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The limits of culture : Islam and foreign policy

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Abstrak

The contributors to The Limits of Culture find that, contrary to the currently popular view, culture is rarely more important than other factors in shaping the foreign policies of countries in the Caspian region. They find that ruling regimes do not necessarily act according to their own rhetoric. Iran, for example, can conduct policies that contradict the official state ideology without suffering domestic retribution. Also, countries frequently align with one another when they do not share religious beliefs or cultural heritage. For example, Christian Armenia cooperates on trade and security with non-Christian Iran. Cultural identities, the contributors find, are flexible enough to enable states to pursue a wide range of policies that are consistent with their material interests. As the essays in The Limits of Culture make clear, the emerging foreign policies of the Caspian states present a significant challenge to the culturalist argument.