



Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications - Physical Environment, Economy, Social Structure, Political Structure, Iraq, Islam, Clausewitz, Wargaming

U.S. Government, Department of Defense, U.S. Marine Corps War College, Marine Corps University

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This textbook is designed to help Marines link concepts of culture to the realities of planning and executing military operations around the world. The book has three primary goals: To provide a theoretically sound framework of five basic cultural dimensions, based on clear, academically accurate definitions, which are relevant to military missions. To apply these basic cultural principles to actual environments to which Marines and other members of the U.S. military have deployed, or may deploy in the future, showing how the principles of Operational Culture can be applied across the geographic and kinetic spectrum of operations. To develop a capacity among Marines at all levels to think systematically about culture, and to apply that thinking to learning about culture in both professional military education and pre-deployment training.

This book is of equal utility to company-grade and field-grade officers, as well as for staff non-commissioned officers (SNCOs). It is to be used in the classrooms of the Marine Corps, and will also serve as a reference tool in the fleet. Finally, it can help commanders and planners to incorporate culture in every step of the road prior to and during deployment, from unit training, to planning, to the ongoing commander's evaluation of the battlespace. These capabilities are particularly germane in current and future operating environments.

Purpose of Operational Culture for the Warfighter * Framing the Problem: "Irregular" Warfare and the Significance of Culture * Back to Clausewitz * Integrating Culture in the Military Domain * Purpose and Structure * As We Cross the Line of Departure * Part I - Terms of Reference * Chapter One: Context * A Historical Approach to Culture in Operations * The Conceptual Context * The Five Operational Culture Dimensions * Chapter Two: Defining Culture * Military Definitions of Culture * Culture: An Operational Definition * From "Culture" to "Operational Culture" * Conclusion * Part II - Five Operational Culture Dimensions for Planning and Execution * Chapter Three: Dimension I - The Physical Environment * How Culture Groups Relate to their Environments * Operationally Relevant Features of the Physical Environment * Water * Land * Food * Materials for Shelter * Climate and Seasons * Fuel and Power * Transportation and Communication Networks * Chapter Four: Dimension II - The Economy of a Culture * Formal and Informal Economic Systems * Goods and Services in the Informal Economy * People Who Participate in the Informal Economy * Economy as a Dynamic Network of Exchange * Egalitarian and Communal Distribution * Direct Reciprocal Exchange * Symbolic Directional Exchange Economy as a Way of Structuring Social Relationships * Pastoralism * Agriculturalism * Industrial Production * Chapter Five: Dimension III — Social Structure * Understanding Social Structures * Factors Affecting Position within the Social Structure * Age * Gender * Kinship and Tribal Membership * Class * Ethnicity, Ethnic Identity, and Membership * Religious Membership * Chapter Six: Dimension IV — Political Structure * Political Organization * Political Structures Defined * Bands * Tribes * Chieftdoms * States * Who Holds Power: Cultural Forms of Leadership * Formal Leaders * Informal Leaders * Leadership in Acephalous Societies * Episodic Leaders *

Councils and Oligarchies * Hereditary Leadership * Dictators and Strongmen * Elected and Selected Leadership * Culture and Law * Law as Cultural Mirror * "Inside and Outside" the Law: The State versus Local Cultural Groups * Conflict Resolution and Law * Conflicts Over Power: Challenges to Existing Political Structures * Chapter Seven: Dimension V — Belief Systems * Some Features of Beliefs and Symbols * History, Imagined Memory, and Folklore * Icons * Symbols and Communication * Rituals * Norms, Mores, and Taboos * Religious Beliefs * Formal Religion * Informal Religion * Part III * Toward Applying Operational Culture

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