

Refining Strategic Culture:

Return of the Second Generation

Abstract. This article seeks to refine the concept of ‘strategic culture’ and to highlight some appropriate methods of analysis through which this concept might be applied in empirical studies. In doing so, I seek to synthesize a much ignored element of strategic culture literature – Bradley Klein’s ‘second generation’ approach – with insights drawn from contemporary critical constructivist theory. The resulting conception of strategic culture presents a less deterministic account of culture than that found in much existing literature regarding, and also provides far greater critical potential with regard to the analysis of the strategic practices of states and other actors. More generally, this conception of strategic culture leads us to ask how strategic culture serves to constitute certain strategic behaviour as meaningful but also how strategic behaviour serves to constitute the identity of those actors that engage in such behaviour.

Article word length: 12,100

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Introduction

The concept of strategic culture has risen to prominence repeatedly within the security studies literature during the past three decades yet, despite the fact that a growing body of literature on the subject has been produced, debate remains fierce as to what strategic culture is, what it does, and how it ought to be studied.¹ Indeed, this is true despite the fact that a number of scholars have recently deployed this concept in the context of various empirical analyses.² Thus, while the notion of strategic culture clearly holds some intuitive appeal for scholars of strategic studies, it remains at best a contested concept and at worst, an incomprehensible one.

Thus far, debate regarding strategic culture has occurred between the first and last of the three generations of strategic culture scholars identified by Alastair Iain Johnston.³ The first generation of scholars, the most prominent of whom remains Colin Gray, initially used the concept of strategic culture as a means of improving our understanding of why different national communities approached strategic affairs in different ways.⁴ The third generation and, notably, Johnston himself, criticised first generation scholarship as being untestable and focused their attention on the development of falsifiable theories of strategic culture.⁵ Each of these approaches to the study of strategic culture has its adherents, yet neither is satisfactory. The latter suffers from the absence of any recognition of the role of agency in terms of the

constitution of strategic culture, while the former remains both under-theorized and overly deterministic in terms of its explanation of the operation of strategic culture. Collectively, as Gray has recently lamented, existing efforts to theorize strategic culture remain of limited utility to those interested in the relationship between culture and strategy.⁶

What has been neglected, however, has been the approach towards strategic culture scholarship adopted by what Johnston describes as the ‘second generation’ of strategic culture scholars. This neglect may have resulted from the diversity evident even within the somewhat limited selection of scholars and texts that are included by Johnston and others in this category.⁷ This diverse category of work includes a critical account of American ‘national character’,⁸ an analysis of arms fetishism within global politics⁹ and, perhaps most importantly, Bradley Klein’s limited but impressive account of strategic culture.¹⁰ As I shall argue here, this second generation literature on strategic culture – in particular that of Bradley Klein - offers much that may aid us in advancing beyond the impasse that presently mars the debate regarding strategic culture. This is especially true when Klein’s work is read in the light of both his other contributions to Strategic Studies literature¹¹ and the works of other authors who have adopted similar approaches to the analysis of strategic affairs.¹²

This article seeks to revive and expand upon the approach to strategic culture scholarship initiated by Klein, and to highlight some appropriate methods of analysis through which the concept of strategic culture might be applied in empirical studies. In order to undertake this expansion, I seek to synthesize strategic culture theory and elements of critical constructivist theory that are largely consistent with Klein’s

approach to strategic culture scholarship. The resulting conception of strategic culture leads us to ask how strategic culture serves to constitute certain strategic behaviour as meaningful but also how strategic behaviour serves to constitute the identity of security communities.¹³ Strategic behaviour is conceived of here as a practice that represents both the site at which strategic culture operates and the site at which strategic culture is produced. The implications of this understanding of the relationship between culture and behaviour are significant. In general, we are led away from the search for the origins and perennial characteristics of a particular community's strategic culture and towards the analysis of how communities and the relationships between them are constituted through the practices associated with strategic behaviour. In other words, rather than taking for granted the seemingly natural existence of security communities (especially states) and asking how an attribute of a particular community (its strategic culture) influences its behaviour, I argue in favor of an examination of the strategic practices that serve to constitute communities and the relationships between them. Such an approach offers both practical benefits in terms of a greater appreciation of the politics of strategy and far greater critical potential than existing approaches. In short, it offers us the opportunity to look afresh at strategic practices that are too often taken for granted.¹⁴

The article proceeds in four stages. I begin by briefly summarizing the debate over strategic culture theory that has taken place over the past three decades. In particular, I focus on the writings of two of the most important contributors to this debate, Iain Johnston and Colin Gray.¹⁵ These two scholars have staked out opposing positions with regard to the concept of strategic culture that largely shape the current field of debate.¹⁶ In the second section, the writings of these two scholars are critically

assessed in order to highlight the weaknesses in existing accounts of strategic culture. These weaknesses relate to existing understandings of the constitution, operation and analysis of strategic culture. Thirdly, I argue that a promising means of addressing these existing weaknesses is to return to the second generation of strategic culture scholarship and to combine the insights of Klein with critical constructivist international theory.¹⁷ As I seek to demonstrate, an array of critical constructivists have made significant progress in theorizing the nature and operation of social structures and their work is, in many ways, consistent with that of Klein.¹⁸ Contemporary constructivist literature therefore has much to offer the analyst of strategic culture. Finally, I make some tentative suggestions regarding the means by which empirical studies of strategic culture might be carried out. As such, the final section of this article posits some directions in which strategic culture scholarship could be advanced.

The story so far

The concept of strategic culture originated in a brief paper on Soviet nuclear strategy written by Jack Snyder for the RAND Corporation.¹⁹ Though Snyder ultimately concluded that culture should be an explanation of last resort²⁰, during the past three decades a significant body of literature has emerged relating to the concept. Early examples of this literature, produced predominantly during the 1980s, focused on illustrating and explaining variation between Soviet and American ‘styles’ of strategy.²¹ During the 1990s, an additional wave of strategic culture literature appeared that sought to challenge Realist accounts of the strategic behaviour of

states.²² More recently, the concept of strategic culture has emerged as a key element within the debate over the future of European security policy.²³

In general, this body of literature advances two common arguments. Firstly, much of the strategic culture literature suggests that, due to cultural differences across security communities, different communities will make different strategic choices when faced with the same security environment. Secondly, existing strategic culture theory also suggests that particular communities are likely to exhibit consistent and persistent strategic preferences over time. Thus, strategic culture theory is used to highlight and distinguish the persistent trends in the strategic behaviour of particular security communities. Despite these similarities, some important differences have emerged between scholars working with the concept of strategic culture. Though these differences are evident across the works of many of the scholars cited above, they are most clearly visible within the works of Iain Johnston and Colin Gray who, over the past decade, have engaged in a debate regarding the nature and analysis of strategic culture. It is due to both the clarity of the positions staked out by Johnston and Gray and the fact that many other strategic culture scholars have situated their own works in relation to these positions that in the present and following sections attention is focused upon this debate.

Johnston's contribution to the strategic culture debate remains of great relevance due to the rigor with which he assesses the existing literature and the clarity with which he advances his own conception of strategic culture.²⁴ He argues that:

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.²⁵

Thus, for Johnston, strategic culture affects behaviour by presenting policy makers with a 'limited, ranked set of grand strategic preferences' and by affecting how members of these cultures learn from interaction with the security environment.²⁶ Central to this theory is the distinction between strategic culture and state behaviour. Johnston adopts this approach in order to isolate strategic culture as an independent variable and then measure its causal power with respect to state behaviour.²⁷ Johnston contends that this approach is superior to those of scholars such as Colin Gray because it constitutes a falsifiable theory of strategic culture. Johnston applies this theory to an analysis of Chinese strategy during the Ming period.²⁸ He examines a set of classic Chinese military texts in order to identify the characteristics of Chinese strategic culture, and then tests for the influence of this culture through an analysis of the strategic practices of Chinese military leaders during the Ming dynasty. Thus, strategic culture and strategic behaviour remain at a 'healthy' distance, and the influence of the former on the latter can be scientifically tested.

Johnston's work on strategic culture has been strongly criticized, particularly in terms of the distinction between strategic culture and strategic behaviour. Gray, who represents perhaps the most prominent critic of Johnston's work, argues that, in their

search for a falsifiable theory of strategic culture, scholars such as Johnston have committed errors that 'are apt to send followers into an intellectual wasteland' and argues, instead, in favour of an understanding of strategic culture as context, the 'the total warp and woof of matters strategic that are thoroughly woven together'.²⁹ Gray's key argument is that strategic behaviour cannot be separated from notions of strategic culture because such behaviour is inevitably carried out by people who are 'encultured'.³⁰ For Gray, the inability to separate culture from behaviour precludes the possibility of separating cause from effect, thus precluding the application of positivist methods of social science to the analysis of strategic culture. The implications of this approach to the study of strategic culture are twofold. Firstly, drawing upon arguments presented by Martin Hollis and Steve Smith³¹, he argues that the recognition that culture and behaviour cannot be separated necessitates the adoption of methods that enable one to understand rather than explain strategic behaviour.³² Therefore, strategic culture analysis ought to be driven by the need to interpret the meaning of strategic behaviour rather than by the desire to explain the cause of that behaviour. Secondly, Gray suggests that strategic culture theory cannot be amenable to the type of comparative theory testing that is frequently undertaken by positivist scholars. This challenges the work of scholars who, building on Johnston's argument, seek to test strategic culture theory against other theories such as neorealism.³³

As it stands, the literature on strategic culture remains organised around the debate discussed above. More recently, and particularly in the context of the debate regarding the future development of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), various scholars have advocated the adoption of the understandings of strategic

culture advanced, respectively, by Johnston and Gray. Sten Rynning and Stine Heiselberg, each of whom argues that Europe lacks a strong strategic culture, follow Johnston in stressing the importance of conceptually distinguishing between culture and behaviour.³⁴ Alternatively, Christoph Meyer, who presents a more positive view regarding the potential emergence of a coherent European strategic culture, supports an understanding of the concept that builds on the arguments of Gray.³⁵ Thus, despite the fact that some scholars have continued to apply strategic culture theory, the works of both Johnston and Gray remain foundational within the relevant literature. The following section of this article seeks to clarify the weaknesses that are evident within both Johnston's and Gray's approaches to strategic culture.

Holes in the plot

According to both Johnston and Gray, the key area of disagreement that separates them relates to the question of whether or not strategic culture should be conceptually distinguished from strategic behaviour. This, then, would appear to be the key 'gap' in the literature and the issue that requires most scholarly attention if strategic culture theory is to be improved.³⁶ On closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that there are a number of issues within this body of literature that, so far, have not been dealt with satisfactorily. These relate to the constitution, operation and analysis of strategic culture.

The constitution of strategic culture

One of the fundamental questions that have been overlooked by first and third generation scholars of strategic culture theory is that of how strategic culture is produced. This question is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, if we do not understand how strategic culture comes to exist, then we are unlikely to be able to appreciate what it does. Secondly, we need to know where strategic culture comes from if we are to know where to look for it. Johnston's approach to this issue is fundamentally shaped by his methodologically-driven determination to conceptually isolate strategic culture as a distinct cause of strategic behaviour. Johnston posits a monocausal relationship in which strategic culture is identified as an independent and isolatable variable that causes (or at least limits) the behavioural choices of states. This presents a problem, however, when we come to ask how strategic culture is produced. Within Johnston's model of strategic culture, causality moves in one direction only – from culture to behaviour. However, if the behaviour or practices of individuals do not 'cause' the emergence of strategic culture, then what does? Johnston largely ignores this question, despite its importance in relation to any empirical study of strategic culture.³⁷ Like many other strategic culture scholars, Johnston's fundamental assumption is that the constitution of strategic culture is intimately connected to the origins of a particular security community. Thus, he suggests that it is at the earliest points in a security community's history that strategic culture 'may reasonably be expected to have emerged'.³⁸ In seeking to explain this process of constitution, Johnston has little to offer other than a passing reference to the 'philosophical and textual traditions and experiential legacies out of which...strategic culture may come'.³⁹

In essence, this approach is similar to that taken by other scholars of strategic culture. Booth, for example, argues simply that ‘the strategic culture of a nation derives from its history, geography and political culture’.⁴⁰ What is evident in these and other explanations of the constitution of strategic culture is the assumption that underpins virtually every study of this concept, namely, that a security community ‘naturally’ possesses a unique strategic culture. What is lacking is any appreciation of, firstly, the inherently constructed nature of identity and culture and, secondly, the role of agency in producing such structures. If we focus on Johnston’s claims regarding the importance of philosophical and textual traditions, for example, we must recognise that the study and explication of philosophy is a practice undertaken by individuals, as is the writing of texts. Agency is also central to the concept of ‘experiential legacies’; only human agents are capable of experiencing events and constructing legacies regarding those events through practices of communication. Johnston’s theory is designed to allow the measurement of the influence that strategic culture has on the practices of people, but in doing so precludes the possibility that people play a role in creating culture.

Gray strongly critiques Johnston’s arguments regarding the desirability of conceptually separating strategic culture from behaviour. Gray’s argument that strategic behaviour is necessarily representative of strategic culture implies that human practices serve to constitute culture, indeed, he even goes so far as to say that ‘human strategic actors and their institutions...“make culture”’.⁴¹ This is a fundamentally important point because it holds open the possibility of accounting for the production of strategic culture through the recognition of the constitutive role of

human agency. However, despite his recognition of this capacity for agency, Gray struggles to accommodate this position with his essentially deterministic views of the role of strategic culture. Thus, though he accepts that his earlier work may have seemed ‘somewhat deterministic’, he remains convinced that all behaviour must be influenced by culture because, for example, ‘Germans cannot help but be German’.⁴² This interpretation of strategic culture is largely consistent with traditional accounts that assume that strategic culture represents a natural attribute of a security community, one that emerges during a community’s ‘formative’ years. Thus, despite the potential significance regarding the ‘making’ of culture Gray, like Johnston, does not develop a thorough account of the constitution of strategic culture.

The operation of strategic culture

On first inspection, one might assume that Johnston and Gray have been more successful in explaining how strategic culture operates rather than how it is constituted. Certainly, far more attention has been paid by these authors to the question of what strategic culture does than to the question of how it is produced. There remain, however, significant weaknesses in each of these authors’ attempts to address this issue. In *Cultural Realism*, Johnston goes to considerable effort to specify the process through which strategic culture shapes the strategic choices made by policy makers. Returning to his definition, strategic culture is, for Johnston, an ‘integrated system of symbols 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’.⁴³ Thus, strategic culture, an attribute of communities or

peoples, suddenly makes its presence felt within the cognitive processes of policy makers as it causes them to hold particular assumptions and apply particular concepts and preferences in their policy making practices. The problem here is how to account for the transmission of the symbols, preferences and concepts that form strategic culture to and between the members of a community. In other words, how do policy makers become aware of the symbols that form strategic culture? Johnston avoids this question, I would argue, because to address it would entail the challenging of his theory of the operation of strategic culture. If individuals are granted responsibility for the communication (and, hence, perpetuation) of culture, the argument that culture constitutes behaviour but that behaviour does not constitute culture becomes questionable. To retain this argument, one would have to assume that individuals are cultural 'dupes'; they transmit strategic culture without possessing any capacity to influence it. This position becomes even less tenable when one takes into account the implicit assumption that is evident in Johnston's work regarding his own capacity to step outside the influence of culture and make objective observations regarding its existence and effects.

While Gray explicitly challenges Johnston's explanation of the operation of strategic culture by asserting that strategic practices constitute that culture, he fails to advance beyond this criticism. Indeed, it is clear from Gray's most recent writings on strategic culture that he is uncomfortable with the implications that follow from the recognition that people 'make culture'. Rather than examine in greater depth the relationship between structure and agency with regard to the operation of strategic culture, Gray falls back on familiar arguments regarding the longevity of culture, its emergence in the 'formative moments' of a security community, and the unique cultural attributes

of different security communities.⁴⁴ This last point is evident in the examples drawn upon by Gray, which include, for example, the Germanic belief that Germany was the protector of Western Europe and the American tendency towards monochronic decision-making.⁴⁵ Such overly deterministic arguments subsume the role of agency and are characteristic of first-generation strategic culture scholarship that was initially and rightly criticised by Johnston. Thus, despite the fact that Gray repeatedly states that behaviour constitutes culture, he does not thoroughly investigate the implications of this argument, especially as they apply to the operation of strategic culture.

The analysis of strategic culture

The final question that remains unresolved within the literature relating to strategic culture is that of how strategic culture ought to be studied. Indeed, this is perhaps the point at which the greatest variation lies between Johnston and Gray. Methodology represents the departure point for Johnston and a final and, as yet, unreached destination for Gray. Johnston's major work on strategic culture thoroughly critiques earlier generations of strategic culture scholarship on the grounds that scholars such as Gray advanced generalised and ultimately untestable arguments. For Johnston, scholars of strategic culture ought to apply Popperian notions of falsifiability in order to produce testable hypotheses and valid truth-claims.⁴⁶ The adoption of this method requires Johnston to conceive of strategic culture as being distinct from the strategic behaviour that he seeks to explain.

Gray argues persuasively against this approach to strategic culture scholarship: ‘from the perspective of methodological rigor it is hard to fault [Johnston]. The problem is that one cannot understand strategic behaviour by that method, be it ever so rigorous’.⁴⁷ Gray contends that the definition of terms such as strategic culture ought to be driven by the nature of the subject matter one is trying to define rather than by the demands of methodology. As has been demonstrated above, this criticism is warranted. Johnston’s definition does allow him to conceptually distinguish culture from behaviour, but it results in an understanding of strategic culture that is unconvincing with regard to both the constitution and operation of that culture. To account for the existence and transmission of culture, one must necessarily theorise the relationship between strategic culture and human agents. Furthermore, once we begin to inquire as to the relationship between culture and behaviour it becomes increasingly difficult to accept a theory of the operation of strategic culture that ignores the constitutive role of human practices.

If we cannot hope to explain the causal affects of strategic culture on strategic behaviour, how ought we to approach the analysis of this subject matter? Unfortunately, Gray does not provide a complete answer to this question. After acknowledging that ‘the theoretical, let alone empirical, difficulties’ that are raised by his approach are ‘obviously severe’, Gray goes on to briefly suggest that scholars would do well to adopt an interpretive approach with regard to the study of strategic culture.⁴⁸ Rather than helping us explain strategic behaviour, Gray contends that strategic culture analysis helps us to address the question ‘what does the observed behaviour mean?’⁴⁹ In doing so, Gray makes reference to the distinction between

explanatory and hermeneutic approaches to social science drawn by Hollis and Smith.⁵⁰ Importantly, while this may represent a starting point for the development of a method suited to strategic culture analysis, it represents little more than this. This is true for two reasons. On the one hand, and as Hollis and Smith note, there is great potential for diversity within hermeneutic approaches to the social sciences.⁵¹ For example, the search for meaning can focus on that which individuals intend or it can focus on the meaning of an utterance as determined by a particular set of social rules or norms. While the adoption of the latter position may seem on first glance to be consistent with existing strategic culture analyses, it also dilutes the relevance of Gray's comment that people make culture, thus returning us to a somewhat deterministic understanding of strategic culture.⁵² On the other hand, Hollis and Smith's famous distinction between explanatory and hermeneutic approaches may not even be an appropriate starting point for the elucidation of a method for strategic culture analysis. This is particularly evident given both the apparent centrality of textual analysis to a great many works on strategic culture and Hollis and Smith's questionable suggestion that theories within the discipline of International Relations 'need not grapple with the nature of language in any depth'.⁵³ Instead, adopting a hermeneutic approach to the analysis of cultural artefacts (such as texts and speeches) would seem to warrant a very serious consideration of the nature of language. Thus, while Gray highlights some of the key weaknesses with the methodology adopted by Johnston, he does not advance a sufficiently developed alternative.

The discussion above highlights a number of significant and interlinked weaknesses within the literature on strategic culture. First and third generation accounts of the

constitution, operation and analysis of strategic culture are flawed. On the one hand, third generation scholars who seek a falsifiable theory of strategic culture necessarily sacrifice the capacity to account for the role of agency in the constitution of culture. The consequences that follow from the adoption of this method-driven approach include, firstly, an inability to theorise the constitution of strategic culture and, secondly, the development of accounts of the operation of strategic culture that oversimplify the relationship between culture and agency. On the other hand, first generation scholars, though they have begun to recognise that the practices of human agents serve to constitute strategic culture, have not yet developed a theory of strategic culture that successfully incorporates this position.⁵⁴ The remainder of this paper seeks to address the weaknesses that are evident in first and third generation approaches to strategic culture theory, and to advance an alternative approach.

Reconstructing the second generation

What has been odd about much of the debate regarding strategic culture theory has been that, on the one hand, those involved have repeatedly made reference to Johnston's three-generational characterisation of the strategic culture literature and yet, on the other, no serious or sustained attempt has been made by such scholars to engage with the work of second generation scholars such as Klein. This section seeks to build upon Klein's conception of strategic culture in order to respond to some of the weaknesses in alternative accounts identified above. On closer inspection, however, the reluctance on the part of many strategic studies scholars to take seriously the arguments of Klein is anything but surprising. Klein's work is critical in

orientation, drawing as it does on the scholarship of post-structuralists such as Michel Foucault, R. B. J. Walker and Richard Ashley and post-Marxists such as Antonio Gramsci and Robert Cox.⁵⁵ Despite the gradual acceptance of post-positivist theory within the fields of International Relations and Security Studies, the sub-discipline of strategic studies has remained largely isolated from these changes, as is clearly evidenced by the theoretical paucity evident within the debate regarding strategic culture. While the absence of any serious engagement with his position regarding strategic culture may be predictable, it remains a significant failing of those scholars engaged in the strategic culture debate because Klein's work promises to add much to our understanding of this concept.

Klein's understanding of strategic culture contains three key elements that distinguish it from those held by conventional strategic culture scholars. Briefly, these relate to the constructed nature of social reality, the scope of both strategic culture and the politics of strategy, and the relationship between strategic culture and strategic practice. Klein's position regarding the constructed nature of reality differs sharply to that held by many Strategic Studies scholars in that, unlike them, he refuses to accept the distinction that is typically made between an external reality and our knowledge of that reality.⁵⁶ This distinction is central to the work of Johnston who seeks to measure the accuracy of his theory of strategic culture by comparing it to strategic practices in the 'real' world. Alternatively, Klein argues that the reality that Strategic Studies scholars refer to, including, for example, the states system and the very notion of security, is socially constructed.⁵⁷ This position is also held by constructivists who have generally been concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality.⁵⁸ For scholars such as Klein, our knowledge of the world and, therefore, our practices

within it are shaped by the social structures that enable and constrain social, discursive interaction.

The similarities between this understanding of the role of social structures and Gray's conception of strategic culture are immediately clear. Gray conceives of strategic culture as providing the context within which policy makers must necessarily act and without this context, he argues, events lack meaning. Klein and many constructivists would go further, and suggest that the very possibility of meaning is predicated upon the existence of social structures. Intersubjective conceptions of meaning are central to all political and social action because they make communication, and therefore collective organization possible.⁵⁹ It is, after all, groups and not individuals that engage in strategic behaviour and it is strategic culture that enables the undertaking of the social and political practices that necessarily precede such behaviour.⁶⁰ To this extent, strategic culture can be thought of as *an intersubjective system of symbols that makes possible political action related to strategic affairs*. Furthermore, strategic culture constrains and enables the communicative practices that are central to the politics of strategy.

It is with regard to the scope of the politics of strategy that Klein's work also differs significantly from that of conventional strategic culture scholars. For first and third-generation scholars, strategic culture shapes only one aspect of the politics of strategy; it aids in our attempts to explain or understand why unitary and culturally distinct nation-states use military force in different ways. In other words, strategic culture shapes the political process through which a given state's political and/or military leaders decide upon how to use military force in a given situation. Klein's work does

incorporate this aspect of conventional strategic culture scholarship; he argues that the concept of strategic culture ‘embodies [a] state’s war-making style, understood in terms of its military institutions and its accumulated strategic traditions of air, land and naval power’.⁶¹ Klein also contends that strategic culture incorporates the manner in which a state prepares for the use of force – through economic, technological and institutional development – and the manner in which the use of force is justified within the context of political debate. As such, strategic culture represents a political web of interpretation in which strategic practices gain meaning. This web shapes the military practices of states by rendering certain strategic practices as possible and legitimate while others remain either impossible or illegitimate. Thus far, Klein’s position seems relatively similar to that advanced by conventional strategic culture scholars such as Gray.

However, conventional strategic culture theorists go no further than this. Instead, they take for granted much that, according to Klein, remains to be explained. Specifically, while conventional strategic culture scholars do examine the politics of strategy as it refers to the use of force they ignore entirely the political processes through which communities capable of using military force are constituted.⁶² This is typical of much of the literature within the field of Strategic Studies, where the existence of sovereign nation-states and their situation within an anarchic international system are taken for granted. For Klein, however, the fundamental purpose of utilizing the concept of strategic culture is to problematise the taken-for-granted status that is typically granted to states and the states-system.⁶³ Thus, while Klein’s analyses have tended to focus on one aspect of the politics of strategy – how strategic practices render possible particular forms of community – his approach

encapsulates a much broader conceptualization of the scope of strategic culture. Specifically, Klein explicitly draws a connection between the politics of identity and the politics of strategy.

This aspect of Klein's work is also consistent with that of many critical constructivists. Constructivists have long been concerned with the issue of how social structures serve to constitute the identities of particular agents. For example, Weldes, building on the work of Stuart Hall, has argued that, as well as regulating the behaviour of agents, norms also play an interpellative role in 'calling into being' certain identities or sites of agency.⁶⁴ This is a particularly important aspect of constructivist theory in terms of the advancement of our understanding of strategic culture. Symbols related to a security community's identity form a central part of its strategic culture because they inform collective understandings of the boundaries and relationships between that community and others. Furthermore, how we understand such relationships is likely to influence our assumptions about the appropriate role of military force within international politics.⁶⁵ To engage in strategic culture scholarship therefore, is (or ought to be) to investigate the means by which strategic culture constitutes certain behaviour *and certain collective identities* as possible.

As has been noted in the previous section, conventional accounts of strategic culture have failed to address the issue of how strategic culture, let alone the identity of strategic actors, is constituted. Johnston posits a theory of strategic culture and remains unable to account for the existence of such culture. Gray challenges Johnston's theory but remains unwilling to acknowledge the implications of his acceptance that practice constitutes culture. Alternatively, Klein argues that the very

starting point of any strategic culture analysis must be to treat military strategy as a cultural practice.⁶⁶ While the field of Strategic Studies has tended to emphasise the regulative role of strategic force, Klein remains intent upon examining the generative nature of such practices – ‘generative of states, of state systems, of world orders, and to some extent, of modern identity as well’.⁶⁷ Thus, Klein argues that strategic violence is not merely used to patrol the frontiers of the state; it serves to constitute them as well. Klein effectively reverses the line of argument typically advanced by conventional strategic culture theorists. While scholars such as Johnston and Gray remain focused on the question of how the cultural attributes of a state shape its strategic practices, Klein focuses on how strategic practices constitute the identity of a particular state.

Klein’s articulation of the relationship between strategic culture and strategic practice is largely consistent with constructivist notions regarding the mutual constitution of structures and agents. Indeed, while constructivists have focused attention on the importance of social structures they have also examined the constitutive function of human agency. Indeed, the notion that agents and structures are mutually constitutive is one of the central ontological propositions of constructivism.⁶⁸ Alternatively, the constructivist position on this point is largely drawn from the work of sociologist Anthony Giddens. Following Giddens, constructivists claim ‘that human agents do not exist independently from their social environment and it’s collectively shared systems of meanings (‘culture’ in a broad sense). At the same time, social constructivists maintain that human agency creates, reproduces, and changes culture by way of daily practices’.⁶⁹ The ‘agent-structure problem’ refers to the difficulties of developing theory that successfully meets the demands of both the need to

acknowledge that human agency is the only moving force behind the actions, events, and outcomes of the social world, and also the need to recognise the causal relevance of structural factors.⁷⁰ While constructivists may not have ‘solved’ this problem, the very recognition of its existence has tended to move constructivist scholars away from the type of deterministic claims that are still evident within much strategic culture literature.⁷¹ Instead, constructivists such as Fierke have focused specifically on the transformative capacity held by human agents with respect to social structures.⁷²

While constructivists have sought to avoid the weaknesses of structurally deterministic arguments, they have also refused to overemphasise the freedom of individuals to exercise agency independently of social structures. As Fierke notes, the goals of individuals must be pursued within a social realm and, therefore, they must be communicated and made meaningful to others.⁷³ As a result, in addressing the agent-structure problem, many constructivist scholars have focused on the communicative practices of agents, for it is at the site of such practices that structures and agency meet.⁷⁴ Social structures constrain and enable such practices, but it is only due to the repeated practices of agents that social structures come to exist. Therefore, constructivist scholarship has focused conceptually on social structures, such as norms and identities, and empirically on the social and communicative practices of particular actors. As such, second-generation strategic culture theory promises to shift the attention of scholars away from the discussion of broad generalisations about the national ‘character’ of particular security communities and towards the detailed analysis of the communicative practices of those involved in the politics of strategy.⁷⁵

The amalgamation of Klein's work on strategic culture and some of the key insights of critical constructivist theory attempted above is brief, yet it provides significant leverage with regard to the first two weaknesses of conventional strategic culture theory identified in the previous section. Through recognising the roles played by human agents, second-generation strategic culture theory promises much in terms of our theorisation of the *constitution* of strategic culture. More specifically, such an approach moves us away from the search for the discrete origins of a community's strategic culture and identity and towards the analysis of the practices that serve to repeatedly constitute those social structures. Strategic culture does not magically emerge during the formative years of a particular security community and then perpetually operate upon the members of that community. Indeed, as David Campbell has noted, it is often the reproduction of narratives of a community's 'origins' or 'formative years' that serve to constitute that community's identity and its relationships with other such communities.⁷⁶ Strategic culture and collective identity, are (re)produced through the practices of those engaged in strategic affairs.⁷⁷ Thus, rather than assuming that each community 'naturally' possesses a strategic culture, one must investigate how practices related to the use of military force serve to reconstitute particular collective identities and understandings about the meaning and uses of strategy. For some, no doubt, this approach to the theorisation of strategic culture threatens the dignity of the concept as it challenges the linkage of strategic culture to grand patterns in a security community's strategic practices. Instead, the theory of strategic culture promoted here recognises the constitutive power of practice, thus granting strategic culture analysis an urgency and relevance with regard to contemporary strategic behaviour.

Furthermore, our understanding of the *operation* of strategic culture must be significantly altered once we take seriously the ontological propositions of constructivism. Key here is the recognition that the strategic practices of security communities are carried out by groups of individuals and a process of group decision-making must be undertaken if those individuals are to act collectively. Central to this political process is communication, and communication is only possible when those involved can draw upon shared systems of symbols. I have argued above in favour of a definition of strategic culture as a system of symbols that constrain and enable communication and politics related to strategy. A particular strategic culture (to the extent that we are able to speak of a distinct culture) will be distinguished by the symbols incorporated within it and the ways in which those symbols are related to one another.⁷⁸ More generally, we might expect a strategic culture to enable the articulation of particular understandings of the identity of a community, the nature of its relationship with other communities, and the appropriate role of force within the context of those relationships. Therefore, strategic culture constitutes a set of rules regarding what may be communicated and, implicitly, what may not. Strategic culture may therefore be thought of as defining a set of language games related to the politics of strategy.⁷⁹

Importantly, the rules of these games are not, and cannot be, unchanging. Thus, though strategic culture constrains political practices, political agency and processes of political contestation always hold the potential to change the constituent elements of that culture.⁸⁰ As post-structuralist scholars have repeatedly suggested, due, in part, to the reflexive capacities of human agents the meaning of particular symbols or signs and the relationships between them can never be finally fixed.⁸¹ Humans are

not cultural ‘dupes’ whose social practices are fully determined by the social structures in which they operate. Instead they are capable of reflecting upon their use of language and the structures that constrain it. However, this is not to say that human agents are free to change strategic culture as they please. Political processes of contestation regarding the meaning of and relationships between symbols will determine whether or not change in strategic culture takes place. Strategic culture therefore represents an inherently dynamic structure that is repeatedly reconstituted through the very practices that it enables and constrains. Thus, second-generation strategic culture theory suggests that the existence of long-term patterns in the strategic behaviour of states must be investigated rather than assumed.

Strategic culture analysis

Given the theorisation of strategic culture identified above, we must now turn to the question of how strategic culture scholarship ought to proceed. Clearly, the propositions of second-generation strategic culture theory hold important implications for the how we study strategic culture. These implications relate to the questions that are asked within strategic culture scholarship, the subject matter that is studied and the method by which it is studied. With regard to the first of these issues, the above discussion has demonstrated clearly that traditional strategic culture literature has ignored some challenging and interesting questions. In particular, strategic culture scholars have largely been guilty of assuming the existence of natural, stable and unitary security communities (states) that each possesses a unique strategic culture.⁸²

Such assumptions ignore the constructed nature of both collective identities and strategic culture and they also ignore the intimate relationship between the two.⁸³ In short, second-generation strategic culture theory urges us to consider two general questions. Firstly, how is it that some understandings of a community's collective identity, its relationship with other communities, and its use of military force come to be articulated while others do not? Secondly, what are the consequences that follow from the articulation of particular understandings of these central issues? Thus, strategic culture scholarship ought to focus on analysing how a particular social structure (strategic culture) shapes the content and meaning of strategic discourse as well as what implications follow from the deployment of that particular discourse.

As the previous section has suggested, constructivist theory matches a conceptual focus on social structures to an empirical focus on communicative practices.⁸⁴ Therefore, the investigation of the research questions outlined above demands the analysis of the discourse of the politics of strategy.⁸⁵ This discourse is constituted by, but not merely reducible to communicative practices of those involved in the politics of strategy, practices that are amenable to textual analysis.⁸⁶ Strategic culture scholarship must therefore be concerned with the analysis of texts, but which texts? The answer to this question will ultimately depend on whom one takes to be involved in the politics of strategy. Immediately, it is important to note that strategic cultural analysis need not be applied solely to states. Obviously, as is evident from much of the most contemporary literature regarding this concept, the strategic culture of institutions, such as the European Union, is worthy of analysis.⁸⁷ However, even this expanded conception of strategic culture might be too narrow for some. As Klein himself has demonstrated, it is worthwhile considering strategic culture on a global

level. Strategic practices including nuclear deterrence, arms control, and collective security operations (such as humanitarian interventions) take place in a global political setting and, as such, may be amenable to strategic culture analysis. Finally, there is no need to apply strategic culture analysis solely to the strategic practices of states and international institutions such as the EU. Sub-state or transnational actors that engage in the use of force may also be amenable to such analysis.⁸⁸ One of the benefits of such analysis would be the recognition of the multiple forms of identity that are relevant within the context of strategic practices.

Furthermore, even when strategic culture analysis *is* applied to the examination of states, there is no need to adopt a narrow view of who is involved in the politics of strategy. Within the United States, for example, the list of individuals and institutions that may be said to have some role in the production of strategy is enormous.⁸⁹ Ideally, one might seek to analyze the communicative practices of those most intimately involved in the making of strategic policy, yet transcripts of this level of discourse are notoriously difficult to gain access to. Alternatively, speeches, press releases and policy documents produced by officials from the various departments and government bodies that are involved in the policy making process represent highly relevant texts worthy of strategic culture analysis.⁹⁰ In addition, however, we might choose to examine texts associated with the media, with academia or with the plethora of think-tanks, all of which are engaged in the security policy-making process.⁹¹ Finally, one may choose to examine texts relating to the everyday practices of ‘normal’ people as those people are, in a number of different ways, implicated in the politics of strategy.⁹² On first inspection, the sheer enormity of the list of potentially suitable texts for analysis outlined above might be seen to suggest that

strategic culture analysis lacks a clear focus. On the contrary, however, the challenge of deciding which actors are involved in the politics of strategy is faced by anyone seeking to analyse the strategic practices of a security community, whether they choose to do so from a realist, institutional, or cultural perspective.⁹³

The examples listed above together form what might be described as the political documentary record. However, as Klein argues, we can extend our ‘textual’ analysis to social practices that are not themselves confined to the written word. ‘Because all social practices necessarily rely upon a documentary record as well as on repertoires of meaning and interpretation that are always made available through the medium of language, they are also susceptible to critical methods of inquiry that explore the construction of truths... From this standpoint, all practices acquire a “curious literariness” that is not available to narrowly materialist or empiricist explanations’.⁹⁴ Thus, our analysis of written texts ought to be coupled with the ‘textual’ analysis of social practices. Still, we must necessarily choose certain texts and practices to analyse. How is this to be done?

Perhaps the primary consideration that is likely to underpin our selection of particular texts and practices for analysis relates to the notion of power. No doubt, some scholars will choose to focus solely on texts produced by state officials and political leaders on the grounds that those individuals are likely to possess the greatest power in terms of the making of strategic policy.⁹⁵ However, if we are to understand the constitutive and productive functions of strategic culture, I would argue that we must also take into consideration the manner in which the politics of strategy plays out in a variety of arenas. Given the suggestion made above that strategic practices play a key

role in the production of the collective identities of security communities, the analysis of texts relating to popular culture and everyday life may hold the potential to highlight important elements of this constitutive process as it relates to the people of those communities.⁹⁶ Furthermore, we must recognise that the power of political leaders is, in part, constituted by the productive capacity of strategic discourse. Thus, unless we define the scope of strategic culture analysis broadly we are likely to repeat the failings of much traditional IR literature in vastly underestimating the volume and variety of power that it takes to produce the states, military institutions and modes of conflict that we often take for granted.⁹⁷

Finally, we must turn to the most challenging of the issues related to the analysis of strategic culture, that concerning the method through which the analysis of texts ought to be carried out. It is at this point that the epistemological division within constructivism, which itself echoes a much lengthier debate within the social sciences,⁹⁸ becomes central. The key issue here is how we ought to approach the analysis of language. Ted Hopf's distinction between conventional and critical constructivists is useful here because it focuses upon the two general positions advanced within constructivist scholarship regarding the analysis of language.⁹⁹ Conventional constructivists, such as Peter Katzenstein¹⁰⁰, adopt a correspondence theory of language while critical constructivists, such as Jutta Weldes, adopt a constitutive theory of language. The former assume that language corresponds directly to, or mirrors, aspects of an objective world. In the context of constructivist scholarship this means that while language may be used to describe norms, identities or cultures, it does not serve to constitute them. Constructivists who adopt a correspondence theory of language, perhaps most famously Alexander Wendt, have

been strongly criticised because doing so tends to lead to overly deterministic accounts of the role of social structures.¹⁰¹ On closer inspection, this same weakness is evident in much contemporary strategic culture literature. Johnston's analysis of ancient Chinese military texts is symptomatic of an approach grounded in the correspondence theory of language; he assumes that these texts describe rather than constitute Chinese strategic culture. More recently, Meyer has constructed an account of strategic culture theory that builds on the work of constructivists such as Peter Katzenstein and Jeffrey Checkel who, like Wendt, adopt a correspondence theory of language.¹⁰² Like Johnston, Meyer treats language as an unproblematic medium of communication rather than as a practice that constitutes the reality that he seeks to investigate. Again, what is missing within both Meyer and Johnston's works is an analysis of the constitutive role of language.¹⁰³

Alternatively, those who adopt a constitutive theory of language contend that our use of language serves to construct the world in which we live. Constructivist scholars such as Karin Fierke, Jennifer Milliken and Jutta Weldes have been far more willing to place the analysis of language at the center of constructivist research. Adopting this understanding of the role of language holds important implications for how scholarship is practiced. Firstly, it influences the standards that we use to judge the quality of scholarship. If language serves to constitute reality then we cannot get behind language to compare it to an unmediated reality.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, we cannot hope to construct and test falsifiable theories (as Johnston would have us do) by comparing them to reality. Secondly, if we recognise that language constitutes reality, we must necessarily acknowledge (and take responsibility for) the constitutive power of our own scholarship.¹⁰⁵ These points raise two important and interrelated

questions: how are we to judge the standards of discourse analysis, and how should we decide upon the objectives of our own scholarship? How we answer these questions will heavily influence how we undertake the analysis of strategic culture.

There are no easy answers to these questions. With regard to the latter, critical constructivist scholars have generally concerned themselves with interrogating hegemonic discourses, which are themselves seen as constituting a reality that is fundamentally unjust. Thus, one of the things that the critical constructivist authors noted above share is a highly critical attitude regarding the practice and study of international politics. Furthermore, this critical outlook has influenced the methods adopted by such scholars. These methods are characterised by significant diversity due to the desire held by such scholars to resist attempts to impose a hegemonic discourse on the practice of scholarship itself.¹⁰⁶ More recently, however, Milliken has gone to some effort to categorise the range of methods that have been adopted by scholars engaged in the analysis of language.¹⁰⁷ There is space enough here to only briefly discuss these methods, but scholars interested in studying strategic culture would do well to consider in greater detail the methods of analysis outlined by Milliken.

Milliken outlines the initial objective of textual analysis as involving the identification of the symbols incorporated within a discourse and the mapping of the relationships between them. More specifically, she distinguishes between predicative analysis and metaphorical analysis as two means by which texts may be analysed. ‘Predicative analysis focuses on the language practices of predication: the verbs, adverbs, and adjectives that attach to nouns’ because these serve to construct the features and

capacities of the thing(s) named.¹⁰⁸ Alternatively, metaphorical analysis involves the examination of ‘metaphors as structuring possibilities for human reason and action’.¹⁰⁹ Each of these methods is intended to highlight relationships (or categories of relationships) between elements of a discourse. In general, these forms of textual analysis are particularly useful for examining patterns of variation and similarity within or across discourses. Within the context of strategic culture scholarship, textual analysis could be used to show consistency or variation across time and/or space in the discourse of strategy.

Taken alone, the method of textual analysis outlined above is not too dissimilar to the types of analysis undertaken by some strategic culture and conventional constructivist scholars. Indeed, as Milliken has acknowledged, these methods are particularly formal means of studying language and remain insufficient unless they are complemented with an analysis of how such discourses produce the world in which we live.¹¹⁰ The analysis of discourse productivity involves the examination of the practices, power relations and identities that are constituted as possible, reasonable and legitimate within particular discourses. Thus, we must recognise that discourses do not merely constrain and enable the communicative practices of all people equally, they selectively constitute some and not others as ‘privileged storytellers...to whom narrative authority...is granted’.¹¹¹ The production and occlusion of identities is a particularly important focus of this form of analysis. Turning once again to strategic culture theory, we might apply analysis of the productive capacity of discourses of strategy to examine the political structures and sites of authority that are produced by predominant discourses of strategy. Thus far, such questions have been largely ignored within strategic culture scholarship.

The methods discussed thus far involve the examination of the structure of strategic discourses and the analysis of their productive functions with particular respect to the constitution of collective identities. What remains is the question of what stance a strategic culture scholar ought to adopt relative to these discourses. Clearly, different scholars will answer this question in different ways. Some may satisfy themselves with the examination of the structure and productive capacity of a particular discourse. Many involved in the analysis of discourse advocate the adoption of a more critical stance, however, one that is directed towards the undermining of hegemonic discourses rather than the mere analysis of them. On the one hand, strategic culture scholars may pursue such an objective through the application of genealogical or deconstructive methods of analysis. The former seek to challenge the hegemony of particular discourses by showing their constructed nature and historical contingency¹¹² while the latter seek to displace and reverse the binary oppositions that are frequently employed within a discourse in order to privilege particular ‘truths’ by subjugating others.¹¹³ On the other hand, as Fierke has argued, constructivist analyses may possess some inherent critical value to the extent that they show both how our knowledge of the world is constructed and the implications that follow from certain constitutive practices.¹¹⁴ Such analyses encourage us to ‘look again, in a fresh way, at that which we assume about the world because it has become overly familiar’.¹¹⁵ The critical potential that is enabled by the adoption of a constructivist account of strategic culture represents a particularly important addition to the literature, as many existing applications of strategic culture theory have taken for granted the stable existence of unitary nation states and the legitimacy of the use of force.

Some final comments

As presented above, the account of strategic culture theory generated by ‘second generation’ scholars is significantly different to that proposed by both the first and third generations of strategic culture scholars. Such accounts tend to take the existence of states and the legitimacy of the state-sponsored use of military force as natural and unproblematic. The account of strategic culture outlined above calls on scholars to critically investigate rather than merely accept the taken-for-granted status of these positions. In doing so it moves us away from general and overly simplistic arguments about the causative role of particular states’ cultural attributes and towards the detailed analysis of the politics of strategy. This politics has two significant dimensions, both of which are worthy of analysis. Firstly, there is the politics associated with the constitutive function of strategic practices. We must analyse the manner in which strategic practices serve to constitute a particular community, including the generation of the identity of that community and the ordering of relations within it. Secondly, there is the politics associated with the constitution of the meaning of the use of force. In this context, we must analyse the political practices that constitute the use of force in a particular instance as having a particular meaning (or meanings). Thus, we must take seriously the argument that the meaning of reality, even as it relates to the use of military force, is socially constructed.

These two areas of investigation are of particular importance today. The former is fundamentally related to existing debates regarding the role of identity and the place

of the nation-state within international politics.¹¹⁶ Appreciating how collective identity is constituted is clearly of great significance with regard to, for example, efforts to ‘reconstruct’ states such as Afghanistan and Iraq. Focusing on Iraq for a moment, strategic culture scholarship might help us address a range of key questions. How can a viable Iraqi state be constituted? What alternative collective identities currently compete with that of an Iraqi state? How do the strategic practices currently undertaken by actors within the region serve to constitute or deconstruct these varied collective identities? Finding answers to these questions is of very real importance in contemporary international politics.

The second area of investigation discussed above – that related to the political constitution of the meaning of instances of the use of military force – is equally important though, perhaps, less appreciated. Some may argue that strategy is ultimately about military success and that matters of interpretation are of little importance. On the contrary, however, one need merely consider the practices of the US within Afghanistan to see how central questions regarding the *meaning* of force are to strategic success. For example, Bush appreciated from the outset the importance of characterising the US invasion of Afghanistan in terms of liberation rather than conquest.¹¹⁷ Thus, contestation over the meaning of the use of military force represents an aspect of strategy worthy of significant scholarly attention. Second-generation strategic culture theory both directs our attention to such issues and offers methods by which to undertake such an investigation.

In conclusion, the account of strategic culture theory advanced in this article promises to help us ask and answer key questions regarding the strategic behaviour of security

communities. However, this set of questions is far broader than that which has typically been raised by strategic culture theorists. Perhaps one of most important consequences of the rearticulation of strategic culture theory undertaken above is that it promises to lend strategic culture scholarship far greater urgency with regard to the daily practices of those involved in the politics of strategy. Thus, rather than arguing that certain states will necessarily engage in strategic behaviour of a certain type due to their cultural makeup, strategic culture scholarship ought to engage in the critical analysis of the political practices that constitute and that are constituted by strategic culture. As is evident in the harm and suffering visible in conflict zones around the world, the consequences that flow from the politics of strategy warrant our urgent attention.

¹ Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Strategic Cultures Revisited: Reply to Colin Gray', *Review of International Studies*, 25:3, 1999, pp. 519-523; Colin Gray, 'Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back', *Review of International Studies*, 25:1, (1999), pp. 49-69; and, Stuart Poore, 'What is the Context? A Reply to the Gray-Johnston Debate on Strategic Culture', *Review of International Studies*, 29:2, (2003), pp. 279-284.

² See, for example: Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards, 'Beyond the EU/NATO Dichotomy: The Beginnings of a European Strategic Culture', *International Affairs*, 77:3, (2001), pp. 587-603; Stine Heiselberg, 'Pacifism or Activism: Towards a Common Strategic Culture within the European Security and Defence Policy', *IIS Working Paper*, No. 4, (2003); and, Per M. Martinsen, 'Forging a Strategic Culture: Putting Policy into ESDP', *Oxford Journal on Good Governance*, 1:1, (2004), pp. 61-66.

³ Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

⁴ Colin Gray, 'National Styles in Strategy: The American Example', *International Security*, 6:2, (1981), pp. 21-47; Colin Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Styles*. (Lanham, Md.: Hamilton Press, 1986); David R. Jones, 'Soviet Strategic Culture', in Carl G. Jacobsen (ed.) *Strategic Power USA/USSR*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); and, Carnes Lord, 'American Strategic Culture', *Comparative Strategy*, 5:3, (1985), pp. 269-93.

⁵ Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Alastair Iain Johnston, 'Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Jeffrey W. Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); and, Jeffrey W. Legro, 'Whence American Internationalism', *International Organization*, 54:2, (2000), pp. 253-89.

⁶ Colin Gray, 'In Praise of Strategy', *Review of International Studies*, 29:2, (2003), pp. 285-295, p. 291.

⁷ See also the account of second generation strategic culture literature presented in: Stuart Poore, 'Strategic Culture', in John Glenn, Darryl Howlett and Stuart Poore (eds.), *Neorealism Versus Strategic Culture*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 55-57.

⁸ Reginald C. Stuart, *War and American Thought: From the Revolution to the Monroe Doctrine*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1982).

⁹ Robin Luckham, 'Armament Culture', *Alternatives*, 10:1, (1984), pp. 1-44.

¹⁰ Bradley S. Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture: American Power Projection and Alliance Defence Politics', *Review of International Studies*, 14, (1988), pp. 133-48.

¹¹ See, especially: Bradley S. Klein, *Strategic Studies and World Order*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹² See, for example: Karin M. Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies: Critical Investigations in Security*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); Jennifer Milliken, 'Discourse Study: Bringing Rigor to Critical Theory', in Karin M. Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.) *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation*. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001); and, Jutta Weldes, 'The Cultural Production of Crises: US Identity and Missiles in Cuba', in Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson and Raymond Duvall (eds.) *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities and the Production of Danger*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

¹³ Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture', p. 133. The term 'security communities' is used here to acknowledge the constitutive function of strategic behaviour and the point that the communities that are constituted need not be states.

¹⁴ Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*, p. 13.

¹⁵ With regard to the former, see: Johnston, *Cultural Realism*; Johnston, 'Cultural Realism and Strategy'; and, Johnston, 'Strategic Cultures Revisited'. With regard to the latter, see: Colin Gray, 'Strategic Culture as Context'; and, Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁶ Christoph O. Meyer, 'Convergence Towards a European Strategic Culture? A Constructivist Framework for Explaining Changing Norms', *European Journal of International Relations*, 11:4, (2005), pp. 523-549, p. 524.

¹⁷ Here, I draw upon Ted Hopf's distinction between conventional and critical variants of constructivism. (See Ted Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory', *International Security*, 23:1, (1998), pp. 171-200.) Hopf argues that, 'to the degree that constructivism creates theoretical and epistemological distance between itself and its origins in critical theory, it becomes "conventional" constructivism' (p. 181).

- ¹⁸ See, for example, Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*; Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'Aporia: A Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory', *European Journal of International Relations*, 3:3, (1997), 365-392; and, Milliken, 'Discourse Study'.
- ¹⁹ Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*. (Santa Monica: RAND, 1977).
- ²⁰ Jack Snyder, 'The Concept of Strategic Culture: Caveat Emptor', in Carl G. Jacobsen (ed.) *Strategic Power USA/USSR*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 4.
- ²¹ For example, see: Carl G. Jacobsen (ed.) *Strategic Power USA/USSR*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).
- ²² See especially: Ken Booth and Russell Troad (eds.) *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); and John Glenn, Darryl Howlett and Stewart Poore (eds.), *Neorealism versus Strategic Culture*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).
- ²³ For a summary of this particular debate, see: Meyer, 'Convergence', pp. 524-526, and, more recently, Christoph O. Meyer, *The Quest for a European Strategic Culture: Changing Norms on Security and Defence in the European Union*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
- ²⁴ His most sustained exploration of this concept and its uses remains: Johnston, *Cultural Realism*.
- ²⁵ Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p. 36.
- ²⁶ Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p. 38.
- ²⁷ Meyer, 'Convergence', p. 527.
- ²⁸ Johnston, *Cultural Realism*; and Johnston, 'Cultural Realism and Strategy'.
- ²⁹ Colin Gray, 'Strategic Culture as Context', p. 51.
- ³⁰ Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 135.
- ³¹ Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).
- ³² A similar distinction is drawn in Meyer, *The Quest for a European Strategic Culture*, p. 16.
- ³³ c.f. Glenn et al. (eds.), *Neorealism versus Strategic Culture*.
- ³⁴ Sten Rynning, 'The European Union: Towards a Strategic Culture?', *Security Dialogue*, 34:4, (2003), 479-496; and, Heiselberg, 'Pacifism or Activism'.
- ³⁵ Meyer, 'Convergence' and *The Quest for a European Strategic Culture*, pp. 19-20.
- ³⁶ Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force: The Evolution of German Security Policy, 1990-2003*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 9-11.
- ³⁷ A similar approach is taken by Elizabeth Kier in *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). Like Johnston, Kier seeks to isolate military culture as an independent variable and analyse its impact upon a dependent variable, military doctrine. In doing so, she states explicitly that her work can make no attempt to 'address the sources of the military's culture itself' (p. 9).
- ³⁸ Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p. 40.
- ³⁹ Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p. 29.
- ⁴⁰ Ken Booth, 'The Concept of Strategic Culture Affirmed', In Carl G. Jacobsen (ed.) *Strategic Power USA/USSR*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 121.
- ⁴¹ Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 130.
- ⁴² Colin Gray, 'Strategic Culture as Context', p. 50.
- ⁴³ Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, p. 36.
- ⁴⁴ Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy* pp. 131-132 and p. 148.
- ⁴⁵ Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy* p. 132 and p. 136.
- ⁴⁶ Johnston, 'Strategic Cultures Revisited'.
- ⁴⁷ Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy* pp. 132-133.
- ⁴⁸ Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy* p. 130.
- ⁴⁹ Colin Gray, 'Strategic Culture as Context', p. 51.
- ⁵⁰ Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding*.
- ⁵¹ Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding*, Chapter 4.
- ⁵² Interestingly, Kier makes exactly this choice – to explicitly discount instances where cultural norms are used 'instrumentally' by political actors (see Kier, *Imagining War*, p. 37). Again, this results in an overly deterministic account of the influence of strategic culture as well as a lack of conceptual space in which to account for the possibility of change in strategic culture.
- ⁵³ Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding*, p. 69.
- ⁵⁴ See, for example: Poore, 'What is the Context?'
- ⁵⁵ Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture'; Bradley S. Klein, 'The Textual Strategies of the Military: Or, Have You Read Any Good Defense Manuals Lately?', in James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro

(eds.) *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*. (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989); and, Klein, *Strategic Studies*.

⁵⁶ See, especially: Klein, 'Textual Strategies'.

⁵⁷ Klein, *Strategic Studies*, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Stefano Guzzini, 'A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 6:2, (2000), pp. 147-182, p. 149.

⁵⁹ Friedrich V. Kratochwil, 'Constructivism as an Approach to Interdisciplinary Study', in Karin M. Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.) *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation*. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), p. 19.

⁶⁰ Klein, *Strategic Studies*, p. 37.

⁶¹ Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture', p. 136.

⁶² See, for example, the essays in: Booth and Trood (eds), *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific*.

⁶³ Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture', p. 133.

⁶⁴ Jutta Weldes, 'Constructing National Interests', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2:3, (1996), pp. 275-318. See also: Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson and Raymond Duvall, 'Introduction: Constructing Insecurity', in Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson and Raymond Duvall (eds.) *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities and the Production of Danger*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 14.

⁶⁵ Karin M. Fierke, 'Logics of Force and Dialogue: The Iraq/UNSCOM Crisis as Social Interaction', *European Journal of International Relations*, 6:3, (2000), pp. 335-371.

⁶⁶ Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture', p. 135.

⁶⁷ Klein, *Strategic Studies*, p. 5.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Alex Bellamy, *Security Communities and Their Neighbours: Regional Fortresses or Global Integrators?* (London: Palgrave, 2004); and, Christian Reus-Smit, 'Constructivism', in Scott Burchill et al. *Theories of International Relations* (3rd Ed.) (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2005).

⁶⁹ Thomas Risse, "'Let's Argue!': Communicative Action in World Politics', *International Organisation*, 54:1, (2000), pp. 1-39, p. 5.

⁷⁰ David Dessler, 'What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?', *International Organisation*, 43:3, (1989), pp. 441-473, p. 443.

⁷¹ Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'Aporia: A Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory', *European Journal of International Relations*, 3:3, (1997), 365-392.

⁷² Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*.

⁷³ Fierke, 'Logics of Force and Dialogue', p. 338.

⁷⁴ See, for example: Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*; Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and, Nicholas G. Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

⁷⁵ Klein, *Strategic Studies*, p. 6.

⁷⁶ David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 84.

⁷⁷ Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture', p. 136.

⁷⁸ Iver B. Neumann and Henrikki Heikka, 'Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice: The Social Roots of Nordic Defence', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 40:5, (2005), pp. 5-23, p. 10.

⁷⁹ Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*, at p. 17; and, Kratochwil, 'Constructivism as an Approach', p. 28.

⁸⁰ Klein, *Strategic Studies*, p. 7.

⁸¹ Richard Ashley, 'The Achievements of Poststructuralism', in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds.) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 250.

⁸² The work of Theo Farrell provides an interesting counterpoint to traditional strategic culture research regarding this issue. On the one hand, he illustrates the importance of multiple levels or forms of culture in the context of strategic affairs, including national (strategic) culture, organizational (military) culture, as well as transnational and international norms regarding warfare. On the other hand, however, Farrell's work (perhaps necessarily) takes largely for granted the existence of communities such as military organizations and states. See Theo Farrell, *The Norms of War: Cultural Beliefs and Modern Conflict*. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

⁸³ Klein, 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture'.

- ⁸⁴ Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, 'A New Kind of War: Strategic Culture and the War on Terrorism', *IIS Working Paper*, No. 1, (2003), p. 4.
- ⁸⁵ The notion of 'discourse' used here is consistent with that of Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- ⁸⁶ Neumann and Heikka, 'Grand Strategy', p. 11.
- ⁸⁷ Cornish and Edwards, 'Beyond the EU/NATO Dichotomy'; Heiselberg, 'Pacifism or Activism'; Martinsen, 'Forging a Strategic Culture'; and, Meyer, 'Convergence'.
- ⁸⁸ Farrell examines the influence of transnational norms on military organizational culture, thus highlighting the relevance of cultural analysis within the context of transnational strategic affairs. See Farrell, *The Norms of War*, Chapter 2.
- ⁸⁹ Walter Russell Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk*. (New York: Vintage Press, 2004), pp. 14-18.
- ⁹⁰ See, for example: Richard Jackson, *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics, and Counter Terrorism*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).
- ⁹¹ See, for example: Stuart Croft, *Culture, Crisis, and America's War on Terror*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- ⁹² See, for example: Joseph Masco, 'States of Insecurity: Plutonium and Post-Cold War Anxiety in New Mexico, 1992-96', in Jutta Weldes, Mark Laffey, Hugh Gusterson and Raymond Duvall (eds.) *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities and the Production of Danger*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
- ⁹³ Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), p. 222.
- ⁹⁴ Klein, *Strategic Studies*, p. 10. See also: Neumann and Heikka, 'Grand Strategy', p. 10-11.
- ⁹⁵ See, Jutta Weldes et al., 'Introduction', pp. 18-19.
- ⁹⁶ Milliken, 'Discourse Study', p. 149.
- ⁹⁷ Cynthia Enloe, 'Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs: How to Overcome the Underestimation of Power in the Study of International Relations', in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds.) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 186.
- ⁹⁸ Kratochwil, 'Constructivism as an Approach', p. 16.
- ⁹⁹ Hopf, 'The Promise of Constructivism'.
- ¹⁰⁰ See, especially: Peter J. Katzenstein, 'Introduction', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
- ¹⁰¹ See, for example: Nicholas G. Onuf, 'The Politics of Constructivism', in Karin M. Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.) *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation*. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001); and, Maja Zehfuss, 'Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison', in Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (eds.) *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics*. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006).
- ¹⁰² Meyer, 'Convergence', p. 527.
- ¹⁰³ Farrell's work demonstrates a perplexing mix of these approaches. On the one hand, following Alexander Wendt and Martha Finnemore, Farrell acknowledges that norms can play both regulative and constitutive functions. However, like these conventional constructivists, Farrell quickly reverts to an assumption that constitutive norms serve to constitute actors' practices as meaningful rather than their constituting the identity of actors themselves. (See Farrell, *The Norms of War*, pp. 8-12). In doing so, such scholars preclude the analysis of the deeper constitutive role of culture and practice. For further explanation of this problem, see Zehfuss, 'Constructivism and Identity'.
- ¹⁰⁴ Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*, p. 3.
- ¹⁰⁵ Maja Zehfuss, 'Constructivisms in International Relations', in Karin M. Fierke and Knud Erik Jorgensen (eds.) *Constructing International Relations: The Next Generation*. (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 71.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ashley, 'The Achievements of Poststructuralism'; though see David Campbell, 'Poststructuralism', in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (eds.) *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- ¹⁰⁷ Milliken, 'Discourse Study'.
- ¹⁰⁸ Milliken, 'Discourse Study', p. 141.
- ¹⁰⁹ Milliken, 'Discourse Study', p. 142. In addition, see: Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*, pp. 31-43.
- ¹¹⁰ Milliken, 'Discourse Study', p. 145.
- ¹¹¹ Campbell, cited in Milliken, 'Discourse Study', p. 145.

¹¹² Klein, *Strategic Studies*, p. 6.

¹¹³ Milliken, 'Discourse Study', p. 152.

¹¹⁴ Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*, pp. 210-223.

¹¹⁵ Fierke, *Changing Games, Changing Strategies*, p. 13.

¹¹⁶ See, for example: Georg Sørensen, *The Transformation of the State: Beyond the Myth of Retreat*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹¹⁷ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002), p. 131.