can happen 'in' the sovereign state. This is particularly important for post-colonial analyses which have a tendency to restrict these encounters to the 'distant' and the 'exotic'. As shown in this thesis, the savage and alien is equally present inside in the form of the degenerate. In fact, the standard of civilisation that sustains the denial of sovereignty to the non-West is equally present inside the West. This means that Western rulers wanting to claim sovereignty are bound to appeal to the civilisational norms that are used to delegitimise non-Western sovereignty. Hence, the civilised-savage divide that is widely accepted to exist internationally also exists domestically in the civilised sphere. This argument reinforces post-colonial analyses of sovereignty since scholars have "frequently postulated without interrogating the Westphalian model or the extent to which the model fits the European experience" (Grovogui, 2002: 316).

This argument, however, should not be overstated. It is indeed undeniable that Western states have been (considered) sovereign while non-Western states are consistently denied sovereignty or 'enjoy' at best a conditional or qualified form of sovereignty (Hobson, 2012: 335). But this difference is *only the consequence* of the application of the Eurocentric concept of sovereignty, not a difference – or duality – of the concept itself. In fact, I am not arguing that (civilised) sovereignty is more universal than expected but rather that its provincial character does not prevent it from being applied in similar ways everywhere (including in the West). In other words, we are not faced with a different set of rules used to award sovereignty to some and to deny it to others but rather with one set of *discriminatory* rules and standards that contribute to the creation of a civilised hierarchy upon which claims to sovereignty are based. I thus criticise the view that the non-West is a land 'beyond the law' and in a constant 'state of exception' (Mbembe, 2003). I concur with Benton (2009: 32) and her analysis of zones of law in the extra-European territories of European empires when she states that there is a need to "challenge the emphasis in many accounts of the legal geography of empire on sharp distinctions between European and extra-European spaces" in order to reveal similarities and shared patterns. In a similar way as Benton my analysis reveals how these (supposedly) radically different spaces are in reality carefully constructed through similar practices and hierarchies. Through an exploration of the formation of the idea of French civilisation and its application both internally and externally I am able to support the view that civilised sovereignty is used coherently *across* the civilised frontier. I thus advocate not a

supplanting but a re-balancing of post-colonial analyses towards intra-European events while insisting on the crucial use of the notion of (Western) civilisation. Furthering the post-colonial research agenda, my analysis also provides an answer to those who have argued that such a (post-structuralist) way of conceptualising 'civilisation' is not appropriate. As Bettiza (2014: 10) writes ""the politics of civilization/s" research tends to overwhelmingly focus on Western narratives that construct civilizations as *essentialised* entities in *clash*". Providing an informed analysis of how Western civilisation is built and maintained could solve the issues associated with such essentialisation while the identification of the (discarded) similarities that proliferate among the civilised and the savage sheds a new light on the idea of 'clash'.

Chapter 2

Sovereignty as a performative concept

Introduction

Of the different analyses of sovereignty outlined in the previous chapter post-structuralist and post-colonial analyses have come the furthest in deconstructing sovereignty and revealing the civilised values supporting it. In particular, they have questioned the minimalist definition of sovereignty and its supposed neutrality. These approaches have sought to interrogate how the reality of sovereign states comes into being. In order to contribute to this literature I argue that sovereignty should be considered as a performative concept. If all post-structuralist and post-colonial scholars do not make (explicit) use of this approach, the philosophical presuppositions and main thrust of their arguments all relate to or confirm the assumptions of performativity. As such, the idea of performativity is parsimonious enough to enable a synthesis of the existing critical scholarship on sovereignty within a single framework. In particular, a lot of these scholars would share an understanding of discourse as "a relational totality of signifying sequences

that together constitute a more or less coherent framework for what can be said and done" (Dunn, 2009: 426).[42]

This chapter will establish the basis of the theoretical approach that will be used to study the discourses of sovereignty in the three next chapters. Like an increasing number of scholars in IR I have chosen to use performativity to explore the discourses that build our (international) reality.[43] Performativity means that "discourses constitute the objects of which they speak" (Bialasiewicz et al., 2007: 406). As will be discussed in the following sections, such an approach to discourses – and here more specifically to the discourses of sovereignty – is crucial in order to de-naturalise their foundations and to reveal the constructed nature of these (sovereign) 'realities'. Indeed, performative discourses of sovereignty tend to be presented as "constative utterances" (Derrida, 1986: 11) reflecting a pre-existing or pre-cultural reality. Performativity is particularly adapted to question such discourses and in particular to study how conflicting identities and dichotomies are established as natural and pre-discursive. This will become crucial when turning to the civilised/uncivilised divide and in order to understand how 'difference' is established as natural and pre-existing to its cultural/discursive inscription. Performativity thus sheds a new light on this "representational politics", i.e. reveals how the "recourse to the "natural" (…) is always political" (Butler, 1990: 2 and 126). It is particularly adapted to a re-inscription of culture in 'international relations'.

Contesting the nature/culture dichotomy to denaturalise reality

My ambition in this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive synthesis of performativity in the social sciences. Instead, the focus will be on two salient figures (Clifford Geertz and Judith Butler) who developed useful arguments for understanding and denaturalising civilised sovereignty. By examining how they conceptualise the relationships between what is supposedly 'natural' and what is supposedly 'cultural' – and how they showed that 'nature' is produced in the *cultural* process of enacting reality – I am aiming at applying those principles to sovereignty and at making a broad analogy between these theorists' deconstructions and a deconstruction of civilised sovereignty.

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[42] As Dunn (2009: 426) adds: "Simply put, a discourse creates a truth-effect — it is a collection of representations about X that makes X 'knowable'".
[43] For recent examples see Agius (2013) and Brassett and Vaughan-Williams (2015).

A useful starting point for introducing performativity is to go back to Geertz's discussion on the relationship between nature and culture. For Geertz (1973: 49), "there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture". Indeed, and instead of a *separation* between nature and culture, what the observation of human beings tells us is that there has always been an *interaction* between them, the separation being artificially (and misleadingly) made by the analyst. Geertz argues that human beings are physically and biologically transformed by the kind of culture or proto-culture they develop, at the same time as the kind of culture they develop is influenced by their natural/physical traits. Hence, "between the cultural patterns, the body, and the brain, a positive feedback system was created" (Geertz, 1973: 47) that allows for the development of *finished* human beings. In this sense, "culture, rather than being added on, so to speak, to a finished or virtually finished animal, was ingredient, and central ingredient, in the production of that animal itself" (Geertz, 1973: 47). The human physical (or 'natural') characteristics are not sufficient on their own to explain the development of human beings. For Geertz (1973: 36), "to draw such a line [between nature and culture] is to falsify the human situation, or at least to misrender it seriously". Indeed, and as revealed by the discussions of chapters 4 and 5, the appeal to a supposedly pre-cultural and pre-political nature is itself a political act instead of a mere reflection of an untouched and 'given' reality.

This 'interaction' nature/culture has been further problematised by Butler in her account of sex and gender. Butler starts from the premise that one should not be asked to take sides between the prevalence of nature as 'reality' or the prevalence of culture understood as immaterial (and as such inconsequential) 'discourse' since "the options for theory are not exhausted by *presuming* materiality, on the one hand, and *negating* materiality, on the other" (Butler, 1992: 17). Therefore, performativity occupies a middle-ground that emphasises both the existence of reality and its constructedness. As argued by Butler (1993: 8):

> [T]here is an "outside" to what is constructed by discourse, but this is not an absolute "outside," an ontological thereness that exceeds or counters the boundaries of discourse; as a constitutive "outside," it is that which can only be thought — when it can — in relation to that discourse, at and as its most tenuous borders. The debate between constructivism and essentialism thus misses the point of deconstruction altogether, for the point has never been that "everything is discursively constructed".

Consequently, arguing that reality exists *before* our discourses about it, or that our discourses do not *call into being* the reality that they enunciate, is to act arbitrarily to either distinguish a pre-discursive realm or to deny the existence of empirical facts altogether. For Butler, separating the discursive from the extra-discursive cannot be but a discretionary act for the simple reason that "insofar as the extra-discursive is delimited, it is formed by the

very discourse from which it seeks to free itself". Consequently, such a delimitation is arbitrary for there are no grounds outside of discourse upon which such a decision can be made (Butler, 1993: 11; see also Laclau and Mouffe, 1985/2001: 107-108; Hansen, 2006: 19). That is why "there is no way of comprehending non-linguistic and extra-discursive phenomena except through discursive practices" (Bialasiewicz et al., 2007: 406). Here, one should be careful not to associate performativity with a restricted textual approach ignorant of the broader social context – or what Callon (2007: 329) criticises as "Butlerian-style culturalist excesses". Such a critique is linked to the supposedly 'disembodied' focus on lifeless texts that performativity engenders. Ringmar (2014), for instance, laments the lack of the 'body' and of 'performances' in most studies using performativity. He argues for a focus on 'performance' as a way to access meaning in a direct and unmediated way (to bypass texts or discourses, so to speak). But if the presence of the 'body' is undeniable, its meaning is not evident or directly accessible. Arguing that there is a primacy of the material (here: the body) means re-establishing supposedly incontestable (because natural and pre-formed) foundations for reality. As Wilcox (2014: 361) indicates: "Because Butler seeks to understand the concept of sex as gendered, she is often accused of neglecting 'the body' as if physicality and materiality simply had no bearing on the world".

In contradistinction what Butler emphasises is the absence of 'natural' foundations upon which to base a discourse. Indeed, foundations do not appear naturally or logically, and a discourse seemingly constructed upon them necessarily calls them into being *at the same time as* it derives from them. Butler considers that foundations are established by the discourse itself, a discourse which then claims to only represent (*re*-present) these foundations. With every foundation, a "foundering" can be encountered, but also a "contestation", for the discourse establishing foundations both *authorises* and *excludes* (Butler, 1992: 16, 17):

> [F]oundations function as the unquestioned and the unquestionable within any theory. And yet, are these "foundations," that is, those premises that function as authorizing grounds, are they themselves not constituted through exclusions which, taken into account, expose the foundational premise as a contingent and contestable presumption (Butler, 1992: 7).

This is how a discourse can produce "what it claims merely to represent" (Butler, 1990: 2). As a consequence, the empirical is not a "site or surface", i.e. a *passive* materiality having a meaning on its own. Butler notices that 'matter' and 'matrix' have a common etymology, and that matter therefore has a "power of creation" usually forgotten by empirical analyses. She concludes that 'to matter' should be understood at the same time as 'to materialise' and 'to mean' (Butler, 1993: 32). Performativity is therefore this "*process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and*

surface we call matter" (Butler, 1993: 9).[44] This process of materialisation can also be understood as a naturalisation, i.e. a presupposition which creates a background knowledge taken as 'true' (Doty, 1996: 10).

What does it mean, therefore, when we turn to the notion of subject? Is not the subject necessarily pre-existing to the discourse that s/he enunciates? This interrogation is particularly relevant in the context of civilised sovereignty: indeed, such discourses repeatedly appeal to civilised subjects and entities. But their 'presence' is not natural or automatic: Butler considers that "subjects do not exist somehow behind or outside discourse but are constituted in and through it" (Laffey, 2000: 431). Indeed, the subject is not outside the discourse (as if *pre-given*). Such a conceptualisation of the subject would require a "stable ontological subject that prefigures action" (Jeffrey, 2013: 29). Instead, the subject should be seen as the result of a political construction made possible through necessary exclusions and differentiations. However, "[t]o refuse to assume, that is, to require a notion of the subject from the start is not the same as negating or dispensing with such notion altogether" but rather to enquire into how this subject has been produced and into "the political meaning and consequentiality of taking the subject as a requirement or presupposition of theory" (Butler, 1992: 4). As such, no subject pre-exists and "the speech act, though clearly issued by a subject, is also one that remakes the subject of that enunciation" (Butler, 2010: 155). In his analysis of the performativity of a declaration of independence Derrida (1986: 10) for instance argued that the 'people' to which the declaration refers to

> does not exist. They do *not* exist as an entity, it does *not* exist, *before* this declaration, not *as such*. If it gives birth to itself, as free and independent subject, as possible signer, this can hold only in the act of signature.

The idea of the immanent 'subject' acting on a stable 'object' needs to be rejected: a performative approach reveals that "[d]iscourse is thus not something that subjects use in order to describe objects; it is that which constitutes both subjects and objects" (Bialasiewicz et al., 2007: 407).

The idea of a subject, though, does not have to be rejected altogether. It is only its priority over (and before) the performative acts that is questioned. For Butler (1992: 12), "[t]here is no ontologically intact reflexivity to the subject which is then placed within a cultural context" and the analyst should not accept this "foundationalist fiction" that

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[44] This effect of boundary is also mentioned by Bourdieu who argues that the act of categorisation institutes "a reality by using the power of *revelation* and *construction* exercised by *objectification in discourse*" (Bourdieu, 1991: 223 (emphases in the original)).

presents the notion of the subject as pre-given to the discourse (Butler, 1990: 3). As explained by Laffey (2000: 431) Butler's aim is to acknowledge the possibility of agency (thus to refuse an anti-foundationalist view) while at the same time arguing that the subject is necessarily constructed. In other words, subjects are produced – and disciplined – by (their own) discourses (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 437). This insistence on the notion of the 'produced subject' is also what differentiates performativity from performance. Largely influenced by Goffman's key work (Goffman, 1974) the use of the theatrical notion of *performance* to analyse social reality implies "an active, prior, conscious, and performing self" as well as "[t]he sense of anterior agents; the separation of performer and performance; the sense of performances occupying particular pregiven kinds of spaces; and a notion of a (constraining) script" (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 433 and 438). As Jeffrey (2013: 27-28) writes the theatrical approach to performance "separates the performer from the performance (…) In addition, the notion of performance allows the scholar to assume the roles of director and audience, with a privileged knowledge of the scripts, costumes and comportment of the 'actors' involved". All of these assumptions contradict some of the key claims of performativity: it requires a 'stage' that is set and pre-defined before the discourse, an 'actor' whose identity exists before and outside the act, and a possibility of 'improvisation' or unconstrained creation that contradicts the iteration and repetitions necessary for a discourse to be felicitous.

To illustrate how a performative approach is helpful I now turn to the example that made Butler's performative approach well-known: the deconstruction of the dichotomy between sex and gender. Butler's use of performativity to challenge this well-entrenched dichotomy will then be similarly applied to deconstruct other important distinctions (such as between the state and sovereignty and between the savage and the civilised). Indeed, when two elements are separated one is usually built as natural while the other is placed in the realm of the constructed or cultural. As far as the dichotomy between sex and gender is concerned Beauvoirian accounts postulate sex as the natural matter upon which the cultural construct of gender is imposed so as to give a re-presentation (a meaning) to this pre-existing materiality. In these accounts, ""the body" appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed" (Butler, 1990: 8). But in fact, this classical separation of sex and gender is highly misleading:

> Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex (a juridical conception), gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts (Butler, 1990: 7).

To understand this rather radical argument, it is useful to go back to what Butler argues about 'sex'. According to Butler (1993: 5), "[t]he concept of "sex" is itself troubled terrain, formed through a series of contestations over what ought to be a decisive criterion for distinguishing between the two sexes", and in any case cannot be understood as the logical consequence of biological *evidence* (understood both as 'proof' and as 'obvious'). 'Sex' does not stand out of history as a solid rock on which to inscribe 'gender'. As a product of (political) struggles, 'sex' appears thanks to concessions, exclusions, and regulations to produce the supposedly 'natural' construct that we know as 'sex'. This naturalness of sex is "constituted through discursively constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within the categories of sex" (Butler, 1990: viii). For Butler (1993: 10), "there is no reference to a pure body which is not at the same time a further formation of that body", and accordingly, "[t]o "concede" the undeniability of "sex" or its "materiality" is always to concede some version of "sex," some formation of "materiality"". 'Sex' is thus the result of regulatory norms that materialise 'sex' "through a forcible reiteration of those norms". The fact that this materialisation has to be reiterated reveals that it "is never quite complete, that bodies never quite comply with the norms by which their materialization is impelled" (Butler, 1993: 2). As Butler later argued "performativity never fully achieves its effect, and so in this sense 'fails' all the time; its failure is what necessitates its reiterative temporality, and we cannot think iterability without failure" (Butler, 2010: 153).

This conclusion is identical to what Geertz argues about the dichotomy nature/culture: here, sex and gender cannot be separated as sex (or the body) "*come*[s] *into being* in and through the mark(s) of gender" (Butler, 1990: 8). Thus, "[i]f the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called "sex" is as culturally constructed as gender" (Butler, 1990: 7). For Butler (1990: 8), "sex, by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along". Sex or the body is not outside the social or cultural but rather a product of it. Performativity therefore implies a complete reversal of empiricism: ""sex" becomes something like a fiction, perhaps a fantasy, retroactively installed at a prelinguistic site to which there is no direct access" (Butler, 1993: 5).

Hence, and following Butler's and Geertz's arguments, it becomes impossible "to stabilise claims to identity through recourse to some biological foundation because the division between the natural and the cultural is forever contested" (Weber, 1998: 79). But at the same time, performativity should not be caricatured. Some scholars indeed argue that "discursive approaches deny the "reality" of the subject being discussed". In fact, reality has not disappeared but has acquired a completely different ontological quality: reality is formed through a process of materialisation and interpretation that is distinctively discursive. In other words, "[s]ubjects are "real" only through [and thanks to, one can add] discourse" (Dunn, 2003: 11). To say that "the gendered body is performative" means that "it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality" (Butler, 1990: 136). As such, performativity is not a way of saying that "there is nothing outside of discourse; it is not that [the empirical does] not 'really' exist, but that we have no access to

[it] outside of cultural interpretations" (Wilcox, 2014: 361). Ontology becomes seen as political and always already politicised (Mol, 1999). This will be illustrated by the discourses of sovereignty of chapters 4 and 5 where claims to sovereignty are in fact claims supported by an appeal to a supposedly pre-existing reality.

If performativity is frequently presented as a radical deconstruction of reality, one explanation could be that the empirical sometimes appears self-evident and meaningful in itself. But through a performative reading one understands that this 'meaningful empirical reality' only seems to be meaningful in and of itself because discourses are so well-accepted that they make reality appear as natural. Performativity is therefore not a way of saying that reality does not exist, but rather that it exists *differently*, and hence with different implications. As such, performativity "does not make the state, or the other subjects, any less "real." What it does is radically problematize what is meant by real, and indicates that the "real" is a mode of appearance, a constative/performative production" (Dillon and Everard, 1992: 300). As Ashley (1987: 52-53) argued, performativity allows us to explain "a structuring whose persistence is itself puzzling and in need of explanation by reference to social practices".[45]

Applying performativity to sovereignty: de-naturalising sovereign foundations

The conceptual evolution of sovereignty in IR can be profitably compared to the evolution of gender in feminist theory and to its performative 'deconstruction'. At first attached directly to sex as its 'logical' meaning and 'natural' signification, gender could not be separated from sex, with everything originating from this 'empirical' and 'objective' basis. What will later be called the 'cultural' genderised characteristics of men and women therefore resulted from their 'natural' constitution. With the Beauvoirian critique, gender became the social/cultural meaning *added upon* a natural/physical sex. In this version, "the social unilaterally acts on the natural and invests it with its parameters and its meanings" (Butler, 1993: 4). This first evolution allowed for a critical move: by showing how the 'cultural' acted upon the 'natural', how gender could evolve and was an arbitrary construction long-thought as 'natural', this first move was essential for contesting the naturalisation of gender. That is why Butler (1990: 6) considers this critique as "intended to dispute the biology-is-destiny formulation". But at the same time, this critique naturalised

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[45] Mitchell (1999: 89-90) developed a similar argument about the state: "We must analyse the state as such a structural effect. That is to say, we should examine it not as an actual structure, but as the powerful, apparently metaphysical effect of practices that make such structures appear to exist. In fact, the nation state is arguably the paramount structural effect of the modern technical era".

the dichotomy nature/culture or sex/gender, instituting 'sex' as the uncontestable foundation of gender. She argues that, after a *first critical uncovering* of the dichotomy between sex and gender, there is now a need for a *deconstruction* of what forms the basis of the dichotomy, namely the separation between foundations and discourses (without at the same time returning to the first state of affairs where foundations determined discourses). This deconstruction of the dichotomy could not only show the arbitrariness of the discourse – gender – but also the arbitrariness of the foundations themselves – the 'natural' sex – with both elements being conceived as part of the same (discursive) realm.

When turning to sovereignty and the state, three similar possibilities can be identified. First, sovereignty can be seen as the logical implication of the presence of the state. This pre-sence (or pre-given materiality) *naturally* gives rise to sovereignty, the two concepts being usually employed together because they cannot be separated: a state is sovereign and sovereignty is of a state. For Thomson (1995: 215), "state-centric theories, which have dominated International Relations, are built on the assumption that states are, by definition, sovereign". In this 'classical view' (Lake, 2003: 305-306) sovereignty logically follows the 'pre-sence' of a state, or, to put it differently, the 'presence' of the empirical state inevitably gives rise to sovereignty.[46] The predominance of "[e]xpressions such as *sovereign state* or *state sovereignty* clearly indicate that historically, as well as conceptually, these two terms – sovereignty and the state – have run their course more or less hand-in-hand" (Lipping, 2010: 186). Jackson (1990: 34 and 40) for instance argued that before decolonisation "[s]tates historically were empirical realities before they were legal personalities" and that, as such, "sovereignty and empirical statehood were still roughly aligned in most cases". In a similar vein Hinsley (1986: 17) explained that "when a society is ruled by means of the state the concept of sovereignty is sooner or later unavoidable". In these approaches, the empirical state seems to 'speak for itself' in giving rise to sovereignty.

Identical to the Beauvoirian critique, the constructivist turn in IR encouraged theorists to question the prevalence of the 'empirical state'. With this evolution, the state was placed "in the realm of the physical/natural" while sovereignty was transposed "in the realm of the cultural" (Weber, 1998: 83). The idea that the state was indeed 'natural' and given, but that sovereignty was a social or cultural construct that came *after*, so to speak, as a characterisation of those state elements or capacities represented a strong critique of the empirically deterministic approaches to state sovereignty. As with sex and gender, this first move was crucial for a first contestation of sovereignty to emerge: sovereignty was now conceptualised as a social construct, an arbitrary artefact evolving through time and space in line with the *culture* from which it proceeds (Barkin, 1998; Biersteker and Weber, 1996b; Glanville, 2011; Weber, 1995; Zaum, 2007). To paraphrase Butler, the separation between state and sovereignty was intended to critique the empirical inevitability of most

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[46] See also Peters (2009: 520).

analyses: state 'realities' alone can no longer give rise to sovereignty and thus to a sovereign state. What is now needed is the *good type of state* (i.e. this state that can be *culturally* characterised as legitimate and sovereign).

But this first critique of sovereignty is insufficient. Indeed, such a critique both *denounces* and *naturalises* a (normative) discourse in which some states are considered sovereign thanks to certain capacities while others are considered non-sovereign due to the 'lack' of those capacities. This claim also implies that every state, with the right amount of capacities (for 'good governance') would be able to attain sovereignty; as such, 'quasi-', 'fragile', or 'failed' states are still not sovereign because they have not complied with a Western script of sovereignty, and they could attain sovereignty with the right level of capacities (Helman and Ratner, 1992-1993; Fukuyama, 2004: 129-130), if only they were to make more efforts to develop them. The 'Western state' model is left untouched as an obvious reality justifying the bestowal of sovereignty to the West and its denial to the Rest. Therefore, by separating 'state' from 'sovereignty', this first critique institutes the state as the naturalised foundation of the discourse of sovereignty, as the essentialised pre-social (Epstein, 2010: 331) or pre-cultural, making it difficult to question this 'reality' without rejecting representation at the same time.

A performative critique goes further and de-naturalises the supposed pre-existence of the sovereign state 'realities' (and lack of these same 'realities' in non-sovereign states). As argued by Weber (1998: 92), "the traditional IR definition of sovereignty – absolute authority over a territory occupied by a relatively fixed population and recognised as sovereign by other sovereign states – renders the state prediscursive" because the four components are taken as pre-existing to the definition itself. What the discourse of sovereignty does is to naturalise these discursive elements that serve as 'foundations' for the representation. As Bourdieu, Wacquant and Farage (1994: 16) indicate the (sovereign) state is instituted through the production of "the performative discourse on the state which, under the guise of saying what the state is, caused the state to come into being by stating what it should be". Thus, and as for sex and gender, states and sovereignty are never in the realm of nature and are always constructed (Weber, 1998: 90). Performativity suggests that no state is 'naturally' *there* outside the discourses that create it; contrary to "much of the conventional literature on the nation and the state [that] implies that the essence of the former precedes the reality of the latter", a performative approach argues that "no state possesses a prediscursive, stable identity", i.e. stable *foundations* on which to ground a discourse (Campbell, 1992: 11 and 105).

The first action of the performative discourse of sovereignty is to create the foundations it subsequently claims to only represent, which is what Campbell (1997: 168) calls "performative enunciations marked as constative acts". To understand how, one has to refer to those elements mentioned by Weber (1998: 92) as constituting the traditional IR

definition of sovereignty – "absolute authority over a territory occupied by a relatively fixed population and recognised as sovereign by other sovereign states" – and to interrogate their 'naturalness'. It is thus the state itself that needs to be questioned. And for scholars using performativity, the state is clearly not a natural object that can be studied pre-discursively. Indeed, a performative analysis of the state concludes that states have "no ontological status apart from the many and varied practices that constitute their reality" (Campbell, 1992: 11). The complexity of the world, the ambiguities and contingencies encountered in international relations are normalised and domesticated through a discourse on statehood that serves as a foundation for sovereignty. A state has to "establish its condition of possibility" (Campbell, 1997: 167) through discursive means, that is to say to render coherent and foundational a set of elements that the discourse itself brings to light. One of the ways of doing it is through 'foreign' policy discourses, "a specific sort of boundary-producing political performance" (Ashley, 1987: 51).

Hence, and as argued by Campbell (1997: 164-165), "[a]lthough the multifarious discourses surrounding the state that invoke its name and declare its purpose give the appearance of simply reflecting a reality awaiting apprehension, such discourses in actuality constitute that reality for, when pursued, the sources of authority on which those discourses rest can be considered "mystical"" (see also Derrida, 1994: 34). Those 'strong' states – those 'positively' sovereign states – are therefore states *whose reality has been accepted as natural and empirically evident*. This analysis, however, is not another way of saying that the materiality of the state does not exist: it would indeed be difficult to deny the existence of some material elements. But those elements do not speak for themselves, and "the ways we understand this materiality of people, territory, government, *etc* – does not pre-exist performative expression of the state, including sovereignty" (Weber, 1998: 92). With a performative analysis it also becomes possible to show how certain foundations called into being by discourses can be contested by alternative discourses – thus showing their arbitrariness. The discourse of sovereignty, by constituting a particular society or political community "always necessarily excludes as well as includes" (Walker, 2003a: 22). Certain foundations are 'erased' through discourses despite their discursive affirmation by competing actors. Those material elements can remain outside of discourse (or be erased through discourse) and consequently will not be part of 'reality'.

As such, scholars using performativity are interested in the social practices that sustain the idea of 'state' (through supposedly stable identities and labels) and the claims to sovereignty (Jeffrey, 2013: 42). The consequence of using performativity is thus the 'processisation' of the state, since "the identity of the state is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its result" (Weber, 1998: 90). In the case of civilised sovereignty these practices are the countless discourses establishing or denying civilisation and linking this 'reality' to the sovereign state.

Establishing reality: reiterative discourses and the 'reality effect' of sovereignty

An approach using performativity begs important questions for the state and sovereignty. Crucial among them is how we understand the force of performative discourses – i.e. their ability to create and naturalise the 'foundations' of sovereign and non-sovereign states. As noticed by Dunn (2009: 426): "Some representations become accepted as 'true' and others simply do not. Particular meanings and identities of objects become widely accepted as fixed and true; not because of the inherent 'truth' of those representations, but because of the strength of that specific representational power". Here, two questions are essential: first, how to understand the interaction between discourses and their sedimentation, i.e. their becoming seemingly materially self-evident? And secondly, how to explain the relative force (or power) of certain discourses over others?

The first question concerns the effects of performative discourses on 'reality'. Most authors working on performativity estimate that performative discourses have a *sedimented* or *accumulated* effect on reality, so that they materialise and exercise a constraint on subsequent discourses. The discourse of sovereignty, as other performative discourses, acquires a "naturalized effect" due to its reiterative nature (Butler, 1993: 10). For Laffey (2000: 411), "History – the reiteration of gender norms [or, for that matter, of sovereign norms] – acquires ontological weight through materializations and sedimentations". Butler (1993: 94) also argues that:

> A construction is, after all, not the same as an artifice (...) There is a tendency to think that sexuality is either constructed or determined; to think that if it is constructed, it is in some sense free, and if it is determined, it is in some sense fixed. These oppositions do not describe the complexity of what is at stake.

In other words, the naturalisation or materialisation of sovereign realities can exercise a strong effect of closure and blindness. As Boli (2001: 54) explains "[t]he assumption that the national polity is real is now reflected in so much structure, accounting, and interpretation that we can hardly imagine a world constructed in any other way". The naturalisation of the sovereign state means that "[t]he state comes to seem an autonomous starting point" (Mitchell, 1999: 84) and we forget that this 'instituted institution' (despite appearing to us as *natural*) "issues out of a long series of acts of *institution* (in the active sense)" (Bourdieu et al., 1994: 4). Hence, the fact that we so often take nature/foundations as meaningful in themselves is a consequence of the fact that our

discourses (of gender or of sovereignty) are so well-accepted that they conceal how these 'natural foundations' could mean something else, *hence that they do not mean anything outside of our discourses about 'them'*. Consequently, what the persistent materialisations reveal is the stability of our cultural constructions of the world and the limited space available for alternatives. This is particularly true for the discourses of sovereignty: their 'reality effect' seems to foreclose any alternative. Through its 'foundational' violence (Cocks, 2014) sovereignty prevents the establishment and development of alternatives. The reiterative effect of performative discourses sediments and positions the sovereign subjects over time in seemingly static and definitive categories (Butler, 1997: 33-34; see also Lee, 2012: 59), with performative utterances therefore exercising their creating power in the context of the legacy of a certain past.

It should not be concluded, however, that this 'past' is a given and exists outside of the realm of discourses. In their analysis of Australia, Dillon and Everard (1992: 292) argued that "[r]epetition (…) masquerades as a recollection of the same" and add that repetition

> claims to be a backward look to something stable and fixed, preceding the present act, which is merely to be retrieved or recovered, and repeated. But it is not. It is a creative process, although of a particular sort. It thus produces *what* it claims to repeat, because repetition is never the same, but it does so through, and in the distinctive idiom of, the dynamics of a nostalgia for a past presence. It is, then, a record of constant variation and alteration that contains its own distinctive modes of production, exclusion, and violence, for it is a movement in which movement is something to be overcome.

Repetition is thus also production, for its very claim to recall the past acts as a reinterpretation – a re-enactment – of it. Performative discourses "invoke earlier articulations, even as their reiteration changes them" (Bialasiewicz et al., 2007: 417). As such, performativity is also connected to the idea of 'change'. Generally speaking Butler does not provide a compelling analysis of change. Indeed, change sits uneasily with the idea of norms and iteration that stands at the centre of performativity. As Butler (2009: xii) writes even "though we can radically rework our genders or even try to rework our sexualities (though often failing), we are in the grip of norms even as we struggle against them". The capacity for reality to change and transform is in fact difficult to include in what is, essentially, a static approach that strives to uncover how a constant reality is produced through discourses. One way that 'change' can be accounted for is when 'reality' exceeds the norms. As Wilcox (2014: 361) indicates the "realm of bodily excess cannot be accessed outside of discourse, but it is this excessive realm of the body that creates the possibilities for agency, resistance and political change". It is thus through the failures of discourses to materialise as intended that alternatives are revealed and change can materialise. Butler writes about "discontinuities" between the intended reality and the actual reality that

emerges.[47] Hence, the continuity and seemingly constant reproduction of the same "is called into question by the cultural emergence of those "incoherent" or "discontinuous" gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined" (Butler, 1990: 17). This occurs in a similar way for sovereign states: when their 'reality' (and in particular their civilised 'reality') clashes with previous or competing discourses their very existence is threatened or can be transformed. Additionally, reproduction can deviate in unexpected ways: performative discourses are more unpredictable than the insistence on the idea of 'citationality' would suggest (Gregson and Rose, 2000: 446). For Butler (2009: iii and i) "every act of reproduction risks going awry or adrift, or producing effects that are not fully foreseen" thus transforming norms in unexpected ways.

This remark leads us to the crucial question of the force of the performative discourses: "[t]o what extent does discourse gain the authority to bring about what it names through citing the linguistic conventions of authority, conventions that are themselves legacies of citation?" (Butler, 1997: 51). Performative discourses are not removed from society and materiality: rather, they should be understood as "power processes" (Carver, 2008: 118) which "shift across time and space, largely through political struggle and the distribution of power" (Dunn, 2003: 10). At the most basic level, this power exercised by performative discourses is dependent on the *author* of the discourse, i.e. on his/her authority. Here, having power means being able to "freeze meaning" and naturalise specific representations to the point that they appear "doxic" (Neumann, 2007: 190). As such, "[t]he effectiveness of the performative discourse which claims to bring about what it asserts in the very act of asserting it is directly proportional to the authority of the person doing the asserting" (Bourdieu, 1991: 223). To be able to 'state things authoritatively' – "that is, in front of and in the name of everyone, publicly and officially" (Bourdieu, 1991: 222) – is the first condition for a successful performative action of the discourse.

But more precisely, how is this authority constructed? The first condition is to respect (or to re-enact) socially defined practices or conditions accepted as authoritative. If a performative act is successful, it is because

> that action echoes prior actions, and *accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior and authoritative set of practices* (…) What this means, then, is that a performative "works" to the extent that *it draws on and covers over* the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized. In this sense, no term or statement can function performatively without the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of force (Butler, 1997: 51).

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[47] Both realities are nevertheless equally 'performed', i.e. the result of discourse.

In other words, the authority of a performative discourse owes much to "the social conditions of its production" (Bourdieu, 1991: 38) which renders it natural because inscribed in (and therefore hidden behind) a tradition of previously used authoritative practices. In the same action, the performative author reproduces social standards associated with authority while hiding this 'reproduction' behind the naturalness of the authoritative acts reproduced. This is clearly the case when those *authorised* to speak in the name of the sovereign state resort to established practices such as official declarations or accreditation of foreign ambassadors (*things* that a sovereign state *does*). Performative discourses can thus be significant and impactful only if they "elicit recognition as a warranted, valid, and indeed naturally appropriate way of seeing, saying, and making the world" (Ashley, 1987: 53). They "draw upon socially available cognitive resources – recognized precedents and shared symbolic materials – in order to impose interpretations upon events, silence alternative interpretations, structure practices, and orchestrate the collective making of history" (Ashley, 1987: 53).

But this authority should not be considered as a personal attribute of a single individual; rather, it is diffused throughout society in the "symbolic economy within which performances take place" (Jeffrey, 2013: 31). In this light performativity can easily integrate constructivist arguments about different dominant conceptions of sovereignty and its meaning. The second condition that makes a performative discourse successful is thus the 'objectified' conditions conditioning the acceptability, authority, and therefore potential success, of a performative discourse. Indeed, in the example of regional(ist) groups and identity taken by Bourdieu (1991: 223-224), "the cognition effect brought about by the fact of objectification in discourse does not depend only on the recognition granted to the person who utters that discourse". Crucially, it also depends on "the economic or cultural properties they share in common". The authority of the author cannot be assessed on its own but depends on the social conditions of its production: it has to be analysed in relation to the group(s) recognising the author as a source of authority (or as lacking authority). As such, discourses of sovereignty ignoring established conditions of felicity and overlooking the correspondence between the author and the intended audience will not exercise a performative effect (or rather: they will fail). In other words, "an accounting of felicity's conditions must attend to the cultural structures that render a performative intelligible, meaningful, and capable of being interpreted as felicitous or infelicitous, in addition to the mode and context in which the performative is enacted" (Alexander and Mast, 2006: 4). Performative discourses thus occupy an ambiguous position: they are reliant on a context that they contribute to enact.[48] This is particularly true for the discourse of civilised sovereignty (and the civilisation enacted in support of sovereignty claims).

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[48] This is why a lot of official discourses always start by (re)-enacting a context in which they possess authority.

Uncovering this sedimented effect of the performative discourse of sovereignty as well as its social conditions of felicity is crucial when considering the implications of a performative analysis of the concept. The critique of the normativity of sovereignty gains strength when the 'reality' of sovereignty is interpreted through performativity. Indeed, and as an answer to such a critique of the normativity of sovereignty, most mainstream scholars argue that if sovereignty is indeed normative, its use is justified by its ability to create *strong* states. By introducing a specific understanding of the ontology of these 'strong' states, an approach using performativity reveals that this strength is not linked to a particular version of sovereignty – such as civilised sovereignty – but that it is linked to the force of the discursive practices themselves that act to (re-)create and (re-)inforce the reality (or strength) of the state in question. This is because "certain understandings of sovereignty (…) are imbued with value" (Jeffrey, 2013: 7). Conversely, these discourses can also (re-)create the weakness or fragility of other states. Taking them at face-value means taking for granted the superiority of the 'civilised sovereign state' model and, ultimately, of the civilisation that supports it. But when this 'effectiveness' is proven to be part of the discourse of sovereignty itself there is no more ground on which to establish this superiority. As such, performativity brings the critique of dominant discourses of sovereignty one step further.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter performativity has been shown to be particularly relevant for the analysis of sovereignty. More specifically performativity provides an answer to the "foundational problem" (Shinko, 2010) that sovereignty presents to the analyst:[49]

> The problem of sovereignty is profoundly paradoxical. Accenting the root, we may say that it is profound in the sense that it is preoccupied with the problem of foundation: a fundamental principle, a supporting structure, a base on which society rests, a fund of authority capable of endowing possibilities, accrediting action, and fixing limitations. Accenting the prefix, we may say that it is profound in the sense that that it proceeds from a situation ahead of all foundation, in favor or support of foundation, to produce or bring forth foundation, that will count as or substitute for the foundation now lacking (Ashley and Walker, 1990: 382).

This productive nature of the discourse of sovereignty is crucial when one accepts that there is no position outside of culture – and thus outside of interpretation. As Butler (1990:

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[49] What Bartelson (1995: 2) refers to as an "essentially essentialist question".

78) argues "[m]obilizing the distinction between what is "before" and what is "during" culture is one way to foreclose cultural possibilities from the start". There is no point outside of culture from which to decide on the presence of a 'natural' sovereign. Instead, and to paraphrase Butler (1990: 37), this natural sovereign is the result of a discursive production of nature and of a naturally and empirically civilised sovereign that is postulated as the unquestioned foundation of culture. This questioning of the binary nature/culture thus resonates with the discursive construction of civilised and sovereign identities analysed in this thesis. But it also enables scholars to approach the idea of 'state of nature' differently. As will be discussed in the following chapters this concept is central for the establishment or denial of civilised sovereignty. Deciding on what nature *is* is indeed at the centre of the process of creation of civilised sovereignty. But a rejection of the notion of an 'untouched' nature – in other words: a rejection of the possibility of deciding what nature is before or outside culture – clearly contradicts the assumption that such a state of nature could exist and thus contributes to unsettle the civilised-cultural/savage binary.

Hence, and following on from the discussion of sovereignty as a profoundly Eurocentric concept influenced by the values and principles of a parochial culture, performativity enables me to question some of the central assumptions of the discourse of sovereignty. In particular, I am now able to pose as a question the foundations of this discourse, i.e. the civilisational elements invoked to support claims to sovereignty. If the idea of performativity "presupposes that norms are acting on us before we have a chance to act at all" (Butler, 2009: xi), how is this normative (and productive) action taking place in the discourse of civilised sovereignty? In other words, how are the identities of civilised and savage established in the very discourse that is supposedly built upon these foundational elements?[50] These questions will be tackled in the next three chapters. As a precaution, however, it should now be clear that if these civilised and sovereign identities are considered *arbitrary* and *artificial* – in the sense that they could have been different – this should not be taken to mean that they are inconsequential. As such, deconstructing these civilised and savage identities is not synonymous with a "deconstruction of politics" and a refusal of the very idea of 'identity'. Rather, such an approach "establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated" (Butler, 1990: 148).

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[50] Or as Butler (1990: 16) asks: "To what extent is "identity" a normative ideal rather than a descriptive feature of experience?"

Chapter 3

The writing of the ideal French state: a perfect civilised sovereignty

Introduction

In this thesis, the articulation of identity that I focus on is that of the French civilised and sovereign state. As a first step in this analysis this chapter explores French conceptualisations of sovereignty in the 16th century with a focus on the principles informing these discussions. My interest lies primarily in identifying shared ideas repeatedly used to construct (an ideal of) sovereignty. This chapter thus represents an attempt at studying the conceptual construction of sovereignty at the time, i.e. how claims to (absolute) political authority are justified and maintained. More specifically, this chapter will reveal how these discourses of sovereignty are necessarily built upon references to civilisation and savagery. In fact, one will be hard-pressed to find a 'pure' conceptualisation of sovereignty among French theorists (i.e. a conceptualisation that does not refer or is not built upon cultural notions of progress, evolution and civilisation). As will be shown through an exploration of French political thought sovereignty can only be defined in relation to civilisation. The 'absoluteness' of the concept in fact originates from the superior and inviolable principles that are expressed by the French through their concept of sovereignty. As such, this chapter concurs with post-colonial analyses which conclude at the interconnection of the discourses of civilisation and sovereignty.

The civilisation that these French conceptualisations of sovereignty rest upon is necessarily constructed against uncivilised (and unsovereign) countries or peoples. Sovereignty – and in particular *French* sovereignty – is described as a superior form of political authority and as the best possible form of government but its role as model can only be established by denigrating or denying the existence of other forms of proper political authority. France thus becomes, in essence, the perfect form of a sovereign state. This need to situate France above inferior forms of political organisation is what explains the repeated references to evolutionary theories of humankind.[51] The French texts analysed here make repeated use of internal and external references to 'progress' (i.e. references to France itself as having achieved civilisation or references to other societies as less advanced). These notions of 'progress' (towards French civilisation) form the core of the discourses of sovereignty and help define what a 'true' sovereign is for sixteenth-century French thinkers. Revealing these aspects will be particularly useful when turning to how Amerindians and French achieve this standard of civilised sovereignty or failed to conform to it. The different elements explored here as forming this standard – i.e. the elements that correspond to what a real sovereign (and civilised) society must be – are especially important as they will be at the centre of discussions in the following three chapters (both with regards to the Amerindian's lack of sovereignty and to the French troubled achievement of civilisation).

In order to discuss these issues the crucial period of the 16th century will be analysed in this chapter. According to Church (1969: 3), this century "was one of the most important in the evolution of [essential political concepts such as sovereignty] since at that time there occurred the significant change from essentially medieval constitutional theories" to what came to be known as 'modern' political ideas. The 16th century represents a major transitional period between medieval political thought and modern political thinking, a moment particularly characterised by the progress of the king's power (Guenée, 1971: 78-79). For Church (1969: 335), "[t]he metamorphosis of the realm from feudal community to national state was complete" at the end of the 16th century. What is established at this time will dominate French political thinking until the Enlightenment. Indeed, the triumph of absolutism is clear in all the political treatises published after 1594 (Weill, 1892: 267 and 271) and the next major political crisis – the *Fronde* starting in 1648 – will mainly repeat the same political conceptions (Lemaire, 1907: 169-170). Additionally, questions relating to royal power (and thus to sovereignty and its justification) have sparked off an abundant literature during this "agitated century" (Lemaire, 1907: 71).[52] This is not to argue, however, that the political ideas discussed here were *invented* (in a sort of heroic movement) by French thinkers: these ideas have a history and most of them find their origin in the readings of Ancient philosophers and in Christian doctrine. Instead of an

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[51] What Pagden (1982: 4) calls 'comparative ethnology', i.e. "an ethnology which argued that cultural difference could be explained neither as the consequence of differing psychological dispositions nor as the merely contingent arrangements of different social groups, but as the indication of the positions which the various human societies had reached on an historical time-scale".

[52] Le Jay (1589: f. 9v-10) recognises this 'agitation' when stating that "there has never been a century so full of sedition, disregard and contemptuousness for the Kings than the one we live in".

in-depth exploration of these antecedents, however, what this chapter provides is a snapshot of these ideas and of their use in the conceptualisation of sovereignty.

I discuss French conceptions of sovereignty as they appear from 1519 (and the publication of Seyssel's important treatise) to the first decade of the 17th century (i.e. the aftermath of the religious and political conflicts of the 16th century). This chapter aims at being as exhaustive as possible and to introduce an extensive range of works published during the period, from the well-known work of Bodin to more confidential political treatises. The objective here is not to establish a hierarchy between the most and the least influential works nor to discuss differences between them[53] but rather to identify the common 'grammar' used by political thinkers. One should remember that these works were all published with the approval of the king.[54] This reveals two aspects: first, that these treatises had a certain influence and/or were reflecting ideas and issues generally considered as valid for the period under study. Second, the very fact that they could be published reveals the proximity of their views to the 'official' royal discourse. Keohane (1980: 83-84) characterises it as a "conjunction of study and political involvement" and adds that:

> French scholars of jurisprudence, men of classical education and humanist outlook, often held minor government posts. Such men tended to be strongly monarchical in their political beliefs, and dedicated to advancing the glory of France.

Their proximity to royal power and their vested interest in the maintenance of the sovereignty of the king should not, however, disqualify the views of these scholars as manipulated, insincere, and somehow 'untrue'. The distinction between their 'real' or personal opinions and their published and public expressions can only be arbitrarily established, when it can be at all. Although these scholars could have potentially been more progressive or offered dissident views in a different, less constrained, context, this potentiality has only a limited interest given the objective of this chapter (which is to identify dominant conceptualisations of sovereignty).

Hence, most authors used in this chapter shared a similar background, education and position. They generally studied Law (like Budé) and their professional position was that of 'jurisconsults' (such is the case for Loyseau, Coquille and Moulin). Inside this category of 'jurisconsults' or 'legists' (Church, 1969: 6) most of them were lawyers in one of the major institutions of sixteenth-century France (in general but not always the Parliament

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[53] For in-depth explorations (including discussions of the differences between scholars) see Weill (1892), Lemaire (1907) and Church (1969).
[54] Authors and publishers were in fact delivered a 'privilège' to publish their works.

of Paris): Bignon, Aurigny, du Vair, Gentillet, d'Albon, Poisson and Marion fit that description. If not working at the highest levels of the judiciary or as councillors or members of the Parliament they exercised a public office such as diplomat (Postel and D'espence) or held positions close to the king (such as Seyssel or L'Hospital). A final group dedicated itself to scholarly activities (in the fields of history for Haillan and Du Chesne and of political economy for Montchrestien) or artistic matters (like Caron and Pasquier). In short, most of these authors can be classified as lawyers, scholars and/or public servants.

The similarity of their social position should not, however, be taken in a deterministic way as implying an absolute similarity in their views.[55] As such, and while I do not deny differences between the numerous authors cited, these differences are marginal from the perspective of this chapter. Indeed, and even if some ideas can be used for radically different political goals or the intensity of the arguments used can vary widely (for instance in the attribution of an absolute power to the king), these differences are irrelevant for my discussion insofar as the *same* principles and concepts are used despite the *different* political goals of their author. Similarly, I am not denying the importance of the religious divide experienced in the 16th century. But interestingly, both sides used similar ideas and arguments, if not at the same time or with the same intensity. As explained by Weill (1892: 205), arguments relating to the obedience due to the king shifted camp when a Protestant became heir to the throne; suddenly, it was no longer used by Catholics to criticise the Protestant's rebellion but by the Protestants themselves against the Catholic League. Therefore, what one finds in this vast literature (that could be qualified as 'political theory') is a common view on the state and its ideal organisation. As will be discussed, French authors usually build their argument in the same way and often plagiarise each other (sometimes word for word). Their common heritage and education is also revealed by the references they use and the examples they provide. This is why a presentation of these works by authors – or insisting on the 'personal' arguments developed by each author – would not only be repetitive but would also obscure the commonalities and shared truths defended by all sixteenth-century French theorists. Building this chapter around the common themes and topics encountered in these works thus enables me to highlight the common culture of these authors (instead of the few and marginal differences that exist between them). And it is this common culture that plays a critical role in the conceptualisation of sovereignty.

This chapter is structured in the following way: I first explain how sovereignty was conceptualised as a superior and final form of authority and strongly linked to monarchy and the king (in particular through the 'body analogy'). The second section shows how this

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[55] Other factors could influence their writings. Those living and working in the provinces, for instance, could take a stronger position in defence of local customs and particularism (and argue that the king has no power over them). Similarly, the epoch had an influence on the ideas produced. The strong reigns of François I and Henry II led authors to glorify absolutism and the monarchy. Overall, however, these differences impacted only marginally on the core of the political beliefs about sovereignty analysed in this chapter.

superior authority was justified with reference to higher principles of French civilisation and how these principles represent the 'absolute' usually associated with sovereignty. I therefore demonstrate how sovereignty is constructed by French political theorists as a final form of authority inscribed in and defined by these higher principles (and in particular Christianity and justice). This leads to the necessary portrayal of the king as a father protecting his children/subjects and acting for the public good. This representation of the king is essential since sovereignty is a performative concept prescribing and describing 'perfection' as understood in the French sixteenth-century context. Finally, I show how scholars associated this perfect civilised sovereignty with France and its historical development. In so doing, they reveal how their construction of (civilised) sovereignty rests on a civilisational process starting in the 'state of nature' and ending in the 'most Christian' and civilised European states of all: France. I discuss this evolutionary vision of humankind further in the conclusion.

The meaning of sovereignty and its monarchical 'nature'

The meaning of sovereignty

The discussion starts with the very definition these authors gave to sovereignty. It could appear as surprising that explicit definitions of sovereignty are rare in French sixteenth-century political thought. Bodin indeed lamented this fact in 1576 when his major work on the topic was published. One (if not the main) reason for this lack of definition of sovereignty is linked to the inherent *civilisational* character of the concept. As Loyseau (1608: 34) writes "every inhabited and civilised country is under some sovereignty, because otherwise it would be in Anarchy and without a form of government". Importantly here, only *some* states are sovereign, and these states are the ones inhabited by civilised peoples. Because of this inherent link to civilisation, culturally-neutral definitions of sovereignty are rare. As I will also explain below, it is also insufficient when one wishes to give a full account of sovereignty. Finding a pure or technical definition of sovereignty (like IR scholars struggle to do when they stick to the traditional or minimalist conceptualisation of sovereignty) is thus not easy and, more importantly, is only a temporary step. The minimalist definition of sovereignty is always rapidly reinscribed into a specific civilisational framework (including by Bodin).

This near absence of a minimalist – i.e. non-culturally specific – definition of sovereignty has led many to argue that Bodin was the first one to provide such a definition.[56] For Bodin (1576: 125), "sovereignty is the absolute and perpetual power of a Republic (…) that is the greatest power to command".[57] Sovereignty is primarily defined by its superiority over other forms of authority and thus its apparent absoluteness: the sovereign can give some authority to others but "always retain more" with him; and "sovereignty is not limited in power, neither in office nor in time" (Bodin, 1576: 125-126). The idea of superiority and absoluteness were also clearly mentioned by Budé (1547: 42) and by Loyseau (1608: 25-26):

> [Sovereignty] consists in absolute power, that is to say perfect and entire in all respects (…) and consequently with no superior degree. Because if one has a superior he cannot be supreme and sovereign.

As clearly articulated here, this superiority implies a lack of limitation since the idea of 'limit' necessitates a higher authority and, by definition, the sovereign does not recognise any superior authority (Poisson, 1597: f. 7v). Re-iterating this conception of absolute monarchy Bignon (1610: 309) estimates that the sovereign in France possesses a pure and absolute power and authority, without restriction or being responsible for his actions.[58] Sovereignty is thus what characterised the political community called 'the state' "from which if it is removed, it would not be a state any longer" (Loyseau, 1608: 25). With this insistence on supremacy and absoluteness it is not surprising that "the doctrine of sovereignty offered the national king the most convenient theoretical weapon with which to combat the claims of rival feudal or ecclesiastical authorities, refractory estates or competing systems of law" (Shepard, 1930: 582).

Sovereignty as necessarily monarchical

However, not all states – and by extension not all political communities – are sovereign. In fact, this sovereign community necessarily takes the form of a monarchy. For Seyssel (1557a: preface) all the greatest empires in the world have been monarchies and governed

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[56] This is also how "[t]he words "Bodin" and "sovereignty" have become almost as inseparably linked as synonyms" (Shepard, 1930: 585).

[57] Bodin, like most political thinkers, was using the word 'puissance' when writing in French. This could lead to some ambiguity since 'puissance' can be translated as 'power' or 'authority' (the 'capacity' to do something or the 'right' to do it). 'Puissance' will be variously translated as 'power' or 'authority' depending on the context.

[58] I am purposefully using the masculine ('he' and 'his') when talking about the sovereign. See the relationship between conceptions of masculinity and sovereignty in the third section of this chapter.

by one king only, which reveals the superiority of monarchy when compared to other forms of political rule. Similarly for Aurigny (1554: f. 245v) "the super-stewardship and authority of the king is the most excellent of all". Simon Marion also argued in 1572 that "sovereignty was the true mark of royalty and must reside perpetually in the prince who was unable to separate it from himself or communicate any portion of it to another individual" (Church, 1969: 121). More generally, political theorists of the 16th century are strongly attached to monarchy as *the* form of sovereign government and the "praise of 'monarchy' becomes one of the tropes of the political essays" of the time (Weill, 1892: 280).

But why is monarchy the best (and in fact the only true) form of sovereign regime? Two main justifications are used by French authors. The first relates to the natural perfection and natural inevitability of the establishment of a monarchy. Put differently, 'nature' itself dictates the establishment of a monarchy. For Bignon (1610: 287-288), since the dawn of the world "the first family fathers have commanded in their house" and from this fact can be concluded that all peoples have similarly submitted themselves to a king in what is essentially an assemblage of several families.[59] Political treatises of the time repeatedly compare the 'republic' or political community to the family unit (see an example in Coquille (1607: 1)). The well-conducted family, argues Bodin (1576: 8), is the "real image of the Republic". Hence, what is good at the family level is seen as good at the level of the kingdom (L'Hospital, 1824-1825: 384). This belief is inscribed in an evolutionary view of humankind detailed by Madeleine (1575: f. 1v-2):

> And in fact we read that soon after the creation of Man and after humankind had grown to some degree, men were vagabond and wandering in the woods and forests without any hideaway, living like Plutarch said of acorn and honey, and being close to the natural of brute beasts (…) [but] as the families were growing and multiplying, and they entered into some confusion and disorder, it became necessary to establish a form of Republic (…) And therefore, following what nature almost dictated them, they chose and erected a King to whom they attributed superiority and domination.

With the growth in population and the division of society into families, a king is necessary to maintain order (Madeleine, 1575: f. 1v).[60]

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[59] Pagden (1982) explains how the origins of civil society are usually identified with the family, and Le Jay (1589: f. 79) wrote that "[a]ll the republics are regulated and arranged in the same way as the particular households of which they are made and composed".

[60] The introduction of the 'state' as a solution to an ever-growing population and potential scarcity of resources is mentioned by Jahn (2000: 120) in her important analysis of classical political theorists.

But this 'natural' origin of monarchy is not only linked to the model of the family and to population growth: it is also a model shown and applied everywhere by 'nature' itself. Sixteenth-century authors see monarchy – the rule of one – mirrored in Nature's every aspect: monarchy is the safest government as shown "by the comparison and example of the superior bodies, among which the Sun commanding to all the others" (Coquille, 1607: 1; see also Madeleine, 1575: f. 3; d'Albon, 1575: f. 6 and 8; Jay, 1589: f. 34v; Poisson, 1597: f. 7). Animals also display forms of monarchy. The example of the bees is one of the tropes of Greek political thinking repeated by French theorists of the time: just as bees have one king humans should be governed by a single individual (Aurigny, 1554: f. 1v; Jay, 1589: f. 267v; Madeleine, 1575: f. 3v; Perrière, 1567: f. 23v; Coquille, 1607: 1). Monarchy is thus the most natural form of *police* (i.e. political organisation) and "nature obviously declares it, wishing that in every multitudinous assembly (…) one presides over the others" (Roy, 1575a: f. 4v; see also f. 5-6; on the 'naturalness' of the existence of one leader see Postel 1552: Chapter 4)). For Madeleine (1575: f. 2-2v) "the royal dignity or domination of one is the most ancient form of Republic, the most natural and pleasant" and "consistent with human reason". Any other regime thus becomes considered as 'un-natural', uncivilised and less than sovereign.

Nature, however, is only a reflection of divine will, which leads to the association of monarchy to God's own 'government'. For Roy (1575a: f. 2) the royal government is the closest on earth to the divine government of the universe. As such, monarchy is "consistent with and symbolises the divine and ineffable principality of God (who presides alone over all things)" (Perrière, 1567: f. 6). For these authors monarchy was instituted or created by God (which confirms its perfectness) and should therefore be followed by men who are only imperfect creatures (Madeleine, 1575: f. 5). A combination of the natural and divine arguments is used by Seyssel (1557b: f. 6v) to maintain that the monarchical state is superior and it "is shown by divine, human, natural and political reasoning that we have to come back to one leader in all things and that plurality of leaders and princes is pernicious" (see also Hexter (1968: 407)). Roy (1575a: f. 14) concludes that "there is no doubt monarchy is the best *police* of all, being ordered by God, instituted by nature, received in all time by the first and most ancient peoples, and used today in the biggest part of the inhabited earth".

Sovereignty and the existence of a civil state

Monarchy thus becomes intimately linked to sovereignty and, crucially, to the creation of a civil state. For Madeleine (1575: f. 1) the king's duty is to maintain his subjects in "society and concord". In a similar vein, Budé (1547: 31) considers that without monarchy and its sovereign perfection "our human life (which in and of itself is very variable, dangerous and

full of impediments) would be even more tenebrous and entirely devoid of light". This traditional association between civilisation, the existence of a society, and a reasonable ('enlightened') way of life, reveals how monarchical sovereignty is the path towards a civilised state. Monarchy ensures the maintenance of the 'natural' hierarchy upon which society is (or ought to be) founded.[61] As such, it conforms to "human reason" (Madeleine, 1575: f. 2) because a 'body' needs to have one head only: "The Republic only has one body, which has to be governed by the authority of the head[62] ordained by God, and if others exercised an authority not flowing from him there would be a plurality of kings leading to confusion" (Du Tillet cited in Weill, 1892: 39).

The superiority of the rule of one ('monarchy') is thus supported with reference to the classic 'body analogy':[63] the political body that the kingdom represents should be governed by its 'head', i.e. the king. This analogy starts with the 'description' of the kingdom as composed of 'members' or body parts. Caron (1556: f. 6-6v) writes that

> if we look at the composition of our [political] body we will find an order and organisation between its parts, just like in every man we see a form of a true Republic. Reason governs, the body obeys, the parts depend on the senses and recognise reason as their sovereign princess.

This (implicitly) diverse and divided body is thus unified by the 'head' of the state/body into one (Bodin, 1576: 9; Jay, 1589: f. 187v-188; L'Alouëte, 1597: 1). As Church (1969: 32) explains, "[a] favourite figure used by the writers of the period was the comparison of this social organism with the human body composed of many individuals but mutually dependent members and guided by a single head". Without the head/king, no healthy body can be formed. In the 'head' of the political body are situated reason and intelligence that are essential to the activity of the body (Budé, 1547: 137). As Aurigny (1554: f. 256) puts it, "all the body parts are not equal nor equally valuable, but some commands and the others obey (…) Thus the prince, who is the sovereign part of the Republic, must be highly knowledgeable". In a similar fashion L'Alouëte (1597: 47) considers that "in the head, which is the seat of the soul, is found and reside the excellent faculties of intelligence, the rich treasures of memory, the fertile skills of invention, and the sagacious discourses of reason". Some go further and match the entire political body to the human body: the hands become associated with the king's powers to ensure order and justice (Loyseau,

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[61] See for instance Bodin (1576: preface) and Le Jay (1589: f. 34).
[62] In French, 'chef' meant both 'head of the body' and 'leader'. This later meaning is now the most common one.
[63] As explained by Archambault (1967: 21): "The political treatises of the late mediaeval and Renaissance periods in England, France, and Italy make wide use of the analogy of the human body. This analogy is habitually meant to illustrate the author's conception of the society he is describing, and more specifically – since the works in question deal without exception with the government of princes – to show what the relation of the Prince to his subjects is, or should be, in that society".

1608: 10) and Perrière (1567: f. 8) writes that authority flows from the king just like the nerves originates from the brain.

By presenting the king as the 'head' of the republic or political body French political thinkers participate in what Kantorowicz (1957: 208) called the transcendentalising of the state behind its purely physical existence.[64] To do so they draw their inspiration from a wider political tradition that considered "political happiness as inconceivable without hierarchy. Nature had intended it that way: the head does not serve the same purpose as the feet" (Archambault, 1967: 49). This insistence on the body analogy – and the associated comparison of the king with the physician of the body politic[65] – reveals the centrality of hierarchy in the political thought of the period (Lemaire, 1907: 51).

Justifying the authority of the king: God and justice through the sovereign monarch

Where does absoluteness lies?

This natural and divine argument associating sovereignty with the rule of one is nevertheless not enough. The sovereignty of the monarch does not and cannot rest on such an explanation. We touch here upon one of the difficulties of conceptualising sovereignty, a difficulty that we will explore through Bodin. Bodin is mostly famous for his (supposedly) absolute conception of the sovereign authority of the monarch as expressed for instance in these rhetorical questions: "How would one be sovereign if he recognised the principle of justice of a higher authority? Of one who quashes his judgements, corrects his laws, and punishes him if he abuses of his authority?" (Bodin, 1576: 191). Here Bodin suggests very explicitly that the king's authority is absolute, i.e. that it does not depend on

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[64] My use of the 'King's Two Bodies' theory is only tentative in the context of France since Kantorowicz (1957: 20 and 446) himself estimates that his theory is only applicable to England. Instead of arguing that the exact same model can be applied to France, I want to suggest that similarities can be found between the two countries in their conceptualisation of the king's authority.
[65] As written by Archambault (1967: 29) "[t]he comparison of the Prince to a physician is an important variant of the analogy of the human body". See, for instance, Aurigny (1554: f. 255v), Caron (1556: f. 22v), Haillan (1611), and L'Hospital (1824-1825: 387; 1825: 17-18). Henry of Navarre will make use of the same analogy in 1588 (B.N.F., N.A.F. 17874: f. 15). Du Vair is somewhat more original and adapts the 'body analogy' into a 'tree analogy' with the king standing as the trunk unifying all the branches/parts of the kingdom (Vair, 1680: 5).

any superior or external element or foundation. He is nevertheless constantly framing 'sovereignty' as inscribed into a wider framework of divine and natural law. As he says: "as far as the divine and natural laws are concerned, all the Princes of the earth are subjected to them, and it is not in their power to contravene them". In a contradictory statement he even affirms that "the absolute power of Princes and sovereign lordships does not extend to the laws of God and nature" (Bodin, 1576: 133; see also 129 and 145). Sovereignty thus clearly depends on two higher principles: God's law (or the divine will) and natural law, a set of principles open to interpretation and rarely defined exhaustively but usually associated with a 'reasonable' and 'just' way of life. These 'limits' reveal how sovereignty *is justified by some higher principles* that can only be identified inside of a cultural – or civilisational – framework.

Before discussing what these 'civilisational principles' attached to sovereignty are in the case of sixteenth-century France it is useful to quickly elaborate on the relationship between these values and sovereignty. As shown through the example of Bodin (and as will become clearer with the discussion below) sovereignty is not absolute in the sense of an unqualified and potentially infinite form of power. Rather, the 'absolute' which sovereignty is regularly associated with refers to the principles upon which it depends; principles that can be broadly termed 'civilisational principles'. These principles – and these principles only – are absolute and cannot be negotiated.[66] As will be revealed in the next chapters (and particularly with the French internal discourses) these principles are accepted by all the French actors (including adversaries to the king). Sovereignty thus becomes the final and highest authority of a political community, an authority that is *defined and built upon* civilisational values held as absolute inside of this community.[67] In this sense, sovereignty is necessarily defined by and inside these civilisational values and ideals. Strictly speaking, it is not *limited* by them insofar as it can only exist inside of this framework and becomes illegitimate, non-existent, and unreal – these three terms meaning the same thing in this context – as soon as it is detached from these principles. We now turn to an exploration of these values before exploring further the misleading idea of 'limits' to sovereignty at the end of this section.

Sovereignty and religion

The king's authority and his 'perfect' and 'natural' sovereignty had thus to be justified by an appeal to higher principles, the most important of which being the articulation between

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[66] As Koskenniemi (2010: 223) writes: "Sovereignty, in whichever register we like to think of it, always points to and receives its power from some further notion or structure which, in that sense, is even more 'absolute and [seemingly] perpetual' than it".

[67] And arguably outside of this community as well in the case of inter-community encounters (like 'international relations').

the sovereignty of the king and his appointment by, imitation of or achievement of God's commandments. Religion was central in sixteenth-century French political theory (Church, 1969: 7-8) and it was not uncommon to find treatises or discourses claiming that the king's first obligation is to maintain religion (see for instance the discourse contained in B.N.F., Français 12125, f. 35v). As Madeleine (1575: 10) indicates, "in all the kingdoms and empires, and in all the other forms of Republics, there is first and foremost the need to establish and recognise a true and perfect state of religion" without which "everything would be in confusion and disorder". Sixteenth-century political theorists thus prescribe the maintenance of "the true, the Christian civil life" (Padgen, 1982: 193). In this task, they were helped by a long tradition establishing the French king as 'Most Christian King'. Consequently French people "could avoid, to a very large degree, any feeling of contradiction between their duties to the Church and their duties to the state" (Strayer, 1969: 9 and 16).

For most political thinkers, the king is appointed directly by God and recognises divine authority as the only one superior to his own. Seyssel (1557b: f. 29) explains how the authority of the king comes from God and in a public discourse to the Estates General in 1560 L'Hospital (1824-1825: f. 10) declares that the "king holds his crown not from us but from God". As argued by Pasquier (1621: 145) in a book first published in 1560 "all terrestrial authority [*puissance*] must be established by God". The authority that the king enjoys is thus a "gift from God" (Caron, 1556: f. 10) and the king is often described as being chosen or elected by God in a direct and intentional way (Chesne, 1609: 2; L'Alouëte, 1597: 45; Bodin, 1576: 190). Marion estimates that this election makes kings "sacred" (B.N.F., Français 18888: f. 66) and the advocate-general Jacques Cappel argues in 1539 that the French kings "are constituted by God upon his people" and "hold their kingdom from God alone" (B.N.F., Français 18888: f. 24v). It is clear, therefore, that

> [t]he theory of the divine authorization of kingship was a vital force in the political thought of the sixteenth century. The conception was believed to provide the most satisfactory basis upon which to establish the legitimate character of the political power (Church, 1969: 246).

One consequence is the superiority attributed to God over the monarch: for Gentillet (1576: 47) "the Prince has no authority [*puissance*] above God". In a similar vein, Bodin (1576: 127) argues that "he who is absolutely sovereign does not recognise anything higher than himself apart from God" and that the sovereign prince only has to justify himself in front of God.[68]

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[68] Similar expressions can be found in Budé (1547: 42) and Tillet (1578: 132).

Additionally, the divine origin of the French king's authority entails that his earthly government is inspired by God and reproduces on earth God's government of the universe. The king naturally respects divine law (as will be further explained below in relation to 'justice') and must fear God (Seyssel, 1557b: f. 11). In the *Traité de Reformation de la Justice* attributed to L'Hospital and pronounced in the 1560s the author argues that kings have to obey and humiliate themselves under the "sweet and loveable yoke of God's law" (L'Hospital, 1825: 66). Other authors imply a direct connection or communication between God and the French kings. For Budé (1547: 82) God "conducts [the kings'] free will and guide them through divine inspiration to the right path of reason (which is unknowable to other men)". Caron (1556: f. 3v) makes a similar observation when he writes that the kings' laws are so perfect that "people are astonished by their admirable prudence and believe [the kings] to have previously conversed and communicated with God about them". This "divine counsel" is also mentioned by Perrière (1567: f. 54), thus confirming the belief in a king "inspired directly by God" (Keohane, 1980: 56). 'Dignity' or 'honour' – and in particular "terrestrial dignity'' – is one of the elements communicated by God to the French kings (Loyseau, 1608: 64). For these thinkers "the king was God's representative on earth" (Church, 1969: 104) and his authority clearly established on the basis of this divine connection.[69] Kings are thus seen as the 'lieutenants' of God on earth (Jay, 1589: f. 11v; Poisson, 1597: f. 11), as "ministers of God" (Moulin, 1561: 67) or as mediators between God and men and as the only ones able to interpret and understand the divine will in temporal affairs. L'Alouëte (1597: 152) implies nothing else when he writes that kings are "internally moved and instructed by the High Spirit".

This idea is pushed further by some sixteenth-century political thinkers as they explain how the king is not only a 'representative' but the 'image' of God on earth. For Caron (1556: f. 10v) and d'Albon (1575: f. 5v) the king is "the semblance of God among men" and for L'Hospital (1825: 189) he imitates God. This expression is used explicitly by Marion ("the King represents on earth the image of God" (B.N.F., Français 18888: f. 68)) and by d'Espence ("The Prince is the image of God"), the latter adding that the king "makes himself alike to God thanks to his virtue" (d'Espence, 1575: f. 43). L'Alouëte (1597: 94) compares the king to an earthly Sun, a metaphor also used by du Chesne (1609: 124) when he mentions how the king represents God on earth. He then adds:

> Kings are the living image of God (…) as Kings they are public persona, and as earthly Divinities they oblige the other [men] by the beauty of their acts of power and virtue, their only goal being the good of the people they are in charge of, thus imitating the sovereign Majesty of God the King of Kings (Chesne, 1609: 5).

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[69] This idea dates back to the High Middle Ages: as mentioned by Lemaire (1907: 2) some thinkers under Charlemagne already considered the king as a representative of God on earth.

The idea of the 'representation' of God by the king is carried out to its extreme by some of the late sixteenth-century thinkers: the king does not only represent God but *is* himself God on earth. The king is thus explicitly placed on a similar level as God, in particular by Grassaille who talks about the familiarity of the king with God (Church, 1969: 47). For du Chesne (1609: 330), "all the French kings are a divine dough mixed with a little bit of humanity that Nature shapes in the form of men in order to govern this flourishing Monarchy". For d'Albon (1575: f. 6v) the king "is more than human" and maybe divine. We touch here upon the extreme extent of the link between god and monarch that becomes familiar at the end of the century. Constant, for instance, estimates that opposing the king is like opposing God, while Du Rivault "represented the ruler as literally a minor god on earth, admonishing him always to bear in mind his capacity as a lesser divinity and creature of the Deity" (Church, 1969: 308-309).

Sovereignty and justice

The sovereign authority of the king is also justified with regard to another important – but connected – idea: natural law.[70] Shepard (1930: 591) explains that natural law encompasses the notions of "(1) the inviolability of private property; (2) the inalienability of subjects or families, and the illegality of arbitrary murder of citizens at the command of the sovereign; and (3) the obligatory force of contracts". Most thinkers remain vague about the exact definition of natural law: Le Jay (1589: f. 33), for instance, only mentions the obligation to be "just and reasonable". Gentillet (1576: 60) also argues that "a Prince can give law to his subjects if it is not contrary to nature and to natural reason". As such, the power of the king is "limited by the boundaries of reason, law [i.e. established law] and equity". Because it is connected to the idea of 'civilisation' natural law is notoriously difficult to describe. I will focus in this section on one of the most (if not the most) important notions contained in natural law: *justice*. Justice represents a central civilisational principle on which sovereignty depends. Bodin for instance writes that "the first mark of the sovereign prince is the power [*puissance*] to give law to everyone in general and to each one in particular" (Bodin, 1576: 197). From this first essential right flow all the other "rights and marks of sovereignty, so that properly speaking we can say that there is only this mark of sovereignty since all the other rights are included in this one" (Bodin, 1576: 199) .

In a nutshell, the king's sovereignty is acceptable since it is linked directly to the achievement of justice in the kingdom. There is no – and can be no – contradiction between the divine foundation of sovereignty and its justification through 'justice' since

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[70] These two ideas are connected since the king ensuring the respect for natural law acts as God rendering justice. See d'Albon (1575: f. 5v).

justice is a gift of God (L'Hospital, 1825: 68). In other words, the "law is divine reason given to the wise man" (Caron, 1556: f. 18v), a "donation from God that flowed into the Prince's mind" (L'Alouëte, 1597: 9). The second main foundation of the sovereign royal authority is thus justice. For sixteenth-century political thinkers justice is necessary to justify the king's authority; as stated by L'Hospital (1825: 116) "justice attributes them the right to command". It is the source of the royal authority and majesty for Budé (1547: 21) and Madeleine (1575: f. 24v) insists that justice "confirms, increases and maintains the successive kings and monarchs in their authority".

More precisely, it is *through* the king that justice is realised. First, men came to submit to the sovereignty of one precisely to "enjoy justice" (Roy, 1575a: f. 8). It is indeed always better to have one's king as judge than a multitude of judges (Aurigny, 1554: f. 226). Second, when talking about the links between the sovereign king and justice, theorists generally argue that only the king knows what is just. For Roy (1575a: f. 39), people under a royal government "ignore by themselves the public good and public bad" and therefore need to rely on the king to help them. In a similar vein, Coquille (1607: 4) estimates that people need justice because they are imperfect. In contradistinction, the king is characterised by its virtues and perfections – in particular in relation to justice (Aurigny, 1554: f. 241v; Madeleine, 1575: f. 23v; Chesne, 1609: 3). Third, the king represents the living ideal of justice: as eloquently written by L'Alouëte (1597: 65) "in the person of the Prince, like in the eminent frontispiece of the State, must be the model and mirror of true Justice". Madeleine (1575: f. 27) confirms this representation of the king as the true source of justice in the kingdom: "the King (who is the legislator and governor of his subjects) must be the true light of justice, representing for this issue the authority and majesty of God on earth". As a consequence, the king and justice become indivisible. "Justice and the good prince are relative and inseparable", writes L'Hospital (1825: 28-29; see also the same expression in Loyseau, 1608: 51)), adding that justice is the principal office of the kings (who in fact do not deserve this title if they do not guarantee its achievement).

To accentuate their argument, political theorists contrast the 'fair and just king' to the 'unfair and tyrannical despot'. L'Hospital (1825: 77 and 244) opposes the "tyrannical principalities" to the "royal and legitimate monarchies", adding that "we cannot desire a happier condition in this world than being under a monarchical and royal state, royally governed: under this name, justice (which is the true royal virtue) is included, like injustice is proper to tyrants and the oppressors of humankind". On the contrary, the lack of "observation of the law and of precepts of justice" (Perrière, 1567: f. 17v) is characteristic of tyrannies and the antithesis of a (sovereign) monarchy. The French theorists express their disapproval of Macchiavelli's advice to rule arbitrarily (Bodin, 1576: preface), arguing that such a choice prompts a monarchy to "degenerate into a Tyranny, [in which kings] exercise with discretion violence, thefts and injustices [until] their state falls into total ruin

and confusion" (Gentillet, 1576: 36). A 'logical' association is thus formed between tyranny, chaos, barbarity and a lack of sovereign authority.[71]

The king's authority is thus directly linked to a just political order that allows subjects to live peaceful in a (civilised) society. As summarised by d'Espence (1575: f. 43):

> of all these great goods and graces that God gives, we cannot use them well or enjoy them if there is no law, no justice and no prince. Justice is the purpose of law. Law is of the prince's making. The Prince is the image of God.

Just like religion, justice serves as another element necessary in a 'properly' sovereign and civilised state. Recurrent expressions reveal how 'justice' is central to the existence of the civilised community. L'Hospital (1825: 21-22) writes that

> the order or disorder in the monarchies, cities and republics, emanate from and proceed necessarily from justice (under which name I include piety from which it is inseparable), or from injustice (…) This is certainly a brief explanation, but it is the rule nevertheless, not only of the Christian but of every man living under the light of the simple natural law and who possesses some reason.

The oppositions and linkages between 'justice/injustice' and 'civilisation/barbarism' are explicitly mentioned by most authors discussing political ideas in the 16th century. Caron (1556: f. 18v), for instance, argues that "without law our disordered life would be very similar to that of beasts". Madeleine (1575: f. 26 and 30) develops a similar discourse, emphasising that law prescribes "a certain political order":

> With justice men are contained in a society and concord, kingdoms and principalities are kept in peace and union: conversely with injustice all things are wasted and perverted. So much that where injustice reigns, there is no superiority or domination and we cannot distinguish what is our own. The meanest, strongest, the subtlest and most insidious dominate. It is no longer a Kingdom, but a den of thieves. It is no longer a human society but an assembly of beasts.

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[71] L'Hospital (1825: 26) lists the consequences of such a state as follows: "troubles, divisions, massacres, robbery, intestine wars, vandalising, upheavals, revolts, ruin and desolation".

The association between the lack of justice and a brutal way of life is common throughout the period (see another example in L'Alouëte (1597: 9)). L'Hospital (1825: 79), for instance, writes that "force and violence are more characteristic of beasts than men. Law comes from the most divine part that is inside us, which is reason". Justice is thus crucial to the existence and maintenance of a civilised and sovereign society (Perrière, 1567: f. 11v). Respecting the law and justice is essential "to us who have political and moral intelligence" while disregarding justice is only valid among "Barbaric Nations" (Budé, 1547: 136-137), i.e. where "everything is upside down" and "the country in confusion and peril" (Gentillet, 1576: 396). Using a comparison between rural and urban inhabitants, Aurigny (1554: f. 4v) arrives at a similar conclusion: "The greatest good that is in a city is good justice, which guarantees the foundations of human society; and without it no civil congregation can be".

From defining to performing sovereignty

What do we learn about sovereignty from this discussion? First, that two main civilisational principles – Christianity and justice – were held to be the foundations of the legitimate and final authority that sovereignty represents. Second, that the absoluteness usually misplaced in sovereignty in fact lies in these principles. As a consequence, the king loses his sovereignty as soon as he acts against the precepts that came to define the concept. Hence, sovereignty itself can never be abused or misused since any misconduct disqualifies the one misbehaving as a legitimate holder of sovereignty. What is real – a 'real' sovereignty – is that which lives up to the ideal defined inside this specific civilisational framework. And this framework is better understood as 'conditions of achievement' or 'conditions of acceptability' of the sovereign authority rather than as 'limits' to a sovereign power that is naturally unlimited and absolute. The idea of limits is thus misleading insofar as it implies the possibility of an unchecked sovereign power. This is perfectly summarised by Seyssel: although he mentions 'limits' to the freedom of the sovereign prince (Seyssel, 1557a: preface) these 'limits' are not limiting insofar as the power of the king is not diminished but rather increased when the rules of sovereignty are respected. He adds that if sovereignty "were looser and more absolute it would be worse and more imperfect" (Seyssel, 1557b: f. 13), a judgement that makes sense only if sovereignty is not taken to mean unlimited or unchecked political authority.

More specifically, and as stated by Loyseau (1608: 26), the limits that are discussed by most political thinkers only affect the power of the king, not the (absolute) principles that sustain claims to sovereignty. In other words, the absolute precepts of sovereignty are to be found in the civilisational principles supporting the concept. As Moulin (1561: 87 (my emphasis)) writes: "the prince (*although sovereign*) cannot proceed unless he follows [divine] truth: if he does not then all he undertakes is entirely null". Hence, we arrive at a

new understanding of the term 'absolute': "whatever full authority [*puissance*] [the kings] have, it must be exercised with equity and justice, and if their absolute power is not regulated it becomes dissolute" (Tillet, 1578: 134). Characterising sovereignty as defined inside or by some higher principles is not a way to reduce the authority associated with it but rather to specify its conditions of possibility (Gentillet, 1576: 58). Political theorists usually resort to the example of 'law' in order to explain how this intellectual construct functions: for Aurigny (1554: f. 245v), "it is no law if it is not just, equitable and beneficial to the common good (…) It is not law because it pleases the prince but because it pleases the good and wise prince, to whom nothing pleases except what is honest and conducive to the Republic".[72]

In this approach, the perfect authority of the sovereign king is necessarily identified with the respect of reasonable and civilised principles (Roy, 1575a: f. 20). The sovereign monarchs will necessarily be perfect and achieve the ideal of sovereignty without the need for rules and sanctions (Budé, 1547: 20). In a discourse pronounced at the end of the century du Plessis Mornay estimates that "[e]very man with commonsense will always presume without proof that the King *in his quality of King* (and without considering the insanity or kindness that are specific and natural to him) would have done what he could and had to in order to pacify his state" and more generally to comply with the demands of civilised sovereignty (A.E., M.D. France 373: f. 77 (my emphasis)). Accordingly, 'crossing' the line or not respecting the 'boundaries' of sovereignty is not possible for the king *as king*; he immediately becomes a "tyrant" and loses his sovereignty (Shepard, 1930: 586-587). In this context, the king's acts are *ispo facto* just (Church, 1969: 333) without sovereignty being an unrestrained licence given to the king: "The will of the king was law, but it was of necessity his just will and not merely his unrestrained pleasure" (Church, 1969: 269). Sometimes ridiculed as a mere 'moralism' (Hexter, 1968: 404) on the part of these political thinkers this way of defining sovereignty is in fact the only possible and realistic one. It is both descriptive and prescriptive: sovereignty and the values or foundations that define it necessarily coincide, which does not mean that monarchs and subjects cannot fall short of achieving this ideal(ised), civilised and sovereign reality (as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5).

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[72] Caron (1556: f. 19v) adopts a similar line of argument when stating that "no constitution can ever be called lawful if it is not just (…) the sinful ordinances of men should not receive the excellent name of 'laws' since they are contrary to Justice, the soul of the Republic".

Portraying the sovereign king: a father protecting the public good

The sovereign king as a father

This combination of description and prescription – characteristic of performative acts (Derrida, 1986) – is attached to an ideal image of the monarch (Weill, 1892: 162). If the 'really' sovereign monarch is the one following all the civilised principles outlined above, then the portrait of the king is bound to be an image of perfection. The king is thus performed as possessing a final set of characteristics: he is a father – and therefore defined against a 'feminine' other – who protects the 'public good' and the interest of his subjects. As such, the sovereign represents the 'enlightened' and civilised ruler, justifying his final authority by his action *in the service of* his subjects.

First, and since the political community is portrayed as similar to the family unit, the fate of the republic depends on the king in the same way that "the good or bad of the household depends on the family father" (Perrière, 1567: f. 2). The king thus becomes associated with a paternal figure ruling upon his subjects/children (d'Albon, 1575: f. 7; Jay, 1589: f. 18v and 83): "the King is the common father of all his subjects", states Caron (1556: f. 24v), while Madeleine (1575: epistle) compares the "good kings" to the "real fathers of their people". The image of the 'shepherd' also emerges with a similar meaning (L'Alouëte, 1597: 90; Chesne, 1609: 6).

This paternal position is closely associated with the type of behaviour that a real, sovereign king is supposed to follow (if he wants to be recognised as sovereign). Indeed, "the king is in his Kingdom or city like the family father [and] must dominate his citizens and vassals with goodwill" (Perrière, 1567: f. 3). The 'love' that the king owes to his subjects is a recurrent element: "The good prince can accept to be feared, but as the father of his children, which is to say feared and loved at the same time" (L'Hospital, 1825: 78; see also Budé, 1547: 202). Aurigny (1554: f. 245) also mentions how the good king must love his subjects like a good father would love the members of his household. This is particularly important in order to ensure the obedience of the subjects/children:

> And just like children easily and naturally submit themselves to the power and authority of their father (…) For the same reason people easily submit themself in

obedience to the one they estimated had more love and zeal for the public good (Madeleine, 1575: f. 6-6v).

Obedience is thus not undeserved: the king administers his subjects in a "pleasant" way and like his "wards" (Budé, 1547: 82 and 154). The role that he fulfils – that of a good tutor (Perrière, 1567: f. 18v; L'Alouëte, 1597: 50-51) – is based on the 'virtues' that he possesses. Virtues are indeed one of the main "ornaments" of a sovereign king and are considered necessary for him to reign (Caron, 1556: f. 12v-13). His virtues must in fact exceed "the average condition of his subjects" (Budé, 1547: 126). Budé (1547: 125) gives us an exhaustive list of the necessary virtues of the king: "they need to know all the sciences that are like virtues to command in great, high and belliquous enterprises ; they need to be prudent in order to police and reign over their subjects, and to be wise, to command what is useful in all situations; [to have] industry, and perpetual vigilance over the public good; a controlled liberality that is far from cupidity and prodigality; and dignity and Majesty in their works, with perpetual truth".

Sovereignty as 'masculinity'

Throughout the 16th century, therefore, political thought "was completely infused with an ideal of strong paternal rule as the best possible form of government" (Church, 1969: 95). This 'rule of the father' is explicitly constructed against the 'feminine' other. As Aurigny (1554: f. 137) argues "[a] king and prince in his early days must be taught that he is sent to the world and must be prepared to magnanimity and physical power, not to delights, frivolous pleasures and delectations through which the mind is effeminate and becomes weak and the body languishes". We see here the direct opposition between the "royal virility", as Perrière (1567: f. 27) puts it, and 'femininity' characterised by weakness and frivolity. Caron (1556: f. 11) adds that the king must not be weak and should control his "affections". The sovereignty of the king is thus directly associated with his masculinity and the real sovereign king "should not become effeminate nor weak and be attracted to delights and delectations or other vices and passions that are the most cruel and powerful enemies" (L'Alouëte, 1597: 81; see also Poisson, 1597: f. 33v).

The opposition between sovereignty and the 'feminine' involves comparisons with foreign kings or former French monarchs. L'Hospital (1825: 35), for instance, writes that the French kings are not elevated by God to this responsibility "to languish among delights, to comb their hair, wear blush and clothes like women do, and as did also the ancient Persian kings and some of our ancient kings". A double opposition is forged: on one side lie the French 'masculine' and sovereign kings, and on the other some of the ancient French kings

and the barbaric foreign rulers, all characterised by their 'femininity'. Haillan (1611) is one of the most explicit in his link between the 'bad' ancient kings of France and their supposed feminine traits.[73] Gentillet (1576: 298) for his part links civilisation and citizenship to 'masculinity', criticising the Roman citizens sent abroad for becoming "soft, feminine and weak, just like those of the country they were sent to". In contradistinction, the French *gentilhommes* achieve a perfect balance between softness and strength that is described as follows by Bignon (1610: 89): "the French gentlemen, although raised and fed with delicacy, never lack of generous courage". Their kings logically follow the same model, being at the same time 'strong enough' not to be 'feminine' but civilised enough not to be considered 'brutal' and 'barbaric'. The sovereign king also displays qualities that are explicitly associated with the 'masculine'. Most important among them is 'rationality': the king "is the King of his own emotions, and is always victorious over his passions", thus being "the real Prince of his State" (L'Alouëte, 1597: 81-82). The 'masculine' is here associated with the rational ruler while the 'feminine' must necessarily obey: "the prince, who is the sovereign part of the Republic, has to be greatly knowledgeable, and must alienate all [his] frivolous and vulgar passions, all [his] sensual and immoral desires" (Aurigny, 1554: f. 256). As clearly expressed by Postel (1552: Chapter 16): "[t]he masculine is a fountain of authority, the feminine of reason. And authority must therefore command and reason must execute". But the use of 'reason' by Postel can be misleading: far from implying an association between 'reason' and the 'feminine', Postel understands 'reason' as 'reasonableness' (i.e. as a natural inclination to accept and obey). In all these discussions of sovereignty one is therefore clearly able to see how a 'gendered imagery' supports and maintains the distinction between the sovereign and non-sovereign (Shinko, 2010).

Sovereignty as achievement of the common good

The consequence of portraying the sovereign king as a good and 'masculine' paternal monarch is that his rule is necessarily oriented towards the common or public good of the kingdom and the subjects.[74] The expression 'public good' is repeatedly used by sixteenth-century thinkers in order to associate sovereignty with the good management – or 'good governance' – of the kingdom. The main concern of the prince, writes Aurigny (1554: f. 255v), must be the services he can provide to the republic, something that Perrière (1567: f. 2v) calls "the public utility of the city and the good of all the civil society". Hence, when the tyrant is characterised by his disregard for the common good (Caron, 1556: f. 46) the sovereign king shows zeal towards it (Madeleine, 1575: f. 21v). As Cappel expresses in 1539, this concern is a consequence of the "political marriage" between the king and the public affairs of his kingdom (B.N.F., Français 18888: f. 39-39v). The role of the sovereign king is thus equated to working in favour of the public good (Seyssel, 1557a: preface;

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[73] His book was first published in 1580.
[74] Something that Skinner (2008) also uncovers in his genealogy of the (sovereign) state.

d'Albon, 1575: f. 7; Gentillet, 1576: 23). The kings themselves are keen to present their action as designed to improve the common good (as can be seen in the different treatises contained in A.E., M.D. France 360).

This "traditional notion of the prince as embodiment of and spokesman for the common good" (Keohane, 1980: 61) is thus central in the construction, justification and maintenance of sovereignty. Nevertheless, this notion never acquires a precise meaning. Three ideas are usually mentioned by the theorists: order, peace, and the 'public' interest of the subjects and kingdom. First, order is mentioned as part of the role of the king and defined as the "right disposition of affairs" (Perrière, 1567: f. 23). The idea of order remains vague but associated with the "right rule and government over the subjects" (Madeleine, 1575: f. 7). Second, peace is the objective the king should achieve through his rule: "tranquillity" and "rest" are mentioned by several authors (Madeleine, 1575: f. 7; L'Alouëte, 1597: 7). Caron (1556: f. 21) adds that the "purpose of a real Prince is to make his kingdom better and to maintain it by his example in a blissful tranquillity". The related idea of protection of the people is used in other treatises (Chesne, 1609: 232; Montchrestien, 1615/1889: 120). Both 'order' and 'peace' (just as 'justice') are attached to a well-administered and thus civilised sovereign state.

Third, but certainly most importantly, the idea of 'public good' is explained with reference to the interests of the subjects and the kingdom and is thus opposed to the private interests of the king. L'Alouëte (1597: 67) explicitly states that the king "does not rule for himself but for the public good" of the kingdom. For Caron (1556: f. 45v-46) the king should "forget his attachment to his private profit as something unworthy of him since he will easily judge inappropriate to the one in charge of the public duty to dedicate himself to some private desire". The sovereign king should "postpone his particular profit or pleasure" (Madeleine, 1575: f. 21v) and "directs his will towards the public utility, always preferring the public good to his own private and particular interest" (Perrière, 1567: f. 2v). L'Hospital (1824-1825: 407) takes the example of the answer of the king to the remonstrances and grievances of the subjects which shows their consideration for the profit and advantage of their subjects (something characteristic of a "good king"). The real Christian king must value nothing more than "the happiness and felicity of his people" (Aurigny, 1554: f. 258v). Hence, the king stands out as an 'uncommon' individual: "[t]he King is dissimilar to the private man because from his good [action] follows the public good" (Caron, 1556: f. 11v). Caron becomes more explicit when he insists on the purpose of having a king who is established to protect the public good and reiterates his association of the king's interest with the subjects' interest "up to a point where his contentment becomes their contentment" (Caron, 1556: f. 45v). There is therefore no difference between the public good and the interests of a (good and sovereign) king: the two are necessarily identical and the frontier between private and public interests disappear as far as the king is concerned. This ideal reality is contrasted to the tyrannical (and less than sovereign) king who "takes everything for himself and dispossesses his subjects [thus]

converting his particular interest in the interest of everyone" (Gentillet, 1576: 406; see also Bodin, 1576: 245).

France as the embodiment of (a perfect) civilised sovereignty

So far in this chapter we have explored how French political theorists thought about sovereignty in the 16th century. Sovereignty is first and foremost described as a superior or final form of authority, but most of the discussion is in fact centred on the *conditions inside of which sovereignty comes to be real*. In other words, a final authority can exist in (potentially) any context but will only be recognised as sovereign (and thus as deserving respect) if it matches the conditions put forward by these thinkers. To briefly summarise, these conditions of possibility of sovereignty are:

> - the existence of a monarchy (any other form of political organisation being less than sovereign);
> - the recognition and respect for divine and natural law as defined in the French cultural context, and in particular for Christianity and justice;
> - and as a consequence the realisation of these ideals by a paternal figure – the king – in the interest of the common good of the subjects.

This list is striking for its level of cultural – or civilisational – specificity. In other words, a 'true' sovereign is identified and defined by elements that either explicitly pertain to a specific cultural framework – like Christianity or Western European monarchy – or are dependent upon it to become tangible and recognised – like natural law, justice, and the common good. As such, sovereignty is linked to civilisational elements that have their origin in one particular culture: that of France in the 16th century. But French theorists seem oblivious to this fact or rather accept it as unproblematic. Hence, they 'naturally' and 'logically' describe France and the French kings as perfectly sovereign without questioning their own assumptions.[75] The rest of this chapter will be dedicated to explaining how this was done in order to inform the next two chapters (when this framework will be applied to the Amerindians and to the French themselves during the League).

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[75] As such, one could argue that these authors were either blind to their own 'French-centrism' and/or entirely convinced of their superiority. The only exceptions to this rule occur when they try to distantiate themselves from the king in order to escape the accusation of 'idolatry' and maintain that their work is 'scientific' and 'descriptive'. For an example see Aurigny (1554: preface).

French civilisation and sovereignty

This discussion of the perfection of French sovereignty can be analytically divided into two main sections: how France realises the model of sovereignty described above and how it has 'historically' always realised it (or came to realise it before the others). First, France is performed as having already achieved this state of civilised sovereignty. It is a kingdom characterised by its maintenance of justice, "greater and more praiseworthy in France than in any other country" (Seyssel, 1557b: f. 12v). The French kings are esteemed for their devotion to justice (Bignon, 1610: 422). In addition, France possesses the "most beautiful laws, the most holy ordinances of the world, admired by all the foreigners" (Montchrestien, 1615/1889: 257-258 and for a similar expression in Marion's discourse see B.N.F., Français 18888: f. 78). In fact, foreigners are so impressed by the perfection of French justice that they regularly appeal to France to solve their dispute (as mentioned by most of the authors cited in this chapter). Du Chesne (1609: 232, 240-241 and 274) uses a comparison with unjust/unsovereign societies to perform the superiority of the French kings when it comes to justice:

> Consider the force that had the Justice of our Princes, including in the heart of the barbarians who are in the first infancy of their Monarchy, they desire it [Justice] for what it alone makes it worth to be desired, i.e. a good and just King, a rare and precious thing not often found outside the limits of France.

France also embodies the religious perfection associated with sovereignty. This is especially clear in d'Espence's work but is present implicitly in all the political treatises of the time. D'Espence (1575: f. 32-32v) argues that the French kings have deserved their title of "Most Christian Kings" since they have always defended Christianity against the attacks of the infidels and barbarians. Le Jay (1589: f. 180) adds that "over all the other nations Gaul has been constant, fervent and zealous with its religion".

In a more general sense, the French kingdom is performed as the embodiment of a perfect sovereignty. For Haillan (1611: f. 171) "there is no doubt that [the Kingdom] is absolutely Royal, Monarchical and Sovereign, accompanied by all the marks of absolute power [*puissance*] and sovereignty that one can desire in a Monarchy". He adds that the great "Spirit" of France accompanied her inside as well as outside the kingdom in all her enterprises and discoveries "including to the newly discovered lands" of America (Haillan, 1611: f. 7). The French monarchy is also "governed by a better order than any other one" (Seyssel, 1557b: f. 7v) and is "the most established Monarchy that exists and has ever existed in the world" (Loyseau, 1608: 43). Because the French "have been more civilised"

than any other they have happily combined the arts of war with the arts necessary for a civil life such as "ploughing and cultivating the land" and "studying the arts and religion" (Bignon, 1610: 141). This perfection in her "absolute power" [*puissance*] allowed France to conquer other countries peacefully through "her word" (i.e. the attraction she exercises) and example (Pasquier, 1621: 145).

Even more important for a discussion of the conceptualisation of civilised sovereignty are the recurrent 'descriptions' of France as a flourishing kingdom. As expressed by different authors France is "the most flourishing Kingdom that has ever existed" (Bignon, 1610: 522), characterised by its wealth and abundance of all things (Chesne, 1609: 306-307; Seyssel, 1557b: f. 29). This 'flourishing' reality is seen by some as the direct result of the action of the sovereign kings (Haillan, 1611: f. 6; Madeleine, 1575: f. 12v). As eloquently written by d'Espence (1575: f. 34):

> What scared those who want to invade the kingdom of France the most if not the fact that it is the most flourishing of all? None extends its limits farther. None possesses a Senate so august, so sacred, and so frequently assembled. In none exist so renowned academies and universities. None is more populous, none possesses such a concord and such an authority [*puissance*]. In no other country justice flourishes like in France. In no other places is faith as honest and religion less corrupted.

Hence, the sovereignty of France is directly linked to – as well as gives rise to – the idea of a 'flourishing kingdom' highly familiar in discussions of civilisation and civilisational superiority. Indeed, the civilised and sovereign reality of France 'produces', 'generates' and 'gives rise to' a perfect society. This 'social efficiency' is crucial in the construction of the civilised identity of France (and will be used against the Amerindians' sovereignty and destabilised during the French League).

A 'history' of (eternal or acquired) perfection

The perfection of the French state, its superior civilisation and its subsequent sovereignty are usually justified among French scholars by references to a mythical and eternal perfectness of the French state or by an evolutionary perspective (with a progressive attainment of perfection). In both cases, and although the explanations differ, the result is the same: France represents the perfection necessary to uphold claims to sovereignty.

Recurring to 'history',[76] therefore, appeared as a crucial tool to 'discover' the reason for the existence in France of a perfect form of governance and sovereignty. Among political thinkers 'history' thus acquired a specific status and most of these scholars resorted – to varying degrees – to 'historical' arguments (Jouanna, 1989: 317-319).[77]

One group of scholars adopted the view that the perfection of the French kingdom is the result of a long evolution. In such discourses, the current state of (civilised) France is compared to its 'barbaric' origins and the two 'realities' are linked together by an evolutionary account. Caron is probably the most explicit about this evolutionary view of humankind invariably leading (if successful) to a civilised and sovereign society similar to that of France. Written like a dialogue his book includes a number of tropes about the evolution of human society (and therefore the possibility of evaluating and classifying their achievements):

> When men were spread and dispersed in woods and mountains, living without laws like brutal beasts and knowing no society; they followed the company and assembly of each other, having no cities, houses nor huts but only hiding places to which they retreated for the safety and defence of their body. It seems therefore that it was very difficult to attract them to the social life necessary for men to reach harmony. [Making a reference to the contemporary Amerindians] Do you remember the writings about these Barbarians and savages that still do not belong today to any police? (Caron, 1556: f. 6v-7).

Based on both mythological and actual references to the 'state of nature' idea, Caron builds an evolutionary view of human societies.[78] For him, (rational or prudent) men progressively organise themselves until the establishment of the "sovereign happiness", i.e. "the constitution of a town or city well-ordered and policed with laws and mores appropriate to reason" (f. 7). Caron makes use of the classical association between civilisation and city and of civilised man "as a uniquely city-building, city-dwelling animal" (Padgen, 1982: 15). Humankind thus enters into this "political humanity" representing the highest possible

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[76] 'History' is used in inverted commas to denote the instrumental use made of 'historical' knowledge. This section is not interested in establishing – as if it were possible – a true historical account of France's past or in comparing this instrumental 'history' to a supposedly 'real' History. The instrumental use of 'history' in order to perform the state means that "writing history [is] an exercise in the construction of meaning" (Jeffrey, 2013: 43) rather than the retrieving of a lost past.

[77] Although it was not the first treatise to resort to history it is undeniable that Hotman's *Franco-Gallia* (Hotman, 1711) had a strong influence on subsequent authors (Lemaire, 1907: 101; Weill, 1892: 99). This book is not mentioned in this chapter since it introduced ideas that differed from the 'mainstream' of contemporary political theory (and that were thus harshly criticised by most scholars).

[78] Le Jay (1589: f. 19-19v) also develops a similar evolutionary view where men evolve from "brutal beasts" living in a state of nature (characterised by an absence of civil law and the domination of the strongest) to the civil and reasonable life.

form of political order – an order that is unknown to those "living without any civility" but perfectly realised in France (Caron, 1556: f. 7 and 44v).

For this first group of scholars ancient France entirely matches the description of the 'state of nature' that will be later applied to the Amerindians. Ancient French are described as nomads regularly changing their habitation (Tillet, 1578: 5) and living in a general state of 'Barbarism' that characterised Europe at the time (d'Espence, 1575: f. 13-13v). The ancient French are performed as warriors entirely occupied in warfare (Roy, 1575a: f. 26v). For these authors the French people was therefore not perfect from its inception: "just like those who are newly born have neither reason nor knowledge (just like beasts) even though they have the physical appearance and name of 'men'" (Haillan, 1611: f. 2-2v) the ancient French were characterised by their barbarism.

The evolutionary scheme developed by the French theorists is thus relatively simple: out of this first or primitive state of barbarism the French have developed into the most civilised and flourishing kingdom on earth. The link is provided by the French kings who act as 'agents of change'. Haillan (1611: f. 12) mentions the mythical king Pharamond: "Pharamond having established them in a safe place decided to join in one body this barbaric people thanks to good laws and constitutions". Here can be identified several classic associations: between barbarity and nomadism, between the civilised people and their association in a unified 'body', and the passage from barbarism to civilisation thanks to law and justice. Other scholars mention Charlemagne as the source of the French process of civilisation (d'Espence, 1575: f. 13v). A final group of authors considers that the naissance of a real sovereignty and civilised state in France dates back to the king Clovis: this king "embellished the Kingdom of the Christian Faith, of a secured administration and justice, of laws and ordinances" (Haillan, 1611: f. 2-2v). For them it is clear that France has never lost its sovereignty and civilisation ever since (Chesne, 1609: 132 see also Cappel in B.N.F., Français 18888: f. 26).

Whatever the disagreements as to the exact timing of this transformation all agree that France is now civilised enough to be considered a perfectly sovereign state. If the Gaulois were called 'barbarians', writes Bodin (1576: 443), we now see that the French are "the most courteous and accommodating people of Europe". The virtue(s) associated with the French kings and people enabled the kingdom to reach this stage (Roy, 1575b) and to now be "redoubtable to Europe, Asia and Africa [despite] having long languished in a weak and fragile childhood, without laws, without any form of justice or a good and solid government" (Haillan, 1611: f. 2).

The second group of scholars depicts and performs France as 'eternally' civilised and sovereign, having been born or created in that perfect form. For them, "the form and

way of reigning" introduced by the previous French kings is particularly "reasonable and political" which can explain the maintenance of a good political order in France (Seyssel, 1557a: preface). More specifically, most theorists link this political order to the fact that France has always been a monarchy: "this [French] kingdom has already lasted longer than any other that has existed" (Loyseau, 1608: 43). In fact, it is "the oldest Kingdom that exists today" (Chesne, 1609: 302; see also Budé, 1547: 41; Moulin, 1561: 27-30; Roy, 1575a: f. 20 and 22; Jay, 1589: f. 213). Because France has always kept its "Royal state and government" (Bignon, 1610: 253-254), 'monarchy' and France become inextricably associated (Coquille, 1607: 1; Tillet, 1607: 10). Monarchy in France is thus the oldest in the world and has been continuously passed down among French people.

Different elements also characterised this long-lasting civilised sovereignty. The ancient French are performed by L'Hospital (1825: 231) as the highest achievers of justice and administration. Pasquier (1621: 9) also repeatedly mentions the political organisation that characterised even the old Gaulois: "there has never been a lack of police among our old Gaulois". More precisely, adds Pasquier, "the French were not savage people like other barbaric nations, but civilised and polite". For him, all of these historical proofs come as evidence that France never displayed signs of savagery. Which is why "the French monarchy is the best established to last long and to greatly prosper over any other state or empire" (Seyssel, 1557b: f. 18v). France is also performed as having always been particularly Christian – the French king being the first to receive the Christian faith (Chesne, 1609: 302) – and the old Gaulois are sometimes considered as particularly devoted to Christianity (Postel, 1551: 26). French civilisation and its 'eternal' existence also entail the awareness and practice of the 'arts' and intellectual work. Even in their 'barbaric' childhood French people have always studied eloquence and literature, from which follows that "our old Gaulois (…) had the use of arts and letters before and more anciently than Greece and Asia" (d'Espence, 1575: f. 25-25v; also mentioned in Pasquier 1621: 791). Hence, France has been a civilised and sovereign kingdom at least since the time of Charlemagne:

> Since that time this kingdom has been better established than any other in Christendom. Our ancestors have always been like an iron or cast iron wall, opposed to all the barbaric nations, but opposed to them not because of a disordered cupidity or because of a barbaric ambition to amplify the limits [of their kingdom] but rather with a holy heart and a great and religious courage to give a roof to its people, laws to its cities, liberty to all (d'Espence, 1575: f. 31v).

Concluding remarks

An exploration of French political thinking in the 16th century thus reveals how sovereignty was constructed upon, and maintained by, a civilisational discourse performing the French state as the summit of civilised sovereignty. Although qualified by some as an 'absolute' principle (by which they mean an unlimited and unchecked form of political authority) sovereignty is in reality always defined as the superior and final form of authority in a political community. The 'absolute' aspect of the concept lies somewhere else, in what I have loosely termed 'civilisational principles'. These principles or values are held as absolute – they cannot be negotiated or transgressed – and can only be defined and identified inside of a specific cultural framework: that of France in the 16th century.[79] Christianity and the respect for natural law (and in particular for 'justice') form the core of these principles from which derive secondary ideas: the king is performed as a father ruling over his subjects/children with benevolence, with reason (he is not victim of his own passions and therefore not 'feminine') and for the common good of the kingdom. This dependence of sovereignty upon civilisational principles is particularly visible in the use of 'evolutionary' theories of humankind. As shown in this chapter, discussions on sovereignty in sixteenth-century France regularly included an explanation of how men developed from a state of nature to a civilised and sovereign (French) monarchy representing the highest stage achievable. In these 'theories of progress' or 'modernisation' the idea of an initial state of nature played a crucial role. It represents the 'starting point' of human societies while civilised sovereignty is conceptualised as their most desirable end point.

These evolutionary theories of humankind (that serve to place the French sovereign state at the apex of civilisation and as a perfect example of sovereignty) should not be taken as a complete innovation of sixteenth-century French thinkers. They mostly reflect and build upon previous conceptualisations of 'progress' that were forged in Antiquity, were transmitted throughout the Middle Ages and for which a clear genealogy can be established. The crucial concepts of savagery, barbarism and thus state of nature indeed largely pre-date the sixteenth century. The early anthropology of the Renaissance is linked to "the well-known Renaissance folkloric figure of the Wild Man; early Christian perceptions of monkeys, apes, and baboons; and the classical Greek and Roman tradition of the noble savage" (Dickason, 1997: 63). These ideas are all related to Greek and Roman conceptions of the 'savage' living a simple life devoid of complex social institutions and without government (Boas, 1978).

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[79] This is why Glanville's analysis of early modern theories of sovereignty is compelling but incomplete: Glanville (2014: 32-36) rightly identifies that "theorists of absolute sovereignty did not claim that [sovereignty] was unlimited" but rather that it entailed rights and responsibilities. He fails, however, to connect these responsibilities to a specific cultural or civilisational model – something that this chapter has tried to correct.

French theories of sovereignty in the sixteenth century are particularly informed by two traditions. First, the concepts of savagery and state of nature used by French scholars can be traced back to the idea of monstrous races developed during Antiquity (Friedman, 1981: 207). According to this anthropological thinking, monstrous men live "outside the cultural setting of a city". As a consequence, "their lives were guided by no law" (Friedman, 1981: 30). The monstrous races are thus an early example of the idea of savagery that is so central in identifying and defining sovereignty. Only the 'normal' races can develop a rational, organised and political order leading to sovereignty. The second tradition develops out of the figure of the Wild Man who lives among nature (or in the woods), is brutish, strong physically but lacking social abilities, agriculture, speech and manners. As Jahoda (1999: 5) explains, this Wild Man of the Woods lives "a solitary life apart from the company of beasts and devils". What is particularly highlighted in these 'descriptions' is the lack of social life that characterises the Wild Man (Bernheimer, 1970: 20), a lack that is explained by his inherent irrationality (Husband, 1980: 4).

Just as the monstrous races, the medieval Wild Man became widely used as a convenient Other devoid of the qualities of the civilised Self. The Wild Man is "uncanny, unruly, raw, unpredictable, foreign, uncultured, and uncultivated" (Bernheimer, 1970: 20). In fact, and as explained by Husband (1980: 5), the Wild Man was used

> to counterpoise the accepted standards of conduct of society in general. If the average man could not articulate what he meant by "civilized" in positive terms, he could readily do so in negative terms by pointing to the wild man (…) As medieval man became progressively obsessed with a highly ordered social structure, a rational disposition to direct it, and a committed faith in God to sustain it, the wild man came to represent the opposite. Sublimated in the wild man were the preeminent phobias of medieval society – chaos, insanity, and ungodliness.

Most of the ideas so central to the discussion of the civilised sovereign order are thus present in the texts on the monstrous races and the Wild Man.[80] The 'sources' of this primitivism can be traced back to Antiquity in what amounts to an "unbroken tradition" (Boas, 1978: 153) from Antiquity to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. These seminal ideas of savagery were part of the anthropological legacy of the previous centuries: "in a virtually uninterrupted continuum, the notion of these monstrous races [described by the Greek literature] was perpetuated from classical times through the Middle Ages" (Husband,

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[80] I do not develop further these pre-modern conceptualisations of savagery as they do not differ from the ideas mentioned in this chapter and in the following. In other words, one will be able to find longer explorations of these conceptualisations in the works of the scholars mentioned here but should not expect any major difference between them and the more recent 'modern' ideas of savagery.

1980: 6).[81] That is how they came to inform scholars in France who were trying to explain what a sovereign and political order referred to. By using savagery as a counterexample or an 'unnatural' evolution, French theorists came to define the civilised French order as the achievement of a perfect – hence sovereign – social order inscribed in the 'natural/normal' evolution of human societies.

The conceptual construction of sovereignty in the 16th century therefore relied on notions of civilisation and savagery that pre-date the Discovery of America. In fact, one can question the actual impact America had on the construction of a specific European vocabulary (what Pagden (1986) calls the impact of the New World on the Old). Indeed, it seems that French theorists were using the ideas of 'progress' or 'evolution' without the Amerindians being key references. In addition, their conceptualisation of civilisation draws heavily on medieval notions of human progress. It thus seems exaggerated to argue that the 'Discovery' of America "disrupted all the political and social notions in Europe" (Chinard, 1911: 245). This is not to deny that the Amerindians played a role in the construction of the concepts that later justified claims to civilised sovereignty in and outside Europe. In fact, several authors in this chapter use them in their conceptualisations. Rather, my argument is that other authors (and in fact the majority in the case of French sixteenth-century thinkers) made use of similar concepts of savagery and 'evolutionary theories' of humankind with reference to other (more or less mythical) peoples. Post-colonial scholars must therefore be careful not to over-emphasise the importance of the Amerindians in the construction of sovereignty and its twin concept of anarchy. I concur with the post-colonial theorist Barry Hindess (2007: 332) in defending a more nuanced view of the 'impact' of the 'Discovery' of America:

> In emphasizing the interpretative resources provided by the classical tradition in Europe, my point is not to suggest that the Americas had little real impact of their own on European perceptions of the world around them. Rather, it is that the influence of the encounter with the Americas on European thought in this period can hardly be disentangled from that of ideas received from classical antiquity.

Hence, the main influence exercised by the Amerindians is that they came to provide a new and (more importantly) a contemporary example – a "living illustration" (Ashcraft, 1971: 1097) – of the 'state of nature', an idea that was already widespread at the time.

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[81] Campbell (1988: 15) also notices that theories of Otherness regarding Asia travelled from Antiquity to the Renaissance, "[f]rom Herodotus to Pliny to Solinus to Isodore of Seville to Vincent of Beauvais to Sebastian Münster: each link of the chain binding the oriental lore of antiquity with that of the Renaissance".

Chapter 4

Sovereign doubts: civilisation and savagery disrupt the colonial frontiers

As shown in the previous chapter French theorists establish a strong image of France as civilised and thus sovereign. When turning to events during which the discourses of sovereignty played a key role, one can thus expect a relatively stable division: on one side, the French state is necessarily civilised and its sovereignty never destabilised. Indeed, how could the French *not* be civilised since *they* establish what civilisation is? On the other side, the non-Western actors should be easily denied civilisation and thus sovereignty. If civilisation is always constructed against a savage other, this other is usually perceived as living outside the West. In theory, then, the sovereign state would only need one colonial frontier and this frontier should be clearly established and demarcated.

This would be to forget, however, that the theories of sovereignty analysed in the previous chapter are deeply performative. These writings prescribe a model while pretending to describe an existing reality. As such, they act to create a reality supposedly exterior to themselves. This performative effect can not only be unsuccessful – or infelicitous – but it is also always established against alternatives and competing discourses. This is precisely what is revealed by an analysis of the deployment of the discourse of sovereignty in the West and over the non-West. Two crucial events involving this discourse will be analysed in the rest of this thesis. These examples reveal how the discourse of sovereignty establishes (civilised and savage) identities amidst confusion and doubt. Indeed, civilisation and savagery seem to exist on the 'wrong' sides of the Atlantic: French 'internal' discourses of sovereignty reveal an unexpected savagery inside of 'civilised' France while the colonial encounter is replete with references to elements of

civilisation among the supposedly savage. What is uncovered in these two instances – and thus on both sides of the demarcation between civilised and savage – is the crucial and difficult process of writing a civilisational difference that sovereignty depends upon. Savagery and civilisation never seem to be where one (due to the strong influence of the colonial discourses themselves) expects them to be. The discourses of sovereignty will thus become key in re-establishing the colonial 'truth': civilisation belongs to the sovereign West (and more specifically to one civilised group in the West) while the Rest is 'naturally' uncivilised.

Building upon some key post-colonial insights I reveal in the three following chapters that notions of savagery and civilisation are widely encountered in unexpected places: during their encounter with the Amerindians but also in their 'domestic' sphere the French texts perform civilisation in the savage world and savagery in the civilised one. This unexpected picture explains why sovereignty relies on the the re-establishment of the colonial 'truth'. Indeed, the discourses of statecraft will be performed so that civilisation belongs to the sovereign West while the non-West is 'naturally' uncivilised and unsovereign. Analysing together the empirical construction of sovereignty in two different settings thus reinforces the main arguments of this thesis: (i) that discourses of civilisation/savagery are central for sovereignty both in the West and over the non-West; and (ii) that sovereignty depends on what can be called 'civilisational differentiation' inside as well as outside the West. Ultimately, then, it is a full picture of civilised sovereignty that emerges, one in which sovereignty is shown to rely on the same discursive constructions of difference wherever it is claimed or denied. In order to explore this process, the present chapter focuses on the numerous crossings of the colonial frontiers that one encounters through an exploration of statecraft. Indeed, and because sovereignty is constructed against an 'internal' as well as against an 'external' Other, two colonial frontiers coexist and reinforce the legitimacy of the sovereignty ruler. In this chapter, however, the archives reveal how these frontiers are unstable and regularly crossed, thus associating sovereignty to the now civilised savage and denying it to the savage civilised.

French encounters with the Amerindians

This discussion is informed by an in-depth exploration of archival material related to two crucial episodes for French sovereignty: the 'discovery' and later claims to sovereignty over the Amerindians of present-day Canada and the struggles of French kings to establish and maintain their sovereignty 'internally' during the last phase of the Wars of Religion. As far as the first case is concerned, the French were not the first ones to explore the coast of Canada. Portuguese and English sailors had touched upon this part of the 'New World' in the last decade of the 15th century. But the French were not long to follow. The first to arrive were the Normand and Breton fishermen who started navigating to Canada

as soon as 1504 (Champlain, 1993: 13). This is well-remembered in several accounts of the period: indeed, the French fishermen are regularly cited as "the first *among the Christians*" (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1: 9 (emphasis added)) to discover and navigate to this 'Newfoundland'. To fishing will be quickly added fur trading (especially in the second part of the 16th century). These two activities explain the presence of private Frenchmen and the interests of merchants in these lands. Political interest in claiming and controlling the land of Canada quickly followed.

The first official expedition is launched in 1524 and conducted by Verrazano. The stated objective was to find a direct route to the Orient (Boucher, 2004: 17), the French still considering 'Canada' to be an ideal place to search for a passage to China and its wealth. The novelty of the land discovered was clearly perceived by Verrazano himself: touching upon the coast of Canada, he declares: "And then appeared a land that no one, neither in the old days nor nowadays, had ever seen" (Julien et al., 1946: 54).[82] It is at that time that the first mention of 'Nova Gallia' appeared on a map published a year after Verrazano's trip (Trudel, 1973: 1). This expedition and the following voyages are usually considered as "matters of state" since they were officially sanctioned and authorised by the king (Champlain, 1993: 32). This early period is one of "desultory voyages of discovery, inspired by the hope of a short passage to the East, and associated with the fishing off the Newfoundland banks" (Jackson et al., 1974: 78). Following in the steps of Verrazano is Jacques Cartier, who led or participated in three different trips between 1534 and 1541, first in an attempt to find the same passage leading to China, later to discover and take possession of the resources of this 'New France'. The French king explains the purpose of the first of these trips as the "discovery of certain islands and lands where it is said that he [Cartier] will find a great quantity of gold and other rich things" (B.N.F., Français 15628: f. 213v). The last of Cartier's trips was headed by Roberval who received the first royal commission explicitly stating conquest and colonisation as the goals of the voyage, making it "the earliest official expression known of the French crown's intention to acquire American territories" (Slattery, 1978: 159).

These early discovery voyages were criticised by the other European powers: the Spanish ambassador, for instance, indicates that he officially complained about one of Cartier's trips in 1540 (A.N., K1485: doc 21). But these diplomatic incidents had little consequence. More important were the external and internal political problems encountered by the French kings, which resulted in the lack of any meaningful French settlement in Canada during the 16th century. France's colonial policy was constantly stopped and weakened by the Wars of Religion and conflicts with its European neighbours (Davenport, 1917: 3; Roberts, 1942: 19; Julien et al., 1946: 76; Jackson et al., 1974: 79).

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[82] Notice here the discursive silencing of the presence of non-Christian, non-civilised, peoples in this dramatic sentence. Here, this silencing results from the awarding to Europeans of a capacity to 'see' that the Amerindians do not possess. This observation is a prime example of the 'epistemic deficiency' attributed to the Amerindians (see page 132-133).

They led to long periods of inaction on the part of the political authorities. Additionally, French political interest in the New World should not be overstated: Verrazano's voyage, for instance, was financed by merchants. In a letter written shortly after Verrazano's return, a trader from Lyon indicates the strong interest of the merchant community in the potentiality for trade offered by Canada (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9384: f. 75). In fact, the interests of the French were directed primarily at the Mediterranean rather than the Atlantic (Trudel, 1973).[83] Taken together, these factors could explain why only "a derisory level of resources was allocated to these undertakings" (Ladurie, 1994: 127).

In this context of shifting political interest in the New World, commercial activities were the only ones ensuring the presence of the French in Canada. These activities, however, did not necessitate any permanent settlements. It was in fact unnecessary to maintain settlements during winter when fishing and fur trading were more difficult (Dickason, 1997: 140). Thus, only the political goal of occupying the land could guarantee the presence of the French, and this goal was fluctuating. The very limited number of French living in Canada was identified as a problem early on (see for instance the report of 1627 contained in B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 223). Schnapper (1954: 325) also indicates that peopling was mainly passed down to the missionaries and nobles, resulting in a very limited number of settlers, "two or three hundreds in 1641". So when Champlain (sent by the French king) arrived in Canada in 1603, the only place where the French had a temporary 'colony' was Tadoussac (Champlain, 1993).

This chapter specifically focuses on the early period of encounters as the crucial period of the formation of the French vision of the Amerindians. It starts from Verrazano's voyage in 1524 as the first time the expression 'New France' and the possibility of French establishment are mentioned (Chinard, 1911: 32). This period finishes with the creation of the first commercial company open to investors in 1627 – the act of creation can be found in A.E., M.D. France 782, f. 97 – as the beginnings of the classic colonisation attempts by the French in Canada.[84] By the first decades of the seventeenth century, the main characterisations of the Amerindians are established. Despite the modesty of the French achievements in Canada,[85] this episode represents a major encounter between a European state and populations living in the 'New World'. It resulted in a vast number of documents and testimonies, ranging from explorers' accounts of their journey to 'scientific' publications (usually under the guise of a *Cosmographie*), missionaries' accounts, official

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[83] Addressing this issue in a more general way, Hodgen (1964: 147) notices that "in the world as known to Europeans in the sixteenth century, the fear of the Mongol hordes and the peril of the Turk still overshadowed almost all other claims on attention, even including that made by the more exotic inhabitants of the New World".

[84] For a more detailed account of the early explorations and colonisation of Canada by the French see Trudel (1973) and Bitterli (1986: Chapter 4).

[85] Du Chesne (1609: 304) states in 1609 when talking about France's power that "she also has in the new Indies some lands, but because they are uncertain and of little importance they should not be valued more than for their role in maintaining navigation [to this part of the world]".

declarations and letters. 'Canada' and its inhabitants were also present in theatre plays like *Acoubar* (Hamel, 1586/1611) and in novels and short stories like the *Heptaméron* of Marguerite de Valois (B.N.F., Français 1520) and *Les amours de Pistion et de Fortunie* (Périer, 1601/1973).[86] The 'savages' of America were even physically present in several ceremonial *Entrées* of the king in French cities (in Rouen in 1550, Troie in 1564 and Bordeaux in 1565).[87]

In the main Boucher (2004: 27) estimates that "between 1565 and 1610, one can find more than a hundred French works mentioning the Americas". Interestingly, the Canadian Amerindians are not among the more frequently mentioned 'New World' peoples: "Brazil was without a doubt the most well-known part of America in sixteenth-century France" (Boucher, 2004: 18). In order to analyse French sovereignty, though, Canada offers a much richer example since official state interest in Brazil was limited. The archives concerned with Canada constitute a rich corpus that helps us understand how the French performed the Amerindians and consequently how they could deny them sovereignty. My set of archives includes the major French sources written or published about Canada in these early years of exploration and colonisation. Among them dominate three (sometimes overlapping) groups: the explorers such as Verrazano, Cartier, Champlain, Lescarbot and Alfonse; the missionaries such as Biard and Sagard; and the 'scholars' like Thévet and Montchrestien. Looking at such a range of actors is crucial in the absence of a French canonical figure on the Amerindians (like Vitoria was in the Spanish context). Such a classification, however, should not be seen as strict:[88] indeed, I do not wish to argue that missionaries, explorers and scholars necessarily produced different visions of Canada. Indeed, their focus is sometimes different and their 'descriptions' take several forms: that of journals of exploration for Verrazano or Cartier, of encyclopaedia for the scholars, with an overwhelming focus on religion for the missionaries. But my selection of texts is oriented more by the specific claims of the authors to 'describe' the Canadian Amerindians than by their position in French society, the 'reality' of their perception or even of their travels to Canada. Indeed, it is my contention that the writers mentioned in this study are more influenced by the cultural background in which they grew and wrote than by their (sometimes fictional) individual experience of 'Canada'. The diversity of their views is thus proportional to what their culture allowed them to see. I therefore do not wish to question the veracity of their claims or their correspondence with an 'external' Canada but rather seek to treat their texts as establishing a 'truth'[89] about their object. As

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[86] These works do not offer specific insights about the image of the Amerindians in sixteenth-century France and they will therefore not be mentioned in this chapter. Rabelais is another famous example of the use of 'America' in sixteenth-century French literature; his work will not be used in this chapter because he does not specifically talk about Canada (for more details on Rabelais see Chinard (1911)).

[87] On these *Entrées*, see Wintroub (1998; 2001) , Dickason (1997: 212-213) and Chinard (1911: 105-106).

[88] In his study Sayre (1997: 24) also rejects the usual classification of sources on the Amerindians according to the 'occupation' of their authors.

[89] The French writers and explorers show a surprising degree of self-confidence in their 'descriptions' of the Amerindians, thus justifying the use of 'truth' to qualify their writings. In particular, they show

argued by Todorov (1982: 71-72), these discourses should be considered as 'acts' instead of '(descriptive) texts'. Consequently, the notion of 'truth' as correspondence to a pre-existing reality is both illogical and misleading: it is illogical because these discourses contributed to the reality they supposedly only described, and it is misleading because what becomes important is what was accepted as 'true' in any given time and context, not what was supposedly 'really true'.

In this process, the French construction of the Amerindians was not isolated from the larger European movement of exploration and the 'scientific' and political knowledge produced as a result. Spain and Spanish authors in particular exercised a strong influence over the rest of Europe. This chapter does not mention these reciprocal influences but acknowledges their existence. Finally, I will follow the French writers in this chapter in treating the Amerindians of Canada as a whole and unified object; generally speaking, only some explorers differentiated between the various Amerindian groups while most of the others – in particular the *cosmographers* – performed them as a coherent whole. Verrazano for instance writes: "we believe that all of the natives of the lands we visited have identical mores and habits" (Julien et al., 1946: 61). This is particularly unsurprising: the Amerindians are alike since they are performed as 'blank pages' deprived of culture (Todorov, 1982: 50). Hence, the "underlying similarities" of their way of life is "frequently noted during this period" (Dickason, 1997: 91).

Civilisation in America: perceptions of the Amerindian social order

In the texts of this period, the Amerindians cannot be said to have been 'automatically' (i.e. naturally and effortlessly) assigned their place at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder of humankind. Arguing so would deny the existence of the crucial and difficult process of 'writing difference' that took place at the time of the first encounters. Thus, presenting the encounter as a 'natural' clash overlooks the fact that countless similarities had to be dealt with in the process. I concur with Shoemaker (2004: 143) in that it is misleading to claim that Indian and European "values and practices" are at odds and "vastly different". For this view overlooks the critical point that this difference had to be enacted or forged out of a series of striking *similarities*. Indeed, the French discourses performed several aspects of what could be understood (and is usually today characterised

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no sign of doubt or hesitation and it is rare in this literature to find an acknowledgement of the difficulty to properly understand the Amerindians. Léry (1585: 120) who wrote on Brazil and not on Canada provides an exception to this rule: "because of their gestures and attitudes that are entirely dissimilar to ours, I admit that it is difficult to represent them well, neither in writing nor even in painting". As Greenblatt (1991: 89-90, my emphasis) wrote about Columbus: "his discourse (anticipating much colonial discourse to follow) is a fantasmatic representation of *authoritative certainty* in the face of spectacular ignorance".

as) the civilisation of the Amerindians. This has also been identified more broadly in the post-colonial literature: Pagden (1982: 79) observes that given the wide range of 'potentially' civilised attributes attributed to the Amerindians "Vitoria's audience might be justified in assuming that the Indians lived in a society which fulfilled all the basic requirements for a civil way of life".[90] Sayre (1997: 145) also argues that "[o]ften a dissonance arose between claims that the Indians did not have clothing, agriculture, or writing, and observations that they in fact did have these markers of civilization". This general dissonance sometimes results in apparent contradictions and a "quandary" (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 61). There was, therefore, a 'strange likeness' (Shoemaker, 2004) between Amerindians and Europeans.[91] This is all the more striking as Canadian Amerindians did not live in what are sometimes called 'advanced' (because easily comparable to European standards) society like other Central and South American peoples. Nevertheless, the French impressions of them clearly reveal the potentiality for civilisation in these remote and unknown lands.

What are the signs of civilisation identified by the French? First, the French identify some signs of what we could call today the 'religious' practice of the Amerindians. Alfonse (1559: f. 29v), for instance, refers to priests and churches. 'Shamans' are also mentioned by Cartier and Champlain. Sagard (1632: 88-89) also recognises that the Amerindians seem to possess and share a number of (religious?) beliefs. More generally, any prolonged contact with the Amerindians led the French to 'describe' rituals and beliefs. A reasonable conclusion from these occurrences in French texts is that the explorers perceived these practices as related to a religious system. This is why they are mentioned in the first place: indeed, describing other peoples implied for Renaissance travellers an emphasis on several aspects of daily life (like food or marriage customs) among which religion was prominent. But encountering these signs in the French texts of the period remains surprising: given the now well-established conclusion that the Amerindians were portrayed as savages living in a state of nature, these occurrences are bewildering.

In a similar way, agriculture is not absent from these newly found lands. While the idea(l) of savagery is associated with a clear lack of knowledge of agriculture the Amerindians encountered by the French are performed as practicing it. Cartier, for instance, is impressed by the fields of some of the groups near Montreal (Julien et al., 1946). Lescarbot (1617: 865-866; 925-927) also writes about the Amerindians' agriculture several times: he mentions two different peoples and their agricultural practices (particularly for those peoples who are not in frequent contacts with Europeans). Their cultivation of corn is compared to the way broad beans are grown in France and the

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[90] Another Spanish example is Cortes who writes about the Mexican Amerindians that "[t]heir customs in general are very similar to those of Spain" (cited in Dickason (1997: 37)).

[91] In the past few decades a number of contemporary scholars have discussed how the political, social and economic life of the Amerindians was not savage and could even be considered as close to European standards of civilisation (Jennings, 1976). Given my emphasis on performativity, however, only the contemporary recognition of these similarities *by Europeans themselves* matters.

Amerindian success admired.[92] As such, the Amerindians seem to conform to the French standard of civilised agriculture and thus to a key element of civilisation: the idea of 'social efficiency'. They make use of their land and their practices are not unfamiliar to the French explorers and writers.

Finally, and perhaps most strikingly, the Amerindians seem to possess a form of government. Once could have expected the French to perform the Amerindians as living outside of any form of political institutions. This is, after all, the definition of the state of nature. But in reality, and as observed by numerous French writers, a political order and some institutions exist (thus leading once again to the potentiality of Amerindian civilisation). On his third trip, Cartier is able to see the one individual that he describes as having "the command and the government of the country of Canada" (Julien et al., 1946: 189). Similarly, Roberval writes that "they have a king in each [part of the] country that they are wonderfully subjected to and that they honour in their fashion" (Julien et al., 1946: 206). References to kings and leaders are frequent (Alfonse, 1559: f. 28v; Sagard, 1632: 127), and some order during wars is mentioned by Thévet under the form of banners (Thévet, 1575: f. 1012v). Sagard also describes the councils that they hold in the event of a judiciary problem or for decision-making (Sagard, 1632: 198-199, 221-224). Biard (1616: 53) certainly provides the most comprehensive account; after explaining how the Amerindians are organised around local chiefs (the *Sagamos*), he adds that

> it is mainly during the summer that they visit [their land], and hold their state; by what I mean that several Sagamos gather together, and deal with issues of peace and war, friendship treaties, and of the common good.

As one easily notices, this description of the 'politics' of the Amerindians is particularly close to the idea(l) of sovereignty held by French theorists at the time. The mention of the 'common good' is particularly striking as it represents a key element of the political vocabulary of the time (as explored in the previous chapter). Lescarbot (1617: 865-866; 925-927; 942) even provides a 'description' of the democratic process through which the Amerindians decide to go to war, a process that is surprisingly rational and reasonable: the Sagamos explains his reasons to start a conflict and listen to objections before reaching a decision.

These characterisations open the way to paint a particularly positive image of the Amerindians. Attached to the temporal mythology of the 'Golden Age' of humanity, the Amerindians seem to prove equal and sometimes superior to the French. There is no denying the fact that the Amerindians were painted as noble *savages* (as we will explore in the next chapter). As such, their positive traits are always attached to their inferior

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[92] This success is nevertheless attributed to God's benediction of these lands *since the arrival of the French*!

(because savage) condition.[93] Nevertheless, the encounter with the Amerindians produced some surprising observations from the part of the supposedly civilised and sovereign explorers. For Roberval, the Amerindians live a life of abundance, and have no worries (Julien et al., 1946: 206). For Alfonse (1545/1904: 494), the Amerindians are "gentle peoples, and they do not hurt anybody if nobody hurts them". This Golden Age is thus one of concord and peace, untouched by sin, ambition or the complexities accompanying social life (Lescarbot, 1617: 859). Lescarbot (1617: 882) similarly writes that "our savages, although they go naked, possess the virtues that can be found in civilised men". Among them is generosity and courage. Sagard (1632: 65, 85 and 185) also repeatedly emphasises the 'human' aspect of the savages (who do not stop to be labelled as 'savages' for this reason): "all the savages, generally speaking, have some spirit and a rather good understanding, and they are not as rough and slow-witted as we imagine in France". The savages indeed exceed his expectations, and their harshness and rusticity are exaggerated.

Additionally, the Amerindians provide an opportunity for the French to criticise their own society: for Montchrestien, "if it were possible to remove from them all of their bad traits, and to replace them with our good traits, which is to say to give them our virtues without giving them our vices, then they would be honest men" (Montchrestien, 1615/1889: 322). The appetites, desires and speed characteristic of French life are also something that the Amerindians are free of, thus experiencing a relatively relaxed life (Biard, 1616: 49). Hence, the "savages are rather human (…) and maybe even more than peoples considered as more polished and less savage" (Sagard, 1632: 64).

It appears clearly, then, that the Amerindians proved civilised (i.e. were performed as such by the French) at least to a certain extent. For some key criteria of civilisation, influential observers contradict the ideal of savagery that would be expected in the 'New World'. The picture of the naked, asocial and skill-less Amerindian is here contradicted by the assessment given by the French. Although this image of civilisation in America will not be the dominant one (as explained in the next chapter) it is an important and undeniable element of the French encounter with the Amerindians.

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[93] As Dickason (1997: 273) concludes: "It mattered little whether these savage New World men were perceived as living in a Golden Age or as wallowing in unrelieved bestiality": they kept representing man in the state of nature and "before the acquisition of culture". Shoemaker (2004: 143) arrives at a similar conclusion: "for Indians, accepting or furthering the noble savage ideal offers no escape from colonialism because it is a notion linked to a dead past". Crucially, thus, the 'noble' savage is still a savage and the qualifying 'noble' does not elevate the savage above the civilised. On how the two faces developed see White (1972: especially 28).

Savagery in Europe: France in the state of nature

At the same time, and on the other side of the Atlantic, the French civilised identity was not built easily or automatically. Rather, the French were performed as strikingly close to the seminal image of savagery inherited from Antiquity and the Middle Ages. In order to illustrate how France was performed as an uncivil state of nature I focus on the reinforcement of the League against Henry III and its progressive demise under Henry IV (1584-1598). This period witnessed one of the major crises of the French monarchy. As Church (1969: 260) wrote: "Roughly between 1585 and 1593, the royal authority faced its most severe challenge during centuries of existence, and that was because the heir to the throne was an heretic incapable of fulfilling the capacities of the Most Christian King". Despite its intensity this crisis is not exceptional or isolated: crises of sovereignty were frequent in the process of centralisation of the French state. Other major crises include the *Guerre du Bien Public* in 1464-1465 or the *Fronde* between 1648 and 1653. Moreover, these crises are only momentary and explicit examples of a deeper iterative need to perform and re-perform sovereignty on a daily basis. Even once centralisation is achieved sovereignty still needs to be produced and reproduced constantly in order to be maintained.

The crisis that interests us started in 1584 and 1585 under the rule of Henry III. According to most historians "the decisive event was the death of François d'Anjou", the king's brother. From this moment on, and in the absence of royal children, the "legitimate heir became a protestant prince, Henry of Navarre" (Jouanna, 1989: 185), the future Henry IV. For Knetch (2000: 218), "[t]he death of Anjou was a momentous event as it raised acutely the problem of the succession to the French throne. For Henry III had no son and seemed unlikely ever to have one". What could have been a simple (although unusual) succession therefore sparked a crisis primarily because Henry of Navarre was Protestant. In reaction "the French Catholics served notice that they were not willing to accept a heretic on the throne" (Baumgartner, 1995: 222). It is therefore conventionally accepted that "[t]he prospect of a Huguenot becoming the next king of France plunged France into a political crisis" (Knecht, 2000: 218).

The unfolding of events is well-known but involves different alliance shifts and re-configurations. A Catholic League is formed – and simply designated under the name 'the League' – against the king and his potential successor Henry of Navarre. Hence, "[f]rom 1585 the union thus formed led to seizure of power and to civil war" (Ladurie, 1994: 215). Some have called this crisis the War of the Three Henrys (the first name of the king, of Navarre and of the League's leader Guise). The League tried to impose the Cardinal of Bourbon as the new heir to the throne and gathered support not only by mentioning religious arguments but also by using the widespread discontent of the population against

the king's rule (Jouanna, 1989: 189).[94] Henry III, despite his position as king, was not the most powerful actor in the kingdom. He had to sign several agreements with the League (sometimes against his will) in the first few years of the war in order to weaken Henry of Navarre. The king also had to leave Paris under the pressure of the League's leader Henry de Guise. In 1588, popular discontent spread to the cities – especially Paris – with a call to form a popular League; 300 cities responded favourably to it (Baumgartner, 1995: 225).[95] In December 1588 Henry III decides to assassinate the League leaders (in particular the members of the Guise family). The next year, and due to his continued weakness against his adversaries the king is forced to negotiate with Navarre in order to join their force against the League.

Henry III is assassinated in 1589 but his death did not result in the ending of the conflict: a majority of Catholics refused to recognise Henry of Navarre as their king. In particular, the role of the Duke of Mayenne as one of the leaders of the League is crucial in the continuation of the conflict. Finally, in 1593, Henry of Navarre "decided the fate of France by formally adopting the Catholic faith, and in the following year, supported by the moderate Catholics, he was able to enter Paris in triumph" (Jackson et al., 1974: 53 ; for documents relating to his conversion: A.E., M.D. France 242: f. 74 and following). Henry of Navarre is sacred king (and becomes Henry IV) in February 1594. He is recognised the same year by the Sorbonne – a stronghold of Catholicism in the kingdom – as the "legitimate and real king most Christian, natural lord and heir to the kingdoms of France and Navarre" (Weill, 1892: 267) and absolved by the Pope in September 1595. At this point most of the Leaguers rallied behind the new king (a move helped by the important sums of money given by Henry IV to his new allies). 1595 marked the end of the internal conflict which then turned into a war against Spain (declared in January 1595) that would end only in 1598 with the signing of the Peace of Vervins. Indeed, and throughout the conflict, Spain had been very active in support of the League in an attempt to weaken the French king. After the king's coronation the nationalist spirit against Spain awakened in France (Weill, 1892: 263). The Peace of Vervins marks the end of the Religious Wars that had affected France in the 16th century (Lesaffer, 1999: 131).

The study of French sovereignty throughout this crisis will be done through an exploration of the political discourses, edicts, official declarations and pamphlets that were published at the time. A number of them can be found in Goulart and Goujet's compilations *Mémoires de la Ligue*. Others were accessed at the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, at the *Archives Nationales* and at the archives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Official declarations will be complemented by an analysis of pamphlets which had a strong

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[94] More specifically, the king's advisors were seen as exercising too much influence on the king (to the detriment of the old nobility broadly represented by the League) and as pushing for an alliance with the 'heretics'. More generally, historians agree that the religious issues were not separated from political and class struggles (Jackson et al., 1974: 53).
[95] Paris became for a few years the centre of the League. It was divided into sixteen neighbourhoods and administered by a council (*Conseil des Seize*).

popular appeal. Indeed, pamphlets played the role of newspaper and encountered a wide distribution (Weill, 1892: 204). A lot of them were anonymous or published under pseudonyms. 'Private' and 'strategic' documents are not used in this chapter. Indeed, the objective is not to try to re-establish the course of events in its minute details but rather to explore the ideas used (generally publicly) by the main actors. Among them different groups can be identified: the two successive kings and their supporters on one side,[96] and the League on the other (with the dominant figures of the Duke of Guise, the Duke of Mayenne and the Cardinal of Bourbon). This crisis indeed sparked a growth in politically-engaged documents defending one side or the other. It is this very polarisation of the debate that makes this moment a crisis of sovereignty: different actors fought to establish their interpretation as true and legitimate. This does not mean, however, that these texts reflect all the opinions of those affected by these events. In fact, they still represent the interests of a minority close to the powerful actors of the crisis – and a minority that had the capacity to have its voice heard. Since sovereignty depends on the ability to perform the required realities and to impose this interpretation this section will focus on the discourses of the powerful (in the same way as this thesis does). It is these discourses that were publicised and repeated.

Performing the troubles of the kingdom

The analysis of the 'state of the kingdom' during these events reveals several important aspects of the process of performing sovereignty. The texts of the period are far from the ideal of the French civilised sovereign state 'described' by theorists in the previous chapter. In fact, they establish a solid and repeated image of the kingdom as living in a state of nature (drawing, again, on tropes about savagery received from Antiquity and the Middle Ages). During the League the image of the kings as guarantors of civilisation and sovereignty is indeed repeatedly destabilised by their adversaries, thus contributing to a 'crisis of sovereignty' (a 'de-linking' of the current holder of sovereignty with the civilisational values that support the concept). Unsurprisingly, the most ardent proponents of this 'de-linking' are found among the League advocates and those opposing Henry III. Charles of Bourbon talks in 1585 of "calamities" and "oppressions" in his famous Péronne declaration (B.N.F., Dupuy 87: f. 210 and 211v). Charles of Lorraine (a member of the Guise family) 'describes' in 1589 a "state strongly weakened by the continuous miseries and ruins that it has suffered" under the rule of Henry III (B.N.F., Dupuy 121: f. 100v). In a discourse to the Duke of Guise on the topic of peace and war one League author estimates that "our police is so corrupted that it would be better calling our dispute a seditious tumult rather than a true war" (B.N.F., Cinq Cents de Colbert 30: f. 11v). Repeated references are made to the 'inhumanity' and 'barbarism' of the Protestants (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 102) but

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[96] This is a simplification for the sake of our analysis: in the first few years of the conflict Henry III and Henry of Navarre were indeed adversaries. This simplification is made necessary by the non-linear, thematic approach adopted in this chapter.

also of the king himself – particularly after the murders of 1589 (Goulart and Goujet, 1758c: 141).

The deputies of Paris also express their concerns in 1588 in a remonstrance to the king. Using the 'body analogy' and some of the ideas explored in Chapter 3 they write that the French state is "so full of ulcers that all members of the body are rotten and infected". They enumerate the "oppressions", "trouble, ruin and confusion" of the kingdom, its "disorders, miseries and desolations", reminding the king of his responsibility before God for the good administration of the kingdom (all quotes are from B.N.F., Dupuy 844: f. 561-561v). Some go further and openly question the idea of 'order' attached to sovereignty by mentioning the existence of a 'civil war' in the kingdom. The Duke of Mayenne, for instance, frequently highlights the disorganisation of the kingdom and describes the conflict as a "civil war" (see for instance A.E., M.D. Espagne, 331: f. 61). This state of civil war is also associated with "sedition" among the subjects by Bourbon (A.E., M.D. France 761: f. 118), thus further highlighting the distance between the king's rule and the natural obedience encountered among the subjects of a civilised and sovereign state.

This state of disorganisation is confirmed by other sources less obviously linked to the League. In a remonstrance to the king during the Estates General gathered in 1588, justice is considered to be "not only half-perverted, but completely ruined and lost" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 102). In the same document is lamented the "civil war, poverty, miserable servitude and infinite evils" that the French people are experiencing (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 110). In another discourse the author estimates that "we can actually call France the Mother of Laws, but a poor protector of them" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 99). Similar expressions can be found in a report circulated during the same Estates General: "poor France is dismembered, disordered, full of distrust, factions, and of evil enterprises". It is a kingdom where "religion is in double, the Princes are despised, military discipline is lost, Justice is corrupted, the King's finance all spent, and discord is everywhere". The king is directly criticised for letting himself be subject to his passions and humours, thus distancing himself from the rational image of the 'masculine' sovereign king. His ability to maintain unity and concord is also doubted when France is performed as "[a] body from which the members and parts are discordant quickly and necessarily falls apart" (all quotes are from A.E., M.D. France 761: f. 250-251).

Finally, 'scholars', 'intellectuals' but also some Protestants (especially in the early years of the conflict) express similar judgements on the state of France. Writing at the end of the 1580s Du Vair estimates that "we will soon be reduced to the most miserable and calamitous state that any kingdom has ever experienced" (B.N.F., Français 10270: f. 49v). The Duke of Nevers – a strong defender of Catholicism and critic of Henry III – uses the classic 'body analogy'. He explains how divisions inside the kingdom are dangerous since these factions will not be able to come together anymore "just like it is impossible to join

the arms and legs of a body once they have been separated" (B.N.F., Dupuy 579: f. 188). Finally, Protestant writers and supporters of Henry of Navarre also share this pessimistic view of the kingdom, to wit: Philippe Duplessis-Mornay writes that the kingdom is on fire (B.N.F., N.A.F. 17874: f. 13v) while Henry of Navarre himself mentions the calamities it is experiencing (B.N.F., Français 10270: f. 137v). Hurault insists on the "disorders of the Kingdom of France" (Hurault, 1588: 120) and in a Protestant pamphlet against the League the ruin and tremor of the kingdom are mentioned (B.N.F., Français 15534: f. 394). All these expressions come in sharp contrast to the model of civilised sovereignty mentioned by French political theorists at a similar period. France indeed comes to represent a counter-example of the civilised order so praised by the French.

This 'de-linking' of the king and the sources of sovereignty (i.e. French civilisation) is regularly expressed through an 'assessment' of the state of religion in France. As discussed in Chapter 3 religion is central for the achievement of sovereignty in sixteenth-century France. The prospect of having a Protestant king[97] deeply destabilises the idea of the French king as the Most Christian (read 'Catholic') king. In his Péronne address the Cardinal of Bourbon accuses Protestantism to bring the subversion of the ancient religion of his ancestors that was "the strongest link [maintaining] the state" (A.E., M.D. France 761: f. 118). The Parisian *Conseil des Seize* also expresses its disapproval at the attack on Catholicism that they associate with Henry III and 'describes'

> the general affliction of the house of God (…) the contamination of the holy temples, the ruin of the sacred altars, the discontinuation in a lot of places of the holy sacrifice and exercise of religion, the cruel and inhuman persecutions against the priests and prophets of God (…) our city deserted, our beautiful colleges empty (B.N.F., Français 15591: f. 195v).

In short, and as written in a Catholic treatise glorifying the Cardinal of Bourbon, the 'reformed religion' is accused of turning everything upside down (B.N.F., 8-LB34 (291): 34). The Duke of Mayenne repeats these accusations in a public poster at the end of 1592, this time directly against Henry of Navarre, by recalling the links between previous kings and the Catholic faith. For him having a Catholic king is a custom that dates back to the ancient king Clovis and that ensures the obedience of the subjects (who are therefore allowed or required to rebel against a non-Catholic king). He adds that the French sovereign kings have always been helped by the nobility in "the conservation of the Religion [Catholic faith] in their country or in the establishment of it in distant countries where the noun and cult of our God was not yet known" (A.E., M.D. Espagne 331: f. 57v-59v). 'History' is thus called

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[97] This prospect is reinforced by the support that Henry III gave to Henry of Navarre at different periods of the conflict

again to the rescue with clear political motives: denying the French kings their civilisation and thus their sovereignty.

Attacking the current king, preserving the institution of (sovereign) monarchy

In these attacks on the sovereignty of the king(s) one crucial element needs emphasising: these critiques and 'de-linkings' of sovereignty and the king(s) mainly apply to the *current* king(s) and the way they exercise their sovereignty. If they are directed at the *person* of the king (and not at the way sovereignty is conceptualised), these attacks also impact *to a certain extent* on the model of sovereignty itself. It is indeed undeniable that the Catholics (represented by the League) promote a change in the ideal of civilised sovereignty: for them, only a Catholic king is able to achieve the good life that justifies and informs sovereignty. But the other elements of civilised sovereignty explored in Chapter 3 are accepted by the League as well as by the king(s). Thus, and while agreeing on the idea of a civilised (because monarchical) model of sovereignty, the League criticises the possibility of achieving this sovereignty in France through a Protestant king. With this emphasis on Catholicism put forward by the League, this crisis in France presents us with a critique of the current holder of sovereignty and its associated concept of a Protestant (or potentially Protestant) civilised sovereignty. It is not, however, a complete overhaul of the model of sovereignty, or a critique of the entire notion of sovereignty as conceptualised until that time. This crisis is thus not comparable with the delegitimisation of the Amerindian political structures: in the case of the Amerindians the values that support their model of political authority are directly under attack and most of the times completely ignored (and rendered as inexistent) by the French.

The League thus concentrated its attacks on the fact that the sovereign power could be exercised in a better way by a Catholic king. These paternalistic discourses are carefully constructed in order to criticise the way power was exercised by the king without criticising the possibility of a civilised (and monarchical) sovereignty in France. Both the Cardinal of Bourbon and the Duke of Mayenne use similar expressions. Bourbon declares in 1585 that "it is not against the King our sovereign lord that we go to war but for the protection and defence of his person, his life and his state" (A.E., M.D. France 761: f. 120). In a similar vein Mayenne argues that his only goal is to "preserve the State and to follow the laws of the Kingdom" (A.E., M.D. Espagne 331: f. 58v). Acting in the interest of the king (i.e. helping him to re-establish his sovereignty according to the civilisational values he had supposedly stopped defending) is also an argument used by Henry of Navarre when he was not yet allied to Henry III. In a public declaration at the occasion of the entry of his army in the king's territory he begs the king to "believe that we only join the war for him, for his

liberty and for his service" (B.N.F., Dupuy 322: f. 271v). These attacks are therefore directed at the king *qua* person and not at his function. Put differently, what is criticised by the League is the possibility for the king(s) to achieve sovereignty, not the possibility of a French sovereignty. Another way that this is achieved is through the further deconstruction of the image of the king as a sovereign ruler. The pamphlet *Contre les fausses allegations* (1589) for instance clearly points to the supposed 'femininity' of the king:

> Please stop, virtuous Frenchmen, to value your king [who is only] a man-woman ghost: who calls himself a zealous Christian but does not remove his hat [in respect] of God in fear that he might derange his attires... who wears a mirror and scissors at his belt and a gauntlet like a woman (B.N.F., *Contre les fausses allegations*: 51).

Building on the idea developed in chapter 3 – of the necessary 'masculinity' of the sovereign – the king is further stripped of his authority through his supposed 'femininity'.

This line of critique is reinforced by blaming the mismanagement of the kingdom on the king's advisors, thus distancing the ideal of a sovereign kingdom from the un-sovereign 'reality' created by the current king. This argument appears in 1585 when Bourbon evokes the 'usurpers' who surround the king (Goulart and Goujet, 1758a: 58). When Henry III tries to protect Paris against the League by placing sentinels and armed force in the city Guise writes that this decision has been pushed by "the enemies of public tranquillity" that advise him (B.N.F., Français 3363: f. 176v). In a 1588 petition to the king the League members remind the king of his (supposedly) own words: that he has "been induced by the advice and persuasion of others and not by his own judgement and movement" (B.N.F., Dupuy 549: f. 80v). Opposing these advisors thus becomes synonymous with protecting and supporting the real (i.e. legitimate) sovereignty of the king. At the start of their military action against the king the inhabitants of Lyon declare in 1589 that

> When the orders of the King and his actions have as their objective the protection and defence of the Catholic Religion, maintenance of the State and our particular conservation, we have to obey, and even use our lives and wealth for them [because] they come from good advice. But when, on the contrary, his ordnances and pleasures tend to the dissipation of the religion, of the State and his subjects, we do not have to obey them but should oppose them like things coming from bad and pernicious advice. By opposing them we preserve him [the king], and with him the religion and the state (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 274).

This declaration thus offers an illustration of how both elements are combined: the critique of the king as insufficiently sovereign to be obeyed, and the source of this lack of sovereignty in the bad advice that the king has received. Thus, the separation of King and king, of Sovereignty and the person of the king (or of King and Crown, as Kantorowicz (1957) would put it) is crucial in the double action of preserving the ideal of French sovereignty and criticising the actions of a particular king. An external element – the advisors – is introduced when the reality of the acts of the king collide with the ideal of his sovereign function, i.e. *what he should really be*.

Losing sovereignty: the threat of the state of nature

This state of France performed by the enemies of the kings (and sometimes by the Protestants before 1589) is particularly dangerous as it entails the failure of the king to ensure civilisation and therefore sovereignty. These 'descriptions' of the kingdom help destabilise the king's sovereignty but a particular strand of argument also emerges that pushes this 'de-linking' further onto dangerous terrain. Indeed, analogies between the previous 'descriptions' of the state of nature of the Amerindians and the 'descriptions' of the internal state of France are common at the time. The League regularly uses the image of savagery against the king and his supporters. These analogies range from 'mere' denials of humanity to the main actors of the crisis to fully fledged 'descriptions' of France as a state of nature. There are particularly striking as they reveal how the Western sphere of sovereignty was populated by instances of less-than-civilised behaviours. Far from being restricted to the non-West, then, savagery is clearly present (because performed) in the West.

The images of bestiality and savagery are indeed invoked frequently during the period. After the assassinations of the leaders of the League by Henry III, Mayenne qualifies these murders as "cruelties and barbarity" perpetrated by the king (B.N.F., Dupuy 87: f. 279). A pamphlet published after these same events describe them as "cruelties inhumanly exercised" (B.N.F., *Contre les fausses allegations*: 39). In another pamphlet of 1589 the author estimates that the factions and divisions experienced in the kingdom transform the inhabitants from "reasonable men" to "very wild and very cruel beasts" (B.N.F., Dupuy 203: f. 110). The nobility sometimes combines this 'observation' with an anti-popular sentiment: the Parisian popular revolt, despite supporting Catholicism, is compared to a "brute beast" in 1589 (A.E., M.D. France 373: f. 16-17v).

The remonstrances of the Estates General of 1588 also establish links between France and the classic image of the state of nature. In 1598 one such remonstrance explains how those who escaped the troubles "had to take refuge in the woods where they

hoped to find more humanity among the brute, savage, and unreasonable beasts than among men that they found without mercy or compassion" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 601-602). This image is all the more effective as it plays with the association of the 'woods' with savagery and an absence of civility that we also observed with the Amerindians. Another use of this association is made in yet another remonstrance to the king:

> How many great and productive souls are buried and hidden (…) if they were called to the responsibilities they would correct all the demolitions and ruins of this State: but these souls are only known to God and a few good people. But, Lord, if in your court was present a desire to make amend and to salvation we would be looking for the caverns and refuges in which they retreated, we would throw ourselves at their feet and beg them to come [back and] moderate this savage and barbaric life into which we degenerate (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 109-110).

All these expressions seek to oppose the king's expected sovereign conduct – the attainment of a civil(ised) state – with his *actual* achievements: a disordered and barely social way of life. This type of discourse alone is reminiscent of the state of nature image used to describe the Amerindians, but some go further and explicitly perform the similarities between the French internal situation and the (supposed) state of nature of the Amerindians. France, for instance, is performed as deprived of justice. In a public discourse to the Estates one official declares that "we can actually call France the Mother of Laws, but a poor protector of them" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 99). A remonstrance to the king goes further: "As for what concerns justice (the first firmament of the Kingdom, the anchor of the state, and the main link of love and obedience of the People for its prince), it is not half-perverted but completely gone and lost" in France (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 102). The murders of the League leaders are clear illustrations of this destruction of justice:

> What is it to kill a Prince… to stab him in the Royal Cabinet without announcing why or pronouncing some sort of condemnation if not the corruption of all divine and human law, the introduction of tyranny where justice should sit, and the preference for a brutal and disordered will… to the maturity of judgements and the study of the causes (without which the Kings cannot call themselves Lieutenants of God nor reign royally)? (B.N.F., *Contre les fausses allegations*: 31-32).

Having lost justice and what makes a sovereign state *sovereign* the French kingdom becomes mere chaos (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 99). It has lost all the traits of a civilised and sovereign state, in particular its 'valid' institutions. In the ultimate depiction of chaos the leaguers compare France (and here Paris more specifically) to a new Babylon "without Law, without King, without Justice, where everyone is pulling in his direction" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758c: 280; for another comparison to Babylon see Goulart and Goujet, 1758b:

271). As soon as 1585 some pamphleteers warn the king that his kingdom "is today almost without justice, without order and without police" (Goulart, 1590: 161). In a 1589 treatise to justify his entering the war Louis de Gonzague (a fervent Catholic) writes that the consequences of the current troubles are

> the entire desolation of this kingdom, so flourishing and formidable to all nations, be they Christian, barbaric or infidel; the depravation of the ecclesiastical discipline; the ruin of several beautiful and important buildings; the cessation of justice, trade, ploughing, communication that we used to have among ourselves (B.N.F., Dupuy 579: f. 104v-105).

In this discourse are repeated the exact same elements that made the Amerindians live in a state of nature: an absence of religion, of justice, of arts and of agriculture. All the institutions of a civilised – and thus sovereign – society seems therefore lost in France; a clear accusation against the king and his rule. In a discourse to the Parliament one councillor expresses his sorrow to see "this brilliant and dazzling splendour and light fading away and dying slowly". He then adds about the French themselves:

> how miserable the current condition of us Frenchmen is; sons of the same country but worse than the brutal beasts because we hate each other to death and kill each other (something these animals have a horror of). We walk and run together towards stealing each other's life and goods, violating the human and fraternal society, natural and people's law, and civil law even more. We irritate God and trouble the elements by our wrong, impious and villainous behaviours, being ourselves furious and enraged (B.N.F., Dupuy 240: f. 180-180v).

The image of the French as a civilised people – and as social and rational subjects – is here directly under attack. In one of the most violent pamphlets published against the king one pamphleteer accuses him of 'sorcery' and of being influenced by the devil. This is added to a charge against the 'cannibal' advisors that surround the king (all references are from B.N.F., *Contre les fausses allegations*: 20, 22, 34, 38, 43 and 48).[98] The League is thus using the classical 'state of nature' image to argue against the sovereignty of the king and for the replacement of this 'less than sovereign' king by a proper, civilised ruler.

As shown in the previous section the adversaries of the king(s) paint a bleak image of the French kingdom. Crucially, they also resort to the idea of state of nature in order to

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[98] The use of 'cannibalism' in this context refers to the recent murders perpetrated against the Guise and to the suspicion of 'Protestantism' against Henry III and his advisors.

reinforce their attack. This means that France is moved as far as possible from the civilised reality that the country supposedly represents. How is France performed as a state of nature? The first striking element of similarity is that of misery and disorder. The lack of sovereignty of the king is regularly associated with a lack of social order: the presence of 'factions' and divisions inside of France is a sign of an absence of social life. The use of references to the 'woods' is also one of the tropes used by the League in its attacks against the king(s). As we saw in the previous section different actors linked to the League declare that (civilised) people had to take refuge in the woods. Additionally, the economic state of the kingdom – characterised by poverty and misery – is lamented by the League. Taken together, the attacks of the League clearly point to a lack of *civil* society in France that is reminiscent of the seminal image of the state of nature.

The resemblance also extends to the state of war performed by the king's adversaries: the repeated references to civil war inside of France offer a striking parallel between the (supposedly) civilised French and the usual images of savages waging unjust, dissolute, and unregulated wars. Treason, surprise and irrationality are used to 'describe' the French internal situation. The murder of the League leaders by Henry III is considered treason and the division of the French people as leading to internal strife. More generally, the king's adversaries perform an absence of justice in the kingdom, an interruption of religious practice, and a clear lack of what makes the French civilised (in particular agriculture and trade). The bad administration of the kingdom for which the king(s) are blamed can also be seen in a general disrespect for religion (an accusation that is all the more important in the context of the War of Religion). Despite the centrality of religion for any civilised society (Perrière, 1567: f. 104v; Madeleine, 1575: f. 15; Chesne, 1609: 14) the French show disregard for (the true) religion and (legitimate) religious practices. These very accusations can be found in the French context in order to delegitimise the sovereignty of the king(s): religious persecutions, attacks against priests, interruption of the divine service and more broadly disrespect for religion are central elements that characterise the kingdom for the League.

Ultimately, these troubles deprive France of all the attributes of civilisation, in particular of agriculture and commerce. Due to civil unrest and conflict land in France is no longer cultivated. France becomes a *terra nullius* or an "uncultivated wilderness" (Pateman, 2007: 36). France seems to move from the once 'flourishing' kingdom – a clear sign of civilisation and of its potentiality to grow and generate – to the savage state of bareness that we have come to expect from European characterisations of America. The loss of agriculture is also combined with the impossibility of practising trade: the cities of the kingdom thus lose their status and cannot be regarded any longer as signs of French civilisation. By bringing France close to what was held at the time as the antithesis of civilisation – the state of nature – the League thereby tries to destabilise the legitimacy of the king(s)' sovereignty. In this process two aspects are revealed: first, that discourses of sovereignty are reliant upon notions of civilisation and savagery both 'inside' and 'outside'

the sovereign state. Second, that the civilised identity supporting the supposedly natural claims to sovereignty in Christian Europe had to be forged out of strong contestations that performed a reality of savagery.

Concluding remarks

The discourses of sovereignty deployed in the West and in the non-West reveal that constructing sovereignty and statecraft implies a necessary use of the notions of civilisation and savagery (which confirms the theoretical conclusions of the previous chapter). In both instances, the discourses used to establish the presence of absence of sovereignty are intimately linked to the presence of a civil society, i.e. a society offering 'civil' or 'civilised' conditions of existence. But these discourses also cast a doubt on the supposedly stabilised associations of the West with civilisation and of the non-West with savagery. These associations emerge from the theoretical discussion of sovereignty offered by French theorists and mainstream IR scholars alike; French theorists postulate France as the perfect example of a sovereign state while mainstream IR scholars unwillingly conceptualise sovereignty as the achievement of a Western political order. As seen in this chapter, however, the West is regularly portrayed as savage and the non-West as civilised. The first contacts of the French with America analysed in this chapter show how traces of civilisation were clearly identified/performed by the French, thus placing the Amerindians in the civil sphere. Recognising their sovereignty thus becomes almost logical and necessary: the inherent association between civilisation and sovereignty means that wherever the former is identified the latter usually follows. Indeed, (the recognition of) the presence of institutions and social practices among the Amerindians forces the French to draw parallels between their own self-image and these recently 'discovered' peoples. As explained in the following chapter, though, this recognition is never complete and these signs of civilisation always delegitimised through the inscription of the Amerindians as familiar Others who have either degenerated from the European model or have not (yet) achieved it.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the process is similar but reversed. This chapter has shown how the self-image constructed by French theorists of a naturally civilised French state does not survive the troubles experienced by the kingdom. The discourses analysed indeed reveal how savagery occupies the French 'domestic' sphere. Against the image of civilised and sovereign kings (and kingdom) innumerable discourses perform France as living in a state of nature and devoid of the basic elements of civilisation that the West has come to accept as its own. Divisions, absence of religion and savage practices occupy the central ground of these discourses. And their centrality in the public debates of the time indicates that these discourses were not marginal: expressions of savagery and of

(a return to) a state of nature in France abound. Just as for the Amerindians, it will take a lot of efforts to re-establish the image of civilisation of France.

This crossing of the colonial frontier has important implications. Indeed, this *rhetorical use* of 'savagery' to characterise Europe is not identical to the way it will be used in the American context: indeed, the idea of 'savagery' acquired a more significant force precisely because it was not expected in these supposedly self-proclaimed civilised countries. Accusations of savagery therefore became even more shocking and unacceptable than when they were used against the distant Amerindian. The civilised man who 'degenerates' into savagery is indeed "more savage than the savage" (Whatley, 1986: 324) because he is expected to know better. His superior rationality should have prevented such a degeneration. This is sometimes apparent in French writings on the Amerindians: Thévet, for instance, recounts a specific episode that is regularly mentioned in the French texts on America of the period. On their way back from 'Florida', a starving French crew had to sacrifice one of the sailors and his body was eaten by the others. Thévet (1575: f. 1006) finishes the description of this episode in the following way: "This thing [episode] is so pitiable that my very quill defers to write it". What is striking in these last words is that the Amerindians of South America that Thévet previously described as 'cannibals' never attracted such pity and reluctance. This reluctance is only present because it is French people who are found to eat human flesh when they are supposed to be civilised and above such savage practices. As such, we can assume that accusations of 'savagery' acquired more weight when directed at (supposedly) civilised peoples like the French.[99]

Before explaining in the next chapter how colonial frontiers are re-established one important element should be noted. The discourses performing civilisation in America and savagery in Europe mirror themselves but they are also written and voiced by actors who in one case will play a crucial role in the final establishment of the colonial frontier while in the other these actors will fail to achieve their goals. As far as the Amerindians are concerned, the signs of civilisation are performed by those – the French colonisers – who will eventually establish themselves as sovereign (and thus civilised). In France, on the contrary, those raising objections to the civilisation of the kings will finally be defeated and their claims to (civilised) sovereignty will fail. As such, one could say that for the Amerindians the discursive control of the French is total in the sense that it does not suffer interruptions and contradictions from the encountered peoples of America. In contrast, French kings were facing an *internal* challenge to their civilised sovereignty. This total discursive control over the Amerindians, however, should not be overstated: French discourses still had to deal with the (embarrassing and potentially destabilising) presence of

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[99] Nevertheless, and as we will explore in the next chapters, the use of savagery in the European context should not be seen as putting the savage Europeans below the Amerindians. Indeed, Europeans are still postulated as naturally civilised and thus as only temporarily (and by mistake, so to speak) savage-in-essence. In other words, they know the path to civilisation that the Amerindians ignore because of their *essential* savagery.

civilised traits among the Amerindians. One could thus conclude that the alternatives to judging the Amerindians as inferior (savage) Others are in fact contained in the very discourses that will establish this reality. While this point is further explored in the conclusion, this thesis now turns to a discussion of the way the colonial frontier is being re-established: savagery is strongly associated with the Amerindians while the French regain their place at the top of the civilisational hierarchy.

Chapter 5

(Re-)establishing the sovereign, creating a familiar – but inferior – Other

The previous chapter has shown a de-stabilisation of the images of the sovereign West and savage non-West. This represents a transgression of the classical frontier perceived to exist between civilised and savage. The very construction of sovereignty is thus complicated by these crossings: how could one establish sovereignty over the Amerindians if they are, in fact, (performed as) civilised? Similarly, how are the French kings to reclaim their sovereignty when the kingdom exhibits so many traits of savagery?

This chapter will explore how this (re-)establishment of a civilised and sovereign identity and the denial of this identity to the Amerindians is performed by the French (kings), and how they (re-)establish themselves as sovereign authorities through these discourses. For the Amerindians, the civilised signs identified by French explorers are overwhelmed by a general movement of delegitimisation of the Amerindian institutions and practices; these practices never achieved a full civilised status because they are understood as familiar signs of savagery. It is thus their very familiarity as savage traits that helps the French to construct civilisational difference (and ultimately hierarchy) between themselves and the Amerindians. As will appear clearly from the discussion below the natives of Canada are always perceived as imperfect or under-realised version of an idealised Western civilised self. What is constructed through these discourses is the savagery of the Amerindians through their interpretation as familiar Others. It is thus through their inscription in a familiar framework of civilisation that their existence is

domesticated and rendered inoffensive.[100] And these interpretations draw heavily on pre-existing ideas of civilisation and savagery and on the accepted evolutionary theories described at the end of chapter 3.

Mirroring this process, the French kings counter the discourses of savagery that de-stabilise their sovereignty by placing the blame on their adversaries: the League. Referring once again to accepted notions of savagery and similar tropes as those used in America the French kings and their supporters differentiate themselves from the 'rebels' and their savage manners. Given the centrality of civilisation and savagery for the very definition of sovereignty it is not surprising to find the notions being widely used in the context of French political debates. Civilisation and savagery are indeed key terms used to establish an internal or domestic hierarchy between rulers and ruled. And this applies equally between the non-West and the West as inside of the West. Sovereignty towards the external Others is thus established in the same way as sovereignty towards the internal Others: by differentiation (masquerading as an identification) of the civilised from the savage. And it is because sovereignty requires this differentiation that both spheres are populated with civilised and savage figures.

Both in the West and in the encounter of the West with the non-West, the performed presence of an inferior Other is thus central for the establishment of sovereignty. This Other, however, is not radical or challenging but on the contrary familiar and already-known. In other words, she belongs to a mapped category of inferiority that forms an intrinsic part of the worldview of the French. If this is not surprising when one considers the French internal debates, that the Amerindians of Canada could be rendered as familiar savages is less easy to explain. Indeed, one could expect the French to be familiar with their 'own' internal Others. But this is also the case for the Amerindians: they appear in the French texts as illustrations of categories of Otherness already held by the French. While this illustrative role should not be underestimated (as has been shown by Meek (1976) and Jahn (2000), among others) this chapter will show that they do not bring novelty to a concept of 'savagery' already present and well-known to the French.

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[100] This serves to confirm Campbell's argument (and his approach to the world as discursively constructed) since "understanding involves rendering the unfamiliar in the terms of the familiar" (Campbell, 1992: 4).

Writing the Amerindians as familiar but inferior Others

Anyone familiar with the literature on encounters and the Age of Discovery knows that the Amerindians encountered (or rather: written) by the Europeans were portrayed as savage, inferior and as such different beings. But this process was somehow complicated by the presence of the civilised signs discussed in the previous chapter. In other words, deciding on the (lack of) civilisation of the Amerindians is for the French a potentially ambiguous exercise involving the creation of an inferior and 'different' Amerindian out of characteristics that appeared in some respects as civilised and thus similar to the French self-image. The assumption of difference thus needs to be re-politicised (Sabaratnam, 2013), denaturalised, and explored as "a cultural construction" (Sayre, 1997: 111). Throughout this process difference and inferiority are constructed and established thanks to the idea that only civilised peoples (like the French) know what is true. They possess an epistemic superiority: they are able to *'see' the world as it really is* (and therefore also as it should be) since they possess natural law and reason. As a result, only the French institutions and practices are conducive to the public good and to justice; only these institutions are sovereign. Hence, the 'evidence' gathered about the New World and its potentially civilised characteristics is discarded or accepted – i.e. interpreted – through the prism of cultural or civilisational framework of the French.[101] As argued by Pagden (1982: 79) in the case of the Spanish intellectuals' conceptualisation of the American Indians, the key is not the presence of potentially civilised characteristics but their interpretation as civilised or savage. Cultural mediation forms the 'reality' perceived by the observers and then later by political leaders. This is why the familiarity of the Amerindian practices is crucial: this familiarity (that is in some ways unavoidable insofar as the Amerindians were written by the French from their own European/provincial perspective)[102] enables the French to make sense of and domesticate their American experience. The imperialist and colonialist policies that the Europeans developed will then find their sources in these culturally-mediated perceptions of the Amerindians as familiar Others.

In practice, this process of inscribing the Amerindians as familiar Others takes the form of a delegitimation of the 'sociality' of their practices. In other words, the Amerindians are denied the possession of a proper culture leading to social life. This is done through an inscription of these practices as evidence of savagery and as such as less developed or degenerated when compared to their European model (a model that is, as we saw in the last chapter, vastly idealised). The performed 'religion' of the Amerindians, for instance, follows such a process. Despite the identification of some familiar elements (as shown in the previous chapter) these practices witnessed by the French are discarded and

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[101] To paraphrase Ryan (1981: 519), the French have a monopoly on reality.

[102] On the importance of the culture of the viewer/writer in 'describing' 'new' peoples and places see for instance Campbell (1988) and Pratt (1992).

understood as a form of idolatry (Thévet, 1575: f. 1015v). In other words, ceremonies and practices understood as religious in the Amerindian cultural framework are represented by the French as an inferior or immature form of religion that cannot be called 'religious'. This perceived immaturity leads the French explorers to describe the Amerindians as "poor fools" succumbing to farce and jesting. Biard writes with a condescending tone that the Amerindians believe their dreams have a meaning "so there is absolutely no folly that they lack" (Biard, 1616: 82-86 and 94). Cartier and Champlain both describe these superstitious practices contemptuously, insisting on the 'tricks' used by the Amerindians' shamans (Julien et al., 1946: 139; B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1, 144). During his second trip to Canada, the reaction of Cartier's expedition to a manifestation of the Amerindians' 'god' is telling: the French start laughing and consider this false god to be stupid.

In another move that delegitimises the Amerindian 'religious' practices by inscribing them in a known cultural framework the French perceive the Amerindians 'religion(s)' as diabolical. The influence of the Devil is clearly established for Biard (1616: vii and 93). For Champlain (1603: f. 10) "God is benevolent, and certainly it is the Devil who has shown himself to these people". Thévet (1575: f. 1018v) also explains how he (effectively) cured several Amerindians who were attacked by the devil:

> Often in the places where I stayed the Savages, being tormented by the malign spirit that is familiar to them (…) would throw themselves shyly into my arms, screaming aloud *Hipouchi Agnan Omamo Atoupaué*, i.e. the malevolent spirit *Agnan* is beating and tormenting me, please help me. Immediately after, and holding them, I would say the Gospel of St John, and halfway through it these barbarians would feel delivered from the malign spirit, and I guarantee to the reader that I have done such a holy and Catholic act more than a hundred times at least.

As surprising as it may seem for a contemporary reader this charge of devil worship that is amply documented among the Amerindians does not lead the French to argue that the Amerindians might actually possess a religion (if not the right one). In fact "[t]he charge of devil worship does not seem to have been perceived as implying a contradiction with the companion claim that Amerindians had no God and no religion" (Dickason, 1997: 31). Because the institutions and mores of the Amerindians did not equate with those of the Christian observers the latter discounted the presence of a religion. But at the same time, this performed difference enables the 'imperial eyes' (Pratt, 1992) to include these Others at the bottom of a known human hierarchy.[103] An illuminating example is provided by Sagard, one of the missionaries who wrote on the Amerindians. Sagard first manifests his

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[103] This process is thus another illustration of the crucial colonial process of inclusion/exclusion (Aalberts, 2014).

surprise at the fact that some of the basic concepts of Catholicism (such as 'temptation', 'Trinity' or 'Holy Spirit') are difficult if not impossible to explain to the Amerindians (Sagard, 1632: 88-89).[104] Nevertheless, and because he identifies some inconsistencies in the stories they tell and in their practices, he quickly concludes that:

> from what they say, there is no agreement on nor reality [of this religion], as we saw and learned from experience, which makes us know that they do not truly recognise nor adore any Divinity nor God of which they can give a reasonable account, and that we could know of (Sagard, 1632: 230).

Here, the inability to understand and express different 'religious' practices in a "reasonable" way leads the French missionary to resort to the solution that all his predecessors have adopted: in a rather surprising move Sagard blames the Amerindians for his own incomprehension by accusing them of having no religion.

Therefore, it becomes clear that the 'absence' of religious ceremonies is in fact an impossibility to understand these ceremonies as religious rather than an actual lack of ceremonies. The French are indeed clearly unable to identify the type of ceremonies that they associate with a civilised society. For Biard (1616: 96), the Amerindians "believe in a god, at least that is what they say" but they "know neither prayers nor ways to adore him". Verrazano writes similarly that "We did not see that they did sacrifices or prayers or that they possessed temples or places for cult" (Julien et al., 1946: 72). Almost a century later, Champlain reiterates what has become a widespread opinion: the Amerindians "do not know how to adore nor how to pray God, living like brutal beasts" (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1, 126). It thus becomes established as a fact that this "brutish people" has "neither ceremony nor any form of praying God" (Thévet, 1575: f. 1013v). Lescarbot (1617: 713) also concludes with the absence of religion because he is unable or unwilling to identify the familiar "adorations" and "divine service" that he is accustomed to.[105] In essence, rather than simply concluding that these people have no *Christian* religion, the French conclude that the absence of Christianity equates with a lack of a religion *tout court*. What emerges, then, is a coherent account of the (lack of) religiousness of the Amerindians that is centred around a European system of values and not around the perception of the Amerindian other as a credible alternative to the European order. The general conclusion drawn from these observations is that the Amerindians do not possess any form of religion whatsoever: "we don't know what they believe in or which God they worship" (Alfonse, 1545/1904:

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[104] This is reminiscent of recurrent observations made about the 'inferiority' of the Amerindians' languages in particular when it comes to abstract concepts (Padgen, 1982: 181-183).

[105] Thévet adopts a similar strategy when he talks about the Peruvian Amerindians; he estimates that "their gods are imaginary, without them having any form of religion". Hence, by discarding the validity of these gods (that the Amerindians mentioned and that he was aware of) Thévet is able to maintain his conviction that the Amerindians have no religion.

494). Hence, it seems that the Amerindians "have no more god than the beasts do" (Alfonse, 1559: f. 27v). For Champlain the Amerindians "have no knowledge of God" (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1, 4). In a similar vein, Lescarbot (1617: 712) writes that they "are destitute of any knowledge of God, have no worshipping, no divine service, and live in a pitiable ignorance". What could have been performed as Amerindian religious practices does not even qualify as 'idolatry' for Verrazano and Lescarbot (Julien et al., 1946: 72; Lescarbot, 1617: 710). Instead of questioning their own perceptions (and the difficulties associated with them, for instance in terms of communication with the Amerindians) the French generally remain very confident in their ability to understand (and make themselves understood by) the Amerindians – an attitude that is common among European explorers (Greenblatt, 1991: 93).

As a consequence, and rather logically due to their absence of religion, the Amerindians are performed as easily convertible to the Christian faith. The French are particularly confident that they can achieve this goal readily.[106] Indeed, and in a classic way, difference is interpreted as a lack (Todorov, 1989: 155) or an absence that can readily be filled by Christianity.[107] This conviction is repeatedly expressed by the explorers and cosmographers: Lescarbot (1617: 710-711) is probably the most eloquent, writing that the Amerindian is "like an empty canvas which is ready to receive any colour one would like to paint on it". And "this is why," he adds, "our peoples of New France will easily accept to receive the Christian doctrine". This conviction in the religious blankness of the Amerindians appears very early on in the explorers' accounts. Verrazano writes that "they [the Amerindians] are indeed very easy to persuade and they imitated the zeal and fervour with which we practiced our Christian rites" (Julien et al., 1946: 72). Similarly, and after only a few brief contacts with the Amerindians, Cartier confidently claims that "we knew that these people could be easily converted to our faith" (Cartier, 1865: 50). This conviction is based on the experience of spreading Christianity among the Amerindians: "[we] exposed to them several other things of our faith, in which they easily believed", so much that they repeatedly asked Cartier to baptise them (Julien et al., 1946: 157). In his book on the forms of the state Lucinge (1588: 114) also recalls "a beautiful treatise that the Jesuits wrote about a Prince of these newly discovered lands: he was so wise and shrewd that having seen the simplicity and purity of the Christian doctrine (and even if he was idolatrous) he allowed his subjects to be Baptised". Unsurprisingly, and at the beginning of the 17th century, Champlain will draw the same conclusion from the performed absence of religion of the Amerindians: "I believe that they would soon be converted to Christianism if we settle here and cultivate their land, something that most of them desire" (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1: 126). Champlain (1603: f. 8v-11) also recalls several direct

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[106] This is not to deny that the goal of conversion, just as the belief in the presence of gold at the beginning of the exploration, is part of a larger strategy to maintain – political, religious and commercial – interest in the exploration and domination over Canada.

[107] This confidence in the possibility of converting the pagans to the 'true' faith is repeated by Europeans in all their encounters with alien peoples. Bitterli (1986: 153) for instance described how the Portuguese misperceived the Chinese as neglecting their religious practices and thus as easily convertible to the Christian faith.

experiences of easy conversions in his dealings with the Amerindians. The religious actors of the exploration are understandably eager to propagate the same views. The Franciscan Récollets write to the king that they have counted "three hundred thousand souls (…) easy to attract to the knowledge of God since they are not bound by any [pre-existing] cult" (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 45v). Identically, Sagard explains how the Amerindians "regularly used our prayers (…) and frankly acknowledged that these prayers were more efficient than their ceremonies" (Sagard, 1632: 235).

These conceptions on the (lack of) religion of the Amerindians later found their way into political documents. When du Monts is named the king's lieutenant general in Canada in 1603 his mission states that he should "convert, bring to and instruct to Christianism and the belief in our faith and religion the peoples who live on these lands (who are at present real barbarians, atheists without faith or religion), and to bring them out of their ignorance and infidelity" (B.N.F., Dupuy 318: f. 100). The king only reproduces the views of several explorers and advisors, in particular Champlain who suggested that the French king will be able to "establish the Christian faith among an infinite number of souls who do not have any form of religion whatsoever" (Champlain, 1993: 230 and for a similar expression in a letter Champlain wrote to Richelieu see B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 295). Writing at the same period, Razilly (1626/1886: 455) also comments on those millions of poor souls willing and waiting to be instructed in the divine law.

If the delegitimation of the 'religious' practices of the Amerindians occupies a considerable space in the texts on Canada the other aspects of the 'social' life of the Amerindians are not neglected. Unsurprisingly, and through the same process as for religion, these elements that were observed and performed by the French are re-inscribed in a framework of expectations about human societies that necessarily places the Amerindians at the bottom of the civilisational hierarchy (or in the first stage of an evolutionary view of humankind). Some French observers noticed that the Amerindians practice agriculture, for instance, but these observations are quickly subordinated to the overwhelming consensus on the imperfection or incompleteness of the Amerindian agriculture. Firstly, the Amerindians do not have the techniques that the French possess and which make their agriculture a 'real' agriculture. One of the tropes of French discourses is the difference between French (cultivated) and Canadian (savage) vines. Verrazano is the first to observe that "if the vines [of Canada] were taken care of by informed cultivators, they would certainly produce excellent wines" (Julien et al., 1946: 61). Thévet (1575: f. 1014v) uses similar expressions and adds that the Amerindian vines grow "without labour or cultivation" (for a similar expression see also Montchrestien (1615/1889: 327)). But this does not mean that the vines are not planted; on the contrary for Cartier they are, which means that Amerindians do indeed practice agriculture. But he nevertheless re-inscribes Amerindian agriculture as inferior: the land he visits has "so many vines, loaded with grapes, all along the said river, that it seems that they must have been planted by men; but because they are not cultivated, nor trimmed, the grapes are not as sweet or big as our

own" (Julien et al., 1946: 140). This is particularly important since what is performed here is not an explicit absence of agriculture but a lack of perfection in the practice of agriculture according to French standards. The Amerindians thus appear to be incomplete or lacking Selves rather than radical Others. For the French the Amerindian practices are illustrations of notions of development and social efficiency already held. In fact, the example of the vines was already a classic trope used in the Middle Ages (see the examples mentioned in Boas, 1978).

The Amerindians also lack the tools to make their practice worthy of an advanced and civilised agriculture. For Sagard (1632: 103 and 133), the Amerindians do not possess the tools that could make their agriculture efficient. More importantly, the Amerindians' productivity is compared to the fertility of the land. For the French, Canada is "very fertile with all sorts of fruit" (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9384: f. 153v). This idealised fertility means that the Amerindians do not have to make much efforts to obtain what they need to live (Dickason, 1997: 13). This is reminiscent of the 'political economy' doctrines held about 'temperate' and 'torrid' zones: living in a world of abundance, the Amerindians barely need to cultivate to obtain their food and are "not hardworking" (Montchrestien, 1615/1889: 321). In general, the Amerindians are performed as "lazy when it comes to difficult exercise such as ploughing and our mechanical crafts" (Lescarbot, 1617: 890).[108]

Consequently, if the Amerindians practice some form of agriculture, it is only an incomplete and inferior form of agriculture that could (and has to) be improved with the introduction of efficient French agricultural practices. Champlain estimates that "[h]e who would show them how to live, who would teach them how to plough the land, and other things, they would learn well, because some of them have a rather good judgement" (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1, 125).[109] The idea of the 'potentiality' of the Amerindians – their potentiality of achieving Western ideals of civilisation – serves as an expedient intellectual tool to discard potential traits of civilisation: even if some traces of agriculture are identified (and once again, just as for religion, there is no empirical determinism or naturalness to this 'identification'), these can only be imperfect examples that can and should be improved thanks to the teachings of those who have achieved the ideal of social efficiency. Classifying the Amerindians as inferior Selves (or familiar Others) both preserves the hierarchy between French and Amerindians and gives the French a justification for their intervention. Indeed, the ranking of the Amerindian agricultural practice as underdeveloped ones opens the possibility of denying the presence of agriculture (understood as 'real' agriculture) all together: for Biard (1616: 42) the Amerindians "do not plough the land". Verrazano also indicates that "we saw no trace of cultivation" (Julien et

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[108] This is linked to the perceived absence of private property among the Amerindians, an absence that was regarded as problematic by the French. For a defence of the necessity of private property (or the 'distinction of the property of goods') for any civil society see Gentillet (1576: 295).
[109] As Vitoria also observes in his writings these simplistic practices are not a sign of a 'diligent' agriculture (Padgen, 1982: 91).

al., 1946: 70) and the Récollets add that the Amerindians desire to learn ploughing (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 45v). This vision of the Amerindians is reminiscent of the idea of *terra nullius* or *res nullius* usually invoked by the Europeans who "claimed that the lands were uncultivated wilderness" (Pateman, 2007: 36; see also Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 88; Benton and Straumann, 2010: 2).

Other aspects of Amerindian life go through the prism of French cultural expectations. Clothing, for instance, provides yet another opportunity for the French to reproduce the vision of the Amerindians as incomplete, underdeveloped or degenerate peoples. For the French observers, the Amerindians encountered in Canada wear animal skins and furs. Verrazano observes that "[t]hese peoples go completely naked, except for their privates which they cover with small animal skins" (Julien et al., 1946: 55). Cartier and Popelinière make similar observations (Cartier, 1865: 28; Popelinière, 1582: Second book, f. 25). For Cartier (1865: 53), "their whole clothing is only a small [animal] skin". Bellenger's short description of his voyage also reinforces this view: "They go all naked saving their privates which they cover with an Apron of some Beastes skyn" (Quinn, 1962: 340). Finally, Thévet (1575: f. 1009) mentions the "savage beasts skins" that they use, no doubt making a link between these beast skins and the Amerindians' own bestiality. Only one discordant voice, that of Roberval, expresses a different view: for him, the Amerindians "go all naked: and if they wore clothes as French people do, they would be as white and good looking" (Julien et al., 1946: 205).[110]

This isolated remark, interesting for the link it establishes between (lack of) clothes and skin colour, does not destabilise the overarching opinion of the French: if the Amerindians are generally compared favourably to the (entirely naked) Brazilians, their clothes are seen as unsophisticated and a clear sign of their savagery. It is thus the *interpretation* given to the observations that possesses a major importance (rather than the observation itself). Champlain, for instance, estimates that their clothes are imperfect due to their lack of know-how (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1, 71). The French thus gave a cultural interpretation to this 'reality': the Amerindians' near-nudity is a sign of their lack of sophistication, technical but also spiritual. It is indeed possible to notice an association between physical nudity and spiritual nudity in the French texts. Lescarbot (1617: 789) is probably the most eloquent on this question: "in the beginnings God had created Man naked, and innocence meant that all the body parts were respectable to look at. But sin has made the genitals shameful, but not for the beasts which do not have sin".[111] Lescarbot

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[110] Since most voyages took place during the summer (the only time of the year when the French were able to explore Canada) most descriptions of clothing correspond to these summer months. When references are made to the winter period the image does not change drastically: the Amerindians still wear furs and beast skins (but in greater quantity in order to protect themselves from the cold).

[111] Crucially, and in a similar way as the 'Wild Man', the Amerindians are not sinners but ignore the very idea of sin. See White (1972: 22) on this point. Boas (1978: 129-153) also explains how the

(1617: 829) does not conclude that the Amerindians are pure beasts in that respect since they cover some parts of their body, but he insists on their innocence and their purity. Other authors make similar claims, linking physical near-nudity with the "extreme nudity of the attires and wealth of [their] soul" (Biard, 1616: vii) or associating lack of religion with nudity (Razilly, 1626/1886: 455). This is logical since the Amerindians are believed to live in a state of nature, without cultural proprieties, and therefore with no need to wear clothes – which is itself a result of a cultural trait (Todorov, 1982: 49).

Interestingly, this near-nudity is also considered to be a sign of (cultural and physical) poverty or 'underdevelopment'. For Champlain, "their life is miserable when compared to ours, but happy [i.e. satisfying] among themselves who have not seen another and who believe that there is no other" (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1, 286). According to the French, famine is also a recurrent problem for the Amerindians who are "always threatened by the fear of hunger" (Biard, 1616: 76-77; see also Champlain, 1603: f. 8). Cartier concludes that "[t]hese peoples can really be called savages since it is not possible to find poorer peoples in the world, and [I] believe that taken all together they do not own the value of five *sous* [pennies]" (Cartier, 1865: 53). The Amerindians practice of clothing is thus quickly transformed into yet another sign of Amerindian (familiar) inferiority. Their performed poverty is also revealed by their 'poor' housing conditions. For Verrazano, "a lot of inhabitants sleep outside and do not have another roof than the sky" (Julien et al., 1946: 61). Cartier also observes that "they have no other house than below their boats which they turn upside down, and they lay below them on the ground" (Cartier, 1865: 53). This is connected to the 'observation' that the Amerindians are nomads: they live in the woods "because they have no assured place [since] they always run from one land to another" (Alfonse, 1545/1904: 493). This nomadism is also noticed by Roberval (Julien et al., 1946: 205): "They have no fixed home but go from one place to the other depending on where they think they can find their food". Nevertheless, villages and houses are mentioned by the French. Popelinière (1582: Second book: f. 25) identifies wood cabins, just as Thévet (1575: f. 1011v) who writes about their "small villages and poor hamlets of a few houses (…) some covered with wood bark, others with skins and with rush. God knows if the cold really harms them in their houses since the wind enters from all sides". Re-iterating the 'social efficiency' argument used to connote the Amerindians' lack of a proper agriculture Verrazano estimates that "it is certain that if they had our technique, they would build great buildings, since this entire coast is full of blue rocks" (Julien et al., 1946: 67). Hence, even if some recognise a certain sophistication to their housing (Biard, 1616: 42), the general conclusion is rather that "it is not to be housed to be always wandering and to shelter under four poles" (Lescarbot, 1617: 714). In addition, their nomadic life in the woods also connects them to the idea of the Wild Man which was popular in European folklore at the time (Padgen, 1982: 21; Dickason, 1997: 77). Once again, the 'reality' of the Amerindians is the result of an interpretation based on French (idealised) civilisation: here, nomadism and wood houses or tents are perceived as inferior to the French lifestyle.

Greek and early Christian use of the noble savage concept entails that the 'savage' are not guilty of their sins as the Christians since they ignore the true god.

Performing the Amerindians as nomads also reinforces the 'observations' about Amerindian agriculture. Indeed, one cannot practice a 'real' agriculture if one is not sedentary. For the French, therefore, all the signs of savagery that they perceive reinforce each other and enable them to avoid potential contradictions (the perceived 'agriculture' practiced by the Amerindians, for instance, is naturally inferior and imperfect due to the Amerindians' nomadism).

Finally, and perhaps even more strikingly, the political institutions identified by the French go un-recognised as 'political' or are discarded. Through different strategies, French authors and explorers 'perform away' the elements of order that they nevertheless 'see' among the Amerindians. Champlain, for instance, reduces the role of the Amerindian kings to that of temporary leaders: "They have some leaders to whom they obey in times of war, but not outside of these moments, and these chiefs work, and do not have a higher rank than the others" (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1, 91). Thévet (1575: f. 1012) also restricts the power of the kings to that of war leaders. In a similar vein Bodin (1576: 49) observes that the leaders in the "West Indies" are mere heads of family who do not take their authority from God and can therefore not be considered as properly sovereign. It was common for European writers to consider that "Indians had chiefs for leaders while early modern Europeans had kings" (Shoemaker, 2004: 36). Moreover, because the Amerindian leaders' form of rule was different from the expectations of the French they concluded that the Indian chiefs "did not seem to rule at all" (Shoemaker, 2004: 47). Accordingly, their role was diminished and undervalued by the French.

More generally, then, the lack of an identifiable – i.e. similar – hierarchical order in the Amerindian and French 'societies' leads to the conclusion that the Amerindians are "society-less creatures" (Padgen, 1982: 8). Additionally, and because the Amerindians "did not have externalized institutions, such as written codes of law" (Dickason, 1997: xii), they were culturally written as living outside an organised political order. The Amerindians become characterised by an absence of law: "These people in the main have no law, from what I could see" (Champlain, 1603: f. 8v). Describing a group of Amerindians, Champlain adds: "I do not know what law they uphold, and I believe that for that matter they resemble their neighbours, who do not have a law at all" (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1: 85). For others, their only law is to follow nature and the Amerindians live according to their natural instinct (Thévet, 1575: f. 1013v).[112] Hence, and "[a]s far as justice is concerned they have neither divine nor human law but the law that Nature teaches them" (Lescarbot, 1617: 887). Their (performed) nomadism is also linked to this lack of government. Indeed, and because they constantly move, the Amerindians cannot create a society (Lescarbot,

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[112] There is a difference for the French between 'natural law', i.e. a set of (supposedly universal) principles that men should follow and apply *because of their humanity*, and the 'law of nature' which is synonymous with an absence of (social) law and the domination of the strongest. Despite a reference to 'nature' in both cases these two terms must be differentiated: 'natural law' requires the exercise of 'reason', something which the Amerindians are considered incapable of. As a result, they are bound to follow the 'law of nature', i.e. their (savage) instincts.

1612: 19), let alone a government. Biard for instance discusses the *police* (i.e. the government or administration) of the Amerindians in the following terms: "One cannot have a *police* in the absence of a community (…) Yet these savages having no big community, living one day at a time, not being linked to one another, because they are scattered and vagabonds, so they cannot have a great *police*" (Biard, 1616: 49-50).

A familiar Otherness: the Amerindians and evolutionary theories

The Amerindians are thus inscribed as inferior – a key move for the French to later claim sovereignty over them – through their depiction as incomplete or lacking Selves more than as radical Others. In fact, the very possibility of 'radicality' is questioned due to the prevalence of the *French* cultural framework in the enactment of the Amerindians. Given this centrality of 'culture' in enacting what is true, empirical observations – the 'facts' – cannot be detached from interpretation (as Jahn (2000: 66) argued in the context of the Spanish encounters with the Amerindians). Hence, when Cartier observes a potential 'city', it quickly becomes clear that this evidence is discarded on cultural terms. Bodin (1576: 54) for instance states that:

> It is possible that the city is well-built and walled. And that it is filled with people. Nevertheless it is not a city if there is no law and magistrates to establish a right government (…) but a pure anarchy.

Clearly, thus, 'material' elements never speak for themselves. This is why most aspects of the Amerindian world never entered the realm of the 'real' since they always fell short of the French standards. In most cases discarding these elements happens through an insistence on the law of nature as a central defining characteristic of civilised institutions such as social order or agriculture (Padgen, 1982: 79). This natural law is clearly universal for the French: L'Hospital (1825: 60-61) for instance insists on the universality of the French conception of justice when he says that "just like it is the same sun that shines in Paris and gives light and warmth in Rome and Constantinople, divine justice and natural law are not different among the savages of America and among the Christians of Europe". (European) natural law is thus universalised because it is linked to Christianity.[113] It is also linked to the idea of 'truth'. Budé (1547: 70) explains that "God made Man virtuous, that is, capable of reason, and gave him sound judgement, which is the faculty of discerning good from bad

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[113] In his analysis of Vitoria Pagden (1982: 63) notices that Europeans considered the source of knowledge to be God. As such, the knowledge they possessed cannot be but universal and absolute (except if the reality and power of God are doubted, which is unacceptable). Local variations thus become interpreted as 'errors' and deviations from a universal truth.

and true from false". Hence, the French endow themselves with the capacity of seeing 'truth' or what really exists. On the contrary the Amerindians are not seeing the 'true nature of things' (Bain, 2003: 21 and 24) as shown by their incapacity to adopt desirable institutions and civilised practices. They do not "see the world as it really is" (Padgen, 1982: 89) according to Europeans. As Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 63) argue about Spain "Vitoria is led to conclude that the Indians have fallen into a kind of social and religious disorder because they are consistently unable to see the world as it really is". Thanks to the confidence they placed in their 'empirical descriptions' the French held their views on the Amerindians and on their lack of a proper culture as "luminously and self-evidently true" (Greenblatt, 1991: 9). This epistemic deficiency – the Amerindians are incapable of seeing reality as it really is, i.e. how the French perceive it – is central to the process of classifying the Amerindians as inferior Others (and by opposition in awarding the French a prescience far exceeding that of the savages).

The performance of French sovereignty over the Amerindians thus involved writing the Amerindians as inferior but familiar others. Strongly convinced of their epistemic superiority, the French perform a 'reality' of the Amerindians that corresponds to the already well-established fiction of the state of nature. This state of nature is peopled by 'lacking' and 'incomplete' Selves who are "culturally naked" like a "*tabula rasa*" (Whatley, 1986: 321). This can be seen in the long list of deficiencies attributed to the Amerindians by the French. Biard (1616: 331) is probably the most explicit about the Amerindians' state of nature: for him the land of Canada is a "wilderness", full of barbarism and pageantry. It leaves no doubt that the French are held as the superior referent: "And certainly (from what I see) to value oneself excessively is an illness from which no one is exempted except by the mercy of God. You could see these poor barbarians, despite their great lack of police, power, letters, arts and wealth, yet esteeming themselves very highly, despising us greatly, and glorifying themselves as superior to us" (Biard, 1616: 39). The Amerindians becomes a familiar Other in relation to what Europeans perform themselves as being:[114]

> Across a wide spectrum of cultural attributes, European classified Indians as inferiors. They made proper use of the land; Indians did not. Europeans had kings for leaders; Indians had chiefs. Europeans could write; Indians could not. European men behaved with civility; Indian men behaved like animals (Shoemaker, 2004: 142).

An example of these lacks or absences is the Amerindian ignorance of writing: "everyone knows that these Western peoples do not know writing" (Lescarbot, 1617: 786).[115] This is confirmed by the (performed) Amerindian belief that the French writings are some magical

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[114] Thus highlighting once again the inherent connection between savagery and civilisation and their necessary definition by opposition to each other.
[115] 'Western' here refers to the West Indies (America) by opposition to the East Indies (Asia).

artefacts. Hence, the Amerindians ignore the 'arts' of the French (Montchrestien, 1615/1889: 321) and their social conventions and norms (Lescarbot, 1617: 875; Sagard, 1632: 186). Their savagery is also performed in the way they wage war, resulting in an unambiguous illustration of the classical Hobbesian state of nature: "these Canadians, who are the fiercest we know, and who do not practice any job or art whatsoever, are constantly waging war on some of their neighbours" (Thévet, 1575: f. 1011v).[116] Their wars are considered irrational since they are not motivated by legitimate and rational reasons. The Amerindians are thus performed as only going to war to avenge "wrongdoings" (Thévet, 1575: f. 1013), which is seen as irrational and illogical from the French vantage point. Indeed, land is the principal asset in the Late European Middle Ages, and is what justifies waging a war. When talking about the Amerindians the French generally consider their wars to be irrational because they are not motivated by legitimate reasons. As Sagard (1632: 219-220) explained about the Amerindians:

> There is almost no nation that is not fighting or in discord with the others, not because they want to possess their lands or conquer their country; but only to exterminate them when they can and take revenge for small wrongdoings or displeasures which are of negligible importance; but their bad [social] order and the fact that they do not punish the faulty citizens is the source of all this evil.

The gap between French and Amerindian principles regarding war is thus so wide (Dickason, 1997: xiii) that the French perceive Amerindian wars as 'unnecessary violence'. On the contrary, the French praise themselves for their cultural practice of war: they do not resort to 'natural' or instinctive violence.

A key part of this practice of distancing is to inscribe the Amerindians in a familiar temporality and alterity that builds upon accepted notions of savagery and wilderness. Indeed, in order to ascertain their civilisational superiority – a necessary move to claim sovereignty over the Amerindians – the familiar cultural difference of the Amerindians is explained in chronological terms.[117] Talking about the Amerindian practices Lescarbot (1617: 963-964) observes that "these ways of doing were formerly common to a lot of nations". This "temporalizing of difference" (Hindess, 2007: 327) is shown by the recurrent comparisons between the Amerindians and ancient civilisations and peoples. If the

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[116] The French thus participate in the classic "narrative of small, warlike Indian polities and peoples in perpetual conflict" (Benton, 2009: 234).

[117] On the transformation of cultural difference into temporal difference see for instance Hogden (1964) and Blaney and Inayatullah (2006). As noticed by Bernheimer (1970: 120) "[i]t was in the Renaissance that the wild man of native folklore, who had so faithfully accompanied his civilized brother through the involutions and contortions of his history, found himself for the first time relegated to the past and treated as a creature that had become instinct; a view which originated in scholarly circles, but gradually percolated to the peasants and burghers who were the mainstay of wild-man lore".

Amerindians have no beard, for instance, there is no reason to be surprised since according to Sagard (1632: 181) "even the Romans (…) did not have them until the emperor Adrien". Lescarbot (1617: 860) also explains that the long life of the savages can be attributed to their "way of life *à l'Antique* and without complication". The Jesuits in New France also compared the Amerindians' ways of waging war with that of the Scythians and Parthians (Dickason, 1997: 34). Here, "by placing [the] Amerindians in the early stages of a universal cultural development", the French "opened up the possibility that in time, [the Amerindians] would become like Europeans" (Dickason, 1997: 55). As Pateman (2007: 54-55) writes:

> Europeans have discovered a world that is in its first stage of history; a state of nature that exists in the seventeenth century. This (actual) state of nature *waits to be transformed and developed*, to be turned into a civil society. The settlers know what they have to build because they are familiar with the opposition between the "natural" and the "civil".

This is a crucial move in order to legitimise for the *mission civilisatrice* designed to 'improve' the backward way of life of the Amerindians and to start or accelerate their 'development'.

This temporalising of difference also entails an enactment of the Amerindians as "less mature versions of the European adult" (Hindess, 2007: 326; see also Todorov, 1989: 358). The Amerindians are portrayed as children not yet fully developed. This "constructed temporal backwardness of the savages" (Inayatullah and Blaney, 2004: 56) is most clearly expressed by Biard (1616: 74) when he compares the Amerindians to "wild children" and estimates that:

> these poor people (…) when with the time and experience of the centuries will have arrived at some perfection in the arts, sciences and reason: When they would have produced some result in philosophy, police, mores, and convenience of life; when they would be actually predisposed to the maturity of the Saint Gospel, so that they are received in the house of God: we see them [now] puny and scarce, and used as food by the ravens.

This evolution from the state of nature to civilisation is not automatic and the Amerindians will need the help of patient (adult and mature) teachers (Biard, 1616: 101-103). For now, they are 'prisoners' of their own stagnant nature and of their isolated way of life. The Amerindians are thus performed as living in "a state of primordial innocence" and "in the

early stages of a universal cultural development" (Dickason, 1997: 51 and 55). This classic analogy between uncivilised peoples and children[118] leads to "paternalistic implications" (Aalberts, 2014: 774) and enables the French to establish themselves at the pinnacle of civilisation and moral maturity, having themselves evolved from this state of nature a long time ago. Thévet (1575: f. 1013) indeed indicates that the great Hercules, coming to France, "found the people living almost in the way that these savages do today", while Lescarbot (1617: 875) affirms that "the old Gaullois were not better" than the present-day Amerindians.

This general absence of the signs of social life confirms the French in their "understanding of humanity, in which the development of moral and intellectual capacities is associated with the development of [*identifiable*] institutions – marriage, agriculture, writing, money, law, the state, and so on" (Hindess, 2007: 326). The conviction in the lack of culture of the Amerindians leads to the conclusion that they inhabit the first stages of human development: Cartier (1865: 53-54) notices that the Amerindians eat their meat raw and Thévet (1575: f. 1012v-1013) offers a long description of the barbaric treatment of their enemies (even though he also notices that they are not cannibals). These conceptions of the Amerindians are informed by and help illustrate the evolutionary theories used by French political theorists when they discuss 'political order' and sovereignty. As explained in chapter 3 these theories are central to the construction (masquerading as identification) of a proper sovereign state. One example is offered by Roy (1575b: f. 25) who argues

> In the beginnings men were very rude and ignorant of all things, not too dissimilar from beasts [they] ate what the earth produced on its own [and] wore skins instead of clothes. To protect themselves from the heat and cold, from winds, rains and snow, they retreated inside the trunk of big trees, or below their leafy branches, or in deep pits, hideous caverns, or sheds and huts made out of heavy poles (…) Because they were more robust they nourishes themselves with stronger food, and thus lives longer (…) But becoming weaker they could not digest these meats [any more], nor stayed naked and barefoot; they had to find ways to soften their savage and harsh life that they could not bear any longer.

Disregarding the fact that Roy (like his contemporaries) does not provide a particularly convincing reason for the transition from the state of nature to the cultural/civilised state, we find in this quote the main elements that were 'characteristic' of the Amerindians and that confirm their lack of sovereignty. Roy adds that when men decided to abandon their savage life they started agriculture (when previously all their food, including wheat for instance, would grow spontaneously from the earth). They also assembled themselves and

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[118] For other examples see Pagden (1982: 106) and Bowden (2009: 58).

from their 'brutal life' became 'gentle and civil' and "started to feed, clothe and live more honestly" (Roy, 1575a: f. 25v).

The process of denying the Amerindians their sovereignty thus follows an established pattern of 'dealing with' difference. In order to explain the Other, similarities are established as a necessity (the culture of this Other can only be perceived through the eyes of the viewer and thus through her own culture) but also as a methodological tool (Hodgen, 1964). Indeed, these similarities participate in the depiction of this Other as a familiar Other through her inscription into a known framework of human development and evolution. In other words, the differences perceived and performed attribute a place on the civilisational ladder to the Amerindians, thus domesticating a potentially threatening difference (an *alternative*) into a known (and backward because less successful) difference. This process is central when it comes to sovereignty: in fact, it is this very inscription of the Other as inferior, uncivilised and unthreatening that will in turn enable Europeans to confirm their civilisational dominance and as such their sovereignty over the Other (as explored in the next chapter).

The League as an internal Other responsible for the lack of civilisation of the kingdom

Through this interpretation of the Amerindians as familiar Others, the French succeed in re-establishing the civilisational difference on which sovereignty depends. As explained in the next chapter, the way is now open for the French to claim sovereignty over the Amerindians thanks to their civilisational superiority. In a similar way, the 'civilised' must differentiate *him*self from the 'savage' inside of France. Indeed, after the destabilisation of the civilised image of the kingdom explored in the previous chapter, the French kings are compelled to perform civilisation and savagery in a way that can support their claims to sovereignty.

Amid such extreme destabilisation of the image of a sovereign and civilised France several actors struggle to re-establish the civilised sovereignty of the king. Such discourses are usually written or pronounced by the kings – both Henry III and Henry of Navarre (before and after his coronation as Henry IV) – or by their supporters. Their interest in doing so is clear: they need to show how successful they have been and are at maintaining France in its 'glory'. As such, and to ensure that the king does not lose his association with civilisation and thus his sovereignty, these discourses are built around the (re)affirmation of the civilised and therefore sovereign identity of France. The origin of the (uncivilised)

troubles is thus placed in an actor constructed as exterior to the sovereign monarchy: the League. Due to the imperative of establishing themselves against internal competitors the French kings make only limited reference to the paradigmatic external savage: the Amerindians.

The discursive (re-)construction of civilised sovereignty involves the identification by the Protestants of the excesses of the Catholics during the conflict (thereby delegitimising their claim to act in defence of the kingdom's civilisation). The Catholics are usually accused of misconduct and their practices are seen as revealing their true nature as 'enemies of civilisation' and, according to Henry of Navarre, as 'cruel barbarians' (B.N.F., N.A.F. 17874: f. 7v). But more precisely, it is the League that the Catholics generally support that is at the centre of a multitude of attacks which can be classified according to their intensity. Some imply that the League is at the source of the current troubles, others that the League is a barbaric or savage actor and the most extreme attacks focus on how the League contributes to the creation of a state of nature inside of France. In this way, the imagery of savagery is turned against the League and made to support the kings. First, the League is identified as the main reason for the existence of the troubles that de-stabilised the (civilised image of the) kingdom. As soon as 1585 such attacks are frequent: Henry of Navarre estimates that the League "troubles today the tranquillity of this Kingdom" and creates "civil wars" that have brought a "great confusion to all things, poverty to the people, a decline of the Nobility, have ruined the clergy and made justice despised" (B.N.F., F-47170 (17): 5 and 40). He reiterates this view in 1586 in a letter to the nobility, qualifying the League as acting against the tranquillity of the kingdom (B.N.F., N.A.F. 17874: f. 2). Near the end of the conflict Henry IV still mentions the "disorders, ruins, murders, pillages, sacrileges and other types of evils that they [the League] have brought to this Kingdom, thus turning it from the most beautiful and flourishing of Europe into the most misshapen, confused and miserable of the entire Earth" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 108). The idea of 'confusion' is also repeatedly used by Henry IV (before and after his coronation). He deplores this confusion created by the League in 1585 (Goulart and Goujet, 1758a: 132) and in 1593 explains how "extreme poverty and desolation" as well as "disorder and confusion" will continue to characterise the kingdom if the troubles do not end (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 147).

The second 'stage' of these attacks further associates the League with the 'state of nature' idea through the use of the concepts of 'barbarism' and 'inhumanity'. These concepts are used by Henry III to qualify the acts of the rebels (B.N.F., FZ-2052: 4; see also Goulart and Goujet (1758b: 301-302)) but also by Henry of Navarre to characterise the murder of Henry III as "the most barbarous act" (B.N.F. F-46889 (25)). This is a murder that even "the thieves and barbarians, and the enemies of humankind" would have not executed (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 253). The construction of the League's savagery thus draws upon well-known 'facts' about the behaviour of barbarians. When officially joining

Henry of Navarre in 1589 Henry III publishes a declaration that reinforces the idea of uncivilised behaviour of the rebels:

> [The League] has again filled France with troubles and civil war, universal sedition and disregard for the Magistrates, blood, pillages, extortions, vandalizing of religious and profane goods, rapes of women and girls, and *an infinity of inhumanities and disorders such as we have never seen or heard of* (B.N.F. F-46889 (5): 7-8 (my emphasis)).

Building upon the evolutionary theories that populate discussions of sovereignty the king also notices that France has degenerated into a pre-civil or pre-social state and can now be called a "den of thieves" instead of a proper civil society (Goulart and Goujet, 1758a: 196). This accusation also extends to the rebellious cities in 1589 when the king depicts them as practising all sorts of "cruel barbarism" (B.N.F., Français 3876: 362v; see also B.N.F. FZ-2052: 4). Finally, an anti-League pamphlet of 1592 'describes' the Leaguers as "deprived of all humanity" and following their "violent appetites" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 194). These depictions of savagery all relate to the concept of bestiality (and thus to the Wild Man and the monstrous races that were widespread and accepted at the time).

These expressions culminate in the explicit association of the League with the creation of a state of nature in France. When entering the king's territory Henry of Navarre evokes the "dissipation and usurpation of this state" and the "confusion of all things divine and human, the annihilation of all order, *police* and justice" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 252). The Parliament expresses similar concerns that the League is leading to "the entire ruin and overthrow of all *police* and human society instituted by God, and even of this renowned and flourishing Monarchy" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 177). The dissipation of 'order' and 'hierarchy' – such crucial ideas when identifying a civil society – are repeated in a 1589 pamphlet stating that "all the [social] positions are perverted, the temple of justice polluted, crimes not punished, innocence oppressed [and] laws without authority" (B.N.F., Français 6546 (3)). The 'state of nature' analogy is also used in a 1593 declaration written against the League and in support of the new king Henry IV after his conversion. In this declaration the author estimates that the current troubles

> prevent working the land, remove all trade from the fair cities, award impunity to the vices, deprive an infinite number of places of priest, the priests of revenue, the poor people of divine service. In a nutshell, if we do not put an end to these unfortunate dissensions with a good agreement, it will not be long until we see France – the ancient house of the Catholic faith and of all humanity, the main support of the liberty and safety of the Christian countries, the name of a virtuous

freedom – become a name for servitude, with her ancient humanity being turned into the most barbaric inhumanity of the Indies (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 396).

Here, it is striking to notice that some of the categories used to describe the (lack of) civilisation of the Amerindians are being turned against the League supporters who still refuse to swear allegiance to the king. The absence of the traditional signs of civilisation transforms France into what was supposedly external, foreign and different to itself and its sovereign identity. And the kings are not to blame for this state of affairs: it is the League which is performed as responsible. In a 1593 letter to the Duke of Mayenne the deputies assembled around the king develop the same powerful analogy:

This war ruins the Catholic Religion, brings confusion and malfunction to all the Orders of the Kingdom, fills our Nation with vices, corruption of mores, disregard for the divine and human laws; Justice is flouted and submitted to the violence of the strongest and meanest… some of the Subjects of this kingdom are without Ecclesiastic Minister… In what decadence, ruin and despair all the cities of this Kingdom have fallen! (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 374-375).

While reaffirming most of the tropes of the state of nature this document also emphasises the importance of cities as signs of civility. If France is deprived of its great cities then its civilisation is lost as well. A 1591 pamphlet establishes the same link in its attack against the League rebels:

They [the rebels] control the cities, and it will not take long for these cities to lose this name and substance. We see them either deserted, without justice, without community, or without trade. All of our youth is being lost because of the lack of education and schools. In the countryside fields are not cultivated and Parishes are without priest and minister (B.N.F., Français 15591: f. 211).

Recalling Bodin's remark mentioned earlier, cities are only cities when they show clear signs of civilisation (which they do not because of the League). In the rest of the country, it is a paradigmatic state of nature that has come to dominate because of the rebels. The League is thus performed as the source of the state of nature France has degenerated into because of the rebellion. This act of othering the non-sovereign is done, unsurprisingly, through familiar references to civilisation and savagery. These categories are once again called for in order to re-establish a clear civilisational difference on which sovereignty can be built and on which the concept depends.

Concluding remarks

The attribution of images of savagery and civilisation to the unexpected side of the Atlantic disappears in this chapter with the re-establishment of the civilisational difference upon which sovereignty depends. Whether these inversions were exceptions, signs of early cultural relativism, or wilful political attacks, they dissipate under the authority of the sovereign and civilised voice. In Canada, the French explorers and observers reintroduce the Amerindians at the bottom of the civilisational hierarchy with which they are familiar. One can see in this reinscription the effect of the authority of the evolutionary theories inherited from Antiquity and the Middle Ages. And in turn the acceptation of these concepts gave confidence to the Europeans in their encounter with the 'New World'. As explained by Pratt (1992: 219) for the travel literature post-1750, "[t]he possibility of limitations on the speaker's authority is never hinted at" and the seeing imperial eye is all-powerful. It is this authority that in turn authorises the French to write the Amerindians with such confidence and to discard, through the idea of epistemic inferiority, any potential alternative that the Amerindians could have offered to their eyes. With this chapter it becomes clear that the self-proclaimed views of early modern travelers arguing that they represent the first modern 'empirical' scientists are misleading.[119] In fact, most conceptions about Amerindian savagery have their roots in previously accepted notions of savagery and thus do not reflect an un-mediated 'empirical' reality:

> The early chroniclers and natural historians of the Americas, for instance, were not committed to an accurate description of the world 'out there'. They were attempting to bring within their intellectual grasp phenomena which they recognised as new and which they could only make familiar, and hence intelligible, in the terms of an anthropology made authoritative precisely by the fact that its sources ran back to the Greeks (Padgen, 1982: 6; see also Todorov, 1982: 141).

As Todorov (1982: 30) argues when talking about Columbus the strategy employed by Europeans was to search for the confirmations of a truth already known. As such, the relative coherence achieved by the French does not reflect the singularity of the object 'Amerindians' but rather the common cultural framework *from which the French performed them*. In one sense, these discourses tell us more about the French than about the

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[119] This view is sometimes reinforced by contemporary scholars who associate the Age of Discovery and the Renaissance with the development of empirical (and objective) science. Hodgen (1964: 33), for instance, argues that "until the sixteenth century little effort was ever made by anybody to take a long, fresh look at the way of life of any people, or to report results free of the misapprehensions attending an unswerving fidelity to tradition" (an approach she then contrasts with the 'modern scientific approach' (66)).

Amerindians even though they remain crucial when it comes to understanding French sovereignty over Canada. In more abstract terms (and as revealed by an emphasis on the performativity of these discourses) there is no natural Amerindian untouched by French culture; rather, the 'nature' of the Amerindians as natural beings, underdeveloped or backwards beings is produced out of French culture in the enactment of the reality of America. And in so doing some myths (like that one about monstrous races) were vital in order to provide "a ready and familiar way of looking at the native people of the New World" (Friedman, 1981: 207).

In reality, then, the 'Discovery' of the Amerindians was compatible with these views held by Europeans and offered a new (and contemporaneous) illustration of them.[120] If the Amerindians do not qualify as civilised human beings it is *because* they are judged according to the French scale of civilisation. As such, the Amerindians as a group are not 'radically' different (as if incomprehensible for the French) but more simply inferior in relation to French expectations. The very authority of the French texts on the Amerindians in fact emerges from this re-inscription into a singular cultural reality.[121] One can in fact doubt that these self-confident discourses would have been present in the face of 'radical' difference. I have shown in this chapter how the resemblance between French and Amerindians helps performing them as differently situated on a scale of progress and civilisation instead of casting the Amerindians out of this scale altogether. The result is that the French are attributed a sovereignty that the Amerindians are unworthy of.

In France, civilised and savage identities are also re-attributed in line with the will of the self-proclaimed sovereign and civilised voice. Drawing on similar references to the woods, to disorder and to misery, among others, the French kings are able to contain savagery to specific actors: the League rebels. This confirms the observation made by Walker (1993: 163) that "sovereignty is not a permanent principle of political order; the appearance of permanence is simply an effect of complex practices working to affirm continuities and to shift disruptions and dangers to the margin". The 'unsovereign' actors are here placed by the French kings to the margin of the political and civilised order in order to recreate the illusion of unity and permanence of the sovereign order. Discourses

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[120] This is not to deny that the Amerindians were not compatible with the Christian worldview or cosmos (Dickason, 1997: 29; Jahn, 2000: 45). But inscribing them in European political thought did not necessitate the complete rejection and re-thinking of earlier ideological systems. As Jahn (2000: 51) rightly argues "cultures frequently accommodate contradictory concepts" and this incompatibility of the Amerindians was not crucial in triggering an interest in the Amerindians' (lack of) social life. Furthermore, and as Hodgen (1964: 49) observed, "medieval thought, though grounded in the Hebrew Scriptures, contained so large an ingredient of the pagan, the fantastic, the monstrous, and the fabulous". In reality, then, it is not that Christianity *per se* could accommodate monsters and savages but simply that Christianity was not the totalising system it is sometimes portrayed to have been.
[121] Fernández-Armesto (1982: 281) similarly explained how the men of the Middle Ages "had to describe (and therefore distort) alien societies in the familiar terms of feudal organisation" in order to 'make sense' of them.

of sovereignty reveal how the task of othering is central to statecraft. Hence, what an internal account reveals is that the domestic construction of sovereignty is equally dependent on references to savagery as its external construction. In other words, the presence of savagery – that should logically be absent from a civilised state like France – is necessarily and repeatedly performed in the contest over sovereignty. Because the identification of civilisation cannot be disconnected from the identification of the savages, the discourse of savagery is *equally* important to performing sovereignty *in the West*.

Performing sovereignty thus depends on the existence of colonial frontiers. Yet these frontiers, i.e. distinctions between civilised and savage, are only temporally (if at all) stabilised. The usual separation between West and non-West should thus not detract our attention from the resemblance between the 'internal' and 'external' processes of statecraft. Moreover, colonial frontiers do not only exist between the West and the non-West: a similar differentiation is equally present inside the West itself. Putting these two dimensions of sovereignty side by side shows that the task of statecraft follows similar paths in both spheres. This is, to a certain extent, unsurprising: one could have imagined that the Western state is not performed in radically different way 'domestically' and 'internationally'. Since the concept stays the same, the discursive construction of sovereignty logically rests on the same references to civilisation and differentiations between the civilised and savage. What is revealed by this analysis of France in the sixteenth century, however, is that the crucial task of differentiation (or othering) that is at the core of the establishment of a colonial frontier and thus of the task of statecraft is complex and contested. Civilisational doubts and savage crossings – which are only crossings when the West is clearly separated from the non-West – are frequent and they require disciplining from the voice establishing itself as sovereign. Differentiation and classification serve to justify the superiority of the sovereign (and of the sovereign state model defended). This justifies why an exploration of civilised sovereignty is more complete when both 'sides' of statecraft are explored jointly: these two processes are closely related and similar in a number of ways (in particular when one considers the importance of the imperative to differentiate the civilised from the savage).

The basis of sovereignty, then, is in this act of othering alternatives, whether these come from the 'domestic' sphere (and promotes rather limited changes) or whether they originate from the 'outside' and represent a more comprehensive revision of the sovereign model. Both types of alternatives are discarded through their qualification as familiar yet inferior and savage. More precisely, two key ideas are used: degeneration or lack of evolution. Alternative (social) orders are judged either as degenerated forms of a perfect example – this is the case for the French rebels who were civilised subjects but have become 'worse than beasts'[122] – or as underdeveloped like the Amerindians. These

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[122] This strategy was used, for instance, to explain the existence of the Wild Man during the Middle Ages. Indeed, "[t]he status of the wild man was thus reached not by gradual ascent from the brute, but by a descent" (Bernheimer, 1970: 8).

strategies are by no means new or innovative. They in fact reiterate previous ways of explaining the presence of difference. This is why Otherness seems more familiar than disturbing: it serves to highlight what has been lost or is still lacking in the Other but found in the (sovereign) Self.

Chapter 6

The triumph of sovereignty: naturalising the sovereign/colonial frontier

While the previous chapter has discussed how colonial frontiers are performed by sovereign authorities this is not the last element of the process of enacting sovereignty and the sovereign state. Heuristically, a last strategy can be identify that will cement (as far as this is possible for discourses built on such fluid notions as civilisation and savagery) the distinction on which sovereignty depends. These discourses restrict sovereignty to the civilised, deny it to the savage, but they also naturalise this distinction and thus reinforce this civilisational differentiation. Recalling the earlier distinction made when talking about performativity, it is clear that discourses such as the discourse of sovereignty work to naturalise realities: they strive to sediment or materialise them. As argued by Bartelson (1995: 239) sovereignty is "profoundly involved in the naturalization and reification of political reality". The ultimate goal behind this strategy is to make reality appear as (empirically) self-evident. Here, it is the realities of civilisation and savagery that are in need of naturalisation: the discourse of sovereignty of the French are remarkable for their attempt at making essential the distinction savage/civilised that they build. In fact, and to a large extent, the success of their discursive strategies depends on the naturalness of the claims. Hence, it is crucial that sovereign discourses appear to only reflect an 'obvious' (because external) reality.

Different methods are used to achieve this naturalisation of sovereignty. In the case of the Amerindians, the French render the colonial frontier which separates them

from these 'newly discovered' peoples evident and pre-existing. They naturalise the state of nature by removing the doubts and the evidence of civilisation nevertheless identified. This reinforcement of the colonial frontier has also the effect of making French civilisation appear, by contrast, natural and undeniable. The second strategy used by the French relies on performing the Amerindians as welcoming and desiring French rule. Their savagery is thus further entrenched by these performed invitations of the Amerindians who, living in a miserable state, call on the French to civilise them. Back in 'domestic' France, the kings distance themselves from savagery by re-establishing their 'natural' civilisation by appealing to 'history'. The kings also insist, despite doubts and attacks, on the self-image of France as a civilised country – a move that both reinforces this ideal self-image and further delegitimises the attacks carried out by the League. Finally, the League is further essentialised as savage by its association to the close savages of the times: the Spanish.

What this chapter reveals, therefore, is the centrality of this 'appeal to nature' upon which performed realities – as most of our intellectual systems – depend upon. As explained by Boas (1978: 87), Greek and Roman scholars used what they called 'nature' in order to offer "a normative corrective to the variations in standards". The advantages of such an intellectual tool are obvious: by defining as 'natural' one set of behaviours or realities one is able to dismiss counter-arguments by connecting her views to a higher, external and thus (supposedly) objective element. In its own way, and as explained in this chapter, this is also what the French sovereign voice manages to do in order to reinforce its claims to sovereign superiority. Deconstructing the discourse of sovereignty through performativity thus reveals the presence of what McClintock called "the alibi of nature" (quoted by Dunn (2003: 68)), i.e. judgements made on the basis of 'natural' elements, by arguing that those 'natural' elements are constructed by a discourse that treat them as exterior and pre-existing.

From the Amerindian 'state of nature' to French sovereignty

Having established that the Amerindians live in a state of nature, the French discourse of sovereignty over them is already well-entrenched. Indeed, if the Amerindians are 'in the making' (i.e. in the process of becoming complete and social human beings), then French intervention can only be beneficial to start or accelerate this evolution. In a series of documents (all similar in terms of their argumentation) the French kings and officials refer to the state of nature of the Amerindians in order to explain their decisions. In doing so, they naturalise a state of nature that is the result of a cultural process of writing the Amerindians as uncivilised. By referring to this reality and excluding the doubts and

crossings explored in chapter 4 the French render obvious and evident a reality that they have culturally constructed. Undoubtedly, this naturalisation reinforces their claims to sovereignty over the Amerindians.

These naturalisations appear early one in the encounter. As soon as 1540, François I explicitly refers to the reality enacted by the early explorers when he sends Roberval and Cartier to Canada:

> Driven by the desire to understand and have knowledge of several territories that are said to be uninhabited and others possessed by savage peoples living without knowledge of God and without the use of reason, we have sent a certain time ago costly expeditions to discover several of said countries by some of our good pilots and some other subjects of good understanding, knowledge and experience (…) we have decided and deliberated to send back [Frenchmen] to the said countries of Canada and Ochelaga and other neighbouring lands across the sea not inhabited nor possessed nor dominated by any Christian ruler (…) with the objective that you live with these foreign peoples if possible and that you establish yourselves on these lands and countries, build there towns and numerous temples and churches to communicate our holy catholic faith and Christian doctrine, establish laws and justice officers to make them live reasonably and in the love of God (B.N.F., Français 5503, f. 190).

Here, one can identify a clear opposition between the irrational Amerindians and the rational French. This difference places the Amerindians at a sufficient – social – distance so that they can be naturally conquered, and it becomes a *duty* for the French to do so. Only through imperialist policies (and French domination) can the Amerindians improve their life (in particular through the development or activation of a potential that has been latent so far). The powers given by François I to his representatives in 1540 are therefore "near-royal powers" (Trudel, 1973: 36):

> And to attract the said peoples [the Amerindians] to the knowledge and love of god and to bring them and keep them under our obedience [I give you the right] to maintain the law and punish the disobedient ones, the rebels and the wrongdoers (be they from the said [French] expedition or from these lands) either with death or another exemplary punishment (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9384: f. 262).

As shown in these two quotes the Amerindians need to be educated (presumably to reach the same stage of civilisation as the French). Their constructed savagery is taken as a given

by French kings. The practical consequence of performing the Amerindians as familiar and inferior Others is thus their subsequent lack of any political right to self-government and sovereignty. Hence, the colonising mission of the French is framed around and is dependent upon a vision of the Amerindians living in the state of nature. French colonial policies are thus 'logically' beneficial to the Amerindians: they will allow them to enter the realm of 'culture' and to become socially efficient (according to French standards).

If the sovereignty of the Amerindians is disregarded – or rather is inconceivable for the French – the sovereignty of the civilised European monarchs is further naturalised (even when they are not French allies): François I insists that the countries where the French can establish themselves should not be "occupied, possessed or dominated or be under the subjection and obedience of any princes our allies and confederated and even of our dear and loved brothers the (Spanish) Emperor and the King of Portugal" (A.N., U754: f. 59v; this is also specified in other contemporary documents such as in B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 3). For the Europeans, "it was well established practice, amounting to law, that the state in whose name a settlement was established in territory formerly unsettled by the nationals of any European monarch, became sovereign of the territory in question (…) at no time were [the Amerindians] considered as the owners of their land or as being entitled to any role in connection with its disposition" (Green and Dickason, 1989: 38-39). The 'natural' superiority of the French is thus simply expressed through a legitimate and smooth silencing of the Amerindians' civilisation and rights.

Little change can be noticed in subsequent official documents giving permission to the French to colonise Canada. The same "barbaric peoples" are mentioned in 1578 (Michelant and Ramé, 1867: 8) when the king gives commission to de la Roche to be his Lieutenant in Canada. His instructions in the main repeat the previous official documents (while contributing to (re-)perform the Amerindians as 'naturally' savage that are discursively deprived of sovereign agency):

> Without offense to the princes our good friends, neighbours, allies and confederate, and without undertaking anything that could cause them some wrong, there is possibility to conquer and take some lands and countries newly discovered and occupied by barbaric peoples (Michelant and Ramé, 1867: 8).

In 1605, Henry IV gives commission to his admiral to "discover some coasts and remote lands uninhabited or inhabited by people still savage, barbarians and deprived of any religion, laws and civility, with the objective to settle there and build forts, and try to bring these peoples to the Christian faith, to civilise their mores, regulate their lives, and their collaboration with the French for what concerns trade. And to this aim bring them to recognise and submit themselves to the authority and domination of the French crown"

(B.N.F., F-46912 (22): 13). The establishment of civilisational difference not only shapes but is also further reinforced and naturalised by the successive French political decisions. The insistence on teaching and 'transmission of knowledge' (be it religious, agricultural or social) happening through French sovereignty are all directly related to the performed nature of the Amerindians. The legitimacy of French sovereignty is then simply established thanks to a short ceremony recorded in an official report (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 2: 4).[123] This type of sovereign acquisition becomes ingrained and by the mid-seventeenth century the major treatise on sovereignty written by Le Bret (1643: 121) mentions the legitimacy of these practices of grabbing land that is "abandoned and that remain without Lord".

The creation of companies also plays a role in the naturalisation and repetition of the savagery of the Amerindians. Several companies will be created in the 17th century to improve the mediocre results obtained in colonising Canada. The first one appears in 1627 (A.E., M.D. France 782: f. 97), and in the act of creation the French king mentions his desire that "the French reputation be spread far away in these foreign lands, and that our piety be publicised by the conversion of peoples buried in infidelity and barbarism" (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 198). Far from being restricted to commercial interests the company is set up with the objective of "populating the said land [of Canada] with French Catholics who by their example will incline these populations to the Christian faith, to civil life, and will establish there the royal authority" (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 222). This is important to notice as one could expect French colonial policy to be orientated only towards commercial gains. This should be even truer in the case of a commercial company. But even in its founding document the company is included in the French civilising mission, thus showing the prevalence of the idea of the cultural blankness of the Amerindians in deciding the shape of French policies. Through these discourses and statements what emerges is the 'naturalness' of the natural Amerindian, i.e. the obvious and undeniable reality of the Amerindian living a natural (and savage) lifestyle.

Due to the co-constitution of the notions of civilisation and savagery it is not surprising to find several expressions of French civilisation juxtaposed with the affirmations of Amerindian savagery. Cartier notes the "good order and police" existing in the French kingdom (Julien et al., 1946: 117) and Thévet (1558: 68) refers to France as a "country of law and police". Montchrestien (1615/1889: 322) expresses this sense of superiority eloquently when he writes that "if it belongs to one nation in the world to participate [in this colonisation] it is the French nation, which has inherited (as its own) the glory of the letters and warfare, of the arts and civility, and more importantly of the real Christianity". [124] Hence, it is not only "fair titles" that explain the king's rights on Canada but also "relevant reasons and honest conscience" (Biard, 1616: 320) linked to the moral and religious superiority of the French. Writing to Richelieu in 1635, a Jesuit estimates that the people of Canada begin to enjoy the "sweet fruits" of French benevolence, and that the

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[123] On the use European legal tools and techniques in these (supposedly) lawless lands of the 'New World' see Benton (2009).
[124] As Grovogui (1996: 51) writes "European intellectuals (…) claimed that the actions of the colonists were guided by a certain natural reason that resided only in Christianity".

presence of the French contribute to breathing life into "an infinity of barbaric peoples' souls who die every day in the slavery of the devil" (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 303-303v). Certainly defending their role in the eyes of the king, the Breton merchants also claim to have made the savages "obliging and gentle" thanks to their trade with them (B.N.F., N.A.F. 9269: f. 31). The civilising mission that cements claims to French sovereignty is thus reinforced and in its turn contribute to naturalising the colonial frontier between the French and the Amerindians.

The expression of French sovereignty over the Amerindians is further naturalised by the 'description' of the Amerindians as welcoming French sovereignty. In fact, the Amerindians have the *bon goût* to desire French rule! The Amerindians are reported as "loving and admiring our mores and ways of living" (Montchrestien, 1615/1889: 322) and Champlain is convinced that they are inviting the French to rule over them:

> These peoples do not possess a malevolent spirit as some of the other, distant savages, which make me believe that they would accept the knowledge of God, if their country was populated by people who spent time and effort to teach them by their good example how to live. Because if today they have a desire to improve their life, this desire will disappear tomorrow, when it will be time to suppress their bad habits, the debauchery of their mores, and their incivility. I talked with them several times about our beliefs, laws and customs, and they listened very attentively and then replied: '*You are telling me things that exceed my mind and understanding, and that we cannot understand by discourses. But if you desire us to understand them, it is necessary that you bring in this country women and children so that we can learn about the way you live, how you worship your God, how you obey the laws of your King, how you cultivate the land and feed the animals. Because by seeing these things, we would learn more in a year than in twenty, and would judge our life miserable compared to yours*'. Their discourse seemed to me natural common sense, and a proof of their desire to know God (B.N.F., Rothschild 1967: tome 1, 296-297).

Here, the Amerindians are deprived of agency through 'their' active desire for French rule. Unsurprisingly, 'their' aspirations are aligned to the French ones. The same strategy is used by Montchrestien (1615/1889: 320):

> God made us not only men, but men above the other men, and, what is even more important, Christians (…) to make us deserve this position, we should not fear crossing oceans and storms in order to make the name of God our creator known to so many barbaric peoples deprived of all civility, peoples who call us, who open

their arms to us, and are ready to become our subjects so that by our holy teachings and our good example we set them on the path to salvation.

In these two examples French writers perform a 'desire for submission', a discursive strategy that one can also notice in one of Columbus' letters (Dickason, 1997: 5) and more generally in the dual process of formal acknowledgement and silencing of the Amerindians performed by the Europeans (Greenblatt, 1991: 61). This discursive strategy is made available to the French through to their belief in the truthfulness of their perceptions and ideals and through the way they perform the Amerindians as incomplete and always lacking. Hence "the French found the actions of the natives in greeting them and participating in their ceremonies as unambiguously communicating their wishes to have the French rule over them" (Seed, 1995: 66). Added to the image of the Amerindians living in a state of nature, these interpretations render French sovereignty in Canada not only possible but natural and desirable for everyone involved.

The French kings as civilised and sovereign rulers

These strategies of naturalisation also play a crucial role in the domestic struggle between the kings and their adversaries. In their fight against the League and in order to defend their civilised sovereignty the French kings also attempt to naturalise their civilisation in different ways. Particularly noteworthy are the discourses that re-establish the French kings as historical purveyors of stability and civilisation. Generally speaking, then, this naturalisation of French sovereignty/civilisation takes the form of an appeal to 'history'. Henry III, for instance, states that he is above the savageries of the conflict: "I am legitimate King by succession, as you all know, and from a lineage that has always ruled gently" (Goulart, 1590: 568). Indeed, is not the French king from the oldest Christian race of kings? (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 278). The French kings are thus made to appear superior to – and untouched by – the savagery of the League and its supporters. In 1586 Henry of Navarre writes to the clergy supporting the League that "the war that you conduct so intensely is unworthy of Christians [and] unworthy among Christians" (B.N.F., N.A.F. 17874: f. 4). This civilised king is also one who has announced "the Gospel to the most remote parts of the world that were unknown to our predecessors" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 332). The superiority of the king above the League thus rests in his achievement of the ideal of a civilised ruler able to "soften the toughest and most barbaric hearts with the sound of his words" (B.N.F., Dupuy 313: f. 150). The kings are portrayed as ideal rulers – corresponding to the 'descriptions' outlined in chapter 3 – and as fathers to their people (B.N.F., Français 15591: f. 212v). In a declaration to the Parliament in 1585 Henry III reinforces this image by stating his "care to see [his] Kingdom flourish in the Glory of God and [his] subjects live in His fear and love" (B.N.F., Dupuy 844: f. 370).

Additionally, the two successive kings are careful to be identified with a peaceful kingdom bringing the possibility of progress and civilisation to their subjects. As such, they and their supporters depict an idealised image of (civilised) France before the troubles with the League which works to re-establish the 'natural' because normal state of the kingdom. Such expressions can be found throughout the troubled period under study. As soon as the revolt starts Henry III is keen to reaffirm how he has established "repose and public tranquillity that our Subjects have begun to enjoy a few years ago" through his hard work and his care (Goulart and Goujet, 1758a: 54). In 1587 the king presents his actions as aiming at the re-establishment of the peace and tranquillity enjoyed in the kingdom before the troubles (B.N.F., Français 3363: f. 116). He repeatedly refers back "to the previous years 1583 and 1584 and the good order that we had given and started to establish in our kingdom to the honour of God and the relief of our poor people" (B.N.F., Français 3876: f. 357v). When the Estates general are called in 1588, Henry III argues that if nothing is done "there will not remain any vestige of the character and highness of this kingdom of ours that used to be admired by all the foreign nations" (B.N.F., F-46886 (23): 5-7). In a public letter denouncing the recent Parisian takeover organised by the League, the king writes that he would have "never believed and estimated that a true and natural domination and power such as our own, that has been established so legitimately and for so long (and from which our subjects have received such good treatment and gratification…), would have had to be strengthened and reinforced with other forces or columns than those of piety and justice" (Goulart, 1590: 512). When Henry of Navarre succeeds Henry III he replicates the same discourses with the objective of establishing the legitimacy of his rule. In different public documents he argues that his "intensions… have always been to re-establish a good and durable peace in this Kingdom; we have always hoped to re-institute repose, splendour and opulence that due to the continuous civil wars have been lost" (A.E., M.D. France 762: f. 48; see also a similar expression in B.N.F., FZ-2069: 4). The insistence of the kings on their work towards the tranquillity and flourishment of France is thus crucial in their attempt at naturalising their civilisation and as a consequence their sovereignty.

Consequently, by placing the kings as historical defenders of civilisation, these discourses depict the monarchs as naturally acting for the *preservation* of French sovereignty and civilisation. Henry IV can thus affirm that his "principal desire and goal, and that towards which all our actions have tended, has been to establish in our Kingdom a good and certain tranquillity in order to put an end to the disorders, violence and miseries of the war, so that God can be worshiped according to his holy orders and the authority of the Laws and of justice can be re-established" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 71). This involvement and interest of the king in taking care of his kingdom is reminiscent of the idea of the King's two bodies (Kantorowicz, 1957):

> Every sensible man will always presume (without other evidence) that the King in his function as King – without considering the dementia and goodness that are

specific and natural to him – would have done what he could and should have to pacify his state… given that it is obviously his own good that is lost in the continuation of the civil miseries, his house that is burning, his blood that is spreading, and his life that is fading away (A.E., M.D. France 373: f. 77)

Implicit in this statement is the *impossibility* of conceiving of the king as acting for any other purpose than the preservation of the civilisation of the kingdom. Naturalisation here takes the form of a discursive closure. By discursively associating the kings to the civilised state of France these actors are able to support the view that if the monarchy is lost, then all civilisation and sovereignty will be lost as well. The role of the kings is thus to re-establish the 'normal' state of civilisation that has been lost due to the League. Hence, supporting the king(s) means ensuring the maintenance of social order, peace, and civilisation. Conversely, without a king, "[w]hat would the notable inhabitants who hold the offices of the Monarchy, the Finances, the Justice, the Police, the Army do?… All of this is lost, if the monarchy is lost. Who would provide them with the freedom to trade? Who would guarantee their possession of the land? What would become of the authority of their justice and their degrees? Who would command their army? In the end, what would be their order?" (B.N.F., N.A.F. 17874: f. 18). A similar discourse is used to promote reconciliation around Henry IV in 1593:

the Catholic Faith would be restored, the Churches preserved, the Clergy maintained in its dignities and possessions, Justice re-established, the Nobility would regain its strength and vigour for the defence and peace of the Kingdom, the Cities would recover from their losses and ruins thanks to the re-establishment of trade, of the arts and crafts that feed the people but are almost completely forgotten, of the Universities and the Sciences which have in the past made our Kingdom flourish, but which now languish and perish slowly; the fields would be cultivated again instead of being abandoned as they are in many places and would produce food for men instead of being covered with thistles and spines (which make them odious to see). In sum with peace everyone will take back his function (B.N.F., Français 4045: f. 28-28v).

The naturalisation of French sovereignty thus takes the form of an 'idealisation' (masquerading as a description) of the kingdom before the troubles. What these texts do is to remind to the reader the self-image of France as a civilised place and as such reconnect (in a particularly conservative manner) the preponderance of the kings to the magnificence of the kingdom. In other words, if France is necessarily sovereign, then the attacks performed by the League are false and misleading. This is why the kings and their supporters perform France as the pinnacle of civilisation so that they can re-establish their exemplary image of sovereignty. In an edict of 1588 Henry III explains how he rules over the "most noble kingdom on earth" (Goulart, 1590: 574). In a public answer to the Duke of

Mayenne, Henry IV presents himself as an extraordinary monarch: "It has pleased God to have us been born from the most ancient lineage of Christian kings, and by legitimate succession to reach the Crown of the most beautiful and flourishing Kingdom of Christianity" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 278). The Parliament of Paris reiterates this view by mentioning this "renowned and flourishing Monarchy" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 177), playing with the dichotomy encountered in previous chapters between the flourishing and civilised kingdom of France and the barren land – or *terra nullius* – of the Amerindians. Naturalising French superiority and civilisation therefore involves references to (traditional) external Others: "so as not to neglect any part of the world, is not this [royal] house renowned in Africa (…) and even among the Oriental Indians who, when they saw the Portuguese arriving towards them, called them *Franques*?" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 332). Hence, France's perfection means that "there is no people on earth that have ever had such beautiful and holy Laws like ours" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 332; see also B.N.F., F-23610 (483b): 3). A remonstrance dating from 1598 adds that the 'fleurs de lys' (the emblem of the king) are "rich jewels and the invaluable price of so many conquests that [the French kings] have won over their Enemies, the foreign Princes and the barbaric peoples" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 596). What is clear, then, is that France is considered to be "the soul of the world… the essential form of a true and perfect Monarchy" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 308).[125] The naturalisation of French sovereignty thus re-activates the political theories analysed in Chapter 3 and their essentialisation of France as sovereign and civilised.

A final strategy used by the French kings to naturalise their civilisation and thus support their sovereignty is to essentialise the League as barbaric by associating it with the widespread view of Spanish savagery. Participating in the 'Black Legend' the French kings insists on Spain as a savage Other which reinforces the naturalness of the kings' sovereignty. Surprisingly, it is not the Amerindians that are associated to the League in order to further reinforce the image of savagery; rather, the French kings use a supposedly civilised, Christian, state for this purpose. Of course, and as a collateral damage, the Amerindians are reproduced as savages as well. But their role is not to create a stark contrast between French sovereignty and the League savagery. They are used instead as poor (and noble) savages suffering under the barbarian Spanish yoke.

As mentioned previously, Spain played a key role in helping the League (in particular financially) with the objective of weakening the French kings. There is therefore a logical sense of animosity against Spain in most anti-League discourses. But this animosity takes a specific form: Spain is indeed associated with an image of savagery and barbarism. Talking about – and in favour of – the rights of the French king, one author writes that the

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[125] In a rather ironic way, the same pamphlet justifies the 'completeness' of France by describing it as a 'miniature world' that incorporates the best of every region (including 'Peru') without explicitly noticing that France could indeed include some traits usually associated with these places (such as savagery).

king and the French people "have been strong [in their faith], for the Church, when Asia, Africa, Spain, Italy, and almost the entire universe was full of Arianism and heresies" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 694). The attack becomes even more precise in 1595 regarding the failed attempt of a Jesuit to kill the French king: "Africa does not give birth to monsters anymore; our Europe does, France nourishes them and brings them up, Spain grants them recognition, and Italy [the Pope] sanctifies them" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 251).

More than the support of Spain to the League, it is the "unfair and tyrannical domination" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 59) of Spain over its possessions in America that is the most commonly used idea that sustains, by contrast, the good administration and good civilisation of the French king(s) (see B.N.F., F-46893 (9)). These discourses emerge out of the widespread image of Spanish misconduct towards the Amerindians. In 1579 an extensive account of the cruelties of the Spanish in the Americas was written by Benzoni and adapted into French by Chauveton (Benzoni, 1579). These ideas in turn informed the strong nationalist and anti-League discourses emerging from 1593 (Weill, 1892). Indeed, Spain becomes naturalised as savage. Some sources associate Spain with the idea of barbarism, arguing for instance that Spain "puts the Indies upside down by dint of searching for gold mines" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758b: 40). The League becomes associated with Spanish exploitation of its colonial possessions, with explicit references to the Indies (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 169). It is thus the evidence of uncivilised government of the Spanish in America that helps the French establish Spain as an inferior Other. Evoking the promise of the Spanish king to financially help the League, a 1593 pamphlet accuses Spain of barbarism in 'Peru'

> where he [the Spanish king] drained all the mines and killed two millions of these poor peoples [the Amerindians] in the process due to all the detestable cruelties that Antiquity invented and that time has added (…) [talking to the Spanish:] Fearless butchers, your hands are impatient to find out if the French stomach (…) is softer than the savage one (Goulart and Goujet, 1758c: 215-216).

Crucially here, both the Spanish and the savages are performed as inferior Others. By appealing to 'incontestable' evidence of Spanish misconduct in America, the French naturalise their civilised identities and the savage identity of Spain and of the Amerindians. As a consequence, the prospect of Spanish rule over France is strongly opposed. Spain is qualified as a "barbaric and foreign power" to which the League is subjected (B.N.F., Dupuy 549: f. 147).[126] The Spanish also use "intolerable cruelties" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758d: 690). L'Hospital (1825: 102-104) stated this view as early as the 1560s: for him the Spanish "ruin these poor Indians with their tyrannies and barbaric and unbearable cruelties"; even

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[126] For similar expressions by the Parliament see Goulart and Goujet (1758d: 178) and in a pamphlet see Goulart and Goujet (1758e: 105).

worse, the Spanish conduct themselves as "brute beasts" towards the Amerindians. The catastrophic prospect of being ruled by the Spanish is thus repeatedly used to foster unity around the king during the League. As a 1590 pamphlet declares "all the Christian nations, and even the Barbarians and Indians, give ample testimony of the harshness and tyranny that the Spanish use on those who are subjected to their sovereignty" (B.N.F., Dupuy 579: 158v; other associations with tyranny are made in B.N.F., Français 6546 (3) and B.N.F., F-46893 (9)). Interestingly, the very people of Spain is also associated with unsovereign traits such as disobedience to the ruler (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 37). As such, letting Spain govern France is intolerable. In a 1594 public discourse in Parliament one member declares that it would be unacceptable to "mould France on this wonderful and miserable part of the earth… really another world, formerly so peopled and today so vast and wasted" (B.N.F., Dupuy 240: f. 191). And not only have the Spanish used "inhuman" and "barbaric" methods against the Amerindians (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 105): they are in fact becoming savage themselves. The reformed churches indeed describe them as "already half-savage due to their sustained company with the savages" (Goulart and Goujet, 1758e: 482).

Different naturalisation strategies are thus added by the French kings in order to perform the naturalness of their civilisation. The French kings and the French kingdom are re-installed as historical exemplars of civilisation. The self-image identified by the theorists is thus (re-)established by the kings themselves as the timeless essence of France. Another strategy involves America, but not in the way we would expect. Instead of the French kings comparing themselves favourably to the seminal savages of America, what the task of statecraft reveals is that the Amerindians are indeed established as savages but it is the misconduct of Spain – and by extension of the League – that is central in these discursive strategies. By reinforcing and naturalising the image of Spain as a barbaric actor the French kings are able to create a contrast with their own immaculate civilised sovereignty.

Concluding remarks

Performativity works through the naturalisation of realities. These realities are reiterated until they appear normal, pre-existing, acceptable, in one word: *natural*. The discourses of sovereignty are no different: in order to reinforce the colonial frontiers created at the time of the European explorations the French naturalise, through different strategies, the identities on which their sovereignty is built and depends. These strategies involve reiterative assertions that the Amerindian are savage beings living in a state of nature but also a remarkably effective shaping of Amerindian desires and wishes. Through the French discourses we discover that the Amerindians desire French rule and welcome French sovereignty over them as their only hope to progress and improve their conditions. This

discursive strategy has two effects: it legitimises French domination over the Amerindians by removing any obstacles to it but it also reinforces the image of the French as civilised teachers involved in a civilising mission.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the civilised sovereignty of the French kings is performed as eternal and attached to the (self-)image of France as a civilised country. By associating themselves with this traditional way of portraying France the kings naturalise their civilisation and as such reinforce their claims to sovereignty. Their appeal to an idealised 'history' is thus crucial in the process of reinforcing their claims to sovereignty; thanks to this strategy, it becomes difficult (if not impossible) to destabilise the naturalness of French civilisation and sovereignty. In addition, these discourses of sovereignty reveal how another actor – Spain – is naturalised as savage. Thanks to their appeals to 'incontestable' evidence, the French kings can, by contrast, demonstrate the strength and incontestability of their civilised behaviours.

The naturalisations at play in this chapter thus further emphasise the co-constitution of identities and their subsequent normalisation as pre-existing to the discourses that call them into being. The standard of civilised normality of the French is variously established as undeniable through a reiteration of the civilised-savage frontier, through a conservative appeal to 'history' or through the very recognition of the standard 'by' those who have not achieved it. The two colonial frontiers also reinforce each other: the superiority of the French performed during the encounter with the Amerindians feeds into the domestic naturalisation of French sovereignty while the case of Spain reveals how the reinforcement of the domestic colonial frontier strengthens the exclusion of the Amerindians as savages. After these naturalisations, the external and internal colonial frontiers appear inviolable, thus heralding the triumph of sovereignty.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to explore the missing internal dimension of the construction of civilised sovereignty and to juxtapose this dimension to the well-known external (or international) construction of sovereignty over colonised peoples. Moving beyond what was identified as a limitation of post-colonial analyses – namely their exclusive focus on the external side of the colonial encounter, i.e. how Western states construct their sovereignty over the non-West – this thesis has problematised the establishment of this internal-external boundary by revealing how sovereignty is constructed through discourses of civilisation and savagery both in the West and the non-West.

First, I have discussed how French conceptualisations of sovereignty in the 16th century are necessarily linked to civilised standards of what an acceptable form of political authority and, more fundamentally, what a political *society* are. The conceptual construction of sovereignty in France always involved references to civilisation and culturally specific forms of exercising political authority. These scholarly discourses have also been shown to contain countless references to the ideas of savagery and state of nature. The idea of a progress of humankind from savagery to civilisation is indeed essential in constructing sovereignty and justifying the exercise of a final political authority in a political community. The concept of 'civilised sovereignty' is thus not another way to qualify sovereignty (like positive sovereignty or Westphalian sovereignty) but it is rather the very nature of sovereignty to be attached to a civilisational framework. Given the inherent normativity of references to a superior civilisation the naturalness of sovereignty (and thus its objectivity) are thus further problematised. Indeed, revealing the necessary link between sovereignty and civilisation enables one to insist on the necessity of a cultural frame of reference for identifying a 'true' sovereign state. This is reminiscent of Anghie's analysis of nineteenth-century international lawyers and their difficulty in articulating *in scientific terms* what a sovereign (and civilised) state was (Anghie, 2005: 57-59).

This thesis has then explored the task of statecraft through the writing of the savage (and non-sovereign) identity of the Amerindians and of the civilised (and sovereign) identity of the French. In both contexts, claims to civilised sovereignty have been revealed to be more complex than expected when the Western and non-Western worlds are taken as already different before their encounter. In particular, I have shown how elements of civilisation and savagery are present on both sides of the Atlantic: the Amerindians seem to possess traits of civilisation while the French kingdom is portrayed as a savage state of nature. The colonial frontier between civilised and savage is thus destabilised. As such, 'different' identities have to be created out of 'similarities' and shared characteristics between the two sides of the Atlantic. Statecraft thus becomes the process of 'attributing' civilised and savage identities to the sovereign and the unsovereign – or rather as the process of constructing such identities in order to support claims to sovereignty.

This is why Chapters 5 and 6 have explored the way(s) sovereignty relies on a construction (masquerading as identification) of the civilised and the savage. the Amerindians are *culturally* inscribed as savage thanks to the identification by the French of a large number of similarities that never fully qualify as complete or valid. Always falling short of being a complete Self the Amerindian is interpreted as a (familiar) Other living at the bottom of the civilisational hierarchy dominated and defined by the French. The state of nature in which the Amerindians live is thus built out of the familiar traits of savagery that the French carry with them in their encounters. Hence, the Amerindians fail to live up to civilised standards because they embody the familiar notions of savagery that were widespread in Europe at the time. In a similar way 'inside' of France, French sovereignty is constructed through a recurrent 'distancing' from French savage Others. Using the same references as for the Amerindians, the French kings and their supporters paint the League as an internal savage Other in order to represent their own political actions and values as civilised. These identities are further entrenched through a variety of strategies that make them appear 'natural' and self-evident. But when compared to the previous destabilisations of the colonial frontier, one is able to see their artificiality and constructedness.

In sum, sovereignty is shown to be a political struggle between self-appointed civilised actors and the savage Others that they construct by opposition to them. Such a process of building civilised and savage identities is riddled with doubts and can only be disciplined by the sovereign voice. What emerges, then, is a necessary yet threatening construction and subsequent differentiation of the civilised sovereign state from savage Others: these Others are both necessary for the state actors to ground their claims to sovereignty but they also need to be domesticated and placed in a familiar, unthreatening framework. As a consequence, these unavoidable Others occupy the margins of the political order. The hyper agency of the Western state is established thanks to this key strategy of production and differentiation from external and internal Others.

Additionally, this thesis has discussed how discourses of sovereignty rest on an arbitrary and always temporarily established distinction between civilised and savage. Sovereignty is not only constructed on similar ideas of civilisation and savagery inside and outside the West: it is also constructing hierarchies internally and externally. Indeed, and while the inferiorisation of the non-West has been discussed extensively in the post-colonial literature on sovereignty and colonial encounters, the same process is mirrored inside the West with some parts of the population performed as savage and inferior. In other words, the presence of savagery – that should logically be absent from a civilised state like France – is necessarily and repeatedly performed in the contest over sovereignty. Paradoxically, then, a refocus on the Western dimension of civilised sovereignty reveals a fuller and more balanced picture of the Eurocentrism of the concept since the same discriminatory processes can be identified on both sides of what are, essentially, *two* civilised frontiers constructed on similar ideas of progress.

Re-assessing sovereignty and its role as an organising principle of our international society

Several conclusions can be drawn from this analysis of sovereignty. First, sovereignty participates in the establishment of (i) a domestic hierarchy between the legitimate ruler (or rulers) and those who have to obey and (ii) an international hierarchy between the legitimate form of rule (the civilised values) and the values that are denied this legitimacy and importance. The first hierarchy is 'internal' to the sovereign state and enables a minority to maintain its power. This domination is justified by the achievement of civilisation through the sovereign and by the savage (and thus illegitimate) nature of any alternative. Civilisation is thus clearly involved in the political struggles accompanying statecraft. Far from its image of objective and 'descriptive' concept, sovereignty depends on the political process of establishing civilised and savage identities. This is why the attribution of an unproblematic civilised identity to the West misses the essential idea that the West (as any other actor claiming civilisation) can only be temporarily and imperfectly civilised. Hansen (2006: 30) wrote that "the state only knows who and what it is through its juxtaposition against the radical, threatening Other. And, the protection of the state against an external Other is often intimately linked with the delineation of an internal Other". Sovereignty is thus the ever-reproduced (and always in need of a further reproduction) performance of a civilised Self and a savage Other. The second form of hierarchy to which sovereignty is connected (and to which I come back below) is between the civilised sovereign state and the uncivilised dependent Other. By classifying some societies as less advanced – or backwards, to use a more politicised (and less now less frequent) term – the sovereign can impose his authority and legitimate his domination. Sovereignty thus seems to escape our simplistic analytical categories and disciplinary

boundaries: it plays a key role both towards the 'inside' and towards the 'outside and it orders the world in both spheres by constructing civilised and savage identities.[127]

Because sovereignty has been shown to be necessarily associated with civilised values, this thesis also represents another critique of the IR desire to describe sovereignty as an objective and unlimited form of political authority. Attributing some objectivity to a political concept like sovereignty is particularly problematic. Indeed, sovereignty is necessarily associated with a standard (of civilisation). Because of its inherent normativity sovereignty should rather be studied through the lens of performativity. Such an approach reveals that the realities of sovereignty are always naturalised and never natural (or *naturally there* for the observer to see). Judgements on the reality of sovereignty can thus only be made by looking at the naturalised realities that state actors (and their competitors) perform. These "[p]erformances of the state [constitute] ephemeral moments which seek to claim permanence" (Jeffrey, 2013: 73). The objectiveness that scholars find lacking in sovereignty is thus the result of a mismatch between their own analytical and epistemological expectations and the way sovereignty functions. Pointing to the lack of control that most states exhibit over their own borders and territory Benton (2009: 279) argues that "sovereignty is often more myth than reality, more a story that polities tell about their own power than a definite quality they possess". Such a statement is problematic insofar as it conflates the idea of constructedness with that of artificiality (sovereignty as a 'myth'). As shown in this thesis, sovereignty functions as a set of claims referring to (supposedly pre-existing) civilised foundations. Its constructedness does not make it less 'real'. Rather, it makes it 'real' in a different way.

As far as the ideas of 'unlimitedness' or 'absoluteness' are concerned this thesis supports the view that sovereignty is attached to responsibilities (Glanville, 2014). Nevertheless, IR scholars also need to recognise that sovereignty is attached to *Western* responsibilities. This has important implications for contemporary international relations. Just like the idea of trusteeship, sovereignty has been constructed on paternalistic implications, namely "to redeem peoples that fell well short of the (self-affirmed) perfection of European civilization" (Bain, 2003: 7). My analysis of civilised sovereignty has shown how certain non-Western features are devalued and delegitimised if they do not correspond to the Western (here: French) model of a civil society. As a consequence, the ideas of equality and independence attached to the concept should be questioned. In fact, these non-Western features are usually ignored altogether (or seen as inexistent). But crucially, there is nothing intrinsically superior or more successful in the attributes of

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[127] As Bartelson (1995: 17) noticed, "[s]overeignty as a concept seems to float free of its instances in the 'domestic' and 'international' spheres. Instead, it cuts across these levels of analysis, and seems to be the condition behind their separation and interdependence; it forms the crucial link between anarchy and hierarchy".

Western states. The only reason for this delegitimisation is the perceived *difference* of these features from the accepted features conducive to social life (and thus to a superior and more desirable way of life). Such judgements are normative and based on a Eurocentric understanding of the development of human societies. This is why when using sovereignty we need to recognise "the political implications of our categories" and the only apparent neutrality and timelessness of our language (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006: 344). As Puchala (1997: 129) writes, IR scholars should abandon their "implicit assumption that Western analytical concepts are both universally acceptable and unquestionably valid". Sovereignty is indeed always reproducing inferiority and dependence for some and as such plays a central role in the construction of hierarchy at the international level.

Finally, this thesis has questioned the usual and common-sense association between sovereignty and independence. In the theoretical literature as well as in policy discussions sovereignty (as the inherent correlate of the nation-state) is attributed a key role for the emancipation of peoples around the world. Taken at a high level of generality, sovereignty seems universal enough; it simply refers to a right to independence held by the highest authority of any given polity. But as shown in this thesis this restricted understanding is not the one that has been used by the West. In fact, political writers and actors have found it impossible to identify what sovereignty is outside of their (or the dominant) cultural framework. This is why IR scholars need to question the association between sovereignty and independence. Sovereignty promotes (at best) the independence of the sovereign elite adhering to the values considered as civilised in the West. Even when they recognise the Western content of the concept, some scholars still reproduce this standard view. Bull (1984: 222-223), for instance, writes that the revolt against the West he describes has been "conducted (...) in the name of ideas or values that are themselves Western", including "the rights of states to sovereign equality". Such an argument both acknowledges the provincial nature of sovereignty but still universalises the concept by referring to its use by actors in the non-West. Bull does not consider how such a spread of the concept of sovereignty could be considered as a problematic imposition of Western values. Not because sovereignty means freedom and because the West is supposedly the 'inventor' of this idea but because sovereignty is built on a specific Western understand of freedom. Given the strong cultural content of sovereignty (i.e. the way it serves as a vehicle for Western values) this reliance on a concept supposedly bringing equality led to a further domination of the West. As argued by Nandy (1983: 3), "the specific variants of the concepts with which many anti-colonial movements in our times have worked have often been the products of the imperial culture itself and, even in opposition, these movements have paid homage to their respective cultural origins". In this acceptation, the problem with sovereignty in the non-West is not its lack of achievement but rather the consequences of fully achieving it. Inayatullah and Blaney (1995) indeed argued that if Third World states had capacities to be 'units of meaning' then the promise of independence that sovereignty holds could be achieved. But even if the non-West was to acquire such capacities, would their independence be recognised by other (Western) states if the form taken by this independence was to differ substantially from Western expectations? In other words, is the problem with the adoption of sovereignty by the non-

West one of achievement – realising sovereignty – or one of cultural specificity of the concept (in which case the non-West will always lag behind)? In this thesis I defended the latter answer on the basis of the intrinsic links between sovereignty and Western civilisation. From this perspective, sovereignty seems badly adapted (to say the least) to the goal of non-Western independence and emancipation.

Implications beyond sovereignty: from international to intercultural relations?

Beyond the (central) concept of sovereignty, the conclusions of this thesis are also relevant to the question of culture and identity and their role in a narrowly-defined field of inter*national* relations. Sovereignty is indeed a prime example of how culture is generally excluded from IR as a non-topic (or as irrelevant for out conceptualisations of relations between already-formed states). As shown in the review of the literature on sovereignty, the role of culture is silenced in different ways (that are sometimes combined): Western culture can be portrayed as neutral or as accommodating difference and the Other since it is relatively open and non-directive. Another way through which culture is silenced is through the presentation of the dominant (Western) culture as indeed provincial, but as the most desirable form of culture. Western culture is therefore universalised based on its undeniable superiority. Finally, the role of culture(s) can be relegated to the past, either to pre-modern (and pre-international) relations or to the imperial past. In both cases, cultures or civilisations are seen as not (or less) relevant in the current universal global order.[128]

As discussed throughout this thesis, though, international relations presuppose encounters between cultures. Approaching international relations as intercultural relations opens up new ways of looking at the topics that IR as a discipline focuses on. It also raises different questions that IR has so far evacuated (except for a few exceptions). In particular, and if international relations are primarily about interactions guided by culture, how does culture shape these encounters? How is the Other perceived and conceptualised? What can a focus on these cultural encounters reveal for the relations that we study as international?

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[128] This tends to be the view shared by constructivists and English School scholars. Bull and Watson (1984: 429), for instance, argue that the rise of the Third World has led to a "new international political order, in which the interests of the non-western majority of states and peoples are reflected".

These are important questions and this thesis has only provided partial answers to some of them. Indeed, through the study of the French encounter with the Amerindians of present-day Canada, one is afforded a glimpse of what encounters between cultures entail.[129] One of the main conclusions of this analysis is that the 'different' Other is always read through pre-existing categories of difference. She is, essentially, a familiar Other. In practice, this means that the signs identified by the French were always re-inscribed into a familiar framework (which, in this case, was that of 'savagery'). This is consistent with what studies on early ethnography and on travel literature have revealed. In their studies of pre-Renaissance travels, scholars have concluded that 'encounters' reveal more about the familiar frameworks used than about the peoples 'discovered'. In the late Middle Ages, early ethnographers "had to describe (and therefore distort) alien societies in the familiar terms of feudal organisation" and would assimilate newly found peoples into known categories (Fernández-Armesto, 1982: 281-282). Strangeness is thus always familiar: Marco Polo, for instance, "travels across a landscape half created in advance of him" (Campbell, 1988: 88). Hodgen (1964: 54) similarly argues that

> Medieval anthropogeography in this sense was tough mental stuff, so often repeated, so durable, so satisfying, that by the time of the Renaissance many of its preconceptions had been accepted as received experience, and were employed, to the confusion of thought, in the interpretation of the new peoples of the New World.

Cultural encounters are here reduced from the heroic and idealised transformative act of discovery to a mere allocation of the exotic "within the context of a familiar web of discourse" (Ryan, 1981: 523).[130] The Other is incorporated into the "language of the system" (Pratt, 1992: 31). The 'difference' that is seen is in fact already-known: "Almost without effort, the new worlds were co-opted into a style of thinking as if they had been part of the argument from the beginning" (Ryan, 1981: 530).

Just like other cultural 'encounters', then, the French 'encounter' with the Amerindians was heavily influenced by previous concepts and theories. These explorers were no different from the early anthropologists studied by Hodgen (1964: 184): "When abroad, their eyes saw no more than their minds, shaped at home, were prepared to accept". One could even ask whether this type of identification by association to familiar

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[129] One should be careful, however, not to restrict cultural encounters to encounters between self-defined cultures (such as 'the French' or what they perceived as different ('the Amerindians')). Encounters can and do happen inside of a supposedly cohesive culture (such as the French one). This point is explored below.

[130] Campbell (1988: 22) explains how "the seeing itself is an act of reverence, not of discovery".

frameworks is not a universal feature also used by the non-West: this seems to be the way the Tainos integrated the Spanish who arrived from a 'different' land and with a 'different' culture (Bitterli, 1986: 73). Taking one's culture as a reference point, the 'explorers' construct the Other as lacking when compared to their idealised Self-image. The other becomes a distortion of the Self (Campbell, 1988: 177-178). And the identity of the Other changes as the identity of the Self is transformed. Indeed, a common feature of Western encounters with the non-West is the classification of the different Other as the antithesis or negative of the positive West. More specifically, the non-West is identified by its lack when compared to the West (Hodgen, 1964: 25-26; Bernheimer, 1970: 9). This confirms the idea that the Other is always defined in relation to the Self. As explored in this thesis, the civilised and the savage function as a nexus: one would not exist without the other. Encounters are thus events during which this nexus is established, reproduced or destabilised.

International/intercultural relations thus reveal an unexpectedly disappointing picture: the cultural encounters can be summarised by an assimilation or domestication of the Other by the Self. Indeed, historians have concluded that "[t]he assimilation of the new worlds, in other words, involved their domestication" (Ryan, 1981: 523). One way the presence of an Other is explained in this context is through the idea of 'degeneration'. Degeneration offers a convenient way to domesticate the Other: it both explains and renders the Other inoffensive or unthreatening. This strategy was widely used in the pre-modern era (Bernheimer, 1970: 8; Fernández-Armesto, 1982: 281) but also during the Age of 'Discoveries': according to Blaney and Inayatullah (2006: 124) many Europeans "regarded the New World peoples' physical and social distance from the singular moment of Edenic creation as a correlate of their degeneration from Christian faith and civilized behaviour". By placing the 'new' and 'unknown' – these terms being somewhat deceptive, as explained below – into familiar frameworks (for instance through the idea of degeneration) encounters are made inoffensive: they do not and logically cannot destabilise one's own worldview or perspectives since the encountered Other is always already established and re-established into the known. Alternatives are erased and intercultural relations become self-validating exercises, at least for the dominant actors.

The relations that IR focuses on thus seem to be mainly concerned with escaping true cultural questioning of one's own culture. They become "openly self-validating" exercises (Ryan, 1981: 536). This is not surprising: given that "the self is constituted/constructed in relation to the other" (Guillaume, 2002: 12), this Other is never read or seen on her own terms. Some discussions in IR could be enriched by such insights on intercultural relations. The search for the local and non-Western must for instance deal with these limitations if it is to produce a convincing account of this elusive Other. This is not only a theoretical issue: recently state-building scholars and practitioners have shown a renewed interest in the non-Western or 'local' (particular through the 'local ownership' agenda and the critiques of liberal state-building). State-building actors have been criticised

for basing their approach on the idea of a non-West state of nature or *tabula rasa* (Autesserre, 2009; Lemay-Hébert, 2011). But escaping this deadlock will prove difficult if the perceptions of the non-West by the West are not deconstructed and analysed in depth. Indeed, and even with the best intentions, finding the 'local' is no easy task while reproducing the non-West as the antithesis of the West appear as the commonest option.

IR as a discipline should thus focus on encounters between cultures and how they could provide a more meaningful questioning of the Self and the worldviews that she holds. A lot of what IR is concerned with (war and peace, the ordering of our international society, interventions and the post-colonial condition) is intimately related to these cultural 'encounters'. These practices are indeed shaped by the inability of the West to experience a genuine encounter with difference: imposing worldviews and the inability to dialogue is a common attitude denounced both by critical scholars (who see in it the persistence of imperialist reflexes) and mainstream actors (who consider this tendency as counter-productive in the establishment of a global liberal order). The discipline should thus concentrate on the possibility of a true cultural encounter or dialogue of cultures. Ideally, this could enable the West to explore "alternative ways of life as a source of critical reflection on the present" (Blaney and Inayatullah, 2006: 126). This is how the inclusion-exclusion dynamic (Aalberts, 2014) that characterises the colonial encounters could be avoided. Through this dynamic the colonial Other is included in the colonial order – they are perceived as part of this order – but they are also excluded at the same time by being placed at the margins of this order (as savage, underdeveloped or 'traditional'). A genuine encounter with difference would break this dynamic and allow for an integration of the Other in her own terms. Nevertheless, the possibility of such a dialogue can seem remote: indeed, if one considers language to be central for our construction of the world, a true encounter with difference remains an unrealistic prospect. The Self will always construct the Other from the language that she holds (in the broad sense of 'words' and concepts), thus never offering a truthful representation of this Other. As Campbell (1988: 179) explains,

> the traveler's medium is language, and the language he uses has evolved as an envelope specific to its region and culture. It has no words for what is alien – at least, no words that do not contain and express their roots in the state of alienation.

This is why the Other is always already alienated from the Self and inscribed at the margins of the 'normal'. The search for 'true' encounters might thus be seen as a desire inscribed in a traditional view of science as a positivist and rational enterprise of discovery and empirical description. Only in such a context is a true or genuine encounter possible. But as discussed throughout this thesis, such an approach is an idealisation of what cultural encounters – and science, for that matter – are. A culturally-infused language is

predominant in the shaping of the Other. As such, the critical approaches that idealise cultural encounters as opportunities for the discovery of the Other run the risk of contradicting some of their fundamental presupposition (for instance that the non-West is discursively constructed by the West and cannot be seen 'as it is'). To postulate that there is an impossibility to access reality empirically and outside the medium of (culturally-biased) language and concepts should lead to the logical conclusion that 'true' encounters – or the "representation of difference in its own terms" (Ryan, 1981: 536) – can never be achieved. This is a conclusion that is equally applicable to the assumptions underlying this project.

Related to the question of cultural encounter, a second major implication of this thesis for our understanding of international relations is the persistence of colonial frontiers (constituted precisely through the failure of achieving a true and genuine cultural encounter). These frontiers correspond to the differentiation between civilised and savage and the attribution of a seemingly fixed identity to 'different' subjects. These frontiers are well-known to post-colonial scholars who have been studying them in the establishment and maintenance of imperialism and colonialism. The non-West is placed in the category of the savage, relegated to the margins of the international order and portrayed as in need of the help of the West in order to improve its situation. International relations thus do not seem to have evolved dramatically since the Middle Ages: the Other is represented as abnormal and thus placed outside (or excluded) from the normal order of international politics. Campbell (1988: 63) explains how Christian intellectuals used the same expedient by placing the abnormal "outside the *oikumene* in spaces not under the control of the local bishop or bailiff" which reveals how intercultural studies have resonance for international relations. But throughout this thesis what has been emphasised is the proximity of the external Other with the internal Other: the external Other – the Amerindians and savage peoples more generally – are never far from internal Others such as the League or from close Others such as the Spanish. The same colonial frontier is thus present internally and is constructed in similar ways: the internal Other is a savage Other that is both included in existing frameworks and excluded (i.e. relegated to the margins of the political order). The inclusion-exclusion logics of the colonial order are at play both internally and externally.

As such, the discourses of sovereignty reveal that the use of savagery to characterise one's own internal Others in Europe was widespread. As Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 90) observe, the term 'Indian' and its associated savagery "came to be linked to all others" in the 16th and 17th centuries (including religious adversaries back in Europe). Hobbes also constructed his theory with the implication that Europeans could degenerate from their civilised achievements back into savagery (Ashcraft, 1971: 1108-1111). The question of cultural encounters addressed above is thus equally present inside the sovereign state. Using the example of travel writing, Pratt (1992: 35) explains that "European peasantry came to appear only somewhat less primitive than the inhabitant of the Amazon". Thus, one should not arbitrarily restrict the idea of (mis)understanding

between cultures to the international sphere. Doing so would mean essentialising the external Other as different or more different than the internal Other. Furthermore, and as shown in this thesis, it is possible to identify commonalities between the internal and external processes of Othering. The arbitrary boundary between Politics and IR as separate displines is destabilised by the consideration of how difference is produced. But one crucial specificity remains: the Othering of the savage 'at home' relies on a juxtaposition between her savagery and her recently-held but now lost civilisation. As such, domestic savagery undeniably carries a specific weight: the European savage is indeed worse than the distant Other because the former lives in contact with and among the civilised Selves. In a way, the savage in the West should have known better and her savagery is portrayed as a somehow more offensive sin. Accusations of savagery – and as such the establishment of the colonial frontier – therefore play a specific role in the West: turned against those who have all the resources to be(come) civilised, the domestic savage is doubly-condemned since she has no excuse for her behaviour.

Numerous central preoccupations for IR also rely (or are constructed thanks to) colonial frontiers. War and its justifications, terrorism (and the identification of the 'terrorist') or interventions: all rely on the important distinction between the civilised, advanced and rational and the savage, backwards or child-like. As revealed with sovereignty, these colonial frontiers are arbitrarily established for political purposes and regularly crossed. This civilisational difference is also constructed out of familiarity. These insights could find some resonance in the study of war, terrorism or interventions. All these areas are informed by these colonial logics of differentiation and hierarchical ordering. But all are equally troubled by the lack of stability and permanence of these colonial frontiers between civilised and savage. More generally, these international practices seem to create the very problem that they are designed to solve or reduce: difference. Indeed, they all rely on the presence of Others in order to establish their significance. In this way, they are all involved in the creation or reproduction of colonial frontiers. This is particularly contradictory since difference is also the source of the dangers and problems that these practices are designed to deal with. The international reality that is constructed though through these concepts – sovereignty, war, terrorism... – is thus ironically both a necessity and a danger: it is necessary for international relations as we know it to continue to exist (as a self-validating exercise) and dangerous since this constructed Otherness must be excluded and domesticated. The civilised Self therefore creates the very condition – and reason – of its maintenance by contributing to the establishment of an Other.

Finally, and through its exploration of sovereignty, this thesis has insisted on bringing the internal and external processes of othering closer together and on identifying commonalities between them. Such a choice raises an important question that has implications for IR more generally: can the discriminations suffered by the West be compared – or equalled – to the discriminations suffered by the non-West? If the colonial frontier is as important inside and outside, could it be concluded that the establishment of

these hierarchies placed an equal burden on the marginalised Others inside and outside the sovereign state? Is the imposition of a standard of civilisation in the West comparable to the imposition of the same standard to others? Bringing the internal and external processes together has thus the advantage of showing the similarities and shared logics of both but could also lead to difficult questions about the sufferings experienced by the internal and external 'savages'. More importantly, the problem is not in having to decide who suffered the most (as if such a question was answerable) but whether colonial logics have the exact same effect on both the West and the non-West. When Nandy (1983) mentions the impact of colonialism on the British themselves, is he justified in arguing that the British were victims in the same way as the Indians they colonised? Some would probably argue that blurring the line between the colonised at home and the colonised abroad could obscure the way the non-West suffered from the establishment of the colonial frontier. But the other solution – to treat the internal colonial frontier as a minor issue irrelevant for IR – would mean to arbitrarily restrict colonial logics to the international. Once again, it is IR as a discipline – and its desire to conceptualise the international as separate and distinct – that is being interrogated. Some will answer that blurring the lines between IR and Politics will obscure more than clarify; this thesis, on the contrary, has sought to demonstrate the benefits of doing so.

Analytical choices and limitations of the thesis

While this thesis can make valuable contributions to the debates about sovereignty and IR more generally, it is also restricted by some of the analytical choices made. This section will discuss them, try to assess their importance and finally relate them to the future research areas that this thesis could lead to.

The first limitation of this thesis is linked to the choice of a specific case and period. In this thesis the emphasis has been on French external and internal sovereignty. In the case of external sovereignty, the focus has been on the first contacts between the French and the Amerindians. Despite the geographical limitedness of this encounter I have been able to identify similar discourses in the broader literature on the 'Discovery' of America. This literature, which includes the works by Pagden, Todorov and Greenblatt, among others, is usually focused on the Spanish encounter. But interestingly the Spanish reactions discussed by these scholars mirror that of the French in their encounter with the Amerindians. In its external dimension, then, France represents an under-studied example but comes as a confirmation of broader trends.[131] As such, the focus on one country seems

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[131] This is not to say, of course, that the French reacted in exactly the same way as the Spanish but simply that their reactions are *broadly* similar to that of the Spanish. In a more general sense, the processes through which the French (mis)understood the Amerindians are similar to other European

sufficient to reveal the ways in which sovereignty was constructed on discourses of civilisation during colonial encounters. When one considers the prevalence of colonial logics in our contemporary international society these observations are valid for later periods as well. Turning to the internal side of the construction of civilised sovereignty, the particularity of the French case could be problematic: not every country in Europe was experiencing similar issues and contestations. The French religious crisis thus exhibits a high level of particularity (especially when it comes to the identification of internal and external Others) that cannot be transposed to other Europeans states. These results are thus not directly applicable to other European states and comparative analyses would be required. What seems to be certain, however, is that the French case – *when taken at a sufficient level of abstraction* – seems illustrative of some broader patterns of the construction of the sovereign state (in particular in terms of identifying Others and constructing a civilised identity). Similar processes happened in England, for instance, and the discourses of 'civility' played an equally important role in legitimising political authority (Braddick, 2002). Lastly, this thesis has focused on a specific period offering a fruitful example of debates about civilised sovereignty in Europe (and about European sovereignty over the non-West). Due to time and space limitations I have not explored previous or subsequent periods. This is a clear limitation of this thesis and additional research could be conducted on the following periods up to the present day. But more importantly the choice of a specific time period could mislead the reader into believing that French civilised sovereignty did *not* exist before that period and that the civilised identity of France was established once and for all at the end of the 16th century. As an answer to this misunderstanding it is crucial to remember that the processes of construction of civilised sovereignty (and the denial of sovereignty to the non-West) are continuous, only temporarily established and always in need of reproduction. The task of statecraft involves both a reaffirmation (or transformation) of the ideal of civilised sovereignty and a reaffirmation or critique of the capacity of the current ruler to realise this ideal. Due to the continuity of this process the time limits of this thesis should not be understood as a 'beginning' and an 'end' but rather as a snapshot in a continuous process of (re)creation of the civilised and sovereign Self.

The second objection to this thesis lies in the exclusive focus on French discourses. This thesis is thus potentially (and ironically given the objectives outlined in the introduction) Eurocentric. In Eurocentric approaches "non-European societies are either completely excluded from, or rendered contingent in, theorizing modern transformation in Europe" (Matin, 2013: 354). There is thus a clear risk of "emphasizing 'Western' agency as the terrain of the political" (Sabaratnam, 2013: 264), i.e. as the only place to look for when one wishes to explore political ideas and processes. There is a real concern that agency is attributed to the West only or that Western agency is over-emphasised to the detriment of the non-West. As an answer to this critique I concur with Doty (1996: 12-13) who writes in *Imperial Encounters*:

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reactions towards these 'newly discovered' peoples. For an example see how Smith explains the absence of Amerindian agriculture despite the culture of corn (Meek, 1976: 118).

this study is intended to emphasize the fact that encounters between the North and the South were (and are) such that the North's representations of "reality" enabled practices of domination, exploitation, and brutality, practices that probably would have been considered unthinkable, reprehensible, and unjustifiable were an alternative "reality" taken seriously. Alternative representations did indeed exist, but they were either marginalized or systematically silenced.

In a similar way as Doty I choose to emphasise the (representational) power of the West and how its discourses of civilisation and sovereignty enabled certain practices. It is this *imbalance* in terms of performative capacity that usually orients scholars towards Western discourses. Additionally, reliable sources on the Amerindian's reactions to the encounter with Europeans are sparse and when they exist it is usually only through European texts. These sources are thus highly questionable and cannot be taken as representing the indigenous 'voice'. Ironically, then, focusing on Western discourses *and* revealing the civilisational ambiguities they contain might be the only way to access the agency of the Amerindians in the 16th century. Indeed, if alternatives are not revealed through the voice of the Amerindians themselves, the complex process of writing difference studied here brings to light the suppressed possibilities of this encounter. From my analysis, for instance, emerges the possibility that the Amerindians could have been considered civilised (and thus equal). This is a possibility present in the French discourses themselves and in particular in the mention of everything that is comparable and familiar in Amerindian societies.[132] Hence, and because understanding "language as *political* is to see it as a site for the production and reproduction of particular subjectivities and identities while others are simultaneously excluded" (Hansen, 2006: 16), alternatives can be revealed *through* the dominant discourses.

Finally, and interlinked with the previous objection, the choice of performativity in order to study discourses is also problematic in one key respect. Concerns can indeed be raised about the reproductive aspect of performativity. If the goal is to denaturalise 'sovereignty', alternatives need to be identified. Looking at sovereignty discourses, however, hardly seems to be the right place to start to contest the very framework of sovereignty. Hence, "[t]o endeavor to think the state is to take the risk of taking over (or being taken over by) a thought of the state, i.e. of applying to the state categories of thought produced and guaranteed by the state and hence to misrecognize its most profound truth" (Bourdieu et al., 1994: 1). This is particularly worrying if we consider academic works as *performative* in their own right. As Gregson and Rose (2000: 447) write

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[132] This is equally true for internal or domestic alternatives. Indeed, showing how competitors tried to contest sovereignty in France enables me to deconstruct how the 'hyper agency' of the civilised West comes to life. In other words, such an exploration offers "insights into the ways in which agents subvert or rework ideas of state, not as forms of resistance 'outside' state structures, but within the processes through which structures are reproduced" (Jeffrey, 2013: 176).

"research projects, their writing, and their dissemination are supreme examples of academic performance and performativity". As I have tried to show in this thesis, looking at the very discourses of domination cannot offer us alternatives but it does not mean either that reality is taken as granted (and thus that alternatives are not possible). Performativity enabled me to explore the contingent and always unstable construction of civilised sovereignty *contra* scholars who take sovereignty as a pure reflection of an (inescapable and desirable) reality. In addition, I focus on "the conflicts and confrontations of the early beginnings" as a way to recover "discarded possibles" (Bourdieu et al., 1994: 4). Butler (1990: 147) argues similarly that

> Paradoxically, the reconceptualization of identity as an *effect*, that is, as *produced* or *generated*, opens up possibilities of "agency" that are insidiously foreclosed by positions that take identity categories as foundational and fixed. For an identity to be an effect means that it is neither fatally determined nor fully artificial and arbitrary.

Alternatives (or 'agency') are thus present at the very heart of dominant discourses. The analyst therefore has two options: either focusing on dominant discourses of sovereignty in order to reveal their constructedness or focusing on alternatives to sovereignty. Crucially, though, both options point towards the same conclusion: sovereignty is neither inescapable nor is it the only possibility. These two options contribute in their own way to the critique of sovereignty.

Future directions

Taking into account the limitations mentioned above as well as the broader implications of this thesis I want to close by outlining some future directions worth exploring. In particular, three areas could provide fruitful results for our conceptualisation of the construction and management of difference between political communities.

First, our understanding of the Other (and of its production) needs to be further interrogated. As written by Grovogui (1996: 7) "the 'other' is the product of a textuality that, through intellectual assumptions and methods, has transformed mere cultural and historical variations into essential distances". But these essential differences need to be questioned. More specifically, this thesis calls for a greater emphasis on the ways Otherness is constructed and the influence of these processes on international relations. In

some cases, the Other seems to be strictly separated from the Self. Inayatullah and Blaney (2004: 53), for instance, estimate that "[s]elf and other had to be radically separated" during the encounter with Amerindians. In my analysis, the Other is different from the Self because inscribed in a familiar European framework. But are there other ways through which the different Other could come to be (or was historically constructed)? Are non-Western ways of understanding difference similar? Furthermore, this thesis points at a specific way difference is understood, namely *difference as defect* (Bain, 2003: 24), but other possibilities certainly exist. Havercroft (2008: 118), for instance, identifies both a misrecognition of indigenous institutions and an impossibility to translate indigenous conceptions into European categories as key sources of the inferiority of indigenous peoples in international relations. What is called for, thus, is an exploration of the different dimensions of Otherness and a rejection of the Other as necessarily (and simply) 'radically' different. At the same time, this thesis has raised an important epistemological question with regards to 'difference' and its study. Indeed, from what position is one able to identify what is (and is not) different? In other words, if difference is always portrayed under the guise of the familiar, where is 'difference' actually located and by whom can it be perceived? This concern relates to the uneasiness of talking about difference while recognising the centrality of familiarity for its interpretation. For Ryan (1981: 524), for instance, "novelty and change were expected to confirm rather than break with tradition". But how does one perceive this 'novelty' and this 'change' – this 'difference' – and from what vantage point can the analyst decide that or if 'difference' was *there*? Although very abstract, this issue brings us back to the desire to find the exotic and the different in the non-West (or assuming that the non-West *is* different) which can lead to an essentialisation of this non-Western Other as necessarily different.

Second, the language of sovereignty has erased 'local' realities and institutions. But perhaps more importantly, it has also erased alternative political systems or orders. In other words, the imposition of sovereignty as a universal template has forced other forms of political community to disappear or adopt the language of the sovereign state. This is particularly worrying since sovereignty can contradict non-Western forms of political organisation and more widely non-Western worldviews. Cocks (2014: 79) indicates that "[i]f the early North American Indian relationship to the land is at odds with the idea of sovereign power over a fixed territory, so is the traditional North American Indian penchant for community self-rule by consensus as opposed to rule by a centralized state differentiated from society". As a coercive and hierarchical form of authority sovereignty is not necessarily the most adapted form of political rule (especially for societies upon which it is being imposed). But self-determination, autonomy and independence are now widely associated with the grammar of sovereignty, both in the West and in the non-West (Cocks, 2014: 77). This is problematic, for insofar as sovereignty is deeply provincial, "understanding the indigenous right of self-determination in terms of state sovereignty ironically is at best inappropriate and at worst a form of imperialist co-optation itself" (Havercroft, 2008: 128-129). Some future research could be conducted, therefore, not only on alternatives to sovereignty as the only form of political rule but also on how the

adoption of the language of sovereignty is actually not conducive to independence or freedom for non-Western peoples. In this context, is it desirable to 'go beyond' the horizon offered by the concept of sovereignty? A first task would be to analyse how sovereignty has been established as the only option. In this respect, IR scholars might be part of the problem. Indeed, sovereignty is portrayed as a culturally-open and equalitarian concept having been embraced throughout the world and thus as supposedly culturally-open, or as an equalitarian concept opposed to the previous unsatisfying, medieval system of suzerain states (which stands as the only alternative to the current system of sovereign states). Sovereignty is thus presented as in the best interest of all societies (including non-Western ones).[133] Looking beyond sovereignty, however, necessitates rejecting key elements of Western modern thought and the answers that sovereignty has come to provide inside of this intellectual framework (Walker, 1993). If the options are not restricted to the alternative 'cosmopolitanism versus sovereign states', imagining other orders still prove difficult.

Finally, a last line of enquiry concerns the ever-reproduced 'neutrality' of the concept of sovereignty (something that this thesis has not been able to explore given the focus on one specific period of history). This thesis has argued that no conception of sovereignty can be detached from a specific (Western) civilisational content. But 'civilisation' as a normative ideal is constantly evolving and re-invented. Ironically, this has provided an opportunity for positivist scholars to preserve the image of sovereignty as a neutral and objective concept. Indeed, the discrimination that lies at the centre of civilised sovereignty is repeatedly hidden behind the positive elements of the last embodiment of civilisation.[134] The hierarchical ordering of peoples and cultures that form the core of how the international order of sovereign states functions is thus constantly *reproduced* but also *re-invented under a different guise*. These ever-reproduced discriminatory conceptualisations of sovereignty presented as neutral, universal and objective can still be seen at work in some contemporary analyses. At the end of his historical exploration of the links between sovereignty and responsibility, Glanville makes a distinction between earlier forms of external enforcement of sovereign responsibilities and the use of the contemporary Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. For him, previous interventions were targeted at 'subjects' while contemporary interventions are designed to protect 'citizens'. He also explains how contemporary operations are not design to conquer territory but rather to build sovereignty and respect "the will of a sovereign people" (Glanville, 2014: 219). Glanville is thus oblivious to the 'hierarchical ordering' that pervades the notion of R2P. Here, an apparent change from one form of sovereignty to another seems to be the condition for survival of colonial logics: by demonising the past and past practices of sovereignty as violent, colonial or imperialistic, scholars are able to reproduce a supposedly more acceptable and neutral contemporary notion of sovereignty. On closer analysis, though, their notion of sovereignty is equally normative and Eurocentric. This

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[133] Those arguments can be found, for instance, in Bull and Watson (1984: 433-434).

[134] One could say that the last version of civilisation that supports sovereignty is stripped of its political dimension and presented as apolitical, acultural and thus universal.

perpetual reproduction of colonial logics – the integration of "cultural distinctions into a hierarchical ordering of developmental levels" (Koskenniemi, 2001: 130) – is at the heart of the ever-changing yet always discriminatory concept of sovereignty. In order to build upon the critique of sovereignty presented in this thesis a deconstruction of this reinvention of international neutrality through sovereignty is a necessary step in order to further the post-colonial critique.

Concluding remarks

Throughout this thesis the idea of difference and of its management (i.e. how difference is perceived, represented and acted upon/with) has been at the centre of the analysis. Sovereignty – especially when understood as 'civilised sovereignty' – plays a crucial role in this process. It is through sovereignty that the rules of coexistence with difference – and difference itself – are constructed and reconstructed. It is also in relation to sovereignty that the (civilised Western) Self is established. Despite recurrent discourses about the curtailment of sovereignty, its lack of contemporary relevance or its supposed limitations in the face of globalisation, neither sovereignty nor civilisation seem close to disappearing from the Western conceptual framework. Rather, they are transformed and re-created on a daily basis in order to fit new expectations and ideals. This explains why studies of sovereignty are still crucial.

But beyond sovereignty, this thesis has been centrally concerned with recovering diversity and difference. As argued, this objective has been informed by a belief in the intrinsic value of Otherness as a tool for self-reflection (so as instrumental for the West to reflect on its own choices) but also by a recognition that Western values have no intrinsic superiority. At the same time, though, there is a need to remain conscious about the unintended effect that such a project could carry with it. Indeed, difference has always been approached as a problem in the colonial order: as stated by Hodgen (1964: 482), "diversity is the problem which underlies and qualified the statement of all other problems in modern anthropology". It is important, thus, that such a project designed to recover difference is not transformed into a colonial attempt at domesticating difference in order to reach (a biblical) unity or uniformity. In addition, this thesis has sought to improve the way the Other is perceived by denouncing the domestication of the Other through familiar language and framework. Although clearly anti-colonial, such a project could also be read as (yet another) attempt at bolstering the Western project of (re)unification of human beings assembled thanks to a better cross-cultural understanding of each other. Both dangers reveal the difficulty of escaping the modern colonial frames that inform our analysis and the problematic re-appropriation of anti-colonial enterprises by the colonisers.

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