

**STRATEGIC CULTURE:  
A CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION**

by

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## ABSTRACT

Strategic Culture has appealed to political theorists since Jack Snyder first introduced it in his 1977 work “The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations.”<sup>1</sup> Researchers agree that aspects of a society’s culture can influence security policy and practice but have had difficulty with a conceptual definition. This could be resolved by showing a connection between the concept and a common causal agency that would support reliable application.

This thesis proposes a conceptual definition that shows a direct causal relationship between strategic environment and strategic culture. The proposed definition contends that social organization and order derive from a fundamental human drive to create security through the establishment of a social collective. This same drive for collective security will also be shown to result in the development of core political, social, and economic organizations that can best capitalize on the predominating physical resources and strategic challenges that constitute strategic environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Snyder, J. (1977). The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations, RAND Corporation.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

How does one begin to acknowledge a learning path that began long before I even knew I was on it? I am not a typical or traditional academic. This research is not a path actively chosen as an eager young student intent on an academic career. At the time of my first forays into post secondary education I was more interested in being a visual artist and experiencing as much of the world as I could, as often as possible, and all at once whenever possible. That curiosity, however, also drove academic choices down many different paths such as fine arts, comparative religion, philosophy, history, and political science with the eventual destination the study of international relations. In any event, this has been a wonderful learning journey that eventually found meaning and direction in a fascination with the concept of Strategic Culture. I am convinced that it has great potential as a tool of comparative and practical analysis of social constructs that include state and non-state stakeholders in international relations.

There have been quite a few very patient academic guides and mentors as well as friends who have been instrumental at pivotal moments in this academic experience. The core acknowledgement, however, must go to what I will describe as my own Strategic Culture

The defining cultural background of my own family as a first social construct has been a significant contributor to my approach to situational analysis. I spent my early and most formative years in Liberia and Pakistan influenced by family support staff from cultural environments very different to that of my immediate family. My mother and father spent their key formative years growing up respectively in Japan and India. The cumulative combination has made for an interesting perspective on beliefs, values, and priorities in a variety of social constructs and a somewhat eclectic appreciation of the world.

Included in the family acknowledgement are all of my children. Not because they ever believed in what I was doing, though I suspect that at some level they do. Adults now, they are all too wonderfully caught up in their own growth and learning to pay much attention to my fascination with Strategic Culture. What they inadvertently gave me was a wonderful opportunity, over the course of their growing up, to study the evolution of their miniature social constructs in response to their expanding environment.

My current employment as a naval officer with the Canadian Forces has also helped to inform and shape some of my thoughts on Strategic Culture. I confess I much prefer Sun Tzu's philosophy of war fighting to that of Clausewitz.

Finally, no acknowledgement would be complete without recognizing the rich body of research that went on before my own. The summary of three literature reviews included in this thesis provides only a glimpse of the work done since 1977. This work has served as a strong foundation and starting point for my own research and analysis. I look forward to seeing what comes next.

## INTRODUCTION

### Strategic Culture: A Conceptual Definition

This paper proposes a conceptual definition of Strategic Culture as a necessary starting point for later research into the subsequent successful development of both an operational definition and a reliable methodology and variables matrix for eventual application in comparative analysis.

The concept itself is best approached from a multidisciplinary perspective as it draws on terminology and expressions from a variety of academic disciplines. The paper therefore includes a section with an exploration of some of those terms in order to overcome any discipline-specific confusion of intent in the language chosen.

It is also important to be clear on what is meant by a conceptual definition.

Professor William C. Robinson, School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee stated that a conceptual definition is one that defines “a concept by means of other concepts.”<sup>2</sup> Robinson further clarified this statement with his explanation of an operational definition.

“An operational definition identifies one or more specific observable conditions or events and then tells the researcher how to measure that event. Typically, there are several operational definition possibilities for variables and values. The operation chosen will often have an immediate impact on the course of the research, especially the findings.

Operational definitions must be VALID -- do they measure what they are supposed to measure? It is easy to develop definitions that are easily operational, but which lack meaning and appropriateness. The operational definition may involve the use of proxy variables.

Here, the researcher is never completely certain that she is measuring the precise property they intend to measure.

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<sup>2</sup> Robinson, W. C. (2006). November 2006. from [http://web.utk.edu/~wrobinso/540\\_lec\\_opdefs.html](http://web.utk.edu/~wrobinso/540_lec_opdefs.html).

Operational definitions must be RELIABLE -- the results should be the same when done by different people or by one person at different times.”<sup>3</sup>

The proposed definition of Strategic Culture is based on the theoretical context of Social Constructivism.

“The focus of **social constructivism** (in shorthand: constructivism) is on human awareness or consciousness and its place in world affairs. Much IR-theory, and especially neorealism, is materialist; it focuses on how the distribution of material power, such as military forces and economic capabilities, defines balances of power between states and explains the behaviour of states. Constructivists reject such a one-sided material focus. They argue that the most important aspect of international relations is social, not material. Furthermore, they argue that this social reality is not objective, or external, to the observer of international affairs. The social and political world, including the world of international relations, is not a physical entity or material object that is outside human consciousness. Consequently, the study of international relations must focus on the ideas and beliefs that inform the actors on the international scene as well as the shared understandings between them.”<sup>4</sup>

It is particularly important to approach the concept of Strategic Culture from this theoretical context when confronted with an international community that is no longer the exclusive domain of state or state sanctioned actors. The concept has applicability at many levels and configurations of social constructs specifically because any social construct has its origins in a conscious, and even instinctive, collective human response to perceived security challenges or opportunities. Strategic Culture is not exclusively shaped by states – it also shapes states. By the same token, it can also contribute to the evolution of non-state social constructs as a response to changes in a strategic environment.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Introduction to International Relations, Oxford Scholarship Online, <http://www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199285433/> Chapter 6 pg 162

## CHAPTER ONE Methodology and Relevance

“Done well, the careful analysis of strategic culture could help policymakers establish more accurate and empathetic understandings of how different actors perceive the game being played, reducing uncertainty and other information problems in strategic choice. Done badly, the analysis of strategic culture could reinforce stereotypes about strategic dispositions of other states and close off policy alternatives deemed inappropriate for dealing with local strategic cultures”<sup>5</sup> Alistair Iain Johnston 2005

Strategic Culture is a concept first introduced by Jack Snyder in his 1977 report, “The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations.”<sup>6</sup> His objective was to introduce a concept that would facilitate better understanding and predictive capability on the part of American defence policy makers with regard to probable Soviet responses to American nuclear policy.

Theorists have since considered a range of issues from a variety of academic disciplines associated with research on Strategic Culture and have engaged in a recurring and sometimes heated debate on the lack of consensus with respect to a definition. Most researchers agree, furthermore, that it will be difficult to reliably apply the concept in an operational or context specific analysis without first establishing a reliable definition.

This paper proposes the following definition:

"Strategic Culture is the culturally embedded social, economic, and political organization and ordering of a society as historically shaped by successful interaction with and adaptation to their prevailing physical and strategic environment"

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<sup>5</sup> Stone, E. (October 2006). Comparative Strategic Culture: A Literature Review, Part I. Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum Contract No. DTRA01-03-D-0017, Technical Instruction 18-06-02, 31 USA

<sup>6</sup> Snyder, J. (1977). The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations, RAND Corporation.

## Methodology:

The definition proposed in this thesis is supported by an analytic process that will build on a selective review and analysis of the research done to date in order to identify both shared definitional intent and common key concepts in previous explorations of the concept. This approach will help to identify and overcome gaps and shortcomings in the development of preceding research and help to build a framework for the conceptual definition of Strategic Culture proposed in this thesis. The establishment of a reliable conceptual definition will provide a clearer basis for measurable, comparative analysis of the respective Strategic Cultures of state and non-state stakeholders as relevant influences in international relations.

Traditional and mainstream security studies operate on the state-centric assumption that the state is the principle, legitimate, agency of national and international security, typically armed with sophisticated military technology and the authority to use lethal force. Critical Security Studies chooses, instead, a broader and deeper exploration of security by a variety of theoretical approaches that all seek to challenge the foundations upon which the dominant state-centrism and military-centrism is built.<sup>7</sup> Previous research has tended, as a result, to approach Strategic Culture from the traditional and narrow security perspective of anticipated predictive and analytic value for state-centric analysts.

This narrow approach has resulted in much of the research to date struggling to establish a context specific or operational definition prior to establishing

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<sup>7</sup> Booth, K., Ed. (Jan 31 2005). Critical Security Studies And World Politics Lynne Rienner.

agreement on a clear conceptual understanding of the fundamental meaning of Strategic Culture. The review of the literature on Strategic Culture presented in this thesis, in order to support a conceptual definition, will focus on previous research that recognizes Strategic Culture as a potentially useful, analytic tool in Critical Security Studies, and concentrates on theoretical analysis of Strategic Culture as opposed to context specific discussion and application of the concept.

The concept of Strategic Culture is based on the identification and analysis of shared individual human characteristics, both as they shape collective identity and as they determine collective security concerns. It would, therefore, be problematic to place it in an exclusively state-centric theoretical context. There is value, instead, in approaching a conceptual definition from a theoretical perspective that focuses on the importance of the human or social agency as presented in the work of Alexander Wendt.

“The character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other, and these are constituted largely by social rather than material structures.”<sup>8</sup>

The approach to a conceptual definition presented in this paper, in order to have the potential to support a subsequent measurable and reliable operational definition will reflect the relevance of Social Constructivism as a theoretical context for understanding and defining Strategic Culture as an analytic tool.

#### Relevance:

Humanity lives in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. The movers and shakers in the global community have expanded beyond the political and the

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<sup>8</sup> Wendt, A. (Nov 13 1999). Social Theory of International Politics Cambridge University Press.

corporate to include non-governmental organizations, interest groups, criminals, and individuals. It is critical to have the analytic tools at hand to make measurable, comparative, assessments of the stakeholder objectives and priorities in any given situation, but particularly when the situation has the potential for conflict. I contend that the concept of Strategic Culture has the potential to be one of those analytic tools. It can, if properly understood, and consistently and comparatively applied, enhance understanding of the core values, priorities, and motivations behind the choices and actions of stakeholders whether they be governments, corporations or interest groups, including terrorists and criminals. The intuitive appeal of the concept is not new. It was reflected in the 6<sup>th</sup> century writings of Sun Tzu in “The Art of War”

So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you can win a hundred battles without a single loss.

If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or may lose.

If you know neither yourself nor your enemy, you will always endanger yourself.<sup>9</sup>

Included in this understanding of Strategic Culture is recognition of a need for reflective or self-analysis. If the analyst is not aware of their own Strategic Culture, they run the risk of allowing it, unconsciously, to distort their application of the concept to another social group or state. Any attempted application of the concept, without first analyzing self, will tend to be unduly influenced by the projected values, security concerns, and priorities of the analyst and will not be adequately objective or comparative.

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<sup>9</sup> Carr, C., Ed. (2000). The Book of War : Sun-Tzu's "The Art of War" & Karl Von Clausewitz's "On War". New York, N.Y., U.S.A., Random House Inc: 2000 Modern Library Paperback Edition.

In order to understand the basis for the definition proposed in this paper and to appreciate the potential of Strategic Culture as a measurable occurrence relevant to comparative analysis it is important to review both the terminology being used in this paper to identify the concept and the historical development of previous research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Strategic Culture: An Exploration of Terms

“Words are chameleons, which reflect the colour of their environment.” Learned Hand 1872-1961: In *Commissioner v. National Carbide Corp.* (1948)

Words, by necessity, are the building blocks of definition. A definition, according to the Gage Canadian Dictionary, is a “statement that makes clear the meaning of a word or group of words.”<sup>10</sup> A description, on the other hand is “the act of giving a picture or account in words.”<sup>11</sup> In either case, success in crafting a description or a definition depends on the use of words. All the more important, then, before setting out to revisit a definition, to be clear on the words and phrases being put to use to that end. It would be unfortunate to present a definition that was limited in relevance simply because of a misunderstanding or erroneous assumption of word usage. To borrow from Professor Peter Stoett in ‘Human and Global Security: An Exploration of Terms:’

“Defining words is a fundamental act, for us as individuals and as members of collectives. When definitions are constructed in a closed and limited fashion, alternative thinking can be stifled and orthodoxy reinforced.”<sup>12</sup>

Given that a conceptual definition is one based on the use and application of other concepts to provide understanding, it is particularly important to be clear on what is meant by those concepts in a more comprehensive manner than what is offered in dictionary terms. It is necessary to also show how the separate parts of language being used work together to lay a framework for the final definition.

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<sup>10</sup> Neufeld, Victoria E. Editor, “Gage Canadian Dictionary” Gage Publishing Ltd. 1983 Canada Pg. 310

<sup>11</sup> Ibid Pg 319

<sup>12</sup> Stoett, P. (1999). Human and Global Security: An Exploration in Terms. Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

First there is the distinction referenced above between a definition and a description. To define something is to state precisely what it means, to describe it's nature, properties or essential qualities. Put simply, to define something requires a degree of understanding of both what it is and why it is. To describe something, on the other hand is to give a picture or account of it, what it looks, tastes, sounds, smells, and/ or feels like, in words. An understanding would benefit the describing but is not essential.

In using the term strategic I refer to the adjective that derives from the noun strategy as a particular long-term plan for success, especially in politics, business, or conflict, suggesting a pre-positioning or preparing for strategic advantage.<sup>13</sup>

Culture is used as a noun and refers to the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared basis of social action.<sup>14</sup> It has been argued that culture is a difficult term to use as it is so broad and inclined to multiple application. Taken in conjunction with the qualifying adjective strategic, however, it is given a more specific context. In this instance of particular relevance is the last phrase of the definition for culture which specifies that of a shared basis for social action. From a language usage perspective the concept of Strategic Culture indicate a peoples' shared basis for collectively pre-positioning or organizing themselves for strategic advantage.

Geography, or the study of the natural features of the earth's surface and man's response to them,<sup>15</sup> when qualified by strategic, indicates a peoples' response to the predominating physical elements of their environment such as topography, climate, soil, and vegetation. The physical elements represent the available resources that will

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<sup>13</sup> (2005). Collins English Dictionary. Glasgow, UK, Harper Collins

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

shape the means of production necessary to sustain the society. The physical environment also shapes security challenges in terms of the availability of natural barriers such as mountains and oceans and transportation conduits such as rivers and open plains. The relationship between a society and the physical environment is of particular relevance as it will shape how a people chooses to organize themselves and order their values and priorities in anticipation of potential threats and opportunities that are based on historical successes in their strategic geography.

The research on Strategic Culture also includes frequent reference to dependent and independent variables. A variable is something that has a range of possible values. When it is a dependent variable its value depends on that taken on by an independent variable. Conversely an independent variable has a value that determines that of the dependent variable.

“Variables that are thought to change in response to changes in the value of other variables are referred to as dependent variables. Their value depends on the value of other variables. Variables that influence the value of other variables through changes in their own values are referred to as independent variables.”<sup>16</sup>

Strategic Culture is a society's' inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared basis of social action. It develops as a collective response to the fundamental human need for security within the context of the challenges and opportunities presented by their unique strategic environment. Security today has become a far more complex concept than the dictionary definition of assured freedom from poverty or want.<sup>17</sup> UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated at a UN led

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<sup>16</sup> Manheim, J. B. R., Richard C.; Willnat, Lars; Brians, Craig Leonard (2008). Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods Seventh Edition. U.S.A., Pearson Education Inc.

<sup>17</sup> (2005). Collins English Dictionary. Glasgow, UK, Harper Collins

international workshop on Human Security in 2000 that the concept of security had moved past the traditional state-centric view where national security was the priority, to a more inclusive view that holds human security as the priority. Where once human security was seen as a subset or outcome of national security this shifting of priorities suggests that national security is instead a subset that is dependent on human security.

“Once synonymous with the defence of territory from external attack, the requirements of security today have come to embrace the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence. The need for a more human-centred approach to security is reinforced by the continuing dangers that weapons of mass destruction, most notably nuclear weapons, pose to humanity: <sup>18</sup>

He elaborated on this with a definition that included a list of criteria that he believed were necessary to human security today.

“Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment -- these are the interrelated building blocks of human – and therefore national – security.” <sup>19</sup>

The problem with a security definition based on a list of criteria, however, is that it becomes bound to those same criteria, and loses the flexibility to adapt to changes in the dominant social, political, and strategic environment. There is more sustainable value in a definition that incorporates instead a context free appreciation of the “why” of a concept. Human security, and subsequently national security, approached in this way, is the extent and nature of control an individual or group has, direct, or

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<sup>18</sup> Annan, K. (2000). “Secretary-General Salutes International Workshop on Human Security in Mongolia.”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

delegated, over the means of their survival, their wellbeing and their growth or development.

This perspective is better able to include situations such as those where a people may appear to have their basic needs met but in reality have no control over how, when, or even if those needs will be consistently met. They may, instead, be faced, for example, with the ongoing threat of having their means of survival withheld or withdrawn as a means of coercing their cooperation with an imposed government or regime. It is also more applicable when an unexpected change in the physical environment such as natural disaster, climate change, or increase in population density, compromises the traditional or historical control, direct or delegated, that a society has had over the means of their survival. Direct refers to a self sufficient, subsistence existence such as farming or fishing, and delegated refers to participation in a more complex, industrialized society, with indirect control over the means of survival.

This exploration of terms may have seemed excessive or repetitive, but language can be both a useful communications tool and an impediment to understanding. Broken down into component parts and analyzed piece by piece, words and phrases can be reassembled to make up the building blocks of knowledge. To propose a conceptual definition for Strategic Culture requires a preliminary understanding of the separate concepts being combined to support the composite.

Understanding the component parts of the concept of Strategic Culture provides a useful frame of reference for a review of some of the key points in the research that has been done since its' inception. It should also facilitate an analysis of

shared concepts in previous definitions, the identification of consistencies in definitional intent, and recurring definitional shortcomings.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Strategic Culture: A Literature Review

A comprehensive review of the literature on Strategic Culture, if it was to include a full exploration of every attempt at definition, would fill more than one sizeable book. Fortunately there have been two recent collaborative efforts to define the concept. The first and most relevant was a 2005 conference organized by the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Contemporary Conflict (CCC) in Monterey, California. The objective of the conference was to explore the possibilities of Strategic Culture as a useful and reliable means of comparative analysis with regards to anticipating threat potential specific to the U.S. The conference organizers acknowledged that:

“Despite the publication of many path-breaking books and scholarly articles on the subject of strategic culture, the research in this area has not cumulated into a coherent, productive field of study. The lack of cumulation is often the result of authors employing often very different conceptions of strategic culture and applying them to a single case study.”<sup>20</sup>

The conference was unable to conclude with any kind of consensus on a definition. It did, however, produce three extensive literature reviews of the research done on the subject since its inception. These reviews provide an extensive and well ordered summary of existing definitions and challenges relating to the development of the concept of Strategic Culture that will be included in the analysis in this thesis of previous research on Strategic Culture.

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<sup>20</sup> Stone, E. L., Twomey, Dr. Christopher P., and Lavoy, Dr. Peter R. (September 2005). Comparative Strategic Culture, Conference Report. Center for Contemporary Conflict, Office of the U.S. Defence Threat Reduction Agency, USA

The second collaborative effort was a 2006 undertaking by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency to develop a curriculum for the study of Comparative Strategic Culture Analysis. The goal of the 2006 curriculum study was to establish a course of study that would be the basis for further research to develop the concept as an analytic and predictive tool for the probable use of weapons of mass destruction against the U.S. The efforts of the 2006 conference focused on a series of case studies that were context specific and therefore more relevant to the development of an operational definition. To support analysis of the case studies the conference proposed a working definition believed to be sufficient as the basis for developing a Strategic Culture curriculum. The curriculum definition stated that:

“Strategic culture is that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behaviour, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.”<sup>21</sup>

This definition will be included in the analysis in this thesis of previous research on Strategic Culture. These collaborative efforts at a definition as well as a review of the 1977 report by Jack Snyder on Soviet Strategic Culture will be the basis for a review and analysis of the recurring concepts used to define Strategic Culture.

#### Jack Snyder and the Soviet Strategic Culture:

It is best to start a review of the research on Strategic Culture at the beginning with a review of the report in which it first materialized. Jack Snyder introduced the concept in 1977 in his report, ‘The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications

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<sup>21</sup> Johnson, J. L. (2006). Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus. J. A. Larsen. Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Science Applications International Corporation.

for Limited Nuclear Operations.’ At the time Snyder was engaged in graduate studies at Columbia's Russian Institute and contracted by the US Directorate of Operational Requirements to examine “the factors that might affect Soviet reactions to possible U.S. limited nuclear operations.” In the preface to his report Snyder indicated that he would make no attempt in his report to predict Soviet reactions but that he would concentrate instead on providing “a context for better understanding of the intellectual, institutional and strategic-culture determinants that would bound the Soviet decision making process in a crisis.” Snyder went on from this statement to indicate that he would also speculate “on the dominant behavioural propensities that would motivate – and constrain – the Soviet leaders during their efforts to cope with a situation where limited nuclear use by either side loomed as a possibility.”<sup>22</sup>

Snyder defined Strategic Culture as:

“the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy.”<sup>23</sup>

While it makes sense to refer to shared ideas, responses and patterns of habitual behaviour as influences on strategic choices and doctrines, this definition represents a vague hypothesis. It indicates the existence of a relationship between shared ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour and nuclear strategy, but it does not identify the nature or direction of that relationship. It also fails to provide a frame of reference or a causal agency for the shared elements that would consistently connect them to nuclear strategy. While the definition has theoretical appeal it lacks any measurable means that

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<sup>22</sup>Snyder, J. (1977). *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, RAND Corporation.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

would allow it to move past the theoretical to consistent operational application. Where do the shared ideas, responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour come from? What variables determine or shape these shared attributes of a specific strategic community? What conditions the collective response, of a society or of the ruling elite of a society, to a perceived security threat such as the nuclear strategy of an opposing society? How does that society identify a crisis in the first place or distinguish it from an opportunity?

Snyder spent a good part of his report explaining the various methods he had contemplated to analyze Soviet attitudes toward limited nuclear war. He considered an analysis of their stated doctrine to be of limited value because of the inconsistent and propagandist nature of the available doctrinal reports and his observation of a ‘Soviet propensity to lie.’

He then considered an analysis of Soviet responses to what he described as past military crisis as a possible indicator of Soviet nuclear doctrine. This however, appeared to provide answers as ambiguous and unreliable as an analysis of Soviet declared doctrine, in part because the history of Soviet specific actions was too brief and because there had not been enough Soviet-specific military responses on the scale of a potential nuclear exchange.

Snyder found some relevance in the notion of technological determinism influencing Soviet nuclear doctrine noting that, “the Soviets themselves admit that the most significant factor leading to their renunciation of the doctrine of the inevitability of war has been the military technical revolution.”<sup>24</sup> In short, the Soviets became reconciled

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

to a deterrent relationship with the U.S. based on mutual vulnerability for economic reasons. Competing with the U.S. in an upward spiralling revolution in military technology was becoming too costly.

In the end Snyder felt that the most reliable approach to an accurate understanding of Soviet nuclear doctrine would lie in an analysis of their doctrinal writings and political leadership speeches, in spite of the acknowledged inconsistent and propagandist nature of the available doctrinal reports. He also felt that it would be advantageous to include in his analysis an appreciation of the “intellectual history of Soviet strategic thought and a sense of the organizational and political criteria of Soviet decision making”<sup>25</sup> as a basis for understanding Soviet attitudes to limited use of nuclear weapons as a strategic option. He turned to the notion of a Strategic Culture unique to the Soviet Union as a necessary component of an analysis of their doctrinal and political writings.

Snyder admitted in his report that there were insufficient case studies for effective analysis. He also conceded that state doctrinal statements and actions were too ambiguous and unreliable to be a basis for effective analysis. He felt, however, that by placing an analysis of Soviet doctrine and leadership speeches in the context of Strategic Culture or “the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour”<sup>26</sup> of Soviet leadership he could come up with a better understanding of their probable response to U.S. nuclear policy. This conclusion is somewhat contradictory. He proposed to support an analysis of what he described as ambiguous and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

unreliable state doctrine and leadership speeches with an analysis of the shared ideas, responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour of the same unreliable and ambiguous governing Soviet society. He went on in his analysis to point out that a “comprehensive sociology and intellectual history of Soviet strategic thought goes far beyond the scope”<sup>27</sup> of his report. He confined his analysis, therefore, to the social, political, and technological history of the Soviet Union specifically as it related to U.S. nuclear policy. Snyder admitted, even as he presented his methodology that “the report’s substantive conclusions about Soviet attitudes toward limited nuclear war are far more tentative.”<sup>28</sup> He concluded that, on the basis of a history of insecurity and authoritarian control, Soviet Strategic Culture placed greater emphasis on the use of unilateral damage limiting strategies when faced with the threat of nuclear war as opposed to the deterrent of significant counter strike capability. In short, the Soviets preferred a nuclear policy of unrestrained, pre-emptive nuclear capability as a deterrent to any proposed U.S. limited use nuclear policy. If nuclear war was imminent, the Soviets believed it was better to have the capability to hit first and hit hard with an all out nuclear attack on the U.S. rather than rely on a capacity to react to a U.S. first strike. Snyder acknowledged the existence of what he called a countervailing Soviet strategic subculture, apparent in Soviet writings, which did not support nuclear pre-emptive capability. This subculture, however, was external to government and the military so he chose to disregard it, as he believed it lacked the bureaucratic or political strength to have a voice in Soviet policy.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

Snyder's analysis of a Soviet history of insecurity and authoritarian control that would place greater emphasis on the use of unilateral damage-limiting, nuclear strategies was tentative. His recognition of the relevance of sociology and the intellectual history of Soviet strategic thought, however, was insightful. If he had reached farther back into Russian and even pre-Russian intellectual history and tied his analysis of Soviet ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour to the historical impact of the strategic geography that shaped first Russian and then Soviet society he would have been able to make a far less tentative conclusion. In his report he proposed the existence of a unique Soviet Strategic Culture as an independent variable that somehow came into spontaneous existence with the birth of the Soviet Union. While the relevance of such a concept to understanding Soviet strategic choices as related to nuclear policy is clear, it would have more validity and substance when approached as an evolving phenomenon or set of characteristic responses to security threats; characteristics dependent on the far more independent variable of strategic environment. Taken in this context he could have grounded his definition of Strategic Culture in a more measurable causal relationship. He would have been able to provide a less tentative analysis of Soviet responses to nuclear threat if he had approached his research on Soviet Strategic Culture from the perspective of the geographically shaped historical behaviour patterns of the Soviet and the Russian people.

#### Aspects of Russian Geography and History Relevant to Soviet Strategic Culture:

Soviet and the Russian society are the sum of the evolving and cumulative ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour shaped by the

historical movement and ordering of emerging and blending societies in response to the predominating strategic and physical environment. The relationship between Eurasian geography and the evolution of Russian and eventually Soviet society can be more readily illustrated with the following examples of geographic impact on the history of the regions social and intellectual development.

Peter Zeihan in “The Geography of Recession”<sup>29</sup> undertook an analysis of the recent global recession that included an exploration of the geographic factors influencing the economies in a variety of countries. His summary of the Russian geography as an economic factor has relevance to Dr. Snyder’s ‘sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour’<sup>30</sup> in that it introduces a set of independent variables that can be seen to have influenced the development of Soviet defence policy, including nuclear doctrine.

“The Russian steppe lies deep in the interior of the Eurasian landmass, and as such is subject to climatic conditions much more hostile to human habitation and agriculture than is the American Midwest. Even in those blessed good years when crops are abundant in Russia, it has no river network to allow for easy transport of products.

Russia has no good warm-water ports to facilitate international trade (and has spent much of its history seeking access to one). Russia does have long rivers, but they are not interconnected as the Mississippi is with its tributaries, instead flowing north to the Arctic Ocean, which can support no more than a token population. The one exception is the Volga, which is critical to Western Russian commerce but flows to the Caspian, a storm-wracked and landlocked sea whose delta freezes in the winter (along with the entire Volga itself). Developing such unforgiving lands requires a massive outlay of funds simply to build the road and rail networks necessary to achieve the most basic of economic development. The cost is so extreme that Russia’s first *ever* intercontinental road was not completed until the 21st century, and it is little more than a two-lane path for much of its length. Between the lack of ports and the

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<sup>29</sup> Zeihan, P. (2009, June 2, 2009). "The Geography of Recession " Stratfor Global Intelligence, from [http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090602\\_geography\\_recession](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090602_geography_recession)

<sup>30</sup> Snyder, J. (1977). *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, RAND Corporation.

relatively low population densities, little of Russia's transport system beyond the St. Petersburg/Moscow corridor approaches anything that hints of economic rationality.

Russia also has no meaningful external borders. It sits on the eastern end of the North European Plain, which stretches all the way to Normandy, France, and Russia's connections to the Asian steppe flow deep into China. Because Russia lacks a decent internal transport network that can rapidly move armies from place to place, geography forces Russia to defend itself following two strategies. First, it requires massive standing armies on all of its borders. Second, it dictates that Russia continually push its boundaries outward to buffer its core against external threats.<sup>31</sup>

Zeihan's assessment suggests a population that is both isolated and isolationist with the majority widely dispersed and historically tied to near subsistence agrarian living. The current population is approximately 140 million with 73 percent based in urban centres<sup>32</sup> but is spread over more than 17 million square kilometres. Canada, by comparison, has almost 33.5 million people spread over close to ten million square kilometres.<sup>33</sup> The country's borders are far flung, and defined extensively by neighbouring states as opposed to natural geographic barriers. The size of the country, coupled with poor natural, east-west transportation conduits, also requires the costly maintenance of a massive standing army.

As early as 1904 H.J. Mackinder was writing about the impact of Geography on human history. In his article 'The Geographical Pivot of History'<sup>34</sup> he referred specifically to the impact of Geography on the history of Russia.

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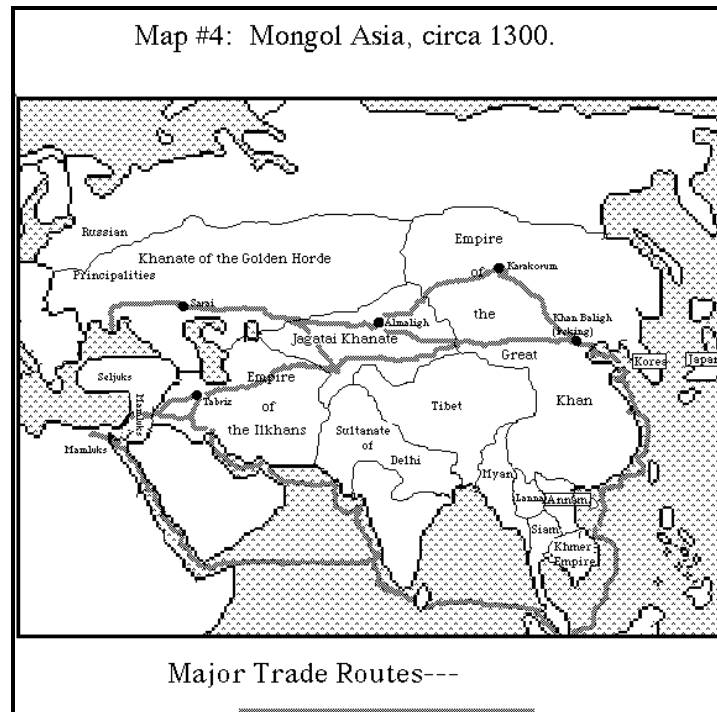
<sup>31</sup> Zeihan, P. (2009, June 2, 2009). "The Geography of Recession " Stratfor Global Intelligence, from [http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090602\\_geography\\_recession](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20090602_geography_recession)

<sup>32</sup> Russia, C. I. A. W. F. B. (2010). "Central Asia: Russia." from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html#>.

<sup>33</sup> Canada, C. I. A. W. F. B. (2010). from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ca.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Mackinder, H. J. (1904). "The Geographical Pivot of History." The Geographical Journal **Vol. 170**(No. 4): 298-321.

“For a thousand years a series of horse-riding peoples emerged from Asia through the broad interval between the Ural mountains and the Caspian sea, rode through the open spaces of southern Russia, and struck home into Hungary in the very heart of the European peninsula, shaping by the necessity of opposing them the history of each of the great peoples around – the Russians, the Germans, the French, the Italians, and the Byzantine Greeks. That they stimulated healthy and powerful reaction, instead of crushing opposition under a widespread despotism, was due to the fact that the mobility of their power was conditioned by the steppes, and necessarily ceased in the surrounding forests and mountains.”<sup>35</sup>



**Figure 1** [http://www.shsu.edu/~his\\_ncp/RM04.GIF](http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/RM04.GIF) A map showing the extent of Mongol occupation of Russia in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

In this instance he was referring to the natural conduit from Asia that the open steppes provided to the expanding Mongol armies and the resultant pressure they brought to bear on both the Russian people and the populations of Eastern Europe. (Fig.1)

\* Kievan Rus are regarded as the beginning of Russia in 862 AD when Oleg, one of the first Russian leaders conquered Kiev and established it as the centre of Russian power  
<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/history/russia/kievanrus.html>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

“The Mongols first appeared on the southern Russian steppe in 1223. The Russians had not seen this people before but they thought they knew the type . . . The destructive power of the Mongol war machine eclipsed anything the Russians had seen before. Other steppe nomads had contented themselves with raids and forays. This time the Kievan Rus<sup>36</sup> found itself rapidly subjugated and annexed into the huge Mongol empire.”<sup>37</sup>

As a result of extended forced contact and interaction with the conquering Mongols that would continue until 1480, the Russians became familiar with the Mongols’ administrative practices, politics, society, and language, which led to social and commercial interaction and joint military campaigns.

Mackinder went on to note the impact of the rivers that acted as natural early conduits into the Russian heartland. (Fig.2)

The impact of geography as it related to the Mongol invasion and dominance of the pre-Russian people was significant and would take a full book to explore. Dustin Hosseini, a graduate student at the School of Russian and Asian Studies in California summed it up sufficiently for the purposes of this thesis in his 2005 paper “The Effects of the Mongol Empire on Russia.”<sup>38</sup>

“the effects of the Mongol invasion were many, spread across the political, social, and religious facets of Russia. While some of those effects, such as the growth of the Orthodox Church generally had a relatively positive effect on the lands of the Rus, other results, such as the loss of the *veche* system and centralization of power assisted in halting the spread of traditional democracy and self-government for the various principalities. From the influences on the language and the form of government, the very impacts of the Mongol invasion are still evident today. Perhaps given the chance to experience the Renaissance, as did other western European cultures, the political,

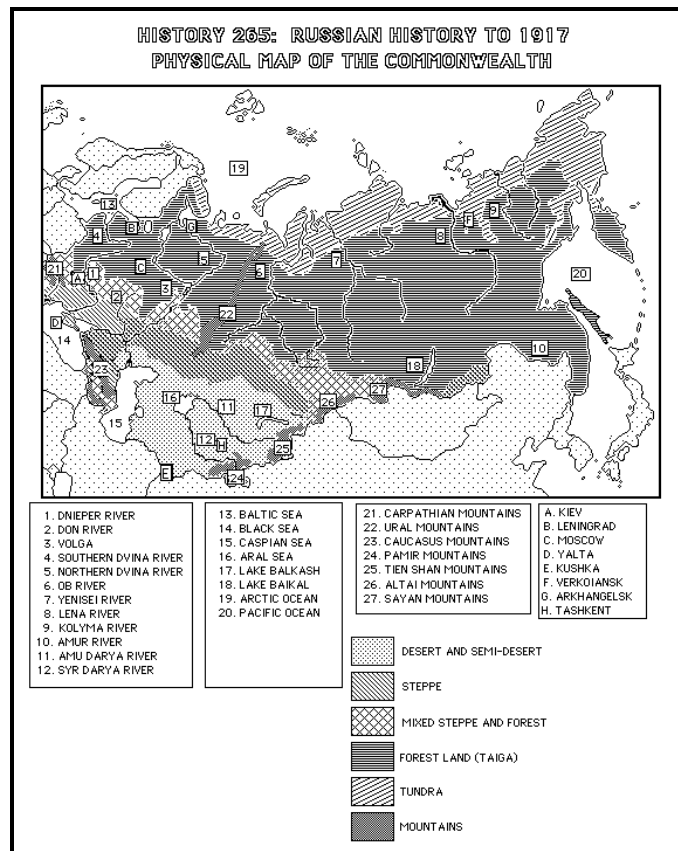
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<sup>36</sup> (2010). "Kievan Rus." History Exhibit: Russia, from <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/history/russia/kievanrus.html>. The beginning of Russia as Kievan Rus' in 862 AD

<sup>37</sup> Halperin, C. J. (1987). Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History Indiana University Press; Reprint edition

<sup>38</sup> Hosseini, D. (2005). "The Effects of the Mongol Empire on Russia ", from [http://www.sras.org/the\\_effects\\_of\\_the\\_mongol\\_empire\\_on\\_russia](http://www.sras.org/the_effects_of_the_mongol_empire_on_russia).

religious, and social thought of Russia would greatly differ from that of the reality of today.”<sup>39</sup>



**Figure 2: Russian Geography 1917** [http://www.shsu.edu/~his\\_ncp/RM1-2.GIF](http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/RM1-2.GIF)

This map shows the tendency of Russian rivers to flow north and south limiting both their navigable season due to ice and their range as a transportation and communication network capable of connecting the region from west to east.

Snyder noted at the outset of his report on the Strategic Culture of the Soviet Union that he did not have ready access to reliable case studies or doctrine to form anything more than a tentative analysis of their probable response to U.S. nuclear policy. He could have pursued his analysis of Soviet doctrine and what he recognized as limited case studies in a broader historical context. If he had expanded his research to include

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

both Russian and Soviet shared ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour, his analysis could have been less tentative. If he had shown where these shared ideas were also collective and cumulative responses to the prevailing historical strategic environment, his conclusions could have been far more substantive. His analysis of Soviet preferences could have expanded to reflect the early Mongol political influence of centralized power that assisted in halting the spread of traditional democracy and self-government in Russia. He could have reinforced his analysis with concepts grounded in the historical impact of the independent variables of strategic geography, such as the distinctive north south flow of rivers that impeded the spread of the Renaissance across Russia. Instead he based much of his analysis on near intuitive speculation with regards to the significance of the very dependent variables of Soviet doctrinal writings and political posturing.

#### Monterey Conference 2005

In September, 2005 the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Contemporary Conflict (CCC) in Monterey, California, organized a workshop on Comparative Strategic Culture to bring together a variety of subject matter experts to consider the "*utility and future role for comparative strategic culture theory in U.S. defense strategy . . .*"<sup>40</sup> The conference, though productive, concluded that it was still not possible to arrive at any kind of consensus on a preliminary definition of Strategic Culture. Participants did agree, however, that a better appreciation of the Strategic

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<sup>40</sup> Lavoy, D. P. R. S., Dr. Elizabeth L.; and, Twomey, Dr. Christopher P. (2005). Comparative Strategic Culture Conference Report Center for Contemporary Conflict, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School for the Advanced Systems and Concepts Office of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

Culture of an adversary would be useful in the development of successful policy relating to that adversary. The U.S. centric priorities of the conference focused the need for further research in the context of a U.S. view of the post 9/11 world. While participants recognized the value of knowing the strategic culture of an adversary, any adversary, there was a tendency to project Western values and priorities on assessments of the concept. This narrow approach presented obstacles to achieving a more universal appreciation of Strategic Culture as applied to the priorities of both non-western cultures and an increasing range of, often lethal, non-state stakeholders in the game of international security.

The conference also recognized the need to re-examine culture as a legitimate tool of policy analysis. Participants concluded that it would be better to approach culture, not as a single system defined by nationality or state borders, but as one regionally defined, and shaped by a “conglomerate of co-existing variables, with each major regional and cultural area resonating with its own strategic culture.”<sup>41</sup>

The final report of the conference concluded that, while it fell short of achieving a measurable definition, it confirmed the need for one. The concept of Strategic Culture, if it was ever to be used successfully as an analytic tool for policy development, had to be defined in a way that could be measured, or tested. Two issues were identified that the conference participants felt needed to be resolved if a measurable and testable definition was to be achieved.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

- “1. First, where does the culture in question lie?  
2. Second, where does the behaviour that it shapes exist?”<sup>42</sup>

The conference participants produced three literature reviews of value to future research. The first by Elizabeth Stone of the Naval Postgraduate School, the second by Jeffrey Lantis of the University of Wooster, and the third by Darryl Howlett of Southampton University.

### Stone Literature Review: The Field So Far:

Stone identified what she called three waves of literature on the concept of Strategic Culture. Listed below and subsequently summarized, they show the evolution of the concept while confirming the unresolved struggle for consensus in definition.

FIRST WAVE			
1	1977	Jack Snyder <sup>43</sup>	“the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy.”
2	1979	Ken Booth <sup>44</sup>	“refers to a nation's traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behavior, habits, symbols, achievements and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat or use of force.”
3	1981	Colin Gray <sup>45</sup>	“modes of thought and action with respect to [force], derived from perception of natural historical experience, aspiration for self-characterization, and from state-distinctive experiences”
4	1981	Colin Gray <sup>46</sup>	“there is a discernible American strategic "culture": that culture referring to modes of thought and action with respect to force, derives from perception of the national historical experience, aspiration for self-characterization (e.g., as an American, what am I?, how should I feel, think, and behave?), and from all of the many distinctively American experiences (of geography, political philosophy, of civic culture, and "way of life") that characterize an American citizen . . . there is an American (and, by extension, other) strategic culture-which flows from geopolitical, historical, economic, and other unique influences. Second, that American strategic culture provides the milieu within which strategic ideas and defense policy decisions are debated and decided. Third, it is suggested here that an understanding of American strategic culture (and, by extension, "style") can help explain why American policymakers have made the decisions they have”

**Table 1** Representing the First Wave of Strategic Culture showing a selection of proposed definitions For many papers, especially in the first two waves, there was little new in the way of definitions but more a tendency to describe, explain or present context specific examples without benefit of concise definition. Many also simply referred to the existing proposed definitions of Snyder, Gray and Johnston.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Snyder, J. (1977). *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, RAND Corporation.

<sup>44</sup> Booth, K. (1979). *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* Croom Helm.

<sup>45</sup> Gray, C. (1981). "National Style in Strategy: The American Example." *International Security* Vol. 6(No. 2): 21-47.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

The First Wave (Table 1) took place in the early 1980's and was state specific and explanatory in nature, most often seeking a better understanding of the differences in American and Soviet nuclear strategy. The dominant view held that these differences were the result of "unique variations in macro-environmental variables such as deeply rooted historical experience, political culture, and geography."<sup>47</sup> Beyond being context specific the definitions did little to provide a basis for understanding why these macro variables produced such distinctive and divergent cultures. There was more of a tendency to provide an involved and often complex explanation than a reliable definition.

Snyder went on his 1977 definition to explain that in the Soviet Strategic Culture:

"Individuals are socialized into a distinctively Soviet mode of strategic thinking. As a result of this socialization process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes and behavioral patterns with regard to nuclear strategy has achieved a state of semi permanence that places them on the level of "culture" rather than mere "policy."<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the assertion that the concept, as defined in early efforts was unwieldy, Stone also identified two other shortcomings that were prevalent in this first wave of literature:

Patterns of behavior were subsumed within the definition, implying that strategic thought led consistently to one type of behavior. This formulaic approach was at odds with circumstances where thought and action were inconsistent with each other and was open to so many potential exceptions as to be insupportable beyond context specific explanations.

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<sup>47</sup> Elizabeth Stone, *Comparative Strategic Culture: A Literature Review, Part I*, Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum Contract No. DTRA01-03-D-0017, Technical Instruction 18-06-02, page 1.

<sup>48</sup> Snyder, J. (1977). *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, RAND Corporation.

There was also a problematic assumption that there was homogeneity to a society's strategic culture that carried across time. This supposed that multiple inputs resulted in a static and uniform strategic culture unaffected by social, economic or political variations or hierarchical tiers of development within a given society.

The Second Wave of literature (Table 2) occurred in the mid 1980's and began to move research beyond efforts to define the concept to attempts to analyze the relevant aspects of the concept in order to determine its potential as a reliable strategic decision making tool.

<b>SECOND WAVE</b>			
1	1984	Colin Gray <sup>49</sup>	referring to modes of thought and action with respect to force, derives from perceptions of the national historical experience, aspirations for cultural conformity
2	1990	David R. Jones <sup>50</sup>	"three levels of inputs into a state's strategic culture: a macro-environmental level consisting of geography, ethno cultural characteristics, and history; a societal level consisting of social, economic, and political structures of a society; and a micro level consisting of military institutions and characteristics of civil-military relations. This strategic culture did not just delimit strategic options; it pervaded all levels of choice from grand strategy down to tactics."

**Table 2** Representing the Second Wave of Strategic Culture showing a brief selection of definitions. The concept had waned somewhat in popularity at this point. Once again, there was little new in the way of definitions but a continued tendency to describe, explain or present context specific examples without benefit of concise definition. Many also simply referred to the existing proposed definitions of Snyder, Gray and Johnston.

The key premise was "that there is a vast difference between what leaders think or say they are doing and the deeper motives for what in fact they do."<sup>51</sup> Implicit in this new direction was an acknowledgement of levels or tiers of Strategic Culture distinguished by the perceptions and objectives of analysts. As such Strategic Culture began to be viewed as a tool of "political hegemony"<sup>52</sup> in strategic planning. Political

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<sup>49</sup> Gray, C. (1984). "Comparative Strategic Culture." *Parameters Winter 1984*: pp 26-33.

<sup>50</sup> Jones, D. R. (1990). Soviet Strategic Culture. *Strategic power : USA/USSR Ed. by Carl G. Jacobsen.* New York, St. Martin's Press.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

leaders could use the concept as justification to legitimize the use of violence against alleged enemies.

In 1984 Colin Grey described rather than defined Strategic Culture in the context of the United States as:

“referring to modes of thought and action with respect to force, derives from perceptions of the national historical experience, aspirations for cultural conformity (e.g. as an American, what am I and how should I feel, think, and behave?), and from all of the many distinctively American experiences (of geography, political philosophy and practice [i.e. civic culture], and way of life) that determine an American culture.”<sup>53</sup>

Alistair Ian Johnston in 1995<sup>54</sup> referenced this and other definitions of the first wave as being unwieldy in part because they tried to include so many variables as relevant. These included:

“Technology, geography, organizational culture and traditions, historical strategic practices, political culture, national character, political psychology, ideology, and even international system structure were all considered relevant inputs into this amorphous strategic culture.”<sup>55</sup>

Further complicating these early definitions, according to Johnston, was an effort to assign classifications to each of these variables. The result was a description, rather than a definition, of the concept that was far too complex and unwieldy to test for validity.

Once again Stone identified problematic areas in this body of literature. Among them were attempts to link culture and behaviour. Does strategic culture influence behaviour? The elite that led strategic decision making within a given society

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<sup>53</sup> Gray, C. (1984). "Comparative Strategic Culture." *Parameters* Winter 1984: pp 26-33.

<sup>54</sup> Johnston, A. I. (1995). "Thinking about Strategic Culture." *International Security* Vol. 19(No. 4 (Spring, 1995)): pp. 32-64.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

had been socialized in and were therefore constrained by the same symbolic myths and traditions of the previous generation of elite within the society. While it was accepted that the elite specific diffusion of myths and traditions could result in differences between the social strata in national behavior, it was not clear whether this meant one should expect cross national differences in strategy. The notion of continuity in myths and traditions among the elite in a society also perpetuated the tendency to link Strategic Culture with political and military interests.

The Third Wave (Table 3) of literature was “more rigorous and eclectic in its conceptualization of ideational independent variables”<sup>56</sup> while focusing narrowly on specific strategic decisions as “dependent variables.”<sup>57</sup>

<b>THIRD WAVE</b>			
1	1995	Alastair Ian Johnson <sup>58</sup>	“different predominant strategic preferences rooted in early formative experiences of state, influenced to some degree by philosophical, political, cultural and cognitive characteristics of state and its elites.”
2	1995	Alastair Ian Johnston <sup>59</sup>	“Strategic culture is an integrated system of symbols (i.e. argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting grand strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.”
3	1998	Andrew Scobell <sup>60</sup>	“the fundamental and enduring assumptions about the role of war (both interstate and intrastate) in human affairs and the efficacy of applying force held by political and military elites in a country. These assumptions will vary from country to country.”
4	1998	Major Russell A. Moore <sup>61</sup>	The concept of strategic culture has been defined in various ways at both the strategic and operational levels. Throughout the literature, three common elements of strategic culture have emerged: 1) strategic culture provides a value system in the context of strategic decision making; 2) this value system is held by a specific community; and 3) the "outputs" (security policy, doctrine, etc.) of this community are affected by strategic culture. The sources of a particular community's strategic culture include geography, history, the worldview of the regime (religion, ideology, culture), economic factors, and the organization of government and military institutions.
5	1999	Graeme P. Herd <sup>62</sup>	“the set of beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, norms, world-views and patterns of habitual

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Johnston, A. I. (1995). "Thinking about Strategic Culture." International Security Vol. 19(No. 4 (Spring, 1995)): pp. 32-64.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Scobell, A. (2004). China and Strategic Culture. Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A, University Press of the Pacific. Reprinted from 1998

<sup>61</sup> Major Moore, R. A. (1998). Strategic Culture--How It Affects Strategic "Outputs". Marine Corps War College. Quantico, VA, Marine Corps University, : 40.

<sup>62</sup> Herd, G. P. (1999). III. EU–Turkey Clashing Political and Strategic Cultures as

			behaviour held by strategic decision makers regarding the political objectives of war, and the best way to achieve it.” <sup>51</sup> (Yitzhak Klein, “A Theory of Strategic Culture,” 1991) and, “The underlying central assumption embedded within the concept is “the belief that traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour, habits, symbols, achievements and historical experience shape strategic behaviour and actual policy making.” (Asle Toje, “Introduction: The EU Strategic Culture,” 2005)
6	1999	Colin S. Gray <sup>63</sup>	Ideas about war and strategy are influenced by physical and political geography-some strategic cultures plainly have, for example, a maritime or a continentalist tilt-by political or religious ideology, and by familiarity with, and preference for, particular military technologies. Strategic culture is the world of mind, feeling, and <i>habit in behaviour</i> .
7	2001	Rajesh M. Basrur <sup>64</sup>	Strategic culture may be defined, in Colin Gray's words, as 'the socially constructed and transmitted assumptions, habits of mind, traditions, and preferred methods of operation - that is, behaviour - that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community' (1999: 28).
8	2001	Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards <sup>65</sup>	defined as the institutional confidence and processes to manage and deploy military force as part of the accepted range of legitimate and effective policy instruments, together with general recognition of the EU's legitimacy as an international actor with military capabilities (albeit limited).
9	2003	Robert M. Cassidy <sup>66</sup>	military-strategic culture is a set of beliefs, attitudes, and values within the military establishment that shape collective (shared) preferences of how and when military means should be used to accomplish strategic aims. It is derived or developed as a result of historical experience, geography, and political culture. Core leaders perpetuate and inculcate it, but it is most pronounced at the operational level because, when armies have met with success in war, it is the operational techniques and the operational histories by which enemies were defeated and which are consecrated in memory. Finally, while military-strategic culture is not quantifiable, one can empirically discern preferences for how and when to use military forces. These qualitative preferences are observable in military doctrine, military operations, and in statements by the core military elites.
10	2003	Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen	Strategic culture is the most often used to describe what constrains security actors from making certain choices.
11	2003	Georgios Skemperis <sup>67</sup>	I consider strategic culture as an amalgam of beliefs, images, and symbols carried by the people – including the decision-making elites – of a country regarding, in a broader term, the relationship between their country and the rest of the world, and, more specifically, foreign policy and national security. Strategic culture is created or modified either by the ruling elites through propaganda, or by the effects of vivid events and shocks, or both. The major feature of strategic culture is the fact that it becomes dogmatic. It encourages and enhances the tendency of people to abstain from the time- and effort consuming procedure of searching for incoming information, analyzing and reaching rational suppositions or conclusions. It does that by offering them a “pre-cooked” and broadly acceptable position on foreign policy and security.
12	2003	Sten Rynning <sup>68</sup>	Thus, constructivists would argue that we must study the EU by assessing the way in which EU policy is shaped by embedded ideas in addition to the external balance of power – which will perhaps lead us to appreciate the growing influence of these ideas over time. Classical realists take issue with such an approach to strategic ideas and culture because they refuse to separate culture and behaviour – akin to separating mind and body – and thus refuse to accept the argument that geopolitical behaviour may <i>not</i> be influenced by strategic culture.
13	2004	Herman L. Wilkes,	an integrated “system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies,

Stumbling Blocks on the Road to Accession?, Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

<sup>63</sup> Gray, C. S. (1999). "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back." Review of International Studies **Vol. 25**(No. 1): 49-69.

<sup>64</sup> Basrur, R. M. (2001). "Nuclear Weapons and Indian Strategic Culture." Journal of Peace Research **Vol. 38**(No. 2): 181-198.

<sup>65</sup> Cornish, P. a. E., Geoffrey (2001). "Beyond the EU/NATO Dichotomy: The Beginnings of a European Strategic Culture." International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) Changing Patterns of European Security and Defence **Vol. 77**(No. 3): 587-603.

<sup>66</sup> Cassidy, R. M. (2003). Russia in Afghanistan and Chechnya: Military Strategic Culture and the Paradoxes of Asymmetric Conflict. Strategic Studies Institute. Carlisle, PA, U.S. Army War College.

<sup>67</sup> Skemperis, G. (2003). Strategic Culture in Post-War Europe. International Relations Program Syracuse, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.

<sup>68</sup> Rynning, S. (2003). "The European Union: Towards a Strategic Culture?" Security Dialogue **2003**(34): 479.

		Jr. <sup>69</sup>	metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious." Johnston, 1995, paraphrases Geertz 1973 definition of religion as a cultural system.
14	2004	Vassilis Margaras, <sup>70</sup>	Thus strategic culture as a 'system of symbols' comprises two parts: the first consists of basic assumptions about the orderliness of the strategic environment, that is, about the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses (zero-sum or variable sum) and about the efficacy of the use of force (about the ability to control outcomes and to eliminate threats, and the conditions under which applied force is useful). Together these comprise the central paradigm of strategic culture.' (Johnston 1995)
15	2004	Christopher O. Meyer <sup>71</sup>	emphasises the role of ideas, norms, identities and worldviews for understanding how actors interpret social reality and construct their interests in international affairs and EU institutions through these cognitive lenses. They do not dispute that material circumstances, such as anarchy of the international system and differences in the distribution of power capabilities matter for actors, but suggest that these differences are often not sufficient for understanding states' behaviour in foreign affairs.
16	2005	Peter Lavoy <sup>72</sup>	"a hierarchy of different strategic 'myths' that interact with the material constraints and the preferences of particular leaders."
17	2005	Andrew Scobell <sup>73</sup>	"strategic culture should be thought of as a typology or hierarchy, and insisted that the lines of strategic culture become very blurred above the operational level and at the level of grand strategy."
18	2006	Willis Stanley <sup>74</sup>	"the role of religion and the influence of ancient Persian and Islamic cultures to explain the broader patterns of contemporary Iranian political and strategic choices . . . a revolutionary interpretation of Shia Islam, the influences of Persian culture and Islamic exceptionalism, extremely complex, consistent, and far-reaching familial relationships, and a continuing belief that that Iran is far superior than its neighbors creates a perpetual and distinct Iranian strategic culture."
19	2005	Jeffrey Lantis <sup>75</sup>	"culture is an evolving system of shared meaning that governs perceptions, communications, and actions, and offers little in the way of testable hypotheses . . . strategic culture possessed a strong degree of continuity, and highlighted that more often than not past learning becomes sedimented into the collective consciousness of a population or group."
20	2005	Theo Farrell <sup>76</sup>	"strategic culture must always be viewed and analyzed as an open system . . . culture itself is more or less consistent . . . both internal and external shocks occur – and the impact of such shocks are hugely important – but the culture more often than not settles and continues on as a constant norm."
21	2005	Henrikki Heikka <sup>77</sup>	"a realist strategic culture could be defined as one where states construct their grand strategies and strategic practices in relation to power alone, with a view to balancing power as such, no matter what the identity of the power" (Barry Posen 1987)

<sup>69</sup> Wilkes, J., Herman L (2004). Spain, The European Union and the United States in the Age of Terror: Spanish Strategic Culture and the Global War on Terror. Department of National Security Affairs. Monterey, CA, Naval Post Graduate School. Master of Arts in National Security Affairs: 103.

<sup>70</sup> Margaras, V. (June 2004). Strategic Culture: The Concept. International Relations & European Studies (PIRES). UK Department of Politics, Loughborough University.

Meyer, C. O. (June 2004). Theorizing European Strategic Culture Between Convergence and the Persistence of National Diversity, Centre for European Policy Studies.<sup>71</sup> Meyer, C. O. (June 2004). Theorizing European Strategic Culture Between Convergence and the Persistence of National Diversity, Centre for European Policy Studies

<sup>72</sup> Lavoy, P. R. (October 2005). "Pakistan's Strategic Culture: A Theoretical Excursion." Strategic Insights Volume IV(Issue 10).

<sup>73</sup> Scobell, A. Ibid."Strategic Culture and China: IR Theory Versus the Fortune Cookie?" ( Issue 10).

<sup>74</sup> Stanley, W. (2006). The Strategic Culture of the Islamic Republic of Iran Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office.

<sup>75</sup> Lantis, J. S. (2005). "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism." Strategic Insights Volume IV, (Issue 10).

<sup>76</sup> Farrell, T. (2005). "Strategic Culture and American Empire." SAIS Review **Volume 25**(Number 2): 3-18.

<sup>77</sup> Heikka, H. a. N., Iver B. (2005). " Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice: The Social Roots of Nordic Defence." Cooperation and Conflict:Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association Vol. 40: 5-23.

22	2005	Jeffrey S. Lantis <sup>78</sup>	Identifying strategic culture as a set of shared assumptions and decision rules prompts the question of how they are maintained, and by whom?
23	2005	Iver B. Neumann, and Henrikki Heikka <sup>79</sup>	“we refashion the concept of strategic culture as a dynamic interplay of potential grand strategy, on the one hand, and specific practices such as doctrines, civil–military relations and procurement on the other. The key source of inspiration for this reconceptualization is the so-called ‘practice turn’ in anthropology and sociology.”
24	2005	Darryl Howlett <sup>80</sup>	“a methodology that is falsifiable and leads to cumulative research, which can be used for future prediction. This view considers strategic culture to be “an independent variable and behavior as a dependent variable, and pitting the culturalist explanation of behavior against alternative explanations, such as realist and institutionalist ones.” (Iver B. Neumann and Henrikki Heikka, 2005)
25	2005	Darryl Howlett and John Glenn <sup>81</sup>	The study of Denmark identifies two forms of strategic culture: cosmopolitanism and defencism. Cosmopolitanism stresses neutrality, alternative non-military means of conflict resolution and the importance of international institutions such as the former League of Nations and the United Nations. In contrast, defencism emphasizes both the importance of military preparedness encapsulated in the dictum ‘if you want peace, you must prepare for war’ and of regional military organizations, such as NATO, in defending the country and deterring would-be aggressors
26	2005	Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards <sup>82</sup>	Our definition of strategic culture as the political and institutional confidence and processes to manage and deploy military force, coupled with external recognition of the EU as a legitimate actor in the military sphere

**Table 3** Representing the Third Wave of efforts to define the concept of Strategic Culture. There was a resurgence in interest resulting in an increase in articles on the subject but there remained an inability to achieve consensus with regards to a definition.

The literature also tended to be critical of realist and structural materialist thinking as inadequate to explain strategic choices. The literature managed to avoid what it described as the deterministic nature of the first wave and showed a commitment to competitive theory testing. The third wave of literature, however, like the first and second, also had problematic areas. The focus on the weakness of realism was referred to as flawed and dependence on organizational culture as a key independent variable in strategic planning was described as troublesome. Ultimately, the literature was still unable to come up with a tight conceptual definition for strategic culture.

### The Way Ahead

<sup>78</sup> Lantis, J. S. (2005). "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism." *Strategic Insights Volume IV*, (Issue 10).

<sup>79</sup> Neumann, I. B. a. H., Henrikki (2005). "Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice : The Social Roots of Nordic Defence." *Cooperation and Conflict* 40(5).

<sup>80</sup> Howlett, D. (October 2005). "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature." *Strategic Insights Volume IV*( Issue 10).

<sup>81</sup> Howlett, D. a. G., John (2005). "Epilogue: Nordic Strategic Culture." *Cooperation and Conflict* 40(121).

<sup>82</sup> Cornish, P. E., Geoffrey (2005). "The strategic culture of the European Union: a progress report." *International Affairs* Vol. 81(Issue 4): 801-820.

Stone went on in her analysis to identify what she saw as the most productive future path of strategic culture studies and the areas of focus that were most likely to resolve identified problematic issues. Many of these have found their way into research that has taken place since 2006 (Table 4: Current Thought) but still fall short of a conceptual definition.

<b>“CURRENT THOUGHT”</b>			
1	2006	Jeannie L. Johnson <sup>83</sup> and Jeffrey A. Larsen Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	Strategic Culture is that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.
2	2006	Gregory Giles <sup>84</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	Shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.
3	2006	Kerry M. Kartchner <sup>85</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	defined as “shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.”
4	2006	Jeannie L. Johnson <sup>86</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum Project	“The agreed upon foundation for strategic culture consists mainly of a consensus on including culture as a variable in analyzing foreign policy and security decisions.”
5	2006	Jeannie L. Johnson <sup>87</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum Project	“Strategic culture is that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.” Conference definition.
6	2006	Peter R. Lavoy <sup>88</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	Stephen Rosen’s (1996) approach is very similar, observing that strategic culture is made up of the shared “beliefs and assumptions that frame ... choices about international military behavior, particularly those concerning decisions to go to war, preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare, and levels of wartime casualties that would be acceptable.” Johnston (1995) portrays strategic culture as “an ideational milieu which limits behavior choices.” This milieu is shaped by “shared assumptions and decision rules that impose a degree of order on individual and group conceptions of their relationship to their social,

<sup>83</sup> Johnson, J. L. (2006). Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus. J. A. Larsen. Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Science Applications International Corporation, Johnson, J. L. (October 2006) "Strategic Culture: Refining the Theoretical Construct." **Volume**, DOI:

<sup>84</sup> Giles, G. F. (2003). The Crucible of Radical Islam: Iran’s Leaders and Strategic Culture. Know Thy Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and Their Strategic Cultures. B. R. S. J. M. P. Editors, U.S. Air Force Counterproliferation Center.

<sup>85</sup> Kartchner, K. M. (2006). Weapons of Mass Destruction and the Crucible of Strategic Culture: Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office.

<sup>86</sup> Johnson, J. L. (October 2006) "Strategic Culture: Refining the Theoretical Construct." **Volume**, DOI:

<sup>87</sup> Johnson, J. L. (2006). Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus. J. A. Larsen. Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Science Applications International Corporation.

<sup>88</sup> Lavoy, P. R. (2006). Pakistan's Strategic Culture. Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office.

			organizational or political environment.”
7	2006	Colin S. Gray <sup>89</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	Strategic culture is of interest because the concept suggests, perhaps insists, that different security communities think and behave somewhat differently about strategic matters. Those differences stem from communities’ distinctive histories and geographies.
8	2006	Fritz W. Ermarth <sup>90</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	It is that body of broadly shared, powerfully influential, and especially enduring attitudes, perceptions, dispositions, and reflexes about national security in its broadest sense, both internal and external, that shape behavior and policy.
9	2006	Jeannie L. Johnson <sup>91</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	Strategic culture is that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.
10	2006	Jerry Mark Long <sup>92</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	In this approach, we will take “strategic culture” to indicate an ideational milieu, one that makes important assumptions about the fundamental values of the community, the nature of the enemy that threatens those values, and the role of war in defending the same. <sup>8</sup> These fundamental values coalesce in what we will term a meta-narrative, the overarching story that situates individuals in a distinct community, provides a cognitive roadmap by which they are to live, and that motivates members to protect the community against its enemies, even in the face of death.
11	2006	Darryl Howlett <sup>93</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	The consensus reached was that a definition was available and that strategic culture can be understood as a set of “shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.” The definition consequently acknowledges that strategic culture is a product of a range of circumstances such as geography, history and narratives that shape collective identity, but one which also allows it a role in both enabling and constraining decisions about security.
12	2006	Murhaf Jouejati <sup>94</sup> Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus Project	Strategic culture is that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.
13	2006	Thomas G. Mahnken <sup>95</sup>	A nation’s strategic culture flows from its geography and resources, history and experience, and society and political structure. <sup>4</sup> It represents an approach that a given state has found successful in the past. Although not immutable, it tends to evolve slowly. It is no coincidence, for example, that Britain has historically favored sea power and indirect strategies, or that it has traditionally eschewed the maintenance of a large army. Israel’s lack of geographic depth, its small but educated population, and technological skill has produced a strategic culture that emphasizes strategic pre-emption, offensive operations, initiative, and – increasingly – advanced technology. (Michael I. Handel 1994), Australia’s minimal geopolitical status, its continental rather than maritime identity, and its formative military experiences have shaped its way of war. (Michael Evans 2005)
14	2007	Alan Bloomfield, and Kim Richard Nossal <sup>96</sup>	the habits of ideas, attitudes, and norms toward strategic issues, and patterns of strategic behaviour, which are relatively stable over time. Put another way, if norms and behaviour are both stable, this period of stability can be characterized as a particular strategic culture.

<sup>89</sup> Gray, C. S. Ibid. Out of the Wilderness: Prime-time for Strategic Culture.

<sup>90</sup> Ermarth, F. W. Ibid. Russia’s Strategic Culture: Past, Present, and... in Transition?

<sup>91</sup> Johnson, J. L. (2006). Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus. J. A. Larsen. Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Science Applications International Corporation.

<sup>92</sup> Long, J. M. (2006). Strategic Culture, Al-Qaida, and Weapons of Mass Destruction. Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office.

<sup>93</sup> Howlett, D. (October 2005). “Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature.” Strategic Insights Volume IV ( Issue 10).

<sup>94</sup> Jouejati, M. (2006). The Strategic Culture of Irredentist Small Powers: The Case of Syria. Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office.

<sup>95</sup> Mahnken, T. G. Ibid. United States Strategic Culture.

<sup>96</sup> Bloomfield, A. a. N., Kim Richard (2007). “Towards an Explicative Understanding of Strategic Culture: The Cases of Australia and Canada.” Contemporary Security Policy 28(2): 286 - 307.

15	2009	Roger Barnett <sup>97</sup>	“consists of shared beliefs, values, and habits among persons in a military or paramilitary organization with regard to the use of military force.”
16	2009	Rashed Uz Zaman <sup>98</sup>	Two general categories based on the methodological approach. <sup>38</sup> The first is characterized as “broad descriptive.” The body of literature on strategic culture that emerged in the 1970s and the 1980s constitutes this category. Its approach to the subject involves broad historical analyses of patterns in the strategic behaviour of specific states, attributing culturally derived causes to those patterns, and then projecting them into the future. The “analytical school” of strategic culture made its appearance in the 1990s and offers an alternative to the broad descriptive approach. In this approach, analytical scholars use narrower definitions of culture and more rigorous methods for testing its effects on specific classes of strategic behavior. This becomes necessary in cases in which rational-actor models and realist-based definitions of interest fail to explain particular choices adequately.
17	2009	Jeffrey S. Lantis <sup>99</sup>	Strategic culture is characterized as a discrete force that shapes the security policy decision-making environment. It may be a function of common historical experiences, geo-strategic circumstances, elite articulations of national identity, and even myths and traditions. The legacies of colonialism play a role in modern national identity and strategic culture in African states, for example; Chinese and Russian strategic cultures appear to be steeped in history and regional rivalries (and a combination thereof, lending to historical insecurity).Citing Alastair Iain Johnston 1995
18	2010	Caroline S. Conzelman <sup>100</sup>	“the combination of internal and external influences and experiences...that shape and influence the way a country understands its relationship to the rest of the world, and how a state will behave in the international community”

**Table 4** Representing discussion on the concept of Strategic Culture since 2006. There is still a tendency to describe the concept as opposed to building towards a definition. There is greater agreement on what it is supposed to influence, and on the separate aspects of the concept, but nothing that links it to a causal agency, no measurable indicator of “why” it occurs.

Stone identified three key areas of future research that would help to bring the concept of Strategic Culture closer to a reliable definition.

1. There was a need to learn from the past. Stone referred to a need for more critical exploration of the literature on pre-existing theoretical and state specific definitions of strategic culture in the context of the historical periods in which they were written. The study of previous Strategic Culture research in historical context is essential to understanding. There may, however, be additional and more

<sup>97</sup> Barnett, R. (2009). *Navy Strategic Culture: Why the Navy Thinks Differently*, US Naval Institute Press.

<sup>98</sup> UZ ZAMAN, R. (2009). "Strategic Culture: A “Cultural” Understanding of War." *Comparative Strategy* **28**: 68-88.

<sup>99</sup> LANTIS, J. S. (2009). "Strategic Culture and Tailored Deterrence: Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice." *Contemporary Security Policy* Vol.30(No.3): 467-485.

<sup>100</sup> Conzelman, C. S. (2010). Agrarian Sindicato Democracy and Evo Morales’s New Coca Leaf Politics: An Anthropological Perspective on Bolivian Strategic Culture. *Bolivia Strategic Culture Workshop* Florida International University, Miami, Florida, , Florida International University Applied Research Center, and United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM).

measurable analytic value in a study of a peoples' history that includes or reflects the impact of the prevailing geographic features and strategic environment on that history.

2. Stone also pointed out a need to use cross discipline studies. She identified a historical tendency to confine research on Strategic Culture to the theoretical perspective of political science and international relations. Stone suggested that this represented a bias that could limit adequate exploration of the concept, isolating research and analysis from the potential benefit of related and complementing work in other fields such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and history. Political and international relations theory have developed useful conceptual frameworks on which to hang theoretical models that valuable provide insights into international events and trends. There is additional benefit to be derived by including research from complementing disciplines that are focused on the human cultural, psychological and social elements that have historically shaped political order and organization.
3. The third point identified a need to adopt a more inclusive approach to the concept that recognized its relevance in application to non-state actors in an analysis of strategic decision making. International Relations was no longer regarded as the exclusive domain of state stakeholders. Ken Booth, in his 1994 article Security and Self

Reflections of a Fallen Realist, articulated this shift to a more inclusive approach to the study of international relations and security studies.

“Having been brought up on the state-centric and militarised news media and popular culture of the Cold War, my generation of international relations students was primed to believe that a theory of what, in Aron's phase `diplomats and soldiers' did, explained world affairs . . . .

`States are the most powerful actors' was (and remains) a basis of the realist litany. However, the more I thought about the individual cases which are the staple of AI's (Amnesty International) work, the more I thought about the significance of thinking about international relations from the perspective of individuals rather than states. . . .

The individual/bottom up/victim perspective began to change what I thought about the state, state types, social power, other security problems than the military inventories of the superpowers, the state as the exclusive security referent, and states as a source of threat rather than as a source of security. The sovereign state came to be seen as an important part of the problem of insecurity, not the solution.”<sup>101</sup>

Strategic Culture researchers began to realise the importance of an inclusive perspective, as opposed to the traditional state-centric realist perspective, as the number and instances of non-state players, including terrorists, insurgencies, and pirates increasingly impacted international security. If the basis for analysis was exclusively state-centric, it would be inadequate to provide insights into the behaviour of non-state stakeholders in international security. It would also have limited application when civil war and ethnic or tribal rivalries transform the state as a source of collective security to a source of profound human insecurity.

#### Lantis Literature Review Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism

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<sup>101</sup> Booth, K. (1994). Security and Self Reflections of a Fallen Realist. Strategies in Conflict: Critical Approaches to Security Studies. York University, Toronto, Ontario, Centre for International and Strategic Studies.

Jeffrey Lantis took a longer historical look at the concept of his literature review, aptly titled “Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism.”<sup>102</sup> He paid particular attention to the evolution of the theoretical context in which definitions have been attempted, tracing it from the “Clausewitzian” state centric to the beginnings of a more human centric or constructivist perspective. He divided his review of the literature into two specific areas of interest, starting with the concept of ‘Political Culture’ as a pre-existing but related concept as a preface to his subsequent exploration of what he called ‘Third Generation Studies’ in Strategic Culture. He concluded with three important questions.

- i. Who are the keepers of Strategic Culture?
- ii. Is Strategic Culture a fixed and static phenomenon of human societies or an evolving and transformative one?
- iii. What is the universality of Strategic Culture? Can researchers define it in a way that supports consistent and reliable application?

#### Political Culture

Lantis traced the origins of Strategic Culture as far back as classical works like the writings of Thucydides and Sun Tzu. He contended that Clausewitz had advanced the idea of a national or political culture when he recognized war and war-fighting strategy as “a test of moral and physical forces.”<sup>103</sup> By this he meant the resource capacity and will of a state to follow through on the use of force to do more than simply

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<sup>102</sup> Lantis, J. S. (2005). "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism." Strategic Insights Volume IV, (Issue 10).

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

defeat an enemy on the battlefield. A state had to be prepared to so totally defeat an enemy that it no longer had the means or the will to constitute a further threat.

According to Lantis, Strategic Culture first appeared in contemporary research in the 1940s and 1950s as “national character studies.” This work represented some of the earliest scientific efforts to make a connection between state behaviour and culture. The research on national character drew heavily on anthropology and identified a nation’s language, customs, socialization, and shared memories as the source of its national character.

Next in the chronology was the work done in the 1960s by Gabriel Abraham Almond and Sidney Verba<sup>104</sup> that represented a ground-breaking study of the concept of political culture. They defined it as “that subset of beliefs and values of a society that relate to the political system.”<sup>105</sup> The ideas and beliefs that were included in that subset were: values; democratic principles and institutions; ideas about morality and the use of force; the rights of individuals versus those of the community or collective; and a pre-established notion of the role of a country in international or global politics.

In further tracing the development of the concept of political culture Lantis went on to cite anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s influential work of 1973<sup>106</sup> where he defined culture as:

“an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Almond, G. A., and Verba, Sidney, Ed. (1989). The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. USA, Sage Publications.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Geertz, C. (1973). The Interpretation Of Cultures. New York, NY, Basic Books.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

According to Lantis, the 1980's saw the growing popularity of interdisciplinary research linking culture and politics. Theorists like sociologist Ann Swidler introduced the use of "more complex models of connections between culture and state behaviour" mediated by cultural "strategies of action."<sup>108</sup> He cited her 1986 work where she

"defined culture quite broadly as consisting of "symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life."

Swidler saw culture as an agency that

"influences action not by providing the ultimate values toward which action is oriented, but by shaping a repertoire or "tool kit" of habits, skills and styles from which people construct "strategies of action."<sup>109</sup>

This repertoire or tool kit becomes integrated or embedded into a culture based on a history of successful application to the point where it becomes the habitual response strategy for a specific range or pattern of conditions or circumstances.

### Third Generation Strategic Culture

In the 1990's there was a resurgence of interest in Strategic Culture that Lantis described as the Third Generation Studies, similar to the Third Wave described by Stone, and attributed to the growing popularity of constructivism as a theoretical context for understanding state behaviour and international relations. Theorists like Alexander Wendt went so far as to propose that Constructivism represented a paradigmatic challenge to the historically dominant theoretical context of Neorealism as a basis for

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<sup>108</sup> Lantis, J. S. (2005). "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism." Strategic Insights Volume IV, (Issue 10).

<sup>109</sup> Swidler, A. (1986). "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." American Sociological Review Vol. 51(No. 2): 273-286.

understanding international relations. The international community was no longer the exclusive domain of states but included a complex variety of often competing social constructs. The neorealist view of an international structure acting as some kind of constraint on state behaviour had limited application when the stakeholders were no longer exclusively state actors with objectives that fell outside the range of the state centric.

Lantis credited Theo Farrell with a more recent assessment of the increased popularity of constructivism. Farrell identified it as a blend of culturalism and constructivism that allowed international relations theorists to

“view actors and structure much differently than the rationalist approaches to international relations . . . locating actors in a social structure that both constitutes those actors and is constituted by their interactions.”<sup>110</sup>

This presented a model that would evolve a society or a social construct in a helical process. The individual shapes the society which in turn shapes the individual. This also connects with Swidler’s explanation of a cultural strategy of action. Successful individual preferences and actions become reinforced as an embedded cultural component of a social construct that subsequently shapes the choices of individuals within that society.

Lantis, however, identified the work of Alastair Iain Johnston, ‘Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History’ (1995) “as the

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<sup>110</sup> Lantis, J. S. (2005). "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism." Strategic Insights **Volume IV**, (Issue 10).

quintessential third generation work on strategic culture.”<sup>111</sup> Johnston set out to investigate the existence and character of Chinese strategic culture in the expectation of finding causal linkages to the use of military force against external threats. In doing so he identified the concept of strategic culture as a relevant “ideational milieu that limits behavioural choices,” from which “one could derive specific predictions about strategic choice.”<sup>112</sup> Johnston described strategic culture as a conceptual frame of reference specific to a society that would so determine strategic choices that analysis in a given security scenario would enable specific response prediction.

Lantis pointed out that Johnston, in addition to defining Strategic Culture as a set of shared assumptions and decisions, also acknowledged the existence of strategic sub-cultures for which “there is a generally dominant culture whose holders are interested in preserving the status quo.”<sup>113</sup> The recognition of subcultures within a given strategic culture was a positive departure from the earlier assumption in the first wave of literature that there was a homogeneity to a society’s strategic culture. It was a recognition that a society is shaped by multiple inputs that will not have the same impact on the different social, economic or political tiers in a social hierarchy, but will instead produce similar hierarchical tiers of strategic culture. The dominant tier will make strategic choices that will maintain the status quo in so far as the choices maintain the conditions that ensure their continued dominance.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Johnston, A. I. (1995). Cultural Realism, Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History, Princeton University Press.

<sup>113</sup> Lantis, J. S. (2005). "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism." Strategic Insights **Volume IV**, (Issue 10).

### Three Questions

Lantis concluded his literature review of Strategic Culture with three questions that he felt must be answered in order to understand the concept.

First he asked “Who are the Keepers of Strategic Culture?”

If, as Lantis contended, we can acknowledge that Strategic Culture is an “important ideational source of national predispositions, and thus of national security policy,” then what elements of a society “define and control these cultural foundations of state behaviour.”<sup>114</sup> Who are the Keepers of Strategic Culture? If one can accept that the concept is relevant to political and security analysis, then it would be of value to identify what it is that shapes the principal actors in a society, the political leaders and institutions, responsible for the cumulative and historical development of the foreign and defence policy path.

Lantis cited Thomas Berger’s work on policy discourse where he identified Strategic Culture as a “negotiated reality”<sup>115</sup> among elites. Leaders are usually obliged to respect deeply held societal convictions or core beliefs such as multilateralism and historical responsibilities such as traditional allies, shared ideological or environmental values and priorities, and shared ethnicity. The pattern of historical behaviour for many countries, however, shows that leaders can opportunistically choose when and where to justify choices on the basis of strategic, cultural traditions. The

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Berger, T. U. (1998). *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan*, Johns Hopkins University Press: 272.

leading elite can also decide when and where to consciously push beyond previous boundaries of acceptable foreign policy behaviour.

Lantis then presented the question of continuity or change? Is Strategic Culture static or does it evolve? To answer this he referred to Harry Eckstein's 1988 article 'A Culturalist Theory of Political Change' where he wrote,

“... the socialization of values and beliefs occurs over time. Past learning becomes sedimented in the collective consciousness and is relatively resilient to change.”<sup>116</sup>

Lantis countered this observation with the recognition that change, over time, is possible. Historical memory, political institutions, and multilateral commitments, although not easily or quickly changed, are not static. According to the literature, they also shape Strategic Culture. It follows then, that the foreign policies shaped by evolving Strategic Cultures are also undergoing what Lantis calls enduring transformation.

If Strategic Culture can change, are there circumstances that might bring about sudden or unexpected change? Lantis refers to his own research when he identifies two conditions that might bring about what he calls 'Strategic Culture dilemmas' that might result in changes to security policy. The first is external shocks that could significantly change core beliefs and undermine traditionally accepted historical narratives.

The second circumstance would occur when primary tenets of strategic thought come into direct conflict with one another. In other words,

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<sup>116</sup> Lantis, J. S. (2005). "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism." Strategic Insights **Volume IV**, (Issue 10).

“a country with interpretive codes of support for democracy and an aversion to the use of military force faces a strategic cultural dilemma when confronted by a challenge to democracy that necessitates a military response.”<sup>117</sup>

The final question included in Lantis’ literature review is that of the universality of Strategic Culture. Is it a phenomenon restricted to individual states or can non-state or multi-state actors have a Strategic Culture? He referred to the case of the European Union and their efforts to successfully form a common European Security Strategy (ESS), formalized in 2003. He suggested that the members of the European Union may never be able to agree on a common perception of threat or shared strategic interests but countered with the view of Cornish and Edwards (2001) that “there are signs that European Strategic Culture is already developing through a socialization process.”<sup>118</sup>

Lantis presented an insightful review of the theoretical development of the concept of Strategic Culture. He was able to provide some satisfaction with regards to his closing questions, but like Stone he also identified areas of research that would require further attention if the concept was ever to mature enough to find reliable and consistent usage in comparative analysis.

First and foremost among the underdeveloped areas of research was the need for a common definition.

Associated with the need for a definition was a comparable need to identify a measurable process by which a Strategic Culture is created, maintained, and passed on to subsequent generations.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

Finally, Lantis presented a need to establish the universality of Strategic Culture along with what he called “a refinement to the models of linkages between external and internal determinants of security policy.”<sup>119</sup>

#### Howlett Literature Review: Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature

Darryl Howlett placed his literature review in the context of what he called the profound transformations of the twentieth century, noting that in addition to two world wars, we have also seen a third, the Cold War, resolved without fully engaged conflict between the two contending super powers. He proposed that these events, especially the comparatively peaceful resolution of the third, have had a transformative impact on twenty-first century understanding of the world. Any attempt to define strategic culture as a relevant tool of analysis must take place in a broader exploration of this transformation in understanding and explaining international relations and critical security studies. Later in his review Howlett included the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Towers as yet another transformative event influencing understanding of the role of the state and the changed nature of conflict. An analysis of Strategic Culture research, Howlett suggested, must therefore take place within a re-evaluation of realist and neorealist thought. This recommendation echoes one of the problematic areas defined by Stone in the third wave of literature on Strategic Culture. Realism as a theoretical context for understanding and defining Strategic Culture was limited in that it could not accommodate or include the expanding range of non-state stakeholders influencing international relations and therefore relevant to valid critical security studies.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

Howlett identified two general trends in the approach used by theorists using the concept of Strategic Culture. There were those who applied the concept without specifying a concise meaning beyond identifying a need to reflect the influence of cultural conditions on strategic choices. Their interpretation of the concept was more descriptive in terms of providing and enhanced understanding of “the domestic cultural context in influencing strategic outcomes.”<sup>120</sup>

The second theoretical approach was more concerned with first establishing a conceptual and policy relevant understanding of Strategic Culture. The was on the development of an understanding of the concept as a measurable relationship between culture and strategic choices. Such an understanding would not only enhance interpretive and predictive analysis of stakeholder strategic choices, it would also make it possible to apply the concept as a comparative analytic tool in a regional and cross-regional context.

Howlett suggested that while it may not be possible to reach agreement on an underlying core concept of Strategic Culture, it may be possible “to establish a middle range theoretical and policy range knowledge.”<sup>121</sup> This assumption is troubling as it represents a descriptive approach to understanding the concept without first establishing a concise and consistently applicable definition. Whatever theoretical approach is used to further understanding and analytic application, there first has to be a reasonable degree of conceptual consensus. Without agreement on definition, theorists may find themselves

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<sup>120</sup> Howlett, D. (October 2005). "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature." Strategic Insights Volume IV( Issue 10).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

researching divergent ranges of knowledge and arguing apples and oranges. Howlett went on to cite the 2005 work of Alexander George and Andrew Bennet, ‘Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences,’<sup>122</sup> to support his advocacy of the development of generic knowledge in order to establish common ground. It is difficult to conceive of the development of generic knowledge without first establishing consensus on a definition that would support constructive collaboration across conceptual and discipline boundaries. Without a core definition it would in fact be more difficult to consistently identify and understand Howletts’ “conditions, processes, and causal mechanisms that link the use of each strategy to variance in its outcome.”<sup>123</sup> His reference to the benefits of a collaborative and cross discipline perspective to Strategic Culture research, however, reflect a recurring theme in the recommendations made in the literature reviews referenced in this paper. It is from this perspective Howlett explored the main currents of thought or approaches, what he referred to as the trends and issues in recent literature, influencing current research on Strategic Culture,.

### Strategic Culture Trends and Issues

Howlett identified what he believed were the three key trends in Strategic Culture research. The first was to approach Strategic Culture from a traditional state centric perspective and see it strictly

“in terms of its capacity to add greater historical and cultural detail of developments operating within the state but are seeking only to supplement material based analysis based on interest and the distribution of power.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Bennett, A., and George, Alexander L. (2005). Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences, The MIT Press.

<sup>123</sup> Howlett, D. (October 2005). "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature." Strategic Insights **Volume IV**( Issue 10).

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

The state centric approach to defining Strategic Culture has already been criticized by Stone and Lantis in their literature reviews as being inadequate to reflect the involvement of a growing range of non-state actors in a transformed 21<sup>st</sup> Century international relations security model. It is noteworthy here in terms of confirming the continued advocacy of this approach among some theorist. It also demonstrates an acknowledgement that the concept has relevance in terms of understanding state behaviour in relation to a variety on non-stake actors in a more complex international environment.

The second trend was to develop an approach to Strategic Culture research based on the construction of a falsifiable methodology that could produce cumulative research and better support predictive application. This approach saw Strategic Culture as an independent variable and behavior as a subsequent dependent variable. This view also saw greater utility in a culturalist explanation for behavior than in the more traditional realist and institutionalist explanations of behavior held by adherents to the first trend. This approach is inadequate for measurable and quantifiable research in that it is based on an explanation of a concept that has no grounding in a clearly defined independent variable capable of sustaining consistent, comparative analysis. The only cumulation this approach can produce is one of additional descriptions and explanations better suited to context specific analysis.

The third trend was for researchers to achieve an appreciation of stakeholder behavior by becoming immersed in their cultural experience, by analyzing both what a stakeholder said, and what they didn't say, in order to better understand their choices and actions. There was no explicative value proposed in this approach but instead

an improved interpretive value in assessing specific stakeholder actions within the context of their own culture. This last approach lacks an adequate frame of reference for the proposed immersion in a stakeholder's cultural experience. It also fails to place an analysis of what a stakeholder says or doesn't say in any kind of measurable context that can be replicated in comparative analysis with the articulations of a competing stakeholder.

This is not to dispute the relevance of the trends identified by Howlett but to point out that they are incomplete without a grounding aspect that supports comparative analysis. They are descriptive and explicative trends in research that would ultimately benefit from the preface of a concise conceptual definition.

#### Can Transnational Actors Have Strategic Cultures?

Howlett went on his review to note that there was also a growing interest to improve on the definitional aspect of Strategic Culture by considering a framework for analysis that could be applied at a regional or transnational level. This interest was identified as a reflection of the aligning of like minded states in regional associations to better support region specific shared transnational priorities and objectives. The application of the concept of Strategic Culture outside of a state centric frame of reference is noteworthy in that it requires the accommodation of non-state stakeholders for a comprehensive analysis. It illustrates the acknowledgement of shared economic, environmental, and related human security issues that transcend borders and the traditional, perceived sovereignty of the state. This approach further supports the constructivist view of international relations that includes the state as one of many social constructs relevant to an analysis of international relations and critical security studies.

To support the relevance of regional or transnational analysis Howlett made multiple references to a series of articles in a special 2005 edition of *Cooperation and Conflict* dedicated to exploring Nordic Strategic Culture.<sup>125</sup> The special issue was a study of the respective and related Strategic Cultures of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The study represented what Howlett described as a significant collaborative venture between the states in the Nordic region. He further supported regional or transnational analysis as an emerging trend in research with reference to an article published the same year by Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards exploring the Strategic Culture of the European Union.<sup>126</sup> He saw this trend in Strategic Culture research as significant because it proposed that the concept was not necessarily defined exclusively by state borders but could exist as a collective, regionally defined, phenomenon.

Howlett mentioned two other factors as relevant influences on transnational application of the concept of Strategic Culture in threat analysis. One was the internet and the other the changing face of conflict itself. Agents of threat were no longer confined to state actors. Non-state groups and even individuals could present lethal threats to local, national and regional security.

Howlett, in referencing the impact of the internet, cited the argument of John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt that "the information revolution is altering the nature

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<sup>125</sup> Åselius, G. G., John; Græger, Nina; Heikka, Henrikki; Howlett, Darryl; Leira, Halvard; Neumann, Iver B.; and, Rasmussen, Mikkel Vedby (2005) "Special Issue on Nordic Strategic Culture." [SAGE Journals Online: Cooperation and Conflict](#) **Volume**, 140 DOI:

<sup>126</sup> Cornish, P. E., Geoffrey (2005). "The strategic culture of the European Union: a progress report." [International Affairs](#) **Vol. 81**(Issue 4): 801-820.

of conflict across the spectrum."<sup>127</sup> The information age has seen the networked organizational structure begin to supplant the traditional and often state-centric hierarchical power model, making the successful conduct of conflict more and more dependent on networked information, and lateral and bottom up lines of communication.

As a result Arquilla and Ronfeldt believed that

"information-age threats are likely to be more diffuse, dispersed, multi-dimensional nonlinear, and ambiguous than industrial-age threats."<sup>128</sup>

The impact of the internet on analysis of international relations and critical security studies is relevant to the development of a definition of Strategic Culture. The wide spread use of the technology represents a cost effective means of linking and empowering non-state actors as significant stakeholders in international relations. This further reinforces the need to approach a conceptual definition of Strategic Culture from a theoretical context more in line with social constructivism than traditional realism or neorealism.

Howlett also addressed the dilemma, in using Strategic Culture in an analysis of the transformed 21<sup>st</sup> Century face of conflict, of the increasing tendency, especially in the U.S., to view terrorists not as criminals outside the laws of nations, but as armed enemies. In developing security policy is it valid to regard terrorist groups in general as an 'armed force' and if so, is it strategically useful to then acknowledge them as a legitimate armed force instead of a criminal group? Once again, this diminishes the significance of an exclusively state-centric approach to analysis of international relations

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<sup>127</sup> Howlett, D. (October 2005). "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature." Strategic Insights **Volume IV** ( Issue 10).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

and confirms the increasing relevance of a social constructivist context for defining Strategic Culture.

### The Sources of Strategic Culture

Possibly the most significant aspect of the literature review by Howlett was his summary of what he called the sources of Strategic Culture. By these he was not referring to the authors of various attempts at definition but to those agencies that he believed shaped Strategic Culture within in a society or a state. He prefaced a list of the most commonly identified sources with a distinction between ideational and material sources. His list included:

1. Geography
2. Climate and resources
3. History and experience
4. Political structure
5. The nature of organizations involved in defense
6. Myths and symbols
7. Key texts that inform actors of appropriate strategic action
8. Transnational norms, generational change and the role of technology

Howlett believed that such an extensive list of variables influencing Strategic Culture could result in a complexity in the concept that could compromise attempts at theory building. He recommended, as a preliminary solution for this complexity, that the variables be prioritized according to importance of impact. Howletts' recommendation might have validity in context specific analysis, but the absence of consensus for a conceptual definition would make it difficult to establish a consistent

ranking of all the variables he determined were necessary for use in reliable comparative analysis.

Howlett recognized that the first of his list of variables, however, were key to shaping strategic culture.

“the significance of geography, climate, and resources has been a key element in strategic thinking throughout the millennia and remain important sources of strategic culture in the current era.”<sup>129</sup>

The acknowledged primacy of the elements of the physical environment as enduring variables influencing Strategic Culture is an important step towards a conceptual definition. It is the physical environment that sets the conditions for and shapes the ideational variables such as political structure, defense organizations, and myths and symbols.

Howlett also acknowledged that proximity to great powers, access to vital resources, and the nature and number of territorial borders were enduring and significant geographic factors that have historically motivated strategic considerations. Once again Howlett was referring to the relatively constant physical variables that make up the strategic environment of a society. These are slow to change and while the physical influences such as geography and climate specific to any one area may vary, their influence as an type or range of independent variable have a consistency that can support the development of a reliable conceptual definition and support eventual operational application in comparative analysis.

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

Are strategic cultures immutable or do they change over time?

Howlett pointed out in his review that one of the criticisms that frequently faced attempts to define Strategic Culture had been a tendency for theorists to present the concept as a complex and deterministic phenomenon impermeable to change.

Approaching the concept as a fixed phenomenon, as some permanent cultural aspect of a society is at odds with the stated primacy of the physical and strategic environment as influences that shape Strategic Culture. Phenomena such as geography, weather, and strategic relations are consistent as concepts, but the relationship between a society and these variables will vary depending on a society's capacity to capitalize on and overcome their strategic and physical environment. Any attempt to use the concept, furthermore, as a deterministic tool would involve the incorporation of so many context specific factors that accurate prediction could be easily overrun by the complexity of the process. This does not refute the relevance of Strategic Culture as an analytic tool to increase understanding of strategic choices, however, and this increased understanding can contribute greatly to a better appreciation of probable trends in strategic choices.

Howlett also felt that it was difficult to understand "the dynamic relationship between cultural identities, different types of behaviour and strategic outcomes."<sup>130</sup> He noted the emergence in recent literature, however, of a growing inclination to find answers in sociology and anthropology, particularly as it applied to developing a more dynamic understanding of culture as it relates to strategic thinking. Of particular relevance to his review in this regard was the 2005 article by Iver Neuman and

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

Henrikki Heikka, 'Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice: The Social Roots of Nordic Defence.' Howlett referred to the proposition that previous work on Strategic Culture had been using an outdated concept of culture that was taken as a given in analysis and accepted as an entrenched material fact so that "the literature on strategic culture does not (yet) give us the kind of dynamic and specific framework for empirical analysis that we need."<sup>131</sup> The recognition of a need for a more dynamic understanding of culture as a precedent for defining Strategic Culture further reinforces the understanding that neither concept is static.

Howlett also cited the Neumann and Heikka suggestion that while current models treat culture as a homogeneous phenomenon, it is better approached "not as the stable product of a homogeneous process inside a clearly limited nation-state, but rather as an unstable compromise of a contested transnational type."<sup>132</sup> This observation is relevant to the application of the concept of Strategic Culture in two respects. First it recognizes that there is no single, uniform interpretation of the concept within a state. Second it acknowledges that Strategic Culture can manifest as a collaborative phenomenon that transcends borders to shape the shared strategic choices of multiple stakeholders.

#### Strategic Culture: Developing a Framework for the Future?

Howlett proposed at the end of his literature review that future research would benefit from embracing related developments in other disciplines. The

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<sup>131</sup> Neumann, I. B. a. H., Henrikki (2005). "Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice : The Social Roots of Nordic Defence." *Cooperation and Conflict* **40**(5).

<sup>132</sup> Howlett, D. (October 2005). "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature." *Strategic Insights* **Volume IV**( Issue 10).

accumulation “of interdisciplinary knowledge in individual, country, regional, cross regional and transnational setting”<sup>133</sup> would help to develop a much-needed, greater theoretical precision in Strategic Culture research. The expansion of accumulated knowledge will undoubtedly bring many new insights, but if not placed within the framework of a clear conceptual definition, the sheer volume of information could very well overwhelm future attempts to apply Strategic Culture in useful analysis.

Another challenge in taking an interdisciplinary approach is the risk of oversimplifying the social analysis and relying on broad generalizations of categories, which could lead to misinterpretation, and even the stereotyping, against which Lantis had cautioned.

“Done badly, the analysis of strategic culture could reinforce stereotypes about strategic dispositions of other states and close off policy alternatives deemed inappropriate for dealing with local strategic cultures”<sup>134</sup>

Howlett, as a remedy against this risk, proposed a methodology for future research called process mapping. Once again he referred to the work of George and Bennet. Process mapping involves “theoretically informed historical research to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to an outcome.”<sup>135</sup> Through process tracking he believed it would be possible to trace the processes that could have generated an outcome in specific case studies and then link the resultant observations in a case specific explanation. Process mapping without a specific framework can become a complex and

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Stone, E. (October 2006). Comparative Strategic Culture: A Literature Review, Part I. Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum Contract No. DTRA01-03-D-0017, Technical Instruction 18-06-02, 31 USA

<sup>135</sup> Howlett, D. (October 2005). "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature." Strategic Insights **Volume IV**( Issue 10).

context specific description and explanation of what could potentially be a broad range of data resistant to practical or comparative analysis. The establishment of a reliable conceptual definition for Strategic Culture, however, could provide a theoretical frame of reference that would identify those processes for mapping that are specific to shaping strategic choices and would better support comparative analysis.

Howlett reiterated his view of Strategic Culture as a dynamic and mutable phenomenon that could manifest at various levels or tiers within most states as opposed to a single static and homogenous state specific expression of strategic preferences. He also concluded that the concept had transnational and non-state application.

In terms of future research, Howlett recommended the development of actor specific, behavioural models when considering adversaries. He pointed out that those adversaries would come in an increasing variety of guises. It was important to recognize and understand the critical differences unique to each actor when undertaking analysis, especially as it related to the development of policy. “Simple assumptions that one is dealing with rational or unitary actors may be particularly dangerous when one is dealing with non-state actors, such as warlords, terrorists, or rivals in civil wars.”<sup>136</sup> This recommendation, while it recognized the relevance of non-state actors to strategic choices and security in international relations, presented a solution that relied upon context specific descriptions of the actors, whether state or non-state, as context dependent variables without providing a consistent frame of reference for reliable analysis. An analysis of strategic choices, particularly if it is a comparative analysis, relies on a

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

consistent conceptual definition. Without this frame of reference analysis will tend to involve a context specific description of all the factors relating to the stakeholders that may become so extensive and complex as to obscure accurate analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Common Themes and Concepts

A compound conceptual definition such as Strategic Culture is one based on understanding the use of the distinct concepts used in descriptive and explanatory analysis. This suggests that the concepts or ideas used most consistently in previous research on Strategic Culture have a place in the development of such a definition. An exploration of common concepts shared by previous definitions as well as the associated dominant intent of the respective researchers will identify recurring conceptual themes that were sufficiently robust in analysis to support the definition proposed in this thesis. There has also been agreement among researchers on some of the key challenges that have confounded definitional consensus. A sampling of previous definitions will provide a reasonable indication of the concepts consistently used in previous definitions of Strategic Culture.

#### Sampling Previous Definitions

Previous definitions have varied in terms of stated intent, some being context specific, as in the case of Jack Snyder's definition to support his research on anticipated Soviet policy responses to U.S. nuclear policy, and Andrew Scobells' research on trends in Chinese security policy.

Others, like Jeffrey Lantis and Colin Gray were concerned with establishing a more universally applicable theoretical definition that would support further research and operational application. In spite of the different objectives there are similarities in many of the concepts used to define Strategic Culture.

Snyder, while attempting to shed some light on probable Soviet responses to U.S. nuclear strategy defined the concept as:

“the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy.”<sup>137</sup>

He referred to ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour, attributed to instruction or imitation, which he credited with shaping strategic doctrine. His proposed definition was context specific in that he used it to predict the probable military behaviour of one state in response to a specific security scenario presented by the nuclear policy of another. It was also more descriptive than definitive in that it described the Soviet specific cultural elements that might influence strategic choices but he did not show these elements as reflective of a concept that had consistent application. He established no frame of reference that would allow researchers to consistently identify the same concept as it manifested in other cultures. The ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour Snyder presented as a definition were more outcomes of Strategic Culture, explanations of its impact rather than a definition that would provide understanding of why the phenomenon existed. There was no connection made between the proposed ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour and any measurable pre-conditions or criteria relevant to strategic choice that would produce a Strategic Culture.

Snyders’ description of the concept had intuitive analytic potential because it makes sense that some aspects of a peoples’ culture and history would influence preferences in strategic choices. For ideas and responses to become identifiable patterns

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<sup>137</sup> Snyder, J. (1977). *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, RAND Corporation.

of behaviour, however, they have to be sufficiently productive or successful with a large enough part of a society to become ingrained or imbedded. His description, in spite of intuitive appeal, fell short of a definition, something measureable or useful in any kind of consistent, comparative analysis. The concepts he employed to define Strategic Culture were presented as variables dependent on instruction and imitation for transmission and perpetuation. Is that really where ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour come from? If they are taught, or mimicked then who is the first teacher, what is the original model for behaviour, and why would a society choose to perpetually teach a particular set of ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour? The use of the term culture implies a deeper and more embedded origin, given that it is “the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action (and) the total range of activities and ideas of a people.”<sup>138</sup>

Snyder also dismissed the impact of an active Strategic Culture that derived from the bulk of the Soviet population. He felt that the majority of the population had little to no influence on strategic policy so dismissed any reason to include the preferences of most of the Soviet population in his analysis. He concluded, instead, that the Soviet Strategic Culture was driven exclusively by a militaristic, Soviet elite. He did not identify a reliable, measurable, or quantifiable origin for the ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour unique to the Soviet elite that would inform and shape security doctrine. There was reference to history, but it was a reference confined to Soviet history. The Soviet Union was a state populated predominantly by Russians, a people with a deep

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<sup>138</sup> (2005). Collins English Dictionary. Glasgow, UK, Harper Collins

history that stretches back centuries. The patterns Snyder noted in the Soviets had social and political origins that long predated the establishment of the Soviet state. He would have been better served in his analysis if he had looked deeper than Soviet history.

Snyder acknowledged his analysis was tentative because of a shortage of case studies and historical examples of Soviet crises similar in intensity to a possible nuclear war. There is validity in looking to the shared ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour of a people to achieve a better understanding of their probable strategic responses. Shared ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour are dependent variables, however, that need to refer to an independent variable or set of variables if they are to have consistency in comparative analytic application. A reference to instruction or imitation as a source is inadequate.

Colin Gray, in his 1981 article “National Styles in Strategy: The American Example,” first saw strategic culture as a component in security studies and defined it as: “modes of thought and action with respect to [force], derived from perception of national historical experience, aspiration for self-characterization, and from state-distinctive experiences.”<sup>139</sup>

Grays’ definition, like that of Snyder, described rather than defined Strategic Culture by listing the outcomes of the concept rather than defining the primary conceptual elements that shaped the outcomes.

Gray revisited the concept in a 1984 paper entitled ‘Comparative Strategic Culture’ and identified it as a further development of the concept of political culture. Presenting Strategic Culture as some kind of evolution of political culture might bring

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<sup>139</sup> Lavoy, D. P. R. S., Dr. Elizabeth L.; and, Twomey, Dr. Christopher P. (2005). Comparative Strategic Culture Conference Report Center for Contemporary Conflict, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School for the Advanced Systems and Concepts Office of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

research closer to a conceptual definition if there were not similar outstanding problems defining the earlier concept.

Stephen Chilton, 1991,<sup>140</sup> reviewed the 1963 work of Almond and Verba on Civic Culture<sup>141</sup> that defined political culture as “the “particular pattern of orientations to political action.”<sup>142</sup> In his review Chilton pointed out that “thirty years of conceptualisations and theoretical criticisms have failed to redeem the earlier promise of the concept. Political culture remains a suggestive rather than a scientific concept.”<sup>143</sup> Like Strategic Culture, the notion of a political culture has appeal as a means of analyzing and anticipating the behaviour of international stakeholders with regards to security policy and security choices. Attempts to define political culture, however, have also been more descriptive than definitive. There are no central conceptual elements that establish a consistent frame of reference for operational application in reliable analysis or comparative analysis.

Gray, when describing Strategic Culture as an extension of political culture suggested that “a particular culture should encourage a particular style in thought and action” but that, like geopolitical analysis, strategic-cultural analysis should be understood to influence rather than rigidly predetermine state behaviour. Noteworthy in his 1984 observations are both the proposition that the concept had limited predictive capability and the connection made between culture and geography.

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<sup>140</sup> Chilton, S. (2005). Chapter 6: Defining Political Culture. Grounding Political Development(2nd Edition). USA The University of Minnesota, and Lynne Rienner Publishers.

<sup>141</sup> Almond, G. A., and Verba, Sidney, Ed. (1989). The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. USA, Sage Publications.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Chilton, S. (2005). Chapter 6: Defining Political Culture. Grounding Political Development(2nd Edition). USA The University of Minnesota, and Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Grays' approach to the concept in the eighties was also very much state centric and focused on how Strategic Culture might influence the state use of force. His reference to modes of thought and action with respect to the use of that force, however, used concepts similar to Snyder's use of ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour. Both are using concepts that are descriptive rather than definitive and depend on independent qualifiers or variables for consistent application in multiple scenarios. What modes of thought and action, what ideas responses and patterns of behaviour, common to most security stakeholders, will consistently influence security choices and the development of security policy?

Like Snyder, Gray did not see the concept having precise predictive value with regards to state behaviour but saw it instead as an influencing factor. He saw its origins in national perceptions of historical experience, a national drive to self-characterization and state experience. Like Snyder, Gray based his definition of the concept of Strategic Culture on dependent variables or a descriptive collection of concepts that lack a reliable frame of reference. What is the conceptual basis or source for a national perception of historical experience? What drives a people to self-characterization? What shapes the core values and priorities of an evolving state experience? Connecting a definition to dependent variables that have no grounding, no independent variable as an anchor, leaves them without reliable foundation. They are more like characteristics of a description than a conceptual framework for a definition. This incomplete approach to a definition may be useful in describing the concept in a specific context but is of limited analytic value, particularly in comparative analysis.

Alastair Iain Johnston, in 1995 defined it as:

“different predominant strategic preferences rooted in early formative experiences of state, influenced to some degree by philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of state and its elites.”<sup>144</sup>

Johnston, in his definition, referred to predominant strategic preferences that he attributed to the early formative experiences of a state. He acknowledged a limited influence on those preferences of the philosophical, political, and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elites. There are, once again, similarities between ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour; modes of thought and action; and, predominant strategic preferences. They all suggest collective or shared strategic response preferences, usually attributed to a state or the dominant elite of a state. Johnston took the concept of Strategic Culture further than a general reference to historical influences however and based his notion of predominant strategic preferences on formative state experience. He made only passing mention of the influence of the more ideational characteristics of the state and its elites. There is no indication, however, of what first shaped those formative state experiences. What makes them unique, quantifiable, and relevant to comparative analysis with the formative experiences of another state? Johnston constructed his definition, as did Snyder and Gray, from dependent variables based on yet another set of dependent variables. What independent conceptual elements, common to most states, would give rise to the formation of state experiences that would shape the evolution of security choices, and the development of strategic policy? He gave no independent set of variables as a foundation for his definition. He described the attributes of Strategic Culture but did not define how or why the concept exists as a phenomenon common to

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<sup>144</sup> Lavoy, D. P. R. S., Dr. Elizabeth L.; and, Twomey, Dr. Christopher P. (2005). Comparative Strategic Culture Conference Report Center for Contemporary Conflict, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School for the Advanced Systems and Concepts Office of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

state and non-state stakeholders, and is therefore reliable for application in comparative analysis. What are the conceptual elements that can consistently influence security perceptions so as to shape social organizations, core values, and priorities? These conceptual elements are the independent variables that influence the dependent variables referred to in existing Strategic Culture research as ideas, responses, and patterns of behaviour; modes of thought and action; and, predominant strategic preferences. As dependent variables they are often contextually unique and require a connection with defining conceptual elements as an independent frame of reference for effective analysis.

Andrew Scobell wrote a 1998 paper on the Strategic Culture of China, republished as a book in 2004, in which he defined Strategic Culture as:

“ the fundamental and enduring assumptions about the role of war (both interstate and intrastate) in human affairs and the efficacy of applying force held by political and military elites in a country. These assumptions will vary from country to country. Also important are the perceptions prevalent among the elite within one country regarding the nature of another country’s strategic culture.”<sup>145</sup>

Scobell set out to use the concept of Strategic Culture as a means of assessing the strategic disposition of China relative to the U.S. and Japan. He first conducted an analysis of the Chinese Strategic Culture and then attempted an analysis of their perception of the distinct Strategic Cultures of Japan and the U.S. This undertaking amounted to comparative Strategic Culture analysis, and though nearly as tentative as Snyders’ efforts to explain the Soviet Strategic Culture, made a useful reference to what he described as a long-standing Chinese appreciation for the relevance of culture in strategic thinking. The point was well-illustrated by a quote he cited from Lieutenant

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<sup>145</sup> Scobell, A. (2004). China and Strategic Culture. Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A, University Press of the Pacific.

General Li Jijun, former vice president of the Academy of Military Sciences, who stated that:

“Culture is the root and foundation of strategy. Strategic thinking, in the process of its evolutionary history, flows into the mainstream of a country or a nation’s culture. Each country or nation’s strategic culture cannot but bear the imprint of cultural traditions, which in a subconscious and complex way, prescribes and defines strategy making.”<sup>146</sup>

Scobell presented a cryptic definition of the concept of Strategic Culture, one that did not adequately reflect insights that appeared elsewhere in his paper. This is particularly true of the quote from Li Jijun. Scobell overlooked historical, societal, roots and simply defined the concept as the “fundamental and enduring assumptions about the role of war”<sup>147</sup> in a state. He described it as a typology, or hierarchy, but contended that it was difficult to apply above the operational level. He did, however, highlight what he had observed as a Chinese “Cult of the Defense” that he felt played an important part in the development of their security policy. He stated that the “Chinese elites fervently believe that China is under the sway of a unique peace-loving, non-expansionist, defensive-minded strategic tradition.”<sup>148</sup> But he did not say why this Cult of Defense existed, beyond referencing ideological and philosophical agencies and the perceptions and policies of their military and political elite. Scobell made no connection between Chinese philosophies or ideologies underlying assumptions about the role of war and any aggregate of conceptual elements that had a unique societal and political impact on China. There is reference to the benefit of thousands of years of history through which behavioural patterns become apparent, but there is no link between what amounts to

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

traditional ideas and values and a fundamental source or shaping agency for those ideas and values. It is as though the ideas simply manifested out of nowhere. What is there that is so unique about China that it has evolved such a distinctive set of philosophical ideals, values, and priorities? What factors or characteristics have persisted throughout their history to shape their described “fundamental and enduring assumptions about the role of war”? Once again we have a definition that is more like a description and is based on dependent variables that are not anchored to any significant or reliable independent variables.

Lantis, in discussions at the 2005 Monterey Conference, identified culture as “an evolving system of shared meaning that governs perceptions, communications, and actions, and offers little in the way of testable hypotheses.”<sup>149</sup> On the subject of the permanence or malleability of the concept he noted that, “strategic culture possessed a strong degree of continuity, and highlighted that more often than not past learning becomes sedimented into the collective consciousness of a population or group.”<sup>150</sup> While the acknowledgement that Strategic Culture was both evolving and embedded in a society, he did not indicate any origin for this evolving, shared meaning that was so significant that it could consistently influence security perceptions and choices. He also neglected to indicate how this shared meaning would become sedimented into collective consciousness.

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<sup>149</sup> Lavoy, D. P. R. S., Dr. Elizabeth L.; and, Twomey, Dr. Christopher P. (2005). Comparative Strategic Culture Conference Report Center for Contemporary Conflict, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School for the Advanced Systems and Concepts Office of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

Lantis introduced the concept of external shocks to a culture group, which could drastically impose a shift in strategic choices that were not in keeping with traditional norms. External shocks could include sudden environmental change, civil war, natural disaster, or participation in a large-scale conflict. The impact of external shock in particular, he argued, demanded that strategic culture be “thought of and analyzed as a fluid, continuously evolving concept.”<sup>151</sup> Lantis did not go into details as to why the external shock would influence Strategic Culture. Consider the impact of occurrences such as natural disaster or civil war, however, on the conceptual elements that may have shaped the values and priorities of a cultural group. Changes in key environmental elements such as the loss of arable land, access to maritime trade, or the loss of an entire generation of adult males will have a significant impact on traditional strategic choices.

Lantis referred to a “system of shared meaning that governs perceptions, communications, and actions”<sup>152</sup> that is not dissimilar to earlier descriptive characteristics such as modes of thought and action, ideas, responses, patterns of behaviour, preferences, assumptions and philosophical, political, and cognitive characteristics. All are dependent variables in human thinking and behaviour. They are dependent because they invariably come about, individually, and collectively, as either a cumulative, or an immediate, response to circumstances or environmental conditions.

The three literature reviews of the 2005 Monterey conference provided both an overview of past research strengths and a summary of areas for future research development. It was agreed that although the concept of Strategic Culture still eluded

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

definition, it continued to have strong appeal as an analytic tool. Several of the participants in the 2005 conference also took part in the 2006 Curriculum project where they were able to arrive at a working definition that they felt was adequate as a basis for developing a curriculum to support further research. Their definition reflected the cumulative preceding efforts and while still more descriptive than definitive, represented the most comprehensive attempt at definition.

“Strategic culture is that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.”<sup>153</sup>

This definition captured the notion found in most previous definitions that Strategic Culture was made up of shared ideation and actions. It also supported the frequently held understanding that these shared attributes came from common experience and cultural history. Of all the proposed definitions this one was the most articulate in stating the role of Strategic Culture in determining the means to achieve security objectives.

This last definition comes close to providing a basis for consistent application in comparative analysis, but it continues to lack an anchoring or grounding independent variable or set of variables to which it can tie the shared ideation and action. Shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behaviour derive from common experiences and accepted narratives. But what reliable conceptual elements provide a consistent framework for those common experiences? What are the measurable and enduring

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<sup>153</sup> Johnson, J. L. (2006). Comparative Strategic Cultures Syllabus. J. A. Larsen. Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Science Applications International Corporation.

conditions that shape and perpetuate accepted, and often distinctive, shared narratives?

Unless a reliable and measurable source for shared ideation and action is established, any attempts to use Strategic Culture as an analytic tool, much less as a means of comparative analysis will require an exhaustive exploration of historical patterns of behaviour for every context specific application. Even then, the results will continue to be tentative and unreliable as there will be no consistent frame of reference for comparison.

The recurring missing element, also absent in this last, near comprehensive definition, is the relationship a people have with their strategic environment, with their geography. The natural resources, topography, climate, and strategic position relative to competing societies ultimately determine how a people chooses to organize and order themselves in an adaptive social construct. These are the persistent conceptual elements that make up the strategic environment for a culture or society and as such will inform and shape their priorities and define their core values. The physical environment, and a people's capacity to harness or control that environment to their best advantage will determine how they identify threat and opportunity and the means they choose to achieve what they perceive are shared, collective, security objectives.

The strategic environment is best integrated as the independent variable, or reliable conceptual elements in a conceptual definition of Strategic Culture by examining the relationship between geography and the historical development of human society.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Geography – The Missing Link

The notion that geography contributes to the shaping of human behaviour is not a new one. Sir Halford J. Mackinder, in 1904, published his article, ‘The Geographical Pivot of History’<sup>154</sup> in which he proposed that geography was key to the shaping of human history. Mackinder wrote from a British perspective, at a time when the age of exploration and colonization had come to an end, and there were no perceptible new lands to discover. He observed that human knowledge, at the start of the twentieth century, was sufficiently developed to offer an understanding of the world in its totality. Researchers could finally “seek a formula which shall express certain aspects, at any rate, of geographical causation in universal human history.”<sup>155</sup> He believed that such a formula would provide insights and perspective on the conduct of competing forces in international politics. In his article he described the physical features of the world that he felt had most influenced human action and related them to the phases of human history to which they were, in effect, organically linked. Oceans could both limit and facilitate transportation and communication. Mountain ranges provided natural borders and strongholds, and open plains and navigable rivers could provide natural highways. He saw the ebb and flow of human history as a dynamic part of the life of the world as a living organism.

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<sup>154</sup>Mackinder, H. J. (1904). "The Geographical Pivot of History." The Geographical Journal Vol. 170(No. 4): 298-321.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

More recently Colin Gray in his article, 'The continued primacy of geography - A Debate on Geopolitics'<sup>156</sup> pointed out the significance of geography in shaping culture as it related to the development of security policy. His claim was not that geography determined policy but that it was "pervasive in world politics." Geography, he argued, defined not only the players in international politics but also defined the stakes for which they competed and the terms in which they measure security.

Gray used the example of a maritime power versus a continental power, pointing out that,

"in modern times maritime powers and coalitions have either won or drawn all the great wars they have waged with continental powers and coalitions. Thus, in what British geographer Sir Halford Mackinder called the Columbian Age of 1500-1900, maritime powers apparently enjoyed a strategic advantage in their struggles with continental powers."<sup>157</sup>

The influence of geography on human societies is much older than the power struggle between maritime and continental societies, however, and shapes far more than the conduct of inter-societal conflict. Anthropologists and sociologists agree that geography is an integral part of what shapes the fundamental core of the social, political, economic, and military organization of a society. What follows is a review of the 10 key, historical, and geographically influenced social constructs identified by sociologists,<sup>158</sup> that are relevant to the conceptual definition of Strategic Culture proposed in this paper. This review is preferable to moving forward on the assumption that the concepts are universally known, and understood, outside the discipline of Sociology.

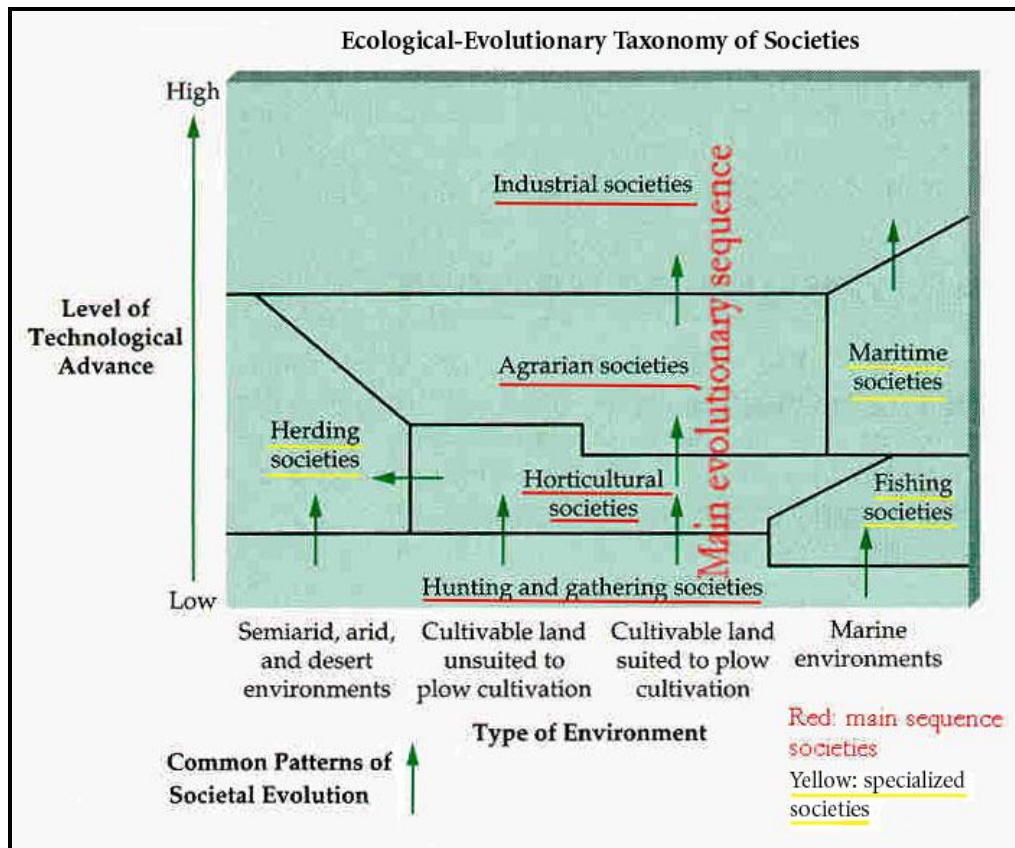
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<sup>156</sup> Gray, C. (1996). "The continued primacy of geography." *Orbis; Spring 96* Vol. 40(Issue 2): p247, 14p.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Lenski, G., and Nolan, Patrick (2006). *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology - Tenth Edition*. Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A., Paradigm Publishers.

Patrick Nolan and Gerhard Lenski, 2006,<sup>159</sup> are among the sociologists identify a human society as an adaptive and politically autonomous group whose members engage in cooperative activities. Ecological-Evolutionary Typology theory (EET) (Fig. 3) guides much of the current study of human societies.<sup>160</sup> The three key assumptions of this theory are relevant to the use of geography in clarifying the conceptual definition of Strategic Culture proposed in this paper.



**Figure 3:** Evolutionary-Ecological Taxonomy of Societies - This chart illustrates how the subsistence Technology and the Environment of a society come together to produce an evolving Ecological-Evolutionary Typology or EET. The environment determines the most appropriate subsistence technology in an evolving process.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

The first assumption of the EET is that human societies are a part of the natural world and therefore influenced by their environment. The second assumption is that, because they are a part of the world of nature, members of human societies, like other species, have a genetic heritage that profoundly influences their choices and actions through the genetic embedding of historically successful social adaptations. (Fig. 4) The third assumption of EET proposes that this genetic heritage enables members of human societies to create distinctive cultural heritages through proactive dissemination of successful ideas and behaviour. This perpetuation is made possible by the uniquely human capacity for complex written, symbolic, and oral means of communicating or perpetuating the genetically initiated cultural heritage. It is this last characteristic that sets human societies apart from all others in the world of nature. One of those distinctive cultural heritages is Strategic Culture.

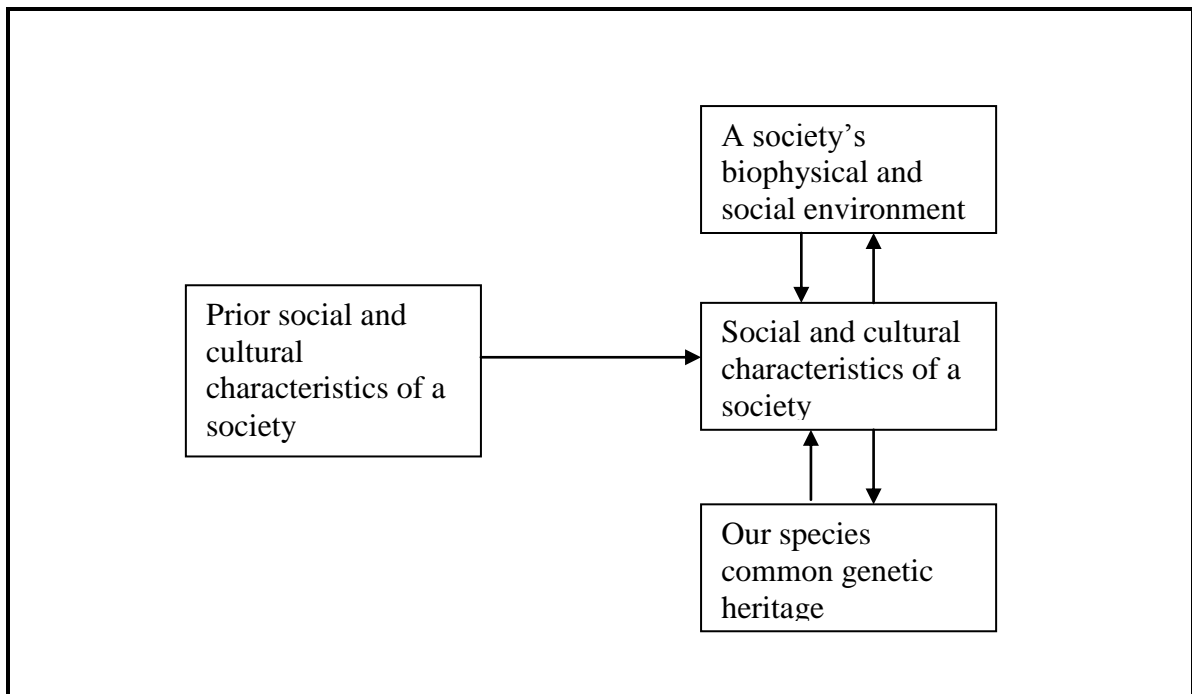
Nolan and Lenski define the environment as everything that is external to a population and has any effect on it. In terms of human society, this goes beyond the material or biophysical elements such as soil, mineral, and water resources, terrain, climate, plants, animals and physical features of their immediate surroundings. The environment, for human societies, includes the human, social element, or any other human societies with which its members are likely to come in contact, or which could influence the society in any way.<sup>161</sup>

The biophysical and the social environments both present opportunities and threats related to perceived collective security. The genetic heritage of human

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

societies is the historically embedded lessons learned that serves as the basis for the culturally perpetuated preferences or cultural heritage in social ordering and organizing that enables a society to make the most of the opportunities unique to their environment and overcome the challenges. This heritage is a genetically embedded, collective, historical experience of what has been successful for a particular human society in the past, both in terms of technology, social, political, spiritual, and economic organization.



**Figure 4:** Basic Ecological-evolutionary theory model of human societies<sup>162</sup> This model shows the basic ecological-evolutionary determinants of the characteristics of human societies.

The unique human capacity to create distinctive and complex cultural heritages as an extension on the more primal genetic heritage is made possible by the ability to share complex information through the use of symbols. Symbols are distinct from the signals used by non-human societies, in that they are “conveyors of information

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

whose form and meaning have developed within a community of users.”<sup>163</sup> In short – language.

Nolan and Lenski also support a basic model for human societies on which it is possible to build alternative models shaped by different environmental factors. This model includes the most basic determinants or causes that shape human societies. (Fig. 4) These are the influence of the biophysical and social environment, the influence of genetic heritage, and the influence of culturally perpetuated prior social and cultural characteristics unique to a society.

Human beings form societies in a collective security response to a variety of shared basic needs. These include the obvious physical survival requirements of food, water, sleep, warmth, and oxygen. Societies also develop a shared explanation for the unknown, a life philosophy that is specific to their strategic environment and forms the basis for their spiritual organization, priorities, and values – their religion.

Finally, there is a shared need to be a part of a society. The human infant is helpless for an extended period of time and must be protected and nurtured. Survival of the individual and the society, furthermore, is dependant on the ability of the child to acquire a great deal of information that will guide behaviour and eventually allow the child to participate in the society as a contributing adult. The child acquires this information and knowledge through an extended, and sometimes formalized, socialization process.

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

Societies have developed in a variety of biophysical and social environments that have presented challenges and opportunities fundamental to shaping a variety of geographical distinguishable societies. Humankind is a marvellously adaptive species with the advantage of incremental species and societal learning. This unique combination of the adaptive and the learned has enabled human societies to develop the necessary skills and tools or subsistence technologies best suited to their environment to ensure not only their survival, but also their growth and further development. The result has been a variety of distinctive societal types that have emerged throughout human history.

Sociologists have developed a classification system <sup>164</sup>for the historical development of human societies based on the subsistence technologies employed. Frequently the technological means of subsistence were directly shaped by geographical factors such as strategic location, available natural resources, and predominating climate. This system of classification divides human societies into 10 basic categories (Table 5), with individual societies classified on the basis of their primary mode of subsistence. Of these 10, five were identified as being based on environmentally specialized technologies (EST), advanced agrarian societies, fishing societies, maritime societies, simple herding societies and advanced herding societies.

EST based societies often came to survive as absorbed components of larger more complex societies. In isolation they were too specialized and lacked the diversity to sustain growth.

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

## Societal Classifications

<i>1. Hunting and gathering societies:</i>	<i>the hunting of wild animals and foraging for uncultivated plants</i>
<i>2. Simple horticultural societies:</i>	<i>cultivate plants but do not have plows and use only wood and stone tools</i>
<i>3. Advanced horticultural societies:</i>	<i>use metal tools and weapons</i>
<i>4. Simple agrarian societies:</i>	<i>cultivate plants and use plows but use only copper and bronze</i>
<i>5. Advanced agrarian societies:</i>	<i>use iron tools and weapons</i>
<i>6. Fishing societies:</i>	<i>environmentally specialized type (EST) - relies on that technology most useful to people located on a body of water</i>
<i>7. Maritime societies:</i>	<i>(EST) more technological advanced than fishing societies</i>
<i>8. Simple herding societies:</i>	<i>(EST) subsist on open grasslands with sparse rainfall</i>
<i>9. Advanced herding societies:</i>	<i>(EST) uses horses and camels for transportation in work and warfare</i>
<i>10. Industrial societies:</i>	<i>newest type and most advanced; heavy dependence on machine technology and inanimate sources of energy Also the most powerful</i>

**Table 5** Societal Classifications

Not all of these categories continue to exist today and the core values and priorities of hunter gatherer or simple horticultural societies have limited significance in an analysis of twenty-first century international relations. They are retained here both for the integrity of the Societal Classification table and for their potential influence in consideration of isolated and underdeveloped or failed state societies. Advanced agrarian societies; environmentally specialized societies such as fishing, maritime, and herding;

and, industrial societies, however, continue to be represented, and can, directly or indirectly, influence stakeholder preferences and choices in today's global society.

All of these societal types evolved out of and continue to be influenced by the unique opportunities and challenges imposed by their geography. A society needs arable land to support agriculture, rivers, oceans and lakes to support fishing or maritime subsistence, open plains for grazing to support herding, and the financial and transportation infrastructure, and material and qualified human resources to support the development of industrial society.

The subsistence technologies specific to each of these distinct environments have also influenced the social, spiritual, political and economic organization, order and priorities or values of their respective societies. In the event that a society has a long enough history, even if it has moved forward to successfully embrace industrialization, its core values and priorities may still have deep and influential roots in their original strategic environment and in the values and priorities of the subsistence technology on which their modern society is based. Key among the persistent or embedded core values is the power stratification within a society. This can include the identification of legitimate political authority, social, economic and political values and organization, and the fundamental principles of religion. <sup>165</sup>

## 5. Advanced Agrarian Societies

Advanced agrarian societies first appeared around 800 BC when iron came into use for the production of general tools. This type of society traditionally saw the bulk

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

of the land owned by the governing elite which made up a very small percentage of the population. In many instances, the landowners also owned the peasants who lived on and worked the land. The Czar in Russia 'owned' over 27 million serfs just prior to their emancipation in 1861. Living conditions for peasants were generally very poor.

Less than 10 percent of the population in an advanced agrarian society actually lived in the urban centres. Much of this 10 percent was the society's elite, drawn to the urban centre to be close to social, cultural and government affairs. This governing elite also generally regarded work of any kind as degrading and socially beneath them. As the dominant class in the advanced agrarian society, their values became the model, the ideal for the rest of the society. So much so, those merchants in their societies, who acquired adequate wealth, often abandoned their successful enterprises to pursue the coveted life of leisure enjoyed by the governing, land owning, elite. It has been suggested that this attitude towards the value of work may have contributed to a deteriorating rate of technological innovation that eventually came to compromise the dominance of advanced agrarian societies.

Three additional classes of society were also drawn to the urban centres of agrarian societies - the clergy, the merchant class, and the artisan class. The merchant class in an advanced agrarian society tended to be affluent but excluded from the elite of landowners. One of the most productive classes in advanced agrarian societies was that of the artisan. It was their productivity that supplied the merchants with goods to sell.

Governance for advanced agrarian societies was predominantly hereditary monarchy, and authority over the bulk of the population tended to be coercive. Intra-societal conflict was generally interclass. Interstate conflict was frequent and tended to be

between the elites of the warring states. Political power was sought after for the personal advantages it would bring, not for the benefit of the bulk of the population. This is described by Nolan and Lenski as, “the proprietary theory of the state”<sup>166</sup> which portrays the state as a piece of property that its owners, the governing, land owning elite, may use as they see fit. A reasonable outcome to expect from this historical attitude would be a tendency to associate power with land ownership. There would be little sense of responsibility on the part of the governing elite for the well-being of the majority of the population beyond ensuring their rudimentary ability to work the land without complaint or protest. Land ownership, furthermore, tend to be inherited, creating a ruling elite that represented a relatively small segment of the overall population with the majority excluded from participation beyond that of a cheap, renewable, labour resource. Interstate as well as intrastate conflict would be based on competition among governing elites for ownership or control of land.

This type of societal attitude is often reflected in the elitist approach to governance experienced in some countries today where the ruling minority is made up of the military and the state leaders or owners of industry. It aptly describes the dominant attitude of government in modern Russia, for example, and was a strong influence in the governance of the Soviet Union. Jack Snyder’s report reflected his observation of this historical attitude in his dismissal of an observed countervailing Soviet strategic subculture apparent in Soviet writings. It was clear to him in the writings of the governing elite that they believed the larger strategic subculture lacked the bureaucratic

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

or political strength to have a voice in Soviet policy. In short, the bulk of the population was not relevant to governance except as a malleable human resource best suited to fill the ranks of the military and industry.

## 6. Fishing Societies

According to Nolan and Lenski no fishing society, with the exception of the Arctic, was ever completely dependent on fishing for its food supply, supplementing with cultivation, foraging, hunting and domestication of livestock. In many ways a fishing society is similar to a hunter gatherer society that has adapted to an aquatic environment for its hunting. This type of society is likely the second oldest in the history of human societies. It had a more complex and diverse subsistence technology, and a tendency to remain in one location, giving it the potential to support a larger population. Fish have a higher reproductive rate than land animals and fishing societies tended to work a smaller part of their available territory. Social inequality was more prevalent than in hunter gatherer societies and the system of governance or leadership tended to be based on hereditary nobility. Slavery occurred in approximately half of fisher societies. Fishing societies, unlike hunter gatherer societies, seldom evolved to a more advanced societal type. They were forced to live in hard-to-defend, coastal communities that were easily overcome and eventually absorbed by expanding horticultural societies. Today fishing societies tend to be specialized coastal communities within larger societies.

## 7. Maritime Societies

Nolan and Lenski propose that true maritime societies are rare and have seldom occurred concurrently in any great numbers. Singapore, as a matter of fact, is currently the only true maritime society in existence. Technologically similar in many

ways to agrarian societies, the maritime societies were unique in their development and application of specialized technology adapted to the challenges and opportunities of their maritime environment. Their location on the shores of large bodies of water at a time when it was cheaper to move goods by water than by land, allowed these societies to subsist on trade and commerce for their survival rather than fishing or cultivation of the limited arable land available in their coastal environment. Eventually overseas trade became the basis of their economy.

Maritime societies were based in urban centres, much like agrarian societies, but they tended to be smaller, and where there were multiple urban centres for an agrarian society, there was usually only one for a maritime society. Their political organization was usually republican, markedly different from the monarchical, land owner based, systems typical of an agrarian society. This has been attributed to the dominant interest of the governing merchant class in commerce and exploitation of the skills and productivity of their artisan and peasant class instead of the agrarian governing elite interest in conquest and control of a much larger and less specialized peasant population. “An oligarchy of wealthy merchants could do the job, since their primary responsibilities would be to regulate commercial competition and to provide naval forces to defend their access to foreign ports.”<sup>167</sup>

This political organization resulted in core values very different from those of agrarian societies. Merchants, as the dominant class in maritime societies, presented a social model that held productivity and profit in high regard. When compared to the

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

values espoused by advanced agrarian societies it becomes apparent that there was a direct correlation between the success and strength of the merchant class in a society and the overall rate of technological innovation and progress in that same society. Maritime societies measured power in terms of control of productivity and commerce and the means to cultivate and protect trade interests beyond their borders.

### 8. Simple Herding Societies

According to Nolan and Lenski herding societies, like fishing societies, adapted to a specialized environment. They had approximately the same range and extent of technological development as horticultural and agrarian societies. The domestication of animals appeared in human societies about the same time that plants were first cultivated. Crop cultivation was not well suited, however, to areas with limited rainfall, a shorter growing season, or mountainous terrain. Livestock, however, could thrive in many of these areas. Herding societies and their pastoral economies typically required a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle in order to follow their grazing animals. They were generally made up of multiple smaller communities, similar in size to traditional hunter gatherer societies. This was attributed to dependence on sparse resources and the need for mobility. The herder societies, however, were usually made up of about a dozen distinct communities each of less than a hundred in population. The greater size of these societies was due in part to their environment. Open grasslands presented few natural barriers to movement or political expansion.

### 9. Advanced Herding Societies

Advanced herding societies began using horses and camels for transportation around 2000 B.C. giving them a military advantage and furthering their

capacity for political expansion. Livestock was the primary resource for these societies and the size of a herd signified not just a man's wealth, but also his power. It took a strong man or the head of a large family to maintain and defend a large herd against rivals and enemies.

These societies were distinguished by a high degree of social inequality and the practice of hereditary slavery. Strongly patriarchal, their kinship practices included the payment of a bride price and a requirement for newly married couples to live with the family of the young husband. Men performed the work that supported the economy. Raiding and warfare were also a frequent occurrence, making pastoral life both patriarchal and highly militant. The size of the herder societies coupled with their militancy led to the necessary development of a strong political authority. For about 2500 years, commencing around 900 B.C., herding societies successfully preyed on agrarian societies from China to Europe. Theirs were some of the largest empires in history, with the Mongols, established in the early thirteenth century by Genghis Khan, one of the most notable examples. Ultimately, however, the herders could not maintain dominance over the advanced agrarian societies. Their subsistence technology could not produce the same surplus produced by agrarian societies. It is this capacity to produce surplus that was essential to advances in subsistence technology. Surplus enabled a society to support specialization and the development of increased societal complexity. The herder societies, though highly territorial and expansionist, had a higher regard for personal power over ownership of land. The land was not something you owned or for which you were responsible. It was a resource you used, moving on as the herds required. A society would have territorial rights to the land and its success depended in large part on its

ability to protect those rights. A man's real power was measured not by land ownership but by the size of his herds and the number and loyalty of his followers. The Bedouin, historically, have been a particularly successful herder society which augmented herding with trade. As masters of the desert these nomadic tribes have long been the providers of transport to travelers and traders in their harsh environment. Herder societies developed a highly patriarchal social and political organization that can still be seen at the heart of several modern Middle Eastern industrial societies.

## 10. Industrial Societies

Nolan and Lenski identify industrial societies as the most recent in the human timeline of social development and suggest there is an ongoing theoretical debate that the industrial age has not yet come to a conclusion. The countering view is that it has been replaced by the information age.

Industrialization began in Agrarian societies long before the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. England was quick to derive more than fifty percent of its income from machine based productivity, thereby establishing itself as the first truly industrial society.

A variety of factors gradually moved agrarian societies forward towards industrialization. The first was the accumulation of technological information. This included advances in transportation and navigation, ultimately enabling the successful conquest and colonization of the New World. The technological innovations that expanded horizons for agrarian societies included the compass, the stern rudder, larger ships and a reconfiguration of sails from few large ones to multiple, more manageable small sails.

The conquest of the New World was begun in the fifteenth century, long before the formal onset of the Industrial Revolution. This conquest introduced new money into the European economy in the form of Inca and Aztec gold and significantly weakened the long established and agrarian based barter system. Colonization and the increased volume and relevance of money also triggered inflation, which decreased the power of the traditional land owning, governing elite. At the same time it gave the merchant class unprecedented power and authority in government. This greater and more equitable distribution of prosperity and power increased support for further technological innovation and the continued improvement in civic and industrial efficiency. This era also saw a shift in the world power centre from the Middle East to Western Europe.

There were several other innovations that moved human societies out of the agrarian societal model. The printing press led to a rise in literacy. There were also improvements in agriculture that increased productivity. This was partially in response to the move towards a more capitalistic society less resistant to change and an increase in agricultural competition triggered by inflation. Among the agricultural innovations were practices such as:

1. crop rotation
2. selective breeding
3. invention of simple machines to reduce labor
4. dissemination of technical information concerning farming
5. enclosing common lands.

There are several key features that distinguished an industrial society.

There was a shift in population concentration to urban centres to be close to the means of

production. A marked increase in productivity saw a corresponding increase in overall living standards. The nature of production also changed, shifting from labor intensive to capital intensive. The labor force also changed. Among the changes was an increase in white collar jobs, increased employment of women outside the home, larger work organizations and an increase in specialization.

Industrial societies were larger in terms of population, infrastructure and diversity of land use, and more complex than any preceding societal type. The stratification of society increased in number and diversity. Government, as a result, played an increasing role in regulating society and managing its economic life. A larger share of the gross national product, in the form of increased taxes, was required to support the larger and more complex government. People in an industrialized society, through participation in assembly line production, also began to become increasingly alienated from the products of their labor. Their sense of worth, particularly with the introduction of hourly wages, became more readily measurable by their ability to consume.

Traditional kinship and community subgroup relationships also experienced realignment though industrialization, with large mechanized workplaces becoming a new basis for kinship associations.

The participation of women in the workplace also changed the traditional family model and relieved women from exclusive dependence on male family members.

The locus of power for industrial societies shifted from land ownership to ownership of the means of production. Included in this was an imperative to ensure unobstructed access to both the resources needed for production, and to expanding

markets for their products. The governing elite of industrial societies held a view of the bulk of the population similar to that of a maritime society in that they needed a diversely skilled and educated population to work the factories and administer the day to day running of the larger and more complex society.

Industrial societies are the most powerful in today's international community of societies. They control the global economy and oblige a high degree of emulation by developing countries hoping for successful participation in world markets. It is noteworthy to consider the potential impact this pressure has on societies with deep ties to their traditional values and priorities, and their perceptions of what constitutes legitimate power. Some societies may come from historical backgrounds that make them less inclined to embrace the imposed change. In extreme cases the imposition of change can represent a serious threat to their traditionally held understanding of power in and of itself.

One of the most significant characteristics of modern industrial societies, however, has been the shift in the relationship with the environment. Earlier societies were significantly shaped and influenced by the biophysical and social environment in which they evolved. Industrial societies, however, have consistently demonstrated an increasing capacity, and intent, to control, or have power over, their environment.

#### Additional Geographical Influences

There are other aspects of geography that have played and continue to play a part in shaping not only the development of human societies but also their security preferences. Geographical elements that influence the diffusion or spread of innovative societal and technological development include access to natural transportation routes

such as rivers and navigable coastlines; the presence of natural barriers such as large bodies of water, mountain ranges, large rivers, deserts, heavily forested areas, climate extremes; and, isolating factors such as being located on remote islands or in inaccessible mountain valleys. Isolating factors compounded by limited access to natural resources such as those that might be experienced by an island society as compared to ready access to resources common to a continentally based society can also significantly influence security preferences. Empirical observation suggests that a continental society may be inclined to set defense of domestic resources as a security priority while an isolated and resource limited society may be more likely to set a security priority on ensuring mobility and secure access to trade routes and reliable trading partners.

Proximity to other societies can introduce competition over territory, access to or control of resources, and ideological or philosophical differences, often resulting in conflict. Proximity, however, can result in similar values and the exchange of stimulating new ideas and beneficial innovations in subsistence technology. This exchange of ideas and innovations traditionally benefitted from a fortunate combination of the biophysical and the social environment. Geography can encourage transportation and communication allowing collaborative interaction among societies due to trade, seasonal tribal or religious gatherings, seasonal migrations, and war as allies against a common adversary.

According to Nolan and Lenski changes in technology relative to geography (Fig. 3) also had a profound influence on societies. A simple example is the impact on transportation and commerce by the advent of the age of sail from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the introduction of the sextant in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. With a more

efficient means of international travel and reliable navigation, primary routes of commerce between societies shifted from the land to the sea. Societies that had thrived on land based trade routes, as a result, often faded into near oblivion. Quiet coastal communities with protected harbors experienced tremendous development and shipbuilding became a growth industry.

The ability of a society to capitalize on new technologies was also often linked to access to specialized natural resources. Ship building required access to timber suitable to the construction of hulls and masts and a subsistence technology that was robust enough to produce the surplus needed to support the development of specialists such as skilled artisans and sailors.

The classification type of a society also influenced interaction. Agrarian societies with a land owning, governing elite that saw the peasant majority as subhuman did not tend to see any value added in investing in the wellbeing or intellectual development of the bulk of the population. Socialization outside the governing elite, as a result was limited and informal. There was also little interest among the elite to change the status quo. The landowning and governing elite saw a stable and secure power base in their ownership of the land and the requisite peasant population needed to work the land. This created a resistance to change and developmental inertia that resulted in limited progress in subsistence technological innovations. If not for the inflation introduced by exploration of the New World and the Industrial Revolution, agrarian societies would have been much slower to industrialize.

The status of women in a society also derived from society type and influenced priorities and core values. Herding societies tended to regard women as

property, with traditions such as a bride price, and exclusion from the primary work place. The possession of multiple wives was often respected as a sign of power and wealth. Agrarian societies were more egalitarian in terms of gender when it came to inclusion in the rural work force, but otherwise imposed inequities in terms of land ownership and a voice in governance in what was a highly stratified society. Maritime societies were more republican and preferred to exploit all aspects of society to benefit commerce, often including women. Their governance was by a slightly more enlightened Merchant elite oligarchy. Industrial society saw women entering the work force in unprecedented numbers with eventual recognition as participants in governance and ownership of capital.

The social classifications described by Nolan and Lenski represent generalizations as opposed to hard and fast rules determining social organization and ordering. Instead they represent guidelines based on dominant subsistence technologies and the culturally and genetically embedded social, political and economic organization that would allow a society to capitalize on the dominant strategic environment. In any given situation, furthermore, the influence of additional, often complex and sometimes unexpected environmental and strategic events or circumstances would require more in depth and extensive analysis. The social classifications do, however, provide guidelines and insights into the core values and organizational preferences of a society based on its historical subsistence technology.

### Strategic Culture, Geography, and Power

The preceding review of the history of human social development as an outcome of the dominant strategic environment, although rudimentary and familiar for

many, is necessary to appreciate the extent to which geography influences the values, priorities and security choices of a variety of society types. The formative relationship, in particular, that existed between historical societies and their respective geographies is important to understanding and defining the concept of Strategic Culture. The land, and where it was positioned relative to competing societies, the resources available for subsistence and the natural barriers and conduits for transportation and communication all influenced how a society would organize and order itself, what it would perceive as vital core values or capabilities, and what it would recognize as legitimate social, economic and political power or authority. The dominant physical and strategic environment will influence what can become deeply embedded shared perceptions of legitimate power, including the socially sanctioned means of acquiring, preserving and transferring power that can become so genetically and culturally embedded that they can continue to influence the choices and preferences of a society even after it has become a modern industrial state.

The need to establish power, or control over the means of survival, manifest early in human history and is marked with the coming together of early hunter gatherers. The human condition, at its most primitive, is at the mercy of the environment. Nature has first power over the individual. Survival is that initial struggle to overcome cold, heat, wet, dark and the predations of carnivores. The human animal, however, is highly adaptive. Advanced capacity for communication, for language also makes it easier to work collectively and collaboratively to overcome nature and assert some kind of power over the means of survival, to consistently acquire food, shelter and security from predators. The development of a society is an extension of this measure of individual

control or rudimentary power over nature. Through association in a collective it becomes possible not only to survive, but to develop a greater degree of mastery over the means of survival to the point where it is possible to accumulate sufficient resources to create a consistent surplus. This surplus enables societal specialization and the enhancement and advancement of subsistence technologies. It is this collective control or power over basic survival needs and the capacity to accumulate surplus that leads to more secure, more technologically advanced, sustainable societies.

Returning to the three key assumptions of Ecological-Evolutionary Theory (EET)<sup>168</sup> it is possible to see that two of the three assumptions represent causal relationships with geography that can significantly influence how a society organizes and orders itself. The biophysical environment determines the most appropriate subsistence technology for societal survival. As a species humanity is highly adaptive and well suited to making best use of the resources at hand to ensure individual and collective survival. If the geography makes arable land readily available, along with a good climate for agriculture, human societies will cultivate the land and organize themselves in a manner best suited to this subsistence technology. If the geography provides better survival options through herding, then a society will organize and order itself in a way that best supports the further development and advancement of this subsistence technology. The subsequent refinement of the subsistence practices can produce an incremental efficiency that can lead to surplus production and a capacity for specialization that will further advance subsistence technologies.

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

The third important assumption, based on the second of a shared human genetic heritage, is a capacity to develop a unique, cultural heritage. It is this capacity that enables a society to identify and formalize processes and practices that have proven, over time, to ensure collective success. Survival also dictates that a society ensures the successful dissemination of these proven successful choices to successive generations through formal and informal socialization.

Included in the building of a cultural heritage specific to a particular biophysical and social environment is the identification and development of a political and spiritual organization and social leadership that will ensure ongoing success. The development of a social organization is based, in part, on the selection of leaders who are the most skilled at and/or knowledgeable about the subsistence technologies relevant to the biophysical environment, and those most capable of ordering and organizing the rest of the population to maximize success within both the biophysical and the social environment.

The development of a cultural heritage is based on and reinforced by success. The cultural heritage of a society is passed down through socialization, and eventually becomes embedded in the fundamental social identity. This cultural heritage includes core values, beliefs, and priorities reinforced by generations of successful application. One of the cultural heritages embedded in a society is Strategic Culture.

Strategic Culture is that aspect of a society's cultural heritage that refers to the historically reinforced and environmentally influenced organizing and ordering of a society, especially as it relates to the identification of legitimate sources of power and the

legitimate transfer of that power. The concept relates to both the culturally embedded perception of threats and opportunities specific to a society's biophysical and social environment and the historically confirmed, most appropriate, and effective response patterns. Included in this is the identification of social behaviour that could undermine or compromise social order and collective survival relative to those identified threats. A successful society will invariably progress and expand, acquiring improved subsistence technologies and more complex social, religious, economic, and political organizations in response to the changing biophysical and social environment. Many aspects of the originating cultural heritage, however, will remain sufficiently embedded to influence choices long after their formative relevance has vanished.

There is power in the subsistence technologies, but it is a power over the biophysical environment that will give way to newer and better technologies. There is power in mastery of material technologies such as the working of metals that enables military and economic dominance in inter-societal competition. There is power in the relationship between organized religion and political leadership.

The dynamics of political and social power, codes of conduct, social and religious organization, and stratification, as well as the recognized sources of leadership authority do not change easily. If the governing elite of an agrarian society perceives land ownership as the legitimate source or authority of their power, that becomes a core value in their cultural heritage. So much so that when subsistence technology shifts actual power from land ownership to ownership of the means of production and the beginnings

of industrialization, this segment of society will continue to perceive land ownership as the only legitimate basis for governance and resist the shift.

A herding society may have traditionally seen power as something indicated by the personal power of an individual, the network of powerful contacts and the extent and range of personal influence. When actual power becomes associated with control of capital and access to a skilled and educated population to support a transition to industrialization, there will still be that underlying need to retain and demonstrate personal power and status, both domestically and in inter-state relations and negotiations.

The natural resources, topography, climate, and strategic position relative to competing societies ultimately determine how a people chooses to organize and order themselves in an adaptive social construct. These are the persistent conceptual elements that make up the strategic environment for a culture or society and as such will inform and shape their priorities and define their core values. The physical environment, and a people's capacity to harness or control that environment to their best advantage will determine how they identify threat and opportunity and the means they choose to achieve what they perceive are shared, collective, security objectives.

Geography, or the dominant strategic environment, provides a reliable independent variable, or set of reliable conceptual elements on which to base a conceptual definition of Strategic Culture. It allows researchers to examine the relationship between geography and the historical development of human society in a way that will allow the identification of consistent patterns of behaviour in strategic choices related to specific types of strategic environment. This introduction of geography

as a reliable independent variable will also facilitate analysis of how, and why, a society will choose to organize, and order itself in an adaptive social construct. It will also influence a people's capacity to harness or control that environment to their best advantage. It will determine not only how they identify threat and opportunity but also the means by which they choose to preposition themselves to achieve what they perceive are shared, collective, security objectives.

Integrating geography as an independent variable into previous attempts at Strategic Culture definition should address the challenges that have consistently confounded success in definitional consensus.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Revisiting the Challenges

Previous efforts to define and understand the concept of Strategic Culture have resulted in agreement on a range of challenges thought to stand in the way of understanding and reliable operational application of the concept and comparative analysis. If the relationship between a society and its strategic environment is, in fact, the variable missing in earlier research, it should be possible to revisit and overcome these challenges by incorporating the influence of the geographical link with embedded cultural heritage. It should also become apparent that the conceptual definition proposed in this thesis, by virtue of including this relationship between a society and its strategic environment will support operational application and further research towards a measurable comparative analysis of respective Strategic Cultures.

#### Eight Challenges Facing Strategic Culture Research

1. Where does the culture in question lie?

The concept of culture, as mentioned earlier, has often been described as difficult to define and complex. Refining the concept with the adjective of strategic increases understanding, but it still lacks sufficient clarity to support consistent application in operational and comparative analysis. By showing that Strategic Culture is the result of a causal relationship that a society has with its unique biophysical and social environment relative to perceived collective security, the concept becomes tied to an independent variable. This amounts to a grounding of the concept that enables consistent identification and application, particularly in comparative analysis.

2. Where does the behaviour that it shapes exist?"

The influence of the biophysical and social environment on a society shapes its core understanding of power relationships. As a result Strategic Culture shapes and stratifies power relationships both within a society and in its dealing with other societies. Specifically, this aspect of human cultural heritage will help identify what constitutes legitimate power in a given society, and as a result, will influence leadership selection, governance style and security priorities in relationships with other societies.

3. As a definition the concept was too unwieldy.

Previous research, in omitting the influence of strategic geography as a key factor in shaping Strategic Culture, presented definitions either loaded down with complex lists of dependent variables or so sparse as to have no real validity or applicability. The addition of the independent biophysical and social variables that derive from strategic geography allows the exclusion of lengthy and redundant descriptive phrases based exclusively on dependent variables and adds dimensionality to oversimplified definitions.

4. Patterns of behavior were subsumed within the definition, implying that strategic thought led consistently to one type of behavior.

Attempts to predict strategic thought on the basis of generalized patterns of culturally determined behaviour lacked a consistent conceptual frame of reference. Any analysis would be more context specific description inclined to cultural stereotyping. , Linking the concept of Strategic Culture to strategic geography provides a definitional and analytic frame of reference based on a, sometimes complex, range of measurable biophysical and strategic geographical variables. While these can exist, depending on

context, in a variety of combinations, they can, nonetheless, be consistently identified and ordered according to context specific priority or relevance in analysis.

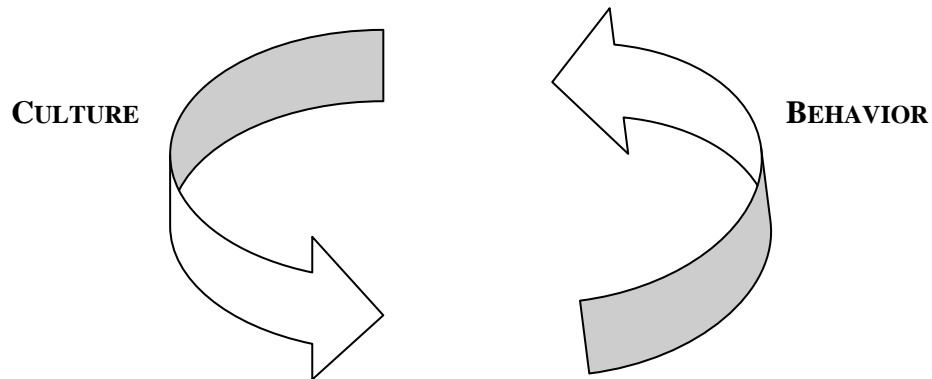
5. There was a problematic assumption that there was homogeneity to a society's strategic culture that carried across time.

Researchers agreed that there had been a tendency to assume a uniform Strategic Culture associated with each state. Integrating the influence of geography and strategic environment shows that the concept refers to an evolving relationship that a society has with its strategic environment. Progress in subsistence technologies, or control of the biophysical environment; improved capacity for specialization; and, increased productivity; leads to increased complexity and stratification within a society. Core values based on perceptions of legitimate power sources and power relationships may become embedded, but interpretation and day to day application will evolve to meet changing social, economic and political needs.

6. The debate had become a symbolic discourse that attempted to link culture and behavior.

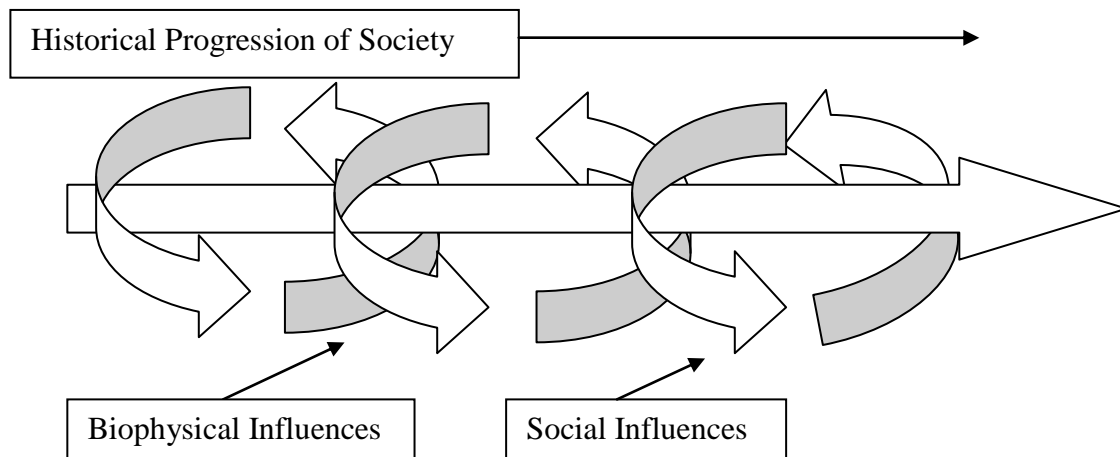
The introduction of strategic geography as a grounding set of independent variables when defining Strategic Culture takes the discussion out of the endless, disconnected, closed loop debate (Fig. 5) between culture and behavior. The strategic geography shapes aspects of the cultural heritage of a society including its Strategic Culture. Instead of trying to determine which came first, the culture or the behavior, it becomes a case of understanding the more complex dynamic relationship between the environment and a society that determines responsive behavior. Successful choices and behavior patterns are repeated, reinforced and sufficiently socialized by historical application that they become a part of the society's cultural heritage and subsequently

influence future behavior. Environment determines behavior, which in turn shapes culture, which further influences behavior. Instead of a causal loop, it is an incremental causal relationship between multiple aspects of a society, more like a directed spiral than a closed loop. (Fig. 6)



**Figure 5:** Closed Causal Loop

In a closed causal loop each characteristic, culture and behavior, causes the other creating either a static and isolated appreciation of the society’s Strategic Culture, or one that floats unconnected and cannot, therefore, be used effectively or reliably as a basis for multiple stakeholder comparative analysis.



**Figure 6:** Directed Causal Spiral

In a directed causal spiral the biophysical and social environment shape evolving response aspects of culture and behavior. This presents culture and behavior as dependent variables grounded in a set of independent biophysical and social variables and provides

a framework for understanding Strategic Culture that can serve as a reliable basis for both operational analysis and comparative analysis.

7. The elite that led strategic decision making had been socialized in and were therefore constrained by the same symbolic myths and traditions of their predecessors. While it was accepted that this could result in differences in national behavior, it was not clear whether this meant one should expect cross-national differences in strategy.

The strategic environment plays a significant role in determining both the means of leadership selection and the order and structure of governance and society best suited to the historical subsistence technology that first shaped the values, priorities, and preferences of a society. The subsequent stratification of the society will correspond to the order and structure of governance in terms of the extent of control, or access to legitimate power allotted to different levels of a society and core aspects of this stratification will become embedded in the cultural heritage of the society. Individual and group placement in the organizational structure, often determined by characteristics such as economic status, age and gender, will influence preferences to either maintain the power relationship status quo or move towards change.

This stratification of access to power not only has a direct relationship with culturally embedded recognition of legitimate power, but is also included in a society's evolving formal and informal socialization processes. Different levels in the social power hierarchy will therefore attach different significance to the symbolic myths and traditions of their predecessors based on their proximity to and control of power within their society. These differences can be more readily understood and even quantified when analyzed from the perspective of a Strategic Culture linked to historical and evolving biophysical and strategic geographical influences.

8. The focus on the weakness of realism was identified as flawed and its dependence on organizational culture as a key independent variable in strategic planning was described as troublesome.

Realism operates on state centric analysis of international relations which is diminishing in relevance as technology empowers and links more and more stakeholders in the game of international security and power brokering. Ken Booth noted the dwindling relevance of realism as a basis for analysis in his 1994 paper 'Security and Self Reflections of a Fallen Realist' that:

“Critical security studies begin in a rejection of traditional security theory. It rejects, in particular: the definition of politics that places the state and its sovereignty at the centre of the subject; the moral authority of states; the belief that the state is and should be the key 'guardian of peoples’”<sup>169</sup>

Including the influence of geography in a conceptual definition of Strategic Culture, incorporates the influence of the strategic environment on the development of social constructs best suited to collective security. This frame of reference for a definition, however, does not exclude realism as a means of explaining and understanding state behaviour in international relations. It merely places the state in a broader context as one example of a social construct. It also redefines organizational culture as a variable dependent on the strategic environment.

Human societies have self-organized in an evolving and varied range of society types that adapted their historical political organization and ordering to meet the dominant biophysical and social challenges facing collective security. Before the state, there was the city state and before that there were towns, villages, tribes, and clans. In

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<sup>169</sup> Booth, K. (1994). Security and Self Reflections of a Fallen Realist. Strategies in Conflict: Critical Approaches to Security Studies. York University, Toronto, Ontario, Centre for International and Strategic Studies.

short, there have been incremental varieties of social constructs in response to developments in subsistence technology and the security challenges associated with the dominant biophysical and social environment for a given society.

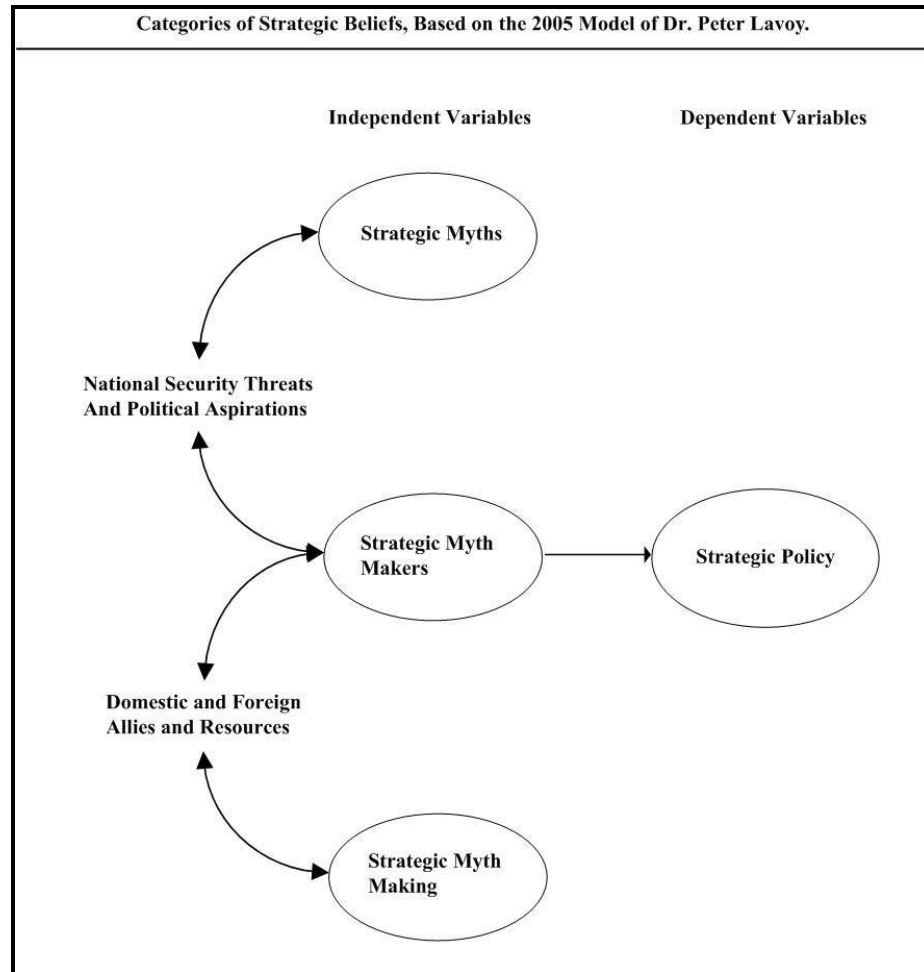
Today international modes of instant information and capital transfer and exchange, as well as rapid transnational transportation of goods, services, and people are changing the security challenges facing human societies. New social constructs based more on shared interests and less on geographic proximity are beginning to emerge and influence security choices at the individual, community, state and international level. Realism will continue to have validity as an analytic tool as long as the state continues as one of the dominant social constructs influencing international relations. It is necessary, however, to reposition realism from a role of dominance in international relations analysis and include it instead as a useful means of understanding the actions and choices of the state as the still dominant construct in a growing number of relevant social constructs.

### Revisiting Previous Models

The connection between Strategic Culture and the biophysical and social environmental factors that have historically shaped societies and eventually states also enables a deeper understanding of the origins of the core values driving the political elite in a state and of its power relationship with the subordinate Strategic Culture strata within the same state.

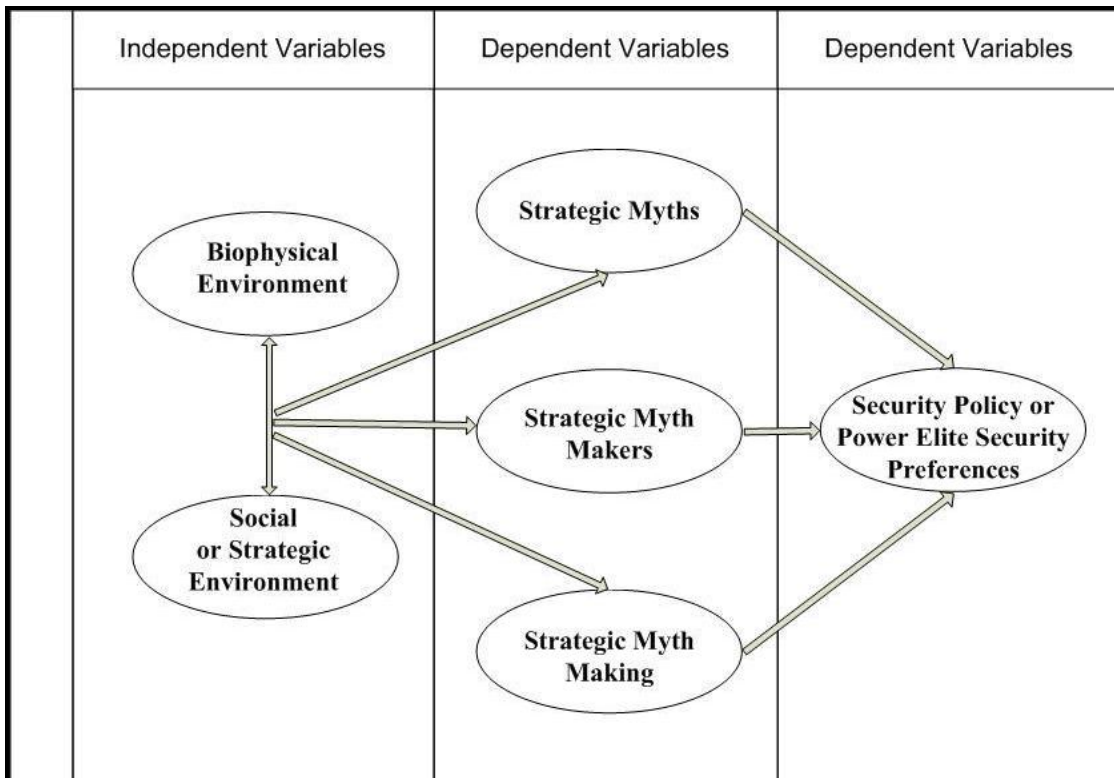
Lavoys' visual representation of strategic beliefs depicts the components of strategic myth as independent variables (Fig. 7) when they are, in fact, dependent variables. They evolve as a part of the socialization process driven by the social

organizing and ordering specific to the challenges of the subsistence technologies and collective security demands related to a specific environment. (Fig. 8) The strategic environment of a society will influence the evolution of explicatory and instructional myths that ensure continuance of the social organization and ordering that has historically proven to best meet the subsistence and security challenges of that society.



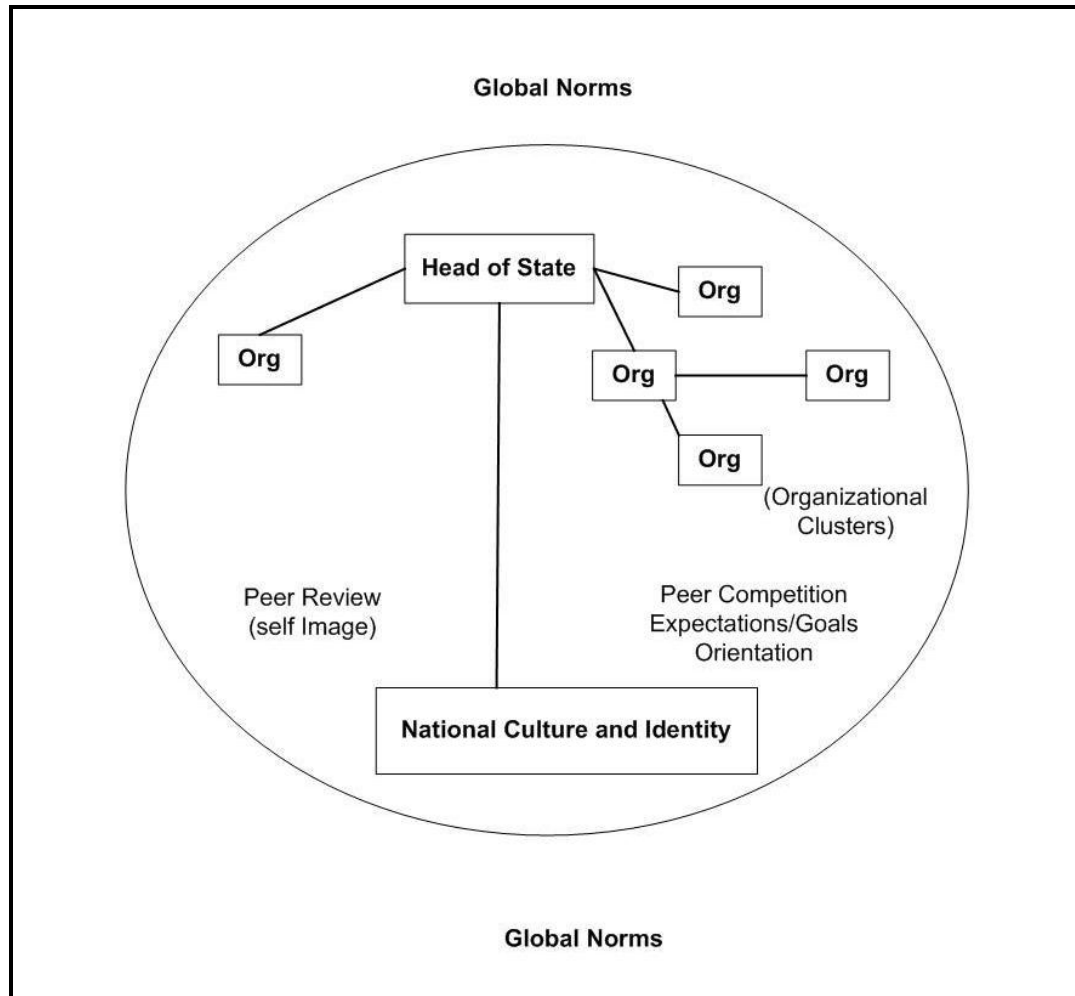
**Figure 7:** Categories of Strategic Beliefs, Peter Lavoy.<sup>170</sup> Lavoy's visual representation of strategic beliefs depicts the components of strategic myth as independent variables.

<sup>170</sup> Stone, E. L., Twomey, Dr. Christopher P., and Lavoy, Dr. Peter R. (September 2005). Comparative Strategic Culture, Conference Report. Center for Contemporary Conflict, Office of the U.S. Defence Threat Reduction Agency, USA



**Figure 8:** Revision of Lavoy Categories of Strategic Beliefs - A revision of the Lavoy categories shows strategic beliefs as dependent variables and introduces the biophysical and strategic environment as independent variables. Strategic beliefs and myths evolve as a part of the socialization process driven by the social organizing and ordering specific to the challenges of the dominant subsistence technologies and collective security demands related to the biophysical and strategic environment.

Johnsons' model is incomplete as it presents National Culture and National Identity as independent variables without any indication of how to differentiate between those of one society and those of another. (Fig. 9) Grounding the model with a link to biophysical and social environmental factors as independent variables (Fig. 10) allows the researcher to more readily identify measurable, distinguishing, causal characteristics for the Strategic Culture of a specific society.

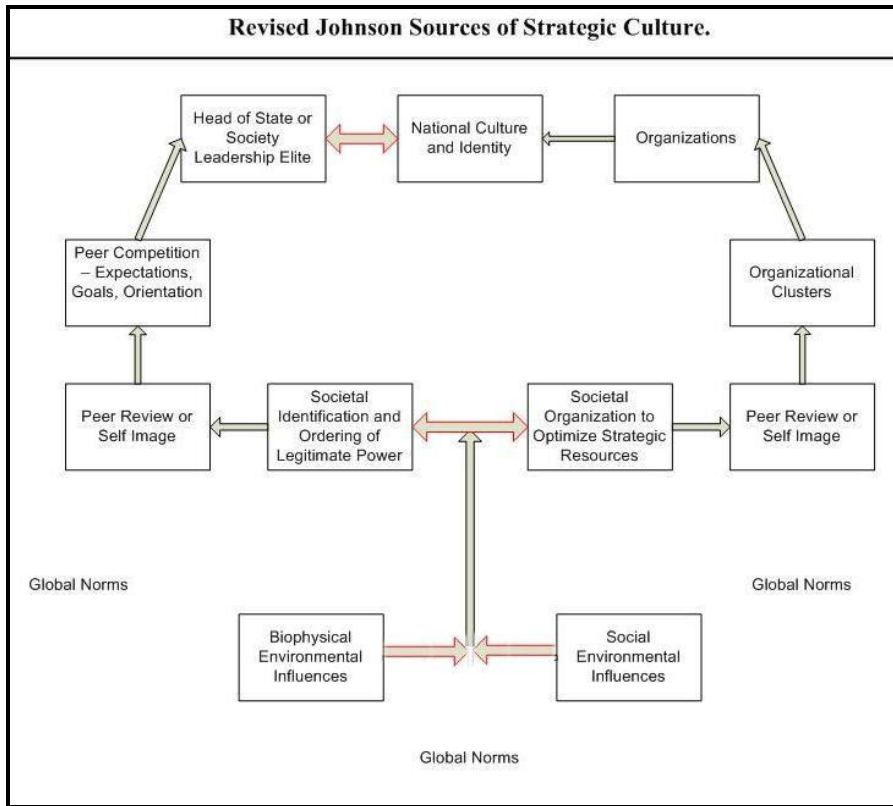


**Figure 9: Sources of Strategic Culture, Jeannie Johnson.**<sup>171</sup> Johnsons’ model presents National Culture and National Identity as independent variables without any indication of how to differentiate between the origins of those from one society with those of another.

Surrounding the sources model with a sea of ‘Global Norms’ remains problematic as the international community has regionally defined norms as opposed to some great homegenous global standard of socialization. For the purposes of supporting the definition of Strategic Culture proposed in this paper, however, the focus will remain on the internal model.

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.



**Figure 10:** Revision of Johnson Sources of Strategic Culture. A revision of the Johnson model shows how National Identity is first shaped by the organizational demands of subsistence technology but also comes to shape the further development and evolution of social and political organization.

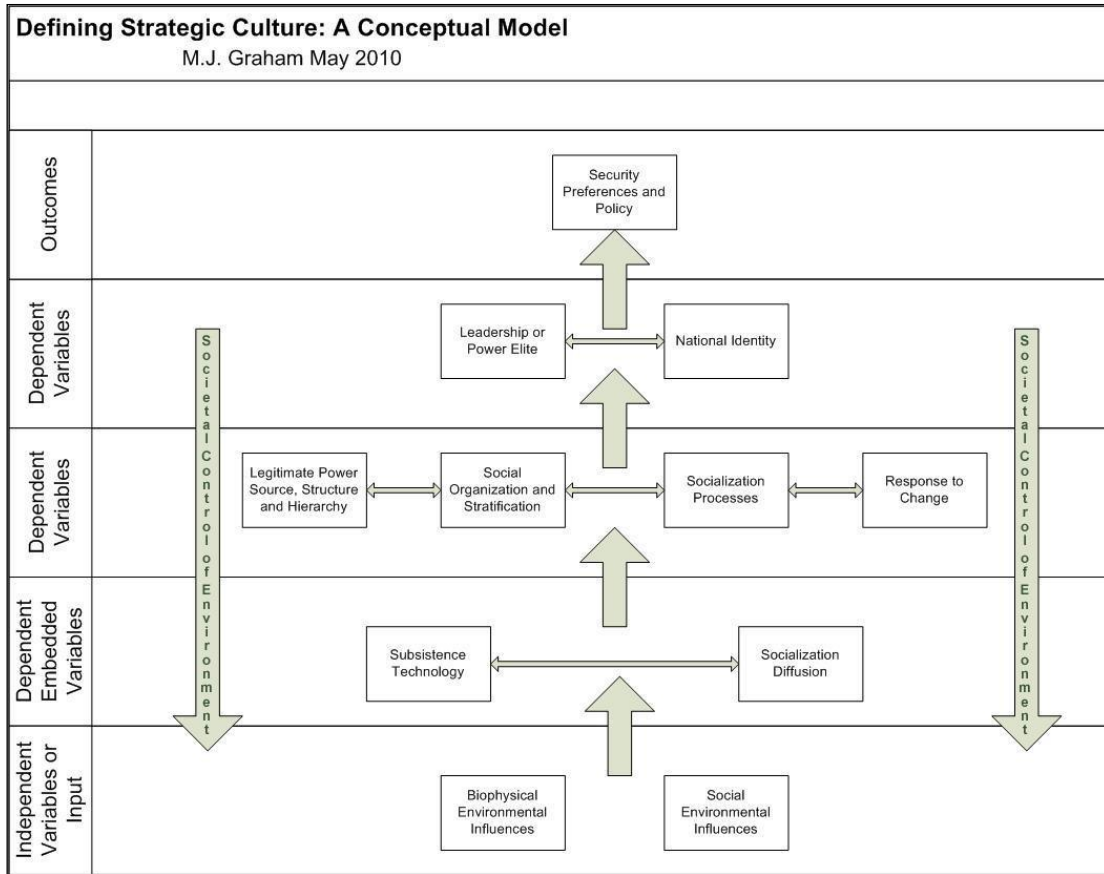
The subsistence technology historically best suited to the dominant biophysical and social environment will significantly influence the core social organizing and ordering with regards to traditional power relationships and distribution of power. National Identity is first shaped by the organizational demands of subsistence technology but also comes to shape the further development and evolution of social and political organization. Leadership must, to some extent, respect and accommodate the core values and priorities of National Identity, but at the same time can influence and evolve National Identity to enhance or consolidate power. The organization of the political, social, and economic elements of society will influence the ordering of power relationships at the

same time as being influenced and shaped by the dominant or elite power source within the organizational hierarchy.

### Revisiting the Proposed Model

It now becomes possible to revisit the proposed conceptual definition for Strategic Culture. Visually, the model for the proposed definition identifies the independent variables as input and the dependent variable of security decision making and policy as output. (Fig. 11)

The model also shows a return flow of control from the society back to the environment. As a society develops and masters more productive subsistence technologies to make better and more efficient use of the resources available within their biophysical environment, the power balance shifts. Where once the environment determined core social organization and power relationships, the move towards industrialization sees a society begin to cultivate the capacity to reshape their environment to meet their needs, to enhance and consolidate political, social and economic power. Society, in this same process also begins to reshape itself, increasing in complexity and stratification, and modifying less embedded aspects of cultural heritage. Included in this process is a correlating need for a more extensive system of governance and law.



**Figure 11:** Defining Strategic Culture: Grahams' Conceptual Model. The model for the proposed definition of Strategic Culture identifies the independent variables as input and the dependent variable of security decision making and policy as output. It also shows a return flow of control from the society back to the environment.

It will be easier to revisit the proposed definition by breaking it down and analyzing it from the perspective of the sociological and historical information presented thus far.

"Strategic Culture is the culturally embedded social, economic, and political organization and ordering of a society as historically shaped by successful interaction with and adaptation to their prevailing physical and strategic environment"

Taken from the perspective of the development of human society types as a collective security response to environmental challenges, it is possible to see that conceptually, the environment specific to the historical development of a society will influence organizational and power stratification choices. The social organization will reflect the nature and organization of the work needed to develop and apply the appropriate subsistence technology for the dominant physical environment. This social organization preference will persist long enough to become embedded in the cultural heritage of a society. This means it will continue to influence social organization long after the society has evolved to a more advanced subsistence technology and a more complex social organization and stratification.

The same holds true for economic, religious, and political organization. Key in political organization is the historical identification of legitimate power sources and the stratification of power within the political and social organization. The United Kingdom, for example, comes from an Agrarian society that was first to move to Industrialization. Perception of power in the society, however, continues to have strong emotional links to land ownership. This has been offset by a more dominant role in governance from the population sector that owns the means of production. The political elite, however, whether land or capital owning, recognize the need to accommodate the interests and concerns of the artisan and laboring classes to the extent that such accommodation will ensure the maintenance of the power status quo.

Much of the Middle East, on the other hand, has its organizational origins in Herding societies and traditionally identifies legitimate power as that which is associated with personal associations and control of a strong following within the society.

The governing elite dominates a significantly hierarchical patriarchy and places value in achieving high political and social esteem, both domestically and among the power elite of neighbouring states.

It is acknowledged that these are generalizations presented as simple examples, but based on the research done by Sociologists into the origins and staying power or culturally embedded aspects of Human Society types it is valid to accept that there is a significant relationship between the historical biophysical and social environment of a society and their contemporary collective security preferences.

As such, it is not a static thing but an evolving capacity of a people to coordinate and collaborate their efforts to capitalize on the physical resources available to them and to develop an advantageous strategic relationship within a larger local, regional or global society.

The shared objective of collective security will evolve as a people develops its capacity to control or make best use of their physical and strategic environment. As the Strategic Culture for a people evolves, however, there will likely remain at it's core some key aspects of the original influence of the physical and strategic environment that shaped their fundamental social, political and economic organizational priorities, values, trends and patterns.

Strategic Culture is a dynamic relationship between the people of a society and the physical and strategic environment in which they live. It is dynamic in that it is subject to gradual change as the relationship with the environment changes. Where the land will influence an embedded cultural heritage based on historical successes in subsistence technology and strategic relations, those same success will influence selective

perpetuation of that cultural heritage. It is dynamic in that it evolves in relation to the capacity of both the society and the dominant subsistence technology to create sufficient surplus necessary to support societal specialization and the further advancement of subsistence technology. If the environment, furthermore, is particularly hostile or does not include natural conduits for transportation and information exchange, the diffusion of socialization and advances in technological innovation will move slowly and the society will, overall, prove resistant to change.

There will also evolve tiers of Strategic Culture within any given people, dependent on an individuals or sub-groups capacity to access and capitalize on available physical resources and their strategic position relative to their local, regional and international society.

The biophysical and social environment of a society type will contribute to both the social organization and the distribution of power within a society based on the best means to capitalize on the available resources for subsistence. This involves the gradual embedding of social stratification based on both proximity to power and the recognized or legitimate means of transferring power within a society. This stratification also accounts for variations in perception of priorities relating to social organization, prioritizing of core social, political, and religious values, and the potential for mobility or advancement from one strata to another.

Providing a conceptual definition for Strategic Culture, while based on an accumulation of previous research, is not an end in and of itself. It is a starting point, a simple analytic tool that can contribute to ongoing efforts to understand the international

community and achieve a more objective appreciation of the concerns and priorities of the stakeholders competing for dominance in global security.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Looking Ahead

The definition for Strategic Culture proposed in this thesis benefitted from the accumulation of previous research on the concept. The extent and consistency of recent research in particular, is attributable, in part, to the compelling nature of the concept, especially in an international environment that has so profoundly changed in the past fifty years. It makes intuitive sense that there would be some fundamental, common, independent variable, or set of variables, that shapes the cultural characteristics of stakeholders in international relations. The consistently applicable set of independent variables or norms in the definition proposed in this thesis, once quantified and categorized in future research, could enhance stakeholder analysis and give useful insights into their respective security preferences. The global community humanity calls home is increasing in complexity and in the diversity of state and non-state stakeholders determined to influence self –interested change, legitimately or through the threat or application of lethal violence. Traditional state borders are giving way to instant transnational communications and increasingly efficient and accessible international transportation. Conflict is no longer restricted to ideological or territorial differences between states or between conflicted interest groups engaged in internal state civil wars.

The conceptual definition for Strategic Culture proposed in this thesis is relevant in this emerging international community as it has the potential to be a useful analytic tool in assessing the real objectives and intent in the rhetoric and actions of this growing diversity of stakeholders. As Elizabeth Stone suggested in her literature review for the 2006 Curriculum Study, “there is a vast difference between what leaders think or

say they are doing and the deeper motives for what in fact they do.”<sup>172</sup> From the perspective of the development of security policy, Strategic Culture has the potential to provide a better appreciation of a potential adversary’s real strategic perspective in an emerging or potential conflict or contest of ideologies.

Researchers have recognized that there is a need to re-examine culture as a legitimate tool of policy analysis and that it was better approached not as a single system but as a “conglomerate of co-existing variables, with each major regional and cultural area resonating with its own strategic culture.”<sup>173</sup>

By anchoring a conceptual definition of Strategic Culture to the stable independent variables found in the relationship between a society and its strategic environment the concept has the potential to provide a measurable consistency, valid for application in comparative analysis. There is a measure of universality to the concept of a dynamic relationship between a people and their unique biophysical and social environment. This serves as a set of core independent variables against which a wide range of society specific, geographic, and strategic differences, or dependent variables, can be measured, and analyzed, in comparative analysis.

Researchers have also identified a need to learn from the past. There is double relevance to this recommendation. First, it is important to build on existing research into not only Strategic Culture, but pre-existing similar concepts such as Political Culture and National Identity. The study of International Relations will benefit

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Lavoy, D. P. R. S., Dr. Elizabeth L.; and, Twomey, Dr. Christopher P. (2005). Comparative Strategic Culture Conference Report Center for Contemporary Conflict, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School for the Advanced Systems and Concepts Office of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

more from a collaborative accumulation of ideas and insights than it will from a linear refuting of competing theories. The story of modern society represents no more than a heartbeat in the grander history of human societies, and yet the changes of the past century alone, the technological and organizational changes in particular, have been both profound in impact, and rapid in transition. There is significant value in approaching an analysis of contemporary International Relations from a deeper historical and sociological perspective. A better understanding of the origins of human societies can provide valuable insights into the embedded core values and power relations specific to different types of modern social constructs, whether they are traditional states, non-governmental organizations, corporations, dominant religions, interest groups, organized criminals, or terrorist.

Previous research consistently referred to a need to use cross discipline studies. The research behind this paper benefitted greatly when it departed from the academic confines of Political Science and International Relations (IR) theory. By exploring the concept of culture and even of Strategic Culture from the perspective of History, Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology it was possible to achieve a new dimensionality of understanding and connect IR theory to Social and Psychological behavioral theory. There has been significant complementing research in these fields, often carried out in isolation from IR theory or Political Science. There would be value in developing a collaborative, cross disciplinary approach to further research that saw complementing studies in a variety of disciplines working together as opposed to in isolated, parallel tracks of research.

The transformation of the international arena has introduced competing, security stakeholders that include a growing number of non-state actors. Any analysis of the dynamic in international relations must include this diversity if it is to be relevant, timely and reliable. The concept of Strategic Culture, when approached as a social construct that results from the relationship a society has with its strategic environment, enables application beyond the state centric, thereby giving it utility in analyzing both state and non-state security stakeholders.

By approaching a definition of Strategic Culture through the lens of Social Constructivism it is possible to support Realism as a valid theoretical basis for analysis of the state as a dominant social construct in international relations. It also allows this analysis to take place concurrently with complementing analysis of non-state social constructs based on social and psychological behavioral theories. The increasing variety of relevant actors or stakeholders in IR demands that research move past linear, theoretical modelling and adopt a more lateral and networked approach. This will enable the continued relevance of Realism as a legitimate means of analysis of the state as just one of a diversity of increasingly relevant and sometimes competing social constructs. One theoretical approach does not need to supplant its predecessor. It is merely an expansion of theoretical understanding in support of greater and deeper appreciation of how the world works.

There is also a need to recognize the impact of the internet on concepts of culture and Strategic Culture. There are arguments that claim the Industrial Age is still in full swing, but this perspective has been challenged, more and more often, with the view that the information age has taken over. Social, economic, and political organizations are

beginning to feel the effects of this transition to an information based society as networked organizational structures begin to supplant traditional hierarchical models. Successful social and business relations have become more and more dependent on same-time, networked, information management and instant, networked, communication.

The face of conflict itself has undergone a similar transformation. Success in the battlefield has become more and more dependent on having a capacity for instant, reliable, information exchange and immediate but secure communications. The threats of today and tomorrow are no longer exclusively driven by state centric concerns and priorities. Instead they have become increasingly “diffuse, dispersed, multi-dimensional nonlinear, and ambiguous than industrial-age threats.”<sup>174</sup>

Strategic Culture, defined as a social construct shaped by environmental factors, allows potential application to a virtual environment in that it assesses the relationship a society has with their dominant environment. Humanity is moving towards a future less defined by state borders and natural geographic barriers than by shared interests, priorities, and values. It will take time, but the approach to research advocated in this paper can lead to a refined, measurable, operational definition applicable to physical, social, and virtual environments that can impact on the actions and security preferences of most social constructs.

The conceptual definition for Strategic Culture presented in this thesis is sound, but it requires further research to establish a testable, operational theory. Effective future research will not only continue to build on all that has gone before, but will also

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<sup>174</sup> Howlett, D. (October 2005). "Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature." Strategic Insights **Volume IV**( Issue 10).

employ a little calculated hindsight. The proposed conceptual definition can be tested for future, operational, and comparative utility by retrospective application in a variety of context specific, historical security scenarios, to confirm the validity of the distinct conceptual variables used in the proposed definition. Once the separate, conceptual components in the proposed, conceptual, definition have been confirmed, or refined, through context-specific application, it will be possible to take research to the next level and establish a basis for reliable comparative analysis. This will involve identification of appropriate independent and dependent variables, with sufficient universality in application, for the development of a reliable, comparative analysis matrix. These variables would include measurable geographical, sociological, and psychological characteristics that could impact on security preferences, either as a result of an embedded cultural heritage, or as a direct, real-time, response to perceived threat or opportunity.

A final goal of future research should be to establish terms of reference for reliable application of the comparative analysis matrix that include a precondition of reflective, or self-analysis. A great deal of misunderstanding and subsequent human conflict has developed throughout history because one stakeholder has inadvertently projected their unique, culturally embedded, views of threat and opportunity on their perception of the security preferences and choices of an assumed adversary. Without a clear and comprehensive appreciation of internal core values, priorities, and threat perceptions it is easy to superimpose them as a criteria for analysis of the actions of a perceived adversary. It is critical to understanding the actions of another to first understand the internal core motivators of the cultural heritage of respective analysts, so

that all stakeholders in a potential conflict or collaborative situation can become deeply familiar and comfortable with their specific and unique Strategic Cultures.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Conclusion

Strategic Culture, though fairly young as a specific concept, has origins that can be traced back to the classical writings of Thucydides and Sun Tzu. The latter in particular contended that success in battle was heavily dependent on knowledge and understanding of both the enemy and yourself. In 'The Art of Warfare' Chapter 3 he states:

“So to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles is not the highest excellence; the highest excellence is to subdue the enemy’s army without fighting at all.

These five factors are the way (tao) of anticipating victory.

Thus it is said:

He who knows the enemy and himself - Will never in a hundred battles be at risk;

He who does not know the enemy but knows himself – Will sometimes win and sometimes lose;

He who knows neither the enemy nor himself – Will be at risk in every battle.”<sup>175</sup>

Theorists and philosophers have long held that it was best to know and understand your adversaries, but as Sun Tzu pointed out, it was best to also know yourself. If the policy makers of a society or organization are not aware of their own Strategic Culture, they may inadvertently and erroneously project their own perceptions of threat and opportunity, their own terms of reference for legitimate power and legitimate power transfer when trying to determine and understand the choices of a perceived adversary. Strategic Culture, given reliable conceptual definition, has the potential to overcome misunderstanding in multiple stakeholder analysis in international relations.

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<sup>175</sup> Carr, C., Ed. (2000). The Book of War : Sun-Tzu's "The Art of War" & Karl Von Clausewitz's "On War". New York, N.Y., U.S.A., Random House Inc: 2000 Modern Library Paperback Edition.

It has already been pointed out that future research into Strategic Culture will benefit significantly from a multidisciplinary approach. Given the impact of the information age and the growing transnational nature of human relations and interactions, knowledge itself and research in a variety of fields is moving towards a more discipline inclusive approach to expanding human understanding. Strategic Culture is a compelling concept, in part because it offers the prospect of improved understanding of collective human activities related to security. It also offers analytic tools relevant to reflective analysis, both for the individual and a socially constructed, or organizational grouping, and subsequent improved self understanding. It has been tempting to include reference to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theories, but that falls outside the bounds and constraints of a conceptual definition, and will have more relevance when it comes time to establish a matrix for comparative analysis that includes measurable and quantifiable Strategic Culture variables. Maslow's Hierarchy has fascinating application when attempting to determine where a human society stands developmentally, based on their level of subsistence technology and a capacity to produce sufficient surplus to support societal specialization and active promotion of specialized leisure pursuits.

It is also important, in closing, to establish parameters for successful future application of Strategic Culture as an analytic tool. Scenarios that would benefit from Strategic Culture analysis are often extremely complex with multiple historical, environmental, and social layers impacting on stakeholder security preferences. Unless and until a comprehensive matrix for both context specific, operational, and comparative analysis is developed, there will be a tendency to make invalid, sweeping, often ethno, gender, or generational centric, generalizations in the name of Strategic Culture. There

will also be a tendency to want to apply the concept as a predictive tool as opposed to employing it as a useful, but not exclusive, analytic tool for deeper understanding of the complex issues shaping stakeholder security choices and preferences in a given scenario.

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