

Selected Topics in Business Administration:

Revisiting Culture and the Clash of Civilizations Paradigm

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Following research in the library of Norwich University in summer 1994, this text was originally written as an undergraduate essay, and which attracted great interest as it was among the first essays to place 'culture' as the key concept or paradigm in international and global affairs of that time; reviewed in 2001; revised 2022 with minimal referencing in the Chicago tradition.

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A INTRODUCTION

The confrontation between the two superpowers during the Cold War made that our attention focused mainly on matters that had in common a conflict based on the ideological different between liberalism and communism deriving from perceptions of market mechanisms and social justice and expressed in demonstrations of military might. The end of this confrontation has been interpreted as the end of an era where ideologies were determining social behaviour¹ and where wars were waged as well as truces concluded in the name of these ideologies.

Assuming this to be true, events that marked the time of writing these lines in the 1990s such as the Gulf War, the Yugoslav and Chechen mayhems, the peace efforts in the Middle East but to name the few, strongly suggested that there is a different origin from that of ideology determining the social behaviour and patterns for conflict or co-operation. What is more, the origin can either be novel or historically established, the intensity of which the superpower conflict managed to conceal. Assuming on the other hand, that ideology is still the prevailing factor, albeit expressed in a less open manner than it was during the Cold War, would imply that there has always been only one origin that determined social behaviour. In either case, I argued and still argue that culture is the origin.

Thus, in order to shed some light on the global affairs of the time, a new system of concepts was formulated so as to construct a novel framework of analysis, a paradigm, whose core concept is culture, defined for the moment as being the collectively held visions of social order². The exploration of how these visions were constituted led to a dynamic definition of culture that enabled an understanding of how political meaning or knowledge is constituted.

The task today is to review the paradigm and establish its relevance in today's post-Covid-19 world.

Following Greenfield's assertion that 'cultural forms ensure that forces shaped centuries ago continue to shape the destinies of mankind at the end of the twentieth century'³, culture has evolved alongside with technology and economic development, which

¹ (a) B. Beedham, 'A Better Way to Vote', *The Economist*, 11 September 1993, p7; (b) S. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilisations', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol73, No3, p29.

² M. Berezin, (1994), 'Fissured Terrain: Methodological Approaches and Research Styles in Culture and Politics', *The Sociology of Culture*, D, Crane (ed.), Blackwell, p92.

³ Quoted in M. Berezin, *ibid.* p98.

actually are its prime movers. Therefore, it is a source of change⁴, an activity over which mankind can exert little or no control. In other words, I moreover claim, politics, regimes, ideologies are culturally determined⁵.

B THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Prior to determining the system of concepts that constitute the paradigm, it is important to make the distinction between ideology and culture because either there is the tendency of misunderstanding one for the other or downplaying the role of culture by associating it with artistic expression, and therefore considering it as irrelevant to the inter-national relations realm.

Ideology

To start with, ideology is characterised by the functions it performs. In order to explain social interactions, ideology is used as an analytical tool so as to construct a precise model of reference which attaches a single meaning to a political term and where the concepts are uncontested⁶. Subsequently, the model serves both as a guide and source for legitimate action⁷. For instance, fundamentalist ideology uses religious models upon which all action is based regardless of the consequences. In other words, ideology is on the one hand, the transformation of ideas into social directions without questioning, and on the other, the commitment to the consequences of ideas, thus is able to link together a particular conception of social structure and determine expectations. However, ideology does not derive from the internal factors of an individual society, because different ideologies may co-exist depending on the particular belief system in a given place. These are therefore determined by culture otherwise there would be a unique ideology, hence we need to consider culture.

Culture

Following Greenfield's assertion that 'cultural forms ensure that forces shaped centuries ago continue to shape the destinies of mankind at the end of the twentieth century'⁸, culture has evolved alongside with technology and economic development, which actually are its prime movers. Therefore, it is a source of change⁹, an activity over which

⁴ E. Service, (1975), *Origins of the State and Civilization*, Norton, P269.

⁵ A. Weeks, 'Do Civilisations Hold', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol72, No4, p25.

⁶ M. Freedman, 'Political Concepts and Ideological Morphology', *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol2, No2, P156.

⁷ W. Carlsnaes, (1986), *Ideology and Foreign Policy*, Blackwell, p168.

⁸ Quoted in M. Berezin, *ibid.* p98.

⁹ E. Service, (1975), *Origins of the State and Civilization*, Norton, P269.

mankind can exert little or no control. In other words, I moreover claim, politics, regimes, ideologies are culturally determined¹⁰.

Different definitions of culture have been forwarded. Malinowski see it as 'inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits, values'. Frith sees it as the 'component of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as material which people inherit, employ, transmute, add to and transmit; it is all learned behaviour which has been socially acquired'. Botomore as 'the ideational aspects of social life, as distinct from the actual relation and forms of relationship between individuals, and Levi-Strauss as 'a system of collective representations'¹¹. What is common to these definitions is the idea that culture is (a) transmitted and that (b) there is no collective identity without a certain sharing of cultural similarities, the recognition of common patterns and characteristics¹².

Accepting the claim that culture is transmitted it follows that the basic difference between ideology and culture is that the latter has an evolutionary feature the former does not have. This enables us to define culture dynamically and organically: *it is the interaction or tension between man and his environment*. A community then becomes context-dependent upon a semiotic system and following Bourdieu¹³, each collectivity possesses a cultural capital, which can be transmitted by inheritance and invested in order to be cultivated. This defines the *habitus* of a culture as 'the system of modes of perception, of thinking, of appreciation and of action'. These features may take the form of either a religion or constitute a civil religion¹⁴ reinforcing in both cases ethnic identity.

This may signify the globalisation of specific or dominant cultural features but the diffusion of religions such as Buddhist, Christian, Islam did not conduce towards a universal culture meaning that these religions vary from region to another. This is because the culture of a particular society consists of three elements: ideas, semiotic forms, and values¹⁵ expressed through metaphors which are subjectively interpreted and so long as there are not made precise in a political thought, a culture has little chance to survive. From a structuralist viewpoint then a particular culture emerges from managing the construction of meaning in the abstract relation between the signifier culture and the signified relationship among individuals, which, unique in space and

¹⁰ A. Weeks, 'Do Civilisations Hold', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol72, No4, p25.

¹¹ C. Jenks, (1993), *Culture*, Routledge, p121.

¹² P. Shafer, 'Culture and Cosmos: the Role of Culture in the World of the Future', *Cultures*, VolVII, No2, p45.

¹³ Op cit. (note 10), p130, 0132.

¹⁴ Seen as the 'collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalised in a collectivity', R. Bellah, 'Civil Religion in America', *Culture and Society*, J. Alexander & S. Seidman (eds.) Cambridge University Press, p266.

¹⁵ P. Kirpal, 'Culture and Development – The Incipient Crisis', *Cultures*, VolVIII, No4, p86.

time, yield a variety of cultures. This plurality shows that culture is flexible and wide in scope to include many sectors and is present in relationships that involve people, the objects they create and their environment.

Furthermore, it serves as a value system thus becomes an ordering force that determines behaviour, an ideology, which is difficult to change¹⁶. This is because a political thought is qualified by a core concept and adjacent concepts which are either options to the core idea (logical adjacency), or those based on social practice (cultural adjacency). The latter relate to historical and geographical usage of ideas and language that may be either customary or innovative. Cultural adjacency avoids overloading the concept for it contains elements that do not follow logically from the indivisible components of the concept¹⁷. Moreover, political concepts acquire meaning not only by traditional discourse and cultural contexts, but also from their particular position within a configuration of other political concepts equally culturally determined. Culture is thus able to shape political outcomes because of the use of vehicles including cultural institutions, linguistic and symbolic practices, and cultural actors (with include at the institutional level religion, education, public organisations). Further, the presence or absence of national modes of communication, a shared idiom in which political ideas and rituals are articulated, in addition to disseminating and imposing explicitly or implicitly meanings into political methods of analysis¹⁸.

Thus far we have considered the relationship between communities and culture. Yet cultural capital may also be found on a larger scale, that of the state – a set of organisations headed and more or less well co-ordinated by a sovereign executive body – or civilisation, the actors of the system or cultural entities¹⁹. The condition for an actor to qualify as a cultural entity is to have a sense of cultural identity based on a common set of values largely moulded by the traditions of the past and the aspirations of the future. There is however a supplementary condition for the *habitus* of a state: to display cultural accommodation. Switzerland, for instance, has managed to integrate four different cultures within a sole system while giving them a certain degree of autonomy. Thus, one and the same political system may comprise a variety of culturally unique fields of thought and experiences. In the case of a civilisation, one cultural realm may consist of diverse political units. A word of caution, however. As it is noted in the following section, ‘civilisation’ does not imply the universality of values within it, only that there are common features not found in another civilisation²⁰. At this level, cultural ties are not the only one found: economic and political are equally present.

¹⁶ Ibid. pp37-46

¹⁷ Op cit. (note 7), pp151-154.

¹⁸ Op cit. (note 3), p92.

¹⁹ Op cit. (note 2b), p24.

²⁰ S. Huntington, ‘If not Civilisations, what?’ *Foreign Affairs*, Vol72, No5, p191.

In the struggle for survival, a cultural entity needs military power to ensure that its physical base is not threatened and economic power in the one that will enable it to prosper. If the latter is weak, the culture is under threat by other cultures that compete to safeguard their own identity or even attempt to promote it over other territorial boundaries.

C CIVILISATIONS

According to Huntington, the centrepiece of inter-national politics is the interaction between western and non-western civilisations, namely between western Catholic and Protestant, Islam, Buddhist, Confucian, Japanese (Shinto), Slavic-Orthodox, Hindu, Latin American and native American²¹. However, this classification has some difficulties especially in defining the *habitus* of Africa unless a further distinction is made to include some important local cultures. Moreover, civilisations are not the only cultural entities that have a determining impact on the inter-national area, but also other types. For instance, the US has played an important role in determining outcomes both as a state and as being part of the western civilisation, that is, operating with other western states through economic, trade and technological regimes. Finally, the bipolar classification between west and non-west tends to be ethnocentric (albeit practical) which tends to conceal the existing relationships and conflicts among non-western civilisations let alone those defining the western civilisations.

In order to give a clear picture of how the civilisations may interact, it is useful to briefly describe the *habitus* of each of these broad groupings²². 'Western civilisation' is characterised by individuation which determines the social and state structures, thus the fundamental rights, inclusive of the principle of religious tolerance²³ become meaningless unless an individual is considered to be important²⁴. The creation of the nation-state coincided with culture but not elsewhere thus the effect of importing such concepts to other civilisations has been proven to be damaging²⁵, which explains why western criminal and constitutional law are out of place in Islamic societies²⁶.

Within the 'non-western' grouping of civilisations, the main feature of Confucianism is the family, the ordering agency, wherein each member has specific rights and duties:

²¹ Op cit. (note2b), p23, p25.

²² Thus momentarily accepting Huntington's classification.

²³ A. Toynbee, (1951), *War and Civilisation*, Oxford University Press, pp6-7.

²⁴ A. Bozeman, 'The International Order in a Multicultural World', *The Expansion of International Society*, H. Bull & A. Watson (eds.), Clarendon Press, p390.

²⁵ A. Toynbee, (1952), *The World and the West*, Oxford University Press, p72.

²⁶ Op cit. (note 22), p401.

there is a conception of moral obligations rather than for individual liberties²⁷. The ensuing hierarchy is what keeps strong states in place while liberalising the economy, which is a resistance to the influence of western democracy for it is perceived as a threat to this culture²⁸. In Japan there is the reaffirmation of Shinto religious beliefs as the ultimate norm-setting principles of identity in policies and culture²⁹. Hinduism is based on the caste system, which determines social structure and behaviour³⁰. In Islam, religion, which supports the community and the individual, forms an integral part of the social domain and the state that acts as a guarantor of the maintenance of language and culture.

To sum, we may say that western ideologies tend to be universalistic, humanistic and are fashioned by intellectuals whereas non-western ideologies are parochial, instrumental, and created by political leaders. Further, not only non-western civilisations have different *habiti* from one another, but also with the western civilisation and in their substantive content are incapable of integrating a system of inter-national order developed and institutionalised by western cultures. In terms of the relationships with the west, they have the choice to either be isolated or accept to join the west, or to balance the cultural power of the west.

D THE CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

Above was made the claim that the presence of various civilisations and a multitude of cultures is not conducive to constructing a world society. This is because, the status quo is likely to change where there is territorial non-coincidence between culture and a cultural entity, especially the state, thus according to Huntington, lead to, or resume, a clash between civilisations. The regions where this phenomenon can be observed constitute the fault between civilisations³¹.

The reasons Huntington has put forward³² for such a clash are the fundamental and enduring differences in the *habitus* of the civilisations. The interdependence of states, a relationship whereby the actions of one actor determine the actions of another, has intensified civilisation consciousness as there is an awareness of cultural similarities and differences. Economic development has diminished the role of the state thus creating a gap to be filled by alternative ideologies. The west, despite being the most powerful civilisation, militarily and economically, has not managed to create the drive to

²⁷ Ibid. p388.

²⁸ L. Binyan, 'Civilisation Crafting', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol7, No4, p20.

²⁹ Op cit. (note 22), p400.

³⁰ Op cit. (note 22), p388.

³¹ Op cit. (note 2b), p29.

³² Ibid. pp25-27.

unify other cultures. Finally, economic regionalism has enhanced the development of patterns of co-operation between adjacent cultures.

However, the clash may not only take place between civilisations but also between cultures, which is an enduring phenomenon.

The clash may lead to changing the status quo in the following ways. First, territory changes in order to expand the entity's physical base or to gain control over territory lost. An instance of this was Yugoslavia before the braking up. Second, shifts in the relative power of a culture thereby an attempt to gain access to decision-making centres as the case of the massacres between Tutsis and Hutus shows. Third, changes in social composition as in Kashmir or in certain parts of what was Yugoslavia. Fourth, changes in the state structure as it has happened in Haiti where an invasion was necessary to bring back democracy. Fifth, changes in alliances such as the call by Iran's president for co-operation with China and India to have the last word in international events³³. And last, changes in laws following a threat by another culture as it is taking place in Europe where immigration policies are tightening.

The outcome of the clash between cultures, and civilisations in consequence, depends on their position in the inter-national arena, in other words, whether they are dominant a culture or not. It is modernisation, the process by which any actor attempts to substitute past forms of economic, social, legal, and political arrangements for a novel framework that enhances contacts between cultures³⁴, and this contact transforms them. This is because the attempt to occupy a dominant position and thereby further an ideology leads to the strengthening of other cultures who perceive the threat and act in opposition, resulting on the one hand, in economic, political, and social transformations and on the other, ideological, and cultural transformations³⁵.

In other words, a dominant culture that manages to penetrate other civilisations with technology and religion by dividing and containing the social space thus enforcing a vision and order, do not actually manage to transform the values in their entirety. To be entirely successful, all the elements of the host *habitus* need to be transformed. But when the elements of the dominant *habitus* cannot find a corresponding element of the host *habitus*, the latter is disengaged from the system³⁶ thus creating a gap, the opportunity for the subdued culture to strengthen its culture and find a voice in the inter-national arena.

³³ Op cit. (note 19), p188.

³⁴ M. Malitza, 'Culture and the New Order: a Pattern of Integration', *Cultures*, VolIII, No4, p102.

³⁵ J. Cueva-Jaramillo, 'Ethnocentrism and Cultural Conflicts: The Anthropology of Acculturation', *Cultures*, VolIV, No3, pp25-27.

³⁶ Op cit. (note 23), pp66-70.

E THE STATE AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS

The motive for a state includes universal values, namely deprivations of prestige, the loss of power relative to other states, income, safekeeping its physical base and economic opportunities. Within the culture paradigm put forward here, the state is no longer viewed as belonging to an ideologically defined camp but to a culturally-defined one which determines the form the state takes.

From a historical viewpoint, great non-western civilisations have been despotisms, not legislating empires which explains why western democratic forms based on the individual cannot possibly – whether volitionally or culturally - take root in such cultures despite economic development. It is difficult to perceive what form non-western states can take since the majority are still in the process of transformation. However, the general trend is to find a compromise between the values that enhance economic development and traditional values. Saudi Arabia, for instance, has managed to fashion a relationship of mutual trust between the governing royal house, the religious authorities, and the public without undermining tradition³⁷. This is not the case in the west where despite the common features of liberal democracies, both interests and idiosyncratic values depend on their culture³⁸.

The state of non-western cultures is therefore faced with a dilemma, namely, to follow economic development where continued progress depends on a gradual accommodation with democracy based on western thought which is still dominant, or to follow a culturally-determined collective choice reinforced by the state. Should the status quo change, the state will consort with any civilisation, however alien it may be so long as the price is right and the goods ready³⁹. In torn countries along the fault lines of civilisations the situation is different: the state has to accommodate all cultural aspirations or otherwise it is doomed to perish. To avoid such a situation, a civilisation identity needs to be redefined by finding support from both the state and the economic sector, and from a public that is willing to follow the proposals on condition that dominant groups are equally willing to sponsor such actions.

Yet, an important part in determining the form of the state is its bureaucracy. Bureaucratic organisations in the economic sector (profit organisations) are governed by rational action, whereas those in the institutional sector (government) are governed

³⁷ Ibid. p402.

³⁸ R. Dore, 'Unity and Diversity in World Culture', *ibid.* p410.

³⁹ F. Ajami, 'The Summoning', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol72, No4, p6.

by cultural norms⁴⁰. Since a bureaucracy is to a certain extent autonomous and its 'purpose is its own teleology, simply to survive'⁴¹, institutional organisations are those which transmit the *habitus* of a culture. Therefore, decision-making, which, in a way is not independent from bureaucratic practice, is also value-laden and since culture offers an integrative potential, it allows the creation of an integrated framework for decision-making⁴². And in cases where state management is ineffective, it is the democratisation of culture, thereby maintaining a pluralism of cultures within a single territory, that can minimise the chances a culture to become dominant⁴³.

F THE STATE AND CIVILISATION RELATIONSHIPS

The state is enmeshed in relationships that can either be conflictual or along patterns of co-operation. At the micro level, we can see conflicts and shifting power balances of states from one civilisation to another, whereas at the macro level conflicts between states and groups from different civilisations⁴⁴.

Micro political processes are characterised by what Greenway has called the kin-country syndrome⁴⁵: the recognition of a cultural alter ego hence rallying support from other members of the same civilisation because an increase in fellow-feeling does enhance the propensity to perceive shared interests⁴⁶. Thus, ethnic groups may conflict depending on the measure of their integration, the measure by which a culture is transfigured, in order to gain comparative advantage over another. On the other hand, the Swiss example shows that it is not imperative to unify a nation's customs in order to guarantee cohesion; on the contrary, seeking this unity may spark conflicts⁴⁷.

On a larger scale, patterns of co-operation and conflict may take place along the fault lines of civilisations: places where there is state dismemberment thus competition for the dominance of one culture. Conflicts are exacerbated by differences in values when the differences are not accurately perceived⁴⁸. Moreover, *it is not the cultural differences themselves that are the cause for conflict but failure to explain the reasons*

⁴⁰ F. Dobbin, 'Cultural Models of Organisations: The Social Construction of Rational Organising Principles', op cit. (note 3), p126.

⁴¹ Op cit (note 5), p307.

⁴² op cit. (note 11), p41.

⁴³ Ibid. p44, p57.

⁴⁴ Op cit. (note 18), p187.

⁴⁵ Quoted in op cit. (note 2b), p35.

⁴⁶ Op cit. (note 36), p414.

⁴⁷ E. de Montmollin, 'Switzerland: Cultural Pluralism and the Modern State', *Cultures*, VolIII, No3, p165.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p409.

behind these differences. Cultural co-operation depends on the value attached to culture by those who need to co-operate⁴⁹ as it is happening in the Middle East.

In contrast Ajami claims from a realist viewpoint that battle lines are not coextensive with civilisational fault lines. The lines follow interests of states: states control civilisations. Thus, the Gulf War was not a battle of civilisations but to restore local balance of power⁵⁰. However, one of the pretexts for war and especially for the occupation of the Kuwaiti territory was the historical different that progressively became part of the Kuwaiti and Iraqi *habiti*. Culture exacerbated economic and state interests.

Given the above-mentioned culture dilemma, the state is part of two webs of relationships: economic and cultural which are not necessarily the same. Considering NAFTA for instance, the economic co-operation between Canada, US, and Mexico, does not imply that they form a civilisation. From a cultural point of view, Mexico belongs to a different civilisation from its partners since a different tradition has shaped its social sphere, despite sharing a common religion with its partners. Thus, some of the disagreements that may arise within NAFTA may be due to cultural dissimilarities and perceptions of economic interests.

Unlike NAFTA, since economic relations are bound to continue, the choice of an economic partner may be determined by culture and not exclusively on the basis of business since it is culture that determines business practice. This is the case with ASEAN, with the exception maybe of Indonesia with is a torn country where economic conflict is exacerbated by a cultural conflict. These cases show, and are confirmed by a number of studies, that organisations and industries are structured similarly within nations but take different forms across nations. These differences are not due to disruptions of the market but to cultural patterns generating different state apparatuses and approaches to economic organisation⁵¹.

Co-operation and conflict may also take place at the regional level where cultural complexes, cultural entities composed by a certain number of states without constituting a civilisation, may arise where tensions are located on regional fault lines. Within these complexes we may also see core-periphery relationships such as that between Russia and the current members of union. However, local differences can be an obstacle to uniting people under the civilisation banner as the differences between Algeria and Morocco show, and if this pressure is too strong a clash may follow. This means that fault lines are shifting.

⁴⁹ Op cit (note 13), p87.

⁵⁰ Op cit. (note 37), pp8-9.

⁵¹ M. Orru et al, quoted in op cit. (note 38), p136.

The above show that economic relationships shape political relationships since a sound economic base is necessary to support a civilisation otherwise it leads to a rise of an opposing culture. Yet, from a macro viewpoint, economic relationships are based on the *habiti* of civilisations.

It seems unlikely to see the formation of global organisations based on civilisation principles. However, the attempts made by the UN in promoting all the cultures on an equal basis⁵² tend to create a sense of global culture, or as the dominant discourse now has it, an international community. Further, there is a convergence of cultures because there is the tendency to organise societies effectively⁵³ which may be attributed to the increased participation in regimes and hence an awareness of similarities. Yet the greater the contact between cultures, the greater the awareness of differences and the greater the alienation of non-dominant cultures, which leads to an opposition to western concepts within the UN and other regimes.

Thus, the general ideology of an international society is made up of influences which emanate from each cultural entity, keeping the anarchic structure well in place, rather than from the economic requirements and market structure which are the expression of one particular civilisation. In this multicultural world issues are inter-civilisational which have replaced inter-superpower issues such as arms proliferation, human rights, and immigration⁵⁴. The attempt to solve such issues from a cultural viewpoint may lead to laying the foundations for a world federation of cultures⁵⁵, or civilisations, since the *habitus* induces tolerance and at the same time an increase in cultural awareness.

G THE PARADIGM AT WORK

Prior to considering how the paradigm may account for pattern of social behaviour, it is worth mentioning that it is the culturally and economically strong cultural entities that can have a hegemonic position. It is a different position from having a dominant position in that, following Laitin's definition of hegemony⁵⁶, the hegemon is able to control the transnational activities, culturally determined, the dominant culture cannot. However, dominant cultures within a civilisation or cultural complex may assume the role of

⁵² UNESCO 1966: Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation, op cit. (note 13), pp178-181.

⁵³ Op cit. (note 36)

⁵⁴ Op cit. (note 36), p415.

⁵⁵ Op cit. (note 11), p52.

⁵⁶ The political forging – whether through coercion or elite bargaining – and institutionalisation of a pattern of group activity in a state and the concurrent idealisation of that scheme into a dominant symbolic framework that reigns as common sense, quoted in op cit. (note 3), p101.

hegemonic poles and others, dependent peripheries⁵⁷. The US, for instance, has managed to implement its cultural features in more than twenty states⁵⁸, a phenomenon barely seen with Islamic cultural resurgence. Yet, the latter has managed to influence the social direction in some states of the Islamic civilisation. Cultural implementation comes about by the control of technology through large investments and research and development by the hegemon. The resulting cultural domination gives the hegemon access to cultural channels of communication where the construction of a taken-for-granted aspect of society takes place, thereby constructing a hegemonic *habitus*. This is the advantage hegemonic states are likely to get from building interdependent links with weaker states. However, despite the west using its civilisational elements for its own advantage, its culture has acted at a superficial level only⁵⁹. It is at the deeper levels that cultural changes take place but as the Iranian revolution shows when people realised that they were seduced by west's culture, a hegemon can rarely affect such deep-rooted cultural ties.

Let us now consider the Caucasian region to use the paradigm. Each of the ten states in the region has a cultural capital. Yet, it is Russia that influences the decision-making centres since the region is the Russian breadbasket. Should Russia want to maintain its dominance, it needs to accommodate the other cultures within a comprehensive framework without transfiguring them. This can be achieved by controlling the communication channels among the centres. Otherwise, in each centre, the *habitus* of each cultural capital may be transformed into political thought, therefore into an ideology whose aim is to gain control over institutional organisations and control the channels of communication. And since alien laws not rooted in convictions and customs are not accepted, the result is the consolidation of an ethnic identity thereby leading to tensions with the dominant culture of the hegemon, and the minorities. Hence Russia risks losing control over a vital area for necessities⁶⁰. We can therefore appreciate the efforts made by a dominant culture in maintaining its hegemonic position to the extent of waging war, while other cultures fight to create or maintain their own identity, as the current situation in Ukraine shows. In this situation, the region constitutes a civilisation's fault and the states involved are culturally torn.

H CONCLUSION

As an overall conclusion we may say that culture has always been the determinant of social behaviour whether this be at the individual, state, regional or inter-national levels

⁵⁷ Op cit. (note 33), p22.

⁵⁸ *The New State of the World Atlas*, Simon & Schuster, 1991, pp76-77.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p100.

⁶⁰ *The Economist*, August 6th, 1994, p23.

because it has had the ability to unite the individual and one's context⁶¹. It is the terrain upon which resistance takes place but that which is bounded by prevailing ideologies and hegemonies.

Modernisation as technical and digital evolution has developed an awareness of the *habitus* of each cultural entity and furthermore, has shown the importance of preserving the cultural capital while bringing a multitude of cultures in contact for a further understanding and subsequently, their co-existence. However, the latter does not necessarily lead to acceptance of another *habitus* and depending on the way the differences are perceived, may lead to upsetting their co-existence.

Culture constitutes the fundamental form of power characterising society whose expression varies according to the changes in the environment of each individual. And since each individual person is part of the inter-national realm, variations of perceptions, values and beliefs are conducive to changing the patterns of co-operation and conflict, thus understanding a culture may prove to be helpful to broadly predict the movements of the actors in the international domain.

⁶¹ As I mention it in other texts: culture is a manner of thinking and doing.