

Producing Military Commanders: A Systemic Exploration of the Development Environment

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Abstract

PRODUCING MILITARY COMMANDERS: A SYSTEMIC EXPLORATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT by MAJ Francisco J. Leija, USA, 60 pages.

The United States Army can improve the quality of the officer corps by enhancing the understanding of how field-grade commanders are developed. The Army has produced some of the finest leaders in history. The leaders produced have been possible due to an officer development process that the Army has carefully managed. Recently, concerns regarding the effects of operational tempo towards the future quality of commissioned officers have emerged. This study develops a model of the Army's officer development environment by applying systems and complexity theories to explore how future commanders develop. This study analyzes the variables, perspectives, and existing practices of officer development that reveal the tendencies and tensions for a developing officer. Due to the complexity of an open "living" system, there are no centralized solutions for developing officers. This study identifies existing opportunities that reside in the current environment and do not require institutional change.

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Introduction

The United States Army can improve the quality of the officer corps by enhancing the understanding of how field-grade commanders are developed. The complexities associated with today's full-spectrum environment have thrust the field commander to the Army's forefront of priorities. The challenges associated with transformation, a two-theater war, and the remaining global security requirements present the Army a situation that has been described as a state "where a confluence of factors is relentlessly driving change."¹ This situation has taken a toll on the Army. Sustaining combat operations has come at the expense of future leadership development. The generational effects on the capabilities of future commissioned officers are questionable. The 2009 Army Leadership Development Strategy acknowledged these effects: "we are not building an adequate bench of senior leaders for the future...our preparations of leaders to operate in this environment and to lead these decentralized organizations has not kept pace."²

In a time when the Nation and the Army have taken time to re-assess their global commitments, the Army should take time to re-assess its top leadership: the officer corps. Across Army formations, commanders have overall responsibility for soldiers, non-commissioned officers, officers of a unit, and mission accomplishment. A majority of officer development currently occurs inside tactical units. Field grade commanders are the greatest influence within these units, and future commanders will be the direct result of tactical unit officer development.

¹U.S. Department of Defense, *How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook* (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 2008), 1.

²U.S. Department of Defense, "Army Leadership Development Strategy," United States Army Homepage, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2009/12/09/31552-new-army-leader-development-strategy-released/> (accessed March 15, 2010), 2-5.

Exploring the environment where commanders develop is important to understand the characteristics of career-long capabilities that the Army is seeking in field-grade officers.

Field-grade commanders provide the talent-pool for the Army's future strategic leadership. Unlike civilian corporations, Army officers cannot enter the profession laterally. A recent article in *Fortune* highlighted how large business corporations transitioned to outsourcing their leadership from the military community. In a case at Wal-Mart, an expansion in operations led to a leadership shortage. Wal-Mart took a glance abroad and identified that commissioned-officer talent fulfilled its senior leadership requirements.³ The Army has no such option. In addition to not being able to outsource leadership, Army promotion regulations restrict flexibility in career progression. Therefore, it is important that officer development create the potential for general officer consideration. Simply put, the Army cannot afford to make mistakes in the development of its future commanders.

Today, field-grade commanders are the face of the Army to soldiers abroad. They stand as a symbol of what "right" looks like for the Army. The influence that commanders exercise throughout the entire Army is incomparable. Army culture reinforces this importance. It is important to acknowledge that board selections or pre-command courses do not create commanders. Commanders are a product of their development environments, which influences them from their first day of commissioned service.

Officers can take various development approaches in their journey. A conventional approach is the prescription given by the Human Resource Command. This prescription entails service schools, tactical unit assignments, joint assignments, general officer evaluations, below-

³Brian O'Keefe, "Battle Tested: How a Decade of War has Created a New Generation of Business Leaders," *Fortune Magazine* 161 (March 2010): 110.

the-zone selections, and assignments that maintain relevance in tactical units.⁴ This prescription is the safest way to ensure successful promotions and command selection. A recently retired Army Major General described this approach as a “personnelists” approach. He described alternative avenues such as advanced civil schooling; service school and university instructors; Active Component/Reserve Component (AC/RC) assignments; fellowships to strategic posts; and other assignments that diversify experience at the strategic and operational levels of the Army.⁵ Understanding the options and timing in decisions associated with approaches is critical to the development of future commanders. Improvements on individual career development conceptualization would aid developing officers tremendously.

More than civilian and military education, job experience gained by service in tactical units is the professional credential of the military officer.⁶ Job experience establishes the potential for promotion and selection to future commands. The tremendous potential of development opportunities that reside in the world of practicing as opposed to theorizing anchors this belief in Army culture. However, battalion and brigade officer-development programs lack stewardship. Units practicing doctrinaire approaches do not reinforce or nest with higher concepts, which are

⁴U.S. Department of Defense, *The Armed Forces Officer* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1988), 1-4.

⁵Major General (R) Robert H. Scales, “Too Busy to Learn,” *Proceedings* 136, no. 2 (February 2010): 288. Other works that discuss the value of diversification on development include *An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present* by Charles E. Kirkpatrick, U.S. Army Field Manual 6-22 *Leadership*, and *Critical Thinking* by Richard Paul and Linda Elder.

⁶U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2010), 2. Additional reference on the value of experience and why it is valued amongst organizations can be found in part I of *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, by Donald A. Schön and, in part III of *The Fifth Discipline* by Peter M. Senge.

necessary for critical and cognitive development. This situation contributes to a dysfunctional development process resulting in unintended cultural norms throughout the officer corps.

In 2008, the Center for Army Leadership commissioned the RAND Arroyo Center to investigate officer development that is occurring in the field.⁷ The concern of general officers is that due to a sustained assumption that the highest form of development still occurs in tactical unit assignments, the Army might be jeopardizing officer development. Current junior officers already seem confused. “Many officers equate self-development with professional reading,” and senior officers have already expressed “concern that changes in how units are manned, via modularity and lifecycle manning, could have undesirable consequences for leader development.”⁸

The Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO) has described the future near-term environment as “a universe of autonomous polities continuously seeking to optimize their own wealth, security, opportunities, and influence in relation to each other and the system as a whole.”⁹ Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has described the leadership required for this environment as “adaptive and thinking professionals who understand the capabilities their Service brings to joint operations and how to apply those capabilities in a

⁷Peter Schirmer and James C. Crowley and others, eds., *Leader Development in Army Units: Views From the Field* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008), 2.

⁸Schirmer and Crowley, et.al., 70.

⁹U.S. Department of Defense, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2009), v. For a detailed analysis of the challenges associated in this environment consult *Planning: Complex Endeavors* by David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes.

flexible manner.”¹⁰ Understanding the role that future field-grade commanders will play in our nation’s defense is crucial.

An objective goal is required for officer development.¹¹ Field-grade command development coincides with a twenty-year (battalion command) or a twenty-five year (brigade command) career. This makes it an appropriate benchmark for a goal in officer development efforts. Officers are reluctant to identify field-grade command as a personal goal in development to avoid hurting retention or individual feelings due to the small number of officers selected to command; however, it is the duty of all officers to prepare to lead. Regardless of position in a unit, an officer must be ready to assume responsibilities superior to their posting. The leadership capabilities of commanders require career-long development and are not achievable in the final years leading to command.

The Army has numerous formal and informal programs for officer development; however, inadequate implementation of existing programs, coupled with an insufficient understanding of the development environment and tensions in the environment, creates a situation where officers miss key development opportunities. Defining tensions that prevent desired results in development efforts is necessary to fully understand leverage points in the environment. By exploring the tensions that exist in the environment, opportunities emerge from existing misunderstood resources. Acknowledging these opportunities enables the Army to improve the quality of officer development efforts and ensures that current resources allocated towards this goal do not get underutilized.

¹⁰Ibid., 2.

¹¹Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham, “Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35-Year Odyssey,” *American Psychologist* 57, no. 9 (September 2002): 705-709.

The Army defines development as a deliberate, continuous, sequential and progressive process achieved through a lifelong synthesis of knowledge, skills, and experiences gained by self-reflection, institutional education, and operational experience.¹² The general approach to this study is explanatory, due to the complexity that exists in the development environment.

Complexity is “hard to predict not because it is random but rather because the regularities associated to it cannot be briefly described.”¹³ There are simply too many variables at play in individual development to prescribe a solution. Instead of prescriptions, this study will focus on opportunities within the existing environment of officer development. By providing opportunities in the form of conceptual or physical resources, rather than prescriptions, the flexibility in application for decision makers, developers, and developing officers is retained. This study does not propose structural changes to the existing institutional process. The current officer development process has sufficient potential if fully applied. Improving the officer corps by simply enhancing the understanding of existing development practice is pragmatic.

The Development Environment of Future Commanders

The development of a field grade commander occurs through lessons learned throughout a lifetime of experience. Each officer experiences different intensity, sequencing, and interpretations of overall development efforts creating a complex environment. Due to the ambiguity in quantifying what officer development means to individuals, a base understanding is

¹²U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Army Field Manual 6-22: *Army Leadership* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2006), 8-9.

¹³Robert Axelrod and Michael D. Cohen, *Harnessing Complexity: Organizational Implications of a Scientific Frontier* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 16. Other works helpful for the reader to understand complexity include *Making Things Work* by Yaneer Bar-Yam, *The Fifth Discipline* by Peter M. Senge, *The Landscape of History* by John Lewis Gaddis, and *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity* by Jamshid Gharajedaghi.

necessary for all officers. In *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter M. Senge described how complexity can serve as an excuse for people to limit their efforts. He went on to explain how “structures of which we are unaware hold us prisoner.”¹⁴ The structures he referred to are systems where individuals coexist. By not understanding a system, or acknowledging how many systems are active in an environment, an individual can feel overwhelmed or limited. Systems theory introduced the concept of the environment in the 1950s.¹⁵ The environment distinguishes open from closed systems. “Openness means that the behavior of living [open] systems can be understood only in the context of their environment.”¹⁶ For the Army, the environment is its super system, with three subordinate systems nested inside.¹⁷ This study will explore the environment in open systems as opposed to closed systems. The open approach retains the context of each system where officer development occurs, and it will serve to contrast the tensions in the environment.

The concepts and definitions required to understand the description of this environment come from Robert Axelrod’s *Harnessing Complexity: Organizational Implications of a Scientific Frontier*. Harnessing complexity focuses on identifying when interaction into a complex environment has begun and then attempts to understand the existing situation to transform it into

¹⁴Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Science of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 69, 94.

¹⁵Mary Jo Hatch and Ann L. Cunliffe, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives* (New York: Oxford, 2006), 77.

¹⁶Jamshid Gharajedaghi, *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity: A Platform for Designing Business Architecture* (Oxford: Elsevier Science and Technology Books, 2006), 30. Other works helpful for the reader to understand open systems include *Making Things Work* by Yaneer Bar-Yam, and *Organization Theory* by Mary Jo Hatch and Ann L. Cunliffe.

¹⁷Hatch and Cunliffe, 65. In this section, Hatch described a super system organization theory as a Russian doll. She focuses on explaining the importance of the relationship amongst the different sized dolls to nest into a unified purpose.

a desired condition.¹⁸ As stated earlier, the process of developing commanders creates various competing entities and variables. In order to understand a foundation from where to derive existing opportunities, it is necessary to organize the environment into manageable units.

For this study, the primary elements to understand are agents, strategies, and artifacts (see figure 1). An agent is an element within an environment that can cast a vote to impact the environment; “most commonly we think of an agent as a person...a person is not the only kind of agent...a family, a business, or an entire country can be an agent.”¹⁹ A strategy is a way an agent interacts within an environment to achieve a specific goal. An artifact is an object used within a strategy by an agent. All three elements are distinguished as concepts and therefore create a conceptual line running through these elements and linking them together. It is important to acknowledge conceptual lines because they are the basis for describing the entirety of this environment. To distinguish between a strategy and conceptual line see figure 1.

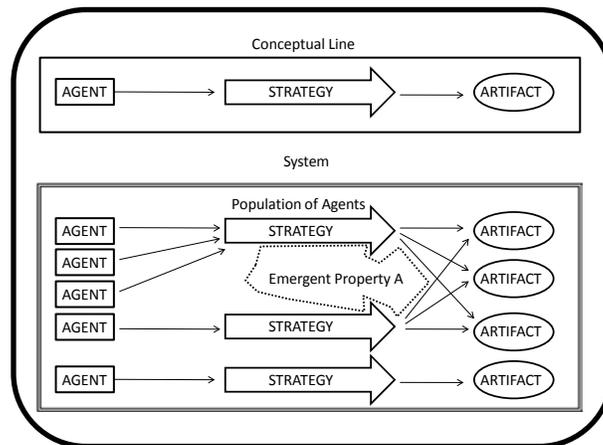


Figure 1. The Three Element Conceptual Line²⁰

¹⁸Axelrod and Cohen, 15.

¹⁹Ibid., 4.

²⁰This is a depiction of the framework concepts from *Harnessing Complexity* by Robert Axelrod.

The three-element (agent—strategy—artifact) conceptual line is important to understand. Other important terms are population, system and emergent properties. A population refers to agents that are collaborating with each other by association of strategy or artifacts (see figure 1). A system is one or more populations within the environment that acts as a dimension. As systems interact, there are indirect entities that spontaneously emerge; these are emergent properties. Emergent properties exist in the space between systems and conceptual lines.²¹

The same agent, strategy or artifact can exist in different systems and play different roles. An example of this exists in an everyday environment. Take a family vehicle for example. In one system, a vehicle is an artifact for a family to transport children to and from locations with a strategy of carrying out family activities. The same vehicle serves a distinct role in a different system. A police officer canvassing a neighborhood to determine inconsistency in activity or to determine crime may use the vehicle for analysis. It is the same vehicle, yet two agents in two systems utilize it as an artifact for two separate goals with two separate strategies.

The environment for this study is bounded to an individual officer that will complete a twenty to twenty-five year career in the Army with the goal of field-grade command. This study acknowledges that not all officers intend on pursuing a twenty to twenty-five year career or are goal oriented for command, but bounding the environment establishes a common reference that all officers can relate to concerning their own development. As officers develop, they make decisions relative to other agents they encounter within the environment. Understanding the function of time as it relates to an individual's development is essential. In *The Logic of Failure*,

²¹Axelrod and Cohen, 15. Other works that describe emergent properties in the same manner include *The Scientific Way of Warfare* by Antoine J. Bousquet, *The Landscape of History* by John Lewis Gaddis, *Making Things Work* by Yaneer Bar-Yam, and *Learning for Action* by Peter Checkland and John Poulter.

Dietrich Dorner described how most people do not have trouble dealing with configurations of space, yet they have quite some trouble dealing with the sequential aspects of time. He cited a musical melody as distinguished from the individual tones.²² This function of time applies to an officer's development. Any decision an officer makes injects energy to an environment and changes the situation. Validating goals, current resources, and current capabilities are key to development and can only be achieved if the entirety of the environment is understood.

The Army uses a three-domain strategy for officer development: self-development domain, operational domain, and institutional domain.²³ For an officer, these domains exist in three systems: the individual system, the unit system, the institutional system (see figure 2). The purpose for exploring the environment as three separate systems is to group relevant agents and their interactions. Any environment consists of specified systems that make up the whole. For this study, only the systems that are relevant to all officers are used. For example, an officer's environment in Fort Hood, Texas may consist of these three systems plus a system for the Fort Hood installation, a system for the state of Texas, and a neighborhood system. Including systems that are not applicable to all officers developing within the Army is not beneficial to this study and for that reason, only these three systems are used. In *Systems Thinking*, Jamshid Gharajedaghi explained that although open system analysis relies on the context of the overall environment, and that "everything depends on everything, this everything can be grouped into categories...."²⁴ For example, the individual system approaches the environment from a bottom-up perspective. The institutional system approaches the environment from a top-down perspective. Approaches with

²²Dietrich Dorner, *The Logic of Failure: Recognizing and Avoiding Error in Complex Situations* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 107.

²³U. S. Department of Defense, Department of Army Pamphlet 600-3, 2.

²⁴Gharajedaghi, 30.

opposing forces will not result in an intended outcome. Understanding how and where leverage points can become relevant to an individual or organization can only be possible by analyzing the environment in full detail. Distinguishing between different approaches that exist in the environment enables a better understanding on where two systems intersect and more importantly, on why they intersect in a particular area of the environment.

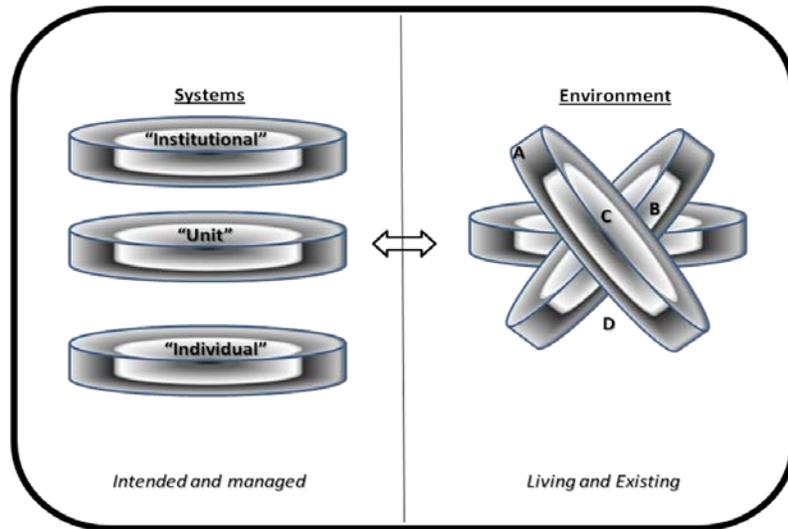


Figure 2. The Three Systems²⁵

Systems interact freely in the environment but are created and managed independently (see figure 2). Understanding the relationship between systems as they interact is a good way to assess the role an individual plays within a development environment. As seen above in a graphical description (figure 2) of Axelrod's framework for harnessing complexity, there are

²⁵This is a graphical depiction of the concepts of systems theory from *Organization Theory* by Mary Jo Hatch on the left, and multidimensionality theory from *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity* by Jamshid Gharajedaghi on the right, applied to the Army's development environment.

points in the environment that exist in one, two, or three systems.²⁶ An alternative theory that assists in understanding this description is the concept of multidimensionality, defined as “the ability to see complementary relations in opposing tendencies and to create feasible wholes with unfeasible parts.”²⁷ Individuals interact and have a role in each of these systems. Acknowledging which role, in which system, an individual plays when making decisions is a powerful concept. As depicted in figure 2, the letters A, B, C, and D represent the same individual interacting in each system. The letter “A” represents an officer interacting solely in their individual system, while the letter “B” represents an officer interacting in their unit system through their individual system. The letter “C” represents an officer interacting in all three systems, such as completing an institutional requirement, hosted by a unit, with a senior rater participating in the activity. The letter “D” represents a singular emergent property of the environment (follow-on chapters discuss emergent properties). When combined into the environment, individuals can overlap two or three systems. The environment consists of several systems and individuals interact in the environment from multiple positions. Axelrod described this as the process of an agent to predict the consequences of their actions. He goes to explain that as agents change strategies they change the context in which other agents are trying to adapt.²⁸ By making such an acknowledgment, individuals can understand the importance associated in knowing which system a decision is active. We will begin the environmental description with the bottom-up approach of the individual system.

²⁶Axelrod and Cohen, 7.

²⁷Gharajedaghi, 38.

²⁸Axelrod and Cohen, 8.

The Individual System

The individual system is composed of the agents that are the greatest influence on an officer due to their immediate proximity in everyday life. It is where an officer develops within the environment. This system does not equate to self-development. The close and personal relationship of this system to an individual's decision-making capability makes it one of the most important. Unlike the unit or institutional system, here the individual officer is the highest authority. How an officer reasons is a direct interpretation of this system, since "when humans think about the world, we do not do so randomly but, rather in line with our goals, desires, needs, and values."²⁹ The individual system describes an officer in a forest of agents, and "unfortunately, most of us when we step back we just see lots of trees."³⁰ The ability for an officer to measure the scale of the system in which they are making decisions is possible through exploring this system. In accordance with the conditions used to bind this study, there are seven identified agents inside this system. They consist of the reviewing commander, senior commander, immediate supervisor, mentor domain, peer domain, subordinate domain, and the individual officer themselves. These agents interact in three agent populations: formal, informal, and personal populations.

The formal population consists of the reviewing commander, senior commander, and the immediate supervisor (commonly referred to as the rater). This population is guided by Department of the Army Pamphlet 623-3, *Evaluation Reporting System*.³¹ Here a senior commander has primary responsibility for development. The reviewing commander retains

²⁹Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *Critical Thinking: Tools for Taking Charge of Your Learning and Your Life* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2001), 54-55.

³⁰Senge, 127.

³¹U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Army Pamphlet 623-3, *Evaluation Reporting System* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2007), 1-3.

overall oversight responsibilities. Although primary responsibility is the domain of the senior commander, the primary instructor and developer is the immediate supervisor. In theory, this concept is ideal. The instruction-development-oversight domains shift up through this chain of command. This means that the individual that serves as a junior officer's senior commander also serves as an immediate supervisor. Ideally, it is logical to expect that the principles taught and evaluated at the top echelons of the army are the same at the very bottom of the army.

The strategies and artifacts used in the formal population vary. The reviewing commander could have a strategy to inspire and motivate his subordinates. They might use physical fitness, ceremonies, and public appearances as artifacts to achieve his goal. The senior commander could have a strategy of assessing officer potential and being the primary developer of professional career minded officers. Meetings, formal counseling, evaluations, and internal assignments could be used as artifacts in this conceptual line. The immediate supervisor could have the strategy of assessing performance and developing branch specific skills. In this conceptual line, direct rewards and punishment such as awards, recommendations, or public acknowledgement could be artifacts.

The informal population consists of the domains of the mentor, peer, and subordinate. In this population, there is no formal guide. The individual unit and geographical location play a significant role in the development of the norms for this population. Due to no formal guidance, the interactions within this population are un-bounded and limited only by the imagination. Mentors may be members of an individual's chain of command or may not even be in the service. A subordinate that has departed the Army or served with an individual several tours in the past may have significant importance to an individual's development. A peer relationship may be collaborative or competitive in a current assignment or throughout a lifetime. Due to the loose associations of these relationships and the freedom of influence, the informal population of the individual system possesses tremendous potential.

The strategies and artifacts used in the informal population vary. A mentor could use a strategy for holistic development with limitless artifacts. A peer may use a competitive or collaborative strategy, or both. Board results, evaluations, job assignments, joint projects, reinforcing efforts in work are just some of the artifacts that would be at work here. Subordinates may use a strategy of contribution towards existing gaps of knowledge. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manuals, social development, liaison roles to other soldiers, or simply collaboration on existing requirements serve as artifacts in this conceptual line. Similar to the mentor who can be a great teacher, a qualified subordinate possesses great potential for an individual to learn from their experiences. Although the development achieved is based on the dynamics of the individual relationship, the mentor and subordinate agents prove to possess the most potential for development in this system.

The last population in this system is the officer himself. Since this is the hardest to quantify due to personal beliefs, the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) dimensions are an ideal description of how an individual officer can classify the artifacts he uses internally when making decisions. Much like the approach used to select the agents and systems of the environment, the five domains used here are not absolute and do not account for all personal influences. The domains are simply a means to articulate agents that generally characterize the personal variables that influence individual soldier decisions.³² The CSF is "based on 30-plus years of scientific study and results, uses individual assessments, tailored virtual training, classroom training and embedded resilience experts to provide the critical skills our Soldiers,

³²Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1998), 1-15. Emotions are constantly at play and at work, yet most people discourage discourse on the impacts that these variables. Understanding that these variables influence all decisions and learning is important for developing officers. *Motivation and Personality* by Abraham Maslow gives readers a relevant explanation on the importance that emotions play on motivations and decisions for individuals.

family members and Army civilians need.³³ The concept of the CSF is to develop soldiers holistically through five strength dimensions: Physical, Emotional, Social, Family, and Spiritual.”³⁴ These five dimensions will serve as agent categories in the personal population. It is important to note that unlike other agents of this system and environment, these agents influence the individual from within.

The physical dimension is “performing and excelling in physical activities that require aerobic fitness, endurance, strength, healthy body composition and flexibility derived through exercise, nutrition and training”³⁵ Examples of this conceptual line would be a strategy of general health or exceptional fitness. Artifacts that can be at play in this line could be body composition, body weight, the Army Physical Fitness Test, a unit run and so on.

The emotional dimension is “Approaching life’s challenges in a positive, optimistic way by demonstrating self-control, stamina and good character with your choices and actions”³⁶ Examples of this conceptual line would be strategies of personal satisfaction in life choices, a balanced life, or total fulfillment. Artifacts that can be at play in this line could be feedback from family, career, athletics, or other external or internal personal assessment.

The social dimension is “maintaining trusted, valued relationships and friendships that are personally fulfilling and to foster good communication including a comfortable exchange of ideas, views, and experiences.”³⁷ Examples of applicable strategies for this line could be

³³U.S. Department of Defense, “Comprehensive Soldier Fitness,” Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, <http://www.army.mil/csf/> (accessed January 30, 2010).

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

popularity in your work place, recreation area, or immediate circle of friends. Artifacts at play for this line could be personal resources such as time, money, volunteer work, published articles, military appearance, physical fitness, trivial knowledge and so on.

The family dimension is “Being part of a family unit that is safe, supportive and loving, and provides the resources needed for all members to live in a healthy and secure environment.”³⁸ Examples of strategies for this line could be a prosperous spouse relationship, accomplished children, a flourishing long-distance relationship with immediate or extended family. Artifacts at play in this line could be time, annual vacations, effort, money, attention, religion, communication, a hobby, or a television.

The spiritual dimension is “Strengthening a set of beliefs, principles or values that sustain a person beyond family, institutional, and societal sources of strength.”³⁹ Examples of strategies for this conceptual line could be a more active parish life, profound research in to ones faith, or simply a deep pursuit for more knowledge. Artifacts at play in this line could be volunteer work at the parish, a library or book, a priest or religious leader, a philosophical mentor, your spouse and so on.

Exploring how all five of these artifacts interact in an individual officer enables a greater appreciation for the interaction of just one of the three populations of agents in this system. Combining all three populations and exploring these with personal priorities and goals, then contrasting those goals with where time is actually spent helps a person understand the power of competing agents.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

The Unit System

Many of the artifacts and agents in the individual system exist in the unit system. The distinction of these systems is in their purpose and scale. The individual system is set at a scale that facilitates reason and explanation for the purpose of an individual officer's methods of interactions. The unit system is set at a larger scale to describe the intermediate environment that receives the individual's interactions towards accomplishing a set mission. In the unit system, the theory and science of leader development meet with individual actions to create professional officer development. Carl Von Clausewitz acknowledged the inherent dynamics and challenges of such phenomenon in his second book in *On War*: "no matter how obvious and palpable the difference between knowledge and ability may be in the totality of human achievement, it is still extremely difficult to separate them entirely in the individual."⁴⁰ It is in the unit system that the challenge of merging knowledge and skills occurs. The importance of this system is evident in the Army's declaration of importance of the Operational Domain of leader development.⁴¹ Exploring the agents, strategies, and artifacts of this system enables an understanding on why some units succeed in officer development and others do not.

There are four agents and one population of agents in this system: superior headquarters, the commanding officer, the unit staff, the work force (remaining unit members), and immediate families of unit members and external agencies. Similar to the individual system, the agents used to describe this system are not absolute in nature. There is an infinite amount of additional agents interacting in this system; however, the agents selected best describe the overarching interactions of the tactical unit.

⁴⁰Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 148.

⁴¹U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Army Pamphlet 600-3, 2.

A superior headquarters might be either a division or brigade headquarters. FM 3-0, *Operations*, describes both as headquarters with a principal task of directing subordinate unit operations.⁴² Additionally, with the current military operations abroad, the requirements of Army Forces Generation described in FMI 3-0.1, *The Modular Force*, significantly impact responsibilities of these headquarters.⁴³ The superior headquarters utilizes a general strategy of effectively integrating subordinate units into daily operations. General artifacts that this agent utilizes are directives, operation orders, reporting requirements, funding, and additional organizational resources.

The commanding officer is charged with a wide variety of duties in various regulations and doctrines. AR 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, best describes the commander as the key individual responsible for the overall performance and command climate of the unit.⁴⁴ A general strategy for this agent is the effective accomplishment of unit missions and the welfare of unit resources and personnel. Artifacts utilized in this conceptual line consist of command philosophies, battlefield circulation, meetings, inspections, planning guidance, and evaluation reports.

The unit staff is described in FM 3-90.6, *The Brigade Combat Team*, as personal staff, coordinating staff, and special staff. Regardless of the staff categorization, the staff exists to support the command. As such, a general strategy for the staff to adapt is the effective support to

⁴²U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Army Field Manual 3-0, *Operations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2008), C-5.

⁴³U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Army Field Manual 3-0.1, *The Modular Force* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2008), 2-1.

⁴⁴U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Army Regulation 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2008), 1-2.

immediate unit operations and commander inquiries. Artifacts utilized in this conceptual line are the Military Decision Making Process, operations orders, briefings, and meetings.

The work force consists of the remaining soldiers assigned to the unit. The collective effort of the work force significantly affects the unit outcome and the arrangement of priorities. The strategy for the collective work force consists of effectively achieving assigned duties and responsibilities. Artifacts used by this agent range from operations orders, unit equipment, performance level, motivation level, supervision, inspections, collaboration, procrastination, and disruptive behavior.

Immediate families of unit members and external agencies are classified as a population of agents. As a population, they are significant to unit operations due to the lack of formal preparations or general guidance that exists for these issues.⁴⁵ The issues introduced by these agents are unanticipated; they typically require a significant amount of time. The strategy that binds these agents in a population is the accomplishment of identified requirements. Each agent of this population identifies requirements and engages with unit staff or the commander to accomplish an individual requirement. Artifacts used by these agents range from installation requirements, to Department of the Army requirements, and back down to domestic or legal personal issues. With such a large range in use of artifacts and such a limited level of unit preparation, this population is a significant contributor to the outcome of unit goals.

By isolating the agents and strategies of this system it is clear that the challenges of accomplishing the unit missions and responsibilities, maintaining unit resources and the welfare of soldiers, and accomplishing external unit requirements at the collective level is simply in a

⁴⁵U.S. Department of Defense, "Army Family Action Plan on Target for 2010" United States Army News, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2010/02/02/33891-army-family-action-plan-on-target-for-2010/> (accessed May 4, 2010).

different category than individual interactions. As described above, various agents and artifacts are utilized in both the individual and the unit system. It is becoming apparent that valuable resources such as time play a crucial role in the interactions of these systems. It is important not to dismiss resources as an obvious tension. For now, it should be set aside for further exploration.

The Institutional System

The Institutional System is the largest of the three systems, forming a super-system.⁴⁶ The value in exploring this system is in the contrast that emerges between intent of institutional efforts and conditions that result from these decisions. According to Peter Senge, “no one can be forced to develop his or her personal mastery. It is guaranteed to backfire.”⁴⁷ The direct conflict placed on an individuals’ freedom of choice by mandatory development results in less than ideal results. The distinction between the personal nature of how people learn and the programmatic nature of learning residents in an institutional approach to officer development is evident in this system. Another value in exploring this system is in understanding the impact of decisions made at this level. Much like Dorner’s musical melody metaphor, decisions made at this level are as musical notes played from a remote and distant location.⁴⁸ By the time the music is heard from these decisions, several other decisions have already been made in other systems. The institutional system has five populations of agents: Headquarters Department of the Army, force trainers, force providers, force managers, and war-fighters. Much like the previous two systems,

⁴⁶Hatch and Cunliffe, 65.

⁴⁷Senge, 172.

⁴⁸Dorner, 107.

there is an extremely large number of individual agents in this system. Aligning them in populations by function enables description for this system.

The Department of the Army headquarters contains the most diverse agents of this system. Any requirement not aligned with the other four populations falls onto this population. According to the Army’s annual posture statement, the strategy used is “The Army Plan.”⁴⁹ The main description of this strategy is to “provide relevant and ready land power for the 21st century environment” with a vision of remaining “the preeminent land power on earth—the ultimate instrument of national resolve.”⁵⁰ This population uses the Army Campaign Plan, the Quadrennial Defense Review, the Dynamic Army Resource Priority List, the formal chain of command, various other programs as artifacts.

Force trainers encompass all agents associated with formal and informal institutional training. Training and Doctrine Command accounts for the largest entity in this population of agents. According to the Training and Doctrine Command, the general strategy is to “develop and manage all training for the U.S. Army.”⁵¹ Artifacts used in this population include programs of instruction, mobile training teams, doctrine, and various other means of alternative education.

Force Providers encompass divisional units that are currently at home station undergoing Army Force Generation cycle requirements to equip and collectively train forces to return to warfighting commands. The general strategy of this population is best described in the Chief of Staff’s mission statement “to provide necessary forces and capabilities to the combatant

⁴⁹U.S. Department of Defense, *How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook*, 3.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., 355.

commander in support of the National Security and Defense Strategies.”⁵² Artifacts used by this population consist of Combat Training Centers, material resources and organizations, the official Chain of Command, and various other organizations and agencies.

Force managers encompass sub-organizations and commands that are associated with the management of personnel. The largest entity in this population is the Human Resource Command. A strategy that best describes this population is their mission statement: “Our mission is to develop, manage, and execute all manpower and personnel plans, programs and policies-- across all Army components--for the entire Army team.”⁵³ Artifacts used in this population are individual soldiers, assignments, unit tier categorizations, promotions, command selections, and various other institutional resources that enable mission accomplishment for this population.

Warfighting forces encompass geographic and functional combatant commands that are engaged in executing national military means abroad. Although the Unified Command Plan defines the responsibilities of the Combatant Commands, the general strategy of this population is to “provide for the integrated effectiveness of U.S. military forces in combat operations and for the projection of U.S. military power in support of U.S. national policies.”⁵⁴ Artifacts used by this population are the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, Operations Plans, campaign plans, the Joint Strategic Planning System, the Global Force Management process, Contingency Planning Guidance, and various other planning or resource means to achieve the national objectives.

⁵²Ibid., 3.

⁵³Ibid., 295.

⁵⁴Ibid., 40.

Acknowledging the forces and dynamics in the institutional system is essential to understanding the existing relationships that generate guidance for the unit and individual systems. In this system each population of agents, in theory, mutually reinforces one another for the collective attainment of a unified goal. This system possesses unique characteristics, in that it is removed from the direct execution and enforcement of policies, plans, or operations. It also serves as a direct interface to civilian oversight and leadership.

Overall, these three systems (individual, unit, and institutional) comprise the environment where the Army practices officer development. The development environment consists of far more agents, strategies, and artifacts that are simply beyond the scope of this study. The main purpose of each description is to generate an understanding of directional forces at specific scales within the environment. Grounding awareness in scale is beneficial in identifying leverage points throughout the officer development environment.⁵⁵

Emergent Properties and Tensions within the Environment

Exploring the dynamics present in the development environment reveals forces that limit the full potential of Army efforts. Tensions are the difference in opposing forces between two or more desired outcomes. Jamshid Gharajedaghi described a tension as an obstruction in a system “...out of our reach they reside at the core of our perceptions and find expression in mental models, assumptions, and images ...they are responsible for preserving the system as it is and frustrate its effort to become what it can be.”⁵⁶ Emergent properties, as discussed previously in Axelrod’s theories for *Harnessing Complexity*, are “properties of the system that the separate

⁵⁵Axelrod and Cohen, 21.

⁵⁶Gharajedaghi, 131.

parts [agents--strategy--artifacts] do not have.”⁵⁷ He gave the example of “no single neuron has consciousness, but the human brain does have consciousness as an emergent property.”⁵⁸ By exploring and defining emergent properties and tensions, then reassessing the understanding of the environment, the opportunities in the environment will present themselves.

Environmental Emergent Properties

Among systems, emergent properties appear spontaneously as a result of interaction between agents in the environment. For this study, emergent property refers to independent officer enclaves that exist throughout the Army environment. The two central ideas that support officer enclaves as relevant emergent properties are the ideas of individualism versus collectivism in the Army and the human personality behavior in the leadership of others. The distinction in individualist and collectivist cultures is in the way people live and believe within a society. The Army is a collectivist culture; “in collectivist cultures cohesive groups give individuals their sense of identity and belonging, demanding considerable loyalty in return for the sense of security that such loyalty imparts.”⁵⁹ This means that officers and soldiers seek groups within groups to belong.

The second idea of personality behavior originated in 1915 and was revalidated in 1996. The theory stated that there are five behavioral trait patterns for humans: surgency, dependability, agreeableness, adjustment, and intellectance.⁶⁰ With the exception of adjustment, the remaining

⁵⁷Axelrod and Cohen, 15.

⁵⁸Ibid., 15.

⁵⁹Hatch and Cunliffe, 184.

⁶⁰J. J. Deary, “A (Latent) Big-Five Personality Model in 1915? A Reanalysis of Webb's Data,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 71, no. 5 (November 1996): 992-1005.

four traits suggest four officer enclaves: minimalist, individualist, direct-leadership, and the committed-officer enclave. These enclaves are unconscious factions of similar and mutually reinforcing interest that perpetuate throughout the environment. Much like the approach used to define the systems and conceptual lines in the environment, the emergent properties discussed here are only some of the many that exist in the environment. An example of another set of enclaves in the environment is officers that are progressing in a career vertically and officers who have reached their final rank and are continuing horizontally. Using the same principle for determining which systems to explore, these four enclaves were selected for the general applicability to the majority of active duty officers. An individual may be a part of these enclaves without realizing they are participating or possessing awareness of other participating members.

“If emergent properties are the spontaneous outcome of ongoing processes, then to understand them one has to understand the processes that generate them.”⁶¹ Gharajedaghi classified type I and type II emergent properties. He distinguished between independent variables and interdependent variables. He pointed out the importance in this distinction by associating the collective worth of the properties as a whole. “An all-star team is not necessarily the best team in the league, and it might even lose to an average team in the same league.”⁶² In the “league” of the officer corps, the four enclaves are interdependent variables that provide resilience in leadership for the Army. Each enclave by itself simply serves one purpose, but together they form a time-dependant capability that is continuously providing a unique capability for the Army.⁶³ Officers do not permanently reside in a particular enclave. They routinely rotate in and out of them as

⁶¹Gharajedaghi, 47.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., 46

circumstances dictate. Being aware of his existence is beneficial for an officer who is interested seeking a higher degree in his development, actions, and decisions. Exploring each individual enclave provides some of the answers to how and why officers develop.

The first emergent property is the enclave of minimalists among commissioned officers. Agreeableness, known as friendliness or the need for affiliation, is the behavioral trait applicable to this enclave. This trait concerns itself with getting along with, as opposed to getting ahead of, others.⁶⁴ Considering that “most people do not want to be different,”⁶⁵ it is reasonable to expect that most officers at any given time simply want to perform the requirement assigned. The Army defines this as “standards.” A standard is the minimum achievement required in a task or effort. The reason for the creation of an Army standard is to ensure that all soldiers reach the minimum amount of achievement required for the larger unit to function. There are certainly appropriate times to be a part of this enclave. The problem with this emergent property is that it provides a false sense of empowerment and authority.

The second emergent property is the enclave of the individualist. Surgency is the behavioral trait applicable to this enclave. It involves patterns in behavior for getting ahead in life.⁶⁶ The Armed Forces Officer guide described this as “getting ahead is a matter of getting noticed. Getting noticed is an art. It has been called many things. ‘Positioning’ is the latest term used to describe an officer who gets noticed by the powers that be.”⁶⁷ This enclave consists of individuals that view the world through a lens with a scale only for the individual system. For

⁶⁴Richard Hughes, Robert Ginnett and Gordon Curphy, *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 163.

⁶⁵U.S. Department of Defense, *The Armed Forces Officer*, 4.

⁶⁶Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 162.

⁶⁷U.S. Department of Defense, *The Armed Forces Officer*, 6.

them, the immediate requirement of individual needs of their personal career outweighs all other priorities. Again, there are times in the life of a commissioned officer where this enclave is helpful and sometimes even required. Like the minimalist enclave, the challenge that this emergent property presents is that some officers reside in here permanently. Officers that permanently reside in this enclave generally achieve one of the two outcomes. One possible outcome is exposure and tragic failure in their career. Another outcome is becoming very successful and rising to positions of great authority and influence. Those who rise in their career tend to influence others by perpetuating their beliefs and values that led them to their success. These values typically tend to game the system and consist of recipe formulas that are created for the sake of individual success. This enclave is one of the most important in the environment due to the unintended influence and misinterpretation possible. Compounding the challenges that this enclave presents is the officer promotion system. The institutional strategy for the promotion system is ideal. However, the artifacts utilized in this effort are subjective evaluations that perpetuate valuing perception above performance. A distorted understanding of pleasing one individual versus fulfilling all duties becomes the central issue in the influence of developing officers that permanently reside in this enclave.

The third emergent property is the direct leadership enclave. Dependability is the behavioral trait applicable to this enclave. It involves patterns in behavior related to one's approach to work. Officers high in dependability prefer structure and tend to be risk averse.⁶⁸ This enclave consists of officers that define leadership as first-hand actions. A unique characteristic of this enclave is that officers must be members of this enclave from time to time to

⁶⁸Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 164.

lead others. Officers that remain permanently in this enclave typically do not do so by choice. In this enclave, officers are either incapable of leaving for various emotional or physical limitations or have had a dysfunctional entry-level development. The concept of mimicking helps explain the latter of the two reasons for not being able to depart from this enclave.⁶⁹

Upon entry, most junior officers are very impressionable. Interacting with a charismatic supervisor or senior rater often results in officers aspiring to emulate them. Depending on the circumstances existing within a unit system, the command climate may not lend itself to open discourse on how or why the senior officers that are worthy of emulation are created. Due to this void in understanding, junior officers adopt (or mimic) fragments of observed actions in hopes of emulating performance. Attempting to perform certain actions without understanding the context (or background) in depth of preparations is as dangerous as mimicking actions from a movie or show. Much like the disclaimers of “these are professionals-do not attempt this at home” associated with such performances, inspiring military leaders require a certain dialogue to comprehend. Clausewitz captured this phenomenon as routine when he wrote, “they will copy their supreme commander’s favorite device--thus automatically creating a new routine...No matter how superbly a great commander operates, there is always a subjective element in his work. If he displays a certain style, it will in large part reflect his own personality; but that will not always blend with the personality of the man who copies that style.”⁷⁰

Considering the incredible responsibilities and authorities in a commissioned officer’s career, making appropriate conclusions in development is crucial. In the absence of such a

⁶⁹Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (San Francisco: Wiley Imprint, 1987), 107-118.

⁷⁰Clausewitz, 154.

dialogue, officers see the direct approach to leadership as the best way to lead. Although there is merit to direct leadership, it is only one part of leading; “every bad leader I have ever worked with never knew how to empower his or her subordinates. I have learned that leaders require the aid of the entire unit in order to be successful.”⁷¹ The danger in this approach is that it negates the propensity of an officer’s career to expand and increase the scope of influence. By the time a developing officer reaches their first command, the direct leadership approach provides limited utility.

An appropriate example for this enclave is a business corporation. Imagine a sales corporation that was unable to outsource its senior executives. With the implied requirement of having to grow their own executives, the career path for aspiring executives would have to be broad enough to understand the general dynamics and characteristics of the entire corporation. An appropriate place to begin such development would be managing a department on a sales floor. The ability to personally make a sale or handle a problem would complement executive development and prove tremendously powerful in establishing credibility with peers and subordinates. However, once an executive progressed to a regional, national, or international organizational posting, continuing to use a direct approach would limit the decision-making skills of the executive. Although there are always appropriate times for direct leadership at all levels, utilizing and developing only one skill for too long can lead to a dysfunctional development in leadership skills. Understanding that leadership is both direct and indirect is something that at times requires open dialogue with someone of tremendous credibility. The importance of this emergent property is validated in the Wal-Mart decision (previously discussed) to outsource its

⁷¹Schirmer, et. al., 97.

senior leadership. Clearly, Wal-Mart possessed enough management candidates from within for promotion. However, the company identified the distinction in “direct-leadership” talent they possessed and “organizational-leadership” they required.

The last emergent property is that of the committed-officer enclave. Intellectance, is the behavioral trait applicable to this enclave. It involves behavioral patterns dealing in assessment, problem solving, and adapting to new environments. The ability to be broad minded, intellectually curious, and think largely are all characteristics of this trait.⁷² Clausewitz best describes how this trait relates to military officers, “two qualities are indispensable: first, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead.”⁷³ This enclave consists of officers that are able to understand the intent of their duties and assigned responsibilities. Their actions reflect a general effort to fulfill not only the requirements of their duties, but also the intent of the overall effort. They are able to grasp the role that they are playing in the grand scheme of the effort. They consistently are striving to figure out the purpose for their efforts. At times, officers in this enclave are mislabeled “self-starters.” A self-starter is “somebody with the initiative and motivation to work without needing help or supervision.”⁷⁴ Although this is true of officers in this enclave, it is true of officers in other enclaves as well. It is important to distinguish “self-starting officers” from “committed officers” to properly assess

⁷²Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 165.

⁷³Clausewitz, 102.

⁷⁴Encarta, “World English Dictionary” MSN Encarta, <http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?lextype=3&search=self%2dstarter> (accessed March 15, 2010).

developing officers and intervene in an officer's development when they are working-hard in the wrong direction.

Unlike other enclaves that pose a challenge with permanent residence of officers, this enclave provides benefits to the development environment. Unfortunately, the challenges and efforts required by permanently residing in this enclave are vast. Interacting in the environment through this approach solely would prove to be problematic in sustaining an appropriate balance with all agents in an environment. Additionally, not utilizing the approaches of the other three enclaves would result in a situation where a worthy officer could be passed-up for promotion, subordinates could misunderstand strength for weakness, or where an effort resulted in a negative return.

After exploring the development environment using emergent property theory, the interpersonal dynamics amongst the officer corps become clearer. The four officer enclaves described illustrate multiple perspectives that exist in the environment. Understanding how officers group and which perspectives are prioritized amongst enclaves is important for developing officers. Establishing the correct balance in interaction amongst the four officer enclaves benefits an enduring development approach.

Internal System Tensions

Up to now, the development environment has been explored as an open system. A closed system approach is used to identify system tensions. This section will begin with the institutional system and then progress to the unit system and individual system. Inside the Institutional System, two tensions stand out: stewardship and the development approach.

The first tension in this system is in the area of stewardship of intent. Institutional programs lack appropriate representation. The official chain of command is the only control mechanism for ensuring the success of these programs. This tension originates in the creation of institutional strategies. Populations in this system select strategies based on closed system

assessments. These programs are crafted on a best-case scenario. The Arroyo Center study contains an example of this tension. Out of four hundred and five officers, when asked how often their senior rater discussed leadership skills or their development, twenty percent of the captains and twenty-five percent of field grades responded “never.” Forty percent of captains and forty-two percent of field grades responded “less than once a year.”⁷⁵ Clearly, this is not the intent of the Army’s evaluation programs. Another example of this is in the “pillars of leader development” versus the “domains of leader development.” The Army publicly acknowledges both concepts. Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV presented a testimony to Congress utilizing “pillars”⁷⁶ and DA Pamphlet 600-3 utilizes “domains.”⁷⁷ Although the labels are trivial, the concepts are not. Pillars consist of education, training, and experience, while domains consist of operational development, institutional development, and self-development. Both strategies seek similar goals; however, a lack in stewardship at the institutional level results in confusion. In this case, the omission of self-development is caused by an absent explanation on how pillars and domains co-exist. This tension impacts officer development by causing ambiguity for developing officers that already have limited time constraints and competing priorities.

In this system, agents assign responsibility to individuals regardless of capacity. This creates a problematic situation for appropriate stewardship of any institutional program. Another example of this is in the *Army Command Policy* regulation. The first chapter is dedicated to the responsibilities of command. The remaining seven chapters are dedicated to various

⁷⁵Schirmer, et.al., 46.

⁷⁶William B. Caldwell, IV, “Hearing Information,” House Armed Services Committee, http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/OI072809/Caldwell_Testimony072809.pdf (accessed January 18, 2010), 3.

⁷⁷U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Army Pamphlet 600-3, 2.

administrative and punitive requirements of a commander.⁷⁸ After reading this regulation, it is difficult to conceive that a single individual could be a good steward over all of these responsibilities, given the fact that there is absolutely no mention of tactical and combat responsibilities.

The second tension in this system is in the area of the development approach itself. Force trainers use the three-domain strategy described earlier for officer development: self-development domain, operational domain, and institutional domain.⁷⁹ However, a limited distribution of resources from the institutional system to the unit and individual system impedes the potential in the overall efforts of officer development. “In our discussions with groups of majors and captains, the initial response to questions about their self-development effort was usually silence. Even the senior officers had difficulty articulating what a self-development program should comprise.”⁸⁰ However, at the same time, the Center for Army Leadership has an entire book dedicated to “self-development.”⁸¹ The resources that the Department of Defense and the Army provide for officer development are simply overwhelming, but these resources do not meet their potential. A portion of the cause lies in accessibility and awareness of these resources. The access (format, various websites, and difficult search engines) to this knowledge is not synchronized or integrated. Internet usage prior to universal search engines is a good comparison on where the Army currently finds itself in this effort.

⁷⁸U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Army Regulation 600-20, 1-80.

⁷⁹U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Army Pamphlet 600-3, 2.

⁸⁰Schirmer, et.al, 51.

⁸¹U.S. Department of Defense, “Self-Development Handbook” Center for Army Leadership, http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CAL/repository/SDev_Handbook20.pdf (accessed March 02, 2010).

In the Unit System, tensions can be found in the areas of positional power and unit development programs. The power tension unintentionally exists between the commander, staff, and unit member agents of this system. The strategy used to achieve goals by these agents is where the tension begins. Distinguishing between power and authority is important to understand this tension. Authority derives from a position in a hierarchy, while power derives from many forms such as “personal characteristics...expertise...skills... intelligence... coercion... control... opportunities...and resources”.⁸² The commander of a unit is the agent in the system that possesses supreme authority. Due to this position staff and other agents are reluctant to question, provide feedback or even ask for clarification at times. The tension begins when a commander approaches the unit system with a pre-conceived narrative. A commander may not realize the effect of environmental changes in time. Understanding that the limitations of an individual continue to apply to commanders is important for other agents of this system to acknowledge. How this tension limits officer development for command is in the consistency in the strategy towards this goal by a commander. “A common statement amongst captains was ‘I had two battalion commanders. One focused on developing junior officers. One focused on his in-box, and we never saw him.’”⁸³ From these types of statements by junior officers, it is clear that consistency in the approach to officer development varies too much. Commanders and developing officers would benefit by an open command climate that fosters communication for such valuable input.

The second tension is unit development programs. Taking a cursory glance at the operating environment through the Arroyo study, the component of Officer Professional

⁸²Hatch and Cunliffe, 254.

⁸³Schirmer, et.al., 32.

Development sessions stands out as a major component in unit programs. Development sessions consist of various approaches to educate officers in a military unit. Historical staff rides, classroom instruction, written assignments, or simple periodic gatherings are some of the conventional approaches used for development sessions. Some unit programs consist of just development sessions.⁸⁴ These development sessions are the norm within tactical units. Although development sessions serve a great function by providing a means to prioritize what commander's want officers to learn, they possess an inherent drawback. Conducting these development sessions gives a false-sense of reassurance to a commander that unit officer-development is occurring ideally. Unless sessions nest towards a unified objective and integrate with evaluations, unofficial counseling, official feedback, and routine dialogue development is not occurring.⁸⁵ Conducting fragmented officer professional development sessions is like having random engagements on the battlefield not orchestrated for a unified objective.

In the Individual System, the tensions are in the area of expectations and growth. In the first tension, opposing forces begin with individual interpretations of goals presented by the immediate supervisor and senior commander agents. The immediate supervisor focuses on the accomplishment of the short-term duties for the officer, and the senior commander performs the role of liaison to the larger scale goal of producing a next generation of army leaders. Being able to see the larger canvas to contrast the daily duties of a job with the overall duties of a profession is important for the development of future commanders. The emergent properties of the individualist officer and dedicated officer enclaves play a key role in the interpretation of the

⁸⁴Ibid., 19-23.

⁸⁵U.S. Department of Defense, "Commander's Handbook for Unit Leader Development," Center for Army Leadership, [http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CAL/repository/Commanders Handbook% 5B1%5D.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/CAL/repository/Commanders%20Handbook%205B1%5D.pdf) (accessed March 02, 2010), 4-6.

dynamics revolving around this tension. The importance on development placed by an officer will significantly differ on this interpretation. Focusing on achieving immediate goals for short-term goals must be balanced with long-term efforts. This tension compounds with the emotional and social domains of an individual. Due to requirements of maintaining social standing and balancing emotional requirements, young officers do not ask for clarification or seek assistance to preserve approval from superiors. Removing these options leaves an individual with the limited tool of observation. Observation is a function of interpretation and can lead to a dysfunctional understanding as mentioned in the direct-leadership officer enclave. With the demands required to understand institutional procedures and technical job knowledge, entry officers are easily confused to believing that immediate job requirements are all that exists. Understanding the whole of the commissioned officer's profession is extremely challenging. This is where the field-grade commander concept really begins to emerge. It is here where an individual must begin making choices--being decisive. Acknowledging or seeking the decision to make a career of the military is important to development. This avoids procrastinating through 12 years of military service and then suddenly realizing actively begin professional development. According to the Army, it is striving to produce an officer with these capabilities:

The goal of Army leader development is to produce agile and adaptive expeditionary leaders who are... able to frame and analyze their environment across a multitude of operational variables, ...defeat an enemy who presents asymmetric threats, ... engage multiple adversaries with multiple agendas simultaneously... provide us with the capability to successfully interact at the human level with not only our own Soldiers, but with joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners; the indigenous populace and government.⁸⁶

⁸⁶U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Army Pamphlet 600-3, 7.

Considering the ambiguous nature of the contemporary operational environment (as defined in the Capstone Concept for Joint operations), the Army is correct in establishing such goals for officer leadership. Unfortunately, a majority of the key and essential capabilities underlined above are not achievable by solely relying on branch technical skills or operational unit assignments below a brigade for development. Yet this is where a majority of the focus is on for a twenty-year career worth of development. These skills are extremely important and required to achieve battlefield success, but just as important to the professional officer should be the analysis, assessment and decision-making capabilities underlined above. The combined efforts and achievement in a twenty-year career worth of development should be by design and intention, not chance. Although there are limited opportunities to command the senior staff that surrounds the commander has the duty to take command if the commander should be incapacitated--therefore achieving the ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of a field-grade commander is applicable to all officers serving a twenty-year career.

The second tension in this system is in the area of growth. Growth refers to the ability for an individual officer to develop capabilities in pursuit of the Army's officer goals. This tension emerges between the goals and strategies of the reviewing commander/senior commander and those of the supervisor, peers, emotional domain, and social domain. Unless the value of future capabilities is understood, an appreciation for the preparation required is not possible, thereby decreasing the priority in immediate needs for officer development. This is why it is so important for young officers to receive holistic explanations of the officer corps profession. If no one explains the purpose and intent of officer development, a young officer will not be able to understand the depth of preparations required to perform at a certain level of responsibility in the distant future. Realizing how development integrates and nests from inception to retirement explains the purpose of career timelines, assignments, and associated requirements. This conclusion is important for developing officers when they are balancing their energy and time if the Army is to succeed in their goals. The officer enclave (minimalist, direct-leadership,

individualist, dedicated-officer) in which the officer resides when making this conclusion significantly affects the interpretation of the issues surrounding it. For this reason, the conclusion of what officer-development is should be continuously reassessed throughout a career.

Officer development is projected towards long-term goals. An example of this is the Joint Professional Military Education Program for Pre-commissioning education. CJSCI 1800.01D specifies pre-commissioning education requirements that are broad in nature and give a general overview of company and field-grade educational material. “In addition to an introduction to their respective Service, students should have knowledge of the basic U.S. defense structure, roles and missions of other Military Services, the combatant command structure, and the nature of American military power and joint warfare.”⁸⁷ The reason for these requirements is that awareness in future knowledge requirements are necessary prior to precious operational experiences to prevent the squandering of these life experience.

Environmental Tensions

Going beyond the boundaries of individual systems, environmental tensions focus on the tendencies in interaction amongst all systems in the environment.⁸⁸ The concept of multiple systems is rooted in the need for diversification and specialization. The metaphor of an automobile is often used to describe general systems theory.⁸⁹ Using this same metaphor, the system tensions previously identified focus on the electrical or steering system of officer

⁸⁷U.S. Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1800 01D, *Officer Professional Military Education Policy* (OPMEP) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), A-A-6.

⁸⁸Gharajedaghi, 30-32.

⁸⁹Hatch and Cunliffe, 37-39.

development. This section will focus on the tensions that affect the entire automobile. There are two areas of tension in the environment: the practice of officer development and information management throughout and across the systems.

In the first environmental tension, the concept of the narrative is paramount. The meaning of officer development depends on the mindset of the officer (amongst the four enclaves) and the system where they make that conclusion.⁹⁰ In the institutional system, an officer in the minimalist enclave may conclude that development consists of completing professional military schooling, while an officer in the individualist enclave may conclude that development consist of nominative assignments. In the individual system, an officer in the direct-leadership enclave may determine that development consists of spending all of their time conducting battlefield circulation, while an officer in the committed enclave concludes that development consists of a balance between coaching subordinates, mastering skills one level above them, and learning skills two levels above them. The ambiguity that surrounds this question is open to interpretation due the various systems (scale of environment) and mindsets (enclave interaction) active within the environment. All of the conclusions made in these examples are correct. It is all officer development. However, these conclusions only describe fragments of the whole. To this tension, meaning is everything. The questions arise: what is officer development? More importantly, how does an officer do it?

In the environment, each individual agent is committed to a strategy in pursuit of a goal. These efforts repeat amongst agents in all systems.⁹¹ If an officer is attending a military course, they are learning material for an academic requirement. If they are attending an officer professional development session, the goal is set for the existing command. If they are receiving

⁹⁰Gharajedaghi, 44.

⁹¹Axelrod and Cohen, 3-4.

an evaluation or formal counseling, it is for a particular duty position. Integrating these efforts to a collective whole for the officer is where this tension exists. An example of this tension is the Joint Professional Military Education Program for Pre-commissioning education. CJSCI 1800.01D specifies pre-commissioning education requirements that are broad in nature and give a general overview of company and field-grade educational material. “In addition to an introduction to their respective Service, students should have knowledge of the basic U.S. defense structure, roles and missions of other Military Services, the combatant command structure, and the nature of American military power and joint warfare.”⁹² The reason for these requirements is that awareness in future knowledge requirements are necessary prior to precious operational events to ensure appropriate development in a lifetime of experience. Integrated learning avoids decomposition by acknowledging the connections between categories of learning and the many ways they work together all around the officer.⁹³ The omission of an integrated strategy, that is widely circulated, specifically for officer development prevents the Army from establishing a common understanding amongst officers.

The second environmental tension is information management throughout the environment. Providing the right information, to the right people, at the right time is challenging in any endeavor.⁹⁴ The dissemination of knowledge exists in the vertical and horizontal information flow throughout the three systems in the environment.⁹⁵ The Army’s unique mission makes a clear chain of command a necessity. The chain of command preserves the intent of

⁹²U.S. Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1800 01D, A-A-6.

⁹³Yaneer Bar-Yam, *Making Things Work: Solving Complex Problems in a Complex World* (Cambridge: NECSI Knowledge Press, 2004), 168.

⁹⁴Axelrod and Cohen, 106-108.

⁹⁵Gharajedaghi, 96.

important themes and messages within the environment from top-down and from bottom-up. Preserving stewardship of intent is one of the unique strengths of the Army. Unfortunately, the chain of command also creates a significant hierarchy that at times creates a bottleneck effect of information in all directions.⁹⁶ Balancing the benefits of the chain of command and limiting the disadvantages of a hierarchy is where opposing forces begin to emerge. How this tension is relevant for officer development is in the link between the officer developing and the entirety of Army development resources.

As described in the environmental description, Army officer development occurs in all three systems, by multiple agents, by different strategies. An individual officer can benefit from all institutional or unit development information within his own environment. They can also benefit from other officers' development environments. The concepts of differentiation, specialization, and integration are relevant to this tension.⁹⁷ The specialization required by distinct units, missions, or branches forces differentiation in officer development. Integrating these approaches, would allow the army to disseminate knowledge on best practices in developing for interested officers.

One of the key aspects to the power associated in the individual system is the relationship between mentor and protégé. An important variable in these relationships is the personal approach of the two individuals in the relationship. The two individuals complement one another like pieces in a puzzle. The same principle is applicable to unit development and practices of institutional development resources. By providing a pool of information to sort through, an individual could pick-up a style or practice for individual or unit development concepts. This is

⁹⁶Bar-Yam, 65-66.

⁹⁷Gharajedaghi, 92-93.

where these interactive programs begin to become more relevant. Institutionally, the Army is creating different interactive means of transferring information relevant for development purposes. However, it is pale in comparison to the unrestricted means in the civilian sector. Due to the significant difference, most officers seeking information prefer to utilize non-military sources because of ease in access.

The Potential of Meaningful Opportunities

After exploring the environment and tensions of officer development, it is important to re-assess. Understanding the contrasts, constraints, and limitations in developing future commanders places a different perspective on Army goals and efforts. Although improvement in these efforts is possible by creating new structures, assigning new responsibilities, and changing existing programs, enough opportunity exists in the environment. A certain restraint on opportunities exists to avoid relegating improvement to simply more change. Too often, the Army seeks to find answers in change. The Army is unable to harness the full extent in benefits from changes due to the duration of the change itself. Instead taking the time to understand why there is a problem, the Army generally stops short at simply identifying the problem, finding fault or no fault, then proposing a change to the approach. The issue with this type of approach is that the solutions generally are intended to be permanent. Once the solutions get implemented, at the first negative sign, the cycle repeats itself and the potential in the change is never reached. Five general areas possess potential for improving the officer corps. These areas are in information management, formal counseling, unit development programs, mentorship, and an officer development strategy.

The first opportunity is information management and consists of consolidation and integration of available information for officer development. This opportunity is relevant to the information management environmental tension (getting the correct information to appropriate developing officers). This opportunity exists in the institutional system. An overwhelming

amount of centers, departments, official publications, and articles on the topic of officer development exists. Although the redundancy in venues of the same scope of knowledge provides diversification, the limited access and awareness of each source significantly limits the return that the Army can achieve.

An example of this opportunity is the Army Knowledge On-line portal. Already in existence inside of the portal is a hyperlink for “My Leader Development.” Currently, this section is only populated with a link for the Multisource Assessment Feedback program. This assessment program is a great development tool for an individual. It creates a “360” feedback assessment loop for personal development.⁹⁸ Although the portal section is a great tool, it does not come close to presenting the Army’s full range of development resources. Elements of the U.S. Army Center of Military History, the Army’s Official Home Page, TRADOC news service, the Combined Army Research Library, the War College, and the Combined Arms Center are just a few pieces of information relevant to officer development. Integrating these centers into a one-stop site that is user friendly would substantially increase the utility of these centers. The information that exists out there should not be challenge to find for developing officers. A prioritized list of capstone doctrines, Army pamphlets that relate to officers, and a strategy specific to officer development would exponentially benefit the officer corps.

At any point in a career, an officer should know exactly what knowledge the institution values and what options are available in the remainder of that career. There should not be voids of knowledge that surprisingly appear. A good example of this is the Enhanced Graduate School Program under the Eisenhower Leader Development Program in partnership with Columbia

⁹⁸U.S. Department of Defense, “Self-Development Handbook,” 2-4.

University. The program develops desired senior officer skills. The United States Military Academy conducts the Eisenhower program to develop tactical officers. This program requires a three-year utilization tour at the academy. The enhanced graduate program is the same as the Eisenhower program and does not require a utilization tour.⁹⁹ Unfortunately, unless an officer was looking into information for becoming staff at the academy, they would not find this information. This is just one example of information that should be managed differently to improve the process of appropriately developing future officers and provide the best field grade commanders.

The second opportunity is formal counseling. This opportunity is relevant to environmental tensions (practice) and the system tensions of stewardship (institutional), power and unit development (unit), and expectations and growth (individual). This opportunity exists in the unit system. The commissioned officer culture relegates formal counseling to an officer's immediate supervisor (Rater) and their senior commander (Senior Rater). Official statements emphasize the desired system:

Commanders play a critical part in development by understanding the roles of all their officers, their education and development needs and incorporating them into a unit officer professional development process. All officers look to their rater, senior rater, and mentors for advice and career counseling. Some counseling is official, such as the preparation and submission of DA Form 67-9 (Officer Evaluation Report) and DA Form 67-9-1 (Officer Evaluation Report Support Form). Other forms of counseling are often unofficial and relate to career patterns, advice about assignments and duty positions. Regardless of the type of counseling, commanders should be factually informed before rendering advice. This pamphlet contains many of the professional development facts that commanders need to give wise counsel.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹United States Military Academy, "Eisenhower Leadership Development program," Behavioral Sciences and Leadership, <http://www.dean.usma.edu/departments/bsl/ELDP.cfm> (accessed March 5, 2010).

¹⁰⁰U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Army Pamphlet 600-3, 24.

As indicated above, official counseling directly links to an officer's development. An evaluation consists of a support form (DA Form 67-9-1) and the evaluation report (DA Form 67-9). The idea behind this process is that the support form facilitates the development process by requiring dialogue between the officer, supervisor and senior commander. The support form establishes the senior commander's priorities and expectations. The developing officer utilizes the support form to propose ways to fulfill the senior commander's expectations. The intent is the formal initiation of the evaluation period, followed-up by cyclical re-evaluation until the issuance of a final evaluation. Currently, the intended practice of this process is not followed.¹⁰¹ The support form is an afterthought in the evaluation process.

One of the reasons for this practice is the narrative that officers created as a function of their development. In systems, individuals make decisions to streamline, postpone, or amend formal requirements for the sake of expediency. Unintended consequences result from these types of actions due to a void in explanation of the decision itself. As individuals continue to insert, adapt, and eventually evolve in the environment, they lack the ability to contrast actions experienced, when there is an absence in explanation. To them there is no amendment or abbreviation. They develop understanding normal and correct as a function of their personal experiences and practices. Somewhere in the process of temporarily amending something, it becomes permanent if the explanations are not carried forward with the actions. This is the status that the officer culture finds itself concerning formal counseling.

Imagine going through an academic institution with no official feedback. A student simply receives a grade at the end of the year. Now imagine the impact of academic development

¹⁰¹Schirmer, et.al., 48-51.

in that type of environment. This is how the Army is unintentionally developing officers. The necessity for official dialogue with senior commanders is significant to development. There is no surprise when a letter grade is received in a class. There should be no surprise or guesswork for an official officer evaluation as well. Following the official intended practice of this system only facilitates the responsibilities of a commander. This approach enables self-responsibility in performance. Students do not blame their instructor, nor thank their instructors for the grade they receive. They understand that the grade they receive is the grade they earned. The coaching and mentoring that occurs along this process is exactly the intent of these programs.

Aligning current practices of the support form closer with its original intent possesses significant challenges within the established officer norms. General Petraeus spoke of a similar challenge that he faced as a commander in his address to Command and General Staff College students in the fall of 2008.¹⁰² He described a challenge in mutual supporting efforts amongst his subordinate commanders. He went on to explain that eventually his solution came in the means of the officer support form. He added a bullet that read “Team Player” underneath his expectations. He made his commanders aware of his expectations and then asked them to quantify their efforts towards this expectation. Commanders abroad can learn from this example and add a simple bullet of “developing future commanders” to support forms of their subordinates.

The third opportunity is in the area of unit officer development programs. This opportunity is relevant to both environmental tensions and the system tensions of stewardship (institutional), power and unit development (unit), expectations and growth (individual). This opportunity exists in the unit system. This is another effort in current practice that is not yielding

¹⁰²General David Petraeus, “Class of 2009” (Lecture-For Attribution, Command General Staff College, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Kansas, September 22, 2008).

the best returns for developing future commanders. Unlike the previous two opportunities, the Army has identified this issue and presented a logical solution to harness the potential in this opportunity. The Center for Army Leadership has developed and published a pamphlet titled *Commander's Handbook for Unit Leader Development*. Along with this pamphlet the center has published two supporting documents titled *Army Leader Transition Handbook*¹⁰³ and *The Self-Development Handbook*.¹⁰⁴ An integration of the recommendations and knowledge of all three documents provides an ideal platform for an institutional model of leader development. Based on the Arroyo study and general officer experience there is no centralized solution to execute unit-leader development program.¹⁰⁵ However, unit development programs possess the largest influence in the development of an individual (contrasting development to institutional and self-development).¹⁰⁶ Perhaps most important, this platform provides a known point from which institutional, unit, and individual commanders or leaders can contrast their own development environment. Although there is no exact unit officer development program ideal for all units, we do know the general tenets of ideal officer development.¹⁰⁷ The Army should be able to account for these tenets in some manner amongst officer unit-development programs. The key to this opportunity is approaching unit officer-development programs with an open mind. Experiences of personal development will be valuable for reflection when creating the programs, but can limit the amount knowledge received when learning or in this case re-learning what officer

¹⁰³U.S. Department of Defense, "Army Leader Transition Book," Center for Army Leadership, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cal/repository/LeadershipTransition.pdf> (accessed March 2, 2010).

¹⁰⁴U.S. Department of Defense, "Self-Development Handbook".

¹⁰⁵Schirmer, et. al., 19-23.

¹⁰⁶U.S. Department of Defense, "Army Leadership Development Strategy," 1-7.

¹⁰⁷U.S. Department of Defense, "Commander's Handbook for Unit Leader Development," 1-6.

development means. A clear lens must be used when approaching this opportunity. The three Center for Army Leadership documents can be summarized into one word: integration.

The commander's handbook integrates research, doctrine, and experience. An example of this concept is the *Situation-Observation-Assessment-Reinforce-Recommend* tool. This report presents a tool (artifact) for commanders to be used in for un-official and official counseling. The report provides commanders a means to populate patterns of behavior to reinforce or recommend actions for a developing officer. Alongside this report is an action plan to delegate roles and responsibilities by position within a unit hierarchy.¹⁰⁸ This enables a commander to diversify their observation perspective of an officer. This reporting tool empowers a commander with the flexibility of randomly assigning the task of observation and assessment ranging from a subordinate, peer, or mentor to better populate the officer's profile. According to the commander's handbook, this reporting tool can be utilized for quarterly counseling and eventually support the quantification an annual evaluation.¹⁰⁹ All of these actions remain at the sole discretion of the commander. In principle this concept will integrate a unit officer-development program.

The fourth opportunity is in the area of mentorship. This opportunity is relevant to both environmental tensions and the system tensions of stewardship (institutional), unit development (unit), expectations and growth (individual). This opportunity exists in the individual system. The cultural understanding amongst the officer corps equates to a relationship between a mentor and a protégé.¹¹⁰ The mentor is generally a senior officer and the protégé is junior officer. The mystery

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 19-21.

¹¹⁰Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 57-59.

that surrounds mentorship comes in the form of a question. How, where and when do officers obtain a desirable mentor? No one specific solution quantifies a universal answer to this question. However, there are certain parts and variables to this opportunity worth exploring to gain a broader understanding on mentorship relationships.

In the first part, one of the mentorship variables is the narrative of individuals. In its most basic form a narrative is comparable to a book.¹¹¹ The experiences in an individual's life fill-in the blank pages of his book. Generally, books with similar topics, publishers, even distributors complement one another. The complement may come in the form of contrast or agreement. These similarities enable a functional understanding from which to project forward. Some of the most successful mentorship relationships are often described as simply "made to fit."¹¹² Participating individuals involved usually served together, enjoy the same hobbies, or enjoy mutual interests. In essence, they travel in similar circles and perceive environments in a similar fashion. This means that the difference in understanding is generally the level of experience. This helps instruction, learning, and general dialogue.

Another mentorship variable is acknowledgement. Since most officers do not walk around with a sign that reads "seeking mentor" or "open mentor vacancies," these relationships usually begin informally. Acknowledging when the relationship has evolved from association or friendship to mentorship is important for both participants. In one regard it saves confusion. A mentor that is actively participating with twenty protégés may not be able to fulfill an officer's needs in development. On the reverse end, a protégé that has six generals, ten colonels, and

¹¹¹Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987), 1-2.

¹¹²Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 59.

various majors trying to give them advice may not be able to give full acknowledgement of a particular mentor's advice. Understanding that these situations exist is important. The principle here is that protégés and mentors are thinking about this variable, not that a formal contract or agreement is necessary.¹¹³ In another regard this variable ensures an equitable distribution of mentors. For whatever reason, there are individual officers that somehow never cement a solid mentor relationship. Likewise, other individuals have mentors in abundance.

The last mentorship variable is diversification. One mentor cannot serve all functions. Understanding the complexity in our lives enables us to organize our efforts more effectively. In officer development, most officers simply look towards senior officers for mentorship. Some officers just focus in their current unit or branch. Understanding the various professional systems that an officer actively participates or will participate in the future, helps in diversifying the mentors an officer seeks out. A multi-directional approach may be necessary. Most officers do this all the time. They learn from a subordinate Non-Commissioned Officers. They just may not acknowledge they are being mentored. Ultimately, the function of mentorship is to prepare appropriately for future responsibilities and expectations. Ensuring that a steward or ambassador in a particular area of interest, with the appropriate experience, and a common narrative is facilitating development is the essence of mentorship.

The second part of this opportunity is the Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback program. The Center for Army Leadership manages this assessment program (mentioned earlier under opportunity one: information management). This assessment program provides confidential

¹¹³Schirmer, et.al., 68-72.

feedback for individuals to assess and personally develop themselves.¹¹⁴ Since the assessment program is confidential, there is limited use for open dialogue in an official capacity. However, since mentorship is by choice and an element of trust is inherent within the relationship. A protégé or a mentor can use this assessment to enhance development.¹¹⁵

The fifth and last opportunity is a development strategy dedicated for officers. This opportunity is relevant specifically to the competing interest tension inside the institutional system. It is also relevant to both environmental tensions and the system tensions of stewardship (institutional), unit development (unit), expectations and growth (individual). This opportunity exists in the institutional system. Understanding how officers currently develop throughout an entire career of service is necessary to understand the purpose of development efforts. This includes why the Army is organized in a certain professional military education model, why the current subjects are being taught, why the officer career path is organized in a certain manner, why there are various paths to an officer's service and career, and why officers are currently needed. This explanation must be synchronized amongst all PME institutions, it must be accessible for reference when serving in operational assignments, and most importantly it must be updated and centrally maintained. It should synchronize and account for all formal regulations and requirements on officer development, provide all possible opportunities in assignment and education, explain the intent of each phase of efforts that is expected of commissioned officers, and quantify a unified goal for a lifetime of officer development.

¹¹⁴U.S. Department of Defense, "Army Looking to Improve Leadership Capabilities," United States Army News, <http://www.army.mil/-news/2008/05/22/9351-army-looking-to-improve-leadership-capabilities/> (accessed March 3, 2010).

¹¹⁵Ibid. A detailed pamphlet that explains how to interpret this assessment report and utilize the information for development is provided by the center.

Army senior leadership is currently focused in creating awareness on this subject. General Dempsey summarized the 2010 TRADOC Senior Leader Conference, held in March, into prioritized goals for unit commanders. The Army's goals for all commanders are to adapt to their learning environments, participate and understand the *Army Capstone Concept* and *Army Leader Development Strategy*, and finally to generate excitement amongst formations in figuring out how to improve our Army.¹¹⁶ Senior generals understand that the centerpiece of the Army is the individual soldier, that they must be led by officers, that command influence is essential for development, and that commanders are responsible for development. Currently some of these institutional explanations exist. However, they are fragmented and dispersed throughout the Army.

The 2009 Army Leader Development Strategy is the closest artifact that the Army possesses to fill this void. However, this strategy is not popular, it is not taught at PME courses, PME institutions do not account for it in their mission and intent statements (implying that there is minimal consideration given to this strategy), and most importantly it does not provide a specific officer development platform.¹¹⁷ This strategy does identify that "Implementing annexes [to this strategy] for officer, noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, and civilian leaders will guide our efforts."¹¹⁸ This implies that the need for a specific officer development strategy exists. The opportunity in this area would be to follow-up on the creation of such an annex and then integrate it into PME and operational commands.

¹¹⁶U.S. Department of Defense, *Reflections on the TRADOC Senior Leader Conference- March 2010* (Memorandum Format, Washington: Government Printing Office, 2010), 1-2.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹⁸U.S. Department of Defense, "Army Leadership Development Strategy," 14.

Conclusions

Upon completing an examination of the environment where the Army currently develops officers and commanders, the propensity of existing practices and the potential of future development should be clearer. Through this study, decision makers can acknowledge and quantify that a developing officer interacts in at least three systems simultaneously. This enables a better approach for any agent in the environment attempting to engage an officer. Developing officers within the environment should recognize the importance of assessment skills required to distinguish an artifact in one system from an agent in another system of interaction. Agents in the unit system can benefit from integrating the four officer enclaves into unit development programs. Finally, the five opportunities presented cannot only serve to enhance the development of emerging officers; it can facilitate the creation of an ideal command climate in military units.

With the inability of the Army to bring in field grade officers from outside the profession, the management and stewardship of development efforts is vital. Balancing the operational tempo in a time of war with the development of the Army's future leadership is not possible without significant intervention. The Training and Doctrine Command is attempting to meet this demand. The energy injected through the institutional system is penetrating down to the unit and individual systems. Overall, three central conclusions summarize the study.

First, officer development occurs throughout a lifetime of service. The Army's current strategy on leader development recognizes makes it a point to recognize this conclusion. The strategy establishes a "campaign of learning." This campaign acknowledges the depth required to achieve senior leadership capabilities.¹¹⁹ If done correctly, officer development rarely leads to

¹¹⁹Ibid., 1.

immediately visible results. Rather, development is a multi-dimension process that is continuous in nature. Existing field-grade commanders must balance between immediate requirements and the stewardship of the Army's future commanders. Simply put, the switch for officer development is always "turned-on." Future commanders are actively growing in the environment regardless of whether they are cognizant of their development. Lessons learned are sometimes permanent.¹²⁰ The temporal depth to develop command capabilities is well over two decades. Every year counts. The Army cannot afford to have individuals begin to develop in the last five years of a lifetime process.

Second, whether an officer is an agent in the individual, unit, or institutional system—everyone plays a role that is significant to the overall Army effort of developing future commanders and leaders. Improvement is possible from multiple directions and at various intensities. According to congressional testimony, the TRADOC commander is the overall steward for Army officer development and the CAC commander is his delegated authority to execute this effort.¹²¹ However, the CAC commander resides in the institutional system. The link between the institutional effort and the operational unit effort still needs integration of resources and intent. The Army Leader Development Strategy mends current seams in this area but requires the annexes specific to officer development to provide a reference that is common from the institutional system to the unit system.

Third, command development does not begin or end at a certain rank. By exploring the environment where future commanders develop, the power and importance of initial development

¹²⁰ Schön, 154-156.

¹²¹ Caldwell, 2.

was established. Understanding the difference between learning something correctly the first time, versus correcting unintended lessons, is important in an environment with limited resources. By possessing the correct understanding of the officer profession, junior officers can project their development and could decide to continue their individual service. This may affect the retention of some of the talented officers that currently exit the service prematurely due to faulty perceptions of the officer corps profession. Although initial development is valuable for the Army to realize, a reverse focus is appropriate as well. It is not so clear who develops field grade officers in the Army. The frequency and intensity of development between field-grade officers and their designated developers needs institutional attention. This issue needs to further exploration if the Army is to improve its strategic leadership.

Simply considering the three conclusions above leads to an intellectual curiosity about how the Army currently develops field-grade commanders. Questioning how and why the Army produces its commanders is beneficial for improvement and growth in a learning organization.¹²² Viewing the environment that the Army uses to develop officers through the lens of systems is beneficial. Conceptual lines, tensions, and emergent properties facilitate a clearer view of an ambiguous and complex situation. Layered systems, competing goals, and the developing officers themselves reveal the tensions that produce unintended outcomes for the Army. Understanding how and why these tensions result in less than ideal institutional efforts reveals practical resources that are opportunities waiting to be exploited. These opportunities are applicable from various positions within the environment. Both senior commanders and junior officers can benefit alike. The opportunities are applicable individually or collectively and they are mutually

¹²²Senge, 373-375.

reinforcing in nature. They require no structural change and are applicable in everyday duties with minimal efforts. Perhaps most important is that by simply re-evaluating existing assumptions or practices on officer development a new understanding is reached that can contribute to the strengthening of the entire officer corps.

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