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David Edelstein. *Occupational Hazards: Success & Failure in Military Occupation*. Cornell University Press, 2008. 248 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8014-4615-3 (\$35.00, cloth).

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse

Roundtable Web Editor: George Fujii

Introduction by Paul Macdonald, Williams College

Reviewers: David Ekbladh, Tufts University  
Peter Liberman, City University of New York and Federico Manfredi, Graduate Center of CUNY  
Greg Mitrovich, Columbia University  
Gideon Rose, Managing Editor, Foreign Affairs

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**Introduction by Paul Macdonald, Williams College**

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David Edelstein's book *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupations* addresses an important if overlooked puzzle for political scientists and historians: why have military occupations proven so difficult? Since 1815, there have been twenty-six completed military occupations but only seven in which occupying powers were able to achieve their interests. This pattern of relative failure calls out for a general explanation, but it also raises the ancillary question of what can explain success in those few cases where occupying powers were able to accomplish their strategic goals.

To account for the dismal record of military occupation, Edelstein persuasively argues that military occupation is difficult due to impatience on the part of occupying powers and occupied populations. While both dominant external powers and subjugated populations want military occupations to be brief, successful occupation "often takes a long time and consumes considerable resources." As a result, occupying powers face two difficult tasks. On the one hand, they must persuade restive populations to stifle nationalist ambitions and accept lengthy occupations. On the other, they struggle to maintain their own commitment in the face of escalating costs and hostile domestic publics back home. Given these unfavorable conditions, it is not surprising that most military occupations ultimately fail.

Yet as Edelstein notes, there are a small handful of critical examples of successful occupations. To explain these rarities, Edelstein introduces a parsimonious if somewhat counterintuitive theory. Rather than explain occupational success in terms of the strategies of the occupying power or the characteristics of the occupied population, he argues instead that it is the international threat environment that determines whether military occupations succeed or fail. Specifically, military occupations are most likely to turn out well when both the occupied population and the occupying power perceive a significant third-party external threat to their security. These external threats are important for two reasons. First, when facing an external threat, occupied populations are more likely to accept the protection of an external power. Second, external threats can persuade otherwise hesitant external powers to commit fully to long and costly occupations.

Edelstein evaluates these claims with a survey of military occupations since 1815 as well as nine detailed case studies including the Allied occupation of Germany, the U.S. and Soviet occupations of Korea, and the British occupation of Egypt, among many others. The diversity and richness of the case studies reflects the wide-ranging scope and ambition of the book. As the reviewers note, however, Edelstein's relatively sparse theoretical framework is often unable to account for the diversity and complexity of the cases he considers.

David Ekbladh, for example, brings a historian's point of view and notes the various non-state and transnational forces that shape and often drive the results of military occupations. Ekbladh observes that American occupational authorities often leaned heavily on "non-military and even non-state groups" to perform the various post-conflict reconstruction and nation-building activities. International organizations, religious charities, foundations, universities and businesses are among the myriad actors that populated occupation zones and shaped occupation outcomes. Ekbladh likewise points to how regional economic factors and meddling in the internal politics of occupied countries by external actors can also influence the ability of third party occupiers to achieve their goals. In sum, the international environment exerts considerable influence over the outcomes of military occupations, but external threat is simply one element of a much broader matrix of influences and pressures.

While Ekbladh pushes Edelstein to consider a more complicated view of the international context, Peter Liberman and Federico Manfredi point to a variety of domestic political factors *within* occupied societies that can help determine the relative success of military occupations. In particular, high literacy rates, large middle classes, effective bureaucracies, and developed legal institutional infrastructures can help facilitate the state-building efforts of occupation authorities. In addition, occupying powers may find it easier to dominate relatively wealthy countries, whose resources can be used to purchase collaborators as well as to repress insurgencies. Liberman and Manfredi present data that would seem to support their conclusions – countries that were successfully occupied had a pre-war GDP per capita that was nearly 60 percent greater than those where occupations failed. Perhaps successful military occupation depends not simply on a high external threat environment, but a permissive domestic one as well.

A common theme of all of the reviews is the difficulty in defining when military occupations are partial or complete successes versus when they are failures. This classification challenge, in particular, animates Gregory Mitrovich's review, which contends that contrary to the conventional wisdom, even relative "successes" such as the post-war occupations of Germany or Japan must be viewed in a broader context of the enduring relations of dependency that resulted. In particular, Mitrovich argues that the threat that captured the imagination of American policymakers was not just the danger of Soviet expansionism, but also the emergence of revanchist regimes in either Germany or Japan that might threaten to overturn the post-war American order. Thus, while the U.S. eventually transferred power to like-minded elites, the "occupation" never really ended. The United States retained considerable *de facto* control over the external and internal policies of both Germany and Japan and acted as an imperial power in all but name. For Mitrovich, these cases tell a cautionary tale – they hint at the danger of classifying military occupation as a bounded phenomenon with discrete beginning and end points, whose outcome can be neatly described as either a success or failure.

We can accept these caveats and argue that one of the great virtues of Edelstein's analysis is its relevance to contemporary political questions of direct policy relevance.

Policymakers could learn much from reading this book, especially in terms of understanding the limits of force and the challenges inherent in state building. Gideon Rose, however, wishes Edelstein had been more attentive to the specific needs of the policy community. In this vein, Rose pushes Edelstein to explain when policymakers are seduced into choosing occupation, what measures policymakers can adopt to ease the costs of occupation, and how policymakers should extricate themselves from expensive occupations once they appear unwinnable. In many respects, Edelstein's book points to how little direct control policymakers have over the fate of occupations – the external context is much more important than an occupier's particular strategy. But as Rose notes, policymakers tend not to see the question of occupation in this way: they focus on the task at hand; they grope for workable solutions; they weigh costs and benefits in terms of short term improvements or setbacks. In the end, Edelstein tells a sobering story about how structural constraints limit the quick and easy application of military power, but it may be a story policymakers are unable or unwilling to hear.

### **Participants:**

**David M. Edelstein** is assistant professor in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service and the Department of Government at Georgetown University and currently a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He is also a core faculty member in Georgetown's Center for Peace and Security Studies and Security Studies Program. His first book, *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupation*, was published in 2008 by Cornell University Press. In addition, his research has appeared in *International Security*, *Security Studies*, and *Survival*.

**David Ekbladh** is assistant professor of history at Tufts University. His first book, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order*, will be published by Princeton University Press in early 2010. He is currently working on a study of American globalism in the 1930s.

**Peter Liberman** is Professor of Political Science at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He is the author of *Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies*, as well as articles on the causes of war, nuclear proliferation, and retributive motives for conflict.

**Paul K. MacDonald** is an assistant professor of political science at Williams College. He has previously held research positions at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, and the Center for International Security and Cooperation. He has published articles in *International Security*, *Review of International Studies*, *Security Studies*, *Daedalus*, and the *American Political Science Review*.

**Federico Manfredi** is a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at The Graduate Center (The City University of New York). His research focus is the study of insurgencies and

counterinsurgencies and he travels frequently to Afghanistan and Iraq to conduct in-field research. His article “Rethinking U.S. Policy in Afghanistan” appeared in the Winter 2008/09 issue of *World Policy Journal*.

**Gregory Mitrovich** is a Research Scholar at the Arnold A. Saltzman Institute for War and Peace Studies, Columbia University. He is the author of *Undermining the Kremlin: America’s Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Cornell University Press, 2000) which was awarded the Stuart L. Bernath Prize for outstanding book from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. He has been a fellow at the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, and the Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University. He was a member of the Hoover Institution’s “Impact of Cold War Broadcasting on the Iron Curtain” project, as well as the “Communicating with the Muslim World” project directed by Secretary of State George Shultz. He is currently completing a book project entitled *Tempering Hatred: Anti-Americanism, Public Diplomacy, and the Origins of the American Century*.

**Gideon Rose** has been the Managing Editor of *Foreign Affairs* since 2000. He served as Olin Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations from 1995 to 2000, and as Associate Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs on the staff of the National Security Council from 1994-1995. He received his BA in Classics from Yale University and his PhD in Government from Harvard University. He has written widely on American foreign and security policy and is currently working on a book about how the United States has ended its wars over the last century.

Review by David Ekbladh, Tufts University

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**M**ilitary occupations, rather like Benjamin Franklin's adage relating guests to fish, only have a limited period before they begin to offend their hosts' senses. Another storied American who knew something about occupying time, Douglas MacArthur, echoed the sentiment, stating, "military occupations serve their purpose at best for only a limited period of time, after which a deterioration rapidly sets in."<sup>1</sup>

MacArthur's appreciation of this brief window was a lesson he was learning on the job — he made the statement just two years into the U.S. occupation of Japan. Time is one of the key elements in David Edelstein's argument about why some occupations can be seen as failures while others are remembered as successes. It is one aspect of the author's definition of a military occupation, which is an intervention that is not meant to be a permanent imposition of colonial rule or sovereign authority by the occupier over the occupied territory. Military occupation is usually meant to extend the interests of the "guests," which often are centered on the cultivation of stability and a regime hospitable to their ambitions among their "hosts."

The ongoing crisis of the U.S. occupation of Iraq lurks behind much of the book. Problems there compel a fresh and hard look at the general problems posed by military occupations. What is telling is that for such an important and, as Edelstein notes, all too common element of international affairs, research on the topic of military occupation is stunted. His framework provides a way to highlight those internal dynamics that decide whether an occupation will succeed or fail. The author breaks new interpretative ground. His ambitious analytical scope and broad set of cases (that can, admittedly, be debated) help bring some clarity and structure to a vast issue. Yet, his analysis focuses on relationships that tend to boil down to two sets of actors, the occupier and the occupied. In Edelstein's hands this mostly internal perspective does proffer insight. Yet, if the goal is to provide scholars and policymakers and understanding of the complexities that must be mastered for success then regional and international considerations that can profoundly influence these internal concerns should be on the table. With this, the book points to a fuller, richer investigation of a critical global issue.

Occupation authorities are always faced with a spectrum of nagging concerns that play out on a variety of levels. When it comes to the maintenance of internal stability, promises for what would now be called "development" or "nation building" are regularly extended. In a number of Edelstein's cases, those running the occupation leaned on various non-military and even non-state groups to perform these indispensable relief, reconstruction, and construction activities. Offering the occupied a better (phrased at some historical junctures as "civilized") standard of living could be a standard justification offered by American forces in the Philippines, Haiti, and South Korea. Here is a limit in Edelstein's narrative. He often equates resources with "boots on the

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<sup>1</sup> Edelstein, 1.

ground”—the number of soldiers committed by the occupiers. However, there were pressing political and social questions that demanded answers troop strength could not provide.

The United States Military Government in Korea spent a great deal of time in the 1940s trying to get more funds out of Washington for “rehabilitation” operations that were to develop a more productive and modern Korea as opposed to social programs simply to contain “disease and unrest.” While lacking specialists in Korea, by the middle of the 1940s the United States could call on considerable institutional resources for *administering* post-conflict zones. Some of these were non-military, meaning the Army often sought help from new UN bodies and nascent civil foreign aid bureaucracies in the U.S. government. Equally important were nongovernmental groups that carried out such “softer” tasks. For example, the Rockefeller Foundation popped up in occupied southern Korea, underwriting a collection of health related and educational programs—tasks similar to those it undertook during the earlier U.S. occupation of Haiti. In other cases, missionaries, foundations, voluntary groups, universities, multilateral institutions and businesses have contributed, if not to the success, at least to impressions of the occupation in the target nation and the international community. Drawing in partners that can meliorate local dissatisfaction and placate international opinion require other international actors see the operation as legitimate (or, at the very least, worthy of their benign neglect). This not only helps limit the diplomatic and political costs and complications for the occupier, it may let it access valuable resources at various levels of the international community from NGOs to multilateral institutions.

Edelstein describes the benefits of multilateral involvement in the internal aspects of occupation as ambiguous. He tends to code multilateral by the involvement of formal alliances or organizations, such as NATO or the UN, but does not dramatize the fact that the successful post-World War II occupation of Western Germany was itself a multilateral undertaking. However, the experience of occupation has long depended on other, often international relationships and capacities beyond those of the occupying state. Costs of maintaining such utilitarian goodwill is part of the extensive diplomatic and political capital a power must spend far beyond the occupied terrain to support its agenda.

When an occupation does not have such support its costs can spike. Edelstein rightly notes how the presence of an “external threat” can create a confluence of interests if constituencies in the occupied territories see this threat as less palatable than the presence of their “guests.” The quick warming of German elites to the post-World War II Western occupation willing to keep out the dreaded communists is a case in point. Still, there are other important aspects of regional dynamics (as the most pressing threats tend to be nearby) that play on outcomes.

Take the French adventure in Mexico from 1861 to 1867, which Edelstein rightly lists as a failure. He notes that there was no external threat to unite Mexican elites with their French-installed leader, the hapless Habsburg Prince and putative Emperor of Mexico,

Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian. But there certainly was one regional catalyst that played against French success—the United States. Here a major European power experienced something familiar to contemporary U.S. authorities in Iraq — the ability of a regional player to make life extremely difficult on the ground, even for a great power. Iran has effectively complicated (to put it mildly) American ambitions in Iraq through military aid to insurgents, political support for movements working contrary to the occupation’s goals, and even its own humanitarian aid to segments of the Iraqi population.

In the 1860s, the U.S. Civil War provided an opening for the French gamble in North America. But as Union victory loomed, American attention turned to the conflict to their south. Freebooters and mercenaries fought for and against French rule and American materiel found its way into a Mexican conflict. Ominously, key figures in the Union leadership saw the domestic rebellion they faced as intertwined with the Mexican occupation. Ulysses S. Grant did not believe, “the Civil War completely terminated while the French remained in Mexico.” The U.S. eventually moved a large army to the Rio Grande and some, including Grant, even attempted to openly supply arms to opposition forces. Had the Confederacy, that was eager to placate European powers and even considered a military expedition to aid Maximilian, survived or even prevailed, the outcome might have been very different. While it was Mexican blood that decided the fate of this occupation, a neighbor hostile to the project (and one comparatively weaker than France) contributed to a situation where the French imperial project and Maximilian himself became expendable.<sup>2</sup>

Regional relationships are not solely political or military. The state of a regional economy factors into the incentives Edelstein sees as one important means for an occupier to win local support. But the availability of such incentives is sometimes a function of the state of the economic relationships with the nations that surround the occupied territory. American officials in southern Korea and Japan faced daunting economic and social concerns from a northeast Asian economy utterly upended by war, the collapse of the friendly Nationalist regime in China, the mass postwar movements of people, and the dismantling of the Japanese empire that had operated as an economic unit. Each American effort faced differing imperatives because of these concerns but, the upshot is, who constitutes the region and what its dynamics are at a particular historical moment can direct the internal course of an occupation.

The author’s definitions of what constitutes “intervention” or “colonization” as opposed to “occupation” can undoubtedly be argued. For example, Edelstein omits the German occupation of France (and the panoply of fascist military occupations during the 1930s and 1940s) during World War II because he is unclear if there was intent to return true

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<sup>2</sup> David Schoonover, *Dollars Over Dominion: The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican-United States Relations* (Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 195-199, 221; T.R. Fehrenbach, *Fire and Blood: A History of Mexico* (updated edition, New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), 423-439.

French sovereignty at the end of the conflict. Those Japanese military occupations during World War II to create client regimes for a “Co-Prosperity Sphere” are also skipped. The Soviet occupations Eastern Europe after World War II are dismissed because they are seen as presumptive parts of an imperial project. None of these were savory causes but if, as Edelstein explains, one of the defining goals of an occupation is to create stable regimes that serve a power’s interests, the omission of these might point to the apparent tolerability of the political agendas behind those operations that are classified as occupations (in fact, his list of occupations is mostly Anglo-American).

This is less to dicker about the status of one historical case as opposed to the other than to suggest that some problems faced by authorities in an “occupation” situation may be similar to those involved with intervening to contain an insurgency, carrying out a peacekeeping mission, or self-consciously building an empire. At some points it might have benefited Edelstein to move outside his own analytical construct to look at other places when similar conditions prevailed even if that particular undertaking is not coded as an occupation. He notes that the Soviet occupation authorities in post-World War II northern Korea initially used force to settle the local population. This willingness to use coercion, Edelstein concludes, was an important component of a successful Soviet occupation. At almost the same moment, however, the Russians were applying coercive force on an occupied Germany. This violence has come to be seen as almost the original sin of communist rule in Germany and in Eastern Europe generally. Why did the use of force by the same power in broadly similar circumstances have such wildly divergent impacts? The book’s argument provides no easy means to reconcile this question.<sup>3</sup>

Workable policy, the cooperation of segments of the local population, and the right balance of resources and incentives are important but policymakers need to consider a spectrum of imperatives. Just one of these is: can the occupying power maintain a continuing justification that both domestic constituencies and the international community can comprehend and support? This amounts to more than a writ from the United Nations or other supranational authority. Rather it suggests the ability to make “world public opinion” (such as it is) understand and agree with the evolving aims of an occupation. Two of the most successful examples, the post-World War II U.S. occupations of Germany and Japan were among a phalanx of occupations at a historical moment when there seemed to have been more patience with the concept. They could be understood as part of a wide-ranging attempt to establish global stability after prolonged upheaval. This is in stark contrast to the nagging difficulty the United States has had in justifying its long presence in Iraq and even Afghanistan. It may not be solely timing or the scope of nationalist reaction that challenge the occupier’s goals but specific regional and international imperatives that shape the possibility of success. Edelstein has undoubtedly provided structure to a line of inquiry that has much to tell. Perhaps the best thing his book offers is an understanding that while a military occupation can appear

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<sup>3</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 19-20; John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 22-24.

to be an easy option at a moment of crisis the myriad of difficulties that will come in execution should give pause to those in power.

Review by Peter Liberman, Queens College & Graduate Center, CUNY, and Federico Manfredi, Graduate Center, CUNY

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David Edelstein's *Occupational Hazards* is a fascinating study of twenty-six historical military occupations since 1815, plus a few others still ongoing. Drawing deftly upon an impressively large secondary historical literature, Edelstein finds that the great majority of these occupations failed to reach the occupiers' objectives. He thus adds compelling support to the view that stable states and democracies cannot be imposed easily at gunpoint.<sup>1</sup>

The book also seeks to explain why some occupations succeed and others fail. Edelstein's answer is one that has been generally neglected in prior studies of state-building and democratization: success depends on the occupier and occupied both perceiving a common external threat.<sup>2</sup> In such situations, Edelstein argues, the occupied populations will collaborate more readily with the occupier, who in turn will invest more in stabilizing and protecting them. In the absence of a common external threat, and when the occupied societies are internally divided, occupations are more likely to fail.

Edelstein finds historical confirmation from the success of all five of the book's occupations that faced external threats. These were the democracies that the United States fashioned from the rubble of the defeated Axis powers: Italy 1943-48, Western Austria 1945-55, Western Germany 1945-52, Japan 1945-52, and Japan's Ryukyu Islands 1945-72. Even merging the similar Japan and Ryukyu cases, this 4/4 record is much better than the 2/15 success rate for the cases lacking an external threat, and the 0/6 success rate for cases with internal divisions (this tally does not include several "mixed successes"). Edelstein also concludes from in-depth case studies that the Soviet threat "led the West German population to accept the occupation" and "enabled the occupation of western Germany to succeed" (28, 35), while "an external threat—the threat of Soviet-sponsored communism—is key to explaining the success of the occupation of Japan" (131).

There may be something to this argument, but the book does not convincingly demonstrate such strong conclusions. One problem is that the congruence between external threat and success depends partly on setting a rather high bar for success for

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<sup>1</sup> Other recent studies that focus mainly on the postwar democratization of Germany and Japan include Eva Bellin, "The Iraqi Intervention and Democracy in Comparative Historical Perspective," *Political Science Quarterly* 119.4 (2004-5); Douglas Porch, "Occupational Hazards: Myths of 1945 and U.S. Iraq Policy," *The National Interest* 72 (2003). A broader set of cases are analyzed by Thomas Berger, "Political Order in Occupied Societies: Realist Lessons from Germany and Japan," *Asian Security* 1.1 (2005); James Dobbins, *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003); Minxin Pei, Samia Amin, and Seth Garz, "Building Nations: The American Experience," in *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, ed. Francis Fukuyama (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Looking at a different set of imposed polities, Andrew J. Enterline and J. Michael Greig more recently found that they tended to be destabilized by external threats; "Perfect Storms?: Political Instability in Imposed Polities and the Futures of Iraq and Afghanistan," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52.6 (2008).

some of the occupations that lacked external threats. Edelstein labels the Soviet occupation of eastern Austria a failure because the populace rejected communism (184), even though Moscow achieved its main goals of extracting reparations and neutralizing Austria, which historian William Bader has described as a land of “scant strategic value” from which the Soviet Union “could afford to disengage” provided the Allies did the same.<sup>3</sup> The Allied occupation of the Rhineland in 1918-30 is coded as a failure just because it did not “cement a peaceful order in Central Europe” and avert the Second World War, despite its utility for enforcing German disarmament and reparations payments. Edelstein considers the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza a failure because it “did little to quell opposition in the West Bank, Gaza, and the wider Arab world to Israel” (188). But the occupation looks more successful as a means of precluding hostile conventional offensives from these territories.

Such disagreements in interpretation arise inevitably from Edelstein’s defining occupation success by the achievement of the occupier’s aims, since these are often fluid, multiple, or inscrutable. This criterion for success also can lead to assessing as failures occupations that accomplished much but still fell short of unrealistic ambitions. Thus the focus on aims can be a distraction from the dynamics of political struggle between occupier and occupied.

A second major problem with Edelstein’s threat argument is that he provides only weak evidence that the Japanese perceived a major threat from the Soviet Union after the Second World War: one politician’s expression of gratitude to Washington for keeping Hokkaido out of Stalin’s grasp, and Japanese conservatives’ electoral success (pp. 131-33). Were the Japanese seriously perturbed by the Soviet threat? According to Thomas Berger, “as an island nation relatively insulated from the threat of a Soviet invasion, the danger was less immediate [than for Germany]. Japanese strategic calculations were dominated by fears of becoming overly entangled in Washington’s strategic designs in Asia, as opposed to being abandoned by the United States.”<sup>4</sup>

If Japan could be democratized in the absence of a severe external threat, other factors must have accounted for success there, and perhaps elsewhere. One leading candidate is the occupied societies’ pre-existing economic and political infrastructure. An extensive literature on state-building and democratization has found that they are facilitated by the high literacy rates, large middle classes, effective bureaucracies, and legal and political institutions that accompany development.<sup>5</sup> Occupiers can also use developed societies’

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<sup>3</sup> William Bader, *Austria between East and West, 1945-1955* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 208.

<sup>4</sup> Berger, “Political Order in Occupied Societies,” 17.

<sup>5</sup> See Bellin, “Iraqi Intervention and Democracy;” Berger, “Political Order in Occupied Societies;” Jason Brownlee, “Can America Nation-Build?” *World Politics* 59 (2007); Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

wealth as a hostage for social compliance, and their road and rail networks to repress insurgencies.<sup>6</sup> For similar reasons, developed states are less prone to civil war.<sup>7</sup>

Consistent with this, as the table below shows, the average GDP per capita was 60% higher in Edelstein's successes than in the failures, and the average literacy rate was about 70% higher. Counting relatively wealthy Allied-occupied Rhineland and Soviet-occupied eastern Austria as successes instead of failures sharpens the difference, with the successes' GDP per capita averaging twice that of the failures, and their average literacy rate being 120% higher.

*Development Level for Successful and Failed Military Occupations*<sup>8</sup>

	Case	Per Capita GDP (1990 International Geary-Khamis dollars)	% Literate
Successes	France 1815-18	1135	52
	Italy 1943-48	3316	81
	Western Austria 1945-55	3559	99
	West Germany 1945-52	4994	99
	Japan 1945-52	2874	98
	Ryukyus 1945-72	2874	98
	North Korea 1945-48	1442	64
	<b>Average</b>	<b>2885</b>	<b>84</b>
Failures	Mexico 1861-67	674	28
	Egypt 1882-1954	649	22
	Cuba 1898-1902	1639	71
	Cuba 1906-9	1639	71
	Haiti 1915-34	1045	9
	Dominican Republic 1916-24	1027	23
	Istanbul (Turkey) 1918-23	1213	8
	Rhineland (Germany) 1918-30	3648	99

<sup>6</sup> Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay?*

<sup>7</sup> James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review* 97.1 (2003).

<sup>8</sup> The success/failure classification is from Edelstein, *Occupational Hazards*, the literacy statistics are from Arthur Banks' Cross-National Time-Series dataset (SUNY Binghamton, 2007) and the per capita GDP statistics are from Angus Maddison, *The World Economy, Vol. 2: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD, 2006). Data from last prewar year are used for cases following wars, and missing data was replaced with data from the closest available date. Japanese figures are used for the Ryukuys, Jordan's literacy rate in 1967 is used for the West Bank/Gaza, and the entire Korean peninsula's GDP per capita is used for North Korea, an underestimate since the North was 50% more developed than the South, according to Angus Maddison, *The World Economy, Vol. 1: A Millenial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2006), 207-208. We are grateful to Angus Dobbie for research assistance compiling this data.

Iraq 1918-32	1000	10
Eastern Austria 1945-55	3559	99
West Bank/Gaza 1967-	1724	36
Cambodia 1979-89	869	50
Southern Lebanon 1982-2000	3136	76
Lebanon 1976-2005	3524	80
<b>Average</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>49</b>

Devastating defeat in the Second World War provides another reason why postwar Japanese, Germans, Austrians, and Italians cooperated with U.S. state-building efforts. The magnitude of the catastrophes wrought by their vanquished leaders and militarist pasts help explain why these societies “embraced defeat.”<sup>9</sup>

Some recent nation-building studies have emphasized the effort and skill of the occupier.<sup>10</sup> Edelstein acknowledges the importance of U.S. investment in its postwar occupations, but contends it was largely driven by the onset of the Cold War, as a way to bolster their defenses against the Soviet Union. In the absence of fears of communist gains and of the Soviet threat, he argues, the United States would have carried out initial plans proposed by Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau for suppressing German power through deindustrialization.

However, it is important not to exaggerate the shift in U.S. policies and their impact on the stabilization of the defeated Axis powers. Deindustrialization was never considered for Japan, Italy, and Austria, and the Morgenthau Plan for Germany was discarded even before the war had ended. At the same time, the importance of U.S. postwar aid to European economic recovery also should not be exaggerated.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, it is not clear how much the stability and democratization of the former Axis states depended on their economic recovery rates. Finally, Washington had sufficient incentives to see these occupations through even without an external threat. The installation of stable democracies was sought to avoid relapses into autocratic militarism, and their recovery and integration into a U.S.-led trading system would bring economic benefits to the United States.<sup>12</sup> In sum, the occupations of Germany, Italy, Austria, and Japan might not have gone quite as well in the absence of the Cold War, but it is far from clear that they would have failed.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2000); Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Re-Civilizing the Germans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11-44.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Dobbins, *America's Role in Nation-Building*.

<sup>11</sup> Alan S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51* (Routledge, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> John Gimbel, *The Origins of the Marshall Plan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976); Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Edelstein addresses occupation strategy more directly in a chapter comparing the U.S. and Soviet postwar occupations of Korea. While the U.S. achieved only a “mixed success” with Syngmann Rhee’s wobbly and militarily vulnerable regime in the South, Edelstein argues that the Soviet Union successfully imposed a stable communist regime under Kim Il-Sung in the North. Edelstein attributes the difference mainly to Kim’s use of ruthless repression, which included the expulsion of a million dissidents. But U.S.-backed efforts to repress political opposition in South Korea backfired, generating more antagonism. Because Edelstein doesn’t specify *a priori* the elements of a successful coercive strategy, it is unclear whether he thinks the U.S. strategy was insufficiently coercive, or just clumsily executed. Edelstein also points, more persuasively, to Washington’s blunder in promoting unpopular Korean conservatives, who – unlike Kim’s communist cadres in the North – opposed much-needed land reform and had been colonial collaborators under the Japanese.

Coercion played a key role in the Soviet imposition of stable and friendly polities in postwar Central and East Europe. Edelstein omits these cases (with the exception of East Austria) on the grounds that they were indefinite occupations.<sup>13</sup> But Stalin appears to have initially considered German neutralization and withdrawal as an alternative to partition and superpower domination.<sup>14</sup> Edelstein includes other cases (like the 72-year-long British occupation of Egypt) in which occupations that were originally intended to be short evolved into protracted stays. The threat of an indefinite occupation anyway should make subject populations more rather than less rebellious. Although the Soviet-imposed communist regimes collapsed at the end of the Cold War, Moscow successfully obtained reparations, a buffer against the West, and political allies for over forty years, despite the absence of a common external threat.<sup>15</sup> Counting these cases as successful occupations would further loosen the historical correlation between external threat and occupation success.

Edelstein deserves much credit for investigating the role of external threat in the outcome of military occupations. But it is probably overambitious to seek a single-factor explanation for the outcomes of such diverse and complex enterprises. Future research will need to untangle alternative explanations for resistance and collaboration under military occupation, and the investment and strategy adopted by occupiers, to better

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<sup>13</sup> Edelstein also excludes wartime occupations, on the grounds that the occupier’s long-range intentions cannot be known during an ongoing war. This is not always true, and the occupier’s actual long-range intentions anyway may not critically affect the dynamics of occupation.

<sup>14</sup> Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Belknap Press, 1995); Vladimir O. Pechatnov, “The Big Three after World War II: New Documents on Soviet Thinking About Post War Relations with the United States and Great Britain,” *Cold War International History Project Working Papers*, 13 (1995).

<sup>15</sup> For contending views on the profitability of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe, see Peter Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), chapter 7 and Stephen G. Brooks, *Producing Security: Multinational Corporations, Globalization, and the Changing Calculus of Conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), chapter 6.

identify the contribution of external threat. In this effort, it might be useful to analyze outcomes in terms of the success of state-building, democratization, loyalty, etc., rather than the attainment of the occupiers' maximal goals per se. This would help illuminate factors that foster these particular objectives, even when they fall short of the occupiers' maximal goals.

### *Introduction*

In *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupation* David Edelstein tackles one of the most important yet least understood tools of international diplomacy—the military occupation. Edelstein posits what may be the first comprehensive theory to explain the success or failure of occupations. Simply put, his thesis is that successful occupations require a threat common to both an occupying power and an occupied nation. The result is a tremendously ambitious, yet controversial, analysis that attempts to explain cases as dissimilar as the occupation of France after the Napoleonic Wars, the American occupation of the Philippines in 1898, and the Soviet occupation of North Korea in 1945.

Given that Edelstein decided to write the book in response to America's struggle to stabilize a post-Sadaam Iraq, it is both ironic and unfortunate that he couldn't have delayed publication for a year to take into consideration the enormous changes that have occurred since 2007. While many factors have contributed to the growing stabilization seen in Iraq, one of the most important was the achievement of a Sunni-U.S. alliance of 2006-2007 that might not have emerged had it not been for the brutality with which Al Qaeda in Iraq suppressed the Sunni populations in the areas under its control. By exploiting the growing animosities between the insurgent Sunni populations and Al Qaeda in Iraq, the U.S. counter-insurgency campaign routed-out terrorist havens of formerly controlled central Iraq and changed the complexion of the occupation, providing real-time confirmation of the operating forces that Edelstein believes crucial to a successful occupation.

### *The Argument*

Edelstein creatively employs neorealist theory to explain why occupations succeed or fail — his use of traditional international relations concepts like threat perception and alliance formation offers an important advance in our understanding of the structure of occupations. In brief Edelstein contends that the success of an occupation has less to do with often long-cited factors such as levels of modernity or the supposed legitimacy of collective action than with the existence of an external threat that would convince an occupied population to ally with the occupying power.

The threat environment is so critical that over the course of nearly two hundred years only seven occupations can be coded as successes. The first is that of France 1815-1818 as Europe restored the French monarchy after the defeat of Napoleon. Incredibly the next successful occupation wouldn't occur until after World War II with first, Italy 1943-1948, Austria 1945-1955, Germany, 1945-1952 (*sic*—actually 1955), Japan, 1945-1952, the Ryukyus 1945-1972, and North Korea, 1945-1948 (Edelstein, 5).

Edelstein defines an occupation as the temporary control of a territory by a state or allied states that makes no claim to permanent sovereignty over that territory. Thus he contends that we must differentiate between occupations, interventions, colonial empires, nation-building efforts, and Soviet-era satellite states. Edelstein writes that “Military occupations require a military intervention force and usually include some form of administration, either civilian or military, to govern the occupied territory. Critically, the intended duration of a military occupation must be temporary and finite. That is, an occupying power must intend at the onset of the occupation to vacate the occupied territory and return control of the territory to an indigenous government” (3). Interventions seldom result in the development of new governmental structures, colonial administrations have no acknowledged endpoint, and nation-building programs employ tools that go beyond that of occupation.

I agree with much of what Edelstein contends, in particular his rejection of multilateralist and modernist explanations for occupational success, a literature that rose to prominence in response to the debacle of Iraq. Regarding the former, one only has to witness the breakdown of Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina to understand how little the international community’s presence has legitimized these occupations in the eyes of the inhabitants, indeed it seems instead to have fostered greater chaos with the constant negotiation between partners that true multilateralism requires.

Similarly dubious are those claims that success is determined by an occupied country’s level of development, the greater the level of industry and education the more likely for a successful occupation, particularly if that outcome is the creation of a democratic state. First, given that high levels of modernity have been achieved in both ruthless authoritarian regimes as well as democratic states, why should modernity be a factor in determining successful occupations? Second, successful occupations usually demand some type of reform in the social structure of the occupied nation; otherwise there would be no need to for a victor to occupy a defeated rival. Some of the most difficult nations to reform are those that possess both highly developed economies and highly educated populations who see the victor’s new reforms as an affront that must be resisted — we see this resistance anywhere new cultural and social norms are being imposed by an outsider — even in nations such as Germany and Japan that had been completely defeated in war.

*Japan and Germany: Successful Occupations—or Successful Empires?*

Since they represent two of the seven successful occupations over the past two centuries and are the most important of those successful outcomes, Germany and Japan represent the defining cases for Edelstein’s argument. Edelstein contends that both occupations faced early difficulties that might have led to occupational failure had it not been for the intervention of the Cold War. With their sovereignties restored both nations faced a choice of Soviet communisms or American capitalism — both Japan and Germany chose to side with the United States; they balanced rather than bandwagoned with the Soviets. But is this necessarily the case?

There is no question that both nations became strong allies of the United States; the issue is did they have a choice in the matter, was there indeed, a true hand-over of full sovereignty to both nations as Edelstein — and most Cold War historiography — claims and as his model requires? It is my contention that this did not occur, that indeed the nature of both occupations and the security structures that grew out of the Cold War did not lead to full sovereignty but a restricted form of autonomy that not only included heavy influence in their domestic structures but more importantly placed significant limitations on their foreign policies. This was due to one overriding rationale, that both Japan and Germany remained a threat to the United States — and most of the world— that needed to be kept in check through complete dismantling of their warmaking capability and by initiating a series of policies designed to launch a social revolution that would replace both nations' autocratic power structures with truly democratic societies.

Edelstein, following traditional Cold War conventional wisdom, contends that the United States abandoned these policies as the Cold War intensified. I do not believe that is the case and will argue below how the most important social engineering aspects of American policy continued several years into the Cold War and only ended when American and Allied decisionmakers believed the limitations imposed on West Germany and Japan eliminated them as threats to the international system. Consequently, American and allied officials re-structured both countries in ways to prevent them from again threatening the international community, even if that meant potentially weakening the defensive pact against the Soviet Union. I will explore what this means to both countries.

### *Japan*

From 1945-1948 American policy was premised on alleviating two main concerns, first ending Japan's threat to the United States, second, restructuring Japan's economy to ensure the rise of a liberal democracy.<sup>1</sup> This entailed dismantling its military, breaking up the Zaibatsu trusts that controlled Japanese society, and purging Japanese society of the militarists and industrialists who supported Japan's xenophobic policies and the militant factions that led the country to war. As Edelstein states, these policies were predicated on occupation lasting only a few years—instead it officially lasted for seven years.

America's dedication to the enormous social changes originally called for began to whither with the occupation's growing cost, the significant reduction of resources committed to the occupation, and the growing resistance to many efforts to liberalize Japanese society. America's global responsibilities, including the need to feed most of Europe and Asia, and the rise of the Cold War led the United States to decide in 1948 to abandon the early occupation strategy and instead work with the Zaibatsu in order to get

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<sup>1</sup> See T.A. Bisson, "Reparations and Reform in Japan" *Far Eastern Survey* 16.21 (Dec. 1947), 241-147. See also, Hugh Borton, "Past Limitations and the Future of Democracy in Japan," 70.3 (Sept. 1950), 410-420.

Japan's economy off the ground.<sup>2</sup> Economic reforms helped move Japan forward and by July 1952 a Japanese peace treaty was signed that ended the occupation. Edelstein concludes that this occupation was a success.

This transition, however, was not nearly as smooth as it seemed and Japan's sovereignty was in reality never fully restored. Indeed, one of the most important metaphors of an occupation's end—the troops returning home—never occurred. The Japanese government that emerged from the *de jure* end of U.S. occupation had its powers highly circumscribed; its constitution was written by Americans under a military occupation—hardly the most legitimate circumstance—and it included provisions that no truly sovereign state would ever accept including stringent limits on the size of the Japanese military and a prohibition from it ever being deployed overseas.

Furthermore, if the Cold War was the determining factor as we are led to believe why did the United States not abandon the military restrictions as it had social restrictions and restore Japan's military capability in order to balance Soviet power in Asia? The purges of Japanese political, economic, and military leaders continued well into 1951 even though Cold War pressures in Asia were reaching the boiling point with the loss of China and the outbreak of the Korean War.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, one of the most perplexing aspects of American policy was the failure to even conceive of calling upon Japan's surviving military manpower to serve alongside U.S. forces in Korea, despite the disastrous defeats UN forces suffered during the initial North Korean offensive and especially the Chinese intervention after UN forces reached the Yalu river.

Thus while the occupation may have ended in a legal sense, *de facto* Japan was still largely dominated by the U.S. as it remained a potential long-term threat to the U.S. and much of Asia. If Japan were a true alliance partner the U.S. would have encouraged its resumption as a naval force to help balance Soviet and Chinese power in the region, and would have welcomed Japanese divisions to fight along side U.S. forces in Korea or Vietnam. Instead, Japan was kept on a tight leash, limited by a foreigner's constitution to play a junior role in world events. One can say that instead of regaining its full sovereignty, Japan had become an important component in America's national security empire. This begs the question, did the Japanese occupation succeed or did it simply morph into another form of control that ended its threat to U.S. security?

### Germany

The situation in Germany was much worse. I applaud Edelstein's recognition that the United States entered Germany to enforce a harsh peace, and his dismissal of a belief held by so many today that U.S. occupation forces were treated as liberating heroes. Instead,

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<sup>2</sup> Jermoe B. Cohen, "Japan: Reform vs. Recovery," *Far Eastern Survey* 17.12 (June 1948), 137-142.

<sup>3</sup> See T. A. Bisson, "The Economic Purge in Japan" *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 12.3 (May 1953), 279-

American occupation troops enforced a brutal regime where all German citizens were considered guilty of the crimes of the Nazis, where “fraternization” between occupation forces and German citizens was declared illegal, where the Potsdam accord and occupation regulations sought to punish German citizens by reducing their food rations to no greater than the rest of occupied Europe. Occupation planners dismantled Germany’s war-related industries, liberalized her highly centralized economy, began to eliminate the militant, xenophobic, Nazi influence in its societies, with the hope that one day democracy could be built. But there were no illusions that a democratic Germany would be an automatic outcome of the occupation, which is why so many called for Germany’s dismemberment and economic castration so that she would never again threaten the world community.

The conventional wisdom, as cited by Edelstein is that this all changed with the onset of the Cold War. Germany’s crucial place as the heart of Europe’s economy and the front line of the new Cold-War divide of Europe necessitated that the destruction of her industry and the alienation of her people cease. In its stead, new policies were created that placed democratization at the forefront of allied occupation efforts and the Marshall Plan began to invest funds for the reconstruction of German industry. More ominously, denazification effectively ceased as a policy.<sup>4</sup> The Western allies ended efforts to cooperate with the Soviet Union to create a single Germany and formed West Germany from the fusion of their three zones. With the decision to rebuild a West German army under the auspices of NATO, the occupation formally ended on May 5, 1955 when U.S. High Commissioner James Conant became the first U.S. Ambassador to West Germany.

But, as with Japan, this sovereignty was circumscribed. First, West Germany was itself simply a creation of the Allies, something German scholars took to referring to as the “rump state of West Germany” barely half the size of 1937 Germany and a quarter of 1914 Germany.<sup>5</sup> Its constitution was prepared under military occupation with significant input from U.S. advisors and with the ultimate approval of the Military Governor of the U.S. zone, General Lucius Clay (the British and French authorities never prepared constitutions for their zones).<sup>6</sup> While West Germany was allowed to possess an army, it was fully under the control of NATO headquarters and could not be deployed beyond NATO’s boundaries. Like Japan, West Germany had been reduced to an important component in America’s global Cold War national security system.

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<sup>4</sup> See in particular John Herz, “The Fiasco of Denazification in Germany” *Political Science Quarterly* 63.4 (Dec. 1948), 569-594.

<sup>5</sup> See Josef L. Kunz, “The Status of Occupied Germany Under International Law: A Legal Dilemma,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 3.4 (Dec. 1950), 538-565; Max Rheinstein, “The Legal Status of Occupied Germany,” *Michigan Law Review* 47.1 (Nov. 1948), 23-40.

<sup>6</sup> Harold Zink, *The United States in Germany, 1944-1955* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1957), 179, and see also J.F.J. Gillen, *State and Local Government in West Germany, 1945-1953*, RG 466, Records of the Office of the High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG), Historical Office, Box 5, National Archives II, College Park, MD., 8-17.

This conventional wisdom also overstates the impact of the Cold War in changing American attitudes towards occupation policy—particularly one of the occupation’s most divisive issues, German reparations for the Soviet Union. It is a firmly held belief that the dismantling of German industry for reparation payments ended with General Clay’s 1946 declaration that such transfers cease—in fact, reparations to the Soviet Union would continue until 1950 and until 1951 for the eighteen other recipients of German industrial might.<sup>7</sup> In one of the most absurd occupation policies ever conceived, dismantling of massive German steel producing complexes, coal processing units, synthetic rubber and fuels plants, and chemical production facilities would continue until 1951.<sup>8</sup> A survey of U.S. newspapers from the era clearly demonstrates that the dismantling of heavy industries vital to Europe’s economic and military reconstruction continued unabated despite the announcement of the Truman doctrine, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Blockade Crisis, and the Korean War.<sup>9</sup> While Marshall Plan funds rebuilt modern heavy industrial plants in Germany, dismantling crews were hard at work tearing down similar facilities and shipping them to the recipient nations including Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the USSR and despite the complaints of Paul Hoffman, head of the Economic Cooperation Administration that oversaw the Marshall Plan.<sup>10</sup> Hoffman pleaded to have the dismantling stopped but to no avail.<sup>11</sup> It would not be until 1951 when the program would officially end.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly the continued German threat played a key role in the continuation of what has to be considered one of the most incomprehensible of policies, so much so that it overshadowed even the growing Cold War challenge in Europe.<sup>13</sup> It would not be until the allies recognized that their continued presence in West Germany would prevent uncontrolled German re-militarization and maintain West Germany’s continued western tilt that they began to look at the Germans as allies. But significant damage had been done.<sup>14</sup>

### *Occupation and the Pottery Barn Doctrine*

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<sup>7</sup> See J.F.J. Gillen, *Deconstruction and Decartelization in West Germany, 1945-1953*, HICOG, *Ibid.* See also “West Favors Cutting or Halting German Reparations to the Soviet,” August 6, 1949, *New York Times*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> “Ruhr Smoke Hides Dismantling Chaos,” *New York Times*, August 21, 1949, 1. “West German Occupation: It has Changed from Harsh to Benign, but Further Easing of Controls Will Depend on Course of the Cold War,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 21, 1951, 8.

<sup>9</sup> “Morgenthauism Persists,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec 30, 1951, 12.

<sup>10</sup> “Europe’s Lackey in the State Department,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* Oct, 5, 1949, 22. “Fourth Reich Made in the USA,” *Nation*, 171.15, Oct. 7, 1950, 312-313.

<sup>11</sup> See “Acheson Assures Allies of Added Dismantling of German Plant,” *New York Times*, Oct. 3 1949, 13.

<sup>12</sup> “West German Occupation: It has Changed from Harsh to Benign” *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> “Wrecking Germany at America’s Expense,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 3, 1949, 6.

<sup>14</sup> “Are the Nazi’s Taking Over Again?” *Saturday Evening Post* May 27, 1950, 32-33, 132-134.

If we can eliminate two of the most important examples of occupation success, Germany and Japan, then based on Edelstein's definition just how successful has occupation been as a policy. The answer is not very. The four World War II era cases he considers successful, Italy, North Korea, Austria, and the Ryukyus, were largely of little consequence and may have benefited from changes in global politics rather than threat perceptions. The occupation of Austria clearly benefited from the 1954 "Spirit of Geneva" as well as Khrushchev's last ditch effort to show the Germans that they, too, could be reunified if they chose neutrality. American policy would influence Italy well after its occupation ended, indeed American public diplomacy cut its teeth battling the Italian communist party during the 1940s and 1950s. In 1948 the Korean peninsula received little attention given the Chinese Civil War and growing confrontation in Europe, and the Ryukyus were largely an issue between the United States and Japan.

However, given the successful inclusion of Germany and Japan into the international liberal order, does it matter that according to a particular definition these examples should be considered failures? It does matter as these cases (as well as the 20 cases of failed occupations) demonstrate that the social transformations required of occupations can not be achieved within a few years, indeed they may take a few decades at least. This fundamentally changes the nature of the discussion; if the most successful occupations are multi-decade empire building projects then we should abandon any belief that regime change can be achieved with any degree of speed. Such was the warning of Secretary of State Colin Powell who invoked the now famous Pottery Barn rule in Bush administration deliberations leading to the invasion of Iraq—if you break it, you own it. The U.S. invasion did not necessarily break Iraq—Hussein had long shattered the country, however, it took ownership of the country and will continue to own the problem for several more years at least. Hopefully the common enemy, Al Qaeda, will force both the U.S. and Iraq to continue to work to a successful outcome.

David Edelstein's *Occupational Hazards* is an impressive book that makes a major contribution to the security studies literature. The professional incentive structure in political science favors the production of theory-driven rather than puzzle-driven works and favors strong answers to trivial questions rather than weak answers to important questions. Edelstein has had the courage to buck both of those malign pressures, tackling a subject of immense practical import and complexity that has never, at least to my knowledge, been addressed in such a rigorous comparative fashion. And he has done so with great talent, research, honesty, and sense. The result is a book that anybody interested in war, intervention, or occupation will want to read and mull carefully.

Edelstein takes as his puzzle the question of why military occupations succeed or fail, defining those outcomes in relation to the achievement of the original goals of the occupying power. He distinguishes occupation from a variety of related phenomena (e.g., annexation, colonialism, intervention, and nation-building), defining it as “the temporary control of a territory by a state (or group of allied states) that makes no claim to permanent sovereignty over that territory.” (3) Constructing a complete set of relevant occupations over the last two centuries, he then proceeds to document and evaluate each case and offer conclusions about the factors that account for the patterns of success or failure. His major finding is straightforward: occupations are difficult enterprises that usually fail, with their outcomes largely shaped by structural conditions such as the presence or absence of an external threat that can bind occupiers and occupied together.

The subject of occupation presents an array of daunting intellectual and methodological challenges for the analyst, and I think Edelstein has done a good job in meeting them. He is clear and frank about the various choices he made in constructing the study as he did, and most of those choices strike me as sensible. When reading the book, several times a “gotcha” thought would spring to mind as I came up with what seemed like a flaw or compelling alternative argument on a particular point, but almost always I would soon find that the author had gotten there first and defended his corner explicitly, fairly, and well. The book discusses an extraordinary range of cases and yet is (as far as I can tell) well informed and generally accurate about each, which is no mean feat. In fact, given the paucity of literature on this topic, simply compiling and presenting basic information on all the cases is a great service, and for the field's sake I wished that the mini-narratives in Appendix 2 had been significantly longer. And although, unsurprisingly, I had some quibbles on occasional points, Edelstein's conclusions strike me as generally sensible: the factors he identifies as important do seem to have been important, and to have influenced events in the direction that he claims. In sum, this is good, useful, qualitative scholarship of a kind both policymakers and social scientists should value highly. (I would add historians to the list too, but like Mikey in the old Life cereal commercials, they hate everything political scientists do, so we have learned not to look for approbation from those quarters even when it is deserved.)

Speaking of policymakers and social scientists, it seemed to me that Edelstein himself was somewhat torn between their respective mindsets. More than most scholars, he appreciates historical contingency, understands the sorts of challenges that policymakers face, and is careful to couch his analyses and conclusions in probabilistic rather than definitive terms, to speak of tendencies and pressures rather than laws. But he also clearly wants to arrive at strong, parsimonious, and generalizable conclusions about his cases (both individually and collectively), dichotomizing their outcomes and attributing the results to the operations of a few simple structural variables. I can see both sides of this coin, but I wish he had gone even further toward the policymaker's perspective, eschewing even more of the social scientist's quest for certainty than he does.

What would this have meant in practice for his study? Taking agency as seriously as structure. Edelstein writes at one point, "the argument in this book reminds us of the importance of structural factors in determining outcomes in international politics...Occupation outcomes...cannot be explained by looking only at the choices made by policymakers." (166) I agree whole-heartedly. But by the same token, the outcomes cannot be explained by looking only or even primarily at structural factors. Both parts of the picture—structure and agency—need to be combined to give a truly accurate portrait of the subject, even if doing so will inevitably fuzz things up considerably. (Of course, that's just what one would expect a neoclassical realist to say, but it remains true nonetheless.)

I think three sets of policymaker choices need to be brought into his analysis more clearly, which if done would affect both case selection and coding. First, the back-stories of the occupations need to be delved into more deeply; second, the actual conduct of the occupations need to be examined more closely; and third, success and failure need to be judged not simply in relation to initial occupation objectives but also, and more importantly, in relation to the menu of options policymakers had available to them.

Edelstein codes the cases he examines as mostly failures, and wonders why states keep banging their metaphorical heads against the wall. In his conclusion, he writes that "only...hubris can explain the continuing efforts of states to make occupation succeed despite the uninspiring track record of occupation. Given the dubious history of occupation, one might expect rational states to avoid the occupation of foreign territories, yet occupation continues." (165) The problem with this comment is that his book does not show—cannot show, on account of its design—that states have *not* tried to avoid getting tangled in occupations. Edelstein defines occupations, after all, as incursions lasting "at least one year" (193, fn. 9); anything shorter is classified not as an occupation but as an intervention. Yet how many of his occupations are really best understood as the result of interventions or war endings gone bad? And how many potential occupations (by his definition) never occurred because the preceding interventions or wars went well or because at the key moment policymakers decided to avoid the occupation trap entirely? One cannot know the answer to those questions without examining the entire

universe of interventions, wars, and occupations together. (From a policymaker's perspective, in other words, the most illuminating comparison for the 1915-1934 Haiti occupation might not be Germany 1945-1952, as Edelstein chooses in chapter one, but Haiti 1994-1995—an occupation dog that didn't bark.)

To his credit, Edelstein briefly addresses a version of this point himself, and concludes that even if it has some merit, "the evidence suggests that occupation can succeed, and it is, therefore, important to understand the reasons for success." (11) That is true, but the methodological or hermeneutical challenge may be more serious than he realizes. I think, in short, that occupations have some autonomy and coherence as a practical or historical category, but may have less so as an intellectual or theoretical one. It might be that *any* collection of them has to be assembled by selecting on a dependent variable, making it hard to draw strong or definitive theoretical conclusions even from an otherwise complete or well-constructed sample.

If the origins of occupations (and non-occupations) involve choices, so does their conduct, posing additional methodological problems. Edelstein seeks to learn the secrets of success and failure and adopts a strategy that on the surface seems logical: tot up the successes and failures and do comparative analysis to see what factors they have in common. Such an approach, however, biases him toward a structural conclusion by reifying the actual outcome of each case as the historically inevitable one: "Case X had these structural characteristics, it had this outcome, so we can say that these characteristics are associated with this outcome." In fact, however, it is likely that most if not all of the cases he examines could have turned out quite differently had the policymakers involved made different choices along the way. And so the plausible alternative histories of each case should really be considered as well as the actual history in order to make a convincing argument for the impact of a structural cause on events.

Take the contemporary Iraq case, which Edelstein examines briefly. Would the occupation of Iraq have developed the same way had the Bush administration planned better for the postwar era and handled the transition to the occupation better? Would the Iraqi insurgency have followed the course it did had the administration and its appointees dealt differently with postwar public order, the disbanding of the Iraq army, and deBaathification? Maybe, maybe not—scholars are likely to debate this for a long time. But the very fact that such a debate will persist means that one cannot treat that the Iraq case as a single data point—at least not without having raised and disposed of the possibility of counterfactual narratives with different outcomes. And the same applies, I would argue, for most of the cases in Edelstein's sample.

Finally, from a policymaker's perspective, the very question that Edelstein puts at the heart of his study—what causes an occupation's success and failure?—is flawed or beside the point. The real question, a sophisticated policymaker would say, is not one of absolute success but of relative value: at any particular moment, how does occupation compare to the other policy options on the table for dealing with the problem at hand?

Again, Edelstein is too honest and smart not to recognize this issue himself, but doing so fully would have meant significantly reorienting the discussions of the cases. At one point, Edelstein genuflects in the direction of David Baldwin's *Economic Statecraft* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), but his own approach, unfortunately, seems to have been shaped by the more conventional literature on whether economic sanctions "work" or not—literature that Baldwin's decision-maker-centric approach blows out of the water. To put it bluntly, from a policymaker's perspective, an occupation that is accurately coded as a failure in light of its own original objectives could still easily be the least bad choice given the full range of policy options available.

These criticisms of Edelstein's methodology might seem daunting, and to me, in fact, they do reduce the strength of some of his claimed theoretical conclusions. I would have preferred more process tracing of the occupations to see how they emerged and how they played out (and might have played out differently), and would have liked to get inside the head of the policymakers involved more to see how they viewed the choices available to them at the time. A study conducted along these lines would still have produced lessons, but of a more modest and context-sensitive variety—suggestions for issues and cautions future policymakers should bear in mind, rather than bold statements about which structural forces open the door to ladies and which to tigers.

Nevertheless, in scholarship as in politics, it is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, who spends himself in a worthy cause. David Edelstein has produced a book (on a truly Rooseveltian topic!) that future students of occupations will have to grapple with and future policymakers considering occupations must ponder. Given the practical importance and relative neglect of the subject, that is a major accomplishment richly worth celebrating.

Author's Response by David Edelstein, Georgetown University

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I am grateful to the roundtable participants for their thoughtful and careful reviews of my book. I would also like to thank Williams College for co-sponsoring and hosting the conference in April at which my book as well as three others were discussed.

I began work on this book in the fall of 2002 as the prelude to the seemingly inevitable U.S. invasion of Iraq was underway. At the time, discussions of the post-war fate of Iraq often referred back to the successful post-World War II occupations of western Germany and Japan. If Germany and Japan could be rebuilt and democratized after World War II, then why not Iraq in 2003? These common analogies prompted two questions that motivated my study. First, are Germany and Japan suitable analogies for Iraq? And second, are there other cases of post-war military occupation that might offer different lessons than Japan and Germany?

In the end, I argue that western Germany and Japan are both poor analogies for Iraq and that the relevant universe of cases is, in fact, far more expansive. Military occupation has historically failed more often than it has succeeded. To explain the pattern of success and failure, I focus on the threat environment of the occupied territory. That is, occupation success or failure is best explained by whether an occupied territory faces an external threat to its survival, an internal threat to its integrity, or no threat at all. Occupations are most likely to succeed when an occupied territory faces an external threat that motivates a nationalistic population to accept occupation by a foreign power and that compels the occupying power to devote sufficient time and resources to the occupation to permit its success. As the reviews note, this is largely a structural argument. I do not argue that the structural threat environment is completely determinative, but I do contend that structure significantly constrains the possibility of success for political leaders.

Let me now turn to criticisms that recur throughout the reviews: (1) defining occupation, (2) assessing success and failure, and (3) addressing alternative arguments. I then conclude my reply by identifying a shortcoming of the book not identified in the reviews and discussing how the findings of the book may be useful to policy makers.

### *Defining Occupation*

Throughout the reviews, especially David Ekbladh's, and Peter Lieberman and Federico Manfredi's, a number of questions are raised about my definition of "occupation." As the reviewers note, how occupation is defined affects the choice of cases to include and possibly the conclusions reached about the efficacy of occupation as a tool of statecraft.

My definition of occupation emphasizes its intended temporary duration and distinguishes occupation from related concepts such as annexation, intervention, colonialism, and nation-building. Annexation implies permanent acquisition. A state can

intervene without occupying. The intended duration of colonial missions is often ambitious. And nation-building is not the goal of all military occupations nor is military occupation the only means available for nation-building. For better or for worse, such a definition left a number of cases at the margins and made for challenging decisions about whether or not to include such cases as military occupations. Most notably, as Liberman and Manfredi observe, I excluded the post-World War II Soviet presence in central and eastern Europe after concluding that Soviet actions in central and eastern Europe clearly did not indicate that the USSR's stay would be temporary.

Ultimately, the test of such a decision is to look at what in political science would be called the “robustness” of the decision. That is, how does the argument hold up if we alter the universe of cases to make it either broader or narrower? In this case, I contend that my argument would still hold up well even if the universe of cases was expanded to include the post-World War II Soviet cases. The impact and cost of empire maintenance on the fate of the Soviet Union remains debated, but such costs paid over a long period of time would lead me to code the cases as “mixed successes,” neither having fully accomplished the occupying power's goals at an acceptable cost nor having failed to do so. The effect would be to wash out some of the overall negative finding of the book, but the puzzle would still remain as to why some of these cases are more successful—at acceptable costs — than others.

Liberman and Manfredi further ask why the temporary nature of occupations is so critical to my argument. The logic underlying my argument is that occupation is undermined by a combination of an occupied population's nationalism and an occupying power's impatience. Knowing that an occupying power would rather not prolong its stay provides further impetus to the population to act to convince the occupying power to withdraw. Thus, the intended temporary duration of an occupation—as opposed to the indefinite duration of colonialism—is critical to explaining the dynamics that lead an occupation to unravel, often into violence.

### *Assessing Success and Failure*

As the reviews note, the book attempts to assess a broad universe of cases and identify patterns in the outcomes among those cases. The effort to look at a wide swath of cases necessitated relatively simple (and perhaps crude) criteria for assessing the cases. An overly complicated notion of success or failure would have rendered the effort at comparative analysis at best unhelpful, and at worst, confounding. I settled on a definition that assesses whether (a) the occupying power accomplished its *ex ante* goals and (b) those goals were achieved at costs acceptable to the occupying power.

Liberman and Manfredi suggest that this definition of success and failure sets the bar too high. Rose implicitly agrees by suggesting that while occupation may not have produced the best possible outcome, it may still be better than the alternatives. The reviewers are correct to note that occupation goals are frequently ratcheted back as occupying powers

discover that their initial goals may not be achievable (or at least achievable at a reasonable cost). But this does not obviate the importance of understanding whether ambitious military occupations are likely to succeed. Occupying powers often willfully embark on occupations with ambitious goals when other policy options are available, which makes understanding under what conditions those missions are likely to succeed critically important.

While Liberman and Manfredi contend that I have undercounted successes, Greg Mitrovich suggests that I have *over* counted successes. Germany and Japan—so often assumed to be the exemplars for occupation success—were, according to Mitrovich, not as successful as many, including me, have argued. Instead, Mitrovich contends, the apparent successes in West Germany and Japan are better attributed to the continuous cold war informal empire that the United States developed rather than any success in the immediate post-war occupation period.

While willing to grant the importance of the continuing American presence during the cold war, I also am more inclined than Mitrovich to acknowledge that considerable progress toward achieving American occupation aims was accomplished during the occupation period and that the U.S. relationship with both western Germany and Japan changed in the mid-1950's. In fact, as I argue in the book, a successful occupation is likely to breed a successful alliance. Where is the line between a strong alliance in the aftermath of occupation led by a superpower and an “informal empire” necessitated by an unsuccessful occupation? The line is fine, and reasonable people have disagreed on this cold war case. From my perspective, the critical question is whether the United States accomplished its *ex ante* goals in western Germany and Japan at a reasonable cost, and I would argue the answer is yes.

#### *Addressing Alternative Arguments*

The reviewers present a series of alternative arguments that they claim may better account for occupation success and failure. Let me address three:

First, Liberman and Manfredi point to levels of economic development. After all, West Germany and Japan not only faced a Soviet threat, they also were highly developed, industrial states. This economic development not only provided a foundation for economic recovery, it also created the social bases for post-war democratization in both countries. In fact, as Liberman and Manfredi acknowledge, I address this argument in the book. My contention is that while economic development is, in fact, a useful resource for an occupying power, what is critical is to identify the motives that drive occupying powers to catalyze such resources. In both western Germany and Japan, the initial American instinct was to destroy their industrial capacity so as to prevent the reemergence of a threat from either country. As I argue in the book, the decision to alter these policies was largely driven by the sense of a growing threat from the Soviet Union and/or Soviet-inspired communism. In short, Liberman and Manfredi's evidence does

not surprise me, but my argument takes one step back in order to explain the decisions that occupying powers make to employ economic and societal resources during occupation.

Second, David Ekbladh argues that a broader regional and international context might offer a richer explanation of outcomes in the cases I examine. Beyond simply looking at the threat environment, the international context might lead some occupations to be viewed as more legitimate and some to enjoy more international support. In the book, I investigate quasi-occupations in East Timor and Kosovo that enjoyed international legitimacy and reach skeptical conclusions about the importance of that legitimacy for occupation outcomes. That said, there may be other dimensions of the regional and international context, including levels of international support that have little to do with legitimacy, that may affect the outcome of military occupations. Such arguments do not necessarily undermine my own argument about the significance of the threat environment for occupation outcomes.

Third, a number of the reviews correctly note or imply that I do not present a full-fledged theory of coercion in this book. Occupation success and failure may be less due to structural factors than simply to the ability of occupying powers effectively to employ strategies of coercion. Chapter 3 of the book investigates the importance of occupation strategy by comparing the relative success of the Soviet occupation in northern Korea with the less successful American occupation of southern Korea immediately after World War II. In that chapter, I do not provide a complete theory of coercion within occupations, which would be beyond the scope of this book and which is a major area of study on its own, especially since the invasion of Iraq. What I do argue is that, *ceteris paribus*, coercion is more costly than cooperation and that coercion is more likely to be necessary in unfavorable threat environments than in favorable threat environments. Occupations can succeed by relying heavily on coercion, but they likely to be more costly and more difficult than occupations that enjoy the cooperation of the population.

### *Conclusion*

There is one critique of the book that I expected, but which I did not receive. I mention this not only as some indication of the humility of a first-time author, but also to highlight an important area for future research. My book relies heavily on a structural notion of threat. I, myself, remain somewhat dissatisfied with the detail of the evidence that I am able to muster on how the dynamics of threat played out within the occupied territory being analyzed. Future research might investigate further how threat perceptions evolve within societies, how elite perceptions might differ from the masses, and how occupying powers might manipulate those threat perceptions and promote certain elites over others based on those perceptions.

I conclude with a final note about the policy relevance of this book. Gideon Rose's perspective on this book is one of a former policy maker and a current editor of a leading

foreign policy publication. He questions how useful my analysis might be for policy makers for whom the perfect (i.e., fully successful military occupation) is often the enemy of the acceptable (i.e., something less than fully successful military occupation but better than any other alternative). This is an important point, for I wrote this book with the explicit aim of informing policy makers about the prospects for success in military occupations. Rose, however, underestimates the frequency with which policy makers have undertaken military occupation with ambitious goals when reasonable alternatives were available. Great powers should not have to suffer greatly before realizing that perhaps ambitious military occupation is not the wisest course of action.

Rose further faults me for overemphasizing structure at the expense of agency, but if this is true, then it might be a useful corrective to the more frequent, opposite mistake. I had the good fortune to write this book while working at Georgetown University in the nation's capital as critical decisions with regard to Iraq and Afghanistan were being made. Whenever I would present my argument to policy makers, they expressed a deep dissatisfaction with an argument that did not put their policy decisions front and center. What good, they would say, is a structural argument that leaves so little room for the decisions of policy makers? In response, I would always say what I conclude with here: it is, in fact, as important for policy makers to understand the limits, as much as the possibilities, of what they can do. Hubris is the mistake of overestimating one's capabilities, and it is, in fact, the error that too many occupying powers have made in the past. If my book has one takeaway lesson, it is that states, even the greatest of powers, must appreciate the limits of what they can accomplish.

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