



U.S. Marine Corps Culture & Cultural Intelligence for Stability Operations



Marines

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(b)(4)



Agenda



- **Background**
- **USMC Organizational Culture**
- **Impact of Organizational Culture on Innovation**
- **Impact of Organizational Culture on Cultural Intelligence and Stability Ops**
- **Insights, Issues, and Ideas**



Background



- **Project sponsored by OSD/NA**
- **Based on earlier projects examining how Service organizational culture affects innovation**
- **Desire to look at the organizational culture of one Service in more depth**
- **War in Iraq prompts focus on cultural intelligence and stability operations**



USMC Organizational Culture



- **Tensions within USMC org. culture**
 - *Technology – Equip the man v. Man the equipment*
 - *Mission – Small Wars v. Expeditionary*
 - *Command – Decentralized v. Centrality of Commandant*
 - *History – Extensive v. Selective, Laudatory v. Critical*
 - *Unity – Homogeneity v. Difference*



USMC Organizational Culture



- **Belief in importance of Corps as organization allows tensions to exist without destroying organization**
- **Allows USMC to exploit and use tensions selectively to ensure flexibility and adaptability**
- **Warrior ethos and concern for organizational survival are key elements**



Impact of Org. Culture on Innovation



- **Tensions make it impossible to achieve 100% solution**
- **Resultant pragmatism (80% solution) means rapid adaptation**
- **Innovation more challenging**
 - *Difficult to achieve single-minded focus*
 - *Difficult to institutionalize change*
- **In both cases, change agents must have standing as warriors and change must be sold as incremental**



Impact of Org. Culture on Cultural Intelligence



- **Homogeneity**
 - *No separate primary MOS for FAOs*
 - *Goal is to provide all Marines with basic cultural framework*
- **Pragmatism**
 - *Focus on realistic goals for language training*



Impact of Org. Culture on Cultural Intelligence



- ***Expeditionary Ethos***
 - *Short (7 month) deployments for units*
 - *Tradeoff between local familiarity and burnout?*
- ***Warrior Ethos***
 - *Marines emphasize leaving FOB, interacting with population*
 - *Cultural intelligence has to be pitched using terrain metaphor*



Impact of Org. Culture on Cultural Intelligence



■ History

- *Efforts to improve cultural awareness must be sold as minor shift*
- *Efforts also closely linked to USMC history of COIN (too closely?)*

■ Decentralization

- *Focus on cultural awareness at lower levels mean deficiencies remain at operational and strategic levels for campaign planning (not unique to USMC)*



Impact of Org. Culture on Stability Operations



- **Homogeneity**
 - *Limited capacity in specialty areas like civil affairs, engineering*
 - *No incentives to retain Marines with specialized skills*
- **Expeditionary Ethos**
 - *To ensure deployability and reduce costs, force is very young with high turnover*
 - *Leadership at lower levels may not have experience to deal with demands of future*
 - *Demographic changes making model less sustainable*



Impact of Org. Culture on Stability Operations



- **Warrior Ethos**
 - *Marines want to be where fighting is – prefer COIN to stability operations*
 - *Is it possible to identify determinants of unit performance in stability ops?*
- **History**
 - *USMC able to sell stability operations as something it has always done*
- **Decentralization**
 - *Limited ability to implement necessary programs from above (e.g. integration with Iraqi units)*
 - *In past, less centralized lessons learned process – much improved in recent years*



Insights for DOD



- **Increase pragmatism in planning**
 - *Focus on realistic goals and minor adjustments*
 - *Divide efforts up into discrete, feasible chunks instead of trying to do everything perfectly at once*
 - *Recognize and accept uncertainty*
- **Allow greater decentralization of effort**
 - *Issue broad guidance more rapidly*
 - *Minimize micromanagement once guidance issued*
 - *Encourage varied implementation*
 - *Experiment, collect data, revise, repeat*



Issues for Exploration



- **Effects of tour length on effectiveness in stability operations**
- **Applicability of USMC “business model” for stability operations**
- **Determinants of unit effectiveness in stability operations**



Other Ideas



- **Stability Operations without a Net**
 - *US forces are likely to apply NCW to stability operations*
 - *Asymmetric adversaries may target the network*
 - *How do US forces conduct stability ops without a net?*
- **US forces and the Long War**
 - *US forces confront a conflict that could last decades*
 - *Stability ops will play a key role in the Long War*
 - *How have militaries conducted similar conflicts in the past?*
 - *What are potential ramifications for US forces?*