



CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 1

Welcome to the new MCoE Culture Tips presented by the Culture and Foreign Language Program! We are Drs. Ron Holt and Toni Fisher. We are honored to be a part of the Culture and Foreign Language Advisor team stationed here at Fort Benning. Each week we hope to bring a tip on culture that you can use in working with others both CONUS and OCONUS. We are located in McGinnis-Wickam Hall, 2nd Floor, Room 2308. Please read more about us and the Program at:

<https://www.us.army.mil/suite/doc/22052884>

<https://benna0shrpt2/sites/sgs/KM/CLKN/default.aspx>



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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 2

Did you know that you can receive Promotion Points for learning a new language?

Soldiers who complete the Headstart2 program in any language can get up to 16 promotion points in ATRRS. For those languages hosted on ALMS, those points are automatically posted to ATRRS. For those languages hosted on DLIFLC, Soldiers will need to print out the certificate of training to apply for the credit.

The Headstart2 software uses digitally animated characters involved in military scenarios to teach reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in any of 16 target languages. Soldiers must register for an Army Training Requirements and Resources System account, known as ATRRS, to earn points in any of those target languages.

The program teaches a "military-focused vocabulary," designed with requirements from both the Army and the Marine Corps, to help Soldiers and Marines complete the types of missions they will be engaged in during deployments.

"When a Soldier completes Headstart2, he or she gets credit in ATRRS, which not only tells the unit commander at a glance who has or has not completed pre-deployment language and culture training, but it also gives that young Soldier credit in terms of promotion points."^{**}

Check it out!

ACCESS THE HEADSTART2 PROGRAM THROUGH THE DLIFLC HOMEPAGE:

[HTTP://WWW.DLIFLC.EDU/INDEX.HTML](http://www.dliflc.edu/index.html) UNDER PRODUCTS.

*Col. Danial Pick, commandant of the Defense Language Institute

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 3

What is Culture?

Culture is all the information passed between generations as people mature and learn the way to live within a particular group. Culture includes the traditions, values, beliefs, behaviors and norms of a nation, tribe, region, state or other group of people.

Culture is:

- Learned as a child.
- Shared by a group.
- Adaptive and responsive to environmental changes.
- Integrated or holistic in that if one part changes, all the other parts react.
- Based on symbols so meanings and perceptions are expressed through language, music, art and rituals.
- The way people see and think about the world.
- Deeply embedded and regarded as normal or natural.
- The software inside our heads, and our heads act as the hardware.

Culture tells us how to behave and what is valued and what is not. It influences not only the way we act but also what we think and how we see the world around us.

The ability to use culture is what makes us human. Culture is all the things we learn and share within a group. Yet, it exists as an abstraction. It is not a concrete thing, it is an interconnected set of ideas, all the information passed on between generations through language, writing, mathematics and behavior. It is all around us. It is so habitual that we often do not notice culture, because we take it for granted as “just the way things are.”

Humans are biologically equipped to create and use culture. Culture is all knowledge passed from one generation to another. Culture can be divided into symbolic culture and material culture. *Symbolic culture is all of a group's ideas, symbols and languages. Material culture is tools, clothing, houses and other things that people make or use. It is all human inventions: from stone tools to spacecraft.*

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. #4

Soldiers must understand how vital culture is in accomplishing today's missions. Military personnel who have a superficial or even distorted picture of a host culture make enemies for the United States. Each Soldier must be a culturally literate ambassador, aware and observant of local cultural beliefs, values, behaviors and norms. Why?

- Understanding local culture allows for better decision making through a better and more holistic picture of the operational environment.
- It reduces friction with local nationals.
- It allows better prediction and tracking of second and third order effects, helping avoid unforeseen and unintended consequences.
- Leaders who acquire a basic understanding of local history and culture can also recognize and effectively counter the threat's propaganda, based upon a misrepresentation of history.
- It allows for better operational planning and decision-making.
- It can save lives!

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 5

What kinds of cultural questions should we ask about cultures during COIN or Stability Operations?

Culture is about how people perceive reality. It may not fit the true facts or history. Soldiers must not let personal prejudices cloud their judgment.

- What do we believe about ourselves? What are our motives and values?
- What do the green [pro-U.S.] local nationals believe about themselves? What are their motives and values?
- What do the amber [neutral] local nationals believe about themselves? What are their motives and beliefs?
- What do the red [anti-U.S.] local nationals believe about themselves? What are their motives and beliefs?
- How do the various groups of local nationals view the U.S.? What do they think our motives are?
- What are the current Cultural Centers of Gravity (CCOGs*)? Religion? Ethnicity? Population growth/youth bulges? Power brokers? Health? Open borders? Wealth distribution? Rural/urban? Tribal conflicts? Crime? Education? Corrupt government? Inefficient government? Outside Alliances? Economy? Social system?
- What are cultural narratives/history?

*CCOG; "What are the focal points that glue a combatant's entire system together and provide it with purpose and direction?" The Taliban's centers of gravity are: ideological Islam- Geographic= Kandahar and sanctuaries in Pakistan - social = tribalism and clientism – ethnic= Pashtun mores/culture - economic=opium poppy money.

[Critical thinking: What Americans see as corruption and nepotism may be viewed differently in other cultures. If your mission requires buying goods and services from local nationals, how would you handle this aspect of local culture?]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 6

What are the cultural dimensions of any operating environment?

VBBN (Values, Beliefs, Behaviors and Norms), the basic Army Acronym of what makes up culture. It includes a peoples' history and religion, their use of body language and personal space, power distance between superiors and subordinates, time orientation, individualism, formality, perceptions, use of reason, belief in cause and effect vs. fate, as well as other variables. Try to understand the local differences in values and beliefs within the context in which you observe them.

VBBN provides a framework for society that tells us how to deal with others within our society as well as others around the world. Without this framework every day would be a new challenge, forcing us to relearn the rules for interacting with others. In essence, it eliminates some of the "guesswork" involved in dealing with others. With a common set of rules (both formal and informal), we often know what to expect in a given situation. In fact, if we observe others objectively and thoroughly, we can use culture to help us create strategies for dealing with others, and enable ourselves to better interact with those around us.

The acronym "SEARCH" (Society, Environment, Authority, Religion and Beliefs, Communication and History) provides a framework that organizes the basic dimensions of culture into a "map" that can be as simple or as complex as needed: keep in mind that all these factors work together to create any culture and the way people perceive their world. SEARCH provides a memory aid allowing us to examine any culture and better understand, influence and achieve mission success.

Culture is patterned (things fit together), changeable, and arbitrary. It influences how people make judgments about what is right or wrong, what is important and unimportant, and what attitudes and behaviors are appropriate. As we study the different cultures of the world, keep in mind the climate, the geographic location of the culture and the historical experience of the culture. Look for patterns and relationships.

[Critical thinking: How can an understanding of VBBN impact operational planning and mission execution?]

[Critical thinking: How would you use SEARCH in the field? In what kinds of cases would it be most helpful?]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 7

Why are a people's beliefs important for Soldiers to understand?

Beliefs are shared views of reality. They are ideas about how and why things are as they are, how humans came to be, the origin of the universe, ideas of beauty and why people get sick. Beliefs influence the way people perceive their world; this resulting world view then influences how people behave. People are often unaware of the beliefs operating in their culture until those beliefs come under attack. Beliefs are so central to a culture that they seldom are subject to investigation or argument. Beliefs may differ amongst subcultures sharing a common majority culture. In a COIN or joint operating environment, we must understand the beliefs of our allies, of the local nationals and of the potential enemies in order not to offend people and to understand why they act as they do.

Cultures allow for a range of behaviors, but they impose sanctions on “bad” behavior and often reward “good” behavior. Culture is expressed through local nationals’ words and behaviors. Constantly monitoring people’s actions and words as we enter a new Area of Operation (AO) will uncover much about local culture. Sometimes what people say and what they do are quite different. Words and actions can be strong indicators of cultural values. As cultures change due to technology or events, behaviors will also change, and this will change the belief system. These changes may take generations. World War II brought women into the workforce in the U.S. in record numbers. This brought about a significant change in beliefs about gender roles and women working outside the home. What had been ideal behavior for a woman in the 1940s had changed dramatically by the 1990s. In areas like Afghanistan that have suffered from long periods of war, behaviors will have changed as people adapt to uncertainty and danger.

[Critical Thinking: How do beliefs influence behavior?]

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What is Enculturation?

Learning one's culture is called *enculturation*. We learn the “proper way” to do things from a very young age by growing up in a particular culture. We are taught the right way to behave and accomplish basic activities by parents, relatives, teachers and friends. Today the Internet, movies and television provide new channels for enculturation. We learn most of the cultural rules unconsciously and assume that they are natural instead of culturally constructed. What we are taught at an early age becomes part of our thoughts and feelings and often results in an unquestioning acceptance of cultural assumptions. All humans are enculturated into their group's culture, and they learn the “correct” way of doing things and understanding the world around them.

Children in any culture are taught the “way things are”; that is, —What to eat—How to eat—What is good—Who the gods and goddesses are—Proper etiquette and behavior and so on. Children absorb the information that their parents, relatives, peers and the media give them. We perceive our culture as “the way things are” so we are like fish swimming in water. We swim in a sea of culture and generally do not even realize that it supports all we do. Culture gives us beliefs that are the foundation for our values, values lead to the norms in any society and those norms influence the behavior of us all. Culture tells us what we are supposed to do or not do in any given situation.

[Critical Thinking: Who/what has motivated your behavior and beliefs?]

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What are Social Norms and Mores (mor-rays)?

A *norm* is a range of behavior that is considered permissible by a particular group. Norms tell us how to behave in certain situations. They are social guidelines that most people follow. Norms are not rigid and may be ignored with only minor repercussions. For instance, being late to a meeting does not mean that you will be put in jail or killed. Norms are “social lubricants” that help people interact smoothly. Shaking hands, bowing, and greetings are all norms that help us relate to others. There are norms for behavior, gender relations, voice loudness and body language to which almost everyone in that culture conforms.

Mores are a wider category than norms and include both local etiquette and the fixed customs and fundamental moral views of a human group. Mores give guidance on how to think and behave.

Norms and mores tell us about core emotional beliefs, such as child rearing practices, vengeance, the roles of patronage and corruption, or the roles of women and men as well as religion in daily life.

Culture acts as a form of glue to hold a group together; it does not stay the same—it changes over time as circumstances change. Culture defines us, but we also define culture. New events, technology, influences, and circumstances can all change our culture. Certainly, the invention of computers, the Internet, and instant communication has changed the culture of the average American. Culture reacts to technological change and is always influencing how we perceive change. It tells us who we are, but we reserve the right to modify our VBBN (values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms) at any time to suit the circumstances.

[Critical Thinking: What are American and/or Army norms and mores? Have they changed in the last 50 years?]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 10

What is Cultural Ethnocentrism?

Ethnocentrism is the assumption that the behaviors and values we learned growing up in our families is the correct and natural “way things are.” Ethnocentrism is a human characteristic of seeing the world through the filter of our own culture and assuming that the way we were raised is the best way—that the values and norms of our culture are superior to others.

Because we are raised to understand that our “tribe’s” way of thinking and behaving are correct, all humans are, to some extent, ethnocentric.

If you disdain or ignore local nationals, they will see your lack of respect and be less willing to help you with your mission.

The ancient Romans, Chinese, Aztecs, Incas and many others all believed that they were superior to the people they conquered.

Ethnocentrism can also lead us to underestimate adversaries.

[Critical Thinking: Analyze this statement: “The English drive on the wrong side of the road.”]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 11

What is Cultural Relativism?

In order to avoid ethnocentrism and underestimation of potential adversaries, we must realize that a local society is based on its own culture and history.

Cultural relativism is the idea that different cultures as distinct and unique wholes have different values, beliefs, behavior and norms from one another, and hence see and respond to the world in different ways.

Cultural relativism does *not mean moral relativism*. *Moral relativism* asserts that there are no absolute standards for right or wrong. Therefore one cannot judge anyone else or another culture as these standards vary according to culture, time and situation. This means that we reserve judgment of other cultures' beliefs and behaviors until we have a thorough understanding of why they act and believe as they do, based on a clear understanding of their history, religion, technology, and environmental situations.

Cultural relativism helps to get beyond stereotypes and is a method to limit the negative impact of ethnocentrism.

[Critical Thinking: Cultural relativism suggests that we understand the motivations behind practices. In some Islamic countries women wear burkas. Who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by this and other customs? Does the moral question then become “what, if anything, should be done about a particular practice?”]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 12

What is Globalization?

Globalization is the sum total of communication and transportation technologies that spread internationally, impacting values, attitudes and economies around the world. Globalization began in the 15th and 16th centuries as Europeans used new technologies for sailing ships and navigation to explore and colonize much of the world. Today the world economy is fairly integrated and Western standards of medicine, public health, accounting, airports, roads and computer technology have become the norm that many countries try to attain.

As technologies bring countries closer together, a new global culture is emerging. Multi-national corporations, the Internet, mass media and a global network of finance, manufacture, and export/import, are working to homogenize the world. At the same time, many groups and countries are fighting against cultural homogenization and trying to retain their unique cultures, religions and traditions.

Because of globalized technology, terrorists in remote ungoverned parts of the world can impact anywhere on the globe by using aircraft and the Internet. Some nations, religions and other groups reject globalization and see it as a kind of “Westoxification.” Al Qaeda and others utilize modern technologies, but reject the associated western values such as democracy, secular government, freedom of religion and women’s rights.

Cultures are integrated wholes, and no part of a culture can be really understood if it is isolated from the rest. In Muslim-majority countries, Islam impacts all aspects of social life. Their economy influences how people reckon kinship. The interdependence of one part of a culture on the others makes it difficult, if not impossible, to change or introduce a new idea or technology without a ripple-effect throughout a society.

[Critical thinking: What are pros & cons of globalization?]

Hint—cheap goods from Walmart/end of family-owned stores.

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 13

What is Culture Shock?

Culture shock is a feeling of dislocation, of being “out of place” in a new culture.

When arriving in an alien environment with new smells, new languages, new faces, different types of clothing, along with new rules, Soldiers may commonly experience some culture shock. This can be particularly important if embedded with host nation forces. Culture shock usually passes through four stages:

Honeymoon Stage: The adventure of new places and opportunities.

Avoidance Stage: Marked by loneliness and frustration; the urge to avoid everyone and everything associated with the local culture.

Anger Stage: Stereotyping and disgust for the local culture.

Adjustment Stage: Creative interaction with the local culture.

After a long deployment or several deployments, a Soldier can experience **reentry** shock (reverse culture shock) upon returning home. He/she finds that it does not meet expectations or memories, since things have changed in his/her absence. If not recognized as part of a normal return experience, this can lead to depression. It is important to recognize culture shock and reentry shock, to discuss them with friends and, if the conditions continue, to seek help and counseling.

Culture shock sometimes leads Soldiers to reexamine their values, priorities and what they think of themselves and the U.S. This also happens when returning home after a long absence. Reentry to home culture after a long absence can be difficult, as people cannot simply pick up their lives where they left off. People and the culture at home have changed during your absence.

There are many techniques for coping with culture shock and reentry shock. The best way to minimize culture shock is to educate yourself about the culture to which you are being deployed by reading books, seeing films and talking with natives and people who have been there. Talking about your feelings with others also helps. Reentry shock, or returning to your familiar society, also requires adjusting to the changes in oneself and those that have occurred in the home culture while absent.

[Critical Thinking: What are your experiences with culture shock? What might be the consequences of multiple deployments?]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 14

What is a Social Taboo?

Taboos are mores (mor-ray), or local etiquette, fixed customs and fundamental moral views of a society specifying what actions are prohibited in a culture. Taboos are activities or uses of physical objects that are explicitly forbidden and are based on religious notions of what is permissible and what is not.

Drinking coffee for Mormons and eating pork for Jews and Muslims are all examples of food taboos. These taboos create boundaries between people and constantly remind believers that they belong to a certain group with group expectations.

All cultures have an incest taboo prohibiting having sexual relations with close relatives, but different cultures may define who close relatives are differently. In most American states you cannot marry your uncle, aunt, niece or nephew. In past American Indian cultures a preferred marriage was one between one's mother's brother's child. In some traditionally Islamic Middle East cultures the preferred marriage pattern has been to marry one's father's brother's daughter. This keeps within the larger family the bride price that is paid to the father of the daughter.

[Critical Thinking: Taboos are identity/membership markers and remind people that they are members of a certain group. Can you think of a taboo in your own culture and what makes it unacceptable?]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 15

What are Rites of Passage?

All cultures celebrate the events of birth, coming of age, marriage and death. These and other rites of passage mark changes in a person's status. Rites of passage include baby showers, boot camp/basic training, quinceanera, (a Hispanic girl turns 15), Bar /Bat Mitzvahs, graduation ceremonies, and funerals.

Rites of passage usually include three stages:

First Stage: The separation of the inductees from the normal population as in basic training where inductees get haircuts and new clothes.

Second Stage: The in-between stage where the inductees go through a period of training and tests as in the four years it usually takes to get a college degree.

Third Stage: The inductees reenter the normal population but now with a new status as a graduate, a married person, an adult.

Rites of passage can teach you much about a culture. In the Islamic world the most important rites of passage are marriage and the Hajj to Mecca. After completing the pilgrimage to Mecca, a person's new status is that of *Hajji* (male) or *hajjah* (female).

[Critical thinking: What are American rites of passage? Are they becoming more or less important? Why?]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 16

What are the characteristics of American Culture?

- Fast-paced.
- Punctuality.
- Women's rights.
- Egalitarian, belief in equal opportunity; not outcomes.
- Goal-oriented.
- Individualism.
- Pragmatism.
- Tolerance.
- Separation of church and state.
- Value work and personal success.
- Love of technology.

[Critical Thinking: Do you think these words describe American Culture? Why or why not? What words would *you* use to describe the character of American Culture? What do television commercials tell us about American culture?]

What are the characteristics of a culturally literate Soldier?

- Understands that culture affects their behavior and beliefs and the behavior and beliefs of others.
- Appreciates and generally accepts diverse beliefs, appearances and lifestyles.
- Knows about the major historical events of the local culture and understands how such events impact beliefs, behaviors and relationships.
- Understands the dangers of stereotyping and ethnocentrism.
- Communicates and works positively with individuals from other cultural groups.
- Understands that cultural differences exist and need to be accounted for in planning and executing operations.
- Understands the perspectives of mainstream and minority groups in the local culture.
- Is bilingual or working towards language proficiency.
- Understands that soldiers are often stereotyped and that they will encounter prejudices and biases that need to be overcome by correct behavior and rapport building.
- Understands that culture gives meaning to acts that an outsider would find pointless.

[Critical Thinking: How can you become more culturally literate?]

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 17

CULTURAL LITERATE SOLDIER

A cultural literate U.S. Army Soldier:

- Does not let personal prejudices cloud their judgment and determine their actions.
- Embraces our values while understanding how they may bias our decisions and action as perceived by those from other cultures.
- Acts with respect for the values, beliefs, and customs of other people.
- Knows the history, culture, and institutions of the people amongst whom the Soldier operates.
- Has the ability to take the perspective of those from other cultures.
- Has self-discipline to behave in a culturally appropriate way at all times.
- Can operate among people from other cultures with minimal cultural friction.
- Can appropriately greet, tactically direct, and know key native terms in the local language.
- Has skills to effectively interact, avoid miscommunication, and build rapport to successfully achieve military tasks among peoples from other cultures.
- Positively influences people from other cultures to achieve mission objectives.
- Makes culturally informed decisions and has deep cultural situational awareness based on a sophisticated understanding of foreign cultures and structures.
- Incorporates cultural factors to effectively visualize, plan, and operate in a way that achieves mission success and minimizes unintended population consequences.

Each Soldier must be a culturally literate ambassador, aware and observant of local cultural beliefs, values, behaviors and norms. Why?

- Understanding local culture allows for better decision- making through a better and more holistic picture of the operational environment.
- It reduces friction between those with different cultural inheritance.
- It helps avoid underestimating potential adversaries.
- It allows better prediction and tracking of second and third order effects, helping to avoid unforeseen and unintended consequences.
- Leaders who acquire a basic understanding of local history and culture can also recognize and effectively counter propaganda, which misrepresents history.
- It can save lives!

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 18

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Recent military operations among foreign populations have led to the rediscovery of the importance of culture. Lack of cultural awareness and knowledge has been identified by the U.S. Army as a “critical gap” in capability.

Incorporating Culture into Military Operations: Historically, the U.S. Army focused on operating variables that could be observed. Culture was largely absent because culture often could not be directly observed. The resulting analysis often failed to account adequately for population motivations and to accurately predict effects of our courses of action or, in some cases, adequately specify objectives concerning the population.

Culture is important to incorporate into military planning and decision making where population motivations matter. Culture is the software or program that is shared by a population and directs group level behavior. Population motivation is not only important for analyzing society but also politics (political culture), military (military culture), and the economy (cultural economics).

Political: To paraphrase, given that war is politics by another means, understanding political culture is crucial: the structure of power, authority and legitimacy, how decisions are made and conflicts adjudicated; and the populations’ loyalty, identity, and obligation to groups or the state.

Military: Perhaps the most important consideration for military operations is military or security culture: the inherited ways to fight, historic threat perceptions, acceptable use of violence and war among the population, and how victory is defined.

Economic: Cultural economics is crucial to properly employ “money as ammunition”: the population response; exploitation of traditional economic means and ways by the insurgency; and impact on traditional networks like patron-client, tribes, villages, and occupational groups.

Social: Sociocultural factors may also be important: impact on traditional and religious beliefs of a population, impact on gender relations, and sociocultural based grievances.

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 19

Cultural factors are critical in COIN and Stability Operations. Culture greatly shapes factors leading to population support; being exploited by the adversary to gain support, regeneration, discredit the government; establishing its infrastructure; and establishing the host government legitimacy. Cultural factors are equally important in stability operations where (1) political competition can be intense and all COAs may have political implications, and (2) civil security and stability can be established through strengthening local cultural sources of resilience.

Cultural Data: Cultural data, broadly, are shared beliefs of and common patterns of affiliation among target population groups. Such data are typically derived from –

- Population engagements and interviews.
- Key cultural informants.
- MISO, CA, and HTT reports.
- Media and intelligence reports.
- Observational and patrol reports.
- Population surveys.

Histories, academic research, NGO and government reports as well as databases can be sources of important data and/or analysis.

Care must be taken in not conflating analytical objectives with information categories. Frameworks such as the PMESII are functional or analytical. In ascriptive (and to some extent achievement) cultures, roles and functions are diffuse so an entity may not fit in any one analytical category. Rather, analytical categories focus analysis (such as power, force, resources, and solidarity/cleavage) rather than usefulness for the categorization of data.

Cultural Analysis: Typical steps are –

- *Segment* population by shared sociocultural characteristics – drill down beyond demographics.
- *Match* belief and affiliational patterns to segmented sociocultural groups.
- *Identify* key groups for mission objectives.
- *Understand relation* of institutions and beliefs/affiliational patterns with group motivations relative to mission objectives.
- *Conduct a site assessment* to validate and collect data to refine analysis.
- *Refine analysis:* power structure, decision making, population power analysis, interactions.
- *Generate IR* – collect data and further refine analysis.
- *Estimate population impact of proposed COAs*, including second and possibly third order effects.
- *Monitor* population responses to operations – note difference from expected.
- *Conduct an after-action assessment*, collect data, and develop lessons learned.

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 20

CIVIL-MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS: Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Civil-Military Engagements.

In an era defined by weak states with limited governance, interacting with the local populace has become critical to success on the modern battlefield. This interaction is essential and enduring for the success of US security interests worldwide. Commanders and staff must critically assess the area of operations and carefully consider how best to influence the local population. Local officials, religious leaders, men, and women should be engaged to gather information on local concerns (health, economic, security, etc.), understand local perceptions of the US Military and its mission, and establish trust and confidence in the local or host nation government. When civil -military engagements are planned and executed effectively, they contribute to mission success. Engagements are conducted to establish or maintain relationships with relevant entities in a country to enhance civil and military co-operation, further the national security interest of the US and the partner nation, shape the battlefield to influence the outcome of operations, and deny the adversary the support of the population. Military operations often require the unique capabilities and specialized teams with multi-disciplinary perspectives. Examples of these groups include human terrain teams, provincial reconstruction teams and female engagement teams. These specialized teams are tasked with engaging local populations to ascertain information on civil-society needs and problems, address security concerns, and to form links between the populace, military, and interagency partners. Commanders and staffs must understand how to conduct civil-military engagements and employ engagement teams in order to be successful in operations spanning the range of military operations (ROMO).

Engagements must be conducted in the context of local cultural customs, beliefs, and methods of communicating. This builds understanding and cooperation while mitigating insensitivities and mistrust. In the past, commanders and staffs have developed messages unilaterally from their own cultural perspective and simply translated them into the local languages. Invariably, something is lost in translation or the message conflicted with local views or norms. Leveraging key leaders or actors from target audiences allows units to draw on their familiarity and credibility with those same key audiences. It increases the likelihood that an interaction will inform or influence audiences as desired. Understandably, units must balance the use of these individuals against security concerns.

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 21

Understanding the importance of cultural differences at the individual engagement level of operations.

Understanding of cultural differences enables Soldiers to adjust their behavior and plans to operate more effectively. Cultural differences arise from the legacy of our common experience as a people that are reinforced by norms (taking similar others as references). On the other hand, similarities across cultures arise from having similar biological cognitive processes, emotions, and needs; and through the process of globalization that drives interaction of cultures, resulting in greater similarity.

In general, we share more with those from other cultures than we differ. By some estimates, most cultures differ by only 10 to 20 percent. We tend to notice most what is different and over-estimate these differences. Because culture is shared, violation of even a few cultural programs impacts the population dynamics – where small differences have large impacts at the group level.

At the individual level for operating, culture has less of an impact. Because cultures are mostly similar, individual differences usually are greater than group differences. However, it is still critical to know about cultural differences. Without knowing about the other culture, we are unaware of different cultural programs that an individual may operate by.

Even if the individual does not fully share in his/her culture programs, they will return to and operate within a population that does. This impacts their decisions and actions. Our personality and maturity are more critical for effectively operating with foreign populations. However, effectiveness can be enhanced by understanding the other culture. As an Army, our common capacity to operate effectively is increased by greater cultural understanding.

It is also important to keep in mind that national cultures are sometimes weak and have relatively few shared programs. What we think of as sub-cultures—ethnic groups, tribes, or community—often are more important. Pre-deployment training can only provide a brief and idealized picture of a national culture that may have little correspondence to your particular AO. It is up to you to recognize cultural differences in your AO.

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 22

The Five Dimensions of Culture

In the 1970's, a psychologist, Dr. Geert Hofstede asked the question referring to "why are there so many cultural differences and from where does all the difference come?" After a decade of study and thousands of interviews he developed a model of 5 cultural dimensions that has become an internationally recognized standard.

The five dimensions are:

- 1. Power/Distance (PD)**-refers to the extent of inequality that is seen in a culture among people with and without power. A low PD society refers to a culture where power is shared and dispersed among others who view themselves as equal, such as seen here in the United States. A high PD society indicates a culture that accepts an unequal distribution of power with people understanding their 'place' in society, seen in places like Malaysia, where one would refer decisions only to the top management of a company.
- 2. Individualism (IDV)**-refers to the strength of ties and kinship people have within their community. High IDV =a loose connection with people, a lack of interpersonal connection and little sharing of responsibility beyond family and a few close friends. Low IDV = a strong cohesion within the group with a large amount of respect and loyalty for members, binding the group together. These groups are larger and take more responsibility for each other's well being.
- 3. Masculinity (MAS)**-the degree to which a group values and enforces traditional male and female roles. Low MAS=male and female roles are blurred. Males and females work together equally across professions, males can show emotion and females can work hard for professional success. High MAS = societies where males are expected to be the provider, tough, assertive and strong. If the female works outside the home she has to have a separate profession from the males in the society.
- 4. Uncertainty/Avoidance Index (UAI)**-the degree of anxiety a society feels when in unknown or uncertain situations. Low UAI = enjoys new events and values differences. These groups have few rules and the people are encouraged to discover their own 'truths'. High UAI = societies that try to avoid uncertain situations whenever possible. This group is governed by rules and orders, comfortable with a shared 'truth'.
- 5. Long Term Orientation (LTO)**-refers to how much a society values long-standing – as opposed to short term – traditions and values. This fifth dimension was added in the 1990's after Hofstede's research discovered that Asian countries with a strong link to Confucian philosophy acted differently from western cultures. Low LTO = one can do almost anything in terms of creative expression or novel ideas, making them willing to try innovative plans as long as they are allowed to participate fully. High LTO = delivering on social obligations and avoiding 'loss of face' is considered very important.

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 23

Arab Culture App -

Want to know more about Arab culture ? We have a new Culture App on the Warrior University website!

How to Download Apps on your personal computer:

1. Go to Warrior University at <https://www.warrioruniversity.army.mil>
2. Sign in either with AKO Username/Password or with your CAC Card
3. Select "Training Material" or select "click here for training" button.
4. Select "Apps"
5. Select the app



Installation Instructions for Android users

1. Click the link and save the file to the desktop on your computer.
2. Attach your Android device to your computer using your USB cable.
3. Drag the Notification bar down on your Android device and select the USB connected notification.
4. Select the button to turn on USB storage. Your computer will recognize your Android device as an external drive.
5. Copy the file from your computer to your Android device. Make sure the file is in your device's root directory.
6. Select to safely remove the device from your computer and turn off USB storage on your device.
7. You will need a file manager app to install the App. We recommend ASTRO file manager. Android App Manager can be downloaded from the Android App Store for free.
8. Open your file manager app and browse to your devices /sdcard directory.
9. Locate the App file and long-click it to extract it to this directory.
10. Select the button to install the app and click open when complete.



Installation Instructions for iPad2 & iPhone4 users

1. Connect your iPhone to your computer with the sync cable.
2. Click the download link above to download the App software and save it to your desktop
3. Open iTunes on your Windows or Mac computer.
4. Drag App (downloaded in step 1) from your desktop over the (Apps) label on the left side of the iTunes window.
5. Click the "Apps" tab.
6. Select the "Sync Apps" checkbox.
7. Select the Mobile Training App.
8. Sync your mobile device with iTunes

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 24

Most likely, all of us grew up hearing comments from different people about certain individuals or the way they acted. At some point, we began to wonder why those people had said something awful or funny about a person having to do with their being gay, Jewish, Arab, Muslim, Black, Latino, Chinese or a member of some other identifiable social or ethnic category.

When we were young, we probably didn't have a name for this sort of comment, but as we grew older, we learned to label such comments as cultural stereotyping. Stereotypes are generated by ignorance and/or fear of a person or group that is different from us. Initially, these comments may sound funny but we may realize later how inherently harmful these comments are at best or very cruel at worst.

Although stereotypes can sometimes reveal certain tendencies or attitudes, existing in a certain culture, they are normally highly oversimplified and exaggerated views of reality. They are especially attractive to people who are judgmental of others and who are quick to ostracize people who are different from them. Stereotyping has been used to justify ethnic discrimination and systematic prejudices against whole categories of people. Far from arising out of careful and systematic study and analysis, stereotypes arise out of idle talk and limited knowledge. Instead of helping our understanding of a person or a group, stereotypes always stand in the way of accurate and fair understanding and assessment.

We cannot help generalizing about cultural differences, as this is the main way humans organize their cultural knowledge. However, Stereotypes sometimes arise out of people's need to classify everybody they encounter in order to know how to deal with them and define themselves as members of their own group. Thus, stereotypes, in certain social situations serve to provide answers to questions about how we should act toward people that we do not know well. The problem is that stereotypes are often distorted generalizations and assumptions that classify people by putting them into groupings that are familiar to us. They reflect misconceptions and misrepresentations of the socio-cultural landscape.

Stereotypes are part of the social dynamics and can be humorous at times. However, the question we need to ask ourselves, individually and collectively, is whether the misinformation, negative consequences, and bias they spread are proportionate with the humor they generate.

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CULTURE TIPS

EDITION NO. 25

Cultural Analysis: Typical steps are –

- Segment population by shared sociocultural characteristics – drill down beyond demographics.
- Match* belief and affiliational patterns to segmented sociocultural groups.
- Identify* key groups for mission objectives.
- Understand relation* of structure and beliefs/affiliational patterns with group motivations relative to mission objectives.
- Conduct a site assessment* to validate and collect data to refine analysis.
- Refine analysis*: power structure, decision making, population power analysis, interactions.
- Generate IR* – collect data and further refine analysis.
- Estimate population impact of proposed COAs*, including second and possibly third order effects.
- Monitor* population responses to operations – note difference from expected.
- Conduct an after-action assessment*, collect data, and develop lessons learned.

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