Trust, Attitudes, and Social Influence:
The Cross-Cultural Social Psychology of Counterinsurgency

LT David J.Y. Combs, USN, MSC, PhD
United States Naval Research Laboratory

Sarai Blincoe, PhD
Longwood University

LT Eric Vorm, USN, MSC, MS
Navy Medicine Operational Training Center

July 2015

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
05/07/2015	Final PDF	OCT 2013–May 2015

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Trust Attitudes and Social Influence: The Cross Cultural Social Psychology of Counterinsurgency

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

David J.Y. Combs, Sarai Blincoe, Eric Vorm

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

US Naval Research Laboratory,
Longwood University, Navy
Medical Operation Training
Command

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

ASD R&E HPTB
Human Social Culture Behavior Modeling Program

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
ASD RE HPTB

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Distribution Statement A: Approved For Public Release, Unlimited Distribution

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
The views expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not reflect the policy of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

14. ABSTRACT

Virtually all discussions on the subject of irregular warfare agree that those involved in this challenging and often ambiguous form of combat must be mindful of psychological dynamics such as persuasion and influence approaches, trust, humiliation, cultural sensitivities, and a host of other similar topics. These topics are the focus of social psychology, a sub-field of psychology which describes and explores how humans interact with one another. To date, despite the seemingly universal agreement about social psychology's importance for confronting the challenges of irregular warfare, there has been no systematic treatment of the social psychology of irregular warfare, particularly its possible roles in counterinsurgency. This manual aims to formally close this knowledge gap.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Social Psychology, trust, attitudes, attitude change, cultural psychology, theory of planned behavior, counterinsurgency, COIN, irregular warfare, individualism/collectivism

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**	Unlimited		LT David Combs
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified			**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)* 202 731 3659

Trust, Attitudes, and Social Influence:
The Cross-Cultural Social Psychology of Counterinsurgency

The views expressed in this document are solely those of the authors
and do not necessarily represent the views of the United States Government.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Author Biographies

LT David J.Y. Combs, USN, MSC, PhD

United States Naval Research Laboratory

David J.Y. Combs is a Naval Aerospace Experimental Psychologist. He holds a PhD and MS in experimental psychology (social and political focus) from the University of Kentucky. He also received a certification in political psychology from Stanford University, a certification in missing/incomplete data analysis from the University of Michigan, and a BA in psychology from Simpson University. He has also completed additional coursework in applied survey sampling at The George Washington University.

After completing his PhD he took a fellowship at the Pew Center on the States where he conducted policy research and analysis on topics such as state and local debt loads as well as the unfunded pension liabilities of state and local governments.

He joined the Navy and was commissioned as a Lieutenant (0-3) in early 2011. He attended flight school in Pensacola Florida where he completed Aerospace Experimental Psychologist flight training in both the T-6 Texan II and the TH-57 Sea Ranger.

He is currently assigned to the United States Naval Research Laboratory in Washington DC where he leads research regarding cross cultural trust generation as it applies to irregular warfare (with a focus in counterinsurgency). He also collaborates heavily with the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Joint Staff, and the British Ministry of Defense.

LT Combs has published widely on psychological topics such as trust, leadership, the impact of leader driven humiliation, and emotions resulting from political events. He has also written for the popular press on topics such as state and local debt loads, governor's salaries, and the utility of various types of debt instruments. He has given dozens of conference presentations for gatherings such as the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, and has been hand selected by leadership in the Office of the Secretary of Defense to deliver research presentations to both NATO and the British Ministry of Defense. He can be reached at david.combs@nrl.navy.mil.

Sarai C. Blincoe, PhD

Longwood University

Sarai Blincoe joined the Department of Psychology at Longwood University as an Assistant Professor in 2012. She holds a PhD and MS in experimental psychology (social focus) from the University of Kentucky and a BA in psychology from Wake Forest University. She began working as a research analyst with the Navy in 2012. In that position she has developed a model of trust decisions in high conflict, cross-cultural environments, and coordinated multi-country, multi-method studies of trust generation.

Dr. Blincoe publishes widely on romantic relationships and interpersonal attitudes, including trust and disrespect. The results of her research have been featured on such outlets as National Public Radio and Huffington Post Live.

She is also active in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). As the SoTL content expert at Longwood University's Center for Faculty Development, Dr. Blincoe coordinates campus-wide mentoring and training initiatives. She regularly presents the results of her SoTL projects, which include cross-cultural studies of academic entitlement, and the benefits of using a flipped class technique to teach statistics at national conferences and workshops. She can be reached at blincoesc@longwood.edu.

LT Eric Vorm, USN, MSC, MS

Navy Medicine Operational Training Center

Eric Vorm is an active duty Navy Aerospace Experimental Psychologist. He holds an MS in Educational Psychology from the University of North Texas, and has participated as a visiting researcher to Yale University where he contributed to research on trust, forensic deception detection methods, and human performance and cognition in extreme environments.

He enlisted in the Navy in early 2005, where he served as a Fleet Marine Force corpsman and deployed in support of Operational Iraqi Freedom. In 2009 he was hand selected as a member of a 13-man team operating in the austere environment of the Al Anbar Province of Iraq, where he participated in several regional stabilizing operations, and worked closely with indigenous personnel in counterinsurgency and irregular/unconventional warfare. Upon completion of his Masters degree in 2011, he was selected into the Navy Aerospace Experimental Psychology community and commissioned as a Navy Lieutenant Junior Grade in July 2012. He reported to Naval Air Station Pensacola soon thereafter, where he completed flight training in May 2013.

LT Vorm has contributed to several Navy research initiatives in the areas of command decision making, human systems integration, neurobiological markers of excellence, human performance, and fluid intelligence. He can be reached at Eric.Vorm@med.navy.mil.

Preface

Virtually all discussions on the subject of irregular warfare agree that those involved in this challenging and often ambiguous form of combat must be mindful of psychological dynamics such as persuasion and influence approaches, trust, humiliation, cultural sensitivities, and a host of other similar topics. These topics are the focus of social psychology, a sub-field of psychology which describes and explores how humans interact with one another. To date, despite the seemingly universal agreement about social psychology's importance for confronting the challenges of irregular warfare, there has been no systematic treatment of the social psychology of irregular warfare, particularly its possible roles in counterinsurgency. This manual aims to formally close this knowledge gap.

This is not a comprehensive academic dissertation of social psychology. This manual is designed as a quick-reference guidebook to the role of social psychology in counterinsurgency. Our goal is to provide the reader with a framework for thinking through how humans interact in the social and cultural context that fundamentally defines counterinsurgency operations. With these tools, we believe the reader will be better prepared to anticipate social psychological issues on the COIN battlefield, and to intelligently employ concepts in order to gain a strategic foothold.

1

Basics of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

Starting in the first decade of the 2000s, and continuing in the years following, the United States engaged in major conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. initially approached both conflicts with conventional methods and goals[1] (though see Jones, 2009, for a nuanced perspective of the original approach to Afghanistan). That is, the U.S. and its western coalition allies viewed their mission as largely "conventional"—an approach that usually attempts to "mass firepower at the appropriate place and time to destroy the enemy."[2] This initial approach has a certain merit. After all, the U.S. military is, and has been, designed to fight conventional battles against nation state actors. As one researcher put it, "the emphasis [of the U.S. military] has been on achieving military superiority against the armed forces of nation states, involving an anticipated adversary shaped and operating very much like the U.S. military itself."[3]

Of course, the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan did not conform to a conventional fight. Rather, both conflicts, after what might have appeared to be an initial U.S. victory, evolved into insurgencies and then counterinsurgencies. This initial chapter explains the basics of insurgency and counterinsurgency so that all readers have at least a basic sense of the kind of conflict the rest of the manual will address. Throughout, we will also highlight elements of insurgency and counterinsurgency that intersect with the field of social psychology. By the end of this chapter, the reader should have a working knowledge of insurgency and counterinsurgency and a sense of the relevance of social psychology to this form of warfare.

Conventional Warfare

Before diving into insurgency and counterinsurgency (COIN, hereafter), it is important to provide a brief description of "conventional warfare." Conventional warfare is largely about the destruction of an enemy's ability to wage war. The goal of a conventional fight is not about taking "a slice of

1. Jones, S. G., *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009).

2. Nagl, J. A., *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

3. Ucko, D. H., *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the U.S. Military for Modern Wars* (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2009).

territory or capturing a fortress, but the destruction of the enemy forces."[4] Imagining how this sort of fight must look you would likely picture the trench warfare of World War I, or the tank battles of World War II. The uniformed army of Side A marches against the uniformed army of Side B in an attempt to force Side B to yield to Side A's wishes.

David Galula,[5] one of the fathers of modern COIN thinking, suggested four laws of conventional warfare:

1. The strongest side usually wins.
2. If the two sides are of equal strength, the side that is more "resolute" usually wins.
3. If the two sides are equally strong and equally resolute, then victory goes to the side that keeps and seizes the initiative.
4. Finally, if items 1-3 are even on both sides, then the "surprise" might be the decisive factor.

The goal of conventional warfare can be summarized by saying that if a conventional force could "annihilate the enemy's forces in the field [it] will win the war."[6] This approach is entirely useful for major clashes between nation state actors, but as will become clear shortly, it is altogether inappropriate for dealing with insurgency.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

Insurgency (and counterinsurgency) fall underneath the umbrella term of irregular warfare, which is a set of loosely connected activities that attempt to accomplish objectives through indirect and unconventional means. The *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24)*[7] defines insurgency as "an organized, protracted politico military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control." In other words, an insurgency is where a group within a society aims to throw off the established government, and replace it with their own desired government.[8]

4. Moltke, as cited in Nagl, J. A., *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 18.

5. Galula, D., *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964).

6. Nagl, J. A., *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

7. *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual no. 3-24: Marine Corps Warfighting Publication no. 3-33.5* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

8. The experience of the U.S. in both Afghanistan and Iraq do not exactly mirror this framework. In these cases, the insurgencies were trying to throw off the U.S. as an occupying power, as well as the government the U.S. was trying to establish in the respective nations.

Insurgents are almost always weaker than the government they wish to remove;[9] the existing government usually has access to the full power of a state (*e.g.,* a state military, power to tax, media, police, etc.), while an insurgency is limited to whatever manpower, weapons, etc., they can obtain without the government putting a stop to their efforts. Faced with this inequality, insurgents usually cannot hope to defeat an existing government in any kind of a conventional fight as they would be quickly destroyed.[10] Given this challenge, insurgencies sometimes apply a "population-centric" approach. That is, since insurgents usually cannot take control of their nation (or the population) on the battlefield, their only real option for gaining control is to separate the political support of the population from the government and win that political support for themselves. They often do this by enticing locals to their vision of the future. Only by winning the political support, or at least acquiescence, of the locals will insurgents have a base of power to draw upon for political and physical support such as supplies, food, shelter, and manpower.

Finding methods of winning the support of a population away from an established government is clearly a difficult task. What factors can enhance insurgent chances of success? Many authors have written about this topic. We will start with David Galula's perspective regarding the kinds of factors that make a nation susceptible to insurgency in the first place.

Insurgency Kindling

David Galula, a French counterinsurgency officer who formed a theory of COIN during his time in Algeria, proposed several factors that he believed could lay the groundwork for an insurgency: a cause, weak governance, geographic factors, and the presence of outside support.[11]

From his perspective, a "cause" is any major problem the population has with the government. A cause is perhaps the most critical factor for insurgency development. After all, if there is no "cause" for people to rally toward, no problem the government is not able to address, why would the people wish to throw off the government? A cause can be economic, cultural, religious, ethnic, etc. and must be powerful and attractive enough to create separation between the population and the existing government. As Mao[12] put it, a cause is often generated by some "unsolved contradiction" within the state. Galula theorized that a good insurgent cause attracts as many followers as possible while repelling the fewest possible followers. As an insightful example (considering he was writing in the 1960s), he compared the racial contexts in the United States and South Africa as potentially revolutionary situations. He pointed out how both nations' systematic mistreatment of Black South Africans and African-Americans could easily produce a possible insurgent cause. However, from his perspective,

9. Jones, S. G., *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009).

10. Kilcullen, D., *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

11. Galula, D., *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1964).

12. Mao, Z., *On Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1961).

only the situation in South Africa was ripe for insurgency because in South Africa the cause could resonate with a broad base of the population (Black South Africans making up around 73% of the South African population at the time), while in the U.S. the cause would only resonate with a small minority (African-Americans only making up about 10% of the U.S. population at the time).

Galula suggested that weak governance also plays a critical role in setting the stage for insurgency. His perspectives on this matter are nuanced, but, in essence, he believed a responsive government with a reasonably efficient bureaucracy and police would usually smother an insurgency before it begins. On the other hand, callous governments with non-responsive bureaucracy and poor policing would probably provide kindling for insurgency.

Of course political freedom within a nation is a critical factor as well. In modern times, North Koreans endure one of the worst totalitarian regimes in the world, yet there is no real chance for insurgency because the lack of political freedom snuffs out any ability for an insurgency to organize.[13]

From Galula's perspective, geographic considerations also play a role in setting the stage for successful insurgency. Factors such as nation size, ruggedness of terrain, and openness of borders are all vital from the perspective of the insurgent. For example, a larger nation can often provide more remote locations for insurgents to operate within, and rugged terrain (especially if familiar to insurgents) can be especially helpful for avoiding an unplanned confrontation with the established government. Porous borders with a neighboring country, especially one friendly to the insurgents, can allow insurgents a safe haven where government forces from their own nation are unlikely to follow.

Finally, outside support for the insurgents, from other nations or groups, can often make all the difference between an insurgency gaining traction or being snuffed out. Galula noted that outside support could come in many forms, including moral support, financial support, and overt military support. Outside support from France was critical to the success of the U.S. insurgency against Great Britain (in the American Revolution).

Galula summarizes his ideal context for an insurgency to rise as "… a cause, a police and administrative weakness in the [established governing body], a not too hostile geographic environment, and outside support in the middle and later stages of an insurgency – these are the conditions for a successful insurgency. The first two are musts. The last one is a help that may become necessity."

Insurgency Development

Just because the factors within a nation make it ripe for an insurgency does not necessarily mean an insurgency will develop. When the conditions are ripe for insurgency, how does an insurgency

13. Martin, B. K., *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004).

actually develop and become a full-blown challenge to the existing government? Multiple models of insurgency development exist, but perhaps the most cited is Mao Zedong's (one of the 20th century's greatest insurgent leaders) perspective on the three stages of insurgency development. During his lifetime, Mao Zedong successfully defeated both the Chinese National Army (the governing party of China at the time) and the Japanese (who at the time of their defeat were in China as part of a long-standing occupation force). During the Japanese conflict, Mao laid out a concise strategy for victory in a revolutionary struggle. His book, *On Guerilla Warfare*[14], was written in 1937, and is still considered a relevant source for understanding insurgency.

Mao's Three Phases of Insurgency


Mao Zedong

Mao suggests that an insurgency will often develop in three phases. The first phase is largely organizational. Motivated individuals will attempt to organize human capital, resources, etc. At this phase, would-be insurgents also focus on rallying ordinary people to the insurgent cause and persuading them that the cause is just. In addition, as several commentators have noted,[15] the early stages of an insurgency are usually (depending on the nation) conducted legally. Groups might meet, local leaders calling for change will emerge, yet, in most places such action is perfectly legal. In fact, in most places it would be nearly impossible for an established government to notice any real trouble brewing. The would-be insurgency will probably remain small at this point, but, critically, some initial power base of supporters should emerge from which the insurgency will draw support, shelter, supplies, manpower, etc. By and large, the insurgency is probably made up of little more than some charismatic local leadership and a following of ordinary citizens hungry for change. Of course, the fact that the insurgency is largely made up of ordinary citizens makes it extremely difficult for the government to determine who exactly even constitutes the "enemy."

With some initial strength gathered, organization in place, and sufficient support from the local population, the second phase of insurgency should see some level of violence break out. At this stage of development the insurgents are still no match for the forces of the established government; however, they can begin hit-and-run raids against lightly protected outposts and isolated government facilities.[16] Of course, since insurgents don't wear uniforms, those responsible for carrying out such attacks are indistinguishable from innocent civilians, making it easy for them to avoid retribution from the govern-

14. Mao, Z., *On Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Praeger, 1961)

15. *E.g.*, Nagl and Galula.

16. Nagl (2005).

ment. One researcher[17] claims that Mao's hit-and-run methods were designed with two psychological motives in mind. First, the hit-and-run tactics, while they cannot destroy the forces of the established government, undermine public trust in the established government. Second, the hit-and-run tactics increase the prestige of the insurgents among the locals while simultaneously allowing insurgents to seize badly needed supplies.

Finally, from Mao's perspective, the third phase of insurgency development should see the insurgency gain sufficient strength to fully transform itself into a conventional force that can challenge the established government forces in a conventional manner. This final phase is, of course, exceedingly difficult, and insurgent forces might commonly find themselves moving back and forth between phases two and three.[18]

The critical goal of insurgency is not necessarily to defeat the forces of the established government. Rather, the critical goal of insurgency is to win over, psychologically, the support of the national populace, which will provide insurgents with their power base; challenging the established government on a conventional battlefield is probably beyond the capability of most insurgent groups. Even if insurgents do make progress through Mao's phases, the population remains the key to success for insurgents. Mao was keenly aware of this reality and his writings detail not only his thinking on the three phases of insurgency development but also his perspectives on dealing with individual members of the local population. In his Three Rules and Eight Remarks,[19] which are relevant during each of his three phases, Mao made it clear that the psychology of the local population was his insurgent army's primary concern:

Table 1. Three Rules and Eight Remarks

Three Rules
1. All actions are subject to command.
2. Do not steal from the people.
3. Be neither selfish or unjust.
Eight Remarks
1. Replace the door when you leave the house.
2. Roll up the bedding on which you sleep.
3. Be courteous.
4. Be honest in transactions.
5. Return what you borrow.
6. Replace what you break.
7. Do not bathe in the presence of women.
8. Do not search without a warrant.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid. See Nagl for more details.

19. Mao (1961).

Mao's rules and remarks regarding treatment of the population make his perspective clear. He understood that the only way his army could ever take control of China was if the people were overwhelmingly on his side. Without the people he would have had no base of power for shelter, food, supplies, or manpower. His three phases of insurgency development, as well as his three rules and eight remarks, point to a man whose thinking on insurgency was almost completely focused on winning the psychological and political support of the population to his side—not destroying his enemy (the established government).

Galula's Two Types of Insurgency Development


David Galula

Mao is not the only person with perspective on insurgency development. David Galula, though a counterinsurgent, also had perspectives on the process by which insurgencies develop when the national stage is appropriately set. He suggests two routes to insurgency development: an "orthodox" approach and a "bourgeois" shortcut approach.[20] As with Mao, Galula's perspectives make it abundantly clear that he understood the insurgents' primary goal was to win the support of the locals.

Galula's "orthodox" approach postulates five steps of insurgency development. His first step involves the organization of a political party for the people to gravitate towards. His second step unites the new party with other like-minded parties (again, note the focus on needing the locals for a power base). To this point in his framework, in most nations, insurgent activities would largely be conducted legally. As with parts of Mao's thinking, an established government might not realize that any trouble is brewing at this point. If the government does have a sense that trouble is afoot, there is likely little they can do to stop legal political activity, and if a government does move against insurgents at this point, it runs the risk of drawing attention to the nascent movement. Violent (and clearly illegal) activity would begin at Galula's third step. At this phase of insurgency development, the overall movement is probably still weak, but (as in Mao's step 2) it can engage in hit-and-run tactics designed to both frustrate the government and possibly trigger an overreaction by the established government that will harm locals. A heavy-handed government reaction to the insurgency that causes indiscriminant damage to both insurgent and innocent bystanders can drive the bystanders into the arms of the insurgency.[21] In the final two steps of Galula's development process, like Mao's step 3, the insurgency slowly transforms into something resembling a conventional

20. Galula (1964).

21. Kilcullen, D., *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

military that can challenge the forces of the established government for control.

Much like Mao, Galula's thinking on orthodox insurgency development focuses a great deal on winning over the political and psychological support of the population. His first three steps focus almost entirely on population-centric issues. Even when the insurgents engage in violent actions (step 3), the purpose is largely psychological and designed to cause the government to harm the locals, thereby driving them into the arms of the insurgents (of course, the insurgents wouldn't want this perspective to become known to the locals).

Galula also suggests a shortcut approach to insurgency development, which he called the "bourgeois nationalist approach". In this approach, a small group of insurgents engages in two steps to quickly ratchet up an insurgency. First, the insurgents engage in "blind terrorism" towards any and all targets. Blind terrorism essentially amounts to a psychological warfare campaign designed to grab the attention of both the population and the government. The second step is "selective terrorism" designed to target low-level members of the government. The purpose is to separate national level elite leaders from the population by removing intermediaries. Galula points out that insurgencies of this sort will probably attack government officials such as mayors, postal workers, teachers etc. He also claims that such insurgencies will also target liberal members of the population who, insurgents fear, would try to convince people on both sides to negotiate a non-violent settlement. The bourgeois nationalist approach appears less concerned with winning the political support of the population than intimidating/terrorizing the population into at least fearful, passive, acceptance. Ultimately, this approach is almost entirely a psychological warfare campaign.

Insurgency Summary

In brief, an insurgency arises when local conditions create the desire to throw off an existing government and replace it with some new form of government desirable to the insurgents. Since insurgents are usually weaker than the government they wish to depose, they must rely on the local population to support them. Without local population support, in the form of food, shelter, supplies, manpower etc., the insurgency will quickly wither and die. As Mao Zedong stated, the relationship between the insurgents and the local population is much like the relationship between fish (the insurgents) and water (the local population). If the fish do not have water, they will suffocate and die. In the same way, if insurgents do not have the locals to supply their needs for food, shelter, manpower, etc., the insurgent movement "cannot survive".[22]

The groundwork for an insurgency will probably not exist without a cause, weak governance, appropriate geographical conditions, and, often times, outside support. Provided the groundwork does exist, an insurgency will probably develop over several phases that look much like those

22. Mao (1961)

laid out by Mao and Galula. The insurgency will organize, obtain support from the locals, and eventually work to combat the forces of the established government. The insurgency will probably develop first by using small-scale hit-and-run tactics, and will endeavor to end the conflict by transforming itself into the kind of force that can challenge the existing government on an ultimately conventional battlefield.

Woven throughout this description of insurgency and insurgency development has been a theme of social psychology. As noted, for insurgents to win over the people, they must work to win over (or intimidate) locals to their way of thinking—and their vision of the future (or, at least to not oppose the vision of the future). One element of achieving this goal is for insurgents to persuade and influence locals and to get them to trust that their vision of the future is better than that of the counterinsurgents. As will be discussed at length throughout this manual, social psychology offers counterinsurgents insights into how attitudes change, influence is achieved, and trust is built. The counterinsurgent who understands these topics may be able to anticipate insurgent efforts at persuasion and influence, as well as undertake their own, more effective, campaign of influence and persuasion.

Counterinsurgency (COIN)

How does a state, or other established power (such as the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan), put down an insurgency? As noted above, in many cases it is probably difficult for a government to even recognize an insurgency in its early phases, much less act against it. In addition, once it becomes clear that an insurgency does exist, simply finding the insurgents among the local population can border on the impossible. There are many perspectives on this matter, but, generally speaking, there are two overarching approaches to putting down an insurgency: a heavy-handed approach or a population-centric approach.

Heavy-Handed Counterinsurgency

Some commanders and political leaders view a fight with insurgents as a fight that simply needs to be taken to the enemy; some commanders simply believe "a war is a war" and should be treated as such.[23] This mentality is somewhat "conventional" militarily and, as such, dictates that the goal of counterinsurgency is to destroy the armed forces of the insurgency. In 2013, the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad took this approach to putting down the insurgency that was roiling Syria. What began in 2011 as peaceful protests by the local population degenerated not long after into full blown insurgency. From the beginning, Assad attempted to quash the insurgency, which was trying to cast off his government, by violently crushing his opponents. In mid-2013, with the insurgency showing no signs of weakening, Assad doubled down on this perspective by saying that only military force could compel his enemies to yield.[24]

23. Nagl (2005).

24. Shahine, A., *Syrian Stalemate Endures as Diplomacy Fails to Help Assad's Army* (Bloomberg, 2013). Retrieved from http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-09-12/syrian-stalemate-endures-as-diplomacy-fails-to-help-assad-s-army.html.

While the jury is currently out on whether or not Assad will prevail over his enemies, other heavy-handed approaches to COIN have met with mixed results.[25] For example, the government of Saddam Hussein violently put down an insurgency in Iraq following the 1991 U.S.-led Gulf War. His violent approach was largely successful and kept him in power until the U.S.-led 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom deposed him. In other cases a heavy-handed approach has failed to tamp down insurgency. For example, the Nazis commonly dealt with partisans, who often functioned like insurgents, in a heavy-handed way and found that such an approach was almost completely unhelpful. Nazi approaches to dealing with locals may have actually contributed to the Nazi defeat on the Eastern Front. Many field-level commanders recognized that treating the locals with respect and protecting them from insurgents might well give the German *Wehrmacht* a helpful ally; however, such an approach was antithetical with Nazi policy makers.[26] In a similar vein, some have suggested[27] that in many Eastern European nations the locals were initially, tentatively, pro-German (especially those who had already been occupied by the Soviets[28]), but the heavy-handed tactics of the Germans constantly drove locals into the arms of the insurgents, which caused an endless headache for the *Wehrmacht.*

Regardless of whether or not a heavy-handed approach to COIN is ultimately a useful tool for putting down an insurgency, such an approach is clearly not appropriate for western-style liberal democracies (whether operating in other nations or their own). For those who would attempt to counter an insurgency without resorting to warfare directed against their own people (or people they have charge over) what approach is best?

Population-Centric Counterinsurgency

In contrast to the militaristic heavy-handed approach to COIN just described, population-centric COIN aims to defeat an insurgency by depriving it of the population support it requires to be successful. An insurgency, due to its inherent weakness, is dependent upon the support of the local population for its survival; locals must believe in the insurgent cause and their vision for the future (or at least not oppose the insurgency). Provided insurgents have a minimum of acquiescence from the locals, it will be nearly impossible for the established government to even find insurgents hidden among the locals. The established government is dependent upon the locals rejecting the insurgency and providing them with the information necessary for locating and removing the insurgents. Without the support and information possessed by the locals, the established government will have little to no hope of "victory."

---

25. Henriksen, T., *WHAM: Winning Hearts and Minds in Afghanistan and Elsewhere* (2012). Retrieved from Joint Special Operations University website: www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA558145.

26. Kilcullen, D., *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

27. Lieb, P., "Few carrots and a lot of sticks," in D. Marston and C. Malkasian (Eds.), *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Osprey, 2008).

28. Snyder, T (2003). *The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943*, The Past and Present Society: Oxford University Press.

Essentially, since both a cause and bad government are major drivers of insurgency, population-centric COIN must resolve these drivers of insurgency in hopes of bringing "disaffected populations back into the fold."[29] The U.S. COIN manual reiterates this point. The U.S. defines COIN as "the military, paramilitary, economic, political, psychological, and civic actions taken to defeat an insurgency." This definition makes it clear that population-centric COIN must be a whole of government response to defeating an insurgency. Provided the government is even capable of adequately undermining the insurgent cause, the population should ostensibly have no reason to support the insurgency, which should cause it to wither.

Of course, getting large groups of individuals to turn their opinions and beliefs in a given direction in order to undermine the insurgency is easier said than done. While there is much understanding of drivers of insurgency and how an insurgency develops once the proper factors are in place (*e.g.*, Mao's three phases), there is less agreement on a "step-by-step" style approach for COIN. Instead, a number of COIN theorists and practitioners have provided general principles for conducting COIN. Table 2 provides a short-hand visualization for the multiple perspectives offered by each of several COIN theorists regarding principles for conducting COIN. In looking over Table 2, several themes emerge.

Good Governance

As noted by Galula, bad government is a major driver of insurgency; as such, good governance must be part of any solution. Table 2 illustrates that good governance is a theme across all authors. For example, each of Thompson's[30] points has to do with good government function—essentially, a functioning government that has a plan and provides for people's most basic needs. Several other authors[31] make similar points that credible government is essential to any COIN engagement, and also point out that a government must be in a place to offer credible reconciliation plans if COIN efforts are to be successful. In this vein, the first critical point the U.S. COIN manual makes is that government legitimacy is the "primary objective of any COIN operation."

29. Celeski, J., *Operationalizing COIN* (2005). Retrieved from Joint Special Operations University website: http://carl.army.mil/docrepository/JSOU_Report_05_2.pdf.

30. Thompson, R., *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 1966).

31. Marston, D., and Malkasian, C., *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Osprey, 2008).

Table 2. Themes from Counterinsurgency Authors

Kilcullen	Thompson	Marston and Malkasian	Joes
Strong local knowledge	Government needs obvious political objective	Comprehend history, etc., of host nation	Attractive amnesty program
Diagnose local problems	Government must obey its own laws	Adapt to local situations	Government seen as legitimate by locals
Good intelligence	Government must have plan	Bottom up and top down actions	Limited military actions
Organize interagency collaboration	Government priority must be defeating political subversion, not destroying insurgents	Good training for both civilian and military forces	Redress of socio-political grievances
Travel light	Government must secure its own base	Ongoing COIN education for own forces and local forces	Conservative military policies
Find political/cultural advisor		Risk taking organizations	
Train squad leaders, then trust them		Harmony of effort across organizations	
Rank is nothing, talent everything		Amnesty for enemies	
Strong, well thought out, plan of action		Political compromise among combatants	
Be present with locals		Understand local culture	
Avoid knee jerk first responses		Small unit approaches	
Prepare for hand-over early		Corporate memory	
Build trusted networks with locals		Security for population	
Start easy, low hanging fruit		Raise and fight alongside local forces	
Seek early victories		Political and social context is critical	
Deterrent patrolling			
Prepare for setbacks			
Remember the global audience			
Engage women, avoid children			
Constant measurement of success			
Exploit a single narrative			
Local forces should mirror enemy, not your forces			
Practice armed civil affairs			
Small efforts are beautiful			
Fight enemy strategy, NOT enemy forces			
Build solution, only attack enemy when he gets in the way			
Keep extraction plan secret			
Keep the initiative			

Limited Military Objectives

Across Table 2, several authors also point out that military action should be limited in scope. Joes[32] states that military action should be conservative, and Thompson suggests that the government must focus far more on dealing with political subversion than on engaging the insurgency in a kinetic fight. The *U.S. Army Field Manual* states that while military action will always be necessary when dealing with an insurgency, "any operation that kills five insurgents is counterproductive if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of 50 more."[33]

Lenience for Insurgent Backers

Across Table 2, several authors suggest lenience in dealing with insurgent backers up to and including robust amnesty programs. David Galula also makes this point. He notes that Mao's Chinese insurgents always worried about winning local support away from the established government, and so treated captured government soldiers extremely well. Captured government soldiers were given four choices: (1) join the insurgent army, (2) settle in insurgent territory on a share of land, (3) return home, or (4) return to the regular army.[34] This approach by insurgents had a remarkable effect. Those regular army soldiers who returned to the Chinese army would often, naturally, talk about their captive experience with fellow soldiers. Reports of their treatment destabilized the Chinese ranks. Galula reports that eventually the Chinese army started to lock up soldiers who had been captured by the insurgents for fear of them spreading the word of the benefits of joining the insurgency. Of course, this was an insurgent tactic, but it goes a long way toward making the point that treating prisoners with the utmost respect can have a lasting impact on the population (and insurgent recruitment).

Strong Knowledge of Locals

Photo Credit | U.S. Army by Sgt. Russell Gilchrest

Another factor that comes across in Table 2 in conducting good COIN operations is a strong knowledge of local culture and customs. This point might not be overly relevant for a government trying to put down insurgency within its own borders; however, when a foreign power is trying to put down insurgency (such as when the U.S. attempted to put down insurgencies in Iraq and Afghani-

32. Joes, A.J., *Resisting Rebellion: History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004).

33. FM 3-24. Also see: Kilcullen, D., *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

34. Galula (1964), p. 35 for details.

stan), a keen understanding of local culture is imperative. In Table 2, Kilcullen's list of critical COIN points includes embedding political and cultural advisors with U.S. troops, and vast pre-deployment education on local culture, economics, topography, etc. Marston and Malkesian make a similar point that counterinsurgents must know what is now being called the "human terrain." T.E. Lawrence,[35] the famous Lawrence of Arabia, though an insurgent himself, pointed out that strong cultural knowledge was critical when working with Arab locals. He noted that a person wishing to work with an Arab population would need to know Arab culture down to the level of which subjects to talk about over dinner—and which to avoid. For example, in his "27 Articles" he stated that when interacting with Arabs it is important to "avoid too free talk about women. It is as difficult a subject as religion, and their standards are so unlike our own that a remark, harmless in English, may appear as unrestrained to them…" These points will be expanded upon in Chapter 2 on culture.

Of course, the four themes noted here only cover some of the points advocated by a great many COIN theorists, but they do provide a sense that victory in COIN is absolutely not about the destruction of enemy forces in any kind of conventional military way. Even a quick glance at Table 2 will show that none of the perspectives include any real thinking on the destruction of the enemy. The military is not going to achieve victory by killing insurgents or taking physical territory; rather, the key terrain counterinsurgents must take is the "six inches between the ears"[36] of the local populace.

Ultimately, just as the insurgents need to win over the locals, counterinsurgents have the same goal. Counterinsurgents need to persuade and influence locals to trust them and their vision of the future. As noted earlier, social psychology offers profound insight into how these psychological processes occur. Counterinsurgents who understand the social psychological processes involved with winning over local populations will be in a strong position for success—especially if they understand these processes better than insurgents. We conclude this chapter with David Galula's framework for conducting COIN, and we highlight the social psychological elements of his thinking as a springboard for the rest of this manual.

COIN in 8 Steps

Unlike most COIN theorists who offer general ideas about conducting COIN, in his classic book *Counterinsurgency: Theory and Practice*,[37] David Galula offers an 8-step approach for the conduct of COIN operations. We review the eight steps briefly (see Table 3) to underscore the immense potential that a sophisticated understanding of social psychology might have in the execution of counterinsurgency. Accompanying each point is a reference to a chapter of this manual. These references are not meant to suggest that a single chapter is the only relevant information for a particular step, but rather to provide a starting point and example.

35. Lawrence, T.E., "27 Articles," *The Arab Bulletin* (1917).

36. Jones (2010).

37. Galula (1964).

Table 3. COIN in 8 Steps

1. Concentrate enough armed forces to destroy or to expel the main body of armed insurgents.
Galula suggested that the first step in any COIN campaign must include ridding the area of insurgent forces. Such actions could mean violence against insurgents; it could also mean arresting those associated with the insurgency. The purpose at this step is to make it safe for further COIN actions. He noted that "psychological warfare" would be critical at this phase and even made suggestions about the specific types of messages that should be leveled towards his own troops, the locals, and the insurgents (see Chapter 5 for perspective on how messages change attitudes). In this case, he suggested that the most useful message to the population would essentially be "stay neutral and peace will soon return to the area. Help the insurgent, and we will be obliged to carry on more military operations and thus inflict more destruction."
2. Detach for the area sufficient troops to oppose an insurgent's comeback in strength, and install these troops in the hamlets, villages, and towns where the population lives.
At this stage, military action should begin to taper off (though it will probably not stop completely) and attention will begin to shift to civic actions. Units would need to be stationed with the population—not necessarily near facilities that would seem to have "conventional" military value (e.g., bridges, electric grids, etc.). At this phase, it is critical to avoid seeming like an outsider. Galula indicates that this is the time to integrate with the locals to whatever degree possible. As he put it, this is the time to form "common bonds." Counterinsurgents should convince the locals that they are in the area for the long term (as locals will probably be afraid that counterinsurgents will leave quickly, putting them at the mercy of the insurgents). Essentially, this is the time to begin building foundations of trust with the locals. In Chapter 3 we discuss the nature of trust and ways in which counterinsurgents can build trust with those who may initially distrust.
3. Establish contact with the population and control over its movements, in order to cut off its links with the insurgents.
From Galula's perspective, this phase is especially critical. The main objectives of step three are to reestablish counterinsurgent control over the area once and for all, and to separate the locals from the insurgency, both physically and psychologically. Psychologically speaking, Galula notes that, at this step, "the future attitude of the population, hence the probable outcome of the war is at stake" (As noted, see Chapter 5 for attitudes perspectives). From his perspective, this is the stage where counterinsurgents can begin working on local projects and trying to make life better for the locals. Such efforts should help counterinsurgents with influence with locals. Chapter 4 describes a number of factors that impact how influence is won—mutual cooperation being an influence factor in particular.
4. Destroy the local insurgent political organizations.
This step involves getting rid of the remnants of the insurgent political organization. In this case, Galula does not refer to hardened insurgent fighters; rather, he means to do away with the network of locals who had provided some level of aid and comfort to the insurgency. Galula recommends a good deal of leniency here, including complete amnesty to those who publicly confess prior actions. His intuitions here resonate with the principle of commitment and consistency, a powerful method for gaining compliance that we discuss in Chapter 4.
5. Set up, by means of elections, new provisional local authorities.
At this stage the counterinsurgents should set up local elections (of course, he points out that this could be extremely difficult and could produce negative results; see p. 90 of his book for his full perspective) and respect the outcome of those elections. Counterinsurgents can stress to locals the importance of the elections, the freedom voters have, the need to vote, and the temporary nature of the results. Chapter 5 discusses a helpful model for message design that addresses such concerns as the unmotivated audience, the use of fear appeals, and how to overcome resistance to persuasive efforts.

Table 3. COIN in 8 Steps (continued)

6. Test these authorities by assigning them various concrete tasks. Replace the soft and incompetent; give full support to the active leaders. Organize self-defense units.
Once the elections are over, Galula advocates giving the newly elected leaders responsibility over concrete projects to determine which are competent and which are not (see Chapter 6 for perspectives on generating the kinds of behavior useful for COIN purposes). He also notes that these new leaders will be very obvious targets for any insurgent remnants still in the area and must be protected. At this point, Galula suggests that the locals might be starting to come around and aiding the counterinsurgents. If so, then any needed messaging will be far more convincing if it comes from the locals and the new leaders.
7. Group and educate the leaders in a national political movement.
Ultimately, new leaders need to be grouped into a political party of some kind. This will not be a fast process. Galula suggests that there are a number of local factors that should be considered at this stage. For example, he recommends that regional organizations be generated initially, in hopes that a national party can come into power ultimately. The importance of knowing and working within cultural frameworks, including the presence and power of shared group memberships and social hierarchies, is a focus of Chapter 2.
8. Win over or suppress the last insurgent remnants.
Finally, the last remnants of the insurgency must be won over or destroyed. From Galula's perspective, this final step could be especially difficult. Any remaining insurgents are probably the most hardened. In addition, the local people who are now enjoying relative peace and calm will wonder why on Earth the peace and quiet should be risked to track down a remaining few. From Galula's perspective, the main difficulty in engaging the final phase of his eight steps "is psychological."

Social Psychology and the COIN Context

This chapter has emphasized the point that COIN is not about the killing of insurgents, but rather is about winning the political support of a local population to the side of counterinsurgents. Winning the support of local populations, especially populations that come from a different cultural background (such as was the case for U.S. counterinsurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan) is clearly a difficult matter. As noted in the definition of COIN provided by the *U.S. Army COIN Field Manual*, winning the political support of a local population is a whole of government effort: military, paramilitary, economic, political, civic, and psychological actions are all crucial.

Throughout this chapter, we have described the basics of how both insurgents and counterinsurgents go about winning over the support of the local population. Embedded within these descriptions are topics that are profoundly social psychological in nature. The two main theoretical perspectives in this chapter, one from an insurgent (Mao) and one from a counterinsurgent (Galula), both emphasize the fact that both sides have the same objective: win over the support of the population. In addition, both Mao and Galula emphasize social psychological topics such as persuasion, influence, trust etc. The rest of this manual is devoted to understanding these social psychological concepts, how they manifest themselves in different cultures, and how counterinsurgents can leverage these topics in ways that will provide a road forward for action.

2

Cultural Intelligence for the COIN Context: Social Psychological Perspectives

Chapter 1 laid out the major issues involved in COIN operations—for either counterinsurgents or insurgents to achieve victory, they must ultimately win over the political support of the local population. Lack of population support dooms the efforts of either side. As discussed in Chapter 1, when the U.S. acts in a counterinsurgent role, having substantive, accurate information about local culture is a key element for winning the locals. The U.S. engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan made clear the importance of cultural knowledge and prompted research programs, books, trainings, and technologies designed to give war fighters cultural competence and ease their work in foreign environments.[38] Of course, legitimate questions still remain regarding how well the information and tools generalize. Will research conducted in Afghanistan help counterinsurgents who might one day work in some other very different context? In some cases, the answer is a resounding "yes." But efforts to understand the culture of Afghanistan or Iraq, however essential for the military's most immediate challenges, may not necessarily yield knowledge and modes of operating that generalize beyond those countries and cultures.[39]

This chapter addresses some of the generalizability concerns by describing cross-cultural social psychological research. The chapter begins with a description of a recent model that will help counterinsurgents better understand different component levels of culture. Understanding these component levels will enable counterinsurgents to better anticipate the thoughts, feelings, and actions of people from many difference cultures. After presenting this underlying model, we then turn to specific research findings with associated examples of COIN applications.

Culture Basics

What is culture? Culture is defined as "the ideas, institutions, and interactions that tell a group of people how to think, feel, and act."[40] Many different cultures make up our lives; some are major

38. Boiney, J., & Foster, D., *Progress and Promise: Research and Engineering for Human Social Culture Behavior Capability in the US Department of Defense* (Washington: The Mitre Corporation, 2013)

39. Ibid.

40. Markus, H., & Conner, A., *Clash! 8 Cultural Conflicts that Make Us Who We Are* (New York: Hudson Street Press, 2013).

cultures (*e.g.*, gender, national) and some are subcultures (*e.g.*, professional). The U.S. military is a "culture" for its members. In fact, within the military, or any other group, there are multiple sub-groups each with a distinct culture. Take, for instance, the differences between the branches of military service—each has a distinct "flavor" of communication, appearance, and conduct. Culture influences people and groups at multiple levels, some obvious, some subtle. Figure 1 (adapted from Markus and Connor, 2013) provides a helpful visualization of the levels at which culture works. This model, which introduces the concept of a "culture cycle," has four levels: the individual level, interaction level, institution level, and conceptual ideas level. In this chapter, we focus on the individual, interaction, and conceptual idea levels of the model. These are the areas in which social psychologists have conducted the most research. This section on the culture cycle is based heavily on the outstanding work of Markus and Conner (2013).[41]

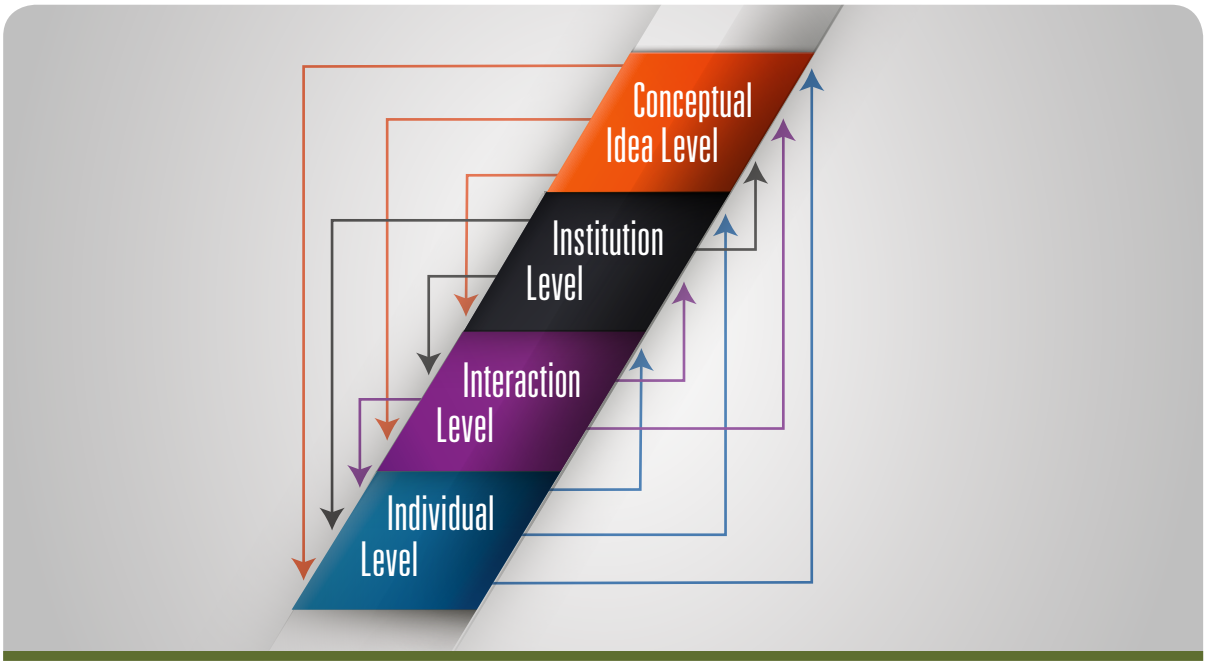


Figure 1. The culture cycle as adapted from Markus and Connor, 2013

The *individual* level of culture is the part of a person that pays attention, feels emotions, learns and remembers information, makes decisions, and acts, tying together his or her days and years.[42] This is the level at which people make meaning out of their experiences and decide what to do next with their lives. Most of us believe that individuals have a cohesive, overall, sense of themselves. A closer look, however, reveals that the overall self is actually made up of multiple elements (*e.g.*, the officer, the sports enthusiast, the parent) that can be switched on or off depending on the

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

situation.[43] This, to some degree, may explain how some individuals can, for example, behave in radically different ways according to the role they are currently performing. We will continue to consider the multi-faceted influence culture has on the individual level throughout the remainder of this chapter.

As individuals connect with other people and things in the environment, we move to the *interaction* level. This is what we see happening all around us; it is how we spend our time. Each interaction has rules or norms for behavior. For example, in Naval culture, daily interactions between personnel are guided by hundreds of norms about how to wear a uniform, how to greet those of a different rank, how to obtain resources, etc.

Every interaction occurs within the next level of culture, the *institutional* level. Examples of these large groups of cultural influence are legal, religious, economic, or scientific. Each of these institutions of thought and practice has its own set of norms or rules for how interactions should take place. Institutions can "exert a formidable force, silently allowing certain practices and products while forbidding others."[44] The institutions that make up the U.S. Naval culture will have similarities with (such as well-defined ranks) and differences from (such as rules about dress) institutions in the U.S. Army culture or the British Naval culture.

Finally, the uppermost (and most abstract) level of the cultural model "is made up [of] the central, usually invisible [conceptual] *ideas* that inform our institutions, interactions, and ultimately, our individual self. Like the unseen forces that hold our planet together, these background ideas hold our cultures together. Because of them, cultures have an overarching pattern."[45] Just as research in physics or biology has identified the invisible but powerful ideas of gravity and genetics that shape the physical world, research on cultures has identified powerful ideas that shape the world of human behavior.

This section of the chapter has presented a cultural framework to help briefly explain different levels of culture. The next section will first describe a critical component of the *conceptual ideas* portion of the model—the now well-known "individualism-collectivism" distinction. Subsequently, the chapter will explain how this "individualism-collectivism" conceptual idea informs other elements of the culture framework. Specifically, we will provide research-based examples of how social psychology can help counterinsurgents understand and predict the behavior of individuals in multiple cultures globally.

---

43. Hoyle, R.H., Kernis, M.H., Leary, M.R., & Baldwin, M.W., *Selfhood: Identity, Esteem, Regulation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999).

44. Markus, H. & Conner, A. (2013).

45. Ibid.

Conceptual Ideas: Individualism-Collectivism

In the late 1970s, a social scientist named Geerte Hofstede[46] conducted a survey of over 100,000 IBM workers in more than 70 countries. His survey results showed that these countries prioritized different values, and those values could be described along four dimensions: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity-Femininity, and Individualism-Collectivism. Each of these dimensions exists, in the framework of culture described above, at the conceptual idea level. Although each of these four dimensions is relevant for understanding culture, this chapter, and manual more generally, focuses specifically on the "individualism-collectivism" conceptual idea because it has generated the most social psychological research of relevance to COIN operators.[47]

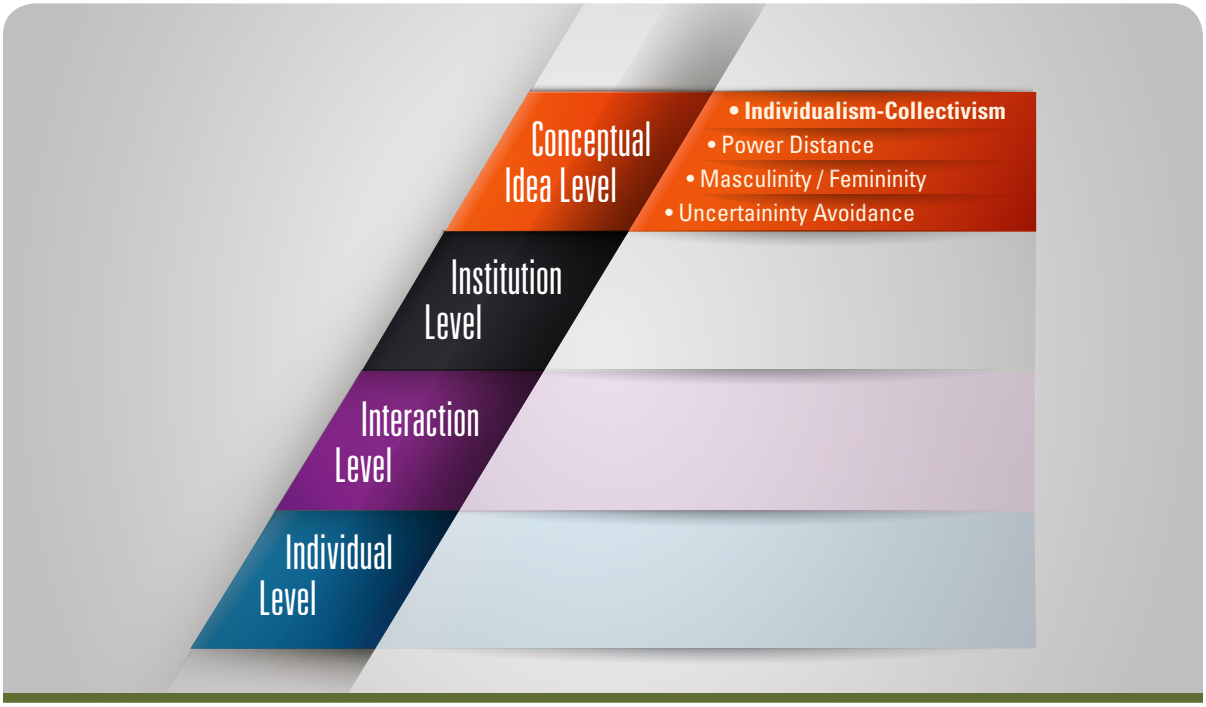


Figure 2. Individualism and Collectivism Within the Culture Cycle

The individualism-collectivism conceptual idea has powerful effects on all the other levels of the culture framework. Knowing something about individualism-collectivism will put COIN personnel in a better position to anticipate behavior at all other levels of the cycle.

What does the conceptual idea "individualism-collectivism" look like? Generally speaking, westernized societies tend to be at the individualism end of the dimension (individualist cultures), whereas

46. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M., *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival* (3. ed.) (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill 2010).

47. The other conceptual ideas are important as well. Future variations of this manual will explore these ideas. See Chapter 7 for more detail on these topics.

non-westernized societies tend to be at the collectivism end of the dimension (collectivist cultures). Figure 3 illustrates this observation, as redder areas correspond with increased individualism. A quick look at the map in Figure 3 will make it clear that "collectivism is the rule in our world, and individualism is the exception."[48] This is a critical point for counterinsurgents. In looking over the map, the areas in which the U.S. has operated over the last decade are clearly toward the collectivist end of the spectrum. In addition, COCOM (Combatant Command) areas of responsibility that are often of special relevance to the U.S. (*e.g.*, CENTCOM, PACOM) are far more collectivist on average than other COCOMs.

At its most basic, the distinction between individualism and collectivism can be reduced to differences in societies between the role of individual persons and the role of groups. In individualist societies, the individual person and his or her interests tend to take precedence over the interests of the group. For example, a young adult's choice of a marriage partner is a personal decision that his or her family may have little to no say in. On the other hand, in collectivist societies, the individual person and his or her interests tend to take a back seat to the interests of groups, such as the family and extended family. A young adult's choice of a marriage partner might be denied by the family in favor of some other person the family endorses—and the individual might well subordinate his or her own wishes to the wishes of the larger group. One interesting way that such distinctions are manifest across societies is in a language nuance. People from individualist societies grow up learning to say the word "I" and think of themselves as "I." They are a unique person; an individual different from others. On the other hand, people from collectivist cultures often grow up thinking of themselves in terms of "we"—"the group is distinct from other groups."[49] Along these lines, one research team pointed out that "the English language, spoken in the most individualist countries… is the only one we know that writes 'I' with a capital letter." They went on to point out a medieval Arabic (often collectivist societies) saying that states "The satanic 'I' be damned."[50]

The idea level of the culture cycle influences the others. The impact of individualism-collectivism as a culture idea can be observed in distinct individual level features. Research from the Globe Study[51] has identified three features in particular.

Globe Study Feature 1: The Independent Self vs. the Interdependent Self

Individualism, at the conceptual *ideas* level of culture, often produces an effect at the individual level of the model known as the "*independent*" sense of self. The independent self is "individual, unique, influencing others and their environments, free from constraints, and equal."[52, 53] Mainstream

48. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010).

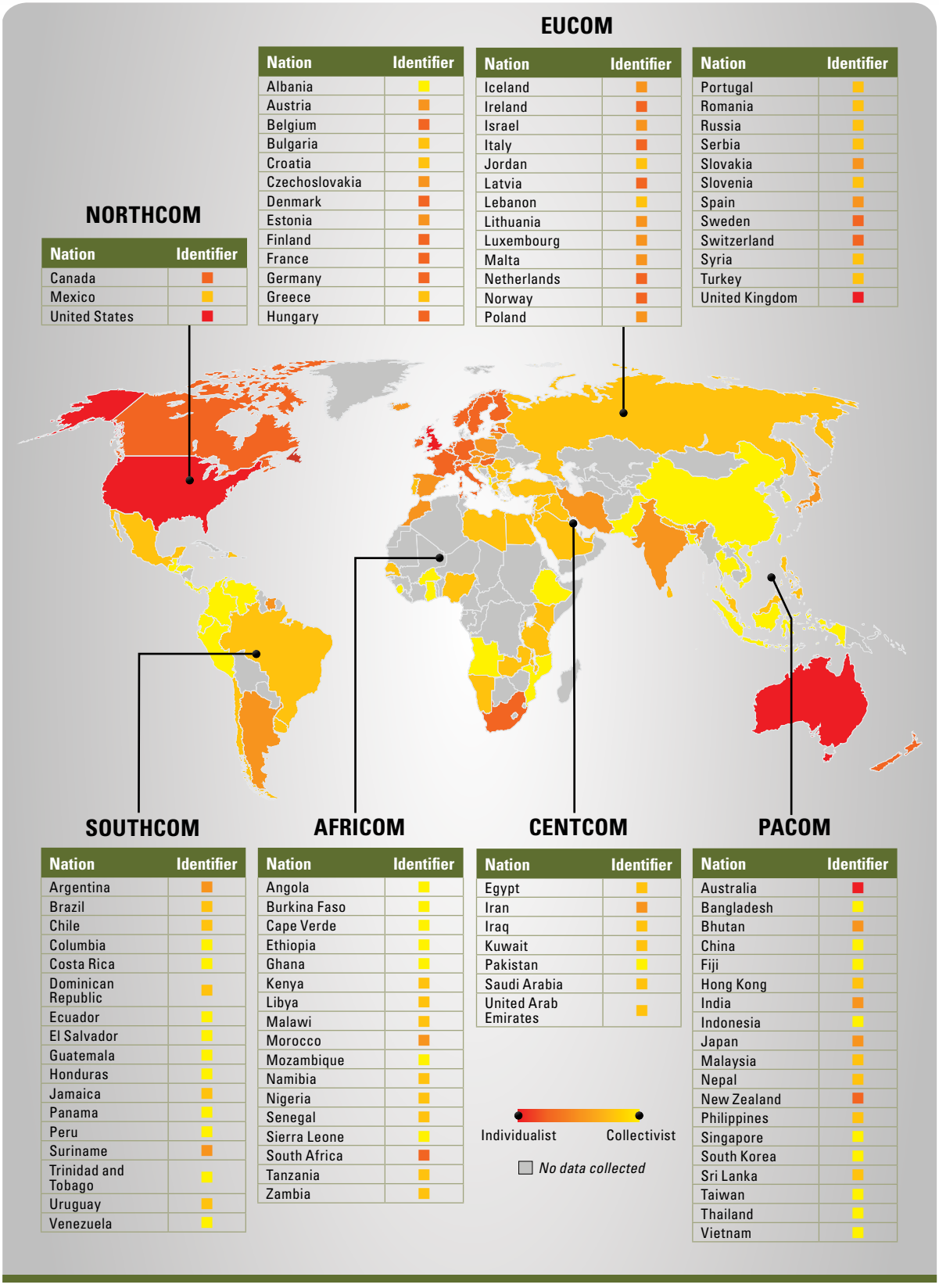
49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. House, R. J., Hanges, P., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P., & Gupta, V., *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: the GLOBE Study of 62 Societies* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2004).

52. Markus & Conor (2013).

53. Triandis, H. & Gelfand, M., "A Theory of Individualism and Collectivism," *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* (Los Angeles: Sage 2012)



Note: Data used to construct this map can be found at: http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html; additional perspective and scores can be found in: Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010.

Figure 3. Individualist and Collectivist Nations Around the World

American culture, which embraces the idea of individualism, is full of independent people. Those independent people believe that they are both special and stable over time and situations. For example, when asked to describe themselves, Americans tend to mention their special, stable qualities. An independent person might describe himself as a Democrat, a Mormon, a good athlete, and witty. These are parts of the person that will not easily change from day-to-day or interaction-to-interaction; they are things that make this person unique. This point probably feels obvious to the American readers of this manual, but contrast this point with how a person in a collectivist society defines himself or herself.

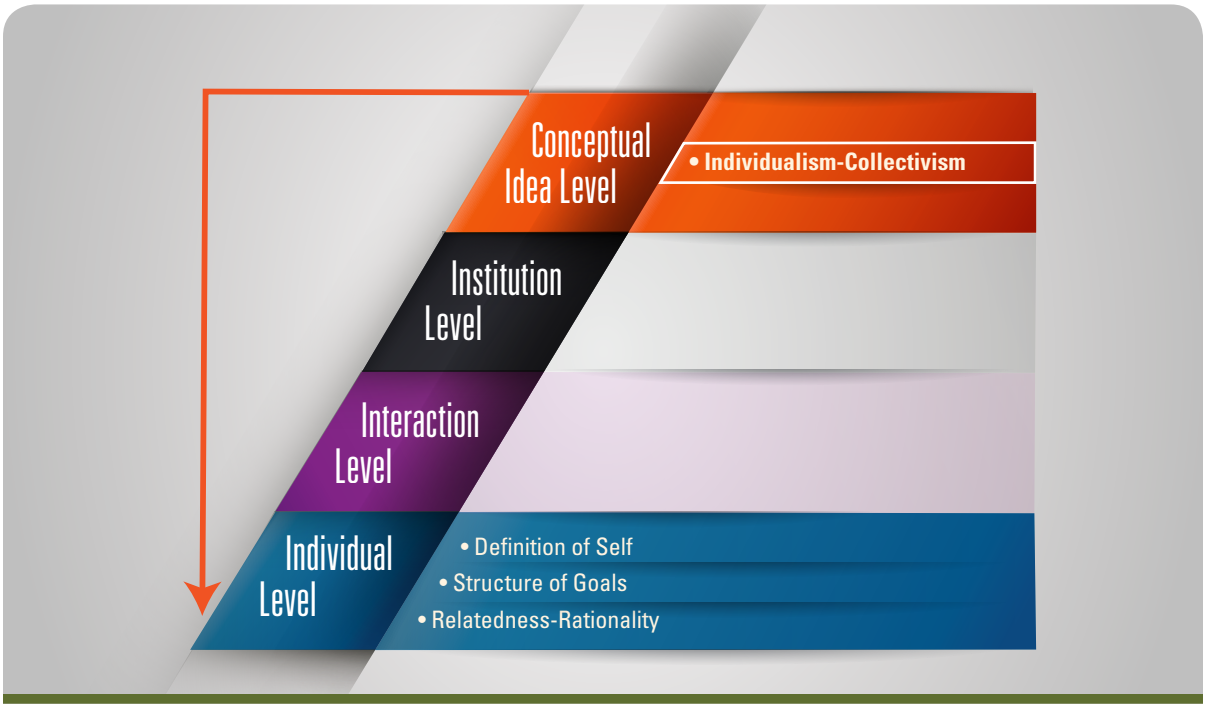


Figure 4. Independent and Interdependent Self Within the Culture Cycle

Collectivism, at the conceptual *ideas* level of culture, often produces an effect at the individual level of the model known as the "*interdependent*" sense of self. The interdependent self is "relational, similar to others, adjusting to their situations, rooted in traditions and obligations, and ranked in pecking orders."[54] Japanese culture, which embraces the idea of collectivism, is full of interdependent people. In contrast to the individualist culture people described above, collectivist people's sense of self might change from situation to situation. Those interdependent people are flexible, ready to adapt over time, and for different social roles (mother, sister, employee). So when asked to describe themselves, Japanese tend to mention flexibility and interconnections with others. For example, a person might describe himself as an obedient son, generous friend, and quiet worker who tries to help his colleagues. These descriptions emphasize his roles and his efforts to be flexible and fit in.

54. Markus and Conner, 2013. Also see Markus and Kitayama, 2010.

Figure 5. Independent and Interdependent Concept Example

Along these lines, some researchers have suggested that the Chinese language has no equivalent for the English word "personality." Presumably this is because personality, as we might understand it in the West, is a stable part of what a person is—theoretically unchanging from situation to situation. Since collectivists tend to see the self as flexible and distinct across situations, apparently, a word like "personality" is not needed in some cases.[55]

Globe Study Feature 2: Loose Ties and Personal Advancement vs. Strong Ties and Group Advancement

It is also important to note that people in individualist or collectivist societies tend to order their priorities differently. In individualist cultures the ties between people are loose; people mostly look out for themselves and for close family members. Correspondingly, a person's thoughts, feelings, motivations, and behaviors are often focused on individual advancement. In collectivist cultures people are, from their birth onward, "integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout peoples' lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty."[56] Correspondingly, a person's thoughts, feelings, motivations, and behaviors are often focused on group advancement.

This distinction in priorities is sometimes evident in how people approach the distribution of earnings from a career. Usually, individualists embark upon a career, make money, and use that money as they see fit. Perhaps they purchase a new car or set aside money for vacations. Collectivists, on

55. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010).

56. Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's Consequences. International Differences in Work Related Values. New York: Sage.

the other hand, will be far more likely to share career wealth with family. As one research team[57] put it:

"The loyalty to the group that is an essential element of the collectivist family also means that resources are shared. If one member of an extended family of 20 persons has a paid job and the others do not, the earning member is supposed to share his or her income in order to help feed the entire family. On the basis of this principle, a family may collectively cover the expenses for sending one member to get a higher education, expecting that when this member subsequently gets a well-paid job, the income will also be shared."

Globe Study Feature 3: Rationality vs. Relatedness

In individualist cultures people tend to give priority to rationality. A cost-benefit analysis approach is used and the needs and desires of the individual are prioritized in most matters, even when giving priority is not advantageous for relationships with others.[58] In collectivist cultures people tend to give priority to relationships. The needs and desires of in-group members (notably family) are prioritized in most matters, even when giving priority is not advantageous for the individual. In collectivist cultures the group is consistently allowed to supersede the individual.

Individualism-Collectivism Summary

Individualism-collectivism is an invisible, background force that shapes the other layers of culture. Using this culture conceptual idea we can better understand how culture works at the "individual level" and "interactions level" of the model. Societies that are infused with the collectivism conceptual idea have different types of interactions, and different understandings of who they are as people than societies that are infused with the individualism conceptual idea.

At first glance, these distinctions between cultures might seem odd and unimportant—especially in the COIN context. However, a considerable amount of research indicates that the individualism-collectivism distinction is associated with multiple types of COIN-related outcomes. A counterinsurgent who is aware of which conceptual idea (collectivism or individualism) they are dealing with will be able to anticipate how individual members of the local population might think, feel, perceive, decide, and act (Figure 4). This awareness is profoundly important cultural intelligence, and, if used appropriately, can be a very effective tool. The next section of this chapter will lay out several ways in which these distinctions might make life more predictable for COIN operators.

57. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010).

58. For additional defining features of individualism-collectivism, see Triandis, H. & Gelfand, M., "A Theory of Individualism and Collectivism," *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* (Los Angeles: Sage 2012).

COIN Applications of the Culture Cycle

Research indicates that people from westernized "individualist" cultures and people from non-westernized "collectivist" cultures tend to process information differently—differences upon which COIN personnel might capitalize in the right situation.[59, 60]

Processing the Information Environment: Analytic or Holistic

Westernized individualists tend to think analytically. "They see objects as discrete and separate from their environments; they see events as moving in linear fashion when they move at all; and they feel themselves to be personally in control of events even when they are not."[61] Non-westernized collectivists, on the other hand, tend to engage in more holistic thinking. They will "see a great deal of the field, especially background events; they are skilled in observing relationships between events; they regard the world as complex and highly changeable and its components as interrelated; they see events as moving in cycles between extremes; and they feel that control over events requires coordination with others."[62] (See Figure 6.)

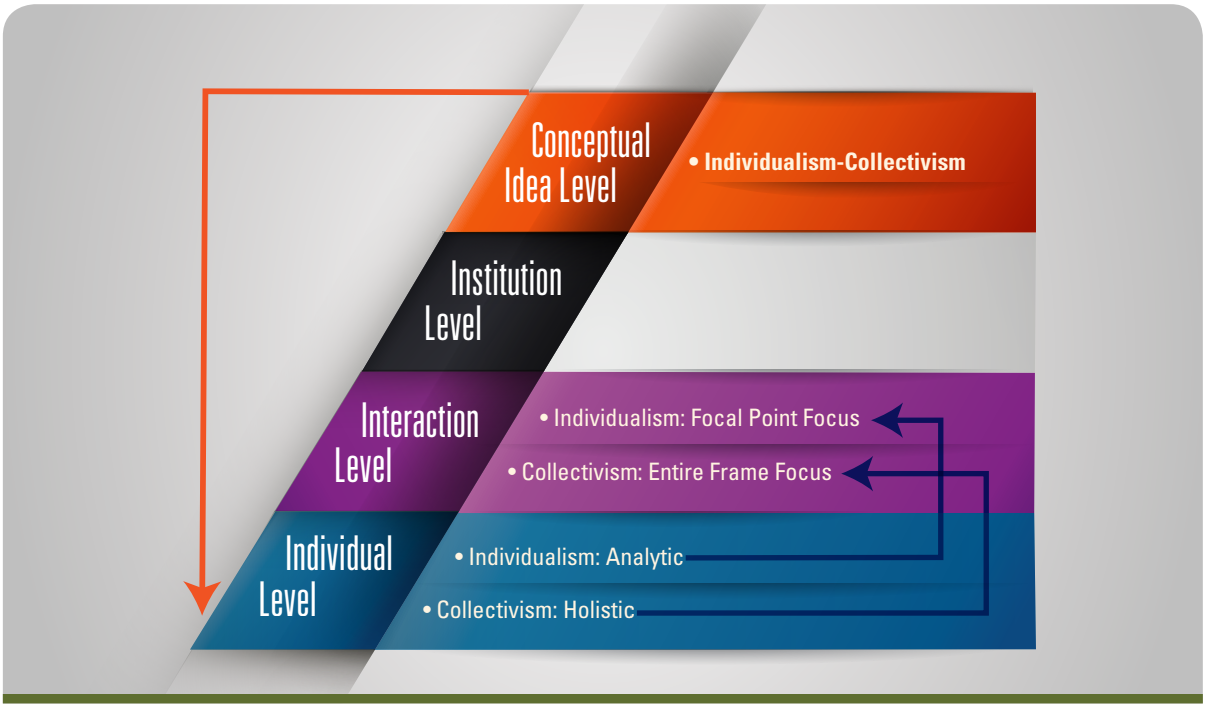


Figure 6. Information Processing Within the Culture Cycle

59. Several of these factors are selected from Heine, S. J. (2010). Cultural psychology. In R. Baumeister & E. Finkel (Eds.), *Advanced Social Psychology: The state of the science.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

60. This section is based and structured heavily around Heine, S.J. (2010). Cultural Psychology. In R.F. Baumesiter, and E. Finkel (Eds.), Advanced Social Psychology (pp. 655-696). New York: Oxford University Press. See his very helpful chapter for even more information.

61. Nisbett, R. E., *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently-- and Why* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

62. Ibid.

These distinctions have major effects on how people think about the information they see. For example, in one experiment, Japanese participants (chosen as a representation of collectivism-interdependence) and American participants (chosen as a representation of individualism-independence) watched two brief film clips of almost identical scenes. They had to identify ways in which the two clips differed. In reality, the film clips differed in terms of the background (*e.g.*, the shape of an airport control tower), the foreground (*e.g.*, the landing gear of an aircraft was up or down), and in the relationships between objects (*e.g.*, a helicopter moved closer to a single engine plane). American participants noticed more differences in the foreground of the video; Japanese participants noticed more differences in the background and the relationships.[63] To better understand these observational patterns, other researchers used eye-tracking equipment so they could precisely follow where people looked in the scenes. The individualism-independence people rarely looked away from the focal points of the scene, but collectivism-interdependence people looked at the focal point only briefly and then quickly shifted their gaze to gather information from the background.[64]

These studies are only two of many examples of how culture influences information processing in the physical environment. Differences in how people watch film clips might at first seem trivial, but it can have profound implications for COIN operators regarding topics such as the design of message campaigns. Knowing that members of collectivist cultures, compared to members of individualist cultures, tend to notice and process more background information and more information about the relationships between people and objects, might lead to different message designs. When creating a print or video message, an American might be so focused on the focal point that he misses critical background details, or the ways in which people and objects are placed around each other. And those background and relational images could jump out to a collectivist audience, who might interpret them in ways that contradict or detract from the intended message. The point is, conceptual ideas embedded in a culture, which are almost always unseen, can "literally influence what we do (or don't) see."[65] If a COIN operator understands analytical versus holistic thinking patterns, and uses it to develop information campaigns that align with cultural differences at the individual level, interaction level behavior could be affected, resulting in better alignment with COIN goals.

Processing the Social Environment: External or Internal

Just as culture influences what people see in the physical environment, culture influences what people see in the social environment, and how that social environment is explained. People need to explain (often just to themselves, but sometimes to others, such as a superior) why other people do what they do. Researchers often refer to how people explain events as "attributions," so we will use this term

63. Masuda, T., & Nisbett, R.E., *Change Blindness in Japanese and Americans* (Unpublished manuscript, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2002).

64. Chua, H. F., Boland, J. E. & Nisbett, R. E., *Cultural Variation in Eye Movements during Scene Perception,* Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA, (2005) 102:12629–33.

65. Heine, S. J., *Cultural Psychology* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

going forward. Attributions are the explanations that people create for the behavior of themselves and others. Some attributions are internal, meaning they refer to a person's character or personality. This would be like explaining a colleague's delayed completion of a task as a result of laziness or incompetence. Other explanations are external, meaning they refer to a situation or circumstances. This would be like explaining a colleague's delayed completion of a task as a result of learning new responsibilities, or managing an overload of work. These distinctions in attribution, or behavior explanation, have a major impact on how people understand and interpret the social world.[66]

People from every culture use both internal and external attributions to explain behavior, but culture plays an especially important role in which type of attribution people tend to rely on. In many cases, collectivist people, who value and prioritize adaptation and interconnection, are more likely than individualist people to pay attention to context (the same pattern that emerged in the visual scene processing research discussed above), and to use it to explain the behavior of others.[67]

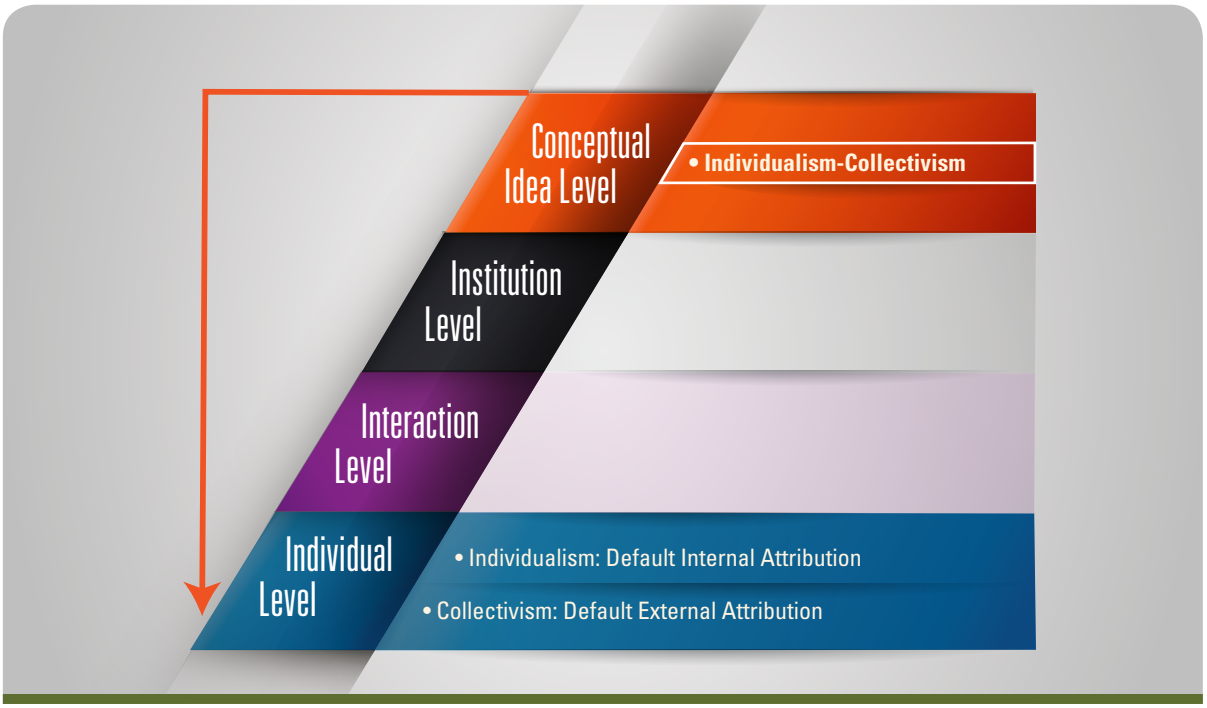


Figure 7. Attributions Within the Culture Cycle

Heine pointed out a striking example of these differences from a study of how American and

66. Jones, E. E.; Harris, V. A. (1967). "The attribution of attitudes". *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 3* (1): 1–24.

67. Norenzayan, A., Choi, I. & Nisbett, R.E.,"Cultural Similarities and Differences in Social Inference: Evidence from Behavioral Predictions and Lay Theories of Behavior," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (2002), 28, 109-120.

Chinese newspapers describe major news events.[68] One research team analyzed reports of two mass killings from the 1990s. They took the reports from the *New York Times* and a Chinese-language newspaper called the *World Journal*. They found that American reporters focused on personality characteristics and traits, mentioning that one of the killers "had a short fuse" and "a psychological problem with being challenged." The Chinese reporters, however, mentioned more relational and social factors, like interpersonal rivalries, losing a job, and the availability of firearms. The researchers made a list of the situational factors surrounding the killings and asked people if the events could have been avoided under different circumstances; for example, if the attacker had "received a job." Americans who read the list of situational factors tended to believe that the killings would have occurred no matter the circumstances; Americans thought the killer simply had the personality for murder. But when Chinese, *who live in a culture that emphasizes circumstances and interconnections*, read the list, they reported feeling more like the murders could have been avoided under other circumstances.[69]

These culturally derived differences in how people process social information can play a meaningful role in interactions with local populations in a COIN environment. Take for example the decision of a local villager in Afghanistan to conceal information about the hiding place of insurgents. American military personnel, coming from an individualist culture, will likely emphasize internal explanations for the villager's behavior: the villager is a dishonest, untrustworthy, perhaps even "evil" person. But the local population (whose support the counterinsurgents very much need) will view their neighbor's behavior differently. Coming from their collectivist cultural perspective, they will likely emphasize external explanations for the villager's behavior. They will have an easier time seeing the situational factors influencing the villager, such as his primary role of family protector and provider, and the obligations that he has to a community leader with family ties to insurgents in hiding.

A recent U.S. military report documents these patterns in the Afghanistan COIN environment. In a series of focus groups, both Afghan and U.S. members of various security forces were asked their views about one another. Notably, a number of the Afghan attributions were *external*. For example, some Afghan focus group members suggested that the reason U.S. personnel behaved poorly in Afghanistan was because they "were not raised properly" or because they are a "lower class of people" (both external attributions). Similarly, some focus groups noted that individual U.S. personnel should not be singled out for blame for all problems (though certainly for some), because some issues were simply the fault of larger forces like governmental ineptitude.[70]

---

68. Heine, S.J. (2010). Cultural Psychology. In R.F. Baumesiter, and E. Finkel (Eds.), Advanced Social Psychology (pp. 655-696). New York: Oxford University Press.

69. Morris, M. & Peng, K., "Culture and cause: American and Chinese Attributions for Social and Physical Events," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (1994), 949-971.

70. Bordin, J., *A Crisis of Trust and Cultural Incompatibility: A Red Team Study of Mutual Perceptions of Afghan National Security Force Personnel and U.S. Soldiers in Understanding and Mitigating the Phenomena of ANSF - Committed Fratricide-Murders,* Unpublished manuscript (2011). Retrieved from http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB370/docs/Document 11.pdf.

Internal attribution patterns emerge when considering how U.S. service personnel view the behaviors of Afghan personnel. There was widespread frustration and complaints in the U.S. focus groups, who commonly stated that Afghan forces "prefer to just lie around all day and do nothing" or that Afghan forces "simply refuse to work very hard." From the perspective of the U.S. military members, whose individualist culture typically prioritizes internal explanations for behavior, this perceived lack of motivation among Afghans was connected with laziness. But such an explanation, even if partially accurate, neglects possible situational influences on behavior.[71]

Controlling the Social Environment: Change the World or Change the Self

Recall an important difference between the individualist and collectivist cultures: the independent self is a more stable self, and the interdependent self is a more flexible self.[72] Research indicates that because of these different ways of seeing the self, people from individualist and collectivist cultures differ in the degree to which they believe they have control over situations. Because independent people see themselves as stable, when they want change they try to get it by shaping and changing the world and other people in it. In comparison, because interdependent people see themselves as flexible, when they want change they try to get it by shaping and changing themselves. Therefore, how a person works for change, whether by controlling other people (a more individualist/Western approach), or controlling themselves (a more collectivist/non-Western approach), depends a lot on culture. The individual level differences in flexibility vs. stability create interaction level differences in the exercise of control.[73]

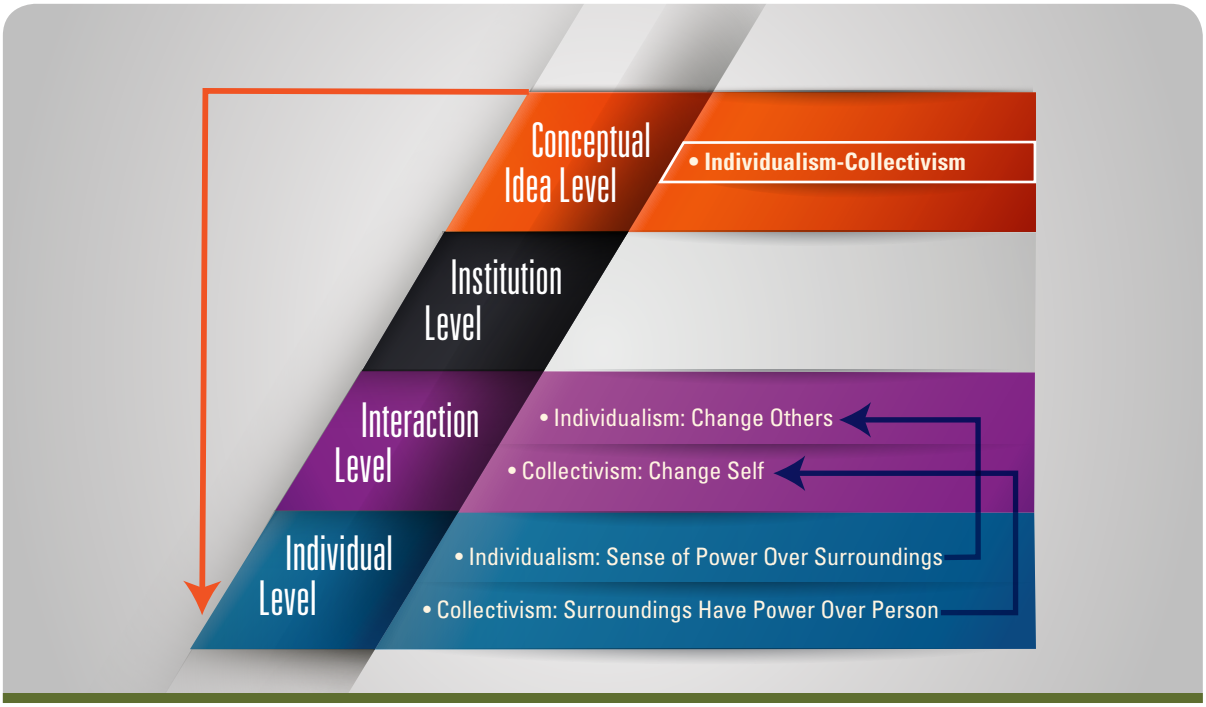


Figure 8. Control of the Social Environment Within the Culture Cycle

71. Ibid.

72. Markus & Kitayama (1991).

73. Nisbett (2003).

This matters for COIN operators because the mindset of changing conditions calls for a different set of behaviors than the mindset of changing the self. A stable, independent self, who wants to control things by changing other people, is more likely to try assertive behaviors, but a flexible, interdependent self, who wants to control things by changing itself, is more likely to try compromising behaviors. Counterinsurgents, coming from the U.S. culture, typically have an independent's idea of control; they work hard to shape the COIN environment and the people in it. This approach can be effective*, but it can also create dissatisfaction and resistance in a local community that thinks about control in a very different way.* U.S. military personnel have already observed these patterns in their engagements with locals in Iraq and Afghanistan. COIN operators report frustration and confusion as they observe locals who bend, negotiate, and accommodate to the insurgents, and then turn around and bend, negotiate, and accommodate to the counterinsurgents. These locals are simply trying to exert control in ways that are familiar and comfortable for interdependent, collectivist people. But to the COIN personnel, who are more independent, individualist people, this looks like inconsistency, or even betrayal (see Chapter 4 for perspectives on consistency of behavior across cultures).

Similarly, it is possible that collectivist people genuinely believe that the actions of a single individual cannot produce much change in the broader world. As a result, they might not even try, which, in connection with the internal and external differences in how behaviors are explained, can make for a lot of misunderstanding in the COIN environment.

Take, for example, one personal story relayed to the authors.[74] A U.S. officer discovered an injured member of an Afghan village, but the villagers did not take much action to deal with the medical situation. In the officer's opinion, the villagers were indicating that the person's needs did not warrant effort, a situation that confused the officer. But what we know about cultural difference suggests that a plausible alternative to labeling the people as lazy or indifferent to the person's needs is the possibility that they genuinely believed that they were powerless to shape events surrounding the injured person.

Knowing this about psychological control allows us to see certain initially surprising (to the individualist culture member) behaviors as rational within the collectivist culture. In other words, the more we can see things from the point of view of the culture we are dealing with, the more we can understand and predict outcomes of COIN efforts and interventions.

Conflict Resolution: Confucian or Honor

Several social science traditions divide the conceptual idea of collectivism into two distinct types. One type is often referred to as "Confucian-based collectivism" and the other is often referred to as "honor-based collectivism" (see Figure 9). This distinction is critical for COIN personnel because

74. Report is available through the authors of this manual. See biography section for author contact information.

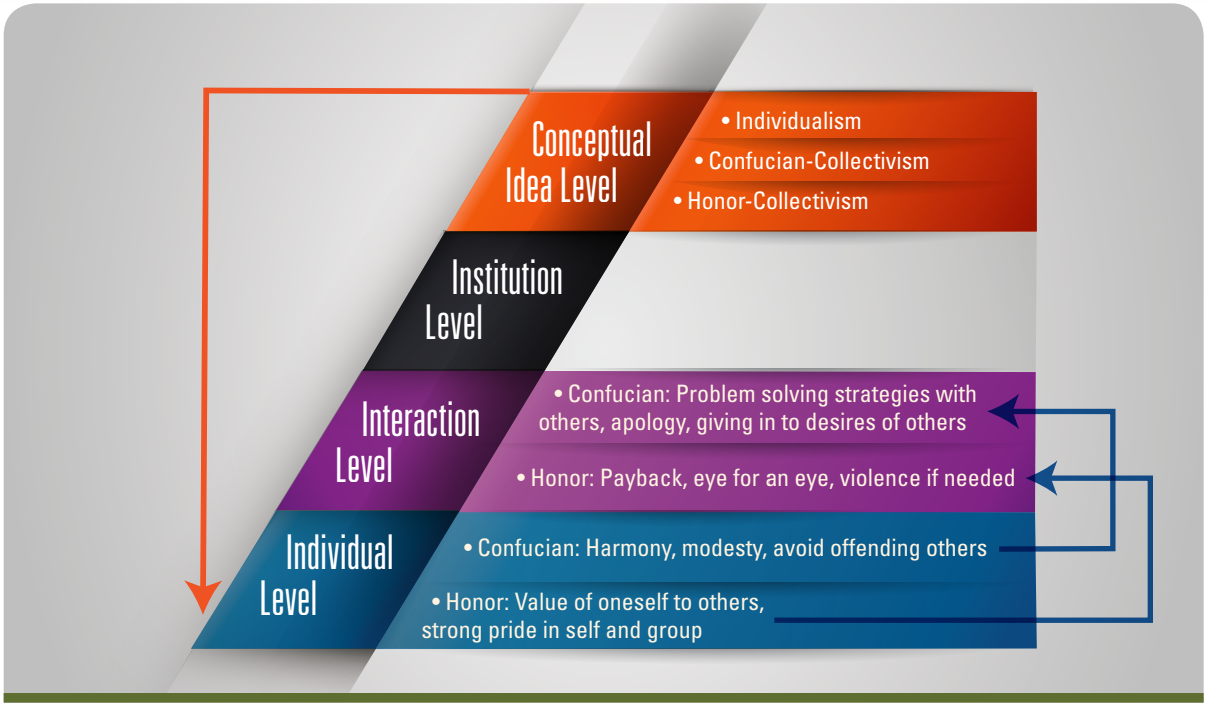


Figure 9. Confucian or Honor Cultures in the Culture Cycle

the Confucian type is often associated with nations in the Pacific Rim and East Asia, and the honor type is often associated with Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.[75]

We began our discussion of the big culture conceptual ideas talking about collectivism as a singular idea because the two types have a lot in common (and we will largely lump the two concepts together throughout this manual). They both emphasize "groups, how one fits into them, one's position within the group, and ways to maintain positive status as a group member."[76] But even with this similarity as to their emphasis on groups and status, Confucian- and honor-based collectivism differ considerably as to the *methods* a person can use to achieve status. Confucian-based collectivism (which, of the two types, has received the most research attention from social psychologists) emphasizes group harmony, modesty, and the avoidance of sticking out from and offending others. As the famous Japanese proverb notes, "the nail that stands up gets pounded down." Because of the emphasis on harmony, people in a Confucian-based collectivist culture tend to respond to disagreement with apologies, giving in, and problem-solving—a set of strategies that avoids shame.

75. Schwarz, N., Oyserman, D., & Peytcheva, E., "Cognition, Communication, and Culture: Implications for the Survey Response Process," in J. A. Harkness, M. Braun, B. Edwards, T.P. Johnson, L. Lyberg, P. Ph. Mohler, B.E. Pennell, & T.W. Smith (eds.), *Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional and Multicultural Contexts* (New York: Wiley, 2010). pp. 177-190.

76. Ibid.

In an honor-based collectivist culture, being a valued member of a group will not be based on harmony and modesty, but rather "the need to protect and maintain honor through positive presentation of oneself and group-members."[77] Honor is "the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim…his right to pride."[78] An individual must actively claim his or her honor, but at the same time, "honor must be paid by others. A person who claims honor but is not paid honor does not in fact have honor."[79] Honor cultures tend to originate in environments with a weak or nonexistent state,[80] a condition that currently prevails in a number of nations globally. When the state cannot protect individuals from victimization or punish the guilty, lawlessness encourages an honor system. This system emphasizes payback, both good for good and bad for bad, and in a payback system, humiliation (whether actual or the threat of) becomes a powerful force. For honor culture people "there is nothing worse than being humiliated, and the culturally approved response to humiliation is swift and intense."[81] A provincial handbook written for Helmand Province in Afghanistan makes the point regarding Pashtun culture that "All Pashtuns are required to uphold the honor of their family and their tribe… An insult to someone's tribe or family can lead to 'badal' [meaning revenge]. The biggest disputes are over women, land, and money, and a Pashtun must protect these things with his life and honor." The handbook goes on to say "Pashtuns are quick to take revenge for an insult, or seek justice for a past crime. It does not matter if the insult is decades old. The only way to restore honor to the family/clan/tribe is to exact revenge on the other family/clan/tribe."[82] This honor-restoration approach (which may include honor killings or blood feuds) often seems counterintuitive to people from Western, individualist cultures, who typically opt for reconciliation and forgiveness paths that prioritize health and safety.[83]

The Afghan focus group research previously mentioned is a remarkable example of just how critical honor can be in certain cultural systems. Afghan focus group members made it clear that their primary grievances with U.S. personnel were related to matters of honor. For example, Afghan personnel reported being more likely to want to engage U.S. personnel with violence for honor-related

---

77. Ibid.

78. Leung, A. K. & Cohen, D., "Within and Between Culture Variation: Individual Differences and the Cultural Logics of Honor, Face, and Dignity Cultures," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (2011), 100, 507-526.

79. Ibid.

80. Cohen, D., Nisbett, R., Bowdle, B. & Schwarz, N., "Insult, Aggression, and the Southern Culture Of Honor: An 'Experimental Ethnography'," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (1996), 70, 945-960.

81. Baumeister, R. & Bushman, B., *Social Psychology and Human Nature* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2011).

82. Westmacott, T., Irish, P. & Lockwood, N., *Helmand: Provincial Handbook: A Guide to the People and the Province* (2nd ed.) (Arlington, VA: IDS International, 2010).

83. Pely, D., "When Honor Trumps Basic Needs: The Role of Honor in Deadly Disputes within Israel's Arab Community," *Negotiation Journal* (2011), 27, 205-225.

matters (such as disrespect for an Afghan's home, disrespect of women, arrogance toward Afghans, and public insults to Afghans) than they were for civilian casualties.[84]

Consider also the role that honor might have in the criticism common among Western military members: Arab individuals consistently lie. The belief that the other side is lying can cause considerable damage. What might be happening? As one observer writes:

> "If Arabs feel that something threatens their personal dignity, they must be obliged to deny it, even in the face of facts to the contrary. A Westerner can point out flaws in their arguments, but that is not the point. If they do not want to accept the facts, they will reject them and proceed according to their own view of the situation. Arabs will rarely admit to errors openly if doing so will cause them to lose face. *To Arabs, honor is more important than facts.* Any Arab would understand what is happening, and would never suggest that the other person is lying. Nor would he insist on proving the facts and thus humiliate the other person."[85]

COIN and the Culture Cycle: A Critical Relationship

This chapter introduced the culture cycle to illustrate how the conceptual ideas of collectivism and individualism work their way down to influence the everyday thoughts, feelings, and actions of members of local populations in COIN environments. The previous pages have given just a few examples of how psychologists' study of culture can be applied to COIN. The patterns of processing the physical environment; explanations for social behaviors; and links between honor, humiliation, and aggression are all affected by culture, and all are relevant to COIN. Victory in the COIN environment depends on winning the local population, and winning the local population depends on an informed appreciation of the local culture. For the COIN practitioner, "understanding and empathy are important weapons; cultural awareness and building trust may be equally or more effective in saving lives as body armor."[86]

In the chapters that follow we continue our discussion of social psychology and its ability to map the human landscape of COIN. As we do so, we repeatedly recall the reader's attention to how the major culture conceptual ideas like collectivism and individualism form the human landscape in the first place.

---

84. See Bordin, 2011, pp 12-15 for fascinating details.

85. Nydell, M. K., *Understanding Arabs, A Guide for Modern Times* (4th ed.) (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2006).

86. Laurence, J. H., "Military Leadership and the Complexity of Combat and Culture," *Military Psychology*, 23, 489-501 (2011).

Checklist for Operators

Identify whether your area of operations is primarily individualist or collectivist.

1. If collectivist, identify whether the collectivist culture is primarily Confucian-based or honor based:
   a. Confucian-based is more common in the Pacific Rim.
   b. Honor-based is more common in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East.
   c. Honor-based is more common where governmental authority is weak or non-existent.

Use the six key questions below to consider the interface between individualism-collectivism ideas and COIN-relevant actions at the individual and interaction levels of the culture model. We specifically highlight how COIN-relevant action may need to be adapted for collectivistic settings. These key questions, along with individualistic and collectivistic answers, are summarized in the table to the right.

1. What is the "self"?
   a. The self is stable and consistent.
      VS
   b. The self is malleable and adaptive.
      - Sudden or substantial attitude change is not equivalent to deception. Consider whether contextual elements, like the presence of group members, or the emphasis of a particular role, has shifted for the individual. This shift may prompt attitude change.
2. Who is the priority?
   a. Self-interest is the priority.
      VS
   b. Group-interest is the priority.
      - Appeals should be tailored to the relevant priority. Where group-interest is the priority, appeals may mention harmonious social relationships or the mutual success of family and community.
3. Where is the contextual focus?
   a. The focus is the foreground.
      VS
   b. The focus is the background or relationships.
      - Pay particular attention to the physical spacing between persons and background elements (such as environmental signs of poverty vs. wealth) in the design of information campaign materials.
4. How is behavior explained?
   a. Internal explanations are favored.
      VS
   b. External explanations are favored.
      - Exercise caution when using personality traits as explanations for behavior.
      - Prioritize social roles and expectations as reasons for behavior.
      - Respect appeals to the will of God/Allah as genuine explanations for behavior.

Checklist for Operators

5. How is control achieved?
   a. Control is achieved by changing the social and physical environment.
      VS
   b. Control is achieved by changing the self.
      - Recognize hesitation to force change upon others as reflecting legitimate beliefs in what is or is not controllable.
      - Consider whether shifting loyalties, lapsed promises, or changing attitudes reflect attempts to exercise control through self-change.
      - Provide opportunities for the exercise of control through self-change/self-improvement.
6. Which techniques will resolve conflict?
   a. Compromise, deference to authority, problem-solving, shame
      - Identify appropriate authority figures through whom conflict resolution may need to occur.
      - Elicit shame by highlighting counter-normative behaviors (this technique should be used with caution).

      VS
   b. Retaliation, tit for tat, humiliation.
      - Anticipate the possibility that "excessive" sacrifice of self or others, including physical injury and death, may be made for honor.
      - Avoid humor that can be interpreted as insult.
      - Initiate positive cycles of reciprocation through words and actions.

	Individualistic	Collectivistic	
What is the self?	Stable entity	Flexible role	
Who is the priority?	Self-interest	Group interest	
Where is the environmental focus?	Foreground	Background/relationships	
How is behavior explained?	Internal-favored	External-favored	
How is change achieved?	Environment change	Self-change	
	Problem-solving, rationality		
Which techniques resolve conflict?		Confucian	Honor
		Shame, compromise	Humiliation payback

3

Building Trust

Chapter 1 made it clear that winning the support of local populations is critical for COIN outcomes. As described in David Galula's steps to counterinsurgency, part of winning local support is finding ways to generate trust between counterinsurgents and locals. David Kilcullen, one of today's preeminent COIN thinkers, suggests in his book on COIN that, from the perspective of counterinsurgents, building trusted networks between local populations and counterinsurgents is the true main effort of those who would defeat an insurgency; effectively everything else on the COIN battlefield is secondary. As he put it, "actions that help build trusted networks serve your cause. Actions, even killing high-profile targets, that undermine trust or disrupt your network help the enemy."[87] Along these lines (though, in reference to trust amongst U.S. operators, not between operators and locals), General Stanley McCrystal, former ISAF Commander, as well as Commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan, wrote "pure trust – the kind that spread across our Task Force every day… saved lives on the battlefield every night. Trust elevated our organization beyond the traditional understanding of excellence. It allowed us to move past being merely an assortment of world class warriors, and towards becoming a single team with a shared consciousness."[88] In short, COIN theorists recognize that for counterinsurgents to ultimately win enough population support to defeat the insurgency they will have to win the trust of the locals. Clearly, this is a challenge. Commenting on this matter, Brigadier General Ralph Baker noted that, "the reality is that it will be a long, long time before we can truly win the hearts and minds of [such populations]. Most of the people have been taught from birth to distrust [Americans and other westerners]".[89] Though earning trust from others on the battlefield, especially cross-culturally, can be very difficult, social psychology offers counterinsurgents a number of useful insights for the trust-building process.

87. Kilcullen, D., *Counterinsurgency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

88. McCrystal, S., *Are you grounded in trust?* (2013, 08 05). Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130805142239-86145090-are-you-grounded-in-trust?trk=mp-reader-card.

89. Baker, R., "The Decisive Weapon: The Brigade Combat Team Commander's Perspective on Information Operations," In G. Pilon (ed.), *Cultural Intelligence for Winning the Peace* (Washington D.C.: The Institute of World Politics Press, 2009).

Understanding Trust

To understand some of the key factors in building trust it is important to understand the Integrative Model of Organizational Trust (IMOT; see Figure 10).[90] Trust, in this model, is defined as "a willingness of an individual to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the individual, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party."[91]

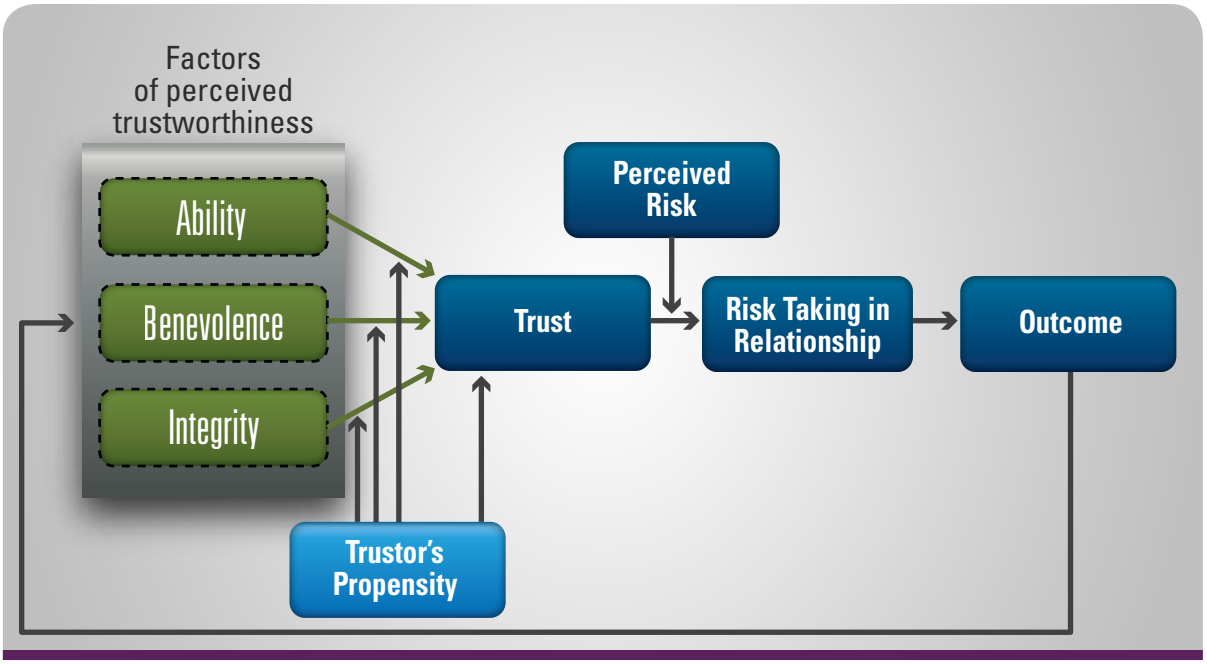


Figure 10. The Integrative Model of Organizational Trust as Adapted from Mayer et al., 1995

The model in Figure 10 is one of the most tested and validated models of trust formation in all of the social sciences. Essentially, the model says that four factors: Ability, Benevolence, Integrity, and Propensity (each of which we explain below) produce trust, which is a willingness to be vulnerable to another. When Person A (a trustor, the person doing the trusting) is trying to decide if Person B (the trustee, the person who would be trusted) is worth trusting (being vulnerable to), Person A probably evaluates whether Person B has enough Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity to make the vulnerability a safe bet. As the model diagram notes, if Person A believes Person B has sufficient levels of Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity, then trust should be forthcoming. Now, if trust is established between Person A and Person B, then the model expects that a decision point will arrive; Person A's willingness to be vulnerable to Person B will be put to the test. If the trust is sufficient, if Person A is sufficiently willing to be vulnerable, then he or she will take a risk in the

90. Mayer, R., Davis, J., & Schoorman, F., "An Integrative Model of Trust," *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 709-734 1995).

91. Ibid.

relationship. What happens next, the outcome, could be good or bad. Person A uses the outcome to update his or her perceptions of Person B's Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity, and on and on the cycle should go. In the subsequent section, we characterize the major factors that produce trust.

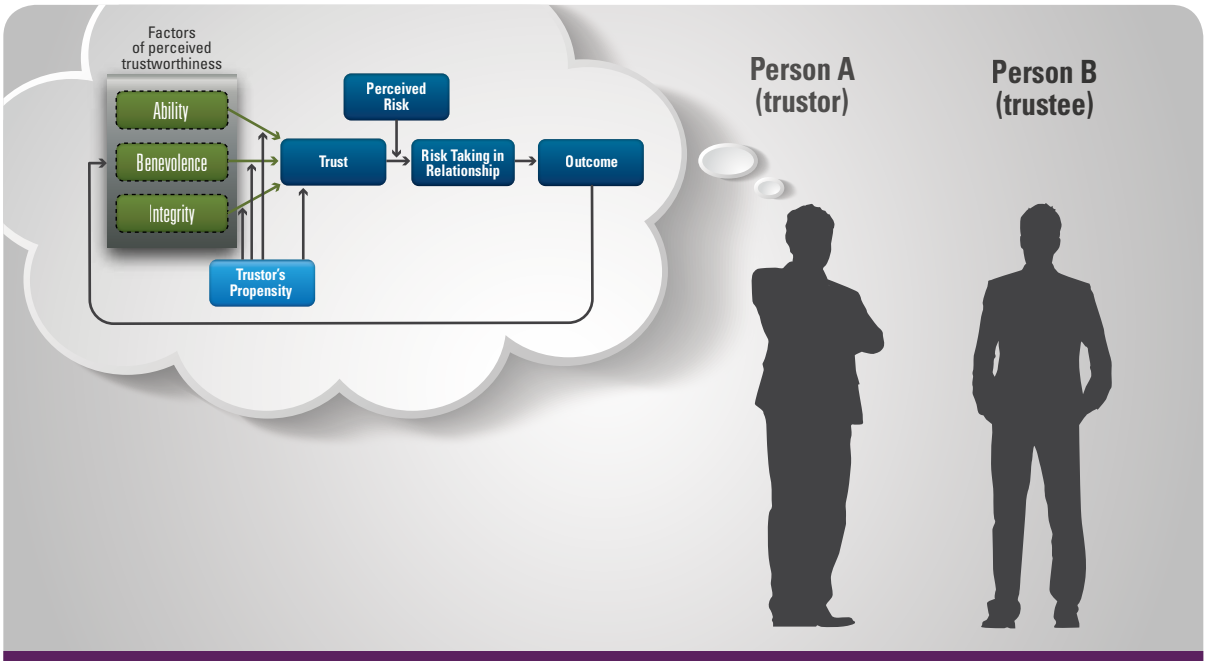


Figure 11. Trust Between People

Ability

Ability is defined by the IMOT as "that group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain."[92] As would be expected, if Person A is trying to determine if he or she trusts Person B, one factor in this decision-making will be whether Person B is competent to accomplish tasks in the trust context. This should seem obvious. Why would Person A make himself vulnerable to the actions of Person B unless he is sure Person B can get the job done? Multiple research projects verify the importance of ability for trust generation. For example, some research has found that when a government is gridlocked and cannot get work done, citizen's trust in that government falls.[93] Similarly, another project found that people in African nations were more likely to trust their government when they also believed that their government was able to provide the kinds of essential services, such as infrastructure and security, one expects of a government.[94]

92. Ibid.

93. Hetherington, M., *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

94. Fricker, R., Kulzy, W., & Combs, D. J. Y., "Exploring, the Integrative Model of Organizational Trust as a Framework for Understanding Trust in Government," *Naval Postgraduate School Technical Report* (2015).

Benevolence

The second major IMOT factor in trust generation is a trustor's sense of a trustee's benevolence. Benevolence, in this context, is defined as "the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor."[95] In other words, benevolence is about establishing that the trustee actually cares. Does the trustee want good outcomes for the trustor? Or is the trustee just using the trustor for their own ends? One story of a U.S. Marine group stationed in Afghanistan illustrates the benefits of benevolence for trust generation in the COIN context.[96] In 2011, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the region surrounding Camp Leatherneck experienced food shortages. Recognizing the shortfall, U.S. Marines supplemented foodstuffs. During a subsequent shura (*i.e.*, a community meeting), one local responded to the actions of the Marines by saying "it's better to work with these guys… They are our true friends. They want to help us… The people planting bombs are hindering our lives and the lives of our children."[97] Initially, these villagers likely held negative perceptions of U.S. Marine benevolence; hatred and distrust of Americans and U.S. military motives is often cultivated from birth in such populations.[98] But given the cultural significance of Ramadan and the clear pro-population nature of the Marine program, it appears that, at least anecdotally, perceptions of benevolence shifted and trust probably increased.

Integrity

Integrity, in the IMOT model, is the "trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable."[99] This definition of integrity does not necessarily mean that the trustor and trustee have the exact same moral code, follow the same religious precepts, etc. Rather, integrity means that the trustor and trustee at least have some moral code that the other can find acceptable, even if begrudgingly, and perhaps more importantly, the trustee is seen as holding to that code with a pattern of consistency and fairness.[100] On the COIN battlefield it is critical to convince local populations that counterinsurgents consistently adhere to principles that the local populace finds acceptable. Of course, demonstrating integrity to locals, especially those of a different culture, may be difficult. The values of individualist countries in general, and the principles of western militaries in particular, often conflict with those of local populations; such disparities may heighten tensions (see Chapter 2). However, behavior that is at odds with local values, if practiced within a pattern of honesty, transparency, and de-

95. Colquitt, J., Scott, B., & Lepine, J., "Trust, Trustworthiness, and Trust Propensity: A Meta-analytic Test of their Unique Relationships with Risk Taking and Job Performance," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 92, 909-927 (2007).

96. Leyendecker, A., *Afghan Soldiers, US Marines Help Helmand Farmers with Food Delivery* (2011, 9 4). Retrieved from http://www.marines.mil

97. Ibid.

98. Jones, S., *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2010).

99. Mayer, *et al.* (1995).

100. Colquitt, *et al.* (2007).

pendability, could nevertheless generate perceptions of integrity. Kilcullen[101] advises military personnel to follow through on promises because "over time, the predictability and order that you create through dependability makes people feel safer and encourages them to work with you."

Trustor Propensity

The final factor in the trust generation process is known as "trustor propensity." According to the IMOT, some people simply have a more trusting personality than others, and are therefore more likely to afford trust to a trustee.[102] Counterinsurgents will not be able to influence personality in a meaningful way, so we will not write much about this matter. However, it is important to note that this "trusting personality" appears to be a reality across cultures (Though, do keep in mind the point from Chapter 2 that indicates that some cultures might not even have a conception of personality. With or without such a concept, some people, regardless of culture, are probably more trusting than others). For example, one research study found that multiple survey items related to people's "trust propensity" strongly predicted trust in government across four nations in the African Trans-Sahel region.[103] With this in mind, if counterinsurgents take population surveys upon entry to an area, inclusion of translated survey measures for the purposes of identifying individuals who might be more predisposed to trust counterinsurgent operators and their messages offers interesting possibilities.

Summary

As noted, the IMOT framework described above is one of the most tested and validated models of trust building in all of the social sciences. In its most basic form, IMOT suggests that when Person A (a trustor) is trying to determine whether or not to trust Person B (a trustee), then Person A probably evaluates Person B's ability in the relevant domain, benevolence, and integrity. If Person A determines that Person B has sufficient levels of these factors, then he or she might be willing to trust Person B, which means being vulnerable to that person's actions, and perhaps taking risks for that person should the need arise. Once the risk situation is resolved, Person A can use the outcome of the risk situation to update his or her perceptions of Person B. While the IMOT has been tested many times, testing almost always occurred within an individualist culture. This is useful for many contexts, but over the last decade the work of American counterinsurgents has been largely focused in collectivist cultures. The next section of this chapter will examine research that tests the IMOT principles in a collectivist culture.

---

101. Kilcullen (2010).

102. Mayer *et al.* (1995); Hofstede, G.,, "Motivation, Leadership, and Organization: Do American Theories Apply Abroad?" *Organizational Dynamics*, 9, 42-63 (1980); Rotter, J.B., "A New Scale for the Measurement of Interpersonal Trust," *Journal of Personality*, 35, 651-665 (1967).

103. Fricker, *et al.* (2015).

Cultural Research on Trust

The IMOT proposes that when deciding whom to trust, people usually consider the factors of ability, benevolence, and integrity. Such considerations seem consistent across cultures. Yet, "evidence suggests that the effect of these trustworthiness beliefs on trust may differ across cultures."[104] That is, the relative weight applied to each of the three trust drivers might differ from one culture to another. Further, culture can modify the definition of ability, benevolence, and integrity.[105] That is to say, actions that appear benevolent in one culture might not be seen as benevolent in another. The research on cross-cultural trust generation is in its infancy, but the prominence of ability, benevolence, and integrity in trust decisions across cultures remains.[106] The following section examines some existing cross-cultural trust research that might shed light on how COIN operators could establish trust in foreign arenas.

Ability

Reliance on perceptions of ability for trust decisions varies depending on whether a person is a collectivist or an individualist.[107] As noted in Chapter 2, people from collectivist cultures tend to believe that traits, abilities, and attitudes of others are unstable across time. That is, most people from collectivist cultures tend to believe that people are different from situation to situation. A person might have one political attitude in one situation, and another political attitude in another. The same goes for perceptions of ability. Collectivists tend to believe that abilities are "impermanent and malleable and dependent upon the context in which they are applied."[108] Therefore, from the perspective of a collectivist, just because a person demonstrates that he or she is successful at a task in one context does not necessarily mean that he or she will be successful in another; circumstances could change and exert different impacts. For example, a collectivist might witness another person successfully complete an exam. The collectivist, when trying to forecast the person's likely success on another exam, would be less likely to assume success. She would probably want additional information, such as whether the person was able to study without being bothered, or whether the person was able to sleep well before the new exam, as well as any number of other contextual factors.

The opposite tends to be true for individualists. As noted in Chapter 2, people from individualist cultures tend to believe that the traits, abilities, and attitudes of others are stable across time. That is, most people from individualist cultures tend to believe that people are consistent from situation to situation. If a person successfully completes some task in one situation, an individualist would

104. Schumann, J. H., & Wangenheim, F., *et al*., "Drivers of Trust in Relational Service Exchange: Understanding the Importance of Cross-cultural Differences," *Journal of Service Research*, 13(4), 453-468 (2010).

105. Schoorman, F., Mayer, R., & Davis, J., "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust: Past, Present, and Future." *Academy of Management Review*, 32, 344-354 (2007).

106. Ibid.

107. Schumann, *et al*. (2010).

108. Branzei, O., Vertinsky, I., & Camp, R., "Culture Contingent Signs of Trust in Emergent Relationships," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 104, 61-82 (2007).

probably assume that the person will be able to successfully complete the task in all situations. In contrast with the exam example above, if an individualist witnessed a person successfully complete an exam, the individualist would be more likely than a collectivist to assume that the person would be successful on another similar exam in the future—regardless of the contextual circumstances surrounding the future exam. For the individualist, strong ability on a task in one situation should predict strong ability on a similar task in another situation.

These perspectives have been confirmed in a recent marketing study that compared the U.S. (individualist society) with South Korea (collectivist society). This project found that individualist consumers were more likely to trust marketing that emphasized a company's ability than were collectivists. The report went on to suggest that marketers should work to emphasize ability factors when trying to build trust with potential individualist consumers.[109]

On the counterinsurgency battlefield in Afghanistan, the perceptions that Afghan soldiers have of U.S. military personnel ability have sometimes been linked to reduced trust. One research project that relied on focus groups of Afghan military personnel (noted in Chapter 2),[110] stated that one reason Afghan soldiers reported not trusting U.S. personnel was because, in their minds, U.S. personnel lacked the ability to accomplish a number of tasks. Afghan soldiers suggested that U.S. personnel were sometimes unable to protect civilians from insurgent violence, which caused civilian "hearts to grow black towards them" (U.S. personnel). As reasons for poor perceptions of the U.S. Military, the Afghan soldiers reported lack of U.S. ability regarding battlefield logistical support, inability to complete promised development projects, and failure to collect good local intelligence. Of course, there is no way to verify if the perceptions of U.S. ability reported by the Afghan soldiers were accurate. Yet, regardless of verification, the Afghan soldiers obviously believed the things they were saying, each of which was probably a driver of reduced trust in the U.S.

Ultimately, perceptions of ability matter as a driver of trust in both individualist and collectivist cultures. However, it is important to recognize that ability probably matters *relatively* less in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures. As one research team put it, individualist people who "approach collectivists hoping that their superior ability will be rewarded with quick trust may be disappointed. On the other hand, trustees who fail to signal their ability to individualist trustors… may miss the opportunity to establish high levels of initial trust."[111]

---

109. An, D., & Kim, S., "Effects of National Culture on the Development of Consumer Trust in Online Shopping," *Seoul Journal of Business*, 14(1) (2008).

110. Bordin, J., *A Crisis of Trust and Cultural Incompatibility: A Red Team Study of Mutual Perceptions of Afghan National Security Force Personnel and U.S. Soldiers in Understanding and Mitigating the Phenomena of ANSF -Committed Fratricide-Murders.* (Unpublished manuscript, 2011). Retrieved from http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB370/docs/Document 11.pdf.

111. McKnight, D.H., Cummings, L.L., & Chervany, N.L., "Initial Trust Formation in New Organizational Relationships," *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 473 – 490 (1998). As cited in Branzei, O., Vertinsky, I., & Camp, R., "Culture Contingent Signs of Trust in Emergent Relationships," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 104, 61-82. (2007)

Benevolence

As with ability, reliance on perceptions of benevolence for trust decisions varies depending on whether a person is a collectivist or an individualist. As we've stated several times now, people from collectivist cultures tend to believe that people's traits differ from situation to situation. The same holds true for collectivist perceptions of benevolence. Just because a person is kind and caring in one situation does not automatically mean that the person will be so in another context.


Photo Credit | U.S. Army by Sgt. Jason Bushong

As noted in Chapter 2, people from individualist cultures have a culturally wired mindset in which their thoughts, feelings, actions, motives, etc. are brought to bear in the service of individual advancement. On the other hand, people from collectivist cultures tend to have a culturally wired mindset in which their thoughts, feelings, actions, motives, etc. are brought to bear in the service of in-group advancement. Within cultures, it is likely that collectivists will usually assume benevolence from their own in-group members (we address this issue in more detail below). On the other hand, individualists might not assume another individualist will show him or her benevolence, especially in the early phases of a relationship. Instead, individualists, knowing that most individualists are out for their own advancement, might not base early trust decisions on a sense of another person's benevolence, and might instead rely on other trust drivers such as ability and integrity.[112]

This perspective is reinforced by marketing research,[113] which suggests that while a sense of benevolence is important for trust-building in both individualist and collectivist cultures, collectivists, though skeptical that benevolence will generalize from situation to situation, probably rely on benevolence perceptions more than ability perceptions when making trust decisions. Marketers who are attempting to generate trust in collectivist cultures should work to emphasize their benevolent intentions for customers. Of course, in a marketing context, true benevolence might be difficult; customers know that marketing is designed to persuade and influence. In situations where true benevolence is difficult to employ, this research suggests that marketers at least attempt to demonstrate empathy for their customers ("we understand what it's like to be you"; "we know exactly what you need") as a sort of proxy for benevolence. In this way, the COIN context has a resemblance to marketing. True benevolence may be difficult to convey effectively, if it can be mustered at all. Thus

112. Branzei, O., Vertinsky, I., & Camp, R., "Culture Contingent Signs of Trust in Emergent Relationships," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 104, 61-82 (2007).

113. An & Kim (2008).

the empathy proxy, along with the other elements of trust generation, should be considered.

The Afghan focus groups again provide critical perspective here on the trust-benevolence link. This work found that Afghans constantly commented that U.S. personnel did not display benevolence toward Afghan forces or Afghan locals. For example, Afghan soldiers commonly reported that U.S. personnel caused multiple civilian casualties and, from their perspective, didn't seem to care. A number of Afghan soldiers also indicated that U.S. personnel failed to demonstrate benevolence during shootouts with insurgents by not providing Afghans with sufficient support. The perspectives of the Afghan soldiers in the focus groups may well be biased or untrue; nevertheless, these perspectives almost certainly harmed Afghan trust in U.S. personnel.

Integrity

As with ability and benevolence, theoretical perspectives on integrity suggest that it is important for cross-cultural trust generation; but, it probably matters less to collectivists than it does to individualists. From the perspective of a collectivist, a person's integrity is a dispositional trait that is probably less stable across situations. Therefore, while integrity will matter for the collectivist when trying to determine if another person is trustworthy, chances are that simple indicators of integrity, such as honesty in interactions, will probably matter relatively less for final trust judgments.[114]

Little research has explicitly examined the impact of the integrity factor on trust for people from collectivist cultures. However, one research project examined how citizens' perspectives of government corruption (as a proxy for integrity) impacted citizen reports of trust in government. This project found that in several African nations (nations that should, theoretically, be collectivist societies) citizens who believed their government avoided corruption were more likely to report that they trusted their governments.

Finally, the Afghan focus groups also provide insight into Afghan perspectives of the integrity of U.S. personnel. The focus groups noted a number of situations in which the "trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable" simply did not occur. Clearly, the general principles and values adhered to by U.S. personnel and Afghan personnel can be wildly different. As would be expected, the lack of convergence of these values produced multiple breakdowns in trust-building. Afghan soldiers reported that U.S. personnel didn't respect cultural norms regarding the privacy of women, avoiding cursing, indecent (at least to Afghans) exposure, and use of bodily function (passing gas). Again, as with Afghan perceptions of U.S. ability and benevolence, these reports are probably biased. Yet, even if the reports are biased, it is worth noting

114. It is important to note that this manuscript relies on the individualism – collectivism distinction for its predictions. While this is a useful framework, as noted in Chapter 2, there are other cultural conceptual ideas that can have an impact on all manner of psychological topics. The integrity factor in the IMOT is a good example of this point. Individualism – collectivism, while important for understanding the role of integrity on trust, might not matter as much as another conceptual idea known as "Power-Distance." See Mayer, *et al*. (2007), for a brief explanation.

that Afghan soldiers commonly referenced factors relating to the integrity of U.S. personnel and how integrity influenced their perceptions (very negatively) of U.S. soldiers.

Other Factors Producing Trust

The previous section noted that the IMOT trust drivers (ability, benevolence, and integrity) are still important for collectivists when making trust judgments; however, some research and theory suggests that each of these factors matters *relatively* less to collectivists than to individualists (with the possible exception of benevolence). If these factors matter less to collectivists, are there other factors, not specifically incorporated into IMOT, that have a special impact on trust generation for collectivists? Research indicates that shared group membership, as well as time in a relationship, can both have a substantial impact on trust for people from collectivist societies.

The Impact of Shared Group Membership

Shared group membership will often cause people, especially from collectivist cultures, to have a preference for other members of their group and show a general favoritism towards in-group members.[115] One reason for in-group favoritism is the fact that members of the same group generally know the group's social rules—and know how to play by such rules in ways that out-group members simply cannot know (this probably relates to the integrity factor of the IMOT).[116] Awareness of in-group membership probably produces enhanced trust because such awareness of "social expectations and obligations enable parties to assess their commitment to the relationship without the benefit of any past interactions."[117] In other words, if they are of the same in-group, people don't have to interact with someone or really know them to trust them; the in-group connection is a proxy for other elements.

Of course, whereas a sense of shared group membership will probably enhance initial trust (especially in collectivist cultures), such knowledge does not necessarily mean that people from the same in-group automatically or wholeheartedly trust each other. Multiple researchers have found nuances to the impact of shared group membership. For example, one team found that in Japan (collectivist culture), shared family membership in a business context can actually harm trust, while shared friendship in a business context can help trust.[118] Likewise, additional research found

115. Brewer, M.B., & Chen, Y.R., "Where (who) are collectives in collectivism? Toward conceptual clarification of individualism and collectivism," *Psychological Review*, 114, 133-151 (2007).

116. Child, J., & Möllering, G., "Contextual Confidence and Active Trust Development in the Chinese Business Environment," *Organization Science*, 14 (1) 69-80 (2003).

117. Branzei, O., Vertinsky, I., & Camp, R., "Culture Contingent Signs of Trust in Emergent Relationships," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 104, 61-82 (2007).

118. Branzei, O., Camp, R.D., Vertinsky, I., "In Whom Collectivists Trust. The Role of (in)Voluntarily Social Obligations in Japan," *Management and Organizational Review*, 319-343 (2013).

that in business negotiations, people from India were less trusting of other Indians compared to Americans' trust in other Americans.[119]

Shared group membership probably promotes trust in most contexts; however, it is important to remember that just because people share a group does not necessarily mean that they will trust each other implicitly. It is also important to remember that the field of research on cross-cultural trust is still very new—much work remains to be done.

Time and Relationships

That familiarity, time, and relationship building (relationship building, of course, is driven by things like ability, benevolence and integrity) are elements of trust building may seem obvious to the individualist culture members among our readers, but one should not overlook the importance of relationship building for driving trust in collectivist cultures.

One research team[120] provided an anecdote that usefully illustrates this point. A Swedish (generally individualists) technology firm was approached by a Swedish consultant about a business opportunity in Saudi Arabia (generally collectivists). The Swedish consultant eventually convinced the Swedish tech firm to send a representative to Riyadh to meet with the possible Saudi clients. The three parties—the Swedish tech firm representative, the Saudi group, and the Swedish consultant—met multiple times over a span of two years. To the irritation of the Swedish tech firm representative, very little seemed to happen in these meetings other than chitchat about things like Shakespeare. In addition, the Swedish consultant, who had originally set up the meetings, was always in the meetings. This further irritated the Swedish tech representative because the consultant probably had business contacts with his competitors. At some point, the Swedish tech representative was about to give up on the effort, yet, remarkably, at almost the same time, the Saudi group suddenly decided that they officially wanted to do business with the Swedish tech firm. A deal was struck for a multi-million dollar contract. Yet, as the researchers note, this is not the end of the story. Because the representative from the Swedish firm managed to land the Saudi contract, he was promoted—and therefore was no longer in charge of the Saudi contract. The Swedish firm nominated a new representative with a great deal of international experience. This new representative, from the perspective of the Swedish firm, was a great fit to take over the account. What happened next shocked the Swedish firm: The Saudis sent a letter indicating that they were preparing to cancel the contract! Ultimately the matter was resolved when the Swedish group put the original representative back on the account.

This case illustrates how the individualist Swedes at times lost sight or were unaware of the way the collectivist Saudis were doing business. The Swedes saw the account as business, pure and simple. For

119. Gunia, B. C., Brett, J. M., Nandkeolyar, A. K., & Kamdar, D., "Paying a Price: Culture, Trust, and Negotiation Consequences," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(4), 774-789 (2011).

120. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival* (3. ed.), (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, 2010)

the Saudis, on the other hand, the account was based on a personal and trusted relationship. They spent time, building a relationship, and brought the Swedish representative into their group. To collectivists this is no small thing. Seeing him leave the account was probably perceived as a major betrayal to the collectivist Saudis, but for the individualist Swedes it probably looked like an appropriate way to recognize the contributions of the original representative and still proceed efficiently with the deal.[121]

Trust Building Example

The IMOT provides a useful framework for understanding the basics of trust building. However, the real utility of a model comes from its ability to explain the real world. Though the IMOT has not been systematically tested in a COIN context, multiple case studies provide anecdotal support for the IMOT.

One detailed example comes from Farah Province of southwest Afghanistan.[122] We simplify the case description for this chapter, but, multiple elements of the report are helpful in understanding how the IMOT might be used to organize cross-cultural trust building efforts.

Photo Credit | U.S. Marine Corps by Lance Corporal Gene Allen Ainsworth III

This example begins with 2nd Battalion 7th Marine Regiment operating in an isolated, Taliban-dominated area. The role of U.S. Marines was to train Afghan police in an area where there were few, if any, existing police units, and almost no prior U.S. or NATO personnel. As might be expected, the Marines were looked upon warily by the people in this isolated, and honor-based collectivist culture. To make matters worse, the presence of the Marines brought a wave of Taliban surveillance and intimidation down upon the locals. When the Taliban observed locals interacting with Marines, they commonly found a host of ways to menace the locals and make them fear for their safety. Not long after the Marines arrived, schools began to close, and music was not played as often, as locals—fearing Taliban forces—simply tried to avoid being aligned with one side or the other. The subsequent actions of the Marines, described below, ultimately improved the security situation. Their actions were not intentionally informed by the IMOT; yet, they mirror the kinds of approaches that the IMOT recommends for building trust.

121. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival* (3. ed.), (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, 2010).

122. Meyerle, J., Katt, M., & Gavrilis, J. *On the Ground in Afghanistan: Counterinsurgency in Practice* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2012).

The Marines took a multi pronged approach to winning over the locals. Initially, the Marines worked to provide security in the area. They warded off multiple Taliban attacks while endeavoring to keep the locals safe from both the Taliban and from collateral damage. In this way, the Marines demonstrated perhaps the most critical type of "ability" for the initial phases of a COIN campaign: the ability to establish security. Next, the Marines began specific actions that copy IMOT benevolence concepts. For example, they worked to establish relationships with locals as often as they could, consistently emphasizing the benevolent message that they were there to "provide security, train the police, and stop anyone who threatened the villagers or Marines."[123] Finally, the Marines found small ways to demonstrate integrity. Where possible, the Marines demonstrated shared values by drinking countless cups of tea and attempting to learn and adapt to local customs as appropriate.

Photo Credit | U.S. Air Force by Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson

Over time, the locals appear to have come to trust the Marines more than might have otherwise been the case. Schools in the area began to reopen and locals appeared to be more confident when confronting the Taliban and telling them to leave the area. The security gains in the area were steady for years after the initial actions of the Marines. One can imagine how a systematic application of IMOT to COIN arenas such as this one could facilitate the achievement of objectives.

Practical Steps to Restoring Trust

So far, this chapter has examined how trust is generated. Equally important, however, is how trust is repaired after it is harmed. This chapter will conclude with a brief analysis of social psychological modeling of trust repair as well as several practical recommendations for repairing trust after it is harmed.

Fixing the Appropriate IMOT Component

As noted by the IMOT model depicted in Figure 10, the "outcomes" element of the model provides information to the trustor, who updates existing perceptions of a trustee's ability, benevolence, and integrity; such updates impact subsequent trust/willingness to be vulnerable and risk-taking

123. Ibid.

behavior. If a trustor places their trust in a trustee, but then the trustee fails, the model suggests that the trustor will have a negative emotional response, and try to attribute the trustee's failure to some cause. Some research suggests that when an outcome harms trust, trust restoration efforts will focus on whichever element (ability, benevolence, integrity) was implicated in the failure whichever element of ability, benevolence, or integrity was implicated in the failure.[124]

Simple Apology

One might expect a simple apology to restore trust, but social psychology research, conducted in individualist cultures, has found that simple apologies might not always smooth things over. When a trustee's failure stems from a lack of ability, taking full responsibility for the failure can produce better trust restoration outcomes than other approaches. However, if a trustee's failure stems from lack of integrity, an apology mixed with external attribution (finding some way to explain how outside circumstances contributed to the failure) might produce better outcomes than an apology alone.[125]

Sacrifice

When trust is harmed, sacrificial action from the trustee can help restore trust. There are several forms that a sacrifice can take.[126] The trustee could forego tempting alternative relationship partners. For example, counterinsurgents could hire local people for a development project instead of hiring U.S. contractors, despite having a preexisting relationship with the contractors and seeing them as an expert and reliable source of labor. Another type of sacrifice is to forego desired activities for the benefit of the relationship. As a third option, when the relationship partner behaves badly, the trustee can make a sacrifice by accommodating rather than retaliating. This final option may have particular relevance to the COIN environment. Each of these strategies will be seen as sacrifices to the extent that they represent a risk on the part of the trustee. These risks, or sacrifices, are likely to have the most benefit for the restoration of benevolence perceptions. Why would a trustee take a risk if he did not want something good for the trustor?

---

124. Tomlinson, E.C., & Mayer, R.C., "The Role of Causal Attribution Dimensions in Trust Repair," *Academy of Management Review*, 34, 85-104 (2009).

125. Kim, P., Dirks, K., Cooper, C., & Ferrin, D. "When More Blame is Better than Less: The Implications of Internal vs. External Attributions for the Repair of Trust After a Competence- vs. Integrity-based Trust Violation," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 99, 49-65 (2006).

126. Wieselquist, J., Rusbult, C.E., Foster, C.A., & Agnew, C.R. "Commitment, Pro-Relationship Behavior, and Trust in Close Relationships," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 5, 942-966 (1999)

Self-Sanction

One final mechanism for trust restoration is known as a self-sanction. If a person or organization loses trust because of a negative outcome, one way to attempt to restore trust is to voluntarily set up a system by which future, similar misbehavior will be caught and punished (this works especially well with ethical violations or failures of integrity). One research team[127] examined this trust restoration approach in Japan (a collectivist culture). Participants read a news article about a well known business that had engaged in shady practices—and was eventually caught. After reading the article, participants, as expected, reported damage to their trust in the company. Participants were then given a second article. Some participants had an article that described the company's voluntary efforts to set up a system by which outside regulators would catch and punish them for any future misbehavior. Other participants had an article in which an external regulator imposed the regulatory system on the company. Participants who read the second article in which the company voluntarily undertook the regulatory system reported that their trust in the company had been at least partially restored compared to those who read about the externally imposed system. The voluntary nature of a self-sanction helped convince participants that the company was making an honest effort to reform. If the reform was imposed by outside regulators, trust was not restored, perhaps because the reform efforts could not be interpreted as genuine.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the IMOT as a model of trust generation. IMOT and subsequent research suggests that there are four primary drivers of trust: ability, benevolence, integrity, and trustor propensity. Importantly, the exact impact of each factor on trust generation is partially dependent upon which Cultural Conceptual Idea (see Chapter 2), individualism or collectivism, is dominant among the people doing the trusting or being trusted. As described in the IMOT, individualists probably weight ability, benevolence, and integrity very heavily in making trust decisions, and might well weight ability especially heavily at the beginning of a trust relationship (see Figure 12). Collectivists, on the other hand, rely on the IMOT ability, benevolence, and integrity factors when making trust decisions, but, probably weight benevolence more heavily than the other factors. Additionally, for collectivists shared group membership and relationship strength may have a greater impact than the IMOT factors (see Figure 13). Of course, shared group membership and relationship strength are relevant for individualists too, it's just that these factors are probably weighted especially heavily for collectivists.

Once trust is harmed it is difficult to restore. Research in this area is relatively new, but, some scientists have found success with several basic trust restoration approaches. The successful application of a restoration strategy (*e.g.*, apology, self-sanction, sacrifice) depends upon identifying which trust factor, ability, benevolence, or integrity, was most damaged.

---

127. Nakayachi, K., & Watabe, M., "Restoring Trustworthiness After Adverse Events: The Signaling Effects of Voluntary 'Hostage Posting' on Trust," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 76(3), 235-243 (2005).

Figure 12. Primary Trust Factors for Individualists

Figure 13. Primary Trust Factors for Collectivists

Checklist for Operators

Determine which cultural framework, individualism or collectivism, dominates your area of operations.

1. **Ability:** What skills, competencies, and characteristics do you (or the person you want to be trusted) possess in the relevant trust domain?
   a. Emphasize domain relevance. For example, you might be highly skilled in one area, but lack ability in another. Emphasize the right domain. Only emphasize things you can actually deliver on.
2. **Benevolence:** In what ways do you or your team plan to do good for the trustor?
   a. Emphasize immediate benefits to the trustor.
   b. Downplay mutual benefit or self-interest of the trustee.
   c. If motives are obviously self-interested, consider alternative action – or methods of appearing to not be self-interested, such as empathy expressions (we see, we understand, we recognize).
3. **Integrity:** To what principles do you and/or your team adhere? Are these principles consistently upheld? Are they consistent with local principles?
   a. Support for shared values should be frequent and consistent from all trustees.
   b. Identify and emphasize overlap of trustor and trustee beliefs, values, and principles.

Highlight existing and seek additional trustor-trustee shared group memberships.

1. For collectivist people, shared group membership carries important benefits and responsibilities. If group membership is extended to the trustee (*e.g.*, the community considers a stationed regiment a part of the community), ties should be protected. Breaking a tie (*e.g.*, rotating to a new area of operations) should be treated with seriousness, expression of regret, and efforts to bind in new trustees.

In the event that an existing trust relationship is damaged, note that trust restoration can be more difficult than initial trust generation.

Checklist for Operators

It will likely be most useful to attempt to restore the trust driver that was damaged.

Identify the trust factor damage (of course, making restitution where possible should help as well).

1. **Ability:** If ability is damaged, apology might be the best course of action.
2. **Benevolence:** Mix apology with an external explanation for why the breakdown in trust occurred. Was there some external factor that could be cited as the reason for failure? Is there some (at least seemingly) sacrificial action you could take?
3. **Integrity:** A self-sanction might be especially useful in this case. But, the self-sanction must appear voluntary. If the self sanction is not viewed as voluntary, trust will not be restored.

Photo Credit | U.S. Marine Corps by Lance Cpl. Daniel V. Gonzales

4

Compliance and Social Influence

Across the COIN context, one of the most basic needs of COIN practitioners is for people (often local populations) to comply with requests or instructions for behavior. This chapter will focus on factors that produce compliance. Specifically, this chapter will examine the things that "cause one individual to comply with another's request for action."[128] This chapter will examine six scientifically validated compliance principles (reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity) that have been demonstrated to increase compliance across multiple fields (*e.g.*, sales, politics, etc.). As with the other chapters in this manual, this discussion will examine the degree to which individualism and collectivism modify the topics examined; some of these principles function differently in different cultures, whereas others are culturally universal. The six compliance principles discussed are some of the most powerful approaches for generating compliance known to the social sciences.[129]

Reciprocity

One of the most widely observed and discussed principles of social influence is reciprocity, which is defined as the "tendency of an individual to return a gift, favor, or service that was first given to them."[130] Robert Cialdini's description of a World War I soldier provides a vivid illustration of this powerful principle:

> In the trenches of WWI, Germany employed specialists who would sneak across open battlefields on their bellies and slip into enemy positions. Their goal was not to kill, but to capture their enemy and bring them back for interrogation. One such soldier was especially adept at this mission, and had gained a reputation for his effective technique.

128. Cialdini, R. B. & Griskevicius, V., "Social Influence," in Baumeister, R. F. & Finkel, E. J. (Eds.), *Advanced Social Psychology*, 385-417, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

129. It is important to note that this chapter is based almost entirely on, and structured around the work of Robert B. Cialdini, the father of this particular line of research. If readers wish for more depth on the subject of social influence, we refer them to his book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion,* (5th ed.), (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2008).

130. Cialdini, R., "Principles and Techniques of Social Influence," in Tesser, A. (Ed.), *Advanced Social Psychology*, 257-281, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1995).

> As he made his way across the open battlefield one day, he was once again able to sneak into the enemy position where he surprised a lone soldier who was in the middle of eating a sandwich. Shocked at the sight of the German soldier in front of him, the man made a decision — one that likely saved his life. He offered the German soldier a piece of his sandwich. The German soldier stood motionless for a moment, then quietly crawled from the trench and returned across the open battlefield.

The experience of being indebted to someone else is characterized by a compelling (though not necessarily conscious) pressure or social obligation to return a gift, favor, or service received.

Consider the more commonplace use of reciprocity in sales. A salesperson often begins the sales pitch with a question. This intentional practice assumes that the potential customer senses the salesperson's expectation of a response, and feels a corresponding obligation to give one. The expectation of response and obligation to respond combine to give the reciprocity principle its power. Regardless of the potential customer's actual interest in the product, he or she will almost certainly respond to the question because a response is expected and that expectation creates an obligation. The more questions posed, the more questions answered. The salesperson may then offer to provide a service, free of charge, such as shampooing a section of carpet. This is another deliberate use of reciprocity. The salesperson has now given time and energy to the customer with the expectation that the customer will respond, ideally with a purchase. The customer feels that expectation as an obligation, an unpleasant emotion that he or she might go to great lengths to relieve, perhaps even by purchasing an unnecessary or undesired product. But the obligation to respond often consists of more than an unpleasant feeling. A feeling can often be ignored or replaced with another feeling. The possibility of social consequences (*e.g.*, being shamed by the social group, being labeled uncooperative or selfish) intensifies the obligation to respond. It is important to note that this applies to both positive and negative behaviors. For instance, the concepts of justice and vengeance are also rooted in the principle of reciprocity (see Chapter 2 section on honor cultures). Regardless of the nature of the behavior or services received, human beings appear to be pre-programmed to return or mirror the behavior of others.

Combining an obligation to respond with an expectation to receive, the principle of reciprocity is fundamental to sales, fund raising, marketing, and politics. It is so pervasive across cultures that international alliances and defense pacts are arranged on the understanding that actions, even those of large government groups, will be returned in kind.[131] [132] As an example of this point, one of the authors of this manual attended an event at the embassy of a NATO member nation. At the event, the Ambassador of the host nation was speaking about the nation's commitment

131. Gouldner, A. W., "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement," *American Sociological Review,* 25, 161-178, (1960).

132. Cialdini, R. B. & Griskevicius, V. (2010).

of troops to the mission in Afghanistan. One reason the Ambassador gave for their nation's contribution of troops to the mission was the nation's attitude of support for the NATO mission in Afghanistan. But the Ambassador gave a second reason that rings of reciprocity: his nation expected that if it faced troubles of its own in the future, the NATO alliance would remember their contribution.

As the NATO example implies, the give and take of reciprocity is not limited to material possessions, which is of great importance for COIN operators, who are frequently limited in the material items they can provide to potential partners. Offering logistical support, helping with labor-intensive projects, or granting access to valuable information can meet the needs of a community or government partner and simultaneously increase the odds that the counterinsurgents' future requests (assuming they are comparable) will be met with compliance.

Photo Credit | U.S. Air Force by Senior Airman Christine Clark

Photo Credit | DoD Photo by Fred W. Baker III

The Medical and Veterinary Civil Action Programs[133], already in use in COIN operations, have potential links to reciprocity. In MEDCAP/VETCAP operations, a team of medical and/or veterinary specialists, accompanied by adequate security, enter a town or village and set up a temporary free clinic for its residents. These operations are fairly common. Aside from the large-scale efforts of several conventional military and government organizations, MEDCAPs and VETCAPs have been employed effectively by small units whose primary missions have been reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, the recovery of lost personnel, and counterinsurgency. The delivery of advanced medicine and veterinary assistance is often of tremendous importance to local populations, many of which are impoverished, or may be under

133. Losey, B.L. "Conflict prevention in East Africa: The Indirect Approach." Prism, 2(2), 77-90 (2011).

the strict control of a regional dictator who has the power to restrict such services. In other words, these services are extremely valuable, which makes it unlikely that such services can be repaid in conventional ways. Several things can happen as a result. One possibility is that individuals will seek these services and, after receiving them, will feel indebted to the U.S. military personnel. If so, then the principle of reciprocity may be the first step toward a cooperative relationship.

Cross-Cultural Research on Reciprocity

Just as salespeople and fundraisers have benefitted from the intelligent use of the principle of reciprocity, so too can operations in counterinsurgency. However, it is important to consider the cultural environment in which one is operating. Collectivist societies tend to promote the group over the individual; individualist societies tend toward the reverse. People who have been raised to consider themselves largely in terms of their role within their society may possibly experience a diminished feeling of *personal* indebtedness upon receiving something of value. Therefore, when in a collectivist society, it is probably useful to emphasize the impact of your work, materials, services, etc. on the group as a whole, and to look for cooperation in the same manner — from the group, rather than from distinct individuals. The pressure exerted by the principle of reciprocity likely exists in either case, but is probably more likely to be effective when used in the context of how that society views the individual.

Commitment and Consistency

Research has demonstrated that people, especially those from an individualist culture,[134] are strongly motivated to behave out of the desire to appear consistent with past behavior and statements. Specifically, the commitment and consistency principle of compliance states "after committing yourself to a position, you should be more willing to comply with requests for behaviors that are consistent with that position." [135]

Consider a Senator who campaigns on a platform that opposes raising taxes. He is successfully elected and maintains his policy; he consistently votes against tax hikes year after year. One day he finds himself in the position where in order to achieve a separate goal and maintain his political party's favor, he must vote to raise taxes. This is a problem for the Senator; he would prefer to avoid the appearance of switching stances. But what exactly makes the Senator so concerned with the appearance of consistency?

As described in Chapter 2, individualists tend to believe that from situation to situation they are stable human beings. In many cases, a person might have deeply held values that cannot be compromised without, in turn, compromising who the person is at his or her core. The appearance

134. Petrova, P. K., Cialdini, R. B. & Sills, S. J., "Consistency-based Compliance Across Cultures," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* 43, 104-111, (2007).

135. Cialdini, R. B. (1995).

of inconsistency is often labeled as hypocrisy. Acting against core beliefs might also cause a person to doubt her own convictions or ability to measure up to the standards set by a social community, God, etc. This point is applicable for matters more mundane than religion and politics. For example, a person might espouse some strong dislike for a particular restaurant. The principle holds that once the person makes some kind of commitment to the position of distaste, such as telling a friend, "Restaurant X is a horrible place; I would never eat there!", he is far more likely to behave in accordance with that commitment than had he not made the commitment (though, see below for research on this matter in a collectivist culture).

It is important to point out that a commitment is more likely to result in consistent behavior if the commitment is made publically. As one research team put it "if a person can get you to make a commitment (that is, to take a stand, to go on record), that person will have set the stage for your consistency with that earlier stand."[136] One of the authors of this manual has witnessed this point in action on a number of occasions in a church he once attended as a youth. Each week, at the end of the church service, the pastor would make an invitation for people to come forward to devote their lives to the faith (*i.e.*, to "get saved."). The pastor commonly noted in explicit detail the importance of making this pledge in public and made it clear that such a public declaration was more meaningful than doing so in private. Years later, the author visited another church which had the interesting approach of requesting that people make their weekly monetary gifts during the service by walking to the front of the church, and onto the stage, dropping their money into an offering receptacle. What the author did not appreciate at the time was that these pastors engaged commitment and consistency principles. When a person devotes his life to a faith publically, it is far more difficult for him to back away from the commitment without having to explain himself to the dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of people who witnessed his actions. Similarly, when a person makes the trek to the front of a room to deposit hard earned cash into a church offering plate, she is probably more likely to do so again in the future. After all, everyone in the room has seen the person give funds to the church. If she fails to do so again in the future, others will probably notice and wonder why the person no longer seems as committed as before — something the churchgoer would undoubtedly wish to avoid. [137]

Under the right circumstances, if you can get people to commit to a position or agreement, especially publically, they are more likely to continue to behave in accordance with that commitment in an effort to avoid appearing inconsistent. There are caveats, however, to how well this principle may work cross-culturally.

136. Cialdini, R. B. & Griskevicius, V. (2010).

137. Burger, J. M. & Cornelius, T., "Raising the Price of Agreement: Public Commitment and the Low-ball Compliance Procedure," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 33, 923-934, (2003).

Cross-Cultural Research on Commitment and Consistency

As described in Chapter 2, people in individualist and collectivist cultures tend to view the stability of individual attitudes, traits, and behaviors differently. For example, the attitudes of collectivists are sometimes dependent on the context in which they are given[138] and might vary from situation to situation. For individualists, attitudes are often more consistent and remain largely the same from situation to situation.

This cultural distinction concerning individual stability across time applies to the commitment and consistency principle. Research findings show that for individualists, past commitments tend to produce consistent future behaviors. However, the same research, conducted in a collectivist culture (*i.e.*, Poland, a nation with a moderate collectivism score; see the Chapter 2 map) demonstrated that prior commitments and behaviors have less impact (though still some) on future commitments and behaviors than for more individualist cultures.[139] This is only one study of one country, but it cautions us to question the individualist assumption that past behavior is the bellwether for future behavior in collectivist cultures. For example, it is possible that some people, who might have been thought of as irreconcilable, might be less oppositional than originally assumed. At the same time, this implies that people we consider reliable may not be so in the future.

One additional point to make is that, in a collectivist culture, *group* commitment and consistency is plausibly more stable than individual commitment and consistency. Winning a commitment from a single person might not amount to much, but, winning a commitment out of some group (be it a family, village, etc.) might well be useful for generating compliance. Of course, the opposite could be true in individualist cultures. Winning a commitment from a single person might well mean that he or she will behave in line with that commitment. However, winning a commitment from the person's group, while still valuable (see Chapter 6), might account for less behavior later on.

Social Proof

Social proof is a compliance principle based on the human tendency to use other people as a source of information. Particularly in situations in which the "right" thing to do is unclear, the actions of other people often serve as a helpful guide. The social proof principle states that people are "more willing to comply with a request for behavior if it is consistent with what similar others are thinking or doing."[140] Rating systems, such as the star system employed by Netflix or Amazon, provide

138. Markus, H., & Kitayama, S., "Culture and the Self: Implications For Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation," *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253, (1991).

139. Cialdini, R., Wosinska, W., Barrett, D., Butner, J., & Gornik-Durose, M., "Compliance With a Request in Two Cultures: The Differential Influence of Social Proof and Commitment/Consistency on Collectivists and Individualists," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 1242-1253, (1999).

140. Cialdini, R. (1995).

social proof. If other people like a product then we can feel more confident in liking it too. Other marketing ploys also use the social proof technique. Consider the "Customers who bought this item also bought…" sections that often appear on merchandise websites. If you like a certain item, presumably the other people who bought this item share your tastes and can therefore be trusted to guide you to other appealing products. In these instances, social proof techniques make the behavior of purchasing certain items appear more desirable and appropriate.

The principle of social proof may also contribute to behavior in the political arena. A former political operative noted how he and his team would take advantage of social proof to get people excited about a candidate. During some campaign rallies, he and his team would position themselves strategically in the audience and at appropriate times begin chants of things like "USA" or "four more years." Consider the power of the social proof principle in the context of a U.S. presidential nominating convention. As the political operative put it:

> One night before the nomination was announced, I called an old friend from the convention floor while my state's delegates were going nuts and shouting around me. My friend, who was watching the coverage on TV, said, "dude it looks crazy there." "It is," I replied. "Watch this!" I started screaming U-S-A! U-S-A! and pumping my fist in the air until my whole section picked up the cheer. "That's… scary man!" he yelled into the phone. "What else do you want them to say?" I asked. Those TV scenes they show around election time where hordes of citizens spontaneously burst forth in patriotic fervor and zeal for a candidate—they're all orchestrated by guys like me. Sometimes it's to sway the media, sometimes it's just for a laugh. But it's pure theater every time.[141]

This political operative understood the power of social proof to get people to behave as desired – in his case, the convention attendees, seeing one of their fellow delegates performing a certain chant, are more likely to see such displays as appropriate behavior for the setting, and follow along. The principle of social proof has immense importance in the context of counterinsurgency efforts. The primary effort of COIN, in laymen's terms, is to show the public that the insurgency is counterproductive to their livelihood, and should therefore be subverted and stopped. This is not so easily accomplished, however, if the insurgency (particularly its leaders) represents the collective attitude of the region. Efforts towards changing the hearts and minds of the local population, in this sense, would be tantamount to attempting to get a small group of political convention attendees to chant "We Love Football!" while the majority of the crowd shouts "U-S-A!" Knowing that a person will often use social proof (how other people are acting) to decide what to think or how to behave, can help the counterinsurgent to both understand and shape behavior.

141. Raymond, A., *How to Rig an Election. Confessions of a Republican Operative*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008).

Social proof is especially valuable in an ambiguous situation. We are more likely to look to others as a source of information when we are uncertain of what is going on or what is expected of us. Uncertainty is a frequent characterization of the COIN environment. In the ambiguous situation, the counterinsurgent, aware of the social proof principle, can provide a model of behavior. The counterinsurgent will be particularly effective to the extent that he is similar to those observing him, an idea we discuss further below under the influence technique of "liking."

Descriptive and Prescriptive Norms in Social Proof

The direct observation of other people is not the only form of social proof. Norms can also tell us what types of behavior are correct in a given situation. Descriptive norms provide a person with a *description of what is normal* in a certain context. For example, dropping peanut shells on the floor of a restaurant is abnormal in most contexts; but, at some western-themed restaurants it is normal to do so. People probably don't need to ask whether such behavior is acceptable at most restaurants – simply noticing the descriptive behavior of others in the setting is all the information a person needs to make a good decision. Prescriptive norms, on the other hand, provide people with a sense of what *ought to be done* in a certain situation. One research team examined littering behavior to demonstrate this concept. In most places in the U.S. there is a prescriptive norm against littering that most people understand without being told. However, in some places where people litter anyway, the descriptive norm is that litter is OK. Research indicates that both of these norm types can exert powerful social proof-related forces on people's behavior.[142] [143] Knowing that norms are a form of social proof, the counterinsurgent has good reason to learn the norms in an area of operations. Additionally, counterinsurgents could attempt to create new norms to shape behavior. Consider the major changes in smoking behavior that have occurred in recent years. Removing cigarettes from cinema and television, and smoking areas from restaurants and public areas, is a restructuring of the smoking norms. Such actions change the impression of what is a "correct" behavior. In many places and situations in the United States, smoking is no longer considered the "normal" thing to do or what people "ought" to do. By creating descriptive and prescriptive norms for cooperation with locals, and behaving in a cooperative manner when the opportunity arises, counterinsurgent leaders can use social proof to strengthen counterinsurgent-community relationships.

Cross-Cultural Research on Social Proof

Chapter 2 made it clear that cultures vary considerably in how much emphasis they place on the individual versus groups. In individualist cultures, a person's own wishes and desires tend to be

142. Brauer, M. & Chaurand, N., "Descriptive Norms, Prescriptive Norms, and Social Control: An Intercultural Comparison of People's Reactions to Uncivil Behaviors," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40, 490-499, (2010).

143. Also see: Hogg, M. & Reid, S., "Social Identity, Self Categorization, and the Communication of Group Norms," *Communication Theory*, 16, 7-30, (2006).


Photo Credit | USAID by Richard Jacquot

a driver of behavior; in collectivist cultures, the needs of the group tend to supersede the wishes of individual members of the group. This principle has an impact on the social proof concept.

Even in individualist cultures, the behavior and perspectives of others can drive the individual's behavior, but social proof has an even stronger impact on the behavior of people from collectivist cultures. Based on a review of 133 studies across 17 nations, people from collectivist cultures are more likely to conform to the wishes or social pressures of others than are people from individualist cultures.[144] COIN operators should keep the concept of social proof in mind when attempting to encourage a behavior that may be counter-normative, or at least rarely observed, in an area of operations (see Chapter 6 for more detail on how the perspectives of others drive behavior).

Liking

Counterinsurgents begin their task with a significant disadvantage. In addition to looking and behaving differently from the members of the local population they hope to influence, they are associated with the United States – a country that is very dissimilar to most other countries in the world. Why is dissimilarity such a concern? Because of the principle of "liking." People tend to like those with whom they are similar and dislike those to whom they are dissimilar, and, in turn, people "should be more likely to comply with a request of friends or other liked individuals."[145] [146]

It is important to recognize that, when given a choice, people tend to gravitate towards and surround themselves with people they like. Similarity strikes people as familiar and comfortable. Conversely, people tend to avoid individuals they dislike. This may seem obvious in the realm of friendships, but the same similarity=liking principle that influences friendship decisions can affect the likelihood that members of a local community will offer their cooperation. At times, counterinsurgents may create unnecessary barriers to communication and cooperation with the local communities in which they operate by highlighting differences and downplaying similarities.

144. Bond, R., & Smith, P., "Culture and Conformity: A Meta-analysis of Studies Using Asch's (1952b, 1956) Line Judgment Task," *Psychological Bulletin*, 111-137, (1996).

145. Cialdini, R. (1995).

146. Condon, J. W. & Crano, W. D., "Inferred Evaluation and the Relation Between Attitude Similarity and Interpersonal Attraction," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 789-797, (1988).

Physical appearance plays an important role in likability as we tend to prefer people that look similar to ourselves.[147] The Department of Defense has long allowed alternative grooming standards for individuals who live and work with the local populations. Facial hair on men and headdresses on women in the Middle East are small examples of the efforts undertaken to appear similar. Many agencies with embedded personnel invest considerable effort in educating operators on regional dress for the same reason. Taking the time to cultivate similarity in the realm of physical appearance gives the impression of interest and shared values (*e.g.*, modesty). The minimal investment required makes the development of physical similarity a promising route to likability for the counterinsurgent, but similarity can be developed in other areas as well. People also tend to like those with shared attitudes and interests.[148]

Photo Credit | U.S. Air Force by Staff Sgt. Patrice Clarke

Many operators, whether intentionally or not, have discovered this principle in action when they have shared images of their family with locals, and suddenly found themselves welcomed where before they were ignored. In many cases, merely drawing attention to the shared role of parenthood and its accompanying desires to provide care and protection can break down barriers to trust and cooperation. There is a tendency to focus on differences between self and other in COIN environments; given the compliance principle of liking, it is advisable to draw attention to similarities when possible. The more similar you appear, whether physically or otherwise, the more likable you will become.[149] Of course, the counterinsurgent should keep in mind the credibility of the similarity. Suddenly adopting the religion predominant in the area of operations does increase similarity, but it also strains the limits of credibility. And faking a similarity runs a high risk of detection, resulting in damaged trust. The counterinsurgent is advised to focus on areas of similarity that are preexisting or can be easily cultivated such as a shared interest in a sport, hobby, or celebrity figure.

147. Dion, K. K., Berschied, E., & Walster, E., "What is Beautiful is What is Good," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 24, 285-290, (1972).

148. Ricks, T. E., *The Gamble: General Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq* (Updated), (New York: Penguin Books, 2010).

149. Cialdini, R. B. & Griskevicius, V. (2010).

Cross-Cultural Research on Liking

People feel better about working with and complying with the requests of people they like. Wherever appropriate, making an effort to establish similarity and common ground, perhaps by embracing local customs of dress or discussing shared interests and values, can increase the counterinsurgent's "likability." Much wisdom from individuals who worked in a collectivist culture – such as T.E. Lawrence – make this point. Lawrence noted that when dealing with people from a collectivist culture, being able to fit in as much as possible, sometimes in simple ways like knowing appropriate dinner time conversation, can make a person more likeable.[150] Similarly, a famous journalist who covered the war in Iraq discovered that the simple act of U.S. Military personnel wearing a mustache helped to smooth interaction with Iraqis.[151] Ultimately, these principles of "liking," obvious as they might seem, can be profoundly helpful to COIN operators.


Photo Credit | Hancock Field Air National Guard Base

Authority

Human beings naturally create hierarchies, with those at the top possessing a sort of social power. That social power can influence other's behavior.[152] In many cultures, the attainment of authority is more desirable than the attainment of wealth. Why? Because authorities can wield tremendous power. The compliance principle of authority states that people are often "willing to follow the suggestions of someone who is in legitimate authority" (or who appears to be in legitimate authority) over someone who is not.[153] Often, simply believing a person is an authority is enough to drive people to action.

Consider, for example, a doctor's white lab coat. This piece of clothing can produce a sense of power. Why? Because, as a symbol, the white lab coat immediately represents authority. The principle of social proof tells us that when humans are uncertain as to how they should think or act, they typically look to others. Authority figures are a possible source of guidance and direction in ambiguous situations. In many cases, a request made from someone who is seen as possessing legitimate authority is sufficient to cause people to behave in ways that they would otherwise not. Take, for instance, the interesting example of the "rectal ear ache."

As described in Cialdini's[154] book, a man came to the doctor's office complaining of an ear ache.

150. Lawrence, "27 Articles," *The Arab Bulletin* (1917).

151. Ricks, T. E. (2010).

152. Milgram, S., "The Perils of Obedience," *Harper's* Magazine, 62-77, (1973).

153. Cialdini, R. B. & Griskevicius, V. (2010).

154. Cialdini, R. B. (2008).

The doctor diagnosed the issue and prescribed ear drops as treatment. On the chart he instructed the nurse to give three drops in the right ear. Only, the doctor abbreviated the word "right" with the letter "R." The nurse, without even thinking to question the prescription, read the instruction as "R ear" – and promptly inserted three drops of the medicine into the man's rectum.[155] This example illustrates the power of an authority for obtaining compliance. The nurse seems to experience a lapse in personal judgment, bypassing symptoms, diagnosis, and the specifics of the medication to deliver the drops. At the same time, the nurse has her own form of authority, which generates compliance from the patient who appears to offer no protest at the nurse's decision to apply the drops to his rectum rather than his ear!

Now, before going any further, it is important to note two things regarding the principle of authority. First, contrary to what many may believe, the power of the United States and its military does not translate into "authority" for the individual American. This is especially true when dealing in counterinsurgency. Again, obvious though it may seem, the goal of insurgency is to undermine the authority of a powerful group or government. So, at least in the eyes of the populations you are likely to encounter, your authority, at least initially, is not automatically established.

Second, it is critical that you do not interpret this discussion of compliance to authority as license to "establish your will" upon the people with whom you will be dealing. Demanding obedience by virtue of power and requesting compliance from a place of legitimate authority may have the same short-term result, but the long-term impacts on a person's emotions and attitudes (fear, resentment, and the desire to undermine or overthrow vs. admiration, loyalty, and the desire to cooperate) differ markedly. Numerous after-action reports[156] include the tragic tales of those who believed their job as a COIN specialist was to first establish dominance, and then somehow transfer power and authority to the local population. Needless to say, those lessons have been hard-learned.

Although the COIN operator is unlikely to speak from a platform of authority, it is important nonetheless to recognize how this principle still may have an effect on efforts to influence others. Whenever you are dealing with locals you must be seen as the authority among the members of your team. This may be especially true when dealing with tribal-based cultures who demand to speak only with those who have the authority to make decisions on behalf of others. If you are perceived as weak or powerless to negotiate (and thereby unable to satisfy demands or requests), then it is unlikely that your efforts will be effective. It is similarly imperative that the spokesperson appear, whenever possible, to possess legitimate authority and power among the rest of the team.

155. Cohen, M. & Davis, N., *Medication Errors: Causes and Prevention,* (Philadelphia: G. F. Stickley Co., 1981). In Baumeister, R. F., & Finkel, E. J. (Eds.), *Advanced Social Psychology*, 385-417, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

156. Contact authors for additional details.

Another consideration in this discussion on authority is the strategic targeting of leaders for support and cooperation. It cannot be understated how important the endorsement of a local authority figure is to the successful outcome of COIN operations. Not only will their endorsement allow you to vicariously gain a portion of their authority (power), but their social influence will likely encourage others to cooperate with your efforts. Conversely, a failure to recognize local authority figures (no matter how meek or powerful from your perspective) may seriously hinder the efforts of long-term operations. Again, there are volumes of examples[157] of COIN operations that were ultimately unsuccessful because, in their arrogance, planners repeatedly failed to recognize and respect the authority structure of the local population. Working against the established authority is an easy method whereby COIN planners or operators can undermine the operation.

Cross-Cultural Research on Authority

Individuals are more likely to comply with those they see as possessing authority, and the decision to do so is often made in the absence of the normal system of personal decision-making and evaluation. Working to influence the behaviors and allegiances of a large people group is difficult. Recognizing where the group falls within the collectivist-individualist spectrum is a critical step in the planning process. Through that lens, the principle of authority can be used as an effective means by which you may approach and influence that group.

Collectivist societies tend to form a series of distinct and often complex hierarchies, based on age, birth order, gender, social status, etc.[158] The individuals at the apex of these hierarchies are primarily concerned with making sure that the behavior of others in the hierarchy is consistent with the norms and goals of the group as a whole. Because the emphasis in this type of society is on the group as a whole, dissent and disagreement are often discouraged. As a result, decisions by those in authority (or the social group as a whole) are likely to be obeyed with little questioning. Depending on the nature of the COIN operation, considerable conflict could erupt as a result of interjecting concepts (freedom to decide for oneself, encouraging people to align with a different group, etc.) that violate the cultural patterns of the established collectivist system. If this group, for example, has decided to align itself with an insurgency, special care must be taken regarding all efforts to convince the group that their allegiance to the insurgency is counterproductive to their well-being. Interventions based on an individualist's point of view, such as impassioned calls to "fight for your rights," will likely incite more conflict, and could potentially entrench the group with the insurgents.

157. Ibid.

158. Dennis, R. & Giangreco, M. F., "Creating Conversation: Reflections on Cultural Sensitivity in family Interviewing," *Exceptional Children*, 63, 103–116, (1996).

Scarcity

Time is running out! This is a limited time offer! Call now, before it is too late! These statements, now common on TV and the Internet, demand attention. This marketing strategy can generate a sort of panic or vulnerability that spurs us to action. But why? These statements work because of the principle of scarcity.[159]

In summary form, the principle of scarcity says "people try to secure those opportunities that are scarce or dwindling."[160] The scarcity principle goes to work when the weather forecasters warn of a large storm or blizzard. People race to the local grocery store to purchase supplies like bread, milk, and toilet paper. Often stores sell out within hours of the announcement of an impending storm. The scarcity principle is easily understood by this example—the more rare or scarce something is, or is likely to become, the more value people place on it. The storm example is especially interesting because there are two scarcity triggers: (1) the storm itself, which can make it harder to buy things later and (2) the other people who are worried about the same thing and so will try to beat out their neighbors.

Aside from its value to marketing and advertising, the principle of scarcity is not just limited to goods. Information can also be valuable if it is deemed scarce.[161] Consider your response when someone tells you that information came from someone "on the inside." Suddenly the information, because of its limited availability, seems somehow more valuable. Similarly, banning information will typically increase people's desire for that information. In the same manner that a rare car fetches a higher price, people will value (and likely believe) banned information more than information that is freely available.[162]

Knowing this principle, COIN operators can anticipate the reaction that a community might have to the threat of scarcity. Many regions in which counterinsurgency operations are conducted experience chronic scarcities of basic necessities. This may drive people to behave more aggressively (think Black Friday retail rampages), or less cooperatively, than they might in circumstances of abundance. COIN operators need to be aware that a person, or group of people, might undertake sizable risk to obtain scarce resources or information. Insurgents might even manufacture scarcity to encourage the population to behave in a certain way. Thus, one way to counter the insurgents could be to reduce scarcities. Similarly, it is worth understanding that some benefits counterinsurgents might provide (such as the MEDCAP example previously noted) are probably very scarce in general. When counterinsurgents do provide scarce resources, it is worth understanding that they could cause a "run" on those resources. Similarly, COIN operators might be able to leverage the principle of scarcity by highlighting scarcity when it does in fact exist. Calling attention to this

159. Wheelan, C. J., *Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science,* (New York: Norton, 2002).

160. Cialdini, R. B. (2008).

161. Darling-Hammond, L., "Inequality and Access to Knowledge," in J. A. Banks & C. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*, 465–483, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001).

162. Cialdini, R. B. (2008).

principle is likely to increase the value of these items (and potentially your value), and may create the impetus needed for people to warm up to counterinsurgents. This can be used as an external motivator to encourage compliance, and in practical terms is quite easy to employ because you probably have a wealth of resources – many of which may, ordinarily, be very scarce (and therefore highly valued) – at your disposal.

Scarcity in Collectivist vs. Individualist Societies

The tendency of human beings to place value on items that are scarce or becoming so appears to be a universal principle that transcends the cultural boundaries of individualism and collectivism. It may very well be that our reaction to a scarcity of resources or information is a result of evolutionary development that occurred long before humans began to organize into cooperative groups. The principle of scarcity can be an extremely powerful motivator of human behavior in any culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted social psychological research on the topic of compliance. Specifically, this chapter examined the principles of reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity. In each case, we have highlighted the basics of how the principle is engaged, provided practical examples of how others have used the principles for activities, such as marketing and political activities, and attempted to point out how each principle could be leveraged by COIN operators.

Perhaps because of their many real-world applications, social influence techniques have been (and continue to be) an active area of research for social psychologists. Any COIN operator, in any cultural context, will be more effective at both predicting and generating behavior for knowing these points.

Checklist for Operators

Reciprocity: Internal pressure is created when people receive a gift, favor, or service. Receiving almost any kind of gift, service, etc., compels people to respond or return in kind.

1. Consider if you can offer something of value that will increase the likelihood that the target group will comply with requests. This can still be useful even if you do not have something they specifically need. The gift might still provide dividends down the road.
2. Determine if there is something you can do for the target group, that will help them, but might also generate subsequent reciprocity for you.
3. Determine if you are asking for something but offering nothing in return:
   a. If so, what can you offer that will be considered of equal value in the target group's eyes?
   b. Remember, if people give YOU something, they might expect something of you later—and be puzzled if you do not reciprocate.

Consistency: People will go to great lengths to appear consistent with prior commitments and positions.

1. In some circumstances, it might be useful to get someone to go "on the record" with a commitment or behavior on your behalf:
   a. This will put pressure on this person to keep up appearances later.
   b. Remember, this is probably even more useful in an individualist culture.
2. Are you asking someone to recant, revoke, or reverse positions (especially publicly)?
   a. If so, is there a way you can minimize the sense of inconsistency on their behalf?
   b. Is there a way you can reframe this change of behavior or position into something more positive or consistent with established norms?
3. Remember, this tactic works in both individualist and collectivist cultures. However, research shows that it probably has a STRONGER impact in individualist cultures on individual people. It might have a stronger impact on groups in a collectivist culture.

Photo Credit | DoD by Tech. Sgt. Joe Laws, USAF

Checklist for Operators

Social Proof: When unsure of what to do, or if a situation is ambiguous, people tend to look to others for direction, and most commonly decide to align their behavior with the salient in-group.

1. Have you identified the most influential group?
2. Can you create the appearance that many other people are cooperating so as to increase the pressure that the target group should cooperate as well?
3. Do you have the support and endorsement of influential group members?
   a. Can you obtain that?

Liking: People are more likely to comply with the requests of those who are similar.

1. Is my appearance consistent with local customs and traditions?
2. Am I interacting in a manner that increases my likability?
   a. If not, can I modify my approach so that my personality or communication style can support my efforts, rather than counteract them?
3. Are there any local projects I can assist with?

Authority: People are likely to conform to the directives of those they see as possessing legitimate authority—or even appear to be authorities.

1. Am I respecting the local authority figure(s)?
2. Can I obtain the support or endorsement of the authority figure(s)?
3. Am I conducting myself in public in such a way that conveys I have authority over my personnel?

Scarcity: People are motivated to seize opportunities that are scarce or dwindling.

1. What can I control; what is limited, or likely to diminish?
2. Have I drawn attention to limited resources or diminishing supplies in order to invoke the principle of scarcity?
3. Do I need to counteract actual scarcities or the impression thereof?
   a. Perhaps solving some scarcity issue will help generate reciprocity.

5

Attitude Change

An insurgency is fought not for territory or absolute annihilation of the enemy, but rather for the political support of the local population. From both a military and social psychological perspective, using persuasion appeals to change the attitudes of the locals to ones that favor (or at the minimum do not obstruct) counterinsurgent objectives is a critical element of winning local support. Any "procedure with the potential to change someone's mind" can be referred to as persuasion.[163] Targeted messages are an example of persuasion.

Photo Credit | U.S. Army by Staff Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti

As detailed in Chapter 1, at each of his eight COIN steps, Galula[164] wrote at length about the kinds of messages counterinsurgents should craft for the local population. Similarly, General (Ret.) Richard Stilwell[165] noted that, within a COIN campaign, appropriate messaging can sometimes erode insurgency support faster than kinetic approaches. His observation is echoed in the mission of Psychological Operations, now known as Military Information Support Operations (MISO), which is to use "planned political, economic, military, and ideological activities directed toward foreign countries, organizations, and individuals in order to create emotions, attitudes, understandings, beliefs, or behavior favorable to the achievement of U.S. political and military objectives."[166] This chapter will focus on understanding how messages change attitudes.

---

163. Petty, R.E. & Briñol, R., "Attitude Change," In R. F Baumeister & E.J. Finkel (Eds), *Advanced Social Psychology: The State of the Science,* 217-259, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

164. Galula, D., *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice,* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 1964).

165. Stilwell, R. G., "Political Psychological Dimensions of Counterinsurgency," In F. Goldstein & B. Findley (Eds.), *Psychological Operations: Principles and Case Studies*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996).

166. Curtis, G., *An Overview of Psychological Operations (PSYOP),* (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1995).

Understanding Attitudes

Designing appropriate persuasive strategies in the COIN context requires an understanding of the basic ways in which attitudes (general evaluations such as good/bad, like/dislike) develop toward a topic, a product, or a person. Here we present one of the best known and well-researched social psychological models of how political leaders, advertisers, and others persuade. Figure 14 graphically represents the Elaboration Likelihood Model[167] (ELM); we refer to this figure regularly in the chapter as we explain the parts of the ELM and how the ELM works in non-Western countries.

The ELM is based on the idea that when people encounter a message, they will think about it in one of two ways.[168] Sometimes, they think very hard about the message (especially when they are motivated to do so). But just as often, and perhaps more often, people do not want to think hard about a message (low motivation). Or they want to think hard about a message but they *can't* think hard about it (low ability). Knowing that people may or may not think carefully about a message, the ELM suggests that messages can work in two different ways. Those two ways are described next.

The Peripheral Route

Often people act like "cognitive misers," but instead of pinching pennies, they are being cheap with their mental effort.[169] In cognitive miser mode, people are mentally lazy, using short-cuts to thinking when possible. This approach to thinking is often quite helpful because people can't think deeply or at length about every message they encounter. The peripheral route of persuasion (see Figure 14, bottom row) takes into account the human tendency to be a lazy thinker. If a message moves along the peripheral route of persuasion, it is because the message recipient doesn't care about the message or lacks the time or energy to think much about it (Figure 14, box 2). On the peripheral route of persuasion a person may barely process the message at all. But if they do process it, they will reach a judgment about it in a somewhat lazy, automatic way. Peripheral route processing has an important benefit: it helps people to generate attitudes while being efficient with their energy and time. Television commercials capitalize on the peripheral route because the typical TV viewer has low motivation and the commercials play for short periods of time.

Most of the persuasive messages that people encounter in a typical day are experienced when ability or motivation to process the message is low. Advertisers, politicians, and others who attempt

167. Petty, R.E. & Cacioppo, J.T., "The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion," In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, (New York: Academic Press, 1986).

168. Chaiken, S. & Ledgerwood, A., "A Theory of Heuristic and Systematic Information Processing," In P. A. M. van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, 246-266, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012).

169. Taylor, S.E, "The Interface of Cognitive and Social Psychology," (pp 189 - 211), In J.H. Harvey (Ed.), *Cognition, Social Behavior, and the Environment*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1981).

to shape attitudes recognize the human tendency to be a cognitive miser; they know that most people who see or hear their message will be unmotivated or unable to think very carefully about the message. This is why we see so many advertisements that emphasize the surface qualities of the message (Figure 14, box 3). Using famous actors, sexy models, upbeat popular music, and personal testimonies, persuaders create messages with flashy surfaces that can grab the attention and change the attitudes of people on the peripheral route.

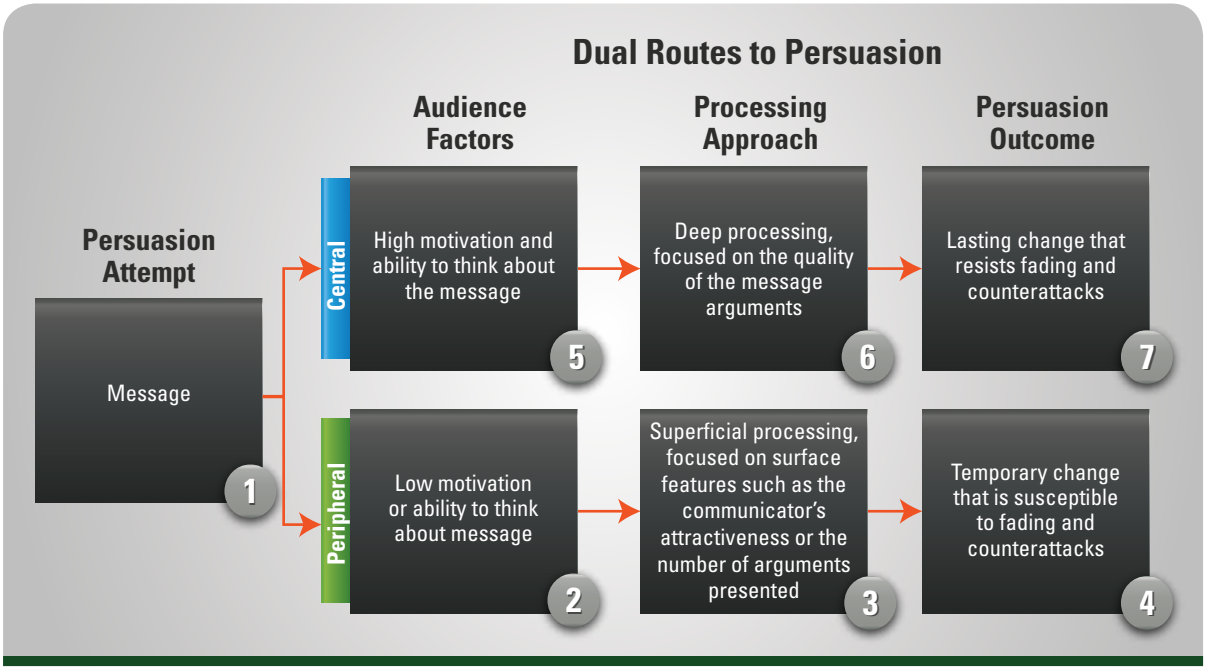


Figure 14. The Elaboration Likelihood Model as Adapted from Petty and Cacioppo, 1986

Using the peripheral route to change attitudes has a big advantage for the COIN operator: there are many different ways in which the surface qualities of a product or message can be manipulated. But there is a significant downside too. A positive attitude formed because of a message's peripheral cues tends to be less permanent (see Figure 14, box 4). When another sexier, shinier message comes along, that original attitude is highly susceptible to change.

The peripheral route is the go-to route for many persuaders because of (a) the human tendency to be a cognitive miser and (b) the number of message surface qualities that can be manipulated. But with peripheral route persuasion being more temporary and vulnerable to counter-persuasion, sometimes a message needs to be designed for a different persuasive route.

The Central Route

Despite the human tendency to be a lazy thinker, there are many occasions when people are ready and willing to think hard about a message. If that is the case, the message will move along the top row of Figure 14, what the ELM calls the *central route* of persuasion. On the central route, a person tries to

carefully assess and scrutinize the message in order to reach a judgment about it. This type of thinking takes a lot of effort, which explains why people only really do this when they care about the message and have the time and energy to think about it (Figure 14, box 5).

Messages about toothpaste don't usually engage people in the deep thinking of the central route because toothpaste usually isn't a meaningful purchase; but when you are looking for a new car, chances are good that you are highly motivated to think deeply and carefully about all of the available information on price, gas mileage, and special features. Because the decision is personally relevant and important, you have motivation to think about car messages that you see and hear. But that isn't the only requirement for central route processing. Assuming you have the motivation, you also need to have the ability to pay attention to those advertisements. Central route processing won't work if instead of listening to the salesperson at the car dealership, you only catch a few highlights as you chase your kids around the showroom.

Figure 15. Leveraging the Central and Peripheral Routes to Persuasion

When people are thinking on the central route, the arguments in a message get a lot of attention and will be the primary reason that a person is convinced (or not) by the message. Assume you have the motivation and ability you need to do some deep, central route processing. You encounter an advertisement for a car you might wish to purchase. If that advertisement contains strong, convincing arguments, your attitude is likely to shift, becoming more positive. And that positive attitude, because it was formed on the central route, will tend to be strong, long lasting, and likely to have an impact on your behavior (*i.e.*, actually buying the car). (See Chapter 6 for a discussion of how and when attitudes generate behavior.)[170] The tendency for attitudes formed via central route message

170. Petty, R.E., Haugtvedt, C., & Smith, S.M., "Elaboration as a Determinant of Attitude Strength: Creating Attitudes that are Persistent, Resistant, and Predictive of Behavior," In R.E. Petty & J.A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude Strength: Antecedents and Consequences* (pp. 93-103), (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1995).

processing to be strong, long-lasting, and influential for behavior makes it very appealing for message creators to do two things: (1) get their audience thinking on the central route and (2) create messages with strong arguments. But it can be hard to create the right conditions for central route thinking. The audience needs to be motivated and able to think carefully. And even if you can accomplish (1), persuaders don't always have a lot of strong arguments to give their audience.

How can understanding ELM help us change the attitudes of others?

Multiple projects have tested the ELM over the last thirty years. In one illustrative example,[171] U.S. university students came into a laboratory and listened to a recorded message about a new graduation requirement: a major-area comprehensive examination for college seniors. What these college student test participants did not know was that they heard only one of eight separate message versions created by the research team (see Figure 16 for a helpful visualization of this experiment, blue and green colors highlight variables that should be driving attitudes in the various conditions).

The ELM predicts that motivated people use the central route to process messages but unmotivated people use the peripheral route to process messages, so the first thing that made the messages different was that the researchers designed some messages to motivate participants to think, and designed other variants of the message to de-motivate them. To accomplish this, half of the participants were told that the comprehensive examination was under consideration for next year (see Figure 16). Presumably, this would make the message *highly* relevant to the participants—the message essentially said "this new policy could impact whether or not you graduate." The other half were told that the comprehensive examination was under consideration for implementation in 10 years (see Figure 16). Presumably, this would make the message of low relevance—the message essentially said "this new policy won't have any impact on you personally." These two different versions of the message got people thinking on the central route (high relevance message) or the peripheral route (low relevance message).

In addition to predicting that motivated people use the central route and unmotivated people use the peripheral route, the ELM also predicts that for people on the central route, the quality of the message arguments matters, but for people on the peripheral route, superficial qualities of the message matter (Figure 14). To test whether people on the central route really do think *differently* from people on the peripheral route, the researchers made more versions of the comprehensive exam message. Some versions had really strong arguments for the new examination; others had very weak arguments (Figure 16). For people on the central route, strong arguments should have more appeal, creating positive attitudes, but for people on the peripheral route, argument strength shouldn't matter at all (Figure 14).

If the arguments appeal to the central route people, the experimenters needed something to appeal to the peripheral route people. The final thing they changed about the message was the speaker. Half of the

171. Petty, R.E., Cacioppo, J.T., & Goldman, R. (1981). Personal involvement as a determinant of argument based persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 41(5). 847-855.

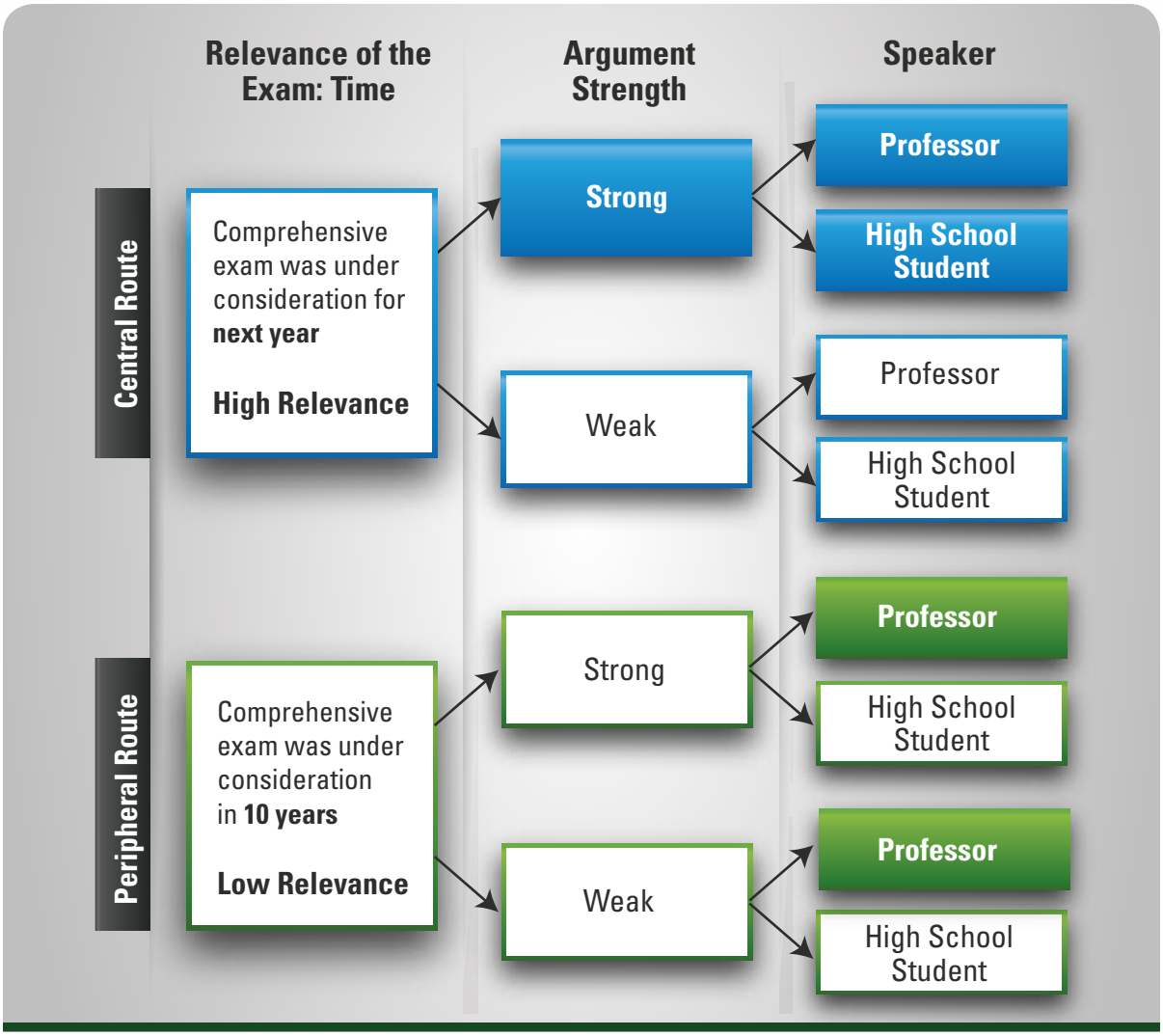


Figure 16. Diagram of Conditions in the Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman 1981 Study

people were told that the arguments for the exam came from a Princeton professor; the other half were told that the arguments were thought up by local high school students. People on the central route shouldn't care who is giving the arguments, as long as the arguments are strong ones. But for people on the peripheral route, where superficial message qualities matter, the expert should be much more convincing than the high-school students. In total, the combinations of the three different variables (relevance of the exam: next year vs. 10 years, argument strength: weak vs. strong, messenger: expert vs. non-expert) meant there were eight different versions of the message (see Figure 16). Each participant heard only one.

The participants' attitudes toward the comprehensive examination were recorded before they heard the message and again after they heard the message. The results of this sophisticated experiment support the predictions of the ELM. Students that thought the comprehensive exam could begin next year (high relevance) were persuaded to support the issue to a greater extent when the arguments used were strong, than when the arguments used were weak. For these motivated students, the expertise of the

speaker didn't even matter (see Figure 17). When motivation is high, the central route kicks in; people start thinking hard and long about the message, so stronger arguments mean more attitude change.

For students that thought the comprehensive exam wouldn't begin for at least 10 years, the messages worked in a very different way. Because the issue lacked relevance, these unmotivated students didn't need to think hard about the message. Instead they focused on a surface quality: whether the message came from an expert or not. For these unmotivated students, no matter how good the arguments were, the expert was much more convincing (Figure 17). When motivation is low, the peripheral route kicks in; people start thinking like cognitive misers. When you think like a miser, trying to save up your precious mental effort, it is easy to be dazzled by an expert, even when the expert lacks substance.

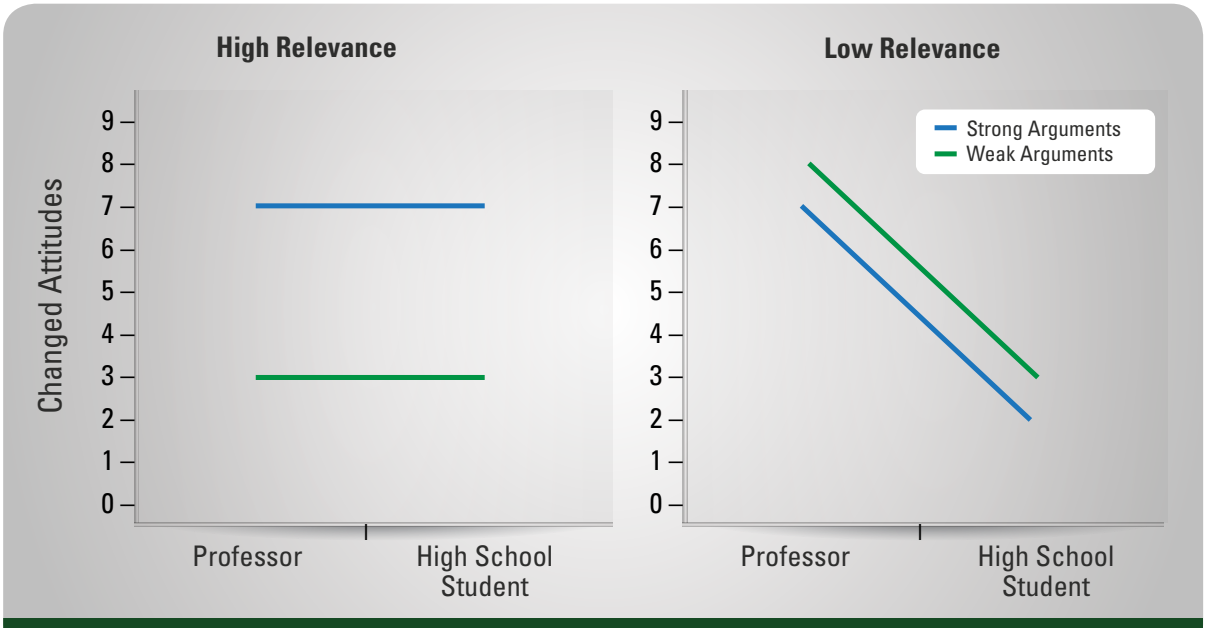


Figure 17. Depiction of Results from Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman, 1981

Cross-Cultural Examinations of Attitude Change

Thus far, this chapter has focused on the basics of the ELM. The model is helpful for understanding attitude change, but it is important to recognize that experiments testing the model have taken place almost exclusively in psychology laboratories in Western individualist nations. As noted in Chapter 2, this approach helps us understand attitude change for individualists, but what of the collectivist nations that are often the focus of attitude change projects in counterinsurgency settings?

Several tests of the ELM have included people from Asian countries (usually more collectivist, see below for details and examples). As discussed in Chapter 2, we do not assume that all collectivist cultures work in the same way. The ways that the ELM works in Asian countries may not be the exact ways that it works in non-Asian collectivist countries. However, and importantly for our purposes, the findings from country to country are largely consistent. Often people are cognitive

misers who are easily (but only temporarily) convinced by the surface qualities of a message. But sometimes, when they are thinking carefully, people can be convinced by strong arguments, and form new attitudes that tend to be more permanent and influential. Thus we have evidence that, no matter the culture, attitude change can happen on the peripheral route or the central route. At the same time, it is worth noting a few interesting differences in the ways that peripheral route cues works. In particular, research on cross-cultural differences in peripheral route persuasion has focused on how other people's opinions, including the opinions of celebrities, experts, and regular people with a common background, become persuasive.

Two marketing researchers[172] wanted to know how individualism and collectivism might impact attitude change within the ELM framework. Specifically, they wondered how someone who is trying to form an attitude about some new object or idea might be affected by what other people think of the new object or idea. In individualist cultures, individuals tend to use the opinions of others only when forming evaluations on the peripheral route. In other words, when individualists are not motivated to think very carefully about a message, they are more likely to let the opinions of others persuade them.[173] [174] When you are being a cognitive miser, "what other people think is the right way to think" is a helpful rule of thumb (see Chapter 4 for perspectives on Social Proof). But what role might other people's opinions play for collectivist people evaluating new messages? Because the collectivism cultural idea emphasizes harmony and connection with others, the researchers expected that other people's attitudes would be more important for collectivist people than individualist people, even on the central route.

The researchers asked people in Hong Kong to evaluate a message about a new kind of electronic device. The participants were given information about what other people from Hong Kong thought of the electronic device and they were given the perspective of an outside rating agency, much like *Consumer Reports.* To check on the role of motivation (central vs. peripheral route), the researchers adjusted elements of the information so that some people were highly motivated to read and understand its content, and others were less motivated. The ELM tells us that for people from individualist cultures, other people's opinions only really matter in low motivation (peripheral route) situations. Would the same thing happen in the collectivist culture of Hong Kong?

The researchers discovered something important: the opinions of other people mattered, no matter how motivated (or unmotivated) the participants were. In fact, participants who read terrible reviews

172. Aaker, J. L. & Maheswaran, D., "The Effect of Cultural Orientation on Persuasion," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24, 315-328, (2000).

173. Axsom, D., Yates, S. & Chaiken, S., "Audience Response as a Heuristic Cue in Persuasion," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 30-40, (1987)

174. Mackie, D., "Systematic and Nonsystematic Processing of Majority and Minority Persuasive Communication," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 41-52, (1987).

from the outside rating agency still gave the product high evaluations if they *also read that other people from Hong Kong liked it*. There are two important things that the results of this experiment do *not* tell us. First, they do not imply that people from a collectivist culture think recklessly about issues and messages. Second, they do not imply that people from a collectivist culture use only the peripheral pathway or only the central pathway of persuasion. What the results *do* tell us is this: the attitudes of people in collectivist cultures might be shaped more by the opinions of like-minded others than are the attitudes of people in individualist cultures (see Chapter 6 for more on this subject). This is important knowledge for persuasion when COIN is taking place in a collectivist area.

Cross-Cultural Testing

In addition to considering the effects of other people's opinions, researchers have examined the impact of celebrity endorsers on attitudes in collectivist cultures (in this case, attitude toward a product). The impact of a celebrity endorser is worth considering for COIN practitioners because it may be easy to manipulate who delivers a message. Specifically, a research study[175] examined three aspects of a celebrity endorser: the endorser's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise (generally these are all "surface level" features of a message that tend to work best on the peripheral route—at least in individualist cultures). The researchers predicted that all three dimensions of the endorser would positively influence Singaporeans (a collectivist people) to purchase a product. The study used Asian celebrities and matched them with an appropriate product. Participants then indicated how interested they were in buying the product.

All three aspects of the celebrity (trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise) were relevant to the decision to purchase. Expertise was the most influential factor. The lesson, in this case, is that when designing message campaigns in collectivist areas, using a noted expert as a spokesperson will probably be especially effective – designing a message with an expert spokesperson who is also attractive will probably be even more effective. Similar results have also been seen in studies in the Korean[176] and Thai[177] cultures.[178] [179]

---

175. Pornpitakpan, C., "The Effect of Celebrity Endorsers' Perceived Credibility on Product Purchase Intention: The Case of Singaporeans," *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 16, 55-74, (2003).

176. Yoon, S., Vargas, P.T., & Han, S., "'East' versus 'West': Cross-cultural Differences in Perceived Impact of Course Expertise," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 32, 287-293, (2005).

177. Pornpitakpan, C. & Francis, J.N.P., "The Effect of Cultural Differences, Source Expertise, and Argument Strength on Persuasion: An Experiment with Canadians and Thais," *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 13, 77-101, (2001).

178. Ohanian, R., "The Impact of Celebrity Spokespersons' Perceived Image on Consumers' Intention to Purchase," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 31, 46-54, (1991).

179. Chaiken, S., "Communicator Physical Attractiveness and Persuasion," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 1387-1397, (1979).

Cultural Advertising

Another important type of information for understanding cultural differences in persuasion comes from existing advertisements. If we assume that advertisers know the culture in which they operate, then looking at advertisements from different countries could tell us about how people tend to be persuaded. One research team examined 200 Korean magazine advertisements and 200 American magazine advertisements. These researchers[180] found important differences embedded in the advertisements. The U.S. advertisements were much more individualist than the Korean advertisements, meaning the U.S. ads were more likely to emphasize self-reliance, personal rewards, and self-improvement. The Korean advertisements emphasized values that are important in collectivist cultures, including interdependence, in-group goals, and family well-being.

Additional Topics for Consideration

Interaction of the Two Paths

Figure 14 depicted the two paths of the ELM, the central and the peripheral, as independent and non-overlapping. This is a useful way to understand the basics of how people process messages, but in reality, the two kinds of thinking often overlap and impact each other. When the two pathways contain complimentary information, their effects tend to add together. But when careful, central route thinking about a message's arguments results in information that contradicts the lazy, peripheral route thinking about a message's bells and whistles, the central route process tends to dominate. This makes sense; when we are thinking carefully, we are better able to discount the sexy messenger's 15 reasons to make a purchase, in favor of an evaluation of just how good the reasons are. We may notice the surface appearance of the message first, but the effects of that appearance are minimized when we start to think carefully about the message.[181]

Existing Attitudes

COIN practitioners are not going to encounter people as blank slates, waiting to have new attitudes impressed upon them. The local population members that COIN practitioners hope to persuade will already have attitudes, many of them very strong and dearly held, especially where religious and political topics are concerned. Nevertheless, persuasion efforts in the COIN setting routinely target these types of attitudes, including anti-Americanism and support for insurgents. When a message opposes an attitude they already have, people will likely be biased against it and want to reject it. Changing such attitudes will be difficult because people have many strategies, some conscious, some not, to protect existing attitudes.

---

180. Han, S-P. & Shavitt, S., "Persuasion and Culture: Advertising Appeals in Individualist and Collectivist Societies," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 30, 326-350, (1994).

181. Chaiken, S. & Maheswaran, D., "Heuristic Processing can Bias Systematic Processing: Effects of Source Credibility, Argument Ambiguity and Task Performance on Evaluation Judgments," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66, 460-473, (1994).

People can use both the central and peripheral routes of the ELM to protect their existing attitudes. For example, people might use careful, central route thinking to protect their attitudes by studying only biased information. People have what is called a "confirmation bias,"[182] a tendency to search for, and pay close attention to, information that supports, or confirms, a preexisting attitude. This bias might look like a preference for getting news from a certain newspaper or select television network. People can use the peripheral route to protect their cherished attitudes by choosing to give partial attention to, or think in a lazy way about, messages that contradict what they already feel. So faced with a pro-America message, a person could decide not to engage deeply with the arguments, but instead focus on the characteristics of the messenger (that person has no status; he isn't even a member of my community!) that can be so easy to ignore and reject.

Even when a persuasive message causes change in an attitude, that change may not be a complete switch from a "negative" or "bad" attitude to a "positive" or "good" attitude. A person may end up ambivalent, meaning that when the attitude object, whether it be a person, idea, or item, comes to mind, the person will experience both positive and negative associations, and believe in both!

Leveraging Fear

Fear appeals can be effective, but only in special circumstances.[183] Fear appeals have to be designed to elicit moderate levels of fear. A message that paralyzes its audience will not produce the desired attitude change and behavior. Further, to successfully utilize a fear message, the message must include a solution. The audience needs to feel vulnerable to the threat, but know exactly how to avoid the danger. Danger and fear are often abundant in the COIN environment. Thus, circumstances can be utilized for persuasion by generating awareness of threat vulnerability and then providing a viable solution.

Circumventing Efforts to Resist Persuasion

Often people can recognize persuasion attempts. This is the case with advertising on television or roadside billboards. It may also be the case in the COIN setting. Particularly when messages are disseminated through media outlets (radio programs, newspapers, pamphlets), people are likely aware that the purpose of the message is to persuade. When people know they are the targets of an explicit attempt to persuade, they often react with resistance.[184] These tendencies to bear down in the face of explicit attempts at persuasion means that sometimes more subtle attempts at persuasion work better than overt attempts. As such, when you attempt to persuade locals (or

182. Nickerson, R.S., "Confirmation Bias: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon in Many Guises," *Review of General Psychology*, 2, 175-220, (1998).

183. Janis, I.L., "Effects of Fear Arousal on Attitude Change: Recent Developments in Theory and Experimental Research," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 4, 166-224, (1967).

184. Petty, R.E. & Briñol, P. (2010).

anyone), it is usually best to avoid making it seem like your explicit intent is to persuade. For example, messages that are "overheard" usually feel more genuine, less planned, and can be more influential than more explicit attempts to persuade.[185]

The same goes for praise. It is often more meaningful (because it feels more genuine) when a colleague's praise is passed on to you through another person. Even marketers attempt to use this principle. Because many people ignore advertisements when they appear on television (*e.g.*, fast-forward through commercials, get up and go to the refrigerator), advertisers utilize product placement in movies and video games. Such product placements are recalled up to months later and can be quite persuasive.[186]

Attitudes and Behavior

Ultimately, we try to change attitudes so we can change behavior. Research suggests that attitudes formed by deep, deliberate, central route processing of message arguments are more likely to guide behavior than are attitudes formed by lazy, peripheral processing of message surface features. This happens because people can hold with more certainty attitudes that are based on strong arguments. People are more willing to act when they are confident in the reasons behind the action. Although strong attitudes are more predictive of behavior than weak attitudes, attitudes are not the only predictor of behavior. Other factors, including a person's sense of personal control over a situation, and what other people want from a person, often merge with attitudes to drive a person's actions. Chapter 6 provides a discussion of these additional factors.[187]

COIN Example

One useful example of using "central" and "peripheral" approaches to attitude change comes from the COIN battlefield of Afghanistan. In the summer of 2009, 1st Battalion 5th Marine Regiment was sent to Nawa District, Helmand Province, for clear, hold, and build operations. Part of this objective was to engage the Taliban in battle and drive them from the area. While kinetic battle was undertaken, there was also a psychological battle between the Marines and the Taliban for the attitudes of the locals.

The Marines frequently used central and peripheral style approaches to information campaigns. In multiple instances, the Marines sought to deliver detailed central route information by standing up a community newspaper and radio station to deliver their messages.

185. Walster, E. & Festinger, L., "The Effectiveness of 'Overheard' Persuasive Communication," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 65, 395-402, (1962).

186. Nelson, M.R., "Recall of Brand Placements in Computer/Video Games," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 42, 80-92, (2002).

187. Also see Petty, R.E. & Briñol, P. (2010).

These messages focused on five primary points:

1. We are here in your village/town at the request of your government to help your brave Afghan National Security Forces to make the area safer, more secure, and increase prosperity for the people.
2. We are here in partnership with your Afghan security forces. Together, we can improve peace and prosperity for your town.
3. We seek your assistance in identifying those who are seeking to destroy your government and keep you in fear. The sooner we can identify these enemies of Afghanistan, the sooner we can remove them from your village.
4. Coalition forces have no intention to stay in your village permanently. We will stay long enough to ensure security and will leave when your own security forces can maintain this security on their own.
5. We look upon you as a friend. We have left our family to assist you, just as we would for any friend.

These efforts were paired with more peripheral efforts delivered via posters, picture-laden leaflets, and anything else that could help get a simple and quick message to the locals that would support the more central messaging noted above.

Of course, the Taliban engaged in their own brand of information warfare. They constantly spread rumors that the Marines were preparing to leave the area soon, abandoning the locals to the Taliban. The Taliban also commonly used threatening letters and phone calls to coerce the locals into avoiding working with the Marines.

Ultimately, the combination of a strong information campaign that mixed central and peripheral approaches to attitude change brought the locals into the fold. Over time, shops began to reopen, IED attacks decreased, and a sense of normalcy returned to Nawa.[188]

Conclusion

At first glance peripheral thinking may seem the easiest target for counterinsurgents because there are so many message characteristics to manipulate, often with minimal effort. But social psychological research tells us that this persuasion approach often works better with an unmotivated audience; counterinsurgents rarely face an unmotivated audience. Furthermore, attitudes formed via the peripheral route are often short-lived. In the COIN environment, the goal is typically to create strong attitudes, or change deeply held ones, thus engaging the audience on the central route is critical. COIN practitioners can use the work of social psychologists to craft persuasive messages and to anticipate efforts at resistance.

188. Meyerle, J., Katt, M. & Gavrilis, J., *On the Ground in Afghanistan: Counterinsurgency in Practice,* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2012).

Checklist for Operators

Select an attitude object (person, object, idea) for the persuasive messaging.

1. If religious/political attitudes are targeted:
   a. Ambivalent attitudes may be the best case result of persuasive messaging.
   b. Anticipate confirmation bias by presenting the message in multiple formats and media that are difficult to avoid.
   c. Avoid the use of "must" statements, which elicit psychological reactance.

Identify the target of your persuasive message.

1. Is the target motivated to think about the message? Motivation is likely high if the message addresses an attitude of importance to the target.
   a. If yes, the target is motivated, pursue persuasion via the ELM central route. Successful attitude formation or change is likely to be more permanent and impact behaviors.
   b. If no, the target is unmotivated, pursue persuasion via the ELM peripheral route **OR**
   c. Shift the target to the central route by:
      - Establishing message relevance
      - Reducing distractions when the message is presented.

      Successful attitude formation or change via the peripheral route is likely to be short lived and usually has less impact on actual behavior.

Select a messenger.

1. The messenger should typically be seen as an expert:
   a. Emphasize messenger trustworthiness.
   b. If possible, select an attractive messenger. Though be mindful of what constitutes attractiveness in the culture you are operating in.

Design the message.

1. If utilizing the central route of the ELM:
   a. Select strong arguments and provide good evidence.
2. If utilizing the peripheral route of the ELM:
   a. Include multiple arguments.
   b. Keep the message as concise as possible.
3. When fear appeals are part of a message strategy, the message must also contain a solution.

Deliver the message.

1. To lower the target's defenses against persuasion:
   a. Deliver messages suddenly and simultaneously to all targets to avoid "forewarning."
   b. Utilize "overheard" methods of message delivery.

6

Driving Behavioral Outcomes: The Theory of Planned Behavior

This manual provides the counterinsurgent with research-backed social psychological approaches to improve the likelihood of mission success. Understanding the conceptual cultural ideas of individualism and collectivism, how to build trust, change attitudes, and influence people can help counterinsurgents in their efforts to win over locals. Each chapter has implicitly assumed that the factors discussed are important to the extent that they encourage locals to behave in ways that facilitate counterinsurgent goals. This chapter is an explicit integration of the core elements of the preceding chapters into a roadmap for generating behavior.

The chapter begins with a description of the Theory of Planned Behavior, a social psychological model that provides good explanatory and predictive power for behavior generation. The chapter describes how the other concepts from this manual fit within the Theory of Planned Behavior[189] to form a system that can help counterinsurgents drive the kinds of behavioral outcomes they are striving for.

The Theory of Planned Behavior

Figure 18 provides a simplified visualization of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). In essence, the model states that three factors: control, attitudes, and norms combine to cause behavioral intentions, and these intentions ultimately produce behavior. This model is summed up by the pneumonic "CAN I Behave."[190] Each element of the model is detailed below.

Control (C)

The first factor that impacts behavioral intent is "control" (the "C" in CAN). This factor refers to a person's belief that he or she has the ability to impact a situation successfully. For example, a young woman might be trying to determine if she should attempt to become a Naval aviator. She senses that she can handle the Aviation Selection Test Battery (ASTB), the pre-selection test that all potential Naval aviators must take to determine their fitness for the job; after all, she was

189. Ajzen, I., "The Theory of Planned Behavior," In *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology,* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012).

190. Belding, J., *Khan Academy Video 2--Theory of Planned Behavior,* YouTube (2013, June 14). Retrieved April 16, 2014, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNcIEIQTBlE.

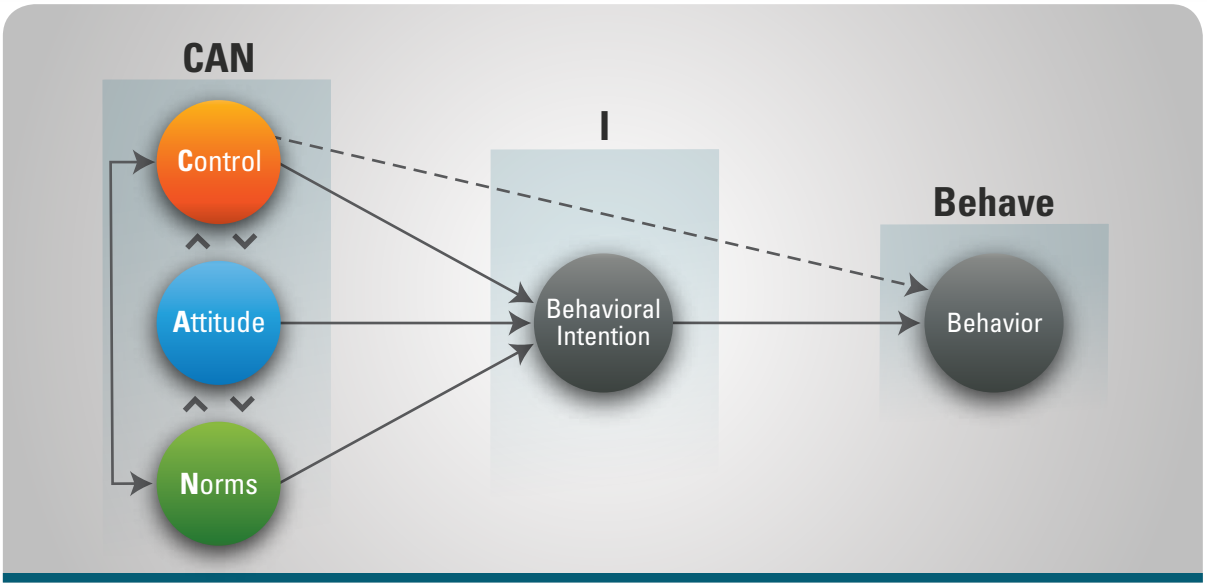


Figure 18. Simplified Depiction of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior

tremendously successful in her Engineering major. Likewise, she's not overly worried about her ability to complete flight school since her Engineering major focused on aviation. However, she is uncertain about her ability to get through Officer Candidate School (OCS). She has never been an athlete, and is routinely disorganized. Will the rigidity of OCS drill instructors be too much for her to handle? In this case, she has a mixed, though cautiously optimistic, sense of control over whether she can successfully become a Naval aviator. This overall sense of her control over the desired outcome will impact her behavioral intention – her attempt to become a Naval aviator.

From a TPB perspective, the more control a person feels he or she has over a goal outcome, the more likely he or she is to form a behavioral intention – and ultimately act. It is important to point out that just because a person believes he or she has control over a situation does not necessarily mean that the belief is accurate. A person might well believe that a situation is firmly in hand but actually have little control over the situation. Consider the aspiring Naval aviator described above. Part of her sense of control is due to the belief that her Engineering major, with a focus in Aviation, prepared her for the ASTB. What she may not control are events of the test day, including her state of rest, the possibility of illness, and other distractions during the examination. (Actual control is denoted by the dotted line in Figure 18.)

Attitudes (A)

The second factor that impacts behavioral intent is "attitudes" (the "A" in CAN). An attitude, as discussed in Chapter 5, refers to a person's general positive or negative evaluation of the matter/object/topic at hand, or the person's attitude toward the behavior in question.[191] Whether a person

191. Ajzen, I., "The Theory of Planned Behavior," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes,* 50, 179-211, (1991).

has a positive or negative attitude about some behavior or topic should clearly affect behavioral intentions. Attitudes toward a behavior are shaped by the different possible outcomes of that behavior, whether good or bad, and their respective likelihood of occurring.[192]

Our aspiring Naval aviator likely has a very positive attitude about the behavior in question: becoming a Naval aviator. This attitude is shaped by possible outcomes of becoming an aviator, including making a good living and making family and friends proud, but, also engaging in a dangerous career. Some of these outcomes are positive (good living, pride of loved ones) and some are negative (danger), and some are more likely than others. If she judges the positive factors as very likely, and the negative factors as less likely, then her overall attitude will be shaped to the positive, and her behavioral intention to pursue the Naval aviator career is strengthened.

Norms (N)

The final factor that impacts behavioral intent is "norms" (the "N" in CAN). Norms are a person's sense of whether others, especially close others, are generally supportive of the behavior in question. As one research team put it, the norms element of the TPB essentially answers the question, "Do most people who are important to me think I should or should not do X?"[193] In the case of the prospective Naval aviator, are her family, close friends, or admired mentors supportive of her possible decisions? Are any of her close, important others actually Naval personnel, or perhaps even pilots? If so, then there is a strong chance that the supportive norms of others around her will form her behavioral intent. Of course, if no one around her supports her thinking on becoming an aviator, her behavioral intent toward that goal will diminish.

When a person weights norms in the behavioral intention process, he or she considers what important others want, and just how important those others actually are. The aspiring Naval aviator might consider her mother's opinion (very important person, very supportive of the behavior), her boyfriend's opinion (very important person, very against the behavior), and her undergraduate mentor's opinion (somewhat important person, very supportive of the behavior), among others. More important people are obviously weighted more heavily in the decision-making process than are less important people.

Intentions and Behavior

The TPB suggests that control, attitudes, and norms combine to produce behavioral intentions.[194] An intention (the "I" in CAN I Behave) is essentially a way of indicating motivation. A stronger

192. Ibid.

193. Webb, T. & Sheeran, P., "Does Changing Behavioral Intentions Engender Behavior Change? A Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence," *Psychological Bulletin*, 132, 249-268, (2006).

194. See the appendix for more detail on how each CAN factor is weighted.

behavioral intention indicates a willingness to exert effort. The stronger the intention to behave, the more likely it is that the behavior will actually take place. Intentions essentially "capture motivational factors that influence a behavior; they are indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior. As a general rule, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance."[195] Each CAN factor – control, attitudes, and norms – is a critical predictor of the kinds of behaviors counterinsurgents are aiming for, but it is the fusion of these factors into behavioral intention that ultimately drives behavior.

Integrating Models, Theories and Principles

The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the content of the prior chapters into an overarching model of human behavior. The TPB will serve as the overarching model, and in the rest of this chapter we indicate how the theories and ideas described earlier in this manual fit within the TPB. Specifically, we revisit each of the CAN (control, attitudes, norms) factors and show how the models and principles described previously in this manual drive the CAN factors. This integration will enable COIN operators to better understand, predict, and, eventually, drive behavior.

Control

Perceptions of control – the belief that one can act in or on a situation to achieve one's goals – is a critical driver of behavioral intentions both in individualist and collectivist cultures.[196] It is the *degree* to which people believe they have control over their environment that differs systematically across individualist and collectivist cultures.

As detailed in Chapter 2, people from individualist cultures see the self as a stable entity – a unit that stays constant over time and from situation to situation. When a change is desired, people from an individualist culture are likely to take action, attempting to shape others and the environment, to bring about the desired change. This point is nicely captured in a campaign statement made by then Senator Barack Obama: "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for, we are the change we seek."[197] This quote is a useful glimpse into Western individualist thinking. If a person wants change, he or she has the power to shape events.

On the other hand, people from collectivist cultures tend to see themselves as flexible, and the world around them as stable and enduring. Often, when people from collectivist cultures want change

195. Ajzen, I., "The Theory of Planned Behavior," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes,* 50, 179-211, (1991).

196. Chaisamrej, R., *The Integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior, Altruism, and Self-Construal: Implications for Designing Recycling Campaigns in Individualist and Collectivist Societies,* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Doctoral Dissertations, 2006).

197. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/06/AR2008020600199.html

they try to get it by shaping and changing themselves rather than the world around them.[198] [199]

The TPB model suggests that a sense of control predicts behavioral intention and subsequent action. Knowing that control beliefs differ between collectivist and individualist cultures, we can speculate that behavioral intentions may also differ between cultures. Specifically, if control over one's own behavior is critical to the behavioral intention and subsequent action, collectivists should be more likely to act. But if control over the behavior of others, or control of the environment, is critical to the behavioral intention and subsequent action, individualists should be more likely to act. In the ongoing example of the aspiring Naval aviator, the behaviors required focus on self-shaping. Our future aviator must physically prepare for the fitness tests and mentally prepare for the ASTB. When enrolled in OCS, the onus is on the individual to obey, conform, and generally mold the self to the demands of the drill instructors. In sum, the collectivist is likely to feel considerable control over the events needed for the behavior of becoming a Naval aviator. The individualist, on the other hand, may feel less in control because the environment of the tests and the personnel at OCS cannot be shaped to personal needs. In sum, because of the ways in which control can be allocated in this particular scenario, we can predict that a collectivist person would be just as likely, if not more likely, to act, than an individualist person.[200]

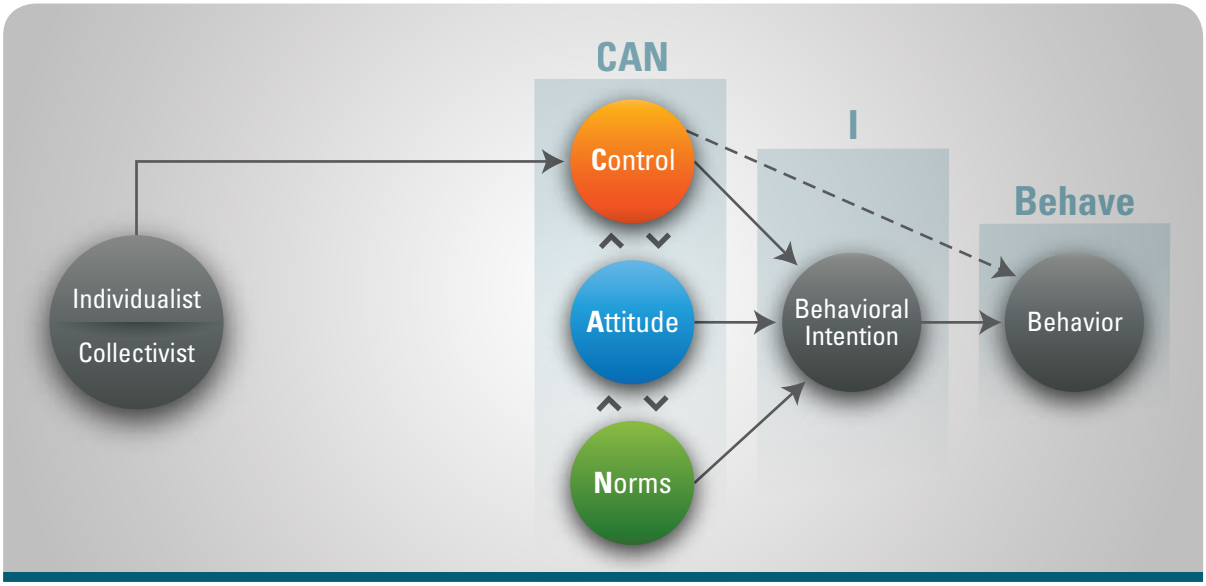


Figure 19. Individualism and Collectivism Within the Theory of Planned Behavior

198. Markus, H. & Kitayama, S., "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation," *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253, (1991).

199. Weisz, J. R., Rothbaum, F. M. & Blackburn, T. C., "Standing Out and Standing In: The Psychology of Control in America and Japan," *American Psychologist*, 39, 955-969, (1984).

200. Ibid.

COIN operators should be especially attuned to this point when they work to shape the behavior of local populations. Results from a TPB research project in Thailand (collectivist culture), suggest that information campaigns in collectivist nations should be especially careful to find ways to enhance the target's sense of control over events. Behavior consistent with counterinsurgent aims will be hard to produce if locals do not feel a sense of control over the outcomes they seek.[201]

Attitudes

A person's attitudes—their positive or negative evaluations of a behavior—are a second critical predictor of behavioral intention. Attitudes are probably shaped heavily by the factors described in Chapter 5 on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). These ELM factors, in turn, are modified by individualism and collectivism factors.

Chapter 5 detailed the ELM as a model of persuasion and attitude change. The ELM assumes that when people encounter a message (TV, radio, print media, etc.) they think about that message in one of two ways. The first is an effortful "central" approach in which a person is highly motivated and therefore thinks carefully about the message in an effort to reach a detailed, thoughtful conclusion. The second is a less effortful "peripheral" approach in which a person is either unmotivated or unable to pay attention to a message and is instead influenced by the messages' surface level qualities.

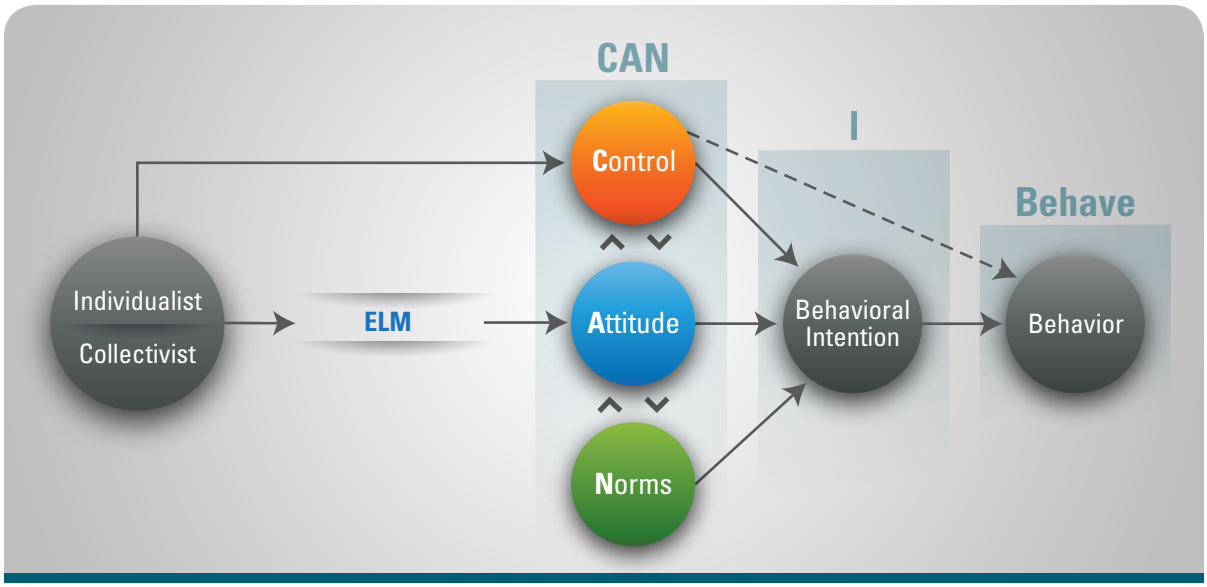


Figure 20. The Elaboration Likelihood Model Within the Theory of Planned Behavior

201. Chaisamrej, R., *The Integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior, Altruism, and Self-Construal: Implications for Designing Recycling Campaigns in Individualist and Collectivist Societies,* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Doctoral Dissertations, 2006).

ELM (fully detailed in Chapter 5) explains how people process persuasive messages and how those messages are ultimately formed into attitudes. Preliminary results from cross-cultural studies suggest that people from individualist and collectivist cultures use both central and peripheral approaches when thinking over messages, with some distinctions.[202] For individualists, strong arguments are probably the main driver of attitude change when people are thinking centrally, as the ELM predicts. For collectivists, thinking centrally includes processing argument details, but, even when collectivist people are using the high effort, central style processing to think over a persuasive message, the opinions of other people matter a great deal. For collectivists, the perspectives of other people are often just as important as strong arguments in a message because the cultural idea of collectivism emphasizes harmony and prioritizing the perspectives of others.[203] Differences between cultures might also occur on the peripheral route. Chapter 2 discussed the research findings that people from collectivist cultures tend to see more background information in media such as pictures and video. If this is the case, then collectivists who are thinking peripherally might be more aware of, and absorbed in, the surface qualities of the message. This particular possibility has not been formally tested to our knowledge.

Norms

Though from the TPB perspective norms usually refer to standards derived from considering the perspective of close others, we believe the norm concept can and should be expanded to incorporate a broader range of norms that, as discussed in Chapter 4, have been demonstrated to have a major impact on human behavior. Norms – a person's sense of whether others, especially close others, are generally supportive (or not) of the behavior in question – are the third and final factor impacting behavioral intentions. In addition to the ways in which the attitudes of close others serve as norms, Chapter 4 described additional norm types (social proof, descriptive, prescriptive) that fit nicely within the TPB norms concept. The principle of social proof states that people are "more willing to comply with a request for behavior if it is consistent with what similar others are thinking or doing."[204] As detailed, this principle tends to function most when a situation is ambiguous and a person wants to know how he or she stacks up against others. Descriptive norms are norms that provide a person with a description of *what is normal* in a certain context. Prescriptive norms on the other hand, provide people with a sense of what *ought to be done* in a certain situation (see Chapter 4 for more details). [205]

---

202. Aaker, J. L. & Maheswaran, D., "The Effect of Cultural Orientation on Persuasion," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24, 315-328, (2000).

203. Ibid.

204. Cialdini, R. B. (1995).

205. Cialdini, R., Reno, R., & Kallgren, C., "A Focus Theory of Normative Conduct: Recycling the Concept of Norms to Reduce Littering in Public Places," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1015-1026, (1990).

As might be expected, norms may impact behavioral intentions differently in individualist cultures compared to collectivist cultures. Chapter 2 described the ties between people in individualist cultures as loose; people mostly look out for themselves and for close family. Correspondingly, a person's thoughts, feelings, motivations, and behaviors are often focused on individual advancement. In collectivist cultures, people are, from their birth onward, "integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout peoples' lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty."[206] Collectivist societies emphasize self-sacrifice for in-group members.[207] Given these cultural differences, within the TPB framework the influence on behavioral intentions of group pressures (as captured by norms), compared to control and attitudes, may be especially strong for members of collectivist cultures.[208] As noted in Chapter 4, several research teams have demonstrated that the perspectives of others tend to play a greater role in driving behavior in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures. Norms impact behavior. Counterinsurgents should be mindful of these factors.

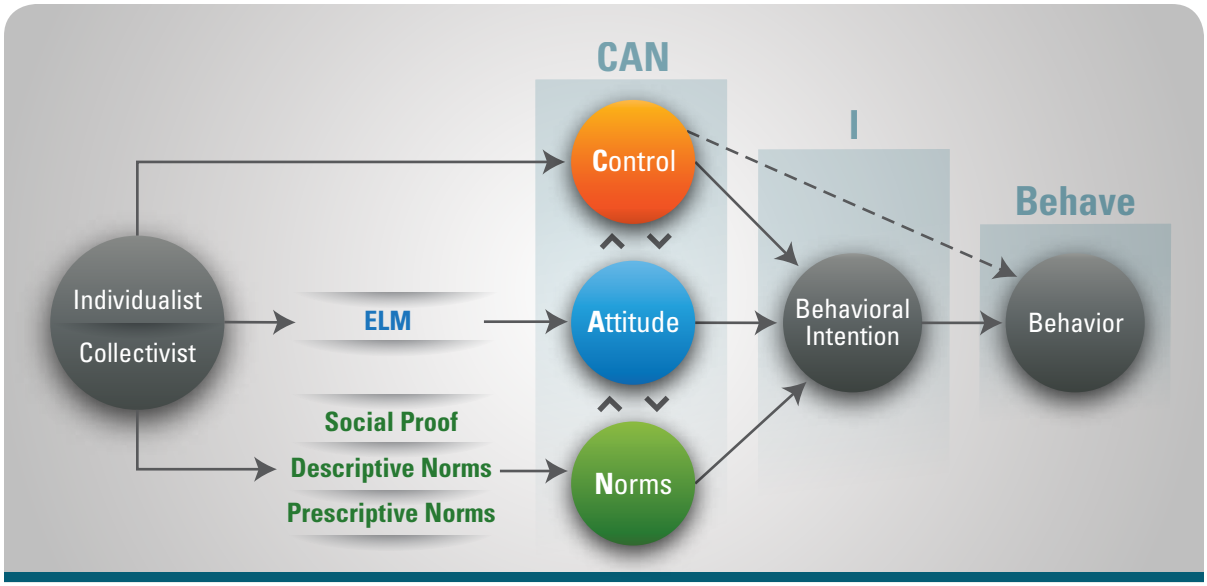


Figure 21. Social Influence Within the Theory of Planned Behavior

Trust in TPB

To this point, we have integrated large portions of each preceding chapter (culture, attitudes, social influence) into the TPB model. How does trust, described in Chapter 3, fit in the TPB? True to its importance, trust is not limited to just one segment of the TPB; it is a pervasive element of both the attitudes and norms factors.

206. Markus, H. & Kitayama, S. (1991).

207. Triandis, H. & Gelfand, M., "A Theory of Individualism and Collectivism," In *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology,* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012).

208. Bond, R. & Smith, P.B., *Psychological Bulletin*, 119, 111-137, (1996).

Multiple research projects in individualist nations indicate that trust plays a critical role in attitude formation and change. For example, one research project found that in a highly charged political environment (one where motivation is high and thus the central route of persuasion is activated) increased trust helped political leaders to generate more political support – even from people who were not of the same political party.[209] Trust also helps when people are processing on the ELM's peripheral route (see Chapter 5). A highly trustworthy persuader can "engender a relatively non-thoughtful acceptance"[210] of a message. Of course, in collectivist nations, a person's trustworthiness can vary from situation to situation, rendering trustworthiness a less reliable, but still important, predictor of attitude change for collectivists.

When people move through the TPB framework on their way to forming behavioral intentions, the norm factor entails evaluation of the perspectives of others and the degree to which one desires to please those others. It is likely that the perspectives of trusted individuals carry more weight than the perspectives of non-trusted or unknown others. For collectivists, trusted individuals are probably in-group members. And, as we have noted, the perspectives of in-group members are critical in shaping the behaviors of collectivists.

Conclusion

In the social sciences, the Theory of Planned Behavior is an important model for predicting human behavior. This chapter presented a simplified version of that model, represented by the pneumonic "Can I Behave?" The word "can" refers to three factors (control, attitudes, and norms) that drive the generation of behavioral intentions and ultimately behavior. The counterinsurgent hopes to encourage members of a local population to behave in certain ways. The Theory of Planned Behavior integrates the social psychology of attitudes, influence, trust, and culture discussed in the preceding chapters to provide the counterinsurgent with a road map for obtaining desired behaviors from the population. The Theory of Planned Behavior also provides researchers with a roadmap for the next stages of DoD human social cultural research.

209. Combs, D.J.Y., & Keller, P.S., (2010). Politicians and Trustworthiness: Acting contrary to self interest enhances trustworthiness. *Basic and applied social psychology*, 32, 4. p 328-339.

210. Priester, J.R., & Petty, R.E. (2003). The Influence of Spokesperson Trustworthiness on Message Elaboration, Attitude Strength, and advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13, 4, 408-421.

Photo Credit | U.S. Marine Corps by Cpl. Artur Shvartsberg

Checklist for Operators

When trying to change behavior, remember the acronym "CAN I Behave". Perceptions of control, attitudes, and norms drive behavioral intentions and ultimately behavior.

It is critical that you make inroads on all three elements of the TPB model: control, attitudes, and norms. These efforts can be prioritized and tailored using the checklist below.

Determine which cultural framework-individualism or collectivism- is more dominant in the area where you are operating.

1. In a collectivistic culture:
   a. Norms will drive behavior more than attitudes.
   b. Control will drive behavior, but more so when control over self is required.
2. In an individualist culture:
   a. Attitudes will drive behavior more than norms.
   b. Control will drive behavior, but more so when control over others and the environment is required.

Photo Credit | U.S. Marine Corps by Lance Cpl. Megan Sindelar

Checklist for Operators

Select the model element of focus.

1. "C" Control:
   a. Identify actors who actually have control over behavior.
      - Ex. In certain communities, women may not have the same degree of control over their own choices and behaviors.
   b. Remove obstacles to personal control.
      - Remember, YOU may be the obstacle!
      - Ex. Solicit regular feedback from community members and encourage participation in community projects.
2. "A" Attitudes:
   a. Generate new attitudes (or change existing attitudes) toward the desired behavior.
   b. See Chapter 5 for additional information on attitude formation and change.
3. "N" Norms:
   a. Gather information on the relevant norms; these are often culture-specific.
      - If existing norms support the desired behavior.
        - Draw attention to these norms.
      - If existing norms are counter to the desired behavior.
        - Challenge the source of the norm.
          OR
        - Identify and promote successful models of counter-normativity.
          Ex. If cooperation with COIN personnel is counter-normative, use as a spokesperson someone who has successfully (which could mean *safely*) cooperated.
        - See Chapter 4 for additional ideas for influence via norms.

*A person may have control beliefs (C) and a positive attitude (A), but if other people, particularly close others, do not support the person's action, behavior may not occur.

What is the level of trust between you and the target person(s)?

1. Trust levels are critical for shaping attitudes and norms.

7

The Road Forward

In this manual we described several major, empirically validated, social psychological theories and their relevance to the COIN battlefield. Consuming this manual appreciably advances the counterinsurgent's cross-cultural social psychological expertise.

Although existing social psychological research can be extremely helpful to counterinsurgents, the research remains limited in critical ways. In particular, most social psychology research takes place in university laboratories in the western (individualist) world. Where cross-cultural research is available, it almost invariably comes from university laboratories in the Pacific Rim (collectivist cultures, but largely "Confucian" collectivism). Limited examples come from Eastern Europe (*e.g.*, Poland) and even fewer come from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and other representatives of "honor" collectivism. Roughly 68% of all social psychological test participants come from American university populations, and fully 96% of all social psychology test participants come from individualist nations[211]. To the extent that the larger field relies on these populations to examine theories of human behavior, our efforts to describe applications of social psychology for the counterinsurgent must also rely on, and be limited by, the peculiarities of persons from western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies.[212]

In an effort to enhance the applicability of social psychological research to counterinsurgency, we have endeavored to focus our discussion on research that includes tests from both individualist and collectivist (non-WEIRD) participants. To enhance the effectiveness of future editions of this manual, more research is needed in and among populations of relevance to counterinsurgents. This final chapter outlines our thinking, in broad strokes, about just such a research program. We begin with a discussion of additional cultural conceptual ideas that require both global mapping as to their patterns of occurrence, and explicit testing as to their impact on the individual and interaction levels of the culture cycle. Next, we review a series of research methodologies that could be applied to the topic of COIN applications in social psychology. We give special emphasis to the power of experiments, particularly a field-based variant known as randomized control trials, to answer three key COIN-relevant questions: What works? Why does it work? How much will it cost?

---

211. Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A., "The Weirdest People In The World?," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, 61-83, (2010).

212. Ibid.

Finally, we speculate on the productive fusion of social psychology and technology with the help of several recent outputs of the OSD Human Social Culture Behavior (HSCB) modeling program. By the end of this chapter, we hope that the reader will appreciate the immense value of COIN, an as of yet unrealized partnership between social psychology research and the DoD.

Mapping the World

In Chapter 2; we discussed the individualism-collectivism distinction that Geert Hofstede identified in his famous IBM study. Since his original project, carried out in the 1960s and 1970s, other research teams have replicated and extended his project with big studies of cultural conceptual ideas. Between 1990 and 2002, six major studies (as well as many small-scale projects) examined dimensions of culture (in at minimum, 14 nations per study), generally replicating Hofstede's findings.[213]

As useful as these projects are for understanding cultural conceptual ideas, their applicability for the counterinsurgent are limited in two significant ways. First, even the most recent findings, published in 2002, are based on data collected principally in the 1990s, before the events of September 11, 2001, the Global War on Terror, and the mass adoption of Internet and smart phone technologies. Theoretically, such major changes in global society could produce unanticipated changes in cultures.

Second, none of the studies used a nationally representative sample of test participants.[214] Hofstede used IBM employees; other researchers used airline pilots, bank employees, product consumers, students, and "elites."[215] Although these participants can be expected to share many of the values of the larger culture in which they have been raised and socialized (the fact that the studies cited provide similar results bolsters our confidence that the results are globally generalizable), they nonetheless represent a certain subset of their culture. In fact, most of these participants could be labeled WEIRD to the degree that they are educated, employed, and have expendable income. We would not necessarily expect that representative samples would completely re-categorize a country, from individualist to collectivist for example, but we might see meaningful shifts on the continuum. Furthermore, given the gravity and importance of these concepts, "feeling confident" about cultural classifications based on dated and non-representative data is not enough. Using nationally representative samples to map the current global patterns of cultural conceptual ideas will provide counterinsurgents, diplomats, the intelligence community (IC), private industry, etc., with an unprecedented level of cultural perspective. In addition, such research could identify subnational nuances (*e.g.,* those with a post-secondary education and

213. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J. & Minkov, M., *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival* (3. ed.), (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, 2010).

214. Some nationally representative surveys, such as the World Values Survey and the Globe Study, do indeed use nationally representative samples to get at the Hofstede concepts. Both are helpful in this regard and should be thoroughly leveraged before new research is undertaken. However, generating new research that is explicitly designed to both examine Hofstede's concepts and their interaction with the kinds of social psychological models we describe will be absolutely critical.

215. see Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010.

white collar jobs versus those with primary education and agrarian employment) in the big cultural conceptual ideas that are, with our present knowledge, invisible or ignored.

Additional Hofstede Factors

As explained in Chapter 2, this manual focused on the possible impacts of the "individualism-collectivism" cultural conceptual idea on the social psychological models described in each chapter; however, Hofstede's original work with IBM employees identified three additional cultural conceptual ideas ("Power Distance," "Uncertainty Avoidance," and "Masculinity-Femininity"), each of which is likely to affect the ways in which social psychological theories actually work.[216] These other three cultural conceptual ideas have not yet received the same amount of empirical attention by social psychologists as individualism-collectivism and the related idea of independent-interdependent self-concepts (see Chapter 2).[217] Not only do these topics need to be mapped globally, their impact on the social psychological models mentioned in this manual (and other models not mentioned) is also an open question in need of systematic, empirical research. Below we offer a brief description of Hofstede's other three dimensions, along with some speculation (research-based where possible) as to the potential for these dimensions to interact with attitude change, influence attempts, trust building, and other COIN relevant social psychology. These speculations could serve as initiation points for a research program.[218]

Power Distance

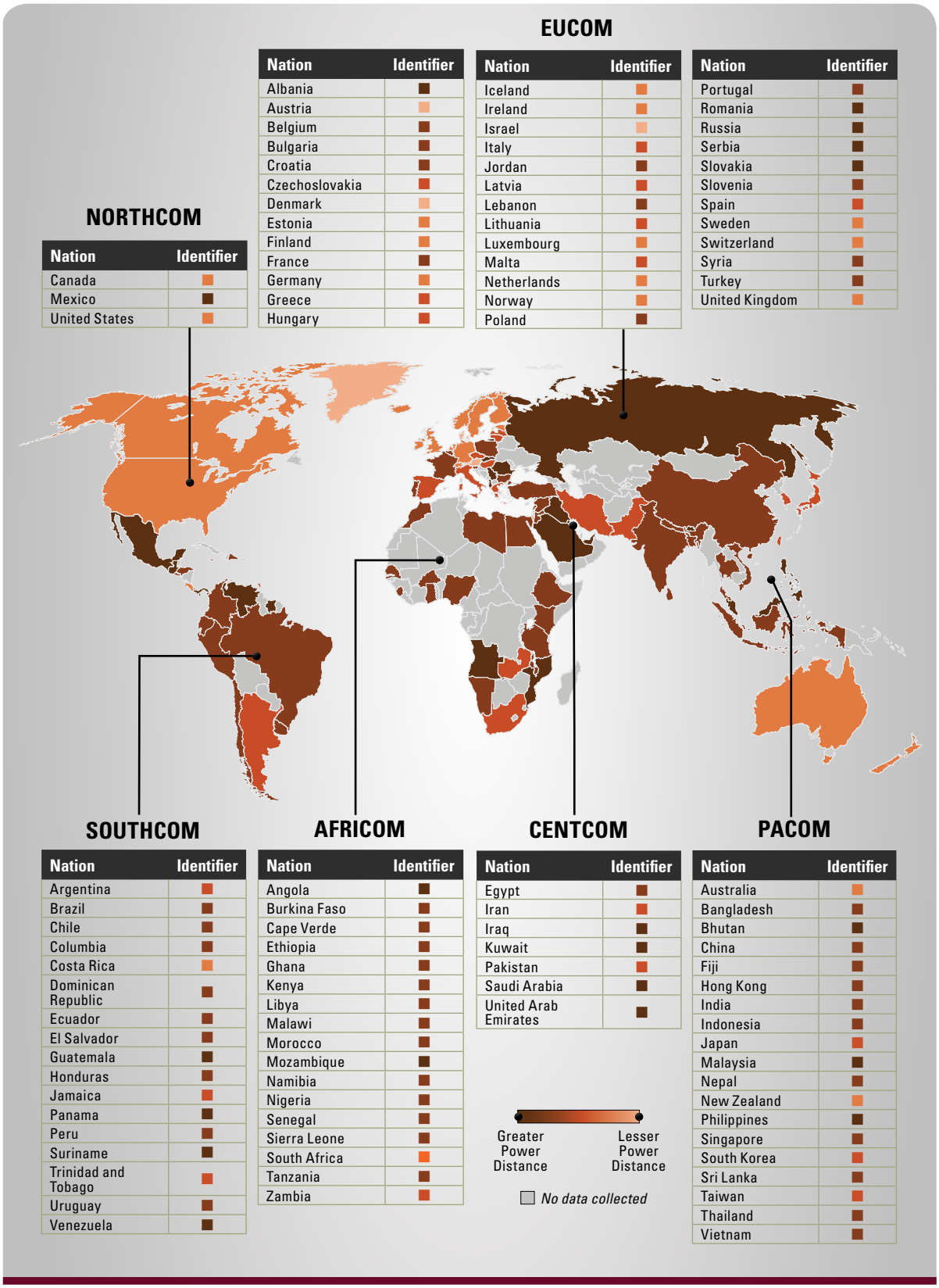
Power distance refers to "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally." Nations that score higher on this concept tend to expect and accept that some people are powerful and others are not. Nations that score lower on this measure tend to expect and accept that power will be more evenly distributed among people. In countries such as Iraq, which scores high on the power distance dimension (twice as high as the United States, in fact), people generally see the hierarchy as reflective of inherent inequalities; thus, the hierarchy is accepted with no further justification needed for one's place.

Power distance can affect the individual and interaction levels of the culture cycle. For example, people from higher power distance nations are less likely to confront authority figures or voice disagreement than are people from lower power distance nations. Not only does this mean that members of high power distance countries may hesitate to question or challenge the opinions or decisions of an authority, it also means that the authority's power will be considered stable and deserved. These

216. Ibid. For ease of referencing, please note that the section on additional Hofstede factors is based on Hofstede's book noted in this reference. Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M., *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival* (3. ed.), (Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, 2010).

217. Heine, S., "Cultural Psychology," In *Advanced Social Psychology: The State of the Science*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

218. Ibid.



NORTHCOM	
Nation	Identifier
Canada	
Mexico	
United States	

EUCOM	
Nation	Identifier
Albania	
Austria	
Belgium	
Bulgaria	
Croatia	
Czechoslovakia	
Denmark	
Estonia	
Finland	
France	
Germany	
Greece	
Hungary	
Iceland	
Ireland	
Israel	
Italy	
Jordan	
Latvia	
Lebanon	
Lithuania	
Luxembourg	
Malta	
Netherlands	
Norway	
Poland	
Portugal	
Romania	
Russia	
Serbia	
Slovakia	
Slovenia	
Spain	
Sweden	
Switzerland	
Syria	
Turkey	
United Kingdom	

SOUTHCOM	
Nation	Identifier
Argentina	
Brazil	
Chile	
Columbia	
Costa Rica	
Dominican Republic	
Ecuador	
El Salvador	
Guatemala	
Honduras	
Jamaica	
Panama	
Peru	
Suriname	
Trinidad and Tobago	
Uruguay	
Venezuela	

AFRICOM	
Nation	Identifier
Angola	
Burkina Faso	
Cape Verde	
Ethiopia	
Ghana	
Kenya	
Libya	
Malawi	
Morocco	
Mozambique	
Namibia	
Nigeria	
Senegal	
Sierra Leone	
South Africa	
Tanzania	
Zambia	

CENTCOM	
Nation	Identifier
Egypt	
Iran	
Iraq	
Kuwait	
Pakistan	
Saudi Arabia	
United Arab Emirates	

PACOM	
Nation	Identifier
Australia	
Bangladesh	
Bhutan	
China	
Fiji	
Hong Kong	
India	
Indonesia	
Japan	
Malaysia	
Nepal	
New Zealand	
Philippines	
Singapore	
South Korea	
Sri Lanka	
Taiwan	
Thailand	
Vietnam	

Note: Data used to construct this map can be found at: http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html; additional perspective and scores can be found in: Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010.

Figure 22. Power Distance Around the World

effects of a culture's orientation on the power distance cultural conceptual idea is important for the COIN operator to understand given the power of authority as an influence principle (see Chapter 4).

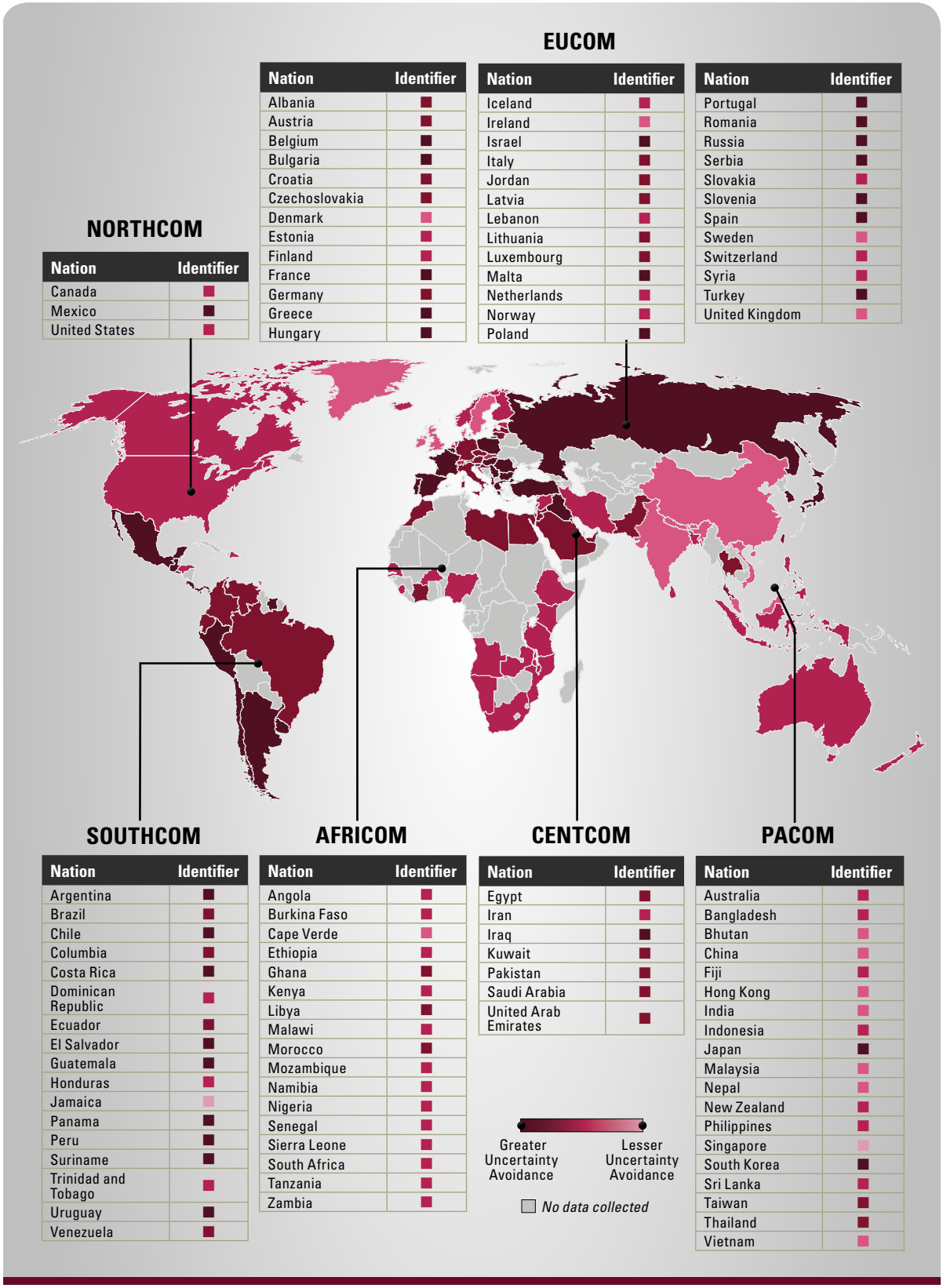
The COIN operator should not expect to upend existing hierarchies and bring about sudden and drastic shifts into egalitarian beliefs and practices; nor should the COIN operator imagine that popular support can be easily rallied in opposition to an established authority.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Because the future can never be known, there is a degree of ambiguity surrounding existence. Such ambiguity can produce feelings of anxiety. Uncertainty avoidance refers to the extent to which members of a society feel threatened by ambiguity. It is important to understand that feeling threatened by ambiguity is not the same as feeling threatened by risk (though clearly the two can overlap). Rather, societies who dislike ambiguity may behave in risky ways in order to reduce uncertainty. Hofstede and his research team give an example of national railway systems to illustrate this point. They note that trains in Germany (a society that scores on the high end in uncertainty avoidance, meaning they are relatively intolerant of ambiguity) are extremely punctual. If a train is going to be late, there is usually an announcement to passengers that has overtones of substantial sorrow. On the other hand, the train stations in societies who are lower on uncertainty avoidance (such as the United States), might not even mention if a train is running a few minutes behind.[219] This example also illustrates an important point about the different cultural conceptual ideas. Knowing where a country stands on one of the dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism, may not be a reliable indicator of where the country stands on another dimension. Germany scores almost twice as high on the individualism-collectivism dimension (indicating more individualism) than Iraq, but Iraq is even higher on uncertainty avoidance than Germany (which is already higher than the United States).

Hofstede and his team report that societies high in uncertainty avoidance often have more concern about "truth" and less room for relativism or doubt (*e.g.,* in religious belief or moral stances). Students in high uncertainty avoidance societies tend to report disliking teachers who admit they "don't know" the answer to some question. On the other hand, students from low uncertainty avoidance societies report more respect for teachers who admit to not knowing something. Even advertising campaigns can differ in relation to uncertainty avoidance levels. Highly avoidant nations make more extensive use of experts (such as doctors) in advertisements; less avoidant nations are more likely to rely on humor in advertising. In Chapter 5 we discussed how the peripheral elements of a message can affect persuasion and noted the finding that the expertise of a celebrity product endorser was particularly effective for message campaigns among collectivists. Combining this research finding with the finding that experts are valued in high uncertainty avoidance nations, we see the potential for an expert

219. The first author of this manual lives in Washington, DC and can attest to this point.



Note: Data used to construct this map can be found at: http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html; additional perspective and scores can be found in: Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010.

Figure 23. Uncertainty Avoidance Around the World

spokesperson to be especially effective in cultures that are high on both collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. Without full information about a country's standing on all the major conceptual ideas, it is quite likely that a COIN operator will not be able to conduct psychological missions at optimum.

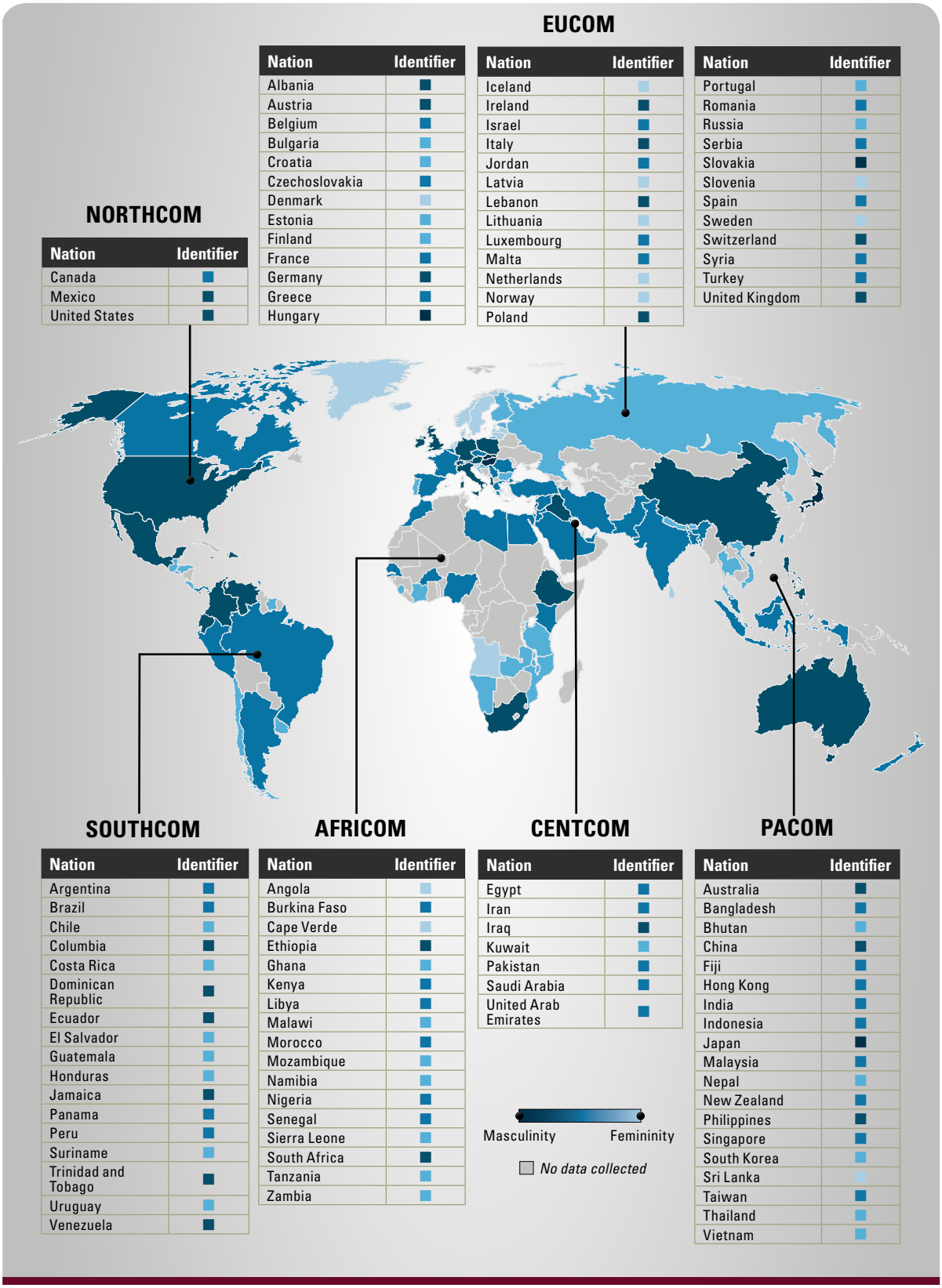
Masculinity-Femininity

The Masculinity-Femininity distinction is the most controversial of Hofstede's major cultural conceptual ideas. As a result, some researchers avoid measuring this dimension so as not to offend respondents, and the dimension has taken on a number of other names (*e.g.*, "quality of life-quantity of life" or "performance oriented-cooperation oriented"), with Hofstede himself recommending the use of labels with which researchers feel comfortable. The Masculinity end of this cultural dimension represents "a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive." In comparison, societies more representative of the femininity dimension will preference "cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented." Additionally, low Masculinity (*i.e.,* high Femininity) countries have more fluid sex roles. For example, equal shares of responsibility are given at home and work and both men and women are permitted to show tenderness and concern for relationships, even crying.

This is the only one of Hofstede's dimensions for which a systematic sex difference occurs. In other words, within a given society, such as the United States, researchers see a systematic difference on this dimension, with men scoring more toward the Masculinity end and women more toward the Femininity end. That being said, cultures still differ from one another on the dimension, such that across all members of the society (men and women together) certain cultures are more masculine than others. As an example, the United States scores quite high on Masculinity whereas the Netherlands scores as a strongly Feminine society.

Illustrative of this difference, Hofstede notes that Americans talk freely of their achievements and are motivated by the possibility of showing others just how successful they are. In comparison, the Dutch often define success quite differently, emphasizing a work-life balance. As with the other cultural conceptual ideas, Masculinity-Femininity is expected to influence all levels of the culture cycle. Hofstede and his team point out a study "that found distinct patterns of play when comparing the games of children in the U.S. to those of children in the Netherlands". In the U.S., male school children were more likely to choose games that allowed for competition and success, whereas female children were more likely to choose games that allowed them to enjoy each other's company. These game preferences did not emerge along male-female lines in the Netherlands.

One possible impact of a culture's Masculinity-Femininity emphasis on the work of a COIN operator is in the area of conflict resolution. As discussed in Chapter 2, collectivist cultures may be more inclined to resolve conflict through cooperation and problem-solving, but emerging evidence suggests that not all collectivist cultures are the same. Perhaps the Masculinity-Femininity dimension is a key piece of the puzzle. Among honor collectivists, fighting it out is a preferred conflict resolution strategy;



NORTHCOM	
Nation	Identifier
Canada	
Mexico	
United States	

EUCOM	
Nation	Identifier
Albania	
Austria	
Belgium	
Bulgaria	
Croatia	
Czechoslovakia	
Denmark	
Estonia	
Finland	
France	
Germany	
Greece	
Hungary	
Iceland	
Ireland	
Israel	
Italy	
Jordan	
Latvia	
Lebanon	
Lithuania	
Luxembourg	
Malta	
Netherlands	
Norway	
Poland	
Portugal	
Romania	
Russia	
Serbia	
Slovakia	
Slovenia	
Spain	
Sweden	
Switzerland	
Syria	
Turkey	
United Kingdom	

SOUTHCOM	
Nation	Identifier
Argentina	
Brazil	
Chile	
Columbia	
Costa Rica	
Dominican Republic	
Ecuador	
El Salvador	
Guatemala	
Honduras	
Jamaica	
Panama	
Peru	
Suriname	
Trinidad and Tobago	
Uruguay	
Venezuela	

AFRICOM	
Nation	Identifier
Angola	
Burkina Faso	
Cape Verde	
Ethiopia	
Ghana	
Kenya	
Libya	
Malawi	
Morocco	
Mozambique	
Namibia	
Nigeria	
Senegal	
Sierra Leone	
South Africa	
Tanzania	
Zambia	

CENTCOM	
Nation	Identifier
Egypt	
Iran	
Iraq	
Kuwait	
Pakistan	
Saudi Arabia	
United Arab Emirates	

PACOM	
Nation	Identifier
Australia	
Bangladesh	
Bhutan	
China	
Fiji	
Hong Kong	
India	
Indonesia	
Japan	
Malaysia	
Nepal	
New Zealand	
Philippines	
Singapore	
South Korea	
Sri Lanka	
Taiwan	
Thailand	
Vietnam	

Note: Data used to construct this map can be found at: http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html; additional perspective and scores can be found in: Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010.

Figure 24. Masculinity-Femininity Around the World

whereas, Confucian collectivists tend to prefer consensus building and prolonged discussion. Honor cultures, such as Iraq, also tend to be high on Masculinity. Here again we see the importance of assessing a country on more than one dimension and the need for COIN relevant social psychological models that simultaneously account for multiple cultural conceptual ideas.

Summary of Cultural Conceptual Ideas

Of Hofstede's original cultural conceptual ideas, individualism-collectivism has generated the largest amount of social psychological research, but there is reason (and some data, particularly from the organizational culture literature) to support the conclusion that power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity each have their own impact on the interaction and individual levels of the culture cycle. There is also evidence that national culture can be characterized by at least two additional dimensions.[220] Research emerging from the world values survey, which uses representative samples of national populations, identified a new dimension, Indulgence-Restraint, as well as replicated a dimension identified as Pragmatic-Normative. This latter dimension is labeled Pragmatic versus Normative.[221]

Countries with higher scores on the Indulgence dimension, such as the United States, allow their members to gratify basic human desires for fun and enjoyment with relatively little regulation or suppression. The oft-heard motto "Work hard to play hard" captures the attitudes and behavior of countries higher on Indulgence. In comparison, low Indulgence societies have strict norms that regulate or suppress gratification of needs. Iraq, which has one of the lowest global scores on Indulgence, is characterized by restraint, with little emphasis on leisure time and tendencies toward cynicism and pessimism.

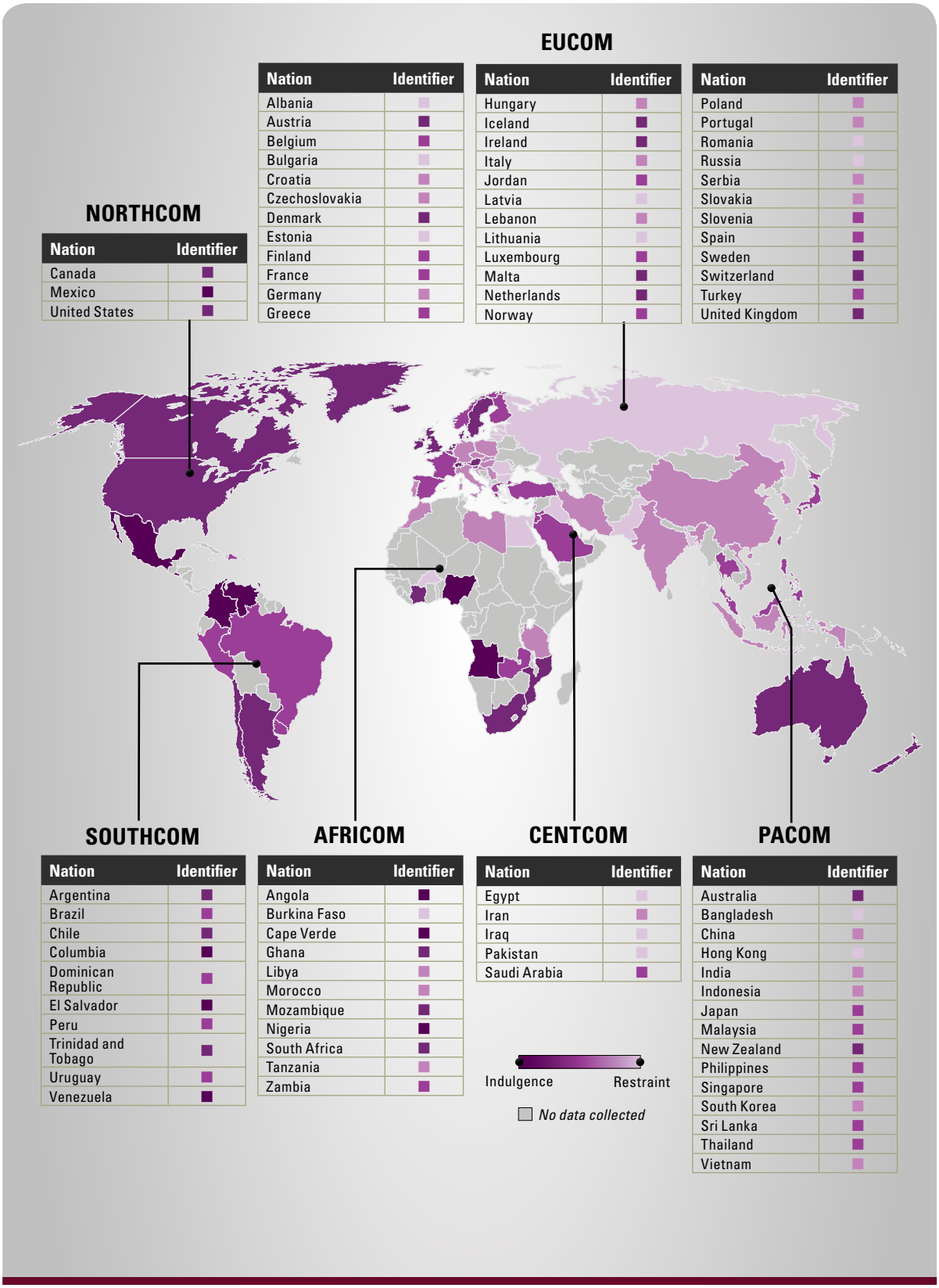
The Pragmatic-Normative dimension captures how a society prioritizes links with the past versus the challenges of the present and future (it has also been called the Long Term Orientation dimension). Low scoring (more normative) societies, such as the United States, have a preference for maintaining long-standing tradition and norms. Changes in society may be viewed with suspicion and society members are likely to have strong, defined views about what is "good," as evidenced by debates in the U.S. over such issues as abortion, drug use, and size of government. In comparison, high scorers (more pragmatic), such as Belgium, encourage preparation and adaptability. People tend to see the "good" as heavily dependent on context, and values such as perseverance and thrift are emphasized.

It is critical that these cultural conceptual ideas inform future research on the topics presented in this manual (trust generation, attitude change, social influence, etc.), and others beyond the manual's present scope. Until this research is carried out, the field of cross-cultural social psychology, especially as it relates to counterinsurgency, will be incomplete.

---

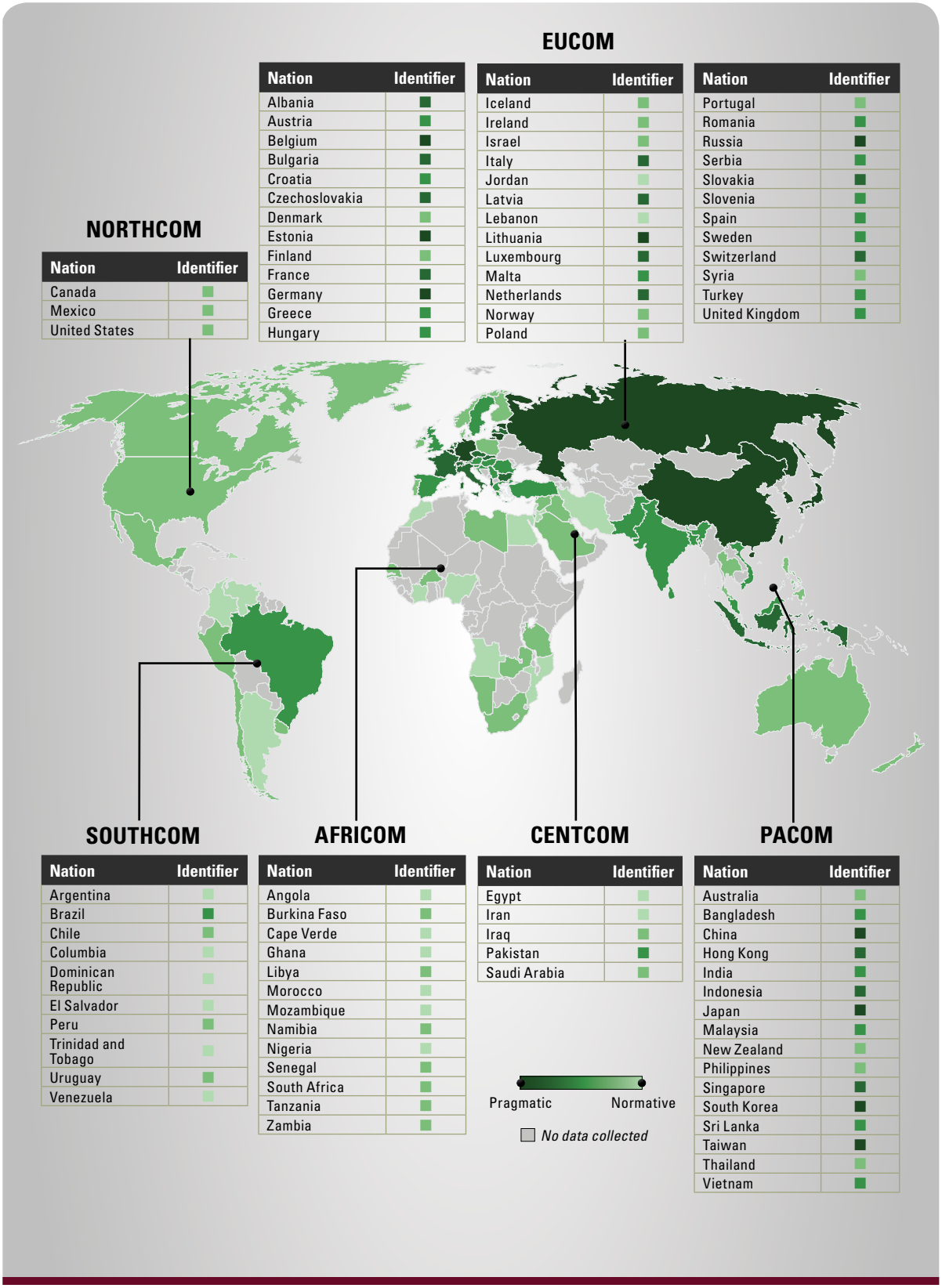
220. Descriptions of the Pragmatism and Indulgence dimensions of culture come from The Hofstede Centre, geert-hofstede.com.

221. http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html



Note: Data used to construct this map can be found at: http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html; additional perspective and scores can be found in: Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010.

Figure 25. Indulgence Around the World



Note: Data used to construct this map can be found at: http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html; additional perspective and scores can be found in: Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010.

Figure 26. Pragmatic-Normative Around the World

Methods of Testing

We have attempted to make the case that the next step in leveraging social psychological research for COIN purposes is to: (1) update and expand the mapping of the major cultural conceptual ideas and (2) use the results of such mapping to drive future tests of the impact of cultural conceptual ideas on social psychological theory and models. For example, this would help us better understand the impact of uncertainty avoidance on attitude change, or masculinity-femininity combined with individualism-collectivism on conflict resolution and trust-building. These questions must be answered using the most powerful methodological tools available to the social sciences.

This next section describes three sets of research practices (methods and analyses) that can be used to make claims about cultural conceptual ideas and their relationships with or impact on social psychological models. We will only briefly outline the first two sets (descriptive and correlational) because we suspect most readers have some familiarity with them. More time will be spent on the details, though in non-technical terms, of the third and most powerful method: the controlled experiment.[222]

Making Frequency Claims with Descriptive Research

Frequency claims are arguments about just one variable, or concept of interest, at a time, based on descriptive methods and analyses. The frequency claim is very common, particularly in news headlines. During election season, a news organization may wish to make the claim that most people support Candidate X, or that, on average, citizens think the nation is heading in the right direction. To make these claims, a researcher would need to design a survey, with questions related to each claim she wishes to make, and give that survey to an appropriate sample of people. From that survey, the researcher can provide raw scores and percentages, as well as measures of central tendency (*i.e.,* mode, median, and mean) and measures of variability (*i.e.,* range, variance, and standard deviation). Frequency data are often presented in graphical form for easy visualization of large amounts of data.

On their own, frequency claims can be quite important to the counterinsurgent. For example, descriptive methods and analyses can be used to make a frequency claim about how many IEDs were discovered on the Airport Road near Baghdad last year or the percentage of Iraqis in a given area of operations (AO) that say they feel safe. At the same time that they offer important information, descriptive methods, and the frequency claims they produce, are significantly limited for trying to answer WHY questions such as, "Why do Iraqis in this AO feel safer than Iraqis in that AO?" Understanding the impact of culture conceptual ideas requires more advanced approaches.[223]

---

222. For a highly readable, yet detailed discussion of these research methods and others, we recommend Morling, B., *Research Methods in Psychology: Evaluating a World of Information* (2nd ed.), (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015).

223. Rosenthal, R., "MEthodology." In A. Tesser (Ed). Advanced Social Psychology, pp. 16-49. (NY: McGraw Hill, 1995).

Making Association Claims with Correlational Research

Association claims are arguments about how one variable is expected to associate with another variable. Association claims are also quite common as people often want to know how two or more concepts are related. If a researcher thinks that the number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) on the Baghdad road is related to observed atmospheric temperature, he will need to begin by gathering information about both variables: IEDs and temperature. The researcher might track the daily temperature and daily IED count for a period of two months. Next, the researcher can calculate a "correlation coefficient" as a measure of the strength and direction of the relationship between temperature and IEDs. As for direction, a positive correlation would indicate that as the number of one variable increases (*e.g.,* temperature) the number of the other variable (IEDs) also increases. On the other hand, a negative correlation would mean that as the number of one variable increases (*e.g.,* temperature) the number of the other variable (IEDs) decreases. Regarding strength, the bigger the correlation coefficient, the stronger the relationship between temperatures and IEDs. The association claims that can be made from this type of correlational method and analysis are incredibly informative, but a good researcher always keeps in mind that correlation does NOT equal causation. An honest, but naïve, researcher might conclude that increased temperature *causes* the increased number of IEDs; of course, this conclusion would likely be mistaken, with significant consequences.

Correlational research is a critical part of any research program – especially a research program that wants to look at more than one variable at a time, as would be required to understand how big cultural conceptual ideas relate to social psychological principles and COIN applications. But such approaches can only ever tell us whether a relationship exists, and if so, in what direction and with what strength. Ultimately, it cannot tell us if one variable causes another; to make the much stronger causal conclusion requires a controlled experiment.[224]

Making Causal Claims with Controlled Experiments

The third type of claim, and the most important to social psychologists and counterinsurgents, is the causal claim, which argues that one variable is responsible for changing another. These claims go beyond simple associations between two variables to the stronger statement of cause and effect. To make a causal claim requires careful research in the form of a controlled experiment. The meaning of *experiment* is very specific. If we know that a researcher conducted an experiment, then we know that the researcher manipulated a variable. A variable is manipulated when researchers assign participants to one level or another. Thus the two key features of an experiment – manipulation of a variable and random assignment of participants – are intimately linked.

In an experiment we call the manipulated variable the independent variable. That independent variable will have at least two levels (also known as conditions); if it did not have two levels it could not vary, and therefore could not be considered a variable. The goal of the experiment is to see if

224. Ibid.

the different independent variable levels, or conditions, lead to different outcomes for the research participants. The intervention, or manipulation of the independent variable, can take many forms. Chapter 5 described an attitude change experiment in which researchers created several taped messages about the implementation of a new university policy. The message was the independent variable. It had eight different levels, or varieties of message content. The researchers "intervened" by giving participants the different message versions. In medical research, the intervention might be to give participants a new medicine. The independent variable is often dosage, and different participants receive different doses in order to test the medicine's efficacy. For our research on the social psychology of COIN, we might want to test the efficacy of a leaflet that we hope to distribute. If we tried out three different pictures on the leaflet, the picture would be the independent variable.

Once we have determined our intervention (the independent variable and its levels), we then have to recruit test participants for our experiment. To meet the second requirement of an experiment, those test participants must be randomly assigned to the different levels of the independent variable.[225] In the case of a new leaflet design, we would randomly assign our test participants to see one, and only one, version of our leaflet.[226] Why is this randomization important? Why can't we just assign people with last names beginning A-H to read one leaflet, G-P to read the second, and everyone else to read the third? Even better, why not just let each participant pick which of the three leaflets they want to read? Random assignment is necessary to avoid "selection effects," or a type of bias that can get into the experiment when participants that are in one group are different in a systematic way from participants in another. Perhaps the geographic area in which the leaflet is being tested has members of two different cultures, and in one of the cultures, last names disproportionally start with the letter A.[227] In this case, there would be many representatives of that culture reading leaflet 1, but very few representatives reading leaflet 2 and 3. As a result, we might see some major difference in how people respond to the leaflets. Any decision to spend money on leaflet design, based on those results, would be biased by the sample. The same thing could occur if we let people pick a leaflet. What if younger members of our sample tended to pick leaflet 3? Then our groups don't just have different leaflets, they also have different ages. This could affect the results of the experiment.

Randomly assigning test participants to the different conditions gives every person an equal chance of being in any one group or condition. In this way, we evenly (or at least almost evenly) distribute males and females, Sunnis and Shia, young and old, etc., across all conditions in the experiment. Random assignment allows the researcher to conclude that any differences between conditions can

225. Random assignment is used only in experimental designs. Random assignment helps to ensure that the different groups of participants are as close to the same as possible. This controls alternative explanations of the experimental results. Another type of experiment, quasi-experiments, is similar to the true experiment *except* that participants are not randomly assigned by the researcher. Perhaps an act of nature or the structure of a school results in the participants being in a certain level of the independent variable. For more information on quasi-experiments, see chapter 13 of Morling, B. (2015).

226. In repeated measures designs participants would be exposed to all conditions or levels of the independent variable. For a fuller discussion, see chapter 10 of Morling, B. (2015).

227. Rosenthal, R., "Methodology. In A. Tesser" (Ed.), *Advanced Social Psychology*, pp. 16-49. (NY: McGraw-Hill, 1995).

be attributed to the experimental conditions.[228] Robert Rosenthal, a pioneer of research methodology in the field of social psychology, puts it this way: "If we have not randomly assigned our subjects to the experimental and control conditions we do not have a true experiment and causal inference is extremely difficult. A non-experimental analysis can often be useful, but, we should emphasize that it cannot tell the tale no matter how fancy it gets. There is no royal road to causal inference other than random assignment of subjects – the only known way to reduce bias."[229]

Randomized Control Trials

Most social psychological experiments are carried out in a laboratory environment at a research university. Such experiments can be helpful, and are often a necessary first step in understanding some phenomenon, but they are altogether incomplete to the extent that the results of a lab-based experiment may not generalize to the conditions of the field. This problem is sometimes overcome by experiments in field environments[230] [231] Experts in International Development increasingly utilize experimental designs, which they refer to as randomized control trials (RCTs), to evaluate socio-economic development interventions. Through the carefully planned implementation of the experimental hallmarks described above (*e.g.,* systematic variation of the intervention with random assignment to intervention groups), members of the development community can more fully address questions of program effectiveness and feasibility. [232] The field of International Development has many parallels with our context–the application of social psychology to counterinsurgency. When governments, militaries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), etc. invest money in programs designed to address socioeconomic problems (or in our case, problems of conflict, defense, and security) it is critical to determine what works and why. Whether testing the efficacy of some development program or some psychological variable designed to help generate trust (or both!), the RCT provides necessary controls to permit statements of causality.

As an illustration of the potential for field experiments to test the applicability of social psychological theory to conflict settings, we turn now to a description of Elizabeth Levy Paluck's study of whether media can reduce intergroup prejudice and conflict. Ten years after the 1994 genocide of more than 75% of the Tutsi ethnic minority population in Rwanda, Paluck conducted a randomized field

228. Morling, B. (2015).

229. Rosenthal, R. (1995).

230. Gerber, A. S. & Green, D. P., *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012).

231. For good examples of field experiments designed to test social psychological phenomena outside of the lab, see Cialdini, R. B., *Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion* (rev. ed., 1st Collins business essentials ed.), (New York: Collins, 2007).

232. White, H., "An Introduction to the Use of Randomized Control Trials to Evaluate Development Interventions," *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation Working Paper 9,* (2011). Available at http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evaluation/working-papers/working-paper-9/

experiment to test the ability of a year-long radio soap opera to affect personal beliefs, perceptions of social norms, and behavior among Rwandans.[233] This project used several layers of random assignment in combination with techniques of representative sampling. Paluck sampled communities from key ethnic, political, and regional categories in Rwanda. Within a given category she matched communities, such that each community had a corresponding match, within the same category, on such things as education level and gender ratio. Next, she took each matched pair of communities and randomly assigned one community to each of the two levels of her independent variable. The independent variable was the radio program, and the two levels were (1) reconciliation program and (2) health program. Thus, each community randomly assigned to the reconciliation program had a matching community assigned to the health program. The matching did not end there. Paluck had official lists of all individuals living in each community. From those lists she randomly selected 40 adults, making sure to balance for such factors as age and sex.

Why all this work before the experiment even began? As discussed above, random assignment is a key feature of a controlled experiment, and the controlled experiment is the gold standard for testing the impact of programs in natural settings. By representatively selecting her participants and then randomly assigning them to conditions of the radio program, Paluck was able to make some strong conclusions based on her results. For example, she found that in a discussion of how to share a communal stereo, the reconciliation program group proposed and debated more viewpoints than the health program group. She was even able to challenge assumptions found in the existing psychology literature. Modern-day psychology puts an emphasis on individual attitudes; much research, typically on American college students (such as that found in Chapter 5), discusses how attitudes can be changed. But in her Rwandan field experiment, Paluck found that beliefs about violence and intergroup relations were incredibly difficult to change; the radio program did not have any effect on these attitudes.[234] This disconnect between established social psychology literature and the findings of a carefully designed field experiment remind us of the pressing need to study representative populations in order to generalize the conclusions of social psychology to COIN settings.

Summary

The future of research that fuses social psychology, cultural conceptual ideas, and COIN must utilize all three of the research approaches described above (descriptive, correlational, and experimental), but with utmost priority given to the controlled experiment. Only through this approach can we claim with any degree of certainty a cause-effect relationship. In the preceding section we described a general movement in International Development (which mirrors key elements of coun-

233. For a complete description of the study methodology and findings, see Paluck, E. L., "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 574-587, (2009).

234. Ibid.

terinsurgency) to embrace the randomized control trial, as well as a specific social psychological field experiment. We recommend that anyone consider these efforts to be models for a sustained evaluation of the application of social psychology to COIN. After careful, experiment-based modification and verification, social psychological models for COIN can be integrated with advanced technologies to enhance DoD navigation of the "human terrain," precedents for and possibilities of which we discuss further below.

Technological Fusion

Over approximately the last six years, the Department of Defense made tremendous progress, often led by the OSD HSCB program, in the development of social cultural models and technology tools designed to give warfighters an edge in the "human terrain." Many tools developed by HSCB were highly successful and today give warfighters a sort of "social radar" for understanding events and behavior at the nation-state level. For example, one especially successful tool, known as the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS, pronounced "I.Q.s") "is a comprehensive, integrated, automated, generalizable, and validated system designed to monitor, assess, and forecast national and international crises in a way that supports decision-making on how to mitigate them. ICEWS offers COCOMS, the IC, and various government agencies a powerful, systematic capability to anticipate, track, and respond to stability challenges."[235] This tremendously helpful tool provides analysis of current events at the national level and fuses these events with academic models to make surprisingly accurate forecasts of instability at the nation-state level.

The social psychological models of culture, trust, attitude change, influence, and behavior generation described in this manual might well have similar applications. In a critical first step, this manual summarizes and integrates counterinsurgency with the methods, models, and approaches of the science of social psychology. Meaningful progress requires that the theoretical connections we discuss herein be rigorously tested using the methods outlined in earlier sections of this chapter. Once tested and verified, models of social psychology for COIN can be fused with cutting-edge technology similar to that of ICEWS. The predictive abilities of existing agent-based modeling software could be enhanced by the inclusion of cross-cultural social psychological information, resulting in an extremely powerful tool for understanding, modeling, and predicting individual human behavior. Clearly such a tool would be a resource for counterinsurgents, militaries, diplomats, and many others.

In addition, existing and future research on the cross-cultural social psychology described in this manual can (and should) be fused with training tools, both low tech (role-playing, classroom instruction) and high tech (video games, virtual reality). Imagine a virtual reality trainer in which the student of counterinsurgency interacts with civilian avatars whose behavior is realistically driven by

235. Boiney, J. & Foster, D., *Progress and Promise: Research and Engineering for Human Social Culture Behavior Capability in the US Department of Defense,* (Washington D.C.: The Mitre Corporation, 2013)

and responsive to the cultural conceptual ideas and social psychological models discussed in this manual. However it is delivered, an understanding of cross-cultural social psychology is and will continue to be, critical preparation for entering the COIN environment.

Conclusion

> "Simply stated, the lesson of the last decade is that failing to understand the human dimension of conflict is too costly in lives, resources, and political will for the Nation to bear. Once a conflict commences, it is already too late to begin the process of learning about the population and its politics. The optimal condition is for our leaders to have the ability to influence budding conflicts "left of bang," that is, before tensions turn violent."
>
> LT Gen. Flynn, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency[236]

LT Gen. Flynn rightly notes that the lesson of understanding culture, psychology, politics, etc. cannot usefully begin *after* the battle is joined. Such understanding must be institutionalized long before. Doing so will save taxpayers untold amount of "treasure," but far more importantly, it will reduce violence on the COIN battlefield and prevent the loss of lives, both American and local. At the same time, the battlefield continues to evolve and the role of the military along with it. Increasingly, the U.S. is shifting its commitments to conflict reduction. The DoD envisions its role as "rooted in our efforts to reduce the potential for conflict, by deterring aggression and coercive behavior in key regions, and by positively influencing global events through our proactive engagement."[237] It is in just such a conflict environment that social psychology can establish the profound legacy of bringing more Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen home in peace.

236. Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis, *Decade of War, Volume 1, Enduring Lessons from the Past Decade of Operations,* (Suffolk, VA: U.S. Joint Staff J7, June 2012).

237. Quadrennial Defense Review, 11, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf

Appendix A: Weighting CAN Factors

This appendix provides additional detail on how the CAN factors described in Chapter 6 are weighted within the TPB. The factors described below will utilize the same "Naval aviator" example used in the chapter.

Control

The researchers who developed the TPB provide a simple formula for understanding how control can be quantified.[238] The "control" element of TPB can be quantified as follows:

$$C = \sum_{i=1}^{n} c_i \rho_i$$

The symbol **Σ** means to "sum" each of the products of c_i and p_i. The c_i element of the formula refers to whether or not some "control factor" is present in the situation at hand and p_i refers to the degree to which that control factor will facilitate or inhibit ultimate performance of the behavior. In the Naval aviator example in Chapter 6, the potential aviator was considering three control factors: the ASTB, flight school, and the OCS experience. For the model, we might weight each of these factors as follows:

- ASTB: The potential aviator will have to take the ASTB, so this factor could be scored as a +3 on a -3 to +3 scale. (-3 meaning "factor will not be something I need to deal with" and +3 meaning "factor is absolutely something I need to deal with;" 0 meaning "uncertain."). Though she is not worried about the exam as she is a highly qualified engineer. So, the ASTB will not inhibit her progress and can be scored a +3 on the same -3 to +3 scale. Overall, multiplying c_1 and p_1 together gives the score +9 for the ASTB factor.

238. Ajzen, I., "The Theory of Planned Behavior," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes,* 50, 179-211, (1991).

- *Flight School:* As with the ASTB, the potential Naval aviator has a similar feeling about flight school. Clearly, she'll have to participate (C_2= +3), and she's only mildly concerned about being able to pass (P_2= +2). Overall, the flight school control factor scores a +6.
- *OCS Experience:* Finally, our potential aviator is somewhat worried about whether she can handle the intense OCS experience. She'll need to attend OCS, there's no getting out of it (C_3 score = +3), and, she's worried about being able to overcome the experience (P_3 score = -3). Overall, the OCS factor can be scored a -9.

Summing all the control factors would score a + 6 in this example. Of course, the potential aviator might have 50 more possible control factors she might consider, but; for the sake of brevity we only consider three here. People rarely do this actual mathematical calculation in their head, but the model is designed to mirror the way people actually think through their ability to have control over a situation.

From a TPB perspective, the more control a person feels he or she has, the more likely he or she is to form a behavioral intention – and ultimately act. Of course, it is important to point out that just because a person believes he or she has control over a situation does not necessarily mean their perceptions are accurate. A person might well believe that a situation is firmly in hand but actually have little control over the situation.

Attitudes

Like the control factor above, the TBP author quantifies attitudes as follows:

$$A = \sum_{i=1}^{n} b_i e_i$$

As with above, the symbol **Σ** means to "sum" each of the products of b_i and e_i. The b_i element of the formula refers to the possible outcomes of engaging in the behavior in question (essentially, if the person engages in the behavior, the probability of getting X) while the e_i element refers to the evaluation of that occurrence (does the person like that outcome or not?). For our potential aviator, she might think of several possible outcomes for her life if she decides to become an aviator: her family and friends will be proud of her, she'll make a good living, her career will be dangerous. For the model, we might weight each of these factors as follows:

- *Family and Friends Proud:* The potential aviator believes that should she choose this career path, her friends and family will absolutely be proud of her, so the b_1 factor could be scored as a +3 (on the same scale described above for control). Like most people, she would love

it if she could make her loved ones proud of her. She would evaluate this outcome very positively so the e_1 factor – pride of loved ones – would equal +3. Multiplying these scores would give a +9 on the "pride of loved ones" factor.

- *Make a Good Living:* Our potential aviator also believes that this career choice will provide her a good living over the course of her career. The b_2 element would be rated +3, and she has a very positive evaluation of making a good living, so the e_2 element would be rated +3 for a total "good living" score of +9
- *Career Will be Dangerous:* The final attitude factor is the danger of her likely career. Naval aviators have one of the more dangerous jobs in the world and her belief in that danger is very real, which might lead her to score this element a +3, and her evaluation of that danger is less than positive, -3. The danger element score would total to -9.

The overall attitude factor would score a + 9 in this example. As with control factors, the potential aviator might have many more possible attitude factors she might consider, the more positive the attitude factors total score, the more likely the person is to form behavioral intentions and ultimately act on those intentions.

Norms

Like the control and attitude factor above, the TBP author quantifies norms as follows:

$$N = \sum_{i=1}^{n} n_i m_i$$

As with above, the symbol **Σ** means to "sum" each of the products of n_i and m_i. The n_i element of the formula refers to the degree to which person X wants the person to engage in some action, and the m_i element refers to the degree to which the possible actor wishes or is motivated to please person X. For our potential aviator, she might have the wishes and motives of many people in mind as she weighs her decisions: her mother, her boyfriend, and a hated sorority sister. For the model, we might weight each of these factors as follows:

- *Mother:* The potential aviator believes that her mother is very supportive and wants her to pursue this career path. The n_1 factor could be scored as a +3. The potential aviator very much values, and is motivated to conform to, her mother's perspective. In this case, the m_1 factor – mother influence – would equal +3. Multiplying these scores would give a +9 on the "mother influence" factor.

- *Boyfriend:* In this example, our potential aviator's boyfriend is absolutely not supportive of her aviation aspirations. The boyfriend's n_2 factor would be scored a -3, and, our aviator is absolutely in love with him and is motivated to comply with his wishes, scoring the m_2 a +3. Multiplying these scores leaves the boyfriend influence factor as a -9.
- *Hated Sorority Sister:* Finally, a hated sorority sister believes that her aviation aspirations are foolish and voices her disapproval, scoring the n_3 factor as a -3. Of course, our potential aviator isn't mildly motivated to comply with her hated rival, so the m_3 factor is also a -3, leaving the hated sorority sister influence factor as a +9.

The overall norms factor would score a + 9 in this example. As with the other factors, there are probably many more people she might consider when trying to make a final decision about becoming an aviator. In this case, her mother is supportive, driving her toward a behavioral intention, while her boyfriend is not, probably reducing her motivation to pursue this career path. The perspective of her rival sorority sister might just push the norms factor into the positive scores. The perspectives of others as a determinant of behavior vary from culture to culture.

Appendix B: List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AO	area of operations
ASTB	Aviation Selection Test Battery
CENTCOM	Central Command
COCOM	Combatant Command
COIN	counterinsurgency
DoD	Department of Defense
ELM	Elaboration Likelihood Model
HSCB	Human Social Culture Behavior
IC	intelligence community
ICEWS	Integrated Crisis Early Warning System
IMOT	Integrative Model of Organizational Trust
MEDCAP	Medical Civil Action Program
MISO	Military Information Support Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCS	Officer Candidate School
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
RCT	randomized control trial
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
VETCAP	Veterans Civil Action Program
WEIRD	western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic

Trust, Attitudes, and Social Influence:
The Cross-Cultural Social Psychology of Counterinsurgency