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U.S. foreign policy toward sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) since the end of the Cold War has been largely ineffective at addressing endemic instability. The growing strategic importance of sub-Saharan Africa demands a new approach to policy formulation that seeks to understand instability as a product of domestic decision making, while simultaneously limiting the influences of Western bias. The study of strategic culture within SSA can effectively inform U.S. policy making, but only if applied within a post-colonial framework. Such a framework limits the effect of Western bias in the study of foreign culture, and is also the most appropriate theoretical approach to use based on SSA's common colonial history.

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U.S. Foreign Policy, Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Strategic Culture, Political Culture, Postcolonialism, Post-Colonialism, Post-Colonial Theory, instability, colonialism, imperialism, decolonization

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Towards Understanding:
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Executive Summary

Title: Towards Understanding: Post-Colonialism, Strategic Culture, and sub-Saharan Africa

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Thesis: In order to better inform U.S. policy toward sub-Saharan Africa, regional instability should be studied via a strategic cultural analysis utilizing a post-colonial methodological framework.

Discussion: The concept of strategic culture, originally established as a framework for deciphering the military behavior of the superpowers during the Cold War, remains relevant still today. Within the American security apparatus, the study of strategic culture serves as a corollary to the study of operational culture. Whereas operational culture addresses civilian population concerns contingent in foreign military operations, strategic culture seeks to understand the various mechanisms at play in a government's strategic military decisions, as they relate to interstate dynamics. That is, it serves to answer the following: "how will a government address external security threats via military action?" Thus, it would seem that the study of strategic culture would have limited applicability outside superpower competition. From an American perspective, only nations that present a credible military threat, and see the United States as a threat, would require study. However, the concepts and models that form the core of strategic cultural studies do not confine their analysis solely to interstate conflict and the military aspects thereof. Rather, they find applicability in assessing all manners of government decision, and to a degree, those of non-governmental stakeholders, so long as those choices affect national security.

In this regard, the study of strategic culture is particularly useful in understanding instability within sub-Saharan Africa. The vast majority of threats to stability within the region are a product of intra-state dynamics. Yet an understanding of these dynamics typically remain bound to structuralist methodologies, seen a product of people acting within a system having its roots in a colonial past. There is certainly merit and usefulness to this approach, but it falls flat as one attempts to describe *why* various instabilities persist, rather than simply *exist*. Needed is an understanding of instability as a product of human agency and historic legacy, people acting as part of an ever-changing system, vice simply within a static one. The remnants of a colonial past and disruptive decolonization processes still linger in sub-Saharan Africa, and understanding how they have, and continue to, shape the narrative of the region is vitally important to understanding the decisions of various groups that prolong instability. Therefore, assessing the strategic culture of sub-Saharan Africa through the lens of post-colonial theory will aid in understanding the decision processes that foment instability.

Conclusion: As U.S. policy toward moves ever more gradually to one of "African solutions to African problems," policy makers must better understand the genesis African instability and its purported solutions. A strategic culture analysis utilizing post-colonial theory is the most appropriate medium to provide that understanding.

Author's Preface

As a well seasoned veteran of five deployments to the Western Pacific, as part of the Marine Corps' unit deployment program, surprise was hard to come by as the President announced a rebalancing of U.S. forces to the Pacific Area of Responsibility. This was not due to any objective study on my part, rather simply a subjective realization that this policy promised little in the way of change to my professional career. For the better part of eight years as an F/A-18D weapons system officer, my training had been geared toward the threats posed by the likes of North Korea and other potential regional adversaries. I had already taken part in most of the regional exercises available to Marine fixed wing aviators, and interacted at a personal level with many colleagues within the armed forces of our partner nations. But it was in that moment that I remembered a lecture from Expeditionary Warfare School advancing the notion that Africa was the next hotbed of armed conflict, due in part to the massive instability found on the continent.

I cannot say that I became an African scholar in that, or any moment since. Too pressing were what I considered the demands of military life. But the thought in the back of my mind, that we, i.e. the U.S., should be doing *something* about the "Africa problem" persisted. Thus, as this academic year began, it seemed only logical for me to pursue a measure of understanding as to what African instability consisted of, why it was important to the U.S., and what, if anything was being done. For anyone familiar with a tiny fraction of the literature available on African instability, the reliance on colonialism as an explanatory tool for the issues plaguing the continent is commonplace. Indeed, that is where I began my study for this paper. I was seeking, very much in vein, a model of decolonization to explain it all. While that effort ended in failure, failure raised a poignant question. If there were no one theory to explain all of the effects of colonialism and decolonization, across the varied experiences of sub-Saharan Africa, what would be the best methodology to study individual cases, and to do so from a security perspective? Eventually that path led to strategic studies and the notion of strategic culture as a determinant in the decisions that affect state security.

I've discovered that the theories that underlie strategic culture point to more than a simple understanding of decision making processes as a result of inputs and outputs. Rather, they seek to understand the factors that influence choice. Why do nations go about security in the way they do? What are the perceived available options? Why would two nations, faced with the same choice, make different decisions? This is assuredly a convoluted process, and has been especially difficult to understand. I'm not by nature a social scientist, nor am I overly familiar with those methodologies, but nonetheless I've found the effort rewarding. Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of this endeavor has been a realization that at times I need to understand my own thought processes, and question my own decision-making.

I owe a debt of gratitude to a great many people. First to my wife Jennifer, whose constant prodding and forceful coercion convinced me to finish what I had started. Secondly, to my mentor in this process, Dr. William Gordon, whose patience was invaluable as I vacillated between topics and struggled to find a coherent framework for understanding. And to all those who offered interest and moral support, thank you for helping me maintain my overall motivation. Finally, to my son Jacob I owe a debt of gratitude, for even in the thick of things, his antics kept me grounded in reality; a poignant reminder of what is truly important. Finally, to my son Andrew, welcome home.

Introduction

> *Africa's rise means opportunity for all of us -- including the opportunity to transform the relationship between the United States and Africa. As I said in Cape Town last year, it's time for a new model of partnership between America and Africa -- a partnership of equals that focuses on African capacity to solve problems, and on Africa's capacity to grow.*
>
> ***–President Barack Obama, August 6, 2014***[1]

> *State failure, inextricably linked with internal strife and humanitarian crisis, can spread from localized unrest to national collapse and then regional destabilization. And unattractive entities-some hostile to U.S. security interests, others hostile to Washington's humanitarian and political goals-may rise to fill the political vacuum. Invariably, state failure is accompanied by the victory of guns over normal politics, the rise of corrupt autocrats who thrive on conflict and deny freedom to their people.*
>
> ***–Chester .A Crocker***[2]

In his most recent work, *World Order*, Henry Kissinger, perhaps the United States' most accomplished and venerated statesmen, devotes remarkably little to the discussion of African nations and their place in that order, especially those of sub-Saharan Africa. Their only mention comes in the form of a list, locations where ungoverned spaces tend to foster the growth of violent extremist organizations. This lack of attention underscores the most prominent feature of U.S. policy toward sub-Saharan Africa in the post-Cold War era: relative neglect characterized by an episodic, if tangential, interest. Relegated to the policy "backwaters," the region has garnered minimal focused attention, aside from that demanded by sporadic, emergent crises.[3]

A starkly negative public opinion of all things Africa-related, informed and inspired by media portrayals of a "dark continent," reinforces this political milieu. Further, the caricatures, stereotypes, and mythologies that undergird American views of sub-Saharan Africa, coupled with decades of ineffective and ineffectual policy initiatives and failed interventions, form a sort of self-reinforcing negative feedback loop. It would seem that without the backdrop of Cold War great-power politics informing national security interest in sub-Saharan Africa, the interaction of

policy failure and public opinion has lead to swift erosion in the processes surrounding effective policy formulation.

Yet as the United States attempts a holistic reengagement on the continent, spurred on by a renewed interest in the security implications sub-Saharan regional instability, it risks doing so with the same misunderstandings and misperceptions that have beleaguered its foreign policy for decades. While domestic bureaucracies and political agendas certainly inform U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis sub-Saharan Africa, a plague of contradictory interpretations of regional nation-state domestic politics tends to undermine those policies eventually implemented. In order devise truly effective policy, and by it achieve a measure of lasting regional stability, U.S. policy makers must seek a more complete understanding of the sub-Saharan African strategic culture. Given the region's shared colonial history, the most effective means to understand sub-Saharan African strategic culture is through the lens of post-colonialism.

Instability, Failed States, and U.S. Africa Policy

The challenge of failed states, and the consequences wrought about by their collapse – humanitarian crisis, civil war, economic turmoil, and institutional paralysis to name but a few – have continually served as a conundrum to the even the best of statesmen. In that vein, sub-Saharan Africa is perhaps the most complex region of the world today beset by the potentiality for failed states. Though there is promise in the region, in the form of emerging and relatively stable multi-party democracies aided by sustained economic growth, regional states still occupy fully sixty percent of the top three fragility tiers (21 of 34 nations) assigned by the Fragile State Index in 2014.[4] Further, all of the most "at-risk" states as evaluated by the Fund for Peace, those assigned the "very high alert" status, hail from the region (South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan).[5] Unfortunately, the myriad

of factors at play that contribute to the frailty of these governments and their respective institutions, and further lay bare ethnic, religious, social, and economic fault lines, form a nearly inexhaustible list, and to some degree, defy comprehensive analysis.

Within the context of American foreign policy, diplomats have often sought to address state failure via familiar historic means – the promotion of democratic institutions, the establishment of free market capitalism, and respect for universal human rights. Some have argued that U.S. foreign policy toward sub-Saharan Africa over the course of the past 50 years has ultimately been framed by multifaceted a "humanitarian paradigm."[6] That is, the region is perceived to be a hotbed of social unrest and political upheaval, in need of constant intervention at the behest of one humanitarian crisis after another, the solution to which lies in better governance, centered on western democratic ideals and liberal institutions. Yet, in the period immediately following the wave of African independence in the 1960s, global sentiment toward the region was remarkably positive. Unfortunately, as many authors have noted, "Afro-pessimism" has largely supplanted that positivity. Teodros Kiros described this phenomenon in 2007:

> For the Western . . . imagination, the condition of Africa is so dystopian that the African self is now a symbol of the worst that could happen to a human being. In this view Africa is not the heart of light, but rather the "heart of darkness." The Africa that was the center of human civilization is now the originator of HIV/AIDS. The Africa of the Iliad and the Odyssey – an embodiment of hospitality, generosity, and cultural polish – is now a site of perversion and of war. Endless commentaries present Rwanda, Darfur, Ethiopia, and Eritrea as places of brutality and savagery. Everything that is not amenable to change and transformation is considered typically African. The Afro-optimism of the immediate post-independence period has now been fully displaced by. . . Afro-pessimism.[7]

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This dystopian view has underscored the evolution of U.S. Africa policy as it has progressed through three distinct phases since the fall of the Soviet Bloc and the end of the Cold War. The chronological division provided by the end of the Cold War is important when

considering, specifically, the U.S. stance toward sub-Saharan Africa. Policy toward the region during the tense years of the Cold War reflected superpower political brinksmanship and the containment strategy outlined in George Kennan's "long telegram", rather than any genuine concern for sub-Saharan Africa itself.[8] Moreover, the jockeying of U.S. and Soviet leadership for the allegiance of various African leaders during the Cold War did more to prolong colonial dependencies than it did to promote true independence. Further, regional conflict often metastasized into proxy wars between East and West, further exacerbating crisis and fomenting instability. The fall of the Berlin Wall and subsequent end of Cold War tensions brought the first change in American grand strategy in more than thirty years.

As the tides of the Cold War began to ebb, eventually receding in their entirety, the pursuit of a "New World Order" redefined American foreign policy.[9] The rapidity of the Soviet collapse quickly removed the ever-present specter of nuclear war, and fostered a period of unipolarity in which the United States could pursue aims other than those designed to combat communism. In terms of foreign relations with sub-Saharan Africa, a strategic reorientation toward humanitarianism serves as the hallmark this period, most closely identified with the administrations of George H. W. Bush and the first term of William J. Clinton. This reorientation was two-fold. First, domestic pressures to reduce discretionary spending, the lack of clear-cut national interests in the region, and the desire to replace once-supported authoritarian regimes with democracies placed downward pressure on aid packages delivered to sub-Saharan nations.[10] Unfortunately, the death of 18 U.S. Army Rangers during operations in Somalia brought this period to an abrupt end in 1993.

The ultimate failure of peacekeeping operations in Somalia signaled a full retreat from Africa within U.S. foreign policy circles. The issuance of Presidential Decision Directive 25

restricted American willingness to pursue direct humanitarian intervention, instead establishing a preference for the role of financier vice force provider.[11] The failure of the United Nations to intervene during the Rwandan genocide in 1994 was a direct result of this new policy. Though not a root cause of the genocide, political liberalization at the behest of foreign powers, having been associated with increased instability in Rwanda and elsewhere, hindered further U.S. led democratization efforts.[12] As a result, policy objectives moved toward addressing issues symptomatic of instability, vice instability itself, such as poverty, crime, and human rights. It would take the events of September 11, 2001 to truly reorient American aims in sub-Saharan Africa. Though, while envisioned endstates changed, there occurred minimal transformation in the means employed in pursuit of these new ends.

Prior to the George W. Bush administration and the War on Terror, the notion of "African solutions to African problems" was a rallying cry among members of the Washington elite, even serving as the foundation of President Clinton's second term Africa policy, though few indicated any belief in such an ethos. Rather, the myriad of policies provided by American politicians demonstrate clearly the conviction that outside observers could, and possibly should, determine the solution to African problems.[13] Unfortunately, the periodicity with which U.S. and other western audiences have heeded the concerns of Africans has only encouraged an episodic approach to policy making, and thus has played a major role in the "quick fix" approach to African security. Unfortunately, by most measurable standards, this approach as failed to improve stability in sub-Saharan Africa. Political and security instability continues to rise, while economically, few regional states fair better than they did a half century ago. Not until well into the U.S. War on Terror would poplar thought vis-à-vis Africa shift toward an approach hallmarked by sustained, multi-sector engagement.

The establishment by President George W. Bush of a Unified Combatant Command, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), was the first and most visible measure designed to promote sustainable security on the continent. While American media and various government entities heralded the formation of AFRICOM as a positive and proactive step toward stability on the continent, the news of its creation met with suspicion, and to some degree contempt, among the nations of Africa and the wider audience of global intelligentsia. Debates among academia questioned whether African security was now being "defined and constructed according to Western (i.e. United States') interests, values, norms, expectations and policy preferences."[14] African negativity to a permanent, though as of yet unrealized, locally based American combatant command was a function of pessimistic views of the Bush administration's forays into Afghanistan and Iraq, prejudiced further by overt and clandestine support of harshly dictatorial regimes during the Cold War.

This dissonance continues today, extending to the broader context of U.S. Africa policy, with notions that American influence serves as a form of subjugation via neo-colonialism, a notion that has been most prevalent within sub-Saharan Africa. The foundation of these attitudes is not difficult to distinguish. For nearly a century, western-European colonial powers ruled nearly the entire continent. The near simultaneous dissolution of those empires in the vestiges of the Second World War has done more to obfuscate the development of independent African states than perhaps any other singular event. The shadow of colonialism and afterglow of rapid independence still inform the collective memory of the continent, colored by the variances and variables peculiar to each fledgling nation-state. Thus, in order to overcome negative public sentiment, and aid Africa in seeking solutions to its own problems, the United States must first seek to understand the strategic perspective and local plight of the peoples it wishes to help. The

strategic cultures residing within sub-Saharan Africa, and the instability with which they contend and to a degree foment, are deeply rooted in the processes of decolonization and the colonial legacies inherited by the post-colonial state. Unfortunately, the limits imposed on the concepts surrounding strategic culture do not avail themselves well to the study of instability within sub-Saharan Africa. As such, the scope and purpose of strategic culture requires expansion and an appropriate context in order to prove useful to American diplomats and policy makers.

Seeking Understating: Expanding Strategic Culture

Strategic culture, as described within the context of international relations and national security literature over the course of the past three decades derives its usefulness as a function of predictive and analytic capability vis-à-vis strategic decision making at the level of the nation-state. Notwithstanding the various approaches used to analyze strategic culture, most strategic studies scholars argue that the strategic a.k.a. military preferences of any given nation are "rooted in the early or formative experiences of the state, and are influenced to some degree by philosophical, political, cultural, [sic] and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elites."[15] Moreover, as a subjective, culturally biased prism through which to interpret objective circumstances, it ultimately informs decision making, by providing a "list" of strategic preferences.

Three generations of scholars have delved into the perplexities of state behavior, seeking an explanatory mechanism, or at a minimum an understanding, of the strategic choices made by great nations. For their purposes, most scholars limit the scope of analysis to those strategic choices regarding the use of military force by actors within the national military establishment. While there is fierce debate among strategic studies scholars as to the most effective framework,

like any other theory, each of the approaches championed by their various proponents carries both strengths and weaknesses.

First generation scholars continued the work of Jack Snyder, who, writing for the RAND Corporation in 1977, attempted to elucidate the foundations of Soviet nuclear strategy.[16] Early works, by authors such as Colin Gray and David Jones, tended to utilize an all encompassing, non-deterministic framework, which characterized strategic culture and strategic behavior as inherently intertwined. As such, first generation efforts tended to focus on macroscopic variables, to include history, geography, political ideologies, and institutional or bureaucratic structures. The strength of this approach is that it tends to focus on understanding behavior as opposed to predicting it. Thus, in the eyes of first generation scholars, there is exists no cause and effect relationship between strategic culture and state behavior as they are mutually supporting and reciprocal in nature.

First generation theories stand in stark contrast to those of the third generation and its scholars, of whom the most well respected is likely Alastair I. Johnston. Whereas Gray and Jones contend that culture and behavior are inseparable, Johnston argues for a distinct separation of the two in order to generate testable hypotheses. In this generation of work, strategic culture directly affects state behavior by limiting the options available to national leadership, operating in a mutually exclusive manner. Herein lays the strength of this approach. By separating cause from effect, a third generation approach to strategic culture provides a falsifiable predictive capability for outside observers.[17]

Both first and third generation strategic studies purport to seek an explanatory mechanism for observed behavior. As such, their focus tends to be on strategic culture as it exists in the present, specifically avoiding the genesis and subsequent evolution of concomitant structures.

This is a key weakness for both approaches, as it increasingly limits the usefulness of their conclusions as a function time. In this regard, second generation strategic culture attempts to fill this gap by attending to both the process and product of that culture. The underlying assumption of second-generation work is that strategic culture is malleable, in that the factors that influence the formation of that culture are inherently dynamic, including among those factors the very actions caused by the culture itself.[18]

Unfortunately, strategic culture remains, almost universally, a tool to describe the grand-strategic decision-making of great powers. There is scant literature addressing anything other than the great powers, i.e. the United States, Soviet Union/Russia, and the collective entities of Europe. Nor is there anything resembling an application of various strategic studies approaches in attempting to understand intra-state decision-making, though some have made use of the technique in an attempt to describe the actions of non-state actors. Holistically, both security studies and strategic studies remain firmly rooted, within the academic and political realm, means of analyzing inter-state competitive behavior; tools of the various schools of international relations theory.

Thus, the notion of using strategic culture as a tool for analyzing instability in sub-Saharan Africa is, at first glance, almost absurd, at least from the perspective of a superpower such as the United States. First, there is little likelihood that any sub-Saharan African state may make a military decision directly jeopardizing American vital interests. Secondly, while there are certainly interstate conflicts or the potentiality for them on the continent, the vast majority of security threats in sub-Saharan Africa emanate from within the state, as a direct result of intrastate actors and institutions. Therefore, to be useful in the context of instability in sub-Saharan Africa, one must adapt and apply the concept within the framework of developmental

intra-state instability dynamics. Further, it must be adapted to address issues that are not solely a function of physical security or the use of military force; instability being the result of a confluence of factors – economic, social, environment, institutional, and political.

While adaptation of strategic culture to non-military, intrastate dynamics is not readily apparent in the available literature, it is not necessarily outside the realm of the plausible. As Dr. Edward Lock notes, "there is no need to apply strategic culture analysis solely to the strategic practices of states and international institutions such as the [European Union]. Sub-state or transnational actors that engage in the use of force may also be amenable to such analysis. 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."[19] Here, the "context of strategic practices" implies the use of military force or the armed coercive measures employed by the various groups he references, though it is not necessarily limited to the military components of competitive behavior. Economic, political, and information-based behavior (to borrow from the commonly held elements national power), also serve strategic ends, and should therefore be included among the outputs of strategic culture. Additionally, there is no logical bifurcation between domestic and international agendas in the context of strategic culture, as national security is a result of actions occurring across the spectrum of locality – domestic, regional, supra-regional, and global.

It proves useful here to step away briefly from the phrase "strategic culture" as a descriptor for the non-military domestic actions of an object state or region under study within sub-Saharan Africa. Use of the term "strategic" typically implies a very realist notion of linking ends, ways, and means within the context of nation-state survival on the international stage. Such an implication, while certainly appropriate in the context of superpower nuclear standoffs, is not ultimately useful insofar as intrastate security and prosperity are concerned. As the

functioning of the object polity and its relationship to state instability is of primary concern, the term “political culture” is more apropos. That is to say, from the perspective of an outside observer, the political culture of various non-great-power nation-states is of utmost importance to U.S. strategic decision making. Much as operational culture concerns itself with aspects of local culture (customs, normative behaviors, etc.) that are important considerations for the military commander, strategic culture consists of those elements of foreign political culture of vital concern for the policy maker operating at the strategic level.

It is the political culture of a state, or more narrowly that of the ruling party or regime, that determines the possible courses of action in any given scenario. What may be deemed perfectly acceptable domestic policy of one nation may be excluded entirely from the list of possible options in another. From a policy formulation perspective, while senior U.S. executives and bureaucrats may generate perfect solutions to mitigate or neutralize the apparent drivers of instability, the actual implementation of such policies is still contingent upon the cooperation of a host/recipient nation. Further, as cooperation is contingent upon such policies being acceptable to that government, it would behoove those making policy to understand what exists within the realm of the possible vis-à-vis the political culture of the nations they wish to stabilize. David J. Elkins and Richard E. B. Simeon noted in 1979:

> Political culture consists of assumptions about the political world . . . that focus attention on certain features of events, institutions, and behavior, define the realm of the possible, identify the problems deemed pertinent, and set the range of alternatives among which members of the population make decisions. Political culture, then, is a short hand expression for a "mindset" which has the effect of limiting attention to less than the full range of alternative behaviors [sic], problems, and solutions which are logically possible. Since it represents a "disposition" in favor of a range of alternatives, by corollary another range of alternatives receives little or no attention within a particular culture. Most people in any culture, therefore, will take for granted a particular course of action or consider only a few alternatives. That they choose from a restricted set will, for most of them, remain below the threshold of consciousness, because they seldom encounter individuals who take for granted quite different assumptions.[20]

A firm understanding of various strategic, a.k.a. political, cultures remains useful even in the event that brokering a mutually agreeable policy between two sovereign parties fails. Knowing the possible course of action a government may take unilaterally in addressing the perceived drivers of local instability would permit, in military parlance, the development of branch plans or sequels to respond in the event of policy failure or incipient crisis. This is not to say that strategic culture can serve the strategic planner in some sort of clairvoyant manner, for as many have quipped, "it's tough to make predictions, especially about the future."[21] Rather, in order to devote resources to the protection of national interests, strategic culture can serve as a mechanism to determine possible threats to those interests. In this regard, if U.S. policy makers find themselves unable to influence the course of events in a given foreign clime, understanding that state's individualized range of options, ascribed to it by its political culture, may at a minimum, prevent strategic surprise.

Methodologies, Constructs, and Frameworks

At this point, having determined the value of strategic (political) culture analysis to policy makers and strategic planners, and the means by which to adapt conventional understandings of the concept to the case of intra-state decision-making, we must choose an appropriate methodology and contextual framework. That is, the aim is not to understand the "strategic culture of instability" per se, or even the overarching strategic culture of any given state. Rather, the aim is to understand state strategic culture as it pertains to domestic decisions that portend and foment instability. Further, as we are seeking a framework for analysis vis-à-vis the sub-Saharan African region as a whole, the foundation of the chosen framework must be

sufficiently broad to encompass the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, yet flexible enough to allow tailoring to the individual circumstances of regional states.

In the case of the strategic cultures within sub-Saharan Africa, the approach championed by second-generation strategic studies scholars proves perhaps the most valuable. As discussed above, the first and third-generations seek primarily to examine strategic culture as it currently exists and informs the security apparatus of the subject state. While this is a manifestly large generalization of these fields of study, it is illustrative as a contrast to the aims of second-generation work, the most prominent scholar of which is Bradley S. Klein. In his *Strategic Studies and World Order*, he argues for what is essentially a constructivist analytical approach to uncover both the foundations and current character of strategic culture. He states quite succinctly, "We are now ready to explore a dimension...not currently emphasized in prevailing accounts of Strategic Studies: the constitutive nature...of modern political identity and global politics. Strategic Studies needs to be historicized."[22] Being as the aim here is to argue for an approach applicable across a large spectrum of nation-states, such a constructivist approach would allow ample flexibility in adapting a chosen framework to the individualized progenitors of strategic culture in differing states.

In 2006, Jeannie L. Johnson, writing on behalf of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency, attempted to further refine these constructivist methodologies for use in the investigation of state strategic culture. The result was analytical approach centered on four inter-related variables (Figure 1) – Identity, Values, Norms, and Perceptive Lenses – that, when viewed in the context of state behavior, aid in determining the source and character of what she refers to as "National Culture." National culture then "provides the context in which organization[al] culture, and its attendant processes, are formed."[23] These processes, in turn,

NATIONAL CULTURE MODEL:
VARIABLES & DEFINITIONS

Identity: A nation-state's view of itself comprising the traits of its national character, its intended regional and global roles, and its perceptions of its eventual destiny.

Values: In a cost/benefit analysis, the material and/or ideational factors which are given priority, and selected over others.

Norms: Accepted and expected modes of behavior.

Perceptive Lens: Beliefs (true or misinformed) and experiences or the lack of experience, which color the way the world is viewed.

Figure 1 [24]

serve a deterministic end with respect to state security behavior. Within this model, the four primary variables are in turn determined in part by the confluence and interaction of no less than 20 separate inputs, ranging from static factors such as geography and natural resource endowment to those of a much more dynamic nature, such as external shocks/disasters and interactions with other nations. (See Figure 2).

NATIONAL CULTURE MODEL: INPUTS

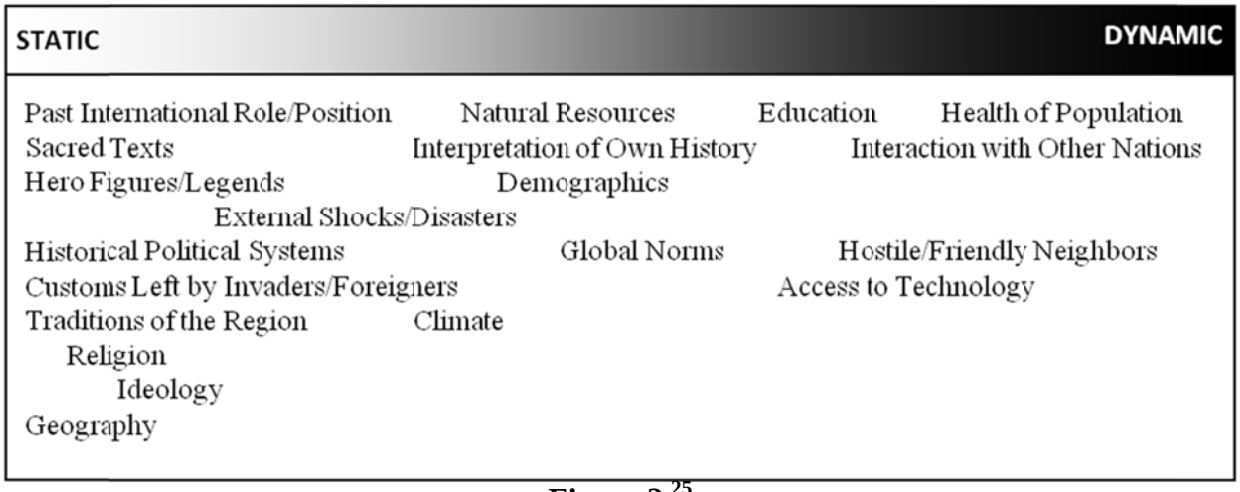

Figure 2 [25]

While the "national culture" model proves a useful starting point, the sheer number and variety of associated variables and inputs presents an investigatory nightmare. According to this model, when it comes to culture, everything seems to matter. This tautological approach is problematic insofar as it fails to limit the scope of analysis if one attempts to create a strategic cultural profile for a subject nation. However, as Willis Stanley notes in his study of Iran, one must attempt to bound the discussion by narrowly defining the issues in question.[26] For example, he selects the Iranian perspective on the use weapons of mass destruction as the focus of his study, claiming it allows the researcher to avoid delving into the intricacies of agricultural policy or media censorship. Unfortunately, this sort of methodology puts the proverbial cart before the horse.

Strategic culture, as discussed previously, not only defines the solution set for any given security matter, more often than not it defines what constitutes a security matter in need of such a solution. That is, strategic culture provides the lens through which nation states interpret stimuli, determine threats, and appropriate resources in response. Therefore, a broad analytical approach is required to determine macro-level trends within the state prior to assessing individual policies or policy areas at the micro-level. Rarely are the decisions of any particular bureaucratic processes made in a vacuum. Rather, they occur within the larger context of national political/strategic agendas. This leads again to the dilemma of scope, and the necessity of some sort of middle ground.

James Smith, Jerry Long, and Thomas Johnson, writing for the Institute for National Security Studies at the U.S. Air Force Academy, building upon the work of J. Johnson and her cohort, make significant headway in this vein. In their 2008 assessment of the strategic culture of violent non-state actors, they sought first a broad framework to describe macro-level cultural

proclivities, and then assessed the impact of that culture within the individual concepts of employment of weapons of mass destruction and asymmetrical operations. An important facet of their paradigm is the concept of a "meta-narrative." As Long describes the concept, it results from the confluence of fundamental community values, forming "an overarching story that situates individuals in a distinct community, provides a cognitive roadmap by which they are to live, and that motivates members to protect the community against its enemies."[27] This meta-narrative then serves as an unconscious byproduct of strategic culture, shaping and informing the menu of strategic choices employed by elite decision makers.

Thomas Johnson takes the concept of a narrative further, exploring the idea that, as a component of strategic culture, it serves a foundational function. He states, the narrative of a group or nation has the capacity to "motivate action, modulate . . . emotional reactions to events, cue certain heuristics and biases, [and] structure . . . problem solving capabilities."[28] Such an approach proves useful in limiting the scope of factors assessed to be contributing to the formation of strategic culture. In order to serve a deterministic end, the notion of meta- or founding narrative requires a sharp division between factors that directly influence the formation of said culture - events, emotions, and ideologies - and those that affect its manifestation – environment, geography, natural resources.

Expanding upon the implications of this meta-narrative approach, one can further partition the proposed set of variables included in the study of strategic culture. Three distinct demarcations seem to exist. The first are those variables that contribute directly or indirectly to the formation of culture vis-à-vis cognitive affectation, described by the term "Cognitive Influences." Defined for purposes here, cognitive influences are those factors that collectively inform perception, underpin the interpretation of stimuli, and articulate both rational and

emotional psychological responses. Further, they guide action by establishing social norms and mores. In this regard, the following factors, taken in part from J. Johnson's theoretical construct, would form the majority of variables within this category: religion and religious traditions, sacred texts, ideologies, hero figures, founding mythologies, external shocks and disasters, shared historical experiences, and externally imposed practices or customs. Though this list is in all likelihood incomplete, those variables within it do well to describe the general theme of all those factors that may constitute a cognitive influence.

Secondly, "Endowment Variables" include those aspects of strategic culture that remain relatively static over time, or peripheral in their ability to alter the nature of that culture, such as natural resource, geography, climate, and demographics. Their defining characteristic is a relative lack of reciprocity with the culture they help to form. Rather, there is a generally a unidirectional flow of influence from endowment variables to culture, while culture has little ability to alter the status of those same variables. In some scenarios, the opposite may be true, as is the case with many Middle Eastern nations where oil resources are directly affected by the decisions made as a result of strategic cultural imperatives. However, at a conceptual level, endowment variables are a canvas upon which strategic culture is painted. While they heavily influence the resultant culture, that culture, much like paint, can do little to affect it.

Finally, "Manifestation Variables," consist of those organizational structures, institutions, and bureaucracies that form the system within which strategic culture operates, thereby affecting the means by which it is expressed in terms of policy and action. Broadly defined, manifestation variables are those elements of strategic culture residing within both public and private spheres, which provide a manner of agency within the culture itself. Agency, in its use here, invokes the sociological connotation of that which provides the ability to act. As an example, within the

workings of a government, it is often the case that various bureaucracies, subordinate within the branches of government, are responsible for the actual implementation of policy. These institutions give agency to policy. In much the same way, manifestation variables provide agency, an ability to act within the strategic culture, to those variables that fall within the cognitive or endowment categories.

The categorization of variables set forth here does not imply that those within each set operate independently. For instance, those factors assessed as manifestation variables may, on a case-by-case basis, affect the functioning of cognitive influences. As an example, bureaucratic processes my limit or alter information prior to it reaching those at an appropriate decision making level, thereby distorting the manner in which cognitive influences operate. Alternately, cognitive influences and endowment variables may often be responsible for the original structure of institutions and bureaucracies. For example, the development of 18th century American strategic culture, by necessity, predated many, and arguably all, American institutions. American cultural imperatives such as "rugged individualism" or "Manifest Destiny" provide further evidence of the link between endowment variables and cognitive influences.

Therefore, while the categorization of variables does not imply their isolation, it does provide a form of triage, in terms of prioritization of effort and focus, from a methodological perspective. Categories can serve to "bound the discussion," much as Stanley implies the selection of narrow issues can. This is especially important when attempting to establish a theoretic framework for an area replete with diversity such as sub-Saharan Africa. The region as a whole shares little in the way of climate or geography, and perhaps less in the way of political institutions or formal bureaucracies. Thus, in seeking to establish a framework for understanding

strategic culture within sub-Saharan Africa, the scope of investigation is naturally limited to cognitive influences, based overwhelmingly on historical experience.

In this regard, even a cursory knowledge of world history would seem to reveal the appropriate framework for analysis of sub-Saharan strategic culture. Through 1959, nearly the entire continent of Africa was under the colonial rule of various European powers. Yet by 1966, only ten African countries, out of what today amounts to 55 independent nation-states, remained under imperial control. Of those, all of which are located south of the Sahara Desert, Zimbabwe was the last to gain formal independence in 1980. Though diverse in character and culture prior to and during their assorted colonial subjugation, the wave of independence that reshaped the global political landscape in the decades following World War II embarked the nations of sub-Saharan Africa "on a common history as 'emergent', 'non-aligned', 'developing nations'."[29]

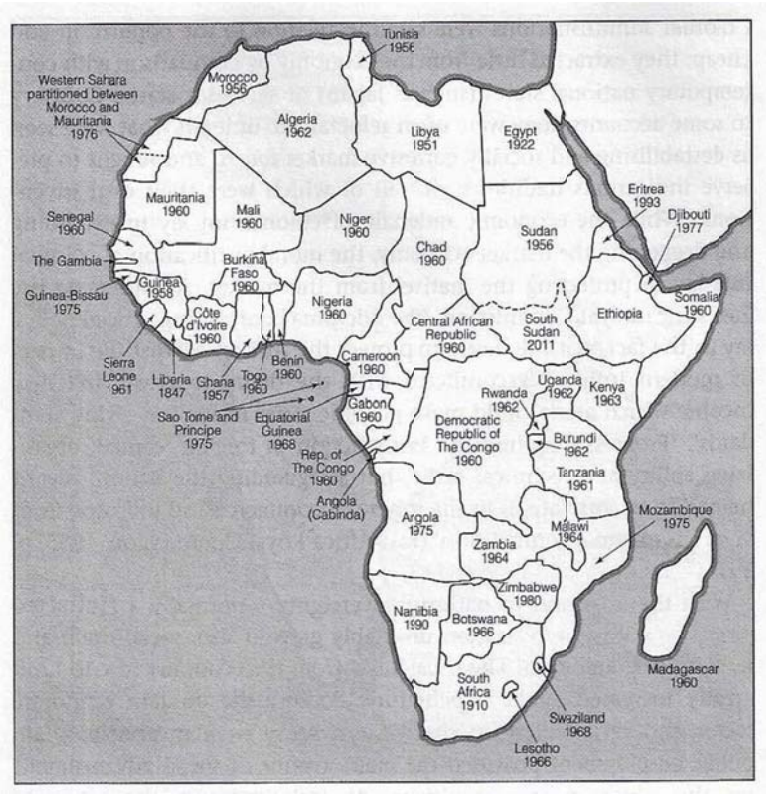

Figure 3 – Map of Africa depicting dates of independence.[30]

Given the aforementioned diverse nature of these now foundling nation-states, their common experience and heritage as former colonies would seem a reliable scapegoat for the widespread, and to some degree, endemic problems that seem to plague the region.

Indeed, there are ample accounts, some rhetorical and some academic, that neatly point

to colonialism's negative consequences. Unfortunately, many of these works tend to limit their time horizon, focusing narrowly on the actual colonial period or the years closely following independence. This limited perspective is remarkably unhelpful in the present when attempting to identify domestic sources of instability, especially considering that many post-independence political leaders have long since vanished from positions of authority in sub-Saharan Africa. Further, this limited perspective lends itself to a structuralist approach, imagining the genesis of instability as a function of colonial institutions, imposed social hierarchies, and economic dependencies with which current and former political leaders must contend.

While there is certainly merit in an institutional or structural approach to the study of the colonial experience, lacking from it is an incorporation of the very thing we are concerned with, at least from the perspective of strategic or political culture – human agency. The results of any policy decision is as much a product of the people making the decisions and those affected by them, as they are of the environment in which they were implemented. How and why political actors institute various policies is, perhaps, of greater importance than the institutional or environmental variables present in the decision making process. As Bernard Waits notes, the "puzzling feature of post-colonial history is that countries embarking on independence with much the same colonial legacy have followed different trajectories."[31] Though a further puzzling feature might be that, given these different economic, social, and political trajectories, they have lead to similar predicaments.

These markedly different trajectories become apparent when considering the case of political institutions in sub-Saharan Africa as well. Upon independence, the vast majority of states in the region instituted fledgling multi-party democratic governments. Unfortunately, many of these initial governments failed to achieve meaningful, legitimate governance, and

subsequently fell in a spate of coup d'états and takeovers at the hands of military juntas, resulting in unstable power-sharing arrangements and one-party authoritarian "democracies." The most prominent failures of governance in the region are well known: the Rwandan genocide of 1998 following the failure of the Ashura Accords; civil wars in Sudan, South Sudan, Liberia, and Angola to name but a few; famine and turmoil in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eretria.

Yet there are success stories. The government of Botswana, a former British colony in Southern Africa, has had peaceful elections and transitions of power since independence in 1965.[32] South Africa, though tainted by legalized discrimination in the form of apartheid for much of its independence, has made great strides since the 1993 referendum disestablishing the practice.[33] Zambia has maintained a relatively stable political system during its independence as well, though interspersed with periods of one-party participatory democracy and failed coup attempts.[34] Unfortunately, there is little agreement as to what the prima facie evidence indicates with respect to success and failures of governance in sub-Saharan Africa.

Political scientists, economists, and sociologists continue to debate the topic heavily, proffering divergent theories that serve to address empirical observations. Some point toward a lack of egalitarian democratic fundamentals among the populace as an instrument of failure. Others note the correlation between poor public policy and the challenging demographics associated with ethnic diversity. A third school of thought presupposes the artificiality of colonially derived political institutions, positing instances of instability as the product of resultant patrimonial politics aimed at maintaining power. Finally, still others have noted the interrelationship between state capacity and perceived legitimacy, and that both seem to correlate with the level of similarity between pre- and post-colonial political institutions.[35] These competing explanatory mechanisms all imply an a priori assumption that structural deficiencies,

and the various forms in which they manifest, are responsible for state weakness, instability, and failure.

In 1980, with the Cold War still looming large, Edward A Kolodziej and Robert E. Harkavy noted that security policy, in the case of developing states in particular, is the result of "needs and preferences of a nation" and the environment in which they are made. Little has changed in this regard, though terms such as "national interests" have largely replaced terminology such as "needs and preferences." Suffice it to say, policy, whether economic, security, social, or diplomatic, is subject to the wants, needs, and preferences of particular ruling elites and their perception of context- and situation-dependent variables.

Therefore, to understand policy and the processes by which it is formulated, especially those that perpetuate instability in sub-Saharan Africa, we must "understand the belief system, the cognition map and perception of the people concerned."[36] That is, we must understand the strategic culture of those nations and their ruling elites, and to do so, we must understand their origins. Nowhere more so than sub-Saharan Africa has colonialism served to shape, and to some degree contort, the lens through which politicians view the world and that which would portend to threaten it. Though, as noted in the introduction and follow-on discussion of American policy, "Afro-pessimism" continues today to cloud the ability of western academics to effectively evaluate African issues. Thus, a postcolonial research approach and methodology can serve to both illuminate security as interpreted by those in sub-Saharan Africa, while simultaneously allowing those viewing it from the outside to cast aside biases that distort the process.

Postcolonialism and Strategic Culture

Thus far, we have identified and contended with two important aspects of an analytical approach to discerning strategic culture within sub-Saharan Africa. First, an adaptation and

expansion of baseline strategic culture has allowed an application of those ideas to the context of domestic politics within the region. Secondly, we have identified the colonial period and subsequent processes of decolonization as an appropriate framework within which to begin the study. Still lacking, however, are solutions to two fundamental issues: Western bias and the role of human agency.

First, as outside observers and evaluators of sub-Saharan strategic culture, those within the U.S. government must ensure an appropriate methodology in order to limit the influence of biases and stereotypes. Uday Chandra noted as late as 2013 that "American political science research on the postcolonial world reproduces older colonial stereotypes and theories."[37] As has already been discussed, the cultural effects of colonialism do not confine themselves those once subjugated. Rather, nations and peoples who function as the beneficiary of colonialism and imperialism typically adopt mentalities and form biases that enable actions that would otherwise garner disapproval. Further, these modes of thought have tended to influence, to some degree or another, modern interactions between colonizers and the colonized, well after end of formal colonialism.

Edward Said, referring to the European intellectual approach toward the Orient, noted in his 1978 landmark tome *Orientalism*, that the foundations of this approach lay in a "flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing to him the relative upper hand."[38] Stated in simpler terms, those in the First World generally have a superiority complex toward those in the Third World. Though beyond the discussion here, even the commonly used nomenclature above bears witness to this by implying a substantive hierarchical world order. Regardless of the appropriateness of such monikers, which is debatable, the implication is that such a sense of superiority can

negatively influence the dialog between nations. When attempting to discern strategic culture, this sense of superiority may also lead to transference of values, thereby obscuring or manipulating the truth, rendering the results of such study useless.

Secondly, as noted in the previous discussion of strategic culture, an appropriate methodology must emphasize the importance of human agency in the development of that culture. Within the framework offered by the common colonial experience of sub-Saharan Africa, human agency, from an indigenous perspective, manifested itself in the anti-colonial movements that led to independence, and the processes by which the rulers of new regimes consolidated power. While there was much holdover from the colonial period in terms of institutions and structures, namely international borders and functioning bureaucracies, these legacies could not alone condone legitimacy upon new leaders. Rather, the apparatuses by which emergent leaders came to, and maintained power, provided the foundations for strategic culture in the former colonies. Thus, in order to address human agency in the evolution of strategic culture in sub-Saharan Africa, the methodological approach must seek to understand threats to legitimacy and power from the perspective of those who fear its loss, and the narrative that defines those threats.

In reconciling both these methodological issues - perspective biases and the role of human agency - the approaches utilized by postcolonial theorists prove effective. Postcolonial studies are anything but new, and typically well accepted among academic circles as being effectively explanatory insofar as being a descriptive medium for a wide range of social phenomena observed in former colonial states. Though a thorough dissection of all its aspects and applications is beyond the scope of this argument, it is important to note the dissention

among academics as to the precise definition of the term "postcolonial," when its use is appropriate, and the inferences that its use engenders.

Some have argued that "postcolonialism," as a condition, can apply equally well to both former colonial subjects and their imperial rulers. Others have implied that it describes a discursive process, wherein those under colonial rule formulate a national identity, both separate from and greater than, the identity imposed by the colonizer. Still other authors, like Edward Said, claim that it is most useful to describe the context in which First World and Third World nations relate to one another, both past and present. There is considerable debate even over hyphenation; the un-hyphenated "postcolonialism" is thought to connote a modern, non-ideological understanding, were as "post-colonialism" elicits a deference to Marxist ideologies that underscored many of the post-World War II independence movements. Still further, the very use of "post" as a prefix causes a ruckus, some arguing that the colonial past and neo-colonial present exist in continuity, lacking the stark division that "post" implies.

As the purpose of this paper is to suggest how colonialism and the various processes of de-colonization in sub-Saharan Africa might apply when studying the strategic cultures of that region, the following description is perhaps apropos; Postcolonialism as a theory "deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies."[39] Note here the specific lack of reference to the society in question. This is important insofar that it recognizes the effect of colonization on the perspectives of both the imperial power and subject in question. But a more thorough and perhaps, dichotomous, description is required to reach the level of usefulness required when considering a postcolonial approach to the study of strategic culture. While scholars have applied postcolonial theory across a broad spectrum of disciplines including history, economics,

and sociology, the application to political theory is most relevant to the concept of strategic culture considered here.

Therefore, as applied in the realm of indigene politics, postcolonial theory deals with the development of culture in response to newly achieved sovereignty "which radically revised the ethos and ideologies of the colonial state and, at the same time reoriented the goals of the independence movement towards the very different conditions of national autonomy."[40] Further, as applied within the milieu of Western political science it amounts to the "dislocation and displacement of western knowledge."[41] It is the conscious effort to remove bias and stereotypes from the study of other cultures, and to allow the subject, rather than the observer, to determine the value of cultural symbols, relics and artifacts.

As a methodological approach to the study of strategic culture, postcolonialism provides a means to consider colonial history from the perspective of those who lived and struggled under the rule of another, and still experience the effects of such rule today. It seeks to define and then dissect the role of imperial rule with respect to the transformation of indigenous culture, ideology, economics, and political life. In keeping with the model of strategic culture argued for here, a postcolonial approach allows for a methodical study of cognitive influences. Such an approach asks the fundamental question; in what way did colonialism affect the mindset of the colonized, both before and after independence? In that vein, the following are questions that a postcolonial approach may offer in the pursuit of strategic culture in sub-Saharan Africa.

- In what way did colonial powers attempt to alter the social fabric of individual colonies?
- How did colonizers alter the meaning behind significant cultural symbols and artifacts?
- What colonial institutions remained after independence? What purpose did they serve in the post-independence period?
- What narrative did eventual rulers employ to garner popular support?
- What does self-rule imply? Prior to independence? After independence?

- What aspects of pre-colonial culture, traditions, and ideology remain?

While this is not an exhaustive list, these questions are indicative of the general methodological approach of postcolonialism. Further, this line of questioning supports what has been argued for herein. That is the utilization of a second-generation approach to strategic culture in order to understand the attendant processes and inputs central to the formation and modification of strategic culture. Secondly, as they apply to the model of strategic culture posited, these questions, and those like it, directly address the cognitive influences and manifestation variables that exist within specific cultures. A prime example comes from Kenya, and the linkages between the oppressive tactics of the British government during the Mau Mau uprising in the 1950s, and the authoritarian modes of governance adopted by post-independence regimes.

During a seven year declared "state of emergency," the British employed counter-insurgency tactics composed mainly of widespread violence, rape, mass incarcerations, torture, and murder in an attempt to subdue the populace. As Margaret Kohn and Keally McBride note, this "was an intensification of existing modes of colonial governance that destroyed the remnants of indigenous sources of authority and order and replaced them with unmitigated coercion."[42] Numerous regulations, namely the Native Courts Regulations of 1897, the Vagrancy Regulations of 1898, and the Emergency Powers Order of 1939, had codified many of the measures used during the "emergency." Many of those provisions remained in effect, or were reenacted by indigenous regimes in various form or fashion following independence, thereby continuing authoritarian practices of the government.[43]

Using a post-colonial framework, one can discern with slightly more background information that it is likely that years of colonial rule had, in the minds of would be rulers, transformed the notion of legitimacy in Kenya. Prior to colonialism, only the support of the tribe (populace) could confer legitimacy on local rulers. British colonial rule altered that system, such that legitimacy now emanated from above, negating the need for consensus building. Rather, the coercive power of the colonial state became synonymous with legitimacy. After independence, legitimacy, as practiced by the native ruler, continued as a function of the coercive capability of fear, and when that failed, force. Autocracy had become a cultural imperative, and to some degree remains in place today, as evidenced by the widespread international denunciation of the recent Kenyan elections.

When we apply this interpretation of events to the adapted model of strategic culture, we see that colonial practices had a definitive cognitive effect on future indigenous regimes. The ability to coerce the populace, being the legitimating factor in governance, identified both the threats to the ruling regime -internal dissention- and the appropriate measures for addressing those threats – inculcate fear and repress by violence if necessary. Though in the long run this is likely to constitute a negative feedback cycle, the strategic culture of Kenya, as it existed for decades following independence, thwarted any such understanding among the ruling elite.

Applied in this way, one can see the value of a post-colonial approach to strategic culture. The above insights, while cataloged by the aforementioned authors, came from the work of African intellectual Ngugi wa Thiong'o. In this case, we have removed western cultural bias by referencing the thoughts of the very people affected by

colonialism. Further, by doing so, we emphasize the human agency of those involved in the development said culture. This is not to imply that Kenyan strategic culture is one-dimensional. Rather, the postcolonial approach proved appropriate due to the colonial context of Kenya's autocratic policies. In this way, and applied to the varied colonial experiences of sub-Saharan African states, one can holistically understand the strategic cultures resident within the region.

Conclusions

As noted by President Barrack Obama at the opening session of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit in August, 2014, Africa is a growing area of importance for U.S. foreign policy. Yet, U.S. diplomats risk continuing a trend of ineffective foreign exploits in the sub-Saharan region based on an overly "Westernized" interpretation of history and culture as it exists. In order to counteract this trend, policy makers would do well to adapt the tenets of second-generation strategic culture to the realities of politics south of the Sahara. Further, given the regions shared colonial history, a post-colonial approach aids in a fuller understanding of those strategic cultures. By removing Western biases, emphasizing the role of human agency, and rejecting a myopic structuralist approach to instability, one can gain a truer understanding of strategic culture and the processes by which it comes about.

By fully understanding the strategic culture of the myriad nations in the region, U.S. diplomats and politicians can be better prepared to offer policy recommendations that will meet with approval and excitement in the nations they wish to stabilize and see prosper. Additionally, such an understanding may in fact prevent strategic surprise, by preparing officials for the possibility that policy concurrence between the U.S.

government and its various partners may not be in the realm of the possible. Strategic culture, when applied to sub-Saharan Africa through the lens of postcolonialism, can increase understanding, and result in far more effective and efficient U.S. policy foreign policy in the region.

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