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INTERCULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract

Discovering the ground truth is critical in order to adapt within complex intercultural operations. This project explored the following research question: How do cultural norms and values influence intercultural perceptions of US military advisors interacting with Afghan military personnel? The research applied a method of *qualitative data analysis* to examine collected narratives from US military advisors and discovered valuable insight to improve the effectiveness of the human domain. To support the thesis that American strategic success depends on adaptive intercultural competence that overcomes influential misperceptions, the researcher argued for three *foundational pillars*: recognize *conflicting interests*, the importance of *cultural context*, and *complex problems require critical thinking*. The data analysis revealed repeated themes of assumptions, risk, and gender, and led to a concept of a psychological *third gender* perspective in cross-cultural opposite-gender interaction. Several conclusions were developed from the collected data with implications for an effective human domain in the US military. First, it is critical to analyze *cultural misperceptions* to develop cultural competence. Second, *cultural context matters*. Third, *active feedback* is necessary in complex situations in order to adapt effectively. The researcher expands on active feedback with the following recommendation: An effective human domain must integrate active feedback into training for operations involving complex intercultural interaction.

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Introduction

As a deployed US Air Advisor tasked to develop an organic pilot training capability for the Afghan Air Force, I was surprised by my own cultural assumptions and misperceptions when interacting with Afghan student pilots as an instructor pilot. A revealed truth often opens the mind to consider and question concepts that established the initial perception.¹ This project explores the following research question: How do cultural norms and values influence intercultural perceptions of US military advisors interacting with Afghan military personnel? This researcher used a qualitative path of discovery and found surprising and valuable insight to improve the effectiveness of the US military human domain. The background and literature review establish three foundational pillars applicable to the scope of this study. Next, the researcher describes the specific methods used to collect and analyze qualitative data followed by a detailed data analysis. The analysis suggested several conclusions developed from the collected data. The research concludes with recommendations to improve US military intercultural competence.

American strategic success depends on an ability to adapt to a cultural context in spite of personal biases. Although difficult to attain, cultural competence is critical before developing intervention strategies that require interaction with other societies in order to achieve long-term political end states. This review provided a foundation for how the US can attain strategic goals when military forces are employed with other cultures to build partner capacity. The following pillars supported the argument for intercultural competence: (1) Strategies to promote US national interests do not easily translate between cultures on an international stage; (2) Matching a cultural context is more successful for long-term objectives; (3) 'Ground truth' examples prove cultural matching is an elusive goal and will defeat easy answers to complex problems. This review provided a foundation to further examine how cultural norms influence intercultural relations and how the discovery of cultural misperceptions reveal interesting observations valuable to mission effectiveness.

Building off the conclusions of the literature review, this study used a method of qualitative data analysis to study narratives of US military advisors in Afghanistan for factors related to the research question regarding intercultural perceptions. The researcher discovered repeated ideas and concepts from collected narratives to generate an intercultural competence theory supported by the associated experiences. The strength of this method is how it builds a theory grounded on what the qualitative research uncovers instead of beginning with a predetermined hypothesis. A theory generated by this method uncovered concepts that reveal cultural misperceptions common in intercultural interaction and recommendations for future improvements for US military advisor applications.

Data analysis of the collected narratives was a journey of discovery. This section addressed the following information in sequence. First, the researcher described challenges with narrative collection and shares lessons learned with the reader. Next, analytical objectivity is necessary when conducting qualitative data analysis framed by the researcher's own unique perspective and experiences. Samples of first and second cycle coding provided a context of how the method was executed during data analysis. Two concepts continued to appear throughout the compiled narratives coded as events concerning RISK and/or GENDER. Categories of associated patterns illuminated how actual experience of US military advisors confirmed or conflicted with their initial assumptions. Both categories began with assumptions and developed into first-hand experience or knowledge. This section finishes by exploring the idea of Third Gender in the context of female US military advisors interacting with male Afghan personnel.

From the literature review and data analysis, three conclusions were identified as relevant for the US military in situations involving intercultural relations. The collected narratives and

analysis suggested several takeaways which build on each other. First, the trail of discovery reinforced the idea that culture is not simple and it is critical to identify explanations for cultural misperceptions. Second, because culture is fluid, people adjust their behavior to adapt to a new cultural context. Third, active feedback is critical to an effective human domain system as this context shifts.

In the final recommendations section, the researcher argued American strategic success depends on adaptive intercultural competence to overcome influential misperceptions. Specifically, US military advisors will benefit from an active feedback element integrated into their training, leading to enhanced effectiveness in intercultural interaction. In order to break free of biases and outdated information, individuals and organizations must be open to receiving feedback. This researcher proposes deliberately integrating active feedback to shape the essential training for US military personnel selected for roles of complex intercultural interaction.

Background and Literature Review

“The world’s hope for peace...is directly dependent upon the mutual understanding of peoples.”

– From *The Cultural Approach: Another Way in International Relations*, 1947 ²

American strategic success depends on adaptive intercultural competence to overcome influential misperceptions.³ Understanding people through culture is not an innovative idea in the area of international relations, but history has confirmed it is difficult to acquire proficiency in this area. Culture is a fundamental element in international relations and its impact must be fully grasped before developing intervention strategies that require interaction with other societies in order to achieve long-term political end states desired by the US. This researcher reviewed multiple works to answer the following question: How does the US achieve strategically successful goals when engaging a military to interact with other cultures? After this study, the researcher proposed the following pillars: (1) strategies to promote US national interests do not easily translate between cultures on an international stage; (2) matching a cultural context is more successful for long-term objectives; (3) ‘ground truth’ examples prove cultural matching is an elusive goal and will defeat easy answers to complex problems. With this in mind, this project continued to evaluate the theory that uncovering cultural misperceptions may reveal valuable insight, specifically related to gender roles in professional cross-cultural interaction and mission effectiveness.

Definitions and Scope. Before examining the arguments presented above, it is necessary to define the terms used and the scope of this review. The author approached this research from an international relations realist lens, assuming the US will act according to its own security interests above others. The term “strategic success” is used to denote achieving desired end states with a long-term outlook. For the purposes of this study, culture is defined as everything

humans do that is not purely biological or necessary for survival.⁴ Values consist of what an individual or group of people consider as important and refer to “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite” and are influenced by cultural perceptions.⁵ In his book, *Culture Matters*, Samuel Huntington defined culture as “the values, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and underlying assumptions prevalent among people in a society.”⁶ In sum, culture includes the shared ideas about life that guide a group’s behavior and can change.⁷ Intercultural competence is much more than simply knowing about other cultures. It is a combination of cultural competence and cross-cultural communication. Intercultural competence provides the “expertise to interpret and analyze the interactions of people from different cultures on various levels”⁸ as well as a cognitive skill that promotes effective and appropriate decision-making within a culturally complex context.⁹

Conflicting Interests. The first pillar in this review is the concept that strategies to promote US national interests do not easily translate between cultures on an international stage. This struggle is a result, in part, of conflicting interests and unsustainable strategies. In some cases, US short-term interests do not align culturally with other nations. This problem requires critical thinking through reflection on a complex issue in order to develop a sustainable strategy which supports the long-term interests of both parties. In other words, it requires a non-biased review of the problem prior to setting a course of action.¹⁰ From a realist perspective, the US makes strategic decisions based on rational calculations of expected success. However, in the journal *International Relations*, Roland Paris contends that intervening states imposing political change into foreign environments often project their own biases and assumptions onto another culture.¹¹

These misperceptions suffer from a lack of critical thinking and appear in the intervention

cases of US-led imposed regime change in Iraq and Afghanistan. Conflicting interests were present in both cases; US interest of regional stability countered with local interests of self-determination. Michael Ignatieff examined nation-building in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan and identified an essential paradox “that temporary imperialism – empire lite – has become the necessary condition for democracy in countries torn apart by civil war.”¹² Ignatieff’s book *Empire Lite* encapsulates the simultaneous yet conflicting US interests of self-determination and imposing American values with the following: “to safeguard American interests in Central Asia at the lowest possible cost and to give Afghanistan back a stable government of its own choosing.”¹³ While the US possessed contradictory interests within its own policies, the solution is further complicated when another culture’s interests are brought into the equation. Creating a long-term sustainable strategy for complex problems requires a level of critical thinking and intercultural competence the US military has yet to demonstrate.

Cultural Context. Strategies must be able to adapt to the unique cultural context of each situation. However, attempts to develop a sustainable strategy in intercultural relations are easily influenced by misperceptions. Cultural context is complex and there is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution across diverse civilizations. Edelstein and Krebs posited the US retains delusions of grand strategy and “in the complex and highly uncertain world of international politics, it is all but impossible to identify the ideal strategy ahead of time.” They further identified the problem that strategies with short-term rewards may prove unwise for long-term interests so strategy must be flexible.¹⁴ In the case of Afghanistan, Paris identified the model of state building mirrored “the structure and functioning of developed Western states, irrespective of whether this would prove sustainable in the Afghan context.”¹⁵ If the desired end state is not sustainable, state building efforts in Afghanistan may reflect the old dilemma of *trying to fit a square peg in a*

round hole. Therefore, when developing a long-term approach, the US must account for the unique cultural factors and adapt its strategy to fit the cultural context of the issue.

A WEIRD Perspective. A fundamental element to consider in international relations is the cultural context of the societies involved in the interaction. A United Nations Open Working Group determined that “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are...universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities, and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.”¹⁶ It is necessary to translate interests and values between two interested groups. In the case of international economics, societies use a currency exchange rate to determine cross-cultural financial value. Using this same concept, imagine a *cultural exchange rate*¹⁷ where two cultures could interpret interests and values of both groups. Before beginning a cross-cultural exchange, it would be foundational to understand our own personal biases and perspective.

Most western societies, and even behavioral scientists, tend to assume other societies of people will behave in similar ways, but these assumptions are unwisely grounded on observations of the “*weirdest*” people. A *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* article by Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan identified most behavioral studies are based on WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) societies. The authors argued that WEIRD perceptions of “normal” society are in fact least representative of general human behavior in the rest of the world. They cautioned people to be less cavalier in making assumptions about human nature on the basis of our “rather unusual slice of humanity.”¹⁸

A WEIRD perspective will certainly prove problematic when applying influential misperceptions on diverse cultures. Intercultural competence attempts to provide a cultural exchange rate as a cognitive tool able to interpret a diverse culture after recognizing one’s own

personal perspective and may prove effective in determining sustainable strategies meeting both cultural interests. Next, examples of US intervention will shed light on the critical element of culture in international relations and how it influences success or failure.

Matching Cultural Context. The second pillar to consider when developing a successful international strategy is the idea that matching cultural context is more successful for long-term objectives. In order to be sustainable and effective, government policy should be based on the existing social organization of the culture the US seeks to influence. Historic and modern cases of US intervention highlight varying patterns of failure and success concerning interaction with diverse cultures. Military theorist Bernard Brodie stated “there is an intellectual no-man’s land where military and political problems meet,” and the US military often tries to apply a scientific or linear strategy without adapting to the critical values unique to different societies.¹⁹ Exploring previous cases of US intervention revealed the concept that certain actions require a “cultural match” to be effective in the context of the society. Additional support is available in Ty Groh’s paper on “Ungoverned Spaces” examining the theory of cultural matching and a modern government trying to establish authority over the Pashtun people: “The state failed when it either misunderstood the importance of these structural factors or willfully ignored them to pursue other interests.”²⁰ Paris also supported cultural matching when he stated “the failure of outsiders to understand and accommodate the informal structures of Afghan justice sometimes verged on the tragicomic.”²¹

US and Native American Cultural Mismatch. While cultural matching can have a positive impact on strategic objectives, a failure to match can result in devastating consequences. US relations with Native American tribes was an example of a cultural mismatch. The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) mandated US formal tribal governments on Apache and Sioux tribes

in order to establish official interaction with Native American tribes, and consequently imposed the US structure of government. Prior to the 1934 IRA, the political structures of the two tribes were very dissimilar. The Sioux cultural norms reflected a legitimate government with a consensus structure and did not depend on a central leader to determine policy. The Apache societal norms were more hierarchal and feasible under the imposed new government. It is likely that the diverse progress of the two tribes after the 1930s were related to the cultural match of previous norms concerning political tribal governments. The closely matched Apache structure led to successful development and progress. However, the mismatched Sioux society currently includes the poorest counties in America.²² The divergent progress of the Apache and Sioux demonstrates the negative effects on societies when intercultural competence is not employed to adapt a strategy to the cultural context.

Intercultural Competence. After WWII, the United Nations recognized the importance of intercultural competence and founded an organization with the purpose of promoting education and collaboration among nations to contribute to peace and security, known as United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).²³ In 1945, President Roosevelt expressed the necessity of understanding cultural context when interacting with other societies:

Today, science has brought all the different quarters of the globe so close together that it is impossible to isolate them one from another...We are faced with the pre-eminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships – the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together in the same world, at peace.²⁴

To relate this to current cultural issues, when analyzing the cultural context of Afghanistan, there are significant differences within the borders of the country based on different environments.

The region of Kabul nearly reflected a WEIRD society in the 20th Century, but the populated city context was poles apart when compared to the rest of Afghanistan. Bernt Glatzer observed

several cultural differences in Afghanistan that must be considered when interacting in a cross-cultural context. Afghanistan does not possess a strong sense of nationalism, which is a key ingredient to implementing a national government. Additionally, American misperceptions about tribes complicated developmental efforts because Afghan tribes are not inherently political. However, generations of ongoing conflict in Afghanistan has shaken the society, resulting in a shifted political landscape and tribal culture based on the current context.²⁵

In international intervention, understanding local values is critical to strategic effectiveness. In his book, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, David Galula identified the key terrain in an insurgency is not physical space, but the political loyalty of people in that space. In order to gain loyalty, it is imperative to understand what is valued within a society. Each population has unique values to consider when developing a more attractive counter-cause and the counterinsurgency force must adapt to these variables.²⁶ Strategic effectiveness in irregular warfare depends on being able to adapt to the cultural context.²⁷ The same holds true when attempting to establish a long-term solution with a dissimilar culture. Aneek Chatterjee recognized this theory in the article “Will Democracy Survive? Afghanistan and the International Community Post-2014” where he argued the future long-term success in Afghanistan must be shaped by the Afghan people.²⁸

Despite past missteps, the US is beginning to recognize the importance of cultural contexts. A 2008 Congressional Hearing focused on transforming the US military’s cultural awareness where Secretary of Defense Robert Gates expressed a key military mission is not the fighting we do, but our capability to empower, enable, and mentor partner nations to defend and govern themselves.²⁹ The implications of this new mission require focused efforts to develop cultural awareness with the ground forces most involved in counterinsurgency and stability operations,

and identified the role of the Air Force as having the least influence in this area (more on this later).³⁰ While not exactly mainstream, applying the idea of a “cultural match” or at least possessing intercultural competence is a skill worth developing, especially in military forces directly tasked with interaction with other cultures.

Complex Problems Require Critical Thinking. The third pillar to consider when developing an international strategy posits that ‘ground truth’ examples prove cultural matching is an elusive goal and will defeat easy answers to complex problems. US involvement in recent conflicts required a new focus on cultural competence, but military cultural awareness training may not actually hit the mark. George Lucas, Jr. (US Naval Academy professor and author, not Star Wars filmmaker) identified the following tangible shift in US military doctrine with a new focus on intercultural competence. The official Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24.2 *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*, released in 2009, devoted a section to *Cultural Competence and Situational Awareness*.³¹ In 2014, Army FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* included a *Culture* chapter and guidance for “Human Terrain Systems.”³² Additional US Joint Publications on Advising provide multi-service tactics, techniques, and procedures for a multitude of topics but devote a relatively short five pages to *Culture and the Advisor*.³³ The Army’s focus on culture is not apparent in other military services, and may be appropriate based on mission relevance as identified in the above Congressional Hearing.

Limited USAF Cultural Training. The US Air Force (USAF) receives significantly less cultural education and relies on ‘just-in-time’ pre-deployment training to fulfil requirements. Additionally, the USAF depends on online computer based training (CBT) to deliver a two-hour Culture General Course with an additional two-hour culture-specific course (only Iraq or Afghanistan). The service attempts to make up for a deficiency of intercultural competence with

pre-deployment training provided at the Air Advisor Academy in New Jersey – a course designed to prep Air Advisors tasked to NATO’s Air Training Command-Afghanistan (NATC-A) – including classroom instruction and fieldwork.³⁴ While this training is a start, it does not attain the level of cultural competence necessary for USAF members to adequately advise a culture so different from their own. The USAF overall mission has not typically fulfilled the role of advising and perhaps the ‘just-in-time’ training approach is a fiscally appropriate response. However, if the national strategy depends on a military capability to empower, enable, and mentor partner nations to defend and govern themselves, then the limited depth and relevance of training should be a priority and is worth reconsidering. The mission of Air Advising and the previous analysis of cultural matching lead to an interesting dilemma concerning appropriate partner nation capabilities.

Reestablishing Iraq and Afghanistan Air Forces. To achieve long-term American strategic success, strategists must address difficult questions prior to introducing a new system into a non-Western culture. Specifically, it is necessary to critically consider if certain capabilities are actually appropriate and sustainable for the cultural context of a society. Recall that the aforementioned Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the first pillar recognized that these goals must take into account “different national realities, capacities, and levels of development.”³⁵ The *U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* directs the Department of Defense (DOD) to “build the capacity and competence of U.S., allied, and partner forces for internal and external defense.”³⁶ Two cases of AF capabilities shed light on the strategic cost of applying an easy answer to a complex problem.

Nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan involved in-depth Air Advisor programs designed to reestablish the respective Air Forces as a self-sustaining national defense assets.

Strategists saw the apparent success of the Air Advisor program in Iraq and applied the same program onto Afghanistan without asking tough questions about the significant differences in cultural context between the two cases.³⁷ The challenge of NATC-A Air Advisors was to rebuild and modernize the Afghan AF from nothing and it still struggles to make sustainable progress with the partner force. In retrospect, the ‘ground truth’ reality in Afghanistan reflects this solution was not verified as a cultural match for the society it attempted to serve.

American strategic success depends on adaptive intercultural competence that overcomes influential misperceptions. Although difficult to attain, cultural competence is critical before developing intervention strategies requiring interaction with other societies in order to achieve long-term political end states desired by the US. This review provided a foundation for how the US can achieve strategically successful goals when engaging military forces to interact with other cultures. The following pillars supported the argument for intercultural competence: (1) strategies to promote US national interests do not easily translate between cultures on an international stage; (2) matching a cultural context is more successful for long-term objectives; (3) ‘ground truth’ examples prove cultural matching is an elusive goal and will defeat easy answers to complex problems. This project continued further to examine how cultural norms influence intercultural relations and how the discovery of cultural misperceptions reveal interesting observations valuable to mission effectiveness.

Method

This study used the method of qualitative data analysis to study narratives of US military advisors in Afghanistan for factors related to the stated research question. The researcher anticipates discovering repeated ideas and concepts from collected narratives to generate an intercultural theory supported by the related experiences. The strength of this method is how it builds a theory grounded on what the qualitative research uncovers instead of beginning with a predetermined hypothesis. A theory generated by this method will uncover answers to illustrate concepts that reveal cultural misperceptions common in intercultural interaction and possible recommendations for future improvements for US military advisor applications.

Grounded Theory. Grounded theory is simply the discovery of theory from data. Typically, a researcher develops a theory and then tries to verify the theory with research. In the case of grounded theory, the researcher collects data by asking open ended questions and then examines the data to discover a theory supported by the data. Sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss argue that this approach may “close the gap between theory and empirical research” in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. The basic theme of their book is the defense of the concept that “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research.”³⁸ Because the author is limited in her experience with qualitative data analysis, grounded theory suggests a useful method to finding meaningful information from narratives.

Research Process. Generating a theory from data involves a process of research where “most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research,” according to Glaser and Strauss.³⁹ The process of grounded theory includes four stages of working with qualitative data using Codes, Concepts, Categories, and Theory, where the researcher builds and tests theory throughout all

phases of the analysis.⁴⁰ Similar codes are grouped together as common Concepts; then related Concepts are grouped into Categories which are used to generate a theory. Grounded theory cautions against preconceived ideas tainting an objective researcher exploring the data. However, this researcher conducted a literary review while exploring the associated subject of adaptive intercultural competence for a related academic paper in a previous term. The adaptive intercultural competence paper information will be summarized and included as background when appropriate for the current research.

Collected Written Narratives. This study examined qualitative data in written narrative form collected from US military officers who interacted with individuals from another culture during their deployed missions. The scope of this study is limited by time and resources. Due to these limitations, this researcher chose a tangible, clearly-communicable data form that could be easily collected and that would provide a linear delivery of the respondent's experience. The prompt for the narrative suggested a written paragraph as the length of the individual's story, but allows for expansion if needed. The term "paragraph" intended to manage expectations for the respondent and to limit the qualitative data to be codified due to the study's time constraint. The quality of the individual cultural perceptions delivered is more important than number of narratives collected. This approach aligned with Glaser and Strauss who argue "the number of cases is also not so crucial. A single case can indicate a general conceptual category or property; a few more cases can confirm the indication."⁴¹ Grounded theory views both types of data, qualitative and quantitative, as necessary to generate theory.⁴² The researcher collected narratives from ten respondents who delivered multiple stories of cross-cultural interaction within each written communication. In sum, this study will use the described method to process collected individual written narratives for qualitative data in order to generate a grounded theory.

Narrative Coding Process. The narrative coding process was developed by referencing *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook, Third Edition* by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The researcher selected the code types identified in *Table 1. Definitions of Code Types for Qualitative Data Analysis* to examine and analyze the collected written narratives. In the first cycle of coding, **In Vivo** codes identify words or short phrases directly from the narratives. Repeated words and phrases may lead to further connections between the narratives. Miles et al. described this type of objective coding as appropriate for a researcher learning how to code data which honors the respondents' written narrative using quotes.⁴³ Another code type used in the first cycle is **Values** coding developed by the researcher's subjective perception. Values coding should reflect the respondent's values, attitudes, and beliefs sub-coded to represent the individual's perspective. Specific definitions of a value (V), an attitude (A), and a belief (B) from Miles et al. are provided in *Table 1*. This type of subjective coding is appropriate when exploring cultural values and intrapersonal or interpersonal respondent experiences.⁴⁴

In the second cycle of coding, **Pattern** codes examine the codes and concepts discovered in the first cycle to develop meaningful and more significant elements from the collected data. Miles et al. establish that "Pattern coding is not always a precise science – it's primarily an interpretive act."⁴⁵ Interpreting data is subjective by nature, incorporating the perspective of a researcher. For example, an Air Advisor experience in Afghanistan framed a viewpoint on how the researcher interpreted the data and formed ideas of significant themes within the collected narratives. This researcher selected an academic advisor with anthropological and cultural expertise to verify the codes as meaningful to the research question at hand. Specific codes developed in the first and second cycle will be described in the data analysis section of this work.

Finally, analytic memos were used throughout the discovery process as a tool to capture

the researcher’s thoughts about the data. These memos are primarily conceptual and aid in the development of theory during data analysis.⁴⁶ The researcher used the Comments function in Microsoft Word to capture codes and memos within the collected narratives. Code types were differentiated by bold font within the narrative for In Vivo codes; abbreviation of V, A, B for Values codes; and all caps identified Pattern codes in the second cycle of analysis. Analytic memos were often separate comments or identified by parenthesis. Although the academic advisor to this project identified a particular software as useful when coding narratives, this researcher chose to use the tools available in Microsoft Word due to the limitations of this study.

Table 1. Definitions of Code Types for Qualitative Data Analysis

<p>In Vivo Coding (1st Cycle, Objective)</p>	<p>Uses words or short phrases quoted from the narrative as codes. Honors the participants’ written narrative using quotes. Most well-known qualitative coding methods.⁴⁷</p>
<p>Values Coding (1st Cycle, Subjective)</p>	<p>Suggest a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs; indicate the perspective or worldview of the respondent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A value (V:) is the importance we attribute to ourselves, another person, thing, or idea. • An attitude (A:) is the way we think and feel about oneself, another person, thing or idea. • A belief (B:) is part of a system that includes values and attitudes, plus personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of the social world.”⁴⁸
<p>Pattern Coding (2nd Cycle, Interpretive)</p>	<p>Explanatory codes that align material from First Cycle coding into more significant elements of analysis.⁴⁹ “Pattern codes usually consist of 4 summarizers: (1) categories or themes, (2) causes or explanations, (3) relationships among people, and (4) theoretical constructs.”⁵⁰</p>

Data Analysis

“Research never ‘proves’ anything; at best, it *suggests*.”⁵¹ Data analysis of the collected narratives was a journey of discovery. This section addresses the following information in sequence. First, the researcher will describe challenges with narrative collection and shares lessons learned with the reader. Next, analytical objectivity is a necessary goal when conducting qualitative data analysis considering the researcher’s own unique perspective and experiences. Samples of first and second cycle coding provide context of how the method was executed during data analysis. Two concepts continued to appear throughout the compiled narratives coded as events concerning RISK and/or GENDER. Categories of associated patterns developed and illuminated how actual experience of US military advisors confirmed or conflicted with their initial assumptions. Both categories begin with assumptions and develop into first-hand experience or knowledge. This section finishes by exploring the idea of Third Gender in the context of female US military advisors interacting with male Afghan personnel.

Challenges. This project used the following narrative prompt: “*Describe a situation you’ve personally experienced interacting with a different culture when the initial assumptions did not fit the actual cultural context.*” The researcher experienced several challenges with narrative collection: academic approval, timely collection, and confusing terms. First, the academic approval process was an unplanned challenge for the project because it utilized narratives collected from human participants. Each respondent was required to give signed permission to use their provided narrative for the purposes of academic research. The release can be signed digitally which alleviated further problems when communicating electronically. The second challenge was collecting narratives in a timely manner. The academic approval process delayed the project by four weeks and the researcher was not allowed to send the prompt

until appropriate approval was granted. All respondents are US military officers who are still active duty and located all over the world. Interaction between the researcher and respondents was primarily through email. Third, some respondents found the narrative prompt to be ambiguous and were unsure what kind of experience the researcher was trying to collect. The term “cultural context” was particularly confusing within the prompt. Future research would benefit by testing out the prompt on several individuals to resolve any confusing terms before sending it to possible respondents. These questions were often clarified through email, and the researcher intentionally tried to avoid leading the respondent in a particular direction while ensuring the narrative captured a personal story about interacting with Afghans as US Advisors. Once the narratives were finally collected – and continued to trickle in throughout the data analysis process – the true discovery of the project began.

Analytical Objectivity. The researcher recognized that perspectives are shaped by past experiences and tried to look objectively at each narrative by carefully observing the words used by the respondents to build codes described in the Methods section of this study. In his book *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes*, Patrick Porter stated: “A major obstacle to accurate cross-cultural perception is the problem of analytical objectivity.”⁵² By using In Vivo and Values coding, the researcher methodically examined specific words used by the respondents. A sample of what this coding looked like during the data analysis process is shown in *Figure 1. First Cycle Narrative Coding Sample*. Note the bold font within the narrative and comments added by the researcher in the right margin.

Additionally, the researcher recognized there are multiple cultural factors that affect behaviors within any society – including religion, family affiliations, education levels, local norms, and previous intercultural exposure, to name a few. Due to the limitations of this study,

this researcher chose to focus on a relatively secular and narrow view of the perceived Afghan cultural norms observed first-hand by US military advisors. Moreover, the researcher had limited experience and exposure to these factors which are difficult to determine by observation. The scope of this study did not allow for a deeper analysis into these other cultural factors, but they are important to acknowledge.

Figure 1. First Cycle Narrative Coding Sample

[a] One of the most important, humbling, and rewarding missions we flew as C-208 air advisors in Afghanistan was the human remains mission. However, from day one of my deployment, I was counseled that as a US female advisor, I would not be able to fly on any of these missions. The USAF had even developed a CONOPs on it, stating females could not pilot these missions. Then one day on a routine mission to Camp Bastion with my Afghan male student, the US Marines greeted us at the plane and said they had two coffins for us to transport back to Kabul. I pointed out the fact that I was female and the Marines seemed to not care. They brought their Afghan counterparts out to the plane and also showed them I was female. No one cared. They just wanted their buddy to be brought home to Kabul and buried. After receiving Group Commander approval, I flew the soldiers' remains back home to Kabul. I later sat down with the Chief of Stan/Eval for the Afghan Air Force fixed-wing squadron at Kabul and he told me the CONOPs were strictly a US regulation without Afghan input, and the Afghans had no rules about who flew the plane. It was a shock to the USAF personnel, but also a welcoming response. The Afghans had their first female flying missions and the inflexibility this perceived cultural "faux pas" would have on the flying schedule was less than ideal.

█, USAF Capt/Maj, Afghan Air Advisor, female]

Commented [KSS2]: Inappropriate gender role

Commented [KSS3]: Assumptions-organizational

Commented [KSS4]: USAF rule assumed Afghan cultural offense

Commented [KSS5]: "No one cared. They just wanted their buddy to be brought home to Kabul and buried."

Commented [KSS6]: US rule w/out Afghan input

Commented [KSS7]: "Afghans had no rules about who flew the plane"

Commented [KSS8]: Not culturally offensive for females to fly any missions

Commented [KSS9]: "first female" - novelty

Interpretive Coding. After initially capturing In Vivo and Values codes within the compiled narratives, the researcher next looked at the identified data to develop Pattern codes. Some patterns were immediately obvious and easily created when similar words were used by different respondents. Other patterns did not surface until repetitive analysis and after reflection of the full collection of narratives. Recall that Pattern coding was referred to as an “interpretive act” and a different researcher with their unique personal biases and experiences might discover their own patterns using the same qualitative data analysis process. This researcher validated the recognized codes by collaborating with a faculty advisor. The identified Pattern codes were recorded and are defined in *Table 2. Definitions of Pattern Codes*.

Table 2. Definitions of Pattern Codes

ASSUME (organizational)	Organizational assumptions, derived from formal training, education, or authorized policies or positions.
ASSUME (personal)	“To think that something is true or probably true without knowing that it is true.” ⁵³ Personal assumptions expressed within a given narrative
GENDER	“The state of being male or female.” ⁵⁴ Typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones.
GROUND TRUTH	Identifies information provided by direct observation; may support or conflict with previous assumptions. (first-hand knowledge)
HUMOR	Lighthearted joking, teasing.
INTERACTION (physical, verbal)	Identifies physical contact or presence involved in an interaction between people. Includes interpreted facial expressions such as smiling, or using humor.
NOVELTY	“The quality or state of being new, different, unusual and interesting.” ⁵⁵ May result in unpredictable behavior or interaction.
PERSPECTIVE	Point of view: “a position or perspective from which something is considered or evaluated.” ⁵⁶
PREP	Identifies preparation for Advisor role; includes organizational (required pre-deployment training), personal (study, replacement turnover, etc.), may be first or third hand knowledge.
ROLE	“A part that someone or something has in a particular activity or situation; the part that someone has in a family, society, or other group” ⁵⁷ ; personally interpreted as appropriate or inappropriate based on cultural assumptions or first-hand experience.
RULE	Organizational rule or instruction that constrains or restrains behavior.

A visual sample of how Pattern coding developed during the data analysis process is available in *Figure 2. Pattern Narrative Coding Sample*. Note the Pattern codes identified in ALL CAPS were added within the comments in the right margin, but the initial In Vivo and Values codes are still preserved within the narrative and other comments. Remember that Pattern codes are interpretations of the qualitative data, based on the researcher’s unique perspective. The previously defined Pattern codes were recognized throughout several narratives, and furthered the journey of grounded theory discovery.

Figure 2. Pattern Narrative Coding Sample

[a] One of the most important, humbling, and rewarding missions we flew as C-208 air advisors in Afghanistan was the human remains mission. However, from day one of my deployment, I was **counseled** that **as a US female** advisor, I would not be able to fly on any of these missions. The **USAF** had even **developed a CONOPs** on it, stating **females** could not pilot these missions. Then one day on a routine mission to Camp Bastion with my **Afghan male student**, the US Marines greeted us at the plane and said they had two coffins for us to transport back to Kabul. I pointed out the fact that I was **female** and the Marines **seemed to not care**. They brought their **Afghan counterparts** out to the plane and also showed them I was **female**. **No one cared**. They just wanted their buddy to be brought home to Kabul and buried. After receiving Group Commander approval, I flew the soldiers' remains back home to Kabul. I later **sat down with the Chief of Stan/Eval for the Afghan Air Force** fixed-wing squadron at Kabul and he told me the CONOPs were strictly a **US regulation without Afghan input**, and the **Afghans had no rules** about who flew the plane. It was a **shock** to the USAF personnel, but also a welcoming response. The Afghans had their **first female** flying missions and the inflexibility this **perceived cultural "faux pas"** would have on the flying schedule was less than ideal.
 [REDACTED], USAF Capt/Maj, Afghan Air Advisor, female

- Commented [KSS2]: PREP
- Commented [KSS3]: ROLE: Inappropriate gender role
- Commented [KSS4]: Assumptions-organizational
- Commented [KSS5]: GENDER: USAF rule assumed Afghan cultural offense
- Commented [KSS6]: "No one cared. They just wanted their buddy to be brought home to Kabul and buried."
- Commented [KSS7]: GENDER: US rule w/out Afghan input
- Commented [KSS8]: GENDER: "Afghans had no rules about who flew the plane"
- Commented [KSS9]: GROUND TRUTH: Not culturally offensive for females to fly any missions
- Commented [KSS10]: NOVELTY: "first female"

Pattern Codes. A discussion of several identified pattern codes is valuable to further develop the direction of the analysis process. Based on the narrative prompt, almost every narrative addressed some form of initial assumptions, coded as “ASSUME” and included personal or organizational assumptions. Another pattern seen in most narratives indicated the respondents’ preparation – sometimes reflected in formal training, at other times involved personal turnover with first-hand experience.⁵⁸ A few respondents identified a lack of preparation or turnover. These patterns were coded as “PREP” and were typically described in more detail within the researcher’s comments. Another notable discovery was the “GENDER” pattern code included in *every* narrative from female US military advisors. The gender code was often associated with other pattern codes and was further explored to develop Concepts and Categories in the grounded theory process. “RISK” was a pattern code that surfaced later in the data analysis process after collaboration with the researcher’s advisor. This researcher initially coded these events as “PERSPECTIVE” but recognized the value of deeper analysis and later

connected the codes as “RISK” events. Miles et al. identify critical thinking and revising codes is tedious work, but valuable to diagnose essential concepts in the analysis process.⁵⁹

Throughout the coding process, concepts were developed and combined into a visual representation using tables. Initial tables often did not survive early critical review but were a crucial building block for the process of generating an eventual theory. Tables were reorganized into categories that connected several concepts identified as interrelated and interdependent. The researcher made an effort to preserve the words of the respondents’ narratives when practical to avoid losing meaningful information during the data analysis, typically reflected by using quotes. *Tables 3, 4, and 5* demonstrate the analytical progression from similar events to connected concepts and will be discussed next.

RISK and GENDER. Most narratives involved RISK or GENDER coded events. The researcher investigated the different observed perspectives reflected in the narratives during identified RISK events and compiled them into *Table 3. Different American and Afghan Perspectives*. This table examined contrasting perspectives of the same event and recorded analytic memos to stimulate further consideration of concepts and categories in the data analysis.

Table 3. Different American and Afghan Perspectives

Coded Event: RISK	American perspective	Afghan perspective	Analytic Memo
Disposed wood in maintenance pit [h]	Serious safety concerns over discarded wood in maintenance pit	Didn’t perceive safety concerns using maintenance pit as trash dump	Motives - why put wood in the pit?
ANA soldier accidentally discharged magazine [i]	(1) Someone could have been killed	No one was hurt, press on with the mission	“...understand the dangers, we simply have no other choice.” (McChrystal book quote)
ANA soldier accidentally discharged magazine [i]	(2) Victory that someone wasn’t killed due to previous muzzle awareness training	No one was hurt, press on with the mission	Different perspective based on first-hand experience

Officer ordered soldier to test maintenance crane [j]	Sitting in a tow strap loop 20 ft in the air is dangerous (V: high value of individual safety)	Dangerous, but worth the risk (V: low value of individual soldier's safety)	Task/duty priority
ANA found IED, brought it into camp [k]	IEDs are dangerous and should be avoided	IEDs are interesting; Accepted high level of risk	US aversion to RISK; Afghan acceptance of danger
Anticipating future logistics needs [l]	"Anticipating future demand for supplies and equipment is essential to good logistics"	Accept the risk; Planning for future or emerging events is not in our control - "Inshallah" if Allah wills it	Afghan disinterest in RISK
Male/female physical contact (hands)* [m]	Physical contact between different genders makes Afghan males uncomfortable	Physical contact okay in aircraft; no negative reaction observed; understand context	Context matters, *also GENDER coded event
Coded Event: RISK	American perspective	Afghan perspective	Analytic Memo

As the reader can see, perspectives were not the same between different points of view looking at the same event. In one case, two US military advisors had a vastly different perspective based on their experience on the ground with Afghan personnel (see *Figure 3. Narrative: Different Perspectives*). One US advisor viewed an event as a high risk event where "someone could have been killed." However, the advisor familiar with the progress of training recognized the Afghan muzzle control training saved lives in the same scenario.

Figure 3. Narrative: Different Perspectives

[i] On another occasion my team chief, myself and our team were out on dismounted patrol with ANA soldiers. One of the ANA soldiers squeezed the trigger to his AK-47 and didn't release until his clip was empty. The ANA officers and SNCO didn't do anything to the soldier and pressed on with the mission. My Major was extremely upset because someone could have been killed. I told Maj [redacted], this situation was a victory. The reason it was a victory was because the soldiers had his weapon in the ready front position with the muzzle facing the ground. When we first go into theater the ANA had zero muzzle awareness and were flagging everyone. We did address this issue with the ANA [redacted] Commander and recommended remedial training for the soldiers (no finger on the trigger unless you are ready to shoot). [redacted], Capt USAF, EET/Combat Advisor]

Commented [KSS64]: Afghan perspective: "pressed on with the mission"

Commented [KSS65]: US perspective: someone could have been killed

Commented [KSS66]: US perspective: victory that someone wasn't because of effective previous remedial training

Overall, an American perspective was more risk averse and unwilling to unnecessarily risk American lives in Afghanistan. In a contrasting point of view, Afghans were accustomed to war and death – danger was simply a fact of life. In his recent book *Team of Teams*, US Army General (Ret.) Stanley McChrystal reflected, “Most of us would consider it unwise to do something before we are fully prepared; before the equipment is optimally in place and our workers well trained.”⁶⁰ However, the courteous Afghan Minister of the Interior – responsible for the Afghan Police – patiently explained to Gen McChrystal, “Of course we understand the dangers, we simply have no other choice.”⁶¹ To Americans, the Afghan perspective of RISK was almost a NOVELTY and made it difficult to orient within an unexpected context of different perspectives.

Expectations and Responses. In a great deal of the narratives, respondents revealed surprise that their perspective was not also shared by the other person involved in the interaction. US personnel often assumed sameness and expected to share similar values and experiences. Their first-hand experience frequently conflicted with what they expected. This concept of unexpected responses was also true in GENDER coded events. *Table 4. Gendered Events with American Expectations and Afghan Responses* builds on the ideas from the RISK event table and adds GROUND TRUTH into a concept of personal expectations and first-hand experience of intercultural interaction.

Table 4. Gendered Events with American Expectations and Afghan Responses

Coded Event: GENDER	American Expectation	Afghan Response	GROUND TRUTH	Analytic Memo
US female attends meeting as “youngest and lowest ranking officer” and “only female” [b]	Lowest ranking officer “deserved a seat in the far back corner.” Expected a “lack of extra attention given to females” by Afghans	“As soon as I walked in, they [Afghans] kicked a USAF Colonel out of his seat at the table and had me sit there.”	Hospitality and place of honor for US female officer	Third gender, NOVELTY, celebrity

NOVELTY – “first US female pilot in Kabul”; “first Afghan female fixed-wing pilot” [c]	“Be cautious flying with an Afghan female”	HUMOR – typical jokes representing women “Who would make radio calls since we would be gossiping the entire flight?”	Humor to deal with unfamiliar situation	Third gender, NOVELTY
PHYSICAL – hand shaking between males/females NOVELTY – very interested in US female [d, m]	Afghan males uncomfortable with female contact	Requests for hand shaking, pictures, and conversation	Afghans males requested interaction with US females	Third gender, NOVELTY, celebrity
PHYSICAL – male/female hand contact during flight instruction* [m]	Afghan males uncomfortable with female contact	“The student did not react negatively to my physical contact in the aircraft” and improved his flying skills	No observable negative reaction, physical contact appropriate for critical phase of flight	Third gender, context, *also RISK coded event
Coded Event: GENDER	American Expectation	Afghan Response	GROUND TRUTH	Analytic Memo

Assumptions – Preparation – Ground Truth. The collected GENDER events and the surprising GROUND TRUTH revealed the concept that expectations evolved from the respondents’ assumptions and preparation, given pattern codes of ASSUME and PREP, respectively. The next phase of the data analysis process led to the creation of *Table 5. Assumptions – Preparation – Ground Truth.* This table focused on the connections between Assumptions, Preparation, and Ground Truth in events where first-hand experience either confirmed or conflicted with initial expectations. Assumptions shape the preparation which provides a “script” to follow for intercultural interaction. However, when a person encounters something “off-script” and their actual experience does not fit expectations, they may become disoriented. Some of the narratives repeated ideas of Western solutions that did not work within the context of the reality on the ground. One US system implemented was a computer-based system to conduct inventory for a logistic mission. However, the ground truth discovered a lack

of literacy within the Afghan soldiers and an even smaller group who were familiar with computers. Inaccurate assumptions lead to challenges to orient and adapt to a complex situation involving different cultures.

Table 5. Assumptions – Preparation – Ground Truth

Events	ASSUME	PREP	GROUND TRUTH	Confirm or Conflict?
c	Be cautious when flying with females (GENDER)	Briefed during training	Most were receptive/excited; HUMOR	Conflict
d	Inappropriate topics could offend Afghans (GENDER)	Cultural sensitivity classes	Afghan male student asked questions of US female instructor; topics were not offensive	Conflict
e	All adults can read and count	Utilize computer-based systems to conduct inventory	Lack of literacy: only 50/750 Afghan soldiers on installation could read, even fewer were computer literate (poor cultural match)	Conflict
e	Everybody knows how to drive; there will be plenty of mechanics	Translate vehicle maintenance manuals	Lack of drivers and mechanics; most could not read the translated manuals	Conflict
h	Take things for granted	US personnel turnover	“We don’t measure success in miles or days but in inches and years.”	n/a
h	Hydraulic jacks would not work for all the vehicles in Afg.	Maintenance pit was universal and needed zero upkeep	Afghans didn’t perceive US safety concerns & used mx pit as trash dump	Conflict
l	Afghans possess “basic concepts of logistics”	Limited turnover regarding past issues, challenges, progress	“Most basic concepts of logistics were not commonly understood” by Afghans	Conflict

Assumptions – Roles – Interaction. The researcher built on the Assumptions – Preparation – Ground Truth connection and explored how this concept applied to events categorized by GENDER. *Table 6. Assumptions – Roles – Interaction* examines Gender coded events from the angle of initial assumptions unsupported by first-hand interaction.

Table 6. Assumptions – Roles – Interactions

GENDER Events	ASSUME	ROLE	INTERACTION	Confirm or Conflict?
a	Afghans did not want females involved in certain missions (PHYSICAL)	US female advisor not allowed to fly on human remains mission	“No one cared.” Afghans wanted their buddy brought home to be buried.	Conflict
b	Lack of extra attention given to females	Only female in conference room, also lowest ranking officer	Afghans insisted she sit at the table	Conflict
b	Always greet guests with warm hospitality	Only female in conference room, also lowest ranking officer	Afghans insisted she sit at the table	<i>Confirm, but conflicts with ASSUME [b]</i>
d	Students wouldn’t respond well to a female IP	“sole purpose...to train the females”	Flew/interacted with both female and male students; no issues	Conflict
d	US females categorized with Afghan women	Male students could not touch Afghan female students	Requests for hand shaking of US female (PHYSICAL)	Conflict
f	US IPs must be tactful when correcting Afghan students, allow them to “save face”	Tread lightly as IP to avoid offending Afghan student’s honor	“save face” cultural norm outweighed by respect for IP in student/teacher relationship	Conflict
f	Afghan females marginalized	Full integration of Afghan females into the flying unit	Female students treated the same, despite large age differences	Conflict
m	B: believed contributions may be marginalized due to gender	US female IP teaching Afghan male student	Student was eager to impress and motivated to avoid disappointment	Conflict
m	B: believed contributions may be marginalized due to gender	US female IP teaching Afghan IP	Afghan IP was very respectful; trying to impress US female IP	Conflict
m	Physical contact inappropriate between males and females	US female IP instructing Afghan male student in critical phase of flight	Female IP physically touched student’s hand; no negative reaction from student	Conflict

It is beyond the scope of this study to deep dive into the original roots of these American

assumptions, but a few are worth mentioning. Two assumptions were frequently mentioned and even reinforced by formal or informal preparation for female US military advisors. First: *US women may not be effective in certain missions involving interaction with Afghan males.* Second: *US women may be viewed as “objects” or “not trained professionals” by Afghan males.* This last one is particularly interesting when considering American society’s stereotypical values of objectified women and workplace gender wage gaps and may be worthwhile for future research. However, this study focused on the connections between initial assumptions and first-hand experience of US military advisors in Afghanistan.

The interaction between female US military advisors and male Afghan personnel revealed a surprising ground truth that countered many initial assumptions. These interactions suggest that gender was not a negative issue as expected. In fact, female US advisors were often treated like celebrities by male Afghans. Additionally, female US advisors did not experience any perceived dishonoring behavior during interaction. Some even stressed how respectful the Afghans were. Finally, physical interaction between different genders was not the cultural *faux pas* described by formal preparation. This last discovery was particularly interesting and led to supportive evidence for the Third Gender idea, explored in the final portion of data analysis.

Third Gender. The Third Gender idea was first brought to the attention of the researcher while preparing to deploy as an Air Advisor to Afghanistan in 2014. The individual she replaced was also female and the following communication was recorded through an email addressing numerous questions on how to prepare for the upcoming deployment.

Researcher: Gender/culture: Any thoughts? Advice?

Deployed advisor: Gender/Culture: I have had zero issues here. They kinda see us as a third gender – not male but not Afghan female either.

This email provided this researcher information from someone with first-hand experience that

conflicted with her personal assumptions developed from cultural stereotypes and formal pre-deployment training at Air Advisor Academy. The researcher initially expected her contributions to the mission would be limited in their effectiveness by gender. Receiving this new first-hand perspective opened a line of questioning for this researcher and instigated a search for how initial assumptions could be so counter to the truth on the ground.

Third Gender is defined as the concept that individuals are categorized, either by themselves or by society, as neither man nor woman.⁶² This is not a new concept and references to this type of gender were included in *Arabian Nights* as eunuchs, or even ceremonial Hijras participating in important cultural events in South Asia. Eunuchs and Hijras are more accurately a reflection of sexual category, or having neither male nor female biology. For the purposes of this research, the researcher will continue to use the term Third Gender, not as an anatomical characteristic, but rather a psychological gender dimension related to cultural norms of behavior. This study is particularly interested in how cultural norms and values influence intercultural perceptions and will focus on this specific type of interaction and behavior.

Psychological Gender Stereotypes. Gender is an important factor when examining interpersonal communication and can be a challenge when considering intercultural relations. The terms masculine and feminine are commonly understood as individual personality characteristics, but can also be applied in the scope of cultures. In the book *Intercultural Relations*, author Gary Weaver identified feminine and masculine to be two ends of a culture continuum. Weaver described a low-context culture as masculine where “words become very important and are used to establish control, persuade, and compete with others.”⁶³ On the other end of the continuum, a high-context culture was identified as feminine where “relationships are valued, nonverbal messages are as important as verbal messages, there is a tendency to avoid

interpersonal conflict and maintain harmony.”⁶⁴

Cultures and people are sometimes stereotyped as strictly masculine or feminine, but just as personalities are unique to each individual, stereotypes can lead to misperception. To this point, Sandra Bem researched the traditional male-female dichotomy in 1974, concluding that masculinity and femininity are actually types or characteristics of behavior. Bem identified four types of psychological gender types: “masculine, feminine, androgynous (masculine and feminine traits are seen in androgyny), and undifferentiated (neither masculine nor feminine).”⁶⁵ These psychological gender types are important to consider when investigating sexual stereotypes and cultural perceptions. In *Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication*, the authors argue that androgynous individuals with high levels of masculine independence and feminine nurturance may view relationships as opportunities to adapt behavior depending on the nature and context of the interaction to determine appropriate behavior.^{66, 67} The androgynous psychological gender type is significant when examining the unexpected behavior in an intercultural context of female US military advisors and male Afghan personnel.

Cross-cultural Gender Interaction. Expectations of cultural gender stereotypes conflicted with first-hand cross-cultural gendered interactions between female US military advisors and Afghan males. The textbook *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication across Cultures* describes different cultural expectations regarding touch. “For those who practice the Muslim religion, casual touching between members of the opposite sex is strictly forbidden... Cultures differ in the settings or occasions in which touch is acceptable.”⁶⁸ Initial US assumptions often aligned with the idea that American behavior would fall within the context of the other culture they were interacting with and appropriate behavior would also be established by these cultural norms. However, several narratives support the idea that the

standards of behavior for Afghans did not apply to members of a different culture. An example of this phenomena is demonstrated in the following narrative from a female US military advisor.

Figure 4. Narrative: Gender and Touch

[d] ...My observation during my stay was that American female servicemen represented a third gender. The majority of my experiences illustrated that the students I advised showed me no disrespect and treated me like my male counterparts. However, on one occasion during the holiday, a male student told me he could not touch (e.g. shake hands) the other female students in class but following that comment, he shook my hand. To me, this represented the way I was perceived in comparison to the 2 Afghan female students in class. That being said, there were in total only 3 female Afghan students... [REDACTED], USAF Capt, Afghan Air Advisor, female]

This narrative is particularly revealing when considering the expected cultural norm of opposite gender touch. The male student did not include the female instructor into his own cultural norm of behavior regarding the opposite sex as he would with the female Afghan students. This situation is a clear example of the third gender as a psychological sex category. Other examples of “atypical” cultural behavior between males and females from different cultures included occupational roles and novelty behavior.

Occupational roles are another factor to consider when examining cross-cultural gender interaction. In Afghanistan, the student/teacher relationship is based on a high level of respect for the teacher. The following narrative describes an unexpected challenge of this relationship.

Figure 5. Narrative: Student/Teacher Relationship

Upon flying with both the Afghan students and instructors, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the importance Afghan culture places on "saving face" was far outweighed by the respect that they hold for the teacher in a student/teacher relationship. The students were extremely congenial and had a thirst for learning that far outweighed anything I have seen from the majority of NATO students at ENJJPT. The Afghan students' deferential attitude was carried to the point that I actually had to tell them to take matters into their own hands regarding the planning for their own training, since being able to plan is such an important part of executing a sortie. The common answer of "Sir, you are the teacher, we will do whatever you would like" was actually an unexpected difficulty that took some convincing for the students to overcome. [REDACTED], USAF Lt, Afghan Air Advisor]

In this narrative, a cultural norm produced challenges for a student to achieve the desired characteristic initiative in planning a flight in the eyes of his instructor. The deferential attitude of the student toward the teacher made it challenging to progress to a self-sufficient perspective necessary for an effective pilot.

The female respondents in this study were all acting in the role of instructor pilots who were responsible for teaching students. During her experience instructing a male Afghan student as an Air Advisor, the researcher personally observed an interesting interaction that involved several previously explored concepts – including her occupational role as an instructor pilot, and cross-cultural gender interaction involving physical touch. Note the environment of the interaction is in the context of flying an aircraft is different than the social setting of the shaking hands narrative. Because this interaction occurs during a critical phase of flight, the context also involves the Pattern code of physical Risk.

One Afghan student I instructed was struggling and was considered to be the lowest student in his class. My peers told me he was quite a challenge to fly with because he had ‘no respect for gravity’ and depended on the instructor to save most of his landings from becoming crashes into terra firma. The day before we flew, we sat down in the classroom to go over what we would cover the next flight; short field landings. I told him to be prepared to discuss it before we flew the next day. The next morning, the student showed up completely prepared to teach me all about what he had studied and prepared about the subject of short field landings. I was pleasantly surprised at his level of preparation. He seemed eager to impress me and to not disappoint me.

During the flight, he still demonstrated his unhealthy respect for the dangers of gravity, and I had to take the controls from him several times. The student had a tendency to keep both hands on the yoke while neglecting the power during the last phase of landing. Once he had safely performed several normal landings and takeoffs, I demonstrated the short field landing and talked about how it was critical to have one hand on the yoke and the other on the throttle for a successful short field landing. The student was very eager to try it next; “Yes, teacher. I will fly this next one.” I talked him through the pattern and as we were very close to touching down, I saw he still had both hands on the yoke. Thinking there was no time for me to verbally correct him – then for him to translate that message to his hands – I physically grabbed his left hand with my right hand and put it on the throttle. While I was still shadowing the controls the student completed the maneuver and we continued to fly patterns until the training was complete. The student did not react negatively to my physical contact in the aircraft and outwardly appeared quite proud that he had improved so much on a maneuver he struggled with before.

Later when I was describing the flight to my US friends in the squadron, they playfully asked me if he had ‘placed a scarf over my hand?’ Or ‘did he ask for my father’s contact info to pay a bride price?’ They were surprised I had touched the male student and told me I was probably the only woman besides his wife and family that had ever touched him and now he probably considered me to be his second wife. This became a common joke for the rest of the deployment.

A final remarkable interaction described in several narratives involved the Pattern code NOVELTY. This behavior is interesting in that when people encountered something new or unknown to their cultural norms, it resulted in previously unpredictable behavior or interaction. Respondents described instances where they were given seats of honor when clearly outranked, or Afghan ramp personnel wanting their picture taken with the “celebrity” US female. Other narratives described the US assumption that female US military personnel would be culturally offensive and even placed limitations on the roles and missions they could perform. But when the two cultures actually interacted, the norms of one culture were not automatically placed onto the other culture. The actual interaction between female US military advisors and Afghan males suggest that these US females were not included in typical cultural gender norms expected of an Afghan female. This suggests that Afghans understand context and do not project their cultural gender norms onto US females.

Third Gender Ground Truth. The female gender of US military advisors did not negatively affect their interaction with Afghan males. In his article titled “Gender Perspectives and Military Effectiveness,” Robert Egnell argued that adding “a gender perspective to military operations more generally has the potential to add new capabilities and thereby also improve the effectiveness of operations.”⁶⁹ Of note, the female respondents initially assumed their gender would limit their effectiveness when interacting with another culture in Afghanistan. However, Egnell and others argue that a gender perspective is critical to integrate into military operations because “in a contemporary context, different forms of complex stability and peace support operations...are the most common military tasks. The aims of such military operations have changed from the pursuit of concrete military strategic objectives to the establishment of certain conditions from which political outcomes can be decided.”⁷⁰ US military leaders need to be

aware of biases and assumptions that may not actually translate across different cultures. The strategic context of intercultural relations demands “local cultural understanding and great organizational diversity to tackle the often complex tasks involved in stabilization.”⁷¹

Discovering the ground truth is critical in order to adapt within complex intercultural operations.

Conclusions

“Culture is difficult and prone to oversimplification.”⁷² In the book *Military Orientalism*, Patrick Porter reflected on the practical effects of culture and the impact for the conflicts involving the US. This study examined a similar path by exploring how cultural norms and values influence intercultural perceptions by analyzing the experiences of US Advisors deployed in Afghanistan. The collected narratives and analysis suggest several takeaways which build on each other. First, the trail of discovery reinforced the idea that culture is not simple and it is critical to identify explanations for cultural misperceptions. Second, because culture is fluid, it involves people adjusting behavior to adapt to a new cultural context. Finally, active feedback is critical to an effective human domain system as this context shifts.

Cultural Misperceptions. Culture is more complex than a simple quick-reference guide and it is necessary to prepare military personnel to anticipate unexpected behavior during intercultural interaction, hoping to avoid the shock of cultural misperceptions. It is important to consider and question concepts and assumptions that lead to cultural misperceptions. Current US military training misses the strategic goal of intercultural competence by oversimplifying culture. Pre-deployment preparation establishes expectations with a “cultural script” with tools such as a simplified quick-reference guide containing topics of language, customs, and a list of cultural *faux pas* to avoid. These tools tend to use simplistic heuristics intended to help avoid causing offense, but miss or ignore the complex factors in cultural interactions. Additionally, intercultural competence requires an understanding of personal biases and preconceptions that feed into intercultural interaction. This oversimplification of culture in training can lead to a difficult adjustment period when the actual interaction does not match the assumptions or predetermined script.

A new behavior could be socially risky, but it may be more rewarding to adapt behavior given the new context. The pattern code of “Novelty” seen in the collected narratives supports the idea that culture changes. “When conflicts arise between culture and calculations about the utility of action, culture can be remade to serve utility.”⁷³ In the case of Novelty, a socially acceptable behavior may not yet be established. In the narrative of the US female officer attending a meeting with US and Afghan personnel, the novelty of her being the only female became more significant than the expected behavior due to her lower military rank. The Afghan male officer possessed the will and capacity to insist she take a seat of honor, which was confusing to the respondent as it seemed to violate her cultural perception regarding women and the Afghan culture. As people balance risk and reward, their choices and consequences influence future behavior and establish a new cultural context that may counter previous behaviors and assumptions. As the pattern of Novelty revealed the constant adaptation of culture, it also supports the utility of context when encountering unexpected behavior.

Cultural Context Matters. Culture is both complex and adaptable, often operating without a predetermined script. Cultural context helps to clarify the ambiguity of unpredictable behaviors. Porter used the idea of cultural realism to explain culture as “fluid and malleable” instead of a permanent tradition acting on people.⁷⁴ People adjust and adapt their behavior according to the context and environment they operate within. Consider the relationship between the codes “Assume-Role-Interaction” described in Data Analysis. Most of the intercultural interaction conflicted with the US assumptions about the Afghan culture and their perception of a “culturally appropriate” role. This information suggested Afghans understand context and do not project their own cultural norms onto other people not “included” in their cultural group.

The narratives describing the idea of Third Gender support this even further as female

military US personnel were clearly in a different category where the Afghan cultural norms of physical touch and opposite genders did not apply. The narratives which described shaking hands between opposite genders and physical touch during flight instruction demonstrated that context matters and people adjust their behavior based on their calculations of risk and reward.

The limitations imposed on female US military advisors, in both formal policies and informal expectations, were intended to avoid any culturally offensive action. But the actual interaction between US and Afghan military personnel revealed cultural context matters when determining appropriate behavior for intercultural interaction. The sooner this cultural context is understood, the sooner intercultural interaction becomes more effective. The cultural competence necessary to adapt to the context is developed by experience and preparation.

Active Feedback. The complexities of culture and the adaptation of people make it critical to employ a feedback element into a system of interaction. For current US military advisors, this feedback occurs late in their timeline during turnover or personal experience. In his book *Adapt*, Tim Harford related a story of a Soviet analyst, Peter Palchinsky, who recognized that “most real-world problems are more complex than we think. They have a human dimension, and are likely to change as circumstances change.”⁷⁵ Personal and organizational assumptions shape policies and approaches for interaction with another culture, including constraints or restraints on physical touch, talk, or gender roles. However, the reality is infinitely more complex and application of cultural assumptions may no longer be appropriate due to a different cultural context with factors such as local norms, class, ethnicity, gender, and cultural adaptation. Consider the “Assume-Prep-Ground Truth” relationship identified in Data Analysis. The US assumptions led to misapplication in the form of preparation and conflicted with the first-hand experience when interacting with Afghans. Some of the assumptions led to

“solutions” that did not match or fit the complex realities on the ground. Several narratives mentioned assumptions that all adults could read or drive which led to misapplying what seemed like a simple solution without considering the contextual factors.

In his book *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Edgar Schein identified if the context or “environment changes, and those assumptions come to be dysfunctional, the organization must find a way to change some of its culture...”⁷⁶ Biases and assumptions make it more difficult to orient to a new context and determine the best course of action or behavior. Peter Palchinsky developed three principles for adaptation. “First, seek out new ideas and try new things; second, when trying something new, do it on a scale where failure is survivable; third, seek out feedback and learn from your mistakes as you go along.”⁷⁷ Palchinsky’s third principle of active feedback is critical to effective adaptation and applies in the context of intercultural interaction. Supported by the concept that culture changes, the sooner the military’s human domain can adapt to the cultural context, the more effective they will be during intercultural interaction. Integrating this concept of active feedback will be discussed in the Recommendations section.

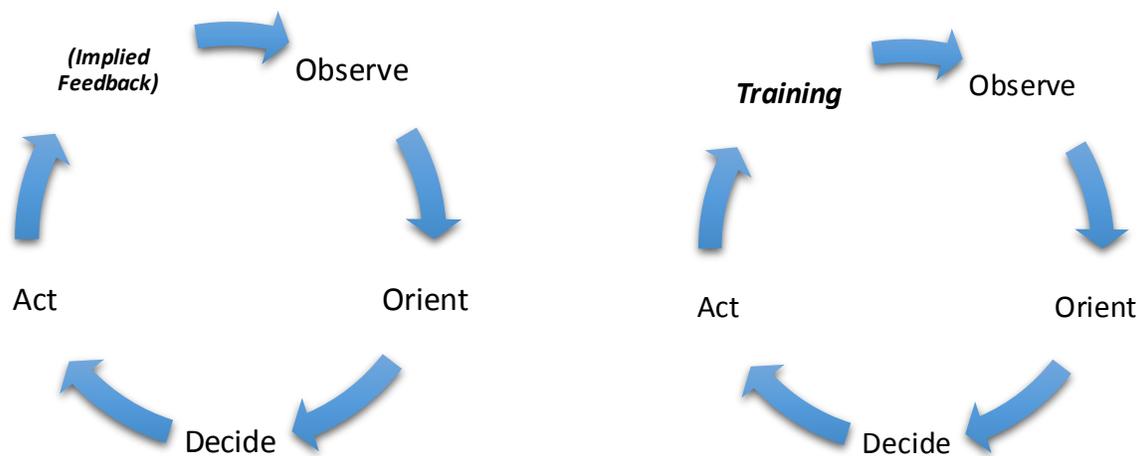
Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned research conclusions, I recommend incorporating a method of active feedback into the human domain based on military strategist John Boyd's OODA Loop. American strategic success depends on adaptive intercultural competence that overcomes influential misperceptions. Patrick Porter identified the critical factor of observation in *Military Orientalism*: "Consciousness of our own assumptions, attention to change and contradiction within culture can sharpen our ability to observe...the enemy acting strategically."⁷⁸ Active feedback will enhance the strategic effectiveness of US military advisors interacting with other cultures. In order to break free of biases and outdated information, individuals and organizations must be open to receiving feedback. In *Adapt*, Tim Harford drives home the concept that in complex situations, failure can lead to success if we can only learn from mistakes and apply these lessons to future action.⁷⁹ Palchinsky's principle of active feedback is critical to effective adaptation and has great applications in the context of intercultural interaction in the human domain of the US military.⁸⁰ Integrating active feedback will have positive effects by shaping essential training for US military personnel selected for roles of intercultural interaction.

Strategist John Boyd developed the OODA Loop, well known in the military planning circles for providing a process to adapt to uncertainty.⁸¹ The OODA Loop involves a decision cycle of Observe – Orient – Decide – Act, see the left cycle in *Figure 6. John Boyd's OODA Loop and Recommended TOODA Loop*. Because it is a repetitive process, lessons are learned and applied to the next iteration of the decision cycle. Many humans naturally incorporate this process as they learn from their experiences and adapt their behavior to avoid undesirable effects.

In *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Edgar Schein identified “the key to learning is to get feedback and to take the time to reflect, analyze, and assimilate the implications of what the feedback has communicated.”⁸² Critical thinking involves difficult reflection and analysis before making a decision and is a necessary skill when considering the complexities of culture. In their article “Addressing and assessing critical thinking in intercultural contexts,” authors Tucker and Miller defined intercultural competence as “another set of cognitive skills – promotes effective and appropriate decision-making, but within contexts that are culturally complex.”⁸³ After considering the implications of feedback and adaptation for complex situations, this researcher recommends an integrated approach to training US military advisors.

Figure 6. John Boyd's OODA Loop and Recommended TOODA Loop



TOODA Loop. The US military currently approaches “Culture” with three detached stovepipes demonstrated in *Figure 7. US Military Culture Stovepipes*. First, US military advisors with first-hand experience and optional individual feedback. Second, mandatory cultural computer-based training (CBT) and attendance at the Air Advisor Academy provided by contract to deliver required pre-deployment preparation. Third, cultural experts with second-hand knowledge and anthropological expertise. The separate stovepipes fail to capture the

important benefits of shared knowledge and experience and lead to advisors unprepared for cultural situations that are “off-script” or unexpected. Stovepipes are not designed to integrate lessons learned and first-hand experience throughout training. A complex situation demands a more adaptive system.

Figure 7. US Military Culture Stovepipes



In *Team of Teams*, Gen McChrystal identified the difficulty of trying to adapt with a prescriptive organizational structure and argues a system of systems was more effective for a complex environment.⁸⁴ McChrystal mandated crosstalk between his teams to increase the mutual understanding between the teams and allowed for innovation to tackle challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Similar to the Team of Teams concept, integrating the stovepipe groups will lead to a more effective human domain. US military advisors become culturally competent through relevant training with active feedback – fed by first-hand experience and anthropological knowledge – before encountering the Observe-Orient phases of the OODA Loop. A visual representation of this integration is shown in *Figure 8. Effective Human Domain Integrates Feedback*. Training with relevance would strengthen the capability for advisors to Decide-Act more quickly and effectively in their appropriate roles.

To facilitate active feedback for US military advisors, an open feedback tool should be made available and accessible to key decision makers, organizations, and individuals to share and integrate experiences and ground truth of US and Afghan interaction. A similar feedback

system was implemented at Air Command and Staff College during academic year 2016 with a low-cost but high yield in terms of gathering effective feedback for a transformative period at the school. The ease of access and integration of feedback would allow for relevant training, expectation management for advisors, and input from anthropological experts who could discern strategic adaptive behavior within culture. Active feedback integration could have a strategic impact on the human domain in the US military and is essential as operations involve critical adaptation within complex intercultural interaction. The sooner the US military's human domain can adapt to the cultural context, the more effective they will be during intercultural interaction.

Figure 8. Effective Human Domain Integrates Active Feedback



Notes

¹ I wish to thank Dr. Angelle Khachadoorian who took on the role as my advisor for this project. Her expertise in anthropology was extremely helpful to fill my personal knowledge gap in this area. Many sources used within the paper were upon her recommendation. Additionally, I wish to thank Lt Col Connelly, Majors Hopkins, and Turcotte for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. All errors found herein are my own.

² Ruth Emily McMurry and Muna Lee, *The Cultural Approach: Another Way in International Relations*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947), v.

³ I wish to thank Lt Col Connelly and Maj Hopkins for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. All errors found herein are my own.

⁴ IAW ACSC, Elective Notes.

⁵ Gary Weaver, *Intercultural Relations: Communication, Identity, and Conflict* (Boston, MA: Pearson Learning Solutions, 2013), 39.

⁶ Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, ed., *Culture Matters* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000), xv.

⁷ Fred E. Jandt, *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community* (Las Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2013), 6.

⁸ Weaver, *Intercultural Relations*, 78.

⁹ John W. Miller and Jennifer S. Tucker, "Addressing and assessing critical thinking in intercultural contexts: Investigating the distance learning outcomes of military leaders," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol 48 (September 2015), 120.

¹⁰ Miller and Tucker, "Critical thinking in intercultural contexts," 120.

¹¹ Roland Paris, "States of mind: The role of governance schemas in foreign-imposed regime change," *International Relations*, Vol 29, No.2, June 2015, 139.

¹² Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan* (Toronto, Ontario: Penguin Canada, 2003), vii.

¹³ Ignatieff, *Empire Lite*, 106.

¹⁴ David M Edelstein and Ronald R. Krebs, "Delusions of Grand Strategy: The Problem with Washington's Planning Obsession" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 94, No.6, Nov/Dec 2015, 110-113.

¹⁵ Paris, "States of mind," 150.

¹⁶ Graham Long, "The Idea of Universality in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," *Ethics & International Affairs* (Cambridge University Press), Jun 2015, Vol. 29 Issue 2, 203.

¹⁷ "Cultural exchange rate" refers to a concept closely related to intercultural competence. In the case of international economics, societies use a currency exchange rate to determine cross-cultural financial value. In a similar way, a cultural exchange rate provides translation between cultural values involved in intercultural relations and will lead to clearly defined objectives.

¹⁸ Joseph Henrich, Steven Heine, and Ara Norenzayan, "The Weirdest People in the World?" *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, No. 33 (2010), 61.

¹⁹ Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1956), iii.

²⁰ Ty L. Groh, "2006 Ungoverned Spaces: The Challenges of Governing Tribal Societies," (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School), v.

²¹ Paris, "States of mind," 150.

²² Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt, "Where does economic development really come from? Constitutional rule among the contemporary Sioux and Apache," *Economic Inquiry*, Jul 1995, Vol 33, No.3., 424.

²³ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 233.

²⁴ McMurry and Lee, *The Cultural Approach*, 1.

²⁵ Bernt Glatzer, "War and Boundaries in Afghanistan: Significance and Relativity of Local and Social Boundaries," *Die Welt des Islams*, no. 41 (2001), 397.

²⁶ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), 71.

²⁷ IAW ACSC – from Elective Midterm Essay by Sarah Kaiser.

²⁸ Aneek Chatterjee "Will Democracy Survive? Afghanistan and the International Community Post-2014" *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Vol XXXVIII, No.4, Summer 20*, 42.

²⁹ House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, *Defense Language and Cultural Awareness Transformation: To What End? At What Cost? Hearings before the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services*, 110th Cong., 2d sess., July 9, 2008 (H.A.S.C. 110-155: 2008), 104.

³⁰ House of Representatives, *Defense Language and Cultural Awareness Transformation*, 2008, 109.

³¹ Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*, 21 April 2009, i, 1-18.

³² Army Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 2 June 2014, 3-5 (pdf p49).

From Paragraph 3-23: "The human terrain system provides tactical to strategic level support to commanders. The human terrain system conducts field research and analysis of the local population to determine the civil considerations in order to help commanders better understand the operational environment from the population's perspective and assess how actions will potentially impact and be perceived by the local population."

³³ Allied Tactical Publication (ATP) 3-07.1, *Advising*, 1 Nov 2014, vi. (pdf p8).

³⁴ House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, *Transforming the U.S. Military's Foreign Language, Cultural Awareness, and Regional Expertise Capabilities: Hearings before the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services*, 110th Cong., 2d sess., Held September 10, 2008 (H.A.S.C. 110-171: 2008), 60.

³⁵ Long, "SDGs," 203.

³⁶ Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, January 2012), 5.

³⁷ The Afghan Air Force (AAF) was founded in 1924 with the Iraqi AF (IQAF) trailing by just six years. The short histories of the two Air Forces have seen very different progress, related, in part, to cultural differences between the two civilizations. By 1988, the IQAF had grown to be the largest AF in the region, supported by a developed society and partner nations. In contrast, the AAF, under Taliban rule, had less than a dozen aircraft left by 1992 and was completely destroyed after 2001.

³⁸ Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1967), 2-3.

³⁹ Glaser and Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 6.

⁴⁰ The purpose of the *Codes* step is to identify anchors or key points from the collected data. The *Concepts* step involves grouping similar codes as a larger building block. Building the data further, the *Categories* step gathers

groups of similar concepts. Finally, the *Theory* stage involves constructing the actual theory from a collection of categories.

⁴¹ Glaser and Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 30.

⁴² Glaser and Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, 17-18.

⁴³ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Jonny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* 3rd Ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 74-75.

⁴⁴ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 75.

⁴⁵ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 90.

⁴⁶ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 96.

⁴⁷ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 74-75.

⁴⁸ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 75.

⁴⁹ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 86.

⁵⁰ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 86, 90.

⁵¹ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 223.

⁵² Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes* (Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2013), 16.

⁵³ Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

⁵⁴ Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

⁵⁵ Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

⁵⁶ Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

⁵⁷ Merriam-Webster online dictionary.

⁵⁸ The term “turnover” is a common military word used to describe the personal interaction between incoming and outgoing personnel. Turnover often involves establishing expectations, challenges, and lessons learned to help the new person be most effective in their new role.

⁵⁹ Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 82.

⁶⁰ Stanley McChrystal, Tatum Collins, David Silverman, and Chris Fussell, *Team of Teams* (Penguin Publishing Group, New York, NY: 2015), 1.

⁶¹ Stanley McChrystal, et. al., *Team of Teams*, 1.

⁶² Online: <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/third-gender>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_gender, retrieved 19 May 2016.

⁶³ Gary Weaver, *Intercultural Relations: Communication, Identity, and Conflict* (Pearson Learning Solutions: Boston, MA, 2013), 68.

⁶⁴ Gary Weaver, *Intercultural Relations: Communication, Identity, and Conflict* (Pearson Learning Solutions: Boston, MA, 2013), 68.

⁶⁵ Ronald B. Adler, Lawrence B. Rosenfeld, and Neil Towne, *Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication, Fifth Ed.* (Harcourt Brace Janovich College Publishers: Fort Worth, TX, 1992), 75.

- ⁶⁶ Ronald B. Adler, Lawrence B. Rosenfeld, and Neil Towne, *Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication, Fifth Ed.* (Harcourt Brace Janovich College Publishers: Fort Worth, TX, 1992), 75-76.
- ⁶⁷ “In general, research by Bem and others supports the conclusion that androgynous individuals are less restricted in their behaviors and are better able to adapt to situations that require characteristics presumed of men or women. This flexibility, this sex role transcendence, may be the hallmark of mental health.” (Adler, 75)
- ⁶⁸ Myron W. Lustig and Jolene Koester, *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication across Cultures, Sixth Ed.*, (Pearson Education: Boston, MA, 2010), 211-212.
- ⁶⁹ Robert Egnell, “Gender Perspectives and Military Effectiveness: Implementing UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security” *PRISM: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2016*, 77.
- ⁷⁰ Robert Egnell, “Gender Perspectives and Military Effectiveness: Implementing UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security” *PRISM: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2016*, 75-76.
- ⁷¹ Robert Egnell, “Gender Perspectives and Military Effectiveness: Implementing UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security” *PRISM: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2016*, 87.
- ⁷² Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes* (Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2013), 192.
- ⁷³ Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism*, 16.
- ⁷⁴ Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism*, 18.
- ⁷⁵ Tim Harford, *Adapt: Why Success Always Starts with Failure* (Picador, New York, NY: 2011), 27.
- ⁷⁶ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership, 4th Ed.* (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA: 2010), 233.
- ⁷⁷ Tim Harford, *Adapt: Why Success Always Starts with Failure* (Picador, New York, NY: 2011), 27.
- ⁷⁸ Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes* (Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2013), 197.
- ⁷⁹ Tim Harford, *Adapt: Why Success Always Starts with Failure* (Picador, New York, NY: 2011), 22.
- ⁸⁰ Tim Harford, *Adapt: Why Success Always Starts with Failure* (Picador, New York, NY: 2011), 27.
- ⁸¹ Frans P. B. Osinga, “The Enemy as a Complex Adaptive System: John Boyd and Airpower in the Postmodern Era,” in *Airpower Reborn*, ed. John Olsen (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015), 51, 59.
- ⁸² Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership, 4th Ed.* (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA: 2010), 367.
- ⁸³ John W. Miller and Jennifer S. Tucker, “Addressing and assessing critical thinking in intercultural contexts: Investigating the distance learning outcomes of military leaders,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Vol 48 (September 2015)* 120.
- ⁸⁴ Stanley McChrystal, Tatum Collins, David Silverman, and Chris Fussell, *Team of Teams* (Penguin Publishing Group, New York, NY: 2015).