

Trust Erosion and Identity Corrosion: Threats To The Army Profession

by

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The United States Army spent the last two years studying and debating what it means to be a profession and what qualifies individuals as professionals. It worked to maintain its professional status as an institution and avoid becoming an obedient government bureaucracy. The critical task that lies ahead, however, requires the Army to identify the future threats to the profession and safeguard against them. This paper tackles that task. It identifies the threats to the Army profession in 2020 and beyond, and makes recommendations to overcome them. As a result of this research, it is clear the primary threats to the Army profession in the next decade are the erosion of trust in the Army by its client, the American people, combined with identity corrosion amongst Army professionals.

Trust Erosion and Identity Corrosion: Threats To The Army Profession

No profession can survive if it loses the trust of its client; and the Army now has much to do to restore its credibility as a self-policing institution.

—Professor Don Snider¹

That was the warning to the Army in the 2004 edition of *The Future of the Army Profession*, and that warning is now more relevant than ever. The United States Army spent the last two years studying and debating what it means to be a profession and what qualifies individuals as professionals. It worked to maintain its professional status as an institution and avoid becoming an obedient government bureaucracy. The critical task that lies ahead, however, requires the Army to identify the future threats to the profession and safeguard against them. This paper tackles that task. It identifies the threats to the Army profession in 2020 and beyond, and makes recommendations to overcome them. As a result of this research, it is clear the primary threats to the Army profession in the next decade are the erosion of trust in the Army by its client, the American people, combined with identity corrosion amongst Army professionals.

As this paper illustrates, there is a growing trust division between the civilians that control the military and the officers that lead it, brought on by an increasing belief that the officer corps fails to self-police the institution as evidenced by highly visible acts of misconduct. General Officers in the Army exacerbate this perception by committing the very crimes they are charged with policing. While not yet fully manifested in the opinions of the American public, this loss of trust is rapidly emerging in the form of oversight by Army's civilian masters, in both the Executive and Legislative branches of government.

The threat of loss of trust is significant by itself, and is compounded by corrosion of professional identity in the segment of the officer corps entering its tenure as senior leaders. As the very stewards of the profession, these leaders demonstrate gaps in their identity that will inhibit their ability to create developmental programs that enhance the future of the profession and socialize the next generation of Soldiers comprised of the Millennials. This is a particularly complex challenge that the Army must solve in order to allow today's strategic leaders to professionally acclimate young Americans whose values often run contrary to those of the institution in which they will serve. This paper looks at the loss of professional identity of the Army officer corps, and it investigates how generational gaps and diverging societal values may heighten the corrosion of identity in the future.

Both of these topics are by themselves a significant challenge. When combined, however, and set in the context of the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment of the twenty-first century, they form a set of conditions that, if not addressed, could result in significant erosion of trust with the Army's client and further corrosion of professional identity. Set in the context of an impending period of resource reduction, the Army must find efficient solutions to prevent the bureaucratization of the institution and its decay as a profession.

The Army as a Profession

In order to understand threats to the profession, one must begin with an understanding of what a profession is and does, and specifically what classifies the Army as a profession. To develop this understanding and provide context, this paper turns to the extensive collection of work already accomplished during the 2010 Army Profession Campaign under the direction of the Commander of Army Training and

Doctrine Command (TRADOC.) The Army's Secretary and Chief of Staff envisioned the purpose of the campaign as facilitating "an Army-wide dialog about our Profession of Arms."² The Army's senior leaders took a fresh look at the Army as a profession and the impacts that a decade of war had on it. The campaign sought to answer three critical questions: 1) What does it mean for the Army to be a profession? 2) What does it mean to be a professional Soldier? 3) After nine years of war, how are individual professionals and the profession meeting these aspirations?³ The campaign, headed by the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE), answered these questions and yielded important definitions and concepts that are the basis of the work laid out in chapter 2 of *Army Doctrinal Publication 1* (ADP 1): *The Army*, and the draft of *Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 1* (ADRP 1): *The Army Profession*. Both are now the accepted standard by which the Army measures itself as a profession.

The Draft ADRP 1 describes four aspects that must be met in order for any occupation to be considered a profession. First, it must provide a vital service to the society which the society cannot provide for itself, but which the society must have to flourish. Second, the occupation provides the service by working with abstract knowledge and practice that has been developed into human expertise. This work is rarely routine or repetitive, and generally takes years of study and experiential learning in order to master it. Further, it is measured by effectiveness, not efficiency. Third, a profession must earn and maintain the trust of its client through the effective and ethical application of its expertise. Adherence to its ethic controls the profession's behavior. Finally, based on trust relations with the client, the client grants relative autonomy to the profession in the application of its art and expertise. They expect the profession to

continuously exercise discretionary judgment as individual professionals self regulate and police the profession.⁴

Draft ADRP 1 further describes the five essential characteristics of the Army profession. These characteristics include trust, military expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps, and stewardship of the profession.⁵ The American people trust their Army as a profession and place special confidence in it when the Army considers service to the nation its highest priority. Trust has always been the bedrock of the Army's relationship with the American people. It is the Army's inherent duty to preserve that trust.⁶ As Snider describes it, "Because of this trust relationship, the American people grant significant autonomy to the Army to create its own expert knowledge and to police the application of that knowledge by its individual professionals. Nonprofessional occupations do not enjoy similar autonomy."⁷

In the Army, military expertise equates to the "design, generation, support, and ethical application of landpower."⁸ Honorable service alludes to the fact that the Army exists to support and defend the Constitution and the American way of life. Army professionals do so by adhering to the Army values⁹ in all they do. Esprit de corps refers to the bond between Army professionals that provides common purpose and the perseverance to overcome obstacles and adversity, and to win wars. Finally, stewardship of the profession is about the Army being "responsible and duty bound not just to complete today's missions with the resources available, but also those of the future to ensure the profession is always capable of fulfilling whatever mission our nation gives us."¹⁰ As long as the Army's leaders, Soldiers, and civilians maintain their commitment to these five characteristics then the Army remains a profession.

For the sake of this paper the following assertions apply. First, the Army qualifies as a profession by the definitions outlined above, and is therefore one. Second, as Snider and others effectively argued, while the Army is inherently a profession, it also possesses many of the characteristics of a bureaucracy. The challenge for the Army to remain a profession must be to strike the appropriate balance between both. When appropriately done, trust is maintained. When not done, trust erodes, autonomy declines, and the Army slips closer to becoming solely an obedient government bureaucracy.¹¹ By accepting that “the Army is an American Profession of Arms, a vocation comprised of experts certified in the ethical application of land combat power, serving under civilian authority, entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people,”¹² permits one to move forward in identifying the threats to the profession.

Trust Erosion

The newly released ADP 1 devotes the entirety of its second chapter to a discussion of the Army profession and begins by defining the profession as being built on trust – trust between Soldiers; trust between Soldiers and leaders; trust among Soldiers, their families, and the Army; and trust between the Army and the American people. It further explains the importance of discipline in units as fundamental to building that trust.¹³ Likewise, Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno lists one of his strategic priorities as an enduring “commitment to the Army Profession, a noble and selfless calling founded on the bedrock of trust.”¹⁴ He further describes high standards and discipline, as well as integrity, among the most essential guiding principles for the Army.¹⁵ If one believes that “the profession exists only by the trust of the client; and *that* trust is the *same* trust that enables the individual Soldier to develop within the Army as a

profession, for Soldiers and units to bond, for Soldiers' families to trust the Army through myriad deployments, and for Army leaders to engage in civil-military relations,"¹⁶ then the profession should pay attention when cracks in the bedrock, found in issues of trust, begin to surface.

If trust is truly the bedrock, then the Army needs to look closely to ensure nothing is dripping into it and cracking it through a freeze-thaw phenomenon that could be slowly, but perceptibly, eroding the foundation. Something is currently dripping into the bedrock of trust and those drips are major acts of indiscipline. Many believe the Army is not doing enough to stop the drip. For example, as a result of recent Army Leader Day discussions at the Army War College, students clearly understood that Congress is concerned about indiscipline in the military. Congress is debating withholding authority under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) from military commanders over a perceived lack of seriousness in dealing with acts of misconduct. When commanders lose the ability to use the UCMJ to enforce discipline in the profession, they lose the ability to self-police, one of the four aspects of being a profession. When the client loses trust and begins to withhold autonomy from the profession, the profession moves a step closer to being an obedient bureaucracy. When that happens, "unquestioned trust between the professional and the client, which is needed to sustain the ethic, no longer exists."¹⁷

The Army is not without historical precedent of loss of autonomy occurring because of the perception that it was failing to exercise sound discretionary judgment. The late 1990s provide an example of the Army losing its clients' trust over trainee abuse at Aberdeen Proving Grounds. In reference to this incident the Army notes that

“There have been times in the past when the Army lost autonomy and some legitimacy with the American people when it failed to abide by an Ethic approved by the client. These incidents caused the Army to lose both legitimacy and autonomy, as evidenced by Congress imposing external regulations.”¹⁸ Aberdeen demonstrates that when the American people lose trust in the Army’s ability to repetitively exercise discretionary judgment, they take authority and autonomy away. Trust is the currency of professions – “If we (the Army) were to lose our trust relationship with the American people, the entire edifice of our profession would crumble.”¹⁹ The Army lost trust as a result of Aberdeen, and Congress took action.

For the last decade the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University has collected and published data in its National Leadership Index about the level of confidence the American public has in major sectors of American society. In 2010 data continued to reflect that “despite a perceived crisis of declining confidence in many institutions, the United States military remains the most respected sector of our society.”²⁰ Likewise, a 2012 GALLUP opinion poll shows that 75 percent of Americans place a “great deal” of confidence in the military, more than in any other occupation.²¹ Such statistics indicate that trust erosion is not yet an issue with the American public, but one needs to look no further than recent Congressional debate and legislation proposals to see that trust is eroding with those that are charged by Article I of the U.S. Constitution to raise and support the Army.

Recent actions in the legislative branch of government reveal the cracks in the foundation of trust with the military. It is clear that some members of Congress have lost faith in the military to adequately deal with certain aspects of indiscipline. It is becoming

increasingly apparent that America is tired of reading about sexual assaults, hazing, and problems with suicide prevention within the military. Accordingly, political leadership in America exercised its Constitutional authority and provided oversight to the military through legislation that limits the military's autonomy to self regulate these types of infractions and issues. The Army, among the other services, appears at the forefront of issues with sexual assault, hazing, and suicide, and therefore holds its share of the blame for the erosion of trust and will certainly bear its share of the burden when it comes to loss of autonomy.

Amendment 3016 to the 2013 Defense Policy Bill, introduced by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, demonstrates on such example. This amendment easily passed in the Senate, and requires any service member convicted of rape, sexual assault or forcible sodomy to be administratively discharged if their sentence does not already entail dismissal from the service. This is only the first of many acts of oversight aimed at controlling the military's options when it comes to dealing with sex crimes.²² In general, military courts have the same flexibility with sentencing those convicted of sex crimes as they do for all other crimes. This legislation, which passed the senate by voice and with no debate, requires convicted sex offenders to be separated from the service. The legislation comes from her belief that "sexual violence in the military continues to occur at an alarming rate,"²³ and the military retains approximately one-third of its convicted sex offenders, causing her acclaim on the Senate floor that if true, "then clearly we must move forward."²⁴ Senator Gillibrand, among other powerful Senators, thinks it is time to provide additional oversight to the military in dealing with this issue. In essence, the Senate is telling the military in general, and the Army in particular, that it no longer trusts

it to handle the problem, so it is going to prescribe how it does so. That is exactly the type of oversight a governing body provides to a bureaucracy, not a profession.

In the House, Representative Speier of California sponsored legislation, the Sexual Assault Training Oversight and Prevention (STOP) Act, in November of 2011 aimed at providing oversight in sexual assault cases. The proposal calls for “removing authority from the chain of command to investigate sexual assault allegations.”²⁵

Beyond the STOP Act, Speier advocated further action in 2012 writing the House Armed Services Committee Chairman saying “it is imperative that Congress hold the military accountable and truly implement a zero-tolerance policy in response to this problem.”²⁶ Those are certainly not the words of a civilian authority that trusts the military to police itself.

Most of the proposals outlined in the preceding paragraphs were made formal when President Obama signed them into law as part of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.²⁷ Clearly this indicates an erosion of trust. Legislation aimed at limiting a military commander’s ability to deal with acts of indiscipline are rare, and the military should view such Congressional oversight as evidence it is losing the faith of its civilian masters. No rational person disagrees that serious sex offenders should be prosecuted and separated from the military. The issue lies in the definition of what constitutes a sexual offense. One of the purposes of the UCMJ is to give commanders the ability to self-police the profession. It offers a full range of options in dealing with offenses whereby professionals exercise discretionary judgment and do not necessarily have to deal with all cases in the same way.²⁸ The debate here, however, is not about sex offenses, but about trust. If the Army desires to remain a profession, Congress must

allow it to self regulate within the guiding principles of its own ethic. If not, it becomes the dutiful bureaucracy with rules that govern all possible decisions. The leadership of the Army would do well to pay attention to these tendencies and take whatever means necessary to prove to Congress that it attacks the issues and strives to earn the rightful status as a self-policing institution.

The evidence so far could easily lead one to believe that recent Congressional oversight is only related to sexual assaults in the military. However, Senator Murray of Washington introduced similar legislation aimed at overhauling the Department of Defense's mental health and suicide prevention programs.²⁹ It is not unreasonable to conclude that Senator Murray, and the rest of the U.S. Senate that passed the amendment, has lost confidence in the military to handle the issue on its own. The Senate feels the need to intervene with measures, while intended to provide assistance, also limit autonomy.

Lest one think that the freeze-thaw effect of trust erosion resides only in the Legislative Branch, evidence exists that the Executive Branch of government flexes its oversight muscles too. It is forcing military leaders to take a hard look at themselves in light of acts of indiscipline by senior members of the military profession, including prominent retired General Officers. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recently stated, "If we really are a profession – a group of men and women who are committed to living an uncommon life with extraordinary responsibility and high standards – we should want to figure it out before someone else figures it out for us."³⁰ General Martin Dempsey said that in the aftermath of scandals and acts of misconduct by some of the military's senior leaders. In effect, he warned that if the military does not get its ethical

shortcomings under control, then those that control the military will. At the time of this statement he was responding to the Secretary of Defense's direction to look holistically at the military's ethical training programs to determine if those programs for senior officers were satisfactory, in order to provide an interim assessment to the President.³¹ This is evidence the Executive Branch's confidence is waning and General Dempsey's review of ethical training standards is an attempt to quickly fill newly forming cracks in the foundation of trust.

As in any foundation, cracks do not just happen, they indicate deeper issues, and if not addressed can erode the foundation to its core.

The Army is now well respected, along with the other services, and quite highly rated in every recent poll of public trust, even amidst several highly publicized ethical and professional lapses. Such approval, however, cannot be taken for granted, particularly in times of urgent budget reductions. The Army's client, the American people, gets to make the judgment of the extent to which the Army is a profession, and they will do so based on the bond of trust created with them by the effective and ethical manner in which the Army continues to build and employ its capabilities.³²

Said another way, America's trust is the lifeblood of the Army as a profession. If the Army loses that trust then the profession could cease to exist. The situation is not yet dire, but the Army needs to pay attention to what its civilian masters are asking of it, especially as the Army becomes the major bill payer for the upcoming defense drawdown.

Fortunately for the Army, as it moves forward, it already possesses solid mechanisms to help restore withering trust. The primary thing the Army must accomplish to patch the cracks is to make its internal population aware that all actions have consequences. Some of those consequences impact the very fiber of the profession. A significant outcome of the Army Profession Campaign is the advent of the

2013 “America’s Army – Our Profession” education and training program, developed by the CAPE. The program officially began at Joint Base Langley-Eustis on January 3rd when TRADOC hosted a professional development workshop designed to introduce the program to the Army.³³ The education regimen includes quarterly topics Army leaders must address within their units.³⁴ From October to December 2013, the fourth quarter focuses on trust, the bedrock of the profession. During that period, the Army will emphasize those trust relationships both within the institution and with society in general.³⁵ The educational modules for accomplishing this, however, remain in development.

This presents a tremendous opportunity in the very near term for the Army to teach itself about the threat trust erosion embodies. As the CAPE’s leaders develop educational packages that address trust, they should be mindful of the cases highlighted in this paper, and incorporate vignette based scenarios that demonstrate how misconduct becomes the agent that breaks down the Army’s trust foundation with the American people. In developing these values laden educational scenarios, they must incorporate sound pedagogical models for values- based education. This will likely require immediate research about how to best use such models and incorporation of specialists with expertise in developing them.

Beyond 2013’s fourth quarter, however, the Army must make certification in all aspects of the profession, including trust, a requirement for all levels of professional military education (PME) from basic training to general officer education. This will require the Army to rapidly reach concurrence on what it wants ADRP-1, *The Army Profession*, to say and be as the doctrinal manual for the profession. The Army must

urgently push to finalize this publication. Once accomplished, existing programs of instruction in the training base and generating force must rapidly synchronize the concepts of ADRP-1 ensuring the Army speaks with one voice across all developmental programs.

Furthermore, the Army should leverage gaming concepts to continue the development of sophisticated values and ethics simulation programs that advance the concepts of the profession. While some first person, game context, ethical training modules such as the CAPE's *Moral Combat* exist,³⁶ the Army should advance this construct by further leveraging existing and future computing technology to create virtual worlds in which Army professionals encounter challenges with impacts on the profession. It requires only incremental improvements of such scenarios to fuse them with other simulations like those used for combat vehicles and small unit training. Finally, Army senior leaders should direct scenario improvements that force Army professionals to make values-based decisions within realistic collective training events at all levels. If done correctly, one can envision after action review discussions at the Army's combat training centers focused not just on competent tactics, but also on sound ethical decisions that enhance the future of the profession. By incorporating such methods, the Army can begin to caulk the cracks in the bedrock of trust and ensure they never reappear.

Identity Corrosion

Turning from the threat of trust erosion, corrosion of professional identity emerges as yet another threat to the profession in the coming decade. One concept surfacing from the Army Profession Campaign is the "renewal of the unique aspect of the identity and role of the strategic leaders of the Army – the sergeants major, colonels,

general officers, and members of the Senior Executive Service – as the ‘stewards of the Army Profession.’”³⁷ Many of these stewards, however, do not understand what being a professional means in the way emerging Army doctrine defines it. Therefore they do not view themselves as professionals. Even more concerning, many do not see the necessity to redefine the Army as a profession or to maintain its professional status. This lack of professional identity and understanding among emerging strategic level leaders should not come as a surprise for at least two reasons.

First, among the conclusions emerging from the 2002 publication of *The Future of the Army Profession* was the finding that junior officers did not view themselves as professionals.³⁸ Now, more than ten years later, those same captains and majors of 2000 are the lieutenant colonels and colonels of 2013, the corps of officers entering the strategic level of leadership. By the Army’s definition they are the stewards of the profession but the Army has done little in the past ten years to increase this cohort’s sense of professional identity. Beyond one year of study at the Command and General Staff College, which included only one course on leadership, and almost no education about the profession, this group received little, if any, formal education in the concept of professional identity in the ensuing 12 years since the original study. These stewards have, however, distinguished themselves in an era of persistent conflict as some of the premier war fighters the nation has ever known. However, in so doing they have deferred PME opportunities at increasing rates. These factors combine to create a set of conditions in which the stewards may not fully grasp the magnitude of their stewardship responsibilities.

Anecdotal evidence also reaffirms this corrosion of identity. One only needs to talk to a group of Colonels and ask a few pointed questions about the profession, to determine most cannot define what it means to be a professional or why the concept is important. This became apparent following Snider's address to the Army War College resident class of 2013 – his remarks focusing on challenges facing Army strategic leaders in maintaining the Army as a military profession during the forthcoming defense reductions.³⁹ Ensuing seminar discussions following his address illuminated and revealed that many War College students saw little relevance in the topic. More alarming in an approaching era of constrained resources, these emerging strategic leaders will likely revert to what they learned during the 1990s. In that previous era of constrained resources effective business practices of doing more with less led to the initial loss of professional identity and other bureaucratic tendencies in the first place.⁴⁰ Making this potentially worse, many of today's generals were the battalion and brigade commanders executing those practices during the last defense drawdown period.

As stewards of the profession, this cohort of colonels that lacks professional identity, it now bears responsibility for creating the developmental programs to instill the professional values and ethic in the next generation of leaders. The generation of Millennials, those born between 1980 and 2000, who now serve as the Army's junior officers and enlisted soldiers. The Army recognizes that the Millennials will be the greatest influencers in the Army from 2015-2024, both as seasoned Soldiers and fresh recruits. As a group, Millennials are a diverse and disjointed generation. They appear to be a tolerant, pragmatic, ambitious, and optimistic cohort. They believe in their influence

and unique identity. They are innately intimate with the digital world. Most relevant to the Army, however, their values do not align with the Army's and remain in flux.⁴¹

This description demonstrates the wide gap between the values-based profession the Army must maintain and the society from which it draws its recruits. The Josephson Institute of Ethics declared, in extensive surveys of American high school students, over 50 percent report having cheated on an exam, and over 55 percent report having lied to a teacher about something significant in the past year.⁴² While these trends have improved slightly over previous years, they indicate significant values problems with America's youth. Additionally, by many accounts Millennials, characterized as generally driven by "more of an emphasis on extrinsic values such as money, fame and image" and much less by "intrinsic values such as self-acceptance, group affiliation and community"⁴³ create additional cause for concern. These trends illustrate the values gaps between the Army and the society it serves and recruits from. One should reasonably expect this value gap to continue to widen as the generation of Millennials rises to lead the Armed Forces.

In terms of professional identity, the Army is faced with a unique set of conditions as it moves toward 2020. The Army will be: led by stewards who do not fully appreciate the concept of the profession; facing an era of diminishing resources; challenged with maintaining the profession while recruiting from a population base whose values do not align with those of the Army. If that were not challenging enough, because of Department of Defense and Army budget and program cycles, the Army has to quickly identify solutions to this identity corrosion in the next one to two years. By 2014 the Army will submit its Program Objective Memorandum which charts the Army's future

resource allocation decisions for the ensuing six years.⁴⁴ This means in real terms that the Army has a year to figure out its initial concepts for manning, training, and developing the Army of 2020, an Army soon comprised primarily of Millennials.

The first condition associated with identity corrosion, lack of professional identity among stewards of the profession, should be relatively easy to overcome. As mentioned before, the Army already initiated the “America’s Army – Our Profession” education program of 2013. This program inherently incorporates the concept of identity. When the Army’s most senior leaders emphasize the importance of the profession to its emerging stewards, these highly effective war fighters will no doubt quickly grasp and internalize the importance of understanding the profession and creating systems to sustain it. One way the Army targets senior leader identity is through the development of a computer based Virtual Experiential Interactive Learning Simulation (VEILS) product focused on senior leader level ethical decision making.⁴⁵ Each scenario developed provides exceedingly realistic dilemmas and presents the participant with numerous ethical challenges allowing him to see how both individual decisions affect trust within the profession and recognize their own role as a steward of the profession. The Army should continue to invest in, and rapidly field, the VEILS program. Further, participation should be a gate for professional certification commensurate with service at the level of colonel and above across the Army. Moreover, the Army should continue to invest in other simulations that will help certify identity within the entire force. The Army recognizes that “future learners will prefer independent learning experiences and have a natural affinity for self-development and lifelong learning, and prefer

collaborative learning experiences.”⁴⁶ The virtual environment provides a relatively inexpensive venue for producing those experiences.

The crux of solving issues with identity corrosion for the future, however, relates to closing the values gap between the Army and society. Recruiting and retaining future leaders will require unique adaptations to traditional Army leader development models and practices. The Army must invest in its moral developmental programs to overcome issues with moral fading and rationalization amongst its professional stewards, and to prevent moral disengagement within the next generation of leaders. In nearly all cases of misconduct, both within and external to the Army, individuals understand the ethical implications of the situations in which they find themselves. They know what should be done, exhibit intent to act ethically, yet fail to do so. They rationalize and disengage morally between intention and action in order to attain short-term gratification.⁴⁷

Hannah’s and Sweeny’s research demonstrates that professional identity enhancement occurs through moral jolts attained by immersing leaders in developmental “experiences reflective of the real world, even if they are virtual or vicarious.” They go on to point out the importance of then shaping such experiences through guided reflection by “capable mentors.”⁴⁸

While a comprehensive discussion of future moral developmental models is beyond the scope of this paper, the Army must invest deeply in how it will shape future generations of leaders in order to continue to promote professional identity. For example, the Army’s capstone document on leadership, *ADRP 6-22, Army Leadership*, should devote more than four paragraphs to the concept of character development.⁴⁹ Fortunately the Army has a solid basis for understanding moral development in *The*

U.S. Army Concept for the Human Dimension in Full Spectrum Operations 2015-2024.

It highlights the importance of guiding and preparing “commissioned and noncommissioned leaders in their efforts to develop moral and ethical Soldiers.”⁵⁰ It dedicates an entire chapter to understanding the moral component of the human dimension. Army senior leadership should make it required reading for every senior noncommissioned PME course and for every officer as part of the Captain’s Career Course.

In the end, beyond the trust of the client, leaders and leader development continue to be the lynchpin that holds the Army profession together. As Snider eloquently states, “the critical point here is that leadership within the Army, specifically the competence and character of its individual leaders at all levels, uniformed and civilian, is the single most influential factor in the Army being, and remaining, a profession.”⁵¹ As the Army shapes itself for the future, it would do well to pay particular attention to leader development systems such as PME and ensure those programs include certifications and relevant education about moral reasoning and character development. This is essential as the Army strives to eliminate identity corrosion and bridge gaps in societal values for the future of the profession.

Conclusion

It is clear that the Army faces significant challenges to its status as a profession in the coming decade. One of these challenges is the threat of erosion of trust with the Army’s client, the American people. The Army should remain acutely aware of indicators of trust erosion found in increased oversight by both the legislative and executive branches of the government and act decisively and convincingly to overcome them. Additionally, the Army profession is challenged by identity corrosion which is further

exacerbated by the importance of creating character developmental systems to close values gaps between the Army and American society. The good news is the Army Profession Campaign, begun in 2010 and resulting in the “America’s Army – Our Profession” education program of 2013, has put the Army on the right path to think through the solutions to each of these challenges. Further, these threats are not yet a crisis and sufficient time to implement solutions to prevent the decline of the profession still exists. However, the Army must act quickly and should not rest on its laurels. It must act now to shape the future, because austere budgets and the pending surge of Millennials within its ranks demand it. If the Army wants to remain a profession, it will find ways in the coming decade to incorporate the recommendations consistent with overcoming the threats of trust erosion and identity corrosion as this paper suggests. The Army, as the nation’s loyal servant, has no choice but to reinforce the principles that make it a profession. America relies on it as its preeminent source of land power, now and in the future, to protect its national security and win its wars.

Endnotes

¹ Don M. Snider, “The U.S. Army as Profession” in *The Future of the Army Profession Revised and Expanded – Second Edition*, Don M Snider, Project Director and Lloyd J. Matthews, editor, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005), 31.

² Commanding General, Training and Doctrine Command, *An Army White Paper: The Profession of Arms*, (West Point, NY: Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, December 8, 2010), preface.

³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Profession: Initial Draft –Not for Implementation*, ADRP 1 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 25, 2012), vi-vii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ix-x.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁷ Don M. Snider, "Once Again, the Challenge to the U.S. Army During a Defense Reduction: To Remain a Military Profession" *Strategic Studies Institute Professional Military Ethics Monograph Series*, Volume 4, (February 2012): 8.

⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Profession: Initial Draft*, ix.

⁹ The seven Army Values are comprised of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. For further explanation of how the Army defines each of its values, please refer to: U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership: ADRP 6-22*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, August, 2012), 3-1 – 3-3.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army Profession: Initial Draft*, ix.

¹¹ Don M. Snider, "The U.S. Army as Profession" in *The Future of the Army Profession Revised and Expanded – Second Edition*, Don M Snider, Project Director and Lloyd J. Matthews, editor, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005), 13.

¹² Commanding General, Training and Doctrine Command, *An Army White Paper: The Profession of Arms*, 4.

¹³ U.S. Department of the Army, *The Army*, ADP 1, (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 17, 2012), 2-2 – 2-8.

¹⁴ Raymond T. Odierno, *Marching Orders of the 38th Chief of Staff, U.S. Army*, (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, January 2012), 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ Don M. Snider, "Once Again, the Challenge to the U.S. Army During a Defense Reduction", 19.

¹⁷ James Burk, "Expertise, Jurisdiction, and Legitimacy of the Military Profession," in *The Future of the Army Profession Revised and Expanded – Second Edition*, Don M Snider, Project Director and Lloyd J. Matthews, editor, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005), 51-52.

¹⁸ This quote refers to an investigation that revealed Drill Sergeants at Aberdeen Proving Ground were "systematically abusing trainees." The issue was long-standing and widespread, and because "the Army failed to self-police adherence to an appropriate Ethic, Congress passed legislation with very specific language on how to train and lead our Soldiers." This incident and others like it such as prisoner abuse and unlawful or indiscriminate non-combatant deaths can also deplete the Army's reservoir of trust. The quote and this information comes from: Commanding General, Training and Doctrine Command, *An Army White Paper: The Profession of Arms*, (West Point, NY: Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, December 8, 2010), 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ George E. Reed, "Threats to the Profession of Arms," *Defense Policy Journal*, February 28, 2011, <http://www.defensepolicy.org/2011/george-reed/threats-to-the-profession-of-arms> (accessed September 17, 2012).

²¹ Gallup Poll, "Confidence in Institutions", June 2012, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1597/Confidence-Institutions.aspx> (accessed January 2, 2013).

²² Rick Maze, "Senate Cracks Down on Sex Assaults in Military," *The Navy Times*, November 28, 2012, www.navytimes.com/mobile/news/2012/11/military-sex-assaults-senate-troops-discipline (accessed December 13, 2012).

²³ Ramsey Cox, "Senate Passes Amendments on Sexual Violence, Mental Health in the Military," *The Hill*, November 28, 2012, <http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/senate/269911-senate-amendment-on-sexual-violence> (accessed December 13, 2012).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Sava Hamedy, "Sexual Assaults Taint Military, as Congress Turns up Heat on Pentagon to Deal With Problem," *BU Washington News Service*, July 2012, <http://buwashingtonnews.com/2012/07/26/sexual-assaults-taint-military-as-congress-turns-up-heat-on-pentagon-to-deal-with-problem/> (accessed October 30, 2012).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Invisible No More, "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 Wrap-Up," January 4, 2013, http://www.notinvisible.org/ndaa_fy_2013 (accessed January 22, 2013).

²⁸ As an example of discretionary judgment regarding sex offenses a given commander might not think that an eighteen year old female private, who is otherwise a top performing Soldier, who grabs the butt of one of her male peers at a party, is deserving of the same treatment under the UCMJ as a 26 year old Drill Sergeant that rapes one of his trainees in an Army Basic Training unit. Under the UCMJ, both are sex offenders, and under the new legislation, both cases would be handled in the same manner.

²⁹ This particular piece of legislation seeks to standardize programs across each of the military services and is an effort to reduce the alarming rate of military suicides which "has not abated despite major investments in new programs and outreach efforts across the services." This quote and this information comes from: Adam Ashton, "Senate Passes Murray Measure to Reform Defense Suicide Prevention Programs," *The News Tribune* December 5th, 2012, <http://blog.thenewstribune.com/military/2012/12/05/senate-passes-murray-measure-to-reform-defense-suicide-prevention-programs/> (accessed December 13, 2012).

³⁰ Thom Shanker and Elisabeth Bumiller, "Pentagon to Review Ethical Standards," *New York Times*, November 15, 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/11/16/world/panetta-and-general-dempsey-to-review-military-ethics.html?_r=0. (accessed December 19, 2012).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Don M. Snider, "Once Again, the Challenge to the U.S. Army During a Defense Reduction: To Remain a Military Profession", 4.

³³ Amy L. Robinson, "TRADOC talks America's Army – Our Profession" January 10, 2013 <http://www.army.mil/article/94114/> (accessed January 22, 2013).

³⁴ The “America’s Army – Our Profession” quarterly education plan directs that the first quarter of 2013 focus on standards and discipline, doing the right thing in all situations, and those aspects of the profession that set the Army apart from common living. The second quarter addresses Army customs, courtesies, and traditions and sustainment of esprit de corps and stewardship of the profession. The third quarter theme aims at military expertise and what it means to be a certified Army professional. This information comes from: Major General Gordon B. “Skip” Davis, Jr. and Colonel Jeffrey D. Peterson, “America’s Army – Our Profession”, *Military Review January-February 2013*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Combined Arms Center, February 2013), 45-47.

³⁵ Ibid., 47.

³⁶ Army Game Studio for CAPE, “*Moral Combat*”, (West Point, New York, Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, November 29, 2009) <https://milgaming.army.mil/Entrance/Product.aspx?productid=2> (accessed 27 January, 2013). This website is requires a CAC card to run and is therefore only available to DOD personnel.

³⁷ Don M. Snider, “Once Again, the Challenge to the U.S. Army During a Defense Reduction: To Remain a Military Profession”, iv.

³⁸ Don M. Snider, “The U.S. Army as Profession” in *The Future of the Army Profession Revised and Expanded*, 3.

³⁹ Don M. Snider, “The Challenge for Army Strategic Leaders: To Maintain the Army as a Military Profession During the Defense Reductions”, lecture, Carlisle Barracks, PA, October 15, 2012, cited with permission of Dr Snider.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *The U.S. Army Concept for the Human Dimension in Full Spectrum Operations 2015-2024*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-7, (Fort Monroe, Virginia, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, June 11, 2008), 4.

⁴² Josephson Institute of Ethics, “For the First Time in a Decade, Lying, Cheating, and Stealing Among American Students Drops,” Los Angeles, CA, November 20, 2012, <http://charactercounts.org/pdf/reportcard/2012/ReportCard-2012-PressRelease-HonestyIntegrityCheating.pdf> (accessed 8 February, 2013).

⁴³ Michelle Healy, “Millennials Might Not be So Special After All, Study Finds”, *USA Today*, March 15, 2012 <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2012-03-15/Millennials-might-not-be-so-special-after-all-study-finds/53552744/1> (accessed 29 January, 2013).

⁴⁴ “*Department of Defense Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) Process, Army Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) Process, Executive Primer*”, <http://www.acqnotes.com/Attachments/Army%20PPBE%20Executive%20Primer.pdf> (accessed January 6, 2013).

⁴⁵ The author, COL Vermeesch, volunteered to participate in a VEILS validation program at the Army War College in early December 2012. Participants completed exercises as either a civilian senior executive servant, an Army colonel serving on the Department of the Army Staff, a brigadier general leading a Humanitarian Assistance Joint Task Force in Africa, or as a senior level command sergeant major.

⁴⁶ Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *The U.S. Army Concept for the Human Dimension*, 28.

⁴⁷ Sean T. Hannah and Patrick J. Sweeney, "Frameworks of Moral Development and the West Point Experience: Building Leaders of Character for the Army and the Nation," in *Forging the Warrior's Character, Moral Precepts from the Cadet Prayer*, Don M. Snider Project Director, and Lloyd J. Matthews Editor, (Sisters, Oregon: Jerico LLC, 2007), 127-159.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 156.

⁴⁹ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, ADRP 6-22, (Washington D.C: Department of the Army, August 1, 2012), 3-5-3-6.

⁵⁰ Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *The U.S. Army Concept for the Human Dimension*, 19.

⁵¹ Don M. Snider, "Once Again, the Challenge to the U.S. Army During a Defense Reduction: To Remain a Military Profession", 7.