Political and Strategic Cultures in the Longue Duree: Insights from the Middle East

by Michael Eisenstadt **(/experts/michael-eisenstadt)**

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Articles & Testimony

A more rigorous understanding of how political and strategic cultures interact to affect the conduct of states could aid intelligence analysts and policymakers.

The following is an abstract of a chapter from the Routledge Handbook of Strategic Culture *(2023). Purchase the full chapter* **on the Routledge website (https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Handbook-of-Strategic-Culture/Kartchner-Bowen-Johnson/p/book/9780367445485)** *.*

This chapter explores the relationship between political and strategic cultures, drawing on insights from the modern Middle East. It identifies elements of continuity and change in the political and strategic cultures of the states influenced by the region's ancient Arab-Islamic, Persian-Iranian, and Hebrew-Judaic civilizations, and considers how they have been affected by geopolitics and cross-cultural interactions. Political and strategic cultures are linked in often complex ways, influencing the conduct of diplomacy, the waging of war, and regional conflict dynamics. And while a state's political culture may shape its strategic culture in top-down fashion, strategic cultures may also emerge from below, and be shaped by diverse influences. The chapter suggests that a more rigorous understanding of the ways that political and strategic cultures interact and affect the conduct of states could aid intelligence analysts and policymakers, and concludes with a hope that the emerging field of cultural change research, by explaining how and why cultural evolution occurs, may open new vistas of inquiry. ❖

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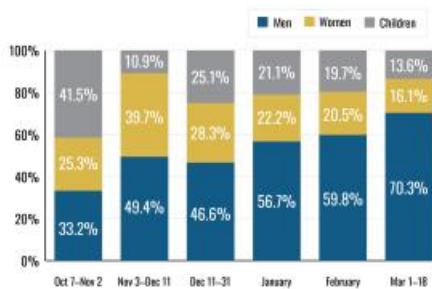

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