

HOWARD J. WIARDA

Political Culture, Political Science, and Identity Politics

An Uneasy Alliance



POLITICAL CULTURE, POLITICAL SCIENCE, AND IDENTITY POLITICS

“Culture counts!”—it being an essential ingredient for studying the politics of other countries, asserts Howard J. Wiarda in this insightful and important text. His convincing and well-written account nicely synthesizes all realms of political culture, from cultural anthropology to national character studies, a complete digest the reader will find stimulating, productive, and well-balanced.

Phil Kelly, Emporia (Kansas) State University, USA

The value and effectiveness of political culture as an evaluative tool and predictor of national policy outcomes has become a point of scholarly disagreement among the practitioners of comparative politics and area studies. Howard J. Wiarda provides a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the historical evolution of political culture and points out the strengths and weaknesses of this analytical approach. Although he is a supporter of the uses of political culture, his study is balanced and carefully crafted. Wiarda by no means settles the argument over political culture but he has certainly presented a clear, credible and provocative overview.’

Michael Kryzanek, Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts, USA

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An Uneasy Alliance

HOWARD J. WIARDA
University of Georgia, USA

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2014 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:

Wiarda, Howard J., 1939-

Political culture, political science, and identity politics : an uneasy alliance / by Howard J. Wiarda.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4724-4228-4 (hardback)

1. Political culture. 2. Identity politics. I. Title.

JA75.7.W53 2014

306.2--dc23

2014011767

ISBN 9781472442284 (hbk)

ISBN 9781315601168 (ebk)

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Preface

If you are a writer or scholar, you are always a prisoner of your own earlier writings, reviews, and the footnote references to your work. You cannot escape these and you live with them forever. In my case, I am known as a “political culture guy.” Or, more simply, as a “culturalist.”

That is not, actually, an accurate representation of my views or work. It is true that I have written extensively about what we political scientists call “political culture”—the values, ideas, beliefs, and behavioral orientations that undergird political behavior.¹ It is also true that, in some of my writings, I have concentrated, because I find them interesting, worthwhile, and fun to research, on political-cultural factors.² But close readers of my larger *oeuvre* will know that I have always believed in and pursued multi-causal explanations. No one factor, be it culture, institutions, structure, or class analysis, explains everything. There are always, or let us say to be safe “almost always,” a complex of multiple causes shaping the great movements of history. As social scientists, it is our duty and obligation to weave these complex causes together into an explanation that best approximates reality.³

While on the one side, I am sensitive to the mislabeling of my work as “culturalist,” I am also aghast at those who would undervalue culture, as not having any explanatory power at all. Not only are they critical of culture as providing even a partial, let alone an all-encompassing, explanation, but they tend to dismiss culture, and sometimes those who write about it, as not having social science value. In the Marxist tradition, for example, culture is viewed as part of the “superstructure” and subservient to economic and class factors; among institutionalists, culture is usually treated as a “dependent variable” or else is redefined, as Nobel prize-winning economist Douglas North did,⁴ as just another “institution.” Neither of these latter two approaches strikes me as particularly

1 Howard J. Wiarda (ed.), *Politics and Social Change in Latin America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974); later editions published by Westview Press and Praeger Publishers.

2 Howard J. Wiarda, *The Soul of Latin America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001)

3 My longest and most detailed effort in this direction is Howard J. Wiarda, *Dictatorship, Development, and Disintegration: Politics and Social Change in the Dominican Republic* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Latin American Studies, University of Massachusetts, University Microfilms, 1975, three volumes).

4 Douglas North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

valuable or useful. Clearly, culture is important, the only question being how much. And equally clearly, culture needs to be treated as an independent variable, not just a reflection of economic or institutional factors, whose importance will vary over time and circumstances, and that needs then to be treated as part of a complex of other explanations.

But there's more to it than that. The dismissal of culture as an explanatory factor is part of a trend in political science and the other social sciences to emphasize scientific, empirical, and rational-choice explanations at the expense of analysis, interpretation, and assessment. In this approach, political culture somehow does not count, even though in recent work on the subject by Robert Putnam,⁵ Ronald Inglehart,⁶ and Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba,⁷ which may be unknown to scholars of this orientation, political culture can be studied just as systematically and "scientifically" as can other political phenomena. I have found that many of these more "scientifically"-oriented scholars would rather stay at home and work on their "data sets" or manipulate their computers than go abroad to actually experience another culture.

When I hear these arguments, including from some of my own colleagues, I want to scream and pull my hair (actually, quite a bit of it is still remaining). "Have you never been abroad?" I want to ask. "Do you understand *anything* about foreign cultures?" "Do you not realize that in every country, region, and culture-area such as Latin America, East Asia, or the Middle East, the sights, sounds, dress, smells, language, and behavior are very different?" "Have you no respect or understanding of cultures, including academic cultures, other than your own?" To me and to most others, I suspect, the answers to these questions are so obvious as to be not even worth discussing. Except that to too many of today's social scientists, they are not obvious at all.

Therein lies a dilemma, a puzzle. Why is it that social scientists are so averse to explanations that advance culture as a possible explanation. Are they all secret Marxists still influenced by Marx's shopworn and too-simple ideas about substructure and superstructure? Are they still, as a legacy of the Nazi regime and World War II, concerned that what were then called "national character studies," will lead to ethnic stereotyping and, hence, to mass extermination of Jews, gypsies, and others? Or are they so PC that, having mistakenly conflated culture and race, they fear above all—the unpardonable sin—of being labeled "racist." One can legitimately argue the degree of importance of culture as an explanatory factor but, in considering cultural explanations, it has become clear to me that something

5 Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

6 Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Change in Advanced Industrial Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

7 Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba (eds), *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963); also, by the same editors, *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1980).

more than “mere” science is at work here. Something else, something deeper, is afoot. Is it ideology; is it psychological; is it political correctness; what is it?

I think I know the answers to at least some of these questions. And since I have myself studied, researched, and written about various aspects of political culture, I thought I would try my hand at an explanation. This study is thus a product of what I and others, critics as well as advocates, have written about cultural explanations. The present book is, therefore, not so much a report on new or original research, of my own and others, on political culture; rather, it is an analysis and synthesis of both the history and more recent work and research in this field.

As a Washington think tanker and professor of political science, I am mostly what we call a “barefoot empiricist.” I *love* to go out and explore new countries and regions, do research and interviewing there, and then write about it. My fields are foreign policy, comparative politics, and international relations; I am interested in comparative political development, particularly of Third World nations where cultural factors are especially important. I have traveled, worked, and done research in over 90 countries on all the continents save the Arctic and Antarctica.

But sometimes I feel compelled to do more general, theoretical, and conceptual work. There are times, thus, when I feel the need to grab my own profession by the scruff of its neck, shake it up, and try to teach it some lessons. I had done that earlier with my work on Latin America,⁸ American foreign policy,⁹ democracy promotion,¹⁰ comparative politics,¹¹ corporatism,¹² and civil society.¹³ I do not know if the profession is any better off or more enlightened after one of these outbursts but, rather like cussing or exploding at a lame bureaucracy, *I* feel better once having done it.

This is one of those books. It is an overview of the entire field of political culture studies. It is not a polemic; rather, I seek to be fair and balanced. My purpose is to assess what political culture can teach us and what are its limits. I am not trying to “get” anyone, settle scores, or engage in ideological or methodological battles. I try to be straightforward and even-handed with regard to all points of view. But

8 Howard J. Wiarda, *Politics and Social Change*; also “Wiarda, *Corporatism and National Development in Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981).

9 Howard J. Wiarda, *Foreign Policy without Illusion* (Chicago, IL: Little Brown/Scott Foresman, 1990; later editions by Harper Collins, 1996, and Potomac Publishers, 2009).

10 Howard J. Wiarda, *Democracy and Its Discontents* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995); Wiarda, *Cracks in the Consensus: Debating the Democracy Agenda in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1997).

11 Howard J. Wiarda (ed.), *New Directions in Comparative Policies* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985); and Wiarda, *Introduction to Comparative Politics* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1999).

12 Howard J. Wiarda, *Corporatism and Comparative Politics* (New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996); also Wiarda (ed.), *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America—Revisited* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2004).

13 Howard J. Wiarda, *Is Civil Society Exportable?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002).

where there is cant or stupidity, I am not above pointing that out. Or sticking the knife in to destroy an argument.

I have been writing about political culture for a long time but never considered myself a “political culturalist”—whatever that may be. I think of political culture as an approach to understanding, one among many, and not a full, all-encompassing, complete, or sufficient explanation. Many factors go into understanding other nations and other cultures, of which political culture is one. Some scholars, however, think that factor is the most important one in explaining why some countries succeed and others fail. Others are less convinced of that argument. I fall somewhere in-between.

While I was never self-consciously a “culturalist” writer, I have over the years become more interested in the debate as well as what underlies the various positions. Political culture was always *one* (of nine or ten) of the approaches I taught in my graduate Comparative Politics Seminar;¹⁴ but then last year (2012), for the first time, I taught a semester-long seminar devoted entirely to Political Culture. That seminar, and the excellent graduate students in it, constituted the origins of this book.

I am grateful to those students—Hasan Ahmed, Nancy Arrington, Patrick Howell, Sarah Hunter, Megan Lounsbury, Bailey Sanders, Jan Yamauchi, Jongmin Yi, and Weigi Zhang—and the comments, oral presentations, and papers they offered. This book would not have been possible without their detailed reports.

I am also grateful to the top-ranked (#4 in the country) School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) at the University of Georgia, now my “home” institution, which provided me with a named professorship (the Dean Rusk Professor of International Affairs), generous research and travel funds, a light teaching load, and a hospitable climate for research and writing. My fellow faculty members in the Department of International Affairs, one of the three departments within SPIA, have been wonderful colleagues, even while I use them as sounding boards and, occasionally, foils for my own ideas. Doris Holden has been my typist, editor, and generous friend and adviser for going on 35 years. My wife, Dr. Iêda Siqueira Wiarda, the other political scientist in the family, shares my belief in the importance of culture and has over the decades been my lifetime companion in the many travels and cultural encounters we have had in following our separate research paths. None of these individuals or institutions is in any way responsible for the analysis that follows, however; for good or ill, that is a product of my own “political culture.”

Howard J. Wiarda
Athens, Georgia, and
Washington, D.C.

14 The published version of this ongoing seminar is Howard J. Wiarda (ed.), *Grand Theory and Ideology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Chapter 1

Introduction: The Culture Debate— Political Culture and Comparative Politics

Political culture is important. Or, as a recent book title puts it, “Culture Matters!”¹

Culture is an important variable in political, social, and economic analysis. Culture *counts*! Some social scientists think of culture, along with structure and institutions, as one of the three most important factors in determining political outcomes. Others go farther with the claim, supported by considerable evidence, that culture is *the* most important factor. Modern statistical and computerized multivariate analysis help validate this claim.

Yet others dispute these claims of the importance of political culture. They say culture does not count, that only structural and/or institutional factors matter. Some of these counter arguments are rational; others, downright irrational. In this book we seek not only to explain political culture but also to wrestle with the issue of why that topic evokes so much hostility among some scholars.

When we speak here of *political culture*, we are referring to the deep-seated ideas, beliefs, values, and behavioral orientations that people have, or carry around in their heads, toward the political system. We are not talking about culture *per se*—dance, music, paintings, art—although all or any of these may have an effect on the overall political culture. No, our focus is narrower: those aspects of art, religion, music, beliefs, ideology, etc. that specifically affect the political system, political processes, or policy outcomes. Political culture has to do with political values, beliefs, and mindsets, not with paintings on a wall or musical notes, no matter how glorious.

Political culture is learned. So far as we now know, political culture is not genetic—although there is new but still inconclusive research that may point in this direction.² It is not, we think, inherited through your DNA, although sometimes in popular commentary people will say that their beliefs and values are part of their “character.” No, political culture is generally understood to be incorporated through the learning process, which we call “political socialization,” which begins at birth. People are *socialized* into a prevailing political culture through the immediate family, the extended family (clan groups), the school system, Boy or Girl Scouts, Little League, friends and neighborhoods, peers and classmates. The society, the class or caste into which you were born, the identity, ethnic or

1 Laurence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (eds), *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

2 Nicholas Wade, “Human Culture, An Evolutionary Force,” *New York Times* (March 2, 2010), D1, reporting on the new research.

otherwise, which you take on, and the nation and world in which you grow up—all have a strong impact on your political belief system and political culture.

Political culture usually has to do with fundamental core beliefs. These are essential, often existential, beliefs related to who you are as a person. They are not fleeting or superficial likes or dislikes. They are not whether you like a particular person, president, candidate, or colleague on a daily basis. Rather, core beliefs include your basic attitudes toward democracy, authoritarianism, or freedom. Political culture and political culture studies seek to tap your attitudes toward the fundamentals, not the superficial or ephemeral.

Although political culture is learned and probably not genetic, it does not usually change easily or quickly. The learned beliefs that are part of a political culture may go on for generations, even millennia, if the culture is isolated enough such as some tribes in the South Pacific or the Amazon jungle. Once a set of beliefs and practices is imbedded in a political culture, it is very difficult to change it. Think of the difficulties of bringing democracy and human rights to such historically authoritarian political cultures as Russia, China, or the Arab Middle East. Or the near impossibility that the United States has faced in trying to change quickly the political cultures of Iraq or Afghanistan and implant democracy there.

While political culture changes slowly, usually requiring two, three, or more generations, it does change. Often almost imperceptibly. Political culture changes under the impact of urbanization, industrialization, and overall societal modernization. Globalization, war, and occupation may also change a political culture. The media have a strong effect in changing a political culture, so does the worldwide web, the internet, and social media. For example, the so-called “Arab Spring” of 2011 which toppled a string of Middle Eastern dictators and brought social and political change was stimulated and spread by social media. Hence, while political culture usually changes quite slowly, it can go through a quite rapid and radical transformation. On the other hand, radicals and revolutionaries often find, to their consternation, that the political culture of their country changes far more slowly than does the leadership, the regime, or the country’s political institutions.

Political culture is not to be confused with racism, although one needs to be especially careful and sensitive when stepping into this terrain. Nor are political culture studies the same as ethnic stereotyping. Nor should they be confused with the older and now generally discredited national character studies.

Culture is one thing, race another. If I say, “all blacks” or “all Greeks” are this or that, that is racism, unacceptable ethnic stereotyping. But if I say, “Blacks tend to identify with and vote for, in ratios of nine- or ten-to-one, the Democratic Party,” that is not a racist comment. That is a tendency statement, a factual statement, and a matter of identity, culture, or self-interest politics—perfectly acceptable. What we now call “identity politics,” to which political culture studies are closely related, is similar. No stereotypes are used; voting behavior is analyzed; percentages are used. We are not saying *all* blacks or *all* Greeks are this or that or vote in a certain way; we are using sociological tendency statements. But you can probably guess that,

in popular commentary and conversation, a factual, statistically derived tendency statement may sometimes begin to shade over or be expressed as a perceived racist statement. We need to carefully guard against such slippage or the confusion of race and culture.

To further distinguish race from culture, let us consider recent immigrants into the United States. Many of these immigrants, of whatever race, color, or identity, absorb one political culture in their home countries, but when they arrive in the US, they must adjust to and absorb another political culture. They cannot change their race or ethnic identity but they do change their culture. Think, for example, of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, both very Germanic and very American in his behavior.

Many of these immigrants, recently arrived, carry elements of both their old and their adopted countries' political culture. Some of them fall so in love with America that they become, as the saying goes, "more American than the Americans." Many of these immigrants become very successful in this country as they leave their former values behind and adapt to take advantage of the opportunities available in America. Their children, born here and socialized in America, are usually bi-cultural in language and family loyalty but are also thoroughly American in how they think and behave. By the time we get to the grandchildren, the pressures are enormous to be completely American, forgetting or refusing to speak the old-country language, inter-marrying with Americans often of other ethnicities, and completely identifying with American values.

All this has to do with culture, culture change, and assimilation, not race. The values (authoritarianism, hierarchy, and ascription) and social structures (two-class, top-down, elitist) that once held you back in the former country no longer exist in egalitarian and upwardly mobile America, giving you the opportunity, once you have adjusted, learned the language, and mastered the system, to move up in the social scale. It is culture and cultural adjustment that account for your new-found prosperity, no longer—or at least not so much—your color or ethnicity.³

Perhaps here, albeit not yet systematically, we have some hints as to why some people, despite all the evidence of its importance, still dislike the use of political culture as a behavioral explanation. First, we have all by this time, after the horrifying experiences of Nazi Germany and of racism, been brought up ("socialized") to be suspicious of anything that smacks of racist or ethnic stereotypes. No matter how much we say we are only dealing in tendency statements and using statistical correlations, when we say "Blacks tend to vote Democratic" or "Jews tend to be oriented toward social justice," it raises deep suspicions in some quarters. We need to be very careful and sensitive when we employ this kind of analysis.

Second, it will be noted from the paragraphs above that culture change usually takes a long time, often two or three generations. It is a gradual process and can

3 Cultural anthropology has led the way in distinguishing between race and culture. We discuss the issue in more detail in Chapter 3.

seldom be hurried; even the great revolutions in Russia, China, and Cuba *struggled* to change their countries' political culture and even after many decades of trying were not very successful at it. But if you are a radical, a revolutionary, or a social reformer, two or three generations, 50 to 75 years, is way too long. You cannot and do not want to wait that long. You want to get on with the job, to advance your reform program. Political culture, hence, becomes your enemy, something to be opposed to rather than adjusted to, a barrier to your agenda. Hence, political culture, those who study it and those who say it is important, have to be rejected, repudiated, maybe even shouted down—not a very scholarly attitude.

A third possible reason for opposing or rejecting political culture explanations, not unrelated to the previous point, emerges from this discussion. Since World War II and the emergence of the welfare state, more so in Europe than in America, the sense has grown strong that we can adjust and change almost anything—education, health care, housing, etc.—through social policy. Through our institutions and social engineering, the belief is, we can change or reform anything, to do away with poverty, racism, sexism, etc. But that may be true only in rich countries (Norway and Sweden) which have the wealth to do all these things. It may also be true mainly in the Western world and not in the non-West where other values and other cultures prevail. Surely we need to be sensitive to these other cultures and values, and to the level of development of their societies, before we, Westerners, rush in to impose our values and change everything. Once again that “pesky” factor of culture enters in.

Well, there we have it, some of the arguments, at least preliminarily, both for and against political culture. Let us go into these in a bit more depth.

Culture and Politics: The Popular Discourse

Almost everyone at the popular level understands that culture counts, culture matters, culture makes a difference. This is good, plain, old commonsense. This popular, common-sensible approach to culture may be closer to the truth, may be more honest, more accurate, and more valid, than the anti-culture views of some social scientists.

Culture, cultural differences, and culture clashes are with us every day. Almost every school, business, or workplace has its own distinct culture.⁴ It is possible to assess these differences with some accuracy, and social scientists, business gurus, and CEOs are busily doing that on a constant basis. You need to be able to adjust to the prevailing culture of your new school or job; alternatively, as a manager, you may need to introduce changes into the culture of your institution.

Cities have distinct cultures as well. New York (finance) is very different from Washington (politics). Miami (Hispanics) is very different from New Orleans

⁴ For example, Anjali Raval, “Lessons That Cross Borders,” *Financial Times* (April 9, 2012), 11.

(French). Los Angeles (entertainment) is a quite different city from Seattle (high tech). Chicago (Midwestern) is quite different from the cities on either coast. Detroit (automobiles) is not at all like Pittsburgh (steel) or Philadelphia (the founding fathers). We identify Boston with New England and its great universities, in contrast to Baltimore about which acerbic writer, H.L. Mencken, said, “There is no there there.”

Different regions of the country also have distinct cultures. Of course, in this book we are mainly interested in their *political* cultures, and recently there has been a spate of innovative books, employing census and other data, on the subject.⁵ New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and the West Coast are all quite liberal—“blue states.” Appalachia, the South, the Central Plains, and the Mountain West tend to be conservative—“red states.” The Midwest is home to most of the swing states, while Louisiana, with its French-Canadian background, is a region unto itself.

Most of us who live there know that there are vast cultural differences *within* our respective states. We cannot go through all of these here; a few examples will suffice. Thus, New York City is very different from the rest of or “upstate” New York State; Boston is very different from Western Mass.; South Florida (Miami) is very different from North Florida (“cracker”); Eastern Michigan (union), very different from Western Michigan (rock-hard Republican); Southern California (laid-back), not at all like Northern California (entrepreneurial).

In the state where I currently live, Georgia, we have coastal Georgia, piedmont Georgia, mountain Georgia, and then greater Atlanta—each with its own history, sociology, and culture. When I travel from my home in Athens, a liberal academic community (like Ann Arbor, Bloomington, Madison, Austin, Amherst, Berkeley, or others you can name) to my summer retreat in the North Georgia mountains (now considered by census returns to be part of greater Appalachia), it is like going to a different country. The politics, sociology, culture, economy, and even language are all very different.

When it comes to international travel and the culture differences between countries and regions (the main focus of this book), the variation is even more pronounced. For student exchanges as well as tourist travel, we like Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand in part because they speak our language and their culture is similar to our own. When we travel to the European Continent, however, the differences between countries become more pronounced. Just landing at the airport, you know immediately that you are in another country and another culture: the smells, sounds, and sights are all different in Europe North and South and East and West. And yet here you are still within “the West”; when you get to the non-West, it is really, as the saying goes, “another world”—i.e., another culture, another civilization.

5 Gertrude Himmelfarb, *One Nation, Two Cultures* (New York: Knopf, 1999); also Colin Woodard, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America* (New York: Viking, 2011).

It amazes me that even those social scientists who travel abroad for research (a dwindling number) tend not to give serious attention to culture variables. Are they blind; do their senses not function; are they unaware of what's going on around them? For such regions or culture areas as Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Arab Middle East are so fundamentally different from the West that it boggles the mind that one could miss or ignore these differences. Indeed, these distinct areas or civilizations are so far apart culturally that it is hard, and then only with strong qualifications, to draw comparisons between them. It is like comparing apples to oranges to kumquats. Indeed, in this book (Chapter 8) we go as far as to suggest a separate, distinct model of development for each of these major culture areas.

The issue is not just culture, however, and our frequent lack of understanding of other countries. The issue has critical foreign policy implications as well. Take Iraq or Afghanistan, for example. Both of these countries could be considered failures of American foreign policy. And why did we fail to achieve our goals there? In large part (1) because we never understood or came to grips realistically with the underlying culture of these two countries, and (2), related to the first, we tried to construct in these countries a model of democracy, governance, human rights, women's rights, etc. based on the US example or model that had almost nothing to do with Afghan or Iraqi reality. Ask yourself, how many of our four-star generals in Iraq, how many foreign aid officials in Afghanistan, how many persons in Congress or the White House spoke Arabic or Pushkin and really understood these two countries and their cultures? The answer is: almost none. We need not go much farther for an explanation of our foreign policy failures, in the Middle East or elsewhere, than that.

A main theme of this book is that culture matters. Culture counts! It counts much more than many scholars and government officials are willing to admit. Culture is not everything but it is a lot. It is a lot not just in terms of our understanding, analysis, and assessment of foreign countries and areas but also of our foreign policies. Good or bad policies and success or lack of success in policy often hangs on our understanding of other countries and cultures: how they think, what motivates them, what makes them tick. Failure to understand produces bad, often failed, policies.

To hint at the importance of cultural considerations, I have culled from my files, collected over the last year or so, a diverse assortment of newspaper and other headlines or titles related to these themes. These headlines provide a sense not only of the essential nature of culture as a factor or variable but also the many-faceted aspects of culture as it plays out in the workplace, in domestic affairs, and especially in international and foreign policy affairs. These headlines do not necessarily "prove" anything at this point about culture but they are illustrative of culture's importance. Additional proof of the argument for culture is offered in the body of the book and its conclusion.

Herewith some examples, chosen for their variety:

"A Cultural Gulf Separates France and Germany," *Financial Times*

“Economic Culture and Economic Performance: What Light Is Shed on the [European] Continent’s Problems?” Venice Conference

“Foxconn [a Chinese company] Faces Cultural Clash as Its Global Reach Grows,” *Financial Times*

“Bombing Shakes Pakistan’s Political Culture,” *Washington Post*

“A True Culture War! Should Anthropologists Help the Pentagon in Iraq and Afghanistan?” *New York Times*

“Professor Outlines the Secret to Effective Intercultural Communications,” *Columns*

“The Culture of Conspiracy,” *Wall Street Journal*

“Spain, Italy, and Identity Politics,” *Financial Times*

“Culture War,” *Washington Post*

“What a Headscarf Can Mean: It’s all About Culture and Identity,” *Washington Post*

“Doctors Miss Cultural Needs, Study Says,” *New York Times*

“National Culture a Factor in Power Politics or Business,” *Financial Times*

“The Triumph of Culture Over Politics,” *Wall Street Journal*

“It Does Not Matter How Senior Your Leadership Team Is, if the Culture They Create and the Protégés They Develop Do Not Lead to Better Development,” CNBC

“The Violence Is Rooted in the Culture, Not the Gun Store,” *Washington Post*

“Cock Fights [Human] and Culture Clashes,” *Financial Times*

“Black Culture Beyond Hip-Hop,” *Washington Post*

“A Culture War Treaty,” *Washington Post*

“For NIH Chief, Issues of Identity and Culture,” *New York Times*

“Putting ‘Culture’ onto the Middle East Agenda,” Woodrow Wilson Center Program

“For American Workers in China, a Culture Clash,” *New York Times*

“Yum! Brands’ New Corporate Culture,” *The Economist*

“Health Opens a New Front in America’s Culture Wars,” *Financial Times*

“Finding the Payoff in Knowing What and How Another Culture Is Thinking,” *New York Times*

“Cultural Attitudes and Rumors Are Lasting Obstacles to Safe Sex,” *New York Times*

“Leisure Is the Vital Ingredient in Nordic Success,” *Financial Times*

“Cultural Development,” Fareed Zakaria, *Washington Post*

“Who Draws the Borders of Culture?” *New York Times*

“Idea of a ‘Culture of Poverty’ Makes a Comeback,” *New York Times*

“All Hail the American Work Ethic,” *Athens Banner-Herald*

“A Culture of Criminality on Wall Street,” *Wall Street Journal*

“This Raging Fire: The Cultural Change That’s Needed to Save Black Children,” *New York Times*

“Human Culture, an Evolutionary Force: Biologists Cite Evidence That Culture Has Been Interacting with Genes,” *New York Times*

“The Return of History,” *New York Times*

“Cultural Change Is Key to Banking Reform,” *Financial Times*

Obituary: “A French Thinker [Lévi-Strauss] Who Crossed Continents and Cultures,” *New York Times*

“A New Culture War Is Brewing over Capitalism,” *The Economist*

“The Culture Wars Shift to School Halls,” *New York Times*

“Looking to Moscow or Washington? History, Culture, and Foreign Policy Orientation in Eastern Europe,” Term paper title, University of Georgia

“The Sound of Silence: The Culture Wars Take a Break,” *New York Times*

“Republicans Discover Home Truths in Book on Afghanistan: It’s All About Culture,” *Financial Times*

“Greeks and Germans,” *New York Times*

“When the Spirits Talk, as They Frequently Do, Thais Are Eager to Listen,” *New York Times*

“To Reach a Distant Workforce: Rapid Globalization Is Teaching Multinationals How to Translate Their Corporate Culture to New Territories,” *Financial Times*

“China’s President Lashes Out at Western Culture,” *New York Times*

“Let’s Stop ‘Civilizing’ Afghanistan,” *Washington Post*

“Europe’s Far Right: Culture Matters More,” *The Economist*

“It’s the Culture [of Italy], Stupido,” *Washington Post*

“Culture Blame Games Are No Way to Prevent Future Crises,” *Financial Times*

“Culture Turned Fukushima from Nuclear Disaster to ‘Made in Japan’,” *Financial Times*

“One Leadership Model Cannot Fit All Cultures,” *Financial Times*

“Culture Shock: A Dutch Social Democrat Questions the Benefits of Immigration,” *Financial Times*

Well, there we have it, a collection of recent random headlines and other titles drawn from my clippings files.

What do we learn from these headlines? First, that culture is an important topic, certainly in the media and in the popular consciousness. Second, that culture deals with important issues: business, sex, high politics, communications, party politics, international relations and foreign policy, understanding other countries, war, the internet, the worldwide web, social media, etc. It is not a factor that can be ignored. Third, we learn that the concept of culture is used in a great variety of ways and circumstances; it is often employed loosely, and, in these headlines at least, without much definitional rigor or precision.

How can we solve these problems? First, while we can probably all admit that culture is important, we need to weigh the cultural explanation against other important factors, like geography and the environment, the class or social structure of a given society, and the way its institutions are organized, to see which of these factors carries the most explanatory power. Second, we need to focus: while culture deals with a variety of important issues, the particular focus in this book is on *political culture*: the values, beliefs, and behavioral orientations that affect people’s *political activities*. Third, since culture in the headlines