

# H100 executive summary essay



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Executive Summary H100: War, Society, and the Structure of Military

Revolution 10 May 2011 SUBJECT: "The Western Way of War" by Geoffrey Parker, in *The Cambridge History of Warfare*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005, 1-11. 1. General: This article explains the necessity for a culture to develop their way of war and describes how the western way of war's evolution was instrumental to the successful rise of the West consisting of Europe and the former European colonies in the Americas.

The author contends that the West developed their way of war to compensate for numerical inferiority using five principal foundations: technology, discipline and military tradition, strategic vision, capability to adopt new technology, and the commitment from the nation state to finance a war. He stated that this combination required the West to seek total annihilation and unconditional surrender of their enemy which most cultures considered barbaric; but the mounting success during war proved it had considerable merit. . Supporting Points on the Subject: Parker contends that the West's way of war embraced the three core principal foundations used by many cultures when developing their way of war, but it is the unique addition of the final two that allowed the West to dominate during war. The first principal, technology, was aggressively acquired by the West and enabled fighting superiority as demonstrated throughout history since the Persian wars in 5th century BC.

The additional two core principles, superb military discipline involving rigorous training and long term service combined with the strategic vision of total defeat and annihilation of their enemy, created the foundation for the Western way of war to compensate for numerical inferiority. But it was the

ability to instill in their culture the societal acceptance to fund a standing military and adopt changing technologies that separates the western way of war from other nations.

Additionally only those Western countries that could embrace all five principal foundations using punctuated equilibrium, in which development proceeds in short rapid bouts interspersed with extended periods of stasis, had the military edge required to be successful during war. 3. Significance: There is strong historical evidence and examples that support the article.

Parker's essay clearly demonstrates how the western way of war provided the West's success in war throughout history. The author highlights that only those few western nation states that were able to successfully embrace the five principal foundations had the favorable balance of military power that allowed them to be ultimately successful during a war.

His example depicts how time and time again western expansion occurred because of the military dominance produced from the western way of war. This essay is valuable to a military professional as it explains the interdependency between culture and the western way of war throughout history. It also provides the basis for the need for military professionals to understand other intangibles like political will on the impact of the success or failure of war.