

can deal with ethical dilemmas and address atrocities, all while exercising just war theory and practice, this book provides many useful case studies.

In *Here They Come*, Porter has provided military and civilian readers an opportunity to gain empathy for the plights of those in the complex environment of a conflict such as Kosovo. Readers should care about these conflicts because they continue to happen in our world today, and U.S. military professionals as well as U.S. Department of State personnel might someday find themselves dealing with one. Whether examining this context from the perspective of IDPs/refugees, special forces operators advising indigenous forces, or just two young lovers trying to survive a lethal environment, *Here They Come* is an engrossing narrative that puts the reader in the middle of the action. It starts out fast and accelerates throughout. It is a must-read for civilian leaders, military professionals, and educators alike.

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Divided Armies: Inequality & Battlefield Performance in Modern War. By Jason Lyall. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020. Pp. 528. \$99.95 (hardcover); \$35.00 (paperback).

Inequality as a Key Determinant of Battlefield Performance

In 2015, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert B. Neller, released a statement on the importance of diversity in the U.S. Marine Corps, stating, “Diversity is the aggregate of the varied cultures, backgrounds, talents, skills, and abilities among Marines. Diversity for the Marine Corps means we Marines are connected in a special relationship with the American public; we are leveraging America’s varied pool of skills and abilities; and we are maximizing individual differences as a force multiplier.”¹ In Dr. Jason Lyall’s new book, *Divided Armies: Inequality & Battlefield Performance in Modern War*, the author examines the value of diversity in military forces and discusses the benefits and consequences of diversity as well as its importance to military success. The theory behind Lyall’s ideas seems apparent: that greater diversity and equality within the military leads to better battlefield results. That said, there is much more than meets the eye that is hidden within this theory.

Lyall first defines key terms to lay the foundation for his theory. Vital to

understanding how effective an army is in battle depends on the definition one uses for battlefield performance. Lyall states that battlefield performance is “the degree to which a state’s armed forces can generate and apply coercive violence against enemy forces in direct battle” (p. 9). Key terms to tease out of this definition include *cohesion* and *combat power*, both of which are needed to inflict violence on the enemy effectively. Both are required to achieve great battlefield performance, and they are central to the idea of equality being vital to battlefield success.

Using the definition above, as well as comparisons to the three normative facets of what comprises victorious armies—power, ideations, and institutions—Lyall introduces the main idea missing from these conventional ideas on war: the human factor.

Modern armies are nothing like what is depicted in movies and television shows such as *Game of Thrones*. Men and women in battle are not unphased, obedient robots trained to strike when ordered. Instead, modern militaries are made up of sentient soldiers who possess the same qualities, quirks, and idiosyncrasies as anyone else. Further, the three tenets that comprise successful armies ignore soldiers’ racial and ethnic identities. Consequently, the common ideas used to define a successful army ignore the role that inequality plays in an army’s victory or defeat. Tied together with the definition outlined of battlefield prominence, Lyall connects the dots between inequality in the military and the negative battlefield performance of an army.

The key idea that is sussed out from the beginning of this book is that inequality plays a large role in modern armies’ battlefield performance. When one group of soldiers is discriminated against, or when one group feels unrepresented within the larger army, that army is more likely to suffer on the battlefield. This idea gives new credence to the push for greater diversity within the military. The inclusion of different beliefs and life experiences adds to the striking power of a force, and when a larger part of a nation is represented on the battlefield, and all soldiers are treated equally, the force fights better and wins more.

Project Mars

In *Divided Armies*, Lyall defines inequality as “the uneven distribution of membership within a given political community across the groups that find themselves nestled within the boundaries of the same territorial unit, whether a state, empire, or other form of political organization” (p. 4). To help quantify his theory of the importance of equality in battlefield performance, Lyall created Project Mars, a “new dataset of 250 conventional wars fought by 229 belligerents between 1800 and 2011” (p. 17). Using Project Mars, Lyall is able to illustrate the likelihood of four kinds of battlefield outcomes given greater military inequality. The four behaviors are 1) the probability of loss, 2) mass desertion, 3)

mass defection, and 4) the deployment of blocking detachments used to coerce soldiers to fight through the threat of fratricidal violence (p. 17).

Until now, no readily available measure of inequality within an army has existed. Consequently, Lyall created a military inequality coefficient (MIC), which calculates an army's level of inequality across its constituent ethnic groups (p. 7). A MIC consists of two components: the relative share that each ethnic group represents among an army's prewar personnel and the numeric value assigned to each ethnic group based on its position within the political community. From here, Lyall is able to depict the results of what has happened to an army plagued by inequality.

The results are eye-opening. An army plagued by inequality has a 75 percent greater chance of sustaining higher casualties than the enemy than does an army with greater equality among its ranks. Mass desertion, a rarity in equal and diverse armies, is extremely likely in an army with great inequality. The same goes for mass defection and the probability of using blocking detachments. The graphs displayed in the book clarify that the greater the inequality of an army, fueled by a lack of diversity of a nation's soldiers, the worse its battlefield performance (p. 18).

Lyall spends five chapters highlighting historical examples that support his theory. Inequality attacks the morale of soldiers in minority or discriminated groups, lowers trust among ethnic groups in the unit, and divides groups of soldiers into factions that are more likely to defect in concert with one another (pp. 19–22). Through his employment of Project Mars, as well as the many in-depth examples that are discussed and analyzed in his book, Lyall proves that inequality significantly affects the battlefield performance and success of an army.

The Future of War

One of the most fascinating concepts in *Divided Armies* focuses on the future of warfare and how inequality in modern militaries will continue to have a severe and deleterious effect on battlefield performance in 2021 and beyond. The key question posed by Lyall is whether any or all the potential problems that can result from inequality within an army—including mass casualties, desertion, mass defection, and the use of blocking detachments—will remain an issue as warfare become less human-focused and more robot- and cyber-oriented. He concludes that, yes, inequality will remain an issue in modern militaries. From the exploitation of fissures in society caused by identity politics to near-peer threats on the world stage, the human factor of war will forever be a critical factor in the success of any military. In the future, the fissures lying hidden in every society may be targeted to create instability in a nation's armed forces. These acts of war may come in the form of propaganda from enemies abroad, aiming to increase desertion and defection among a nation's military members

and hoping to stifle its ability to attack in full strength. In reading *Divided Armies*, one realizes how strategically significant diversity and equality can be for mission success.

Conclusion

Divided Armies offers a fascinating look at an idea that gets lost in the American political conversation as little more than a politically correct maneuver used by employers and now the U.S. military. Instead, what is gleaned from this book is that diversity and equality are every bit as crucial to battlefield success as any other facet previously thought to be vital to the success of an army. Lyall lays out an intelligible thesis that is novel and apropos in the world today. As the U.S. military becomes more diverse, hoping to use the strengths that the nation's population holds, it must be cognizant that equality among these diverse groups of individuals is crucial to winning the next war. Along with General Neller's sentiments on increasing diversity to take full advantage of America's "pool of skills and abilities," diversity and equality should also be sought to improve battlefield performance. As the twenty-first century progresses and near-peer threats create sophisticated maneuvers to target instability in the United States, maintaining diverse, equal, and cohesive military units is just as important to battlefield success as any other factor.

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Endnote

1. Gen Robert E. Neller, "Commandant of the Marine Corps Diversity Policy," 2018.

Containment in the Middle East. By Ehud Eilam. Lincoln: Potomac Books, an imprint of University of Nebraska Press, 2019. Pp. 216. \$29.95 (hardcover and ebook).

Containment in the Middle East offers a survey of various efforts to politically and militarily contain a wide range of factions and interests of various Middle Eastern countries. The book refrains from prescribing a specific approach or policy and is more a narration of events that have taken place in recent years, chiefly between 2011 and 2019. The book is modestly engaging and notable for its broad scope, but it lacks sufficient depth to garner much support from military historians, researchers, or policy makers.