



Jasen J. Castillo, *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014.

Quentin Holbert, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Since the earliest thinkers of ancient Greece and China, theorists have speculated about the nature of warfare; what drives men to war, what determines victory, and what are the implications of victory or defeat? Theorists from Sun Tzu to Carl Von Clausewitz all offered theories about the conduct of warfare with changing political and

technological environments. Jasen J. Castillo offers his piece, *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion*, to the millennia-long dialogue and proposes his theories on how armies stay cohesive when facing dire situations.

Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion focuses on theoretical components of military conduct rather than the actions of militaries. Therefore this book is more comparable to works such as Michael Farrell's theoretical piece *Modern Just War Theory: A Guide to Research* than conventional histories such as Gordan Corrigan's *The Second World War: A Military History*. Castillo argues that we can explain how militaries fight in suboptimal conditions using a few models of combat cohesion. Castillo's models of combat cohesion emphasize two positive correlations: a positive correlation between the military's organizational autonomy and their combat ability, and a positive correlation between a regime's control over its population and the degree of cohesion within their military. The independent variables, which are regime control and organizational autonomy, affect their respective dependent variables, which are combat cohesion and combat effectiveness respectively. Castillo highlights these relationships with five case studies: Germany from 1944-1945, France in 1940, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1941, North Vietnam from 1965-1973, and the United States of America (USA) from 1968-1972.

Despite Castillo's emphasis on theory, the book is accessible to trained and untrained historians alike. This is largely because *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion* is well organized. The preface and two preliminary chapters explain his combat cohesion theories clearly, and Castillo leaves no terms or concepts ambiguous. After a strong introduction to his ideas, each of Castillo's case studies follows the same general format. First he introduces the army he is discussing, and he immediately follows it with the type of army it was and why it fulfills said definition. The remainder of the chapter then highlights battles where the outcomes of his theories are observable. One example of this is with chapter five: he introduces the status of the Soviet military during the Second World War, he classifies the military based on his cohesion theory, and he offers several examples of battles where his model applies perfectly. The second reason for the accessibility of *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion* is because of the clear language Castillo uses. He does not hide his intent behind

unnecessary verbiage or with flowery poetics; his style is very clear and direct. The usage of military terminology is appropriate, but it does not slow down his theory's explanation or the examples' narratives. He is also careful to not make assumptions on what different historical actors were thinking or felt. Instead direct quotes and well-established context are the basis for his inferences, such as the evidence surrounding why Hitler was concerned about the speed of the Panzer division's advances into the Soviet Union (150). The only concern regarding Castillo's language is his lack of precision regarding the opinions of other historians and of military officials. The usage of phrases such as "some may [or "might] argue" (44, 76) blur whose opinions are reflected as well as the prevalence of said opinions among historians and military commanders. Despite this flaw, the language Castillo uses is overwhelming effective because it is clear, concise, and precise.

Castillo's work is strong when discussing military doctrine and he offers numerous sources in reference to each campaign. Many of the major works in both tactical doctrine and unit morale appear throughout *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion* appropriately. He effectively and coherently blends primary and secondary sources, and Castillo succeeds in introducing his sources gracefully. His explanations and dialogue avoid contrivances despite relying on a wide variety of sources, and his primary argument does not collapse with the evidence provided. However, deeper reading indicates that there are a few unusual omissions of authors that would have added to this book's depth, and that some of Castillo's choices in evidence is questionable. Castillo claims that "the literature uses cohesion to refer to the determination of small units, such as squads or platoons" (18) rather than in large units. However his citation for this piece is Elizabeth Kier's article "Homosexuals in the U.S. Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness" (239). This citation is a problem because it does not support Castillo's claim that cohesion theory referred to small units prior to his research across the entirety of previous literature. Simultaneously, he ignores research from authors such as James Griffith, Frederick J. Manning, and Alexander A. Cox, which all mention unit cohesion as large-scale phenomena.

This issue of unusual source usage, or the lack of viable sources, does occur a few times, but it does not detract heavily from the main text. However the unusual source choices are a major detraction when examining his historiographical roots. While

excellent in discussing campaigns themselves, he does not succeed in placing his work in a wider historiographical context. He does not succeed in differentiating his historiographical discussions in chapter two from his introduction to his theories in chapter one. One way to improve this text would be to keep chapter one the same as it is now, but to cut out the similar pieces in chapter two and replace them with a more thorough literature review. This would not be an issue if this book was a conventional description of events, but a theory-heavy book benefits immensely from a strong literature review.

Overall this book has a lot of interesting ideas regarding military cohesion, but suffers from some unusual source choices and a weak literature review. Despite these flaws, *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion* does stand as an extremely well-written and engaging piece of military theory. It extends across different branches of military history, and seamlessly brings them together to create a coherent manuscript on what determines a military's fortitude. This book also identifies a large field of untapped research potential. Applying Castillo's models to other conflicts would be an interesting follow-up to *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion's* work, as Castillo only addresses five case studies across two conflicts (The Second World War and the Vietnam War). More thorough examinations of Italy, Japan, and Great Britain during the Second World War as well as exploring other conflicts is the next logical step for military historians to examine and refine Castillo's findings. This book is a recommended read for all enthusiasts of military theory, and it is a recommended piece to conduct follow-up research upon.