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AMERICAN SOCIETY VS U.S. ARMY VALUES: DIRECTION OF SOCIETY'S VALUES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ARMY

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ABSTRACT

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This paper examines the values of youth in today's American society, how they compare with Army values, and implications for the 21st century Army. Several sources across the spectrum are examined to ensure accuracy of the composite value system of today's youth.

First, the values of today's youth are established. This is done in two stages. Initially, the five major influencers of youth's values are examined with their impact. Then, current youth conduct and attitudes are explored in the areas of priorities, violence, lying and cheating, substance use, sex and bearing children, health and education. Second, these values are contrasted with Army values. Finally, implications and courses of action are explored.

The Army of the 21st century must maintain high quality standards for accessions. Educational achievements are slowly improving as science and math scores improve and dropout rates decrease. But, as this paper shows, the values of youth are in serious trouble. Insurmountable evidence shows a deterioration of values, a growing hole in the moral ozone. Possible initiatives and courses of action for the Army are provided.

Introduction

Increasing concern exists over the values and morals of our society. Many believe we are facing deep moral trouble, which is creating a growing hole in our moral ozone. Articles abound in newspapers, magazines, and periodicals on the state of values in our country. There are many themes. Often cited are the breakdown of the family, deterioration of civility in everyday life, rampant greed, increased sexual activity at ever earlier ages, rise of sexual abuse, rise of violence, rise of substance abuse, rise of teenage suicide, a decline in the influence of religion, and an increase in cheating at schools. A large proportion of society believes many problems facing the country primarily have to do with values. Some go so far as to say the problem is severe, a moral crisis.

This presents a concern for Army leadership. Army accessions reflect American society. Despite projected drawdowns to an active force of 475,000 and reserve force of 575,000, a combined total of approximately 200,000 accessions will be needed annually to maintain force requirements. The Army has a value set as identified in Field Manual 100-1, *The Army*. If values of the accessioning population are diverging further from the Army's values, implications for the 21st century Army must be addressed. If true, differences, implications, and possible courses of action or policies must be determined.

This paper will identify the value system of America's potential accession population, both officer and enlisted. Various terms are used to discuss character such as values, ethics, standards of conduct, virtues, principles of right and wrong, and morals. The word "values" will be the key used throughout this paper. Its definition is the core beliefs or desires which guide or motivate attitudes and actions. It describes the things we value and prize the most, providing a basis for ranking one value over another. Army accessions include both enlisted and officers. Therefore, research looks at studies made of various groups—teenagers, high school students, and college students.

This paper will address and answer the following issues and questions. What are the primary influencers of today's youth? How are these influencers shaping the value system of youth? What are the current values of youth in the context of priorities, violence, lying and cheating, substance use, sex and bearing children, health, and education? How do the values of youth today compare with Army values? Are they different? Is the gap narrowing or widening? What are the implications? What possible courses of action can be taken to alleviate or mitigate any conflict? What are the options?

Influencers

How do youth learn their values? Two separate studies identified the same five sources as having the greatest influence on youth. In April 1990, a survey was done on teenagers ages 13-17.[1] They were asked what were the greatest influencers on their values. The five, in order of importance, were friends or peers, home or family, school, media, and religion. A similar poll was taken in 1992 of teens aged 13-18.[2] In this survey, teenagers were asked where they learn most of their values. Answers showed the same five influencers, although in this survey family was rated highest instead of peers. To understand the youth value system it is essential to examine the state of the five major influencers. Are they changing? How much impact do they have on youth values? What kind of morals are youth learning from these sources? Are they improving in their ability to provide a good and solid value system or is their influence waning?

Family

Parents have probably the greatest impact on youth value systems. Healthy families increase the chance of well-adjusted children. Strong family relationships are a potent force in aiding youth meet the stress of contemporary life. Because children are moral sponges, good role modeling is critical. Research shows that adolescents develop best when they have a supportive family life characterized by warmth and mutual respect, by the earnest and sustained interest of parents in their lives, by parental responsiveness to changing social capacities, by articulation of clear standards, by communication of high expectations, and by democratic ways of dealing with conflict.[3]

Despite all these known facts, the reality of present day family impact on youth morals is discouraging. The American family is no longer characterized by the traditional two parents with positive parent-child bonds. There are increasing numbers of single-parent households. Statistical data show that the percentage of single-parent families has increased from 9.1 percent in 1960 to 28.6 percent in 1991.[4] Increasing numbers of adolescents are not living with two parents. This percentage has dropped from 85.2 percent in 1970 to 72.5 percent in 1990.[5] Even though adolescents may be living with two parents, the drop is even more significant when considering biological parents. The percentage of children living with both biological parents has dropped from 78 percent in 1960 to only 57 percent in 1990.[6] For black children it was 26.9 percent in 1988.[7] Various estimates show that over 50 percent of all children born in the 1980s will live with only one parent for at least some period before reaching age 18. This percentage is continuing to rise for children born in the 1990s. Over the last three decades, the divorce rate has doubled.[8] Approximately one half of marriages continue to end in divorce. More children are being born out of wedlock. Of all children, 5 percent were born out of wedlock in 1960, 23 percent in 1986 and it is expected to be near 29 percent by the year 2000.[9]

What are the effects of the changing family on the values of today's youth? Unfortunately, for the most part, the effects are negative rather than positive. The single greatest result of family structure changes is an increasing number of youths

who live with only one parent. Parenting is, by all standards, a difficult task even for the experienced. Two parents working together is often stressful and taxing. For a single parent, rearing children is even more difficult. Children from divorced families are more likely to engage in deviant behavior.[10] Divorce usually requires a mother's participation in the labor force and, therefore, decreased time spent with children. Adolescents living with single mothers are more susceptible to peer pressure than those with intact families.[11] Evidence shows divorced mothers have lower academic expectations for their children.[12] The effect on educational performance is significant. A study of children aged 5-17 showed 12 percent of children living with both biological parents had to repeat a grade. For children from a family with only a formerly married mother or with a stepfather, the rate was 22 percent. But for children from families with a never-married mother and no father, 30 percent had to repeat a grade.[13] Children born to teenage mothers face even more risks. A study done in Baltimore showed a high incidence of school failures, substance abuse, running away, delinquency, anxiety, depression, and early parenthood among children of teenage mothers.[14] The risk of school failure or delinquency is two to three times higher than average. Finally, children growing up in single-parent families are more likely to have children earlier in life, to marry younger, and to divorce.[15]

Disintegration of the traditional family is causing a disturbing trend in youth values. Children have a fundamental need for close supportive relationships in a family setting. But statistics reveal that less and less children are having the need fulfilled within the family. Since parents have the greatest influence on youth morals, the result is a disintegration of values.

Friends or Peers

Friends have a critical influence on the values of youth. To the eyes of the adult generation, youth have a herding instinct. They often travel in packs from home to school, to shopping malls, to movies, and to athletic events. Paradoxically, to prove their individuality, they often dress, talk, and even walk alike. This underscores the importance and major impact peers have on teenage behavior and development of morals.

What is the extent of peer influence? It appears to go beyond just traveling in a pack or dressing alike. Peers influence educational aspirations and use of drugs such as alcohol, marijuana, and other illicit drugs.[16] Youth spend more time with peers than with their parents. This occurs as many peer groups are anchored at school. Influence can be both negative and positive. Therefore, though peers can influence use of drugs, they can, on the positive side, result in positive self-esteem and a good understanding of others' feelings.[17] Youth who have satisfying friendships have a better chance of viewing themselves positively and behaving in ways that reflect good social skills. Furthermore, influence is reciprocal. Youth are influenced by their friends and in turn influence their friends.

Efforts have been made to measure peer group influence on adolescents. Four findings are cited by Bredford Brown.[18] First, all teenagers do not respond to peer influence uniformly. The younger the teenager, the more susceptible he or she is to being influenced. Girls are more susceptible than boys. Those who have confidence in social skills are less susceptible. Second, youth vary in how they

perceive peer pressure. They vary greatest in areas such as misconduct and involvement with school or family. Other significant factors are age, peer group affiliation, and location of residence. Interestingly, the pressure to finish high school is the single strongest peer influence.[19] Third, peer pressure does not necessarily result in a specific standard of conduct. Often a value or behavior affects who is chosen as a friend or group of friends. In these cases the behavior is not initiated due to peer pressure. The teenager already held the value. Fourth, peer influence does not operate in a vacuum. Other experiences and forces operate which impact how susceptible a teenager is to peer influence. For example, family structure can have a major influence on susceptibility. Teenagers with highly supportive parents are less susceptible to peer influences. Also, if a teenager has many friends, the influence of any one friend is less.

Peer influence has always existed. Being part of a peer group and having friends is a natural event for youth. Peer pressure and peer influence is important in forming a moral code. Values learned will normally be determined by what set of friends a teenager chooses. The effect can be negative or positive. Parents who are highly supportive and who monitor the peer group of their children can increase the chances for the positive.

Schools

Historically, schools have played a major role in character education and the teaching of values. In the early years of America, character education was taught through discipline, teacher's example and the school curriculum. The Bible was the public school's source for moral instruction. The 20th century has seen a crumbling of moral teaching in schools. This has included the introduction of Darwinism, positivism, personalism, and pluralism.[20] Darwinism led to seeing morality as being in flux. Positivism advocated morality as relative and private, a personal value judgment. Personalism emphasized individual rights and freedom over responsibility. Finally, pluralism raised the question of whose values should be taught. As a result, public schools have retreated from their role as value educators.

Overall, how are schools doing? Data from 1993 show that of the American population 25 years and older, 80 percent have completed high school.[21] As a whole, the dropout rate is declining. It has dropped from 15.7 percent in 1973 to 12.7 percent in 1992 and continues to drop.[22] However, there are some problem areas. The rate remains high for American Indians at 25.4 percent.[23] Certain geographical regions have unique problems. As an example, in the 1992-93 school year the dropout rate in grades 6-9 for Hispanics in the Los Angeles Unified School District was over 60 percent.[24] When youth were asked to rate the overall quality of teaching in their schools, in 1979, 68 percent gave schools an A or B.[25] The percent increased to 76 percent in 1992. On the negative side, the average proficiency in math and science was only slightly higher in 1992 than in 1970.[26] The pace is not keeping up with the higher level of skills needed in a global economy. Furthermore, in 1994, only 28 percent of eighth graders scored at or above the proficiency level in reading.[27]

How are schools doing in teaching values? There is strong evidence that schools and teachers on both the K-12 and college levels reinforce negative

attitudes about honesty.[28] A large part can be attributed to pressure on teachers and school administrators to raise standardized test scores. The result is cheating. Most students get away with cheating. Most teachers are unwilling to take aggressive actions to stop cheating. A Josephine Institute report published in 1990 suggested one of the major factors for the decline in youth values was "the failure of schools to establish high ethical and work standards, enforce discipline or prevent cheating, and teachers who are more committed to 'playing it safe' than to confronting behavior problems."[29]

What is occurring to correct the problem? There are several signs that character and value education is returning to the American education system. In 1994, eight National Education Goals were enacted into law. Goals include the following to be accomplished by the year 2000:

> All children in America will start school ready to learn.....Every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy.....Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.[30]

In July 1992, 30 educational leaders met under the auspices of the Josephine Institute of Ethics. The purpose was to agree on core values that would form the foundation of character education. The result was six core values: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, justice and fairness, caring, and civic virtue and citizenship.[31] It was felt these transcended cultural, religious, and socio-economic differences, and as a result, could be used for effective character education in schools. Schools are realizing that they must do more than merely educate. They must address the social and economic ills of our society and return to core value education.

Media

The mass media—television, radio, newspapers and magazines, records and tapes, films, and video—play formative roles in the value systems of youth. Youth learn from the media, portray attitudes common in media messages, and behave in ways which reflect media content. Media shape attitudes about acceptable behavior, perceptions about society, and expectations of the future.

Which mass media has the most effect? Television is thought to have the greatest effect. Youth spend a large amount of time watching television. Average viewing per week is 22 hours, though for some it can be as high as 60 hours.[32] Young adolescents usually spend the most hours watching television. As they grow older, other media such as radio, records and tapes, and music videos become more important. Movie attendance also increases. One source reports that a

typical teen is likely to see over one hundred films per year either via television, movie theater, or movie rentals.[33] For older teens, magazine, newspaper, and book reading increases as television viewing decreases. On average, adolescents spend approximately eight hours per day with some form of mass media.[34]

Since mass media has a profound effect on youth values, what morals are being learned? Some would advocate that television has many positive messages. Popular programs such as "Home Improvement", "Roseanne," "Family Matters," "Step by Step," and "Married with Children" are all heterosexual, monogamous couples living in a nuclear family. Despite family squabbles, there is an underlying theme of family love. James Potter reported on a study of middle and high school students who were asked to identify the primary themes portrayed in television programs. The three top lessons or themes identified by the youth were, "Truth always wins out; honesty is the best policy, good wins over evil, and hard work yields rewards."[35]

However, there is far greater evidence that in fact media, especially television, has a negative effect on youth morals. A Josephine Institute report on the decline of youth ethics suggests, "The media is spending too much time emphasizing the negative or engaging in 'gotcha' journalism concerned more with the scoop than the truth."[36] Violence on television has an unmistakable effect on the aggressiveness of youth behavior. Higher aggressiveness is correlated with a higher content of violence on television shows viewed. One study reported that watching crimes and violence also leads to developing an image of a mean world in which people cannot be trusted.[37] There are other effects. There is a high correlation between large numbers of hours in front of the television and obesity. Messages about thinness equating to popularity and beauty contribute to eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia. Heavy television viewing often leads to lower achievement on reading tests. Fortunately, there is a recent move to regulate television in order to improve programs and, as a result, make it a positive influence on youth. In an industry where money is a higher priority than values, this may be a formidable task.

Religion

Peers, family, school, and mass media are rated ahead of religion as factors youth believe influence their values. Religious influence is declining. In a study done by Gallup, only 13 percent of teens interviewed felt that religion has a great deal of influence.[38] There appears to be growing doubts over whether religion can really solve society's problems and address issues and concerns youth face.

Yet private faith of teens remains relatively strong. Gallup also found the following realities in their survey of American youth:

> Nearly all believe in God or a universal spirit. The great majority hold a belief in a personal God. The majority pray and read the Bible when they are alone and no one is observing them. Teens give high marks to youth groups, religious instruction, and youth ministers. The spirit of voluntarism and charity is alive and well. Although many stop attending church at the period of life after high school, most do not lose their faith. Most young people reject the notion that religion is not relevant in the modern world.[39]

Furthermore, to most teens, religion is still relevant. They believe religion can deal with issues such as problems with drugs and alcohol, sexual issues, problems of marriage and divorce, morality in government, and world problems such as war. Eighty percent state their religious beliefs are important.[40] Finally, 75 percent state they try to follow the teachings of their religion.[41] Though the influence of religion may be on the decline, it still remains a potent force in the formulation of youth values.

Attitudes and Behavior

The five major value influencers have been addressed. They mold the moral systems of American youth. Their influence will continue. As noted, the direction each of the influencers is going is not a rosy picture. What are the results of these influencers on youth? Next, youth values will be examined in the context of their attitudes and behavior in various areas: priorities, violence, lying and cheating, substance use, sex and bearing children, health, and education. In each case trends will be noted. Unless there are major changes in the five influencers, these trends can be expected to continue.

Priorities

What are the priorities of youth? As is true in society, a large proportion of youth regularly engage in fundamentally dishonest behavior. Yet the problem does not appear to be because youth consider honesty and integrity unimportant. Nor is it that young people do not understand the difference between right and wrong. What seems to be the problem is that youth often do not have the character or will to do what they think and know is right and honest. Often youth make the choice to sacrifice ethical values to accomplish other goals they feel have a higher priority.

What are young people saying? The Josephine Institute conducted an extensive survey of high school and college students in order to reveal their priorities. The top six values, in priority order, with percentage listing the value as "essential" are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Top Value Priorities for High School and College Students[42]

High School Student Top Priorities

1. Getting a job you enjoy	77%
2. Getting into college	73%
3. Getting a well-paid job	66%
4. Having trusting personal relationships	66%
5. Being respected for your integrity	55%
6. Being honest and trustworthy	54%

College Student Top Priorities

1. Getting a job you enjoy	78%
2. Imparting firm ethical values to your children	71%
3. Having trusting personal relationships	67%
4. Being honest and trustworthy	63%
5. Being respected for your integrity	58%
6. Being kind and caring	52%

While getting a job they enjoy ranks as top priority for both high school and college students, integrity and honesty ranked low for high school students and college students alike. In a similar study done by Gallup, following a moral code also ranked low on the list with only 53 percent of respondents saying it was a very important trait.[43]

Violence

The good news is that violent crimes in the United States has been on a decline since 1993. Unfortunately, the decrease is the result of less violence among adults. Statistics for youth is hardly encouraging. While the crime rate for adults is dropping, the rate for teens is soaring. Some say not only are youth crime rates increasing, but it will get even worse. Single-parent households, child abuse, and deteriorating inner-city schools are all factors that have significant influence on youth violence, and they are getting worse.

How bad is the situation? In 1994, of 15 age groups, the age group with the highest number of murder offenders was 20-24 with the second largest group the 17-19 year olds. The 5th largest group was the 13-16 age group. Juvenile murder arrests have more than doubled in the last decade.[44] Homicide rates for youths ages 14 to 17 rose 16 percent between 1990 and 1994.[45] As the number of youth in the 14 to 17 year old age group rapidly increases during the next decade, the number of teenage crime cases are expected to rise. Teenagers are likely to continue as the most crime-prone group in the American society.

Lying and Cheating

As previously noted, honesty and integrity score fairly high on the priority lists for both high school and college students. Furthermore, a vast majority of students believe it is wrong to cheat. However, statistics prove that other values have priority.

What is the record on lying and cheating? In a cover story, *USA Today* reported that cheating has become a sport. The article revealed that 70 percent of college students admit to cheating.[46] A majority of students believe people will cheat and lie when it is necessary to get what they want. They will tend to abandon traditional ethical values such as honesty, in favor of win-at-any-cost attitudes. Josephson has identified a common rationale to explain how youth who lie and cheat can justify their ethics. He calls it the "doctrine of relative filth," which interpreted is, "I'm not so bad, so long as there are people who are worse."[47]

Surveys of youth on the issue of lying and cheating have reported disappointing statistics. Less than two percent of college cheaters get caught and only half of those caught receive any punishment. Thus 99 percent of all cheating goes unpunished.[48] Among high school students, in 1969, 55 percent lied to parents about school. The figure rose to 70 percent in 1989. For the same period, students who signed their parent's name to an excuse rose from 26 percent to 48 percent.[49] Among high school students, 61 percent, and for college students 32 percent admitted cheating on an exam during the last year. Nearly one-third of students were willing to lie on a resume, job application, or job interview.[50] A large majority admit to lying to parents, teachers, and significant others. This includes students at private high schools and private religious colleges.[51] Is there any logic to all the lying and cheating? The students' logic is simple and straightforward, "Everyone is doing it. Why should we put ourselves at an unfair disadvantage by being honest?"[52]

Substance Use

Drug use among youth is on the rise again. After a gradual decline in the 1980s, usage has increased steadily over the last four years. The drugs of choice are alcohol and cigarettes. What is the drink of choice? Three-fourths of youthful drinkers drink beer. The primary influence on drug use is associating with peers who use drugs. The second largest influence is family members who use drugs.[53]

Youth face conflicting messages when it comes to drug use. Society prohibits drug use for youth. Yet many adults accept drug use as normal and even support its usage. Youth are bombarded with advertising which encourages drug use. Billboards, magazine ads, and television commercials portray hip drinkers and smokers living the "good life." Many rap and rock bands have marijuana and other drug themes in their lyrics. The tobacco industry spends nearly six billion dollars per year inducing and encouraging youth and adults to smoke.[54] Only the automobile industry spends more advertising dollars. Another factor causing increased use is that less and less teens believe drug use is a problem. In 1987, 54 percent of youth surveyed indicated drug abuse was the biggest problem facing people their age. By 1992 the percentage had dropped to 40 percent.[55]

An alarming number of American youth continue to smoke cigarettes. Smoking rose in 1995, the fourth consecutive year that it increased for 8th and 10th graders and the third year in a row for 12th graders. In the latest survey conducted by the University of Michigan, 19 percent of 8th graders, 28 percent of 10th graders, and 34 percent of 12th graders had smoked during the previous 30 days.[56] Adding to the problem is the widespread availability of cigarettes. Other data show that ethnically, white youth are the largest users of cigarettes. Teens living in rural areas are more likely to smoke. Academic achievers are less likely to smoke. And finally, teens who do not expect to go on to schooling after high school are three times more likely to smoke than college-bound teens.[57]

As with cigarettes, young people are getting the advertising message when it comes to drinking. Teens who watch sporting events on television are especially inundated with the lure of drinking. Alcohol use has not seen any significant increase in recent years, but usage remains high. As with cigarettes, teenagers have relatively easy access to alcohol. Nearly 80 percent of teens report having few problems getting their hands on alcohol.[58] In the most recent University of Michigan survey, 45 percent of 8th graders, 64 percent of 10th graders, and 74 percent of high school seniors said they had used alcohol during the last year. Binge drinking among 8th graders is of notable concern. During the previous two weeks of the survey, 15 percent of 8th graders had consumed five or more drinks in a row.[59]

Other illicit drugs such as LSD, amphetamines, stimulants, and inhalants show small percentages of use, except for marijuana. Marijuana use is experiencing a strong resurgence. Usage almost doubled between 1992 and 1994, rising from 4 percent of teens aged 12 to 17 to 7.3 percent. An added problem is that only 42 percent of teens consider marijuana a dangerous drug.[60]

The statistical data on drug and alcohol use in the 1990s is disturbing. Youth are getting conflicting messages and they are listening to the messages provided by the media and their peers. Former United States Surgeon General C. Everett Koop claims the key to reversing the trend is for parents to take responsibility in providing right values. Regarding youth, he states, "These people are immortal in their own eyes. Nothing can happen to them. Smoking won't bother them; neither will drinking and driving.....They like to take risks and they don't like anything that begins with the word don't!"[61]

Sex and Child Bearing

As with drug use, youth are receiving mixed messages on sex. The twin threats of unwanted teen pregnancies and AIDS make teen sexuality more complicated. Teens are told abstinence is the only foolproof method. But they are also told they can have safer sex with consistent use of condoms. In addition, they face motivations both to engage in and to avoid sex. Positive motivators include becoming more popular, experiencing physical pleasure, feeling better about oneself, and fulfilling the sex drive. Negative motivators include moral considerations, parental disapproval, unwanted pregnancy, and diseases such as AIDS.[62]

Society is doing an excellent job of educating teenagers on sex. Surveys show almost 100 percent of teens have received sex education and over 90 percent have

received specific education in both AIDS prevention and safe sex.[63] Nevertheless, a recent survey of high school students showed 53 percent had engaged in sexual intercourse at least once during the last year. Of these, only 53 percent said they had used a condom the last time they had sex.[64] It appears the education being taught is not being heeded by a large portion of teenagers.

On a positive note, surveys have found that today's youth have increased optimism toward marriage and parenthood. While 88 percent hope to marry, 84 percent want to have children. How many children? Nearly half, 45 percent, want two or more children, and 9 percent four or more.[65]

Health

With all the emphasis on nutrition and exercise in schools, opportunities to play sports in our society, advertisement of athletic equipment, exercise shows on television, and aerobic videos, it would seem that health would be an area in which youth excel. The message is consistent. Unfortunately, surveys and statistics do not bear this out. In fact, bad eating habits, lack of sleep, and poor attitudes toward exercise contribute to health-damaging behavior. However, one major promising trend is that physical fitness has become a popular teen goal in recent years. Teenage girls are now almost just as likely as boys to exercise and participate in sports.[66]

Girls are at more risk than boys when it comes to poor eating habits. More than half of all teenage girls want to lose weight, with 24 percent actually on diets.[67] Teenagers are taught nutrition in school, but many fail to eat properly. Obesity among teenagers is on the rise. Bingeing and purging of food continues to be a problem among some, especially girls.

Many teenagers are not getting enough sleep. The average teenager gets just over seven hours of sleep per night. This is not enough as 60 percent report being somewhat tired on most school days. For 70 percent, tiredness and exhaustion affect school work and class performance.[68]

How physically fit are teenagers? Most teens, over 90 percent, exercise at least once per week. The majority play on sports teams, take gym class, or participate in some other form of exercise. However, there appears to be a lack of regular commitment to exercise. The American Medical Association has found that the majority of adolescents are in poor physical shape. Two specific findings were that "more than half of all girls and a quarter of all boys are unable to do a single pull-up. Half of all young women and 30 percent of all young men are unable to run a mile in less than 10 minutes."[69] One problem appears to be that American families tend to spectate together rather than recreate together.

Education

Youth are getting the message when it comes to the importance of a good education. There are several good signs. Dropout rates are decreasing across the board. The biggest improvement and most encouraging statistic is the dropout rate for black youth which has gone from 27.3 percent in 1975 to 16.3 percent in 1992. On a survey question asking teens to indicate the importance of being well

educated, 91 percent indicated it was very important and another 7 percent said it was somewhat important.[70] Additionally, the percentage of high school students intending to further their education by attending college full-time is increasing. In 1987, 51 percent indicated plans to attend college. By 1992, 68 percent had such plans. Finally, when high school students were asked how likely or unlikely it was they would graduate from high school, only two percent said it was unlikely.[71] At least one message is being heeded.

Youth vs Army Values

The U.S. Army is a values-centered profession. Field Manual 100-1, *The Army* establishes those values that have guided the Army since 1775. What are these values?

The Army ethos is described using three words: duty, integrity, and selfless service. In addition, there are five core professional qualities which relate to values. These ethos and qualities are defined as follows:

> Duty—Behavior required by moral obligation, demanded by custom, or enjoined by feelings of rightness.
> Integrity—The uncompromising adherence to a code of moral values, utter sincerity, and the avoidance of deception or expediency of any kind.
> Selfless Service—Putting the welfare of the nation and the accomplishment of the mission ahead of individual desires.
> Commitment—Dedication to serving the Nation, the Army, the unit and one's comrades.
> Competence—Finely-tuned proficiency.
> Candor—Unreserved, honest or sincere expression; frankness, freedom from bias, prejudice, or malice.
> Compassion—Basic respect for the dignity of each individual; treating all with dignity and respect.
> Courage—A perfect sensibility of the measure of danger and a mental willingness to endure it. The ability to persevere in what we know to be right and, not tolerate wrong behavior by friends, peers, subordinates, or superiors.[72]

Research of youth values showed that overall, there is a downward trend. High percentages of families are disintegrating, leaving youth with fewer role models at home. Peer influence is growing while parents' ability to monitor their children's friends is decreasing. Media, especially television, continue to broadcast their messages that include violence, sexual overtones, and alcohol consumption. Religious influence is decreasing. Schools are only now beginning to reinstate value oriented curriculums. Youth, both at the high school and college levels, rate honesty and integrity below other priorities. Teen violence is on the increase. Lying and cheating are common. Substance use remains high for alcohol and is increasing for cigarettes and marijuana. Over 50 percent of high school students have experienced sexual intercourse. The physical condition of teenagers is rated low by the American Medical Association.

The gap between values of the Army and of youth in our society is widening. There are few positive signs suggesting that youth morals will do an about face. Data suggest that youth values will continue to deteriorate into the 21st century.

Implications and Courses of Action

With the moral standards of young people declining, what are the implications for the Army of the 21st century? What courses of action should the Army take? The Army will continue requiring substantial numbers of recruits each year. It must take what society has to offer, because the Army is a mirror image of society, reflecting both its strengths and weaknesses. Though society's youth may be readjusting their ethical standards, the Army must maintain its emphasis on critical values. What are the implications and recommended courses of action?

The widening gap in values will impact recruiting negatively. *Army Regulation* 601-210, Regular Army and Army Reserve Enlistment Program is very detailed and explicit as to who may enter the Army. Education, drug use, health, police record, parenthood, and character all have a critical effect on acceptance or rejection. Recruiting requirements, for both Active and Reserve Components, will remain substantial. The Department of the Army projected requirements for the next five fiscal years are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
U. S. Army Projected Recruiting Requirements - FY 97 through FY 01

Fiscal Year	Active Duty	U.S. Army Reserve	Army National Guard	Total
FY 97	89,700	44,200	57,413	191,313
FY 98	83,800	47,600	61,749	193,149
FY 99	84,700	50,400	62,128	197,228
FY 00	88,200	50,400	61,987	200,587
FY 01	90,800	50,400	62,164	203,364

Over the last few years, approximately 95 percent of recruits have been high school graduates. Two-thirds have scored in the top 50 percent on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Can the Army maintain these levels, despite the declining values of youth? Compared to the early 1990s, required accessions will continue to increase. Surveys show propensity for young people to join the Army is declining. Fortunately, over the next few years the prime market age group will increase slowly. Also, high school dropout rates are continuing to show a downward trend, but are unlikely to drop much further. All these factors indicate that recruiting problems will occur if the Army hopes to maintain a force with high educational and moral standards.

The widening gap in values can best be addressed with increased character education before entry into the Army and after induction. Prior to entry, the Army

can have significant impact in character education through various partnerships with society's education system. Various ways will be explained. Once in the Army, character and value training can be enhanced during initial entry training (IET) and unit training.

Youth are not automatically moral or ethical. As research has shown, families are continuing to disintegrate, the media is having an overall negative effect, and the impact of religion is waning. Peer group values reflect society's values. It appears schools must take the lead in character education. It takes a great deal of education and sustained effort to instill values. A large majority of both parents and youth believe that education in the schools should include both moral and ethical training. As a result, character education programs are growing across the United States. Many are endorsing and teaching the six core ethical values developed by the Aspen Declaration: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, justice and fairness, caring, and civic duty and citizenship. The effectiveness of these programs are often affected by obstacles such as turf, religion, politics, and money.

School systems provide an excellent opportunity for the Army to become involved positively in the value training of future enlisted and officer accessions. Alliances can be built. How can the Army assist schools in character education? There are several ways.

First, the Army can assist schools in setting up character education programs. The Army has excellent and tried methods of creating a strong ethic. A vision of high purpose is created. A sense of pride and specialness is instilled through unit tradition, high expectations, dress codes, and behavior codes. Rigorous training results in real achievement and self-esteem. Finally, the Army offers a mission oriented training program. Through innovation, some of these same ideas can be incorporated in school programs to enhance a strong ethic.

Second is the increased involvement of ROTC and Junior ROTC (JROTC) in school character education programs. The Army is already involved with many schools through ROTC at the college and university level and JROTC at the high school level. In recent years, through the initiative of General Colin Powell, JROTC was expanded to over 3,000 high schools. In these schools the Army has a presence. Some ethics is currently taught in these two programs, but it could be extended. The Professor of Military Science and his or her staff could become the prime instructors for the character education program in the school.

Third, the Active Army, U.S. Army Reserve (USAR), and Army National Guard (ARNG) have many public affairs officers and good speakers. Many in the Reserve Component are teachers or school administrators. Through initiative and aggressive coordination with school systems, ongoing character education lectures and instruction could be given by Army officers and senior NCOs. The Army targets youth with a high school diploma, a score in the top half of the ASVAB and high morals. Leaders in the Army are required to maintain the highest moral standards. These leaders can have a positive impact on students as they make presentations on values.

Fourth, USAR and ARNG units are located in thousands of communities both large and small. Each has an obligation to contribute to the community. One key approach would be cooperating with the local school district in their character education program. Again, officers and NCOs can participate in providing instruction on values and moral character.

Once recruited into the Army, there is some character education during IET, but this could be expanded. Currently there are short classes on the Elements of Army Family Team-Building, Code of Conduct, Standards of Ethical Conduct, and Military Justice—Policies, Laws, and Regulations. In family team-building, a key point is building healthy families that teach respect for others, foster a sense of trust, and define their values. The code of conduct stresses conduct and behavior in the event of capture. Ethical conduct reviews the fourteen fundamental principles of ethical service for all government employees. This includes values such as loyalty, honesty, and citizen obligations. Military justice training focuses on policies regarding homosexual conduct and regulations governing overall sexual conduct. The *IET Soldiers Handbook*, TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4, provides sections on discipline, values, and standards of conduct. Four fundamental values are defined as: loyalty to the ideals of the nation, loyalty to the unit, personal responsibility, and selfless service.[73] More can be done. The values system of society from which recruits come is sliding. A majority are in the 17-21 age bracket. Experts in character development advise that the most important period of moral development is in the late teens.[74] It is then that they make choices and establish priorities. Additional character education focused on helping recruits choose among competing values and prioritizing ethical and non-ethical values would be beneficial.

Is there time for any more instruction in basic training? Many would assert training schedules are already full. Is there an alternative? As has been pointed out, an increasing number of recruits come from single-parent homes, usually without a male role model. The Army can improve its role modeling. Assuredly, Drill Sergeants can and should be role models. Leaders chosen from amongst the basic trainees can also be assigned the function of role model. Though this will add to their responsibility, it is a necessity. Selecting trainee leaders with the highest moral standards will be critical to the success of an effective role modeling program.

Beyond IET, more character education training at unit level both in the Active Component and Reserve Component will be important. Commanders and unit leaders need to be consistent role models for ethical behavior and must enforce ethical principles. Ongoing training is important. This should include ethical commitment or a desire to do the right thing. Also important is creating an ethical consciousness and building ethical competency skills. Army chaplains are well trained in character education and can be the driving force in developing and maintaining ongoing unit level training.

Finally, the Army needs to continue placing emphasis on values when writing officer and enlisted efficiency reports. Specific values are already part of the rating systems. Redoing appraisal formats is not necessary. Rather, raters, senior raters, and reviewers must ensure that value ratings are a key and integral part of the overall rating.

Conclusion

Our society is in deep moral trouble. Optimism is difficult when examining the impact of the five major influencers on youth. The breakup of families will continue and likely worsen as increasing numbers of youth are raised in single-

parent families. As families fall apart, influence of peers will increase. Schools can have a positive influence. A growing number of educators are realizing the need for values education. The impact on youth will be positive. But, in the final analysis, teachers cannot replace parents. The media can become a positive influence on youth. There must be a commitment to change from conforming to what the media calls, "what the people want," to a higher level of ethics. Leaders in the media must be willing to move from a value-destroying to a value-building philosophy. Will the lure of money stand as a barrier? Religion can regain its influence. A majority of youth believe in a God. Church leaders must be able to bridge the gap. Youth need to be able to relate religious values to their everyday life. Youth leaders have a significant but doable task. Until value influencers move in a positive direction, there is likely to be little improvement in the conduct or attitudes of youth.

Will this affect the Army of the future? Yes, there will be a negative effect. Fortunately, the Army is downsizing and the available market from which to recruit young people is slowly increasing. Post high school education is increasing in importance. However, accession requirements are increasing. Propensity to join the Army is declining. A smaller percent of society's youth will meet the moral character standards required by the Army. Taken together, the Army faces a threat to its current standards for new recruits.

The Army can be a positive influence on youth values. The Active Army, USAR, and ARNG can all cooperate with local school districts in enhancing values and character education. The JROTC staffs can assist their high school leadership implement character education. Additional value education can be added to IEWT. Role modeling can be improved. Unit level training after IET can be incorporated into a yearly training plan. The Army must continue to draw recruits from across the American society, from all ethnic groups, both male and female. Taking positive initiatives now can ensure that the future Army continues to maintain the highest standards—duty, integrity, and selfless service.

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