Building Soldier – Civilian Trust in Mixed Army Organizations

by

Dr. James T. Treharne
Department of the Army Civilian

Under the Direction of:
Dr. Don M. Snider

United States Army War College
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Department of the Army Civilian  

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The Army has two professional communities, the Profession of Arms and the Army Civilian Corps. However, Army-wide survey data shows there is insufficient mutual trust between members of the two communities. Perceived lack of leader inspiration, coaching, and counselling; mentoring, and confidence in the ability to certify Soldiers and Civilians in competence, character, and commitment contribute to the lack of mutual trust. This paper examines mutual trust in mixed organizations in the institutional Army where both communities, Soldiers and Civilians, serve together. The Army has numerous initiatives to enhance Civilian development. These include career program management, acculturation, and training. This paper assesses these initiatives and makes recommendations related to career program management, workplace initiatives, culture, and shared professional experiences.  

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Abstract

The Army has two professional communities, the Profession of Arms and the Army Civilian Corps. However, Army-wide survey data shows there is insufficient mutual trust between members of the two communities. Perceived lack of leader inspiration, coaching, and counselling; mentoring, and confidence in the ability to certify Soldiers and Civilians in competence, character, and commitment contribute to the lack of mutual trust. This paper examines mutual trust in mixed organizations in the institutional Army where both communities, Soldiers and Civilians, serve together. The Army has numerous initiatives to enhance Civilian development. These include career program management, acculturation, and training. This paper assesses these initiatives and makes recommendations related to career program management, workplace initiatives, culture, and shared professional experiences.
Building Soldier – Civilian Trust in Mixed Army Organizations

Trust is the bedrock of the Army profession.¹ There are multiple trust relationships that undergird the Army profession. Trust between Soldiers and Civilians is vitally important to the effective and efficient execution of the Army’s roles and responsibilities. This trust manifests itself in at least three important ways. First, there is mutual trust between Soldiers and those senior Civilians in the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, and the executive and legislative branches who provide statutory direction and oversight to the military. Second, there is mutual trust between Soldiers and the public citizenry whom the Soldiers ultimately serve. Third, there is a mutual trust between Soldiers and Civilians who work together day by day in various Army institutions towards mission effectiveness. This paper centers on this last relationship, that of Soldiers and Civilians who work together in the institutional Army, more specifically, analytic organizations at the Army or Major Command level.² As I will demonstrate with Army-wide data, unacceptable levels of trust exist between Soldiers and Civilians. For example, only 64% of active-component Soldiers agree or strongly agree that “Army Civilians trust Soldiers to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.”³ Likewise, only 64% of Army Civilians agree or strongly agree that “Soldiers trust Army Civilians” to do the same.⁴ This paper focuses primarily on how the Army can assist the Army Civilian Corps to do their part to build and maintain mutual trust.

This paper is organized into four sections. First, the paper briefly comments on the Army profession, with emphasis on the Army Civilians. Second, it identifies the challenges that currently exist when Soldiers and Civilians work together in Army organizations. Third, the paper analyzes select Army initiatives that contribute in one way or another to build trust between these two groups. Fourth, it provides
recommendations to reinforce, change, or add initiatives that will strengthen mutual trust.

The Army Profession

Army Doctrine Reference Publication No 1 (ADRP1) lays out the doctrinal underpinnings for the Army Profession. It identifies two distinct communities of practice: the “Profession of Arms” which includes uniformed Soldiers from its three components (Regular Army, National Guard, and Army Reserve) and the “Army Civilian Corps” which includes Department of the Army Civilians. The Army recognizes as “Army Professionals” those members of these two communities of practice that meet the certification criteria for character, competence, and commitment. Figure 1 shows a high-level view of the profession. It lists the five essential characteristics of the Army profession: Military expertise, Honorable service, Trust, Esprit de corps, and Stewardship of the profession. Interestingly, this formative figure lists four levels of trust, but it does not explicitly label the trust between Soldiers and Army Civilians. However, ADRP1 clearly and unequivocally states in its amplifying paragraph that trust, which serves as the bedrock of the profession, includes the “Trust between Soldiers and Army Civilians.”

Thus, any profession that wants to remain a profession must continually assess itself to ensure that it maintains the essential characteristics that best defines its profession. Army professionals have the responsibility for ensuring that the vital trust between Soldiers and Civilians, along with the other levels of trust, are abiding and effectual. There is certainly no guarantee or even expectation that the Army will remain a profession without exercising due diligence to protect and nurture it. Doing so is particularly important for two reasons. First, the Army over time waivers in its behavior
between that of a profession and that of a bureaucracy. This constant tension between professionalism and a bureaucratic nature has existed since the Army was professionalized in the late 1800s.

Secondly, the Army Civilian Corps is rather young in its explicit development as a formally recognized and certifiable component of the Army profession. The Army decision about five years ago to include the Civilian Corps as a member of the profession reflects the historical truth that the profession includes not just those who carry arms.

**Figure 1. Overview of the Army Profession**

in its explicit development as a formally recognized and certifiable component of the Army profession. The Army decision about five years ago to include the Civilian Corps as a member of the profession reflects the historical truth that the profession includes not just those who carry arms.

**Current Challenges**

The Army has multiple ways of assessing its state as a military profession. One deliberate method is the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE) Annual
Survey of the Army, the results of which are published in a Technical Report.\textsuperscript{11} The recent 2015 Survey includes both Soldiers (PFC through Colonel) and Army Civilians (GS7-GS15) throughout the Army. The essential elements of analysis include several relevant topics related to mutual trust between the two communities of practice. In fact, for this survey, the “Army culture of trust”\textsuperscript{12} is central to CAPE’s efforts and serves in this paper as the basis to identify key problem areas in building mutual trust between Soldiers and Civilians.

The 2015 survey analyzes respondent data to a given statement in which they provide on a five-point Likert scale their level of agreement or disagreement. The survey then posits predefined criteria\textsuperscript{13} chosen by CAPE:

- Areas of strength to reinforce (90% or above agree (A) or strongly agree (SA));
- Areas to strengthen (80% - 89% agree or strongly agree); and
- Areas to remediate (less than 80% agree or strongly degree).

The 2015 survey highlights four areas that need remediation. The first area is the mutual trust between the Communities of Practice. This area, the trust between Soldiers and Civilians, is the principal challenge addressed in this paper. The other three areas are influencing factors that potentially contribute, positively or negatively, to mutual trust between the components. These three areas include: leader inspiration, coaching and counseling; the likelihood for being mentored or providing mentoring, especially for Army Civilians; and the confidence in the Army’s ability to certify one as a professional based on character, competence, and commitment.\textsuperscript{14}
Internal Trust

The principle challenge in need of remediation is internal trust between the Communities of Practice. This lack of trust is not unique. There is also a lack of trust among the four professional components (Active, Guard, Reserve, Civilian). Table 1 highlights the key results regarding internal trust. This table highlights several important results. With respect to trust among the four components of the Army profession, Army Civilians trust Active Soldiers with the same high percentage (88%) as Active Soldiers trust each other (Q25_3). However, Active Soldiers rate Civilians 25 percentage points lower (63%)(Q25_6). This disparity highlights a major problem of internal trust. Additionally, Army Civilians trust members of the Reserve and Guard at a much higher rate than Active Soldiers do (Q25_4/5). Each of the three profession of arms components (Active, Reserve, and Guard) has its least confidence in Army Civilians compared to others.

Table 1. Internal Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component / Communities of Practice</th>
<th>% A+SA</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Trust Soldiers of the Active Component</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Trust Soldiers of the Army National Guard</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Trust Soldiers of the US Army Reserve</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Trust Army Civilians</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>ACC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AVG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Trust among Army Profession components:

- Q25_3: I trust Soldiers in the Active Component to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.
- Q25_5: I trust Soldiers in the National Guard to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.
- Q25_4: I trust Soldiers in the Reserve to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.
- Q25_6: I trust Army Civilians to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>% A+SA</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>ACC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>AVG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Trust between PoA & ACC:

- Q25_2: Army Civilians trust Soldiers to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.
- Q25_1: Soldiers trust Army Civilians to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>% A+SA</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>ACC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>AVG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>% A+SA</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guard</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>ACC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>AVG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With respect to trust between the Profession of Arms and Army Civilian Corps, the degree that respondents believe Soldiers trust Army Civilians is very low (62%) and the degree that respondents believe Army Civilians trust Soldiers is only moderately higher, but still very low (74%)(Q25_1/2). So, while there is a challenge with internal trust among all the Army profession components, the lack of internal trust between the two professional communities is most in need for remediation.

Leader Inspiration, Coaching, and Counseling

The second area of needed remediation is a contributing factor to internal trust. It is the ability for leaders to inspire and motivate their subordinates. Table 2 clearly shows in its first four questions that leaders must improve their ability to inspire subordinates to persevere, achieve their potential, be a person of character, and be a steward of the profession. This encourages subordinates to develop their personal character, competence, and commitment. Doing so provides the potential to build trust between the leader and his subordinates. Only 70% of overall respondents indicate that their leader used coaching and counseling that was helpful (Q36_2P). While the statistics here are across all participants, it is reasonable to believe that lack of helpful coaching and counseling degrades the level of trust not just between leaders and subordinates, but also between the two professional communities of practice. Army Civilians also report a significantly lower understanding of the doctrine for the Army profession (74% versus 57%).

Coaching and counseling can, among other things, close this gap by helping Army Civilians understand the profession and seek the key attributes of a professional: character, competence, and commitment. Coaching, counseling (and mentoring), if implemented more effectively, would add trust among all cohorts, including between communities of practice.
The second contributing factor is “mentoring.” It is tempting to clump together mentoring with coaching and counseling. But, mentoring is distinctly different. FM 6-22 defines mentorship as “the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect (AR 600-100).” By implication, the level of mutual trust in the relationship will be reinforced and expanded during the mentoring process. Figure 2 clearly shows the low percentage of Soldiers and Army Civilians who have a mentor (64% and 41%)(Q36_3). Civilians report having a mentor at a much lower rate. Less than two out of three Army Civilians report that they are a mentor (Q36_4). Given the key role that mentorship plays in furthering trust and respect, such low rates indicate that this is likely one factor that is impeding strong mutual trust between the two professional communities. There is no indication that respondents had a mature
understanding of what constitutes good mentoring, so the shortfall in “good mentoring”
may be even more substantial than the survey indicates. Additionally, it is not possible
to know why more people report mentoring than report being mentored. But, as the
report suggests, there is likely confusion in one’s understanding of what activities
constitute mentoring. To the extent this is true, there exists a major opportunity for
enlightenment and training, particularly for Army Civilians.

Professional Certification

The third factor identified by the survey that influences trust is individual
confidence in the Army’s ability to certify a Soldier or Civilian as a professional based on
character, competence, and commitment. Table 3 shows that while respondents
understand the importance of character in making right decisions (96%)(Q28_1), only
65% (Q30_2) agree or strongly agree the profession is successful in developing
character and even less (59%) (Q30_2P) believe such success can be certified. With
respect to competence, Table 4 shows that respondents overwhelmingly understand its
importance (95%) \((Q31_1)\); but there is much less confidence that the profession is successful in developing and certifying competence in Soldiers \((77/71\% \text{ respectively})\) \((Q1_1/Q1_3P)\) and even less for Army Civilians \((64/62\% \text{ respectively})\) \((Q1_2/Q1_4P)\).\(^{25}\)

Table 3. Character\(^{26}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character (Average of 4 Items)</th>
<th>Army Profession Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q31_1. An Army Professional's Character is revealed in making right decisions and taking right actions.</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30_3. The Army Profession is responsible for developing the Character of Soldiers and Army Civilians.</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30_2. The Army Profession is successful in developing the Character of Soldiers and Army Civilians.</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30_3 (P). The Army Profession is capable of accurately certifying the Character of Soldiers and Army Civilians.</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Competence\(^{27}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence (Average of 5 Items)</th>
<th>Army Profession Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q31_1. An Army Professional’s Competence is revealed in the performance of duty with discipline and to standard.</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30_4. The Army Profession is successful in developing the Competence of Soldiers to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30_3 (P). The Army Profession is capable of accurately certifying the Competence of Soldiers to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30_2. The Army Profession is successful in developing the Competence of Army Civilians to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q30_4 (P). The Army Profession is capable of accurately certifying the Competence of Army Civilians to perform their duties with discipline and to standard.</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, commitment fairs no better. Table 5 shows that, while its importance is strongly agreed on (95%) (Q33_1), only 65% (Q35_2) agree or strongly agree that the profession is successful in developing the commitment of Soldiers and Army Civilians. And, only 61% (Q35_3P) believe it is possible to accurately certify this commitment.\(^{28}\) Additionally, Army Civilians, especially if non-prior service, do report less commitment to being a “Soldier for Life” than those in the profession of arms.\(^{29}\) To understand the effect on trust of character, competence, and commitment together, one needs to look at the results of two key questions in Table 6. First, 97% (Q27_5) of respondents say that they “believe that trust is earned by demonstrating Character, Competence, and Commitment.” Second, 97% (Q13_5) of respondents also state that they “trust others when they consistently demonstrate Character, Competence, and Commitment.” Therefore, given perceptions that these characteristics are difficult to certify, it is not surprising that a lack of mutual trust exists.

Table 5. Commitment\(^{30}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment (Average of 4 Items)</th>
<th>Army Profession Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q33_1: An Army Professional’s Commitment is revealed in the performance of duty despite challenge, adversity, and setback.</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q35_1: The Army Profession is responsible for developing the Commitment of Soldiers and Army Civilians.</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q35_2: The Army Profession is successful in developing the Commitment of Soldiers and Army Civilians.</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q35_3P: The Army Profession is capable of accurately certifying the Commitment of Soldiers and Army Civilians.</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Army has taken steps to embed the doctrines of the Army Profession into its culture. These steps include the development of policies, programs, and training packages. Collectively, they serve to reinforce strong areas and remediate weak areas of the Profession. I will discuss three initiatives: Career Program Management, Army Acculturation and Employee Engagement, and Training. These three key initiatives are among several that the Army is instituting to professionalize the Civilian Corps.

**Career Program Management**

The Army has recently published its regulation (AR690-950) governing “Career Program Management.” Its purpose is to prescribe “policies and responsibilities for developing, managing, and conducting Army Civilian career program management.” This regulation describes responsibilities, career program enterprise management, human capital plans, talent management, and the Army intern program. The regulation appropriately begins with a description of the Army mission and strategic goal along
with the vision for the Army Civilian Corps. In these descriptions, the Army does not address that the Army Civilian Corps is a community of practice in the Army profession just as the Profession of Arms is a community of practice. In fact, the Army Profession is not mentioned until much later in the document. The regulation rightly credits the support that Army Civilians provide Soldiers towards mission accomplishment as they often deploy alongside them. However, the language would be more motivational if it described the civilian role more in terms of its contribution as a second and equally important community of practice.

The vision for the workforce is “deliver the right person, to the right place, at the right time” in support of the Army. This understates the Army’s actual vision for the civilian workforce. The stated vision, if plainly interpreted, may connote to some that if the management system works, it will merely provide a civilian at the right time and place just as other systems provide the right materiel or other capability at the right time and place. But, the Army vision for the civilian workforce is more substantive. It envisions the civilian workforce to include those who have met the certification criteria in character, competence, and commitment and those who exhibit the essential characteristics of the Army Profession.

The regulation does emphasize throughout the importance of competency. For example, the Career Program Proponency (CPP) helps Civilians define career goals using competency-based training plans. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civilian Personnel is the “lead proponent for competency development and utilization.” Competency is clearly a required attribute for civilian professionals. In
contrast, the regulation does not offer concrete policies for developing and certifying commitment or character, the other two certification criteria for individual professionals.

The regulation does also put emphasis on training, education, and professional development opportunities. Senior commanders are required to establish the right learning culture to encourage Civilians to leverage these opportunities.\(^{38}\) The emphasis for supervisors is primarily on competency, such as identifying competency gaps and strategies to close them.\(^{39}\) Presumably, the culture of training, education, and development would include strategies for an individual to build character and commitment to the Army. Again, these have not been explicitly detailed in the regulation.

The regulation also states that Civilians are responsible to “seek advice, guidance, coaching and mentorship.”\(^{40}\) Further, it includes a section on mentoring and coaching and rightly emphasizes that these techniques will help “inculcate the Army profession.”\(^{41}\) However, the regulation says that “Mentoring focuses specifically on providing guidance, direction, and career advice.”\(^{42}\) Rather, given that individuals in a mentorship relationship have some level of mutual trust, mentoring should also focus on the development of character and commitment.

Lastly, the regulation places strong emphasis on talent management including a variety of professional education opportunities. These opportunities, targeted towards GS13 – GS15, enable Civilians to not only gain valuable technical and leadership skills, they also offer an opportunity to learn along aside members of the profession of arms. If pursued, these shared experiences have the potential to foster the needed mutual trust between the communities.
Army Acculturation and Employee Engagement

The Army has two programs that work in conjunction which each other to develop the competence, character, and commitment of Army Civilians. The first program, Army Acculturation, helps to provide a new civilian entering the profession tools and knowledge during their first year of employment. The TRADOC website\textsuperscript{43} hosts a wealth of materials for new Civilians and employers. These include a new employee toolkit, a supervisor toolkit, a sponsor toolkit, a civilian acculturation handbook, and more. The website also provides, front and center, a nine-minute video describing the Army Civilian. This video\textsuperscript{44}, produced by the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, highlights explicitly and effectively the civilian role in the profession of arms. While much of the Army acculturation program involves the administrative and informational side of on boarding, the program does offer doctrinally sound and helpful material on the Army profession. For example, the Acculturation Handbook\textsuperscript{45} begins with a chapter on the Army Civilian Corps which describes its heritage, the civilian creed, and the oath of office. It then has a complete chapter on the Army Profession. These resources, if effectively used by both the employee and the employer, will help a new civilian’s initial path within the profession. But, while this handbook can be a very effective resource, it says very little about coaching, counseling, or mentoring. These three vital activities are very important for a new civilian and his employee. The handbook could be improved by setting standards and expectations of leaders and employees.

While the Army Acculturation Program is intended to inform and develop the civilian during his first year of employment, the Army Civilian Engagement program picks up at the end of the first year. This Army effort is in the early stages of
development and staffing. The Army should follow through on a recommendation to “Continue ongoing efforts to develop a sequential and progressive developmental process for Army Civilians that includes Army acculturation, employee engagement, and career-long leader development.” There are at least three keys to the success of this program. First, it must recognize that the process of developing and sustaining character, as well as competence and commitment, is both a career and lifetime endeavor. Second, both Soldiers and Civilians must constantly exercise ethical decision-making. Third, Army Soldiers and Civilians and their leaders must take every opportunity to inculcate the characteristics of the profession into their unit culture, as it will reinforce the positive motivation and behavior of individual professionals.

**Training**

The Center for the Army Profession and Ethic provides an abundant range of education and training packages for individual and organizational development. The intellectual and philosophical thought behind these training packages is sound. The objectives and state are well defined. In recent years, the Army has announced a professional theme. For fiscal year 2017 and 2018 it is “One Army, Indivisible.” Along with this theme, the Army provides an information paper, relevant posters ready for printing, the Army’s announcement of the theme, a senior leader guide, and a set of videos. The learning outcomes associated with this year's theme are:

- Compare the essential role of each component, community of practice, and cohort.
- Demonstrate examples of how each component, community of practice, and cohort contributes to the mission.
• Explain the concept of mutual trust and cohesion as a Total Force.

This type of training, if used effectively to fulfill these outcomes will help develop the Army profession and create mutual trust between its communities of practice.

The CAPE website has many other items for education and training. These include case studies, virtual simulators, training support packages, information on Army Profession seminars, and other tools and materials. For example, one virtual simulator entitled "A Special Trust," "focuses on the Army Profession and Ethic, along with civil-military relations." Role playing one or more of the senior leaders in this simulator (General officer, Colonel, Sergeants Major, or Senior Civilian will, along with other objectives, develop: “familiarity with and deep reflection on the essential characteristics of the Army as a military profession; namely, trust with the American people and within the Army, military expertise, esprit de corps, honorable service, and stewardship of the profession." The Army has produced an abundance of high-quality training materials. However, their effectiveness is largely based on unit leader’s personal commitment to use them. Thus their overall effectiveness remains to be determined.

Recommendations

This paper has addressed the issue of trust between Soldiers and Civilians, the two communities of practice that comprise the Army Profession. It has done so principally by focusing on those activities within the Civilian Corps that are now being implemented to build this mutual trust. Additionally, I provide here four recommendations to the Army to improve trust within the communities of practice specifically in the Army’s major analytic agencies, such as the TRADOC Analysis Center or the Center for Army Analysis. First, the Army must revise its Career Management Program. Second, the Army must focus on activities within the workplace
to develop mutual trust. Third, the Army must recognize that the two communities of practice will still bring background differences while it focuses on building a common professional culture. Fourth, the Army must increase the number and quality of shared professional experiences.

**Career Management Program**

First, the Army must ensure that its Career Management Program for Army civilians is closely integrated by words and actions with the intent and language of the Army Profession. Specifically, it must place much more emphasis on development of individual character and commitment. Thus, the career management regulation must include policy guidance for ways and means to explicitly develop and mature the character and commitment civilian members to the profession. Emphasizing competence is a necessary but insufficient for developing a professional. As Colonel (Retired) Kim Summers said: “The Army is not developing budget analysts or training developers or human resource specialists; instead, the Army is developing committed landpower experts certified in competencies that ensure it can perform the unique service society demands.”54 The main challenge is developing and certifying professionals of character and commitment, who also must be competent. As a leader, I would rather have a subordinate with strong character and commitment but a level of competence that needs improvement than the other way around. The Army must prioritize the development and sustainment of these important personal attributes through specific career opportunities.

**Workplace Initiatives**

Second, while the Army has provided many new and excellent opportunities for training, education, and professional development for Civilians, I believe the most
effective way to build trust and cohesion with fellow active duty coworkers is to instantiate what Edgar Schein calls reinforcing and embedding mechanisms\textsuperscript{55} in the workplace. Most importantly, it is in the workplace that Soldiers and Civilians will see what the leadership priorities are based on “what they pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis.”\textsuperscript{56} Additionally, they will see how the leader role-model teaches, allocates rewards, and selects personnel for promotions.\textsuperscript{57} Leader actions in these areas will positively reinforce through word and action that Soldiers and Civilians are both members of the profession. When leaders treat Soldiers and Civilians as co-members of the Army Profession, they will enhance mutual trust. Further, it is in the workplace that Soldiers and Civilians will validate that which they have been taught in training.

Military expertise is one of the five key essential characteristics of the Army profession. Military expertise does not come easily. Rather, “To master and apply such expert knowledge requires years of study, practice, and experiential learning.”\textsuperscript{58} The workplace provides the venue for both Soldiers and Civilians together to study and practice to gain the expertise necessary of a profession. This process takes time.

A mixed organization also provides an opportunity for Soldiers and Civilians to become professionally acquainted with each other. I believe some lack of trust is due to misconceptions about each community’s knowledge, skills, and attributes. For Army Civilians, they will typically be introduced to the Soldier and the Army in the acculturation process during their first year. But, that is just the beginning as Civilians and Soldiers work together year in and year out in mixed organizations.
The responsibility for building of mutual trust lays with the senior leaders in the organization. Leaders in mixed organizations must organize and execute the mission of the organization under the premise that Soldiers and Civilians both contribute in equally important ways to mission accomplishment. I believe there should be no fixed rules on who leads a team or an assigned project. There should also be no fixed rules on how Soldiers or Civilians are placed in the evaluation rating chain.

Promotions are appropriately celebrated for Army officers in a public setting that carefully conveys the importance and responsibility of the new rank. Yet, Army Civilians are often promoted without any public acknowledgment or awareness. The Army should use this opportunity to reinforce publicly the fact that the institution is likewise recognizing that this member of the profession has met the profession’s certification criteria for character, competence, and commitment. Doing so serves as a culturally reinforcing mechanism to the individual being promoted as well as his or her professional colleagues and co-workers.

Finally, it is in the workplace that good coaching, counseling, and mentorship takes place to develop character, competence, and commitment. There is no better venue for doing so. I believe a mixed organization is the ideal place to cultivate trust through these three mechanisms. There should be no arbitrary rules on who performs each of these functions or even how the organization is structured into teams based primarily on communities. I believe Soldiers can counsel, coach, and mentor Civilians. Civilians can do likewise with Soldiers. Membership in either community should not be the determining factor for the role and responsibilities that leaders assign to its individuals. Earlier, I provided survey data that shows respondent perceptions that there
is a lack of coaching, counseling, and mentoring. Lack of these activities inhibits the development of mutual trust. Leader emphasis in this area is needed to correct this perception. Further, strong cross-community counseling, coaching, and mentoring will build mutual trust. Each member of a community will become more familiar with their professional partner and gain from a fresh perspective on their own duties and career requirements.

Culture

Third, we must accept that Soldiers and Civilians in a mixed organization will retain, based on their experiences within their own communities of practice, some distinct differences in beliefs and behaviors. For example, Soldiers and Civilians have by law different rules for how they are compensated for their work and even when they are permitted to work. These differences can be a source of friction. I believe it is imperative that leaders understand and acknowledge these differences, but create innovative ways to minimize any potential frictions due to the differences. Even more importantly, the leader and both communities of practice should understand and emphasize what values and practices they have in common as Army Professionals. Former Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, stated that the common cultural feature in the institutions he led was “a powerful sense of family.” He further stated that “you need to identify those elements of the culture that you must embrace, support and try to strengthen and those that must be changed to enable future success.” I recommend that the leader in mixed organizations must determine what cultural identity the organization will have that both communities can support and embrace. In the mixed organization, the “family” of professionals, from both communities, must be the focus of attention for the leader. Organizations should avoid, except where necessary, activities
that include just one group or the other. For example, leaders should seek to allow
members of each community to attend the other communities professional development
programs. Civilians should be encouraged to attend schooling that is traditionally for
Soldiers. This schooling can include such programs as Senior Service Schools,
Intermediate Level Education, or Functional Area training. Attendance and graduation
from such programs provides not only professional expertise, but also an understanding
of the cultural background that exists in the other component's community.

Despite the effort to develop a common culture, the leader must recognize that
some differences will remain. An example is the typical career pattern of a Soldier that
includes frequent moves and deployments versus the more stable career pattern of
most Civilians. Both communities of practice should both acknowledge and understand
the reason for these differences. For example, I commend the Army acculturation
program for its inclusion of a significant amount of information about how our uniformed
Army operates. The new employee handbook has chapters on the organization of the
Army as well as customs, courtesies, and traditions. This is very informative background
information for the Civilian. However, Soldiers are not typically presented parallel
information about how the Army Civilian Corps is organized and operates. A Soldier
who is a supervisor of civilians will undoubtedly learn what is required. But the typical
Soldier coworker may not fully understand the Civilian’s background. I believe a greater
awareness of the differences between the cultural backgrounds that Soldiers develop
versus Civilians will lead to understanding and increased mutual trust between the
communities. Understanding these differences and developing a common culture likely
will enable its leaders to develop an environment that optimizes the contribution of both Soldiers and Civilians towards mission effectiveness.  

**Shared Professional Experiences**

Fourth, one method to build trust is by creating an inclusive unit/team culture through shared experiences. The leaders in a mixed organization must continually look for opportunities to provide shared professional experiences. In my assessment, these experiences are particularly important for Army Civilians. The mission of the United States Army is to “fight and win our Nation’s wars.” A military deployment for a Civilian is an effective way to provide a shared experience. For Civilian members of the Army profession, a deployment in support of a named operation, for example, Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom, serves as an unmatched professional and personal career opportunity that enhances mutual trust in the Soldier and Civilian relationship. For example, I served at the Center for Army Analysis (CAA) from 2004 to 2013 and observed many Army Civilians who deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, typically for six months. CAA was very proactive in seeking deployment opportunities for both Soldiers and Civilians. These voluntary deployments typically provided an unparalleled professional opportunity for the Army Civilian to develop personally and professionally while gaining an immense appreciation for the uniformed Army, its mission, and the responsibilities of its Soldiers. Likewise, Soldiers and other Civilians held those who deployed in the highest esteem and respect. Undoubtedly, these experiences build mutual trust.

Typically, Army Civilians must voluntarily take the initiative to pursue such opportunities, and the Army must continue to offer and promote such opportunities. The Army, as well as the Office of Secretary of Defense, has a Civilian Expeditionary
Workforce program. One of the goals of this program is to “Communicate the value of Army Civilians as a force multiplier to stakeholders.” This website provides all the formal procedures for applying such an opportunity. These opportunities are typically one year plus any required initial training. All Army organizations should actively seek opportunities for their Army Civilians to deploy to support overseas contingency operations. To better facilitate such opportunities, I believe the Army should also institute procedures that allow organizations with deploying Civilians to backfill their temporary vacancy. The vacancy could be filled, as appropriate, by a temporary Civilian, a Soldier, perhaps from the Reserve Component, or a contractor. These experiences will inevitably build trust by allowing the Army Civilians to see the operational Army performing its essential functions and demonstrating to Soldiers the many ways that Army Civilians can, and do, contribute.

Not all Civilians can deploy or will volunteer to deploy. So, the Army should actively leverage opportunities for Army Civilians to observe and participate in training at places like our Combat Training Centers. On two occasions I took small groups of (primarily) Army Civilians to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California. During these well planned but short (less than 48 hours at the training site) opportunities, the Civilians gained an immense appreciation of how the Army actually operates in the field. The insights gained gave the Civilians greater confidence in their understanding of Army operations. I am certain that these types of activities are confidence- and trust-building exercises for both communities.
Conclusion

The Army has two professional communities, the Profession of Arms and the Army Civilian Corps. But, as the 2015 CAPE Survey data shows, there is insufficient mutual trust between members of the two communities.

These two professional communities work closely together in the institutional Army. In major Army analytic organizations this is certainly true. In these organizations, it is particularly important that Soldiers and Civilians have a high level of mutual trust. When there is a level of mistrust between the Profession of Arms and the Army Civilian Corps, there is a commensurate degradation in the organizations ability to execute its responsibilities. However, the mixed organization is the ideal venue to build high trust between these communities. The Army Career Program should build trust as it works to develop more fully career patterns for Army Civilians that are specifically designed to develop not only competence, but also character and commitment. The most important trust building must occur in the workplace as leaders provide an environment that recognizes the inherent value and contribution of each community. In the workplace counseling, coaching, and mentoring must take place between and among Civilians and Soldiers so that internal trust will be enhanced. Leaders must provide opportunities for Civilians to have shared experiences with Soldiers through training or real world deployments. Leaders must continue to recognize that while each community retains some aspects of a unique background, common culture in the Army profession must be predominant. Trust in mixed organizations is vital. As leaders build and reinforce mutual trust, the institutional Army will stand ready to support the Army’s mission of winning our nation’s wars.
Endnotes


2 The author was assigned to the TRADOC Analysis Center as a Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel from 1999 to 2004. He served as a Colonel at the Center for Army Analysis from 2004 to 2006. From 2006 to 2016 he served at the Center for Army Analysis as a GS15 Department of the Army Civilian.


4 Ibid.


7 Ibid., 52.


10 Snider, "Myths About the Army Profession," 53.

11 Brockerhoff, *CAPE Annual Survey*.

12 Ibid., 7.

13 Ibid., 15.

14 Ibid., 83.

15 CAPE defines internal trust as a mutual trust “within the team/interpersonal, between Soldiers and Army Civilians, and among the components of the Army,” in contrast to an external trust such as between the Army and the American people. Ibid., 8.

16 Ibid., 75.

17 Ibid., 28

18 Ibid., 62.

19 Ibid., 27.


22 Ibid., 38

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 76.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., 78.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., 52.

30 Ibid., 80.

31 Ibid., 68


33 Ibid., 1.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 4.

38 Ibid., 5.

39 Ibid., 6.

40 Ibid., 11.

41 Ibid., 23.

42 Ibid.


47 Ibid., 19.

48 Ibid., 12.

49 Ibid., 15.


53 Ibid.


56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 17-18.


60 Ibid., 6.


66 Ibid.