

Cross-cultural Dimensions of Multilateral Non-Proliferation, Arms Control and Security-Building Dialogues

These different ways of analysing the potential impact of cross-cultural differences on international politics can now be brought together and focused specifically on multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and security-building dialogues. But how precisely to draw upon these different ideas of diplomatic, political and strategic culture remains to be clarified. A good starting point is Ball's definition of strategic culture offered above. It is close to a conception that is useful for our purposes, but in order to draw in elements from political and diplomatic culture, the crucial requirement is to take one further step away from thinking in narrow "strategic" terms, towards thinking in terms of a "security culture."⁴⁰ Since policies towards arms control, non-proliferation and confidence and security-building measures, or broader attitudes towards peace-making and how to achieve security (unilaterally, mutually, etc.) are extensions of fundamental strategic positions and decisions, what applies to "strategy" in the narrow military sense is also directly relevant to the security-building realm.

The consensus definition of security culture that this group of scholars arrived at argues that:

Culture, as it refers to non-proliferation, arms control, disarmament and security-building issues, consists of those enduring and widely-shared beliefs, traditions, attitudes, and symbols that inform the ways in which a state's/society's interests and values with respect to security, stability and peace are perceived, articulated and advanced by political actors and elites.

This definition builds upon the work on strategic culture but moves away from its more or less strict emphasis on military affairs and the use of force to broader issues of "security, stability and peace." It also evokes the specific issues associated with the non-proliferation, arms control and confidence- and security-building agenda, highlights the importance of political actors and elites, and emphasises the enduring character of the cultural elements that analysts are looking for.

Figure 1 expands upon this definition, by illustrating in a schematic form how various cultural influences could play a role in the determination of state policies towards security-building, and how they could shape the complex calculations of material capabilities or interests that lie behind policy-making. Conceptually, the diagram treats the various aspects of diplomatic, political and strategic culture as general manifestations of "culture writ large" (which is not shown on the figure). Similarly, the three sets of concepts overlap and share many characteristics, and the boundaries between them are not sharp. At the center, however, are those elements that concern us, and that can be considered as part of "security culture" (as defined above). Security culture is in a sense a subset of political, diplomatic and strategic/military culture: it draws upon the same wellsprings as, and shares some characteristics of, political, diplomatic and strategic cultures, while being distinct from each of them.

It only remains to specify more clearly some of the *content* of the different parts of this diagram. For the purposes of providing some sort of general framework for the case studies that follow, Figure II offers a set of questions that various contributions to this study have sought to answer. Although the questions

⁴⁰ This of course parallels calls for the entire discipline to be reoriented from strategy to security studies. See Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, second edition (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 23-25.