

THE TRI-MODEL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL ANALYSIS

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE TRI-MODEL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

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Since the end of the Cold War, observers and analysts of international politics and national security affairs have struggled with the resulting changes in state behavior and organization. In retrospect, the Cold War period, and indeed, the period of great industrialized nation states, was short lived. During previous generations, society generally organized itself as religious groupings and ethnic tribes, with dynastic rulers nested as subsets within these groups. Economic organizations were subservient to these entities. However, with transformations in politics, science and technology, the relevant position of dynasties and ethnically-based regimes declined, while economic organizations have risen. This is the international landscape of today, and understanding it is crucial for analyzing the world and formulating foreign policy.

THE TRI-MODEL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL ANALYSIS

While frame of reference helps understand the world, it also may restrict perspective within narrow boundaries. This is especially the case with the American perspective, a 230-year historical view of limited depth to comprehend and reflect on the strategic environment. Americans, and by extension her leaders and theorists, are most comfortable applying the Westphalian nation-state and bipolar, Cold War models because they dominated great power relationships during America's infancy, and matured as America achieved great power, then superpower, status. Lost to this view of international organization, however, is that this period represents only a small sliver of history. When placed into the perspective of thousands of years, the brief period of great, industrialized nations was, and still is, revolutionary. The unique character of the time spawned our recent strategic theories and models, intending to decipher this new period of interaction between massive groupings of industrialized peoples. Therefore, it is a mistake to apply these theories and attempts to define the strategic environment within the context of a world still experiencing a profound period of change. Such efforts are premature, not unlike assessing a sculpture before the artist has chipped away all the stone to reveal the final form.

During previous generations, society generally organized itself as religious groupings and ethnic tribes (The Tribal/Religious Community), with dynastic rulers (The Dynastic Regime) nested as subsets within these groups or with a sole religious chief or tribal ruler. Economic organizations (the Mercantile City) were subservient to, and at the whim of, their protection and benevolence.¹ Nevertheless, with the advent of self-governance, coupled with leaps in science, technology and industrial growth, the

relevance of Dynastic leaders and their regimes declined, and the power of the oldest means of societal organization, the Tribal/Religious, began to erode.² The recent 200-year industrialized period witnessed a transformation into a new construct driven by scientific and technological advances. What happens when peoples, no longer motivated by fidelity to a God-given right of another to rule, or aspirations for ethnic primacy, begin to administrate world affairs based primarily on economic concerns and individual expression? What happens when nations grounded in a philosophy of economic prosperity, and the economic entities themselves, become the primary actors in global affairs? This is the unprecedented, ongoing international transformation that continues to accelerate and gain momentum.

The ultimate outcome of this revolution is far from certain. Many nations and non-state actors still cling to, and are motivated by, reactionary forces of extremist religion and ethnic distrust or racism, and some actively undermine the emerging global construct; one that is more inclusive, enlightened, and wealthier than ever, but grounded on an ever increasing interdependence on fragile technologies vulnerable to deliberate disruption. America is in the navigator's chair, piloting this global economic construct into the next century and beyond. Successful accomplishment of this voyage requires a deeper understanding of the motivations, actions, strengths and weaknesses of the older organizations, the Tribal/Religious and Dynastic regimes that sometimes cooperate, sometimes grudgingly coexist, and often actively oppose progress.

Historical Perspective

In the pre-industrial, pre-nationalistic era, tribalism, organized religion, and royal dynasties ruled. Authority rested with the family, tribe, religious leader, feudal lord, and

king. In medieval Europe, for example, lords reigned over the peasantry who harvested or gathered crops and raw materials. These lords retained allegiance, not through fondness, but by maintaining order, protection from external threats (other lords and marauders), and a contract that by providing a measure of wealth and authority to the lord, men could hopefully go about their life relatively unmolested and in peace.³ The lords maintained power by protecting the peasants and their productive capacity, and discouraging internal disobedience and external encroachments with a loyal military force. This force was usually a mercenary army, with a professional or aristocracy-based officer corps and idle poor or mercenary rank-and-file, headed by the nobility.⁴ Because these forces were often small and expensive, lords avoided decisive battles, as defeat would incur a loss of power base. A different code of war existed; difficult to comprehend with our modern mindset, but perfectly logical in that environment. Surrender of a garrison could occur under a flag of truce with limited loss of life, with an adversary free to leave, sometimes with weapons in hand.⁵

Not until Napoleon used nationalism to mobilize the masses did the *modern era* of wars of annihilation begin. Napoleon mobilized the common citizenry, the “peasants” of the day, to a cause and loyalty larger than themselves, a patriotic bond to the nation-state. To defend themselves from this method of organization, other nations followed suit. While this type of national organization was not completely unheralded in history, Napoleon’s effort coupled vast military conscription with industrialization, breeding the framework of the last two centuries: times of unrestrained bloodshed between industrialized nations.⁶

Note, however, that this framework with which industrialized peoples organized, viewed, and explained world affairs never really applied to some regions. Vast regions in Africa, Asia and South America never progressed from the tribal, feudal, and religious forms of organization and politics previously described. This partially accounts for their inability to organize for industrial growth or to repel nations with large nationalized citizenries armed with industrially produced wealth and weapons.⁷ While nation-states carved up Africa, the people living there continued to scratch out a day-to-day existence, concerned more with feeding a family and tribal survival than whether the Allies defeated the Axis. In the Middle East, tribe and clan retained its historical preeminence into the late twentieth century, with the struggle between communism and capitalism providing superpower benefactors to underwrite dynasties.⁸

Over the past 200 years, nation-states adopted a variety of governmental forms, reflecting the political/sociological debate over how to best unite masses of industrialized peoples as societies transitioned from kingdoms to self-governing nation-states. Napoleon's imperial France was a pure nationalistic vision for its "people." This subsequently became the model; for example, Germany followed suit in similar fashion. Countries such as England began to blend monarchical rule with a more democratic style of governance. On the other side of the Atlantic, something completely different evolved. While initial North American colonization reflected strong religious overtones, it progressed to a collection of states governed by financial freedom, self-determination, and civil liberties that resulted in a unique American national identity.⁹

As nationalism extended into the twentieth century, the last vestiges of monarchical rule in the industrialized West declined in burgeoning industrial societies, with remnants

such as the British and Dutch monarchies remaining only as ceremonial decor. While free market, democratic individualism spread, other ideas and theories about how to best organize the masses, and for what end, emerged. National Socialism was largely a continued effort to apply the masses and industrialization towards dynastic or ethnic ends.¹⁰ Communism, in a sense, attempted to bond peoples to an ideology similar to a religion, but without a God.¹¹ World War I, the Communist revolution in Russia, World War II, the Chinese Communist takeover, and the Cold War ravaged the planet as societies struggled with how to best politically organize vast populations competing for productive capability, wealth, and technological advances unimaginable just decades before.

Then, after just a few generations of nation-state dominated history fueled by competing political ideologies, something happened: the Western dominated idea of free trade, individual rights, and democracy triumphed. The Berlin Wall fell, Germany reunited, the Soviet Union disintegrated under the monolithic weight of its own command economy.¹² One can argue that even the last bastions of the communist ideology only remained as totalitarian fiefdoms, retaining the ideological facade as a face-saving decoration while capitalist tentacles invaded their economies (Vietnam;¹³ China¹⁴), or were held off despite their own economic ruin (North Korea¹⁵). But the masses of the world knew the truth; the communist emperor really had no clothes. No serious ideology of appeal remained that challenged the idea of free capitalist societies motivated by a desire for free thought, civil liberties and pursuit of personal wealth.¹⁶

And then something truly remarkable occurred (at least to those grounded in the bipolar and nation-state models of international relations): nothing. Some debated the

“End to History”¹⁷ as dormant historical squabbles began to divide national spoils and resurrect ancient vendettas. President George W. Bush declared “a New World Order”¹⁸ as disorder erupted around the globe. Simultaneously, the world absorbed tremendous technological advances that reshaped and shrunk the planet, morphing relationships into a new dynamic characterized by globalization. Most attempted to function in the new environment, without a prevailing new framework to replace the old, bilateral model. The disintegration of communism and the zenith of capitalist democracy were almost forgotten in less than a decade by much of the world citizenry. What happened?

The Tri-Model Framework

What was occurring, and still occurs, was a transformation and acceleration of societies away from Tribal/Religious or Dynastic organization to societies where economics dominate (Mercantile City). As this shift occurs, the primacy of the Mercantile type of international actor ascends. To understand the transformation, we must examine the unique values and goals, leadership structures, power-bases, behaviors, strengths and weaknesses of the Tribal/Religious Community, the Dynastic Regime, and the Mercantile City.

Tribal/Religious Community

Historically, the tribal or religious organization has held primacy from the beginning of mankind's social organization.¹⁹ It coalesces around a common religious belief or ethnic past. Its leaders govern according to an authority garnered from either historic ethnic or religious right, or ideological truth. These values motivate the leadership and the masses. Values, as defined by ethnic right, religion, or ideological correctness, are the most important characteristic of this actor, and provide the foundation for action by

the leadership. The Tribal/Religious Community cares less about “individual rights,” “progress,” “fair play,” the standard of living, and international boundaries as defined by Western standards. Historically dominate in international affairs, it began to be challenged by the ascent of the Western nation-states, first by the ability of dynastic regimes to better organize and leverage wealth, and then by the industrialized nation-state.²⁰ While behind in development, however, the Tribal/Religious Community has reemerged with a vengeance as an international player, with global technological and economic advancements providing new tools to further its ethnic, religious, or ideological agenda.

The dismantling of Western empires after World War II created many of the nations within this category today. European patrons either granted colonies outright independence, or found themselves embroiled in “wars of national liberation.”²¹ The European powers carved nations out of former holdings, such as in the Middle East, fashioned institutionally based nations in areas such as the Pacific and Africa, and fought bloody campaigns in a vain attempt to retain influence in former colonies, as evidenced by the French in Vietnam and Algeria.²² The short, modern-day national history, however, does not well represent the historical experience of peoples involved. For instance, modern day Israel has a short, approximately 50-year existence; however, its ethnic lineage, the essence of this Tribal/Religious Community, is one of the most ancient.²³ New nations retained their ethnic, tribal, and religious identity with thousands of years of historic memory. Nations within the Tribal/Religious category include Iran, Sudan, Somalia, and a multitude of African states. This category also includes non-state entities battling for varying degrees of autonomy or independence such as the

Palestinians²⁴ and the Kurds.²⁵ Additionally, if an ideology provides the binding element and ultimate value for a people or group, the nation falls within the Tribal/Religious category, with the ideology serving as “religious truth” as exemplified by communism or fascism (“political religion”).²⁶

The Tribal/Religious Community’s leadership may appear centralized or decentralized, and the government structure may rapidly transition between the two. For example, when the Dynastic Regime of the Shah crumbled in Iran, the Ayatollah Khomeini appeared to assume a position as the final authority on all government and social matters. But, even while his authority appeared supreme, Khomeini took care with instituting his theocracy, being aware of the various social forces within the country.²⁷ Ultimately, the Koran provided the “constitution” and Shiite Muslim Iranians took great care to fashion a religious government:

The government was presided over by a president and prime minister, who were responsible for running the ministries and executing government policy. The 270 seat Majlis, which wrote and passed new laws subject to Khomeini’s approval, was led by a speaker The Council of Experts - an elected body of seventy to eighty eminent Islamic scholars was responsible for such high matters ... as revising the 1979 constitution and selecting a successor to Khomeini. The twelve member Council of Constitutional Guardians screened and modified all legislation from the Majlis before passing it on Laws that did not meet the council’s Islamic standards were sent back There were economic and political sections linked to tens of thousands of mosques. The clerics connected with the mosques functioned as local administrators. They provided food, clothing, and ration cards, ran the courts, collected taxes, and rounded up volunteers for war.²⁸

What Westerners fail to understand because of our secular perspective, is that Khomeini was the George Washington of his country; a patriot who established an Islamic democracy, albeit one that is not compatible to Western preferences. The institutions founded on religious values continue to function, well after his death. It is a

brand of democracy with a foundation emphasizing Shiite religious values, and balancing those with individual, political, and economic freedoms.²⁹

Another error would be confusing the Tribal/Religious Community with a monarchy where, while appearing similar with a precursory examination (especially if tainted with Western prejudices), the differences are extreme. The key difference is the Tribal/Religious Community's power is based on the right or ability to champion religious, ideological, or tribal interests, and not a cult of personality. Thus, this category's most significant strength is the ability to mobilize the citizenry behind a cause and thereby resist collective adversity to a much greater degree than a monarch. Moreover, because a nation has a "king" does not mean it is Dynastic. If the Community's identity is grounded in a strong ethnic or religious foundation, toppling the king or leader will only raise another ruler to preside.

The Tribal/Religious Community's vulnerability lies in its economic shortcomings. Because of the need to control information and freedom of expression to protect the "truth," the regime stunts economic growth and information exchange, thereby stifling investment and scientific progress. For instance, Iranian government censorship significantly stifles the free flow of information and ideas.³⁰ Additionally, because the nation's motivation is captured within some religious, ethnic, or ideological vision, it may find external allies with the same outlook scarce, leading to isolation. Even when the binding vision is an ideology, once dogma passes beyond national boundaries, interpretations and ethnic influences may weaken international mass unity. The communist block nations attempted to organize as an ideological collective, but ultimately ethnic linkages and motivations, coupled with various leaders' dynastic

tendencies, supplanted this vision until the states fell into a more familiar Tribal (China) or Dynastic (Stalin's Russia) organization.³¹

The Tribal/Religious Community presents a challenge when formulating national policy to counter it. The first difficulty involves understanding the Community's motivations, which requires detailed interpretation of ethnic and religious history and cultural beliefs; no small task. While we may assume we are on the "right" side of the issue, the Tribal/Religious opponent maintains the same or even greater conviction of the justice of its cause. A military contest with such an actor may result in a protracted struggle and complete victory will probably require a bloody, protracted conflict. When confronting a Community actor internationally, it is also best to choose a geographic locale as distant from the borders of the Community as possible, for the strength of the actor is derived from its popular base. Simply, the best policy is to avoid a direct confrontation with the Tribal/Religious Community, and to resist the temptation to apply military force, even if a vital interest is involved. Subtle, patient, private diplomacy, and economic inducements provide the best counter. Enticing the Community into economic, scientific, and academic exchanges and partnerships, especially direct contact with its population, is the best course in confronting it; engagement provides "temptations" too difficult to resist. It is a long-term strategic approach, but ultimately the Tribal/Religious Community is an anachronism that cannot keep pace in the modern era. Sacrifice and furor are its strengths, so it is best to avoid them if possible.

Dynastic Regime

The star of this actor, the Dynastic Regime, never seems to completely set. The Dynastic Regime's primary goal is the preservation of the ruling elite and maintenance

of family wealth and power. Its leadership is grounded on the viability to rule by birthright or personality. Leadership is often intertwined with an ethnic or religious right to rule (or both). This may be a royal family, such as in Saudi Arabia³² and Jordan,³³ a dictator and his family, inner-circle, or ruling elite such as in Libya,³⁴ Cuba,³⁵ and North Korea.³⁶ Leaders derive ultimate authority through family, bloodline, or party membership. The regime's power-base is usually embedded in tradition and preserved by a loyal military, usually the army, maintained to deal as much with internal as external threats. The personality and objectives of the ruler provide the strongest indicators of international behavior. This typically stable, predictable regime, concerns itself with the maintenance of family or group power, acquisition of wealth, and keeping its populace content to a degree that facilitates the first two objectives. The ruling elite are sometimes an ethnic minority in the country. For instance, the minority Hashemite family in Jordan rules the Palestinian population.³⁷ The Hashemites maintain power by keeping a firm grip on governmental institutions, especially the military, whose combat arms branches are primarily populated by rural Bedouin peoples, with the Palestinians limited to support roles.³⁸ A limited form of participatory government is allowed, but the election laws are designed to favor the Bedouin tribes.³⁹ The royal family also ensures its religious and international policies stay attuned to popular sentiment.

Two critical fragilities make the Dynastic Regime the weakest of the three international actors. First, the regime lacks a strong institutional foundation beyond the ruling clique, so it often weathers leadership transition poorly. In the Dynastic Regime, the ruler and government are one, so his death or loss of legitimacy may prove lethal to the current state structure. In 1999, one of the gravest considerations in Jordan was

who would succeed King Hussein upon his death. In fact, a month before his passing, he designated his son, Prince Abdullah, as heir, with an understating that Prince Hamzeh would follow him. Until this shift, Hussein's brother, Crown Prince Hassan was to ascend the throne. While obscurity clouds decisions behind palace walls, the fact that Abdullah and Hamzeh descended directly from Hussein was secondary to Hussein's belief that the more intellectual, urbanized Hassan was not in tune with either the Palestinian majority or the Bedouin tribes. Abdullah, commander of the army's elite Special Forces, with acclaim from recent skirmishes on the Iraq-Jordanian border, possessed the support necessary for the kingdom to survive, especially in the most important institution of all: the army.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Abdullah's choice of a Palestinian wife helped cement his status among the majority Palestinian populace he was to rule. This brings us to the second vulnerability of the dynastic regime: popular legitimacy.⁴¹ If the masses become seriously disaffected with the ruler, and he then loses their subservience to his divine or ideological right to rule, revolution may occur. The fall of the Shah of Iran's regime provides the perfect example of what happens when a modern day monarchy loses the acquiescence of the masses.⁴²

Finally, the ruling class must maintain control over information and the media to censor information and ideas deemed negative to the ruling status quo, another disadvantage when considering economic and scientific growth. Regimes such as North Korea are particularly sensitive to outside ideas and perceptions that might negatively influence the thoughts of their subjects.⁴³

Negotiation with this actor is easiest in one respect; because the regime is a cult of personality (or family or party) with the ultimate goal of maintaining power and

controlling wealth, its diplomatic, economic, informational or military actions are more direct, and thus, more easily ascertained. Because of its personality-based leadership, the Regime is the most vulnerable of the three to decapitation of the ruler or ruling elite. The U.S. invasion of Panama, Operation *Just Cause*, provides a textbook example of how to neuter a Dynastic Regime with the removal of the leader and simultaneous destruction of his “guard.”⁴⁴ The 2003 invasion of Iraq is another textbook case.

An additional technique to attack a dynastic regime involves inciting rebellion among the regime’s population, especially when a minority rules. The toppling of the Shah of Iran and the overthrow of Ceausescu of Romania⁴⁵ provide examples of the outcome when the masses of a Dynastic Regime decide they have had enough. The danger with toppling a Dynastic Regime, however, comes with the aftermath. The monarchy or ruling elite has most likely maintained power by ruthlessly suppressing discontent, especially discontent along ethnic or religious lines (have and have-nots). Once removed, these social forces will likely explode; consequently, post-conflict resolution may prove problematic for the attacking power. Religious and ethnic forces that have suffered oppression most likely will emerge, not viable economic, Mercantile actors (as witnessed in Iraq and Iran⁴⁶).

If behavioral reform, not revolutionary upheaval, of this actor is desired, a mix of clear carrot and stick inducements (power and wealth for the ruler / family / ruling class) provide the best negotiating approach. Reformation of the underlying ruling institution itself again requires a long view, with enticements to moderate the leadership to the extent it is willing to adopt gradual reforms that do not undercut its short-term position.

Ultimately, peaceful transition probably requires an enlightened ruler or ruling class willing to take a secondary role.

Mercantile City

The Mercantile City has existed in a micro-sense since merchants and tradesman dominated their small village, but has gradually expanded its reach, influence, interdependence, and numbers. For most of history, this actor has been subservient to the Tribal/Religious or Dynastic organizations. Village boundaries restrained the access of merchants and tradesmen to resources and markets and the ability to project and protect their economic might. These entrepreneurs were beholden to their local magistrate or lord to provide protection. Technology limited military forces' ability to protect the vast swaths of territory outside the city walls.⁴⁷

As technology improved transportation, communication and production, economic influence, power and reach grew and birthed the industrial giants of the 1800s and 1900s who built railroads, highways, telegraph and telephone networks, effectively shrinking the globe and ultimately the distance between Mercantile Cities. With the advent of democracy, capitalism, and free trade ideals, coupled with industrialization and revolutions in science and information technology, the walls of the Mercantile City began to share the boundary of the nation-state. As the wealth and power entrepreneurs grew, the boundaries of their "village" became the industrialized nation-state, and the "magistrate," the government, provided protection.⁴⁸

Economic interdependence and long-distance trade are not new ideas; however, the industrial revolution and democracy first allowed the Mercantile City to become the nation. Now globalization is breaking down the "walls" of interdependent, national

“cities” to the point where trade, economic organization, and security arrangements are increasingly encouraging the creation of nation conglomerates, such as the European Union.⁴⁹ This change continues to grow and accelerate, dramatically altering the essence of the nation-state dominated international framework. As world market interdependence, advanced communication and industrial urbanization occurs, the city walls expand. Digitization and telecommunications, coupled with the potential profits of a global market, even challenge the final city wall of nationalism. Distance and time between entrepreneurs has melted away. The growth of wealth and interdependence is blurring nation-state interests to such a degree that boundaries in an atlas are beginning to lose relevance to actual power and “state” behavior. The world of nations has ceased behaving as a collection of competing nation-state “villages,” and is evolving towards a series of interconnected global economic cities.⁵⁰

This is not to suggest it will evolve into some mass world government, at least not anytime soon. An analogy would be how technology and interstate trade transformed America from a collection of political states to an era where state sovereignty is primarily an exercise in administration and organization that allows citizens economic freedom. Such change is gradual and vulnerable to catastrophic disruption (as demonstrated in the American Civil War). Nevertheless, it reflects the current trend in globalization.

Mercantile City leadership is diverse. In the nation-state version of the Mercantile City, wealth, popularity, and media access define true power. Even the official elected leadership of democratic nations is somewhat illusionary. For instance, while elected representatives in America remain beholden to the electorate, they must first weather

the whim of the wealthy to gain funds necessary to compete politically.⁵¹ Entering national politics and gaining “official” electoral power and influence in American government first requires the demonstrated ability to seduce and please the wealthy. And thus, who is more influential: Bill Gates or the Senator from Nebraska? Similarly, what national allegiance does IBM or Coca-Cola purport? While the name brand seems American, the stateless corporation’s allegiance leans increasingly towards the global Mercantile City.⁵² Or perhaps the motivations of the citizenry, the entrepreneur, the corporation, and the state have kluged.

The ultimate goal of the authors of the Declaration of Independence, the total pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness⁵³ reigns supreme in the Mercantile City. The new lords, the entrepreneurs, call the shots, as long as the peasants, the consumers, are content. The society holds economic prosperity and the right of each individual to prosper as sacred. The political aristocracy of national and local governments administers the day-to-day management of the city and arbitrates disputes between the economic lords. The aristocracy maintains a well-trained legion to protect the city and it guards against the Tribal/Religious or Dynastic “savages” who have not yet decided to, or are unable to, join the city and may threatened its walls or resources. And the peasants inside the walls happily partake in the spoils of civilization.

The strength of Mercantile nation-states lie in their economic might and production, access to resources and open flow of ideas and information. Information and ideas flow freely among Mercantile countries, and with this, the opportunity for wealth and expression that fuels economic growth and individual freedom. The Mercantile country’s weakness lies in its challenge to mobilize the citizenry’s national

will behind a cause. To muster the Mercantile City's vast wealth and production, leaders must convince the citizens of a grave threat - a difficult task if obscure. Additionally, as interdependence among different Mercantile nations grow and even form new-multinational constructs, action by one state independent of the others becomes increasingly difficult. Globalization of the Mercantile City constrains state sovereignty.⁵⁴

In order to oppose a Mercantile nation-state, an opponent should keep the confrontation ambiguous and never present a direct, physical threat to the society. If the society never senses a direct threat and believes confrontation will cause a degradation of lifestyle and comfort, unpopularity will burden the elected leadership governing the Mercantile City. Should the citizenry becomes convinced of a viable threat to survival or way of life, however, the City may mobilize its vast resources and capabilities to crush the enemy with extreme violence.

Multi-Category Organization

While many countries clearly fall within one of these three categories, others find themselves in two or even three simultaneously; for instance, China falls somewhere between a Dynastic Regime and Tribal Community. The countries of Eastern Europe evidence greater ethnic motivation than Western Europe. Russia - and its former Soviet Republics - desire admittance through the gates into the Mercantile City, but continues to be embroiled in tribal, ethnic, and religious conflict while simultaneously lacking a viable magistrate to keep their "neighborhood" crime-free.

Also, even when a society seems clearly categorized, all societies possess characteristics of all three classifications because the categorization is values based. The competing forms of values and control - personal, economic, ethnic, and religious -

are manifest to differing degrees in different countries. Often, leaders, especially Dynastic rulers, attempt to tie popular ethnic or religious emotions to their regime in an attempt to underwrite legitimacy and stability. Moreover, events may inflame ethnic or religious fervor in a Dynastic or Mercantile country. For example, the September 11, 2001 attack by Al Qaida on the World Trade Center galvanized Americans (loosely identifying “American” as a sort of hybrid ethnic group) into an almost religious-like, nationalistic, ideologically motivated response. The important lesson learned is a government (or group in Al Qaida’s case) should avoid employing tactics that rally enemies to respond outside its primary, normal pattern of behavior and motivation.⁵⁵

Figure One provides a visual representation of how one might classify a select group of nations within the Tri-Model Framework.

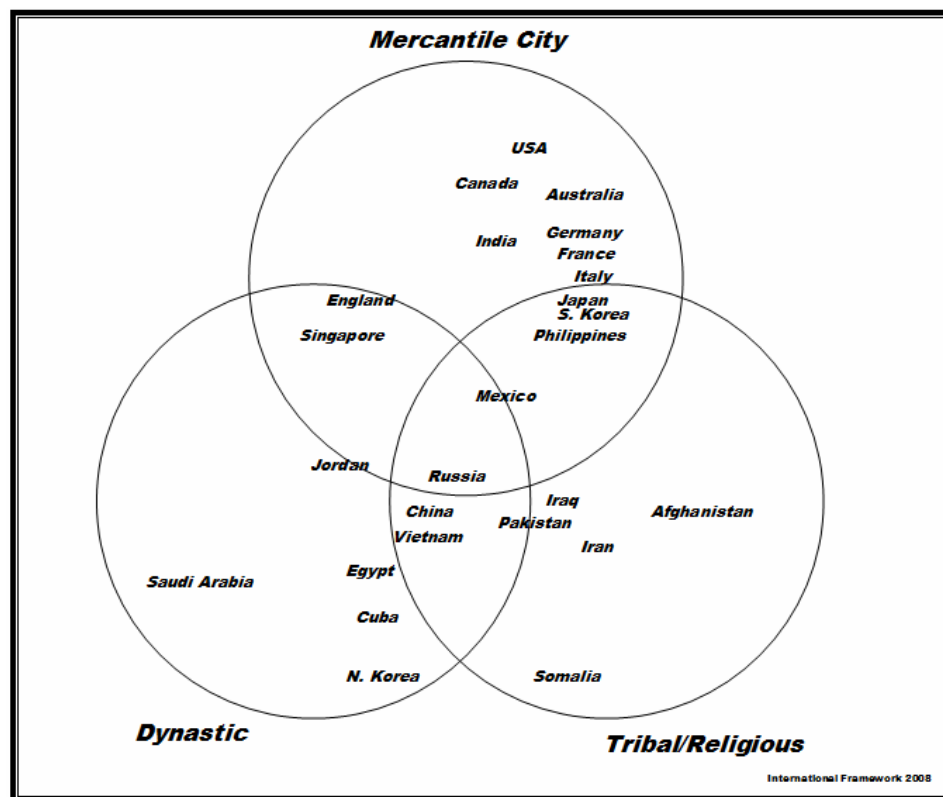


Figure 1. International Framework 2008

One may debate the exact level competing Mercantile, Dynastic, and Tribal/Religious influences have within each society and where each country should fall. The point, however, is some nations fall distinctly within a type category (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), while others remain engaged in societal struggles or balance of factors that resist categorization firmly within a single type (Russia and China).

Non-State Organizations

Changes in the international climate not only changed the character of nations, but non-state actors as well. The same availability of wealth and technology that accelerated the Mercantile City's ascent has enabled the independence and sometimes aggressive separate behaviors of smaller economic actors. Corporations or wealthy individuals have gained influence historically reserved to the realm of nation-states (note: even Al Qaida's beginnings were forged with the tremendous financial resources of the Bin Laden family fortune).⁵⁶ Different non-state entities will tend to mirror one of the state categories in their behaviors. For instance, a non-state international corporation easily falls within the Mercantile City category of behavior, or operates as a player in the Mercantile City environment. Other non-state entities tend to behave according to Tribal/Religious or Dynastic patterns. Large ethnicities battling for independence or a national identity share the same characteristics as the Tribal/Religious state actor. We may even place international ideological groups with large constituencies, such as Green Peace, the Red Cross and Amnesty International, in this category.⁵⁷ Ideologically motivated terrorist groups with small constituencies or appeal, religious cults, and narco-trafficking organizations behave as Dynastic organizations.⁵⁸ In the pre-World War II environment, such groups largely lacked

relevance. Today's environment enables these groups to play on the world stage. Our response to them must account for which behavior pattern a non-state actor follows.

Application to National Security Policy

Before embarking on a discussion of applying this model to real national policy or international analysis, a dose of reality is in order. Undoubtedly, a reader of this, or any other political / international theory or analytical framework, can identify oversimplifications, exceptions, and flaws. The purpose of theory, especially one predicting or explaining a highly complex, dynamic and ever changing environment, is to assist the decision maker by simplifying and modeling the world; it is a tool to help understand, gain perspective, and thus facilitate thinking about complex issues. The more chaotic the environment, the more room there is for abstraction and creation. This, or any other model used to explain and predict international events and formulate policy, should be utilized simply as a tool. While imperfect, it helps comprehend and cope with the current international environment.

The utility of the Tri-Model Framework to analyzing international relations is it explains a variety of current phenomena and relationships prevalent in today's world, and provides actual and potential pitfalls when crafting foreign policy.

Categorizing Nations

One key lesson when applying this framework is that political and military leaders must avoid crafting policy, during peacetime or in conflict, without due consideration as to which category the country belongs. If wrongly categorized, our application of national power may not only fail to achieve our objectives, but may even degrade the situation.

Regime Change and Evolution

If regime change is desired, either rapid, or measured and progressive, we must consider what is *most likely* to rise in its place. Establishing a “democracy” by installing an electoral system does not automatically correspond with the behaviors the West commonly associates with such a system. The recent democratic experiments in Lebanon and Palestine (the jury is still out in Iraq) provide reminders that if a society’s values are predominately Tribal/Religious, state actions and leaders will likely display associated behaviors. We should simply remind ourselves that Adolf Hitler rose to power in a democracy.⁵⁹ A prudent regime change strategy should first identify the Tri-Model status of a state or group, then the desired end state, and then what measures will best prepare the people of that society to embrace Mercantile values. Movement of a country from outside to within the walls of the Mercantile City is a process, one that may be generational. However, this generational process has successfully occurred, and is strongly favored by current trends, as demonstrated below.

History and Current Trends

Figure Two, Three and Four provide insight to trends and the potential for constructive regime change if the values of the populace support transition to the Mercantile City category. Figures Two and Three display the status of the great powers just prior to World War II and today, respectively. Note the shift of the most powerful countries towards the Mercantile influence, if not full entry within the city walls. The addition of India, formerly an extension of the British Empire, now represents a potential future economic superpower and further exemplifies this trend. A regional application to post-Cold War Europe, shown in figure Four, emphasize the current trend, but also

cautions what can happen if Tribal/Religious squabbling takes over, as they did in the Balkans.

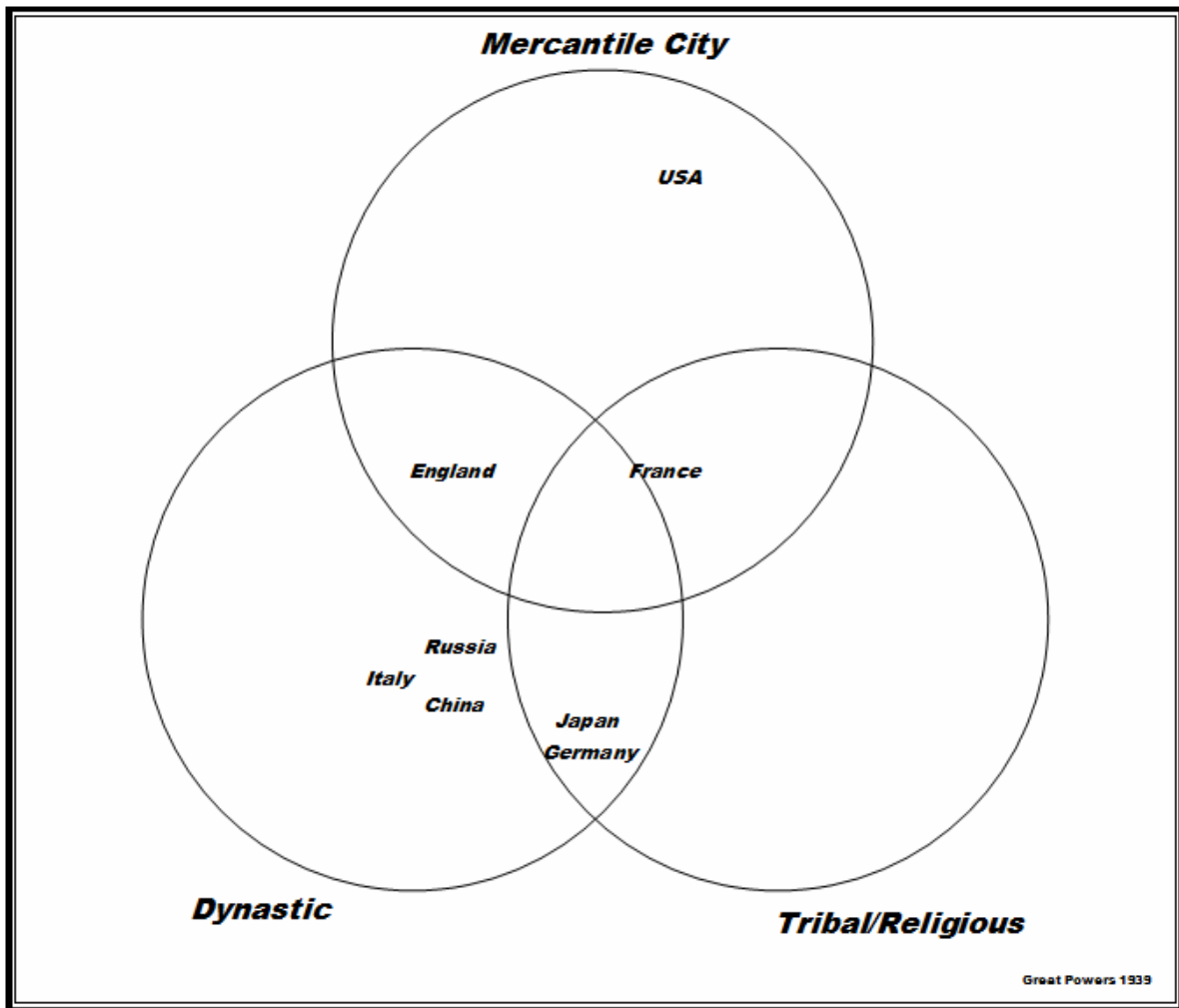


Figure 2. Great Powers 1939

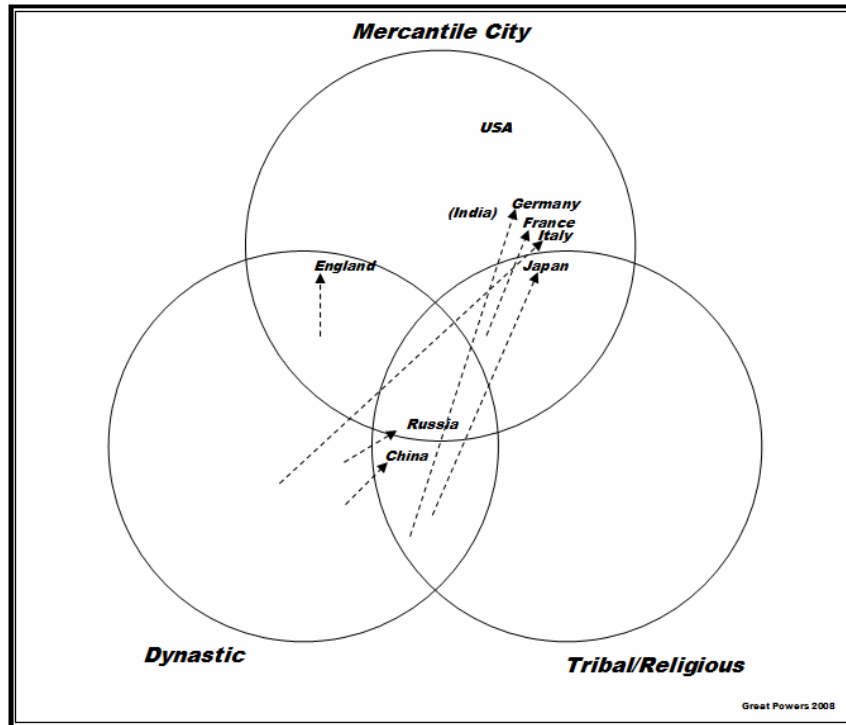


Figure 3: Great Powers 2008

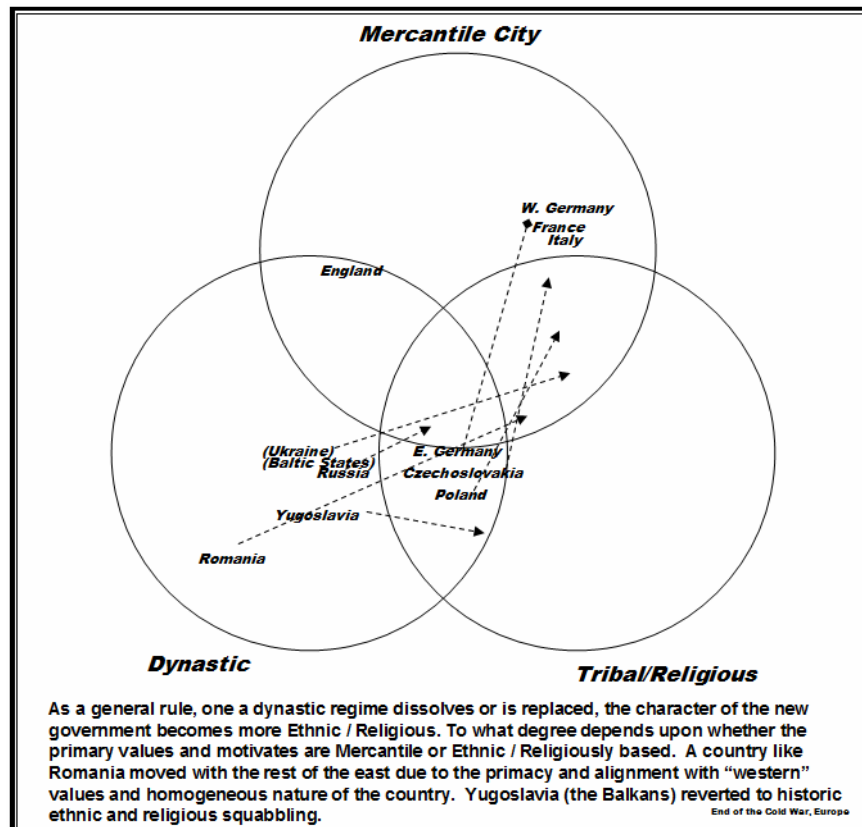


Figure 4: End of the Cold War, Europe

Conclusion

The Tri-Model Framework for International Analysis provides a tool to predict and explain the behaviors of state and non-state actors in today's rapidly changing, highly complex international environment. Applying this model should assist the national decision maker in explaining situations and identifying potential pitfalls. Additionally, the Tri-Model Framework calls for introspection concerning America's, and her Mercantile allies', true values-based strengths and weakness. We sometimes forget that America's historical appeal has been based on freedoms, primarily behavioral and informational, transferred into open and fair internal political, economic and sociological discourse and progression. These are the forces that opposing regime types ultimately cannot counter, as opposed to brute military might. Ironically, what the United States could not military or diplomatically force upon Southeast Asia and China in the later half of the twentieth century, occurs naturally through economic evolution today.⁶⁰ While the United States government has recently wielded a mighty foreign policy hammer of economic and military measures, it has not always been that way; when military power was formerly utilized, the hammer was the outgrowth of the values, not vice-versa. The true "power" that America and its Mercantile cousins wield is that which continues to elevate the Mercantile City to historic heights: free industrial, economic, educational, political, and informational trade.

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