

to be devastating to the cause of national unity in the years to come; and finally, it would have demonstrated that the experiences of colonialism in Africa contributed to the emergence of a unique historical configuration in modern postcolonial Africa, or what Ekeh refers to as the 'unique nature of African politics' (Ekeh, *Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement*, 1975: 93). This, however, does not take away anything from Power's work, which is well researched and of exceptional quality. Judging from its pricing and packaging, the book is well suited for university libraries, but as an attempt to 'complete' what is generally regarded as an 'incomplete' Malawian history, this book should be recommended and made available to every Malawian.

GODWIN ONUOHA

Human Sciences Research Council

Joseba Agirreazkuenaga, *The Making of the Basque Question: Experiencing Self-Government, 1793–1877*. Reno: Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, 2011, 312pp. \$19.00 (pbk).

Is it possible to merge two quite distinct approaches like ethnosymbolism and institutionalism? The former draws on the persistence of ancestral myths of ethnic origins conveyed through the recurrent use of symbols, narratives and discourses, while the latter socio-political approach focuses on the power of institutions in moulding popular perceptions, including political identities. The two seem to be hardly compatible. Yet, Joseba Agirreazkuenaga's book on the origins of the 'Basque question' compellingly succeeds in establishing a relationship between the two. He underlines the long-term effect of political and juridical institutions on the perception of a sense of Basque nationhood, not only among the elites, but also among most of the workers, the peasants and ordinary people. He shows how the General Assemblies, or local parliamentary institutions, of Araba, Bizkaia and Guipuzkoa (as well as the *fueros* of the Kingdom of Navarre) shaped a political discourse centred on myths of primordial independence firmly grounded on a robust and intellectually articulated legalistic tradition. The origins of Basque nationalism are normally ascribed to the activity and organisation of Sabino de Arana y Goiri (1865–1903). Although this is true, Arana himself was inspired both by the prevailing European *Zeitgeist* and by a previous tradition of cultural writings on the 'Basque question'.

Methodologically, the author starts from the rare advantage of knowing Euskara, the Basque language, which allows him direct access to archival fonts in that language spanning a few centuries. This first-rate mastery allows him to delve deeply into untapped archival and literary resources and extrapolate illuminating liaisons and connections of the persistence of Basque identity before the age of nationalism.

Chapter 1 prepares the ground with an excursus into the configuration of prenationalist discourses on the 'Basque cultural community', while Chapter 2 focuses on Spain's and France's models of state formation and consolidation, invoking a comparative theoretical approach to the process of national state-construction in Europe (40). Basing his argument on a series of books published around 1818 (like Juan Antonio Zamacola, Pedro Jose Astarloa and, later, Augustin Chaho), Chapter 3 discusses how the idea of a Basque nation began to emerge before its rediscovery

and reinterpretation by the nationalists. The following chapters discuss the functioning and evolution of Representative Assemblies, notably the Basque political conferences (1775–1936), which the author argues were central in articulating and shaping a sense of Basque nationhood. Returning to the decisive influence of centralist institution-making, Chapter 7 tackles the long-term effects of Spain's and France's liberal constitutions, with their legacy of cultural homogenisation and eradication of cultural and linguistic differences. Chapter 8 focuses on an important discontinuity point, the First Carlist War (1833–1839), which created opposite common memories of resistance and oppression, while Chapter 9 discusses the continuities, in spite of an apparent discontinuity, of local institutions, through 1839 and at the end of the First Carlist War, threatening the continuity of the *fueros* and the legality for self-government. This is a particularly important point as it sets the basis for a long-lasting nationalist discourse that still perseveres to the present day around notions like a 'Basque political constitution' or a 'Basque nationality', a term that was widely used at least since 1843. Chs. 10 and 11 develop the argument of Basque constitutionalism exploring further its linkage with the concept of Basque 'nationality'. Chapter 12 explores the festivals and sport events that helped to articulate Basque nationhood at a political level, always considering the importance of language in defining the Basque nation before the emergence of nationalism around 1892. What makes this chapter and much of the book original is the authors' rare knowledge of relatively unexploited primary sources, like the *bertsolariak*, oral poets, verse improvisers and singers-narrators in the Basque language who conveyed stories deeply tied to the perception of local identities as well as to broader political developments.

Chapter 13 brings these findings together by analysing the speeches in the Spanish parliament over the need to 'homogenize' Spain, emulating thus the Franco-German model then prevalent in Europe. These discussions culminated in the 1876 law abolishing the *fueros*: The abolition led to a blowback effect in the Basque provinces with several organisations emerging around a common discourses of self-defence against state aggression and centralisation. These narratives, speeches and written literature formed the nucleus of what then emerged as Basque nationalism through the Basque Nationalist Party, founded by Arana in 1893–95.

The book concludes with a robust epilogue in which concepts like 'resilience' and 'historical legality' are associated with broader historical developments through a *longue durée* perspective that takes into account the homogenising efforts of the state as well as the new challenges posed by globalisation. This makes the book a key reading for all students of Basque nationalism, particularly those interested in the prenational period before Arana. It is also an important work for the study of nationalism in its early stages and stateless nations in general, and in this respect the book has no rivals in the English language.

A possible limit with this approach is that it may overlook the pervasive effects of Spain's process of nationalisation, at least in the cultural field. The once fashionable thesis of Spain's 'weak nationalization' has been dismissed by recent historiography, as a new generation of scholars has challenged these assumptions demonstrating that, not only Spain's nation-building has been far-reaching and pervasive, but that it 'succeeded' in destroying many aspects of peripheral culture. However, the book provides a set of valid arguments for both sides of the story as it points to the destructive impact of state centralisation, as well as to the ultimate incapacity of the Spanish state to achieve its homogenising vision.

Agirreazkuenaga bridges masterfully ethnosymbolism and institutionalism, shedding light not just on Basque nationalism, but on nationalism in general. In fact, although the book largely focuses on the persistence of ancient Basque institutions, it also considers the legacy of ethnic myths through discourses of group identity articulated around the continuing importance of political institutions. The Basque specialist will find Agirreazkuenaga's deep knowledge of the prenationalist discourse and culture highly useful, while nationalism scholars can learn a wealth of information relating to the importance of institutions in shaping myths of ethnic descent.

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Ikerbasque Foundation and UPV/EHU

Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012, 293pp. £21.38 (hbk).

Why did the Chinese government escalate some international crises, such as the 1999 US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, and not others, like the 1998 attacks on ethnic Chinese in Indonesia? Why did Chinese youth go from standing in front of tanks in 1989 to becoming the country's staunchest patriots defending the 2008 Olympic flame in capital cities around the world? Zheng Wang's book, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, looks at a particular dimension of China's socio-political culture-historical memory, to solve a number of puzzles about the country's international and domestic politics that the mainstream, realist tradition of International Relations theory has a hard time explaining. Combining insights from the liberal and constructivist traditions, Wang examines Chinese foreign and domestic policies since Jiang Zemin's 'patriotic turn' in the 1990s. Employing historical memory as the main explanatory variable, Wang's analysis identifies the causal relationship between China's official historical narrative, the country's collective identity construction and its foreign policy.

The stated aim of the book is to delineate with precision the extent to which ideational factors bring about conflict behaviours. Wang's original theoretical framework directly links identity to political outcomes, locating three causal pathways in which ideational factors influence policy behaviour: as road maps, as focal points and as institutions. Although this framework heavily draws on insights that most constructivist and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) approaches have already incorporated, namely how cognitive constraints and biases can affect foreign policy-makers, Wang distinguishes himself by giving pride of place to memory. Examining the impact of historical memory and identity on cognition allows him to make sense of some otherwise puzzling instances of Chinese foreign behaviour like the ones mentioned above.

Wang's analysis of how China chooses to remember its past has great relevance for the present. It sheds light on topical questions about the political implications of national historiography, and the role that history education plays in a country's domestic and foreign relations. Wang offers a map of the meanderings of Chinese historical memory, illustrating the Chinese Communist Party's ideological evolution from communism to nationalism over the course of the last three decades. This transformation is set against a broader background of the change in China's self-image during its millenary history.