

Cultural Dimensions of Strategy and Policy

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Biological and cultural factors determine human thoughts, decisions, behaviors, actions, and reactions. Biological factors are more prominent in determining the thoughts and behaviors of individuals than of human collectivities. At the collective level—the one with which strategy and policy are concerned (e.g., a nation-state)—cultural factors are dominant. Thus the formulation, implementation, and outcome of strategy and policy must consider cultural dimensions.

Policy makers and strategists tend to view situations through their own cultural and strategic “lenses,” without sufficiently considering and calculating other perspectives and interests. However, the Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy (ACFSP) offers a systematic and analytical approach to the vital task of viewing the world through many lenses. The national security community is interested in cultural features or dimensions that drive political and strategic action and behavior. The ACFSP identifies basic cultural dimensions—identity, political culture, and resilience—that seem fundamental to determining such behavior and thus are important to the formulation

and outcome of policy and strategy. Identity is the most significant because it ultimately determines values and interests that form the foundation for policy and strategy to attain or preserve those interests. Though not necessarily a definitive approach, ACFSP provides a specific way to approach the complex issue of how culture figures into strategic and political behavior. The key points include the following:

1. Strategy and policy are driven by ends.
2. These ends are determined by interests.
3. Interests are derived from the sense of purpose and core values that a particular collectivity considers foundational to its existence.
4. The sense of purpose and core values arise from elements that constitute the collectivity's identity.
5. Identity is the foundation for collective mobilization.
6. Such a mobilized collectivity can be put into action for political purposes through its peculiar form of political culture that provides the ways and the means.

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7. The resilience of the group's culture, grounded on the strength of a common identity with a shared sense of purpose and values, can determine the collectivity's flexibility in resisting, succumbing to, or adapting to forces that challenge the shared purpose and values.

Why Culture?

We face a world without the simple and comforting dichotomy of the Cold War—a world made increasingly more complex by the forces of nationalism and globalization released by the end of the Cold War. During the period following the early 1990s, the post-Cold War era, scholars have become more aware of the growing importance of culture in determining the course of today's complex and interconnected world.

Although scholars may have recognized this phenomenon, practitioners at first did not. We can criticize US national security and foreign policy of the 1990s for its failure to recognize and address the immense, potentially destabilizing, and conflict-generating cultural and political changes unleashed by the end of the Cold War. Much of this force had to do with the release of pent-up demands for self-determination by a variety of cultural groups distinguished by ethnicity, religion, and language. Finding space to emerge, suppressed groups quickly turned into political forces and movements in the pursuit of formerly unattainable interests (separation, independence, domination, etc.) defined by previously unviable identities (ethnoreligious nationalism).

The reemergence of counterinsurgency as a major task has alerted the practitioners of policy and strategy to the importance of culture at the tactical and

operational levels. We might call this the Department of Defense's "cultural turn"—hence, the emphasis placed on culture as a consequential, if not a decisive, factor in countering insurgencies.¹

Moreover, the national security community is recognizing the significance of culture at the policy and strategic levels, although most of the current effort and resources for the cultural turn remain devoted to the tactical and operational fights. Consideration of how culture affects our political/strategic actions and behavior as well as the actions and behavior of others has become a vital strategic task.

Cultural Dimensions of Leadership, Operations, and Strategy

It is too easy to think of the role of culture in the world of national security strategy and military operations as a single-dimensional phenomenon. That is to say, too often we conflate our consideration of culture to one comprehensive set, conceived and perceived as widely applicable across the length, breadth, and depth of the space we call national security and military operations.

To attain a better resolution of the role of culture, we can consider three distinct dimensions of its intersection with national security and military operations: cultural considerations at the individual level, in tactical- and operational-level military actions, and at the political and strategic levels. This is not to imply that these dimensions are separate and distinct because there are significant areas of overlap and mutually supporting as well as hierarchical relationships among them; nevertheless, the distinction is useful.

Cultural considerations at the individual level encompass the dimensions of

leadership, management, and interpersonal communications and relations. Languages, cultural dos and don'ts, and negotiation skills are examples of what this dimension would consider. The US military's current emphasis on cultural understanding, cultural awareness, and languages addresses this dimension.

Cultural considerations in tactical- and operational-level military actions examine cultural factors that can influence the success or failure of tactical activities and campaigns. At the tactical level, aspects of the tactical battlefield such as tactics, training, small-unit leadership traits, and weapons design have cultural components. To design campaigns with the greatest chance for success at the operational level, we must consider the interplay and harmony of factors such as service/agency organizational cultures and the cultures of allies in forming a capable joint, interagency, and multinational force operating in a foreign land. Additionally, military leaders must consider cultural dimensions of the opponent, such as civil-military relations (political control), military-societal ties (popular support), and military force (senior leadership style, operational-level doctrine and training philosophy, and military culture), among other factors.²

Cultural considerations at the political and strategic levels deal with the impact of cultural factors on the formulation, implementation, and outcome of policy and strategy. Such factors can affect political and strategic decisions, actions, and behaviors. The ACFSP gives us one approach for considering this dimension, the area with which we are most concerned, in a systematic manner.³

What Is Culture?

Culture is a fundamental, although not the only, factor for defining and understanding the human condition.⁴ It affects how people think and act. Through their culture, humans and societies assign meaning to the world around them and define their place there. We see culture manifested in languages; ideas and ideologies; customs and traditions; beliefs and religions; rituals and ceremonies; settlement patterns; art and music; architecture and furniture; dress and fashion; games; and images—in short, in anything that symbolizes or represents the values, norms, perceptions, interests, and biases of a culture.⁵

The German political economist and sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) saw man as an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun. The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926–2006) extended this notion by equating culture with Weber's "webs of significance."⁶ In Weber's and Geertz's conception, man was like a spider in the middle of his web except that the strands were not made of silk but of values, perceptions, and norms that were significant and meaningful to him. Thus, the main task in analyzing culture entails understanding the specifics of what is significant and meaningful—the meanings represented by the strands of the webs of significance. Conducting this task requires interpretation of symbolic forms and systems to tease out their denotations.

We must recognize that human beings are not born with a particular culture (the webs of significance) but that culture develops through a process of conscious and unconscious socialization and acculturation (human interactions) within the particular situation into which an individual is born. This "particular situation"

can encompass a wide range of factors, from the individualistic and biological, such as gender and race, to an ever-widening circle of social, political, economic, religious, organizational, and ethnic levels of human organization (family, community, ethnic community, religious order, economic class, village/town/city, state/province, nation, region, and world). Therefore, in trying to come to grips with how culture operates, we must recognize that it varies enormously through space and time. Variability over space is reflected by the variety of cultures in the world at a given moment in time. Because history best captures variability over time, it thus becomes, in part, a record of cultural change.

Culture operates at different levels, ranging from the individual to various levels of collectivities. At each level, it is rarely the sum of the cultures of lower levels. At the individual level, culture affects interpersonal communications and relations; at the collective level, it affects intercollective (e.g., interclan, intertown, interstate, etc.) communications and relations. Clearly, an overlap exists between culture at the individual and collective levels, especially if we consider decision makers. But a framework that distinguishes between the two could facilitate a study of the cultural dimension of policy and strategy.

The Analytical Cultural Framework for Strategy and Policy

As noted above, policy makers and strategists tend to use their own cultural and strategic lenses for viewing situations, without much regard for other perspectives and interests. That said, how should we approach the task of appreciating and understanding the different lenses through which other people, groups, societies, na-

tions, and regions see themselves and the world? Let us examine the ACFSP's basic cultural dimensions—identity (its definition and linkage to interests), political culture (the structure of power and decision making), and resilience (the capacity or ability to resist, succumb to, or adapt to external forces)—in an American context to understand how they affect American values and interests and, therefore, American policy and strategy. First we should consider the revolutionary circumstances of America's national origin and the founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights, Federalist Papers, etc.). The United States' unique revolutionary origin redefined the organization of society. Democracy and republicanism, freedom and liberty, equality, Manifest Destiny, and other fundamental conceptions of man and society combined with a pioneering spirit, individualism, and entrepreneurialism to establish a unique and enduring American identity.

Furthermore, Protestantism combined with capitalism to fan a tremendous appetite for innovation, adaptation, and progress.⁷ America became both a synonym and symbol for a land of innovative and adaptive people. Along with growing prosperity came the dominance of middle-class livelihoods, values, and practices that formed the backbone of American society. These ideas and values interacted with history, resulting in a richer—some would say a more “positive”—development of American society and identity.

What does all of this mean in terms of American identity, political culture, and resilience? First, American citizenship and identity are based on place and, more importantly, on the idea of being an American rather than on bloodlines.⁸ This foundational notion of the American identity differentiates US citizens from those in the rest of the world who favor

bloodlines. Second, American political culture, having evolved from a revolutionary distrust of strong central authority (kings and tyrants), thus emphasizes the protection of individual/local rights and privileges and the principle of checks and balances even though it may compromise the efficient functioning of the government. This has resulted in a particularly complex political culture. Finally, America's relationship with globalization reflects one test of US resilience. Perhaps more than any other society, that of the United States has been able to innovate and adapt to the forces of globalization. Indeed, America has been and remains one of the engines of globalization. In another test of resilience—the way America integrates with transnational institutions (e.g., the United Nations or the World Trade Organization)—it does so with the determination to protect individual and national prerogatives while remaining open to institutions that support its ideas of liberal democracy, economic openness, and universal human rights.

These cultural considerations affect American policy and strategy. Most Americans have a distinct worldview and beliefs about the United States' place in that world. That view is very much founded on the legacy of eighteenth century enlightenment that also animated America's founding revolution. A democratic world with a capitalist economic system based on free trade is America's idealized utopia, and Americans see their country as destined to have a leading role in bringing about such a world.

Other societies may share aspects of what constitutes American identity, political culture, and resilience, but not identically. In the same manner, every other society reflects a unique combination of identity, political culture, and resilience.

Common Themes across the ACFSP Dimensions

Two aspects of the modern world that play key roles in all the dimensions—modernity and nationalism—form the first common theme. Modernity has both material (e.g., industrialization, scientific and technological developments, and the information revolution) and ideational (e.g., different ideas about political and economic organization such as democracy, autocracy, and socialism) aspects. Nationalism has taken many forms rooted in the traditional past as well as in the new political and geographical arrangements of the modern era (ethnic, religious, and nation-state political).⁹

Another common theme holds that, as a subjective and emotional entity and process, culture is inherently unpredictable. This contrasts with rationalism or rational-choice theory, prized in social sciences because it seems to provide a way to predict. However, we can see the predictive shortcomings of rational-choice theory as the basis for human thought and action everywhere in daily life, from the unpredictability of the stock market to the uncertainties of international relations.¹⁰ In the world of policy and strategy, prediction is the prize of analysis. Human beings, individually or collectively, do not always think and behave in rational ways. The concept of rationality itself is relative and subject to differing conceptions and definitions, based on culture. At best, people may gain some insight into what might be most probable. Precisely because we are creatures of emotions and passions, we can more fully comprehend our thoughts and actions only through cultural understanding that offers predictive insights into the seemingly irrational patterns of thought and behavior.

Culture is the principal contemporary expression of another common theme—history, the record of people and society. Without history, there is no culture. But history is an interpretive field, more subjective than objective. Thus, we must appreciate each dimension of the framework as the product of both the accumulation of actual historical experience and the revisionism brought by memory and interpretation of that history. In doing so, we must also consider that memory and interpretation of history are often incomplete, selective, or distorted.

History, therefore, serves two important functions: as an agent and a process that determines specific tangible and intangible cultural forms; and as an instrument of culture, usually purposefully distorted or adapted for contemporary and, most often, political purposes. For many modern nation-states, distortion often takes the form of inventing or exaggerating a heroic past that serves to legitimize the regime while inspiring and helping to mobilize the populace for national projects. Examples abound throughout the world and in history: Hitler's Nazi Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union, Saddam's Iraq, and Kim Il Sung's North Korea. More than likely, we could probably find evidence of manipulation of history for political purposes anywhere in the world. When we dig a little deeper into the historiography of a particular society, deliberate distortions, exaggerations, omissions, and even inventions become readily apparent.

Identity

One aspect of culture that seems to matter greatly at political and strategic levels involves those cultural factors that determine identity, perhaps the most important of the ACFSP dimensions because it

ultimately determines values and interests that underlie the policy and strategy designed to attain or preserve those interests. A fundamental trait essential to people and societies, identity can very well be equated with culture.¹¹ It defines existence, purpose, destiny, and, sometimes, fate; moreover, identity provides a sense of self-worth, dignity, and community. Because people exist both as individuals and members of a group—a collective—an examination of identity must also recognize the existence of differing individual and collective identities. At the individual level, identity begins with a base of biologically inherited features that supports a superstructure of cultural or acquired elements. Clearly, race, gender, and family are the most obvious and consequential biologically inherited identity traits. Superimposed on these are socially inherited features such as ethnicity, religion, clan, class, and tribe. The boundary between biological and social inheritances is often blurred. Ultimately, however, social inheritances are changeable while biological inheritances are not.

Though important for the individual, identity may not necessarily have equal or similar significance at the collective level. Collective identity almost always consists of fewer traits than the sum of the individual identities of its members because, by necessity, collective identity is based on features shared by all or most members of the group. However, in terms of political and social power, collective identity is almost always far more than the sum of the individuals because it has the potential to mobilize the group and thus exert political power. For example, at the nation-state level, leaders who can fuse individual with national identity can inspire the people of the country to sacrifice for survival and glory. The ability to mobilize a nation is essential in strategy and the conduct of

foreign and domestic policy—and absolutely paramount for the enterprise of war. Inasmuch as policy and strategy are oriented toward a particular collectivity rather than an individual, be it a subnational, national, regional, or transnational entity, we are most concerned with collective identity in considerations of policy and strategy.

As with individual identity, collective identity consists of both biologically and socially inherited traits, but often the biological or “blood” traits are more fictional and mythical than real. Ultimately, of most importance is the collective social agreement on what commonality binds the group. Even if all members shared exactly the same features of individual identities, biological and social, they could not form a collective identity unless they agreed on the basis for coming together.

Collective identity also exists in widely ranging forms, creating intricate layers of overlap and hierarchy. Indeed, it would be the rare society that exhibited only one collective identity; thus, we must consider the existence of a multiplicity of such identities. The latter also reveal social and political fault lines that contain the potential for future divisions. Although collective identities exist simultaneously, we can usually define them hierarchically. Some are more important than others. Each individual and group sorts and prioritizes, often consciously but sometimes not. The identity that occupies the top of the hierarchy has the greatest potential for significant and powerful political force, often with implications for peace and conflict. For most of the modern age (i.e., since the late eighteenth century), nation-state political nationalism—the most important and powerful collective—has had direct implications for war and peace. Although suppressed by the confrontation

between capitalism and communism during the Cold War, nationalism has undergone a resurgence during the post-Cold War period. But the form of nationalism that became prominent in that era has been more of the ethnic and religious variety rather than nation-state political nationalism. The era following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 has added to the increasingly complex situation by highlighting the potency of religious and ethnic extremism.

When considering more specifically the sources of collective identity, especially those that result in political power (and, therefore, the power to mobilize the collective toward a common purpose), we cannot escape history, whose principal contemporary expression is culture. We can extend the thought that culture cannot exist without history, that culture is a historical product, to the notion that identity cannot exist without history. History is based on interpretation and is subject to constant revision and reinterpretation. But what is the basis of the revisions and reinterpretations? Here we consider not academic history but the popular mass view of history, usually a simplified and reduced version. New evidence plays a part, but even more so does the collective “memory” of that history—memory that may be real but is more likely selective, subjective, or manufactured. The fact that history can never be definitive points to one of the most important aspects of identity—that identity is dynamic and changeable. It need not be permanent.

Politically, the most potent collective identity in the modern era has been the nation-state. The concept of a nation is old, and, in the traditional sense, membership in a nation is determined by a common identity based on one or more of a number of physical and cultural factors such as origin, ancestry, location, reli-

gion, language, and shared history. In the modern era, the concept of the nation-state that combined national fervor with political organization introduced a powerful new foundation for nationhood. Modern forms of national identity can thus serve as the basis for powerful collective actions, especially in the political, social, economic, cultural, and strategic arenas. The sources of national identity of modern nation-states are often based on a shifting amalgamation of the old and traditional (ancestry, location, and religion) with the new (recent history). Thus, nation-state identity usually arises artificially or deliberately rather than deriving from the natural and spontaneous consequences of a country's history. Every nation glorifies what it is and what it represents and thus tends to gloss over history that does not fit that story (narrative). This becomes all the more evident in nations with arbitrarily created rather than historically evolved boundaries—for instance, countries established by colonial powers, especially in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Thus national leaders commonly evoke and use history deliberately as an instrument of unity and mobilization. In such usage, history is often distorted or even falsified.¹²

Nationalism is not the only basis for collective identity with consequential political power. Transnational identities have also proven effective in generating substantial political power. Some, such as extremism (religious, ethnic, and political) and criminal activity, can be destructive and threatening to order. Others are potentially constructive, such as collective identities that, for example, advocate worldwide human rights, seek to preserve and promote labor rights in the context of a globalizing society, promote an open and tolerant society for the free exchange of ideas and information, build global

consensus over climate change as a common global problem, encourage religious expressions of universal brotherhood, and advance international efforts for the peaceful resolution of conflict. Subnational collective identities such as a tribe or sect have also proven to possess increasingly potent political force in those parts of the world where the nation-state is weak or where the state seems remote from individual or group concerns.

Political Culture

Aristotle famously said that “man is by nature a political animal.” What does this mean in terms of thoughts, decisions, and actions? We are most interested in how being political translates into real-world outcomes. Identity provides collective unity and foundation for mobilization, but politics supplies the instrument and the means to mobilize the group, leading to actions and results.

We can define political culture as the set of values, beliefs, traditions, perceptions, expectations, attitudes, practices, and institutions that a particular society harbors about how the political system and processes should operate and what sort of governmental and economic life it should pursue. Political culture is dynamic and changeable because of its historical derivation. Factors that contribute to the formation of a particular political culture include historical experience, religious tradition, collective values, founding principles, geographical location and configuration, strategic environment (e.g., relative vulnerability or security), economic capacity, and demographics.

The philosophical attitude toward the meaning of progress and development represents a most important factor of political culture. If we accept the notion that modernity and modernization originated

in and became defined by the West, we must also consider the problems of Western bias in the modernization scenario. The essential question in this debate concerns whether there is only one correct path to modernization ("civilization") and its implied sense of progress, or whether there is a multiplicity of paths (e.g., a "Confucian way" that could explain the successful developmental paths taken by East Asian nations). This is an important issue because of its profound effect on the kind of political culture that develops.

Faith and religion have become increasingly important factors in the construction of political culture, especially in the post-Cold War era and in societies with significant nonsecular political traditions. The role of religion in political culture is not difficult to understand if we recognize its role in identity formation. A key issue in political culture entails the extent to which people having a primarily religious or ethnically based identity will also show allegiance to the nation-state and/or transnational institutions.

Political culture also forms two key supporting instruments of its expression that are of interest for policy and strategy: political system and strategic culture. *Political system* refers to the organization of political power, with particular emphasis on identifying and understanding the basis for power, its distribution, and hierarchy. Consideration of the political system includes examination of the role of history, class, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, geography (physical, social, and cultural), demography, and power fault lines that determine power centers, connections, and operations. The world houses a spectrum of political systems, varying from failed states and diffuse power structures to centralized systems such as autocracies. In between these extremes occur various

gradations of systems such as democracies. Within each of these systems resides a spectrum of players and institutions that have political power and influence, usually having differential access to tangible and intangible resources (e.g., material, financial, influential, and moral). Within all political systems are rules of the game about obtaining, using, and transferring power.

Strategic culture, a relatively new concept, arose in the post-Cold War era in reaction to two developments, the first of which was the shock of the social scientific approach's failure in predicting the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union and European communism. This precipitated a search for one or more missing factors that could have led to more accurate predictive analysis.¹³ The second development—the realization that each nation had a unique perspective which affected the way it perceived, interpreted, analyzed, and reacted to events and developments—amounted to a realization that no single universal "law" governed how all nations behaved. These two developments led to considering culture as an important factor in collective behavior (including that of the nation-state) and, thus, policy and strategy; out of it emerged the idea of strategic culture, thus defined as the concept that considers how cultural factors affect strategic behavior.¹⁴ Strategic culture both enables and constrains actions and reactions regarding strategic choices, priorities, security, diplomacy, and the use of force.

Resilience

As mentioned previously, resilience refers to the capacity or ability of a culture to resist, succumb to, or adapt to external forces. It tests the culture's stability and coherence and measures the endurance of its identity and political culture. Thus,

it can help us understand either the permanence or changeability of the values and interests that determine a particular culture's strategy and policy.

Globalization probably represents the greatest external force that affects cultures around the world and tests cultural resilience. From a historical perspective, although globalization often focuses specifically on the economic and the informational, we should consider it the current phase of modernity that encompasses both material and nonmaterial dimensions. Despite the existence of other periods of globalization, the type that we face today may assume such enormity that we do not yet have the historical basis to inform us of its potential impact.¹⁵

Although it is a term most often associated with economics and information, we believe that *globalization* in its broadest sense includes economic, social, technological, political, informational, and ideational factors. Key notions to consider include interdependence and a dynamic that is more involuntary than voluntary. Thus we have a sense that we cannot control the globalization force, only accommodate or mitigate it.

An important component of globalization calls for understanding its linkage with anti-Westernism and anti-Americanism. Many people in the world consider globalization synonymous with Americanization or Westernization and identify America as the primary source of globalization, especially those aspects of it perceived to undermine traditional society and values.

Another important test of resilience is how a culture approaches its integration with transnational institutions such as the United Nations or the World Trade Organization. A culture may take a paro-

chial position, intent on preserving its own interest at the cost of the larger interest for which the institution was created. Alternatively, it may be willing to sacrifice parochial interest for the good of the larger community. The motivations for and viability of taking these positions offer insight into each culture's resilience.

Conclusion

The theoretical principles of considering cultural dimensions in the formulation, implementation, and outcome of strategy and policy seem simple enough, but to actually apply them to a specific nation or a group, subnational or transnational, requires intense study and analysis of the history of that collectivity. We will discover no one right answer, but if we hope to formulate more effective strategies and policies, then we must strive to make them more answerable to cultural factors. The very lack of a definitive cultural analysis demands a multiplicity of efforts. Different approaches will emphasize different factors. A historically oriented analysis likely emphasizes different factors than one taking a political scientific approach—anthropological, sociological, economic, psychological, or military approaches focus on yet other factors. Their sum, however, can provide the sort of comprehensive analysis that can move us closer to the truth even if we never reach it. This is the difficult challenge that faces strategic leaders involved in strategy and policy. Identity, political culture, and resilience give us a starting point for that cultural analytical journey. □

Notes

1. "The *cultural turn* describes developments in the humanities and the social sciences brought about by various developments across the disciplines. Most noted amongst these was the emergence of cultural studies and the rise of the sociology of culture within the discipline of sociology. . . . It describes a shift in emphasis towards *meaning* and on culture rather than politics or economics. This shift of emphasis occurred over a prolonged time, but particularly since the 1960s" (emphasis in original). *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v., "cultural turn," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_turn.

2. The Army's Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, December 2006, and FM 3-0, *Operations*, February 2008, represent examples of how cultural factors have now become prominent aspects of the tactical- and operational-level fights. Barak A. Salmoni and Paula Holmes-Eber offer a five-dimensional approach (physical environment, economy, social structure, political structure, and belief system) to the issue of culture and military operations. This cultural framework for operations is an excellent complement to the ACFSP's three-dimensional framework for strategy and policy. See their book *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2008), <http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/mcu/mcupress/opculture.pdf>.

3. Sheila Miyoshi Jager, visiting professor of national security studies at the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute, 2006–8, writes of the need for appreciating how the three different levels of political-military operations—strategic, operational, and tactical—require different kinds of cultural knowledge. See her study *On the Uses of Cultural Knowledge* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, November 2007), <http://www.strategicstudies-institute.army.mil/pdf/FILES/PUB817.pdf>. Jager's levels (strategic, operational, and tactical) are different from the three dimensions considered by the US Army War College—policy/strategy, operations, leadership/management. However, the more important point is that the two frameworks agree on the notion that we must differentiate how cultural factors work in different areas—that culture cannot and should not be conflated into a "one size fits all."

4. Two other features that define the human condition include man's biology and the physical environment.

5. The Army defines culture as

the set of distinctive features of a society or group, including but not limited to values, beliefs, and norms, that ties together members of that society or group and that drives action and behavior. Additional aspects or characteristics of culture are: (1) Culture is shared; there is no "culture of one"; (2) Culture is patterned, meaning that people in a group or society live and think in ways forming definitive, repeating patterns; (3) Culture is changeable, through social interactions between people and groups; (4) Culture is internalized in the sense that it is habitual, taken for granted, and perceived as "natural" by people within the group or society; (5) Culture is learned; (6) The distinc-

tive features that describe a particular culture include its myths and legends.

See US Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy*, draft. Culture is expressed in the real world through symbols and symbolic systems that represent, reflect, or contain the meanings inherent in cultural features—therefore, values, beliefs and norms. Learning to identify these symbols and symbolic systems and "read" the meanings they reflect, represent, or contain is thus a crucial skill for understanding a particular society and its culture.

6. Geertz founded the field of interpretive anthropology, the dominant variant of cultural anthropology that approaches culture as a symbolic system. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5.

7. Max Weber examined Protestantism and capitalism's complementarity in detail. See his famous treatise *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner, 1976).

8. Ethnicity is a cultural construct usually based on race, religion, language, and way-of-life traditions. It may be possible to conceive of a distinctive American ethnicity that transcends the usual determinants by embracing an ethnic identity based on the American idea.

9. The beginning of the modern era is most commonly defined by the advent of the enlightenment and industrialization in the eighteenth century. The enlightenment created a rational secular world in which man dominated the ideational domain, while industrialization created a material world in which man dominated the physical domain. Divorced from the constraining and limiting premodern fixation on the divine, the modern era increasingly promised a future of unlimited possibilities.

10. The most prominent example was the failure to predict the collapse of the Soviet Union. Two important criticisms of rational-choice theory came from Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis and political scientist Ian Shapiro. Gaddis's criticism of the social sciences and their focus on the quest for the independent variable appeared in his book *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), chap. 3. Shapiro indicted the social sciences and humanities, maintaining that they are driven more by concern over methods—most importantly, rational-choice theory—than by real-world problems. See his book *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

11. Thus, the study of identity involves the exploration of the same parameters mentioned earlier for the study of culture: formation, agency, process, boundary, variability, stability, coherence, and effect on thinking and decision making.

12. Two important and powerful studies have had an enormous impact on how we view the formation of coherent and stable modern nation-states. Editors Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983), contains startling studies of how nation-states deliberately invented tradi-

tions to provide legitimacy by tying themselves to their long, traditional past and by consolidating their power through invented symbols and rituals. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, England: Verso, 1983), examines how printed words played a key role in virtually linking all parts of the modern nation-state. Widespread, cheap printing—"print capitalism," to use Anderson's term—is a modern phenomenon. Its ubiquity was an essential mechanism and instrument for rapidly binding citizens of a nation-state by helping them imagine their membership in that national community. For example, print capitalism helped spread the sort of invented traditions that Hobbsbawm and Ranger considered. For some nations, such as Indonesia, that had never existed as a single coherent community prior to its formation in modern times, the concept of a national community in itself was an invention that print capitalism made possible to imagine.

13. John Lewis Gaddis, perhaps the world's foremost historian of the Cold War, wrote that

the efforts theorists have made to create a "science" of politics that would forecast the future course of world events have produced strikingly unimpressive results: none of the . . . approaches to theory . . . that have evolved since 1945 came anywhere close to anticipating how the Cold War would end. . . . If their forecasts failed so completely to anticipate so large an event as that conflict's termination, then one has to wonder about the theories upon which they were based.

See his article "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992–93): 3.

14. Important works on strategic culture include Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 32–64; Stephen Peter Rosen, "Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 5–31; Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 65–93; Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Richard J. Ellis and Michael Thompson, eds., *Culture Matters: Essays in Honor of Aaron Wildavsky* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997); Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); and Yosef Lapid, "Culture's Shop: Returns and Departures in International Relations Theory," in *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, ed. Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996).

15. For example, note the globalization based on expansion of European trade between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries or the opening of the Silk Road in the thirteenth century.

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