Conclusion

The differences in attitudes toward the value of culture and the cultural skills discussed above may relate to the nature of the particular missions Marines participated in (type, primary duties, level of interaction with foreign individuals, etc.). A majority of Marines who deployed only to OIF/OEF indicate that their missions were combat-related, while Marines who deployed elsewhere participated in a wider variety of missions, though foreign military training exercises (21%) were the most common. Such variance has implications for CAOCL culture training and education and their tailoring to mission type. In terms of MOS, Marines with ground combat arms MOSs express positive attitudes toward the value and use of culture. Moreover, some Marines with ground combat arms MOSs value or use aspects of culture significantly more than Marines with other MOSs. Further analyses are required to probe these findings and provide insight into such differences. Overall, regardless of where they deployed in terms of OIF/OEF vs. Non-OIF/OEF, or whether their MOS fell under ground combat arms, Marines illustrate through this survey that they strongly value understanding the impact of culture on an operation, as well as regional knowledge, culture training, and, when dealing with foreign security forces, organizational culture. In addition, they recognize the importance of using cultural skills for accomplishing their mission. These initial findings suggest that CAOCL offers something Marines need, value, and use, both for COIN as well as for more traditional USMC missions.

Notes:

3. For the purposes of this preliminary analysis, ground combat arms refers to the following MOSs: 03 (Infantry), 08 (Field Artillery), 13 (Engineer), 18 (Tank and AAV).
4. In order to increase the confidence that our sample accurately reflects today’s Marine Corps, we weighted the data we received in terms of the USMC population values for rank and gender. Weighting is a statistical process that balances each case (participant) relative to the proportions of the population you’re trying to represent (in this case, the current proportions of rank and gender in the USMC). We also manually compared our sample in the population estimates of age and deployed status (ever deployed vs. never deployed) and found these sufficiently comparable – i.e., typically within a few percentage points. Therefore we did not weight those variables. In addition, we excluded the solitary E-1 and 12 E-2s that participated because the weights for those few cases would have been disproportionately large to compensate for their lack of representation in our sample. Hereafter the data are referred to as the weighted data.
5. The ranks of E-1 and E-2 are particularly underrepresented in the GAL and therefore our survey could not reach many of them.
7. Raw numbers for E-3: 490; E-4: 368.
8. For an explanation of the Mann-Whitney test, see for example http://academic.ualberta.ca/~georgevren/pols216/pspas/ordinadatad.htm
9. Mann-Whitney U test: U = 64358.00, p = .032; U = 68599.50, p = .668
10. U = 19718.50, p = .854
11. Throughout this article, “significantly” refers to a statistically significant difference.
12. U = 65814.00, p = .234; U = 71991.50, p = .974; U = 51336.5, p = .099
13. U = 13983.00, p = .005; U = 13849.50, p = .003;
14. U = 51785.00, p = .467; U = 50545.00, p = .486
15. U = 29043.00, p = .000; U = 41337.50, p = .000; U = 32855.00, p = .002; U = 48883.00, p = .035

Translational Research

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Overall Conclusions about the Value and Use of Culture
Regardless of whether participating Marines deployed only to OIF/OEF or had deployments in addition to or other than OIF/OEF, initial survey results illustrate that today’s Marines strongly value
• Understanding the impact of culture on an operation, regional knowledge, the organizational culture of a foreign security force, and culture training.
• Using various cultural skills while deployed. Details of these findings are below.

The Value of Culture: Type of Deployment
While most of the time a Marine’s attitude toward culture does not vary with his/her deployment history, a Mann-Whitney test indicates that Marines who only had deployments other than OIF/OEF assigned a higher average rank in evaluating the importance of culture training (392.21) relative to Marines who only deployed to OIF/OEF (355.87), U = 62936.5, p = .016. In terms of solely OIF or OEF or solely Non-OIF/OEF deployments, deployment type does not make a significant difference in how Marines feel about understanding the impact of culture on an operation or having knowledge of different regions; the majority agrees or strongly agrees that these issues are a valuable component to operational readiness. In addition, when isolating those Marines who had worked with a foreign security force, there is no significant difference between Marines’ attitudes toward culture based on a history of OIF/OEF only or Non-OIF/OEF only deployments, again, the majority agrees or strongly agrees about the importance of understanding organizational culture when dealing with foreign security forces. However, those Marines who had deployments other than OIF/OEF rate culture training as significantly more important relative to other PTP training requirements in comparison to Marines who deployed to OIF or OEF only (see Figure 1).

The Use of Culture: Cultural Skills and Type of Deployment
When Marines focus on a single deployment in their history, whether they refer to an OIF/OEF deployment or to a deployment in addition to or other than OIF/OEF makes no significant difference in the importance they assign to building rapport, using or interpreting body language, or negotiating with foreign locals. Specifically, the majority rate these skills as important or very important. Marines focusing on a deployment in addition to or other than OIF/OEF, however, rate behaving according to local cultural norms as needed (468.16) and using basic words or phrases in a foreign language (459.37) as significantly more important than those Marines who only deployed to OIF/OEF (390.94, 406.46, respectively), U = 61180, p = .000; U = 64548.5, p = .006, respectively (see Figs. 2 & 3).

Additional Factors: MOSs Associated With Ground Combat Arms vs. Other MOSs: The Value and Use of Culture
While there is no significant difference between the high value placed on culture training and organizational culture by Marines with MOSs associated with ground combat arms and Marines with other MOSs, Marines with ground combat arms MOSs value understanding the impact of culture on operational readiness and regional knowledge significantly more than Marines with other MOSs. (See figures 5 and 6).

In terms of cultural skills, Marines with MOSs associated with ground combat arms and Marines with other MOSs either feel similarly positive toward cultural skills (behaving according to local norms as needed; using or interpreting body language) or Marines with ground combat arms MOSs value the skills significantly more than Marines with other MOSs (influencing and persuading; building rapport; negotiating; using basic words or phrases in a foreign language).