

Research Question #6

What do we mean by trust? Are there different kinds and levels? How can we develop mutual trust in the conduct of the mission and performance of duty?

The Ambiguity of Trust

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“I’m not upset that you lied to me, I’m upset that from now on I can’t believe you.”

— Friedrich Nietzsche¹

¹ “Quotes about Trust,” Goodreads, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/diversity>.

Introduction

Trust is a complex issue that serves as the foundation of the U.S. Army warrior ethos. High levels of trust foster strong working environments and positive command climates. Trust is reliance on others, confidence in mutual abilities, and the consistency of behavior.² Understanding what trust is and how it is developed is important for leaders to foster a unit of commitment rather than one of compliance. The Army does a good job of translating the institutional importance of trust in its doctrine; however, there is an area for improvement.

Problem and Thesis

Trust as a concept, described in doctrine, is nebulous. *ADRP 6-22* discusses trust and the foundation it provides for values and mission effectiveness; however, it does not show how trust is defined or through what lens it is analyzed. Uncertainty regarding how trust is forged and defined has led to its becoming a buzzword rather than one of substance. This creates ambiguity when people can see trust in different ways culturally. The question therefore is how can the Army better clarify trust to account for the various types and levels? This paper will examine what trust is, the different levels of trust, and how mutual trust is developed in the conduct of a mission or duty. Ultimately, the paper will provide the Army with a mechanism for clarity in the description of trust in its doctrine.

Research Methodology

The fundamental analysis for this paper is exploratory and seeks to understand the current state of trust. It will provide insights into the problem and derive a solution to enhance the Army's use and framing of trust. This paper attempts to look at the subject matter with an in-

² U.S. Army, *ADRP 6-22: Army Leadership*, Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012: 6-7.

depth, objective perspective and is qualitative in nature. Primarily, sources include articles, books, and the Army's doctrine.

What is Trust?

Most people view trust in linear terms, meaning that trust either exists or it does not. In actuality, trust is multifaceted and continually developing. Trust is ambiguous, as well as highly personal and subject to scrutiny. This section will look at the origins and types of trust.

Origins of Trust

The origins of trust are difficult to trace, but like most things, are probably rooted in survival and social order. The concept of trusting one another has allowed groups to survive and prosper in harsh and dangerous environments. Trust also allowed for the foundations of communal societies to flourish because of established behavioral norms. It is no mistake that arguably four of the Ten Commandments deal with trust: (1) thou shalt not kill, (2) thou shalt not commit adultery, (3) thou shalt not steal, and (4) thou shalt not bear false witness. No matter one's religious beliefs, this shows that the basic concept and importance of trust existed thousands of years ago to ensure societal structure and integrity.

ADP 1: The Army defines trust as "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something."³ Each member of the military takes a risk placing his or her life on the line or in another person's hands. This belief in other service members begins with the oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.⁴ The oath is rooted in loyalty, and if that trust is broken, the ramifications are detrimental to unit effectiveness. For this reason,

³ U.S. Army, *ADP 1: The Army*, Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012: 2-2.

⁴ U.S. Army, *ADRP 6-22: Army Leadership*, Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012: 3-2.

trust is the foundation to a strong military organization. Trust is a litmus test of morale and cohesiveness, and when it is missing, stressful situations reveal trust issues.⁵

Trust occurs early in a person's life. A baby inherently understands he or she must trust his or her parent(s) in order to survive. The idea of trust implies we accept a certain level of risk. Fundamentally, it is an understanding of expectations between people, similar to a contract. The Army uses trust, honorable service, military expertise, stewardship, and esprit de corps as essentials for unity and effectiveness.⁶ This is highlighted in a statement of Gen. Martin Dempsey, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: "These bonds of trust extend from those in uniform to the loved ones who support us, and they connect today's force with those who have already served and with those who will."⁷

Some people believe their trust is initially given and can be lost; others believe their trust must be earned. How do we analyze trustworthiness? What criteria do we use? This is dependent on both the situation and the environment. If dealing with love, trust may take a long time to accrue because of the depth of willingness to sacrifice associated with such feelings. At work, the trust of senior leaders and subordinates may be associated with demonstrations of competence, knowledge, or expertise.⁸ No matter the situation, trust is associated with one of three types.

Types of Trust

⁵ Andrew J. Knight, "Retaining the Warrior Spirit," *Military Review* 94, no. 5 (September 2014): 97.

⁶ U.S. Army, *ADRP 1: The Army Profession*, Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2015: Foreword.

⁷ Martin E. Dempsey, "'From the Chairman,'" *JFQ: Joint Force Quarterly* no. 70 (2013): 2, accessed January 27, 2016, Military & Government Collection, EBSCOhost.

⁸ Company Commanders, "How Trust Is Earned or Lost," *Army Magazine* 64, no. 1 (January 2014): 59.

After understanding what trust is, we can divide it into various types. Three main types of relational trust exist: trust between people, trust between a person and an organization, and trust between organizations. First, between people, trust is something that is earned at different levels and, in some cases, can be lost just as easily as gained. Trust between people is the fabric of society and it enables the cultivation of relationships. Loss of trust in a person can result in a loss of credibility.

Trust leads to autonomy. When a parent gives a teenager keys to the car to drive alone for the first time, the parent is showing trust in the teenager's competence to safely operate the vehicle. Similarly, trust in subordinates allows for autonomy, which is an essential component of mission command. Without trust, mission command is nonexistent because leaders micromanage subordinates, creating a stifling environment of overly centralized control. *ADRP 1: The Army Profession* uses the term "internal trust," which is "the reliance on the character, competence, and commitment of Army professionals to live by and uphold the Army Ethic."⁹ Unfortunately, nefarious manipulation of internal trust can lead to destructive consequences.

Trust between individuals opens the door for risk and vulnerability. For example, in June 2010, Aaron Masa, a 24-year-old loner, enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in order to escape his troubled past. As a corporal, he developed a friendship with a Marine sergeant and his family. Masa and his new friends spent a considerable amount of time together doing multiple activities, and Masa became a confidant to the family. He loaned them money during a financially difficult period in their lives, and even went so far as to make efforts to babysit his friend's two daughters to provide additional support to the family. Despite the appearance of good will, in March 2014, the sergeant's three-year-old daughter reported Masa molested her. In

⁹ U.S. Army, *ADRP 1: The Army Profession*. Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2015: 3-2.

addition, he took sexually explicit photos of both children. The courts convicted Masa, who is now serving a 30-year sentence in the US Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.¹⁰ In this case, Masa used the trust given to him to take advantage of the situation and commit atrocities. Similar to trust between people, trust between a person and an organization presents various complexities that must be considered.

The second type of trust is between an individual and an organization. In some cases, this form of trust is implied based on the person's relationship with the organization. The military ethos sets guidelines and standards, which establish expectations for everyone, with respect to both themselves and their peers. Junior ranking individuals must trust their leadership to take care of them and hope they have their best interest at heart. A police officer earns an implied trust because of the institution he or she represents. As an entity, people feel an organization is either trustworthy or not. Conversely, this category of trust can exist between a person and a group as well. The value of trust in a group setting is the expectation and assumption that the individual will act in the best interest of the team instead of himself or herself. "Teamwork is based on commitment to the group, which in turn is built on trust. Trust is based on expecting that others will act for the team and keep its interests ahead of their own."¹¹

Both the person and the institution can destroy the other's trust. In one case, the institution does not live up to its obligations, such as not making payroll for the month. In another instance, the person breaks the trust of the institution. One example is Darleen Druyun, the equivalent of a three-star general, who was one of the top Air Force acquisition executives. A

¹⁰ Richard Lardner, Eileen Sullivan, and Meghan Hoyer, "Pentagon: Hundreds of Military Kids Sexually Abused Annually," *AP: The Big Story*, January 4, 2016, accessed February 1, 2016, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/e3089b0ab5444ea38bd2e0a0aeef06/military-kids-sexually-abused-hundreds-times-each-year>.

¹¹ Company Commanders, "How Trust Is Earned or Lost," 59.

tough contract negotiator, she was highly coveted because of her skills and ability to get the best deals. She was also heralded for saving the Air Force billions of dollars through reforms. On October 17, 2002, two weeks away from retirement, she held a private conference with a senior Boeing executive regarding a position within the company after she retired. At that time, the Air Force was in need of a refueling aircraft, and Druyun subsequently negotiated a \$20 billion deal with Boeing to lease and eventually purchase 100 tanker aircraft. The controversial deal was seen by many as a bailout for the struggling Boeing. Additionally, the deal was a conflict of interest for Druyun because she primarily agreed to it in order to position herself with Boeing after she retired. In April, 2004, Druyun pleaded guilty to a conspiracy charge for negotiating for a job with Boeing and offering preferential treatment to the aeronautical company for years as she led Air Force projects. Druyun was sentenced to nine months in prison.¹² Even more challenging to manage than the trust between a person and an organization, because of scope, is the trust between two organizations.

The third type of trust is developed between two or more institutions. This concept is exemplified when the Army says, “In living by and upholding the Army Ethic, we are Trusted Army Professionals.”¹³ The term “Trusted Army Professionals” ties the action of upholding the Army’s ethics to the reward of trust as a service. The bond is between the institution of the American people and the military. Trust is fostered in the understanding that the military will uphold the American people’s body of ethics in order to exercise military might in conflicts. The Army defines this type of trust as “external trust.” External trust is “the confidence and faith that

¹² George Cahlink, “Deal Breaker,” *Government Executive* 36, no. 8 (May 15, 2004): 19–20, accessed February 1, 2016, Military & Government Collection, EBSCOhost.

¹³ U.S. Army, *ADRP 1*, Foreword.

the American people have in the Army to serve the Nation, ethically, effectively, and efficiently.”¹⁴ External trust was broken in 2007 when the Air Force accidentally flew multiple B-52s with unarmed nukes from North Dakota to Louisiana. The fallout from political distrust resulted in senior leaders losing their jobs, additional mandated programs, and increased oversight, all of which have had lasting effects. Trust was lost between the two organizations of the political body and the Air Force.

One important question relating the three types of trust is how a person or organization can trust someone or something unknown. In both cases, the term “trust” is misused. Trust is a two-way relationship built on understood expectations. It is not possible to have trust as a one-way interaction. For example, an infant cannot understand or fulfill expectations. A person, therefore, cannot trust an infant. When a Hollywood star does something illegal, he or she has not broken the trust of the fans because the codes of conduct are one-way expectations.

One-way expectations are not trust, but instead, should be called “disenchantment of expectations.” This means that the person is not meeting the expectations that have been established for him or her in another person or organization’s mind, but these expectations may not be reciprocally agreed upon or understood by both parties. If a spouse has an affair, there is a loss of trust because while both had the same initial vision, one person has chosen to break it. The trust types further correlate to levels of trust upon further analysis.

Different Levels of Trust

As mentioned, trust is not like a light switch, something easily flipped on or off. There are different levels of trust that need to be examined for clarity and understanding of the human psyche. This section will describe the gradients of trust and introduce the Trust Threshold Model.

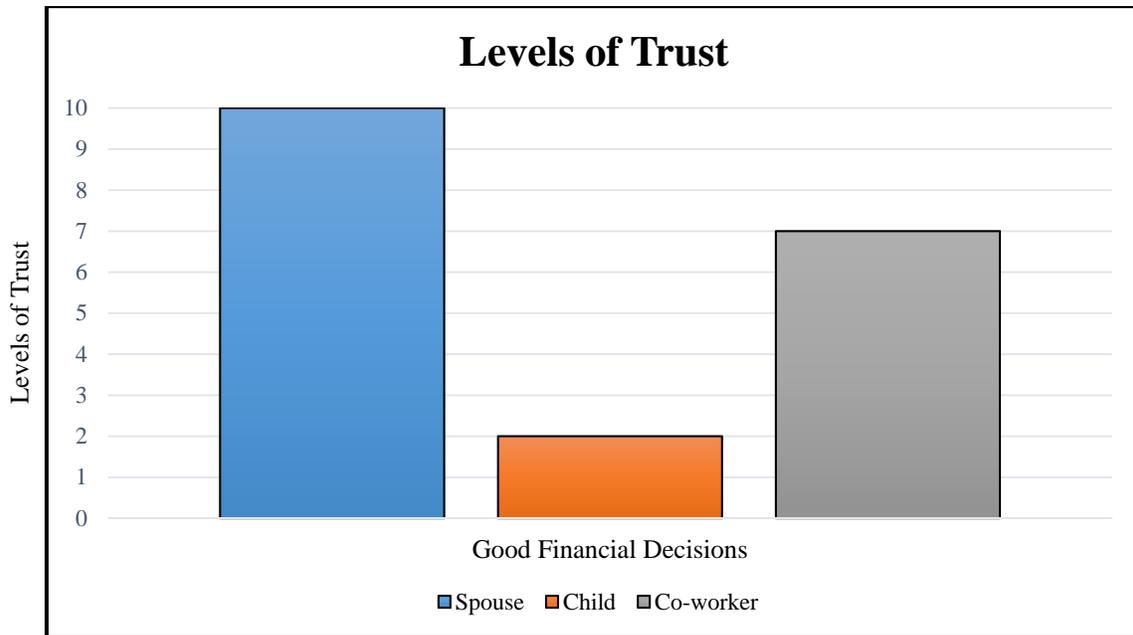
¹⁴ Ibid., 3-2.

Gradients of Trust

First, we must understand that there are gradients to trust; it is not simply binary. For example, people do not inherently trust everyone to the same extent. People give a different amount of trust to each person they know. Graph 1 shows three gradients of trust, which operate in breadth and depth. Breadth deals with the number of categories, or ways we choose to trust someone. For example, a person may trust someone financially, with secrets, love life advice, and help if they are in trouble. Graph 1 displays the category of “good financial decisions,” which is a person’s willingness to trust either their spouse, child, or coworker with money decisions or advice. Depth deals with the level people will trust someone. Trusting someone to borrow five dollars requires a different level of trust than lending them five thousand dollars. In actuality, we trust people on different levels for different reasons. Graph 1 represents this concept by the numbers 1-10 listed on the Y-axis of the bar graph. The depth of an individual’s trust in people or organizations also considers safety and risk of personal exposure.

Referencing Graph 1, the person may trust the spouse wholeheartedly to be fiscally responsible. The person may not trust his or her child with money because of age or knowledge. Lastly, a co-worker is trusted for good fiscal advice. The graph shows only one category, but people instinctively do this for many different categories covering various facets of life. The key is comprehending that people do not trust everyone the same. Furthermore, people do not trust the same person the same amount in different categories.

Graph 1: Levels of Trust Model



Ultimately, the depth of trust assigned, whether to an individual or an organization, is based on perception of risk and personal safety. Trust for certain people may grow deeper because we inherently feel safer with them or expect that our own interests are more protected. Most people associate the military as a whole with safety, and in fact extend that to any true service-based position, such as firefighters and law enforcement. It is implied that these organizations are responsible for the safety of the American people, and when that personal safety is threatened, depth of trust in the organization is decreased or lost.

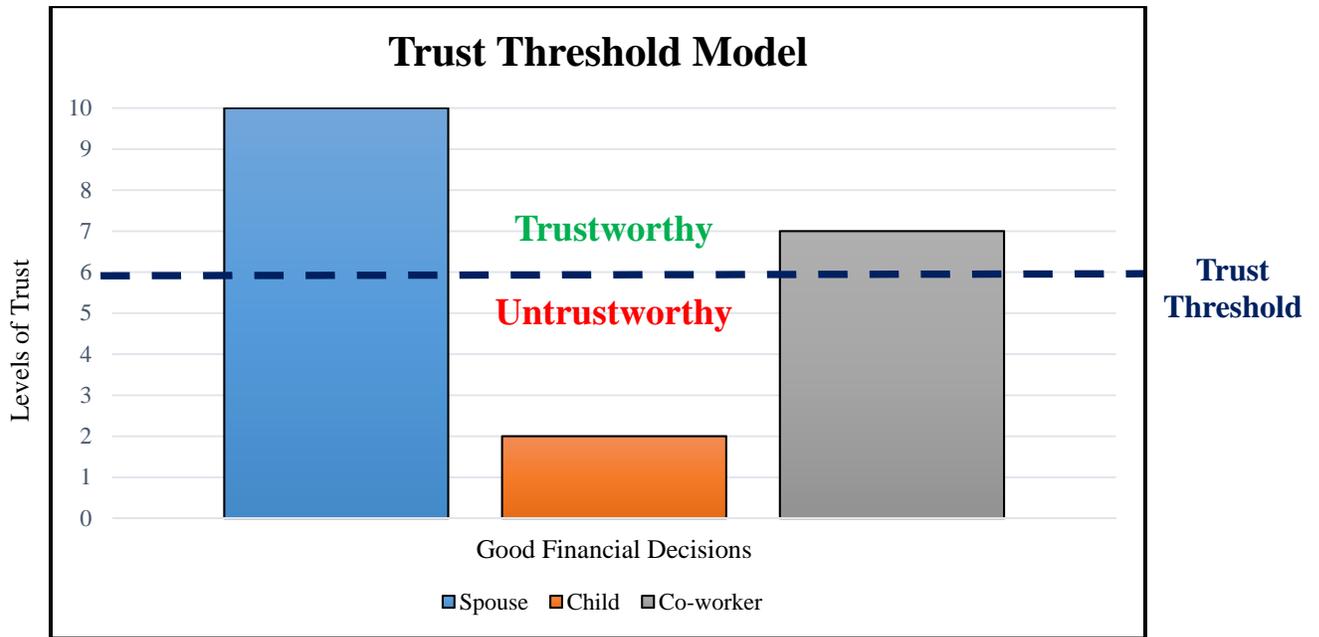
Trust Threshold Model

The numbers of categories involving trust are based on a person and what he or she values. On a subconscious level, people measure and assign a level of trust to others and organizations. So how does someone determine if another person is trustworthy in a certain

category? Graph 2, once again, focuses on the category of trust with money. People often start in one of three positions of trust: either they have none, some, or a ton of trust. Initial trust is based on reputation. Otherwise, people are neutral with no previous information to pull from. It must also be mentioned that the initial assessment of trust may not be through personal interaction, but is determined by how a person looks or how his or her actions are observed at a distance, formulated in conjunction with biases.

No matter the position, people conduct actions that affect the level of trust either positively or negatively. Inputs are actions a person or organization takes that affect trust. After a certain period, a person evaluates those inputs and the trust threshold is reached or not reached. The trust threshold is the level of internal criteria a person uses to decide whether someone is trustworthy or untrustworthy. Trust thresholds are not stagnant. They move up and down depending on the person, type and importance of the category, and time frame. For example, in Graph 2, the trust threshold is located at a “6”; however, in another category, such as “trust with job responsibilities,” the threshold may be an “8” for someone who is career-minded.

Graph 2: Trust Threshold Model

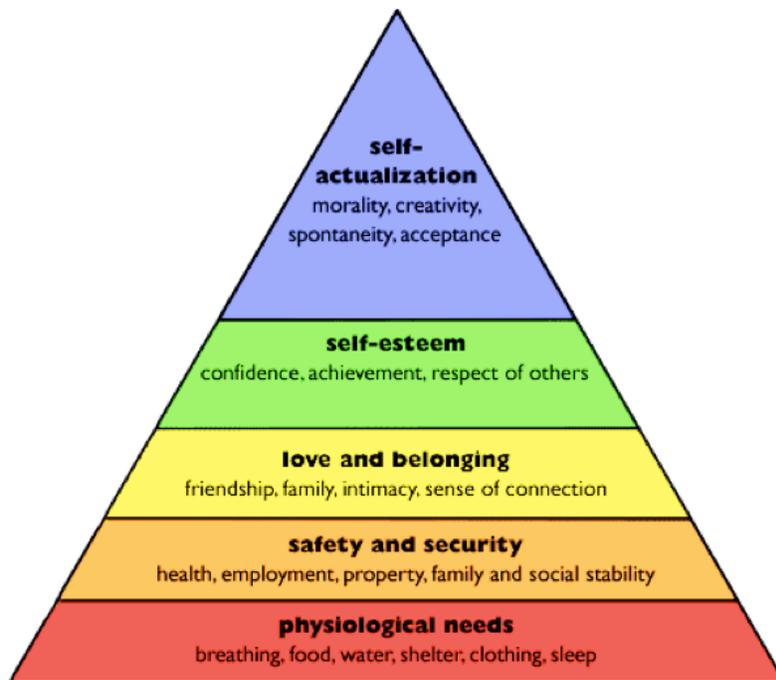


People define their own threshold internally, meaning it may be different for each person. It is my theory that we determine who is most trustworthy based on who meets the highest criteria associated with Maslow's hierarchy of needs on an individual basis. Maslow's hierarchy of needs was selected because people are motivated to fulfill basic needs and those needs have a hierarchy of importance. Whatever the individual feels is most important will weigh more when establishing who is most trustworthy overall. These considerations change depending on age, maturity, and motivations.

Finally, if the trust threshold is reached and a person has been deemed to be trustworthy, it takes considerable failures to lose enough trust to move into the untrustworthy section. This is because of the power and lasting effects of first impressions. Someone considered trustworthy will continue to be seen as such even when he or she makes mistakes. The same is true if initially

the person is deemed untrustworthy. Someone who is untrustworthy will have to work hard to get into the trustworthy area. If someone crosses into the other category through effort, it is easier to regress back to the original one.

Chart 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



(Clark 2012)

Developing Mutual Trust in the Conduct of Mission or Performance of Duty

Understanding the categories and gradients of trust is important for the Army to develop soldiers with standard institutional values. This paper separates development of mutual trust in the Army into personal and organizational. As described earlier in this paper, there are three types of trust: between people, between a person and an organization, and between two

organizations. The trust needed between people is described in *ADRP 1: The Army Profession* as developing mutual trust in cohesive teams based on character, competence, and commitment. Character is the dedication to the Army Ethic, competence is demonstrated ability to perform duties, and commitment involves contributing honorable service to the Army.¹⁵ The fusion of character, competence, and commitment is a fundamental necessity for mutual trust development between individuals; however, is slightly different for other types of trust.

When development of trust involves an organization, like the second or third types of trust, it requires a higher-level of distinctness and understanding such as the Essential Characteristics of the Army Profession. The five characteristics are: military expertise, honorable service, esprit de corps, stewardship of the profession, and trust. Military expertise means striving for personal and professional excellence, accomplishing the mission, and continually gaining training and education to master one's craft. Honorable service involves obeying the laws of the United States, rejecting anything illegal or immoral, demonstrating character, and treating others with respect. Esprit de corps embraces the feelings of fellowship, dignity, and shared loyalty to the organization and mission. Stewardship of the Army profession means accepting and upholding the Army values and standards. It involves being accountable to one another and using resources wisely to ensure that we maintain the trust of the American people.¹⁶

This concept is important to understand because the five essential characteristics are not isolated entities; rather, they are critical builders of the others. For example, building mutual trust between entities like the Army and the American people, the Army builds the mutual trust through showing its competence to employ warfare and having dedicated professionals

¹⁵ U.S. Army, *ADRP 1: The Army Profession*. Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2015: 3-2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2-7.

honorably serving their country. Additionally, having troops who have morale means they will not soon abandon the cause and stewardship ensures that the Army is improving through feedback and long-term responsibility.

Conclusion, Recommendation, and Areas for Further Research

The idea of trust is deeply rooted in the consciousness of society and the military. It is the foundation of other ideas, such as character and ethics. While not everyone is trustworthy with everything, the idea of trust is far more complex than it is given credit for. The categories of trust involving relationships between people, between a person and an institution, and between institutions built to explain the levels of trust. The levels of trust show how trust is not binary but rather a gradient that people subconsciously and consciously process. This idea ties into the Trust Threshold Model, which illustrated each area of trust that people consider and expresses that there is a threshold that must be met to define whether someone is trustworthy. The weight of the threshold is often determined by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This all culminates to show the ambiguity of trust and how the Army must define the structure in doctrine so soldiers know what components make up trust. By providing clarity, the Army will see better soldiers in the military because leaders will be able to identify and develop specific desired characteristics that enhance trust in others.

Recommendations

The idea presented relating to Maslow's hierarchy of needs is important because of how it ties everything together. The top of the pyramid or highest priority of needs is self-actualization, and included in that is "morality." Morality can mean many things, but "trust" is an important concept within the realm of morality. The goal of the Army should be to define the highest needs that correlate to Maslow's hierarchy and to include them in its doctrine. In order to

make trust more clear regarding expectations, the Army needs to develop “Tenants of Trust” so people know what they should be aspiring to rather than a vague overarching concept. The Army could write them into *ADRP 6-22: Army Leadership* as a table for reference. Chart 2 is an example of Tenants of Trust for *ADRP 6-22*.

Chart 2: Tenants of Trust (Example)

Trust encompasses reliance upon others, confidence in their abilities, and consistency of behavior. Trust builds over time through mutual respect, shared understanding, and common experiences. Trust is the foundation of the Army Values, and these Tenants of Trust emphasize the type of soldier the Army needs in order to be successful.	
Competence Trust	Army professionals will be trusted with knowing their jobs and the profession of arms. Each soldier expects the others to develop themselves in training, expertise, and education to be as competent as possible in their career fields.
Character Trust	Soldiers will be trusted to have the highest character comprised of moral and ethical qualities as defined by the Army Values and Army Ethics. While culture creates diversity of character, soldiers will be rooted in the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage so expectations for all who serve are similar and known.
Financial Trust	Service members will be trusted to be responsible stewards of their finances and not jeopardize individual, family, or unit effectiveness due to poor financial practices.

By outlining the aspects of trust, the Army and individuals who serve know the standards to which everyone is held and what to expect from others. It is then quantifiable when trust is broken and what that means. The Army must use doctrine to get everyone to the same expectations. The next method to build mutual trust is through soldiers developing themselves in the manner outlined by the Tenants of Trust. Items like competence and character are vital to developing mutual trust because lives are on the line and people must know they can depend on those next to them.

Areas for Further Research

Numerous areas for research exist regarding trust and understanding how best to define what they mean to the Army. Areas for further research include:

- 1) What is the role of trust in leadership?
- 2) Does trust differ in wartime versus peacetime? If so, how?
- 3) Can a conscientious objector be trusted?
- 4) How do gender, ethnic, and religious differences affect trust?
- 5) Is there too much implied trust in the military?

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