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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

Racial Diversity within the Marine Corps

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Executive Summary

Title: Racial Diversity within the Marine Corps

Author: Major Clinton D. Alexander, United States Army

Thesis: In comparison to the United States population, non-Whites are not represented fairly in the Marine Corps Officer and Senior Non-Commissioned Officer leadership.

Discussion: Diversity is an ever increasingly important topic in the civilian world as well as in the military. Organizational behavior experts tend to agree that diversity fosters multiple points of view with which to solve problems and decreases groupthink. Organizations that foster diversity also tend to have better teamwork, mission accomplishment, and increased recruitment. This study seeks to determine if the Marines are a diverse organization, when comparing the organization to the population of the country. Based on numbers provided by the Department of Navy Diversity, the Marine Corps is a very diverse organization. However, the Marine Corps officer and Senior NCO leadership is far from diverse. In comparison to the United States population, this study finds that Whites are over-represented in the Officer Corps, with all other racial groups being under-represented. In regards to Senior NCOs, Whites are under-represented in regards to the United States population. Blacks are over-represented, and all other races are under-represented. This study looks at some potential reasons as to why this occurs, however, the main object of the study is to determine how the Marines compare to the population and paint an accurate picture of the current state of the Marine Corps to the reader. Finally, the study briefly examines some of the other services to determine if this is a Marine centric problem, or does the issue cut across all of the Department of Defense.

Conclusion: By continuing to study what the current state of the Marine Corps is in regards to diversity, the Marines can continue to take measures to recruit, retain, and promote the most qualified individuals while yet insuring the force is diverse.

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THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DON NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

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PREFACE

The issue of equality and diversity continues to be an important issue in both the military and civilian world. This study clearly shows that, although the military is a very diverse organization, its senior leadership continues to be primarily white. The only exception to this occurrence takes place in the Senior NCO Corps, where blacks are over-represented when compared to the general population. The real relevance for this study is for the Marine leadership to sit back and examine the numbers as presented in the data and determine, how do we get the face of the Marine Corps to match the face of America? Specifically, how does the Marine Corps attract more Asians, Hispanics, American Indians, and Blacks to become members of the officer corps? Additionally, how does the Marine Corps keep Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians in the NCO Corps. Hopefully this study will assist the Marine Corps leadership in looking at these issues.

I would specifically like to acknowledge Lieutenant Colonel Mary Reinwald who assisted in explaining how the Marine Corps Command Screening and Promotion boards occur. Furthermore, Marine Major Angell Green from the Office of Marine Corps Diversity was very helpful in explaining emerging policies and initiatives the Marine Corps is developing. Doctor Eric Shibuya's tireless efforts in coaching, mentoring, and shaping this study was instrumental to my success. Finally, I would especially like to thank my family Tori, Mattie and Ashley for all their support and love.

Introduction

One element of diversity that continues to be an important area for research and study is the element of racial diversity in organizations. The Commandant of the Marine Corps has expressed in a policy statement that, "Diversity provides us [The Marine Corps] the opportunity of bringing fresh ideas and innovative capabilities to the total force."¹ The Commandant's statement shows that diversity is important to the Marine Corps. The Commandant further states that, "we must respect the race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and cultural differences of all personnel." Based on the racial data provided by the Department of the Navy, it would appear that the Marine Corps is a very racially diverse organization. However, closer examination shows that, the leadership of the Marine Corps is not very diverse, and the Marine Corps must diversify its leadership in order to become a truly diverse organization. This study will examine what the current facts are, and what are some potential solutions.

Prior to studying what diversity is and why it is important, a definition of races to be studied is appropriate. The Department of Naval Diversity identifies the following races in their annual report: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American.² For the purposes of this study, these definitions of "race" will be used to determine what the current state of the Marine Corps is and where it needs improvement.

Organizational behavior experts Adrienne Collella, Mike Hitt, and Chet Mill define organizations as multicultural, plural, or monolithic. According to them, a multicultural organization is an organization in which the organizational culture fosters and values cultural differences.³ Likewise, they contend that a monolithic organization is one that is demographically and culturally homogeneous, all White Catholic males from

Texas for example. Furthermore, they define a plural organization as one that has diverse workforces and takes steps to be inclusive and respectful of people from different cultural backgrounds. In plural organizations, diversity is tolerated but not fostered. Using these categories, I will argue that the Marine Corps is somewhere between a multicultural organization and a plural organization.

Another reason it is important to study diversity in the military is that it is beginning to gain the attention of those outside of the military. In a recent editorial for the Marine Corps Times, United States Congressman Kendrick B. Meek discussed the issue of diversity in the military. Representative Meek attests that the Officer Corps must catch up with the enlisted ranks for true integration to occur. Representative Meek sits on the House Armed Services Committee and is the Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. In short, Meek contends that a need exists to: increase preparation of minorities in the various pre-commissioning activities, increase awareness of career prospects in the military, and increase senior mentoring of minority officers.⁴ Finally, he confirms that the issue of lack of minority representation in the officer corps has been raised through the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation to the House Armed Services Committee. The Committee has agreed to hold hearings on the issue. What this means for the military is that if it does not come up with a strategy to increase diversity, Congress might impose a strategy instead.

The final note to mention on why diversity is important has to deal with legitimacy. There are thirty-nine four-star generals (O10) in the military today, and only one is Black, General William Ward. General Ward is also the chief of U.S. Africa Command.⁵ As Africa Command stands up, the United States can present the face of the

old colonial masters of Africa, or present a more diverse face such as General Ward. The military used a similar tactic during Hurricane Katrina when Army Lieutenant General Russel Honore was designated Joint Task Force Katrina Commander. Honore was from South Louisiana and of mixed African, French and Creole ancestry. The fact is that, the military could have sent anyone to be the commander, or could have chosen to send someone who the indigenous peoples of South Louisiana identified with.

This paper is not advocating that sticking a minority in charge that looks like the locals equals mission success. For example, for earthquake relief in Pakistan the military does not have to find the highest-ranking Pakistani-American in the military and make him the Joint Task Force commander. However, in the General Honore example in Hurricane Katrina, there were plenty of generals to choose from, but cultural background might be just as important a consideration as some of the more traditional reasons to choose a commander.

What is Diversity, and Why is it Important?

Before identifying why the Marines Corps is not an organization that fosters diversity, it is important to understand what diversity is and why it is important. Simply defined, diversity is a characteristic of a group of two or more people that refers to the differences among those people on any relevant dimension.⁶ Diversity has several dimensions, such as: race, sex, religion, and sexual orientation to name a few. This study is focused solely on the dimension of race.

There are several reasons why diversity is important. The first reason is that the demographics of America are changing. As the demographics of America change, the face of the Marine Corps should also change to reflect the population it serves. For example, by 2050 it is estimated that the White population will decrease from seventy percent currently to fifty percent of the United States (U.S.) population.⁷ In the same time frame, the Hispanic population is expected to double from twelve percent to just under twenty-five percent. Therefore, as the face of America changes, equality, mathematics, and a desire to attract the best recruits from the population pool, would dictate that the face of any organization would likely mirror America.

Another reason promoting diversity is important is the need to prevent discrimination. Discrimination occurs as the result of unequal treatment of individuals based on group membership.⁸ Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional. As the demographic makeup of America changes, it is important for the Marine Corps to understand the changing face of America and insure it is not unintentionally discriminating against a particular race.

Two more reasons why diversity is important deal with performance and productivity. Two leading experts in the field, Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe, contend that, as the workforce demographics change, if diversity is fostered the trust and morale of that team will increase.⁹ They further contend that once trust and morale increases in a team, communication, productivity, and creativity will also increase. Therefore, as more Hispanics enter the Marine Corps for example, if they feel they are not part of the "team" as described above, the overall productivity or mission accomplishment of the Marine Corps will decrease.

The next reason diversity is important concerns recruitment. If diversity is fostered in an organization and minorities within the organization feel like part of the team, this serves as a positive recruiting tool for other minorities. For example, one study found that organizations that promoted diversity tended to attract better-qualified minorities and women than organizations that did not openly promote diversity.¹⁰ Based on this logic, it would seem essential that the Marine Corps would want to promote diversity in order to attract the best potential recruits.

The last reason why diversity is important to the Marine Corps is that the Commandant has made it a priority. The closing remarks in the Commandant's policy statement state that, "We must respect and value the race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and cultural differences of all personnel."¹¹ He goes on to say in his closing sentence that, "I expect every Marine, Sailor, and civilian Marine to lead, mentor and develop all individuals within their charge." Therefore, not only do organizational experts agree that diversity is important, the Marine Corps Commandant has made it a priority, which should be enough for any Marine to accept.

Findings for the Marine Corps

With an understanding of why diversity matters, and why it should be important to the Marine Corps, it is necessary first to understand what is the racial makeup of the population of America. Based on 2004 Census data, the Department of Navy Diversity identified 66.7 percent of America as White, 13.9 percent as Hispanic, 12.1 percent as Black, 6.2 percent as Asian, and around one percent as American Indian.¹²

(Figure 1, Source: *Department of Navy Diversity*)

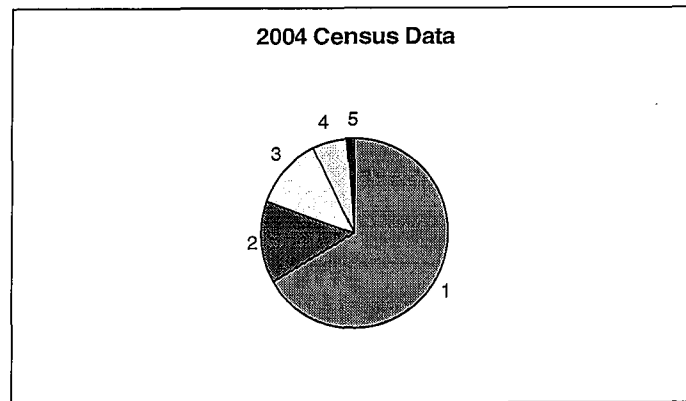
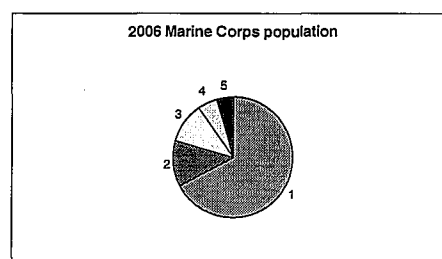
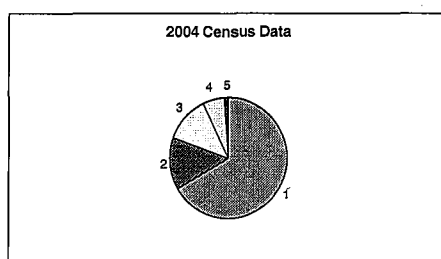


Figure 1: **Key:**

- 1 = White – 66.7%
- 2 = Hispanic – 13.9%
- 3 = Black – 12.1%
- 4 = Asian/Pacific Islander – 6.2%
- 5 = American Indian – 1%

With knowledge of the current racial makeup of America, an investigation into the makeup of the Marine Corps can now occur. According to the 2006 data provided by the Department of Navy Diversity, the Marine Corps would appear to be a very diverse organization, essentially mirroring the United States population. The data provided shows that: Whites make up 66.85% of the Marine Corps, Hispanics are at 12.38%, Blacks constitute 10.65% of the population, and Asian or Pacific Islanders equaled 5.22%.¹³ No data was provided for the percent of the Marine Corps that is American Indian, and 4.5% of the Marine Corps declined to respond. The data given shows that when compared to the United States population the Marine Corps is about (plus or minus 2% or less) where it needs to be in regards to diversity. Figure 2 compares the United States population based on the census and the Marine Corps based on the report.



(Figure 2, Source: *Department of Navy Diversity*)**Key:**

1 = White – 66.7 %
 2 = Hispanic – 13.9 %
 3 = **Black – 12.1 %**
 4 = Asian/Pacific Islander – 6.2 %
 5 = American Indian – 1 %

Key:

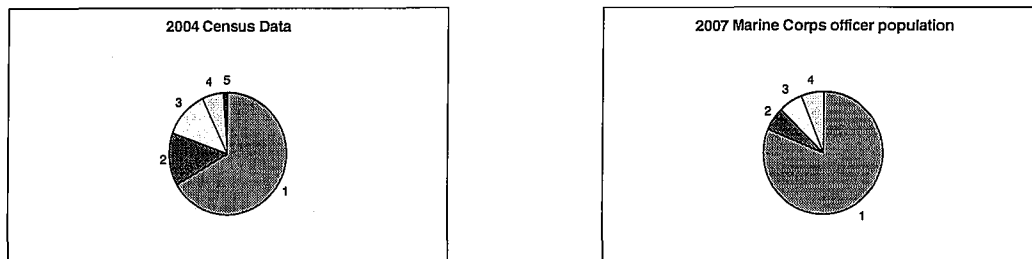
1 = White – 66.85 %
 2 = Hispanic – 12.38 %
 3 = **Black – 10.65 %**
 4 = Asian/Pacific Islander – 5.22 %
 5 = Declined to Respond – 4.5 %

By comparing the two charts, it would appear that the Marine Corps is an organization that is multicultural. However, the official report of the Navy fails to take into account what percentage of these groups make up the Marine Corps leadership. Here is where issues arise.

Although the total Marine Corps appears diversified, the 2007 Marine Corps Almanac shows the discrepancies in the leadership cadre. According to the annual *Concepts and Programs* magazine that the Marine Corps publishes, there are 19,025 officers in the Marine Corps. Of those, 81.3 percent are White, six percent are Hispanic, 6.6 percent are Black, and six percent are listed as Other.¹⁴ The “Other” column in the almanac would indicate that the Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and those who decline to report their race is so small that they do not even warrant their own report.

Based on the data listed above, the Marines begin to look less like a multicultural organization, and more like a pluralistic organization. When compared with the United States population, the Marine White officers are represented 14 percent higher than the United States average. Likewise Blacks and Hispanics are represented in numbers 50 percent less than they would be in the American population. Finally, Asians and the American Indian are so poorly represented in comparison to the United States population

that they are in the “Other” category, according to the Marine Corps.¹⁵ Figure 3 below compares the United States population and the Marine Corps officer population. When compared side by side it is easy to see the deficiency.



(Figure 3: U.S. Population compared to Marine Corps Officer population)

Key:

1 = White – 66.7%
 2 = Hispanic – 13.9%
 3 = Black – 12.1%
 4 = Asian/Pacific Islander – 6.2%
 5 = American Indian – 1%

Key:

1 = White – 81.3%
 2 = Hispanic – 6%
 3 = Black – 6.6%
 4 = Other - 6%

(Source: Department of Navy Diversity, and Marine Corps Almanac)

Before finishing the examination of the officer corps and analyzing the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer corps, one fact regarding seniority needs to be addressed. Based on the data provided in the Marine Corps Almanac, the higher in rank an officer goes, the more likely he or she will be White. The data shows that, of all the Generals in the Marine Corps seventy-seven out of eighty-three were White.¹⁶ This figure accounts for ninety-three percent of the Marine Corps Generals. Black officers ranked second, with only four general officers, and the remaining two are Hispanic. There are no Asian or American Indian generals. What this fact means is that while the total Marine Corps is thirty three percent non-White, its most senior leaders are almost exclusively White.

These figures potentially denote several things. First, to make it to the rank of General your odds are better if you are White. This means that, either non-Whites do not

meet the qualifications to make it to the senior leadership positions in the Marine officer corps, or that some form of glass ceiling (intentional or un-intentional) exists in the officer ranks. The "glass ceiling" is a term used to describe invisible barriers, real or imagined, that prevent certain groups from attaining the highest positions in an organization. Another possibility is that the problem lies not in promotion, but in retention. Non-Whites might simply be leaving before they ever become eligible for the rank of General. Regardless, the effect is a lack of representation for non-Whites at the most senior positions of the Marine Corps.

Based on the data regarding general officers, it would appear that a glass ceiling effect exists. The paradox of the glass ceiling is that sometimes it can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, concerning the general officer numbers, perhaps there truly is a glass ceiling where some form of "good old boy" network is preventing minorities from reaching the highest positions in the Marine Corps. Even if no such policies exist; however, some Non-White junior and mid-grade officers look up the organizational chain and see only Whites. These junior and mid-grade officers then choose to believe a glass ceiling exists and get out of the Marines because they see no future in the organization. The paradox then is that if individuals believe there is a glass ceiling or barriers to advancement, the effect is the same as if true barriers were actually in place. In short, due to the current lack of non-White general officers the "glass ceiling" effect exists, and measures should be taken to mitigate the effect.

If the officers in the military represent the leaders of the organization, the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) can be considered the managers. With the premise that Whites are over-represented in the officer corps in comparison to the United States

population, it is important to analyze where the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer corps rates in regards to the United States population. For the purposes of this study a Senior NCO is defined as a Gunnery Sergeant (E7) or above.

Of the 13,090 Senior NCOs in the Marine Corps, 57.8 percent are White, 11.8 percent are Hispanic, 23.8 percent are Black, and 6.5 percent are categorized as "Other."¹⁷ When this data is compared to the United States population the premise that Whites are over-represented and non-Whites are under-represented becomes somewhat inverted.

First, when analyzing White Senior NCOs, the data suggests that Whites are under-represented in the ranks of Gunnery Sergeant and above, when compared to the United States population (66.7% US vs. 57.8 USMC). Secondly, it appears that Hispanics are also under-represented in the Senior NCO community when compared to the U.S. population (13.9% US vs. 11.8% USMC). Blacks however appear to be over-represented (23.8% USMC vs 12.1% US) in the Senior NCO Corps, as opposed to the U.S. population. One can only assume that the American Indian and Asian/Pacific Islander community is slightly under-represented in the Senior NCO community since they make up 7.2% of the U.S. population combined; whereas, the Senior NCO "Other" category is listed as 6.5% of the Senior NCO population.

The data for the Senior NCO population does present a more diverse population for the Marine Corps than the Marine Officer population. However, it still shows that the NCO population may be a product of reverse discrimination. Reverse discrimination occurs when government policies benefit a historically disadvantaged group at the expense of discrimination against a historically dominant group. For example, the data

shows that Black Senior NCOs are over-represented, as opposed to Whites and Hispanics who are under-represented when compared to the United States population. It is unknown if any specific policies are causing this disparity between the overwhelming number of Black enlisted Marines who reach the Senior NCO ranks; as opposed to, the fewer numbers of White and Hispanic Marines who reach the Senior NCO ranks. The numbers do present an interesting statistic which is an area of future potential study for the Marine Corps.

Another statistic that was identified in the course of this study shows an overall disparity in the Hispanic Marine population when compared to the Black population. As mentioned earlier, Hispanics make up 12.38 percent of the total Marine force while Blacks make up 10.65 percent. Based on the information presented above concerning the overwhelming number of Black Senior NCOs, this number does show an incongruence. However, this project did find that the total population for Hispanic Marines outnumbers the population for Black Marines in the ranks of Private through Sergeant. The trend reverses once both racial groups reach the rank of Staff Sergeant, where the total percentage of Hispanics begins to decrease while the percentage for Blacks begins to increase.¹⁸ Although the Marine Corps Almanac only presents the facts and does not address why this phenomenon occurs, it is an area of potential future research as to why Hispanics choose to leave the Marine Corps or are not promoted past the Staff Sergeant rank when compared to Black Marines.

This fact brings us again back to the concept of the "glass ceiling." Perhaps again there is a "good old boy" network of Black Senior NCOs who set policies in place to increase the number of Black NCOs while installing barriers to the numbers of Hispanic,

White and "Other" senior NCOs. Or, perhaps there is no "good old boy" network.

However, if a young Hispanic is at the turning point of Sergeant and looks at those higher in rank to decide if he has a future in the organization and sees mostly Black and White Senior NCOs, he might believe a barrier exists and decide to leave the organization.

Again, an imagined glass ceiling can have the same effect as an actual glass ceiling. On the other hand, many other factors may be at work as to why fewer Hispanic, Asians and American Indians do not reach the Senior NCO ranks, and these will be discussed later.

The initial argument of this paper was that Non-Whites are not represented equally, in comparison to the United States population, in the senior NCO and officer ranks of the Marine Corps. Based on the information provided so far, it appears that the premise holds true for the officer corps and is false for the NCO corps. A combined NCO and officer comparison is necessary to see if the overall numbers of the Marine Corps leadership/management cadre are not representative of the United States. When the Senior NCO numbers are added to the Officer numbers provided earlier, an overall leadership comparison of the Marine Corps shows that: Whites make up 69.6 percent, Hispanics are at 8.9 percent, Blacks equal 15.2 percent, and "Other" remains at 6.3 percent.

Based on these percentages, the premise that Non-Whites are not represented equally in the senior NCO and officer ranks in regards to the U.S. population only holds partially true when taken as a combined total. For White senior NCOs and officers, the numbers show that White officers and Senior NCOs when combined are represented by three percent more than in the U.S. population. When combined, Hispanics are represented five percent less than in the U.S. population. Blacks, on the other hand, are

represented three percent higher than they would be in the general population. Finally one must assume again that the Asian and American Indians are represented slightly under represented. This is based on the "Other" category equaling 6.3 percent of the Marine Corps, and Asians and American Indians when combined equal 7.2 percent of the population.

To summarize the numbers and confirm or deny the premise of this study, it would appear that when officers and NCOs are combined the premise holds true except for Blacks. When taken separately, the premise holds true for Hispanics in both the officer and Senior NCO ranks, and indeed they are under-represented when compared to the general population. When Blacks are taken separately, the premise holds true for the officer corps, but not the Senior NCO Corps. Finally, the premise potentially holds true for Asians/Pacific Islander and American Indians, as their overall numbers when listed as "Other" are less in both the officer and Senior NCO population when compared to the United States population.

How Marines Compare to Other Services

With a solid foundation of the facts surrounding the problem of lack of diversity in the Marine Corps leadership and management established, an understanding of how the Marine Corps compares to other military organizations is appropriate. A comparison can be a valuable tool to determine if this phenomenon is unique to the Marine Corps, or is this a trend across the military.

Finally by comparing services, the senior leaders can potentially collaborate on strategies for areas to improve or borrow successful programs from each other. One study conducted regarding diversity in the Army concluded that for officers: 75% are White, 12.3% are Black, 5.2% of the officers are Hispanic, 4.7% are Asian or Pacific Islanders, and 0.9% are American Indians.¹⁹ When compared to the general population of America it would appear that White Army officers are over-represented (75% Army vs. 66.6% Population), Hispanics are under represented (5.2% vs. 13.9%), Blacks are almost evenly represented (12.3% vs. 12.1%), Asians are under-represented (4.7% vs. 6.2%), and American Indians slightly under (.9% vs. 1%).

By comparing these numbers to the Marine Corps, one can determine if the problem of diversity in the senior ranks is unique to the Marine Corps or is the problem, military wide or potentially even outside the scope of the military. By comparing the Army's report from the Office of Army Demographics, with that of the Marine Corps Almanac and the 2004 Census data, similar figures can be found.

First, when comparing White Officers both the Army and Marine Corps have more White Officers than the general population. The Army has 75% White Officers, the Marines have 81.3% White Officers, and the general population is 66.7 percent White. The conclusion is that in both the Marines and the Army Whites are over-represented in the Officer Corps than in the general population. A comparable study for the Navy shows similar findings.²⁰

Secondly, the Comparison of Hispanic officers shows that the Army is made up of just 5.2% Hispanic officers, the Marines contain six percent Hispanic, and the U.S. population is 13.9% Hispanic. The Navy's annual report show similar findings, and this

data suggests that across the military there is a need to recruit, retain, and promote more Hispanics in order to keep pace with the changing demographics of America.

Third, a comparison of Blacks shows that the Army is almost even with the general population (12.1%) for Black officers (12.3%). However, the Marines fall behind with Black officers only equaling 6.6% of the force. One idea for the Marine Corps is to work with the Army to identify why and how the Army has been successful in achieving this number. The Navy study shows Blacks equal 7.7% of their force.

Asian or Pacific Islanders in the Army officer corps represent 4.7%, which is below the U.S. population at 6.2%. The Marine data is listed again as "Other" which makes comparison difficult, but it is safe to assume that the Marines are below the U.S. population. The Navy's report shows that just 4% of their officer make-up is Asian or Pacific Islander. Therefore, the problem of recruitment of Asians is not Marine centric and appears that this is an area where all services could improve recruitment, retention, and promotion.

Finally, for American Indians all of the numbers are listed as "Other" or in the Army's case are slightly below the U.S. population. This also is an area of focus for improved recruitment, retention, and promotion.

A quick comparison between Army and Marine Corps Senior NCOs is also an important step to determine if any of the disparities are simply a Marine occurrence or is it an issue that cuts across the military. For Senior NCOs, 47.2% were White, which is almost twenty percent below the U.S. population percentage that is White.²¹ This proportion is similar to the Marine Corps findings where 57.8% of the Senior NCOs were White. The data in the Navy's Diversity report is not specific enough to compare.

Black Senior NCOs in the Army represent 37.2% of the force, while they make up only 12.1% of the population. This higher representation is consistent with the findings for the Marines.. This is clearly an area where whatever the Marines and the Army are doing to recruit, retain, and promote minorities is working, and should probably be expanded to other racial groups.

Hispanic integration into the Senior NCO Corps of the Army has been similarly trying for the Army, as it has for the Marines. Hispanic Senior NCOs represent just 8.1% of the Army's Senior NCO force, while they compose 13.9% of the population. This presents an area of improvement for both forces.

Finally, Asians equal just 2.5% of the Army Senior NCO Corps, and American Indians equal just .9%. Likewise, Asians comprise 6.2% of the population and American Indians cover 1% of the inhabitants. Again the Marine data is insufficient to precisely address the issue. In short, Asians and American Indians represent an area across the board where recruitment, retention, and promotion must improve.

Issues and Recommendations

What can the Marine Corps do to improve these numbers? The first reason non-Whites are under-represented in the officer ranks potentially could be the requirement for a college degree. One recent study by the College Board determined that nearly 50% of White high school graduates go to college, whereas Blacks and Hispanics range from 40% to 37% respectively.²² However, the same study shows that minority college enrollment is on the rise. This means that currently there is a larger pool of Whites to

recruit into the officer ranks, but that a increasing group of Blacks and Hispanics should be available also. One area of focus for the Marines would be targeting officer-recruiting efforts at non-Whites. Additionally, programs that would commission enlisted non-Whites without a degree and subsequently help them earn a degree are another prospective area for recruitment.

The second reason non-Whites are under-represented in the officer ranks may have to do with job placement upon commissioning. One study found that most Black officers are concentrated in the technical or support fields in the military. However, the study found that the majority of the senior officer ranks and high level commands tend to come from the combat arms fields.²³ This may increase the sense of the glass ceiling effect; in that, if a Black officer is in the logistics field looks up and sees all the battalion, regiment, and division commanders are White infantrymen, he may feel he has no future in the top levels of the organization. Efforts should be made to attract non-Whites into the combat arms field, as well as promote non-Whites currently in the combat arms fields to positions of command to serve as mentors and role models. This study does not recommend a quota to make this happen; however, the promotions and command billets should probably be representative of the U.S. population in order to be fair.

Another reason that non-Whites are not represented in the officer ranks equally may have to do with promotion and command screening procedures. According to Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) Mary Reinwald, a Marine manpower officer who has served on two command screening boards, there are no safeguards for minorities in the command screening process.²⁴ Lt Col Reinwald confirms that the command screening board does try and mirror the promotion board in regards to having women and

minorities as board members. However, if the board votes and all the command designees are White, there is no safeguard that goes back and looks at why non-Whites were not chosen.

One last initiative the Marines are conducting involves leveraging technology to track diversity. In 2006, the Marines began the Minority and Female Officer Career Database.²⁵ This database tracks minority and female career progression to determine if they are remaining competitive with their peers and if they are retaining their suitability for promotion with their cohorts. Currently the system is just being used to determine if policies need to be adjusted; however, the real strength of this database could be harnessed by assigning the right personnel with the right background to the next Hurricane Katrina.

Conclusions and Further Research

Although not all-inclusive, there is a host of reasons why non-Whites are under-represented in the officer and Senior NCO ranks. This study has tried to address a few that deal with recruitment, retention, and promotion as potential reasons. Other reasons could simply be socio-economic factors, language barriers, geographic location of Marine bases, citizenship issues, and criminal records just to name a few. However the reasons are so numerous and varied it could take volumes to cover. This is why the Department of Defense has recently contracted the RAND Corporation to develop an overarching diversity strategy for the Department of Defense.²⁶ Regardless of the outcome of the

RAND strategy, initiatives are already being taken in the Marine Corps to improve diversity.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps based on his policy statement already recognizes that there is a need to increase diversity, particularly in the officer ranks. Although not mentioned in the statement, it should be expanded to include the Senior NCO ranks as well. The Marine Corps has taken other measures as well to address the issue.

The first thing is that the Marines have instituted a Diversity Program Liaison Officer and a Diversity Management Office. Major Angell Green is the first diversity program manager for the Marines. She has drafted the policy statement for the commandant, written position papers, attended Department of Defense diversity working groups, organized diversity celebrations and events, and has represented the Marines at various organizations outside of the Marine Corps (NAACP for example).²⁷

Additionally, the Marines have established targets for recruitment. According to Major Green, the Marines are trying to recruit 12% Hispanic, 14% Black, and 5% Other. Although this would not necessarily solve the problem of retention and promotion, it is a start.

As a final recommendation, both the Navy and Marines should split Asians/Pacific Islanders and American Indians from out of the "Other" category and into their own category. This would allow the Marines and Navy to better target and track these racial groups in order to spotlight efforts where needed on recruitment, retention, and promotion.

The premise that Non-Whites are not represented equally in comparison to the United States population, in the senior NCO and officer ranks of the Marine Corps is partially true. As the demographics of America continue to change, fostering diversity will continue to be a challenge not only for the Marine Corps, but also for the country as a whole. Given that having diverse organizations does provide opportunities for improved group performance, the Marine Corps should want to continue its efforts and initiatives at fostering diversity. By continuing to study the current state of diversity in the Marine Corps, the Marines can continue to take measures to recruit, retain, and promote the most qualified individuals while yet insuring the force is diverse. Congressman Kendrick Meek says it best when he states, "Let us keep all options on the table in thinking of effective and creative strategies to rectify the imbalance – for if we fail, the disparity that exists today will persist long in to the future."²⁸

Notes

- ¹ Conway, James. "Commander's Policy Statement on Diversity." *Policy Letter*, Washington, Headquarters: United States Marine Corps, December 2007.
- ² "Annual Report." *Department of Navy Diversity*, Washington, Department of the Navy, 2006, 25.
- ³ Colella, Hitt and Miller, 38.
- ⁴ Meek, Kendrick. "Strength in Diversity." *Marine Corps Times*, November 19, 2007, Opinion, 54.
- ⁵ Meek, 54.
- ⁶ Colella, Adrienne, Michael A. Hitt, and C. Chet Miller. *Organizational Behavior: A Strategic Approach*. New York, NY: Wiley, 2005, 36.
- ⁷ Colella, Hitt and Miller, 42.
- ⁸ Colella, Hitt and Miller, 38.
- ⁹ Gardenswartz, Lee, and Anita Rowe. *Diverse Teams at Work: Capitalizing on the Power of Diversity*. London: Society For Human Resource Management, 2003, 109.
- ¹⁰ Colella, Hitt and Miller, 39.
- ¹¹ Conway, 1.
- ¹² "Annual Report." *Department of Navy Diversity*, 14.
- ¹³ "Annual Report." *Department of Navy Diversity*, 14.
- ¹⁴ "Marine Corps Almanac.", 230.
- ¹⁵ Green, Angell. Interview by author. Marine Corps Base Quantico, December 12, 2007.
- ¹⁶ "Marine Corps Almanac.", 230.
- ¹⁷ "Marine Corps Almanac.", 235.
- ¹⁸ "Marine Corps Almanac.", 235.

¹⁹ Maxfield, B.D. *Active Duty Army: Then and Now*. Washington: Office of Army Demographics, 2004, 25.

²⁰ "Annual Report." *Department of Navy Diversity*, 6.

²¹ Department of Defense 30-35 Report. *Distribution of Active Duty Forces by Service, Rank, and Ethnic Group*. Washington: Office of Army Demographics, 2005.

²² College Board. Higher Education Landscape. Retrieved from <http://www.collegeboard.com/highered/res/hel/hel.html#diversity> on December 9, 2006

²³ Dansby, Mickey, James Stewart, and Schuyler Webb. *Managing Diversity in the Military: Research Perspectives from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001, 163.

²⁴ Reinwald, Mary. Interview by author. Personal. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, December 12, 2007.

²⁵ "Annual Report." *Department of Navy Diversity*, 18.

²⁶ Green, Angell. "Development of Marine Corps Diversity Policy." *Position Paper*, 2.

²⁷ Green, Angell. Interview by author. Personal. Marine Corps Base Quantico, December 12, 2007.

²⁸ Meek, 54.

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