In Defense of Diversity: Immigrant Inclusion in the US Military as a Strategic Imperative

Emerald M. Archer, PhD
Mount Saint Mary's University

Prepared for *The Power of Diversity in the Armed Forces workshop*
25-26 June 2021

Research Question

Wha i he a e i aki g i ha de f -ci i e die
e e i he A e ica i i a ? A e e i g eci
ca abi i ie he ba ie hei e ice a e c ea ed?

Research Claims

- Di e i i a a egic a e i e e c e f ec e c a e d c i i
- S i i g a i i a f i di e i i f da e a i de a d da i i a d a cia ed e a i a ea i ie .
- Th ee di e i ca eg ie ge de , ge e a i a a , a d ci i e hi a i e ec a d k e gi ica e g he f ce eadi e .

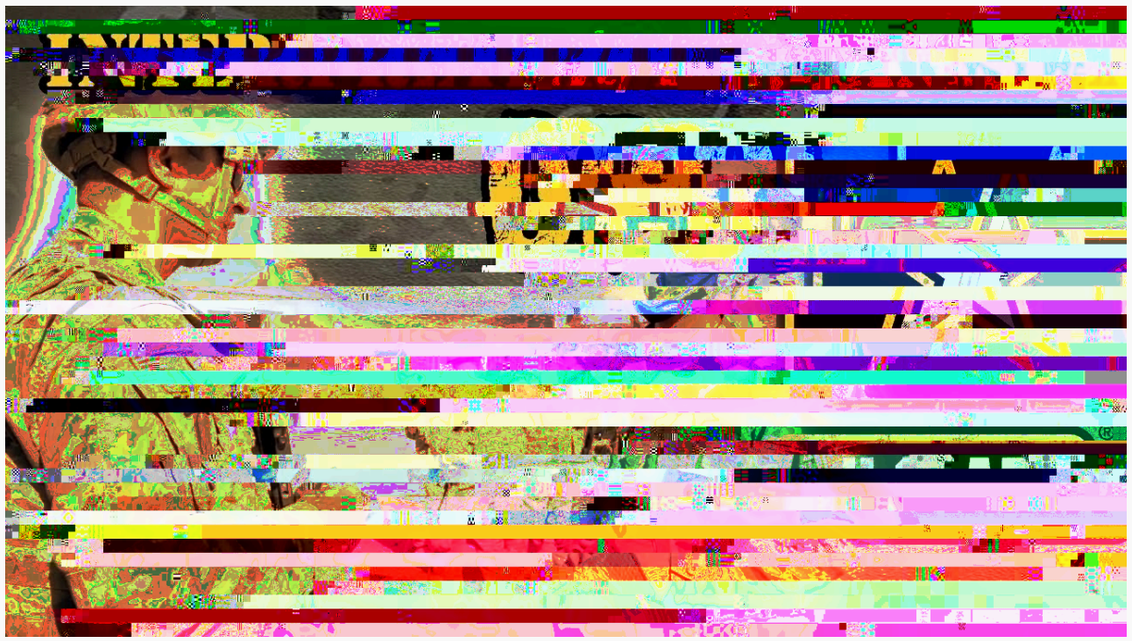
In tant Terms & Theoretical Approach

-
  - e variation of traits within groups of two or more people and may include both visible (e.g., sex, , race) and invisible (e.g., knowledge, culture, values) traits" (Kamarck 2019, 2).
-
  - Foreign-born persons serving in the military who presently reside and intend to permanently live in the US.
  - A citizen raised in an American immigrant community
- 1
  - Engagement typology ranges from coalition-lead operations oriented around humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and peacekeeping to containing great powers.
-
  - Physical (visible) diversity characteristics (e.g., race, gender, age) positively impact performance and organizational outcomes because each member contributes unique cognitive abilities (e.g., personality styles) that are a result of their experiences and are contingent on the visible characteristics (Horwitz and Horwitz 2007).

Immigrant Soldiers

.

Existing Programming



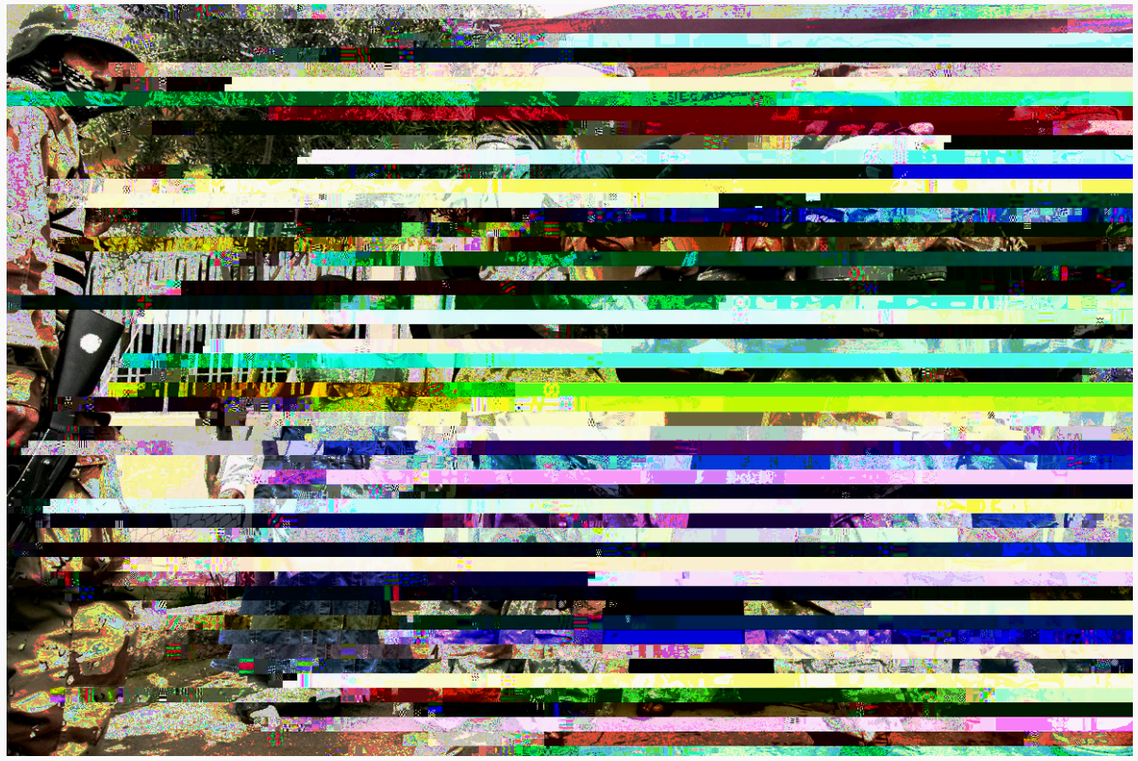
US Army 09L

Translators/Interpreters

US Army MAVNI

Military Accessions Vital to National Interest program

Intersecting Identities at Work



CASE STUDY 1

Interpreters in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars

CASE STUDY 2

Immigrant soldiers with expert medical knowledge

Interpreters in the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars

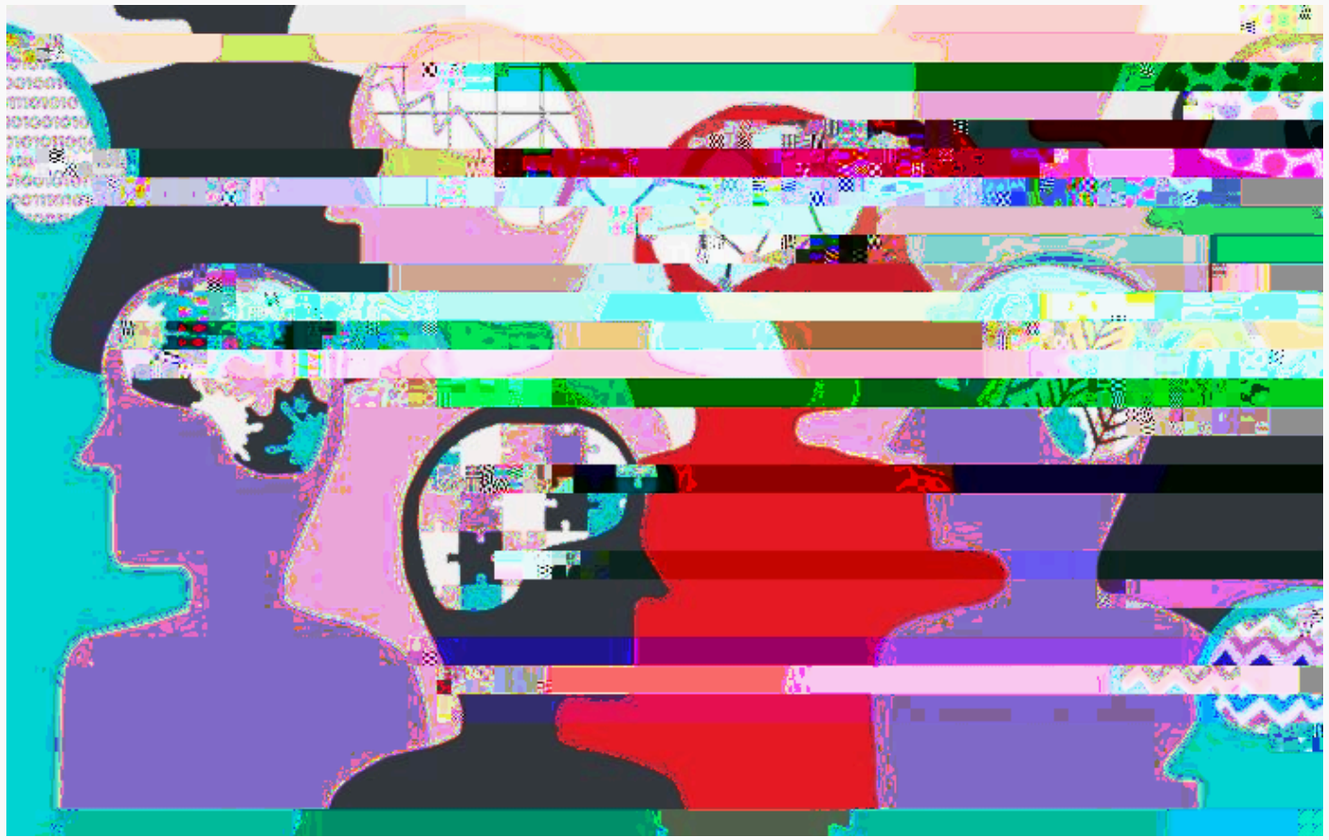
- Intersecting identities:
  gender and citizenship status.

- Female, Iraqi Interpreter –
  Aseel Salman
  - Met and spoke with village women on various raids during the Iraq war.
    - Able to gain intelligence
    - Better assessment of threats due to cultural fluency
    - Salman’s unique background allowed for nuanced understanding of gendered nature of Iraqi culture

N -C e S d e E e Med ca K edge

.

Cognitive Diversity Provides the Frame



- C g e D e , he a f he e e ec e a d e e e ce ha a e c ge he h ca a e f d ffe e ce a g d e , c ea ed a e ag e, e e, a d ead f ce.

- Th cha e ffe e a e f ha h e, b he e a e a e ha a e d c e ed.

Conclusions & Recommedations

- N
  - The case studies show that *<u>because of</u>* a immigrant soldier's expertise and difference, the US military and coalition forces are in a more advantageous position.
- :
  - Reevaluation of the MAVNI program
  - Congressional immigration reform
  - Congressional oversight on DoD policies that endanger non-citizen soldiers
  - More research