



# Aligning Culture with Purpose: Preparing Special Forces for Strategic Competition

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# Agenda

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- Research Question, Literature Review, and Model Development
- Subject Matter Expert Interviews
- Assessments
- Findings and Recommendations

# Research Question, Literature Review, and Model Development

Research Question: *How and should 1st Special Forces Command evolve its culture to maximize its differentiating value proposition to the Army in strategic competition?*

Literature Review & Model Development

Interviews

Assessment

Findings & Recommendations

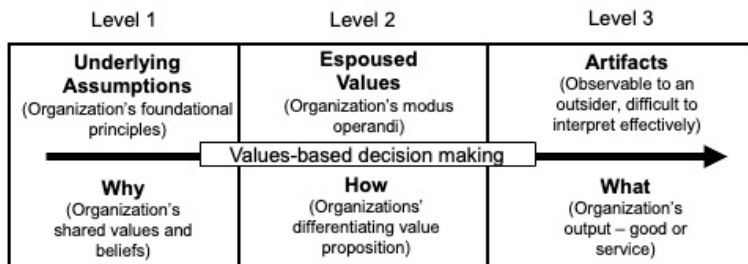
## Culture in Breadth

Three levels of culture (E. Schein)

- Underlying assumptions
- Espoused values and beliefs
- Artifacts

The “Golden Circle” (Sinek)

- Why
- How
- What



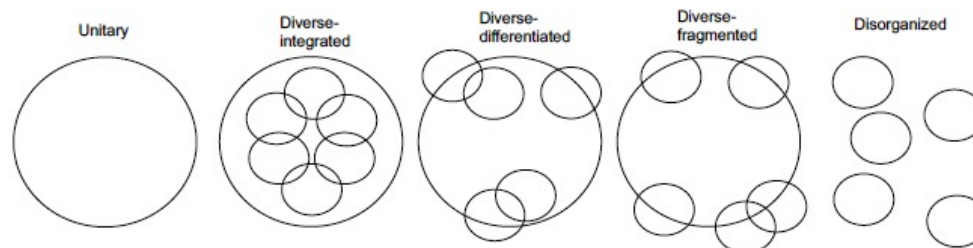
## Culture in Depth

Subcultures (E. & P. Schein)

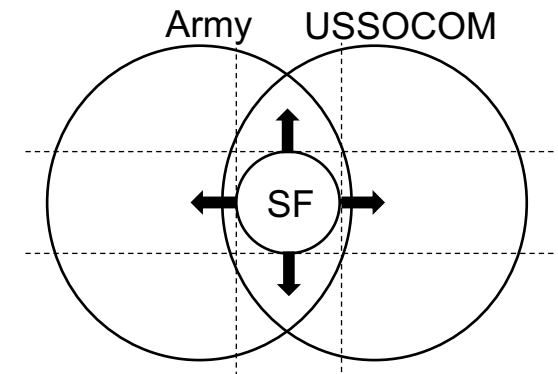
Types of subcultures (Martin & Siehl)

- Enhancing, orthogonal, and countercultural

Spectrum of Organizational Cultures (Hatch)



## Adapted Model



# Subject Matter Expert Interviews

Literature Review &  
Model Development

Interviews

Assessment

Findings &  
Recommendations

## Candidate Criteria

Requirements:

- Active-duty or retired general officer or command sergeant major
- O-6 or higher command experience
- Minimum 25 years of service
- Required service:
  - Special Forces Regiment
  - Joint SOF community
  - Chief of Staff of the Army
  - Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff

## Candidate Selection

- Hierarchical diversity (O-6 to O-10 levels)
- Commissioned vs. non-commissioned officers
- Broad perceptions of the Special Forces Regiment
- Active-duty and retired

## Interview Questions

Please describe the cultures of 1st Special Forces Command, the Army, and USSOCOM.

What is the 1st Special Forces Command's differentiating value proposition to the Army in Strategic Competition?

Is 1st Special Forces Command's current culture aligned with its differentiating value proposition to the Army in Strategic Competition? If yes, how? If no, what needs to change?

If change is needed, how best do leaders enact that change?

# Underlying Assumptions / The "Why"

Literature Review & Model Development

Interviews

Assessment

Findings & Recommendations

**Prevent war through deterrence**

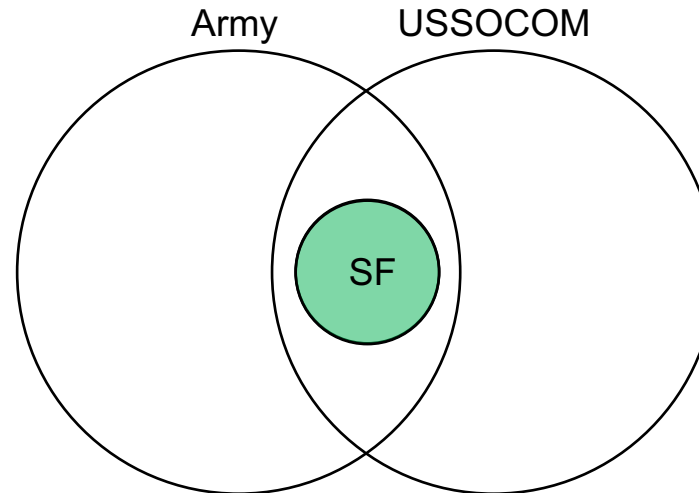
**Prevail in large-scale ground combat**

**Army Values**

- Loyalty
- Duty
- Respect
- Selfless Service
- Honor
- Integrity
- Personal Courage

**Army Professionalism**

**Army Ethic**



**1st Special Forces Command**

- Excellence
- Commitment
- Accountability
- Trust
- Empowerment

**Prevent war**

- Win in competition phase

**Fight and win the nation's wars**

**SOF Truths**

- Humans are more important than hardware
- Quality is better than quantity
- Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced
- Competent Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies occur
- Most special operations require non-SOF support

# Espoused Beliefs and Values / The “How”

Literature Review &  
Model Development

Interviews

Assessment

Findings &  
Recommendations

## Mission focused

## Prefers mass

## Classical Warfighting

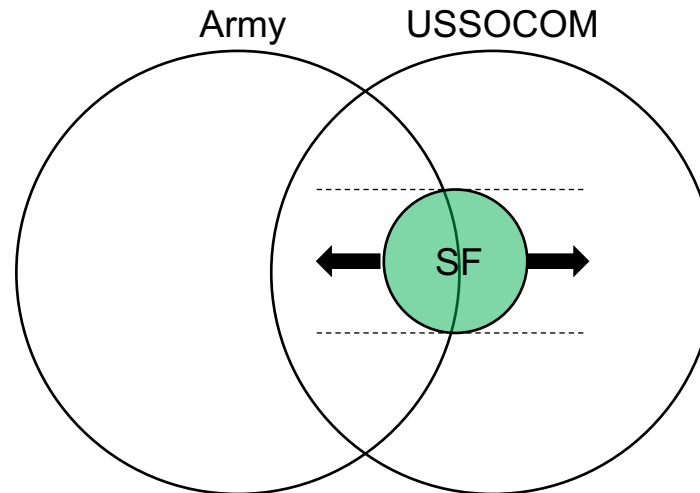
- Enemy-centric approach
- Kinetic approach
- Values the warfighter

## Structured

- Hierarchical (top-down)
- Doctrinaire (Army doctrine)
- Tradition bound
- Unity of command

## Professionalism / Leadership development

- Education
- Training



## 1st Special Forces Command

- Mission focused
- **Adaptable** and proficient
- **Human-centric / indigenous approach** and enemy-centric approach
- Willingness to push boundaries
- Unconventional methods
- Bottom-up organization

## Mission focused

## Small footprint

## Problem Solvers

- Human and enemy-centric approaches
- Willing to use unorthodox methods
- Doctrine informed (Joint doctrine)

## Adaptive

- Bottom-up approach
- Independent thinking
- Willingness to push boundaries

# Artifacts / The “What”

Literature Review & Model Development

Interviews

Assessment

Findings & Recommendations

**Large formations**

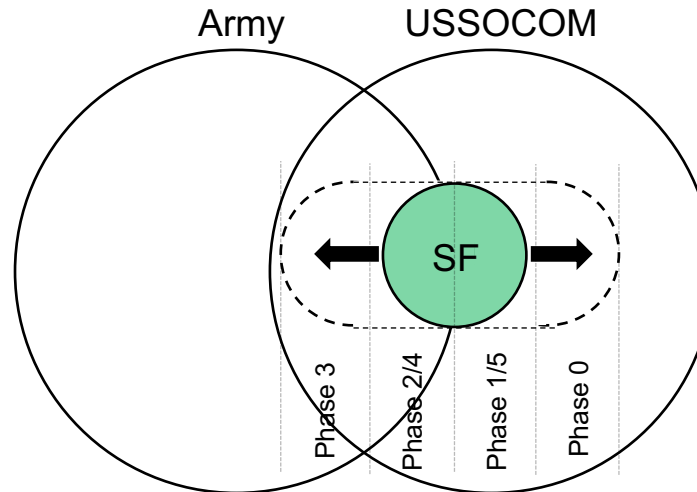
**Uniformity**

**Focus on high intensity conflict (Phase 3)**

**Large weapons systems/programs**

**Leadership institutions**

- USMA/ROTC
- Basic training
- Professional Military Education



**1st Special Forces Command**

- Irregular Warfare
- Fit
- Lack of uniformity
- SFODA-centric

**Missions**

- Civil Affairs
- Counterinsurgency
- Counterterrorism
- Countering WMD
- Direct Action
- Foreign Humanitarian Assistance
- Foreign Internal Defense
- Hostage Rescue and Recovery
- MISO
- Security Force Assistance
- Special Reconnaissance
- Unconventional Warfare
- Preparation of the Environment

**Fit**

**Unique equipment**

**Aggressive**

**Focus on Competition**

# Findings and Recommendations

Literature Review &  
Model Development

Interviews

Assessment

Findings &  
Recommendations

## Findings

Finding #1: 1st Special Forces Command has a cultural differentiating value proposition to the Army.

- 1st Special Forces Command has either a diverse-differentiated or diverse-fragmented relationship with the Army.
- The Army will view 1st Special Forces Command as either an orthogonal or countercultural subculture.

Finding #2: 1st Special Forces Command's current culture aligns with its differentiating value proposition to the Army in strategic competition.

- Efforts by the Army to force cultural alignment may negatively affect 1st Special Forces Command's differentiating value proposition to the Army in strategic competition.

## Recommendations

- 1st Special Forces Command must remain nested with the Army's underlying assumptions, specifically the Army Values and Army Ethic.
- 1st Special Forces Command must reinvigorate a universal acceptance of the human-centric approach amongst its members.
- 1st Special Forces Command must more effectively balance training with education.



# Questions

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