



AUSTRALIAN  
DEFENCE FORCE



ADF PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINE

0 Series | Command

# Culture in the Profession of Arms

Edition 1

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ADF PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINE

# **Culture in the Profession of Arms**

0 Series | Command

Edition 1



Australian Defence Force – Philosophical – 0 *Culture in the Profession of Arms*, Edition 1 is issued for use by the Australian Defence Force and is effective forthwith.

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General

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CANBERRA ACT 2600

13 March 2024

# Preface

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1. Military doctrine describes fundamental principles that guide actions by armed forces to achieve their objectives. While authoritative, doctrine requires judgement in application.

2. Australian Defence Force (ADF) doctrine describes principles that guide the employment and operational effectiveness of a joint force. ADF doctrine publications are designed to concisely describe these principles, and so promote coordinated actions in support of missions and the commander's intent. ADF doctrine publications are written at several levels—capstone, philosophical, integration and application.

3. The content of this publication has been derived from general principles and doctrine contained in other relevant publications, Defence manuals, and allied publications and agreements. Every opportunity should be taken by users of this publication to examine its content for applicability and currency. The Doctrine Directorate invites assistance from you, the reader, to improve this publication. Please report any deficiencies, errors or potential amendments.

4. **Aim.** The first edition of ADF-P-0 *Culture in the Profession of Arms* articulates the ADF's approach to culture in the context of the development of a culturally aware and cross-culturally capable force, characterised by great teams able to work most effectively with others to achieve our mission. It is the principle text on culture and cultural intelligence in the ADF.

5. **Audience.** This publication is intended to be a guide for professional development across all ranks. It informs trainers and educators who design and deliver learning and practical activities for the development of cultural intelligence.

6. **Scope.** ADF-P-0 *Culture in the Profession of Arms* highlights the general principles applicable to the development of more resilient, adaptable and culturally capable Defence personnel. ADF-P-0 *Culture in the Profession of Arms* describes how ADF members can develop cultural intelligence at the individual level, within their teams and organisations, and in the application of

cultural skills and knowledge across the spectrum of competition. This publication does not seek a narrow definition of culture in the profession of arms, but rather applies an adaptive understanding of cultural intelligence as a core military capability in the contemporary ADF.

# Amendments

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Proposals to amend ADF-P-0 *Culture in the Profession of Arms* may be sent to:

Deputy Director Doctrine  
Doctrine Directorate  
Joint Warfare Development Branch  
Russell Offices  
PO Box 7909 | Canberra BC | ACT 2610

[Doctrine Directorate](#)

<b>Amendment number</b>	<b>Chapter(s)</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Effectuated date</b>

# Doctrine publication hierarchy

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The hierarchy of ADF doctrine, and the latest electronic versions of all ADF doctrine publications, are available on:

*Defence Protected Network* [Defence Doctrine Library](http://drnet/vcdf/ADF-Doctrine/Pages/ADF-Doctrine-Library.aspx)  
(<http://drnet/vcdf/ADF-Doctrine/Pages/ADF-Doctrine-Library.aspx>)

and

*Defence Secret Network* [Defence Doctrine Library](#).



# Contents

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Authorisation	ii
Preface	iii
Amendments	v
Doctrine publication hierarchy	vi
Contents	vii
List of figures	ix
<b>PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING CULTURE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1 –</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Culture in the military context</b>	<b>2</b>
The cultural intelligence spectrum	5
<b>Chapter 2 –</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>What is culture?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Recognising culture</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Your place in cultural patterns and structures</b>	<b>12</b>
Agency	12
Power	13
Structure	14
<b>Summary</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART TWO: AWARENESS OF CULTURE</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Chapter 3 –</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Me – Building my cultural intelligence</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Curiosity</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Adaptation</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Cultural relativism</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Chapter 4 –</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Us – Team culture</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Environment and team culture</b>	<b>28</b>
Diversity across the force	28
Unity of experience	29

Climate and culture	30
<b>Reflect, observe, evolve</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Be alert</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>PART THREE: CONNECTING TO OTHER CULTURES</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Chapter 5 –</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>All – Making connections</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>General cultural knowledge</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Culture area 1: Human ecology</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Culture area 2: Social organisation</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Culture area 3: Political organisation</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Culture area 4: Economic systems</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Culture area 5: Beliefs</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Culture area 6: Media</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Chapter 6 –</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Acknowledgements and further reading</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Terms and definitions</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Shortened forms of words</b>	<b>61</b>

# List of figures

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<b>Figure 1.1:</b> Defence Values and Behaviours	3
<b>Figure 1.2:</b> Me-us-all framework	6
<b>Figure 2.1:</b> Recognising culture	9

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# PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

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## **Executive summary**

Part One identifies culture as foundational to military power. It introduces the idea of cultural intelligence as operating on a spectrum—from individual, to team, to organisation—and highlights how the cross-cultural skills, knowledge and mindsets of individual military personnel enable both healthy team formation and success in the operational environment. Part One concludes by explaining the patterns of culture that underlie human behaviour and describing the components that drive cultural change.

# Chapter 1 – Culture in the military context

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1.1 Members of the profession of arms understand the challenges of working in culturally unique environments—both at home and abroad. The ability to adjust to and maximise the power of human potential around us, in our teams, in our force and in our wider environment is an essential skill for an intelligent, adaptive military force.

1.2 Developing the cultural intelligence of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is essential to achieving the Defence mission: to defend Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity.

1.3 Cultural intelligence is the ability to accurately comprehend cultural context, and then act effectively and appropriately. It is central to military effectiveness and applies across the full spectrum of cooperation, competition, and conflict.

1.4 It applies to building, training and sustaining great teams and teams of teams within our force as much as it applies overseas when working with international partners and affected populations, or seeking to understand our adversaries.

1.5 The requirement for cultural intelligence is not limited to senior military personnel, to specific ADF appointments, or to command positions. It extends to all members of the ADF.

1.6 Developing cultural understanding is also a moral responsibility. When we are culturally prepared for our interactions with affected populations and plan for the effects of war on them, we increase our moral authority.

1.7 With cultural understanding, we are better able to meet the shifting circumstances of the operational environment. Without cultural understanding, it is too easy to misunderstand the motives of our allies and adversaries and to lose our direction and focus.

1.8 We define culture as 'a set of beliefs, values, and attitudes shared by members of an organisation or group that influence their behaviours and practices'. When a group repeats behaviours over time, distinctive cultural patterns become visible.

1.9 All people have culture, including you. In some instances, you will share cultural similarities with others, in other instances you will not. Your behaviours and values come from the groups you are born into—such as your family or your ethnicity. They also come from groups you voluntarily join or become part of—such as the Service you joined, or any religion you may commit to.

1.10 Within the ADF, culture shapes our perceptions and actions but it does not determine them. We actively create our cultural norms—we do not passively receive them. Through our active endorsement, we express the values and the behaviours we wish to live by as individuals, teams and organisations.

1.11 At its simplest, culture is 'what we do around here'. In this way, the ADF's culture is a reflection of your actions and behaviours as members of the profession of arms.

1.12 **The ADF, and its integrated partner the Department of Defence, seek to exemplify a culture, everywhere and at every scale and level, in which Defence Values and Behaviours are expressed, demonstrated and normalised in pursuit of the full realisation of individual potential, the emergence of great teams and the achievement of our mission.**

The infographic is divided into two main sections: 'Our Values' and 'Our Behaviours'. 'Our Values' lists four core values: Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity, and Excellence, each with a brief definition. 'Our Behaviours' lists five guiding principles under the heading 'To live Our Values I will:'. The background features a stylized map of Australia and the ADF motto.

Our Values	Our Behaviours
<b>Service</b> The selflessness of character to place the security and interests of our nation and its people ahead of my own.	<b>To live Our Values I will:</b> Act with purpose for Defence and the nation.
<b>Courage</b> The strength of character to say and do the right thing, always, especially in the face of adversity.	Be adaptable, innovative and agile.
<b>Respect</b> The humanity of character to value others and treat them with dignity.	Collaborate and be team-focused.
<b>Integrity</b> The consistency of character to align my thoughts, words and actions to do what is right.	Be accountable and trustworthy.
<b>Excellence</b> The willingness of character to strive each day to be the best I can be, both professionally and personally.	Reflect, learn and improve.
	Be inclusive and value others.

To defend Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity  
www.defence.gov.au

**Figure 1.1:** Defence Values and Behaviours

1.13 The ADF's culture draws from broader Australian society, including First Nation peoples and migrants from all parts of the globe. More than 50 per cent of Australia's population is either born overseas or has a parent who was. Australians identify themselves as belonging to around 300 ethnic groups and speak over 400 languages.<sup>1</sup> Of these, over 150 are actively spoken First Nations languages.<sup>2</sup>

1.14 Living with cultural diversity in Australia is not without challenge. First Nations peoples' lives were dramatically and irreversibly changed when the British first arrived in the late 18th century. Not all migrant groups feel their voices are equally heard. Diverse beliefs and values jostle for influence in public life.

1.15 Through all of this, Australians have created a sense of membership in the Australian community strong enough to accommodate differences. Our acceptance of diversity and equality contributes to our communal stability and security, and is a deep source of strength in times of adversity.

1.16 Understanding and accepting each other's heritage and cultural uniqueness strengthens the ADF. Acceptance of our diversity is a capacity that serves us well when we encounter cultural difference, at home or abroad.

1.17 Competent navigation of the culturally familiar and the culturally unfamiliar is not optional. It is an essential skill for members of the profession of arms as you encounter diverse cultural circumstances and people across your military career.

1.18 In today's complex conflict and alliance environments, ignorance of cultural principles is a form of illiteracy. Being culturally

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<sup>1</sup> *Snapshot of Australia: A picture of the economic, social and cultural make-up of Australia on Census Night*, 10 August 2021, accessed at <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/snapshot-australia/latest-release>

<sup>2</sup> *Language Statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Statistics from ABS collections on the speaking and learning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages*, accessed at <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/language-statistics-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/latest-release>



illiterate or unaware contributes to problematic individual and group behaviour, and blinds us to the humanity of others and the unique ways human beings live their lives. Being culturally literate allows us to develop healthy group cultures, effectively navigate the ambiguity and complexity of cross-cultural encounters, and exercise informed judgement about the motivations of others.

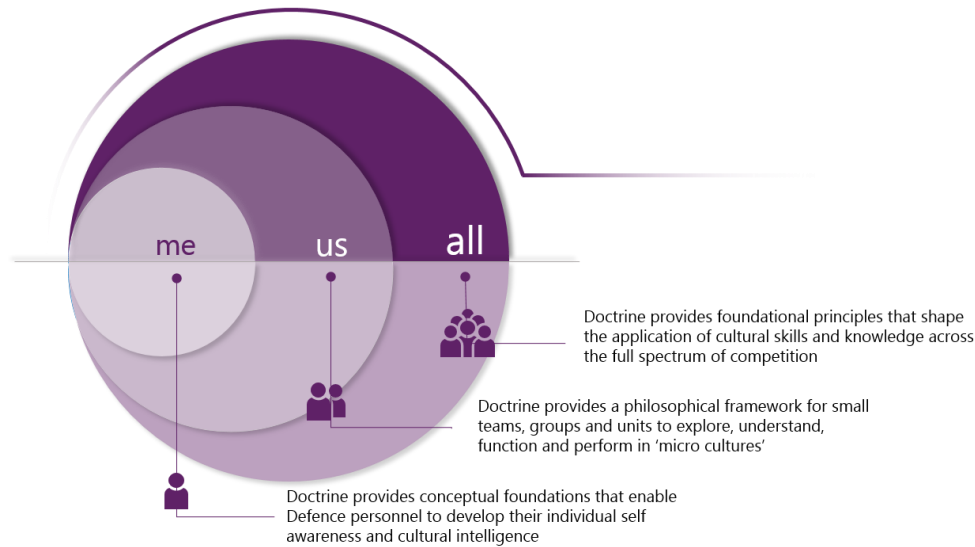
1.19 Because there is no single right way to organise social relationships or make cultural meanings, none of us is in a privileged position to determine the best way to live. Those who live in a different way to you are not inherently living 'the wrong way'. However, recognising and understanding cultural diversity prepares you to better understand culturally unfamiliar people and practices.

1.20 To understand others, we must take care not to make quick judgements that group people into 'us' and 'them'. This treats the unique ways human beings make meaning and establish social relationships as mysterious and potentially dangerous.

1.21 Rather, cultural intelligence seeks to understand both the differences, and the connections, we have as individuals and groups—whether allies or adversaries. It also enhances our ability to understand those who have strategically different priorities. This aids in developing the agility we require to work in challenging cultural environments where relationships, alliances and the dynamics of competition constantly change.

### **The cultural intelligence spectrum**

1.22 This doctrine situates cultural intelligence on a spectrum from individual ADF personnel and small teams, to joint and integrated partnerships, world-wide coalitions and alliances, and international environments. It does so through a clear **me-us-all** framework (see Figure 1.2).



**Figure 1.2:** Me-us-all framework

1.23 At the level of **me**, this doctrine provides conceptual foundations that will enable you to develop your individual self-awareness and cultural intelligence.

1.24 At the level of **us**, the doctrine will provide a philosophical framework for you to explore the 'micro-cultures' of your small teams, groups and units. This provides a foundation for you to develop competency in understanding, functioning and performing in larger teams of teams.

1.25 Lastly, at the level of **all**, the doctrine will articulate foundational principles that shape your application of cultural skills and knowledge across the spectrum of cooperation, competition and conflict—including in domestic support, peacekeeping, disaster relief and conflict.

1.26 The following chapters will expand on each aspect of **me-us-all** to form a comprehensive account of the principles and skills you will need to achieve effective cultural intelligence.

## Chapter 2 – What is culture?

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2.1 As members of the profession of arms, our ability to interact appropriately and effectively in distinctive cultural environments requires a core set of knowledge, skills and mindset—a cultural toolkit— that can be used no matter what part of the world we find ourselves in, or of what operation we are a part.

2.2 This cultural toolkit helps us understand the cultures we create among ourselves as well as the diverse cultural environments in which we operate. This toolkit is indispensable for individuals and teams to operate with awareness and integrity in the mission environment. This reduces the risk of miscalculation, dehumanisation, and mission failure.

2.3 Cultural theory is a complex academic field that has several schools of thought and terminology. ADF-P-0 *Culture in the Profession of Arms* outlines the Australian Defence Force's (ADF's) approach to culture by establishing a common language that enables us to operate as an integrated force. Establishing this common language reinforces the strategic value of cultural intelligence.

2.4 It is important to acknowledge that describing the shared behaviours and beliefs of a group is like taking a photograph of a crowd—it freezes them for a moment, even though people are moving at the time they were photographed. Like the moving people in the crowd, culture changes over time. It does not freeze into a static model at the moment we describe it.

2.5 Similarly, the military actors involved in conflict can rapidly change, requiring amended operational awareness and decision-making on your part. This underlies the importance of constantly evolving and refining our understanding of culture.

## **Cultural awareness versus cultural understanding: the task or the campaign?**

### **Operations over Syria – 2015**

I conducted my first Middle East deployment in 2015, stationed in the United Arab Emirates. Australia was part of the Coalition forces fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and we flew missions controlling the movement of military aircraft in Syrian and western Iraq airspace. At that time, Russia was not involved in the military intervention so was not part of our management of airspace. On my second deployment in late 2016, the political climate had changed. Syria were fighting ISIL but not in partnership with the Coalition, and Russia were providing military support to Syria. We had to take that into account. By the time I got there, there was a direct line between Coalition and Russian headquarters. Each day the Russians would call that line and would say where they wanted to fly that day and Coalition aircraft would stay clear of wherever the Russians said they would be operating.

One particular day, we were controlling aircraft movements in a particular area. On this day, the Russians told the Coalition headquarters, who then told us, that they would be operating at between 9000 and 17,000 feet (ft) in this area. We also had a pair of American F15s who we had cleared to work overhead at 23,000 ft to 25,000 ft. At this point we had communications with Turkey and they said they wanted to put two unmanned aircraft at 18,000 ft and 19,000 ft as well as two F16s at 20,000 to 22,000 ft. So on this particular day we had between two and four Russian aircraft, four Turkish aircraft, and two American aircraft flying at different altitudes in the same airspace, all procedurally deconflicted from each other.

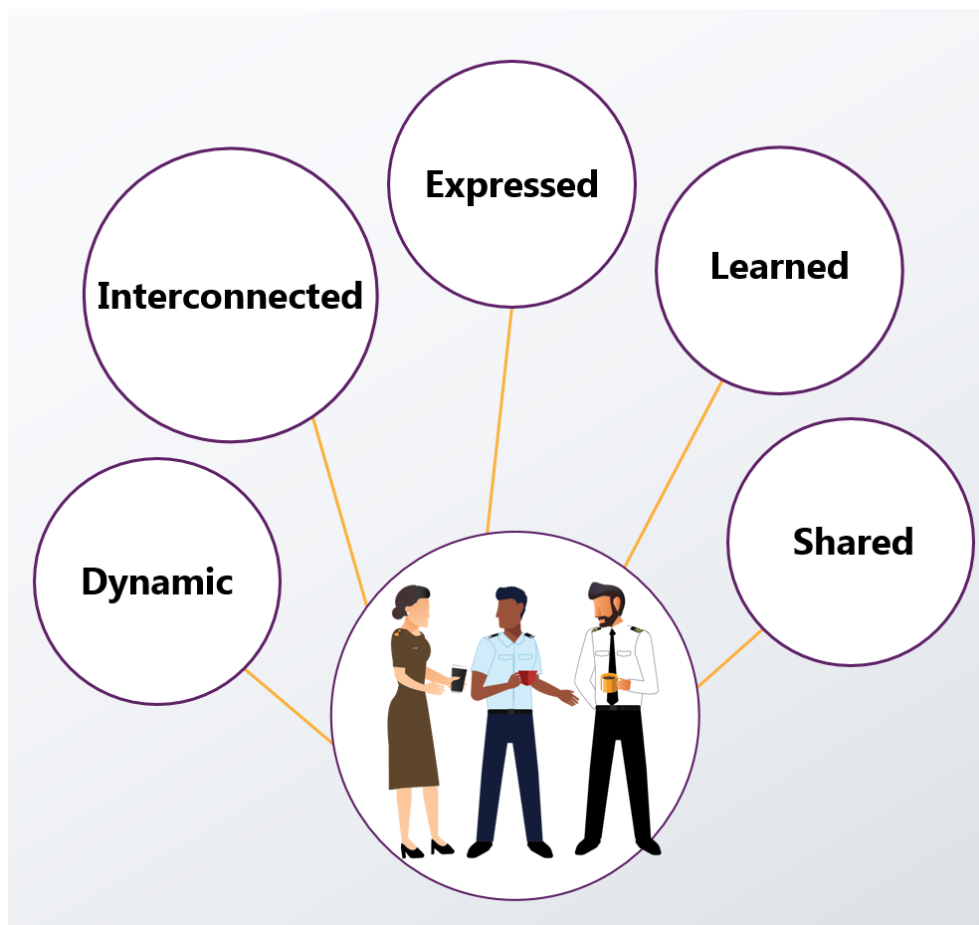
Everyone was playing nice with each other but we were not all on the same team. The Americans were supporting the Kurds, the Turks were fighting the Kurds, the Russians were supporting Syrian regime forces, and everyone was fighting ISIL.

We got a two-hour pre-deployment cultural awareness brief before we left Australia and we were getting daily intelligence briefs about what was happening on the ground. But we were not always in a

position to make as much sense of this information as we would have preferred; about each country's objectives and the effects their targeting would have on the ground. We had enough cultural awareness and procedural integration to do our task each day but not enough cultural understanding to best contribute to the campaign.

## Recognising culture

2.6 Culture and society are two aspects of the same whole. Sometimes the terms are used interchangeably, even if they refer to different features of how people live. The following sections break the idea of culture down into understandable patterns. These patterns, also called 'structures', help us to think, act and reflect on what culture is. This will enable us to recognise our own behaviours and the behaviours of others.



**Figure 2.1:** Recognising culture

2.7 Culture is **learned**. Biology provides humans with the basics to learn and create culture but it does not create fixed patterns of behaviour. Because of our biology, we are born with the capacity to learn any culture and to become members of groups, including more than one group at any moment. We learn this directly, through instruction—such as when we are trained in how to handle lethal weapons and how to use them responsibly. We also learn indirectly—through observation, imitation and communication with others.

2.8 Culture is **shared** between members of a group. It does not belong solely to an individual. Through our shared culture, we learn what it means to act and speak in appropriate and inappropriate ways, and are able to predict how others in our group will act and react to our actions and comments. Understanding and influencing group culture can have a powerful effect on building teamwork.

2.9 In an operational environment, figuring out the interconnections that make for a group's shared culture builds anticipatory awareness of how allies, partners, adversaries and local populations will likely react to your intentions, actions and presence.

2.10 Culture is **interconnected**. All elements of culture are related to each other. To effectively understand a culture, we should seek to learn as much as possible about each element and their interconnections. A fuller explanation of these parts is outlined in Chapter 5.

2.11 Culture is **expressed** through symbols, artefacts, rituals and language. A symbol or artefact is a sign, shape, action or object that is used to represent something else. Symbols, artefacts and language only have meaning and value when people in a group agree on them. Rituals are regularly repeated sequences of gestures and words that embody these meanings and values. Rituals often give expression to symbols, which we can see at work in our system of military uniforms, unit crests and awards.

## Interpreting symbols in the ADF

The badges we wear on our ADF uniforms are symbols. They represent rank, specialisation and Service. Similarly, the medals and ribbons we wear are symbols of noteworthy service, though they are not the noteworthy service itself. Importantly, however, while you may know that another's medal is an official recognition of a significant achievement, you may not know what that achievement is or how you will interpret it. This tells us something general about symbols and their meaning.

Almost anything can represent something else, and there is no universal rule that determines how this should work or how people will interpret the meaning. When interpretations differ between people or change over time, you can see what different individuals and groups value and find important. Paying attention to different interpretations of similar symbols is helpful when you are working in different cultures, on posting to a new unit, in multinational coalitions, and inter-agency environments. In these situations, you may come across symbols that you recognise, but their meanings may differ from person to person and group to group. You cannot assume that what you value and find meaningful will be shared by others.

2.12 Finally, culture is **dynamic**. Culture changes over time as it responds to changing circumstances. Because cultures interact, ideas and symbols are exchanged between cultures. Languages are an example of this. All human societies speak a language. Each social group, including the ones you are a member of, determines what language is best to communicate among its members in any given situation. Slang, abbreviations, pop culture references and insider names or terms are all features of language and its variations across groups. Over time, new words and their meanings are borrowed from other languages and in turn your language changes. Because culture and language are so closely intertwined, new words and their meanings indicate changes in cultural values and meanings.

## Your place in cultural patterns and structures

2.13 Human beings are not random creatures. People seldom speak their own distinct language that no one else understands, or live their life according to invented rules that nobody else shares. Likewise, human beings are not cultural robots blindly living their lives according to imposed patterns and structures. Through our on-the-ground daily lives, we alter the culture that makes us. Most often in small incremental ways, sometimes in significant ways.

2.14 We can see this in society at large, such as the Australian preference for small family units to live for extended periods of time in private house and units. This preference for small family units living in one location is not a universal way that humans 'do' family. Some cultures prefer living with more than one family under one roof, while others extend family to include a wide range of relations, across several households with members moving between each to sleep and eat.

2.15 This interaction between the culture that constructs our habits and our ability to interpret how we put these habits into practice is a fundamental dynamic of all human societies. As practice changes, so does culture.

2.16 This applies as equally to the domains, Services and units you are a part of as it does to overseas cultures, other government agencies, private contractors, and the different military forces we may join with in formal and informal coalitions.

2.17 We identify three essential features of the structure-action dynamic of culture. They are: **agency**, **power**, and **structure**. Each of these features are related to each other. They are found across all human cultures, even if they differ in their design.

### **Agency**

2.18 Agency is the intentional and purposeful striving of human behaviour. Having intention is a universal human capacity. The ability to exercise agency means we are able to coordinate our actions with and against others to persuade, influence and coerce.

2.19 The ability to exercise our agency is shaped and constrained by the largely unconscious and habituated behaviours ingrained in us



via culture. The extent to which a person can exercise agency or follow habit depends on context and circumstance.

2.20 Inequality arises when some individuals and groups have more ability than others to access and exercise agency, authority and resources.

## **Power**

2.21 It is natural for an ADF member to think of power in terms of application—those who are authorised to use power and those who are subject to the use of that power. Others might think of power as something that a person possesses, perhaps by virtue of their rank, experience, personality, charisma or the organisational position they hold. While these approaches to power are useful, there is value in gaining a deeper understanding of how power is created and exercised.

2.22 Power is a social phenomenon in which individuals or groups bring different capacities and strategies to make something happen. In this doctrine, we understand power in two ways: first, the ability to influence the decisions and behaviours of others through control, authority or domination; second, in terms of ideas and ways of doing things that can indirectly control, dominate and influence behaviours and values.

2.23 In this way, power can be compulsory, and sometimes repressive. When used in a forceful way, power can create resistance and defiance in individuals and groups. This resistance can function as a counter-power and many social movements are created in response to it, challenging authority and an established social order.

2.24 In contrast, influential ideas and ways of doing things can indirectly control, dominate, and influence behaviours and values. When we shift our attention from asking who holds and exercises power to noticing how power shapes social relationships and behaviour, we can see that power is not always a resource that one person or group has and another lacks.

2.25 This view of power allows us to appreciate that it can be a subtle and pervasive influence as well as an application of force. We can see this in the ways that behaviour is indirectly shaped by influential ideas and social norms. Often, that behaviour is not driven

by the application of force or punishment, but is shaped by socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking.

2.26 The way naval personnel speak the unique naval language, arising from the early days of sail and evolving ever since, commonly known as 'Jack-speak' is an example of how behaviour can be influenced by norms and tendencies. Jack-speak is an informal language with unique words and expressions spoken by naval personnel to each other, and with variations across many of the World's navies. Naval personnel are not formally taught Jack-speak, nor is it compulsory for them to speak it. Rather, it is learned through conversation, eventually becoming a common and acceptable way to speak, especially at sea. Over time, naval personnel may even forget that Jack-speak is not commonly understood by those outside the Navy, creating patterns of inclusion that can unintentionally isolate others.

2.27 Thus, power can be subtle, as well as forceful. Paying attention to both forms of power is essential in understanding your group behaviour and the wider social dynamics in the cultural environments within which we operate.

## **Structure**

2.28 Social structure describes the way in which cultures are organised into predictable relationships and patterns of interaction. These patterns influence individual behaviour and shared identities. Sometimes patterns become rules, norms and conventions used to guide social practices. The rules and regulations directing the appropriate wearing and use of Service uniforms is one example of this.

2.29 At other times, practices take place in an unconscious way—such as when you act without thinking, or find it difficult to explain exactly how or why you do something. In broader Australian society, it is socially acceptable, when meeting someone casually, to greet them by their first name. Among members of the ADF that wider social rule is often set aside as recognition of military rank and seniority govern personal greetings.

2.30 Structures shape individual, group and societal motives, intentions and behaviours. They are not though, fixed or static. They

change over time in response to external influences, as well as change from within. Your grasp of structures and how they change will help you understand the motivational drivers underlying our own teams, as well as allies' and adversaries' patterns of behaviour and your engagement with them.

## Summary

2.31 Effectively navigating the challenging and complex cultural environments we face requires more than good intentions. It requires an understanding of the basic features of culture that can be applied in all cultural contexts. While there are a range of theories about these features of culture, this doctrine focuses on those that are most applicable and useful to members of the profession of arms. These are:

- a. Culture consists of structures and patterns that underlie human behaviour.
- b. Culture is learned, shared, expressed and interconnected.
- c. Culture changes, it is not fixed or static.
- d. Cultural change happens through the interaction of individual agency, the use and influence of power, and structured patterns of behaviour.

# PART TWO: AWARENESS OF CULTURE

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## **Executive summary**

Part Two describes the four key elements of cultural intelligence required for individuals to effectively navigate cross-cultural complexity. It highlights the primacy of team cohesion and morale in forging healthy teams, recognising this as essential to sustaining confidence, resolve, hope and moral integrity in the face of adversity. It reiterates the fundamental importance of team integrity for effectively prosecuting the Defence mission.

# Chapter 3 –

## Me – Building my cultural intelligence

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3.1 There are four key features that constitute an individual's cultural intelligence: curiosity, knowledge, evaluation, and adaptation. Together, these capabilities constitute effective action in the cultural environments in which you will find yourself, whether they be your team, connecting effectively across organisations (including other teams, units, Services, government agencies, and other countries' militaries and institutions), or responding to unfamiliar cultures. While each fluctuates in importance according to context, development of all of the parts strengthens the whole.

3.2 The capability to function effectively in the context of complex cultural scenarios requires more than acknowledging and learning about cultural differences. It first requires you to be thoroughly aware that the team of which you are a part is the team that will encounter others. Your team, its values and behaviours, makes you. You, in turn, help make your team. Your part in the team is to promote and encourage positive values and behaviours in your teammates. This is essential work. It establishes a solid foundation from which to enter into the culturally unfamiliar, understand relevant cultural factors and their effects, and develop an ongoing willingness to adjust behaviour accordingly.

3.3 Amidst the uncertainty of negotiations, the chaos of operations, the difficulty of inter-organisational and military collaboration, and the ambiguity of cross-cultural communication; cultural intelligence contributes to the accomplishment of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) mission. The application of cultural intelligence promotes ethical decision-making, individual welfare, team morale, situational awareness, and mission success.

### Curiosity

3.4 Curiosity is agency in action. It motivates and facilitates achievement in the face of uncertainty and confusion. Being curious can be trying as it asks that you and your team accept responsibility to seek understanding of what you do not know. What you do not

know can include knowledge of yourself as well as the culturally unfamiliar.

3.5 Your curiosity is a commitment to achieving excellence in any context. It is framed by you living out our Defence Values, and being respectful to others. Setting the conditions for respect is a conscious act; it does not just happen. Build it through being carefully curious, both within your team and in your encounters with others. Ask questions, then listen and learn. If contextually appropriate, turn up more than once; it shows a willingness to understand others and what is important to them.

3.6 Acting on curiosity can be uncomfortable because your lack of knowledge and understanding of cultural difference may be visible to others. However, your interest in, and confidence to learn about, other cultures increases your ability to cross boundaries. Interaction with culturally different people increases your ability to prosper in unfamiliar environments. What might have seemed to be a threat, will recede with greater understanding of that environment.

3.7 It requires courage to face uncertainty, to ask questions, to seek understanding. Without the courage to question and inquire, fears arise from what you do not understand and do not know. Fear of failure, fear of ridicule and fear of incomprehension diminish you and your team. Doubts about your willingness to meet expectations, and adapt to and overcome uncertainty, follow. Accomplishment falls away, and individual and team disinterest results.

3.8 Each time you overcome your fear of the unknown and work to understand yourself and others, your credibility, resilience and capability grows. Those who accept responsibility to understand, make clear their strength of character. In turn, being thoughtful and curious closes the gap between personal capability and mission expectations.

3.9 Exercising curiosity does not mean you can act outside of the remit of your responsibility. Within the sphere of your responsibility, take the initiative to understand the cultural terrain of which you are a part. Check your objectives with others, and your superiors. Apply judgement as to the appropriateness of your inquiry. Assess your intent accurately.

3.10 As a situation evolves, adapt yourself to uncertainty. In circumstances of ambiguity, take charge of managing your curiosity. This will require you to ask yourself again, 'What do I need to know about the cultural circumstances in front of me?', 'What part am I playing in this encounter?', 'How might I be perceived by those who are unfamiliar to me?', 'What am I missing here?', and 'What do we have in common?'

3.11 The practice of curiosity is not necessarily easy. It requires a constant process of reassessing, re-evaluating, and adjusting expectations—of yourself and others. This can be draining. Taking time to reflect with others on your experiences can be an important source of resilience in times of high stress.

## **Beneath the cultural differences: the common bonds of humanity**

### **Evacuation from Afghanistan, 2021**

In the early days of the evacuation, a mate and I were looking at the thousands of people trying to evacuate out through Abbey Gate.

We came across a family who had the correct paperwork and passports for us to be able to get them processed through the system. When we pulled them out of the crowd, it was a mother, father and two kids, as well as two other males, who turned out to be family members without the correct documentation on them. We had to tell these two men that they couldn't come with us. These two men accepted this and told us that they just wanted to say goodbye to their family, knowing that once we walked them out of the gate the Taliban would likely be waiting there to kill them.

Seeing a family that has been together all their life and then having to say goodbye in the brief time that they had is a very emotional experience. We've never met these people in our life and for a brief moment we got to meet them, and then had to split up their family right then and there.

The goodbye that this family had was quiet and emotional and different to others as they weren't trying to fight it. They just accepted the situation and said goodbye to one another. We were in tears at a time when we were meant to be a rock for people in their desperation. We turned away from the families to compose ourselves.

## Knowledge

3.12 Knowledge about culture combines two approaches. The first approach distinguishes between general knowledge of culture, and context-specific knowledge of culture. The second approach distinguishes between insider and outsider views of culture.

3.13 Culture-general knowledge elements are the general elements that constitute any cultural environment. It includes knowledge of: how power works; economic, political and legal systems; human-environment relationships; use of natural and created resources; religious beliefs; gender roles; language proficiency; forms of identity; your behaviour and how you carry yourself; and norms of verbal and non-verbal communication. We will cover more on this in Chapter 5.

3.14 Context-specific knowledge applies culture-general elements to a specific cultural context to achieve effectiveness in that area. By specific cultural context, we mean a part of the world, a region, country, or local area. It can also refer to a specific subculture, such as regional leaders, diplomats, military forces, or demographic subgroups based on age, education, wealth and gender.

3.15 There are two possible perspectives on any culture. The first is the insider perspective. This is the view of a culture from someone who lives in that culture and will focus on what they regard as meaningful to them. Accessing this perspective requires talking to people who are members of that culture.

3.16 You may find your own understanding challenged in this encounter but it is necessary for understanding your own team and force, allies, adversaries and negotiating partners' motivation for their actions. Maintaining confidence and a willingness to listen is essential in this interaction.



3.17 The second is the outsider perspective. This is a view of culture held by someone who lives outside of that culture. Members of a culture do not always have explanations for their own behaviour, beliefs or actions. The outsider perspective can provide this explanation.

3.18 Both perspectives are essential to gaining cultural knowledge.

3.19 Grasping the key elements that characterise a cultural environment provides you with an organising framework for analysing a situation, making a decision and taking action. Operationally, you may not be able to achieve full mastery of these elements in your assessment and decision-making. In a situation where time and resources are limited, you will need to exercise judgement as to how much, and what type, of cultural knowledge you require. But in your team and unit, you do have time to come to understand your own local cultural setting and its alignment with Defence's cultural expectations.

## Evaluation

3.20 Every cross-cultural interaction requires prior preparation and planning. Preparation includes undertaking culture-general and context-specific consideration in advance.

3.21 The first evaluation you should consider is with regard to your own team's culture. Are you exemplifying Defence's Values and Behaviours as the core of your daily action and expectation? Are you and your team representing the best of Australia and the ADF to your unit, the force and the World? Are all of your teammates given opportunity to contribute their full potential and capacity to the team and its mission?

3.22 Planning for operations and activities also requires critical thinking and analysis, thinking deeply about other cultures and the culturally diverse people with which you and your team are interacting.

3.23 Your and your team's advance preparation will need to distinguish between short-term and long-term objectives. When preparing for a cross-cultural encounter, you will need to identify the

specific steps you need to take and anticipate what needs to be done prior to the encounter.

3.24 Planning for cross-cultural encounters requires you to be aware of your own cultural habits. These influence your behaviour and judgement as you interact and assess the motivations of culturally diverse others. Developing awareness of yourself contributes to real-time adjustment as a cross-cultural situation or encounter changes. It includes the ability to suspend judgement until enough information is available to make sense of what is occurring.

## Adaptation

3.25 Cross-cultural interaction requires you—to the best of your ability—to grasp the perspectives of others. This is as applicable to members of your team as it is to those you newly encounter. This includes understanding how the cultural aspects of a situation or interaction might influence your behaviour, your team's behaviour and the behaviour of others. It also includes understanding how others perceive you, your team, or the mission of which you are a part. You are then in a position to review assumptions and adjust mental gaps when real-time experiences differ from expectations. Your capacity to review and adjust includes managing and adapting your social behaviour and communication in cross-cultural encounters. Social behaviours include the way you speak, your and your team's behaviour, and what you convey in your non-verbal communication.

3.26 Adapting your verbal behaviour may require you to: adjust your vocal volume; speed of speaking; directness of delivery; amount of warmth, enthusiasm and formality; and choice of phrases. Awareness of your own verbal behaviours will contribute to your awareness of what others want to convey through their speech.

3.27 Adapting your verbal behaviour might also require you to learn a new language. Fluency in a local language brings greater insight into the cultural features of that region. The greater your language fluency, the greater your ability to understand what is being communicated to you, communicate your intent, earn trust and gain access to local populations. If you need to work with an interpreter, make sure they accurately translate what is being said to you and

that what you wish to communicate is also accurately conveyed. Check your understanding with your interpreter.

3.28 Adapting your non-verbal behaviour will require you to be aware of: your facial expressions and gestures; the amount of and nature of physical contact; your personal appearance; and the way you go about things. Small actions—such as knowing where and when to sit and stand when you are in another cultural environment—can convey a lot about you. You will need to exercise judgement on whether a situation demands formal or informal clothing, and the level of formal or informal body language. Consult a local advisor when determining what level and nature of formality is required, remembering that your own expectations of formal behaviour may not be shared by others.

3.29 Understanding that behaviour appropriate to one setting might be inappropriate in another minimises misunderstanding. It also overcomes the tendency to fall back on our habits instead of showing behavioural flexibility and adaptation in cross-cultural situations.

## Cultural relativism

3.30 Cultural relativism—or the understanding and appreciation of cultural differences—does not mean that you have to accept or agree with practices and beliefs that contravene your values. Being culturally informed helps you understand the motivations that drive these practices and beliefs. However, understanding is not the same as endorsing, particularly those cultural beliefs or practices that are illegal under Australian domestic or local law, or ethically indefensible.

3.31 As ADF-P-0 *Military Ethics* doctrine states, difficult decisions are a normal part of military life. Competing values frequently create ethical dilemmas in which it is not clear what is the right thing to do. The ADF acknowledges that others may have culturally different approaches to ethics, but ADF personnel are expected to make conscious, principles-based decisions. The ADF Ethical Decision-making Framework contained within ADF-P-0 *Military Ethics* will help in making these decisions.

## When mission and culture clash: navigating challenging norms

### ***Bachi Bazi, Afghanistan***

In the recent war in Afghanistan, Australian military personnel reported witnessing the practice of *bacha bazi* (dancing boys): young boys who danced in female clothes for adult audiences.

*Bacha bazi* has its roots in the common practice of men dancing for other men at weddings in Afghanistan. This is treated in Afghanistan as a normal cultural practice. Some powerful Afghan men took advantage of the social disruption and poverty caused by the war to exploit boys and have them dance at events at which Coalition military personnel were present. Military personnel were not aware that *bacha bazi* was part of proceedings until they arrived. Once they were aware, they were faced with the dilemma to leave and risk upsetting a local partner, or stay and be seen to endorse an exploitative practice.

While *bacha bazi* was not normal practice across all of Afghanistan during the war, it was supported and practised by some Afghan male elites who were potential military allies to Australia. From the perspective of these elites, *bacha bazi* was considered culturally acceptable.

## Summary

3.32 Together, the four capabilities of cultural intelligence—curiosity, knowledge, evaluation, and adaptation—are essential to your and your team's ability to:

- a. understand, develop and assure your own team's cultural foundations centred on Defence's Values and Behaviours
- b. organise and execute the courses of action required to meet your mission goals in unfamiliar cultural environments.

3.33 Cultivating cultural intelligence will assist in your own cultural self-reflection and prevent you from ethnocentric bias, which is a tendency to interpret or evaluate other cultures in terms of your own.

At its worst, this results in an inability to adequately understand cultures that are different from your own, a critical flaw when performing in culturally diverse environments or interpreting and analysing intelligence. This can lead to misleading and insufficient understanding, and can have very negative consequences for decision-making.

## Chapter 4 – Us – Team culture

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- 4.1 The heartbeat of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is the teams in which we work, within and across the five domains.
- 4.2 Each team is unique, not separate.
- 4.3 We fight as an integrated force, not as separate individual entities.
- 4.4 Your team is designed to support the distinct environments and platforms within which your Service and domain operates as part of the integrated force. Your team is not separate from the integrated force of which it is designed to be a part, but it is unique and it does have its own culture. Cultivating a healthy team culture is essential to fulfilling our mission. It is also essential to you and your team's health-of-mind and team *esprit de corps*. Without healthy team cultures, we jeopardise our mission, degrade our performance, and damage our people.
- 4.5 Team culture has an enormous influence on you, your relationship to other team members and how your team acts. The assumptions, ideas, norms and beliefs held by your unit shape how your team adapts to unforeseen circumstance and gives meaning to what you do. These deeply held convictions may shape you and influence you long after you leave the ADF.
- 4.6 Because team culture lies as much in daily practices as it does in doctrine, policy and symbols, we can easily overlook the power and influence of these practices on our behaviour. For example, the ADF has an ethic of not leaving an injured team member in battle. This builds morale and readiness to fight for each other to achieve victory. This ethic is not official doctrine. It is cultivated from the bonds members form within the teams in which they live, train and fight. It is part of team culture.
- 4.7 Team bonding can also have negative consequences. A culture of 'do-whatever-it-takes' can breed indifference to brutality and a departure from acceptable behaviours. Allegations of

Australian war crimes in Afghanistan suggests that some members in the ADF had embraced or fostered a culture of exceptionalism and lost sight of acceptable norms. The dysfunctional bonds formed between unit members created a team culture misaligned to our values.

4.8 The very same culture of loyalty and pride that can breed positive morale and team support under fire, can also breed subversion, a reluctance to question illegal, unethical and improper behaviour of team members, and belief that team norms will provide anonymity and protection from authority. Self-awareness and ethical vigilance are security against deviant military behaviour. Guidance on how you can develop sound ethical decision making and strength of character is provided in our ADF philosophical doctrines on military ethics and character in the profession of arms—ADF-P-0 *Military Ethics* and ADF-P-0 *Character in the Profession of Arms*.

4.9 Team culture is crucial to military effectiveness. The British naval commander Admiral Horatio Nelson understood this when he stated to his ship captains on the eve of the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar that in case they could not communicate to effectively coordinate the actions of their ships in battle they should pull up alongside an enemy ship and take the fight to them. Through this direction, Admiral Nelson expressed his trust in his subordinates and their crews' ability to fight at close quarters. A team culture throughout the fleet of trust, initiative, cohesion and disciplined aggression was a great tactical asset.

4.10 Admiral Nelson would not have had such great trust in his sailors if they had not already shown that they deserved it. Only you can create this trust and the cohesion it generates within your team. Team members build trust through shared experience and demanding training, exhibiting and emphasising Defence Values and Behaviours, and working towards a common mission. Team members achieve healthy teamwork through open, constructive agreement on how to behave, perform actions and establish norms. Teams follow this through by establishing symbols, normalising high standards of conduct, and taboos prohibiting or restricting inappropriate practices or language.

4.11 While leaders set team expectations, it is how you support and commit to each other that develops trust, confidence and

positive attitudes throughout your team. Trust builds confidence which is earned not granted. Once gained, continue to nurture trust and confidence. They are assets that sustain us when we collectively experience pressure.

4.12 Put simply, strong teams make strong individuals. The opposite, however, is not necessarily true.

## Environment and team culture

4.13 While Defence Values and Behaviours form the core of team culture in the ADF, the environment within which each force element operates is also an important influence on team culture. This derives from differences in the physical experience of service and the manner in which military power is generated and applied in the maritime, land, air, cyber and space domains. Organisational structures, heritage and history and mission or role are also influential. Most important of all though, as in any human endeavour, culture is influenced by consistent, constructive, collaborative and ethical leadership; or its absence! When working within an integrated force or in coalition, we need to be aware of these team differences in order to avoid problems and harmonise the integration of teams of teams. This is the human aspect of integrated campaigning and operations.

### **Diversity across the force**

4.14 All Services and domains operate in environments that require considerable technological expertise and respect for their contribution, challenges, hardships and uncertainties, each in their different way.

4.15 In battle, our Air Force operates over considerable distances at great speeds, engaging in a high number of sorties. This is a freedom of movement that few sea and ground forces experience.

4.16 By contrast, once a naval vessel leaves harbour, the crew work entirely within the confines of the vessel and there is a commonality of operational tasking for all. If the captain of a ship orders the ship to drop anchor, all crew on board will stop with the ship. None can leave to go elsewhere, unless ordered to do so.



4.17 The Army, by contrast to the Navy and Air Force, tends to operate in very dispersed and flexible groupings over large areas of ground, engaging with civilians, allies or adversaries, across several different fronts. If a battalion commander orders a company to halt, the order will only apply to that company, the other companies continue on with their efforts. Further, soldiers most often encounter civilians on ground that is not theirs, whether it belongs to an adversary or an ally.

4.18 Moreover, within each Service or domain, teams and their micro-cultures can evolve to differ from each other as they adapt to their circumstances and task requirements. To provide a few simple, examples of this:

- a. Within the Navy, submariners, in order to reduce their acoustic signature, pay attention to minimising sound in ways that surface sailors do not.
- b. Army aviators experience very different training and fighting environments than soldiers in rifle companies.
- c. Cyber operators bridge the digital and physical through their global reach, providing real-time assessments of intention and behaviour.

4.19 Within any ADF team, members develop and share unique verbal and non-verbal behaviours, basic assumptions, and physical markers such as dress codes. These micro-cultural markers form critical team bonds and understanding, although they should not form a barrier to other teams in an integrated force in which we all depend on each other.

### **Unity of experience**

4.20 ADF personnel and the teams they form are not one homogenous group. You share cultural features with members from other teams as much as you do within your own team. Nevertheless, patterns, expectations, command philosophies, and ways of problem solving will vary across groups, domains and Services. Teams do this at the micro-level, but like all other groupings, they must maintain as the core of their cultural identity Defence Values and Behaviours and their role as a component of an integrated ADF.

4.21 As much as each Service is unique in its methods, functions and domains of operation; members of each Service share experiences that help integrate us as a Defence-wide team. Our distinct Service platforms are one such example. All Services have unique platforms designed to operate in the domain of that Service. We train to fight in our unique platforms. As much as the weapons systems of our platforms differ, they also bear working similarities to each other.

4.22 For example, each platform is a particular type of enclosed space, such as the inside of a ship, submarine, armoured vehicle, or aircraft. The sailors, soldiers and aviator teams that fight in these spaces all develop awareness of the confines of their vessel and how to extend their own senses, and those of their vehicles, outward to perceive opportunity and danger. That sense of operating in a confined space while looking outwards is platform-specific but also common across much of the force.

4.23 Likewise, all Services and domains work with and analyse data to identify threat and plan a course of action in response. Each unit and team has unique methods and technology for achieving their aims while the integrated mission brings these together for combined military effect.

4.24 While your team takes on a life of its own, you will share similar emotional experiences with other ADF members: pride in your service; fear when faced with threat; fulfilment and gratification when you and your team do well under trying circumstances. These shared experiences and emotions can be drawn upon to help build a sense of connection and commitment to each other.

4.25 When you are brought into an integrated team environment, take time to understand your similarities and respect your differences. You will find that, in what counts most, we are much more similar than we are different. Not only does this create cohesion across the ADF, it puts your cultural intelligence to work.

### **Climate and culture**

4.26 As ADF-P-0 *Command* highlights, organisational climate is how members think and feel about their organisation. It is derived from the shared perceptions that members attach to the practices,

procedures, and policies they experience, and the behaviours they observe being supported, rewarded, and expected. A positive organisational climate shapes ethical behaviour, respect, and duty of care in support of unity of effort. Defence Values are at the heart of this. In the absence of our values we risk creating a toxic organisational climate, leading to psychological harm and a breakdown of trust between team members and their leaders, driving misalignment with the organisation's purpose.

4.27 The shared beliefs, values and attitudes that characterise the culture of the ADF and the wider Defence Organisation tell members about what values are important, what behaviours are expected, how the organisation came to be the way it is, and how it solves problems.

4.28 Together, organisational climate and culture complement each other and can be mutually beneficial in practice. Culture is the deeper, more long-term, of the two as it is the patterns of beliefs, values and behaviours that become ingrained over time. Climate is more short-term than culture and can be more easily changed as personalities come and go.

4.29 As a member of a Defence team you have immediate effect on team and organisational climate. As each and every one of us demonstrate Defence Values, we collectively forge a culture that enables us all to do our best. When every member supports each other in the shared work of Defence, we collectively define the purpose that leads to team and organisational cohesion and excellence in mission performance.

## Reflect, observe, evolve

4.30 Collaborating with members of other teams develops interdependence and cohesion. Creating integrative teams also develops the capacity for strategic imagination, which is a group's capacity to imagine future circumstances and adjust group behaviours to meet these future circumstances.

4.31 Where a task or mission encompasses members from outside your Service or the ADF—such as allies, coalition partners, agencies or civilians—opportunities arise from working with other teams to achieve a common goal through planning or task execution. Other

teams—internal or external to Defence—bring useful skills and experiences that can be leveraged for greater unified purpose.

4.32 Sometimes, ‘friendly’ competition between, and within, teams may not be seen as friendly and healthy if it disadvantages or excludes members, or partners, or is viewed as culturally insensitive or punitive. As your team adapts to changes in circumstances, you develop belief in what your team can do. In doing so, a key capacity of cultural intelligence is performed—the capacity to imagine the perspective of others.

4.33 Imagining the perspective of others is a tremendous power. It not only allows you to understand their motivations in the mission environment, it helps you understand the motivations of team members and how your team evolves as it matches the new capacities they bring. This is how teams develop the capacity to respond to ambiguity and uncertainty. Leaders will shape individual drive and team evolution, but it is your alertness to yourself and what your team is doing that is also key to exercising effective decision-making and initiative.

### **Culture creates capability: reflect, observe and evolve**

Putting a ship, or submarine, to sea is not just the work of the ship’s crew. It is the result of a combined effort from the ship, its shore support agencies, civilian and uniform, and the wider Defence industry partners. The FFG Enterprise (2014 to 2018) reflects the importance of forming a collaborative work culture and creating an environment where everyone understands how they are expected to behave.

Established to manage and maintain seaworthiness of Adelaide Class guided missile frigates (FFG), the FFG Enterprise balanced complex and shared responsibilities across a network of uniformed and civilian Defence, Navy and industry partners. Prior to its establishment, processes and relationships in this network were dysfunctional, creating work inefficiencies, excessive administrative overheads, and everyone was stressed. Relationships between Navy

and industry partners were not what they should have been: collegial, cooperative or coordinated.

Innovative change was required. The creation of the FFG Enterprise in 2014 introduced a new way of doing business for Navy and its industry partners.

The key to success was common understanding, building relationships and a focus on collaboration among all stakeholders. All personnel were involved in co-developing a charter defining the mission and vision, but most importantly the attributes and behaviours they believed would bring them success. The charter guided them on 'how' to interact and work alongside each other and provided a means for individuals to hold each other to account. This created high levels of trust and a safe place, encouraging innovative practices to be adopted without fear and mistrust of individual motives.

Being clear about our common purpose encouraged everyone to abide by the charter and empowered people to think differently. This generated a self-fulfilling and self-perpetuating cycle of people unconsciously behaving according to the attributes and behaviours expected of them, and through this, the charter became the compass for a culture characterised by collective constructive behaviour.

## Be alert

4.34 The ADF, your Service and your unit, are complex, layered organisations deeply rooted in distinctive histories. While leaders direct and shape organisational culture behaviour, it is the practices you live that directly shape your group's behaviour.

4.35 In your choice to defend Australia's national interests, you commit yourself to ethical behaviours informed by Defence Values. You most fully declare your values in your behaviour. Your behaviour as a serving ADF member is never isolated from others. As such, it influences other members of your team. Aligning our group behaviours with our values requires constant vigilance so that misalignment between the two does not occur.

4.36 Misalignment results in ethical misconduct. Ethical misconduct not only degrades the individual, and the team of which they are a part, it also damages our capacity to create trust where it is needed, which affects mission integrity. This in turn undermines the central tenet of our commitment to the Australian people, and our moral authority. Understanding how your group works is key to avoiding ethical misconduct.

4.37 Toxic cultures normalise rule-breaking, by creating opportunity for or excusing offending; behaviours that undermine ethical and legal Defence norms. Everyday practices that violate these norms—bullying, degrading others, dishonesty, sexual harassment, misrepresentation of information, fraud, cynicism, laziness, lack of empathy with others and selfishness—undermines the authority of Defence Values, normalises deviancy, and harms our people. In turn, these practices ultimately harm the ADF's capacity to prosecute its mission.

4.38 Toxic cultural processes can occur at all levels of an organisation. Everyday practices can embed toxic values, such as avoidance of blame, or acceptance of cruelty. As these 'false values' become ever more deeply embedded in underlying group assumptions, we develop damaging common practices, ingraining toxic behaviour in our team and organisational cultures.

4.39 Ethical misconduct within a team occurs when there is deviation from acceptable group behaviours and these become the norms for both existing and incoming members of a team. Here we must look to the interactive effects of power within a team, remembering that power can be exercised through force and through influential ideas and team norms.

## Common themes in the emergence of cultural deviation or toxic culture in groups

- Inadequate leadership
- Geographical or social isolation
- Normalisation of false values
- Unclear or conflicting mission and/or policy
- Elitism, tribalism and 'specialness'
- Misleading reporting (including sanitisation)
- Refusal and/or reluctance to give or accept bad news
- 'Can do' culture with a win/achieve at all costs attitude
- Stretched and/or fatigued workforce
- Casual approach to risk and its management
- Lack of diversity in perspectives and background.

**4.40 The defence of Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity is a noble cause, a moral commitment. Any culture not centred on Defence Values and Behaviours is a culture Defence does not want, endorse or accept, and against which Defence will decisively act. Such cultures are destructive of the individual, team and mission, undermining our noble cause.**

4.41 Toxic cultures do not become toxic by design, or the actions of one bad individual or leader. But leaders are accountable for recognising toxic culture, reporting it and decisively dealing with it; both in terms of correcting the cultural framework within which a team or group is operating and dealing with the unacceptable or unlawful behaviour of individuals. This is difficult but essential work in which those committed to our values and behaviours must be supported.

4.42 By contrast to toxic cultures, members of ethical cultures ask of themselves and others 'is this the right thing to do?', and 'is this the value I want myself and my teammates to live and work by?'. This is not the same as unthinking compliance to procedure. Being thoughtful and questioning lives out our Defence Values and

Behaviours. They provide you with a foundation to speak up when you observe transgressions in others, and voice your dilemmas to your superiors. By doing this, you internalise healthy team values, contribute to a climate that inspires courageous and supportive team behaviours and norms, and build long-term ethical team cultures. When an ethical culture is in place, Defence norms are upheld and reinforced, making future transgressions less likely.

*Culture functions to establish accepted bounds and decision points for behaviour. It provides social norms and boundaries for value-based decisions that affect the group, society, ... international reputation and norms of behaviour. The resilience of a unit's culture can be tested by the quality of decisions made in ambiguous or extreme situations. The behaviours and actions of individuals flow from, and directly influence and shape, the cultural health of an organisation or unit. If the cultural boundaries within a group shift and the norms accepted by society are transgressed, ... there can be disturbing consequences.*

**Major General Paul Brereton, Assistant Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force, *Afghanistan Inquiry Report*, p. 329**

4.43 All ADF teams can work to develop strong healthy teams by understanding how group culture is shaped. Four strategies can assist in this development of responsible team cultures:

- a. **Create healthy team norms that establish trust and commitment.** Norms channel individual behaviour.
- b. **Establish transparent procedures that promote and regulate appropriate behaviour.** Processes of reward, acceptance, and punishment are ways to keep and maintain order within a team.



- c. **Develop deserving ties of loyalty.** Strong, meritorious ties of loyalty between members creates team identity, traditions and values. These can be shared with other teams.
- d. **Create a set of honourable, ethically sound, meanings to which team members refer to express their collective identity.** In times of adversity, meanings and symbols can serve as a unifying and motivational force that helps build strong group bonds and promotes links between past, present and future members.

4.44 Implementing these strategies to create your team culture requires action and contribution on your part. Fostering courageous and thoughtful behaviour creates trust between team members. Trust is the freedom to make the right decisions knowing your team is also committed to making right decisions. By contrast, promoting, or even just tolerating aberrant behaviour, solidifies it into acceptable team practice—this must be avoided at all costs.

## Summary

4.45 Your team is distinctive in its function and the uniqueness of its purpose and history. It is also integrated and inseparable from the rest of your Service, domain, and the ADF as a whole. No matter your rank, your level of skill, or the extent of your responsibility, you play a key part in creating the culture of your team.

4.46 Working in teams can be difficult, especially if there are personality differences among team members, or other team members are 'just not like me'. Putting effort into overcoming these differences creates team cohesion and effectiveness. Effort of this kind also develops your personal competence as you learn to deal with what you are uncomfortable with and may not understand. This not only contributes to good team dynamics, it also develops competence in dealing with uncertainty, a key feature of cultural intelligence.

# PART THREE: CONNECTING TO OTHER CULTURES

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## **Executive summary**

Part Three highlights six core areas of cultural knowledge that are foundational for operational and situational awareness. It describes each of these areas and their importance in understanding local population patterns. It closes by reiterating the fundamental importance of the development of cultural intelligence to the moral authority of the Defence mission.

## Chapter 5 – All – Making connections

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5.1 ‘Know yourself, Know your enemy, Know your environment’ distils an influential approach to warfare proposed by the 5th century BCE Chinese General Sun Tzu. We can restate these categories of knowledge as ‘self, other, environment’.

5.2 Implicit in this phrase is the way each component is embedded in the other two. To know yourself is to know something about how others perceive you. To know your adversary is to put yourself in the position of your adversary. To know your environment is to understand how you, and the adversary, create, occupy and confront each other in that environment. Altogether, this is the cross-cultural ‘All’ of the Defence mission.

5.3 So far we have focused on knowing yourself, one half of cultural intelligence. Self-knowledge is a core feature of the professional mastery of arms. Self-knowledge develops awareness of your biases, how you make decisions, how you function under stress, how you react to fear, and what you are likely to do when you meet people who are culturally different to you.

5.4 Understanding yourself and your teams is more than being self-aware. It also goes a long way to understanding how people from other cultures and organisations might perceive you. When you are working in coalition, foreign environments, or Australian multiagency missions, your personal and cultural characteristics are being assessed by others. As you pay attention to another’s gender, age, marriage status, ethnicity, rank, and other cultural features, they are paying much the same attention to you. Anticipating how another anticipates you in cross-cultural interactions may not be easy but that is not a reason to disengage. Failure to engage can result in you being influenced in ways of which you are not aware.

5.5 As we carry our self-awareness into the competition space, we need to be equipped with ideas and skills to help us interpret the culturally unfamiliar wherever we go. Future conflicts may include conventional warfare between states or conflicts waged by non-state

actors that use a range of measures including terrorism, insurgency, and organised criminal activity. Or perhaps the lines are now blurred between these two kinds of warfare. In any future, the use of false or misleading information to influence ideas will be global, large scale and instantaneous. Conflict is not only a matter of wars that pit one people against another people, but wars among people, in which alliances and interests may shift in unpredictable ways.

5.6 In these competitive environments, potential partners—such as foreign militaries, police, community leaders, businesses, politicians, and others—will be our conflict and peacebuilding associates, but their ideological agendas and political objectives may differ from ours. Understanding what shapes their goals, motivates them to act in particular ways, their beliefs, and how they can mobilise people and resources to a task, is a vital military asset.

5.7 The ‘all’ of this chapter draws attention to how conflict creates circumstances in which coalitions, adversarial relationships, and friendships, can change. We need to be adaptable and alert to change.

## General cultural knowledge

5.8 This chapter takes a general approach, rather than a culture-specific approach, to equipping military personnel with culture-related capabilities. Regional knowledge, language skills, and culture-specific knowledge are necessary and important but it is not possible to provide detailed culture-specific information on every human network, language, place or group.

5.9 Cultures change and coexist in the same location, and nowhere is this more apparent than in situations where conflict, catastrophe and other upheavals cause people to change behaviour and rearrange established social and cultural patterns. In these volatile circumstances, off-the-shelf cultural material may be a guide only.

5.10 This is where culture-general concepts and skills provide a toolkit that you can apply in your situation. Applicable in every location, including in your own life, you will see that the combination of culture knowledge and self-knowledge enhances capability for your teams and the integrated force as well as yourself.

5.11 What follows is an outline of culture-general content areas. Each content area introduces concepts and ideas that help you identify broad patterns and structures. These are sometimes called cultural, or social, categories. They are guideposts to help you make sense of what looks unclear in culturally unfamiliar environments. They help build a picture of the social and cultural causes, influences and patterns of the cultural worlds you encounter.

5.12 The cultural world is not like the natural world where there are consistent regularities, properties and interactions. In the natural world, the properties of steel are always the properties of steel. We could not build ships, tanks, bridges, or aircraft, for example, if these properties were unpredictable.

5.13 The cultural world is different. It does not run according to predictable rules. It arises out of motivations, thoughts, emotions, activities, communications and interactions of socially situated persons. It is more of an intersecting patchwork than an unchanging, unified system. The general cultural concepts and ideas that follow help identify broad cultural features and structures of a population or an adversary. The more you are able to identify cultural features and structures, the more you will see what is important in any particular time and place.

5.14 The concepts and ideas developed in this chapter will also aid you in understanding the intersection of different cultural elements when you are tasked to achieve a goal. For example, Defence's involvement in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations at home and abroad requires effective interaction between agencies to achieve success. You may take part in operations of this kind in more than one national or overseas location. Ideas and practices around competence, transparency, loyalty and duty may differ from agency to agency and location to location. Being prepared and alert to the similarities and differences between yourself and others in these operations will enhance operational communication and expectations.

5.15 Familiarity with the content areas discussed below will assist you as you find your way in environments where specific cultural information and language skills are limited. This same familiarity also helps you take advantage of culture-specific information—such as a pre-deployment briefing—by being able to see it in its broader

cultural context. It will help you link what look like isolated pieces of cultural information to other pieces of information to build a picture of patterns of behaviour and meaning that are specific to a group, individual, region or nation.

## Culture area 1: Human ecology

5.16 Human beings the world over adapt to their physical environment. In turn, the environment shapes how people live as they develop strategies for surviving and thriving in their environment. Human ecology is the interplay between humans and their environment. This interplay always has three components:

- a. the impact of the environment on human life
- b. the impact of humans on the environment
- c. the relationship between living things, including humans, in the environment in which they all live.

5.17 The usefulness of the ecology concept is that it can be applied to any environment and at any scale: from the local, to the regional, to the global. In an operational environment, we pay attention to which parts of the environment are important to the population there.

5.18 This will include important physical resources such as water, food, materials (such as for building), transport and communications systems, fuel and power, climate and seasons and what materially symbolic value people put on these resources.

5.19 The environment includes both human-made and natural features. Dwellings, roads, telecommunications infrastructure, storage facilities, sporting venues, religious buildings, and transportation networks are all examples of the human-made environment.

5.20 Humans always attach value to the natural and human-made environments. This value is often symbolic as well as material. Natural features such as rivers or mountains may be treated as spiritual sites which carry great meaning to local people. Similarly, buildings such as churches, mosques and temples or historic buildings with high heritage value will also carry great importance. Taking account of

what is of high value to a local population—and how people might react if it is damaged as a result of military activity—is critical to effectively working within a population.

5.21 The presence of a highly valued resource, such as water, often results in people creating regulations about who can and cannot have access to the resource. Similar social rules apply to access and use of other valuable resources—such as fuel, food and building materials. Regulation of access often creates social tension when some groups are allowed access and others are excluded. Understanding who controls access to a resource, and how others are excluded from that access, will tell you who has power and influence over others and how regulation of access contributes to social tension or conflict.

5.22 Climate and seasons affect how people organise their lives. Seasonal variations in rainfall, sunlight, temperature will direct when people plant and harvest crops or move their stock animals from one place to another to take advantage of feed. However, be aware! What you may think of as an environmental problem, such as seasonal flooding, may not be a problem to a local population who organise their lives around periodic flooding.

5.23 Likewise, periods of low rainfall tend to coincide with high levels of construction as people take advantage of good weather to construct buildings, roads and other infrastructure, or to burn off fields in readiness for planting. Understanding the interplay of seasons on work patterns and human movement is critical to understanding the impact of operations in a given area.

5.24 Climate change results in changes in the environment that are increasingly a factor in regional security and conflicts. Drought, flooding, fires, dramatic shifts in temperature all impact on human populations in powerful ways as they struggle to respond to dramatic environmental changes. Sometimes, struggle for what was once an easily available resource—such as a dwindling water source—creates competition and conflict for that declining resource. People migrating from a natural disaster area to an unaffected area, will put pressure on resources in the new area, causing competition and potential conflict between the displaced and the settled community members.

5.25 These are only two examples of how climate change can create conflict, and the science indicates that the impacts of climate change will be with us for the foreseeable future. While there may be different views about the impact of climate on the environment, the Australian government recognises and has committed itself to addressing climate change.

## Culture area 2: Social organisation

5.26 Every cultural group creates ways of organising relationships. At its simplest, social organisation refers to how a group of people organises roles and responsibilities for its members. You can learn a lot about people by the way they organise themselves, as every social role carries with it expectations about behaviour, responsibility, status and obligation.

5.27 A person may inhabit more than one social role depending on context, stage of life and who they relate to in any given instant. In turn these roles are expressed in different ways. For instance, an Air Force Group Captain can exercise authority over a unit or group of personnel while on duty, but in their personal life their rank may play little to no part. Rather, other roles and capacities that might include community leader, mother or artist may be more relevant. All four social roles—Group Captain, community volunteer, mother and artist—coexist in the one person but their relevance depends on context and the people to whom they are relating.

5.28 Differences in gender roles and expectations, even within one country, alerts us to an important principle of social life. While many cultures acknowledge similar genders, the way they are practised, understood and experienced are different from culture to culture. While gender is a human universal, the way it is lived out is not. When you are in an unfamiliar cultural environment, you may observe social roles and relationships that look similar to your own but are arranged in different ways with different cultural expectations of behaviour, capability and responsibilities.

5.29 Social relationships can take on important social functions. Some of these may be formal and institutional, such as judicial and banking systems, educational arrangements and religious structures.



Others will be informal, such as the way households in a community share their time and resources to help each other in times of hardship

5.30 Some cultures emphasise the importance of kinship and rely primarily on relationships between an extensive network of relatives to make group decisions. If you are operating in a kin-based cultural environment, you may find that there are no formal positions of leadership and hence no established person or group who can constantly deliver on an arrangement you may be negotiating. A prominent person or group of people may emerge to do this, but do not be surprised if the authority of that leader or group is momentary and disappears, and another person or group within the extended family network takes on similar authority.

5.31 Some cultures place emphasis on arranging people into different classes, or castes. Members of each class or caste have more or less restricted access to wealth, resources or power, creating inequalities between each group. In some cultures, there is little mobility between caste or class, in others there is more. Cultures with high levels of inequality tend to be stratified, while cultures with relatively little inequality are egalitarian.

5.32 In some cases, rank and status, or a place in a social group, can be 'achieved' through talent and achievement. Australian government appointments, including in the Australian Defence Force (ADF) are merit based, achieved through effort and talent. By contrast, rank and status may be 'ascribed' and given through birth, rather than being earned through achievements. An example of this is seen in monarchies, where a person automatically receives a royal rank or status upon birth.

5.33 People organise themselves in many ways other than kinship. People may organise themselves into groups based on gender, sexual orientation, language group, ethnicity, age, profession, ability, religion, political affiliation or other interests. A person may be a member of several such groups, and change their participation in any at any given time. This is likely to play an important part in how a person communicates their identity.

5.34 Identity is the story that a person, or group that person belongs to, tells about themselves. Stories express those qualities and

elements that are important to them and which they want others to acknowledge and understand.

5.35 It is important to recognise that when a person changes their identity story, they are not necessarily being disingenuous. The choice and combination of elements a person expresses can shift according to context, who the story is told to, and what others say about them. This understanding helps us make sense of how a person or group can seem to express contradictory identities.

5.36 The description of different forms of social organisation here are not meant to be exhaustive of each and every way human beings organise themselves. Rather they are a guide to some of the most common types of social organisation you may encounter. As has been described in Chapter 3, preparation and planning prior to any cross-cultural encounter is critical.

### Culture area 3: Political organisation

5.37 Put simply, politics is the process of decision-making over who has power and control over materials, resources, institutions and people. This process can take place between two people, between groups, or between organised political units (such as political parties, or governments). Political organisation is the way that power and authority is created, distributed and embedded in any group. All groups have political organisation to maintain social order and determine who gets what, and how they will get it.

5.38 At the level of a State, or country—which has a population numbering perhaps in the millions—centralised authority and control of physical and social resources are key features. A State rules over a given or 'sovereign' territory. It is comprised of a government executive, a bureaucracy, courts, other institutions which give effect to this rule, and a military to defend its national interests and territorial integrity.

5.39 In States, many aspects of society—such as medicine, education, taxes and social welfare—are monitored, regulated and controlled by the State. Governments are able to do so by making laws and procedures that apply to all members of the country that can be enforced and administered through specialised sectors. Common examples include security forces (such as police), legal

systems (such as courts), and other official bodies (such as the public service or government-appointed oversight bodies).

5.40 There are many other ways to politically organise people. They may operate within a state, and may or may not be subject to state oversight. Small egalitarian groups tend to arrange politics around persuasive people who are able to bring people together to achieve consensus on an issue. Other groups may formally identify leaders, such as through local councils or assemblies. Sometimes groups who see themselves as independent may join together to form a political bloc to pursue a common cause.

5.41 You may encounter cultures where leaders have substantial control over valued items (such as wealth or information or ceremonies), or valued processes (such as the distribution of food or the work people do).

5.42 Carl von Clausewitz, the influential 19th century military theorist, asserted that war is one way that groups pursue their political objectives. It is not the only way: diplomacy and trade arrangements are other common means. Warfare is usually accompanied by political, religious, economic, or moral justifications. These justifications may get blended together so that it not always easy to pick out a single cause driving conflict.

5.43 Post-colonial civil wars in sub-Saharan Africa have often been caused by a mixture of poverty, poor economic growth, ethnic and/or religious rivalry and desire to make money from undeveloped natural resources.

5.44 Each culture has a way of doing and pursuing politics, both to govern its own people and manage relations with other groups. Taking the time to understand how a political system works, whether in an overseas environment or within a multinational coalition, will help you in identifying how important decisions are made, why particular leaders have the authority to make these decisions and what motivates some groups to pursue their goals through conflict.

## Culture area 4: Economic systems

5.45 Economies are systems for obtaining, producing, consuming, and distributing items and services. In practice, economic activity is a

series of exchanges between individuals, groups and institutions like businesses, banks and governments. An economic exchange is where someone who has one item, such as money, can exchange or trade it for other items, such as food or information.

5.46 We tend to think of money, the stock market, and banking when we think about the economy. This sort of economy is largely about the exchange of symbols (printed banknotes, credit cards and bank accounts with numbers and passwords) for goods and services. Food, for example, can be a good that is bought with money. There are also services that can be bought, such as a teacher providing an educational service to students. This is a formal economic system regulated by government or through rules of operation, wages and taxes.

5.47 Informal economic systems involve those economic exchanges that are not recognised, regulated, controlled or taxed by a government. Voluntary work, and the giving or receiving of food that you have grown yourself are two examples of goods and services that government does not control.

5.48 Informal economic behaviour is normal. However, from a government perspective, sometimes the informal economy is treated as illegal, either because it is unregulated, or what is being traded is illegal. At a very small scale, most governments tend not to pay attention to unregulated economic activities because they are not threatened by them.

5.49 Large-scale illegal economic activities that generate a lot of profit—such as phishing emails ransoming personal information, the trafficking of people, or the manufacture of illegal drugs—are threatening to governments and the people they serve. Illegal activities and their profits can destabilise communities, and in extreme circumstances whole countries.

5.50 Economic exchange often revolves around judgements about what is valuable. Groups and individuals may share the same sense of value but it may also be the case that what is valuable to one group or person may not be shared by another. In such circumstances, parties to the economic transaction will need to agree on the value of the traded or bartered item.

5.51 Economic activity may also involve culturally specific ideas about who should be involved in the activity. In some parts of the world, gender plays a big part in this so that men and women have different levels of access to the economy, sometimes with both experiencing economic insecurity.

5.52 Trade, which is the exchange of money for a good or a service, is only one kind of economic activity. The other, most common form of economic activity across the world, is reciprocity. Reciprocity is where a good or service is given to another in exchange for something that is regarded as being of equal value. Sometimes the exchange occurs straight away, such as when people exchange gifts at Christmas or barter goods in a market. Sometimes the exchange is delayed for a time, such as when a person receives a birthday gift, which creates a debt of repayment on the part of the receiver.

5.53 The most significant feature of gifts and bartering is the way this type of economic exchange can create a bond between the participants that lasts long after the actual exchange. This is in contrast to trade, which is often depersonalised and does not create long-lasting social relationships. In reality, both economic systems interact as people often purchase goods to give as gifts, and gifts are sometimes sold on after they are received.

5.54 You will encounter situations where exchanging gifts is a normal way of confirming a relationship, and so is suggested at the end of formal or diplomatic exchanges. You will need to exercise judgement as to what level of commitment or obligation is implied by the exchange of gifts and consult Defence policy when preparing for these exchanges.

## Culture area 5: Beliefs

5.55 Beliefs unite members of a group and influence the way people perceive the world. Beliefs do not have to be true or verifiable to bind people together and neither does a person who holds a belief need to be consistent in their beliefs and behaviours. From an operational point of view, beliefs are highly motivational and understanding who is being motivated and what the goals of that motivation are, is particularly important.

5.56 Beliefs may explain the cause and purpose of how a society, country, or even the world has come to be the way it is. They may include a moral code that sets out the rights and wrongs of personal behaviour. Belief systems may also set out a model for how a society should run and seek to persuade or compel others to be part of this state of affairs.

5.57 One point of view about beliefs, particularly religious ones, is that they are a force that seeks to maintain consensus and order in a society. A very different approach to belief treats that very consensus as largely of benefit to those who have the most to gain from maintaining the status quo in a society.

5.58 This approach to beliefs draws attention to how a belief system assigns powerful social positions to some classes of people, and subordinate roles to others. This may be along the lines of gender, race (people distinguished by their physical appearance), sexual orientation, or people in impoverished economic circumstances. These classes of people may be treated as taboo, as exhibiting unacceptable behaviours according to the dominant beliefs.

5.59 Beliefs are sometimes clearly visible, such as in political platforms or religious creeds. Other forms of expression, such as historical stories, myths, symbols, rituals and taboos, also embed beliefs in them. Not everyone in a culture group may share the same beliefs. Where people do subscribe to a belief—whether it be religious, political or otherwise—that belief may be highly motivational.

## Culture area 6: Media

5.60 Culture is expressed through media and personal technologies such as mobile phones and the internet. Media is part of social and cultural life, not separate from it. Part of what makes these technologies so attractive is that they connect people to one another, carrying messages and data between individuals and groups. As instruments of communication, media are tools for storing and sharing information.

5.61 Mass media, or media that is able to be consumed by large numbers of people at the same time—such as television, texting, or

social media platforms—links people in their local communities with the larger world. In societies all over the world, digital media have become essential elements of social interaction. Digital media enhances social interaction and facilitates the creation of online communities between people who may otherwise not be able to meet face-to-face. Digital media is also a tool for illegal activities, such as terrorism, smuggling, human and animal trafficking, and scams.

5.62 For operational purposes, online communities provide an opportunity to see how different groups form around shared interests, religious or political beliefs. Like physical communities, online communities may have rigid inclusion policies for membership and seek private and secluded online locations to meet.

5.63 They may also form a community around an idea, or as is increasingly common, around a shared notion of what truth is. These can be called communities of truth, which often form in opposition to institutions that exercise authority around information, such as governments, established media, or scientific communities. Online communities of truth frequently serve as platforms for political agitation. As military personnel, we are not concerned with proving or disproving an online community's beliefs about what is or is not true. Rather, we are concerned with their potential to mobilise people to influence, initiate or participate in creating social tension or conflict.

5.64 People declare their beliefs and intentions in online environments. For ADF personnel who need to understand how competition works on online environments, we must be aware that, just like in normal speech, the audience—whoever sees or hears online material—is free to interpret what they encounter online. An audience may accept, reject or redefine the intentions of the original communicator.

5.65 Audiences are 'situated', or possess unique and different standpoints. These standpoints also depend on the sociocultural contexts within which these features are expressed. This means that consumers of online media have a far greater degree of agency in deciding the meaning and value of what they encounter online than is often recognised.

5.66 Symbols and words that have a global reach through accessible media technology—such as smartphones and content-sharing social media platforms—can be shaped by local audiences to have local meanings. This very same global reach means that these localised meanings will almost inevitably be re-shared through the same content platforms to a global audience. Seemingly harmless content can be reinterpreted as a damaging idea that becomes part of a worldview at odds with our own.

5.67 In the global environment of media flow, audiences everywhere are able to consume messages created by any group or person, including ADF members. Because each audience is unique, it will make sense of these according to its own interests, which may not align with ADF priorities and Defence Values. We must be sure that our conduct in an online environment does not associate the ADF with ideologies and ethics at odds with Defence Values.

## Summary

5.68 This chapter has broken down cultural features into recognisable categories to help you effectively apply your cultural intelligence in the operating environment. These categories are not stand-alone, they all intersect. As you grow your cultural intelligence you will increasingly see the connections between media and politics, economy and social organisation, human ecology and beliefs. Making the effort to deepen your cultural comprehension by putting together these interconnections is a vital asset when encountering cultural difference. It enhances your decision-making and the effectiveness of your actions.



## Chapter 6 – Conclusion

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6.1 Cultural intelligence will not, on its own, resolve all of the culturally-based dilemmas you will encounter in military life or on a military operation. But, without effective cultural intelligence, strategic and tactical decision-making will be diminished as you struggle to understand the cultural factors that are driving a competitive situation or operating environment.

6.2 In addition, partnerships with people, agencies and militaries of different backgrounds will suffer from needless ignorance of what each wants, what each values, and how each goes about doing things. Avoid that ignorance. Be conscious of your and your team's behaviours and practices. They communicate and reinforce your moral intent to our people, our allies and partners, and our adversaries. We create strong, healthy team cultures to build and develop our people and our teams. Together we are stronger and better prepared to prosecute Defence's mission wherever we operate.

6.3 Cultural intelligence prepares Australian Defence Force personnel to operate effectively, ethically and respectfully in culturally-unfamiliar environments. Each operational environment is unique and unpredictable. Cultural knowledge and awareness contributes to more effective assessment of the resources and motivations an adversary or ally might bring to a situation. Without it, we risk damaging blunders.

6.4 Cultural intelligence adds to our moral strength. It enables culturally effective peace-building and security efforts and enhances our ability to conduct war in a way that respects our own humanity, and that of our adversaries and the innocent victims of war.

6.5 We wage war and foster partnerships to secure our peace. We do not wage war and foster partnerships to vandalise others. We recognise and accept that war is confusing, complex, disorderly and violent. We add to that confusion and its effects on populations if we are culturally unprepared. That is a moral choice, and we diminish our moral authority if we choose to be culturally ill-prepared.

6.6 As elements of social mastery, Culture joins Command, Leadership, Ethics, and Character<sup>3</sup> as the foundations of the ethos of the profession of arms in Australia.

6.7 Cultural intelligence reminds us that while we will always rely on technology to assert our military will, our most consistent assets are the calibre of our people, our mental agility, and our ability to understand others. These assets are within each and every one of us to be nurtured and applied to the cultural demands of our mission.

6.8 Your cultural intelligence starts with you, today. It does not begin when you arrive in a foreign destination, or when you become part of an Australian or international inter-agency organisation or coalition. It encompasses all of the circumstances you encounter and the team of which you are a part today. The commitment and professionalism you bring to developing your cultural intelligence and with it the strength of character of your team reflects your standards of accountability. Exemplary standards translate into exemplary actions in defence of Australia and its national interests.

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<sup>3</sup> ADF-P-0 *Command*, ADF-P-0 *ADF Leadership*, ADF-P-0 *Military Ethics* and ADF-P-0 *Character in the Profession of Arms*.

## Acknowledgements and further reading

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To further your personal journey, you are encouraged to access the Centre for Defence Leadership and Ethics, Australian Defence College online resources at the [Social Mastery Hub](#) of [The Forge](#). These resources encourage further professional development, and allow you to engage in ongoing discussions and seek to deepen your understanding of issues covered in this doctrine.

Beyond the specific citations, the Australian Defence Force acknowledges its intellectual debt in preparing this publication to a number of sources and recommends their further reading, including the publications listed.

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# Glossary

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*The source for approved Defence terms, definitions and shortened forms of words is the Australian Defence Glossary (ADG), available on the Defence Protected Network at <http://adg.dpe.protected.mil.au/>.*

*Note: The ADG is updated periodically and should be consulted to review any amendments to the data in this glossary.*

## Terms and definitions

### **agency**

Intentional and purposeful striving of human behaviour.

### **behaviour**

Patterns of activities, actions, and reactions that individuals and groups make in relation to each other and the environment.

### **culture**

A set of beliefs, values, and attitudes shared by members of an organisation or group that influence their behaviours and practices.

### **cultural intelligence**

1. The ability to accurately comprehend cultural context, and then act effectively and appropriately.

2. Intelligence on individual and group beliefs, customs and norms for the purpose of anticipating actions of a person or group and interpreting the meaning of their actions.

Note: It may include factors such as ethnicity, religion, other value systems, social stratification and stability, education, history, and language.

### **domain**

Within the operational environment, a medium with discrete characteristics in which, or through which, military activity takes place.

**ethnicity**

Connections made between individual and larger group based on shared cultural practices, community building, origins and descent.

**exceptionalism**

The unacceptable practice by individuals or groups of self-glorification, avoidance of accountability, self-congratulation, contempt for external authority, and normalisation of unethical and/or illegal actions by members of the profession of arms.

**micro-culture**

Distinct small group culture that has its own patterns of behaviours and norms while sharing commonalities with the larger culture of which it is a part.

A specific micro-culture may be anywhere on the spectrum from exemplary to toxic.

**operational environment**

All the elements, conditions and circumstances that may influence the employment of capabilities and the decisions of the commander during campaigns and operations.

**power**

1. The ability of a person or group to influence the behaviour of others.
2. Norms and behaviours internalised by people across society and culture.

**society**

A body of individuals living as members of a community.

**structure**

The organisation of human behaviour into predictable relationships and patterns of interaction.

**toxic culture**

A set of behaviours and attitudes that normalises rule-breaking and encourages damaging behaviours between people. Leads to ethical and behavioural misconduct.



## Shortened forms of words

**ADF** Australian Defence Force



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