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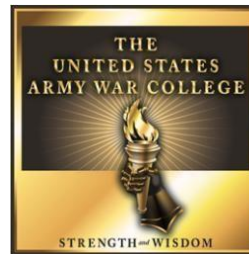
Millennials and the Army Profession

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Millennials and the Army Profession

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Abstract

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Millennials and the Army Profession

The Army conducted a year-long Army Profession Campaign in 2011 which is perhaps the most comprehensive study of the Army Profession ever conducted. The study consisted of surveys, focus groups, senior leader forums and red team analysis, all focused on how the Army might possibly shape the future of the profession.[1] The resulting findings and recommendations influenced Army Doctrine Publication 1: The Army (ADP 1) and the formulation of the essential characteristics of the Army profession presented in Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1 (ADRP 1).[2] Not included in the aforementioned publications and possibly the most influential factors shaping the future of the Army profession are the generational character and traits of the next generation of professionals. Today the Army has three distinct generations serving in its ranks. Using generational theory, this paper will explore the beliefs, values, attitudes, and characteristics that identify the millennial generation of professionals as compared to previous generations. It will examine generational theory, discuss its importance and outline characteristics of each generation currently serving. The paper will then focus on millennial characteristics as they align with the essential characteristics of the Army profession identified in ADRP 1. It will identify trust and stewardship of the profession, or more specifically civil-military relations as key areas of opportunity for the Army to leverage millennial strengths and improve the future of the Army as a profession. Finally, the paper will recommend changes to the Army culture related to the professional development of Millennials.

Generational Theory

Each generation's views on leadership and professionalism are affected by the attitudes, characteristics and beliefs of that generation. When generational shifts take

place in the workforce, attitudes of the individuals in the workplace change[3] and their approach to leadership and the profession changes as well. A generational shift is currently taking place in the Army as the Millennial Generation rises through the ranks.

Social Scientists William Strauss and Neil Howe have been at the forefront of generational theory for decades. They proposed that American society is subject to a cycle of generations that is about the length of a human life. During the cycle there exists a period of institutional growth and ideological conformity that alternates with a period of institutional decay and ideological divisiveness. Each new generation develops distinct attitudes and values under conditions inherited from its parental generation.[4] The cycle, according to Strauss and Howe, can be divided into four phases called turnings. Each turning gives way to a new generation with its distinctive persona shaped by the events and mood of the previous generation.[5] Strauss and Howe have labeled each of the four turnings that make up a generational cycle as the Prophet generation, the Nomad generation, the Hero generation and the Artist generation.   They identify American Generation cycles dating back to 1584. For example, the Colonial cycle spanned 1584 through 1700, the Revolutionary cycle 1701 to 1791 and so on. Each cycle is identified by four distinct turnings.[6]

The first turning or Prophet Generation begins in the aftermath of an epic struggle where society expands and prospers and children are raised in a secure, optimistic, and free environment. These children are encouraged to challenge social values and become obsessed with meaning and distrustful of authority. [7] The Baby Boomer Generation (1943-1960) is an example of a Prophet Generation. It also begins the latest cycle of American generations according to Strauss and Howe.

The second turning in the cycle begins with society undergoing a dramatic challenge to its basic values and institutions. The Nomad Generation consists of children who are left to themselves as the adults in their lives become preoccupied with self-discovery and new movements. They become tough and wild with a bad reputation and are blamed for the ensuing social chaos. The Generation-X Generation (1961-1981) represent the Nomad Generation in the Strauss and Howe model.

In the third turning, or Hero generation, children are raised in an environment of increased protection where the adults are concerned with developing a civic-minded and optimistic generation destined to lead America's next regime. The current generation of millennials (1982-2003) make up the Hero Generation in the Strauss and Howe model. The Millennial Generation has more than 81 million members, nearly as many as the Baby Boomer generation.[8] This turning in current American society is distinguished by a stronger focus on raising safe, well-educated children. Parents of this generation are characterized as "helicopter" or "lawn mower" parents. They metaphorically groom the life path of their children then hover above their life-world.[9]

The final or fourth turning is the Artist Generation that will follow the generation of Millennials. Strauss and Howe refer to this final generation in the model as the Homeland Generation. They are also called Generation Z.

Before discussing the different generations in the model and their role or influence in the Army today, it is important that we define what it means to be a generation. Ron Eyerman and Bryan S. Turner define generation as "a cohort of persons passing through time who come to share a common habitus, hexis and culture,

a function of which is to provide them with a collective memory that serves to integrate the cohort over a finite period of time."[10]

Strauss and Howe define generation as:

A society-wide peer group, born over a period roughly the same length as the passage from youth to adulthood (in today's America, around twenty or twenty-one years), who collectively possess a common persona. The length need not always be the same. A generation can be a bit longer or shorter, depending on its coming-of-age experience and the vagaries of history.[11]

Research shows that, when we are born, can impact our personality.[12] Research that scientifically links historical events to our personal lives is called life course sociology and has proven links to certain historical events affecting the personality of a generation. Using generational theory as a basis, let us now look more deeply at the events and characteristics that define each generation.

Baby Boomer Generation

The Baby Boomers are those born between 1943 and 1960. Their developing years were primarily during a time of economic prosperity.   They grew up in a more optimistic and positive time with the greatest economic expansion.[13] The increase in birth rate in the U.S. following World War II combined with improved medical care made this generation the largest in the current cycle of American generations. Organic, two-parent families were generally stable during this period of time. Boomers were raised in nuclear families where Dad worked and Mom stayed at home.[14] Children were doted over and cared for by family. Less than 1% of Baby Boomer children went to Day-Care. There was an emphasis on excellence in school where, as a result of the number of children competing with each other, students learned teamwork and collaboration. Boomers share core values of optimism, team orientation, work and personal

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gratification.   They became a generation characterized by self-indulgence.[15] Vietnam, the Civil-Rights movement and the assassinations of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy, shaped this generation.

Boomers in the workforce display their core generational characteristics of work and personal gratification. Their characteristics include relentless pursuit of goals and obsession with work, often at the expense of marriages, family, and personal lives.[16] Boomers in the workforce value a strong work ethic. They are uncomfortable with conflict and judgmental to those that see things differently than they do.[17] Boomers advocate a leadership style characterized by their consensus work value and ethic.[18] They believe in a participative style of leadership.

The members of the Baby Boomer generation cohort in the Army at this point consists of Division Level Commanders and above. The officers that have the greatest influence on the Strategic direction of the Army today are from this generation.

Generation X

The generation that followed the Baby Boomers became known as Generation X or Gen X. They are sometimes referred to as Gen Xers or just Xers. Dates vary with the research but Generation X begins in the early to mid-1960s and continues through the beginning of the Millennial Generation. For the purpose of this paper Gen X is identified as 1961-1981. Xers followed in the shadow of the Baby Boom generation and they make up the smallest of the three generational cohorts discussed. In contrast to how the Baby Boom generation was raised, Generation X did not grow up in nurturing homes.   As the Baby Boom generation relentlessly pursued career over family, their children were often neglected or overlooked. Known as latch key kids, Xers would spend more time either in the care of others or alone at home watching TV. Generation

X is also known as the MTV generation. As Baby Boomer parents tended to prioritize career, personal success and gratification over family, the divorce rates climbed. Over 40 percent of Generation X spent time in a single parent home by age 16.[19] Xers are characterized as cynical, skeptical of authority, and survivors. They view the world much differently than the previous generation. Xers would seek out a circle of friends to find the relationships and bonds normally found in a family.[20] The events that shaped Generation X include the Watergate Scandal, Energy Crisis, Tandy and Apple personal computers, the Iran Hostage Crisis, the Cold War, the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Operation Desert Storm.[21]

Xer's approach to work in general is characterized by adaptability, independence, creativity and lack of intimidation by authority.[22] These are all characteristics of their upbringing in a "take care of yourself" environment. They desire a better balance between their work and family lives than they observed growing up. The other side of their independence and self-confidence is that Generation X is viewed as being impatient, having poorer people skills than previous generations and working from a place of cynicism.[23] The latter characteristics cause this generation to have the reputation of being poor leaders.

Generation X in the military today includes current Battalion and Brigade level commanders. Notable about Generation X is that they were developed in a military led by Baby Boomers. That experience included leaders, consistent with the Boomer generation, that were more married to the profession and displayed a lack of work/life balance. As Generation X passed through stronger economic times in the 1990s many pursued civilian opportunities that provided a better balance than they were finding in

the military. This was viewed by some as a decline in Generation X's sense of duty from previous generations.

The Millennial Generation

The next generation and focus of this paper is the third turning in the Howe and Strauss model, the Hero generation known popularly as Millennials. Again, researcher's dates vary by a few years but most agree that this generation includes those born from 1982 to 2003. They are the most recent generation to come of age and fill the ranks of the military.

The Millennial Generation has probably been the most studied generation in their youth and childhood.[24] To summarize the character and motivation of this generation some researchers say that Millennials are the next great generation. They embody some of the best traits of each of the previous generations through this cycle of turnings. Howe and Strauss identify seven core traits of Millennials: socially special, sheltered, confident, team oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving.[25] Other traits and characteristics that researchers have attributed to Millennials can easily be aligned with these core traits.

<u>Socially Special</u>

Millennials are trusting of the institutions and adults that have made them feel special. This is where they draw their optimism. They feel they will be able to accomplish good ends as their generation fills institutions and government. Other characteristics common to this core trait include progressive, tolerant, transparent, diversity conscious, unique, race blind, gender neutral and global. Six in ten Millennials say they think of their generation as unique and distinct.[26] Research also indicates that

the Millennial Generation is more comfortable with diversity and more moderate regarding social issues such as gay marriage and women in combat roles.

Sheltered:

Millennials are products of a child friendly environment. "From the surge in child-safety rules and devices to the post-Columbine lockdown of public schools, Millennials are the focus of the most sweeping youth-protection movement in American history"[27] This generation is more supportive of rules because of the protection they receive. They are also supportive of punishment for violating the rules. Also consistent with this trait, because their parents are typically older and more educated, researchers found Millennials more trustful of authority than previous generations. They have much less conflict with their parents. Only one-in-ten parents with millennial children say they "often" have major disagreements with their children compared to nearly twice as many Gen Xers who responded to the same question.[28] Millennials are family oriented and because of their connection to parents and family, they typically attend colleges close to home.[29]

Feeling Confident:

Millennials possess high levels of trust and optimism - a connection to parents and the future - equate good news for themselves with good news for the country.[30] Some researchers argue that millennial confidence is a product of being "Trophy Kids" in an environment where everyone gets a trophy. They also argue that millennial confidence is partly a result of grade inflation with more children getting A's. Some say that millennial confidence is fragile, meaning once they do not get the trophy or the A grade that their confidence is shaken. Millennials bring a strong sense of self, they have been included in family decisions and the negotiation of their home lives and

expect to contribute from the start.[31] Other characteristics that relate to millennial

confidence include politeness, independence, high self-esteem and being successful.

Millennials have beliefs in collective action, optimism about the future, and trust in a

centralized authority.[32]

Conventional*:*

Millennials live by the rules; they believe that it can make life easier. They have

a desire for order and want to find order in the many views expressed. They have been

characterized as Neo-traditionalist, by reviving traditional elements in combination with

new ways. Millennials are a product of younger Boomers that have become generally

more conservative as adults. They are also the children of Generation Xers who were

more conservative than Boomers to begin with as a generation.[33] Millennials grew up in

smaller families during a period following long economic prosperity that later became an

economic downturn and recession.[34] They are a mixture of conservative and liberal,

and not afraid to spend money. Millennials are also self-policing, are not risk takers,

and are less violent. They are community active and politically active on their own

terms. One researcher, when referring to Millennials and community activity or service,

compared them to someone who will go bowling but will not commit to bowling in a

league. They prefer to serve on their own conditions.

Pressured:

Although Millennials are considered "Trophy Kids", they were also raised with a

pressure to succeed. They were pushed to study hard, get good grades, get into great

schools and pursue profitable careers. The new youth assumption that long-term

success demands near-term organization and achievement sometimes overwhelms

Millennials[35]. Pressure has caused the Millennials to be busier than previous

generations in general. Due to the pressure to succeed, millennial kids have less and less free time. Since the mid-1980s, unstructured activity has been the most rapidly declining use of time among school age kids.[36] However, Millennials also seem to have the capacity to handle pressure believing that all the careful energy will someday be rewarded.[37] They are also identified as a generation that requires immediate feedback for their contributions.

Achieving:

Based on standardized test results, this generation is the smartest. They are pragmatic and tend to choose technology, economics and social sciences over the arts and humanities. They are the smartest, yet, not most creative generation.[38] Associated with this core trait are the other traits of being goal-oriented, outcomes based learners and high achieving. Millennials also possess the Gen X trait of seeking a good work life balance. Their drive to achieve should not be compared to the Baby Boomer drive that took priority over family. More than older generations, over 52% of Millennials say that the most important thing to them is family and being a good parent.[39]

Team Oriented:

"Millennials are developing strong team instincts and tight peer bonds"[40] Peer bonds can be either real or virtual, they are comfortable in both. In school, they worked more often in groups, presented work, and were graded in groups. They have also graded each other's work in groups, with an aim to assist but not criticize.[41] Also related to being team oriented are the millennial traits of cooperation and inclusion. They embody the teamwork of the Baby Boomers and improve upon the technology literacy of Generation X.

The Millennial generation is more connected and maintains larger social circles than any of the previous generations. The team oriented character and collaborative nature of this generation coupled with advances in technology have created a digital social network menu of options to satisfy their appetite to connect. A 2010 Pew Research Study surveyed Millennials ages 18-29 and claimed that Millennials view their use of modern technology as their most distinguishing characteristic from previous generations.[42] Internet and cell phone usage have increased dramatically in the U.S. during the last twenty years and research shows Millennials at the head of that increase. Millennials have never known a life without a computer, they can take in 20 hours' worth of information in seven hours.[43] The use of social network sites is the area where Millennials truly outpace previous generations. Over 75% of Millennials surveyed have social network profiles. Only 38% of Gen Xers surveyed in 2008 had established profiles.[44] Millennials embraced and developed their use of technology as a means for social connection much earlier in their lives which has amplified their teamwork trait and enabled their desire for connectedness and collaboration. Generation X and the Baby Boomers have, over time, increased their usage of social network sites but took much longer and fall well short.   Millennials are not just using the technology they are transforming it into a group activity. Millennials power up their instant messaging social network sites or apps as soon as they touch their devices and have become the most 24/7 peer-to-peer connected generation in human history.[45] Millennials collaboration trait and use of technology from an early age clearly makes their generation unique.[46]

During the previous generation, a typical Gen Xer would graduate high school with a peer group of friends. Then, following high school he or she would develop a

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new peer group in college or elsewhere keeping in touch with only the closest friends from the previous peer group through costly phone calls or time consuming letters. As time went on, contact and close communication with many friends were lost. A typical Millennial on the other hand, maintains contact with hundreds of friends and social contacts consistently and nearly immediately through social media networks that can span many locations and phases of life. For example, the typical American family moves every five years[47], it is not uncommon for a Millennial to have two to three school peer groups, a college peer group and work peer group in addition to family and other miscellaneous social contacts. Unlike the Gen Xer in the previous example, the Millennial does not lose contact with many people from his or her past as easily. The social circle that the Millennial maintains is much larger and more closely connected than that of previous generations. The typical Millennial has an average of 696 Facebook friends consisting of both personal and professional contacts.[48] Instagram, Twitter and others are included on the menu of social media options with similar numbers of contacts or followers. Imagine the difficulty that younger Boomers or Gen Xers would have had maintaining contact with as many friends or contacts via traditional means. Millennials are able to establish strong social circles at an early age and leverage technology to maintain those relationships later into adulthood.

In summary, there are many characteristics that clearly define Millennials as a unique generation, most notably their diversity, collaborative nature, and tendency toward teamwork. These all contribute to this generation being more connected to the society around them than other generations.

Now let's discuss a profession where collaboration and connectedness with society is a professional imperative. The U.S. Army has placed considerable emphasis on sustaining and improving its professional relationship, connection and trust with its civilian masters and the society that it serves.

The Army Profession

The United States Army senior leadership conducted a study during its 2011 Army Profession Campaign that surveyed members regarding what it means to be a profession or a professional.[49] The study revealed a variety of answers that displayed a lack of common understanding regarding the terms. As a result, the Army developed Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1 (ADRP 1). The publication was developed to inculcate a doctrinal understanding and commitment to the Army Profession.[50]

Like other professions, the Army profession provides a service or capability to the American people that they cannot otherwise provide for themselves. ADRP 1 defines the Army Profession as - a unique vocation of experts certified in the design, generation, support and ethical application of landpower, serving under civilian authority and entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people.[51] It goes on to define the Army Professional as – a member of the Army Profession who meets the Army's certification criteria of competence, character, and commitment.[52] Through training, experience, and certification, Army professionals are charged with fighting and winning the Nation's wars. Army professionals must be prepared to apply lethal force in combat operations, accepting unlimited personal liability for their own lives and potentially for those under their command. Also in line with other professions, the Army is a self-regulating organization subject to the Army Ethic. The Army Ethic is the set of laws, values, and beliefs, deeply embedded within

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the core of the Army culture and practiced by all members of the Army Profession to motivate and guide the appropriate conduct of individual members bound together in common moral purpose.[53]

Army leadership has made a distinct effort through the study and development of ADRP 1, to help Army professionals understand what it means to be a successful part of the Army profession. Using generational theory, a closer examination of generational characteristics within the ranks of Army leaders reveals characteristics of Millennials that set them apart from Generation X or Baby Boomers. With respect to certain characteristics, Millennials are distinctly postured to face the challenges of the future of the Army profession.

ADRP 1 lists five essential characteristics of the Army Profession – trust, military expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps, and stewardship. The publication describes them as moral and motivational rally points around which we organize our understanding.[54] This paper focuses on trust and stewardship in comparison with the Millennial Generation characteristics. Trust is the most important and fundamental of the five characteristics of Army professionals. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Raymond T. Odierno, charged the Army to "foster continued commitment to the Army Profession, a noble and selfless calling founded on the bedrock of trust."[55]   ADRP 1 refers to trust as the bedrock of our profession because the trust that the American people place in the Army as a profession is the source of its moral obligation. As professionals, Army leaders must hold that moral obligation in the highest regard to safeguard the sacred trust of the American people.

General Dempsey describes trust from two lenses, internal and external. Internal trust is the trust among peers and the trust between seniors and subordinates. External trust is how we connect with those that we serve including our civilian leadership, our government, and the American people.[56]

The Army has participated in over a decade of war in which Millennials began as platoon leaders and have progressed to positions as high as brigade level operations and executive officers. Millennial battle captains, company commanders and many primary staff officers that have been responsible for combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have been earning the trust and confidence of their leaders, subordinates and peers for over a decade. They have brought to bear the generational character traits of cooperation, teamwork, collaboration and confidence that have gained them the trust of those with whom they serve. They display greater confidence than Gen Xers did as younger officers. Their confident, collaborative nature enables them to communicate two and three levels of command higher with ease. They also possess a desire for immediate feedback based on their contributions. In the deployed environment it was not uncommon to see a millennial battle captain at the brigade level operate with complete confidence during real events such as, "troops in contact" or "downed aircraft recovery," competently developing the situation while communicating and coordinating across organizations and with people two to three ranks higher. Now that millennial majors are leading staff sections at the Brigade level, it is common to see these sections function more as a team than ever before due to the teamwork and collaboration displayed by their generation.

Millennials are starting their professional lives earning trust in combat operations and elsewhere with immense responsibility that previous generations did not have at such early times in their career. Placing this trust in Millennials will benefit the Army as they progress to higher levels of leadership. The trust placed in Millennials coupled with their other distinguishable generational character traits suit them to be good stewards of the Army profession. The challenge to the Army will be to leverage that suitability in a manner that best benefits the profession in the future.   Millennials will need the opportunity to exercise their generational strengths. Millennials are the smartest generation and eager to achieve. If the Army could change its hierarchical culture and allow Millennials to collaborate in new and innovative ways, respectfully operating across traditional rank barriers, then it would realize their true potential.

The second lens that General Dempsey used to describe trust is the external lens. The external lens includes the trust the Army maintains with its civilian leadership including its two masters, Congress and the Executive Branch as well as with the society that it serves. ADRP 1 includes this lens of trust in its discussion of Stewardship of the profession. Stewardship is the responsibility of Army professionals to ensure the profession maintains its five essential characteristics now and into the future.[57] Senior Army leaders in particular have a direct stewardship responsibility through their engagement in the Army's civil-military relations.[58]

Millennials and Civil-Military Relations

Civilian control of the military is embedded in our constitution. The American people, through their elected and appointed officials, exercise control. Effective civil-military relations depends on a high level of mutual respect and trust between civilian and military leaders as well as among those they serve.

Many scholars have written about the gap or perceived gap in civil-military relations over the years. Discussions of civil-military relations all seem to begin with a reference to Samuel Huntington's 1957 work "The Soldier and the State." In his work, Huntington highlights the delicate balance between military and civilian culture and society in the aftermath of World War II.[59] He also highlighted that the military tends to diverge from civilian society by growing more conservative. Many political and social scientists have supported Huntington's assessment although many diverge when discussing the solution to a potential or perceived civil-military gap.

More recent research indicates that since the end of World War II there have been four waves of civil-military relations. The first wave extended from the end of the war to the advent of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973. This wave included a mostly conscript force through the Korea and Vietnam wars. During this wave, American attitude toward the military was initially supportive then turned to ambivalence. The second wave was affected by the negative experience during the Vietnam War and lasted roughly until the end of the Cold War. The prevailing American attitude was highly ambivalent with a shift toward indifference. The third wave lasted through the attacks of 9/11 where the public attitude can be characterized as indifferent with a move toward supportive. Scholars argue that the attacks of 9/11 have ushered in a fourth wave of civil-military relations where the public attitude can be described as esteemed and compassionate.[60] Millennials enter the military during this fourth wave with the most advantageous set of generational characteristics of any generation. This presents the Army with a tremendous opportunity with respect to furthering the stewardship of the profession via improved civ-mil relations.

As mentioned when discussing the millennial characteristics regarding trust, the Millennials are well suited to advance a strong civil-military bond with the civilians of their generation. Some argue that the civil-military gap among the Millennial Generation will continue to converge.

Civilian Millennials, of the previously mentioned fourth wave, are comfortable with today's military. The Millennial Generation is characterized as being unstructured, while the military culture is more structured. At first glance this would indicate a potential gap, however, Millennials seem to recognize this important difference and surveys show they are comfortable with it.[61] They are comfortable with distinct cultures and like Huntington seem to be comfortable with the military being more conservative than society. Studies have indicated though, that the military may not be as conservative as many think it is. A study of West Point cadets indicates that they feel culturally identified with being conservative when in fact many of their views are moderate. Despite a cultural difference or perceived gap, the truth is that civilian Millennials are agreeable with the military having a more conservative culture and see no reason for it to change. It is sort of a, "live-and-let-live" mentality with their understanding and acceptance of the military culture.[62]

It can be argued that Millennials that self-select for the military are more homogenous with those of other generations that also self-selected than they are with their own generation. While this may be true to a certain point, there are distinct generational characteristics among Millennials in the Army that set them apart and position them for opportunity with respect to the future of the Army Profession and specifically civil-military relations. Millennials will be more effective at maintaining

positive civil military relations because of their collaborative, interconnected nature. Their social circles are larger and their ability to maintain relationships through social media are unmatched. The strong identifying characteristics they hold in common with the generation they serve and their ability to sustain strong relationships and peer groups will empower them for success as senior leaders and stewards of the profession. Additionally, as senior leaders, the Millennial Generation will be better suited to lead their succeeding generation than previous cohorts have been. The Homeland Generation or Generation Z that will follow them are also known as digital natives. They are anticipated to be even more connected and digitally collaborative than the Millennials. The Army has an opportunity now to establish in the Millennial Generation a cohort of leaders with the ability to connect, collaborate and lead the following generation more effectively. The Army must leverage this opportunity to embed mechanisms in the profession that will continue to close the civ-mil gap and place Army leaders in a better position of success in the future inter-agency and multinational environment.

Recommendations

I recommend that the Army develop an environment of collaboration uninhibited by tradition hierarchical methods currently used in the Army; and leverage the millennial connectedness to improve future civilian-military relations. The internal trust that Millennials have earned through the last decade of war must continue to be developed as Millennials move into Battalion and Brigade level command positions in the coming years. The external trust and Millennial connection with society presents an opportunity for the Army to have improved civ-mil relationships and improve whole of government effectiveness in the future. Research indicates that in these two areas, collaboration

and civ-mil relations, that Millennials are better suited to succeed as senior leaders than previous generations.

In order to build stronger internal trust the Army must change the way it communicates among its leadership. Millennials appreciate mentorship and expect their contribution to be valued and heard by higher levels of command, even two to three levels higher. Millennials are comfortable communicating with higher levels of authority and accustomed to feeling valued. They have confidence that is often mistaken for arrogance. They operate best in an open collaborative environment but the military has historically been very hierarchical in planning, meeting and briefing. Millennials can thrive in a more collaborative communication structure than what currently exists in the Army. The Army must change how it communicates and become more collaborative. It must include more two-way communication that crosses traditional rank and hierarchy barriers, leveraging the increased opportunity to meet and collaborate digitally. The Army must make a greater effort to connect leaders across the continuum and provide younger officers the mechanism to participate and communicate ideas. A more collaborative, two-way structure could result in increased innovation and better communication throughout various levels of command. Changing the Army's hierarchical way of doing business to more collaborative methods will offer younger leaders more opportunity to contribute the best their generation can provide.

Regarding external trust, the Army must leverage the millennial potential for improved civil-military relations. The interconnected nature of the Millennials and the large and diverse social networks they maintain suit them well to enjoy a better connection with the society they serve. This potential must be cultivated as Millennials

progress onto higher levels of leadership and into strategic level positions. The benefit

to the Army of an increased level of trust and connection with inter-agency and civilian

partners as well as the American people will be considerable. To strengthen this

potentially improved civil-military environment, a community outreach culture should be

developed in the Army. A number of mechanisms can be used to embed this change in

culture. For example, following the model of the U.S. Army War College, a community

speaking engagement should be required for graduation from other PME courses such

as the Captains Career Course and Intermediate Level Education courses. Pre-

Command Courses also provide an opportunity for future commanders to reach out to

civilian organizations. Millennials should be formally provided opportunities and the

expectation to cultivate the civil-military trust and tell the Army Story. The Army could

also embed a culture where leaders can include comments on evaluations that reflect a

subordinate's efforts to foster a closer relationship with the civilian community. Also,

officer and NCO professional development should include incentives for younger

leaders to connect with civilian partners to maintain a closer relationship. The Army

must continue to find ways to better exercise the advantage that the Millennial

Generation possesses of being better connected with civilian society.

Finally, millennial officers should be afforded the opportunity, earlier in their

careers, even if only short duration, to serve in broadening assignments that expose

them to civilian partners both governmental and non-governmental. A millennial officer

has the capacity in these types of assignments to establish, then maintain, long term

relationships and experience with civilian partners that will benefit the Army later in the

officer's career as he or she serves in a Joint Interagency Intergovernmental

Multinational (JIIM) environment. The uncertain international environment of today will require the Army to participate even more in the JIIM environment. Leaders will be required to connect across the whole of government and Millennials are postured and have the required characteristics as a generation to be successful in this environment.

Conclusion

Many researchers describe the Millennial Generation as portraying the best traits of previous generations. With few exceptions maybe the best recommendation is for leaders to let the generation take its natural course of collaboration. Leaders should allow millennial strengths to play out in the future of the Army profession. The Army must continue to provide mechanisms to develop an environment conducive to the Millennials including allowing for more collaboration and communication at all levels, developing and cultivating an environment of strong civil-military bonds. One thing is clear, the future of the Army Profession is in good hands with the Millennial Generation.

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