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Rob Saunders ([saunder@farmingdale.edu](mailto:saunder@farmingdale.edu)) and Jack Holland ([j.holland@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:j.holland@leeds.ac.uk))

## **The Ritual of Beer Consumption as Discursive Intervention: Effigy, Sensory Politics, and Resistance in Everyday IR**

**Abstract:** We draw on work on popular culture, critical geopolitics, visual politics, affect and the everyday in order to develop a framework for the analysis of the ritual of beer consumption as discursive intervention. Specifically, we argue the need for International Relations to expand theories of visual politics to a broader ‘*sensory politics*’, incorporating taste, smell, and touch. For our case study, we explore the empirical contestation of dominant geopolitical discourses, critically analysing the production and consumption of two explicitly and intentionally political beers: *Norwegian brewery 7 Fjell’s release of ‘The Donald Ignorant IPA’*; and *Scottish BrewDog’s production of ‘Hello, My Name is Vladimir’*. Conceptualising the *ritual of these beers’ consumption as affective, effigial, and corporeal discursive interventions*, we encourage a move beyond the visual to the sensory, *in order to make sense of beers’ (limited) potential for resistance within everyday IR.*

**Keywords:** beer, discourse, popular culture, Trump, Putin, effigy

### **Introduction**

In recent years, countless beer brands have transgressed national boundaries, competing for the hearts and minds of consumers around the world. This battle is being waged with a variety of weapons; certainly, hops, grain, and yeast are tools of the trade, but so too are advertisements, product placement, and corporate partnerships. Beer lends itself to patriotic performance in evocative ways, as a product and praxis that evokes lifeways, symbols, and codes. For some beer-drinkers, loyalty to the (purported) ‘national’ brand is sacrosanct, whether this is Carling or Carlsberg. Yet for others, imported beers provide a way to imbibe the ‘foreign’, whether one is seeking the laid-back attitude of the Caribbean (Corona), the craic of a Dublin night out (Guinness), or the unabridged masculinity of the Australian Outback (Foster’s). While the tension between these politicised flows has been evident for decades, there are new forces at play via the craft beer revolution that has swept the world since the 1970s. Influenced by the locavore movement, many beer-drinkers have become regionalised in their consumption, purchasing only brews from within a limited radius of their homes. However, the rapacious mechanisms of neoliberal capitalism have tapped this profitable font, resulting in ‘small’ brews being shipped far from their original provenance. With this pouring out of the local onto the global stage, we are witness to a new world order of beer, where visual politics (logos, labels, and ads) are situated alongside mouthfeels, international bitterness units, and alcohol-by-volume ratings.

In this article, we move beyond studies of beer qua the performance of national identity to interrogate the increasing politicisation of beer on the world stage, focusing on specific examples of how brewing is staking a claim in the realm of International Relations (IR). Our focus is on two beers that make intentional and explicit international political interventions. We begin with a brief précis of the politicisation of beer in the twentieth century and the role of beer as ‘the world’s

favourite drink'.<sup>1</sup> We then develop our interdisciplinary theoretical framework, which draws on work on popular culture, critical geopolitics, and visual politics, as well as literatures of affect and the everyday. We then proceed to a close and critical reading of the visual and affective politics and international marketing efforts of two recent beer releases: BrewDog's 'Hello, My Name is Vladimir' (Scotland) and 7 Fjell's 'The Donald Ignorant IPA' (Norway). We interrogate the linkage of two of the world's most (in)famous leaders – Russian President Vladimir Putin (2000-2008 and 2012-present) and US President Donald J. Trump (2017-present) – to the emergent geopolitics of craft beer,<sup>2</sup> a popular-culture medium that is figuratively and literally consumed. We are particularly interested in the (geo)political performativity of beer's imbibing, which we explore as a moment of resistance through effigial consumption.<sup>3</sup>

Beer-drinking, particularly in the third spaces of pubs where identities of self and community merge, inherently conveys geopolitical meaning(s) through displays of value-laden advertising, vocalised bar-side ordering, and the visual politics of drinking one beer over another. In turn, such activity functions as a potential, if not-necessarily-realised somatic marker for the drinker who, as a (global) citizen, manifests their political culture through the quotidian action of imbibing the hop-and-barley based potable of their home country or some faraway land.<sup>4</sup> We are interested in the political interpositions by the brewers of these two beers, and particularly the question of resistance. In teasing out the meaning of BrewDog and 7 Fjell's geopolitical interventions, we counterpoise their transgressive visual politics against the efforts of national/ist brewers such as the US's Budweiser (which recently rebranded their flagship product 'America') and depoliticised, globalist beers such as Jamaica's Red Stripe (which trades on its 'friendly island' style). Our threefold contribution is therefore, primarily, to literatures on popular geopolitics, affect and the everyday, with a particular provocation to visual politics to extend beyond the aesthetic to the sensory. First, our normative contribution challenges mainstream disciplinary studies, situating beer production and consumption within the discursive battlefield of world politics, as an affective, resonant, and somatic quotidian act. Second, in a theoretical contribution, we develop a conceptualisation of the effigial ritual of beer's consumption as a potentially resonant (but limited) moment and marker of resistance. This power of this resonance is derived from the medium's impact on a range of sensory mechanisms – taste, smell, touch, and intoxication – that go beyond the visual, to tap into the range of ways that IR's everyday discursive materiality manifests. And, third, in an empirical contribution, we provide a critical analysis of two beers that make overt interventions into IR by challenging the dominant discourses undergirding contemporary world politics' two most notorious figures.

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<sup>1</sup> Steve Hindy, *The Craft Beer Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> We view this geopolitics as a holistic formation, not only concerning conflict between actors in world politics, but also as practice in regionalism wherein brewers use terroir, local politics, and iconic elements of place to help their products 'win' in the global marketplace.

<sup>3</sup> For the authors, effigial consumption constitutes a performative practice wherein the consumer creates political meaning through the ceremonial or ritualistic internalisation of a foe, often mimicking certain aspects of cannibalism.

<sup>4</sup> Unlike wines which are often ordered based solely on style and distributed to patrons in clear glasses, beer is about brand. Beer labelling makes its consumption conspicuous, either through bottle or can art, or ordering via symbol-laden tap handles at the bar, an interaction which is visual, cultural, and biopolitical in nature. (Spirits certainly rely on brand, but do not carry the visual power of beer when served to the drinker.)

## Beer and international politics

Academic analysis of alcohol as part of the human condition is well established. However, the majority of scholarly output on the subject of intoxicating potables has tended to avoid questions of politics, except when framed within larger debates around the international temperance movement, religio-social reasons for abstaining from drink, or health issues associated with alcoholism.<sup>5</sup> Our aim is to bring beer into the field of IR, contextualising it as an important-yet-understudied element in what has come to be known as popular geopolitics. While there have been a handful of studies that have linked beer to national identity (especially through the medium of popular culture),<sup>6</sup> we contend that there is a lacuna around the international politics of beer. Such a gap in the literature persists despite growing evidence of the manifold ways in which beer is bound up in the operation of power at all scales, from the politics of the everyday to relations between states.

### Patriotic (beer) consumption

In contemporary societies, consumption has taken on an increasingly political bent. While buying domestic products has long been a constituent element of the political economy of any state (especially in times of war or economic insecurity), the increasing performativity of consumption on a global scale, and its attendant International Political Economy (IPE), has changed markedly in recent decades. In the wake of 9/11, President George W. Bush urged American citizens to ‘spend, spend, spend’ to help the US out of the economic downturn triggered by the attacks on the World Trade Centre.<sup>7</sup> And, more recently, Russian citizens have responded to international sanctions (and self-imposed embargoes on European Union products) by engaging in visible acts of patriotic purchasing, from t-shirts to autochthonous foodstuffs, as well as the intentional ‘non-consumption’ of foreign goods. Paralleling this obsession with strengthening the state through the buying of certain items, Ukrainian citizens have demonstrated a penchant for ‘conspicuous patriotic consumption’, purchasing national products in response to Russia’s annexation of Crimea.<sup>8</sup>

Beer, of course, is consumed both in a figurative (financial) sense, as well as literally, and both variants have long been crucial to societal and political relations. The maxim ‘Beer is proof that God love us and wants us to be happy’ is frequently attributed to Benjamin Franklin, one of the United States’ foundational figures. Yet, he never made such a claim, instead remarking that wine demonstrated the existence of a Lordly agape rooted in Nature. The historical legerdemain that led us to believe that Franklin was America’s first beer-hound is telling. As one Franklin biographer argues, the misattribution of the quote is an effort at making the worldly statesman into ‘one of the

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015); Erica Prussing, *White Man’s Water* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011) and Mark Schrad, *Vodka Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> See Ira Wagman, ‘Wheat, Barley, Hops, Citizenship: Molson’s “I Am [Canadian]” Campaign and the Defense of Canadian National Identity through Advertising’, *Velvet Light Trap* 50 (2002): 77-99; Diane Kirkby, “‘Glorious Beer’: Gender Politics and Australian Popular Culture”, *Journal of Popular Culture* 37 (2003): 244-256; Robert M. MacGregor, ‘I Am Canadian: National Identity in Beer Commercials’, *Journal of Popular Culture* 37 (2003): 276-286;

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Carlson, ‘Patriotic Splurging’, *Time* 158/17 (2001): 76.

<sup>8</sup> See the special issue of *Digital Icons* entitled ‘Patriotic (Non) Consumption: Food, Fashion and Media’ (2017).

guys’,<sup>9</sup> transmogrifying a long-dead Atlanticist and oenophile into a proper ‘American’, somebody ‘we would want to have a beer with’. This shibboleth is politically and electorally significant: consider the 2004 US presidential election which pitted the folksy Texas teetotaler Bush against the erudite Francophone John Kerry,<sup>10</sup> or Barack Obama’s attempts to alleviate racial tensions via a ‘beer summit’.<sup>11</sup> Bush reaped the benefits of appearing to be a guy you could drink a beer with, while Obama seemed to concur with Societe Brewing Company’s mantra that ‘beer is democratic!’: it ‘can unite everyone, despite class, race, sex, religion, or age’.<sup>12</sup>

Beer’s political significance is, perhaps, most observable in the correlation of beer preference and political partisanship. Choice of beer is a good shortcut clue to voting intention,<sup>13</sup> with Corona-drinkers leaning Democrat, Busch Light-drinkers titling Republican, and Guinness-drinkers being swing voters.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, in the UK’s 2016 referendum on Brexit, drinkers could performatively declare their voting intention through their choice of beer labelling, stating ‘in’, ‘out’, or ‘idk’.<sup>15</sup> Of course, the relationship between world politics and everyday popular culture – including beer – is both subtler and more fundamental than these examples suggest. Beer constructs and contests identity, including at a national level. As Foster’s tells British drinkers,<sup>16</sup> ordering a pint is to ask for an Australian and manly beverage; Fosters is a beer for relaxed and comfortable<sup>17</sup> ‘real men’: cans feature the national colours and the iconic Southern Cross, while adverts portray quintessentially Aussie blokes on the beach, barbequing, or backpacking. Such marketing tells drinkers that ‘Fosters is Australian for beer’, in a clear reproduction cum amplification of dominant narratives of masculinity and national identity.<sup>18</sup> These efforts have brought significant sales successes, encouraging other breweries to pursue the explicit conflation of national identity with their beers.<sup>19</sup> Consider, for example, the message behind a tepid<sup>20</sup> pint of ‘glorious English’ Bombardier: ordering one, customers are told, is to ‘once more engage in a little Blighty foe bashing’, returning Albion to its imperial pomp by adopting the role of an English troop in battle.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Nathan Kozuskanich, *Benjamin Franklin: American Founder, Atlantic Citizen* (London: Routledge, 2015), 3.

<sup>10</sup> See Richard Benedetto, ‘Who’s More Likeable, Bush or Kerry?’ *USA Today*, 17 September 2004, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/columnist/benedetto/2004-09-17-benedetto\\_x.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/columnist/benedetto/2004-09-17-benedetto_x.htm).

<sup>11</sup> See Peter Baker, Helene Cooper, and Jeff Zeleny, ‘What a White House Beer Says About Race and Politics’, *New York Times*, 30 July 2009, [http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/07/30/what-a-white-house-beer-says-about-race-and-politics/?\\_r=0](http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/07/30/what-a-white-house-beer-says-about-race-and-politics/?_r=0).

<sup>12</sup> Steph Heffner, ‘Beer Is Democratic’, *Beer Busters*, <http://beerbusterspodcast.com/beer-is-democratic-beer-is-culture-societe-brewing-company/>.

<sup>13</sup> Reid Wilson, ‘What Your Beer Says about Your Politics, in One Chart’, *Washington Post*, 8 January 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2014/01/08/what-your-beer-says-about-your-politics-in-one-chart/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> ‘In? Out? No Idea? EU Beers for the Undecided Masses’, *Little Valley Brewing*, 2016, <https://littlevalleybrewery.co.uk/eu-beers-for-the-undecided-masses/>.

<sup>16</sup> Importantly, Foster’s is not popular in Australia, and is therefore dependent on selling a highly-circumscribed version of ‘Aussie-ness’ (as opposed to Australianness) to overseas consumers.

<sup>17</sup> On this phrase, see Judith Brett, ‘Relaxed and Comfortable: The Liberal Party’s Australia’, *Quarterly Essay*, 19 (2005).

<sup>18</sup> *Author-2*

<sup>19</sup> See Dan Hyde, ‘Foster’s “Good Call” Beer Advert Sparks Sales Boom’, *The Telegraph*, 27 October 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/11190716/Fosters-good-call-beer-advert-sparks-sales-boom.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Kevin Myers, ‘Warm Beer, Cricket and Faith: English National Identity and Refugee Children in Britain, 1937–1945’, *Historica*, 35 (1999): 259–280.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

In a similar vein, as Wagman and MacGregor explore,<sup>22</sup> Molson's 'I Am [Canadian]' campaign functioned as a trenchant example of how beer can be tethered to national identity, serving as a platform for cultural differentiation and as a means of patriotic consumption (while keeping spending within the increasingly 'soft shell' of the state). Taking a page from Molson, Belgian-Brazilian conglomerate Anheuser-Busch InBev decided to rename its flagship product, Budweiser, 'America' in 2016. Contextualised as 'inspiring drinkers to celebrate America and Budweiser's shared values of freedom and authenticity',<sup>23</sup> the rebranding enacted subtle-yet-meaningful changes to the already-patriotic labelling. These included the use of the US national motto *E pluribus unum*, lyrics from the 'Star-Spangled Banner' (1814), and the slogans 'Liberty and Justice for All', 'Land of the Free', and 'Home of the Brave' (see **Image 1: The Exceptional Nation in a Six-Pack**). Rooted in the visual politics of performative national identity and soaked in the semiotics of American quiddity, such marketing evinces the neoliberal, postmodern manifestation of what Billig has called 'banal nationalism', a form of everyday flag-waving that – while seemingly innocuous – is as powerful as any form of ethnonationalism.<sup>24</sup>

### **Beer as discursive intervention**

While some scholars have begun to interrogate the ramifications of conspicuous patriotic consumption and the commodification of (national) culture,<sup>25</sup> less attention has been paid to forms of nationalistic consumption that impugn the image of other polities on the international level.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, we turn to popular geopolitics to assist in the interpretation of the ways in which artefacts of popular culture serve to construct geographical imaginations, sculpt geopolitical visions, produce geopolitical orders, and distinguish between the (good) 'us' and (evil) 'them'.<sup>27</sup> Scholars operating in the field, as well as those IR researchers who interrogate the 'popular culture-world politics continuum',<sup>28</sup> have provided modalities for investigating the power of quotidian activities, from playing with toys to reading comics to watching television. Our analysis is also buttressed by the deepening field of scholarship on the everyday, and especially Davies' recent re-grounding of Lefebvre within the realm of IPE.<sup>29</sup> Methodologies drawn from the interdisciplinary field of visual politics, which pays close attention to the 'co-constitutive place of the visual in the shaping of subjects and the remaking of worlds', are also helpful in examining sites of production,

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<sup>22</sup> Wagman 'Wheat, Barley, Hops, Citizenship' and MacGregor, 'I am Canadian'.

<sup>23</sup> Mary Bowerman, 'Budweiser Renames Beer "America" This Summer', USA Today, 10 May 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/nation-now/2016/05/10/budweiser-renames-cans-beer-america-anheuser-busch/84176886/>.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Marlis Schweitzer, 'Patriotic Acts of Consumption', *Theatre Journal* 60 (2008):585-608 and Jinnie Yoo, William Swann, and Kyungok Kim, 'The Influence of Identity Fusion on Patriotic Consumption', *Korean Journal of Advertising* 25 (2014): 81-106.

<sup>26</sup> In this, we mean forms of consumption that specifically target the (foreign) 'enemy other' rather than glorify the (home) state, nation, or territory.

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, Joanne Sharp, 'Publishing American Identity: Popular Geopolitics, Myth and The Reader's Digest', *Political Geography* 12, (1993): 491-503; Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994); and Gertjan Dijkink, *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> Kyle Grayson, Matt Davies, and Simon Philpott, 'Pop Goes IR? Researching the Popular Culture-World Politics Continuum', *Politics* 29 (2009): 155-163.

<sup>29</sup> Matt Davies, 'Everyday Life as Critique: Revisiting the Everyday in IPE with Henri Lefebvre and Postcolonialism', *International Political Sociology* 10 (2016): 22-38.

interpreting content and the registers through which they work, and assessing zones of circulation and repurposing.<sup>30</sup> Given its focus on the playful politics of consuming the enemy, this article is informed by the work of these and other scholars, particularly researchers seeking to understand the transformative power of images, affect, and somatics in their capacity to reaffirm old and/or create new ‘social and political imaginaries’.<sup>31</sup> And, of course, in order to interrogate the everyday politics of the ritual of effigial beer consumption, it is imperative for IR to go beyond the visual, incorporating a broader range of sensory processes, which are key to beer’s resonance and part of its discursive intervention.

World politics as discursive battlefield: Beyond aesthetics to a broader sensory politics of affect, assemblage, and somatics in everyday IR

In western democracies, policy – and indeed political possibility – hinges upon the discursive foundations that comprise the (often electoral) domestic context. Gramsci recognised the importance of this underpinning contestation – as well as its difference from undemocratic states – and termed it a ‘war of position’.<sup>32</sup> Within this discursive melee, political elites attempt to build up social capital through the composition of resonant narratives that necessarily clash and compete, before resolving.<sup>33</sup> Political elites, within this formulation, attempt to discursively outmanoeuvre each other to have their words heard and accepted, in order to enable their preferred political aspirations. However, they do not act alone on the battlefield of world politics; other actors have the ability to reify and reaffirm IR’s dominant discourses, seek their contestation through resistance and modification, or attempt to craft something altogether new. Actors in the realm of popular culture are particularly well-placed to ‘fight’ and win’ within this contest, since their discursive interventions can play to a range of senses in the quest for resonance.<sup>34</sup>

Popular culture’s weapons within this war of position are considerable. Consider the imagery of the graphic novel, the soundtrack of the Hollywood movie, or the depth of character development in one’s favourite television series. Linguistic and rhetorical strategies may remain important in these mediums, alongside oratorical performance, but where real advantage and importance is found is in popular culture’s affective properties. The ability to play to, encourage, and construct acute emotional responses is often greater, we argue, in popular culture than formal politics. In this, we follow Carter and McCormick’s lead when they argue:

[T]he relation between cinema and enactments of geopolitical intervention must be understood not only in terms of the way one reproduces or subverts the discursively framed codes and scripts of the other but also in terms of the amplification and anchoring of particular affects through specific tactics and techniques.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Sarah Elwood and Harriet Hawkinsy, ‘Intradisciplinary and Visual Politics’, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 107, (2017): 4-13.

<sup>31</sup> Vít Šisler, ‘Digital Arabs: Representation in Video Games’, *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 11, (2008): 203-220.

<sup>32</sup> Author-2

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Author-2

<sup>35</sup> Sean Carter and Derek McCormack, ‘Film, Geopolitics and the Affective Logics of Intervention’, *Political Geography* 25 (2006): 228-245.

For us, it is clearly possible to substitute ‘cinema’, in Carter and McCormick’s formulation, for ‘popular culture’ generally, and ‘beer’ specifically. Like them, we see and emphasise the multiple vectors of affective registering in popular culture, including mass-market and craft brews.

Regarding beer, the imagery of design and the narratives of the marketing are reinforced by the actual consumption/experience of the product, thus linking the emotional power of the image<sup>36</sup> with the potency of the potable. For many, beer-drinking is ritualised through pub-going, a sociological, if not-necessarily political practice that often includes having ‘the usual’, or even being recognised by the barkeep by one’s beer choice, thus producing a ‘seen’ consumptive coupling. In other settings, beer consumption is similarly performed, e.g. bringing bottles to a party (and then curating the ‘meaning’ as well as the style of beer), or via public beer-drinking at sporting events, on the beach, or in the street where the choice of beverage signals aspects of the drinker’s identity. Moreover, beer is tasted and physically consumed, creating even greater potential for the establishment of biocultural assemblages<sup>37</sup> – and the formation of somatic markers<sup>38</sup> – establishing and signalling a chemical pathway of resistance that is remembered through mechanisms that extend beyond the text and the cognitive to include the bodily. Even more than a good meal, the intoxicating nature of beer alters the consumer, producing a range of emotions from euphoria to rage. Beer consumption is visceral: its message – its discursive mediation – is smelled, savoured, and felt, as well as seen and read.<sup>39</sup> Affective investment is more likely through a medium that engages a fuller array of human sensory mechanisms and this investment is vital for the construction of political identity.<sup>40</sup> In moments of trauma, crisis, and discursive subjugation, studies have shown that popular culture’s interventions within a broader war of position are profound, given the difficulties of speaking out for ‘official’ political actors. We suggest that, in the act of affective effigial consumption, beer, like other artefacts of popular culture, has the potential to offer an important potential moment and marker of resistance, even if the performing of such acts is ‘constitutive of an always incomplete subject’ and marked by ‘irony and contradiction’.<sup>41</sup>

### Effigy and resistance

From the centuries-old autumnal celebration of Guy Fawkes Night in leafy English parks to the burning of papier-mâché representations of US leaders in Middle Eastern agorae, the use of effigy has a long history within the performative realm of IR. When attached to the body of the ‘enemy other’, such acts are amazingly resonant, providing highly visible and interactive ‘platforms for

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<sup>36</sup> On the unique power of images in world politics, see Roland Bleiker, ‘Pluralist Methods for Visual Global Politics’, *Millennium* 43 (2015): 872-890.

<sup>37</sup> William E. Connolly, ‘The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine’, *Political Theory* 33 (2005): 869-886.

<sup>38</sup> Gearóid Ó Tuathail, ‘“Just out looking for a fight”: American Affect and the Invasion of Iraq’, *Antipode* 35 (2003): 856-870.

<sup>39</sup> For some swing-top bottles, marketers have ensured and emphasised that beer is also heard. Similarly, audible eructation is also sometimes part of (performative) beer-drinking.

<sup>40</sup> Emma Hutchison, *Affective Communities in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>41</sup> Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca, ‘Rethinking Globalised Resistance: Feminist Activism and Critical Theorising in International Relations’, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9 (2007): 284-301



redemption and moral instruction'.<sup>42</sup> As an essentially populist form of political expression, the practice of burning one's enemy in effigy has become commonplace in times of international uncertainty and periods of heightened insecurity, paralleling the aforementioned phenomenon of conspicuous patriotic consumption. The communal and ceremonial act of a (mostly or even exclusively male) group coming together to set alight an inanimate object that is fashioned in the likeness of a distant enemy is a deeply affective experience that engages nearly all the senses. These include sight (gazing at the image), touch (physically handling or destroying the effigy, or feeling the heat of the flames), smell (breathing in the fumes of the burning offering), and sound (hearing the crackling of the fire and the chants of the crowd). However, not all effigies of political foes are destined for the flames. Depending on the polity in question, there are even more demeaning ways to performatively engage with the enemy *εἶδος* ('form'), from slapping shoes on a politician's likeness in the Arab world (as was done to the statue of Saddam Hussein when it was toppled during the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003) to the defiling of simulacra in human faeces (which occurred in 2015 when black students dumped shit on the statue of British imperialist Cecil J. Rhodes at the University of Cape Town). So, what does it mean when one buys a bottle of beer sporting the likeness of an anti-democratic world leader like Trump or Putin, and does such an act imply politicised communality of any sort?

In the ensuing analysis, we investigate the use of effigy in the naming, labelling, and the attendant taste profiles of particular craft beers, tethering this to the notion of everyday forms of resistance.<sup>43</sup> In the vast majority of instances where the images of real people are emblazoned on beer bottle labels or can art, the depiction is honorific and intended to impart some positive aspect of the celebrity into the beverage. Without question, the use of the American revolutionary Samuel Adams on the flagship product of the US's largest craft brewery, Boston Beer Company, is the most well-known example of this trend. Sporting the smiling face of one of America's 'founding fathers', bottles of Sam Adams are available in markets around the world from Mexico to New Zealand. St. Pauli 'Girl' can be viewed in the same light, albeit through a hypersexualised lens. To the chagrin of many contemporary Germans, the Bavarian Mädchen in her blue-and-white Dirndl has become a global synecdoche for German beer. Perhaps this gendered framing of Germany's most artisanal craft, rooted in the Reinheitsgebot of 1516, explains why the Brewmasters of the Radeberger Gruppe chose to portray a gathering of eight men on the website 'Deutsches Bier'.

Our two case studies, however, are focused on beers that use the likenesses of notorious political celebrities: Putin and Trump. The consumption (and concomitant 'disposal') of these figures via effigial representation is rooted in a historical, if understudied tradition of populist political activism. In their reduction to simple graphics that adorn bottled beverages, these great-power heads of state are rendered inert, weak beer if you will. One can hold them in their hand, make a joke about putting them in one's mouth, and then let them be collected by a member of staff (or even smash them against a brick wall) without causing an international incident. Taken to extremes, it is even possible to invoke the mythological notion that cannibalism enables the assumption an enemy's power through their (literal) consumption in such performative displays; however, it is important to note the dangers of such consumptive practices, as the traits of the prey

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<sup>42</sup> Melissa Schrift, 'Osama's Body: Death of a Political Criminal and (Re)birth of a Nation', *Mortality* 21 (2016): 279-294.

<sup>43</sup> See Richard Butsch, 'Considering Resistance and Incorporation', *Leisure Sciences* 23 (2001): 71-79.

inevitably merge with those of the predator.<sup>44</sup> Such activities, despite the global north-consumerist-hipster aesthetic, provides a compelling (if imperfect) parallel to the burning of effigies of Western leaders in the public space of the global south or the time-honoured tradition of purging Catholicism from Albion every 5<sup>th</sup> of November.<sup>45</sup>

Our aim here is to draw out the particularities of such popularly geo-politicised effigial consumption within the frame of contemporary IR, paying special attention to the historical structures of hegemony and contestation within the European realm. In one case, we see a UK brewer tapping the most au courant critique of Britain's 'eternal foe' Russia, i.e. homophobia (intertwined with homoerotic displays of unadulterated masculinity on the part of VVP). Centred on the oft-shirtless 'man's man' Putin, this intervention draws on deep-seated geopolitical codes about the 'incompatibility' of Britain's progressive values with those espoused by a reactionary Russia, echoing a litany of pop-culture tropes that go back as far "By Jingo": Macdermott's War Song' (1878), if not earlier.<sup>46</sup> In our second example, we interrogate a more playful engagement, pitting Norway—a key US ally—against its North Atlantic hegemon in a way that suggests an increasing level of discomfort with its subaltern position. Herein, we are witness to a cultural critique of a consumerist and incautious 'Merica', embodied in its current president, the bombastic billionaire and reality-TV star Trump. While the former intervention replicates a long-standing rivalry that has led to open conflict on multiple occasions (1807-1812, 1853-1856, 1918-1920), manifested in the 'Great Game' (1830-1907), and was central to the Cold War (1947-1989), the latter reflects a different type of geopolitical tension, i.e. a small state under the suffocating 'security umbrella' of a geographically-distant and culturally-disparate superpower.<sup>47</sup> By linking these two beer-based geopolitical interventions, we aim to excavate the ways in which popular culture speaks to how IR works on an everyday basis.

This, of course, begs the question: what is resistance? And how might effigial consumption contribute to it? Here, we turn to Brassett's recent argument, which draws on contemporary theories of resistance within IPE.<sup>48</sup> These, he argues, move us beyond romanticised images of class struggle, whereby the masses rise up against oppressors, enabling consideration of 'everyday and cultural approaches', in which resistance can be understood 'in more nuanced terms: as performative of certain possibilities and limits'.<sup>49</sup> Brassett puts forward the notion of resistance as an 'ethico-political practice' precisely 'in order to question how we engage the terms of political intervention'.<sup>50</sup> His 'performative approach' asks: 'what does resistance do?' For us, the question becomes, what does drinking beer do? And 'what narratives (of the subject/history) does it tell? What possibilities and limits are instantiated?'<sup>51</sup> These questions understand resistance in a

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<sup>44</sup> Author-1

<sup>45</sup> Bonfire Night is now almost completely ludic, with Fawkes' effigial destruction being lost on many modern-day participants. Given this disconnect, we see that effigial consumption is perennially susceptible to a loss of (geopolitical) meaning through repetition and the passage of time; however, the Lewes, England bonfire practices show how such rituals may be re-invested with meaning, as when several Trump effigies were paraded and burned in 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Author-1

<sup>47</sup> Christine Ingebritsen, *The Nordic States and European Unity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 95.

<sup>48</sup> James Brassett, 'British Comedy, Global Resistance: Russell Brand, Charlie Brooker and Stewart Lee', *European Journal of International Relations* 22 (2016):168-191.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

different and useful way, enabling and necessitating an exploration of ‘the intimate entwinement between historical context — (which includes markets, but also culture, race, gender, etc.) — and the subject’.<sup>52</sup> Viewed in this light (and through Davies’ lens of the ‘everyday’),<sup>53</sup> resistance is a performative practice at the heart of the establishment, rejection, and contestation of power relations, as they emerge, solidify, and evolve through IR’s dominant discourses.

### **‘The holy libation of sincerity?’: Beer, resistance, effigy**

*BrewDog’s ‘Hello, My Name is Vladimir’: Anti-Putiniana in a bottle*

Combining resistance and controversial marketing, one of the clearest contemporary examples of the popular culture-world politics continuum (at least in the realm of beer) has come from BrewDog.<sup>54</sup> Started by two Scottish brewers, this company frequently tackles political issues. Following criticism by health campaigners for brewing the world’s strongest beer, ‘The End of History’, BrewDog subsequently brewed a 0.5% ABV ale named ‘Nanny State’. The beer was, arguably, created to provide flavourful low-alcohol offering whilst waving two fingers at society’s perceived mollycoddling. The End of History, in contrast, was described as targeting the ‘monotone corporate’ beer industry itself.<sup>55</sup> At £500-700 apiece, the bottles were sold encased in taxidermied stoats, with the aim of providing a ‘meta commentary’ on the beer industry. In challenging the very notion of what beer is and what it could be, BrewDog aimed to show that beer could inform politics as well as art, and that one’s choice of beer at the bar can open up a range of possibilities in life (and death), rather than close them down. In a similar élan of political possibility, the company has since turned its marketing guns on a number of different adversaries.

The strategy of targeting perceived political enemies has mixed the founders’ values with BrewDog’s brand awareness, helping to penetrate new markets. The outcomes of this fusion include a successful campaign to change the law – achieved in part by sending dwarves to Downing Street – which had placed apparently-arbitrary limitations on the measures in which beer could be served.<sup>56</sup> Other targets have included disgraced FIFA president Sepp Blatter and world football, wherein BrewDog produced a beer called ‘Never Mind the Anabolics’, which contained substances banned by professional athletics boards. Another political discharge was known as ‘The Royal Virility Performance’, a brew infused with herbal Viagra purportedly to assist the future British monarch in the bedroom. And, in their various campaigns to sell shares, the company sent an armoured tank to the Bank of England, before attempting to buy out Donald Trump’s presidential election campaign by gifting a percentage of company ownership.<sup>57</sup> BrewDog

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>53</sup> Davies, ‘Everyday Life as Critique’.

<sup>54</sup> BrewDog’s bona fides as a ‘punk’ enterprise have recently come into question due to the sale of 22% the firm to a private equity house in 2017. The company’s ‘radical’ image has not been helped by its aggressive litigation over (questionable) trademark infringements, combined with apparent plagiarism of marketing ideas from other (genuinely transgressive) actors.

<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the beer, in its nomenclature, wryly took on the triumphalist thesis of that maven of IR theory, Francis Fukuyama.

<sup>56</sup> The fact that you can now order two-thirds of a pint in the UK is the result, in significant part, of a campaign by BrewDog.

<sup>57</sup> BrewDog, ‘An Open Letter to Donald Trump’, 9 December 2015, <https://www.brewdog.com/lowdown/blog/an-open-letter-to-donald-trump>.

announced that they hoped a gift for Trump could be a boon to the free world, removing a candidate whose policies against immigrants, Muslims, and Mexicans were ‘as misplaced as [his] hair’.<sup>58</sup> While not all of these interventions into political discourse/discursive politics have been entirely successful (BrewDog was forced to address widespread criticism after brewing a no-label beer, described as ‘transgender’), the company’s brand has been built upon repeated efforts to transgress boundaries to further a progressive vision for both beer and politics. Their most infamous attempt at this to date is undoubtedly their beer ‘Hello, My Name is Vladimir’.

As Cassiday and Johnson identify in their essay on visual politics of ‘Putiniana’,<sup>59</sup> there is a massive consumerist cult of personality that accompanies Putin’s iconography within the Russian Federation. In contemporary Russia, Putin’s image is big business, peddling countless products from Yuletide tchotchkes to bottles of vodka. It should come as no surprise then that this domestic obsession with the visage of Putin can be turned from an asset into a mechanism of satirical derision in countries that feel threatened by a resurgent Russia. In BrewDog’s release of Hello, as well as drinkers’ performative consumption, we are witness to a form of cultural resistance that has been identified in other forms of popular culture from animated sitcoms to carnival participation to stand-up comedy.<sup>60</sup> While Putin has been the butt of many geopolitical jokes in the Anglophone west, from Saturday Night Live skits to Internet memes,<sup>61</sup> the financial commitment of BrewDog to impugning Putin is quite bold. In the company’s marketing of its limited release imperial IPA (ABV: 8.2%) through the medium of Vladimir Putin (whose queered face appears in the pop-art style of Andy Warhol),<sup>62</sup> a new form of popular geopolitics is developing, one steeped in physical as well as figurative consumption. Reflecting the beer’s Twitter hashtag #NotForGays, BrewDog pitches the unique allure of Hello as such:

I am a beer for uber hetero men who ride horses while topless and carrying knives.  
I am a beer to mark the 2014 Winter Olympics. But I am not for gays. Love  
wrestling burly men on the Judo mat or fishing in your Speedos? Then this is the  
beer for you!<sup>63</sup>

On the back-label, intertextual double-entendre abounds, from describing the style as ‘bareback double’ (suggesting unprotected gay-male sex) to lauding how the liquid goes ‘straight down your throat’. This churlishness is combined with explicit critiques of Russian ‘ignorance’, ‘dogmatism’, and ‘discriminatory legislation’ (as well as a perfunctory reference to caviar). Such tongue-in-

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<sup>58</sup> The full quote was: ‘Building a massive wall to keep everyone out? Opposing same sex marriage? Insulting the disabled? Calling immigrants criminals and rapists?! Your ideas are as misplaced as your hair, sir’. Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Julie Cassiday and Emily Johnson, ‘Putin, Putiniana and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality’, *Slavonic & East European Review* 88 (2010): 681-707.

<sup>60</sup> See respectively, Frederik Dhaenens and Sofie Van Bauwel, ‘Queer Resistance in the Adult Animated Sitcom’, *Television & New Media* 13 (2012): 124-138; Ricardo Guthrie, ‘Embodying an Imagined Other through Rebellion, Resistance and Joy’, *AlterNative* 12(2016): 558-573; and Brassett, ‘British Comedy’.

<sup>61</sup> Author-1

<sup>62</sup> The nod to Warhol is not (geo)politically neutral given: 1) his credentials as a gay man who lived an open existence prior to the gay liberation movement; and 2) his ethnic identity as a Rusyn-American, thus tangentially linking the question of Ukrainian sovereignty to the visual politics of the labelling of ‘Hello’ at a time of extreme tension between Kyiv and Moscow; see Alexander J. Motyl, ‘Was Andy Warhol Ukrainian?’ *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 32-33 (2011-2014): 549-555.

<sup>63</sup> BrewDog, ‘Hello, My Name Is Vladimir: Not for Gays’ <https://www.brewdog.com/usa/lowdown/blog/hello-my-name-is-vladimir>.

cheek politicised play echoes the aforementioned interventions of BrewDog, a company that advocates a commitment to ‘strike fear at the heart of the gatekeepers and establishment’.<sup>64</sup> However, it is important to note that BrewDog’s ‘piss take’ of Putin, like any form of resistance, can serve to ‘shore up and legitimate existing political structures’ just as in other moments, it may ‘work to encourage re-vision and/or re-imagination’ of hierarchies and structures in IR.<sup>65</sup>

Interestingly, Hello is distinguished by the admixture of Limonnik berries (*Schisandra chinensis*), a plant native to the Russian Far East which purportedly improves sexual performance; this use of the ingredient was operationalised to question Putin’s virility when it was announced the brewery had sent him an honorary case.<sup>66</sup> Clearly, the invocation of terroir via its flavour notes are an integral component of Hello’s political grounding as a tool for undermining Russia’s law against ‘homosexual propaganda’.<sup>67</sup> By the intertextual linking of beer styles to a particular leader’s politics, taste and smell become part of the act of resistance. Fruitiness suggests Putin’s ‘fruitiness’, in an immanent critique of his homophobia. The drinker can smell and taste Putin’s homophobia, mocking it orally, instantly siding with those his policies oppress, as part of a broad affective community united in opposition to what Bauman calls ‘proteophobia’.<sup>68</sup> The everyday ritual of beer’s consumption should, therefore, be understood as affecting and affective in two ways that go beyond the aesthetic. First, beer changes the consumer as they consume it. The intended discursive intervention might become more resonant due to the impact of beer’s imbibing on the drinker, as it chemically alters how they think and feel. Second and more importantly, in this heightened state of suggestibility, these beers’ taste, smell, and mouthfeel<sup>69</sup> is part of the act of resistance. Here, we can see how taste, smell, and touch might produce knowledge of IR, an understanding of which requires the development of a sensory politics to accompany the visual and aesthetic, foregrounded as they are. The potential resonance encouraged by the materiality of this discursive intervention is indicative of the need to take seriously the power of everyday rituals in producing knowledge, which, in this instance, is attempting to foster resistance. According to the brewers:

The sick, twisted legislation brought about in Russia that prevents people from living their true lives is something we didn’t want to just sit back and not have an opinion on. Our core beliefs are freedom of expression, freedom of speech and a dogged (no pun intended) passion for doing what we love. Thus, we are donating 50% of the profits from this beer to charitable organisations that support likeminded individuals wishing to express themselves freely without prejudice.<sup>70</sup>

The release of the beer, which BrewDog marketed as the world’s first ‘protest beer’ specifically aimed at ‘undermining the potential of the Winter Olympics’ as a geopolitical spectacle, prompted an outpouring of support on the company’s website, particularly from fans in Russia who mostly

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<sup>64</sup> BrewDog, ‘BrewDog Satirises Russia’s Anti-Gay Law with World’s First “Protest Beer”’, <https://www.brewdog.com/usa/lowdown/press-hub/hello-my-name-is-vladimir>.

<sup>65</sup> Brassett, 3.

<sup>66</sup> BrewDog, ‘BrewDog Satirises Russia’s Anti-Gay Law’.

<sup>67</sup> Passed on 11 June 2013, the law on ‘traditional family values’ de facto prohibits any public information about ‘non-traditional sexual relations’ that might be seen by minors.

<sup>68</sup> See Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 162.

<sup>69</sup> Its lightness intentionally contrasts with the profile of the imperial porter, the ‘standard’ Russian beer-style in the West, thus disrupting the geopolitical norms of ‘national’ beer styles in the global marketplace.

<sup>70</sup> BrewDog, ‘Hello’.

lamented their inability to get a bottle. Curious given Russia's ever-expanding Internet 'troll army',<sup>71</sup> there was only one critical post on the forum: 'Fuck you faggots' made by MotherRussia (5 February 2014). The Twitter feed for #NotForGays parallels the BrewDog website postings, with nearly universal support for the political as well as savoury mission of the IPA. While most tags are simply drinkers noting their consumption of Hello, a number of tweets include visual political content, including a group of topless Florentine men nestled together (see **Image 2: A Shirtless Protest in Florence**), two men in France re-enacting promotional photos from the BrewDog website (see **Image 3: Replicating BrewDog's Anti-Putiniana in Paris**), and one British pub's provocative marketing of the beer as 'Not for Gays' (see **Image 4: A Cheeky Mocking of Hello's Marketing in London**). Of course, it is important to note the irony and limits to resistance involved in a discursive intervention that attempts to undercut homophobia through the playful accusation of homosexuality. And, arguably, Image 1 and 2 reinforce this limitation, as much as they contest a regressive dominant Russian state discourse. The beer's release actually received little notice in the Russian Federation; the Internet news site The Village did cover the story, pointing out that 50% of revenues would be donated to 'charitable organizations involved in the protection of individual rights'. Once more, the story provoked only a single reader comment, which labelled BrewDog as 'morons' who neither understand the definition of 'freedom' nor the term 'dictator' (polarts, 4 February 2014).<sup>72</sup>

#### *7 Fjell's 'The Donald Ignorant IPA': Trolling the US President one sip at a time*

Norway represents one of the most stalwart members of the transatlantic alliance, having become a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on 4 April 1949. As one of only two members to possess a land border with the Soviet Union (Turkey became the second with its admission in 1952), the country represented a perennial front-line actor in the Cold War. A small country of only 5 million, Norway is fiercely protective of its identity and clearly-defined national values. From a global commitment to peace-building to gender equality in its armed forces to its stance on environmentalism and social democracy, the Nordic nation presents a stark contrast to the US hegemon. Consequently, it should come as a no surprise that many Norwegians have tended to look upon right-wing politicians in the US with some level of derision, despite generally positive attitudes towards the US and Americans.<sup>73</sup> Combining the anti-government populism of the Tea Party with the garishness of a real estate magnate-turned-reality TV star, Trump represented a perfect storm of what distinguishes Norway from 'Merica as he rose in the ranks of candidates hoping to capture the Republican Party nomination for the 2016 presidential election. Into this political maelstrom, which saw round condemnation of Norwegian Foreign Minister Børge Brende's vocal support for the Democratic-nominee Hillary Clinton,<sup>74</sup> came 7 Fjell Bryggeri's release of The Donald Ignorant IPA (see **Image 5: Building the Wall, One Bottle at a Time**).

Captained by 'Norway's grand old man of brewing' and multi-year winner of the country's homebrewing competition, Gahr Smith-Gahrnsen, 7 Fjell's mission is to produce tasty beers that will put

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<sup>71</sup> Andrew Higgins, 'Effort to Expose Russia's "Troll Army" Draws Vicious Retaliation', New York Times, 31 May 2016, [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/31/world/europe/russia-finland-nato-trolls.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/31/world/europe/russia-finland-nato-trolls.html?_r=0).

<sup>72</sup> Vladimir Kvasnikov, 'In Scotland, a Protest Beer with Putin's Portrait is Released', The Village, 4 February 2014, <http://www.the-village.ru/village/business/news/154941-no-name>

<sup>73</sup> See Gregory Flynn, *The Public and Atlantic Defense* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1985).

<sup>74</sup> "'It Is Important for Norway that Hillary Clinton is Elected'", The Local, 15 August 2016, <http://www.thelocal.no/20160815/it-is-important-for-norway-that-hillary-clinton-is-elected>.

Bergen, Norway's second city, on the international beer map.<sup>75</sup> Featuring a caricature of a heavily-coiffured Trump building a brick wall with a trowel, the beer presents itself as a 'fake IPA' that mirrors the falsity of its namesake's run for the post of 'leader of the free world', which according to the labelling would represent a 'fucking disaster'. Mocking Trump's characteristic public-speaking style, the back-label states:

People ask me, they say what do you think of this beer? And I tell them, it's a great beer, it's the best beer! I know the brewers of this beer personally, wonderful people. I could go on for days about these people but in the end Hillary Clinton falsified information and let's build a wall and jobs and money and I'm right and I'm rich and I'm big. Let's make America great again! - Ignorant masses roar with applause.

The suggested ways to enjoy this 'fake' IPA include with 'sound political debate', 'common fucking sense', and 'Keeping America great'. Alternative back-bottle labelling includes the following invective:

US of A. The greatest country in the world. Potentially led by loose cannon who only looks out for him self (sic)... Inherited wealth and bankruptcy en masse in his wake. A narcissist who lives in a gold tower, wants to build a wall between the US and Mexico, deport 11 million people, undermine NATO in the harshest political climate since the USSR collapsed, try to shame Gold Star families, bullying his way pretty damn near the White House, and the list goes on. Generally speaking, The Donald is not a very nice guy.

In a promotion image crafted by 7 Fjell, the beer is set against a geopolitically-inflected backdrop, making use of 'Old Glory' (see **Image 6: Dark Americana, Norwegian Suds**).<sup>76</sup> The sawn-off shotgun catches the eye first: known for its deadly capacities in close-range combat, the iconic weapon has become synonymous both with 'home defence' and 'zombie killing' in recent decades, both aspects of the 'Merica imaginary. Fuelled by a combination of international news reports about gun violence and popular cultural artefacts like *The Walking Dead* (2010- ), the idea of a US unendingly engaged in a violent confrontation with its various 'Others', whether real (Native Americans, African Americans, or Latino immigrants) or fictive (the undead, kaiju, or A.I.), the trope of a ready-to-kill American is ensconced in the geographical imagination of the US's allies and enemies alike. The staging also includes a crucifix (adorned with a 7 Fjell bottle cap), reminding the seer that 'Merica is a land where God rules, faith is worn on the sleeve, and Jesus preached the doctrine of 'shoot first, ask questions later'. The empty beer bottle and the full pint glass thus serve, almost as an afterthought, to link together these three elements (patriotism, violence, and Christianity) and provide a visualisation of what is meant to be made 'great again' via the ministrations of Trump. In this satirical opprobrium, 7 Fjell joins the company of US-based brewers who have employed visual politics in their labelling (combined with provocative naming practices) to impugn Trump. These include Dock Street Brewery's (Philadelphia) Friends Don't

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<sup>75</sup> 7 Fjell Bryggeri website, <http://www.7fjellbryggeri.com/>.

<sup>76</sup> In its use of the US flag, the advertisement taps into a long history of effigial politics wherein the banner of a particular nation serves as a synecdoche for all the perceived evils of the nation (abroad), inverting the visual politics of the banal nationalism of everyday flag-waving (at home).

Let Friends Vote Drumpf - Short-Fingered Stout' and Chicago brewers Spiteful Brewing's (Chicago) 'Dumb Donald Double IPA' and 5 Rabbit Cerveceria's Chinga Tu Pelo ('Fuck Your Hair'). However, given its transborder intervention, the Norwegian brewery sets itself apart from these American critiques of 'one of their own' as they wade into the field of IR targeting a (now-sitting) US president who commands the world's largest military.<sup>77</sup>

Returning to gustatory perception, both beers tap into an affective resonance through their taste. As discussed above, Hello makes use of ingredients explicitly tied to male virility, yet the flavour is intentionally fruity, with the strategically-overpowering use of berries in order to create a beer that is ironically playing to the stereotypes of a drink that a more effete man might prefer. Here, we see the materiality of discourse as BrewDog's interventionary attempts to invest its audience through somatic markers inspired by the tasting notes of a beer that is intentionally, affectively, and effectively political. The Hello-drinker gleefully partakes of the (purported) Siberian provenance and tingly notes of the Limonnik-laced brew, voluntarily embracing their own experiences with 'fruitiness' even when it is clear that the man on the label is pathologically incapable of doing likewise. Liberation accompanies libation in this small act, causing Putin's efforts at stoking global homophobia to be undone. The Donald Ignorant IPA goes one step further in that it is not even an IPA at all. Its taste reveals that, in fact, it is a light golden ale, i.e. a fake proudly parading around despite the obviousness of the falsity. And, in that the realisation, the The Donald-drinker realises their (beer) knowledge trumps that of the American president. They are vindicated in their opposition to his policies and personality, as demonstrated by their 'being in on the joke' with the brewers at 7 Fjell. The familiar-yet-incorrect notes of a golden ale, deliberately wrongly labelled as an IPA, critique Trump's own ignorance and obsession with both decrying and trading in 'alternative facts', positioning the consumer within an erudite majority who resist the president by residing in (accurate) reality, where facts still matter.

### The Limits of Resistance

If one accepts that beer is politics, this does not actually simplify the role of beer-drinking as performative practice<sup>78</sup> or personalised geopolitical intervention within the ever-expanding popular culture-world politics continuum. Instead, it is helpful to return to the work of Butsch, who has called for an understanding of resistance as linked to incorporation, particularly when it comes to commodification.<sup>79</sup> In refusing to accept subordination, beer drinkers revel in their effigial and pseudo-cannibalistic displays of persistence/incorporation of Putin and Trump. Looking back at our two examples, such consumption is a double-edged blade. In the case of Hello, the imbibing of anti-Putiniana is itself participation in the Putin cult. For VVP, who actively cultivates his images as a 'supervillain' in the West,<sup>80</sup> BrewDog's geopolitical intervention serves his personal goals as a world leader and reinforces the interpellation that a messianic Russia serves

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<sup>77</sup> Reprising the cannibalism metaphor, it is possible to draw a meaningful distinction between domestic and international interventions here. For American brewers/drinkers, it is about 'eating one's own' (endocannibalism), whereas in the international context, the focus shifts to 'eating one's enemy' (exocannibalism). From an anthropological perspective, these two forms are vastly different in intent and purpose; see Bill Schutt, *Cannibalism: A Perfectly Natural History* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin, 2017).

<sup>78</sup> Brassett, 8.

<sup>79</sup> Butsch, 'Considering Resistance and Incorporation'.

<sup>80</sup> Tom Brook, 'Hollywood Stereotypes: Why are Russians Always the Bad Guys?' BBC, 5 November 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20141106-why-are-russians-always-bad-guys>.



as a bulwark against the West's war on traditional values (especially heteronormativity). In the second case study, the irony of 'consumption as resistance' is explicit and unavoidable, as partaking of anything associated with 'The Donald' (even a fake IPA) furthers not only neoliberal consumption, but the global leviathan that is the Trump brand. As he has proved in his business life, TV celebrity, political campaign and early presidency, Trump thrives on publicity - good, bad, or otherwise. Therefore, an anti-Trump beer being brewed in the sparsely populated north-western corner of Europe is, arguably, something for America's 45<sup>th</sup> president to lift a glass in celebration. As craft brewers move into the realm of geopolitical intervention, the limits of resistance come into clear focus in a world where globalised mass mediation and truthiness rule. Any engagement of the dominant narrative in binary form invariably also risks its reproduction, thus weaving together the 'tapestry of power and struggle'.<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusion

In his lyrical tribute to the history of brewing, author William Bostwick tells us: 'Beers are mirrors of their times because beer is a mirror of ourselves'.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps you have paused to consider what your beer order says about you?<sup>83</sup> Beer can and should be understood as a discursive intervention into world politics. Ordering a specific beer – and drinking beer in the first instance – says a lot about us: who we imagine ourselves to be and who we want to be. It can give voice to our insecurities, our identity, and our politics. Like so many of the apparently mundane components of everyday life, ordering your next beer is yet another step in performing political culture, whether you consider it banal or not. This article, therefore, has made the case for the existence of a continuum of world politics and popular culture, in which quotidian engagements with the popular are nonetheless deeply and consequentially political. This is the case for beer, even though it is often taken for granted and, to many people, intuitively apolitical. Indeed, that apparently apolitical nature is part of the politics of beer.

Moreover, beyond this normative call for the disciplinary incorporation of more popular-cultural artefacts of IR, in this article we have argued that the effigial ritual of beer's consumption is important, empirically as has been demonstrated in our twin case studies, as well as theoretically. This article can be read as a provocation for the necessary extension of literatures on affect, the everyday, and visual politics to go beyond the linguistic and aesthetic components of world politics, crucial as they clearly remain. A broader sensory politics is needed, which recognises the materiality of everyday discursive interventions, as they are experienced through taste, smell, touch, and even intoxication. As we have shown, these chemical and neural pathways are important for resonance and resistance in international politics. But, as yet, IR largely lacks the tools to study them.

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<sup>81</sup> Butsch, 78.

<sup>82</sup> William Bostwick, *The Brewer's Tale: A History of the World According to Beer* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2014), xiv.

<sup>83</sup> Emily Nichols, "'What on earth is she drinking?'" Doing Femininity through Drink Choice on the Girls' Night Out', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 17 (2016): 77-91.