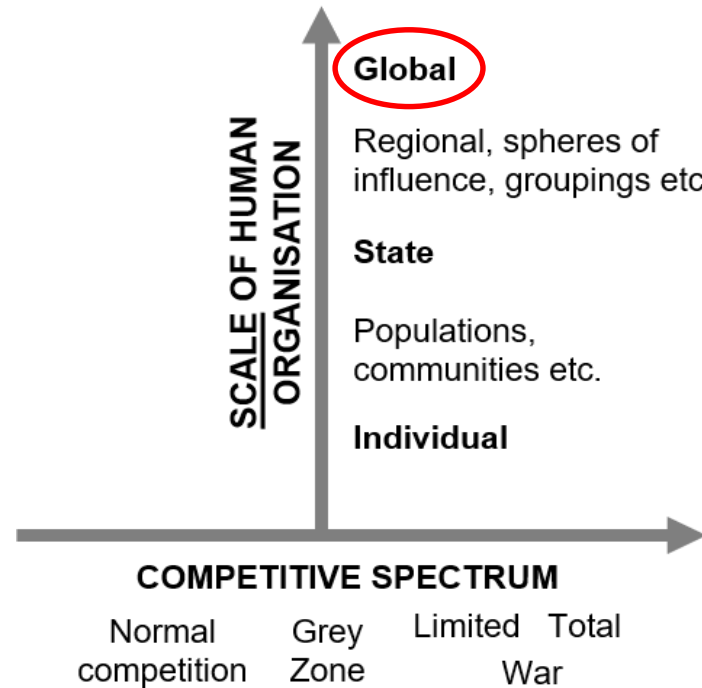
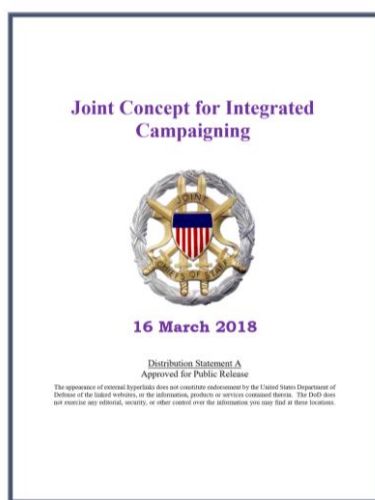
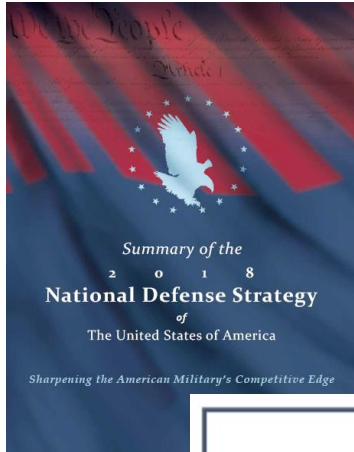


Global strategy amidst the globe's cultures:

Cultures in individual cognition, states and the global system

Nicholas Wright
5th December 2019 SMA brief
Georgetown, UCL,
Intelligent Biology, New America

Grey Zone *and* Global



How can the US make global strategy in a world both vast and rich with cultural diversity?

First, how can US policymakers make *global* strategy?

58 million square miles of land; 193 countries, 1000 cities with over 500,000 inhabitants; 7.7 billion people; 4 billion internet users; 7000 languages; and 100 million Amazon Alexas.

Second, how should strategy consider global *cultural* diversity?

SCALE OF HUMAN ORGANISATION



Global

State

Individual

Concepts of cultures

Global cultures

Civilisations, regions

External: Strategic culture, ways of war etc.

Internal: Political culture, national character

Communities and groups

Organisational culture

Individual cognition

Disciplines

(e.g. security studies)

(e.g. IR, security, critical studies)

(e.g. security studies)

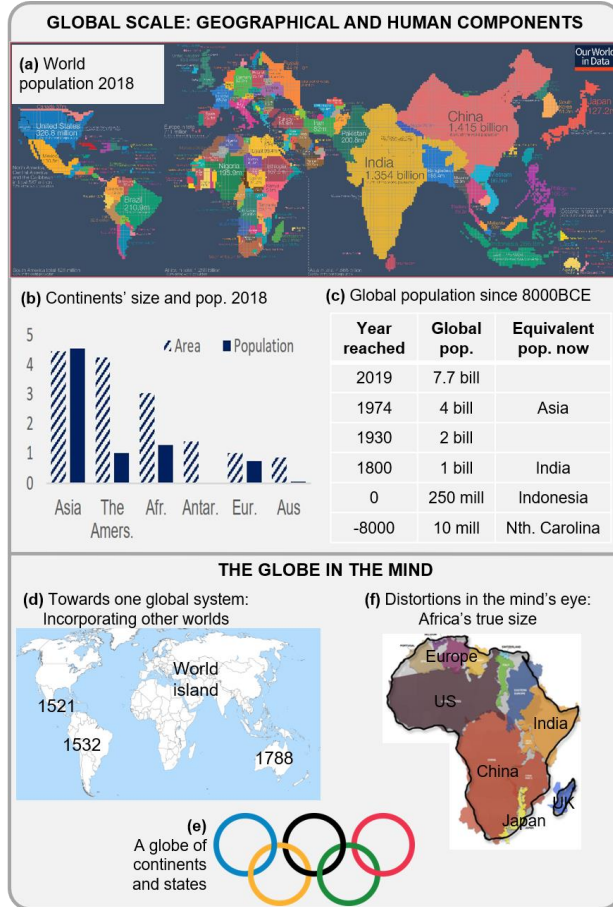
(e.g. political science)

(e.g. anthropology, sociology)

(e.g. management studies)

(e.g. cross-cultural cognition)

WHAT GLOBAL DOES (AND DOESN'T) MEAN

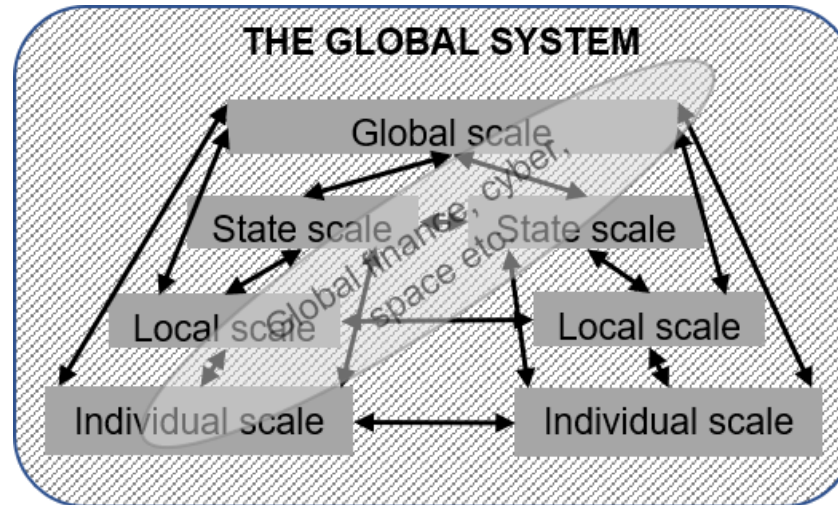


*I define ‘**global**’ as meaningfully involving all the world’s continents on which significant fractions of the world’s population live.*

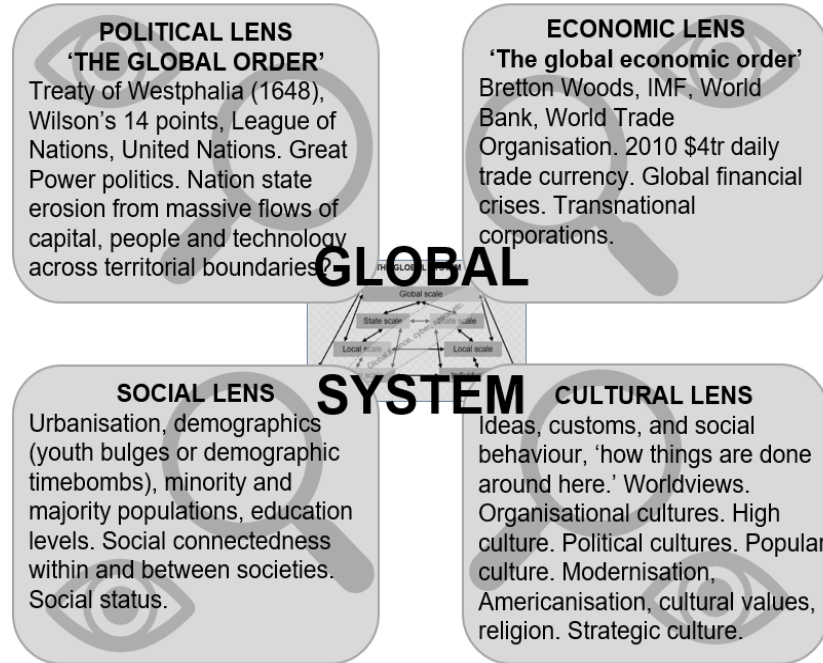
Apply to: ‘global system,’ ‘global order,’ ‘global-isation,’ ‘global confrontation,’ or ‘global strategy.’

The **global system** is a system-of-systems covering the whole of human society across all the world's continents on which significant fractions of the world's population live, and its key sub-systems include:

- states (e.g. the US or China),
- highly globalised subsystems (e.g. the global financial system or the UN), and
- systems at other scales (e.g. sub-state regions like Catalonia; or above the state like the competing Cold War liberal and Communist international systems).



Four lenses to characterise the global system, to analyse its *political*, *social*, *cultural* and *economic* faces.



Globalisation is a shift in the relative amount of influence that the global system's different scales exert on the lives of humanity's individuals, and specifically an increase in the degree that those lives are global. It occurs, often not simultaneously, along all four faces.

GLOBAL CONFRONTATIONS: A HISTORY SINCE 1492

A **global confrontation** is one that meaningfully involves all the world's continents on which significant fractions of the world's population live. (Four clear cases)

		Europe	Asia	Americas	Africa
1500-1753 European confrontations and growing global capabilities					
1519-1659	Habsburg bid for European mastery	+++	+/-	+	-
1689-97	French bid for European mastery, Part I (1660-1753)	+++	+/-	-	-
1702-14		+++	+/-	-	-
1739-48		+++	+/-	+/-	-
1754 to 1939 Eurocentric global confrontations					
1754-63	Seven Years' War	+++	+	+	+/-
1793-1815	French Revolutionary / Napoleonic Wars	+++	-	+	+/-
1904-14	Pre-WW1 Grey Zone	+++	+	-	+
1914-18	World War 1	+++	++	++	+
1931-39	Pre-WW2 Grey Zone	+++	+++	-	+
1939-present Global confrontations waged with culturally non-European great powers					
1939-45	World War 2	+++	+++	+++	++
1945-91	Cold War	+++	+++	+++	++
2014-present	Current Grey Zone era	+	+	+	+/-

Three historical epochs:

European conflicts, growing global links

Eurocentric global confrontations

Global confrontations waged with **culturally** non-European great powers

Futures

'Non-European' superpower

GLOBAL CONFRONTATIONS SINCE 1492: FOUR LESSONS

LESSON ONE: Great power confrontations have been **increasingly global** and that will likely continue;

LESSON TWO: Great power protagonists have been increasingly **culturally** non-European, and whether or how that might matter is examined later in the report;

LESSON THREE: Global system effects matter, and look out particularly for **third parties** that end up the real winners of global confrontations;

LESSON FOUR: Whether or not a global dimension to strategy **pays** dividends depends on identifiable factors (e.g. third parties, balance 'Continental' and 'global' legs of strategy; self-restraint; loopholes in blockades).

WHAT GLOBAL STRATEGY DOES (AND DOESN'T) MEAN

Strategy is the art of creating power.

What “global strategy” *can* mean depends on capability



Available to non-superpowers:

- Directly affecting highly globalised sub-systems (e.g. global finance, global cyber) within the global system.
- Cause worldwide influence on an aspect of the global system (e.g. Russia breaking norms for global effect).



Only **superpowers** (i.e. now only US) can conduct a **global great power strategy**, which I define as *conducting strategy that involves important multi-domain activities and interests in all continents that contain a significant fraction of the world's population.*

Historical **global great powers** (Britain, USSR, US)

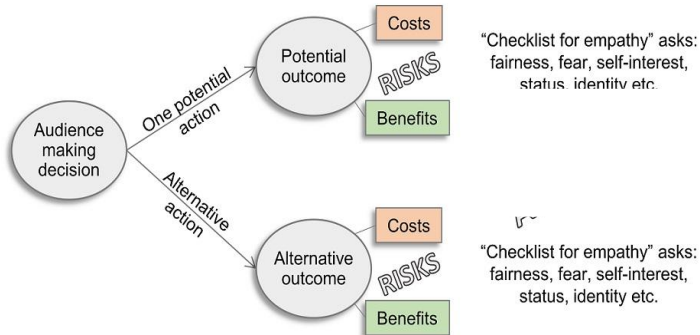
“Global” is not captured by existing scales for strategy:

- Strategic , operational, tactical
- Grand strategy (and doctrines named after US Presidents)
- ‘Levels of analysis’ (e.g. academic economics or IR)

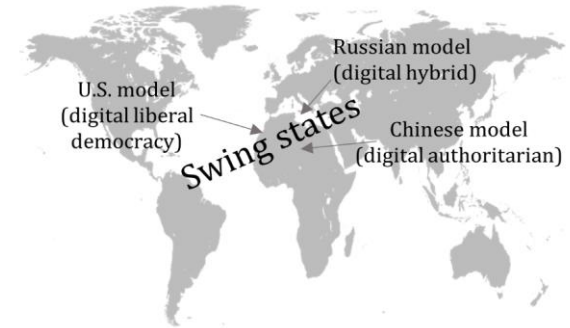
HOW DOES ONE MAKE GLOBAL STRATEGY?

- (1) Adopt a 'global mindset'
- (2) Harness 'global system effects', not just actor-specific effects
- (3) The US domestic system's characteristics crucially drive US global influence – and buttressing US domestic resilience is key
- (4) Global strategy requires both a global 'script' and focal expertise. (e.g. 'The Great Game')

Use Case 1. Specific actors: think "outside-in"



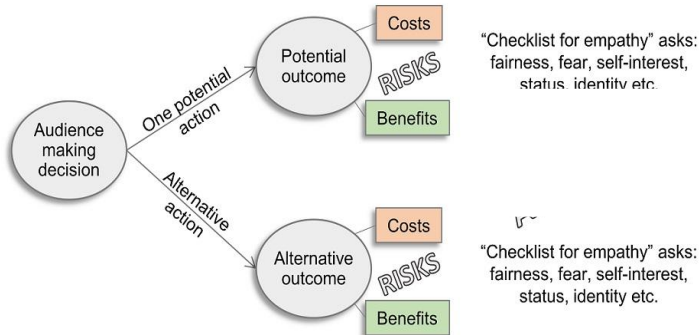
Use Case 2. Global Grey Zone competition



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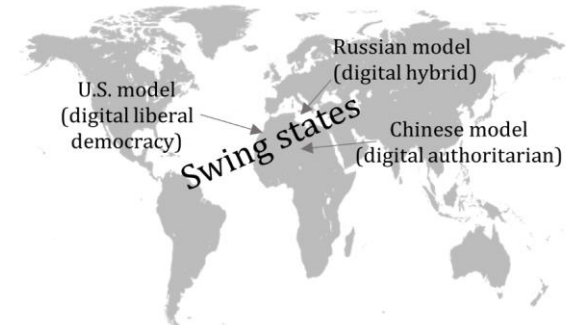
Use Case 1. Specific actors: think "outside-in"



Deterrence calculus the same everywhere?

CULTURE

Use Case 2. Global Grey Zone competition



Swing states all the same?

CULTURE

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Organisational culture

Individual cognition

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(e.g. security studies)


(e.g. IR, security, critical studies)

(e.g. security studies)
(e.g. political science)

(e.g. anthropology, sociology)
(e.g. management studies)

(e.g. cross-cultural cognition)

Seven disciplinary perspectives on culture, at five scales.

SCALE OF HUMAN ORGANISATION	Concepts	Disciplines
	7. Global cultures	(e.g. security studies)
	6. 'Civilisations', regions	(e.g. IR, security, critical studies)
State	5. External: Strategic culture, ways of war	(e.g. security studies)
	4. Internal: Political culture etc.	(e.g. political science)
	3. Communities and groups	(e.g. anthropology, sociology)
Individual	2. Organisational culture	(e.g. management studies)
	1. Individual cognition	(e.g. cross-cultural cognition)

For each discipline's empirical literature:

What is culture?

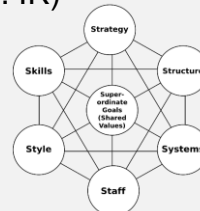
Slippery.

My definition: Culture is the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a human group and reflects 'how things are done around here.'

Consilience between scales

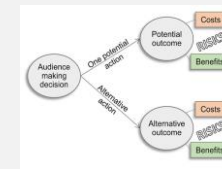
Does culture matter?

Sometimes (e.g. cognition); maybe (e.g. IR)



If culture matters, in what specific ways?

Deterrence, escalation etc.



DIME

Global Grey Zone competition



CULTURE: KEY FINDINGS FROM ACROSS SEVEN DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES, AT FIVE SCALES.

*First, the disciplines all face **common challenges** and they often use **common ideas**.*

*Second, a **cognitive dimension** is seen consistently across the different approaches to culture.*

Third, it is hard to show that culture matters at many scales of human organisation—such as the state scale—due to the small number of cases.

*Fourth, cultures at the **global scale** requires further research.*

*Fifth, culture is just another lens. (Culture is **asserted** to matter profoundly, but...)*

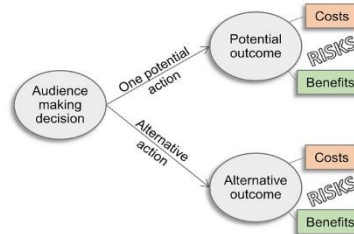
*Sixth, the **history of global confrontations** suggests they are moving even further from their Eurocentric origins and towards a new epoch in which a global superpower (China) will be neither European nor a European offshoot (Britain, the US and USSR) – but how much does this particular cultural difference likely matter?*

*Seventh, culture or civilisation provides **cognitively salient differences** such as dress or religious holidays – and for this reason it will remain a way for political actors and people to divide up the world.*

TWO CROSS-CULTURAL DEEP DIVES

Cultural deep dive 1: Culture in the individual's mind and brain

I systematically reviewed thousands of cognitive science papers comparing decision-making in East Asia and the West.



*specific
differences*

Cultural deep dive 2: Different minds, different strategy?

Do cognitive differences relate to *strategic thinking*? I compared **China and the US** using empirical data from doctrine, elite opinion (including interviews in China) and extant scholarship. E.g. Deterrence, offense and defense.

Cultural deep dive 1: COGNITION IN EAST ASIA AND THE WEST

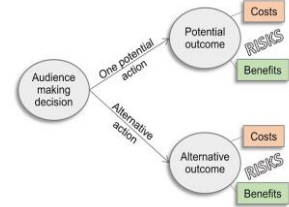
[N.B. “replication crisis”]

Cognition first cut:

Behavioural Economics

2219 studies overall.
13 non-social (e.g. risk, loss)
23 social (e.g. Ultimatum Game)

Common>>different



Cognition second cut:

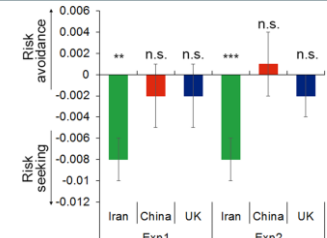
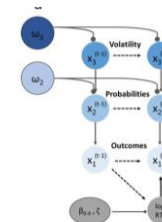
Cross-cultural Psychology

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| (1) Context-dependence | N=56, moderate evidence. |
| (2) Social influence leading to conformity | N=32, low/moderate evidence |
| (3) Face | nil |
| (4) Hierarchy. | nil |

Cognition third cut:

Cognitive Computations

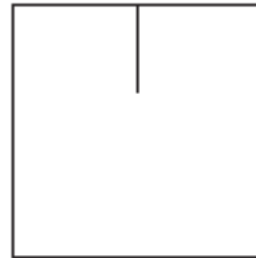
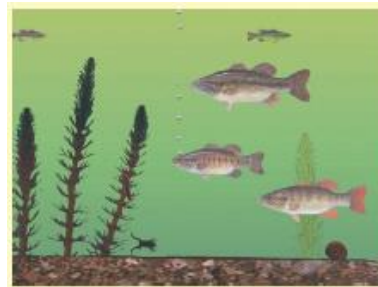
Promising future, big data,
social media, artificial intelligence
(e.g. DARPA, Deepmind)



CONTEXT DEPENDENCE-INDEPENDENCE FRAMEWORK

Westerners tend to engage in more context-independent cognitive processes by focusing on a salient object independently of its context,

whereas East Asians tend to engage in more context-dependent and holistic cognitive processes by attending to the relationship between the object and the context in which it is located.



N=56, moderate evidence
Newspapers etc.

Cultural deep dive 2: DOES CHINESE AND U.S. STRATEGIC THINKING DIFFER?

Does what is common sense and intuitively plausible really differ?

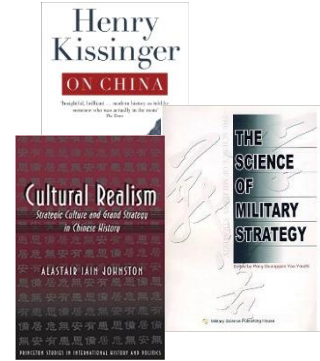
If so, simple and operationalisable framework?

Empirical evidence on cross-cultural strategic thinking:

Chinese and U.S. doctrine

Elite interviews (current and former PLA, incl. CMC, leading scholars)

Extant scholarship



Findings

1. *Chinese accounts of deterrence are more context-dependent, so view events and actions more within the context of surrounding events and actions than do U.S. accounts.*

CONTEXT

- (a) Chinese first-strikes and pre-emption in the context of deterrence
- (b) Context-dependence renders deterrence and compellence the same
- (c) Chinese holistic integration of deterrence and warfighting

2. *Offense and defense in context: “active defense”*

- (a) Chinese holistic integration of offense and defense
- (b) Chinese first-strikes and pre-emption in the context of defense

SOCIAL
INFLUENCE

3. *Greater Chinese emphasis on soft power and do soft power differently*

4. *Expect more adjustment (bandwagoning) than autonomy (balancing) from others]*

How can the US make global strategy in a world both vast and rich with cultural diversity?

First, how can US policymakers make *global* strategy?

Recommendations:

- (1) Adopt a global mindset in planning.
- (2) Harness global system effects, not just actor-specific effects.

Second, how should strategy consider global *cultural* diversity?

Recommendations:

- (1) Apply a framework integrating cultural insights from multiple disciplines in order to anticipate both (a) competitors' decision-making, and (b) how to influence swing states crucial to success in global grey zone competition.
- (2) Cultural commonalities between the world's humans greatly outweigh differences, but specific differences—e.g. context dependence—can provide operationalizable tools to cause intended, and avoid unintended, effects.