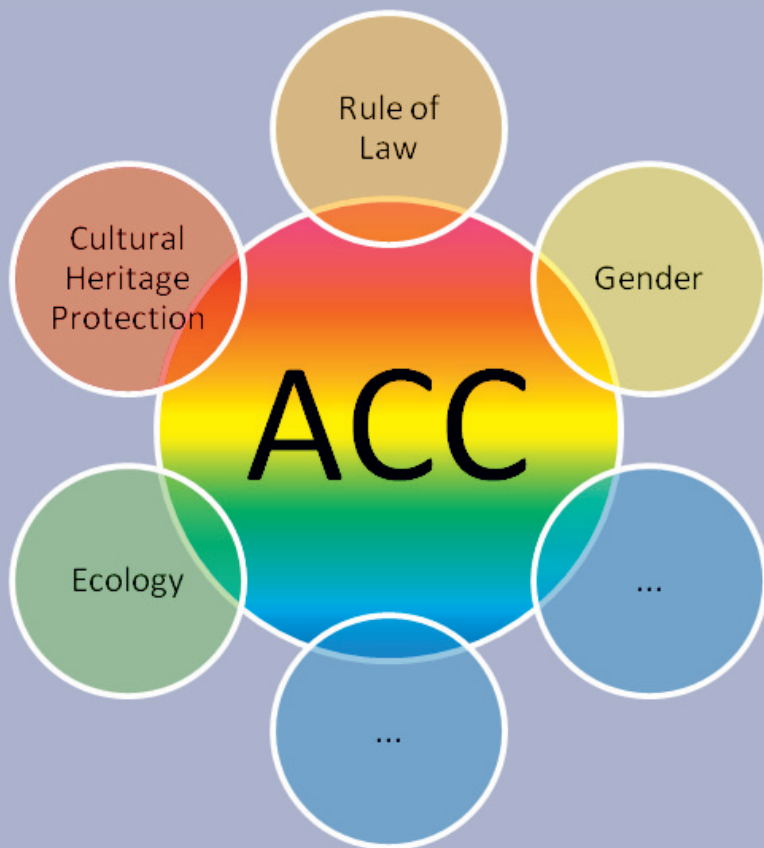


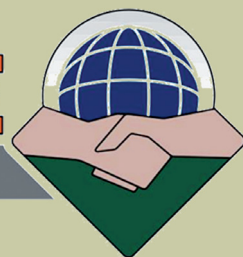
Advanced Cultural Competence

the gate to CCOE's "... makes sense" publication series



CCOE

Civil-Military Co-operation
Centre of Excellence



CCOE's Advanced Cultural Competence Model

**Major Sennef
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Leading Question & Lay-out

The Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Centre of Excellence (CCOE) is a multinationally sponsored, NATO accredited, centre of excellence located in Enschede, the Netherlands. CCOE provides added value, innovative and timely advice as well as subject matter expertise on CIMIC /Civil Military Interaction (CMI) for both civilian and military customers. The primary focus of CCOE's efforts is education and training along with conceptual and doctrinal development. In line with its above mission statement the Concepts, Interoperability and Capacities (CIC) Branch of the CCOE started in 2009 to formulate a model that provides contextual perspective on culture in operations. This model should enable CCOE students and CIMIC personnel to incorporate culture in the operational setting of the mission.

This article intends to provide a clear outline of what CCOE's Advanced Cultural Competence (ACC) model is about:

1. It puts the most important element, the model itself up front and presents the **anatomy** of the model. As any model the ACC model is a simplification of reality and so reduces complicated cultural circumstances in a mission.
2. The article then proceeds to present the model's **approach** of culture.
3. Pointing out its operational relevance by stressing that the model is not just academically descriptive but meant for practitioners. Throughout the article it will be stressed that operational relevance of culture in the context of the ACC model rests in those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of the military operation. The more personnel in a mission is aware of and understands the culture of the area they operate in, the better they'll be able to move around, plan and execute, making a difference in that culture and thus support the mission.

As may be deduced from the above, the ACC model provides three benefits which will be discussed consecutively in the three sections of chapter II.

1. It provides **clarity** of thinking about culture in an operational setting
2. It offers **comprehension** by covering all aspects of culture and allows to draw stringent conclusions on each element
3. It allows to set **priorities** in the cultural setting of an operational area

2. Methodology

The ACC model is based both on theory (scrutinizing the multiple existing theories on culture in conflict) and on practice in the form of input from practitioners in the field and on the hybrid form in between: participation in conferences and seminars. Through all these formats, mainstream as well as key issues in 'culture in conflict' could be identified and described and underlying root issues clarified. Once the problems were defined, a start could

be made by defining possible solutions to the problems by starting to develop a model. The initial model has been scrutinized incessantly and alternatives were formulated especially taking into account constraints from the field as mentioned in feedback. All alternatives were evaluated and a final model been decided upon. Obviously it doesn't stop here: CCOE as a learning organization continues to evaluate the outcomes of this model till falsified, after which it will be readjusted¹.

The model also uses the taxonomy of levels of knowledge which from lowest to highest are:

1. Awareness
2. Understanding
3. Competence.

As the model is used throughout the CCOE, these levels of knowledge are also used by CCOE's Training & Education (T&E) Branch.

II. CCOE's Advanced Cultural Competence Model

1. Anatomy of the Model

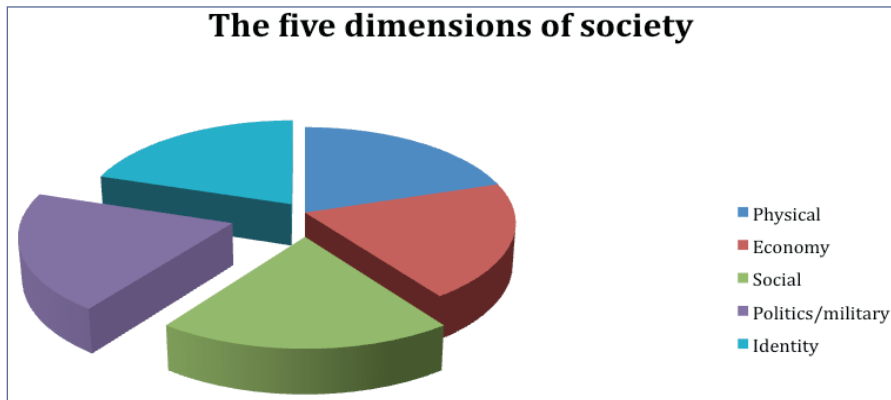


Chart 1: society as slices of a pie

In CCOE's ACC model, culture is approached from a classical anthropological perspective, providing **clarity** by dividing a culture/society into five dimensions².

1. **Physical dimension:** (arable) land, mountains, potable water, rivers, the environment, mineral resources.
2. **Economic dimension:** produce, trade, ways of dealing with scarcity, but also aspects like entrepreneurial confidence and black market.
3. **Social dimension:** the way any society defines and organizes its relationships: young vs. old; have vs. have-nots; male vs. female.
4. **Political dimension** how a society has divided its power and organized its leadership.
5. **Identity dimension** with joint beliefs and history that helped to shape the identity of a culture/society.

The operational relevance of the ACC model can be made clear immediately when looking at these dimensions in terms of conflicts and clustering them accordingly:

The cluster of Physical and Economy dimensions: conflicts and wars about the ownership of scarce resources such as water, oil, minerals, markets and land (Colonial wars; the Boer War: diamonds, Gran Chaco War: oil).

The cluster of Social and Political dimensions: conflicts over power and redressing inequalities in social structures: class wars e.g. French, Russian and Chinese Revolutions; wars for the Mastery of Europe. This cluster often is useful to understand the reasons behind revolutions, insurrections and COIN.

The Identity Dimension: ideological wars between competing narratives to explain the world: e.g. Cold War (Capitalism vs. Communism); Religious Wars: Crusades, Thirty Years War.

This clustering of dimensions becomes even more important within the ACC model as it is indicative what sort of operations to engage in as a military mission, in terms of high yield and facilitating the mission's end state. Conversely it indicates what sort of activities, though important in their own merits, will give diminished returns to the military mission.

The above paragraphs are widely accepted wisdom within classical anthropology and used in MNE-6 and other models. (See page 7 for a description of other models). These insights are merely the base for the ACC model and it is here that CCOE's ACC model starts to stand apart, prove its accelerated returns and show that it does improve the mission.

Having gained insight into the structure of societies and cultures through these five dimensions, it is now easy to categorize and put into a dimension any new term that should be dealt with in missions. All activities effecting any society can logically be placed somewhere in the model. Thus a term like '*ecosystem analysis*' will logically come under '*physical dimension*', '*gender*' will be categorized as a social distinction and thus come under the *social dimension*, while '*cultural heritage protection*' with its links to history and beliefs resides under the *ideology dimension*, to name only a few.

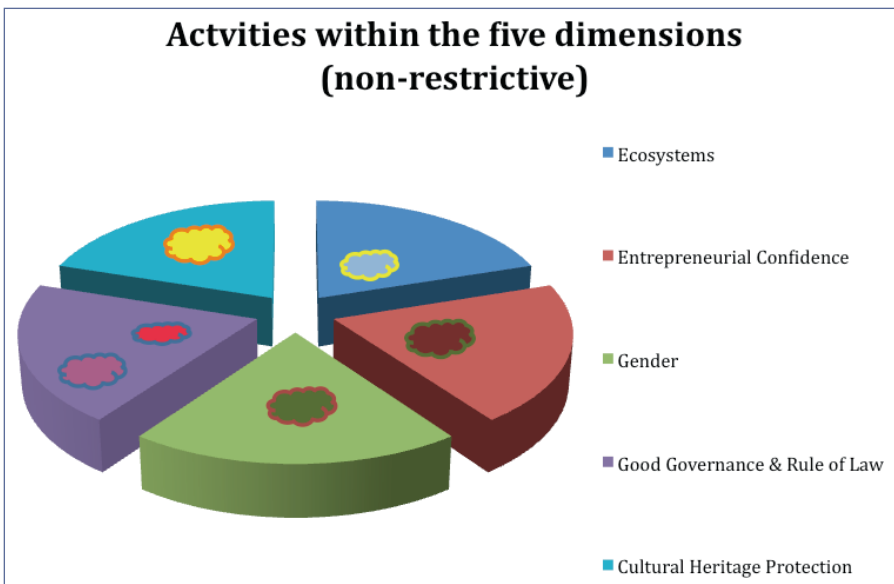


Chart 2: elements within dimensions of society

As the ACC model allows for a further refinement within these five dimensions, it gives these activities a solid place in the mission's constellation, where they through their operational relevance can actually contribute to the mission's success by their inherent legitimacy, sustainability and/or respectability within the society and culture the mission operates in.

A non-restrictive list of the constituent activities within the five dimensions would look like this:

1. Physical dimension:

- **Ecology and ecosystem analysis** with its stress on the value maintaining the integrity of the physical land and its resources, not depleting potable water and naturally comes into the physical element of a society³.

2. Economy dimension:

- Economic activity is either legal or illegal. The illegal sector is often more relevant to the operational setting of missions. Within the legal part, attention should be paid to restoration of **Entrepreneurial confidence**. In the illegal sector, far more prominent in failed states, attention could focus on '**black market**', or '**Money as a Weapon**'.

3. Social dimension:

- **Gender** in line with UNSCR 1325 and related Security Council Resolutions, should be approached both from a mainstream angle as well as from the operational setting, ensuring ways to improve the mission's success⁴.

4. Political dimension:

- **Good Governance:** (Good) Governance is a key component in achieving sustained success of a mission. As a prerequisite for political ownership and therefore as a part of the transition phase, the relevance of Good Governance becomes unavoidable.
- **Rule of Law:** promotion of rule of law in what often is referred to as 'failed states'.

5. Identity dimension:

- **Cultural Heritage Protection** both of tangible as UNESCO World Heritage sites as well as intangible issues as popular rituals and festivals.
- **Grand Narrative** in the meaning of world view / vision, as in 'Battle of the Narratives'; what Strategic Communication calls the "NATO narrative".

2. Approach of Culture in the Operational Environment

With its Advanced Cultural Competence (ACC) model, CCOE has developed a clear, **comprehensive** and stringent model that contributes to the military mission's success. It improves the quality of the relationship between the mission and the local population by deepening the understanding of the local culture.

Operational relevance and effects of CCOE's ACC model are:

- It being based on a sound and transparent multidisciplinary academic framework
- It being generically valid cross culture, cross geography and cross the kinetic spectrum
- Its systematic and systemic thinking about culture and independent application of its tenets
- Its connection with and evolution from similar models, tested both in training as well as in the field while continuously developed further based on feedback⁵.

The term 'culture' within CCOE's ACC model is not strictly defined but rather openly approached as a tag cloud of words such as: 'shared values (of a) group (which) can change over time'. This choice not to define culture had the foreseen and appreciated effect that the process of developing a cultural model at no time drifted into the danger zone of becoming dogmatic and closing off inputs from parties that could not subscribe to such definition. However as a "working definition" of culture, as being used during its courses, CCOE subscribes to: *"the shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore and institutions of a group of people that are unified by race, ethnicity, language, nationality or religion"* but CCOE staff is also known to use Lord Raglan's definition: *"Culture is roughly anything what we (humans) do and monkeys don't."*⁶

CCOE did not develop its ACC model in splendid isolation; other models and publications were used for its development as well as contributions from other institutes, both military and academic, with which CCOE has a relation. These other models include:

- NATO's MNE-6 Object 4.3 (Cross Cultural Awareness)⁷;
- NATO's ACT 'Multiple Futures'⁸
- USMC's Cultural War Fighting Model⁹.
- Strategic Studies Institute: Cultural Dimensions of Strategy and Policy¹⁰
- SWEDINT's Gender Field Advisor Course curriculum¹¹

What gave the ACC model its added value over the others is that these other models do not continue the logical conclusion to the end (MNE-6), remain in the strategic realm without having operational relevance (Multiple Futures; SSI) nor have any cross-cutting depth (USMC). The ACC model enables to make culture

operationally relevant in an incisive way similar to the most vibrant of other 'culture models' used within the military.

While working with international partners it became apparent that 'culture' is approached in different ways in different countries, making the need for an all encompassing model the more urgent. Culture in an operational setting in Anglo-American schools can be likened to two parallel running valleys without ever meeting. Experts in the bigger valley deal with 'cultural anthropology', while the business in the smaller valley is 'Cultural Heritage Protection'. While those working in these valleys are well aware of each other's existence, no initiative has been deployed yet to integrate the two into a congruent approach. CCOE's ACC model on the other hand does just that.

In Scandinavia gender plays a dominant role in the approach towards culture. For this two justifications can be given: gender because of its nature is the cross-cutting aspect 'par excellence' in any culture. Secondly, gender is an issue that since the last decade is very much on the ascendant in the political arena, supported by no less than four UN Security Council Resolutions¹².

Culture Centric Warfare within the ACC model is mentioned as opposed to Network Centric Warfare, the latter associated with military hardware and kinetic war fighting as it was waged in the first phases of the conflicts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. What followed in the stabilisation phase of these conflicts was that the centre of attention shifted away from the military hardware and towards people and their culture, away from kinetics and towards non-kinetics. Illustrative for this transition where the population becomes the objective, is General McChrystal in his famous "Guidance on COIN"¹³. This shift had two consequences in relation to the ACC model.

1. The model makes the troops on the ground (and not just CIMIC personnel) incomparably better equipped in dealing with local population because their competence to operate in the culture of the local population has made them better equipped to do so.
2. Because of the ACC model, those obligatory demands to take note of all the modern politically correct buzzwords with which modern missions have to deal, as: 'ecology'; 'protection of cultural heritage' and 'gender' do not need to be perceived as pesky, obnoxious demands burdening the task of soldiers. Instead they can be made sense of in the operational setting by planning staff aware of and understanding the culture as they can be put in a bigger framework and actually contribute to the operational outcome.

As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, because of the model above and similar terms in their application become mutually reinforcing, comprehensive and start to contribute to the mission's success; in other words: they set the conditions to succeed.

3. Application & Main Benefits of the Model

As for the model's operational relevance, it will come as no surprise that the military belongs to the political dimension, as armed forces have everything to do with (military) power. Military personnel therefore are most in their comfort zone inside the political dimension. From a synergy point of view one can maintain that apart from providing security the armed forces in a military mission operate at their best in the political dimension. NB that this is not to advocate that the military should take over the political responsibility.

Following the above, the ACC model clearly indicates what sort of dynamics going on in a society the military is best equipped to support and what sort of activities less so. As announced in the Introduction the model allows setting **priorities**.

From a synergy point of view: "Rule of Law" and "Good Governance", as well as other activities within the political dimension are well into the military comfort zone and thus best suited to be supported by the military. This is not to say that other dynamics are less deserving or less important, only that the level of involvement by the military mission should be less, e.g. brought to a facilitation level and left to civil organizations in the mission who have more affinity with that dimension.

To continue this line of thought: as demonstrated, the political and social dimensions can be clustered. This means that undertaking activities outside of the political dimension in the social dimension such as e.g. engaging in gender would be rewarding from the point of view of what contributes most to the mission's success¹⁴.

Another preference should be activities in the Identity's dimension, which is the political dimension's other (but not clustered) neighbour in the chart 1. Possible activities here are: "the Narrative" and/or "Cultural Heritage Protection (CHP)" which are according to ACC's model well chosen and a safe investment for the military to achieve mission's goal.

And logically following from the above: activities positioned in dimensions that are far away from the political dimension, such as physical and the economy dimension might be less well suited for the military to be engaged in, as they are so far away from the military's core business that getting it right will require an disproportional allocation of time and resources, however deserving they might be.



Chart 3: network

Many of those aspects mentioned above cannot be restricted to one dimension but are in effect cross-cutting aspects. As can be seen in chart 3, achieving an effect in one field has multiple repercussions in other fields. If applied to the full extent of its possibilities, it can act as a system of systems (SOSA) within chaos theory.

Two examples to illustrate this:

- When in a military mission the commander has decided to allocate his time and resources on 'Good Governance', the effect is that because of more secure conditions 'Entrepreneurial Confidence' might increase. This in turn leads to the opening of more and more small businesses which gives the economy a lift. A healthier economy leads to more income which can be taxed: tax money can in turn be spent on making the use of environmental resources more sustainable and/or be ploughed back into more investments in *good governance*, sustaining the cycle.
- Another powerful example of how an applied cultural force multiplier can improve the mission is *gender*. By paying attention to what basically is 50% of the population, the whole mission can change in character. Information campaigns can be directed differently, intelligence gathering earns a complete new and differently angled sources to yield additional information from, contributing to a heightened situational awareness. The whole society in which the military mission operates, changes because of applied attention to certain carefully selected cross-cutting aspects in the society. Thus the model makes clear how culture can be a way to improve your mission.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Summary & Answer to Leading Question

The Advanced Cultural Competence (ACC) model is developed by the CIMIC Centre of Excellence (CCOE) based on classical anthropological insights. A model is traditionally known as a simplification of reality. The ACC model is just that, a simplification of the often complicated cultural circumstances in a mission.

The ACC model shows how cultural phenomena that might initially be considered alien, unwelcome and even hostile to the operational requirements can take its rightful place in the operation and actually contribute to the mission's success. It gives a very clear and scientifically solid base on how to approach all cultural elements confronted in a mission and therefore is of high operational relevance.

The ACC model:

1. gives **clarity** of thinking about culture in an operational setting through offering an anatomy
2. offers **comprehension** by covering all aspects of culture
3. allows to set **priorities** in the often bewildering cultural environment

As shown in II.1, the model's clarity derives from a time tested anthropological model that enables to divide any society into five dimensions: the Physical, Economic, Social, Political and Identity dimension into which any cultural phenomenon can be clustered. The model is generically valid, cross culture, cross geography and cross kinetic spectrum and it is open ended.

The next chapter II.2 stipulated that the need for a comprehensive model is growing, not just because the role of culture in Culture Centric Warfare is growing but also because of the many ways culture in conflict is approached. The role of culture in an operational setting in the Anglo-American school often is approached by two non-colliding courses: one called cultural anthropology; the other cultural heritage protection. In Scandinavia culture is predominantly dealt with through a gender lens because of gender's cross-cutting aspects and its political preponderance. Confronted with the above diversity in how culture is approached in missions, CCOE, always attentive to operational relevance, decided to develop its ACC model as comprehensive as possible in order to give all cultural elements its proper place in operations.

As for priorities in II.3, the model allows a commander (regardless civilian or military) and his staff to select which aspects from the "cultural arsenal" to employ in the process. More in specific, the ACC model allows a PRT commander to set priorities which activities to support. The model states that the military should first and foremost deliver security (its core business). After that, being part of the political dimension, the military would be well advised to concentrate

on aspects within that dimension such as “Rule of Law” and “Good Governance”, as these are in the same dimension as the military and therefore should yield maximum synergy. If the military were to venture outside of its dimension, the ACC model indicates where to go next and what fields are safest to choose in order to contribute to the mission’s success. The model would advise to move to a neighbouring dimension within a culture, that is either to the social dimension and e.g. concentrate on gender or to the identity dimension and concentrate on e.g. Narrative (‘Battle of the Narratives’) or Cultural Heritage Protection. Less suited to move to would be activities that take place in the dimensions that are further away from the political dimension, such as the physical and the economy dimension. However, because of the cross cutting aspects interference in one dimension will have effects in the dimensions further removed from the political dimension.

2. Way Ahead

Because of its sound academic framework and the fact that it allows to think systematically about culture, CCOE has made the ACC model the cornerstone of its cultural policy.

The model obviously is not just there by itself but will be used to put culture in a wider use. For CCOE this means the way ahead of the ACC model is to show the connectivity of all cultural elements by incorporating the ACC model as the docking element in CCOE’s publications on Gender, Ecosystems, Cultural Heritage Protection, where the ACC model will serve as its foundation. The text of the docking element that will precede each CCOE publication on culture is presented in *Annex 2*.

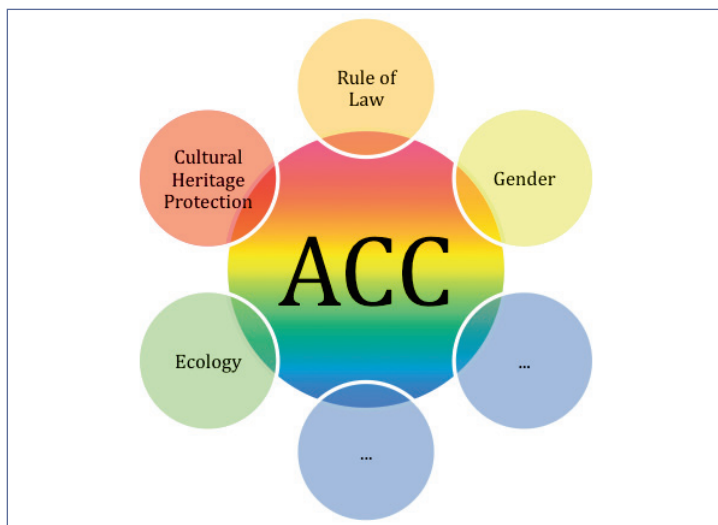


Chart 4:
connectivity

Furthermore the ACC model allows cultural elements to be easily included both in the planning and training phase of the operational cycle. The ACC model allows culture to figure prominently because of its operational comprehensiveness. CCOE applies the ACC model in its Education and Individual Training, ensuring culture is integrated in the planning process and making it CIMIC in the context of the concept.

As can be concluded from the above, the open-endedness of Advanced Cultural Competence as presented above is being trained in each course that CCOE has in its curriculum. Its contents are being continually monitored and if needed revised in order to make them pace the latest developments, based both on feedback received from the field and from the latest academic insights. Also cultural elements that have not surface yet can easily be incorporated in the ACC model. On the horizon one may discern a role of culture both in change management and in congruence of approaches.

Annex 1: Annotation

- ¹ CCOE developed its ACC model in the best tradition of Karl Popper and his empirical falsification
- ² John Monaghan and Peter Just, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- ³ CCOE: *Ecosystems assessment makes sense*, 2011
- ⁴ CCOE *Gender Makes Sense, A way to Improve Your Mission*, 2008
- ⁵ NATO's MNE-6 Object 4.3 (Cross Cultural Awareness)
- ⁶ Raglan, F.: *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama*, unknown, 2003 reprint of 1936 edition.
- ⁷ MNE-6 *OBJ 4.3 CROSS CULTURAL AWARENESS*, Granada 2010.
The objectives of MNE-6 OBJ 4.3 were:
 - to define and articulate a proper Cultural Awareness methodology
 - what coalition functions and CIMIC activities there are to adequately reflect cultural awareness
 - integration of cross cultural awareness into the operational and interagency planning and into the intelligence cycle
 - Establish elements of cultural awareness to be incorporated into the training and education programs and syllabi.
- ⁸ ACT *Multiple Futures*, Norfolk 2009
- ⁹ USMC *Operational Culture for the War fighter*, Quantico 2008
- ¹⁰ ISS Strategic Studies Institute: Cultural dimensions of Strategy and Policy
- ¹¹ Swedish Armed Forces International Training Centre (SWEDINT) runs a Gender Field Advisor course that lasts a week and covers both mainstreaming as well as operational aspects of gender.
- ¹² UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1888 & 1889
- ¹³ McChrystal, General S. *ISAF's Commander Counterinsurgency Guidance*, also valid for stability operations
- ¹⁴ Normally mainstreaming but 'operational gender' as advocates in CCOE Gender publication contributes more to the mission's success.

Annex 2: Text of the ACC Docking Element

The support of societies in their movement from conflict to peace is a very demanding and complex challenge for anybody committing to it. As civil entities might have a head-start when compared to military entities, it is nevertheless absolutely necessary that military forces are able, willing and keen to participate.

These societies in focus demand for more attention and focus than the normal stereotypical situation analysis of military personnel. This stereotypical military situation analysis is not taking all the factors in consideration which need to be part of the equations.

To facilitate this holistic view for the military the CCOE designed the Advanced Cultural Competence Model (ACC). It incorporates all relevant sectors of any society, as well as all influence factors to this society, which the military forces need to understand and imply in their planning to lend the support needed.

ACC structures the society itself into five segments. These are the

- 1. **Physical dimension:** Here one has to think of land, mountains, potable water, rivers, the environment but also the mineral resources.*
- 2. **Economic dimension:** produce, trade, ways of dealing with scarcity, but also aspects as entrepreneurial confidence and black market*
- 3. **Social dimension:** the way any society defines and organizes its relationships: young vs. old; have vs. have-nots; male vs. female*
- 4. **Political dimension** how a society has divided its power and organized its leadership.*
- 5. **Identity dimension** with joint beliefs and history that helped to shape the identity of a culture/society*

Each single one of these dimensions plays a vital part in the interaction of any society, sets its' fundamental axioms as well depicts borders or development opportunities. Any frictions in these areas will create unrest ranging from irritation to aggression.

The CCOE aims for making this model transparent as well as understood. Resulting from that it is part of our program to publish easy guidelines for each single segment, if not covered in other publications or doctrines. The start has been made with "Gender makes sense", covering parts of all five dimensions mentioned above. The publication you hold in your hands now explains the influence of one more aspect on all parts of societies rounding up the picture. In future ACC will be furthermore completed with publications on other issues.

Fostering and promoting understanding and apprehension of ACC will be assured by making understood the importance of most prominent influence-issues in each segment.

- 1. Ecosystems influence in the physical dimension*
- 2. Entrepreneurial influence in the economical dimension*
- 3. Gender influence in the social dimension*
- 4. Good governance and Rule of Law influence in the political dimension*
- 5. Cultural heritage Protection influence in the identity dimension.*

Taking these crucial topics into a close look will enable military personnel to decipher easily the problems at hand. This is the prerequisite for holistic analysis of the situation in the area. Starting from here Alliance Forces will be able to decide on the right measures for most beneficial solving of problems. It is also the key to identify areas of common interest with civil partners in order to achieve cohesive solutions of an enduring character.

ACC is the gate to these conditions, thus, amongst others, enabling military forces to reach the desired end state, in close partnership with civil entities also committed to the efforts in the area of operation.

The support of societies in their movement from conflict to peace is a very demanding and complex challenge for anybody committing to it. As civil entities might have a head-start when compared to military entities, it is nevertheless absolutely necessary that military forces are able, willing and keen to participate.

These societies in focus demand for more attention and focus than the normal stereotypical situation analysis of military personnel. This stereotypical military situation analysis is not taking all the factors in consideration which need to be part of the equations.

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Civil-Military Co-operation Centre Of Excellence (CCOE)
PO Box 5013 - 7500 GA Enschede - The Netherlands
registry@cimic-coe.org - www.cimic-coe.org