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TAMAR PATARAIA, AND TODOR TAGAREV

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Leadership in the Defense and Security Sector in the 21st Century

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Abstract: This editorial article introduces the reader to the rationale for revisiting the subject of leadership in the defense and security sector, highlights the challenges of analyzing the topic during the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine, and then presents the content of this special issue of *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*. The contributors address diverse topics, such as the elicitation of desired leadership traits on the basis of the curricula of selected courses of the NATO School Oberammergau, the experience of China in introducing Western leadership concepts in the education and training of future military leaders, the experience of Ukraine in leading the enhancement of human resource management in the ministry of defense as part of the capabilities-based planning process, and the dangers for Ukraine in falling into the trap of authoritarian leadership during the current war with Russia. Three additional articles examine the interconnections between leadership in communication, respectively, in Hungary's law enforcement organizations, the impact on organizational design, and the role of strategic narratives in Taiwan's soft power and its positioning in the Indo-Pacific region.

Keywords: NATO School Oberammergau, China military leadership, human resource management, capabilities-based defense planning, culture, Hofstede, Taiwan, Indo-Pacific, authoritarianism, neo-authoritarianism, Russia-Ukraine war

Leadership is the art of dealing with people.

When the call for articles for this special issue on leadership in the 21st century was sent out, personalized leadership seemed to be out of fashion and on the decline. The world seemed to be ruled by a networked International Organization, and this, again, including NATO, seemed to function like a well-oiled machine, with people at the various helms playing the roles of figureheads more than leaders in a classical fashion. And these well-paid positions could now be filled equitably with all the representatives of the human zoo.

Many of yesterday's wisdoms in the defense and security field seemed obsolete. The old guard of arms control experts on all sides was gone and had not been replaced, and so were Cold War-experienced NATOans and first-generation EU politicians. Institutions once leading in the global security domain like the SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) and the GCSP (Geneva Centre for Security Policy) apparently no longer felt a need to invest much into the analysis of "hard" security, as the network, the globalized market, and the International Organization seemed to be taking care of security—like an invisible hand—as well. In the wake of globalization, authoritarians (some of them coldly charismatic) mingled freely with leading figures of the free world, the boundaries of the free and the unfree world having become blurred. The democracy project lost attraction and steam.

In the meantime, the voluntarily myopic and conditioned helpless have been called to order by Mr. V.V.Putin, and history as told by him, and written in blood and ashes. Mr. Putin wanted a reordering of the international system, and a re-ordering of the international system he will obtain.

This special issue looks at leadership in different spheres of life. It is the first in what could likely become a series of reflections on leadership. It is thus by no means comprehensive nor aspires to completeness. It is rather like the proverbial stone thrown into to water to see what ripples and waves it may create and reflects the different interests and specializations of the contributors. While the original intention of the editors had been to encourage contributions from the Euro-Atlantic defense and security community, articles now reflect research from a much wider defense and security theater.

At the time of the publication of this special issue, Russia's President Putin decided to invade Ukraine and bring death and destruction to a country that was just about to overcome its post-Soviet legacy of hesitant nation-building, lagging transparency, and an oligarch-controlled economy. And create credible welfare for its people, and that therefore posed a challenge to Putin's Russia, whose fossil energy-based economy is in decline. No amount of intervention in neighboring countries, last in the Caucasus, Kazakhstan, and on behalf of the self-declared

President of Belarus can divert from the fact that Mr. Putin is a “failed leader,”¹ having turned to repression, fearmongering, and deception to hold his faltering empire together.

As both the Belarussian and the Ukrainian electorate, re-enforced by a whole generation growing up after the Soviet Union collapsed and therefore unaware of the joys of Soviet life under Moscow’s tutelage, had turned their back on Mr. Putin’s and Belarussian self-declared president Lukashenko’s unattractive backward-looking model of statehood, coercion, and now *overt war and wanton destruction of lives and livelihoods* seemed the only solution of bringing the two nations back into the fold. Not for want of trying to apply different “technologies” of power: establishing a degree of control via cyber-operations, organized separatism with ensuing occupation and massive confiscation of real estate, and frozen conflicts that could be unfrozen at any given moment.

And, as it turns out, not even a well-planned war. Or a “special military operation,” as both Russia and the UN would like us to call it (and believe). In a “special operation,” it would seem, neither the Geneva Conventions nor the Declaration of Human Rights apply.

* * *

This special issue looks at aspects of leadership from different domains. In “Selective Leadership Expectations in a Multinational Force Context Examined through NATO Training,” Prof. Glen Segell (University of the Free State, South Africa) examines selective NATO leadership expectations as defined by rank and associated training for that rank. The methodology uses five courses offered by the NATO School Oberammergau to determine these expectations in the specific areas of the content for the specific rank, and so too, the value added of the training and its content. The article’s contribution to the study of NATO leadership in the 21st century is to show that even in the age of hybrid and IT-based warfare, there remains—both in theory and practice—the same set of morals, values, and ideologues upon which NATO was formed on April 4, 1949, and so too leadership expectations. These are reflected in the course content.

Andras Hugiik, in “Leadership Theories and Defense Reform in the People’s Republic of China,” looks at the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as currently a hybrid social system which ideologically has retained the core values of Marxist doctrine which, unlike its predecessors, is able to adapt and innovate in response to changing circumstances. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is considering the application of some Western leadership principles not typically associated with the military. Using indirect Chinese, Russian, American and Hungarian sources, the article aims to present contemporary Chinese socialism, analyze the impact

¹ Janusz Bugajski, “Vladimir Putin is a failed leader,” *Washington Examiner*, February 10, 2022, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/vladimir-putin-is-a-failed-leader>.

of political, social, economic, and defense reforms and the significance of leadership in China's development, to describe Western and Chinese civil and military theories of leadership, and outline China's development prospects.

Olena Holota and Oleksandr Tytkovskyi, in "Leadership in Developing a Strategy for Military Human Resource Management as Part of Capabilities-Based Defense Planning," investigate what strategic leader's attributes, such as qualities, capabilities, and behaviors matter for the development and implementation of the military human resource management's strategy throughout the capabilities-based defense planning process.

István Kovács (Budapest), in "Hofstede's Power Distance Matrix: Law Enforcement Leadership Theory and Communication," refers to his professional experience of integrating the dimensions of Hofstede and colleagues with respect to managerial communication into an environment based on other cultural and ethical foundations. His research findings would seem to make it worth considering the extent to which the six dimensions set up by Hofstede could improve law enforcement if they were incorporated into leadership awareness during leadership training.

In "The Impact of Organizational Design and Leadership on Strategic Communications," Amber Evans evaluates the current state and potential of strategic communications in a variety of organizations and how it is impacted by their particular structures and leadership or management styles. There is often a mismatch, she argues, between the desired end state and the actual outcome of strategic communications that is directly attributable to an organizational structure that is ill-suited to the operating environment. She goes on to suggest alternative organizational design structures, particularly for governmental agencies, which might improve the impact of their communications.

Yuan-Ming Chiao, in "Chains, Continuums, and Virtuous Cycles: Parsing Taiwan's Strategic Narratives and Soft Power Leadership in the Indo-Pacific," looks at Taiwan's international profile following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in late 2019. Taiwan's public diplomatic campaign in distributing then-depleted stocks of facemasks provided a degree of international solidarity in a growing atmosphere of economic nationalism. Its government-led strategy of preventative measures that kept normalcy on the island while large swaths of the world entered restrictive lockdowns also became a model of resilient public health policies and trust in government directives. Capitalizing on these developments, Taiwan's soft power approach toward its constrained international profile took on new prominence as it seeks to leverage its technological leadership in the context of disrupted, vulnerable global supply chains. The article analyzes Taiwan's strategic narratives as it has led efforts to conceptualize an arena of increased great power contestation in the Indo-Pacific region.

In "Neo-Authoritarianism and Leadership: Outcomes for Modern Ukraine," Anna Kovalenko provides research to argue that authoritarianism can be an intermediate step on the road to an established democracy or, alternatively, toward totalitarianism. The courses can also be reversed. Ukraine, she argues,

ought to pay careful attention to its political decisions in its current crisis to remain within the democratic paradigm and avoid transitioning to (neo-) authoritarianism.

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Selective Leadership Expectations in a Multinational Force Context Examined through NATO Training

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Abstract: Military personnel with leadership roles may be expected to require some additional specialist training to be more effective in the NATO context, given its multinational environment. That includes the command of forces not necessarily from their own country. To describe and evaluate such leadership expectations, this article examines NATO training and uncovers the expectations defined by the training. The analysis of five courses offered by the NATO School Oberammergau helps determine these expectations in the specific areas for specific ranks and the value-added of the training and its content. For example, non-commissioned officers with ranks OR-4/OR-5 are expected to lead in interoperability, OR-6/OR-7 in rules of engagement, combating trafficking in human beings and tackling organized crime, and OR-8/OR-9 in international ethics and law of armed conflict. Commissioned officers with ranks OF-4/OF-9 are expected to lead in integrity-building and anti-corruption activities. Between 2015 and 2021, there have been a total of 1 555 trainees on these five courses that, given their ranks, could mean that they would be leading over 85 000 subordinates in deployment.

Keywords: Leadership, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, non-commissioned officer, commissioned officer, training, NATO School Oberammergau.

Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has 30 member countries and another 20 partner countries. Both on national and multinational levels of joint

operations, the training of forces is undertaken to prepare them for any assigned mission or task. It is to be expected that ranks with leadership roles will require some additional specialist training to be more effective in the NATO context, given its multinational environment. Namely the command of forces that are not necessarily from their own country. In order to describe and evaluate such leadership expectations, it is the purpose of this article to examine some selective NATO training courses that prepare for leadership in a multinational environment.

By examining the courses, the goal is to demonstrate whether the leadership philosophy as demonstrated by leadership expectations in these courses is coherent and/or to understand NATO's leadership expectations better as applied to different hierarchical levels and specialties. The methodology is to pull from them what is implicit or explicit in their regimen of courses.

Applicable conceptually to appreciating any military leadership training in a multinational context is a comment by the Duke of Wellington, who was commander in chief of the British and allied armies at Waterloo against Napoleon when he visited Eton College near Windsor Castle in 1856, of which he was a graduate. He reputedly said, "It is here that the battle of Waterloo was won!"¹

In the context of the allied force composition of the time, he might well have meant that the games and sports at British colleges developed those qualities in men that made them good military leaders. To be sure, many sports merely mimic warfare. Indeed, leadership through instruction and by example on the sports field starting at a young age, in team-building and functioning, is conceptually no different from that on the battlefield. Trust is a two-way street and an integral element of leading and following, seen most frequently in discipline and cohesion with every team sportsperson and soldier at every rank when they are geared towards the same goal.

Building upon the rationale of Wellington's "same goal" notion in the context of NATO's multinational environment, this article will examine five NATO training courses. This is in the context of the definitions of leadership from the Oxford English Dictionary. In doing so, insight is provided on selective NATO leadership expectations at different ranks indicative of this training. The content of the training is intended to add value to other trainings that might be provided by other NATO and national courses. It adds value to leadership expectations both in the multinational force context and the specific content areas of each course.

The NATO School located at Oberammergau, Germany (NSO), offers the five courses examined here. There are many more courses and schools that provide training in each member state and in NATO.² NSO and these courses have been selected because, after a comprehensive evaluation, the author of this article

¹ Neville Thompson, *Wellington after Waterloo* (London: Routledge, 2016), 4.

² NATO School Oberammergau (NSO), "Course Catalogue," accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.natoschool.nato.int/Academics/Portfolio/Course-Catalogue>.

found them to represent a common thread. It is fair to say that the content reflects the values, morals, and ideology that NATO and its member states wish to adhere to and, if necessary, fight for. This justifies their use as the methodological means to examine the selective NATO leadership expectations as defined by rank and the associated training for that rank.

A caveat is that national promotion systems vary; therefore, measuring the military member's time-in-grade, time-in-service, age and maturity, and the mission objectives when being sent for NATO training is to ensure equity and efficiency gained from any training. There are 30 NATO member states, and in each of these soldiers may have different roles and leadership expectations. For example, NATO NSO defines NCO ranks as OR-1 to OR-9 that in the American Army would be E-1 to E-9, or in the British Army, that would be from Lance-Corporal to Warrant Officer Class 1. For example, the ranks OR-1 through OR-3 are the basic entry ranks into the military structure. Personnel is expected to uphold national standards of conduct and follow supervisors' orders and regulations. In the American and British Army, these are known as Private to Lance-Corporal.³

Three of the courses that this article uses are offered to NATO/partner military personnel at the non-commissioned officer (NCO) rank level OR-4 to OR-9, that in the American and British Armies would be from Corporal to Warrant Officer First or Second Class / Sergeant Major / Command Sergeant Major / and various grades of these.⁴ The three courses are NCO Orientation Course, M1-82 (NCO Intermediate Leadership Course), and M1-95 (Advanced Leadership Course).

Most of the trainees on these would be of a young age and/or new soldiers in their country's armed forces. Within Wellington's rationale, such training might be more significant than for higher ranks since what is gained through learning, experience, and delegation at a young age can be built upon in later years and in different settings. Indeed, when leadership, following, and esprit-de-corps are established at the youngest of ages, for example, through such courses, then there is a greater potential for more experience and exposure over a longer period and a better potential for victory.

Progressively higher ranks and/or older soldiers would be trained in more specialized aspects of soldiering and issues such as rules of engagement and the laws of war. Therefore, this article will examine one course offered to higher officer ranks of OF-4 to OF-9 (Lieutenant-Colonel to General) or civilian equivalent.⁵ That course is M8-103 (Defence Leadership in Building Integrity). Further, it will examine how lessons learned from all four courses can be applied in specialist leadership, for example, from the training offered in M2-00 (Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Course).

³ US Army, "US Army Ranks," accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.army.mil/ranks>.

⁴ NATO, "NATO Codes for Grades of Military Personnel, STANAG 2116" (Brussels, Belgium: NATO, January 2021).

⁵ NATO, "NATO Codes for Grades of Military Personnel."

While all these trainings could be undertaken within each member state, the rationale and justification for NATO NSO training is to prepare trainees for leadership in a joint and combined military environment that would transpire in any NATO deployment. Further, through NATO NSO training, there is a potential value added from the human networking and bonding of the trainees from different countries, to be applied when serving together for many years and evolving to emerge in deployment and mission success. To place such training in the context of leadership expectations, this article proceeds in the next section by providing “Definitions and rationale,” followed by a section on the pedagogy of leadership training in NATO.

Definitions and Rationale

In broad terms, the NSO provides education and training in support of current and foreseen NATO operations, strategy, policy, doctrine, and procedures. That is to meet the organization’s overriding mission, values, and ideology and its member states. Courses are offered for different duration for different ranks, some residential and some online. Some of these are to personnel at the NCO rank level. The definition of the rank of NCO by the Oxford English Dictionary is a member of the armed forces who has achieved the rank of officer by rising from the lower ranks rather than by receiving a commission. It is an enlisted soldier generally appointed to supervise other enlisted soldiers and to aid the commissioned officer corps.⁶

Such selection and appointment could be based upon observations and evaluations of individuals’ leadership qualities and characteristics within their units and daily interactions with other soldiers. Within the context of this definition falls a justifiable rationale for NATO to train those selected and appointed to leadership positions in their own countries. Such training could also teach specialist content beyond that of nationally oriented combat soldiering, enabling them to make valid leadership decisions, issue orders, and lead by example in a multinational environment such as NATO. NATO refers to them as its backbone because they also maintain discipline, enforce standards, and communicate where leadership expectations of NCOs also include duties such as training, recruiting, technical, or military policing. NCOs are responsible to commissioned officers, i.e., their command or management level. Commissioned officers give NCOs and lower ranks their missions, assignments, and orders.⁷

In theory and practice, the NCOs are followed by others of lower rank and so, by definition, lead them. This falls within the context of the definition of leadership given by the Oxford English Dictionary, which defines leadership as a process

⁶ Oxford University, *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁷ Laura A. Ford et al., *21st Century Soldiers and Non-Commissioned Officers: Critical Predictors of Performance*, Technical Report No. 1102 (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, May 2000), <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA380044.pdf>, 45-50.

of social influence that maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal; the quality or ability that makes a person a leader, or the position of being a leader; the person or people who are in charge or who take charge in the absence of anyone else; it can exist in both formal and informal groups and settings, is evident when others follow, and encompasses the ability of an individual, group, or organization to lead.⁸

It is fair to say then that an integral part of any military leadership training, and so too in NATO, is to identify and define for trainees what leadership means in theory and practice, where the aforementioned conceptual definitions and rationale can be a framework for any training course syllabus. The goal of the training would be for the trainee to be able to apply the lessons learned when they are deployed—be it in combat or a non-combatant environment—for example, in peace-oriented or humanitarian missions and civil emergencies. These have increasingly become NATO's missions since the end of the Cold War in 1990. The NATO training is thereby aimed to empower the trainee to be more able and capable in leadership roles and positions.⁹

To place such definitions and rationale in context, this article examines selective NATO leadership expectations as defined by rank and associated training for that rank in the section "The pedagogy of leadership training in NATO" below. Thereafter, there are separate sections on the five NSO courses entitled: The NSO M5-33 (NCO Orientation Course), The NSO M1-82 (NCO Intermediate Leadership Course), The NSO M1-95 (Advanced Leadership Course), The NSO M8-103 (Defence Leadership in Building Integrity Course), and Empowering leadership through specialist training.

The Pedagogy of Leadership Training in NATO

As NATO has 30 member states with varying civil-military relations between governments, parliaments, society, citizens, and soldiers, it is expected that there will be different decision-making and implementation procedures and differences in leadership expectations for different ranks. Further, given different languages and national procedures, there is a need to ensure NATO interoperability. This is entrusted to NATO training in addition to that of the member states.

While there are differences, there are also commonalities. It would be fair to say that leadership is a daily function in all NATO member states and their military. Decisions are taken, and people follow others. As in each member state's civil-military relations, NATO also has both a military and a civilian organizational structure. These are both pyramid structures with one person at the apex who has the authority, and the associated legitimacy is the leadership. This is delegated, so there are also leaders and followers at every level below the apex. At

⁸ Oxford University, *Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁹ Jeffrey J. Horey et al., *Competency Based Future Leadership Requirements*, Technical Report No. 1148 (Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, July 2004), 12-13.

all these levels, even at the lowest one, where all may hold the same basic initial rank, there is still a person who others may follow, be it by virtue of his/her setting an example or through experience.¹⁰

There are other commonalities. NATO training is expected to go beyond just interoperability in deployment and suggest specific leadership content applicable to each rank. Integral to empowerment through training is the planning and preparation that goes into the course syllabus to ensure critical analysis and questioning are at the forefront. Thus, the pedagogy of any training would need to be more than reading material and being lectured.

The first step of any leadership training is the training of the trainers. In NSO, this is an ongoing iterative process. First, there is internal training of trainers where the NSO delivers a “Professional Development” session every week to all staff members. The lectures vary from how to develop online courses and produce visual media to the inclusion of social media in the teaching process and which tools are most appropriate.¹¹

Based on their own training and the content of the course, the trainers determine what leadership means in the context of the course topic. In each of the five courses examined in this article, they determine what leadership means within the context of the course topic. The pedagogy of residential courses has a mixed approach that could include background reading, frontal lectures with questions-and-answers time and PowerPoint presentations, interactive lectures, behavior modeling, problem-based learning (small group – syndicate work), role play, simulation (practical exercises/gaming), informal interaction such as games and sports and individual and group work based upon given scenarios. In addition, the NSO also prepares and offers courses online. Some of these are required e-modules before attending the residential classes. The syllabus and the pedagogy also evolve within the changing military environment and with feedback from trainees.¹²

There are also informal workshop-type environments where the trainee can, in a bottom-up approach, discuss their own experiences and compare them with others, for example, in the wars of today and tomorrow. Trainees are encouraged to lead discussions reflecting upon how their experiences, which in many instances are the front line of deployment and battlefield, can assist higher levels of leadership on reforms and innovation in the defense and security sector. And indeed, how this can be relayed to the higher hierarchy in the military command

¹⁰ Jeffrey G. Lofgren, “NATO Capability Development: Interoperability,” *The Three Swords Magazine*, no. 30 (2016): 12-15, accessed September 6, 2021, https://www.jwc.nato.int/images/stories/_news_items_/2016/LT_GEN_Lofgren_interview.pdf.

¹¹ NATO School Oberammergau, “Train the Trainers,” June 17, 2021, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.natoschool.nato.int/>.

¹² Jowati Juhary, “Understanding Military Pedagogy,” *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 186 (13 May 2015): 1255-1261, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.104>.

and political elites. Trainees could be expected to appraise and even reject syllabus content based upon their own applicable experiences of best practice if they can justify so doing.

The NSO M5-33 (NCO Orientation Course)¹³

To assist and further interoperability, NATO has defined equity in the NCO rank hierarchy across its member states. For example, OR-4 is the first level of leadership that in the American and British Armies would be a Corporal. Following this is OR-5, which is the level of leadership with the greatest impact on subordinate ranks. That in the American and British Armies would be a Sergeant.

The relevant course for OR-4 and OR-5 but also open to others up to OR-9 is the NSO M5-33 (NCO Orientation Course). It provides a foundation of knowledge of NATO. The course content covers NATO structure, policies, operations, and current issues affecting the alliance. It is a two-week residential course, and upon their return to their home countries or when deployed in a NATO unit, the graduates of this course are expected to lead by example on how to interoperate within NATO.

Graduates of this course at the OR-4 rank are expected to take the responsibility in leadership for the good order and discipline of lower ranks. Other tasks could include training, personal appearance, and the general welfare of their subordinate personnel. Graduates of this course at the OR-5 rank would be expected to practice leadership by example, demonstrating personal compliance with standards while enforcing those standards to ensure the good order and discipline, training, personal appearance, and general welfare of subordinate personnel. NCOs at OR-4 and OR-5 would be expected to be unquestionably competent to execute tasks correctly, exercise leadership, care for assigned personnel, and support mission accomplishment.

The NSO M1-82 Intermediate Leadership Course¹⁴

The NATO designated NCO rank OR-6 is the first of the NATO intermediate to senior NCO ranks. That in the American and British Armies would be a Sergeant or Staff Sergeant. The OR-6 is usually assigned in positions requiring increased responsibilities above that of the lower OR-5, for example, greater experience and leadership to shape his/her sphere of influence under all circumstances. It is important to note that some NATO member nations recognize the next rank OR-7 as their first senior NCO rank. That in the American and British Armies would be a Staff/Colour Sergeant or First/Master Sergeant.

¹³ NATO School Oberammergau, "M5-33 (NATO NCO Orientation Course)," accessed September 6, 2021, www.natoschool.nato.int/Academics/Resident-Courses/Course-Catalogue/Course-description?ID=34.

¹⁴ NATO School Oberammergau, "M1-82 (NATO NCO Intermediate Leadership Course in a Multinational Environment)," accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.natoschool.nato.int/Academics/eLearning/Course-Catalogue/Course-description?ID=82>.

The relevant leadership course for OR-6 and OR-7 but also open to others up to OR-9 is the two-week residential NSO M1-82 (NCO Intermediate Leadership Course). In an e-mail communication with the NSO on September 6, 2021, the author received information that from January 2015 to September 2021, 435 trainees from the different NATO member states took this course. These could then be leading over 8000 others.

The content covers, for example, two of many issues that NCOs of this rank may encounter – they need to lead their subordinates and provide advice to their seniors within the decision-making and the defense planning process in NATO. These are first “rules of engagement” (ROE) and secondly, “combating trafficking in human beings” (THB). For the former, trainees are taught the NATO organization and internal processes and given the relevant operational products. For the latter, they are taught NATO policy of combating THB, including child trafficking, and the impact of THB on NATO-led operations.

The leadership expectation takeaways from the course are for the NCO to recognize who is most at risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking and what can be done to identify victims and differentiate between traffickers and perpetrators. In addition, leadership expectations are to understand and implement principles and standards of behavior, including the impact on mission security for NATO-led forces within the broader issue of tackling organized crime that requires fundamental principles of investigation and good practices.

After the course, NCOs of the OR-6 and OR-7 ranks are expected to have the knowledge and leadership skills for key roles within the command structure on these issues. They could be expected to focus their increased knowledge and leadership on collective mission accomplishment and be responsible for managing large numbers of personnel and equipment effectively. In addition, at this level, they must be able to provide sound advice to their superiors.

The NSO M1-95 Advanced Leadership Course¹⁵

The highest designated NATO rank levels of NCOs are OR-8 and OR-9. That in the American and British Armies would be a Warrant Officer First or Second Class / Sergeant Major / Command Sergeant Major and various grades of these. The relevant leadership course for OR-8 and OR-9 is the two-week resident NSO M1-95 “Advanced Leadership Course.” In an e-mail communication with the NSO on September 6, 2021, the author was informed that from January 2015 to September 2021, 472 trainees from the different NATO member states participated in this course. These could then be leading over 23000 others.

The leadership expectation to graduates of the course—considered to be the senior NATO NCOs within the staff elements—is to be responsible for providing required professional development to other NCOs, to ensure proficiency and

¹⁵ NATO School Oberammergau, “M1-95 (NATO NCO Advanced Leadership in a Multinational Environment),” accessed September 6, 2021, www.natoschool.nato.int/Academics/Resident-Courses/Course-Catalogue/Course-description?ID=93.

professionalism with clear and concise inputs on work processes and standardization, and to be the link between staff elements to ensure smooth information flows.

The course provides advanced leadership skills, management abilities, and knowledge of NATO, intending to enable the NCO to apply these skills effectively in an international setting. One of the covered topics requiring the trainee to comprehend, apply, and lead therein is the “international ethics and law of armed conflict” (LOAC). One pedagogy approach to teaching this is to give trainee sources and then require the trainee to explain the myriad of leadership challenges and ethical dilemmas in NATO as they relate to multiracial, multicultural, and multi-gender forces. The OR-8 and OR-9 ranks would be expected to use the enhanced leadership skills gained in training to advise unit/element and higher commanders and mentor subordinates, coordinate and supervise training, monitor unit effectiveness, and uphold standards in LOAC.

Moreover, an example of leadership expectations of rank level OR-9, that is considered the most experienced senior NCO within the NATO structure, is to use LOAC knowledge gained from the course to serve as a role model for all NCOs, to ensure compliance with policies, and to provide oversight at the tactical, operational and strategic-level, supporting the force commander’s intent prior to and during NATO deployments.

At this rank, NCOs might also hold very senior advisory and leadership positions in their home military. So, the knowledge gained from the training could assist in relating NATO’s values, ethics, and ideologies that have remained consistent since the Alliance’s formation in 1949. For example, in the American military, there is a senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (SEAC), who is the most senior NCO overall in the United States Armed Forces. The SEAC is appointed by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to serve as a spokesperson to address the issues of enlisted personnel to the highest positions in the Department of Defense. That would make a graduate of this course one of the most influential LOAC advisors pre-deployment and during deployment of any national or NATO force, including peace and humanitarian missions.

The NSO M8-103 Defence Leadership in Building Integrity Course¹⁶

NSO residential courses and e-modules are not only for the NCO level. They are also offered for higher ranks. There are written guidelines for all military ranks and civilian employees. An example of written policies to empower leadership is the “NATO Bi-SC Strategy & Guidelines.”¹⁷ Sound knowledge of these is a prerequisite for the one-week residential NSO M8-103 “Defence Leadership in

¹⁶ NATO School Oberammergau, “M8-103 (NATO Defence Leadership In Building Integrity Course),” accessed September 6, 2021, www.natoschool.nato.int/Academics/Resident-Courses/Course-Catalogue/Course-description?ID=100.

¹⁷ NATO, “NATO Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) BI-Strategic Command Strategy and NCO Guidelines,” September 15, 2017, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://shape.nato.int/resources/site7234/General/NCO%20leadership/nato-non->

Building Integrity Course.” This is a course for senior NATO/partner military personnel at the OF-4 to OF-9 level or civilian equivalent. In the American and British Army, that is equivalent to Lieutenant-Colonel to General. In an e-mail communication with NSO, the author was informed that from January 2015 to September 2021, 446 officers and civilians participated in this course. These could then be leading the entire armed forces of their respective countries, totaling millions.

One of the covered topics requires the trainee to comprehend, apply and lead integrity-building and anti-corruption activities within national ministries and military organizations. Accordingly, the course pedagogy is designed to create an awareness of building integrity as a key element of defense and related security institution building, including the role of leadership and the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability in the management of defense resources.¹⁸

An example of this pedagogical approach is to give trainees scenarios to facilitate discussion. Given such scenarios, trainees need to demonstrate an understanding of different definitions and principles of the rule of law, its link with anti-corruption during facilitated discussion and exercises, to demonstrate an understanding of the roles and functions of major organizations (domestic and international) involved in anti-corruption activities and measures, to discuss personal conduct and conduct of officials and how this can be reinforced through clear ethical guidance. Trainees are expected to apply the knowledge gained to describe ways in which corruption might realistically be tackled in a home country and to contribute to practical change in their own institution.

Graduates of the course shall be aware and lead others in assessing the impact of corruption as a security risk, the importance of addressing this topic in all NATO plans and operations, and all phases of planning and implementation.

Empowering Leadership through Specialist Training

It is beyond the scope of this article to describe all training courses offered by NATO. Yet, a comprehensive evaluation of these, including the NSO courses examined in this article, points to significant content on the role of leadership in the syllabus and pedagogy. Therefore, it is fair to say that the rationale is that knowledge gained from the training empowers and enables leadership.

To examine such an assumption, this article also considers an example of specialist training – the one-week resident NSO M2-00 course on “Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare” open to the NCO ranks OR-4 to OR-9 and Officer ranks

commissioned-officer%20bi-strategic-command-strategy-and-nco-guidelines-nu-18sept17.pdf.

¹⁸ See, for example, Todor Tagarev, ed., *Building Integrity and Reducing Corruption in Defence: A Compendium of Best Practices* (Geneva/Brussels: NATO and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2010).

OF-1 to OF-5.¹⁹ From January 2015 to September 2021, 202 completed this course. These could then be leading over 7000 military personnel.

One covered topic requires the trainee to comprehend, apply and lead the collection of intelligence and analysis. The graduate is expected to lead subordinates and support more senior strategic and operational decision-makers regarding asymmetric warfare threats and environments. It might be tautological to state, but support to more senior decision makers infers that the latter will be following the lower ranked who are providing the support. In turn, the lower ranked would follow the decision makers' lead. Nevertheless, the takeaway is that the NSO training has empowered leadership without regard to hierarchical rank determination, but more so in the knowledge of topics of significance.

Other specialist training courses with practical leadership expectations are, for example, on the topics of nuclear deterrence, cyber, hybrid (robot, drone, AI-based, IT-based warfare), NATO enlargement, reform towards a more effective, efficient, and flexible alliance, and women, peace and security. Some of the pedagogical approaches in these courses are interactive plenary lectures, case studies, best practices, practical exercises, and discussions that amplify the course lectures.

Conclusion

This article describes and evaluates selective leadership expectations in the NATO multinational environment context. It applied the methodology of examining selected training courses offered at the NSO. In looking at the course content, selective leadership expectations were revealed as defined by the training for the specific ranks of the trainees.

The five courses have a common learning goal – the graduate should be empowered to lead, in peace and war, by command or by example, in a multinational force environment and the spirit of Wellington. That is to serve the “same goal” where forces being led are not necessarily from their own country. Further, it shows that the specific content of each training course adds value to other training that might have been provided by NATO or national training.

This course content and the respective specialist leadership knowledge were evident in the course content at the OR-4/OR-5 level and defined as being expected to lead in interoperability in joint and combined forces within NATO. At OR-6/OR-7 ranks, the focus is on rules of engagement and combating trafficking in human beings. The graduates of the latter course are also expected to lead others within the broader issue of tackling organized crime, which requires knowledge of fundamental investigation principles and good practices. The leadership expectations determined by the specific course content at the OR-8/OR-9 rank relate to the international ethics and law of armed conflict.

¹⁹ NATO School Oberammergau, “M2-00 (Intelligence Support to Irregular Warfare Course),” accessed September 6, 2021, <https://www.natoschool.nato.int/Academics/Resident-Courses/Course-Catalogue/Course-description?ID=1>.

Further, the leadership expectations determined by the specific course content at the commissioned officer ranks OF-4 to OF-9 or civilian equivalents is to lead in integrity building, apply anti-corruption activities within national ministries and military organizations, including principles of transparency and accountability in the management of defense resources, the impact of corruption as a security risk, and the importance of addressing its elements in all phases of planning and implementation.

Between 2015 and 2021, a total of 1555 trainees participated in these five courses. Given their ranks, they would be leading over 85 000 subordinates in deployment. A takeaway from the common content thread that permeates throughout all the courses is the goal to enable the graduates to lead their subordinates in the myriad of challenges and ethical dilemmas in NATO's multinational environment. These relate to a multiracial, multicultural, and multi-gender force, ensuring compliance with policies, adherence to standards and performance, providing oversight at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, and supporting the commander's intent.

Leadership is a process of social influence. The training provided adds value by aiming to assist those at all ranks to develop their cognitive awareness to engage in critical analysis. This could extend generically beyond the specific course content to implementing effectively other approaches, concepts, and tools like national and NATO down/rightsizing, NATO and national defense transformation, network-centric warfare, network-based operations, network-enabled capabilities, concepts development and experimentation, and capabilities-based planning.

Further research could build on the findings here to examine in a comparative perspective how non-NATO, for example, Russian and Chinese approaches to leadership expectations, differ from those of NATO and their training content (if such content is accessible). There could also be further research on the leadership of organizations that have been designated as "terrorist," that do not have the enduring values, morals, or ideologies that NATO has.

Disclaimer

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Leadership Theories and Defense Reform in the People's Republic of China

Andras Huguik

Abstract: The People's Republic of China (PRC) is currently a hybrid social system that ideologically has retained the core values of the Marxist doctrine, which, unlike its predecessors, can adapt and innovate in response to changing circumstances. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and public administration underwent a series of deep reforms that enabled them to become a facilitator rather than a hindrance to development. The meritocratic leader selection system known as "selection and election," consistent with the Confucian tradition and adopting some western leadership principles, played a significant role.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is also considering the application of Western leadership principles not typically associated with the military. However, no evidence exists that the PLA systematically seeks to apply these concepts. The PLA is likely to complete defense reform and enhance the combat capabilities of its strategic and new types of forces, establishing a high level of strategic deterrence and complex systems for conducting joint combined operations. Towards that end, PLA applies Western non-military leadership principles and a mission-oriented leadership model, considering Chinese specificity.

Based on indirect Chinese, Russian, American, and Hungarian sources, the article presents contemporary Chinese socialism, analyzes the impact of political, social, economic, and defense reforms and the significance of leadership on China's development, describes Western and Chinese leadership theories, and outlines China's development prospects.

On the future of the PRC, the author states that, unlike other communist parties that gained power with foreign help, the CCP is indigenous and has national roots. Therefore, it is unlikely to collapse due to mass discontent. More likely, the Party will continue to transform the country and itself in the coming years and continue its rule. It is conceivable, however, that this transformation will eventually lead to a top-down revolution that will gradually break down the foundations of socialism.

Keywords: socialism, reform, development, leadership theories, mission-oriented leadership, strategic deterrence, army, intelligence, combined operation, China.

Reform of Socialism in the People's Republic of China

China's Conception of Socialism

Chinese-style socialism is based on Marxist ideology but recognizes the prominent role of continuous technological development and innovation. Combining market approaches and a socialist model of state administration, the system prioritizes market processes in allocating resources, limiting the state's role in setting the main strategic guidelines, the appropriate design of the regulatory system, and the correction of market imperfections. In the case of China, we are currently witnessing a hybrid system that, ideologically, has retained the core values of Marxist doctrine but which, unlike its predecessors, can adapt and innovate in response to changing circumstances.

Deng Xiaoping developed the theory of Chinese socialism reform. Deng (1904-1997) was a dominant figure in the Chinese Communist Party from 1978 until his death. In carrying out reforms, he made the adoption of capitalist methods and opening up to capitalist states subject to specific conditions: CCP must stick to the socialist path of development, the dictatorship of the proletariat must be maintained, the leading role of the CCP must be preserved, and CCP must remain faithful to Marxism-Leninism and the teachings of Mao Zedong.

The idea of the three representations, formulated in 2000 by Secretary-General, Jiang Zemin, became a new component of the reform theory. This idea means that the Chinese Communist Party represents the interests of advanced productive forces, advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the vast majority of the Chinese people.

By the coming of the millennium, it had become clear that the private sector was driving China's growth. However, the party elite and propaganda remained ideologically hostile to capitalist forces at home and abroad. Jiang Zemin resolved the contradiction by adopting the idea of a new evolution of communism in 2002, supplementing the theory of reform, which also allowed capitalists to join the Party. An idea was needed to frame the Party's unbroken and hegemonic leadership. However, this should not paralyze modernization and would not reverse the reform process. In other words, it would drive reforms further.

Meanwhile, the idea of the three representations has been expanded with a scientific development approach, which according to the CCP's view, includes the aspirations of sustainable development, social welfare, and a harmoniously developing socialist society. Former Secretary-General Hu Jintao developed this theory.¹

¹ Editorial, "History of the Chinese Communist Party," *Liberty, the weekly newspaper of the Hungarian Workers Party XVI (XXIII)*, no. 26 (3 July 2021), https://hetila.punk.hu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021_26_szam.pdf. – in Hungarian.

By taking the ever-changing reform theory as a starting point, President and General Secretary Xi Jinping formulated the “Two Centenary Goals.” The first declared goal is to achieve a “moderately successful society in all respects,” which Xi hoped to accomplish in 2021 during the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. The second goal is to achieve a successful, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious socialist country,² which he timed to coincide with the centenary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Market mechanisms and private property have gained much ground in China since the late 1970s, unlike in any other socialist country. However, both the market and private ownership have their limits: state ownership has been maintained in key sectors (the banking sector being the most important) and state redistribution, guided by political logic, regularly overrides the logic of the market.³

The Impact of Administrative Reforms on Modernizing Management

After the death of Mao Zedong in the late 1970s, the Chinese public administration underwent a series of deeper reforms that enabled it to become a facilitator rather than a hindrance to development. The main elements of these reforms were accountability and the promotion of competition. Since the 1980s, the evaluation of local party functionaries and bureaucrats has been linked to achieving economic goals. Moreover, their political fate and salaries would be maintained only if the goals were achieved. The internal evaluation system led to accountability, and the system of numerical targets and financial incentives led to competition and creative solutions. This system made the bureaucracy interested in promoting progress and required the administration to engage with the public and businesses and experiment relatively freely with reform.

One of the best ways to get ahead is still through the Party and the bureaucracy. There is already a lot of competition for positions at the lowest levels, and only the best can get into the Party's top ranks and the bureaucracy. For instance, the Chinese administrative entrance exams are notoriously difficult.

At the lowest municipal level (within limits), the institution of elections has been introduced: the leadership of the lowest local government bodies (controlled by the state party) is elected by direct ballot. The members of organs of the other levels of power are delegated by the “people's assemblies” of the level below – the provincial people's assembly by the county people's assemblies, the national people's assembly (highest legislature body) by the provincial people's

² Balla Soma, “The Next Possible Ruler of the World: Xi Jinping's China,” *Qubit*, March 29, 2019, <https://qubit.hu/2019/03/29/a-vilag-kovetkezo-lehetseges-ura-hszi-csinping-kinaja>. – in Hungarian.

³ Iván Szelényi, “What Kind of System Was Communism?” *Economy and Society*, December 2016, <https://ujegyenloseg.hu/milyen-rendszer-volt-a-kommunizmus/>. – in Hungarian.

assemblies. Partly for this reason, proponents of the Chinese political system often claim that meritocracy extends to the top leadership. Only those who have climbed the donkey's ladder can be members of the central organs of power.⁴

Local leaders communicate with people and listen to them. Middle managers, selected from among local leaders, carry out their work based on top-down guidance and experience and are responsible for maintaining economic development and political stability. The best middle managers with decades of political and administrative experience will be members of top management.

The competent leader makes important decisions, and power is exercised by those who have already demonstrated their experience in leadership. Proponents say that this system is much more stable and effective than democracy, which they claim has been captured by populists and large-scale industrial lobby groups and has consistently resulted in crises.

Western and Chinese Leadership Models in the Non-military Sectors

Western Leadership Model

In the recent past, Western leadership theories concentrated on the following elements: profit, vision, human relations, and strategic-level planning. At the same time, workers were considered an impersonal factor of production. Leadership theories emphasized achieving goals and maintaining control. However, recent approaches already see the importance of respecting employees, valuing their work, and developing their careers.

Chinese Leadership Model

China has created a special system of meritocracy known as "selection and election." Under this system, leaders are selected at the end of a complex process based on performance and employee support. This process includes so-called background checks, public opinion polls, internal performance and personality assessments, and the actual selection of leaders. This system is consistent with the Confucian tradition of meritocracy.

Confucianism is a specific tradition of ethical and leadership thinking. It is essentially the supremacy of ethics and virtue over anything else. Ethical or virtuous behavior is a characteristic of employees, leaders, senior managers, and high-ranking officials alike. This ancient philosophy is alive in Chinese leadership theory and attaches great importance to employees' personal development and ethical conduct. In China, managers are expected to place ethical considerations above the pursuit of profit. Other important elements of Chinese leadership theory are: encouraging employees, leading by example, equality, simple living, harmony with nature, and others.

⁴ Editorial, "What Makes the Illiberal Model State Work?" *Index* May 17, 2019, https://index.hu/kulfold/2019/05/17/kina_demokracia_meritokracia_hsz_i_csin-ping-politikai_rendszer_hatekonyabb/.

The Chinese implicit theory on leadership differentiates four traits:

1. Personal Morality (it refers to the principles and rules individuals live by and believe to be morally right and sound)
2. Goal Efficiency (it targets to achieve more output for each unit of input, and it has many variations, including goals for productivity, time management, economic efficiency, and resource efficiency)
3. Interpersonal Competence (which is about being good at recognizing and interpreting your own emotions and thoughts that takes both confidence and humility)
4. Versatility (the ability to adapt or be adapted to many different functions or activities).

As King and Wei point out, "The Chinese workplaces had evolved concepts of leadership by integrating methods from Western management approaches, through education abroad and being exposed to Western organizations in China. This does not necessarily mean that the fundamental values underlying Chinese leadership principles have changed." Yet, the Chinese leaders are adopting more *scientific* management approaches (for example, focusing on efficiency, elimination of waste, standardization, and process automation).⁵

A Comparison of the Western and Chinese Non-military Leadership Models

The only common element of leadership between the two cultures is the pursuit of economic efficiency. However, there is a difference in this impact on the relationship between managers and employees. The Chinese approach emphasizes the importance of the individual contribution of employees to the achievement of economic objectives, while Western management still sees employees as impersonal inputs to the production of economic benefits. Western leadership theories are changing and increasingly emphasize the human and ethical factors of leadership. This approach resembles the incorporation of traditional Chinese values such as incorruptibility, shame, and morality. The growing global emphasis on human rights is also contributing to the spread of this approach. At the same time, convergence does not mean that the two cultures already have the same leadership principles. However, Western and Chinese environments accept a wider range of leadership skills and principles as effective.

King and Wei further state that

The convergence of leadership principles between Western and Chinese cultures will ultimately improve the effectiveness and efficiency of leaders and businesses across both cultures. Chinese businesses will benefit from

⁵ Peter King and Zhang Wei, "Chinese and Western Leadership Models: A Literature Review," *Journal of Management Research* (Macrothink Institute) 6, no. 2 (2014), <https://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/jmr/article/view/4927>.

an increased focus on efficiency and innovation, while Western businesses will benefit from improved labor relations and organizational commitment.⁶

Chinese leaders appear to be adopting Western leadership principles they deem useful but continue to place great emphasis on traditional Chinese values. Western culture can be better prepared to build closer ties with China if we understand and appreciate these values. When a Westerner leads a team of Chinese employees (or vice versa), knowing the similarities and differences in the leadership principles of the two cultures, the leader can develop a desirable, effective leadership style.

The Impact of Civilian Leadership Theories on the Development of Military Leadership

The PLA discusses the value of intangible leadership qualities and methods that are not typically associated with the military. Examples include charismatic leadership, institutional leadership, leadership from behind, flexible leadership, and cross-cultural leadership. However, there is no evidence that the PLA is systematically seeking to implement these concepts across the armed forces.⁷

Some noteworthy non-military leadership models that the Chinese military leadership believes can influence modern military leadership are briefly outlined below.

Charismatic Leadership

There are two proven leadership styles that military leaders can adapt to keep the military working: Transactional and Transformational leadership styles. The third one is the Charismatic leadership style, though it is believed to be part of the Transformational style.

Transactional leadership is a style whereby the commanders use rewards and punishments to make the soldiers (military personnel) comply with the orders. Charismatic leadership is a style whereby the commanders inspire and motivate soldiers using their talents. In return, the soldiers offer an extraordinary trust, eventually leading to voluntary compliance with commanders' defined mission without considering a reward or fearing a punishment. Transformational leadership, which is an extension of the Charismatic leadership style, is a style whereby the commanders inspire, motivate, influence, and stimulate the soldiers to an extremely high level to the extent of building extraordinary trust and belief between the two sides towards the common goals.⁸

⁶ King and Wei, "Chinese and Western Leadership Models."

⁷ Roderick Lee, "Building the Next Generation of Chinese Military Leaders," *The Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs (JIPA)* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2020): 135-145, <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Aug/31/2002488091/-1/-1/1/LEE.PDF>.

⁸ Hamad B. Hamad, "Transformational Leadership Theory: Why Military Leaders Are More Charismatic and Transformational?" *International Journal on Leadership* 3, no. 1 (April 2015): 1-8, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2921153>.

Institutional Leadership

The institutional leaders play a leading role in reforming the institution, shaping its vision, and facilitating the structural changes needed to implement reforms on a large scale. The US Army assigns about half of its military executives to the direct leadership of institutional activities, confirming the importance of the institutional Army to the Army as a whole. The Army assigns only a quarter of its military executives to lead what is presumably its core activity – the Army operating force itself.

The institutional Army generates different products. It starts by creating the operating force itself, defining its structure and doctrine, and choosing the weapon systems and materiel. An additional function is defining the skills needed to use weapons and technology to execute its doctrine, procuring or creating the weapon systems and skills to operate them, sustaining these systems and skills, and continually refreshing these outputs as the evolution of threats, budget, and technology environment warrant changes. To create this output, the institutional Army essentially exists before the operating force and always anticipates what it will look like in the future.⁹

Regarding the training of institutional military leaders, the Institutional Army must change from strict reliance on task-based, input-focused ways to incorporating skills-based, outcome-focused ways to develop agile and adaptive leaders to face the challenges of the current and future environments. Developing agile and adaptive leaders with the cognitive, interpersonal, and cultural skills to be adaptive in complex tactical and strategic environments and who are critical thinkers is instrumental to the Army's successful conduct of full spectrum operations in the 21st Century.¹⁰

Leading from Behind

Leading from the front means demonstrating your leadership skills directly on the front line. Many commanders believe they can only demand their troops do what they can do themselves. This approach strengthens relationships with subordinates and builds respect and trust. However, it is not always possible to lead from the front in large organizations. Thus, in this case, leadership from behind is used. Leading from behind requires good judgment, strong delegation skills, and a hands-on approach. The aim is to ensure that the subordinate military unit can continue its combat activities. In addition, the ability to lead from behind also means knowing when to support those fighting at the front without feeling

⁹ Frank Camm, Cynthia R. Cook, Ralph Masi, and Anny Wong, "The Institutional Army and Its Place in the U.S. Army," in *What the Army Needs to Know to Align Its Operational and Institutional Activities* (RAND Corporation, 2021), <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG530.html>.

¹⁰ Scott King, "Changing the 'Ways' of the Institutional Army's Leader Development Strategy" (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2011): <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA547379.pdf>.

a sense of failure. Leading from the front or behind depends on the circumstances, the individual, the military unit, and the type of military organization.¹¹

Effective leadership and command of military forces require knowing what is better, keeping up-to-date with the combat operations in your area of responsibility which is away from the line of contact with the enemy, or personally leading the fight in a section of the line of contact in the area of responsibility. This dilemma has accompanied the history of warfare. Once he had briefed his trusted lieutenants, Hannibal usually joined his Celtic contingent to ensure discipline in its ranks, dressed in a common soldier's armor so as not to be marked by the Romans. Yet, he was recognizable enough to his own Celts. Julius Caesar preferred to run his battles from the rear; however, he was quick to draw his sword and lead from the front in moments of crisis. Genghiz Khan had worked out a chain of command among his hordes and preferred to stay in the rear to survey the sprawling battlefield and delegate the details to trusted subordinates.¹²

Flexible Leadership

Flexible leadership is a theory that emphasizes the need to influence key determinants of financial performance for a company: efficiency, innovative adaptation, and human capital. So why are the elements of flexible leadership theory important for the military? The best explanation is the concept of fighting power, where efficiency, innovative adaptation, and human capital are crucial.

Fighting power expresses how successfully a military force operates on the battlefield once it has engaged with the enemy. Fighting power stands for the importance of learning and adaptation and the need to harmonize effectiveness (the quality of being able to achieve a certain desired result) with efficiency (the capacity to produce a certain desired result with a minimum expenditure of resources). Being effective and efficient at the same time roughly means doing the right things right, or at least doing the right things better or faster than the enemy. This way, we can successfully combine science and the art of war. Taking effectiveness and efficiency into account also helps us better address those human attributes that eventually can turn technological weakness into an exploitable advantage in war.¹³

¹¹ Editorial, "Lead from the Front, or Lead from Behind?" *Pure Blue Ocean*, February 28, 2019, <https://www.pureblueocean.com/my-product/lead-from-the-front-or-lead-from-behind/>.

¹² Jon Guttman, "Did Generals Really Lead from the Front?" *HistoryNet*, October 2, 2021, <https://www.historynet.com/did-generals-really-lead-from-the-front.htm>.

¹³ Zoltán Jobbagy, "The Efficiency Aspect of Military Effectiveness," *Militaire Spectator* 178, no. 10 (National University of Public Service of Hungary, January 2009), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/216155927_The_Efficiency_Aspect_of_Military_Effectiveness.

Cross-cultural Leadership

“Cross-cultural leadership is the way to understand leaders who work in the newly globalized market. Cross-cultural leadership involves the ability to influence and motivate people’s attitudes and behaviors in the global community to reach a common organizational goal.”¹⁴

Military operations also require military leaders to develop and maintain relationships with individuals and communities whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. The army seeks to ensure this through language and country awareness training. This training develops the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and build relationships with the population of a particular area. However, complex operations require a broader range of skills that army leaders in any cultural environment can successfully apply. To achieve this capability, cultural and psychological training will be required in addition to linguistic and community or country awareness training.

Current Situation in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army

In the past few years, the People’s Republic of China has made a huge leap in the country’s rearmament. A robust military infrastructure has been built virtually from scratch using the latest technology. Richard Bitzinger, a senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore, identifies three key reasons for China’s dramatic breakthrough in defense building. First, Beijing introduced a new model of defense industry management, making it more “market-based.” Several positions have been downsized, production chains consolidated, and many conglomerates were broken up into smaller companies forced to compete with each other for government orders and export contracts. Secondly, Beijing has in recent years emphasized deepening military-civilian integration, actively exploiting developments in the military-industrial sector and encouraging military factories to commercialize their respective products. Thirdly, the biggest effect was multiple increases in the military budget. Chinese enterprises have been able to attract the best university graduates, invest in research and development, and test new types of equipment.¹⁵

In military development, the focus is on innovation, improving scientific and technological capabilities, and actively using the latest scientific and technological advances in defense reform. By 2035, the PLA should “strengthen the combat capabilities of strategic and new types of forces, establish a high level of strategic

¹⁴ Editorial, “Cross-Cultural Leadership,” *TechnoFunc*, 2020, www.technofunc.com/index.php/leadership-skills-2/leadership-styles/item/cross-cultural-leadership.

¹⁵ Mikhail Korostikov, Lubov Krasheninnikova, and Vasilii Lemutov, “The Whole Chinese Rath – What the Army Is and Who Should Be Worried of It?” *Kommersant*, July 5, 2019, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4012699>.

deterrence and complex systems to conduct combined operations and joint warfare.”¹⁶

The current phase of military technology development relies on three key building blocks: unmanned aerial vehicles, artificial intelligence, and the use of “big data.” In these areas, China already possesses the know-how to deploy against the “most likely adversary,” the United States.¹⁷

Views on Contemporary Conflicts

The PLA often uses the term “informatization.” It is a term that characterizes the development of a modern military that must be able to operate in a cyber environment. In addition, it appears quite frequently in the founding documents of the Chinese leadership. To a certain extent, it is similar to the concept of network-centric warfare adopted by the US military, according to which the military must use advanced information technology and communication systems to achieve operational superiority over the enemy.

In 2015, China’s leaders revised guidelines on the types of wars that PLA units should be capable of waging. The revised document states that China’s Armed Forces should be prepared to wage “local information wars and to achieve unconditional victories in them.” Special emphasis has been placed on the guidelines on naval operations. In addition, China’s army strategy documents stress the increasing importance of offensive air operations, long-range mobile wars, and space and cyber warfare. It follows from all this that China plans to wage future wars mainly beyond its borders and engage in naval conflicts.¹⁸

Main Directions of the Reform of the Armed Forces of China

In the course of the ongoing reforms, the Chinese Armed Forces are to undergo significant changes. It will no longer be based in seven military regions, as it was previously, but will be organized into five theaters of military activities with five joint commands. Beijing has determined this structure by the strategic importance of geographic regions along China’s borders where the PLA has to be ready to combat to ensure national security.¹⁹

The reform, which began in 2016, primarily affected the PLA’s command and control system. Instead of four headquarters—General Staff HQ, Logistics Directorate General HQ, Political Directorate General HQ, and Weapons Directorate HQ—fifteen compact departments were established, each of which focuses on a

¹⁶ Sergey Nesterov, “Innovative Development – The Way of Military Construction,” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, March 17, 2021, <http://redstar.ru/innovatsionnoe-razvitie-put-voennogo-stroitelstva/>.

¹⁷ Korostikov, Krashennnikova, and Lemutov, “The Whole Chinese Rath.”

¹⁸ Vladimir Ivanov, “China’s Military Might Subjected to Comprehensive Analysis – US Military Intelligence Worries about the Rising Ambitions of China,” *Independent Military Review*, January 25, 2019, https://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2019-01-25/1_1031_china.html.

¹⁹ Ivanov, “China’s Military Might Subjected to Comprehensive Analysis.”

different area and reports to the Central Military Commission (CMC). The reform has also affected the structure of China's armed forces. China's PLA has incorporated a new service, the Strategic Support Troops. There is little information about its objectives and tasks. It has been announced that the Strategic Support Troops will engage in intelligence, information warfare, cyber attacks, and electronic countermeasures.²⁰

"The Chinese Combat Hackers are an integral part of the PLA's Strategic Support Force (namely, the Network Management Systems Command). The best-known hacking units of the PLA: Cyber intelligence unit 61398 with a focus on North America; Unit 61486 (Putter Panda), the PLA's famous cyber-intelligence unit. Units 61786 and 61565 tasked with technical intelligence activities against the former Soviet Union."²¹

The plan for reforming the command and control system of the Chinese Armed Forces establishes two clear lines of command and control of the troops under the auspices of the Central Military Commission. The commanders of the Armed Forces' Services are given command and control responsibilities of their troops, and the headquarters of the joint forces in the theaters of military operations are authorized to conduct operations in their areas of responsibility, which had not been clearly defined until that time. One of the main differences between the new control system of the PRC Armed Forces from the previous one is the absence of the need to create special commands in wartime. Such a command and control structure of the armed forces theoretically allows China to launch operations very quickly.

Chinese leaders continue to prioritize upgrading the C4ISR system, which includes systems for command, control, communications, computing, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. This approach to the development of these systems is a response to the trends in the transformation of the forms and methods of waging modern wars, which assigns main importance to the decision-making processes, as well as the exchange and processing of information. The PLA leaders search for ways to develop the technological capabilities of the troops and their organizational structure to manage joint operations on near and distant battlefields using the most advanced weapons systems.

Reforms to technologically improve C4ISR systems are critical to reducing decision-making time and improving decision-making efficiency by ensuring reliable communications with fixed and mobile command posts. The PRC Armed Forces are adopting the most modern automated command and control systems (ACCS) in the form of Integrated Command Platform (ICP), which are in service

²⁰ Sergey Polunin, "China's Armed Forces: History, Structure, Armament," *Military Arms*, October 24, 2018, <https://militaryarms.ru/armii-mira/vooruzhennye-sily-kitaya/>.

²¹ Korostikov, Krashenninnikova, and Lemutov, "The Whole Chinese Rath."

with smaller units of the Armed Forces echelons. Using the ICP allows for establishing reliable communication between the command posts of armed forces' services, which is necessary for conducting joint operations.²²

The People's Liberation Army of China has practically restored its role in the country's political life and a positive image that was somewhat tarnished after the 1979 Tiananmen events. Today it is one of the most important institutions designed not only to ensure China's external security but also as an instrument of power on which it relies to maintain internal political stability. Moreover, the significance of both of its functions increases from year to year.²³

Chinese Ideas on Modern Military Leadership

The Situation of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Concerning the Good Military Leader and Military Leadership

The preparation of future commanders and other military leaders is planned by using special methods to appoint desirable officer candidates and by training them in a rigorous program of professional military education focused on military issues and technical knowledge, as well as new skills development. The PLA can expect its efforts to pay off between 2035 and 2050.

Three complicating factors have a significant impact on PLA leadership and the training of a new generation of officers:

1. PLA military leaders operate within the collective leadership mechanism of the Chinese Communist Party. This makes it difficult to find direct analogies with other leadership concepts.
2. In the last ten years, senior officers have often been promoted not based on merit. Therefore, it can be assumed that not all senior military leaders have the competencies required for military leadership in the 21st Century.
3. PLA career paths to date emphasize the depth of knowledge rather than breadth of knowledge. (Breadth of knowledge covers the full range of subject matter knowledge. Depth of learning refers to the extent to which each subject area is studied.)

Party, Collective, and Dual Leadership. The real leadership of the PLA comes entirely from the CCP and its first secretary. Consequently, the PLA operates within the broader ideology of the CCP, which sees unified leadership and central authority as key elements of its philosophy. In a sense, the PLA can be seen as the militant wing of a centralized ideology. Within this centralized leadership mechanism, the PLA exercises a form of collective leadership known as the military-political dual leadership system. In this system, the unit commander and the

²² Ivanov, "China's Military Might Subjected to Comprehensive Analysis."

²³ Konstantin Siroyezhkin, "The Military in the Top Leadership of the CCP," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 30, 2013, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2013/05/30/ru-pub-51827>.

unit political officer serve as equal partners. Their joint responsibility is to issue orders, direct the lower levels and supervise the day-to-day work of the unit. The political officer and the unit commander are jointly responsible for the leadership of their unit's party committee and usually serve as secretary and deputy secretary of the party committee, respectively. The unit's Party committee, of which the unit's political officer and the unit commander are members, and several other unit officers, has the power in the unit's command and control mechanism. This embodies the overall leadership of the CCP over the PLA, as these committees are the official decision-making bodies of all PLA units. Decisions within a unit Party committee are made through democratic centralism, where each committee member may voice opinions and vote on a decision, but once the committee makes a decision, it is the responsibility of all committee members to support that policy. In the event of a time-sensitive combat situation, the unit commander is permitted to make a unilateral decision. However, the unit Party committee still shares collective responsibility for that individual decision.

This system is in contrast to the 1980s practice in the former socialist countries, where the political officer could not interfere with the commander's explicit military decisions, and the commander or the political officer could not be the secretary or deputy secretary of the local party organization. Therefore, in my judgment, the current dual military and political leadership system in the Chinese People's Army requires further research.

Corruption in the Military and Its Impact on Leadership. The arrests of the vice-chair of the Central Military Commission (CMC) in 2014 and two CMC members in 2017 on corruption charges are a much bigger problem within the PLA than many experts believe. President Xi's anti-corruption campaign has involved hundreds of PLA generals and other senior officers, many of whom were responsible for staff appointments and promotions. Since the CMC must approve the promotion of all senior officers, it is assumed that most of the generals promoted between 2002 and at least 2012 paid for their promotion. Although a full price list is not available, according to state media and unofficial press reports, promotion to lieutenant general costs about USD 1.4 million, and a promotion to major general costs about USD 700 000. Lower-ranking officers also had to pay for their promotions so that future generals could finance their promotions.²⁴

The result was a system that promoted officers to the rank of general on the payment of a fixed amount of money, rather than based on knowledge, expertise, and competence. However, some officers of truly great ability still managed to obtain the rank of general without paying.

Lacking Breadth of Experience. PLA officers during their career could not get service experience in different branches of the armed forces. They served almost exclusively in the same branch until they reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel. Before 2016, the PLA did not have multi-service organizations, and

²⁴ Lee, "Building the Next Generation of Chinese Military Leaders."

thus officers did not have the opportunity to gain experience in planning, conducting, or leading joint operations. They could get inter-service assignments, where an officer from one service would serve in another, but that happened rarely. "This lack in career diversity results in exceptional depth in knowledge but little in the way of breadth. While this is advantageous in the early part of a career, it becomes a major handicap later in the same career."²⁵

Qualities of a Good Military Leader in the Chinese People's Army

The PLA regularly talks about shortcomings, weaknesses, and deficiencies within the force, many of which are related to people rather than technical systems. The most frequently discussed shortcomings are the inability to analyze the situation and understand the intentions of higher levels of command, to decide on a course of action, deploy forces purposefully and effectively, and deal with unforeseen situations.

That leads to weaknesses in adapting to circumstances, ability to command and coordinate, operate weapon systems, direct operations, and organize effective training. Overall, there are deficiencies in leaders' ability to fight modern wars and command modern combat at all levels.

The PLA discusses the desirable qualities that leaders should possess:

1. *Political loyalty*: the PLA considers politics to be an integral part of its identity and tradition. PLA commanders must always put ideological and political development first in the performance of their official duties. This means believing in communism, serving the people, and stressing the Party's absolute leadership on all issues.
2. *Strategic awareness*: military leaders should fully understand where and how their actions fit into the overall operational strategy.
3. *Special skills*: commanders must have the skills to determine the interplay of different factors.
4. *Sufficient foresight*: commanders should have sufficient foresight to understand how an operational situation will evolve and how actions will follow from each other.
5. *The ability to conduct independent operations*: commanders should have some ability to conduct operations without direct superior command based on their understanding of the situation.
6. The ability to understand the meaning of *informationist* force: the PLA moves towards becoming an *informationist* force where force effectiveness is determined by:
 - the extent to which the force is networked,
 - the extent to which it has access to information,
 - how and to what extent it can process information.

²⁵ Lee, "Building the Next Generation of Chinese Military Leaders."

7. *Skilled in military affairs*: PLA commanders must have the necessary skills to lead combat operations. (Due to the corruption experienced in the top command of the armed forces in the last 10-15 years, the PLA is essentially forced to resume the development of these necessary military skills among senior commanders. Skills and knowledge that are seen as prerequisites for advancement among senior officers in NATO countries—understanding joint operations, integrating the art of war with new technical capabilities, and gaining information superiority—often need to be developed and taught now to senior PLA leaders.²⁶)
8. *Adaptability*: commanders must be able to react to new circumstances, develop innovative ideas, and apply new methods. Specifically, leaders are expected to learn new methods and military developments from other countries, incorporate future technologies that have not yet been introduced into everyday practice, and be more creative. There is also a strong emphasis on finding reasonably independent-minded officers willing to undertake independent research and initiatives.
9. *Appropriate military culture*: PLA leaders must follow the set of intellectual requirements, achievements, and norms that the PLA collectively considers canonical. The PLA does not want leaders who serve only for the paycheck. Instead, it needs leaders passionate about military affairs and the PLA's heritage. That means hiring officers who have an active interest in the art of war, combat leadership, the latest military achievements, international and national military literature, and the PLA's past achievements.²⁷

Many of these desirable leadership requirements are new in PLA, as is the systematic application of mechanisms to promote such leadership qualities. While the PLA is relatively opaque regarding ongoing efforts to develop the armed forces, leadership development within the PLA is more transparent and can be divided into two processes. First, the PLA selects the officer candidates it considers optimal. Then it trains them according to fairly strict requirements.

The PLA currently uses the Myers-Briggs personality type indicator to filter certain personality types. The Myers-Briggs theory considers four basic dimensions to be important in information processing and decision-making behavior and classifies people into the following pairs: Introvert (I) – Extrovert (E), Sensing (S) – Intuitive (N), Thinking (T) – Feeling (F), Judging (J) – Perceiving (P).

In the introvert-extrovert dimension, one can be defined as a solitary or sociable personality. As far as the sensing and intuitive type are concerned, the sensing personality focuses on the concrete, perceptible phenomena of the world, while the intuitive focus on the connections within phenomena. In the thinking-feeling personality pairing, the feeling type accounts for their feelings,

²⁶ Lee, "Building the Next Generation of Chinese Military Leaders."

²⁷ Lee, "Building the Next Generation of Chinese Military Leaders."

while the thinking relies on logical reasoning. In the case of the judging-perceiving type, the judging person likes things to be categorized and makes decisions quickly, while the perceiving person rejects clarity, takes all aspects into account when making a decision, but moves slowly towards making a decision.

Candidates of the INFP (introverted, intuitive, feeling, and perceiving) type will be selected immediately, while those assessed as ENFP (extroverted, intuitive, feeling, perceiving), INTJ (introverted, intuitive, thinking, judging), or ISTP (introverted, sensing, thinking, perceiving) require additional screening. The objective of this personality filtering is that the PLA tries to filter out certain undesirable personalities. The INFP is the desired type.

It seems that the main purpose of the PLA's professional military education (PME) system is to develop the skills needed to lead combat activities at different levels and of different types. There is no indication that the PLA PME system aims to develop new habits of mind, critical thinking, or intellectual integrity.

PLA's PME requirements focus on training officers to plan, conduct and lead combat operations at the tactical and then operational levels. PME requirements can be met by attending any military academic institution. There are also some opportunities for officers to attend higher-quality civilian institutions. Senior officers (major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel) attend a series of multi-month courses at military academies covering single-service and then combined services tactics. Officers that will be assigned to larger headquarters will attend special courses on staff work.

The conditions of the training courses leading to an academic degree and the required reading reflect the desire to develop combat leadership skills. Most academic degrees are military and focus on current issues in military science, strategy, tactics, and operations. The required readings deal exclusively with military strategy, operations, and tactics.

The PLA is making a determined effort to accelerate the development of the desired qualities in the current generation of military leaders. The expectation is that by removing corrupt officers, rigorously testing, and modernizing the military education system, the current generation of military leaders will be able to provide a solid foundation for training and educating the next generation of commanders. However, a complete generational change in the PLA leadership is likely to be needed for a tangible, substantial improvement in the quality of senior military leaders. Knowing the general career path of PLA officers, we can estimate how long this may take.

In terms of senior leadership generation change, the starting point for the PLA is roughly 2017. When the PLA's anti-corruption efforts achieved their desired result, the PLA changed its command and control structure to enable the organization to conduct joint operations and modernized its PME system to shape a new generation of military talent. As a result, the new officers entering the PLA are more likely to get promoted on merit rather than money, have broader career experience, and undergo much more rigorous academic training. Based on the usual career paths for PLA officers, the new generation of officers

would reach their first higher command positions around 2035 and their highest command positions around 2050.

Otherwise, 2035 and 2050 are the broader benchmarks for the overall modernization of the PLA. According to the PRC's 2019 Defense White Paper, the PLA is expected to complete the modernization of national defense and the army by 2035 and transform its armed forces into a world-class force by the mid-21st Century.²⁸

Conclusions

Characteristics of the New Generation of War

The First Generation War was characterized by an orderly battlefield, creating a culture of order in state armies. Second-generation war relied on centrally directed artillery fire, carefully coordinated with infantry, cavalry, and air force to destroy the enemy. Third-generation warfare or maneuver warfare, developed by the German army during the Second World War, relied less on firepower and more on maneuver speed and tempo. In fourth-generation warfare, there are unlikely to be definable battlefields or fronts. In addition, the civil-military distinction may disappear. The fourth-generation war will occur in a complex arena of low-intensity conflict, using tactics/techniques of previous generations of war, across the whole spectrum of political, social, economic, and military systems (networks), with national, international, and non-categorizable actors, or a mix of actors.

The Military Leader of the 21st Century

The 21st-century environment is characterized by rapid organizational change. Leaders need to become versatile, flexible, adaptable, and innovative to remain effective in the new millennium. The hierarchical leadership patterns of the past are not suited to dealing with global complexity, rapid change, interdependence, and multiple challenges. In the information age, future leaders will act as facilitators, coaches, and teachers. Collaborative leadership seems to be the best solution in the current situation. Collective action is based on a shared vision, ownership, mutual values, and respect.

The military leader of the 21st Century is capable of managing uncomfortable situations and large amounts of information. Moreover, he is technically skilled, able to find creative solutions to complex challenges, and able to connect with the locals of the theater of military operations. While the military leadership remains formally hierarchical in terms of responsibility and accountability, in practice, it becomes more collective. As information is necessary to conduct ever more complex military operations successfully, the strategic environment requires a collaborative senior leader who makes decisions jointly and quickly, with

²⁸ Lee, "Building the Next Generation of Chinese Military Leaders."

partial involvement of subordinates, and provides real-time, concrete, direct input. Commanders and staff must trust subordinates and decentralize their military structure accordingly. Information technology is crucial to leadership. However, it can only help if leaders are willing to use it. Leaders must consider the limitations of information technology and the dangers of over-reliance on computers. The lack of understanding leads to technophobia, in which natural resistance to change stifles creativity and innovation.

Today's Dominant Military Leadership Concept Is Mission-oriented Leadership

It seems that in the future, decentralized mission-oriented leadership will be the leadership philosophy in the military. On the other hand, command-oriented leadership would only be given space in exceptional and justified cases. The essence of mission-oriented military leadership is that only a framework goal is set for subordinates in the tasking process, while the path to that goal is not designated. In areas better known to well-prepared subordinates, the supervisor leaves the decision to them.

This delegation of decision-making power favors the subordinates. It develops their autonomy, motivation, and initiative and increases their chances of survival in difficult combat situations. The autonomous decisions of subordinates are crucial for the speed of military operations. Time is one of the three factors (force, space, time) that fundamentally determine the success of military operations in a war situation. In the wars of the future, the territorial scope of military activities will increase significantly as military technology develops, while the time to react to enemy action will be greatly reduced. The time factor will become even more important because of the sharp, rapid, and unpredictable changes in situations, the limited forces available, and the maneuvering military in large operational areas.

A much-discussed feature of mission-oriented leadership is that it accepts, in exceptional situations, the failure to comply with a given order to achieve a goal, to achieve the goal in another way because of a changed situation, or to modify the goal based on its assessment of the changed situation. These features are completely alien to the command-oriented approach to leadership.

The spirit of mission orientation should be reflected in the training and education of soldiers and the relationship between the commander and his subordinates. The main conditions for mission-oriented leadership could be summarized as follows:

- A highly trained command staff based on uniform principles and rules
- Subordinates who are confident in themselves, capable of thinking, deciding and acting independently
- Mutual trust between commander and subordinate based on mutual respect and effective performance
- Well-functioning internal communication, open and honest human relations between commanders and subordinates

- Unambiguous intent of commanders.²⁹

PLA Is Considering the Development and Introduction of Mission-oriented Leadership

Despite shortcomings, weaknesses, deficiencies, and complicating factors, the PLA is considering developing and introducing mission-oriented leadership. Good military leaders in PLA should have sufficient foresight to understand how an operational situation will evolve and how actions will follow one another. Moreover, they should be able to conduct operations without direct superior command based on their understanding of the situation. They need to align with the unique collective Party-based leadership where the Party Committee of the unit (the political officer, the unit commander, and other unit officers are members) has power in any PLA unit's command and control mechanism. Finally, the PLA is interested in incorporating Western leadership methods not typically associated with the military, such as charismatic leadership, institutional leadership, leadership from behind, and flexible and cross-cultural leadership, in the armed forces' reform.

Closing Remarks

With continued economic development, the People's Republic of China has made significant steps in arming the country over the past few years. A vast military infrastructure has been built by using the latest technology. The PLA is successfully strengthening the combat capabilities of its strategic and new types of forces as planned, establishing a high level of strategic deterrence and complex systems for conducting joint and combined operations. In the process, it applies principles of mission-oriented military leadership and Western non-military leadership principles, taking into account Chinese characteristics.

The People's Liberation Army has restored its role in the political life of the country and its tarnished image after the Tiananmen Square events of 1979. Today, it is one of the most important institutions not only to guarantee China's external security but also as an instrument of power on which the country's leadership relies to maintain internal political stability.

As for the future of China, socio-economic reforms will certainly continue. China's development is likely to be a two-way street. In other words, the middle class and prosperity would slowly emerge in the big cities and on the coast, while the rural Chinese would remain relatively poor for some time.

There is no chance of changing the social system in China. The ideals and practices of liberal democracy are alien to Chinese culture. There is no example of democratic governance in Chinese history, and the Chinese cultural tradition does not show any interest in protecting individuals through control of state

²⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Péter Lippai, "The Possibilities and Limitations of Mission-Oriented Leadership," *Journal of the Joint Forces Command*, http://bocskaikonyvtar.hu/images/emedi/LippaiP_kuldetesoriantalt_vez.pdf.

power. Most Chinese support CCP and believe that the Party has demanded less and given them more with the reforms in recent decades.

Unlike the other communist parties that gained power with foreign help, the Chinese Communist Party is indigenous and has national roots in China. Therefore, it is unlikely to collapse due to mass discontent as it happened with the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. More likely, the Party will continue transforming the country and itself in the coming years to continue its rule. However, it is conceivable that this transformation will eventually lead to a top-down revolution that will gradually break down the foundations of socialism. At least, that is the hope of most experts.

Yet, I am preoccupied with other questions and doubts, e.g., can socialism be reformed or can continuous scientific-technical and economic development be ensured within the framework of socialism?

Disclaimer

The views expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent official views of the PFP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, participating organizations, or the Consortium's editors.

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Research Article

Leadership in Developing a Strategy for Military Human Resource Management as Part of Capabilities-Based Defense Planning

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to examine what attributes of a strategic leader, such as qualities, capabilities, and behaviors, matter for the development and implementation of a strategy for military human resource management examined within the capabilities-based defense planning process. Exploring the strategy algorithm presented here may offer military leaders new insight into the practical application of their specific characteristics in human resource management.

A review of the existing literature reveals little evidence of setting the development of a human resource management strategy in view of strategic leaders' specific features. Therefore, this article provides a SWOT analysis for each phase of military personnel management as it is incorporated in the defense planning process, oriented toward developing requisite defense capabilities.

Keywords: strategic leadership, defense planning process, capability, human resource management, strategy.

Since human resource management is paramount for achieving defense organizations' strategic goals, efficient strategy is vital. Consequently, a consistent combination of end-state, strategic goals, consistent actions, and resources to achieve them (interrelated combination of ends, ways, and means) can be considered a primary task for strategic leaders. This seems the appropriate time to

examine what strategic leadership means in the military human resource management's strategy development throughout capabilities-based defense planning processes or, more particularly, which key attributes of a successful strategic leader help them to achieve established end-state and strategic objectives.

This article begins with an overview of leadership theory development and presents a set of main attributes and distinctive characteristics of a strategic leader. Then the discussion turns to outlining the main concepts of capabilities-based defense planning with essential components of military capabilities based on Ukrainian guidelines. The last section presents a study of the role and place of strategic leadership in the formation and implementation of human resource management strategy throughout the capabilities-based planning process.

An introductory study of leadership theory using existing literature from the past century reveals that the understanding of the essence of leadership has repeatedly transformed. Until the end of the 1940s, leadership was considered an internal ability. However, by the end of the 1960s, effective leadership implied a certain behavior style. A further developmental trend of the theory towards the beginning of the 1980s was understanding the influence of unforeseen situations on the manifestation of leadership qualities, the so-called "contingency approach." Recently, a new trend emerged, i.e., strategic leaders need the vision to develop the main processes entrusted to them for the long term.¹ Furthermore, the ability to focus on future central priorities distinguishes the strategic leader from all others. As Roger Gill pointed out, "Leadership starts with a dream – a vision of what or where we want to be. We pursue that vision through strategies, which are the first step in transforming the dream—the vision—into a reality."²

As John Adair has observed, strategic leadership has military origins: "Originally, strategy ... meant strategic leadership – the art of being a commander-in-chief."³ The strategic leader is the leader at the highest level, unlike the operational and tactical leaders. If we look at the military sphere, the tactical leader is the unit commander who makes decisions about individual operations and tasks at his or her level, while the operational leader is a higher-level commander who makes decisions about how exactly it is possible to achieve strategic goals with regard to the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy (so-called 3E-principles). At the same time, the strategic leader is already an official of the Defence Minister or the Chief of Staff level, who determines the primary vision of long-term development and future use of the armed forces or its components in the area of state security and defense utilizing his or her strategic thinking.

John Adair differentiated between "strategic thinking" and "other forms of thinking": the first is "concerned with the important rather than the trivial or

¹ Alan E. Bryman, *Charisma and Leadership in Organizations* (London: SAGE Publications, 1992), 1-21.

² Roger Gill, *Theory and Practice of Leadership* (London: SAGE Publications, 2011), 201.

³ John Adair, *Strategic Leadership: How to Think and Plan Strategically and Provide Direction* (London: Kogan Page, 2010), 8.

mundane, and the long-term as opposed to the short-term.”⁴ The focus is on always using strategic thinking, which “is grounded in a strong understanding of the complex relationship between the organization and its environment.”⁵ Such ability can help him or her conduct a comprehensive analysis of the necessary information *to form a successful long-term development strategy*. Proper formation of such a strategy also implies that the strategic leader has such a trait as prudence, namely the ability to work well with risks. Such work involves the timely identification and clarification of all-important risks, their assessment by impact and frequency, as well as the identification of measures to manage them practically. As the authors of the curriculum “Strategic Leadership: The General’s Art” elaborated, “... one of the most important things that a strategic leader must learn is not simply how to think critically, but how to do it well.”⁶

Michael Hitt, Katalin Takacs Haynes, and Roy Serpa, with reference to Ireland, emphasized that effective strategic leaders in the new competitive landscape expected for the 21st century had to: develop and communicate a vision, build dynamic core competencies, emphasize and effectively use human capital, invest in the development of new technologies, engage in valuable strategies, build and maintain an effective organizational culture, develop and implement balanced controls; and engage in ethical practices.⁷

One of the most comprehensive up-to-date sets of qualities, capabilities, and behaviors, which characterize the most effective strategic leaders, is suggested by the Royal College of Defence Studies (Defence Academy of the United Kingdom). It was developed by both staff and members of the 2016/17 course, with the help and support of a number of external experts from across Whitehall and academia.⁸ The following strategic leadership characteristics should be highlighted from this carefully compiled list:

- Qualities: sincerity, humility, and truthfulness; flexibility; moral courage and boldness; great stamina and resilience in the face of setbacks; self-confidence and an ability to inspire confidence in others, whatever the adversity.
- Capabilities: the confidence to operate in uncertainty: an ability to comprehend and handle extreme complexity, to overcome self-doubt and

⁴ John Adair, *Effective Strategic Leadership* (London: Macmillan, 2002), 263.

⁵ Kate Beatty, “The Three Strengths of a True Strategic Leader,” *Forbes*, October 27, 2010, www.forbes.com/2010/10/27/three-strengths-strategy-leadership-managing-ccl.html.

⁶ Mark R. Grandstaff and Georgia J. Sorenson, eds., *Strategic Leadership. The General's Art* (Vienna, VA : ManagementConcepts, 2009), 44.

⁷ Michael A. Hitt, Katalin Takacs Haynes, and Roy Serpa, “Strategic Leadership for the 21st Century,” *Business Horizons* 53, no. 5 (September-October 2010): 437-444, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2010.05.004>.

⁸ The Royal College of Defence Studies, “Studies, Staff and Members of the 2016/17 Course,” in *Getting Strategy Right (Enough)* (London: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, 2017), 61-73.

the hesitation of colleagues and subordinates, and to operate successfully in an environment of potential disorder, disunity, uncertainty and ambiguity; the ability to operate under intense media pressure.

- Behaviors: a desire to push work across boundaries; a habit of building, leading, and listening to teams.

At the same time, in its Strategic Leadership Primer, the US Army War College provides a list of strategic leader competencies using the “Be, Know, Do” typology. The following competencies can be underlined in this comprehensive list:

- BE (disposition – values, attributes), such as a master of the strategic art of balancing ends, ways, and means; comfortable with complexity; high personal stamina – physical, mental, stress management; skilled diplomat.
- KNOW (disposition – skills): *Conceptual* – envisioning; proactive thinking; problem management; critical self-examination; skillful formulation of ends, ways, and means. *Interpersonal* – communication; inspiring others to act; skillful coordination of ends, ways, and means. *Technical* – systems understanding: political, economic, cultural, logistical, force management, joint/combined interrelationships, etc.; skillful application of ends, ways, and means.
- DO (action – influencing, operating, and improving): provide for the future – visioning (long-term focus, time span, perspective); shape the culture; lead and manage change; practice the strategic art – allocate resources, develop and execute strategic plans derived from the inter-agency process.⁹

Looking across the existing literature on strategic leadership attributes, the following distinctive feature of the contemporary military strategic leader can be derived: his or her ability to formulate, make, and coordinate strategy as a consistent combination of end-state, strategic goals, consistent actions, and resources to achieve them (interrelated combination of ends, ways, and means). Such ability is vital in fulfilling the main tasks of a strategic leader, which General David H. Petraeus formulated as follows: “The first is to get the big ideas right. The second is to communicate them effectively throughout the breadth and depth of the organization. The third is to oversee the implementation of the big ideas. And the fourth is to determine how the big ideas need to be refined, changed, augmented, and then repeating the process over again and again and again.”¹⁰

⁹ Roderick R. Magee II, ed., *Strategic Leadership Primer* (Carlisle, PA: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College, 1998), 3-4, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA430467.pdf>.

¹⁰ An Interview with David H. Petraeus, General (USA Retired), “On Strategic Leadership,” Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, February 8, 2016,

In order to correctly define the role and place of strategic leadership in building a human resource management strategy throughout capability-based defense planning, first of all, it is necessary to clearly define key concepts such as “defense planning process,” “capability” and its basic components, as well as “capabilities-based planning.” Defense planning is carried out to provide State’s defense capabilities by determining the priorities and directions of development of defense forces, their capabilities, weapons and military equipment, infrastructure, training of forces, as well as developing appropriate strategies, concepts, programs, and plans accounting for real and potential threats in the military sphere and financial/ economic capabilities of the State. According to the Ukrainian Defense Planning Guidelines, based on NATO standards, these key concepts are defined as follows.¹¹

The defense planning process incorporates consistent actions carried out according to common principles and procedures to determine and create trained and equipped troops (forces) and capabilities. Capability means the ability of military authorities, formations, military units, military educational institutions, and other organizational structures of the Armed Forces or a set of forces to perform certain tasks (ensure the achievement of certain military objectives) under certain conditions, limited resources and in accordance with established standards.¹²

The following eight basic components of military capabilities are decisive for their comprehensive analysis, planning, creation, development, and evaluation:

- Doctrinal base – normative/legal and organizational/administrative acts, which determine the principles of functioning and use of troops (forces), as well as ensure the achievement of their necessary capabilities;
- Organization – a military organizational structure or its element with the appropriate composition of forces and means to perform assigned tasks that meet the requirements for the particular capability;
- Training – a system of appropriate force training, which provides a certain capability, individual and collective training of personnel, as well as training of headquarters and military formations;

accessed January 18, 2022, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/david-petraeus-strategic-leadership>.

¹¹ Order 484 of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, “The order of organization and implementation of defence planning in the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other components of the Defence Forces” (Kyiv, 22 December 2020).

¹² See also Todor Tagarev, “The Art of Shaping Defense Policy: Scope, Components, Relationships (but no Algorithms),” *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 5, no. 1 (2006): 15-34, <https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.05.1.03>.

- Resources' provision – provision of capabilities with the necessary weapons and military equipment, supplies of material and technical means, as well as financial resources;
- Leadership and education – professional development of management at all levels through education, training, experience, and self-improvement in order to develop the most professionally trained leaders;
- Personnel – qualified, patriotic and motivated personnel (including military reserves) who meet certain requirements for the capability to perform tasks in peacetime and in special periods successfully;
- Military infrastructure – facilities, buildings, structures with related communications (roads) and land, aimed to ensure the performance of troops (forces) tasks for their intended purpose;
- Interoperability – the capability to take joint concerted, effective and efficient actions in order to achieve tactical, operational and strategic goals in the defence sphere.

In Ukraine, the capability-based defense planning process is organized as a sequence of actions to perform the following tasks:

- defining the goals and main tasks of the implementation of state policy on national security and defense;
- assessment of the defense forces' ability to perform their own tasks;
- evaluation of the current military capabilities;
- determining the list of necessary military capabilities that will meet existing needs;
- determining the list of excessive capabilities;
- formation of the need for resource provision for capabilities' development;
- risk management;
- planning and programming;
- monitoring and control of the established goals' achievement.

The capability-based defense planning process includes the stages illustrated in Figure 1. Based on them, capability-based planning can be considered as a planning process that involves the development of defense capabilities, including qualified, patriotic, and motivated personnel, in the face of threats and risks in the long perspective within constrained resources.

Experts from RAND Corporation, who in 2019 conducted a study of defense planning approaches used in the United States,¹³ distinguished two main ap-

¹³ Michael J. Mazarr et al., *The U.S. Department of Defense's Planning Process: Components and Challenges*, Research report (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2019), accessed January 15, 2022, www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2173z2.html.



Figure 1: Capability-based Defense Planning Process.

proaches to defense planning, namely demand-based and supply-based planning. In this case, the Demand-based approach is divided into capabilities-based planning and threat-based planning. In both approaches, the main actions of the decision-makers remain the same, namely: identification, analysis, and development of requirements; assessment of available capabilities; consideration of existing and possible constraints; risk identification and assessment. It should be mentioned here that these actions may be considered the particular stages of a certain strategy.

With regard to capability-based planning, it is based less on identifying specific adversaries and more on analyzing the full range of capabilities, including qualified, patriotic, and motivated personnel, which are needed in future conflicts to achieve strategic goals. The main goal of this type of defense planning is to create planning structures in the current and future environment with a high level of uncertainty about the current and future capabilities of a potential adversary. Such requirements help ensure the planning structures confirm the necessity of having an effective strategy for human resources management.

After considering the concepts of strategic leadership and the capability-based planning process, we argue that the qualified, patriotic, and motivated personnel forms one of the vital components of the armed forces' ability to fulfill their tasks and achieve strategic goals. With this in mind, the development and successful implementation of a human resource management strategy in capability-based defense planning are of utmost importance. At the same time, the practical application of the qualities, capabilities, and behavior of strategic leadership ensures the effectiveness of such a strategy.

The concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) has been adopted widely by military leaders and, over time, has been integrated into policy and doctrine formerly used to describe personnel management and administration functions. In the most general sense, HRM is a series of integrated decisions about the employment relationship that influences the effectiveness of employees and organizations.¹⁴ As Henry A. Leonard explicated, HRM “is a fundamentally important institutional capability for all defense organizations, and thus a key element of defense institution building. ... Successful strategic human resources systems provide not only for the armed forces themselves, but also for the organizations and institutions that support those forces. Absence or failure of this pillar would be a serious if not fatal flaw in a nation’s overall defense posture.”¹⁵ It should be noted that leadership is a comprehensive concept that includes the psychological aspect of a person’s motivation to be a good example of a citizen who is devoted to his or her country.

Based on the above, the Ukrainian Defense Ministry and Armed Forces nowadays have a significant interest in adapting and transforming their strategic human resources system to align with modern best practices. At the present stage, the main goal of military personnel policy is to create conditions for guaranteed and high-quality staffing of the Armed Forces with trained and motivated personnel capable of performing their assigned tasks,¹⁶ as well as policy developments in recruiting, personnel management, education and training, social and humanitarian support.¹⁷ The necessity of transformation of the military personnel policy in these particular areas is due to the need to achieve the following results:

- in recruiting – establishing recruitment units and introducing a Unified State Register of Conscripts;
- in personnel management – implementation of military career management related to military rank, rating system, individual career management, and mandatory rotation;

¹⁴ *How the Army Runs. A Senior Leader Reference Handbook 2017-2018* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2018), <https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/3550.pdf>.

¹⁵ Henry A. Leonard, “Human Resources Management,” in *Effective, Legitimate, Secure: Insights for Defense Institution Building*, ed. Alexandra Kerr and Michael Miklaucic (Washington, DC: National Defense University, Center for Complex Operations, Institute for National Strategic Studies, 2017), accessed January 18, 2022, <https://cco.ndu.edu/News/Article/1375863/7-human-resources-management/>, 115-137.

¹⁶ Order 280 of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, “The Concept of Military Personnel Policy of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine for the Period up to 2025” (Kyiv, 14 September 2021).

¹⁷ Order 5 of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, “On approval of the main directions of development of military personnel policy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine for the period up to 2025” (Kyiv, 12 January 2021).

- in education and training – alignment of the military education system with NATO standards and formation of an effective system of professional military education, taking into account the experience of combat operations;
- in social and humanitarian support – improvement of privileges and social guarantees of military personnel, military salaries, the healthcare system, and a mechanism for housing provision.

As John Chilcot pointed out, “Policy only works if there is a credible strategy to deliver it and strategy demands an achievable policy end-state.”¹⁸ Therefore, it can be argued that the process of developing an HRM strategy represents the military leadership’s strategic vision of development in the field of personnel policy.

Given the essence of the strategy as a consistent combination of end-state, strategic goals, consistent actions, and allocated resources (interrelated combination of ends, ways, and means), the strategy of HRM in capability-based planning can be presented as a set of ten successive and interrelated stages. 1. Defining the strategic objectives, which implement a certain vision to achieve the determined end-state. 2. Analysis of the existing internal and external conditions in the HRM environment. 3. Formation of possible courses of action as ways to achieve the end-state and strategic goals. 4. SWOT analysis¹⁹ of the defined courses of action. 5. Forming a risk management system as a consistent combination of risk identification, classification, assessment (evaluation), and management. 6. Choosing the most effective course of action as a way to achieve strategic goals. 7. Determining the needed resources to implement the selected course of action. 8. Programming the implementation of the course of action. 9. Creation and implementation of effective supportive narrative for internal and external target audiences. 10. Ensuring continuous monitoring of the strategy implementation process, as a combination of intermediate results evaluation and adjustment of existing programs.

The strategic leader has a profound understanding that it is their personal responsibility to set the strategy, direct it and adjust it when necessary.²⁰ Therefore, the qualities, capabilities, and behavior inherent in strategic leadership play a key role throughout all stages of the formation and successful implementation of an effective military HRM strategy.

The essence of each stage from the above list, with a corresponding explanation of the role of strategic leadership, is presented below.

¹⁸ UK Ministry of Defence, Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01, “UK Defence Doctrine (5th Edition)” (2014), 7 (cited from *Getting Strategy Right (Enough)*) (RCDS, 2017), 2.

¹⁹ Analysis of Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT).

²⁰ The Royal College of Defence Studies, “Studies, Staff and Members of the 2016/17 Course,” 63.

During the first phase, the end-state and strategic objectives of HRM are determined on the basis of the state policy in the field of security and defense, which together implement the vision of strategic leadership to achieve the end state and must meet the so-called “SMART criteria,” where SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific (must be as clear as possible), Measurable (must be tracked and evaluated), Achievable, Relevant and Time-based.

The strategic goal of the HRM reform is to create a personnel management system based on the principles adopted in the armed forces of NATO member states, aimed at optimally meeting the needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces (hereafter – UAF) in highly qualified personnel motivated by long contract-based service and able to perform assigned tasks.

The main strategic objectives of the Ukrainian military HRM system are:

- implementation of the principles and approaches adopted in the armed forces of NATO member states in military personnel policy;
- creation of an effective system of military career management related to military rank, improvement of the military service procedure;
- redistribution of the main tasks and functions of the Ministry of Defence and UAF personnel services, as well as official decision-makers;
- development of human capital of the UAF, in particular through modernization of education and science, health care, culture, social protection, ensuring gender equality and spirituality;
- creation of an efficient and transparent system of military salary built on the hierarchy of military ranks;
- establishing a multi-level professional education system in compliance with NATO standards and best Ukrainian and international practices.

The practical implementation of the strategic HRM objectives involves the following tasks:

- improving existing legislative norms on the Euro-Atlantic transformation;
- ensuring that each service member is aware of the benefits of NATO member states’ principles and approaches;
- laying the foundations for the management of the career of service members in the principles of human-centeredness, taking into account gender aspects and mandatory rotation in military positions;
- appointment of service members to higher positions and assignment of military ranks solely based on a rating formed under such criteria as the appropriate level of education, personal experience, including in combat, individual capabilities, necessary competencies, and integrity;
- ensuring the psychological recovery of staff; restoring and maintaining their mental functions and psychological readiness;

- improvement of benefits and social guarantees for military service, the introduction of necessary additional motivating factors, provision of effective mechanisms of control over their implementation;
- Implementing updated military training programs, considering NATO combat experience, principles and standards, including on gender issues.

The expected result of the HRM reform implementation is the establishment of appropriate conditions for staffing the UAF with motivated and highly qualified personnel who demonstrate readiness to perform military service according to Euro-Atlantic principles and can perform the assigned tasks.

The distinctive feature of the true strategic leader that is critical at this stage is his or her ability to have a clear vision of the ultimate end state and strategic objectives, as well as the ability to formulate them clearly. At the same time, such a leader must have the moral courage (willingness to stand firm on main values, principles, and convictions, regardless of consequences) to justify his or her values-based and inspirational vision for people, including their supporters and the public.

During the second stage, the analysis of the existing internal and external conditions for the implementation of the HRM process is carried out. Namely, the current and projected impact in the political, economic, social, technological, legal, security, and military spheres. Based on the results of such research, conclusions are formed, and influencing factors are prioritized for subsequent responses (taking into account possible courses of action).

Throughout the third stage, the formation of possible courses of action as effective ways to achieve HRM's end-state and strategic goals is carried out. It needs to comply with the principles of efficiency and effectiveness, taking into account the possibilities of the efficient application of social, economic, humanitarian, informational, and other tools.

Key for the strategic leader at the second and third stages is the ability to possess and apply the intellectual breadth of a high order beyond normal or corporate mindsets. In addition, a strategic leader at these stages of strategy formation must have a capability characterized as "the confidence to operate in a province of uncertainty: an ability to comprehend and handle extreme complexity, to overcome self-doubt and the hesitation of colleagues and subordinates, and to operate successfully in an environment of potential disorder, disunity, uncertainty and ambiguity."²¹

During the fourth stage, SWOT analysis of identified courses of action, as detailed research of existing and potential strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats, is performed. After conducting such an analysis, possible ways are determined to operate current strengths and weaknesses for the

²¹ The Royal College of Defence Studies, "Studies, Staff and Members of the 2016/17 Course."

most effective and efficient implementation of opportunities and reduce threats for each course of action identified.

Throughout the fifth stage, a risk management system is created, namely the consistent process of all possible risks' identification and classification, their assessment, and determination of effective measures to respond to them.

The identification and classification of risks by categories and types are carried out as follows. By categories, risks are divided into *external* – risks, the probability of which is not related to the performance of structural units and personnel functions and tasks; and *internal* – risks, the probability of which is directly related to such performance. By types, risks are classified as: *personnel risks*, which are associated with the training of personnel and the quality of their functional responsibilities (job descriptions), including risks associated with reduced motivation; *corruption risks*, as a set of legal, organizational, and other factors and reasons that encourage (stimulate) individuals to commit corruption offenses while performing state functions; *regulatory risks*, which are considered as the risks that arise in connection with the absence, inconsistency or unclear functions and tasks regulation in the legislation; *operational and technological risks*, which are associated with violation of the established procedure for performing functions and tasks; *reputational risks*, as actions or events that may adversely affect the reputation, etc.

The risk assessment process involves the following procedures: determining the degree of risk according to the probability of occurrence of risks and their negative impact to effectively ensure the implementation of the HRM process; prioritization of the identified risks for an appropriate response to them. Determining how to respond to identified and assessed (evaluated) risks can be considered as deciding to avoid, reduce, share or accept the risk. Thus, risk avoidance means the suspension (cessation) of activities that lead to increased risk. Risk reduction means taking measures that reduce the likelihood of risk and/or its impact. Risk sharing (allocation) means transferring the risk (part of the risk) to another participant in the HRM process. Finally, acceptance of risk means that no action is taken against it.

The role of the strategic leader at the fourth and fifth stages is to utilize their capabilities to think critically, namely, think clearly, rationally, reflectively, and understand how their decisions ultimately impact the desirable result. It is vital for strategic leaders performing the SWOT analysis and creating an effective risk management system to consider the logical connection between the strategic goal and possible courses of action, as well as to utilize their cognitive skills to identify the relevance of existing arguments for all options.

During the sixth stage, based on the results of the SWOT analysis and risk assessment, as well as testing the political acceptability, feasibility, suitability, sustainability, and adaptability, the most effective course of action is selected as the best way to achieve the end-state and the strategic objectives.

The role of the strategic leader at the sixth stage is utilizing their attribute of possessing intellectual sophistication, such as the ability to full pattern recognition and the capability to identify second, third, and fourth-order effects of the most effective course of action.

In the seventh stage, the needs for all types of resources for implementing the selected course of action are determined based on calculations of available resources, projected additional capacity of the national economy, projected international aid, and other sources.

During the eighth stage, a clear, detailed plan (program) for the implementation of the selected course of action is drafted and approved.

Since, during these stages, *a strategic leader needs to combine* key attributes of strategic leadership and effective management, the process of resource determination and programming the strategy implementation requires multifunctionality (experience in two or more operational or functional areas and knowledge of more than one domain). As Al Robbert pointed out, "Taxonomies of leadership and management skills are plentiful. ... Such taxonomies tend to overlap – those focusing on leadership see management as a subset of needed leadership skills, while those focusing on management see leadership as a subset of needed management skills. ... Leadership skills are emphasized in the visioning and motivating roles; management skills are emphasized in the decisional and resource marshaling roles."²²

During the ninth stage, a supportive narrative is formed for internal and external target audiences, which justifies the need to achieve the certain end-state and strategic objectives, explains the effectiveness of specific chosen ways to achieve them, and justifies certain amounts of resource costs. Such a narrative aims to motivate the target audience to support the defined strategy and assist in its implementation.

The role of the strategic leader at the ninth stage is to use effectively their ability to communicate with a much broader audience and "to operate under intense media pressure: the spotlights of 24/7 news and public opinion polls are relentless and unforgiving."²³ Moreover, a strategic leader must be a charismatic leader able to attract the attention of his followers with a magnetic effect on them, unite them with a common idea and lead to achieving goals and objectives. If we look at the history of leadership, then we see that the overwhelming majority of strategic leaders had a strong charisma, which allowed them to inspire and motivate their supporters and followers. A brilliant example is the extraordinary charisma of Sir Winston Churchill, one of the strongest strategic leaders in world history, which helped him unite and lead all the people of Great Britain in the struggle for survival against the external threat in 1940. His ability

²² Robert Klitgaard and Paul C. Light, eds., *High-Performance Government: Structure, Leadership, Incentives* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), accessed January 11, 2022, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG256.html>, 258-261.

²³ The Royal College of Defence Studies, "Studies, Staff and Members of the 2016/17 Course," 65.

to inspire people to fight and his impeccable personal reputation put Churchill in the front ranks of the most influential and respected global strategic leaders. Furthermore, beyond doubt, a strong strategic leader must be a deeply honest person and champion of values with such attributes as integrity, which inspires the deep trust of his colleagues and followers. The most serious risk for such a leader, whose consequences are almost impossible to compensate for, is the risk of a ruined reputation.

During the tenth and last stage, the intermediate results are evaluated and the strategy is adjusted (if necessary) during all stages of its creation and practical implementation. At the same time, it should be clearly understood that the results of strategy implementation are not the end result and need to be adapted to the implementation of other strategies or the formation of a new one taking into account the constant process of new circumstances and changes in the environment.

The defined algorithm for developing an HRM strategy throughout the capabilities-based planning process is indicative of and subject to further development and improvement. Further, it should be highlighted that some of the distinctive features and characteristics of the strategic leader (their specific qualities, capabilities, and behaviors) are necessary during the practical implementation of each of the above stages. For example, the qualities of self-criticism, the knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses, and the ability to use their strengths and compensate for weaknesses are critical, especially as it applies to the rational selection of personnel. Among the strategic leaders' capabilities necessary for practical application at all designated stages, the following can be emphasized. First is the acknowledgment and awareness of human limitations, including their own; second is the ability to have a natural respect for colleagues and subordinates, as well as a desire to consult, develop, and mentor them; and finally, the ability to recognize the benefits of collaborative working and collective decision-making. Additionally, several types of necessary behaviors, such as a habit of building, leading and listening to teams, as well as a personal ability to work and act collegiately with allies when necessary, can be outlined.²⁴

Conclusions

Given the positions mentioned in this article, it can be argued that strategic leadership plays a key role in a human resource management's strategy development process with the main strategic leader's qualities, capabilities, and behaviors. In this sense, the strategic leaders' ability to formulate, make, coordinate, and implement the strategy as a consistent combination of end-state, strategic goals, consistent actions, and resources to achieve them (interrelated combination of ends, ways, and means) is of highest importance for defense institutional capacity building. It is a particularly vital point throughout capability-based planning

²⁴ The Royal College of Defence Studies, "Studies, Staff and Members of the 2016/17 Course."

to provide for qualified, patriotic, and motivated military personnel in the face of contemporary threats and risks in the long perspective within constrained resources. Examination of the possible order of the human resource management's strategy highlighted that the attributes of a strategic leader are necessary at each stage of the strategy formation, development and implementation.

Disclaimer

The views expressed are solely those of the authors and do not represent official views of the PFP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, participating organizations, or the Consortium's editors.

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Hofstede's Power Distance Matrix: Law Enforcement Leadership Theory and Communication

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Abstract: Hofstede created his theory with its dimensions by working with various private companies. In 2021, the author had the opportunity to do all this for an organization that trains civil service employees. The central question of his research was how to integrate Hofstede's dimensions concerning managerial communication into an environment based on other cultural and ethical foundations. The quantitative analysis employed a questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended questions. Staff and students of the Faculty of Law Enforcement, University of Public Service, responded to the questionnaire. The responses were processed using statistical tests suitable for confirming or refuting a hypothesis. The new research findings indicate that it is worth considering how the six dimensions set up by Hofstede could improve law enforcement if incorporated into leadership awareness during leadership training.

Keywords: leadership theory, Hofstede matrix, cultural environments, ethics and public service, management.

Theoretical Background of the Research

Within the framework of intercultural communication, the theory of cultural dimensions is linked to the name of Geert Hofstede. With the help of factor analysis, Hofstede was able to compare the cultural effects of society with the value system of the members of society and thus evaluate the obtained results in relation to each other. The research results first ensured the creation of four, and later a fifth and a sixth dimension.

Hofstede founded IBM Europe's Personnel and Research Division in 1965 and led it until 1971. Between 1967 and 1973, he conducted research on national differences among staff members of large multinational corporations and their

subsidiaries around the world. More than a hundred thousand people participated in the surveys. Hofstede assisted them in completing the surveys and analyzed the results. The comparison and attitude surveys initially covered forty, and were later expanded to fifty different countries and three different regions, thus creating one of the largest coherent cross-border databases of its age.¹

The initial analysis defined four dimensions of national cultures in which cultural values could be systematically classified: power distance (i.e., the strength of social hierarchy), masculinity and femininity (i.e., task versus person orientation), uncertainty avoidance, and individualism-collectivism. These dimensions touched on four different anthropological problem areas that were addressed differently by various national societies, in particular: how to deal with inequality, how to deal with insecurity, the individual's relationship with themselves or their primary group, and the emotional consequences of task-orientation or more person-orientation in a working environment.²

Between 1988 and 1991, Michael Harris Bond and colleagues successfully conducted a renewed experiment among students in twenty-three different countries using a survey tool developed by Chinese employees and executives. As a result of the research, Hofstede's dimensional theory was supplemented with a fifth dimension, long-term orientation (the relationship of past, present, and future with the harmony of action), called initially Confucian dynamism.^{3,4}

Ten years later, a Bulgarian researcher, Michael Minkov, extended the original dimensions created by Hofstede to 93 other countries, using the so-called "World Values Survey" method. The research protocol refined the original dimensions and also successfully explored the differences between national and individual level data. A new, sixth dimension built around leniency and self-restraint was added to the existing five dimensions.⁵

Hofstede's theory of dimensions has helped to map intercultural traditions. It is still being used by researchers and consultants in many areas of international business and communication (including management, psychology, and sociology).

In business life, for example, it is agreed that communication within and outside the organization is the key to success and one of the primary conditions for

¹ Geert Hofstede, "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context," *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* 2, no. 1 (2011): 1-26, <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>.

² Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984), 327 pp.

³ Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 440 pp.

⁴ Geert Hofstede and Michael Harris Bond, "The Confucius Connection: From Cultural Roots to Economic Growth," *Organizational Dynamics* 16, no. 4 (Spring 1988): 5-21, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(88\)90009-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(88)90009-5).

⁵ Michael Minkov, *What Makes Us Different and Similar: A New Interpretation of the World Values Survey and Other Cross-Cultural Data* (Sofia, Bulgaria: Klasika y Stil Publishing House, 2007), 257 pp.

organizational functioning. Professionals can interact with workers from other countries within a company as they form a community. Further, they have to contact representatives of other organizations who may be born into another society. Hofstede's model helps with all this by providing insight into other cultures. Communication between different cultures requires knowledge of cultural differences because what is perfectly acceptable and natural in one society can be confusing or even offensive in another. Hofstede's dimensions affect all levels of communication, including both verbal (words and language itself) and non-verbal (body language, gestures, clothing, protocol, guidelines, rules, value systems, ethics) communication, and also cover oral and written communication.

The question, therefore, is how external and internal communication of the employees of public administration bodies of strict bureaucracy relate to all this. The interpretation of the values arising from the organizational culture in the field of law enforcement, as well as the strict centralized legal relationships and the principle of issuing and receiving instructions, which also determine the value system and its dimensions of Hungarian citizens from different cultures, impacts the internal communication of the organization.

Law Enforcement in the Focus of Research

Are the leaders in the strictly centralized police model, which operates based on command and unconditional obedience and exhibits almost all the leadership styles, communicate in a way that improves effectiveness, manifests expected performance, and efficiency in the light of and as a result of the work of employees?⁶

In Europe, where the importance of borders is diminishing, the work of the police is constantly the focus of attention. Above all, the heart of the debate is the effectiveness of the police and how they can tackle crime, including international crime (but it is by no means limited to this issue). In democracies, the power of the police is limited to the extent it is acceptable to fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals. The right balance needs to be struck between these two equally important interests. The means by which that balance can be maintained are also important. In the case of police ethics, this is the issue that is at stake.⁷ Is there a personality distortion, is communication motivating, or does it break the consciousness so that the work is realized in a conveyor-like way without question?

⁶ István Kovács, "Vezetői státusz, és kommunikáció a parancsuralmi rendszerben, különös tekintettel a Rendőri Hivatás Etikai Kódexére, valamint a vezetési stílusokra a Lasswell modell alapján [Leadership Status and Communication in the Command-and-Control System, with Particular Regard to the Code of Ethics of the Police Profession and Leadership Styles Based on the Lasswell Model]," *Magyar Rendészet [Hungarian Police]* 18, no. 5 (2018): 177-195, <https://doi.org/10.32577/mr.2018.5.10>.

⁷ Valcsicsák Imre, *Rendészeti (szakmai) etika [Law Enforcement (Professional) Ethics]* (Budapest: Nemzeti Közszolgálati Egyetem, 2013), 182pp.

Does the autocratic leader tend to dominate the conversation, emphasize his own opinion, and interrupt his partners? Does the democratic leader allow the staff to express their own views and will in the course of communication? Is the laissez-faire leader equal in communicating with the other group members?

Hofstede's power distance matrix can provide an answer to all of these questions, as we can determine the extent to which members of an organization accept that power is unequally distributed. This is especially true during the issuance of the order and the measures taken against the citizens.

In terms of individualism versus collectivism, the extent to which people are able to integrate into groups can be assessed. Is the individual able to assert himself in a strict bureaucratic system where his self-interest must be pushed into the background against the organization's goals? Can you work in a team, or will you be more successful on your own?

With the help of the study of avoiding uncertainty, it is also possible to assess whether the codes of ethics characteristic of bureaucratic organizations are indeed guidelines and beliefs among those working in the organization. Can they identify with it or, on the contrary, do they rely on absolute truth?

Regarding masculinity versus femininity, one examines whether enforcement and performance orientation (masculine qualities in Hofstede's model) or cooperation and care (feminine qualities in Hofstede's model) dominate in the law enforcement organization.

The examination of long- versus short-term orientation focuses on the relationship between responding to current and future challenges and the reflections of the past. For example, do law enforcement leaders prioritize their organization's traditions or the accelerated globalization? Is adaptation for pragmatic problem-solving necessary, or is there no need to improve the organization?

In the sixth dimension, leniency and restraint play a role, referring in this respect to the degree of freedom, that is, the restraints imposed on the worker by the bureaucratic organization, the law enforcement. Think, for example, of restricting fundamental rights.

Organization of the Study

The general aim of the study is to create a data source that gives a realistic picture of Hofstede's grouped dimensional theory in law enforcement in view of the selected sample and enhance the leadership theory of police leaders.

Before elaborating the questions necessary for the survey implementation, basic historical research was carried out through an analysis of primary and secondary sources. The survey method forms the backbone of scientific methodology. It employs quantitative analysis to satisfy the research needs (i.e., obtaining as much information as possible). The method is suitable for achieving the objectives (i.e., allowing to make evidence-based recommendations) and lays down pillars (i.e., divisions are comparable, trends can be described in a qualitative and quantitative context). The survey was conducted online.

The sample consisted exclusively of the students of the Faculty of Law Enforcement. When selecting the sample, the author placed particular emphasis on maintaining the rules of research ethics, addressing, among others, publicity and anonymity issues. During the compilation of the survey, open-ended and closed-ended questions had to be answered. A total of 22 people completed the questionnaire, so the survey cannot be considered representative.

After compiling and completing the questionnaires, the responses were compiled into a database. Among the statistical tests, the author calculated maximum, minimum, mean, and standard deviation functions and performed scaling suitable for estimating correlations.

The author's hypothesis is that the power distance in the law enforcement organization is rather large, individualism is more prevalent, uncertainty is avoided, long-term orientation is stuck in the past, and the constraint is significant.

Research Results

Age

One question asked was about the respondent's age. From the categories listed, the respondent had to choose which interval within the category included his age. Only one category could be selected from the list. According to the results, 12 people were in the 18-21 age group and 9 in the 21-31 age group. One person indicated the category between the ages of 51 and 61, which thus proved to be an invaluable result, as the professional employment relationship precludes a person from studying full-time at this age (Figure 1). In Hungary, in the 2019/2020 school year, 1666 thousand children and young people, 86% of the affected 3-22-year-olds, participated in full-time training in public education and higher education at various levels, of which 203.6 thousand in higher education.⁸ Consequently, the age rate of the respondents, which is predominantly the same as the age of those studying full-time, correlates with the maximum value.

Gender Identity

The respondent had to select the category that currently characterized their gender (Regardless of sex, they were classified at birth). Only one category could be selected from the list. Among the respondents were 17 men and five women. Due to the creation of equal opportunities, the transgender category was also set up; however, there was no such gender identity among the respondents. Comparing the data with the survey of the Central Statistical Office, it can be

⁸ "Központi Statisztikai Hivatal Oktatási adatok, 2019/2020 [Education Data, 2019/2020]," Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (KSH) [Central Statistics Office], last modified August 10, 2021, <https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/oktat/oktatas1920/index.html>.

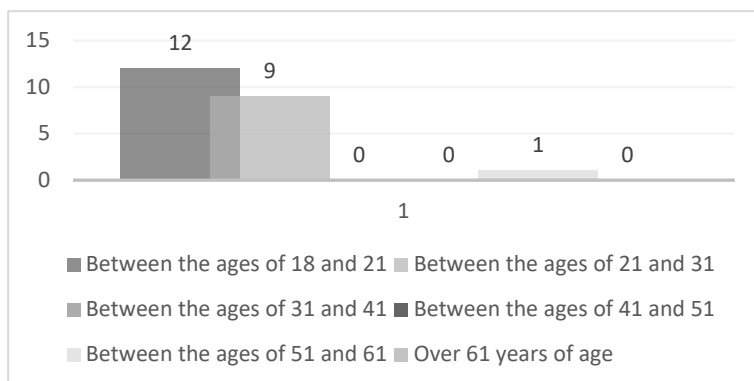


Figure 1: Age of the Respondents.

stated that due to the gender composition of the relevant age group, the number of men exceeds the number of women of almost all ages, with the exception of the 19-23 age group.⁹ In the research, the number of men is much higher than women, so the number of women represented the minimum value.

Specialization

Respondents were asked about the area of their specialization. They had to select one category for the field of their current studies. No one among the respondents took the undergraduate civil national security or the criminal administration course. Two respondents were taking the basic course of law enforcement administration, ten – the basic training course in law enforcement, four – the basic training course in crime, and six – the basic course in disaster management (Figure 2). In 2019/20, 4420 people applied to study in the Faculty of Law Enforcement, of which 1567 persons enlisted in their first choice. As a result of the admission process, only 701 people started their studies.¹⁰ The maximum value in this respect (in 2021) was formed by the graduates of the Bachelor's degree program in law enforcement.

⁹ "Központi Statisztikai Hivatal Oktatási adatok, 2019/2020."

¹⁰ Kovács Gábor, "A Nemzeti Közszerződéti Egyetem Rendészettudományi Kar alapképzés intenzív szakaszának teljesítésével kapcsolatos hallgatói véleményének összegző vizsgálata 2012-2019 között [Summary of the Students' Opinion on the Completion of the Intensive Phase of the Basic Training of the University of Public Service Faculty of Law Enforcement between 2012 and 2019]," *Magyar Rendészet* 20, no. 3. (2020): 163-178, <https://doi.org/10.32577/mr.2020.3.10>.

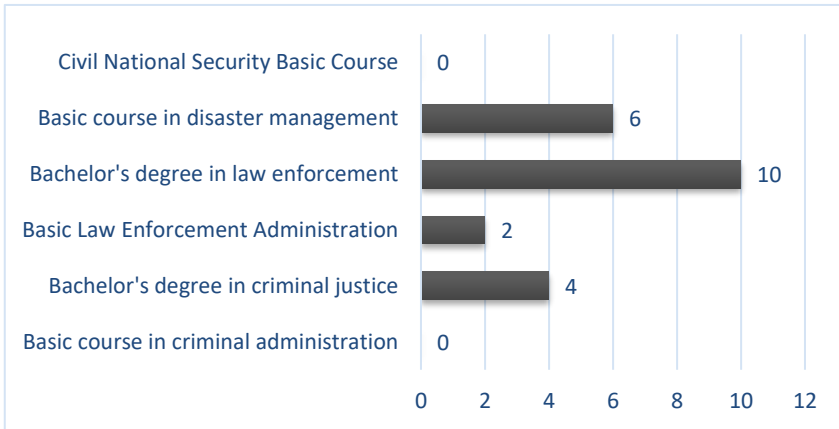


Figure 2: Field of Specialization of the Respondents.

Professionalism

We wanted to know whether the respondent saw law enforcement as a profession or simply as a job. Twenty respondents consider law enforcement to be a profession, while two interpreted it simply as an opportunity for employment.

Leadership Styles

The question posed concerns leadership styles. The respondent had to choose the category that s/he thought was best suited to lead the police force. Only one category could be selected from the list. According to the respondents, nine people consider the autocratic leadership style and 13 – the democratic leadership style as most suitable for leading the law enforcement organization. No one selected “laissez-faire” as the most suitable leadership style.

Hofstede Power Matrix and Dimensions

We wanted to elicit the views of the respondents on power distances and different dimensions prevailing in their current place of employment. The respondent had to rate each statement on a scale of 1-5 in terms of agreement and/or disagreement. The highest concurrence with a statement was rated by 5, and the non-consensual statements by 1.

Twelve respondents agreed—fully or partially—with the statement, “The higher a person is in the hierarchy, the more unattainable (isolated from feedback) he is.” Yet, eight respondents were unsure whether or not they agreed with this statement (Figure 3). A high number of respondents (7) were uncertain about the statement, “Due to his position as a middle manager, he is obliged to cooperate with subordinates and senior management, so he is direct and humane in both directions.” The same number (7) categorically agreed with it. The

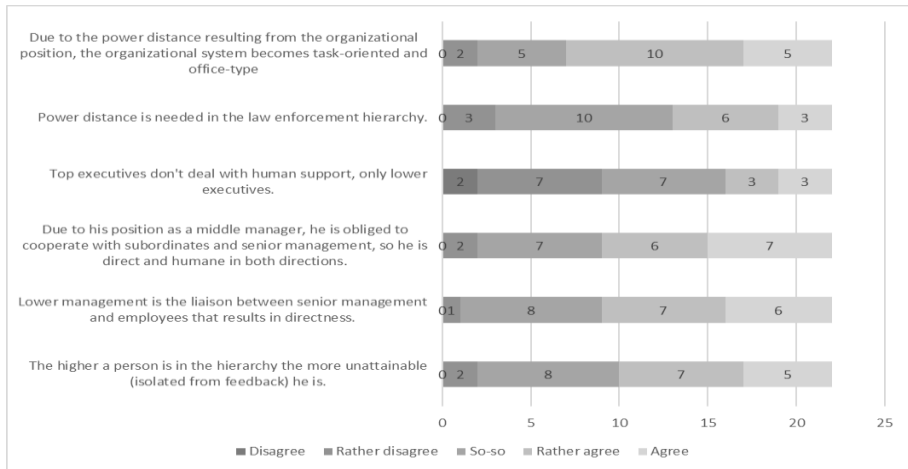


Figure 7: Hofstede Power Matrix and Dimensions.

author's third statement states, "Lower management is the liaison between senior management and employees that results in directness." The highest number of respondents (8) were unsure how to assess it. Six people fully agreed with the statement, and seven rather agreed. My fourth statement was, "Top executives don't deal with human support, only lower executives." Seven respondents were unsure, and another seven rather disagreed with the statement. Two people completely refuted the author's claim. Three respondents agreed fully, and three – partially. My last statement was, "Due to the power distance resulting from the organizational position, the organizational system becomes task-oriented and office-type." The highest number of respondents (15) agreed with this statement – 10 fully and five partially. Disagreeing and uncertain were, respectively, five and two of the respondents.

Interpretation of Results and Conclusions

Based on respondents' views on the author's three statements related to power distance, it was found that the distances of power in the law enforcement organization differ with respect to the leaders at different levels. Respondents believe that senior executives at the top of the hierarchy are more out of direct reach by personnel. This can be interpreted as a high power distance index, thus reflecting the magnitude of inequality vis-à-vis other members of management. All this presupposes one-sidedness in the issuance of guidance, where the flow of information is one-directional – from the top manager to staff. It should be noted that the number of uncertain respondents showed a relatively high value for this question, but overall, more than half of the respondents answered this

question “more or less.” No one disagreed with the statement (rather yes 31.8%; yes 22.7%; “more or less” 36.4%).

Respondents assessed the position of middle managers as a transmission, i.e., a link between senior management and the staff. Its role mediates directness and humanity, thus evaluating the degree of inequality in terms of power distance as small. Although the number of uncertain voters was outstanding here as well, more than half of the respondents agreed partially or fully that the mid-level leader had a cooperative and inequality-sharing role (rather yes 27.3%; yes 31.8%; “more or less” 31.8%). The hypothesis that leadership at the lower levels would be the main pillar of communication and thus the power distance index would be lowest, therefore higher equality among organizational members, was not categorically supported.

Managers at lower levels are in direct contact with staff on a day-to-day basis, which should thus result in directness. Most respondents were uncertain, yet more than half of all respondents agreed partially or fully with the respective statement (yes – 27.3%; rather yes – 31.8%).

Regarding power distance, it has been established that the one-way chain of issuing instructions, based on the bureaucratic nature of the law enforcement body, i.e., on the principle of hierarchy and centralized, one-person leadership, has become entrenched over the years (“agree” and “rather agree” combined – 54.5%; 59.1%, 63.6%). Nevertheless, the number of uncertain respondents is a good reflection of the fact that some change has started: neither are the results definitive nor could power distances change depending on the hierarchy. This does not obviously mean that staff is not obliged to carry out orders (unless they are illegal) or that it may give an order to a superior. It reflects the fact that managers are also accessible. This is an indication of equality rather than inequality. Commanding care is as important an element of leadership as it is of managing the organization itself. This is a new approach, i.e., in addition to one-person leadership, it can also make the leadership trend an integral part of the law enforcement agency. The issuance of instructions can be carried out in one direction, but it can also take the form of executive guidance and support, in which the staff plays an integral part. Long-term orientation is just as important in this issue, as the beginning of change shows the need for keeping the traditions and development, which presupposes pragmatic problem solving (joint performance of tasks by managers and staff) and adaptation.

On the issue of masculinity and femininity, Hofstede associated masculine traits with performance, success, competition, and perseverance, while feminine traits were associated with tenderness, solidarity, support, and human relationships. The study found that senior executives cannot be categorically considered to be endowed with masculine traits, just as executives at lower levels are not. The number of unsure respondents was the same as those who disagreed, partially or fully, with my statement that, in addition to senior management, only lower managers deal with human issues. All this proves that, regardless of their position in the hierarchy, the top and the lower command, whatever the power

distance and inequality, have feminine qualities in support and human relations (rather not – 31.8%; not – 9.1%; “more or less” – 31.8%). Commanding care as one of the tasks of a leader cannot be considered a masculine trait in Hofstede’s theory of dimensions. However, the culture of law enforcement organizations is “leaving no one behind and by himself” in the name of team spirit and solidarity. However, this appears not only at lower management levels but also at the top management level, which can be interpreted as another trend in the emergence of the managerial approach.

On the other hand, respondents clarified that the hierarchy of law enforcement, which corresponds to competition, success, and performance, is the official and task-oriented relationship between direct position and power in the hierarchy and leadership and performance orientation. All this prevails over solidarity, cooperation, and care.

Almost all respondents have a sense of professionalism, which could be interpreted categorically given the substantial number of affirmative respondents (90.9% yes vs. 9.1% no). All this reflects that law enforcement work should be interpreted by respondents not only as a job but as a straightforward profession. As a result, respondents are likely to accept all restrictions, such as freedom of movement, expression, assembly, association, and so on. These are restrictions on their constitutional and fundamental human rights, as the Professional Service Act requires. All this symbolizes the limitation of Hofstede’s sixth dimension. In this regard, the organization does not tolerate any leniency; it rejects it. (Although specificity is given by law, it is up to the individual to decide whether to enforce this condition voluntarily.¹¹) Of course, all this is supplemented by recommendations in the code of ethics. The results move towards collectivism since by accepting these limitations, the individual can put the service’s interests ahead of his or her individual interests. The ability to work in a team is not a result of teamwork but a necessary component for achieving the purpose and fulfilling the mission of law enforcement agencies as defined by law.

In terms of leadership styles, long- and short-term orientation and collectivism were the most measurable. Slightly more than half of the respondents thought that a democratic leadership style was the most appropriate way to lead a law enforcement agency, while slightly less than half voted for autocratic leadership. The laissez-faire leadership style did not receive a vote (Democratic 59.1% vs. Autocratic 40.9%). This is important when it comes to long-term strategy because it requires a general shift from the hierarchical system of centralized leadership and giving and receiving instructions. Respondents believe that the leadership of the organization and its goals can build on collectivism and in line with the hallmarks of a democratic leadership style, rather than being compatible with the authoritarian style endowed by bureaucratic traits. The authoritarian leader does not let decisions slip out of his hands. The democrat believes in

¹¹ Act XLII of 2015 on the Employment Status of the Professional Staff of Bodies Performing Law Enforcement Tasks, *Hszt.*, last modified July 26, 2021, <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1500042.tv>.

teamwork and collective decision-making, which is realized via external and internal cooperation. Thus, managerial communication ranges from one-sidedness to two-sidedness, i.e., the staff is given more space in terms of feedback or instructions' execution. In addition to individual interests, the group's interests are also considered.

In light of the research results, the author was able to substantiate his hypothesis only partially. He could only partially prove that the power distance in the law enforcement organization is high. In fact, it is getting smaller. Individualism is being replaced by collectivism, which can also be seen in leadership styles. Constraints remain significant, and uncertainty avoidance is high.

Recommendations

Hofstede carried out his research and the creation of its dimensions at various companies in the private sector. Law enforcement, with its particular characteristics, cannot be uniformly compared to elements of the private sector without consideration of its unique features. At the same time, there is nothing to prevent us from mapping the existence or absence of these dimensions within law enforcement or even proving the emergence of new dimensions, which thus establish a new paradigm within law enforcement opposed to competition. Nor is there any prohibition on using good practices from the private sector, thus encouraging the attainment of the objectives set out in the cardinal laws (for example, the Basic Law or the Police Act.)

Neither the private sector nor law enforcement can avoid the effects of globalization and transformation. New procedures, new methods, and new good practices can enhance the functioning of law enforcement, guarantee the achievement of goals and ensure that individuals feel safe. This requires specific procedures that maximize strengths and opportunities, eliminate threats, and remedy weaknesses. One of the subjects and central elements of this may be the development of a managerial attitude, which in the sense of communicating these partial results of the research leads to a new world, a perspective that seemed unthinkable for law enforcement a hundred years ago.

Given the new research findings, it is worth considering the extent to which the six dimensions set up by Hofstede could improve law enforcement if incorporated into leadership awareness during leadership training. What would happen if collectivism could play a role in addition to success orientation, which is not just about making a profit but rather about satisfying a social goal? Why not invite an executive driven not by his personal goals and interests but by the creation of a collective value – security? Why not give up selfishness to meet the social need for creating security?

This is not a question of one-person, centralized leadership, of hierarchy as a specific feature of law enforcement, but of the emergence of a new trend to guarantee the application of humane and collectivist leadership styles into the system. The research results confirm that we have set off in a direction that pre-

destines the significance of the ideas discussed here and their practical implementation. To sustain and further develop all this, it is necessary not to deviate from the path because it leads us in the right direction, ensuring social purpose—the maintenance of public security and the protection of public order—and respect for collective values.

Disclaimer

The views expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent official views of the PFP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, participating organizations, or the Consortium's editors.

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The Impact of Organizational Design and Leadership on Strategic Communications

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Abstract: Information warfare, including strategic communications, is becoming ever more crucial in defending national interests and competing globally. Therefore, organizations are increasingly employing strategic communications within the information environment to pursue the organization’s mission and goals. Unfortunately, many organizations lack strategic, structural, and environmental alignment, resulting in reduced efficiency and effectiveness of strategic communications. This article explores the current structure of many organizations defending and competing in a turbulent information environment, proposes a different configuration that balances efficiency and effectiveness, outlines the importance of innovation, and emphasizes the strategic role of leadership throughout the organization and change process.

Keywords: strategic communication, leadership, organizational design, psychological operations, Military Information Support Operations, MISO.

Introduction

Today’s complex information environment finds nations and international organizations challenged to manage the information environment to support their security interests.¹ Following the description of Baptist and Gluck, the information environment is a “vector for malicious narratives in the ongoing battle

¹ Constantin Raicu, “Considerations Regarding Information Warfare and Competitions in the Current Global Security Environment,” Proceedings of the 11th International Scientific Conference “Defense Resources Management in the 21st Century,” Braşov, Romania, November 10-11, 2016, pp. 264-284, <http://www.codrm.eu/conferences/2016/Raicu%20Constantin.pdf>.

for global hegemony.” The United States, its allies, and partners have been “under insidious assault for years” by actors such as Russia, seen by Russian influence in US elections to military activity in Georgia and Ukraine.² Recognizing that they cannot compete with the West directly in conventional terms, such actors employ information warfare to destabilize Western societies.^{3,4} One demonstration of this is the \$1.4 billion that Russia spent on international propaganda from the fall of the Soviet Union till 2011.⁵ Russia fully embraces the idea that “[h]e who controls the trend will control the narrative – and ultimately, the narrative controls the will of the people.”⁶ As an article in Russia’s *Bulletin of the Academy of Military Sciences* states: “[t]he victim country does not even suspect that it is being subjected to information-psychological influence. This leads in turn to a paradox: the aggressor achieves his military and political aims with the active support of the population of the country that is being subjected to influence.”⁷

Information Warfare, when conducted properly, is a flexible full-spectrum capability that is adaptable according to the situation in the virtual and physical environment.⁸ Information warfare employs, among others, social education and media dissemination platforms such as “magazines, newspapers, radio, television, cinemas, schools, professional unions, public conferences, seminars, advertising leaflets, e-mail, web pages or social media.”⁹ This article does not look deeply into the impact of information warfare on the West. Instead, it reviews a challenge facing one aspect of information warfare, Strategic Communications, in competing against and shaping narratives in a turbulent information environment. It argues that without proper alignment between organizational goals, strategy, and structure, as well as human and artificial intelligence components, those charged with developing and executing Strategic Communications will face continually degraded operations. Additionally, the article discusses opportunities for organizations to align strategic communications, structure, and leadership to meet the challenges of a dynamic and continuously evolving operational environment.

² Jeffrey Baptist and Julian Gluck, “The Gray Legion: Information Warfare Within Our Gates,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 14, no. 4 (2021): 37-55, <https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.14.4.1928>.

³ Media Ajir and Bethany Vaillant, “Russian Information Warfare: Implications for Deterrence Theory,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 70-89.

⁴ Baptist and Gluck, “The Gray Legion.”

⁵ Ajir and Vaillant, “Russian Information Warfare.”

⁶ Jarred Prier, “Commanding the Trend: Social Media as Information Warfare,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 50-85, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-11_Issue-4/Prier.pdf.

⁷ Quoted in Ajir and Vaillant, “Russian Information Warfare,” p. 77.

⁸ Raicu, “Considerations Regarding Information Warfare and Competitions,” 267.

⁹ Raicu, “Considerations Regarding Information Warfare and Competitions,” 265.

The concept of “Strategic Communications” is looked at in two parts “communication” and “strategy,” as the combined term suggests that not all communication is strategic. Next, the article discusses the importance of strategy and organizational design with impacts on strategic communications. Lastly, it explores the role of organizational leaders in ensuring strategy implementation.

Why Change Is Important

To compete, organizations must not only get better at what they do since their competitors can also get better; instead, organizations must craft a strong strategy that ensures sustainable competitive advantage.¹⁰ Furthermore, the organization must have structure and competencies to support the strategy. Leaders must acknowledge and understand that organizational structure and control systems carry out the strategy, making it imperative to align structure to strategy. Furthermore, organizational culture modifies organizational outcomes with strategy, structure, control, and culture influencing each other.¹¹

Organizations must differentiate themselves and look for opportunities rather than playing the same game with the same tools as competitors, which may potentially only provide a limited or temporary advantage. Organizational structure should help stakeholders identify opportunities, looking beyond the conventional, toward how to do things better, quicker, cheaper, differently, more conveniently, faster, and more reliable. The organization’s posture must be on learning, continuously scanning for future change and opportunities, then responding quickly with a balance of efficiency and effectiveness.^{12,13,14} Organizational change is complex and requires time, commitment, and determination for the entire organization, but to create sustainable competitive advantage, innovation and opportunity exploitation are necessary.^{15,16}

¹⁰ Stan Abraham, “Stretching Strategic Thinking,” *Strategy & Leadership* 33, no. 5 (October 2005): 5-12, <https://doi.org/10.1108/10878570510616834>.

¹¹ Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival*, 3rd ed. (New York: McCraw Hill, 2010).

¹² Abraham, “Stretching Strategic Thinking.”

¹³ Richard L. Hughes, Katherine Beatty, and David L. Dinwoodie, *Becoming a Strategic Leader: Your Role in Your Organization’s Enduring Success* (John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 21.

¹⁴ John L. Thompson and Melissa Cole, “Strategic Competency – the Learning Challenge,” *Journal of Workplace Learning* 9, no. 5 (September 1997): 153-162, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13665629710169611>.

¹⁵ Richard M. Burton, Børge Obel, and Dorthe Døjbak Håkonsson, *Organizational Design: A Step-by-Step Approach*, 4th ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 7.

¹⁶ Abraham, “Stretching Strategic Thinking.”

Strategic Communication

Littlejohn defines communication theory as the body of theories that form an understanding of the communication process.¹⁷ While there has not been agreement on the definition of communication, most researchers suggest that communication is the process of creating meaning.

B. van Ruler suggests three lenses to view communication theory: communication as a one-way process, communication as a two-way process of meaning creation, and an omnidirectional diachronic process of meaning. As a one-way process, communication is a monologue in which the sender attempts to construct or reconstruct meaning developed by the receiver. As a two-way process, communication acts as a dialogue in which two or more people construct meaning together. As an omnidirectional diachronic process, communication focuses on the continuous development of meaning itself.¹⁸

Understanding the basic ideas behind each communication lens is critical because each lens has varying demands for information feedback. Wiener was the first to acknowledge that feedback mechanisms are essential to communication theory. He emphasized that purposeful behavior requires feedback, used to adjust the behavior. In this way, the behavior remains purposeful and has a specific effect. What matters is not the single communication but rather the process of meaning creation, as meaning is continuously created in an ongoing exchange process. Therefore, the greater the network of communication, the greater the demand for information processing within an organization.¹⁹

Organizations that view communication as one-directional, those that throw information into the environment without incorporating feedback or interaction will struggle to compete. Such organizations overlook that consumers continuously negotiate meaning while other actors are engaged in the information environment, complementing, competing against, or confusing communication efforts. Due to a rapidly changing technology environment, people have what seems to be endless options for accessing information.²⁰ Competing options and a high frequency of use by consumers mean that people receive continuous exposure to various messages across multiple physical and virtual mediums. Researchers suggest that consumers face more significant confusion in processing

¹⁷ Stephen W. Littlejohn, *Theories of Human Communication*, 2nd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1983).

¹⁸ Betteke van Ruler, "Communication Theory: An Underrated Pillar on Which Strategic Communication Rests," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 12, no. 4 (August 2018): 367-381, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1452240>.

¹⁹ Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1948).

²⁰ Van Thac Dang, "Information Confusion and Intention to Stop Using Social Networking Site: A Moderated Mediation Study of Psychological Distress and Perceived Novelty," *Information Technology & People* 33, no. 5 (July 2020): 1427-1452, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-03-2020-0117>.

information due to the number of choices and information available to them.^{21,22} Individuals struggle to accurately interpret the information environment due to confusion related to similarity, overload, and ambiguity.²³ First, with exposure to multiple, seemingly similar messages from varying sources, consumers face similarity confusion, unable to distinguish which sources are accurate or reliable.^{24,25} Next, bombardment by a plethora of information challenge cognitive threshold, leaving people unable to process all the information, leading to confusion.^{26,27} Lastly, users face ambiguity confusion as they face incongruent, unclear, or misleading information.²⁸

Describing the information environment in such a way supports the concept that communication is an omnidirectional diachronic process of meaning development. According to van Ruler, “[t]hrough this lens of communication... interaction is seen as a dynamic interplay between actors in their roles as senders and receivers, which influences the consequences of the communicative transactions at a fundamental level.” She further defines communication not as a sequence of events but rather as a “continuous and simultaneous interaction of a large number of variables that are moving, changing, and affecting each other.”²⁹ Therefore, unlike two-way communication, which depicts communication as a conversation, the omnidirectional diachronic process reveals that those engaged in the communication are not necessarily related or in proximity to each other.³⁰

Furthermore, by studying various definitions of strategy, this article views strategy as the critical element that transforms communication from a process

²¹ Qing Wang and Paurav Shukla, “Linking Sources of Consumer Confusion to Decision Satisfaction: The Role of Choice Goals,” *Psychology & Marketing* 30, no. 4 (February 2013): 295-304, <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20606>.

²² Sheena S. Iyenger and Mark R. Lepper, “When Choice Is Demotivating: Can One Desire Too Much of a Good Thing?” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79, no. 6 (2000): 995-1006, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.6.995>.

²³ Dang, “Information Confusion and Intention to Stop Using Social Networking Site.”

²⁴ Wang and Shukla, “Linking Sources of Consumer Confusion to Decision Satisfaction.”

²⁵ Jasper Doomen, “Information Inflation.” *Journal of Information Ethics* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 27-37.

²⁶ Angela Edmunds and Anne Morris, “The Problem of Information Overload in Business Organizations: A Review of the Literature.” *International Journal of Information Management* 20, no. 1 (February 2020): 17-28, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0268-4012\(99\)00051-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0268-4012(99)00051-1).

²⁷ Quentin Jones, Gilad Ravid, and Shezaf Rafaeli, “Information Overload and the Message Dynamics of Online Interaction Spaces: A Theoretical Model and Empirical Exploration,” *Information Systems Research* 15, no. 2 (June 2004): 194-210, <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.1040.0023>.

²⁸ Wang and Shukla, “Linking Sources of Consumer Confusion to Decision Satisfaction.”

²⁹ van Ruler, “Communication Theory.”

³⁰ van Ruler, “Communication Theory.”

into intended (strategic) communications that advance an organization's mission to ensure sustained survival and success.³¹

Organizational Design Theory

Unfortunately, as Mintzberg argues, many assume that "organizations are all alike: collections of component parts to which elements of structure can be added and deleted at will."³² Burns and Stalker rightfully presented that differing organizational structures produce varying effectiveness according to the conditions they face.³³ The success of Strategic Communications, like any other effort, is wholly contingent on the organization employing Strategic Communications while relying on the implementation of thoughtful and good strategy and organizational design. Misfits (imbalances) between strategy, structure, and environment often lead to poor performance within the organization, including degraded or confused operations within Strategic Communications.³⁴

The structural components of organizational design, which include goals, strategy, and structure, and human and Artificial Intelligence components, which include task and agents, people (leadership and employees), coordination and control, and incentive mechanisms, should be viewed holistically to ensure fit among each other.³⁵ According to Roberts, high performance within organizations results from fit among three elements: organizational strategy, organizational structure, and operational environment.³⁶ Given that structure follows strategy, leaders must first clearly outline the organization's priorities for efficiency and effectiveness according to their assessment of the organization's situation (internal and external) and their choice of achieving organizational goals. After this, leadership can determine how to structure the organization, partition tasks by work roles, and design reporting relationships according to those roles.

Using the multi-contingency model from Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, the following section explores the current structure of most government organizations employing strategic communications and then recommends a configura-

³¹ Ansgar Zerfass, Dejan Verčič, Howard Nothhaft, and Kelly Page Werder, "Strategic Communication: Defining the Field and its Contribution to Research and Practice," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 12, no. 4 (2018): 487-505, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1493485>.

³² Henry Mintzberg, "Organization Design: Fashion or Fit?" *Harvard Business Review* 59, no. 1 (1981): 103-116.

³³ Tom Burns and G. M. Stalker, *The Management of Innovation*, Revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³⁴ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 13.

³⁵ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 7.

³⁶ John Roberts, *The Modern Firm: Organizational Design for Performance and Growth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 12.

tion that better aligns components within a turbulent information environment.³⁷ The article further explores task division, task allocation, reward distribution, information flows, and decision-making.

The Current Design of Many Government Organizations

Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson emphasize that the environment impacts an organization's strategy to varying degrees. The more dynamic or turbulent an environment, the greater the need for proper alignment between the environment and business strategy.³⁸ Despite operating in a turbulent, constantly evolving information environment, many governmental organizations function according to a hierarchy (functional) system that best operates within a varied environment. The Cambridge Dictionary defines hierarchy as a "system in which people or things are arranged according to their importance."³⁹ In his book, "Flat Army: Creating a Connected and Engaged Organization," Pontefract mentions that today, many organizations are operating with twenty-first-century technology, internet-enabled business processes, twentieth-century design, and nineteenth-century management principles.⁴⁰ Such an idea reflects the many government organizations where hierarchical structures and command and control actions and attitudes are prominent.

Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson describe such organizational configurations as functional. The focus is on functional specialties rather than product, service, or customer orientation within a functional configuration. At the top of the configuration is the department manager overseeing sub-units, each with a well-defined job. The hierarchy uses rules and directives to coordinate and accomplish tasks. With executives positioned at the organization's center, information flows through them, to and from the top. Executives are also responsible for making decisions, allocating resources, and coordinating sub-unit activities.⁴¹

Research indicates that most organizations operate within functional hierarchy systems and typically employ defender strategies.⁴² Defenders often prioritize innovation less and concentrate more on maintaining their competitive position, typically measured in share or profitability.⁴³ For Strategic Communications, this is often reported as a measure of performance, with a struggle to

³⁷ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 8.

³⁸ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 57.

³⁹ "Hierarchy," Cambridge Dictionary, accessed April 23, 2022, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hierarchy>.

⁴⁰ Dan Pontefract, *Flat Army: Creating a Connected and Engaged Organization* (Vancouver, BC: Figure 1 Publishing, 2018).

⁴¹ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 69-74.

⁴² Bindu Gupta, "A Comparative Study of Organizational Strategy and Culture Across Industry," *Benchmarking: An International Journal* 18, no. 4 (July 2011): 510-528, <https://doi.org/10.1108/14635771111147614>.

⁴³ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 32-34.

demonstrate an effect.⁴⁴ Defender organizations typically orient themselves more toward exploitation rather than exploration. Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson define exploitation as “taking advantage of current or known technologies to do things in a more efficient or refined way.” At the same time, exploration is “the process of seeking new technologies or new ways of doing things and includes search, variation, risk-taking, and innovation.” With a focus on being efficient in the utilization of resources, defender organizations focus all innovation on process innovation with the goal of efficiency.⁴⁵

Functional configurations utilizing a defender strategy best operate within varied environments. Varied environments are complex due to the many interdependent factors that influence one another, such as political and financial issues, but the environment is reasonably predictable. Organizations commonly apply forecasting and trend analysis techniques in varied environments to project future organizational actions with reasonable accuracy. The primary role of executives in a varied environment is planning and coordination, ensuring that the organization can address environmental interdependencies.⁴⁶

Functional configurations align best with a complicated task design known for high connectedness with few variations and high repetition. A high degree of coordination must be in place for this design, as a breakdown of any task can jeopardize the entire operation.⁴⁷

Management within a defender strategy often has a short-term orientation focusing on efficiency, exhibiting high uncertainty avoidance and a low preference for delegation, replacing delegation with formalized rules to manage subordinates.⁴⁸ As a result, they tend to make reactive and short-term decisions with high levels of detail, neglecting strategic and long-term decisions as they focus on operational control. Furthermore, managers within this structure often need to be kept abreast of all details of operations so they can react quickly to undesirable situations or activities.

The organizational climate of most functional configurations is termed the *internal process* by Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson and exhibits high tension and low readiness to change. The climate is associated with increased conflict, low morale, and low leadership credibility. Resistance to change is often caused by disappointments related to previous change efforts. Emotionally, staff members can be described as disappointed, tranquil, ashamed, fatigued, and less trustful, with increasing conflict and likely perceiving rewards as inequitable. Informal in-

⁴⁴ Claes Wallenius and Sofia Nilsson, “A Lack of Effect Studies and of Effects: The Use of Strategic Communication in the Military Domain,” *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 13, no. 5 (September 2019): 404-417, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2019.1630413>.

⁴⁵ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 30.

⁴⁶ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 54-55

⁴⁷ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 123-124.

⁴⁸ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 135-136.

formation sharing is low, as sharing and openness are not the norms, with information staying within the role or specific job scope of those needing it. The organization must ensure that information processing systems are in place to ensure adequate information sharing.⁴⁹

Leaning more toward a bureaucracy, an organization employing a defender strategy often has a highly formalized and centralized machine-type coordination and control system. Rules and procedures specify work, monitoring, and feedback processes. The machine model relies on high levels of information processing to build efficiencies and adapt to change.⁵⁰

Incentives within this organization are skill-based rather than performance-based. Education, seniority, and rank typically determine pay and incentives. Such a system emphasizes the idea that people should conform to the organization's job descriptions, rules, and policies.⁵¹

Why the Defender Strategy Is a Misfit in Turbulent Environments

As seen in the 2018 National Defense Strategy, the United States and other Western countries are in long-term strategic competition that requires seamless integration of multiple elements of national power, including information.⁵² For organizations focused on competing and shaping the narrative in turbulent environments, the functionally configured defender strategy falls short of competition and is instead a defense of a position. Here signals the first misfit within the current design of some government organizations employing strategic communications.

Next, current research demonstrates that proper organizational strategy alignment becomes more imperative as the environment increases from calm to turbulent.⁵³ In the long run, due to defenders' slowness to change and limited agility, defender organizations face inevitable vulnerability and potential failure as the operational environment changes, such as the emergence of new competition or changes of rules and regulations.⁵⁴ One reason for this lies in their information processing systems. In order to make decisions and act quickly within a turbulent environment, organizations must have a large and fast information processing system. Unfortunately, organizations employing a defender strategy strap themselves to large systems that often lack creativity and flexibility, leaving

⁴⁹ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 141-142.

⁵⁰ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 161-162.

⁵¹ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 183-184.

⁵² Jim Mattis, "Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United State of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge," Department of Defense, accessed April 23, 2022, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

⁵³ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 57.

⁵⁴ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 33.

some organizations stuck in old ways of doing things.⁵⁵ The 9/11 Commission Report, for example, pointed out that outdated information processing and sharing continued to be an obstacle to optimized operations and recommended the development of a “need-to-share” culture of integration rather than a “need-to-know.”⁵⁶

Another reason for increased vulnerability is the organization’s heavy reliance on policies and procedures. Tushman and Nadler warn organizations not to rely solely on organizational policies and practices. These two factors cannot adequately anticipate or respond to internal and external issues impacting organizational effectiveness.⁵⁷

Analyzing innovation introduces another misfit. As discussed, exploration within the defender strategy focuses on process innovation. However, as Lai, Ching, and Wang emphasize, organizations in turbulent environments cannot rely on their competitive advantage but must incorporate advanced technology and innovation into strategy.⁵⁸ Besides an organizational focus on efficiency, the climate is typically known for high tension with low trust and leadership credibility, producing productivity and efficiency as long as innovations are not regularly required.⁵⁹ That said, the innovations required to compete in a turbulent environment would further strain the organizational climate and cause problems for productivity and efficiency. Furthermore, the skill-based incentive framework does not lend well to innovation. The organization rewards individuals for education, rank, and seniority but lacks incentivization for collaboration which is critical for increased innovation.⁶⁰

Also, with an emphasis on predictability, executives within functional configurations can quickly become overwhelmed and lose control as the environment becomes less predictable and more turbulent. Managers within the functional configuration often attempt to respond to unexpected turbulence by driving change but quickly become overloaded. This can be seen by a backlog of decisions, changes, and actions not in coordination across the organization.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 145-146.

⁵⁶ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (2004), 13.3, <https://9-11commission.gov/report/>.

⁵⁷ Michael L. Tushman and David A. Nadler, “Information Processing as an Integrating Concept in Organizational Design,” *The Academy of Management Review* 3, no. 3 (July 1978): 613-624, 615, <https://doi.org/10.2307/257550>.

⁵⁸ Wen-Hsiang Lai, Chio-Ching Lin, and Ting-Chu Wang, “Exploring the Interoperability of Innovation Capability and Corporate Sustainability,” *Journal of Business Research* 68, no. 4 (April 2015): 867-871, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.11.043>.

⁵⁹ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 141-142.

⁶⁰ René Belderbos et al., “Heterogeneity in R&D Cooperation Strategies,” *International Journal of Industrial Organization* 22, no. 8-9 (November 2004): 1237-1263, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijindorg.2004.08.001>.

⁶¹ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 137-138.

Proposed Design for Government Organizations Employing Strategic Communications

Turbulent environments are highly complex and unpredictable. A turbulent environment is the most challenging for managers as there is high uncertainty and the requirement to act and coordinate quickly. Agile organizations can make the right changes at the right time with the right speed, successfully reacting to rapid advancements in technology, the emergence of new competitors, and sudden changes in the environment.⁶² To achieve agility, there must be intentional and balanced decentralized decision-making and formal processes and goals, offering organizational ambidexterity, the optimal balance between efficiency and effectiveness.⁶³

Highly successful strategic communications in a turbulent environment will best operate within an analyzer with an innovation strategy that defends and innovates. Organizations with this strategy prioritize exploration and exploitation, looking beyond what others are doing in search of technologies and markets that can provide sustained competitive advantage while also defending their position. Governmental organizations can realize this through an ambidextrous strategy where incremental and radical innovation co-occurs with product and process innovation. Due to high and fast information processing demands, organizations can support this strategy through frequent monitoring, forecasting, and predictive analytics.⁶⁴

Hierarchical or relatively independent divisions do not perform well in highly complex and continuously changing environments. Instead, Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson point toward the matrix structure that operates according to “dual-authority relations” and has functional and divisional dimensions. With coordination and control resting on their shoulders, functional and divisional managers within a matrix configuration are positioned optimally to coordinate activities across the organization. Furthermore, managers are better able to respond to continual adjustments and changing tasks.⁶⁵

The knotty task design best complements the analyzer strategy within a turbulent environment. This approach empowers teams to develop innovative or adaptive ways and means to achieve results while ensuring integration with other organizational subunits. The knotty task design is highly effective for strategic communications as it enables customized output for the varying audiences (customers) but also creates the most significant demands for managers.⁶⁶

The leadership style of a *producer* is the best fit for this configuration as this type of leader prefers delegation and has high uncertainty avoidance. The producer focuses on “short term and long term; operations and strategy; current

⁶² Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 7.

⁶³ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 21.

⁶⁴ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 37-38.

⁶⁵ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 77-80.

⁶⁶ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 125-126.

products/services and innovation; internal activities and environment reading; hands-on management and delegation so others can act independently; and efficiency and effectiveness.”⁶⁷

Using strong norms embedded within employees and formalization, the clan or mosaic coordination and control system supports the analyzer configuration. Norms are achieved by selecting employees likely to conform, then providing guidance and instruction through formal means such as training manuals. Additionally, rules are learned through modeling by workers and managers. At the same time, written rules are minimal, ensuring greater flexibility.⁶⁸

Profit-sharing/gain-sharing incentivizes the organization, with groups or teams rewarded collectively based on results. Such an incentive design encourages collaboration and innovation, leading to success on projects with limited resources. Furthermore, despite high tension, the incentives system works well in a goal-oriented climate that pursues change through cooperation. Lastly, the profit-sharing/gain-sharing design acts as an organizational glue, ensuring integration between subunits as they confront a turbulent environment.⁶⁹

Matrix Design Case Study: Psychological Operations

From 2011 to 2017, U.S. Psychological Operations (PSYOP) conducted Military Information Support Operations (MISO) in support of Special Operations Command – Forward in Central Africa against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). For background, the LRA “abducted over 60,000 children, massacred tens of thousands of civilians, displaced 2 million people, and destabilized a region the size of California.”⁷⁰ Assessing that most LRA combatants were child soldiers who were abducted, PSYOP initially focused on defection efforts. The operation, according to Col. Bethany Aragon, previous Commander of the U.S. Army’s 4th Military Information Support Group (Airborne), led to a 24 percent increase in LRA defections within one year, five of the six LRA leaders either killed or tried by the international criminal courts, and civilian deaths reduced by 95 percent. Ultimately, the LRA was rendered ineffective, with their forces taken down from 2,000 to less than 100.⁷¹

U.S. PSYOP plays an important role in U.S. Department of Defense communication efforts as PSYOP influences “foreign audience perceptions and subsequent behavior as part of approved programs in support of U.S. government policy and military objectives.”⁷²

⁶⁷ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 137

⁶⁸ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 161-163.

⁶⁹ Burton, Obel, and Håkonsson, *Organizational Design*, 186-187.

⁷⁰ Scott R. Gourley, “Psyop Target: Joseph Kony,” *Issuu*, accessed August 16, 2022, <https://issuu.com/faircountmedia/docs/special-operations-outlook-2018/s/72716>.

⁷¹ Gourley, “Psyop Target.”

⁷² Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 3-13.2 – Psychological Operations* (January 2010), I1, <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp3-13-2.pdf>.

U.S. PSYOP teams often fall under the matrix configuration when deploying, falling in some capacity under the oversight of two bosses, a functional manager and a project manager. In the case above, the regional PSYOP team fell under the functional oversight of the 7th PSYOP Battalion and the Special Operations Command – Forward project oversight in Central Africa.⁷³

The established matrix structure shared resource planning and enabled collaboration between multiple stakeholders to create a community of interest which included nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) Invisible Children and Pathways for Peace, the African Union’s regional task force, the People’s Defense Forces of Uganda, the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization operations in the U.S. State Department, and local and cultural leaders.⁷⁴

Demonstrating the knotty task design, MISO practitioners were empowered to customize MISO operations according to a specified target audience in support of their mission rather than applying generic, cookie-cutter tactics, techniques, and procedures. MISO practitioners could flexibly plan and conduct operations to support mission objectives and authorities rather than rely solely on organizational rules and directives. Furthermore, integrating PSYOPs with other special operations forces subunits formed a “symbiotic whole” toward achieving named objectives.⁷⁵

In this example, the application of an “indigenous approach,” integration, collaboration, information sharing, information environment monitoring, collective analysis, precise targeting, and modifications due to feedback loops led to operational innovation in continually accessing the target audience and exploiting vulnerabilities with tailored messaging. Considering but also looking beyond what others had done before, the community of interest determined that the most effective communication method for the operation was a hybrid communication campaign utilizing traditional radio, leaflet, and aerial loudspeaker operations. This methodology enabled adaptation to the dense jungle environment. Additionally, assessing that most of the target audience were combatants that were once abducted child soldiers, dissemination included prerecorded and printed messages of family members begging the combatants to come home. Application of feedback loops, including defector debrief sessions, enabled the community to modify their operation for continued effectiveness, supporting both near-term and long-term strategies of the operation, which spanned over multiple years. Furthermore, the community and formalized processes, according to Col. Aragon, were crucial to operations by leading to the identification of key LRA leaders.⁷⁶

⁷³ Gourley, “Psyop Target.”

⁷⁴ Gourley, “Psyop Target.”

⁷⁵ The Fayetteville Observer, “How US PsyOps Lured an African Warlord to Defect Using His Mother’s Voice,” *We Are the Mighty*, March 31, 2018, www.wearethemighty.com/mighty-trending/how-us-psyops-lured-an-african-warlord-to-defect-using-his-mothers-voice/.

⁷⁶ Gourley, “Psyop Target.”

Though this example does not highlight all of the elements outlined in the matrix design, the case study emphasizes that combining many of the matrix design elements strengthens operations.

The Role of Strategic Leadership in Organizational Design and Strategy

Astute leaders recognize the extraordinary effort required to achieve and sustain effective operations.⁷⁷ That said, being an effective astute leader does not necessarily mean an individual is an effective strategic leader.⁷⁸ Furthermore, while there is no agreed definition of leadership, “ethical commitments are central to how scholars define leadership and shape their research.”⁷⁹ This is challenging because not everyone’s ethics align, nor is everyone equally clear about their ethics.⁸⁰ Strategic leadership has a more refined description, requiring direction, alignment, and commitment to achieve the enduring performance potential of the organization.⁸¹ Strategic leadership requires leaders to create and agree on clear organizational priorities, with some leaders feeling more like winners and others feeling a bit more like losers, then working together to implement those priorities.⁸² The unit as a whole must implement agreed-upon organizational priorities. If one part of the unit does not work toward organizational priorities, that part impacts other parts and causes the organizational strategy to fail.⁸³ Leaders must work in harmony, sharing information and capabilities, creating synergy, and enabling the organization to grow and succeed.⁸⁴

While working to achieve short-term goals, strategic leaders must keep long-term goals in mind. As Hughes, Beatty, and Dinwoodie state, “strategy involves change, and achieving long-term performance potential in an ever-changing environment requires continuous change.”⁸⁵ To make changes successfully, leaders must challenge their preexisting opinions with new information and knowledge that facilitate decision-making and action-taking and avoid taking decisions that drain the organization’s energy and do not reflect developing capabilities and value. Furthermore, strategic leaders must win the hearts, minds, and

⁷⁷ Leonard R. Sayles, *The Working Leader: The Triumph of High Performance Over Conventional Management Principles* (London: Touchstone, 1999).

⁷⁸ Hughes, Beatty, and Dinwoodie, *Becoming a Strategic Leader*.

⁷⁹ Joanne B. Ciulla, *Ethics, the Heart of Leadership* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 14.

⁸⁰ Ken Hultman, *Balancing Individual and Organizational Values: Walking the Tightrope to Success* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Books, 2002), 325.

⁸¹ Hughes, Beatty, and Dinwoodie, *Becoming a Strategic Leader*, 11.

⁸² Fran Ackerman and Colin Eden, *Making Strategy: Mapping Out Strategic Success* (London: Sage Publications, 2011), 6.

⁸³ Ackerman and Eden, *Making Strategy*, 8.

⁸⁴ Thompson and Cole, “Strategic Competency – the Learning Challenge.”

⁸⁵ Hughes, Beatty, and Dinwoodie, *Becoming a Strategic Leader*, 21

hands of all those engaged in carrying out the strategy to achieve the enduring performance potential of the organization. At the heart of leadership is the ability to engage others to create shared direction, alignment, and commitment. Hughes, Beatty, and Dinwoodie emphasized, “Strategic leaders motivate others through personal connection and inspire them to work together to pursue a superordinate goal that each individual can somehow identify with.”⁸⁶

Conclusion

Russia’s illegal and unjustified invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has not only negatively impacted resources and economies globally but has also had an impact on the information environment. As Russia reaches into global audiences with malign activities, Western strategic communications that defend and compete against malign narratives are essential.

As senior leaders assess current effectiveness and possibility for future operations, many consider additional opportunities of how Strategic Communications may support the achievement of organizational objectives. That said, senior leaders must look internally to evaluate if the organizational strategy and structure fit the outcomes they seek. If misfits exist, leaders must contemplate what needs to be changed, at what level the change needs to begin, and if the organization has the current capability or resources to see change through. Furthermore, for organizational change to succeed, change should begin from the top, supported across leadership, with their focus on carrying out the change effort and strategy elements.

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⁸⁶ Hughes, Beatty, and Dinwoodie, *Becoming a Strategic Leader*, 231.



Research Article

Chains, Continuums, and Virtuous Cycles: Parsing Taiwan's Strategic Narratives and Soft Power Leadership in the Indo-Pacific

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Abstract: Following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in late 2019, Taiwan's international profile rose to prominence. Its public diplomatic campaign in distributing then-depleted stocks of facemasks provided a degree of international solidarity in a growing atmosphere of economic nationalism. Its government-led strategy of preventative measures that kept normalcy on the island while large swaths of the world entered restrictive lockdowns also became a model of resilient public health policies and trust in government directives. Capitalizing on these developments, Taiwan's soft power approach toward its constrained international profile also took on new prominence as it sought to leverage its technological leadership in the context of disrupted, vulnerable global supply chains. This article analyzes Taiwan's strategic narratives as it invests in conceptualizing an arena of increased great power contestation: the Indo-Pacific. It focuses on how elite narratives have employed several discursive strategies that increasingly aim to redirect and reorient supply chains to meet the (un)certainities of geopolitical ideological positioning.

Keywords: Taiwan, strategic narratives, leadership, Indo-Pacific.

Introduction

In a 2021 op-ed piece in *Foreign Affairs*, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen placed the island nation on the "frontlines of a new clash of ideologies" in the Indo-Pacific region. President Tsai identified the Indo-Pacific as a region of economic

opportunities challenged by an assertive “self-assured authoritarianism.” Highlighting the importance of vigilance in upholding regional security, she invoked narratives reminiscent of the Cold War-era domino theory:

Taiwan lies along the first island chain, which runs from northern Japan to Borneo; should this line be broken by force, the consequences would disrupt international trade and destabilize the entire Western Pacific ... a failure to defend Taiwan would not only be catastrophic for the Taiwanese; it would overturn a security architecture that has allowed for peace and extraordinary economic development in the region for seven decades.¹

Tsai’s interweaving of economic and security regional concerns are combined with a reflexive deployment of identity narratives that position Taiwan ideologically with “like-minded partners” of the liberal international order and diametrically opposed to those perceived as threatening that order. This article analyzes Taiwan’s strategic narratives as it attempts to conceptualize an arena of increased great power contestation: the Indo-Pacific. It focuses on how elite narratives have employed several discursive strategies that increasingly aim to redirect and reorient supply chains to meet the (un)certainities of geopolitical ideological positioning.

Situating the Indo-Pacific: Whose Region and for What Purpose?

How Taiwan fits into the architecture of the Indo-Pacific region has been dependent on external actors and events, as well as on state attempts to work within preexisting frameworks. The “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” gained credence within the US government under the Trump administration as an open-ended concept to redefine American engagement in the Pacific region. The concept aimed to address the challenges posed by perceived Chinese threats and the opportunities for cooperation across a range of issues among like-minded partners. According to the now declassified US *Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific*, issued by the Trump administration, America has

a long history of fighting back against repressive regimes on behalf of those who value freedom and openness. As the world’s largest economy, with the strongest military and a vibrant democracy, it is incumbent on the United States to lead from the front.²

¹ Ing-wen Tsai, “Taiwan and the Fight for Democracy: A Force for Good in the Changing International Order,” *Foreign Affairs* 100, no. 6 (November/December 2021), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/taiwan/2021-10-05/taiwan-and-fight-democracy>.

² Key elements of the Framework include: unobstructed access to international sea and air traffic; liberalizing trade and investment; promoting political liberalization and maintaining the U.S.-led postwar liberal international order. Robert C. O’Brien, “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” White House, January 5, 2021, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/OBrien-Expanded-Statement.pdf>.

Political elites and stakeholders' acts in problematizing and defining the region bear powerful consequences on how the Indo-Pacific region is conceived. For example, Indo-Pacific policies can be interpreted as counterbalancing China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure projects and state-led financing of strategic ports, transportation hubs, etc. Yet, for the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue partners ("The Quad": US, Japan, India, and Australia), the framework is often construed as being purposely vague on specifics beyond the aspirational, perhaps due to underlying perceptual problems among each of its members' objectives, needs, and insecurities toward the region. These, in turn, affect how actors problematize the scope of possible involvement and how the region is construed from geographical, political, and economic standpoints. For instance, while the US military has sought to connect Indo-Pacific matters to its outlay of command hierarchy, Japan's conceptions are more in line with economic and political systems. While there may be aligning perceptions on a Chinese threat to existing power structures, this does not easily translate into a coherent understanding that could lead to unified strategies or policies to address such concerns.³

Taiwan, which has an important yet unofficial relationship with the United States, has seen its role in the Asia-Pacific elevated because of the Sino-U.S. trade war, the decoupling of 5G technology supply chains, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it is not a party to the Quad's strategic framework for the Indo-Pacific, Taiwan's outsized role in global technological supply chains and its centrality in maintaining the ready supply of advanced semiconductors that fuel the products and applications of the world economy have given it new power. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) accounted for half of the global foundry sales in 2020 alone and made up a sizeable portion of the island's total exports.⁴ In 2022, the company announced capital expenditures of \$44 billion (equivalent to 5% of Taiwan's entire economy). Much of it was dedicated to overseas expansion to meet the world's insatiable appetite for chips.⁵

While power is about technological and material dominance that maintains center-periphery relations of dependency,⁶ it is also the ideational and cognitive

³ Cleo Paskal, "Indo-Pacific Strategies, Perceptions and Partnerships: The View from Seven Countries," Chatham House Research Paper: Energy, Environment, and Resources Programme and Asia-Pacific Programme (March 2021): <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/03/indo-pacific-strategies-perceptions-and-partnerships>.

⁴ Min-Hua Chiang, "Taiwan's Prowess in the ICT Industry," *Taiwan Insight*, January 17, 2022, <https://taiwaninsight.org/2022/01/17/taiwans-prowess-in-the-ict-industry>.

⁵ Chien-Hua Wan, Samson Ellis, and Betty Hou, "Taiwan Economy Grows Fastest Since 2010 as TSMC Gives Boost," *Bloomberg*, January 27, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-27/tsmc-s-40-billion-spree-may-tip-the-scales-on-taiwan-s-growth>.

⁶ Esther Majerowicz, "China and the International Political Economy of Information and Communication Technologies," Discussion Paper UFRN-DEPEC No. 2 (July 2019),

reorganizational power that gives and constrains Taiwan's abilities to reshape the global division of labor in upstream technologies, placing it as a key stakeholder. Despite the inherent interdependencies that constitute them, the vulnerability of supply chains to disruption either due to geopolitical conflicts, shutdowns due to natural or man-made disasters, and other disruptions have also given credence to policymakers to redefine and remap modes of production previously taken for granted. This begs the question: how are actors shaping the changing scenarios involving disruptions in "normal" supply chain management? And how can we evaluate the deployment of soft power by small and medium-sized states in the quest for regional positioning?

The Soft Power Role of Strategic Narratives

Soft power can be distinguished from traditional hard power resources and capabilities. Whereas primarily state actors dominate and marshal the military and economic resources of hard power, in exercising soft power—including culture, values, and policies—they often intermingle with societal actors. The assets of culture, whether inculcating through people-to-people exchanges, business networks, or cultural venues, can likewise be instrumentalized by states to satisfy specific objectives in public diplomacy and international relations.⁷

Strategic narratives can be defined within the realm of soft power "storytelling," which signifies the attempts states make to explain key moments in the international sphere. Focusing on the formation, projection, and ultimate retention of said narratives provides a framework for analyzing and understanding soft power. Through plot sequencing, actor role assignment, and morally didactic resolutions, narratives are also employed to bring clarity toward collective goals. Accordingly, these narratives aim to persuade and direct actor perceptions toward various issues, including higher-level systemic narratives, second-level national narratives, and policy-specific issue narratives.⁸

On the international system level of strategic narratives, global trade politics has been a continued area of soft power contestations ever since the institutionalization of the US-led liberal trade regime. Hopewell, for example, has shown how strategic narratives used by the world's largest economy employ various ways to legitimate protectionist policies against rivals, even though the US painstakingly maintains an outward image of defending free trade.⁹ Therefore, strategic narratives represent a soft power means of helping states achieve political

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334711023_China_and_the_International_Political_Economy_of_Information_and_Communication_Technologies.

⁷ Laura Roselle, Alister Miskimmon, and Ben O'Loughlin, "Strategic Narrative: A New Means to Understand Soft Power," *Media, War & Conflict* 7, no. 1 (2014): 73-4.

⁸ Roselle, Miskimmon, and O'Loughlin, "Strategic Narrative," 76.

⁹ Kristen Hopewell, "Strategic Narratives in Global Trade Politics: American Hegemony, Free Trade, and the Hidden Hand of the State," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 51-86, 59, <https://academic-oup-com.eres.qnl.qa/cjip/article/14/1/51/6177698>.

objectives, whether legitimating and reinforcing current power dynamics or targeting perceived antagonisms and threats. Indeed, the “moral tale” of fair and unfair traders, free markets versus state capitalism undergirds continued state-firm cooperation in specific sectors of the domestic economy seen as priorities for economic and national security.

The above-mentioned BRI also involves a constellation of strategic narratives and counter-narratives among China, adherents to the initiative, involving would-be partner states, skeptics, and opponents discoursing across issues of economic development, national security, and others. As its sponsored projects came under scrutiny and criticism as being “debt traps” for vulnerable, less developed countries, China modified the communication strategies behind the BRI, emphasizing its inclusiveness as an alternative to Washington Consensus-based development models.¹⁰ Noort and Colley demonstrate that the uptake of narratives toward eventual policy adoption depends on a congruence of material gain and ontological security.¹¹ Strategic narratives and their role in policy change/adoption can be interpreted as storylines or scripts that will stick if they explain “convincingly how future material gain will transpire while enabling a state to maintain a stable sense of ‘who they are’.”¹² While a direct relationship between convincing narrative constructions and policy adoption favorable to narrating states may be more nuanced when considering a multitude of interrelated variables, the constraints of material and ontological factors contribute to the policymaking process. For China, the success underpinning the implementation of BRI objects is also its point of vulnerability: the concurrent efforts by China-skeptic actors in the region to seek counterbalancing action.¹³

With the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the fate of disrupted supply chains as the lifeblood of production, distribution, and consumption for nations has been situated prominently in national security pronouncements and economic policies. Bottlenecks, shortages, and risks associated with geopolitical rivalries revealed state and firm differences in supply chain vulnerabilities and ways to reorganize them.¹⁴ The perception of dependencies on key production and technological components while pressuring the state to seek homegrown

¹⁰ Sarah Babb and Alexander Kentikelenis, “Markets Everywhere: The Washington Consensus and the Sociology of Global Institutional Change,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 47, no. 1 (2021): 521-541, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-090220-025543>.

¹¹ Carolijn van Noort and Thomas Colley, “How Do Strategic Narratives Shape Policy Adoption? Responses to China’s Belt and Road Initiative,” *Review of International Studies* 47, no. 1 (January 2021): 39-63, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210520000388>.

¹² Van Noort and Colley, “How Do Strategic Narratives Shape Policy Adoption?”

¹³ David Scott, “China’s Indo-Pacific Strategy: The Problems of Success,” *Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies* 6, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2020): 94-113, 107-8, <https://dscottcom.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/china-indo-pacific-unlocked.pdf>.

¹⁴ Jim Tankersley and Ana Swanson, “Amid Shortfalls, Biden Signs Executive Order to Bolster Critical Supply Chains,” *The New York Times*, February 24, 2021, www.nytimes.com/2021/02/24/business/biden-supply-chain-executive-order.html.

alternatives¹⁵ does not entail a unified vision of supply chain resilience. For example, the influential industry lobby Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA), while citing the importance of diversification against risks of supply concentration, warned against the “staggering costs and questionable execution feasibility” of complete national self-sufficiency in semiconductor supply chains.¹⁶

Taiwan’s attempts to use soft power to gain international recognition have followed several distinct strategies that reflect changes in domestic politics and shifts in cross-Strait relations with China. For example, the state has effectively used Taiwan’s democratization to highlight its upholding of international norms. These range from transposing international law and covenants into domestic law to seeking a voice and active participation in as many international institutions as possible. Moreover, China’s growing economic clout has also meant that Taiwan has shifted the material power of “checkbook diplomacy” toward soft power: being a champion and cheerleader to international regimes and norms that include human rights, free markets, and democratic governance. According to Choi, adherence to international norms is instrumentalized to overcome the island’s security dilemma vis-à-vis China by allowing it to be connected to foreign policy objectives that can ensure its continued survival.¹⁷

It is, therefore, necessary to see Taiwan’s moves to define its role as a middle power within the confines of security and defense commitments of its allies, its ability to forge economically viable partnerships, and its ability to garner support for its international participation. Taiwanese political elites’ bandwagoning of its own regional policies (cross-Strait relations with China and its New Southbound Policy toward Southeast Asia) to the US-led and Japanese-supported Indo-Pacific strategies have been interpreted as a balancing strategy. In his analysis of official statements made by state officials in Taiwan, Scott shows how the island has tried to align itself to the interests of both security and economic issues of concern perceived by actors feeling threatened by China. They include state and Track 1.5 mechanisms to facilitate communications among Taiwan’s key unofficial backers, including the Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue, Maritime Affairs Cooperation Dialogue, the Taiwan-US Indo-Pacific Democratic Governance Consultations, and the Taiwan-US-Trilateral Security Dialogue.¹⁸ Taiwan’s government has sought “asymmetrical and nontraditional channels” to link its capabilities as

¹⁵ Thomas Kaplan, “Semiconductor Makers and Users Form a Group to Push for Chip Funding,” *The New York Times*, May 11, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/11/business/semiconductor-shortage.html>.

¹⁶ Antonio Varas, Raj Varadarajan, Jimmy Goodrich, and Falan Yinug, “Strengthening the Global Semiconductor Supply Chain in an Uncertain Era,” SIA/BSG Report, April 2021, https://www.semiconductors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/BCG-x-SIA-Strengthening-the-Global-Semiconductor-Value-Chain-April-2021_1.pdf.

¹⁷ Kyong Jun Choi, “Weapons Brushed by the Enemy: The Bounded Autonomy of Taiwan’s Middle Power Foreign Policy,” *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 18, no. 1 (April 2020): 87-122, 111, <https://doi.org/10.14731/kjis.2020.04.18.1.87>.

¹⁸ David Scott, “Taiwan’s Pivot to the Indo-Pacific,” *Asia-Pacific Review* 26, no.1 (2019): 29-57, 41-3.

it faces renewed political and economic means of isolation.¹⁹ Strategic narratives play a central role in placing Taiwan at the center of Indo-Pacific contexts as it attempts to use its role in supply chains to link seemingly unrelated issues together to demonstrate a sense of vulnerability and interdependence on the one hand and the possibilities of a systemic reorganization and resilience on the other.

Methodology

To address how strategic narratives are contextually interlinked across multiple discursive fields and issues, this article analyzes statements and speeches given by Taiwan's head of state, President Tsai Ing-wen, from the discovery and outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in late 2019 to the end of 2021. Using the keyword "Indo-Pacific" on the database of press releases on the official Presidential Office website, a total of 32 speeches and statements were located and selected for narrative analysis. The texts include speeches delivered in person, remarks to visiting foreign dignitaries (ranging from US, Australian, European, and others), and video addresses (due to the pandemic) to think tanks, symposia, and forums.

Based on a suggested framework for analyzing strategic narratives posited by Roselle and colleagues, this article places its primary analysis on the projection of narratives to better understand the contestation and presentation of state claims and justifications.²⁰ The aim was to chart how emerging concepts of regional identity are employed to align Taiwan to the Indo-Pacific and subject the regional interests to existing frameworks of national identity and international solidarity.

In addition to applying strategic narratives and narrative analysis, the article includes two additional aligning frameworks. The first involves placing strategic narratives within the current context of evaluating how states make sense of disruptions to global supply chains. The onset of the disruptive forces previously seen as external to the dynamics of supply chains has therefore called into question the theorization of supply chains as *being* static constructs. Traditional supply chain management theory assumptions have taken for granted the stability of inputs mediated by competitive advantage and efficiency. In contrast, this research answers the calls for the theoretical interpretation of supply chains as a dynamic process of *becoming* as different systems (political-economic, socio-cultural, and supply chain levels) interact with each other.²¹ This panarchical model

¹⁹ Tsai, "Taiwan and the Fight for Democracy." Tsai writes: "[O]ur bid to play a more meaningful role in the international community is evolving in the context of changing regional politics, with more assertive challenges to the liberal international order, *backed by the economic and political power to turn those ambitions into actions.*" (emphasis added)

²⁰ Roselle, Miskimmon, and O'Loughlin, "Strategic Narrative," 79.

²¹ Andreas Wieland, "Dancing the Supply Chain: Toward Transformative Supply Chain Management," *Journal of Supply Chain Management* 57, no. 1 (January 2021): 60, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jscm.12248>.

of supply chains is interpretive and based upon the interactions between different systems in which the supply chain is embedded. For the purposes of this research, the author focuses on the supply chain level and political-economic level narrative interactions as cross-level linkages.²² The “new” normal caused by pandemic-induced disruptions appears to be hardening ideological pathways that have questioned the apolitical interdependencies of global supply chain operations.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Phases in the Adaptive Cycle (Panarchic model, adapted from Wieland by the author).²³

Phase	<i>Supply Chain Level</i>	<i>Political-Economic Level</i>
<i>Exploitation</i>	Low connectedness of supply chain due to its initial establishment; high level of resilience due to lack of sunken costs	Supply chain management concepts, including division of labor, specialization within globalized production, and sourcing
<i>Conservation</i>	Apex of supply chains connectedness and potential due to mutual dependencies; rigidity causes low resilience	Stability and taken-for-granted status quo of economic management equilibrium narratives under growth and globalization
<i>Release</i>	Current chain setup is unable to meet demand induced by external shocks or changing downstream preferences	Vulnerability of dominant modes of production to external shocks or crises as critical junctures in innovations
<i>Reorganization</i>	Release phase leads to a window of opportunity to reorganize and shift toward innovative processes, structures, norms, routines, etc.	Rapid changes following the release phase lead to new theories, norms, routines, and structures

²² Wieland, “Dancing the Supply Chain,” 67.

²³ Wieland, “Dancing the Supply Chain.”

The second framework in analyzing the strategic narratives involves crisis communication linked with how political actors manage discourse during the unfolding of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior analysis has shown that political communication language in health-related crises has been imbued with militaristic metaphors that help mobilize communities, assign and/or deflect blame, construct enemies, and boost the resilience of national sentiments.²⁴ *When combined with the above cross-level linkages related to release and reorganization phases, strategic narrative formation during the pandemic can trace the formulation of how supply chains should be reorganized.*

Situating the Indo-Pacific in Narrative Contexts

A lack of economic integration amongst like-minded countries would only drive us to seek short-term solutions with those who do not share our values and beliefs. Divided we fall.

Tsai Ing-wen, President of Taiwan²⁵

Ways in Which the Concept Is Employed in Text

As previously mentioned, the diverse priorities and mutual perceptions of collaborating actors in the Indo-Pacific contribute to the ambiguity in regional policies. This also has a bearing on the texts and statements originating from Taiwan with regard to the region. Especially during the beginning of the pandemic, the Indo-Pacific region is mentioned as part of cooperative partnerships with its most important ally, the United States. The most common attribute is the island's commitment to contributing to the "peace, stability, and development" of the region. After August 2020, the utterances of Tsai showed marked changes in specificity in strategic narratives beyond the above abstract aspirations. Beyond US audiences, the region is also seen as a basis for cooperation based on "shared values of democracy and freedom." For instance, having elaborated on the complementary nature of Australian-Taiwanese trade, Tsai links both actors as key members in maintaining peace and prosperity, which is "both our responsibility and in our best interest."²⁶

Addressing US-based think tanks in a videoconference, Tsai elaborates that cooperation with the US is to prioritize engagements with like-minded democracies and challenges posed by authoritarian regimes. For the first time, the President refers to "taking a forceful stance in defense of global democracy" with Taiwan as a frontline defender and the "bastion of freedom and democracy in the

²⁴ Eunice Castro Seixas, "War Metaphors in Political Communication on Covid-19," *Frontiers in Sociology* 5 (January 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.583680>.

²⁵ "President Tsai Attends the Ketagalan Forum – 2020 Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue," Office of the President (Republic of China), September 8, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6036>.

²⁶ "President Tsai Addresses Indo-Pacific Leaders Dialogue Session," Office of the President (Republic of China), August 27, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6030>.

Indo-Pacific region.”²⁷ At the 2020 Ketagalan Forum on Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue, the elements of economic security and supply chain reorganization are named as solutions to prevent the destabilization of the region from “aggressive actors”:

One of the most important and painful lessons we have learned is this: the global supply chains and trade mechanisms, we have come to heavily rely on, are highly fragile and are often subject to coercive measures by aggressive actors... The discussion included the need for restructuring global supply chains to bring them closer to home, or locate them in like-minded economies. Most importantly, these global supply chains should also be secure and free from political coercion.²⁸

In sum, the use of the Indo-Pacific region from an abstract concept to an increasingly instrumental platform for action and self-definition has occurred. Of course, these narratives are not arbitrarily formulated: the classification of COVID-19 as a threat to regional stability is made relative to the ambitions of authoritarian regimes and contrasts their response to the pandemic. Designating these threats as common to all actors who share the same values of “the rules-based order” mitigates the complexities of the region’s disparate foreign policies and national security priorities.

The Context of Indo-Pacific in National Issue Areas

As mentioned in the previous section, the Indo-Pacific region is utilized as an orientation and setting for a variety of policy issues categorized as international affairs. The presidential speeches and statements during the pandemic attempt to link geopolitical issues that have once been examined individually into a broader regional canvas. In her 2021 New Year’s address, traditionally directed at domestic audiences, Tsai placed the continued political tension with China into a wider regional context and “no longer just an issue for the two sides.” Chinese military maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait also pose a threat to the “peaceful and stable status quo in the Indo-Pacific.”²⁹ A month later, following a top-level national security meeting, she stated that cross-Strait relations have “been

²⁷ “President Tsai Addresses Taiwan’s Diplomatic, Security, and Economic Challenges at Videoconference Jointly Sponsored by US-based Think Tanks,” Office of the President (Republic of China), August 12, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6027>.

²⁸ “President Tsai Attends the Ketagalan Forum – 2020 Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue.”

²⁹ “President Tsai Delivers 2021 New Year’s Address,” Office of the President (Republic of China), January 1, 2021, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6089>.

elevated to a key regional and global interest” and reiterated that Chinese aircraft intruding into the country’s air defense identification zone was undermining regional peace.³⁰

Democracy as Regional Identity Boundary

The Indo-Pacific texts analyzed are linked in various densities with the concept of democracy and democratic values (“democratic” and “democracy” appear in 24 of the texts). Moreover, in placing Taiwan into the context of the region, the president repeatedly reinforces universal democratic identity as a shared value among stakeholders. Democratic values have several purposes when linked with the Indo-Pacific region. One, it helps differentiate the “like-mindedness” of actors in the region and their common goals while connecting Taiwan to a democratic alliance (mentioned in nearly a third of the texts). Secondly, it serves as justification for actions against threats to democracy in the region.

Textual analysis reveals that the role of democracy in the discourse has shifted. Democracy fits into the narrative of Taiwan’s success in several freedoms: political, religious, and economic. Primarily, it showcased Taiwan as an international success story for overcoming underdevelopment, one-party rule, and its resistance to China’s increased posturing for unification. For instance, in her second inauguration, Tsai extols “our democratic elections and... our success in the fight against COVID-19” as having “amazed the international community twice.”³¹ As the pandemic lingered and intensified, tying democracy and the containment of the virus were more explicitly linked:

The most important lesson for us all is that Taiwan was able to become one of the safest places in the world during this pandemic, and we made sure of this while maintaining our democratic principles and freedoms. The effectiveness of our democratic governance in spite of the pandemic was made possible through the joint efforts of individual citizens, the business community, civil society, and the government.³²

Civil society, business, and cultural aspects of liberal democracy are seen as contributing to a harmonious network of interlocking components. Furthermore, being democratic not only serves as an identity marker; it maps out courses of action for the region (namely, as a solution to authoritarianism, which is mentioned in nearly half of the texts). The connection between democracy at home and democracy in the region is built upon historical claims of having overcome an authoritarian past. This narrative of transformation and adaptation was presented to both domestic and international audiences. For example, experience in democratic governance gives Taiwan the “obligation to speak out and act

³⁰ “President Tsai Convenes High-level National Security Meeting Ahead of the Lunar New Year,” Office of the President (Republic of China), February 9, 2021, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6101>.

³¹ “President Tsai Addresses Taiwan’s Diplomatic, Security, and Economic Challenges.”

³² “President Tsai Attends the Ketagalan Forum – 2020 Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue.”

against the demise of Hong Kong’s freedoms.” Of the 13 texts that mention authoritarianism, five relate it to Taiwan’s own history. These past experiences help position Taiwan beyond a showcase of successful democratization that should survive against authoritarian threats but also serve to legitimize claims it makes in speaking on behalf of the Indo-Pacific region as a whole. While addressing the 2021 Open Parliament Forum and calling on the democratic alliance around the world to face up to authoritarianism, the President said:

Having endured authoritarian rule, the Taiwanese people bravely walked a long and difficult path of democratization and built a resilient and dynamic civil society. But every democracy, no matter how hard-won, requires constant renewal and strengthening.³³

The use of the renewal narrative extends beyond democratic regimes and to supply chains. Tsai noted in the 2021 Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue that the island is “well positioned to serve as an indispensable partner in democratic renewal and in sectors such as biotechnology, renewable energy, and the semiconductor industry.”³⁴

Supply Chain Management as Regional Leadership

Of the approximately 30 texts, 20 mention supply chains. The Indo-Pacific region is more explicitly linked to the economic interests of like-minded countries and strategic competitors alike and the fate of global industrial supply chains. One of the purposes of defining the region as one of economic opportunity has been to bolster the island’s case in becoming a member of bilateral and regional trade agreements. During the pandemic, Taiwan’s supply of surgical masks and personal protective equipment at a time of protectionism was lauded by recipient countries. In turn, struggling at first to secure vaccines against the virus as domestic outbreaks surfaced on the island in 2021, Taiwan’s president described donations from Japan, the US, and Poland, among others, as part of a “virtuous cycle” from the international community that Taiwan intended to expand upon.

As exemplified by critical technologies, Taiwan’s high-tech sector is synonymous with hard power.³⁵ It is not difficult to imagine that the portrayal of supply chains is heavily dependent on context and its intended audience. For example, in her second inaugural address and half a year into the pandemic, Tsai stated the need to keep critical supply chains in Taiwan and that during “the current

³³ “President Tsai Addresses 2021 Open Parliament Forum,” Office of the President (Republic of China), December 2, 2021, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6199>.

³⁴ “President Tsai Addresses Ketagalan Forum – 2021 Asia-Pacific Security Dialogue,” Office of the President (Republic of China), August 31, 2021, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6156>.

³⁵ Tsai placed high-precision manufacturing, AI, 5G applications, renewable energy, biotechnology among those for creating “resilient supply chains” – differentiating them from Taiwan’s soft power (education, human resource development, public health, medicine, natural disaster prevention).

international climate, countries that end their dependence on others will have a head start on national development.” Development through government intervention by ensuring domestic demand and organizing key manufacturing industries under the flag of the national brand indicates a strong role in state policies toward strategic industries, including semiconductors, digital, and cybersecurity industries.³⁶ In the national day address of 2020, the rapid dismantling of supply chain realignment was stated to be irreversible. Securing Taiwan as an “indispensable force in global supply chains” required “integrating government and private sector resources... to achieve full and comprehensive participation in the realignment process.”³⁷ These statements, directed at a domestic audience, play homage to political norms that take for granted a proactive state in managing markets and directing strategic industries ever since the postwar period.

On the other hand, supply chain management can be used to place Taiwan as a key node that benefits the region. In promoting global health and its track record in preventing the spread of COVID-19, Taiwan seeks collaboration in the health industries with the international community and the Indo-Pacific region.³⁸ Similarly, the supply chain is used discursively to identify the players that are optimal for the realignment required and the benefits their collaboration brings. In welcoming investment from Microsoft that would add “innovative momentum” and a “jolt of added vitality across the board,” Tsai linked firms, states, and supply chains into a synergetic continuum:

Taiwan and the US are committed partners in developing global markets. Together we can create a global sales network, enter and establish ourselves in the Indo-Pacific region, build brand new supply chains, and develop vast new business opportunities.³⁹

The restructured and resilient supply chains would benefit Taiwan and US national security concerns by bringing high-end technology manufacturing to America and investment and infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific.⁴⁰ The coupling of shared values with trade is made explicit on several occasions. For example, in

³⁶ “Inaugural Address of ROC 15th-term President Tsai Ing-wen,” Office of the President (Republic of China), May 20, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6004>.

³⁷ “President Tsai Delivers 2020 National Day Address,” Office of the President (Republic of China), October 10, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6051>.

³⁸ “President Tsai Attends 2020 Global Health Forum in Taiwan,” Office of the President (Republic of China), October 23, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6057>.

³⁹ “President Tsai Attends Microsoft’s Announcement of Investment in Taiwan Press Conference,” Office of the President (Republic of China), October 26, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6059>.

⁴⁰ “President Tsai Attends 2020 AmCham Taipei Annual General Meeting,” Office of the President (Republic of China), November 17, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6070>.

her remarks to the 2021 EU Investment Forum to highlight Taiwan's mention in the joint communication on strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, Tsai noted:

Taiwan and the European Union enjoy shared values, including democracy, freedom, the rule of law, and human rights. This makes Taiwan a reliable and natural partner for the European Union, whether in regional security, economic partnership, trade, or investment.⁴¹

This section has revealed how strategic narratives in the pandemic period have shifted toward orienting Taiwan's domestic concerns to the regional architecture defined externally by regional powers. These narratives include broader international/regional narratives intended to position Taiwan in the Indo-Pacific region, national narratives that increase the coherency and compatibility of policy aims with domestic agendas, and issue narratives geared toward solving present issues like the fate of global industrial supply chains. The pandemic has served as a key narrative aligning agent which has been used to equate previous geopolitical disruptions to supply chains as part of a series of threats that require a rethinking of global supply chains.

Conclusion

In February 2022, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the "America Competes Act," which will provide the domestic semiconductor industry with billions of dollars in funding for infrastructure, research, design, and bolstering of the supply chain. The bill also includes provisions to improve relations with Taiwan and "the Quad."⁴² If successfully reconciled with a similar bill passed in the U.S. Senate earlier and signed by the president, it would likely heighten the geopolitical stakes in the struggle for supply chain restructuring while reinforcing the island's importance in the Indo-Pacific.

While it is still too early to ascertain whether this legislation and other actions taken by states in the region will create ideologized supply chains of a bipolar nature not seen since the end of the Cold War, political narratives of the involved powers do suggest cognitive exercises that challenge and reshape the efficacy of once-established economic networks.

Strategic narratives can give scholars and policymakers an "early warning system" of how earlier systems have been perceived to be overturned and what actors identify (or do not explicitly identify) as the root causes of new ideational innovation. For instance, none of the strategic narratives analyzed from the Taiwanese perspective mention the geopolitical and economic jujitsu of balancing

⁴¹ "President Tsai Addresses 2021 EU Investment Forum," Office of the President (Republic of China), October 14, 2021, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/6178>.

⁴² Jacob Fromer and Owen Churchill, "US House Finalises Bill to Confront China, Including Provisions on Semiconductors and Taiwan Ties," *The South China Morning Post*, January 26, 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/3164736/us-house-finalises-bill-confront-china-including-provisions>.

competing political and economic interests that took place before this current phase and why the status quo of depoliticized supply chain leadership has been maintained for so long and indeed why it came to such a critical stage at present.

Future research could greatly expand the scope of sources of strategic narratives and their interactions with an increasingly complex media ecology that goes beyond traditional media and includes social media and discursive concepts along a diversity of areas, including culture, people-to-people exchanges, and values. As the interest in the Indo-Pacific region increases, how different issue networks, policy entrepreneurs, and thematic coalitions create, destroy, or maintain strategy frameworks will rely heavily on the interacting perceptions of material and ideational resources that can be leveraged to meet (new) demands of order and predictability.

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Neo-Authoritarianism and Leadership: Outcomes for Modern Ukraine

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39th Women's Sotnia of the Maidan

Abstract: This article examines the notions of authoritarianism and neo-authoritarianism as well as their features in terms of ideology, mentality, mobilization, and politicization of a population, state control, level of political pluralism, and leadership style. Incorporating evidence from reviews, surveys, and scientific research, the study identifies the main difference between the regimes and opposition to democracy, providing samples throughout history with different characteristics, causes, and backgrounds. It presents a vision of authoritarianism as an intermediate step on the path of a particular state to democracy or totalitarianism. Finally, this article reflects upon Ukraine's future in the European paradigm and contrasts it with Russia. Ukraine is at a crossroads and must continue to carefully navigate toward the institutionalized democracy it has begun to establish.

Keywords: authoritarianism, democracy, political regimes, ideology, mentality, mobilization, politicization, defense, security, Ukraine, Putin, China, Russia, EU.

Introduction

Throughout three recent decades, the situation with democracy in Ukraine has had its ups and downs. Although the Revolution on Granite, "Ukraine without Kuchma" protests, the Orange Revolution, and the Revolution of Dignity paved the way for the democratization and liberalization of Ukraine's political and economic systems, Ukrainian democracy is still at risk. More precisely, the strength of Ukraine's drive to democracy within the last 30 years led to armed resistance and war with Russia due to Belarus's open and vivid support. Nevertheless, the

documents on EU membership make us believe that we all will achieve our objectives.

After February 24, 2022, in a new phase of the war with the Russian Federation, Ukraine faced a state which looked more totalitarian using the ideology of ruscism.^{1,2} Everyone—political scientists, journalists, and military experts to a greater extent—discusses this topic now. This article was written in the limelight of recent events when the Russian Federation was just on the way to war, using tools more similar to neo-authoritarianism. Certain circumstances have appeared since the full-scale invasion started, which must be mentioned here. The facts are rapidly changing; therefore, today's description of Russia, which regularly attacks and bombs the entire territory of Ukraine, trying to capture Kyiv, is a topic for another article.

As is pointed out in the latest Freedom House report, in 2021, democracy is “under siege” worldwide. The global trend for the decline of the level of political freedom that began in 2006 reached its peak due to the number of countries experiencing deterioration. Authoritarian regimes used the COVID-19 pandemic, economic insecurity, and violent conflicts in their favor and became more repressive.

Even if Ukraine is fighting for brand new freedom and an independent democratic way of development nowadays, there is a high risk of giving in to the temptation of authoritarianism in some of its forms. Authoritarian rule is a traditional reaction to war needs since Roman dictators. On the other hand, the myth of authoritarianism as a way to prosperity is also present in Ukrainian political discourse.

President Volodymyr Zelensky, of the one-party majority in the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament), appears to some to be in a position wherein he could abuse power if he were so inclined. However, this article proposes that Ukraine was constantly threatened by authoritarianism, and only the society's commitment to democratic principles has protected its pro-European direction. In this regard, a question arises: How can Ukraine ensure its democratic pathway and protect itself from authoritarianism (assuming it survives Putin's war)?

This article identifies authoritarianism and neo-authoritarianism as types of non-democratic political regimes, evaluates the risks of establishing a neo-authoritarian regime in Ukraine, and proposes the most relevant model of political leadership for reaching the goal of a prosperous Ukraine.

¹ “Ruscism is a concept that will be in history books, in conventional wikipedias, will remain in lessons – Zelenskyi,” *TSN.ua*, April 23, 2022, accessed April 23, 2022, <https://tsn.ua/ato/rashizm-ce-ponyattya-yake-bude-v-istorichnih-knizhkah-v-umovnih-vikipediyah-zalishitsya-na-urokah-zelenskiy-2044717.html>. – in Ukrainian.

² Timothy Snyder, “The War in Ukraine Has Unleashed a New Word: In a Creative Play on Three Different Languages, Ukrainians Identify an Enemy: ‘Ruscism’,” *The New York Times Magazine*, April 22, 2022, accessed April 22, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/22/magazine/ruscism-ukraine-russia-war.html>.

Authoritarianism: History and Definition

Broadly defined, authoritarianism can be considered the most common political regime throughout human history. Among its direct predecessors is tyranny, a term applied since antiquity to mark the absolutist and unrestrained rule by the law of rulers in power, usually by usurpers. Although authoritarianism initially did not have a negative connotation, tyrants received strong criticism as early as in the works of Plato and Aristotle. The past can offer many more illustrations of authoritarian rule, from the pharaohs of ancient Egypt to the absolutist monarchies of Europe. However, Frantz³ rightly points out the essential difference between contemporary dictators and rulers of the past: concentration of power by sole individuals (like monarchs or chiefs) was then a norm, and, as a result, they aimed to demonstrate the completeness of control instead of hiding it.

Proposing a single definition of authoritarianism is not an easy task. Firstly, the interpretation of this term requires defining the concept of regime. Secondly, the nature of the authoritarian rule is not stable over time, and research approaches constantly need to adapt to these changes. There is a need to pay attention to both these issues to discuss neo-authoritarianism as a new threat to democracy.

As with interpretations of authoritarianism, there are a plethora of definitions for the term “regime.” Although this term often receives negative connotations in the press, scholars prefer to stay neutral. For a practical purpose, this article follows the definition provided by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, who explain the term “regime” as a “set of basic formal and informal rules that determine who influences the choice of leaders—including rules that identify the group from which leaders can be selected—and policies.”⁴ However, as Frantz⁵ notes, this definition is rather minimalistic as it excludes such factors as human rights violations, degree of freedom of speech, or economic openness. This incompleteness can be partially explained by the history of research in this field.

The first wave of interest in the concept of “regime” reflected the establishment of the dictatorships of Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany and Josef Stalin in the USSR. Among the distinctive features of such regimes were the single-party system, unifying ideology, and state control of all aspects of human life, including those executed by the secret police. The aim of these means was a complete transformation of society, highlighted by theories of totalitarianism. Nonetheless, plenty of brand-new dictatorships were formed after WW2 and the subsequent collapse of colonial empires. Even though they inherited a few features of

³ Erica Frantz, “Authoritarian Politics: Trends and Debates,” *Politics and Governance* 6, no. 2 (2018): 87-89, <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v6i2.1498>.

⁴ Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, “Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 2 (June 2014): 313-331, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592714000851>.

⁵ Frantz, “Authoritarian Politics.”

totalitarian states, like the single-party system in some instances, the state control was far less penetrating. Moreover, the Cold War also fueled the process of the establishment of authoritarian regimes as both superpowers were ready to provide support to loyal dictatorships.

The nature of authoritarian regimes in their opposition to totalitarian and democratic ones can be highlighted by the classical description by Linz, who based it on his observations of Franco's Spain. In this regard, authoritarianism is:

A political system with limited, not responsible political pluralism, without an elaborated and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader, or occasionally a small group, exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.⁶

Despite its age (this definition was coined more than 50 years ago), this definition is still widely used. Such an approach emphasizes five dimensions of authoritarianism: (1) limited pluralism, including strict restrictions on who can be an apolitical actor; (2) a set of values or, in other words, mentality, which serves to justify the regime; (3) low political mobilization or its complete absence; (4) political power belongs to a single leader or small group; and, (5) limited rights of citizens.

Among these five dimensions, the most important one is the limitation of pluralism imposed by a few elite actors. These elites may own the bureaucracy, army, religious institutions, a single party, oligarchs (industrial entrepreneurs and large landowners), or even transnational economic groups or unions.

However, it is important to note that in later works, Linz and Stepan criticize the classical triangle of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and democracy and even mark this as an "obstacle."⁷ Thus, from the scholarly perspective, there are more authoritarian countries worldwide than democratic and totalitarian ones combined. In this regard, it becomes clear that autocracies are not similar, so there is a need for a more detailed classification of authoritarian regimes.

Typology of Authoritarianism

It is not a surprise that such a broad category as authoritarianism includes very contrasting examples of political systems. As observed by Frantz, authoritarian regimes can "seem more different from one another than they are from democracies."⁸ As a result, various scholars have developed distinct classification systems, and highlighting all of them is not feasible. Nevertheless, it is at least possible to provide a "typology of typologies."

⁶ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

⁷ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*.

⁸ Erica Frantz, *Authoritarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 64.

There are two rather different approaches to the typology of authoritarian regimes: *continuous*, which sees authoritarianism as a linear concept where systems can be placed on a scale ranging from fully authoritarian to fully democratic, and examples including the broad array of typologies that emphasize hybrid political systems, often referred to as gray zone;⁹ and *categorical* which views dictatorships as equally authoritarian, with the key distinction of interest being various features of their rule and with dictatorships classified as civilian, monarchic, or military¹⁰ as examples. Continuous typologies consider authoritarianism and democracy as points on a scale. This idea seems to be quite attractive due to two reasons. Firstly, continuous typologies allow evaluation of each country and judging whether one regime is less or more authoritarian than the other. Secondly, such an approach can be used for tracing a regime's democratization process. However, the latter advantage can be easily turned into a disadvantage as an authoritarian rule is not necessarily making progress towards democracy but conserving the nature of a regime. Moreover, the continuous approach often faces problems similar to those described by Linz and Stepan.¹¹ Instead of marking most countries as authoritarian, such a typology overuses the "hybrid" label.

In contrast, categorical typologies focus on specific features of regimes, such as what social group strategies, leaders, and elites rule or from what groups they originate. For example, Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland distinguish civilian, monarchic, and military dictatorships. A classification by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz¹² is quite similar, differentiating personalist, monarchic, dominant-party, and authoritarian military regimes.

Unfortunately, the internal typology of authoritarianism is still unable to illuminate worldwide contemporary challenges to democracy. This problem can be illustrated by the proposed changes in the methodology of studies of non-democratic regimes proposed by Linz and Stepan.¹³ As a possible solution, the researchers added the categories of *post-totalitarianism* and *sultanism* to mark regimes that do not fall into the tripartite type distinction.¹⁴ The first of them is suitable mainly for the description of post-Stalinist processes in the USSR and so-called countries of People's Democracies, and it considers the stage of development of these processes. Thus, for post-totalitarian states, the ruling party's role remains until the very end of the regime, and the economic sphere is placed under state control. On the other hand, sultanism stands for a dictator's despotic and unpredictable rule (Romania under Ceaușescu is a remarkable example).

⁹ Frantz, "Authoritarian Politics: Trends and Debates."

¹⁰ Frantz, "Authoritarian Politics: Trends and Debates."

¹¹ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*.

¹² Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions."

¹³ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 38.

¹⁴ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 293-295.

Both these types, though useful for research purposes, do not reflect some remarkable recent changes. Therefore, this article highlights the concept of *neo-authoritarianism*.

Features of Neo-Authoritarian Regimes

As we already mentioned, past authoritarian regimes do not always share the features of modern ones. As with the shift after WW2, the end of the Cold War also changed the nature of dictatorships. The distinguishing feature of post-Cold War neo-authoritarianism is the greater use of pseudo-democratic institutions to ensure a regime's survival. This phenomenon is partially connected to the rise in demand for democracy, both by the international community (closely tied to the opportunity for a country to receive foreign funding and assistance) and society within a country.

In recent years, scholars have applied the term *neo-authoritarianism* (or, sometimes, *new authoritarianism*) to label quite different regimes with many common characteristics discussed below. Firstly, to mark the changes that occurred in China since the rise of Xi Jinping in 2013 and the relatively soft and restricted state control. Secondly, to consider the dictatorship of Vladimir Putin that, despite its authoritarian nature, is quite different from its Soviet totalitarian and post-totalitarian predecessors. Thirdly, to indicate the somewhat surprising shift towards authoritarianism in some democratic countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

To better understand what neo-authoritarianism is, we will use the classification system designed by Linz and Stepan, who based their analysis on four broad characteristics: *pluralism*, *ideology*, *mobilization*, and *leadership*. These characteristics, with the addition of *state control*,¹⁵ are discussed below.

Ideology

Ideology for neo-authoritarianism, as well as for authoritarianism, is not a fundamental issue. If the regime needs an ideology, it can be temporarily activated for tactical purposes. *The strength of the neo-authoritarian regime lies in its flexibility.* The main principle is to prohibit everything that can cause harm to the authorities and their power. However, to exist and have social support, neo-authoritarianism is forced to adapt to the demands of society. One of the possible tactics for neo-authoritarian regimes is to artificially create a demand for certain policies among the population and then satisfy it instead of following people's needs or desires. With the development of social networks and tools of manipulation, this trend poses a significant threat to democracy.

It turns out that there is quite the opposite approach to analyzing the question of neo-authoritarianism and ideology. Often there are attempts to find similar ideological characteristics in each modern neo-authoritarian state to discern what unifies these regimes. Researchers from the Institut Montaigne decided to

¹⁵ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 38.

examine which ideological doctrines, daily practices, and discourses are denied by neo-authoritarianism. It turned out that the rise of such regimes is likely combined with “the economy – globalization, 40 years of neoliberalism, the 2008 crisis. ... The latter is certainly inseparable from the middle-class crisis, the explosion of inequalities, the devaluation of politics, perceived by many as subjected to the market.”¹⁶ Thus, all neo-authoritarian countries are similar in their attempts to defend themselves from such crises of the last twenty years; it can be summed up that neo-authoritarianism denies the values declared by neoliberalism.

Mentality

The mentality of the people is also an important characteristic in describing political regimes. Linz and Stepan suggest that mentality is primary while ideology (either its presence or absence) is secondary. Mentalities are ways of thinking and feeling, more emotional than rational, that provide noncodified ways of reacting to different situations.¹⁷ So, awareness of the influence of daily practices, rooted in common views, morality, biases, etc., of a particular group of people on policies is a crucial tool required to examine differences among current neo-authoritarian regimes.

One of the examples of how a neo-authoritarian regime can pragmatically use mentality is that of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.¹⁸ According to Magyar,¹⁹ this autocracy cannot be understood in terms of nationalism, religion, or conservatism. For instance, antisemitism and xenophobia are used not due to ideological reasons but to increase support. No less pragmatic is Fidesz’s adherence to faith.²⁰ Fidesz is one of the two biggest political parties in Hungary, which is quite actively transforming its ideology from liberalism to etatism, from centrist to right-centrist, and cooperating with various coalitions under the rule of Viktor Orbán. Appeals to religiosity aim to transfer the legitimization of power from a democratic foundation, when the politicians in power are accountable for their actions, into the sphere of absolute authority. Secondly, it becomes possible to ritualize all social problems with the help of a language that cannot be involved in the discussion space. Thirdly, with the help of religion, the power of Fidesz is rooted in regions and social groups that are otherwise difficult to reach.

¹⁶ Joseph E. Stiglitz, “The End of Neoliberalism and the Rebirth of History,” *Project Syndicate*, November 4, 2019, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/end-of-neoliberalism-unfettered-markets-fail-by-joseph-e-stiglitz-2019-11>.

¹⁷ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*.

¹⁸ Hans-Georg Heinrich, “From Horthy to Orbán: Neo-Authoritarianism in Hungary. Essay,” in *New Authoritarianism: Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century*, ed. Jerzy J. Wiatr (Opladen, Berlin & Toronto: Barbara Budrich, 2019), <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/53298/9783847412496.pdf>, 100-128.

¹⁹ Bálint Magyar, *Post-Communist Mafia State: The Case of Hungary* (Budapest: CEU Press, in association with Noran Libro, 2016).

²⁰ Magyar, *Post-Communist Mafia State*.

Finally, religion serves as a means of ideological indoctrination in the field of education. As Magyar illustrates, “the link between the Church and the political power is businesslike, in a very secular way.”²¹

China, for example, is one of the most ancient civilizations, which has existed for about 6,000 years. China’s growing strength (seventh in the late twentieth century and now second in the world in terms of GDP) seems to support the effectiveness of neo-authoritarianism. Still, this success is most likely due to the unique socio-cultural code of the Chinese, their understanding of leadership as authoritarians, and the supremacy of the public over the private. Chinese collectivism is deeply rooted in mentality. Andrejevic demonstrates that the sources of this phenomenon lie in Confucianism (respect for seniority, obedience to authority, etc.), Buddhism (denial of individual ego, social position, family), and Taoism (all beings and things are fundamentally one).²²

Russia also wants to feel like an ancient civilization but not of its own. That is why it is trying to keep Ukraine in its zone of influence – with it in alliance, Russia is also part of Kyivan Rus (for example, attempts to “privatize” the roots of the French Queen Anne Yaroslavna).²³ The intention to appropriate Ukrainian cultural heritage is also evident in Putin’s recent essay “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians.”²⁴ This lengthy amateur opus with numerous historical inaccuracies was issued with clearly imperialistic ambitions. Absolutely the same was his on-air appeal on February 24, 2022. Just after this statement, Russia attacked with missiles Kyiv and the other territories of Ukraine. Thus, the war that started in 2014 transformed into a full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war with many more casualties, mainly civilians. This full-scale war is being followed by pseudo-historical spam as they have to explain to their citizens the reasons for killing Ukrainians. And the Russians themselves identify this process as a self-identification of their nation, as stated by the Ermitazh Museum’s Head, Mikhail Piotrovsky.²⁵

²¹ Magyar, *Post-Communist Mafia State*.

²² Tatjana K. Andrejevic, “Understanding the Chinese Mentality – Some Basic Hints,” in Proceedings of the *I International Symposium Engineering Management And Competitiveness* 2011 (EMC2011), June 24-25, 2011, Zrenjanin, Serbia, <http://www.tfzr.uns.ac.rs/emc/emc2011/Files/D%2004.pdf>, 281-86.

²³ “Putin Called the Queen of France Anna as Russian in Paris,” *Radio Svoboda*, May 29, 2017, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news/28517175.html>. – in Ukrainian.

²⁴ Vladimir Putin, “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians,” *Kremlin.ru*, July 12, 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/page/17>.

²⁵ Interview with Mikhail Piotrovsky, “‘He strangled himself.’ Piotrovsky gave an interview about ‘militarists and imperialists,’” *Sever.Real*, June 24, 2022, <https://www.severreal.org/a/byt-nemnozhechko-lyudoedom-piotrovskiy-dal-intervyu-o-militaristah-i-impertsah-/31913618.html>. – in Russian.

Mobilization and Politicization

Contrary to totalitarianism, neo-authoritarianism does not require the whole society to be mobilized or politicized. The exception is during the moment of need or at some stage of the regime's development.

One of the examples of extreme mobilization and politicization of society under neo-authoritarian dictatorship is visible in the events that followed the Russian occupation of Crimea when anti-Western and anti-Ukrainian discourses became hegemonic as a result of state propaganda. The distinction between Us and the Enemy is not anything new, but the success of its use in these circumstances remains notable. Thus, Shevtsova admits "the amazingly successful military-patriotic Kremlin mobilization of the Russian society after the Crimea annexation" and links it with the "search for an enemy."²⁶ This point is supported by Lewis, who notes that "the identification of an existential distinction between friend and enemy was—at least for a short time—a highly effective means of mobilizing society, as evidenced by the success of anti-Western propaganda in Russia after 2014."²⁷ The aggressor continues the mobilization, which requires regular outcomes; that is why Russia opens new frontiers to fight in Ukraine. If the results are unsatisfactory, Russia closes it. Thus the aggressor nihilates all the social movements inside the country, changing society's attention in order to secure Russian political elites. On the other hand, the country's worsening economic situation and the sanction policy of the West lead to a noticeable increase and escalation of social problems, which influences some individuals from Putin's ruling circle. So, society's alienation from active participation in actual policy-making is a standard pattern. Politics is often labeled as the task of specially prepared people, not the whole society, with people of different origins, beliefs, and experiences. Such regimes tend to enact laws on behalf of the people without any previous public discussion or direct demand.

State Control

Only totalitarianism implies all-encompassing control over all areas of a country's life. The authoritarian and neo-authoritarian regimes tend to impose their control on certain spheres, giving space for social and/or economic autonomy. There are a couple of pragmatic reasons for doing so. Firstly, the modern world is globalized, and ruling elites, or even transnational economic groups, can follow their own interests while the regime allows some uncontrolled activities.

Secondly, neo-authoritarianism can use various tools designed by other political regimes if it helps them achieve their goal. The striking example is the exploitation of the liberal approach by the Russian neo-authoritarian elites, as they

²⁶ Lilia Shevtsova, "How Long Russians Will Believe in Fairy Tale?" *Carnegie Moscow Center*, June 25, 2014, <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/56003>.

²⁷ David G. Lewis, *Russia's New Authoritarianism: Putin and the Politics of Order* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/45793>.

were perceived in the modern academic world, in 2008-2012 to “benefit from facilitating programmatic flexibility” because Vladimir Putin is believed to be “an opportunist rather than an ideologically driven strategist.”²⁸ So, state control in neo-authoritarianism turns out to be a tool to legitimate and impose power.

One of the possible manifestations of neo-authoritarian regimes in post-Soviet countries is virtual democracy. According to Wilson, virtual democracies are based on five key principles: (1) the extensive use of mudslinging and compromising information to blackmail opponents; (2) abuse of state power (so-called administrative resources) to assist pro-government candidates and hinder opposition candidates; (3) the use of underhanded tactics that can include infiltrating an opponent’s party or introduction of full namesake candidates with names similar to opposition’s candidates to distract voters; (4) creation of virtual objects like political parties that exist only for drawing votes or making claims that a mainstream party is unwilling to make; and (5) application of *dramaturgy* – “the creation of a narrative around an election or other event, allowing technologists to control the content and tone of political discourse.”²⁹ Thus, this article turns to Wilson’s concept of virtual democracy to discuss Ukraine’s resistance to neo-authoritarianism.

Neo-authoritarianism, if necessary, seeks to oversee all spheres of its citizens’ lives. In China, the formula for a strong liberal leader was proposed in the 1980s as an answer to the question of sparing democratization and market reform in China. Initially, a strong leader meant an authoritarian leader (leadership group) with opportunities and tools that were far from democratic. The assumption was that such an approach was safer for the stability of the state.³⁰ More recently, China has perfected its control over its population. Speaking on the issue of the increase in the intensity of state supervision in China, *the Economist* noted:

The bureaucracy, army, and police have undergone purges of deviant and corrupt officials. Big business is being brought into line. Mr. Xi has rebuilt the party at the grassroots, creating a network of neighborhood spies and injecting cadres into private firms to watch over them. Not since Mao’s day has society been so tightly controlled.³¹

²⁸ Susan B. Glasser, Interview with Carl Bildt, “Carl Bildt: The Full Transcript,” *Politico Magazine*, May 1, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/05/01/carl-bildt-the-full-transcript-215086/>.

²⁹ Erin Trouth Hofmann, “Virtual Politics and the Corruption of Post-Soviet Democracy,” *Wilson Center*, 2006, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/virtual-politics-and-the-corruption-post-soviet-democracy>.

³⁰ “China’s Communist Party at 100: The Secret of Its Longevity,” *The Economist*, June 26, 2021, <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/06/26/chinas-communist-party-at-100-the-secret-of-its-longevity>.

³¹ “China’s Communist Party at 100.”

Political Pluralism and Opposition

Political pluralism and opposition function within the formal boundaries permitted by the regime. The authoritarian type of political regime presupposes the suppression of non-systemic opposition—parties are “excluded” from the political system because they lack representation in the structures of state power and interaction with the ruling group—or its complete absence, as well as the impossibility for the legal opposition to significantly influence the policy of the state. Authoritarian leaders use power without considering the political views that differ from their opinion, and it is almost impossible to change them through elections. We can examine political regimes by elites’ treatment of their opposition.

Authoritarian Leadership

In new realms, authoritarian leadership presupposes a sole directing influence based on the threat of sanctions and the use of force. Authoritarian leaders do not justify their actions by pursuing high goals. They simply state that society is on the very edge of the abyss and take on the task of saving it, after which, according to them, they are ready to give up power. All political activity becomes the exclusive function of political power. Yilmaz and Turner’s observations can illustrate this:

Authoritarian leaders not only aim to shock and paralyze the minds of political opponents daily through judicial repression, violent manifestations of state authority, and imposition of securitization policies, they also aim to embed a kind of ‘aspectual captivities’ within society and intellectual circles to structure the field of knowledge, opinion, and imagination for the sake of their rule.³²

The ruling elite is formed not democratically but through appointments from above. As a result, the entourage of an authoritarian leader is selected based on personal sympathy and loyalty to the leader and not on their business qualities and capabilities.

Practical Implications for the Case of Ukraine

As summarized in the report “Ukraine: 30 Years on European Path” by the Razumkov Center, the first half of the 1990s was almost catastrophic for Ukraine, which was going through an economic collapse and an enormous decline in the welfare of citizens.³³ Unfortunately, further uncertainty in the priorities and directions of growth and development policy, as well as the lack of consistency in

³² Zafer Yilmaz and Bryan S. Turner, “Turkey’s Deepening Authoritarianism and the Fall of Electoral Democracy,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 5 (2019): 691–698, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2019.1642662>.

³³ Yu. Yakymenko et al., *Ukraine: 30 Years on the European Path* (Kyiv: The Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies named after Olexander Razumkov,

implementing reforms, have significantly hampered the socio-economic development of Ukraine. As noted in the report, leaders' failures did not allow them to quickly and effectively use the potential that Ukrainian society had – "a relatively high intellectual and cultural level, good natural and climatic conditions, the age-old desire of the Ukrainian people to establish themselves as an independent state."³⁴

After the collapse of the USSR, Ukrainian political life faced tough challenges. Even after thirty years of Ukrainian independence, some researchers and analysts count it as a transitional or hybrid regime. Such a label can be understood by remembering the two revolutions which took place in Ukraine within the last twenty years. Magyar and Madlovics, in their well-respected study on post-communist regimes, analyze these mobilizations of civic society in 2004 and 2013 as absolute denials of the presidents Leonid Kuchma and Victor Yanukovich and their policies and the Ukrainians' political choices.³⁵ In Ukraine, voters tend to qualify their candidates for their leadership qualities. For instance, Kuchma was known as an "economic man,"³⁶ and Yanukovich as Zagvar, which means the high position of a person in the Soviet system. So, in this regard, it was not completely unexpected that their presidency would obtain authoritarian features. In both cases, this feature did not define the political landscape. They were elected democratically, although once they showed their authoritarian habits, people stopped admiring their policies and political choices. The high level of society's self-organization and immunity from totalitarianism and the USSR overall led to uprisings such as the campaign "Ukraine Without Kuchma," the Orange Revolution, and the Revolution of Dignity.

The possibility of this denial allows for examining Ukraine as a patronal democracy. It has some democratic practices like competitive and fair elections, the presence of opposition and pluralism, and continuous public discussions initiated by people or the government. Still, it is ruled by a patron or group of people with political and economic power. Twice, when the Ukrainian people started their revolution, the political regime was transitioning from patronal democracy to patronal autocracy. Such a political evolution is called "back and forth" and is typical for ex-Soviet Republics.³⁷ In addition, from Wilson's point of view, the Orange Revolution (and we can apply the same logic to the Revolution of Dignity)

«Zapovit» Publishing House, 2021), <https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/2021-independence-30.pdf>, 56.

³⁴ Yakymenko et al., *Ukraine: 30 Years on the European Path*, 58.

³⁵ Bálint Magyar and Bálint Madlovics, *Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: A Conceptual Framework* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2021), 222-23.

³⁶ Kateryna Odarchenko, "Ukraine's Presidents, Power Elites, and the Country's Evolution," *Wilson Center*, November 5, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraines-presidents-power-elites-and-countrys-evolution>.

³⁷ Magyar and Madlovics, *Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes*, 222-23.

demonstrated that Ukrainian society rejected “virtual democracy,” one of the models for new authoritarian regimes.³⁸

In turn, Hale emphasizes the dynamic nature of the “patronage policy,” associated with competition within elites with the changing expectations of clients and “brokers” (oligarchs, regional leaders, bureaucrats) regarding the prospects of their patrons.³⁹ Thus, Hale demonstrates that the change of expectations led to the collapse of the “pyramids of power” during the “color revolutions” in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. Hale argues that the expectations of elites are formed and changed under the influence of formal institutions, which arise in part as a by-product of political conflicts but have their own logic of functioning.⁴⁰

The struggle for democracy in Ukraine culminated with the full-scale war with the Russian Federation. The needed and forced action in resisting the enemy was to impose martial law as one of the temporary measures to defend democracy. Despite the support of the Western countries, the economic situation in Ukraine remains challenging due to the gigantic damages and destruction of civilian and military infrastructure throughout the country, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic earlier. These circumstances are favorable for transitioning toward patronage authoritarianism. For various reasons, Ukraine has not been ready for the full-scale Russian aggression. Some new armed elements, such as the Territorial Defense and National Resistance, were created. The destroyed mechanism of weapons procurement was replaced by international technical support. Issues with military logistics, tactical unpreparedness, warnings and alert systems, and bomb shelters were solved during intensive fighting. Nevertheless, one national feature that helps Ukrainians survive and be united in these rough times is autonomy and a high level of responsibility. Consciousness and self-organization were the foundation of the 2014 Maidan and the defense in the consequent war with Russia. Today, it is of utmost importance to use these features as a foundation for solving problems, such as advancing the effectiveness of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, improving the Ukrainian economy, and providing all necessary reforms to achieve the status of a member state of the European Union.⁴¹

Any discussion on the political situation in Ukraine should consider that the country is situated in a specific region of Europe, where the East meets the West, not only geographically but also ideologically. Moreover, Ukrainian history and mentality, from the democratic institutions of Zaporozhian Sich to the Revolution of Dignity and the war with Russia, are evidence of the population’s expectations of a democratic and European development path.

³⁸ Hofmann, “Virtual Politics and the Corruption of Post-Soviet Democracy.”

³⁹ Henry E. Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 209-10.

⁴⁰ Hale, *Patronal Politics*, 209-10.

⁴¹ “Ukraine Officially Received the Status of a Candidate for EU Membership,” *European truth*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.euointegration.com.ua/news/2022/06/23/7141922/>. – in Ukrainian.

Moreover, not only Ukraine itself but also European allies should be interested in the democratic future of Ukraine. Ukraine's neighbors, most of whom previously belonged to the USSR or its sphere of influence, have not yet achieved democracy and do not even set such a task. The question is not only about ideology but other issues too: "Ukraine is significant for the entire EU in terms of political stability, security, and energy-related matters."⁴² In this way, further democratic reforms in Ukraine are a positive sign for European countries. For instance, in reacting to global challenges like the migration crisis, the world community is interested in a democratic and, therefore, predictable and trustworthy partner.

However, the European development of Ukraine is in danger because of the Russian attempts to undermine democratic processes in the country. In many aspects, the success of democracy in Ukraine requires active countering of not only the Russian military aggression but also its information agenda. Ukraine needs to emphasize, among others, the difference in mentalities that makes dictatorship impossible while, in turn, protecting these mentalities also requires defending Ukrainian heritage from Russian encroachments.

That is a reason why Ukraine should actively reflect on the requirements for a political leader. Ukraine needs a person who can unite people and continue to implement democratic reforms, bringing the country closer to joining the EU. Additionally, in developing a portrait of a political leader, it is necessary to take into account the experience of foreign countries, including the negative ones. Notably, this requires an emphasis on the necessity of splitting out with the Russian authoritarian leadership vision. This geopolitical choice does not mean rejecting the possibility of dialogue between the countries entirely but asks to check power positions and ensure that both sides are treated equally as sovereign and independent states.

Finally, in addition to the commitment to democratic principles and pro-reformist agenda, a leader of a prosperous Ukraine requires both virtue and acceptance of other points of view, which are central to the sustainability of pluralism. The legacy of Robert Schuman, who contributed to the development of such institutions as the European Union, the Council of Europe, and NATO, can serve as a guide for future Ukrainian leaders. Schuman, in this context, is important not just as a visionary of a stable and united Europe but because he imagined, described, and implemented the idea of reintegration of Germany back to the peaceful coexistence of European nations via shaping Franco-German Coal and Steel Production. The idea of supranational integration in some areas can be realized by integrating Ukraine into the European Union, convergence with selected neighboring countries like Poland and Turkey, or countries that are a bit further away, such as the UK, the US, or countries of the Baltic region. That might

⁴² Olga Shumylo-Tapiola, "Why Does Ukraine Matter to the EU?" *Carnegie Europe*, April 16, 2013, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2013/04/16/why-does-ukraine-matter-to-eu-pub-51522>.

become the core of Ukraine's actual European or trans-Atlantic economic integration. In the near future, Ukraine will need to craft a plan for the full reintegration of occupied territories, so Schuman's heritage and attention to the people, their traumatic experience, and resources must be carefully analyzed and studied by Ukrainian leaders.

Conclusion

In recent decades, despite the claims about global advances in democratization, there has been an increase in the number of political regimes that scholars analyze as authoritarian forms of government. Under an authoritarian regime, fundamental human rights are not respected, so the adequate reaction of the world community remains essential, and neo-authoritarianism, with its tricky ability to mask itself under the facade of democracy, must be of particular concern.

Both authoritarianism and neo-authoritarianism have ambiguous interpretations. Political science is not consistent with the concept of the regime, and authoritarianism has been identified throughout history with different characteristics, causes, and backgrounds. In general, there is a tendency to perceive authoritarianism as opposed to totalitarianism and democracy, and some see it as an intermediate stop on the path of a particular state to democracy or totalitarianism. The definition of neo-authoritarianism poses even more problems. However, it is possible to define its basic characteristics in terms of ideology, mentality, mobilization, and politicization of a population, state control, level of political pluralism, and leadership style.

Ukraine is at a particularly dangerous point in its political development. On the one hand, due to democratic institutions such as fair elections, pluralism, and the right to spontaneous assembly, the Ukrainian people foiled the attempts to completely establish an authoritarian rule. On the other hand, the Russian-Ukrainian war, the occupation of Crimea, and social and economic instability make it especially tempting to elect a leader with authoritarian ambitions.

Democratic Ukraine, which adheres to democratic practices, is a strategic goal of Europe because the region in which this country is located must be secured from openly anti-European and/or anti-democratic agendas. Therefore, preventing the arrival of an authoritarian leader in the leadership of Ukraine is important for the stability of the region and the security of the whole of Europe.

Disclaimer

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