

# **EXPECTATIONS AND INTEGRATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CULTURES**

**RESEARCH REPORT 10-003**



**April 2010**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The U.S. Army has numerous types of organizations, some of which have primarily military personnel, while others consist mostly of civilian government employees. There is a varying mix of civilian and military personnel in all types of positions. Both types of employees bring varying but important skill sets, and both are critical to the success of their organization. The U.S. Army military and civilian workforces do have different organizational cultures. Allowing both cultures to exist within an organization rather than finding a way to unite them can impact the overall organizational effectiveness because different rules and expectations are applied to each. Having two unique, separate and distinct cultures can cause unintentional consequences to the total success of the agency and may affect areas such as morale, teambuilding, and turnover. The extent and type of the differences vary by organization and may be a reflection on who resides as the senior leader. For example, in an activity run by a civilian, civilian work practices often prevail. Likewise, a military leader generally establishes military-type policies.

When analyzing how to integrate these two distinct organizational cultures, inherent questions to ask are what organizational culture expectations U.S. Army military and civilian personnel have and how do they differ? Knowing the answer may help leaders to develop an effective culture for their agency that maximizes what both their civilian and military personnel value.

This study uses an applied research approach. Existing knowledge and research will provide baseline information of both the impact organizational culture can have on a workforce, and the consequences of allowing multiple cultures to co-exist within the same agency. A survey will be used to collect data from an independent sampling of civilian and military employees at

agencies at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, to determine if, and how, organizational culture expectations are different for Army military and civilian personnel. Two government agencies with high percentages of both military and civilian personnel were utilized for survey distribution. The same survey instrument also gathered qualitative information on areas of dissimilarity, whether it is perceived that two distinct cultures impact the operational effectiveness of the organization, and if the perceived differences impact areas such as morale, teambuilding, and turnover.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

#### **Introduction**

Organizational culture is a recognized term that describes the unwritten norms, rules and customs in an establishment. Beono *et al.* described organizational culture as subjective when referring to shared beliefs and values, and objective when discussing physical attributes such as location, décor, and regulations (as cited in Schraeder & Self, 2003). Using this definition, it can be understood how organizational culture can vary within business units in the same company, and likewise between similar corporations. Because effectiveness may be impacted by the organizational culture, it is something to consider during mergers and reorganizations. In the corporate business world, mergers and acquisitions are commonplace. According to Pablo, recent merger and acquisition failures have occurred that cannot be explained using traditional rationale, so cultural aspects are being studied instead (as cited in Schraeder & Self, 2003).

It is common within the Department of Defense (DoD) to have both government civilian and military employees purposely working together within one agency. Each of these types of DoD employees has their own culture, and when they are working together in one organization, both of these cultures may attempt to exist independently. As identified in corporate businesses, to be most effective, any establishment should work towards building a new combined culture after a merger or reorganization. Yet within the DoD, there can be found varying rules and expectations for military and civilian personnel within the same establishment, even when holding the same positions and performing the same type of work. Building on experience from industry, the DoD needs to create a unified culture in each agency that brings all employees together for the purpose of enhancing overall effectiveness and reducing dividedness.

## **Background**

The DoD employs a varying mix of civilian and military personnel in all types of positions. Both military and civilian employees have common and unique skill sets critical to agency success. Defense agencies are set up from the beginning to intentionally separate these two types of employees, each with its own unique culture, each developing its members to increase their separation from the other group. Operational effectiveness can be unintentionally negatively impacted if the leader of the organization does not build a new unique agency culture, instead of allowing both the military and civilian cultures to continue independently.

## **Purpose**

If a leader of such an agency with both military and civilian employees were to attempt to merge these two cultures to enhance organizational effectiveness, information on cultural expectations from both types of employees would assist in the development of a new combined cultural foundation. The intent of this research is to determine organizational cultural expectations of military and civilian employees for leaders to use for such endeavors. Even with an understanding of these differing cultural expectations, leaders should expect that this type of initiative will create pushback from the workforce as, “Organizational change that alters the existing values within a culture and differently affects groups within the organization can expect resistance (Trader-Leigh, 2002),” (Lucas & Kline, 2008, p. 277). A change of this type should not be expected to come easily.

## **Overview of the Methodology Used to Collect Data**

Two methods were used in this study to gather data. The first was a survey instrument that was developed to analyze organizational effectiveness and preferences for military and government civilian employees. The second method was to interview both military and civilian

leaders as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to obtain their opinions and insights into this subject area.

### **Research Questions**

Are organizational culture expectations different for Army military and civilian personnel? Can and should both sets of expectations be accommodated within one organization, or is this detrimental to organizational effectiveness?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The Army military and civilian workforces do have different organizational culture expectations. Allowing both cultures to exist within one organization instead of uniting them negatively impacts the overall effectiveness of the organization. The similarities of their expectations can be used as a basis to form a new organizational culture.

### **Limitations of Study**

This study is limited to the U.S. Army, and specifically to the employees at Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), Maryland. As such, the civilians surveyed represent the organizational cultures of this area, and the results may or may not be appropriate to extrapolate to other U.S. Army locations and to the DoD in general.

It is assumed that the military and civilian employee populations are recognized to be unique. Each has different rules governing areas such as entry, retention, and promotion in their associated group. Additionally, as an example of the exhaustive research previously performed on these two separate populations, one study found significance in cultural differences such as, “Nonmilitary personnel are more effective than military personnel in their use of body language and military personnel are more critical of other people than nonmilitary personnel” (Chaney & Green, 2004, p.8).

## **Definition of Key Words and Terms**

**Civilian Employee** – One hired by and paid by the DoD. Not a military or contractor employee.

**Military Employee** – One that has joined and is currently actively serving in the U.S. Armed Services.

**Organizational Culture** – All aspects of any organization that cause specific behaviors by its members. It may be described by norms, customs, beliefs, values, and traditions. Schein defined organizational culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems. (As cited in Matthews, 2000, p. 26).

**Organizational Effectiveness** – “The concept of how effective an organization is in achieving the outcomes the organization intends to produce, (“Organizational Effectiveness,” [n.d.]).

**Subject Matter Expert** – “A Subject Matter Expert is an individual who understands a business process or area well enough to answer questions from people in other groups who are trying to help,” (Reh, n.d.). The individual is recognized as having vast skills and knowledge related to a particular field or area of expertise.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF APPLICABLE LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

Individuals join different types of groups and organizations during their lifetime for varying reasons, and one of the most important choices they make is where they will work. Many variables will weigh into their decision, including salary, job tasks, organizational culture, and location. In many instances, the culture of an organization will factor not only into their initial decision, but continuously thereafter as each employee determines if they want to remain working at a particular establishment. Expectations of the culture of the organization, and whether or not these expectations are met, can have a significant influence on their decisions. If more than one culture is present within an organization, it can cause disharmony in and between members of the workforce. Yet it is normal and it should be expected for this dissonance to occur any time there is a merger, reorganization, or deliberate joining of any two unique populations.

The DoD has purposely structured many of their agencies in such a manner that two organizational cultures, that of its military and civilian employees, are continuously working side by side within one business unit. Leadership generally will not attempt to join these two distinctive work groups into a new organizational culture as each has its own rules, regulations, and traditions. Leaving both cultures to exist independently however has negative consequences on the overall harmony and effectiveness of the organization. *The Heart of Change*, a real-life story of two cultures trying to come together after a merger, shows that related politics after a merger are not only difficult to discuss but can lead to the demise of planned organizational synergies if they are not honestly addressed (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Summaries of prior applicable studies provide a basis for looking into the necessity of developing a combined culture for military and civilian personnel within the same agency. Descriptions of what constitutes organizational effectiveness and the impacts that multiple cultures can have on organizational performance are discussed. Finally, suggested strategies to enhance implementation success of a newly developed organizational culture are included.

### **Competing Perspectives**

Jackson et al. found that while multiple researchers believe that managing cultures can enhance performance, having multiple cultures, “is neither good nor bad,” (as cited in Schraeder & Self, 2003). Although this research was documented in the mid 1990s, the results are still referenced in the current decade. This researcher’s hypothesis is that results of mergers and acquisitions up until that time period could easily be explained based on traditional expectations, so the cultural impacts may not have been analyzed at that time to today’s current extent.

### **Synthesis of the Research**

In a world where more is generally perceived as better, why is having only one culture within an organization important? “If the culture is shared and endorsed across the various subgroups that comprise the organization, then a sense of mission exists, and the organization is relatively cohesive, both internally and in its approach to the outside world,” (Smith, 1998, p. 41). Combining both military and civilian employee cultures into one workforce is, in a sense, much like a corporate merger. But, unlike the business community that has recognized the need for development of a new culture when two entities merge, the DoD places civilian and military employees with their separate cultures into an organization and usually does not systematically work towards building a new culture that both can support. “In a merger, the culture of each organization must advance a deeper understanding and respect for the other’s differences before the staff of each organization can build trust and communicate effectively as one team and create

its own new culture” (Giffords & Dina, 2003, p. 69). Yet, in many instances, military personnel may first work with civilian employees only when they become their supervisor. Or reversed, a civilian joins an organization and for the first time will work with military personnel. These personnel assignments occur, but little if any thought is given to inform the employees of each other’s inherent cultures and how teambuilding and trust between them might be achieved. If an agency is unbalanced in terms of the number of military or civilian employees, the minority may even believe that the other is dominant over them. This perception may be based on the policies (civilian or military) that the organization follows because a merger of the cultures has not occurred to develop a new culture for the specific organization. Any culture being forced to adapt to the policies and procedures of another culture will meet it with resistance; however, blending attributes of current cultures into a new culture can more likely be met with cooperation. Likewise, if there is not a new culture for the senior leader to follow, employees will probably continue to follow their own subculture. This will then continue to be detrimental into the future as, “...in a successful company, it is the culture that underpins management actions that sustains the organization through changes,” (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007, p. 306). Hence, merging absolutely means that a new culture must be formed, as it is not enough to simply put together individual cultures of two separate organizations (Giffords & Dina, 2003).

### **Prior Studies**

One prior study focused on an organization that had two different cultures delineated by profession, similar in many aspects to military and civilian employees. “The underlying assumptions and beliefs inherent in these occupational cultures influenced their interactions and their ability to merge together as one group,” (Lucas & Kline, 2008, p. 282). One profession used a hierarchy and chain of command (CoC) very much like the military and did not question

decisions made by those in authority. Tradition was important to this group, but also made them appear to be unable to modify their behavior as it used as rationale why change should not be considered. While a CoC existed in the other profession, less emphasis was placed on it, and everyone was treated more as an equal and all were confident that any questions would be accepted without reprisal. Commonalities existed between both professions, but instead of being brought together by them, it actually created competition as each wanted to be seen as being better. For two cultures to successfully come together as one, one profession cannot be seen as getting ahead at the expense of the other. Distrust between the two professions, developed over a long period of time, was determined to be the greatest impediment to change. Additionally, because merging the cultures was taking time and there did not appear to be a sense of urgency on the part of management, some within the civilian employee type group believed this would lead to employees finding employment elsewhere.

Another study analyzed the merger of two auto manufacturers from different countries that failed to address all significant cultural issues before completing the deal. (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007). Although a merger team was developed and sought to obtain concurrence on the most controversial issues, it did not come to resolution, and the aftermath of not resolving organizational culture issues plagues them today and will likely do so into the future. The two cultures were from the United States and a major European country. The U.S. segment used teams, dressed and interacted casually without barriers between functional areas and management, and ensured important deadlines were met by staying late on those occasions. The European culture was that of hierarchy, a dress code, following procedures, and always working late hours. In some aspects, they paralleled that of DoD civilian and military cultures. From the beginning, the companies were said to be equal partners in the new venture, but the location

chosen and the name of the newly formed partnership indicated otherwise. Because of the inability to overcome cultural differences, the major advantages of the acquisition (getting a new product to the market quickly and high-level experience in mass vehicle production) were lost.

A third study investigated how related elements of organizational culture can impact effectiveness. The research focused on the metal working industry and collected data from employees at all levels in multiple companies with varying time in the field (Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). The results indicated a significant correlation between cultural elements and organizational effectiveness.

### **Organizational Effectiveness**

Organizational effectiveness can be defined as a group of individuals doing what they set out to accomplish to the best of their ability, using the synergy with the other members of the group to achieve a goal they could not as an individual. Aydin & Ceylan state that, “Effectiveness of the organizations is measured by the congruence between the goals of the organization and the observed outcome,” (2009, p. 34). Mintzberg believes that seven basic forces create organizational effectiveness when managed successfully: efficiency, direction, innovation, proficiency, cooperation/culture, concentration, and competition/politics (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). From a business sense, it is important to obtain organizational effectiveness as it can make your company more efficient, potentially leading to higher profits, expansion, and an increase in the gap from the competition. The effectiveness of an organization can be viewed from several aspects. One study even claims that employee satisfaction and, hence, commitment, not just customer satisfaction, is an important indicator of an organization’s effectiveness and can be analyzed by dimensions of organizational culture such as incentives, involvement, and communication (Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). The working environment

significantly factors into employee satisfaction and is developed in a large part by the organizational culture. Having competing cultures in a workforce, however, will likely create a varying, if not unstable, working environment that can directly impact employee satisfaction and, hence, an agency's effectiveness and success.

While trust enhances organizational effectiveness, the lack of it causes employees to withdraw their association from co-workers and from the organization itself, and can be caused when incivility is inherent in an organization's culture (Zauderer, 2002). This separation process reduces productivity, morale, and agency allegiance while increasing turnover. This type of behavior would be commonplace in any agency that did not work to bring two cultures together, such as any DoD agency that employed both military and civilian employees.

### **Implementation Strategies**

Combining cultures is not an easy task. "We will fight hard to keep and/or protect those behaviors and supporting values we believe are most important," (Larson, 2003, p.11). And any culture that has survived over an extended period of time is in itself successful. Changing those characteristics that have made a culture successful is difficult. Think of military tradition, how long it has survived, and what it means to serve. While it is generally segmented apart from the rest of the American workforce, is it really all that different fundamentally from the behaviors and values of DoD civilian employees? Before one can begin to develop a new organizational culture, knowing the cultural expectations of each separate segment of their workforce is a critical place to begin, and the commonality of cultural expectations between military and civilian employees is the focus of this research.

Once a leader has made the decision that a new culture needs to be developed, it is critical to remember that the focus of the new culture means more than accommodation and sequential modifications; it means new employee incentives, structure, and professional

behaviors (Smith, 1998). Cultural merger processes that have been previously identified can assist a leader in succeeding in this critical endeavor. According to Walker, there are eight steps that should be taken to ensure a successful merger: celebrate small wins, state the merit of past practices, measure progress, ensure employees from all parts of the organization are involved in the assimilation, identify upfront those deep-seated behaviors that may cause problems, communicate the cultural integration process, and state clearly why it needs to be done (as cited in Schraeder & Self, 2003). Matthews (2000) believes that to change culture, a plan needs to be developed that covers the expanse of change process to include: conceptualization, leader approval, employee buy-in, stakeholder support, implementation, and sustainment. In other words, the new culture must be socialized throughout the workforce. Pablo indicated that the integration itself should focus on task (for example, procedures and performance standards), cultural, political (meaning management preferences and styles and power bases or status) and demographic characteristics (as cited in Schraeder & Self, 2003). Careful attention must be given to keeping the existing employees onboard to ensure morale, productivity, and turnover are not jeopardized. Likewise, the leader of the agency and all members of the management team must fully support the development of the new culture with not only words but actions for it to even have a chance at survival. Ceremonies documenting the death of the old culture or graduating into a new one can help employees to let go of their previous customs (Schraeder & Self, 2003). An example of attempting to combine organizational cultures occurred in the U.S. Navy after Operation Desert Storm, when management of the active and reserve forces were pulled together due to restructuring (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). In this case, training and publicizing successful results of short term wins were used to gain support from the members.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter summarized three related studies that support the benefit of researching the necessity of developing a combined culture for military and civilian personnel working together within the same organization. Definitions of organizational effectiveness and how multiple cultures might impact in it are described. Highlighted are the importance of mutual respect, shared values, communication, and trust. Finally, several strategies that may increase the likelihood of successful implementation of a new culture are included, as the premise for this research is to find the common ground between military and civilian cultures.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The specific methods used to collect data, the sample populations, and the instruments used will be discussed in this section in detail. Two types of survey methods and instruments were developed and utilized. Primary variables of the research include whether a DoD employee is military or civilian, the ratio of personnel types, the organizational culture expectations of military and civilian personnel, and the perceived and actual impact of separate cultures on organizational effectiveness.

#### **Research Design**

This study is based on an applied research approach. Existing knowledge and research provide baseline information of both the impact organizational culture can have on a workforce and the consequences of allowing multiple cultures to co-exist within the same agency. A survey instrument was used to collect data from the entire population of civilian and military employees at two agencies at APG to determine if and how organizational culture expectations are different for Army military and civilian personnel. The same survey instrument also gathered qualitative information on areas of dissimilarity, whether it is perceived that two distinct cultures impact the operational effectiveness of the organization and if the perceived differences impact areas such as morale, teambuilding, and turnover.

It was recognized that all DoD personnel that could contribute to the data collection effort were not stationed at APG. However, many employees currently working at APG had knowledge and experience from prior work assignments that could potentially significantly contribute to the research. High-level military and civilian employees that had and/or are currently leading

organizations with both civilian and military employees were identified as SMEs and were interviewed separately using an open-ended discussion to allow for all relevant information to be captured.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The following two questions are the basis for this research. Are organizational culture expectations different for Army military and civilian personnel? Can and should both sets of expectations be accommodated within one organization, or is this detrimental to organizational effectiveness? The research hypotheses is that the Army military and civilian workforces do have different organizational culture expectations. But allowing both cultures to exist within one organization instead of uniting them negatively impacts the overall effectiveness of the organization. The similarities of their expectations can be used as a basis to form a new organizational culture.

### **Subject, Participants, Population, and Sample**

Two government agencies at APG that had a varying mix of military and civilian employees were asked to participate in the study. All government employees at these agencies, regardless of rank or grade, were considered the survey population and were solicited to voluntarily participate in the study by taking an online survey. To ensure privacy, individual responses could not be attributed back to a survey participant or survey agency. (Both agencies that participated in the study had work locations other than APG, and the study was limited to only the government personnel physically stationed at APG.) A total of 150 employees responded to the survey from the selected agencies; 76 percent of the respondents were civilian employees and 24 percent were active military.

SMEs were solicited for input through senior leader networking at APG. Both military and civilian leaders were interviewed using a standard set of questions followed by an open-

ended discussion. This information was used to confirm and/or challenge the results of the survey instrument.

## **Research Instrument**

An online survey instrument was developed specifically for this research. A total of 33 questions were asked. Seven questions specifically addressed the basic forces that create organizational effectiveness as defined by Mintzberg (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009) and discussed previously in this paper. Ten other questions dealt with the categorical dimensions of organizational cultural described by Ginrvicius and Vaitkinaite (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). These 10 dimensions of the model of organizational culture are shown in Table 1.

## **The Model – 10 Dimensions**

From Ginevicius & Vaitkunaite (as cited by Aydin & Ceylan, 2009)

- Involvement** – Providing favorable conditions for all members of the organization for decision making and giving various ideas or suggestions.
- Collaboration** – Encouragement of teamwork rather than individual work.
- Transmission of Information** – New or important information reaches employees in time.
- Learning** – Process to increase existing knowledge.
- Care about Clients** – Related to customer satisfaction.
- Strategic direction** – Achieving the pre-identified goals and plans of the organization.
- Reward & Incentive System** – Provides employee motivation.
- System of Control** – Assists managers in supervising the employees.
- Communication** - Lifeblood of organization used to build bridges among the employees.
- Coordination & Integration** - Ensures effective work with other departments or groups when carrying out common activities.

**Table 1**

SME questionnaires used for personal interviews contained higher level discussion topics related to the same cultural and effectiveness areas of the online survey instrument. Also included were personal accounts of positive and negative results of integrated and non-integrated military and civilian cultures within the same organizational unit. A copy of the online survey

instrument and is found in Appendix A. The online survey instrument used a Likert scale, (balanced positive and negative, with a neutral central value).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected during the months of February and March 2010. For the agencies that agreed to allow their employees to take the online survey, all of their personnel stationed at APG were afforded the opportunity to participate. (The survey tool tracked responses by computer address only, so it is possible that an individual not in the selected sample could have participated in the survey if provided the correct information on how to access it.) One hundred and fifty employees from the participating agencies within the APG population responded to the online survey tool.

Nine SMEs were individually interviewed. Four were military, and five were civilian. In-person interviews were done by the study researcher only to ensure consistency of questions asked and response recordings.

### **Setting and Environment**

APG was chosen as the site of this study for several reasons. This military installation is home to close to 70 Army activities, making the number of agencies and employees available for potential study participation significant. Additionally, the installation also has multitudes of military and civilian senior leaders available for potential individual interviews. Lastly, APG is also where the researcher was located, making access to all potential study participants fairly easy.

### **Validity and Reliability**

As the survey instrument was online and each participant's input anonymous, it is assumed that the data collected is honest and accurate. Prior to the survey being released, peers of the researcher were asked to review the questions for validity and to take the survey to test it

for potential anomalies, problems, or questions related to how the information was presented. As the same online survey was used across agencies with the same instructions, it is expected to be repeatable and reliable. The personal interview of SMEs was not created anonymously, hence the validity and reliability of the related information collected is dependent solely on the source interviewed.

### **Summary**

Results from both data collection methods described will be presented in Chapter 4 of this paper. As discussed, this will include the organizational culture expectations of military and civilian personnel, and the perceived and actual impact of separate cultures on organizational effectiveness. Additionally, any outliers found with the data will be discussed.



## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### **Introduction**

Study results will be presented in this chapter after a summary of the methodology is discussed. The results are shown in four sections. The first section will address the seven basic forces that create organizational effectiveness as defined by Mintzberg (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). The second section will focus on the 10 categorical dimensions of organizational culture described by Ginrvicius and Vaitkinaite (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). The third section looks at other areas potentially impacted by organizational culture. And finally, the fourth section will summarize survey comments. Interspersed throughout the four sections will be relevant SME interview comments.

#### **Methodology Summary**

Two agencies at APG with large numbers of both military and government civilian employees agreed to participate in this study. All employees physically stationed at APG from these two organizations were provided the opportunity to participate in an online anonymous survey during the months of February and March 2010. While 150 individuals partook in the survey, their specific agency was not part of the survey data (it was not essential to the study), so it is unknown how many employees from each agency actually contributed to the results.

In addition to the online survey, nine SMEs were individually interviewed. Four of the SMEs were military, and any insights from their interview used in this analysis will be attributed to them as M-1, M-2, M-3, and M-4. Likewise, the five civilian SMEs interviewed are referred to as C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, and C-5. A baseline set of organizational culture questions related to

government civilian and military employees were asked to each, and additional time was allowed for open-ended discussion to ensure all information on the subject matter could be captured.

## Results

The online survey received 150 participants. Of the 150, 114 (76 percent) were government civilian employees. The remainder, 36 (24 percent), were military employees.

A copy of the online survey is found as Appendix A at the back of this report. The survey requested respondents to answer questions from both the perspective of their current job, and then for what they would want in their ideal job. The available responses are as shown with a correlated numeric value now added by the researcher to each statement to analyze their responses. Any population average that is less than 3.0 will be considered not met for the specific criteria analyzed as this indicates that the majority of the population either strongly disagree or disagree with the question.

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Strongly Disagree (SD)            | 1 |
| Disagree (D)                      | 2 |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree (NAND) | 3 |
| Agree (A)                         | 4 |
| Strongly Agree (SA)               | 5 |

Questions numbered 23 through 29 look at the seven basic forces that create organizational effectiveness as defined by Mintzberg (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009), with the individual results of each question detailed in Tables 23 through 29 in Appendix B. Of the civilians who took the survey, five of the seven basic forces that create organizational effectiveness were not met in their current job (efficiency, innovation, proficiency, cooperation/culture, and politics). Military employees found that two of the seven organization effectiveness forces (efficiency and proficiency) were not met in their current position. Combining both employee populations shows four of the seven basic forces (efficiency, proficiency, cooperation/culture, and politics) are still

below the 3.0 criteria and hence not met. Ratings for all seven of these factors increase for both military and civilian employees when queried what they would desire in these organizational effectiveness factors in their ideal job.

Questions numbered two through 11 focus on the 10 categorical dimensions of organizational cultural for organizational effectiveness described by Ginrvicius and Vaitkinaite (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). Civilian employees indicated through the survey that four of the 10 organizational culture dimensions were not met (transmission of information, reward and incentive system, system of control, and communication). On the other hand, military employees specified that all 10 of the dimensions were met. Looking at both populations together shows the same four of the 10 dimensions not being met. When considering what is desired in an ideal job, all 10 of the scores increase for both military and civilian employees.

Questions 12 through 22 were developed based on research from corporate mergers, and from SME discussions. At least one of the sample populations did not meet the criteria for questions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 22. Question 12 relates to whether rules and expectations are the same for military and civilian employees. Neither population favorably supported that statement. Questions 13 and 14 stated that morale and turnover was not a problem. Again, both the military and civilian employees indicated both criteria were not met. Question 15 indicated that team building across functions is easy and, on average, neither sample population agreed with the statement. Question 16 related to trust. The civilian employees did not favorably support this statement, while the military employees did. Combining both populations together resulted in the results for Question 16 not being met. Question 17 asked if military and civilian employees are treated equally in the organization. Civilians did not support the statement, while military employees did. The overall population however did not support Question 17. Similarly,

Question 22 related to whether military and civilian employees ever get ahead at the expense of the other. Again, civilians did not agree with the statement, while the military sample population did. Overall, the combined sample population did support Question 22. Again, all scores increased when asked to rate the same statement for what would be desired in an ideal job. SME C-1 (personal communication, February 15, 2010) agreed that government civilian advancement is more difficult with military presence, and that military returning to an agency after retirement may impact career civilians. Likewise, SME C-5 (personal communication, March 5, 2010) said that having both cultures can be limiting as the systems are different. Military may be picked for a special job by a military person, likewise for civilians. SME M-4 (personal communication, February 22, 2010) agreed by saying having both cultures can be limiting. SME C-2, (personal communication March 12, 2010) also said that having both cultures in the same agency can be limiting in various ways. SME C-4 (personal communication, March 5, 2010) agreed, saying having both can be limiting if the cultural differences are not exploited. SME M-3 (personal communication, February 15, 2010) disagreed, stating that having both types of personnel is not limiting. However, M-3 stated that you do need to provide both an orientation and specific instructions regarding items such as timelines and standards of discipline.

Some very good information can come from open-ended comment questions. Four such questions were included in this survey and will be discussed individually. The first question of this type asked for the primary area of dissimilarity between military and civilian personnel in your organization, and can be found as Table 30 in Appendix B. Some of the topics from civilian employee responses include: trust, schedules, time, attendance, duties, civilians being at a disadvantage, animosity, unwillingness to share information, military not caring about civilian culture, being treated as soldiers (related to turnover), balance of representation, senior military

not including civilian counterparts in decision making, disregard for civilian knowledge and experience, training time, military believing they should be in charge, cooperation, attitude, workload, military treated with more respect (from both civilians and military leadership), level of experience in the job, lack of acquisition training, intimidation, lack of military knowledge, no concern for civilians spending time with their families, slacking off when rotating out, short term vs. long haul, equality, respect, pay, recognition (i.e., military get more rewards, even for leaving), expectations, team leader positions usually go to the military, supervisory positions filled by current or former military personnel, administrative rules, RDOs, preference to military, culture, military hold higher positions than civilian counterparts, protocol, military have informal dress, training holidays, telework, structure, preference to rehire retired military, bureaucracy, learning curve and training time for military, perception of roles, team integration , training dollars, in-theater operations knowledge, and education level. SME C-1 (personal communication February 15, 2010) said that having a military presence opens doors, and rank does makes a difference. SME C-2 (personal communication March 12, 2010) said that the military add value from their perspective and point of view, and their connections are critical. Military are also frustrated by civilian rules. Additionally, SME C-4 (personal communication, March 5, 2010) said that military may be challenged to get things done as quickly as they are used to; they want results sooner. Civilians/engineers want to study things to death.

Some responses of military personnel to question #30 include: level of sacrifice, work, schedule, responsibility, dress, attitudes, roles, expectations, schedule, lack of acknowledgement to civilian rank, position or authority, hazard exposure, accountability, respect, fitness levels, trust, empowerment, education, career development, military experience, courtesy, deployable, sense of urgency, treated as dumb soldiers, sensitivity level required, and learning curve.

Additionally, SME M-2 (personal communication, January 20, 2010) commented that your mission is given more credibility if you have military, and the military need to be in charge. SME M-1 (personal communication, January 8, 2010) said that you cannot maintain a field culture working with civilians; molding occurs. Agencies that do not have a clear dividing line in positions and duty assignments have the most problems regarding organizational effectiveness. Combine cultures to combine strength, and put people in jobs where they have experience. A civilian should be the director in civilian organizations. Military can be good SMEs. SME M-3 (personal communication, February 8, 2010), said that there should be one culture driven by the leaders in either culture. SME qualifications should be structured more towards the military. One must define what you want the military to contribute.

The second comment question of this type asked for efforts experienced in your current organization that work towards combining military and civilian cultures, and can be found as Table 31 in Appendix B. Civilian employee responses include: end of month activities to recognize individuals, award ceremonies, promotion ceremonies, retirements, holiday parties, briefing sessions, monthly professional development, redesign of organizational structure, allowing military and civilians to attend training together, physical training, joint projects and missions, combined town halls, implied by job that civilian should know what military does, greening course, mission-based test and evaluation, co-located in workplace, language and procedures geared to military, integrated teams, work hours (same), organizational day, team meetings, off-sites, hail and farewells, military briefs in-theater experiences, strategic planning efforts, having civilians that were prior military, similar responsibilities, information exchange, working on teams, one is director and the other tech director, having military in organization, none as the opposite situation exists, and lunches. According to SME C-3 (personal

communication March 15, 2010), the military and civilian cultures cannot be the same. They will never meet as the dynamics of each are different. SME C-1 (personal communication February 15, 2010) also believes that it is natural for the cultures to remain separate, it happens by itself. SME C-5's perspective (personal communication March 5, 2010) is that organizational effectiveness can be improved by integrating the two cultures more using complimentary aspects of their capabilities, but that the cultures themselves need to be kept separate. SME C-4 (personal communication, March 5, 2010) stated that both cultures are different, and we need to exploit them to our benefit. To be successful, they cannot be separate.

Military answers to question 31 included: have civilians to maintain continuity, civilians are mostly former military so know culture, end-of-month activities, all functions are together, common professional development sessions, none, joint training, civilians deploy with military, failed because civilians feel they are entitled to tenure as opposed to output and responsibility, town hall meetings, using general officer protocols for SESes, off-sites, greening assistance by military, military and civilian positions mixed at all levels, and joint meetings. Additionally, SME M-2 (personal communication, January 20, 2010) commented that your mission is given more credibility if you have military, and the military need to be in charge.

The third comment question asked for methods one believes their organization could implement to bring the military and civilian cultures closer together, and can be found as Table 32 in Appendix B. Civilian answers included the following: teamwork, none, combined training, training on each other's matters, annual greening, allow more civilians to attend military schools, more civilian training, respect civilian expertise and advice, have equivalent civilians in each staff section, more activities for the entire command, hold leadership accountable, distribute workload evenly, have soldiers provide information on in-theater experiences and military updates, attend each others' training to learn, favor people with prior military experience for

promotions, change structure, quarterly meetings to share ideas, think joint—not separation, civilian leadership to provide stability, equal pay, equal awards, equal time off, equal dress codes, uniform time accountability, fill positions based on technical requirements not because ex-military, treat everyone the same, mandatory civilian physical training, mentoring, policy implementation, off-sites, social events, make hiring former military easier, same standards, different expectations, make directors civilian, assign more military, send civilians to theater, should not try to get closer to the military, and more social events during work.

Military personnel responded to the question #32 as: make assignments longer, none, acknowledge civilian equivalency, team-building events, only have people do what is within their scope of work, civilians need to respect military, include civilians in military training, seminars, same leave and time off policies, give civilians responsibility, classes on civilian workforce for military and military units for civilians, respect for authorities and seniorities between civilians that matches military rank respect, military cultural education, dialogue, professional development, cancel telework, civilian expected conduct not the same as seen in civilian companies, and civilian personnel should have to meet benchmarks on learning military operations. Additionally, SME M-2 (personal communication, January 20, 2010) believes that the stereotype of civilians and contractors has changed, and that how the military and civilians work together is based on personal experience and personality. SME M-4 (personal communication, February 22, 2010) said that the cultures should not be allowed to remain separate. Civilians have knowledge in specific areas and are long-term technical experts and provide continuity of knowledge. Civilian deputies are the key. Improve organizational effectiveness with a mission statement, vision, common concept of operations, and give the responsibility to the supervisors to develop people to do the mission. Training can help both sides. Provide a more formal civilian training program that mimics the time and type of training

provided by the military. SME C-2 (personal interview, March 12, 2010) said that the Army core values are really the same for them both. Training and the personnel systems draw them apart. Use joint leadership training to bring them closer together.

The fourth comment question asked if you believe having both military and civilian personnel impacts the operational effectiveness of your organization? If so, how? Detailed responses can be found as Table 33 in Appendix B. Answers from civilian employees were overwhelming yes for the following reasons: more efficient, two cultures are worlds apart, bad attitudes from both, military provides warfighter mentality and civilians continuity, both learn from each other, one supports the other in mission effectiveness, civilians not as productive if they believe they are carrying bulk of workload, military combat experience invaluable, military affect continuity, effectiveness cannot be met because organization is only operating as a military unit, military perspective required for mission, learn from each other, do not trust civilians to perform tasks regardless of background, need to listen and learn from each other, to civilians it is just a job, combined viewpoints best, complement each other, blends skill sets and expertise, military mindsets do not always match technical needs of job, military bring culture of hard work and accountability, military insistence on protocol is burdensome and adversely impacts morale, military try to make their mark, military placed in jobs without having required technical expertise, combat soldiers should not be placed in charge of civilians (turnover related), too many military personnel “dumbs down” organization, and the military are used to a different culture.

SME C-3 (personal communication, March 15, 2010) commented that having both military and civilians in the same agency should not be limiting if they are properly used. Military turnover is a problem if they are in charge of a TDA unit, as officers have a 2-year horizon that drives their behavior. Using military deputies has worked out well, as civilians have long-term

stability. SME C-5 (personal communication, March 5, 2010) believes that pairing a military officer with a civilian deputy works well. The military are more apt to change, have a wider vision, and take into account the needs of the Army. The civilian deputy has the institutional knowledge, is better able to define capabilities, and knows the politics. SME C-2 (personal communication, March 12, 2010) indicated that the civilians may need to have the leadership roles as the military rotate out and have no stability or consistency.

Military yes responses to question #33 included: for the positive, heel draggers are problematic, civilians provide continuity during deployment, makes organization run smoothly, lower turnover, key leaders need to delegate and manage better, military contributes green to organization, difference in experiences and knowledge help make better decisions, civilians not answerable the same way military would be, military have operational wisdom, and would be more effective if military input were incorporated.

### **Summary of Results**

In conclusion, study results were shown to determine that all seven of basic forces that create organizational effectiveness as defined by Mintzberg (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009) were not met. In addition, all 10 of the categorical dimensions of organizational cultural described by Ginrvicius and Vaitkinaite (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009) were also not met. Other areas that potentially impact organizational effectiveness and/or are a result of having two separate cultures are: not having the same rules and expectations for military and civilian employees, morale, turnover, difficult cross-functional team building, lack of trust, and the fact that military and civilian employees are seen at getting ahead at the expense of the other. Scores in all areas increased when both employee populations were asked to rate the same statement for what would be desired in an ideal job.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This final chapter will review the intent of the study and discuss study results. The premise of the study is that by allowing both military and government civilian cultures to exist within one organization instead of uniting them can impact the overall effectiveness of the organization because different rules and expectations are applied to each. Having two unique, separate and distinct cultures can cause unintentional consequences to the total success of the agency and may affect areas such as morale, teambuilding, and turnover. For integrating these two distinct organizational cultures into a combined culture, one would need to know the organizational culture expectations of each group and how they differ.

#### **Interpretation and the Implications of the Results**

The following are the two research questions proposed in the study. Are organizational culture expectations different for Army military and civilian personnel? Can and should both sets of expectations be accommodated within one organization, or is this detrimental to organizational effectiveness?

Several previous studies on organizational effectiveness were used as a baseline in the study to determine first whether the organizations in the study currently possess organizational effectiveness, and second if the organizational cultural expectations are different for government civilian and military employees. The first study used was from Mintzberg, who believed that the following seven basic forces create organizational effectiveness when managed successfully: efficiency, direction, innovation, proficiency, cooperation/culture, concentration, and competition/politics (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). Of the civilians who took the survey,

they said that efficiency, innovation, proficiency, cooperation/culture, and politics were not met in their current job. Military employees found that efficiency and proficiency were also not met in their current positions. When both employee populations are combined, four of the seven basic forces (efficiency, proficiency, cooperation/culture, and politics) are still not met. Ratings for all seven of these factors increase for both military and civilian employees when queried what they would desire in these organizational effectiveness factors in their ideal job. Based on the Mintzberg criteria for organizational effectiveness, neither population of the survey participants indicated that they currently work in organizationally effective agencies.

The second study used the 10 categorical dimensions of organizational cultural for organizational effectiveness described by Ginrvicius and Vaitkinaite (as cited in Aydin & Ceylan, 2009). The dimensions are: involvement, collaboration, transmission of information, learning, client care, strategic direction, reward and incentive system, system of control, communication, and coordination and integration. Civilian employees indicated that transmission of information, reward and incentive system, system of control, and communication were not met in their current jobs, while military employees specified all 10 of the dimensions were currently met for them. Combining the populations shows the same four dimensions not met for the civilian employees as not being met for the entire sample population. When considering desire in an ideal job, all 10 of the dimension scores increase for both military and civilian employees. In summary, based on the Ginrvicius and Vaitkinaite criteria for organizational effectiveness, the civilian survey participants indicated in both study measures that they currently do not work in organizationally effective agencies, while the military population believes much more so that they do. Although not conclusive, allowing both military and government civilian cultures to exist within one organization instead of uniting them may be attributing to the fact

that the civilians, and to some extent the military, did not find their organizations to be currently effective.

Questions were included in the survey that addressed problems found when there are multiple cultures in a workplace and were: having the same rules and expectations, morale, turnover, cross-functional team building, trust, equal treatment, sharing organizational beliefs and values, synergy from team members achieves a goal that is not available to an individual, respect, and professional behaviors. Neither the military nor the civilians believe that they have the same rules and expectations, and both found that morale, turnover, and cross-functional team building are less than ideal. Additionally, the civilian employees identified that there are problems with trust and equal treatment. All of these identified problem areas were also surfaced multiple times in the open-ended comment questions. In summary, the identified problem areas in not having the same rules and expectations, morale, turnover, cross-functional team building, trust, and equal treatment may be attributed to having two cultures working separately within one organization.

One other question in the survey (#22) dealt with whether military and civilian personnel ever get ahead at the expense of the other and was a result of SME interviews to determine if the discussion point was valid. On average, military believed that this situation does not occur, while civilians find that it does. The comment questions may support this, as numerous civilian employees believe that the military have an advantage to be hired back into civilian jobs after their tour of duty is concluded, and that military generally get the management positions.

To develop a new combined organizational culture, the leader should focus on the cultural desires of both populations. The focus of the new cultural must mean more than accommodation and sequential modifications, it means a new structure, employee incentives, and professional behaviors (Smith, 1998). The new culture must unite and remove division. From

this study, the following cultural changes are recommended to be implemented by the overall increases in the joint population scores (score increases over one were targeted for improvement areas), and are listed in descending impact order. Simply providing employees with the proficiency to perform will provide the largest increase from the current state to what is desired. Next, new and important information must reach employees in time. The ability to build cross-functional teams must be easier, turnover must be reduced, and organizational efficiency must be improved. Morale needs to increase, agency operating procedures need to be supportive, and a sense of cooperation and organizational culture developed. Internal communications need to be made efficient, the reward and incentive system motivating, and trust needs to be built. Politics managed, innovation rewarded, personnel treated equally, the ability to effectively work with other groups provided, and personnel cannot be seen to get ahead at the expense of each other. Finally, rules and expectations need to be the same for everyone, and their needs to be one united strategic direction.

Suggestions on how to unite the cultures also came from comment questions and SME interviews. These included, where possible: establish the same standards in terms of schedule, time at work, awards, and dress and workload equivalencies. Ensure civilians receive the same type of respect and acknowledgement of their rank, position and authority. Trust and morale must be built and intimidation eliminated. Training on military rules and expectations should be mandatory for civilian employees, and similar training provided to all of the military on civilian rules and regulations. Military should adapt to the culture of a civilian environment, not a field environment, when working in an office setting. There needs to be a clear dividing line between the positions and duty assignments of military and civilian personnel. Hire civilian directors with military deputies in civilian organizations, and reverse it for military lead agencies. Use each where they have strength and experience; do not interchange them. Define what you want the

military to contribute, and take advantage of the military SME to the maximum extent possible to include briefing civilian personnel on their in-theater experiences and greening civilians. Co-locating military and civilian personnel when possible is recommended, as is holding joint professional development, team building, social activities, and training sessions. Provide civilians with a formal leader development program that mimics the time and type of training provided by the military, and recognize it to be equivalent. Have a mission statement, vision, and common concept of operations; and give the responsibility to management to develop their employees to meet them.

A leader needs to consider which of the previously listed suggested improvements are applicable and can be implemented in their agency, and work towards developing a new culture. As previously discussed, steps that have been previously identified can assist a leader in succeeding in this critical endeavor of socializing the new culture into the workforce. According to Walker, eight steps should be taken to ensure a successful merger: celebrate small wins, state the merit of past practices, measure progress, ensure employees from all parts of the organization are involved in the assimilation, identify upfront those deep-seated behaviors that may cause problems, communicate the cultural integration process, and state clearly why it needs to be done (as cited in Schraeder & Self, 2003). Perhaps SME C-5 (personal communication, March 5, 2010) summed it up best by saying the key to ensuring organizational effectiveness occurs is having a common vision that is embraced by the organization.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As many government civilian employee responses from the data collected were very negatively biased towards government civilian employees, an area for further research would be to further segregate on whether civilian employees were former military members. Another area to pursue would be the dynamics that contractor personnel add to the organizational culture

dynamics in governmental agencies. Additionally, male and female employees may have different cultural expectations.

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## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND TERMS**

APG – Aberdeen Proving Ground

CoC – Chain of Command

DoD – Department of Defense

SME – Subject Matter Expert

