COUNTER BALANCE
2020 STYLE GUIDE
Redefining Our Identity
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Clearly follows the archetype of “The Outlaw”. We are effectively a bunch of misfits that try to revolutionize the field in which we are active, namely public finance. And we’re proud of the rebel badge as well.

Breaking rules, putting a name on particular issues and proposing revolutionary solutions to the main challenges the European Investment Bank (EIB) and other public banks face does not scare us at all, it is what we do.

Counter Balance is a watchdog, that is the essence of the identity of our organisation.

This archetype is clearly reflected - not only in the pure content that we and our members produce - but also in the visual styling that we have developed and the tone of voice. By using angles in our visual products and by playing with the contrast these angles create in the layout of our visuals, as well as the color palette that creates a striking visual style we amplify the characteristics we have as a “rebel watchdog”.

However, we cannot lose sight of the context in which we work. By setting up clear guidelines in terms of font use, color palette, image types and overall feeling, we ensure that our targets - the EIB, other public banks, public institutions and other NGOs that work within our context - take us seriously. Form is key in that regard, especially in a very corporate environment, which the public investment sector undeniably is.
Counter Balance uses 4 main colors in the visual identity.

These colors are; Yellow, Brown, White and Black.

**COLOR SCHEME**

**COUNTER BALANCE YELLOW //**

R = 251  
G = 190  
B = 50  

#f9be32

**COUNTER BALANCE BROWN //**

R = 60  
G = 50  
B = 74  

#3c322f

**COUNTER BALANCE WHITE //**

R = 255  
G = 255  
B = 255  

#ffffff

**COUNTER BALANCE BLACK //**

R = 0  
G = 0  
B = 0  

#000000
The refreshed logo of Counter Balance is used in **two forms**. Black on white and white on black.

**BLACK ON WHITE** | **WHITE ON BLACK**
---|---

The logo is always placed in the **right-hand bottom corner** of visuals, reports, brochures, or any other multimedia product produced by Counter Balance itself, unless it is relocated for a specific design (for example a section in a report that states: “Endorsed by...”)

It will **ALWAYS** be accompanied by the slogan: ”Challenging Public Investment Banks”.

DO’S AND DONT’S

/ DO’S /

The logo is always placed in the right-hand bottom corner, unless it is relocated for a specific design (for example a section in a report that states: “Endorsed by…”)

>> The white text logo is ALWAYS used on a black backdrop

>> The black text logo is ALWAYS used on a white backdrop

>> As a rule of thumb, we use the black backdrop for social media/multimedia we use the white backdrop for print products

>> Generally we use a -2.4° angle for the backdrop and the accent lines. However, this can be altered for additional visual effect like the EIB Roundtable Invitation Visual

>> The backdrop angle ALWAYS goes from left to right

Logistics Report Sharepic //

EIB Roundtable Invitation Visual //

Energy Lending Policy Cover //
/DONT'S/

DO NOT
change the font used in the logo

DO NOT
change the color of the logo

DO NOT
change the shape of the logo

DO NOT
use a different backdrop color for the logo other than black, white or (less frequently) brown.
TYPOGRAPHY

COUNTER BALANCE //

Uses two different fonts for text on all forms of media, whether it is multimedia or print.

The fonts we use are:

>>> DIN Pro

>>> Vollkorn

DIN PRO

AaBbCc
AaBbCc
AaBbCc
AaBbCc

USED FOR

Din Pro REGULAR //
>>> Main body text
>>> Titles
>>> Website URL’s

Din Pro ITALIC //
>>> Quote text
>>> Print only body text

Din Pro BOLD //
>>> Emphasis outside body text

Din Pro BLACK //
>>> Subtitles
>>> Final footnote numbering

VOLLKORN

AaBbCc
AaBbCc
AaBbCc

USED FOR

Vollkorn REGULAR //
>>> Quote attributions

Vollkorn ITALIC //
>>> Footnote sources

Vollkorn SEMIBOLD //
>>> Emphasis in body text

MYRIAD PRO

AaBbCc

USED FOR

Myriad Pro BOLD //
>>> Footnote numbers
PREFACE

In a previous report, Counter Balance sought to probe the political and economic interests driving “mega-corridors”—the transcontinental road, rail, air and sea networks that are being constructed to service just-in-time delivery systems and to enable ever more remote sources of minerals and other raw materials to be extracted, at great environmental and social cost.

Such corridors, the report concluded, are a deliberate attempt to “re-engineer economic geography” for the benefit of capital. To achieve “integrated corridor management”, for example, the corridors are being transformed into free trade zones in which tariffs are progressively removed—under the cover of “border controls”, paperwork and other “man-made barriers” that, in the words of the World Bank, “increase distance” by slowing down the transport of goods. Workers’ rights and wages are also eroded as corridor planners form pools of cheap labour by “agglomeration” people into clustered economic zones.

The trajectory is towards ever more “extreme infrastructure”. Extreme because of the scale of the infrastructure that is planned—every continent except Antarctica is affected. Extreme because it enables extraction that is even more destructive than extraction used to be, opening up deposits of oil and minerals in areas previously considered uneconomic. Extreme because it is premised on even more exploitative production, enabling capital to move wherever labour is cheapest and most vulnerable. Extreme because it depends on a kind of finance that is even more extreme than previous forms of finance, involving, for example, new, highly risky asset classes. And Extreme because it can operate only through an extreme politics, involving clientelistic forms of planning that are profoundly undemocratic.

In Corridors as Factories, Counter Balance attempts to dig deeper into the assault on labour through the globalisation of supply chains and their associated infrastructure corridors. Drawing on the work of academics, such as Deborah Cowen, this current report looks at the gap that “logistics” (the managerial practices that orchestrate the movement of goods along corridors and supply chains) now acts as an enabler to global production, distribution and consumption—and how such practices have enabled capital to stretch production beyond the conventional factory right the way down the supply chain and beyond, allowing businesses to increase profits by squeezing labour at every stage. More and more of us—North and South—are now “logisticised” (in the words of Geoff Mann, Professor of Geography at Simon Fraser University) relying for our everyday provisioning on networks of political and economic power whose purpose is not mutual survival but profit and the more entangled we become in these networks, the more our every move is fed into a system of unequal, unjust and destructive wealth production.
Preliminary body text //

>>> DIN PRO ITALIC

PART ONE \(\)

For the report looks at the worldwide proliferation of logistics hubs — consisting of seaports, inland “dry” ports, “spearhead logistics”, highway interchanges and facilities for manufacturing, processing, sorting, storing and distributing goods — as the movement of goods around the world is increasingly orchestrated by “logistics.”

PART TWO \(\)

The ways in which outsourcing, offshoring and logistics have dramatically transformed the whole notion of production. It is not just assembly line workers who are now considered producers — but truckers, port workers and the data extracted from everyday acts of consumption becomes an increasingly valuable commodity for consumers too. Logistics has transformed production processes so that they are as far beyond the traditional factory gate, enabling profits to be extracted at many more points in global supply chains. The implications for labour are profound. Automation (including technologies such as blockchain), in combination with just-in-time management regimes, are subjecting workers to degrading just-in-time labour practices; more work is now contingent piece work; workers are increasingly subjected to electronic monitoring; wages are increasingly squeezed, and new forms of unpaid labour are being brought online.

PART THREE \(\)

Copes the likely direction of travel if logistics is unchallenged. The path is towards increased exploitation of workers; new forms of corporate control and power, notably through the restructuring of capital around digitally captured information “platforms” — an ineluctable increases in energy use, and spiraling environmental destruction. The section also looks at resistance to logistics and the challenges of building alliances that might shift its intrinsically destructive sector. How might non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions and other activists (many of whom may not be at the sharp end of logistics) help rather than hinder those whose reaction to logistics is a visceral (but partial, as yet, unarticulated) sense that “This is not the world we want”? What beliefs might activists refuse to take — and how might such “refusals” avail struggles to oppose logistics, infrastructure corridors and what Anna Tsing terms “supply chain capitalism”??
PART THREE IS THIS THE WORLD YOU WANT?

What is the trajectory of the logisticised, just-in-time supply chains that now dominate the production, distribution and consumption of commodities worldwide? How might resistance – born of refusal to accept injustice, of struggles against predatory labour practices or challenges to the environmental destruction caused by corridors and other logistical infrastructure – deflect its course? Can the “superexploitation” of supply chain capitalism be reined in? And, if not, what does that imply for those seeking to challenge its direction of travel?

TRAJECTORIES OF EXPLOITATION

To take the trajectory of logistics first. If unopposed, four consequences – born of the inherent properties of logistics and automation – merit highlighting: the increasing exploitation of workers; the emergence of new forms of corporate power; the ineluctable increase in energy use; and spiraling environmental destruction.

/ INCREASED EXPLOITATION OF LABOUR /

For workers, the direction of travel is towards increased downward pressures on wages, increased micro-discrimination of work, increasing insecurity of employment, increasing marginalisation in decision-making and the degradation of many skills. Now of this has gone without resistance – not least through strikes and campaigns to improve labour conditions. But capital’s retaliation – particularly, that of increasing the fungibility of supply chains – has arguably weakened these as tools for challenging the vector of logistics as a political and economic force: refusals to work, even in choke points along the supply chain, can often be bypassed.

Exploitation of labour is not an unintended consequence of logistics that can be “put right” once it has been pointed out to employers: it is built into every aspect of the logistics-as-production-line project – and it always has been. As Jasper Bernes comments, “the use-value which the logistics industry produces is a set of protocols and techniques that enable firms to seek out the lowest wages anywhere in the world.”

If it is cheaper to ship cod caught off Scotland to be filleted by workers in China and then to return it to Scotland for sale than it is to have the job done in Scotland (as it is),[10] then this is in large part because the costs of the 20,000 mile-round trip are more than offset by wages in China being a fraction of what they are in Scotland. Remove cheap labour from the logisticised supply chains and the entire rationale of fragmenting production falls apart. Logistics are of value to capital for one reason: they enable “exploitation in its rawest form.”[11] Extreme wage differentials are the foundations of the industry.
GHOST WORKERS - THE REALITIES OF “LABOURLESS” AUTOMATION

This is not a new phenomenon. Automation has always relied on human workers whose presence is ensured by the machines. As Mary Anne and Siddharth Suri document in their book Ghost Work, the industrial revolution depended on large numbers of “piece workers” doing the jobs that could not be mechanised. Without them the assembly line would have ground to a halt.

Today, the piece workers are still around. Machines simply cannot learn without human assistance. They have to be taught to recognise, for example, the difference between different kinds of objects or between Elsa and an Elisa impersonator. And this requires humans, all hidden from view. Greg and Suri call this “the paradox of automation”, namely “the desire to eliminate human labour always generates new tasks for humans.”

When an AI system is flagged because the driver’s security elfe required every time a job is booked (who never matches the selfie photograph), someone has to check it out – and this work is done by poorly paid, on-demand workers, often in the global South, working from their living rooms or bedrooms.

Other ghost work requested by AI includes “doing web research, verifying location addresses, beta testing, user testing for user designs,” and a host of other tasks – all pencilled out to mínimoy workers on platforms such as Microk, “in a competitive marketplace” that allows workers to access “a global, on-demand, 24/7 workforce” which can perform tasks virtually.

As Greg and Suri write, “The truth is, AI is as fully-automated as the Ghost and Powerful. Or was in that famous scene from the classic film, where Dorothy and friends witness that great wall is simply a monotonous, whirring boxes behind a curtain. This blend of AI and humans, who follow through when the AI fails, becomes the new norm.”


EIB INVESTMENT IN NEPAL

TITLE //
>>> DIN PRO BOLD

TITLE EMPHASIZED TEXT //
>>> DIN PRO BOLD
TIPS TO FIGHT CORRUPTION

>>> Better EIB Anti-Fraud Policy
>>> More Transparency in Investigations
>>> Raise Whistleblower Protection
>>> Integrate Suspension Clauses in Client Contracts
‘Interesting discussion today about the EIB. We welcome their openness to discuss and share ideas. It is good that people are increasingly aware of the EIB. There is a clear momentum for precedents to be set on climate, development and transparency.’

Xavier Sol, Director Counter Balance
COUNTER BALANCE SPECIFIC VISUAL ELEMENTS

COUNTER BALANCE //

Aims to challenge public investment banks such as the EIB and this is reflected in the visual elements we use that make up our visual style, both on- and offline.

The fact that we act as a counterweight to the current policies of the EIB and other investment banks, is also extrapolated to our visual elements.

We play with shapes, angles and the juxtaposition of those angles. It is both refined, yet rebellious which works to amplify our core identity (The Outlaw) without losing sight of the context in which we operate. That context is - despite Counter Balance being a CSO - very corporate in nature.

The corporate angle is reinforced by maintaining a very clean, measured and slick look that - at first glance - could easily be mistaken for the branding of an actual corporate entity.

The end result of these elements is a clean style that looks corporate, yet breathes vividly due to the playfulness of the use of sharp angles that contrast each other. This leads to a design that is both very slick and rebellious at the same time.

The choice of black, yellow, white and dark brown further amplify this notion because it results in a color palette that pops at you and draws your attention, be it in digital or physical form.

The importance of a clean style cannot be underestimated as the visual quality helps to lend credibility to Counter Balance as an organisation when communicating to our target audience: public bank staff, legislators and journalists.

Furthermore, the current style lends itself well to experimentation because of the playfulness that is built into the design.
CORRIDORS AS FACTORIES: 
SUPPLY CHAINS, LOGISTICS AND LABOUR 
IS THIS THE WORLD YOU WANT?

NOTE //
>>> The ACCENT LINE is also used in a 30° angle instead of a -30° angle
>>> All angles can be reversed, except the angle on the footer that hosts the logo
ILLUSTRATING CONCEPTS //

When choosing pictures as illustrations for sharepics, visuals or print products there are a few rules that we abide by to maintain consistency in style.

Once again, we must remain aware of the context in which we are active. This context being a very corporate context, we also select the pictures we chose accordingly.

As of 2019, Counter Balance uses pictures taken from the online database BigStock.

As a rule of thumb we try to find pictures that answer the following criteria:

>>> Colorful (Pictures must be colorful and vivid in order to be useful on all platforms, be it online or offline)

>>> We avoid pictures that look like advertisements or look like they came from a corporate training video.

>>> In a corporate environment we try to speak in concepts, thus we look for pictures that are essentially very conceptual in nature. Thus, we avoid pictures that feature people prominently, favoring pictures instead that deliver on a conceptual idea. For example, instead of choosing a picture that features people protesting for renewables, we will choose a picture that delivers on the concept of renewables. I.e. a picture featuring a solar farm or a wind farm. We avoid drawings as visuals and prefer photographs instead.
// EXAMPLES //
CORRIDORS AS FACTORIES: SUPPLY CHAINS, LOGISTICS AND LABOUR
IS THIS THE WORLD YOU WANT?

Nicholas Hildyard, The Corner House

PRINT COVER //

>>> As a rule of thumb, covers for print products are greyscaled. Subject to change depending on the product.
As production is broken up into its component parts and rearranged into new configurations that stretch across the globe, the distinction between "making and moving" becomes increasingly blurred. Areas of work (such as warehousing) that were once deemed outside of the production process have been transformed so that they are now part and parcel of it: warehouses no longer serve primarily to store goods (inventories are kept to a minimum) but as "distribution centres", where workers "perform work once considered to be in the manufacturing sector", notably processing parts, controlling quality, customising and packaging. Moreover, with digitalisation, it is not only the boundary between production and distribution that is blurred. Consumption itself has become a site of production. Through point of sale technologies (barcodes and the like), retailers are able to collect huge amounts of information on who buys what, where and when; every act of consumption becomes a potential act of production – the product being data, which, once itself processed, has now become a major commodity.
ONLINE IMAGES & SOCIAL MEDIA //

>>> Pictures for online use, whether they are for web or social media use are NEVER greyscaled

>>> It is important that pictures online stand out among the sheer excess of images we view online, hence the choice to go for pictures that stand out due to their color scheme
The tone of voice for Counter Balance changes based on the medium we are using to communicate, as well as the overall purpose of said communication effort.

As mentioned before, we are a rebel organisation that operates in a corporate context, thus we change our tone of voice accordingly.

For example, when communicating on LinkedIn, specifically aimed at policy makers, EIB/EU staff or other parties we need to try and influence we will sound much more official.

Twitter and Facebook on the other hand are the channels where we will sound much more tongue and cheek and we will not shy away from poking fun at the EIB or our target to get our point across. On these channels we also use emoji’s much more freely.
The audience, policy makers, staff, etc. are looking for the following aspects:

>>> INFORMATION: Clear and professional. Fact-driven and illustrated by cases

>>> FACT-BASED ARGUMENTATION: We must use facts and figures to prove our point and where possible refer to real-world cases
QUOTATION

In a previous report, *How infrastructure is shaping the World*, Counter Balance sought to probe the political and economic interests driving “mega-corridors” – the transcontinental road, rail, air and sea networks that are being constructed to service just-in-time delivery systems and to enable ever more remote sources of minerals and other raw materials to be extracted, at great environmental and social cost.

Such corridors, the report concluded, are a deliberate attempt to “re-engineer economic geography” for the benefit of capital. To achieve “integrated corridor management”, for example, the corridors are being transformed into free trade zones in which tariffs are progressively removed – together with the border controls, paperwork and other “man-made barriers” that, in the words of the World Bank, “increase distance³” by slowing down the transport of goods. Workers’ rights and wages are also eroded as corridor planners form pools of cheap labour by “agglomerating” people into clustered economic zones.

“The Bank claims to practice ‘zero tolerance to fraud and corruption policy’”, says *Xavier Sol*, author of the report. “But, in reality, its anti-corruption regime is unfit for purpose. The EIB is simply not up to the task of tackling fraud and corruption. This significantly jeopardizes the soundness of European investments in and outside of Europe.”

We favor using *double quotation* marks when quoting specific words or specific jargon.

Within quotation marks we use *single quotations* marks to designate a quote within a quote.
LISTS & BOX FIELDS

For lists in text or box fields, there is freedom in terms of design. You may play around with this and be creative with new ways of crafting these. In the section Typography some examples and the basic rules in terms of fonts, symbols and colors have been explained.

That being said, the way these are shaped and integrated are free to be interpreted. Below are some examples of different implementations: