Realities and Cognition Across Borders Are Uncertain as Boundary Perceptions Adjust

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Perceptions of international boundaries have influenced international relations ever since the development of nations. The people who comprise nations have discerned how culturally different they are from other nationalities. In some instances, a pervasive similarity of attitudes has prevailed differentiating country from country. Other cases have occurred where within the same population there are substantial differences in beliefs. Elite and mass attitudes about the neighboring country may differ substantially. Possibly, the dominant mode of interaction has emphasized the importance of elite attitudes. Undoubtedly, though, mass frenzy about neighboring countries has sometimes directed foreign affairs. How one state perceives the differences between themselves and other countries has always been influential in directing international relations.

The process by which one country estimates another's intentions is now undergoing transformation. Beliefs in national difference are now subject to an almost continual informational barrage emphasizing similarity of peoples’ situations and realities. The amount of information exchange has reached astounding proportions. The media richness people now receive is substantially improving and prevalently highlighted with images and videos.

The institutions of the present international order were conceived decades before the present age of informationalism. Gone from the present day is the belief that international relations are exclusively the province of the elite. A popularization of international transactions has occurred that was unanticipated even a few decades ago. Traditional economic ideas have been replaced by the information economy and an emphasis on globalism.

The reliability of present developments in boundary perceptions is the issue this paper analyzes. Contrasting international realities decades ago with those that prevailed following the transformation produced by information technology (IT) leaves several questions. Has the stability and orderliness that international organization planners envisioned decades ago been eroded? Has informationalism, in fact, improved the international system? Undeniably, now there is substantially more popular involvement with international affairs. How pervasive are these changes? Which political entities are influenced? Are IT opinion leaders likely to decide the future while caught up in the informational transformation? To what extent are some
segments of the population isolated from change? These and other questions exemplify issues affecting the stability and rationalism of present-day perceptions of national boundaries.

The concept of "cultural bias" has been used to discuss the transformative change discussed here as affecting perceptions of realities and cognitions. "A compatible pattern of perceiving, justifying, reasoning, and feeling" is defined as a cultural bias. "Perceptions of time, space, nature, human nature, justice, risk, blame, leadership, and governance" are all included in cultural systems of organizing social reality. (Vereij, Luan, Nowacki, p. 745) This paper analyzes adjusting perceptions in terms of ICT's transformative strength. The effectiveness of ICT at pervasively influencing cultural bias probably has an influence on various types of international cooperation. The issue explained here is whether ICT negatively affects alignment globally causing conflict to develop.

Questions about boundary perceptions have been integral to analysis of conflict for decades. Methods for analyzing social realities have, however, changed significantly. Two significant trends can be identified changing boundary perceptions. The data available for analyzing differences across international boundaries has substantially changed and has been popularized. Since the 1994 invention of the browser, and the subsequent rapid development of the World Wide Web, a tremendous proliferation of analyzable data has occurred. Before the 1990's, data sources were limited with emphasis on survey data and content analysis. Following the transformative developments in information technology, the possibilities for research substantially increased as a vast amount of content became available and as interactive possibilities developed. Later, social networking and a more heuristic Internet further increased data possibilities.

The increased possibilities in data sources occurred together with a second meaningful development, a popularization of quantitative methods. An impressive amount of innovation in qualitative methods occurred. Postmodernism repudiated beliefs in finding grand empirically based theories of political behavior. A substantial number of qualitative techniques were accepted for their ability to incrementally build knowledge. More people began to appreciate the invaluableness of quantitative techniques in their own efforts.

The methodological innovations of the present day are no less serious than their quantitative predecessors in attempting to constructively explain international realities. Both the qualitative techniques that dominated earlier decades and the plethora of qualitative techniques now popular seriously attempt to explain international realities. Postmodern beliefs in qualitative methods approve of the abstraction interpretivism involves. Using ordinary narrative to produce social science research findings about complex phenomena occurs successfully with qualitative methods. Interpretivism's ability to identify and refine theoretically relevant concepts allows the success. As Coppedge explains, "As we climb the ladder of abstraction, we must leave behind the attributes that are irrelevant and take with us all the attributes that matter for the theory at hand." Qualitative methods succeed in Coppedge's explanation because of "round after round of theorizing and systematic testing." (Coppedge, p. 16) How realities are perceived across boundaries and differences in cognitive processes are important subjects for qualitative research.
Past Techniques for Evaluating National Values and Cultural Differences

Perceiving the ideas that are determinate in adjacent countries and in possible adversaries has been basic to appraising international realities for centuries. Always, there are understandings of the intentions and abilities of countries that could possibly be one’s opponents. Knowledge about other nations allows rational foreign policy to be developed. Considerable sophistication has gone into various attempts to appraise realities and cognitive process across boundaries.

Rationality in evaluating other nations can be thought of as both an elite and mass phenomena. People’s imagination of other states are conditioned by many factors. From socialization experiences onward, people acquire more complex ideas about other nations. Media plays an important role in presenting diverse cultures to people. Commercial ventures seek to market products and services advertised with ideas about various national cultures. These influences combine and create expectations within one nation about other nations. People are being continually influenced to have predispositions about cultures across national boundaries. The amount of influence from country to country has been dramatically on the increase.

Similarly, national elites make considerable efforts to know about their neighbors and other countries around the world. Elite appraisals of potential opponents have often figured in analysis of how conflict begins among nations. In situations where two countries are known adversaries, one state’s perception of the other state’s reality can determine developing events. A perception that the adversary is weak has sometimes, in the past, lead a country to believe they can successfully exploit another state with the use of military force.

The process of knowledge building about different countries is intricate. Knowledge about the other state may be ordinarily analyzable. Surveys can be conducted in the country being studied. News and information can be analyzed with content analysis. Statistics released by the second country can be complexly analyzed. When there is little obstruction of data gathering, these social science techniques are all possible. In other instances, the other state is deemed unanalyzable. Current literature explains that interpretive techniques can supplement existing knowledge when knowledge about the other country is difficult to obtain. Both nations that are deemed analyzable and those considered unanalyzable are inevitably scrutinized to improve knowledge of realities and reasoning.

Figure One, an adaptation of Daft and Weick, is useful in conceptualizing accumulation of knowledge with various techniques under different conditions. The knowledge building techniques presented in Figure One all produce data. All social science analysis begins with data. As Figure One presents, analyzing issues in realities and cognitions across boundaries can involve utilizing social science techniques. Current perceptions of realities and cognitions are undeniably influenced by these methods.
Figure One
Seeking Knowledge about Analyzable and Unanalyzable Cultures

Assumptions about Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unanalyzable</th>
<th>Sporadic Observations</th>
<th>Purposive Procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coincidental contacts.</td>
<td>Narrative analysis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chance opportunities.</td>
<td>Performance ethnography.</td>
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<td>Informal data.</td>
<td>Interpretive ethnography.</td>
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<td>Learning by doing.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyzable</th>
<th>Regularized Observations</th>
<th>Data-gathering</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contextual information processes.</td>
<td>Formal search</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Routine, formal data.</td>
<td>Questioning, surveys,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive knowledge</td>
<td>data-gathering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>acquisition.</td>
<td>Active detection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional information sources.</td>
<td>Experiments.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Executive information systems.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Active</th>
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Knowledge Building's Intrusiveness

(adapted from Daft and Weik in Mutch, p. 59)

Possibly, the ontogeny of the ideas in Figure One was from efforts to comprehend closed political systems. An often overlooked assumption of qualitative methodologists is that producing knowledge about a phenomena can be difficult. Research designs may need to surmount political systems and ethnographic groupings that are reluctant to allow researchers access. Qualitative techniques using interpretive analysis are research possibilities in situations where data may be unattainable. Interpretivism has the ability is to make orderly explanation from insignificant data that may be available about the unanalyzable state. Figure One discusses how knowledge emerges from unanalyzable environments amplified by interpretive techniques.

The implication of Figure One for qualitative methods is a recognition that emphasis on
improving knowledge of phenomena is methodologically sound. Qualitative methods often intend to improve knowledge building techniques when the phenomena being studied may be unanalyzable. Social science methods have approved differing standards of strictness with regard to research findings. Gerring advises, "the costs of adopting stricter methodological standards must be reckoned along with benefits. Trade-offs – e.g., between causal descriptive knowledge, theory appraisal and theory discovery, micro-theory and macro-theory, internal and external validity – are inescapable." (Gerring, p. 8) Methodological exactness would be difficult to attain with the issues and data analyzed here. Undeniably, social science research values validity in research findings. In some areas of knowledge building these studies are, however, impractical. Gerring exhorts that moral philosophers sometimes distinguish between "negative" and "positive" duties. He reminds the first duty "is to avoid inflicting harm on others." The second duty is to produce positive goods from research. He mentions the problem of possibly giving bad policy advice from messy data. (Gerring, p. 14) This analysis resolves this dilemmas from Daft and Weik’s perspective. Knowledge building inevitably occurs about both analyzable and unanalyzable cultures. Qualitative methods succeed if they can exert a positive influence in knowledge building about difficult subjects.

Traditional international relations have frequently analyzed conflict from the rational perspective. Knowing the strength of the neighbors has been determinant in whether to attack or not. Knowledge about the resources of the potential opponent has decided policies of aggression or nonaggression. Appraisals of the adversary have not always been accurate. Strategies anticipating material gains from aggressive behavior have occasionally failed because of faulty information. Historical experience about international conflict continues to encourage nations to avariciously seek knowledge about the world around them.

Cultural knowledge has been sought as actively as estimates of military abilities. Culture can include "political values and beliefs about human nature, the environment, and economics, among other things." (Swedlow, p. 703) Ability to reason about strategies and propensities to react can require knowledge of the cultural predispositions of a state. Establishing cooperative reasons across boundaries, similarly, has required significant cultural appreciation among cooperating states. The objective of a knowledge building activity has, traditionally, been to improve both conflictual and cooperative abilities.

**ICT Innovations Transform Emergent Knowledge**

Emergent knowledge refers to the new information people are all the time acquiring from increasingly pervasive information and communication technology (ICT). Innovations have substantially transformed the knowledge acquisition processes relevant to both conflict and cooperation. Consider how extensive the changes have been in gaining knowledge after Internet. The media used to acquire knowledge can be as significant as the information itself, in producing cognitive transformation. While bits of information are now acquired that resemble those that comprised knowledge in earlier decades, the process of gaining this perspective is changed by new media. People now receive much emergent knowledge from pervasive ICT. Some metamorphosis from technology to the knowledge building process has occurred. The technology's literacy reasons transfer to the area of knowledge being studied. Those who developed ICT were not without theoretical perspectives. Theory accepted by ICT developers influences the technology they produce. Social science research methods are an
outstanding example of an academic subject area affected by migration of ideas from ICT to the academic field.

Complex research to locate facts from the world of information has almost become obsolete with ICT at each person's desk. Cognitive transformation occurs because the change in information media is so profound. Researchers are aided in acquiring knowledge about whatever phenomena they are researching. In the past, substantial gains in knowledge building were accompanied minimally by library research. Often travel to a distant location occurred to gain specialized knowledge. These trips conditioned the knowledge building activity. Researchers expended great effort to accomplish even basic increments in knowledge. Nowadays, knowledge is acquirable right from one's desk. This changed activity equation for emergent knowledge has produced substantial change in cognitive processes.

The complexity of ideas has increased substantially with ICT innovation. Previously, researchers had difficulty being confident as the breadth of ideas became more ambitious. Conceptual feasibility was limited by the practicalities of research. Elaborate efforts were required to know a subject thoroughly. Now, acquiring knowledge has become almost effortless, and people attempt more ambitious ideas. The cognitive complexity sustainable with ICT is substantially greater than in the preceding era. Trees of knowledge with branches that reached into related fields and concepts are increasingly the norm. Cognitive complexity problems in organizing facts and perspectives formerly inhibited knowledge building. Now, ICT encourages complexity. Informational resources are immediately available. The productivity gains from technology make saving and organizing data less difficult. A cognitive predisposition occurs to utilize present informational resources to attempt ever more complex ideas.

Knowledge building is now more game like. ICT has always had a close connection to computer games. The technology used for recreational pursuits is the same as employed in serious research. Inevitably, some transfer of knowledge from computer gaming to academic fields occurred. In practice, that meant researchers lost their reluctance to begin initiatives that might fail. Acquiring emergent knowledge about a new subject can be analogized to beginning involvement with a computer game. Gamesmanship allows false starts and emergent knowledge now is obtained with more trial and error logic. The reflexive, cognitive development this change represents is constructive for social science. Ideas now developed pragmatically. Reluctance to experiment with building knowledge is substantially gone. Innovative techniques in emerging knowledge have become dominant. Competition to think "outside the box" is substantial. Research problems are increasingly defined with the researcher having an abundance of informational resources. Substantially more theoretical perspectives are now available as options. The cognitive environment allows the researcher more confidence as he accepts emergent knowledge from whatever theoretical perspective he chooses.

Global Connections Transform Knowledge about Realities and Cognitions

The techniques people required for reasoning with people of different cultures are acquired skills. From childhood socialization, people acquire images of diverse cultures. Children acquire ideas about people separated from them by boundaries. Cultural learning begins as
Children are socialized by their family and gain cultural understandings from them. Later schools take over and systematically develop how children reach cultures across boundaries. Distinguishing among international cultures is required as a prerequisite for becoming reasonably connected to the larger real-world.

Children learn from an early age that all people do not reason the same. Rationalism can even be defined as an ability to successfully follow the value topographies and thought processes of others. Different reasoning prevails at school than at home. Eventually as reasoning complexity increases, values about across national borders and international realities are required. Rational abilities must enable a person to switch his thinking among different reasoning and value systems.

Technology gradually makes inroads on this socialization process. Film and television introduced people to diverse situations. Images became more pervasive as digital photography developed. Media increased in sophistication and reached people on a global basis. In the 1990’s, the Internet browser was introduced. The advent of HTML and the browser popularized Internet throughout the world. People everywhere now could have an Internet connection. As information and communications technologies merged, the astounding global connections now possible became pervasive. In less than two decades, ICT development progressed from a few people with Internet access to a ubiquitous ICT. New smart phones powered by the android operating systems proliferated, and people became connected wherever they were. The connected phenomena improved more with social networking that shared personal realities on a global basis. The basic environment for learning about realities and cognition had forever changed.

The positive externalities that result from ICT globalism are well recognized. People are more capable of accomplishing the information transactions they like as they reach out into a vast global network. The global network offers substantial possibilities for locating and acquiring goods. Substantial motivations for transforming cognitive processes are created. Internet offers material inducements to people to make the effort to succeed with global reasoning. A metamorphosis in perceptions about realities and values has occurred as the information economy surges forward. ICT’s design features are now variables affecting perceptions of realities and cognitions.

Negative externalities from Internet’s development are less well understood. This paper hypothesizes that cognitive problems may occur as these processes are profoundly influenced by ICT. Uncertainty is explained as created in perception of realities and cognition. ICT’s media is considered transformative. The rate of technological change still affirms that the change occurring is substantial. Are globalization’s assumptions popularizing ideas about always improving perceptions of realities and cognition? Is an emphasis on increasing interest in informational futurities emphasizing product differentiation in cultural output? Is ICT neglecting cooperative virtues in favor of positioning for future global gains?

**Boundaries and Complex Interconnectedness**

The boundary concept from psychology is useful in discussing uncertainty in perceptions of
realities and cognitions. The European Union's current crisis exemplifies how disparities among various member countries can be troublesome. People, now, are acutely aware of differences across boundaries in culture and values. The continued success of European Union appears to depend upon adjustments in perceptions. Resolving whether continued cooperation is possible in the present information environment is at issue. Instead of past policies promoting cooperation, divergence of reasoning is now frequently happening. Internet's development has increased the salience of boundary issues as change throughout European Union competes with globalization.

Political socialization processes that have existed for generations instilling pragmatic assumptions about differences in cultures and values are now being questioned. Well-established socialization techniques improved accurate perceptions of differences across boundaries and produced a reasonably stable international system. Long existing techniques for understanding realities and cognitions are now being rapidly replaced by Internet's complex interconnections. There may be substantial differences among political groups with regard to acceptance of Internet transformations. The reasons people perceive realities and cognitions in different cultures are possibly changing. The result is uncertainty in perception about across borders realities and cognition.

Effectively resolving international dilemmas requires dependable perceptions of reality across boundaries. Cooperation is unimaginable if people do not perceive reality approximately the same irrespective of borders. Ordinary transactions necessary for an effective international system fail if ideas about reality are vastly different. Similarities in cognition probably are highly desirable. If entities across boundaries reason differently with emerging situations, confusion and tedious delays can result before any constructive action is possible. The problems that could occur without similar processes of cognition could be astounding. Assuming more cognitive alignment globally may be an erroneous assumption. Cultural differences in accepting and using Internet may be producing diverging cognitive processes. Appreciating how Internet's interconnections are affecting cognition across boundaries appears important.

Reality Issues and Cognition in Diverse Cultures

Reality issues can be defined as concerns that have material consequences. An ordinary example of a reality issue occurs whenever a transaction occurs between buyer and seller through Internet. The seller represents the goods that he is selling with verbal description and possibly images. This representation causes the buyer to form thoughts about the goods being sold. A reality issue exists when the buyer and the seller's thought processes substantially different. Conflict may occur around a reality issue if the buyer receives goods that completely dissatisfy him. Transactions between governments and citizens can similarly be adversely affected by reality issues.

Any happening that requires a response across boundaries is susceptible to having issues about cognition. People cannot always acclimate themselves to cultural dissimilarities. Guessing the dominant cultural reason can prove perplexing. Transboundary cultures may reorder the importance of relevant concerns. In the past, people with expert abilities dominated reasoning about transborder cultural issues. With Internet, everyone gets involved
with reasoning cultural differences, globally.

In action situations, people order their priorities around their preference for different outcomes. Public policy deliberations increasingly use an outcomes formula to decide between various possible options. When policy choices need be made, the public may be surveyed about their preferences. When an outputs formula is used, decisions are made to pursue options that citizens like best instead of deciding with traditional rational choice techniques. Similarly, value systems from other cultures prevailing across boundaries may determine reactions when response is required. The complexity of across boundaries responses is greater because more value systems are influencing cognitive processes. An imagination is building that globally oriented new media creates similar value systems and cognitive processes. This paper questions this alignment assumption. ICT power users possibly emulate the values conveyed by the new media, but how many ICT power users are there? Whether the political strength that determines international political cooperation is with ICT orientated people remains questionable. When those individuals dedicated to ICT are excluded from analysis, discerning the cultural changes occurring because of ICT becomes more difficult.

**Qualitative Methods Are Useful Analyzing Boundaries**

From a methodological perspective, qualitative methods offer substantial possibilities for analyzing perceptions about realities and cognitions across boundaries. Accepting that knowledge building is an incremental process spurred the development of many useful methodological techniques. Data no longer was necessarily a large set of numbers. Interpretivism has allowed the methodologist an ability to employ his own aptitudes in analyzing data that is not amenable to quantitative analysis. The quantitative methodologist proceeds with more abstraction in his reasoning as he utilizes interpretivism in reaching research results. In practice, qualitative methodologists are required to devise systematic techniques for reviewing qualitative data. These techniques include content analysis, hermeneutics, axial coding, and sequential analysis. The methodologist uses interpretivism beyond these analysis procedures to make the connection between abstraction, data, and findings in his reasoning. When the qualitative methodologist completes his analysis of data, he is enabled to produce conclusions that are explained as based on the data he has chosen to use.

Analysis of realities and cognitions across borders benefits substantially from the developments in qualitative methods that have occurred in the last several decades. An ethnographically oriented drama, for example, now acceptably provides data for the conclusions this analysis reaches about perceptions across boundaries. Quantitative data from a German soap opera, Christian and Oliver's Story, that has been subtitled in English and uploaded to YouTube is deemed commendable qualitative data. By May 2012, approximately 500 episodes of Christian and Oliver's Story had been uploaded to the Internet. These episodes presented life situations around a flat share and bar, No Limits, in Düsseldorf, Germany. This soap opera provides a more intimate view of German everyday life than previously has been available. The narrative is about a gay relationship and marriage between the characters Christian Mann and Oliver Sabel. In the drama, Christian is portrayed by Thore Schölermann and Olli by Jo Weil. Produced by German public television, Christian
and Oliver's Story is useful when one is reasoning with perception of reality and cognition issues. Three Internet personalities have successively mediated the German television to YouTube Internet experience. These people—Ichglotztube, MercuryMay, and ChrolliWorldWide—are responsible for creating the digital video files, editing, providing subtitles, and uploading them to Internet. Christian and Oliver's Story is excerpted by these three Internet personalities from *Verboten Leibe*, a German soap opera broadcasted five times a week since January 1, 1995.

Methodologically, Christian and Oliver's Story episodes are excellent qualitative methods data useful to analysis. This narrative, now features approximately 500 uploaded episodes. The drama was first broadcast in November 2007. Narrative analysis accepts almost anything that has a storyline as useable in analysis. The visual images from this soap opera rival the story's content in their invaluableness to the qualitative methodologist. Narrative can be a series of images that tell a story. Visual images from Christian and Oliver's Story have excellent story strength. Present ICT capabilities allow social science researchers to download all the Christian and Oliver's Story episodes from YouTube to their own computer. The norms of present-day qualitative methods cannot deny that episodes of this soap opera on the data storage device are exemplary of what social science presently means by the term "data."

The Christian and Oliver's Story data set downloaded from YouTube is theoretically valuable in studying cognitive transformation. Burgess discusses YouTube and Internet's ability to introduce "transformative or even radical vision into elite discussions." The phenomena that occurs is explained as "a convergence of popular and elite knowledge." YouTube, itself, is explained as "a source of plural and often dissenting views." This new media, "is laden with parodies of just about everything, including parodies of masculinity, parental authority, and the founding fathers." The convergence culture is discussed by Burgess as offering "a new way drawn from popular culture" of thinking about political authority. (Burgess, P. 121) Uncertainty in perceptions of realities and cognitive process could usefully be analyzed using YouTube media. Burgess continues, "The power of YouTube to transform everyday political life is being amply demonstrated on a daily basis." (Burgess, P. 130) This paper's analysis of uncertainty in cross-border perceptions can usefully gain from analyzing narrative drawn from popular culture and from a media that is discussed as transformative.

**Formulaic Analysis**

Many possibilities exist for creating an acceptable analysis of the soap operas data prior to reaching interpretivist conclusions. Formulaic analysis of Christian and Oliver's Story is a narrative analysis technique with substantial possibilities for analyzing reality and cognition issues. Formulaic characters are a possible explanation for why this soap opera has reached people globally. Christian and Oliver's Story may assist the audience be knowledgeable of reality in Germany by familiarizing them with a group of formulaic characters. Loseke advocates examining character descriptions with care "considering all statements about the character in the story." Characters are important to analyze because they are "a central organizing device" in a story. The symbolic and emotional codes characters present make stories sensible to audience members. Loseke continues that symbolic and emotion codes are the basic building blocks of cultural meaning systems. (Loseke, pp. 261-262)
Christian and Oliver's Story is undeniably an example of Internet affecting perceptions of culture and values across borders. The cognitive usefulness of a group of formulaic characters may be how this soap opera has been propelled to global popularity. The amount of uncertainty about reality and cognitive issues resulting from this ICT global initiative is an issue. Formulaic analysis implies that adjustments in perception can be accomplished as formulaic characters guide how cognitive processes comprehend German reality. By emulating how several formulaic characters think, one, possibly, is able to approximate German cognitive process. Now, the mass Internet audience from abroad has begun imagining there own ability to reason with diverse German cultural situations with confidence.

Formulaic stories are another possibility for affecting both how reality is perceived and adeptness with cultural reasoning processes across boundaries. Events that occur in a formulaic story are predictable. Whenever certain conditions exist, plot development occurs approximately the same in each instance. This soap opera possibly can be explained as containing many formulaic stories about interpersonal relations. As different characters interact in the drama, their personal situations appear to resolve themselves with some similarity. Loseke explains, “Formula stories obtain their recognizability and predictability by deploying symbolic codes and emotional cares in ways that reflect how audience members understand the world.” (Loseke, p. 253)

Characters in this drama always walk away from their emotional entanglements with little personal after effects. Emotional detachment is presented as virtuous. Another common formulaic theme pertains to how personal exigencies resolve themselves. Characters exhibit little fear and much resolve when confronted with adversity. Invariably, a character who confronts adversity regains his advantages and social involvements continue unaffected in an episode or so. The formulaic story level of Christian and Oliver's is high with a strong emphasis on no person "losing it" emotionally and with turns of good fortune always ahead. The formulaic story level teaches the global audience that German people keep their composure and patiently anticipate improved prosperity. Understanding German cultural reasoning according to the soap opera formula requires tuning in a calm and well mannered people who are reasonably anticipating material gains.

**Hermeneutics Analysis**

Another technique useful in analyzing Christian and Oliver's Story is hermeneutics. This qualitative data analysis technique was originally developed for analyzing natural interactions such as family conversations. Hermeneutics is concerned with the "latent structure of meaning." Meaning, so defined, can include ideas like interacting subjects' intention, motives of the interaction, function of the interaction as affects distribution of interactional roles, linguistic features, and constant communicative figures. The exact concepts used for analysis may differ, but the analytic framework in hermeneutics needs be "a multi-step scientific procedure of interpretation." (Flick, p. 350)

A paper this author presented at the Western Political Science Association Meeting in Portland, Oregon on March 24, 2012, included a hermeneutics analysis of a sample of three episodes taken from the uploaded episodes of Christian and Oliver’s Story. The hermeneutics analysis devised for the WPSA presentation was a sequential micro analysis of the sample
episodes. The multi-step scientific procedure for interpretation was created by analyzing developments in the narrative with three different concepts. First, analysis considered how developments in the narrative changed the characters' narrative identity. Soap opera characters have already been discussed as possibly formulaic characters. This first analytic concept examines how the sequential narrative further develops each character. Second, the narrative's influence on a concept called audience's urban myth identity was presented. This concept imagines a purpose of the narrative is as a commentary on German urban myths. Figures Two and Three are excerpted from the hermeneutics analysis presented in the March 2012 paper.

**Figure Two**

**Christian and Oliver's Story**

Ichglotzutube's 177th YouTube Upload

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative in Images</th>
<th>Narrative in Words</th>
<th>Character's narrative identity</th>
<th>Audience's urban myth identity</th>
<th>Psychosocial concept of generativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Christian camping with his brother Gregor" /></td>
<td>We need wood if we want a hot meal. Can't you just sit down and do nothing for a change.</td>
<td>Christian – Understands the brother can be a source of inner strength.</td>
<td>Recognizes the consoling strength of brothers.</td>
<td>Seeking respite from personal dilemmas in family is excellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Gregor carrying firewood" /></td>
<td>I'm sorry! It's just that there's nothing wrong with my heart! Okay? No, that's true. What’s wrong with you is something totally different.</td>
<td>Gregor – I can behave naturally around my little brother.</td>
<td>Acceptance of family groups that hold together.</td>
<td>People let down now and then without negative consequences, if they are careful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Gregor’s reason for being in the woods - Luisa" /></td>
<td>I'm sorry...whatever You know I didn't come to the woods to exhaust myself. I get that. I really needed this.</td>
<td>Christian – Accepts his brothers relationship with a woman.</td>
<td>Ability to accommodate a new relationship between man and women.</td>
<td>Be capable of accepting man and women relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An example of an urban myth would be, "Coyotes live within the city of Denver." Were the Christian and Oliver Story narrative about Denver, the audience possibly would learn whether coyotes within Denver was a true myth or a false idea. Third, Eric Erickson's concept of generativity is used in analysis. This psychosocial concept refers to how people often speak
to the younger generation with the purpose of influencing their cultural norms. In middle adulthood, Erickson explained, challenge occurs about how to promote “the well-being of future generations, and parenting, teaching, mentoring, and engaging in a wide variety of activities aimed at leaving a positive legacy of the self for the future.” (McAdams and St. Aubin, 1992) The narrative is analyzed sequentially as to the generativity message the writers are attempting to present.

Conclusions about Realities and Cognitions across Borders

The techniques of formulaic narrative analysis and hermeneutics are excellent for analyzing the soap opera's narrative. Data analysis with these or similar techniques is preliminary to developing conclusions in qualitative methods. The research conclusions themselves result from the methodologist's interpretive abilities. Quantitative methods resolves this research step with statistical analysis. Qualitative research methods allows the researcher's interpretive skills to study the analytic results and draw conclusions. The level of theoretical abstraction in qualitative methods is greater than in quantitative methods. The objective is incremental improvement in knowledge about a phenomena. Research findings emerge from many qualitative techniques that are useful additions to social science knowledge.

The Christian and Oliver's Story data is excellent for exemplifying the qualitative technique of moving from narrative data to research findings. This paper's hypothesis is that as boundary perceptions adjust uncertainty is created about realities and cognition. Because extreme transformations about both realities and cognitions are intended, questioning whether these changes increase or decrease uncertainty is reasonable. Perceptual uncertainties can reasonably be researched with qualitative techniques. Two conditions that affect harmonious reasoning across borders — perception of realities and ability to follow reasoning — are at issue. The social science researcher intends to use data to improve knowledge about the uncertainties ICT may be creating in cross national perceptions.

Formulaic narrative analysts and hermeneutics readies the social science researcher to present his conclusions. Data analysis appears to make salient a discussion about whether ICT content is directed toward a limited proportion of the population. New media is often explained as becoming increasingly personal. Formerly, a handful of news organizations and networks controlled informational content. Now, Internet makes content available exactly matched to the informational preferences of the audience. Beyond that, Christian and Oliver's Story is extraordinary data because one has a strong temptation to believe that everyone is reasoning with this soap opera. The drama's excellence possibly is in how the narrative plays with assumptions about this Internet media transforming all the people. This tempting assumption — transformation of everyone's perceptions about realities and cognitions — is a source of uncertainty.

Qualitative methods techniques can improve knowledge about this phenomenon. A research finding can result explaining that the narrative creates uncertainty because of differential influence throughout the population. The affect of the new media is now seen as differential throughout the population. This is a conclusion reasonably arrived at using qualitative method's abstract techniques. Reasoning from the data, the researcher better understands
that successful international cooperation may require questioning some of ICT's transformations in perceptions of realities and cognition. Qualitative methods clears up misunderstandings about the soap opera transforming all people's beliefs.

**Issues Occur as Cognitive Transformations Are Not Pervasive Enough**

Substantial issues emerge about ICT's influence on cross national perceptions of realities and cognitive process. The bar in Christian and Oliver's Story that serves as the locale for much dramatic action is named No Limits. The name "No Limits" has figured in approximately 500 episodes of the soap opera. No Limits is an excellent example of Internet and cognitive processes. What does "No Limits" mean? How one defines this phrase is a cognitive issue. Explaining the meaning of "No Limits" reflects differences in value hierarchies. All people do not use similar values in defining "No Limits" which indicates conflict in cognitive processes. People across national borders probably do not agree about the meaning of "No Limits."

Within Germany, No Limits connotes a culturalism that is somewhat restrictive of outsiders. This is a bar that has an exclusive German clientele. Metaphorically, No Limits makes a statement in reverse. The message to other countries is something like, "Germany is a prosperous and successful democracy." Other cultures are put on the defensive by No Limits with regards to economic and democratic success. The bar in this soap opera reinforces German belief that their political system is producing economically and socially. No Limits is an affirmation of German culturalism.

As Internet makes the episodes of Christian and Oliver's story available globally, the phrase "No Limits" becomes susceptible to other interpretations. Cognitive processes, globally, comprehend "No Limits" differently. In the Western Hemisphere, there is, for example, a meaningful suggestion that good times a plenty are ahead. Culturalism to the west of the Atlantic believes more strongly in good reasons happening unexpectedly. Cognitive values in these cultures first emphasizes bountiful and sharing values. People are culturally conditioned when they hear "no limits" to imagine that substantial good happenings are about to begin. The phrase is, also, an invocation to begin sharing ceremonies. The cognitive processes that occur when the phrase "no limits" is heard in Western Hemisphere cultures is substantially different than what is imagined to takes place within Germany.

Successful international cooperation questions the differences in cognition that "No Limits" produces. Traditional international relations has recognized that problems can exist when differences in cognition are substantial enough that different cultures cannot adequately anticipate each other's reactions. Never before have media communications been sufficiently powerful to follow global distribution of dramatic content on a regular and ongoing basis. Mukherjee and Krieckhaus explain, "Social globalism leads to greater exposure to the prevailing conditions, ideas, norms, and cultures of other states." The conditioning effect of this type media is an unprecedented phenomena. The astounding interconnectedness of Internet is likely to produce many Christian and Oliver's Story imitators.

As Internet developed globally in the preceding two decades, analysis of the influence of the interconnectedness was predominately positive. The gains that improved informationism could bring to people everywhere was the emphasis. The famous hundred dollar laptop initiative sought to place an inexpensive laptop in the hands of every schoolchild in Peru, for
example. (Living in Peru, 2 June 2007) An astounding belief in the positive gains possible from Internet prevailed. The changed communications environment was reasoned to always reduce dissimilarities of culture and to allow improved mobility of those empowered by Internet. Internet's major developments occurred with some negative criticism, but the level of support remained strong for developments.

In recent years, criticisms of Internet have gained in influence. Alistair Mutch questions the concept of metacognition or “thinking about thinking.” Developments in knowledge management have assumed, "The widespread availability of the capacity for metacognition." Mutch explained that instead, "The insights of cognitive psychology would suggest that there are a number of limits to such embodied cognition. We have seen that human beings are poor intuitive statisticians, tending to assess probabilities on the basis of memorable but atypical instance and neglecting the more representative events." The implications of Mutch's conclusion is that possibly global distribution of Internet content is overly ambitious. The assumptions that cognitive processes can be readily reordered is untested. As Mutch continues, "There is some doubt about the ability to perform such metacognitive activity." (Mutch, p. 244)

Problems with transformation of metacognition cause a realization that global Internet content has major obstacles to accomplishing a communicative intent. The assumption that such content increases alignment of cognitive processes is doubtful. A more likely outcome is that disparate people in different cultures react to Internet content substantially influenced by their own culture's cognitive orientation. When the German soap opera presents the audience the No Limits bar, domestic assumptions about German prosperity are reasoned. When the No Limits bar appears on YouTube in the Western Hemisphere, audience reaction possibly anticipates good times. Whereas the intended meaning of the phrase is somewhat nationalistic at home, other cultures in the global audience react with anticipation of something good for themselves. Differences in cognitive processes in how different cultures react to No Limits is exemplary of a cognitive issue with some potential for conflict.

Uncertainty in perceiving realities and cognitions can be further complicated by cognitive transformations that are not pervasive. When Internet content is distributed through Internet, only a small percentage of cross boundary people are ever aware the content is available. Cooperative international relations may require reasonable perceptions of realities and an ability to reason similarly with other cultures. Analyzing ICT requires asking if content improves perception of reality and helps people tune in cognitive processes across the border. Possibly, a substantial number of people are altogether disinterested in Internet. Those people who tune in Internet ideas may be tuning out more pervasive explanations. Those people empowered by Internet may be more politically active, but they may, also, represent only an insignificant minority. Developing differences between the Internet empowered and the politically active strata in the general population could increase uncertainty in perceptions across boundaries.

**Does International Organization Anticipate and Minimize Cognitive Issues?**

Present international organizations were developed before the information economy. ICT's substantial development occurred after the European Union was established. The conflictual
issues anticipated when European Union was devised are different than those influencing economics and politics, now. The information economy redefined economic issues in such a way that land, labor, and capital concerns were minimized. The information economy placed a premium on the knowledge required to make technology work. The former conception of economic conflict is managed by present international organizations manipulating production and distribution of goods across borders. The prevailing assumption when these international organizations were founded was the international organizations could succeed managing production and distribution of goods issues. Issues influencing international cooperation have been transformed by ICT. In 2012, the issues that must be resolved are different than managing production and distribution. The political machinery of European Union does not appear designed to resolve information economy issues of the present-day.

Having the information to make technology work is a problem closely associated with uncertainty in perceptions of realities and cognitions. Cross boundary perceptions of realities have long been an objective of economic cooperation within Europe. Workers from one country have been able to work in another country. The realities of one culture were to be well understood by the other culture as a result of the European Economic Community and European Union. ICT now affects the perception of reality across the boundaries of the European Union. The attractiveness of regional cooperation has decreased. In 2012, each country is now continually involved with developing possibilities for global cooperation. The acceptance of regionalism is not the same, and national cultures are becoming more cautious of how extensively they share with the regional arrangements. The uncertainty of perceptions of realities across borders is increasing as nations become reluctant to commit their futures to regional cooperation. The basic condition of economic cooperation within Europe is being eroded by the information economy.

The European Union was once explained as promoting alignment among the countries in economic reasoning. The imagination was that all Europeans would begin reacting to economically relevant developments the same. There were beliefs that the economic strength of the entire European Union would mesh seamlessly and produce sustained prosperity. The information economy has now produced more incentives for diverse cultures to struggle to perpetuate themselves. Erickson explains that cultures create messages from older generation to younger generation so as to bring cultural understandings forward in generations. As the information economy places a substantially greater emphasis on information workers in the production of knowledge, the importance of generativity correspondingly increases. Christian and Oliver's Story exemplifies a substantially increased demand for production of informational content. The 500 episodes of this soap opera are media production influenced by the information economy. Increased demand for content has bolstered the importance of Erickson's concept of generativity. The message strength of Christian and Oliver's Story for future generations about German values is substantial.

This soap opera can, also, be explained as a commentary on the urban myths of Germany. The process by which people familiarize themselves with cities has been explained as influential in developing political values. Commentary on German myths by the soap opera can be thought of as connected to the city learning process. People find Christian and Oliver's Story popular as they develop their urban consciousness by watching episodes of the soap opera.
Analysis of the 2005 referendums in France and the Netherlands that rejected European Constitution emphasized the importance of culture and identity in voter choice in Europe. Hobolt and Brouard's research found in France that "loss of identity and culture" was a factor second only to "a weakened role for France in the world" as a predictor of a negative vote on the European Constitution. In Netherlands only "concern over loss of language" was more significant than "culture and identity" as influencing negative votes on constitutionalism. (Hobolt and Brouard, pp. 314-315) This data about the 2005 vote in these countries evidences that substantial motivation does exists in European politics to approve domestic media with a cultural emphasis.

Whether the information economy significance of Christian and Oliver's Story is explained as the concept of generativity or as a commentary on German urban myths, the soap opera does not improve cooperation within European Union. The emphasis has shifted with ICT's development such that projected economic metaevents require attention to national strengths in the emerging information economy. The heavy emphasis that existed for decades on removing uncertainties about realities and cognitions across borders has disappeared. Now, production of informational content that anticipates futurities in the information economy is more together with national culture. The economic sharing found throughout the EEC's beginnings has been replaced by a reluctance to share. A clearly differentiated product is possibly thought to offer greater potential economic success in the decades ahead. As cultures strives to satisfy demands for more informational content, the temptation to create culturally distinct products appears inescapable.

The EEC and the European Union were established with the intention of reducing transborder uncertainty. Manipulation of uncertainty was the technique the international organization planners relied upon to obtain prosperity. Globalism and the information economy have profoundly affect uncertainty assumptions as many countries are becoming aware their global orientation is becoming more dominate. In the information economy, national culture's importance has increased. Difficulty has occurred in agreeing upon regional plans to reduce uncertainty and improve economic cooperation. Nations are increasingly reasoning with the strength of their national product in the global information economy.

**Conclusion**

Realities and cognitions across borders have been explained as presently being affected by some uncertainty factors. ICT has had a transformative effect on complex interconnectedness, globally. Narrative analysis using qualitative methods is useful in improving knowledge about this phenomenon. The 500 episodes of Christian and Oliver's Story have been used in this analysis as data. Interpretivist techniques including analyzing this data as formulaic narrative and with hermeneutics allows social science to devise conclusions about ICT's influence on perceptions of realities and cognitions.

Inevitable problems based on well-established differences in cognitive process can be identified. The alignment some anticipated has faltered due to dissimilarities in cognitive process. Internet content distributed globally does not always cause the same reaction in
audiences. Perceptions of realities across borders are similarly influenced cognitively. Issues exist because the new media empowers and motivates, but does not reach pervasively throughout cultures. Present international organization arrangements were devised prior to the advent of the information economy.

Information economy has changed ideas about economic futurities. Informational content, in this paper's data exemplify information content production that appears influenced by the concept of generativity and by interest in devising commentary on German urban myths. Both ideas improve the product differentiation of the German informational production. Information economy appears to require more defined content in order for cultures to feel secure in the meta economic events of the information economy's future. Analyzed as an example, European Union is troubled with increasing uncertainties across borders. The demands of the information economy appear to favor differentiation of cultures, whereas the European Union has relied upon strengthening accurate perception of reality and thus improving economic cooperation.

As adjusting perceptions occurs about realities and cognitions across boundaries, uncertainties are being created. The information economy has redefined many economic assumptions. Uncertainty, always seen as questionable in the past, now is associated with product differentiation in informational content. The process of adjusting perceptions of realities and cognitions may be a slow and difficult endeavor as various cultures increasingly contend with global interconnections and demands for the production of informational content. Both globalism and content production are indecisive about perpetuating the same level of certainty about realities and cognitions that has prevailed for decades.
Bibliography


