Executive Summary

A Program Evaluation of

WHY ARMY AS AN ORGANIZATION RESISTS CHANGE?

By Anwar Habib

Army is in a state of perpetual transformation as it tries to cope up with the requirements of a dynamic and constantly evolving operational environment. As the geo-strategic environment as well as the quantum and nature of threat change, organizational changes in the Army will become more pronounced. Due to its peculiar organizational structure, working environment, culture, and above all, the nature of its missions, Army needs to adopt a definite approach to handle these rapid transformational changes. Contrary to the popular belief that managing change should be easy in the Army due its peculiar hierarchical chain of command, it is messy, challenging, and chaotic.

The literature reviewed for this paper sustained the assertion that like any other large size organization, Army is structured to reward consistency and predictability. These underlying structural norms become a source of resistance to organizational change as it tries to disturb the routine and change the established norms. Coupled with this is the organizational expectation of “can-do” attitude from its leaders. This organizational behavior is closely associated with the peculiar nature of Army missions. This attitude is believed to prohibit an open upward flow of feedback and ideas form the lower levels of leadership. This in turn creates friction and affect the downward flow of change initiatives, mostly initiated at the top. Beside these important structural anomalies, individual human behavior and perception is also a source of resistance to organizational change.
To study individuals’ perception of organizational change, 97 officers, JCOs, and NCOs of an infantry brigade of Pakistan Army were surveyed. The survey questions were designed to analyze the individuals’ perspective of the change at battalion, company, and platoon level. The results indicate a strong unanimity in opinion on the fact of Army’s resistance to organizational change. As for the causal factors of this resistance, the leaders surveyed confirmed majority of the assertions from the scholarly literature, mostly from the corporate world. There however, were few significant instances of disagreement too.

Army leaders must capitalize on the organizational realization of its resistance to change and build their guiding coalitions for implementing change. There is a requirement of honest and candid communication between the leaders and the led, to lessen the uncertainties and fog of change process. Obedience to command must not hinder the feedback and flow of accurate information in upward direction. An organizational culture that encourages novel ideas and fostering critical and creative thinking, can be a great tool in leaders’ hand in the chaotic times of organizational change and transformation. Leaders owe it to their soldiers and subordinates that they are not only aware of the repercussions of the decisions made, but also have a faith in their fairness and soundness.

Having identified both the inevitability and vitality of change, Army leaders should formulate feasible, suitable, and more importantly acceptable courses of action to execute change. An attempt to implement change through routine mechanisms like SOPs and TTPs, may likely result in crumbled organizations, underutilization of resources, and lower organizational morale. Deliberate and comprehensive planning catering for the fears and perceptions of soldiers and junior leaders, while simultaneously working around the bureaucratic hurdles might lessen the complexities of executing organizational change.
A PROGRAM EVALUATION

OF

WHY ARMY AS AN ORGANIZATION RESISTS CHANGE

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Dedication

To the men and women of Pakistan Army, who sacrificed their today for our better tomorrow.
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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

- **CSA** - Chief of Staff of the Army
- **EME** - Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
- **JCO** - Junior Commissioned Officer
- **LAM** - Louisiana Maneuver
- **NCO** - Non Commissioned Officer
- **SOPs** - Standard Operating Procedures
- **TTPs** - Techniques, Tactics, and Procedures
- **TRADOC** - United States Army Training and Doctrine Command
- **US** - United States of America
- **USA** - United States Army
- **USAWC** - United States Army War College
- **XO** - Executive Officer
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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Change is hard at first, messy in the middle and gorgeous at the end.”

- Robin Sharma

Background

Today, the term change is almost cliché. Change is difficult, therefore requires good leadership and management for its successful execution. Research indicates approximately 70 percent of change efforts fail (Blanchard, 2010) and these failures normally leave crumbled organizations, which leads into frustration, and resentment among employees. Change initiatives to be successful requires the leaders to have a plan, working diligently with their teams to shape the organizational environment and climate, in a manner that is more conducive to change. One would tend to agree with the argument that change initiatives would be easy to execute in military organizations due to their peculiar command climate and inherent discipline. Senior military leaders can direct change, but even in a military organization, if the change is not implemented effectively, it can be marginalized resulting in poor utilization of resources and reduce the organization’s morale.

Change is necessary for organizations to compete, grow, and improve while operating. How leaders approach the process of leading change makes the difference between success and failure. Change is difficult on both the personal and organizational level. Resistance to change is common because fear of uncertainty and the unknown causes angst and apprehension. To some degree, the negative aspects of change are predictable. Members of an organization react to change in both positive and negative ways. While some members of the organization embrace the change
or simply accept it as a challenge, other members confront it with open hostility or aggression. Others are less obvious in their response, demonstrating apathy or grudging compliance (Miller & Turner, 2016). Whenever people are forced to change or adjust their routines, procedures or plans; pain, discomfort, anger, or panic will often occur. However, leaders can mitigate these negative fallouts of change by having an effective implementation plan, leveraging inherent opportunities, while overcoming its challenges.

Change also has a psychological aspect to it, which is very human in nature. Humans and their behaviors are the main component of any military organization. This fact applies more to Army than the other services due to obvious reasons. An Army comprising of different people will react to a change in different ways. Some people may like change and take it as an opportunity for learning new things and professional growth. Others may detest change because they might not like disruption of their set routine. Some may become suspicious of change start resisting it based on their apprehensions (Quast, 2012). There will still be others who might not be purposefully subversive and resistant. Instead, they are unintentionally caught in a Competing Commitment, a subconscious hidden goal that conflicts their stated commitment.

**Research Problem**

“Progress is impossible without change and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

- George Bernard Shaw

A number of books and articles have been written by scholars, strategic thinkers and senior military leaders on leadership and managing change over the years. These writings recommend a variety of processes and structures to successfully manage change. However, leaders at all levels
as well as followers in organizations still do not understand their critical role and responsibility in the complex task of implementing change. It is also important to look at change from everyone’s perspectives because managers and employees (leaders and followers/subordinates) look at change differently (Strebel, 1998). Why is this research important? Today’s rapidly changing environment dictates that even established organizations must change to remain viable. The strategic and operational environments in which the military operates has changed dramatically over the period of last one decade or so. They are expected to remain dynamic and ever-changing in the foreseeable future (US Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2012). It is in this backdrop that any military organization not only needs to change rapidly but also to manage change effectively.

Different military thinkers have varying views of bringing and managing change in the Army. Majority of them believe that the application of modern business and corporate models, dealing with organizational change are equally relevant to military organizations. It is why that the Kotter’s Eight Step Model is taught in most of the professional schools of the U.S Army and is considered most effective in this regard (Miller & Turner, 2016). There are still others, who believe that military organizations are different than corporations, due to the lack of profit and loss motive, and can only gain limited benefit in considering how the private sector operates (Galvin & Clark, 2015). It is therefore important to further study this aspect of the military organizations, particularly the Army.

**Research Questions**

Does Army as an organization resists change? If Yes, what are the main contributing factors to this organizational behavior? is the basic question being answered though this research. Keeping in view the peculiar organization structure, culture and operating environment of the
Army, a number of secondary but inter-related questions are also being addressed. These secondary questions include:

1. Does the peculiar working environment of the Army, known as military culture act as a facilitator or an impediment to change?
2. Is the Army’s strict bureaucratic hierarchy or the Chain of Command a facilitator or an obstacle to change?
3. Do the Standard Operating Procedures for routine functioning of the Army, act as an obstacle to change?
4. How far personal interests and fears of the individual members of the organization result in resistance to organizational changes?
5. How far the unsettling and discomforts of the change process are the drivers of resistance to organizational change?

Research Objectives

Armies operate in a peculiar strategic and operational environment. The strategic environment is the synergistic combination of all the critical variables and actors that create the conditions, circumstances, and influences that can affect military operations today and in the near- and mid-term. Whereas, operational environment is defined as “A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander (US Department of Defense, 2010)” . Army has to achieve its mission while conforming to the dictates of the environment. This environment has traditionally been very dynamic and evolving. The present environment is changing in unprecedented ways. More chaos is expected in the future as General Raymond T. Odierno, U.S Army Chief of Staff puts it, “United States will face an unstable, unpredictable, increasingly complex global security environment that
will be shaped by several key emergent trends: the rise of non-state actors; an increase in “hybrid threats;” state challenges to the international order; and expanding urbanization’’ (US Army, 2004).

To cope with these challenges, armies are not only evolving but are in a state of perpetual organizational transformation. Every evolution and transformation has inherent “Change” in it, and change can result in chaos, disorder and reduce efficiency unless properly managed. It is in this backdrop that this research looks at the organizational dynamics of Army that resist change. Having identified the challenges, the paper also aims at recommending viable solutions to decrease this friction.

**Scope and Delimitation**

The author of this paper is an International Military Student at the U.S Army Command and General Staff College and does not have full access to the inside working of U.S Army. He will therefore focus on existing literature that is available in unclassified form and draw its linkages with the science of organizational change. The author will also integrate his discourse with his Army colleagues in his home country, Pakistan. U.S Army and Pakistan Army are being studied as functional organizational models for the purpose of research. However, due to the peculiar nature of all the military organization, the conclusions and recommendations will be equally applicable to armies elsewhere.

**Summary**

Change is chaotic and most of the times has proven to be counterproductive, if not managed and implemented efficiently. One would think that Army as an organization works on principles of receiving and issuing orders, it would therefore be much easier to implement “change”. The truth is contrary to this notion. Due to its peculiar working environment and huge size, managing
change and transforming armies as organization can be a nightmare if not well planned and managed. Notwithstanding the fact that Army needs to change more than any other organization, it still resists change as an organization. There are many contributing factors to this resistance which need to be studied. Only then, solution to these sources of friction can be recommended which will enable the leaders to manage organizational change in a coherent and productive manner.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

“To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.”

- Winston Churchill

During the past two to three decades, organizational change both within the military as well as corporate organizations has been the subject of an intense academic debate. As the geo-strategic environment and the nature, and quantum of threat evolves, organizational change and transformation will undoubtedly be a much-studied topic for the years to come. Army is a complex organization due to its peculiar structure, role and organizational construct. It therefore requires a peculiar implementation strategy for organizational change, which may otherwise result in poor utilization of resources and reduce the organization’s morale. Army leaders sometimes forget that it takes both leadership and skillful management to effectively implement change within their organizations. Though it seems to be convenient to lead Army from the authority of their position, these leaders need to still provide follow-up assessments and guidance (i.e. management) to ensure successful change (Kelly, 2008). This research sought to determine the peculiar organizational dynamics of the Army, that resists change. Change being a primarily human endeavor, the research also focused on the human dimension of the Army, by studying the individual members’ perception of the change process. The literature was accordingly collected and grouped into general areas; catering for the specific research questions as already discussed in Chapter 1 of this paper. The author has also made an effort to define change in organizational context. This assisted in establishing a common baseline for further discussion on the research questions and analysis of the resulting information for subsequent cross examination with the research findings.
Understanding Organizational Change

There is no dearth of literature on how organizations should manage change. The explanation of the term “Change” is relatively unattended and its definition is avoided. The extensive use of the term change has resulted in this apparent indifference to the explanation of the term itself and is taken for granted. Different scholars have tried to explain the phenomenon and process of change as well as its catalyst differently. The scholars of rational choice theory focus on the significance of the influence of external actors in an organization or environment. They believe that change is initiated by actions in an effort to comply with the dictates of environment or an objective. The proponents of contextualism on the other hand argue that change results from institutional pressures, isomorphism and routines (Quattrone & Hopper, 2001). Despite their disagreement on the catalyst of change, both school of thoughts are in agreement, considering change as the passage of an entity, like an organization, from one identifiable and unique status to another (Ibid.). Change can take many forms as Linda Ackerman provides a useful way of categorizing changes which are common in organizations (Jick, 1993, p. 2):

![Figure-1: Three perspectives on Change](image-url)
The Oxford dictionary defines change as “An act or process through which something becomes different” (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). Change is inherent to organizations all over the world today. Change can take many forms and may be happening as result of desires by organizational leaders to satisfy goals and accomplish organization visions. It can also be the result of changes in the worldview of organizational members. Change can also mean actions those are a response to what is happening in an organization’s external environment (Brazzel, 2014). All organizations, be it military or corporate, are in the process of a continuous change. Once it has been established that change is a universal phenomenon, organizations need to proactively respond to complex and turbulent challenges as well as opportunities. Complexity of the environment further exacerbate the undertaking and places a greater emphasis on leaders to raise their individual levels of thinking, doing, and being. It is also the responsibility of leaders to raise the levels of the collective relationships/social systems in the organization (Jones, 2014).

Change is inevitable rather vital for Army as an organization to remain viable in the complexed environment that it is faced with. There has been no debate in its vitality but military scholars have been debating the movers and initiators of change in Army and other military organizations (Davidson, 2011, p. 10). The issues debated are, whether Army changes on its own or as a result of some external stimuli. If the Army changes on its own, what are the internal factors that influence the choices it makes? And if some external catalyst is needed how does it affect Army as an organization to change and during the change? And finally what are the conditions that determine that the Army would fail or succeed in implementing organizational changes (Davidson, 2011)? Many of the scholars agree that more than often, Army needs some sort of external actor to change and if left alone, Army would either not change or fail to implement change in a coherent manner (Posen, 1984). Most of the scholars build their argument on three
interrelated categories to explain why Army fail or succeed in changing: Organizational theory, Bureaucratic politics and Organizational culture (Allison, 1999).

Hiatt and Creasey, though from a business perspective defined organizational change as “the process, tools and techniques to manage the people side of business change to achieve the required business outcome, and to realize that business change effectively within the social infrastructure of the workplace” (2002). Despite business oriented, the focus on human element of the organization is equally applicable to the Army. A more relevant explanation has been offered by Conner, who defines organizational change as “a set of principles, techniques and prescriptions applied to the human aspect of executing change initiatives in organizational settings. Its focus is not on ‘what’ is changing, but how to prepare people to absorb the implications affecting them” (2006). The bottom line for all organizations, Army in particular, and individuals who work in them, is that change is here to stay. Whether change is planned, anticipated, sought after, or is an unexpected factor, change will occur. The best strategy for the Army and its leadership is to “proactively identify and address both internal and external factors that may introduce change” (Bennett & Bush, 2014, p. 127).

**Organization Theory – Does Army as an Organization Resist Change?**

The vitality of organizations and the role they play in the society in the twenty first century has already been acknowledged (Drucker, 1947). The civilization is considered as synonymous to the ability of people of different times to “organize” in a meaningful way. Iconic figures in the military history like Alexander the Great, Napoléon, and Clausewitz recognized and capitalized on the importance of organizations. Today’s military leaders, even more than in the past, therefore should have a fair level of understanding of the factors affecting organizations (Hunsicker, 2009). Organizations can be defined as a “separate and distinct group of people and resources that have
been brought together for a common purpose or objective. Moreover, the subsystems in an organization interact in a consciously coordinated manner, toward accomplishing a common objective” (Hunsicker, 2009). Though the definition say that organizations are distinct and separate, but it does not mean they are independent. They do operate in an overall environment in a dialectical relationship. Organizations effect the the broader society of which it is a part and in turn have the imprints of the environment (Wolf, 1964). Organizations not only adapt to the influences from an external environment but “their very survival depends on a proper environmental equilibrium” (Barnard, 1962).

Organizational theories are more than likely to conclude that Army is highly resistant to organizational change (Avant, 1993). Many of the organizational theorists consider Army’s resistant to organizational changes due to its structural system, norms and standard operating procedures. These attributes of Army as a whole “shape its organizational behavior towards particular out comes” (Davidson, 2011, p. 11). In mature organizations like the military, change is required to ensure that “organizations remain viable over time”, adapting to the changes in the environment around them (Kelly, 2008, p. 3). But at the same time it is also important that managers and leaders in line with the vision and mission statements as they move and guide their organization through the change process (Murphy, 2003, p. 39). However, organizations generally prefer stability and consistency; whereas change advocated by a senior leader may not always be well received and senior leadership must recognize and manage this issue.

Organizations work under a framework, defined by the vision and mission statement of its leaders. It is the managers in an organization who are responsible for implementing leadership’s vision and strategy, thus making it happen. As a result, one of the most important component of managerial practice is change; “managers help their people and organization proceed from the
present to the future along a path illuminated by the leader’s vision, the organization’s mission, and overall strategy” (Gilley, 2005, p. 4). Thus it falls under the authority of political leadership and to some extent the top brass of the Army, to define mission statement and organizational vision for the Army. To manage and implement change, becomes the sole responsibility of mid-grade Army officers.

Military organizations have traditionally been known for adopting to the dictates of their operational environment in significant ways. Military organizations work as complex systems – “one of inputs and outputs between subsystems within their environments” (Lowson, 2002, p. 32). This organizational structure inherently reinforces bureaucracy and encourage improvements through additional structures and reporting mechanisms, rather than consideration of a more flexible, open system of operation (Pape, 2009). Rigidity in organizational behavior is another important source of resistance to change in the Army (Murray, 2009). Some historians have argued to the extent that at times armies fail to change despite the fact that they correctly identify the ‘need for change’ and the ‘measures of required change’. A careful study of the history will reveal that armies do recognize the problems involved in change and innovation, but fail to implement them in the organizational environments, which is most of the time enshrouded by the fog of uncertainty (Murray, 2009).

Army can be termed as very large organization by the definition of Turcotte, who describes very large organizations as:

“[A] multifunctional organization with at least five hierarchical levels and a very complex external environment from which resources and directions flow. In such an organization, the range of top management responsibilities allows only infrequent, though often intense, interactions with most subordinates. Opportunities
for personal direction and role-centered leadership patterns are limited. Range and complexity of organizational issues make it difficult for executives to master the details involved. They must instead develop skill in abstracting the essence, implication, and key ideas from complex issues” (Turcotte, 2001).

Leaders of very large organizations face very specific challenges. Few major ones are, they cannot rely solely on past experience, the organizational agenda are dominated by external events. It is very difficult for the leaders of these large organizations to fully know and understand their organization at granular level and they have limited time available to deal with internal matters. This results in the promulgation of conflicted policies and priorities (Galvin & Clark, 2015). It is therefore safe to conclude that the change strategies that work well for smaller organizations may not necessarily work in very large ones, thus require an altogether different focus and approach.

Is Military Culture Resistant to Change

Organizational culture is the set of institutional, shared operating values, beliefs, and assumptions within the organization, evolved over time (Shambach, 2004). It can also be termed as a prescription for activities or outlining the “dos and the don’ts” that govern the behavior of its members (Beach, 2006, p. 31). Organizational culture also encompasses the assumptions and values which ultimately shapes the organizational policies and procedures. Roger Harrison highlight following attributes of an organizational culture (Harrison, 1972):

- Organizational objectives that define the successes or failures.
- Procedure and priority for the organization’s resources to be used, and to what ends.
- The inter-relationship of members of the organization.
Define what behavior is legitimate and what is illegitimate; that is, it defines where power lies within the organization and how it is to be used.

Outline expectations, and a framework for rewards and punishments.

Set the undertones for how members should treat each other and how they should treat nonmembers.

Defines the terms of relationship with the external/operational environment.

Army culture can be described as “the sum of intellectual, professional and traditional values of an officer corps; it plays a central role in how that officer corps assesses the external environment and how it analyzes the possible response that it might make to the threat” (Huntington, 1957). Thus this culture is shaped to a great extent by the specific frames of reference developed by the Army officers as a result of their personalities. Personality data gathered at U.S. Army War College [USAWC] “that most successful officers score lower on Openness [Five-Factor Personality Model: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism] than the general U.S population. To make matters worse, those USAWC students selected for commanding brigades, scored even lesser than the overall USAWC average” (Gerras & Wong, 2013, p. 9). This typical behavior is somewhat expected from the armies and its officers the world over. It is because the “Army culture values decisive and ‘can-do’ leaders, who do not get distracted in environments with unfavorable signal-to-noise ratio” (Gerras & Wong, 2013).

Army as an organization exists in a culture of disciplined obedience, in which soldiers must remain steadfast in the face of terrifying conditions. This behavior is contradictory to their psychological instinct for self-preservation. This discipline though sometimes vital for the mission accomplishment, but does not encourages new and untried ideas, concepts, and innovations (Murray, 2009, p. 301). Many scholars are of the opinion that human organizations in general and
military culture in particular are structured on the premise of bringing order and linearity to a world, which is otherwise chaotic and complex (Beyerchen, 1992). It is therefore evident from the opinion of these scholars that Army culture has the tendency to resist change, many times more than their civilian counter parts. Army would therefore need a more methodical and deliberate effort to implement organizational changes.

History also testifies the fact of organizational culture, acting as resistant to change. Organizational culture is a major component of Kier’s explanation, for the lack of doctrinal innovation in the British and French armies prior to World War II (Kier, 1997, p. 29). Halperin similarly captures the possible impact of organizational culture in his discussion of “organizational essence.” He argues that organizational leaders will resist change that threatens their view of the appropriate missions and capabilities of their organization (Halperin, 1978, p. 28). While analyzing the Vietnam War, Krepinevich argues that adherence to the “Army Concept” inhibited the ability of the Army to adapt to the demands of the Vietnam War. This concept was designed for focus on mid-intensity conventional war, and relied heavily on firepower to keep casualties down. This preconceived way of war prevented the U.S. Army from adopting to the dictates of the operational environment and change in Vietnam (Krepinevich, 1986, pp. 4-7).

Most of the scholars describe Army’s organizational culture as a source of resistance to change but positive organizational culture can be catalyst for change. German Army of the interwar period is an example of how positive and conducive culture can smoothen the change process. It shows how a culture of critical examination can enable the organization to adopt to changing environment. It enabled the German Army to rapidly and successfully implement organizational changes, in a time when stagnation was the norm in the world (Murray, 2009, pp. 312-318). Thus
it can be concluded that Army’s organizational culture is resistant to change due to its inherent rigidity but positive and conducive environment can act as catalyst for change.

**Does the Army’s Bureaucracy and Chain of Command Resist Change?**

Robert M. Gates, after serving for 50 years across many levels of both civil and military bureaucracy, concludes that “Everybody hates bureaucracies, even those who work in them. Yet in twenty-first-century America, apart from a handful of hermits and survivalists living off the grid, dealing with impenetrable, impersonal, infinitely complex, obdurate, arrogant, and often stupefyingly incompetent bureaucracies is an everyday travail for everyone” (Gates, 2016, p. 1). Political scientist, Dr. Chad Serena, in his book *A Revolution in Military Adaptation*, observed that Army has to adapt to the dictates of its operational environment or it must fail in accomplishing its mission. He adds that this capacity to change in the face of adaptive threats and dynamic environment is the hallmark of organizational success. Though threat and environment are perceived to be largest initiators of change, sometimes it is internally initiated. However, he observes that change process is slow and cumbersome in large organizations such as the Army, due to their centralized, hierarchical bureaucracy. He concluded that an organization’s ability and tendency change is linked to the nature of its contact with the operating environment and the enemy. Direct and personalized contact with the environment and threat expedites the change process (Serena, 2010). It can therefore be concluded that while the Army may be easy to adopt to changes at tactical level, it will be slower and cumbersome to adapt at the operational and strategic levels.

Louisiana Maneuver (LAM) initiative by the U.S. Army in the early 1990s for implementing organizational changes, is a classic example of Army’s bureaucracy and its behavior towards change. General Gordon R. Sullivan the then U.S. Army Chief of Staff (CSA), came up
with a very effective vision for change and a road map to affect organizational adaptation in a deliberate, proactive approach. All his efforts despite being in the driving seat, could not achieve the desired result as the change he intended to lead, however, would be challenged by the very bureaucracy he led (Schmidt, 2013). Sullivan faced a hard time working his way through the bureaucracy and the bureaucratic procedures the Army had put in place. As military historian Dr. James Yarrison, observed, “Sullivan believed that they were too inflexible and deliberately slow to enable the Army both to make the changes it needed then and to react quickly and agilely to future requirements for change” (Yarrison, 1999).

Organizations cannot compete in today’s challenging environment by working through the traditional bureaucratic approach during high intensity change and its related complexities (Jamali, Khoury, & Sahyoun, 2006). Army leaders also realize that to cope with the rapidly changing environment, the organization also must change and adopt. Failure to change has the ability to result in becoming altogether irrelevant (Shanley, et al., 2005). The people and processes placed for working through change should therefore not be allowed to become a part of the problem itself.

**How do SOPs and Fixed Routine Affect Organizational Change?**

Large organization do need Standard Operating Procedures [SOPs] for routine functioning to ensure coordination and deal with the complexities of the operating environment. It makes perfect sense for the Army to formulate and make extensive use of SOPs, being a very large organization (Nielsen, An Army Transformed: The U.S. Army's Post-Vietnam Recovery and the Dynamics of Change in Military Organizations, 2010). These SOPs being ‘standard’ in all the senses of standardization, are very hard to change (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). In the presence of these SOPs in the Army, change not only becomes difficult, but is also perceived chaotic as it disturbs the very mechanisms designed to keep the organization functioning smoothly. Large
organizations like Army thus lays more emphasis on continuity rather than change in organizational behavior. Organizational routine is resistant to change due to the way individual members of the organization think. Humans develop a link with the past which shape their beliefs through social construction. Their past experiences or in other words routine have a direct link with their beliefs and over time develop commitment to them. These human characteristics cause the continuation of organizational policies and practices and resist any change in the accepted patterns despite new realities (Argyris & Schon, 1996).

Gareth Morgan equates well established organizations to machines and writes, “When we think of organizations as machines, we begin to see them as rational enterprises designed and structured to achieve predetermined ends” (Morgan, 1986). This philosophy equates to the Army’s philosophy of ‘command and control’ which to a great extent relies on the scientific management of the organization. This scientific management implies well defined roles for every individual and a set routine for the organization as a whole. Same is evident from the observation of Cameron and Green who opined that organizations strive to achieve efficiency through set routine, roles. They aim to reduce friction by defining the relationship between the system itself as well as outside world (Cameron & Green, 2009). These theories are based on the premise that it is inevitable for large organizations to have SOPs and set routines as they are the only source of stability, productivity and control. Without these mechanisms in place, it will be very hard if not impossible for the leaders of these large organizations to ensure the smooth functioning of the organization.

Routines are seen as the antithesis of flexibility and change, making organizations to resort to inflexible and unchanging patterns of action. At the same time, they are considered vital for efficiency and legitimacy (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). Theorists have equated organizational SOPs and routine to individual habits. Since habits require no thought, thus they are automatic and
natural actions of an organization (Nelson & Winter, 1982). SOPs are designed to make the leadership’s job easier as they are not required to make decisions for routine functioning as these are already made in advance. They are also considered to save time and energy (Carley, 1996). It is evident that routine and SOPs being beneficial from functional perspective, are therefore adopted almost in all the organizations. They however, tend to minimize the possibility of flexibility and change.

‘Organizational Change’ from the Perspective of Individuals’ Perceptions and Behavior

A major barrier to organizational change is how individuals react to it. There is a great deal of literature on individuals’ reaction to change that emphasizes their resistance to it. The bottom line of all this literature is that organizational change is resisted because “management systems are designed, and people are rewarded, for stability” (Lawler & Worley, 2006, p. 13). Making a change requires a kind of leap of faith for the members of the organization. Organizational change implies for the people to move in the direction of the unknown, and this movement is motivated by the promise of something better at the other end. People will only take the risk if they genuinely believe or at least feel that it is either beneficial or the risks of standing still are greater than those of moving forward in a new direction (Schuler, 2010). Most people do adopt to change, but not before passing through some other psychological gates. These are explained in Figure 2 (Jick, 1993, p. 324):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Stage</th>
<th>Change Stage (Risk Taking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ending Phase – dissociation with the past</td>
<td>1. Shock – Perception of risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Neutral Zone – indifference to past and future</td>
<td>2. Defensive Retreat – securing position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. New Beginnings – looking at the future</td>
<td>3. Acknowledgement – facing the reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adaptation and Change – accepting fate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-1: Framework to Explain Reaction to Change
Different people view change differently based on their role in the organization. Top level leaders of any organization including Army see change as an opportunity to strengthen the organization. They also see it as opportunity to advance their careers, by exploiting new vistas. For the employees [soldiers and junior leaders] change is not desirable. For them, “it is disruptive, intrusive, and it upsets the balance” (Strebel, 1998). Organizations and their members have reciprocal obligations and mutual commitments, both stated and implied, that define their relationship. Paul Strebel call these agreements as Personal Compacts (Strebel, 1998). Any change initiative, whether proactive or reactive in the organization, alter the terms of these agreements. Unless new terms are defined and accepted, members of the organization remain in a state of uncertainty. This uncertainty becomes one of the major sources of resistance to organizational changes.

Organizational psychologists have identified Competing Commitments as another major contributor of resistance to organizational change. Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey define Competing commitment as “a subconscious, hidden goal that conflict with one’s stated commitment” (Kegan & Lahey, 2010). Kegan and Lahey believe that other than conscious resistance to change initiatives, there can be an unconscious immunity to change. This immunity should not be seen as hypocrisy or hidden deliberate reluctance to change. They attribute this phenomenon to the paralyzing effects of competing commitment without any deliberate and conscious behavior of the person (Kegan & Lahey, 2010).

Most of the times, a major change in an organization implies a change in the skills of employees. Some people have the fear or lack of confidence in their abilities to make that transition. They are not sure if they can be as good in the new skills, at par in expertise with the old ones. Some may be right in this assumption and they may really lack in the new skills but
majority is afraid of the unknown (Schuler, 2010). This fear is further intensified when they look at the prospects of them becoming irrelevant, or worse, losing their jobs. The reasons for members of an organization to resist change, thus comprise of some very personal attributes. Thus people naturally push back against change and actively start resisting it, if they are not explained the new arrangements in tangible terms (Quast, 2012).

**Summary**

Organizational change is as important in the Army as civil organizations. Change is inevitable rather vital for Army as an organization to remain effectively viable in the complexed environment that it is faced with. Army is a complex organization due to its peculiar structure, role and organizational construct. Senior Army leaders can direct change, but even in the Army its mismanagement can result in poor utilization of resources and reduce the organization’s morale. Many of the organizational theorists consider Army resistant to organizational changes due to its structural system, norm and standard operating procedures. The inbuilt rigidity in Army’s organizational behavior is another important source of resistance to change. Army’s culture values decisive and ‘can-do’ leaders, but they tend to be less amenable to change. This culture has ‘discipline’ as its major attribute but disciplined organizations rarely place a high value on new ideas and are therefore resistant to change.

The hierarchical government bureaucracy which remains the hallmark of large public sector enterprises like Army, makes the organizational change a cumbersome and exceedingly slow process. Due to its size and peculiar working environment, Army relies on SOPs for its routine functioning. These SOPs though efficient in normal times, are the antithesis of flexibility and change, locking organizations into inflexible, unchanging patterns of action. Army comprises hundreds of thousands of individuals and their reaction to organizational change becomes a
significant barrier to its implementation. These individual members of the organization resist change initiatives due to their natural fears, competing commitments, and discomfort in the uncertainty. The sum of these individual behaviors thus becomes an organizational behavior, with the predominant characteristic of resistance to change.
Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Carl Von Clausewitz, the father of modern military strategy considered military change to be a simple phenomenon. He observed, “If in warfare, a certain means turns out to be highly effective, it will be used again; it will be copied by others and become fashionable; and so backed by experience, it passes into general use and is included in theory” (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 171). Modern theories, however, do not agree with Clausewitz and posit that militaries are difficult to change and innovate. Army implement organizational changes more than often as it has to conform to the evolving geo-strategic situations as well as the introduction of new technologies; resulting in the changed doctrine and tactics. The evolving role and mission of the Army also necessitates organizational changes. The drivers and catalysts of change can thus be both internal as well as external. One would believe that it should be comparatively easier to implement organizational changes in the Army, based on its strict bureaucratic hierarchical nature and its peculiar working environment. In reality, if left alone, the Army would be unlikely to change or would otherwise tend towards inappropriate doctrine (Posen, 1984, p. 13). It was therefore the basic theme of this research to answer the basic question of divergent theories (classic and modern theories) on Army’s resistance to organizational change. Subsequently, this paper sought to identify the factors, contributing to organizational resistance to change and suggest measures for overcoming these sources of friction.

General Research Overview and Approach

The research typology used in this paper is Program Evaluation. The Army as an institution and its organizational behavior in relation to change was studied. Having taken into account, both
the classic and modern theories of Military Change, the author tried to answer the basic question of, does Army resists change as an organization? Change is believed by many scholars, to be intensely personal. This theory is based on the fact that, for change to occur in any organization, each individual must think, feel, or do something different (Duck, 1998, p. 56). Notwithstanding the large quantities of weapons, equipment and other material resources; Army organizations largely compose of men and women. Human factor of the change is therefore the focus of this research. The author has tried to identify the effects of change on individual members of the organization. These effects were further researched to be whether a source of friction or do they facilitate change.

Armies all over the world are huge organizations, employing hundreds of thousands of men and women, both in uniform and civilians. Though civilians play an important role in the functioning of any Army, right from strategic to tactical levels, this research is restricted to uniformed members of the Army. Moreover, due to the large size of the organization, it was impossible to study the organization as a whole. Since the author is an officer of Pakistan Army, undergoing Command and General Staff Officer Course at U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, an Infantry Brigade of Pakistan Army was selected as population for the research.

Research was conducted by randomly selecting samples from all the three maneuver battalions as well as support components of the brigade. This gave the research the required diversity which is the organizational hallmark of the Army. The brigade is composed of a Light Infantry Battalion, two Mechanized Infantry Battalions (having integral armor component) and has affiliated Field Artillery Regiment, an Electrical & Mechanical Engineers Company, a Signals Company, and a Supply and Transport Company (Logistics). Thus it was insured that the input
received has a representation of all the major branches of the Army, except a few highly specialized (finance, public relations and cyber etc.) branches and civilian members of the organization.

**Specific Data Collection Approach and Procedures**

The research consisted of a survey that was administered online. To ensure anonymity and maximum response, the survey was distributed through the Executive Officer (XO) of the brigade. The survey targeted a broad range of individuals varying in service and expertise. Due to peculiar demographic and social construct of Pakistan Army, only officers, junior commissioned officers (JCOs) (equivalent of Warrant Officers in US Army) and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the brigade were surveyed. The soldiers being less educated, having no expertise in English language and having lesser access to online surveys, were therefore not surveyed. John P. Kotter believes change to be closely associated with leadership (Kotter, 2011, pp. 3-7), the research was therefore more focused on mid and lower level leadership of the Army. These mid and lower level leadership of the Army are the ones who execute the organizational changes as compared to senior level leadership who directs and gives vision to the organization.

The survey itself was designed and administered by the author through an online survey creation and distribution platform called Survey Monkey. This survey (Appendix A), consisted of two parts: a demographic section and a quantitative section involving the surveyed service members’ selection of perceived response on a numbered Likert scale. Since the survey was administered to officers, JCOs and NCOs only; therefore, basic reading, writing, and English skills were assumed in this research. As the researcher is located in the U.S., the survey was centrally distributed through the brigade’s XO, electronically through email in order to address the limitation of geographic separation of the researcher and sample.
Part I of the survey comprised of three simple demographic questions. Though the overall aim of the survey was to ascertain the individual’s perspective of organizational change but these demographic details helped analyzing the categorizing the received responses according to demographic categories. These questions were related to the branch, position/rank and length of service of the respondents. This simple demographic categorization was essential due to the peculiar culture of the Army. The categorization of the data into demographic groups helped in ascertaining the perspective of different rank structure, branch of the Army or the length of service. For example, the perspective of an NCO is bound to be different from that of a battalion commander or a staff officer’s prism through which he sees things happening is likely to be different from sub-unit commander. It is important to note that each branch of the Army has its own peculiar sub-set of environment based on its specific role and mission. This fact was given due consideration by categorizing the responses based on the branches of the respondents. The demographic details were kept minimum to essentials only and unnecessary details like gender etc. were omitted. Likewise, units and sub-units of the individuals were not asked to ensure anonymity and guard against regimental biases.

Part II of the survey is comprised of seven questions which helped in ascertaining the individuals’ perspective of organizational change in quantitative terms. Each respondent was asked specific questions on his/her perspective of the key issues like organizational resistance to change, effects of Army’s chain of command, culture, environment, and SOPs on change. The individuals were also asked about their personal experience with change like personal insecurities, uncertainty and fear of losing relevance due to new set of conditions. To evaluate the responses, a five-point Likert scale from (1) through (5), with (1) being strongly disagree and (5) being strongly agree. (3) was kept as neutral and the surveyed individuals chose to agree or disagree with the idea on
the Likert scale. Responses to the questions in part II when integrated with part I of the survey, assisted in ascertaining the trends in different demographic groups, as they perceive change. These trends once identified can assist military leaders in managing the change process in their respective organizations by focusing on the sources of friction

**Validity and Reliability**

The survey was tested for fair level of validity and reliability before incorporating it in the research process. The survey itself was designed using commonly used and well familiar terms and language. This minimized the risk of confusion or misinterpretation on the part of respondents. The survey was administered using an online survey platform that enabled the author to survey individuals on another continent. The survey was distributed to the members of the brigade through brigade’s XO and responses were collected through the online survey platform. This practice ensured the anonymity of the respondents beyond any doubt. An equal opportunity was provided to members of all the major branches of the Army. This helped in guarding against regimental biases as the author himself belongs to a specific (infantry) branch.

The survey was further tested for validity and reliability by surveying a pilot project first. A pilot sample comprising four officers from Pakistan Army, undergoing different training courses in the US, were surveyed. Results of the pilot project were not included in the research but they assisted a great deal in refining the survey questions and the effectiveness of the data in answering the research questions. The survey was posted online only after vetting and refinement through the pilot project thus ensuring the relevance of the survey questions and effectiveness of the data being collected.
Population, Sampling and Survey Techniques

Infantry brigade of Pakistan Army was selected as population for the survey. As already explained the survey was conducted on a randomly selected sample composed of officers, JCOs and NCOs of the brigade. Soldiers/ privates were not surveyed due to their lack of requisite education and expertise in English language. Following pool of officers, JCOs and NCOs was available in the brigade for research:

- Officers - 46 (10 each in 4 battalions and 2 each in 3 support companies)
- JCOs - 92 (20 each in 4 battalions and 4 each in 3 support companies)
- NCOs - 184 (40 each in 4 battalions and 8 each in 3 support companies)

Total - 322

The survey was distributed to a sample of randomly selected 150 individuals out of a population of 322, making it roughly 50% of the population (46.5% precisely). The survey was created using Survey Monkey, an online survey design platform and distributed through the brigade’s XO by emailing the link to the survey. The body of the email included the survey link along with a brief description of the survey, highlighting the anonymity of the results and that participation was voluntary. The Survey Consent Form (Appendix B), was attached to this email, explaining that participation in the survey indicated consent to be included in this research. It also provided the survey participants with the researcher’s contact information if they had any specific questions related to the research.

Necessary formalities were completed and permissions were obtained before the research was conducted. Approval of the Central Michigan University (CMU) was obtained on the
prescribed Research Review Application (RRA) from. The CMU’s approval is attached as Appendix C. Permission of the Brigade Commander was also sought before initiating RRA and conducting the survey to officers, JCOs and NCOs of the brigade. The permission letter is attached as Appendix D.

Data Analysis Approach

Survey was designed to anonymously gather the data on variables that are involved in the process of organizational change. The gathered data was graphically displayed in the form of charts based for better visual assimilation. These charts and graphs were the mean results of all the questions on Likert scale, further cross evaluated with the demographic categories. The sample data, once gathered was systematically analyzed to ascertain the effects of these variables on organizations while they are undergoing change. The variables were further cross related based on various demographic groups like position/rank, service and branch of the sample. This cross examination of variables along the demographic lines helped the researcher to find group specific trends. This also led to the formulation of certain universal and general trends. The facts and trends as established form the analysis of gathered data, were then compared with the findings of other scholars in the shape of existing literature. This comparison in chapter 4 of this research paper enabled the author to draw evidence based conclusions regarding the process of organizational change in the Army. The conclusions equipped the author to make pertinent recommendations to Army leaders, on how they can best drive and manage change in their respective organizations.

Research Limitations and Scope

The research was aimed to study the organizational behavior of the Army to the process of “Change” but the entire Army could not be surveyed due to the obvious reasons of time and
resources. The research was therefore primarily focused on an infantry brigade of Pakistan Army. Another limitation was the geographic distance between the researcher and the sample that was studied. To make up for this limitation, online survey was used that can be conveniently accessed from anywhere. There was a strong risk of bias as the researcher belongs to a specific branch (infantry) of the Army. To mitigate this risk, demographic variety from other branches of the Army was ensured. Moreover, the research questions were finalized after the pilot project survey.

The scope of study remained focused on the responses from the members of one brigade but the researcher looked at the literature in general term, applicable to the entire organization. The conclusions and recommendations are made in general terms for the whole Army, however care is advised in their application as the data analyzed was from a very small randomly selected sample.

Summary

The study analyzed the perspective of mid-grade level leaders of the army at battalion, company, and platoon level. The responses were collected through a survey which was administered online. To ensure a fair level of validity and reliability, the survey was administered to a project sample first. Individual biases were guarded against through the ensuring the anonymity of the respondents who attempted the survey online. To broaden the representation of the sample, efforts were made to have a fair number of respondents from all the representative branches of the Army. The data thus collected is being analyzed in the next chapter, by drawing its relevance to the literature that was reviewed in chapter 2.
Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Primary data was collected for the research through an anonymous survey using the online Survey Monkey platform. The survey was indirectly distributed through the XO to a sample population of 322 officers, JCOs, and NCOs of an infantry brigade of Pakistan Army. Getting people to respond to an online survey proved to be much more difficult than anticipated as the author was located in the US, geographically far from his target population. After a lot of correspondence and telephone calls between the author and the XO, 97 responses to the survey instrument were received against the target of 150, taking about five months’ time. The survey was aimed to measure individuals’ perception of the organizational change and change management in the Army at the commissioned, junior commissioned, and non-commissioned officers level. From these individual responses, the effects of organizational change initiatives were also ascertained on people according to their length of service, irrespective their rank.

The data was gathered and analyzed in the light of reviewed literature to answer the primary research question of, “Does Army as an organization resists change?” The answer being anticipated to be Yes, the data further aimed at identifying the main contributing factors to this organizational behavior? Aforesaid in view, the survey was designed to gather data on following secondary questions:

1. Does the peculiar working environment of the Army, known as military culture act as a facilitator or an impediment to change?
2. Is the Army’s strict bureaucratic hierarchy or the Chain of Command a facilitator or an obstacle to change?
3. Do the Standard Operating Procedures for routine functioning of the Army, act as an obstacle to change?

4. How far personal interests and fears of the individual members of the organization result in resistance to organizational changes?

5. How far the unsettling and discomforts of the change process are the drivers of resistance to organizational change?

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

Military leaders are routinely faced with difficult decisions; the uniqueness of these decisions being the only field where life and death of many depends on leaders’ decisions. Even if we disregard the peculiarity and uniqueness of the combat in this decision making process, they still effect people in hundreds of thousands, non the less. Due to inherent diversity in their teams, military leaders are often faced with problems that cannot be easily solved and in some cases have negative impacts on some constituency even when they have been declared solved. This makes implementing organizational change in the Army, all the more complexed and challenging. It is therefore important that Army leaders take into account the impact of these initiatives and related decisions on different people, in the context of their peculiar personal interpretations (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011). The aspect of different people reacting to change in different ways (Miller & Turner, 2016), was paid due attention in data collection. The equal representation of different demographic groups (based on arm or branch) however could not be ensured, despite deliberate efforts in this regard. The demographic background of the 97 respondents according to their service branch are illustrated in Figure 2.
Efforts were also made to have sufficient representation from all the three leadership categories (officer, JCOs, and NCOs) of the brigade. However, due to the anonymous nature of the survey, their equal representation could not be ensured. Table-2 below illustrates the rank details of the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCOs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCOs</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-2: Rank wise detail of the respondents

Like any other organization, an important aspect of the diversity in the workforce of the armies around the world is the generations gap between its members. This generation gap further shapes their individual perceptions and worldview. Organizational change is therefore more likely to be seen differently by different age groups in the same organization (Bucher, 2017). The opinions expressed by the participants of survey are therefore important to be viewed in this
context. Table-3 shows this detail of the survey participants, who are grouped according to the length of time that they have served in the Army, irrespective of their rank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Service</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15 years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-3: Details of the length of service in years of the survey participants

Scholars have been believing in the Army to be highly resistant to organizational changes due to its structural system, norm and standard operating procedures. These attributes of Army as a whole shape its organizational behavior towards particular outcomes (Davidson, 2011). An overwhelming majority of the field grade and company grade Army leadership believes in this phenomenon too. This trend is evident across all the branches and is perceived as such by all, irrespective of their rank or service category. 74.3% of the officers, JCOs, and NCOs share the perception of their organization being resistant to change. Figure-3 below illustrates that an overwhelming number of Army leaders believe in this fact. 26 of the respondents strongly agreed whereas 46 of them agreed to the assertion of Army being resistant to organizational change. Only a small number of 25 participants either disagreed, strongly disagreed, or were not sure of the situation.
Figure-3: Individual perception of the Army’s resistance to organizational change

Organizational culture being the set of institutional values, beliefs, and assumptions; defines the “dos and the don’ts” that govern the behavior of its members (Beach, 2006, p. 31). Military scholars have believed all along that military culture is not very conducive for implementing change. They argue that disciplined organizations rarely place a high value on new and untried ideas, concepts, and innovations (Murray, Innovation: Past and Future, 2009). Historians have also testified that organizational culture has been one of the greatest impediments to doctrinal innovation in most of the armies during the interwar period (Kier, 1997). Interestingly most of Army leadership at battalion and company level also believe that their organizational culture is resistant to change. Figure-4 explains the breakdown of all 97 responses on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, to the question of Army’s organizational culture acting as an impediment to change. A vast majority (61 out of 97 or 62.9%) of these officers, JCOs, and NCOs responded in affirmative to the assertion that their unit’s working environment and culture hinder the change initiatives. 23
of the respondents believed that their organizational culture is conducive for change. 13 of the respondents did not see any connection between change initiatives and their working environment.

![Graph showing responses to the question: Is Army's culture resistant to organizational change?](image)

**Figure-4:** The effects of organizational culture on organizational change.

Army operates through a bureaucratic structure or as it is known, the chain of command, which unique to military alone. This unique culture of disciplined obedience, in which soldiers must remain steadfast in the face of terrifying conditions, is necessary for mission accomplishment but on the down side, it does create hurdles for change initiatives. Bureaucracies in most of the large organizations are disliked to extent of hate for the procedural hurdles they create in innovation (Gates, 2016). Same is true about Army as a number of very senior Army leaders have been voicing their concern about the very chain of command and bureaucracy that they led themselves. Interestingly, the opinion of battalion, company, and platoon level leadership of the Army, is equally divided in this regard. 38 of the respondents (39.2%) believed that Army’s bureaucratic chain of command does facilitate organizational change. 41 of them (42.3%) saw the
chain of command as an obstacle to organizational change initiatives. Figure-5 explains this data in further detail.

![Figure-5: The relationship of Army’s hierarchical structure and chain of command with organizational change.]

To cope with the operational complexities, large organization do need Standard Operating Procedures [SOPs] and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures [TTPs] for routine functioning. Army being a very large and complex organization has all the reasons in the world to formulate and make extensive use of SOPs and TTPs (Nielsen, 2010). SOPs and TTPs are normally instrumental in the smooth functioning of the organization by removing lot of routine frictions, but are rigid in nature at the same time. With the aim of standardizing procedures, SOPs tend to be a bit too “standard” and do not change quickly or easily (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). SOPs are the first thing that feel the impact of change initiatives rather change is antithesis to the very soul of SOPs. SOPs are seen as a source of continuity and smoothness, whereas when seen in this context, change is all but
chaotic. This fact is also evident from the survey results where a huge majority, 67 of the respondents saw these SOPs as highly resistant to change. Only 19 of the respondents thought otherwise. Figure-6 below explains this perception in more detail.

![Bar Chart: Are SOPs and TTPs obstacles to organizational change?](chart)

**Figure-6:** The effect of SOPs and TTPs on organizational change.

The human aspect of organizations like Army is the singular most important aspect of its organizational infrastructure as well as procedures and outcomes. The diversity in the nature, beliefs, roles, and world views of these individuals imply all together different reactions to organizational change initiatives. There is a great deal of literature on individuals’ reaction to change that emphasizes their resistance to it. All of it can be summed up as, organizational change is resisted because management systems are designed, and people are rewarded, for stability (Lawler & Worley, 2006). Major change initiatives imply a change in the required skill set of the employees. Employees’ fear losing their job or/ and not coping with the new requirements is believed to be a major source of friction among the employees (Schuler, 2010). Interestingly, a
vast majority of our respondents do not agree with this scholarly argument as a reason of resisting change at individual level. 53 of the respondents disagree with the fear of losing their job as reason for resisting organizational change. Only 21 respondents thought that change initiatives might result in them losing their jobs. Figure-7 explains the responses of all 97 respondents with respect to their fear of losing job as a result of change initiatives in the organization.

![Fear of losing job as a result of a “Change” initiative](image)

**Figure-7:** Employees’ fear of losing job as a result of organizational change initiative.

Change initiatives can also result in some employees or members of the organization feeling less important than the past. This may be the result of a change in the organizational structure or the requirement of a new skill set from the members. A simple change in the organizational priorities may also lead to some members becoming irrelevant or less important than the past. 60 of 97 respondents to the survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the change initiative resulting in their feeling of lesser relevance, thus leading to resistance to change. A small
number of 22 respondents did not agree to this relationship of organizational change and individuals’ fear of losing relevance or importance. Figure-8 further illustrates these results.

![Graph showing fear of relevance/importance as result of organizational change]

**Figure-8:** Individuals’ fear of losing relevance as a result of organizational change.

Another important aspect of individual members’ resistance of organizational change is the uncertainty, fog, and the “unknown” associated with change initiatives. Most people do adopt to change, but not before passing through some other psychological gates like disengagement from the previous situation, new beginning, shock, acknowledgement, and adaptation and change (Jick, Managing Change: Cases and Concepts, 1993). Organizational change is seen as an opportunity by strategic leaders but for the low level leadership and employees it means disruption and chaos. Change requires them to move in the direction of unknown on the promise of something better at the other end. This movement is naturally very risky and the human tendency of avoiding risks results in resistance to change (Schuler, 2010). 55 of the survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that change does result in uncertainty and anxiety about the future. Figure-9 below
shows the details of individual opinions in this regard, of all the 97 survey respondents. This uncertainty encompasses both personal and organizational aspects.

![Chart: Uncertainty of the future as a result of a “Change” initiative]

**Figure-9:** Uncertainty of either personal or organizational future as a result of change initiatives.

**Data Analysis Summary**

The data indicates unanimity of opinion on the fact that Army does resist organizational change. This opinion is shared across the board, irrespective of the rank or branch of the Army service members. Different population groups according to the rank or the length of service may differ in their opinion of the primary catalysts of this resistance, the presence of resistance itself is however, agreed upon. The organizational structure, culture, and values of the Army are significantly different from their civilian or corporate counterparts, and the research therefore highlights a few disagreements with the scholarly literature of change for those organizations.
These small differences notwithstanding, there is a significant amount of similarity of the general organizational practices between the Army and other large organizations. The data presented above endorses this assertion.

Organizational culture is one of the foremost indicator of mission outcomes and is proven no different in this case too. An overwhelming majority of the battalion, company, and platoon level leaders believes Army’s culture to be the biggest impediment in the smooth implementation of organizational change. Due to the obvious reasons of the nature of mission, Army units work in an environment and culture of obedience to orders. This culture though greatly assists in the accomplishment of the unique Army missions, is at the same time counterproductive for implementing organizational changes.

Bureaucracy and working in a strictly hierarchical chain of command is considered as significant obstacles to change. Our respondents however were found equally divided in their opinion on this issue. The nature and requirement of Army mission is probably the reason that chain of command is considered both part of the problem and solution. The survey participants however, disagreed with the assertion of service members worried for the loss of their jobs as a result of organizational changes.

Human and personal behaviors, and perceptions were found among the largest contributing factors to organizational resistance to change. Individual uncertainty and anxieties about the future were found to sum up in an organizational behavior that favors continuity and consistency over change and its resultant disruption of the routine.
Summary and Conclusions

Army today is faced with unprecedented challenges as the complexity of its mission and operating environment have changed significantly. The nature of Army mission is directly related to the nature and quantum of threat, and its operational environment. The morphing nature of threat, as well as the breadth of its spectrum have exacerbated the mission accomplishment difficulties manifold, as is evident from the already discussed proclamation of US Army CSA (US Army, 2004). It is not the threat alone that is evolving, the geo-strategic context or the operational environment has never been so dynamic. The environment being the synergistic combination of all the critical variables and actors may not be military specific in its nature but it does create the conditions, circumstances, and influences that can affect military operations today and in the near to midterm. More importantly, the nature of threat and environment both are expected to remain dynamic and keep evolving in the foreseeable future. As already highlighted, in the times of such upheaval, change not only becomes necessary for growing and improving, it becomes vital for the very survival of organizations (Kotter, 2011). Organizational change in this context not only imply the ability to change rapidly, but also to manage change efficiently.

Scholars have identified organizational change to be initiated as a result of a compliance to some external reality like change in the nature of threat and/or environment, but the stimulus for change can also be from within the organization (Quattrone & Hopper, 2001). Same is true for army as any significant change in technology resulting in a paradigm shift in doctrine and tactics may necessitate changes at the organizational level (Murray, 2009). Whatever is the stimulus or catalyst for change, the nature of change largely remains the same; passing of the organization.
from identifiable unique status to another. In both the cases and change can be chaotic and may prove counterproductive if not managed properly. The fact that two third of the organizational change initiatives fail, is a testimony to the chaotic and challenging nature of change. The mere size and complexity of organization like Army, makes the implementation of change initiatives a daunting task.

Both the scholars and practitioners of military profession are unanimous in their opinion of Army’s resistance to organizational change (Murray, 2009) and (Galvin & Clark, 2015). This resistance is largely due to the inherent organizational structure of the Army. Being an organization that operates in a perpetually complexed and dynamic environment, and fog, is therefore naturally inclined to favor stability and consistency. As evident from the survey responses, change initiatives are taken as disruptive and are not desired particularly at junior level leadership. Change initiatives are routinely top-down initiated in the Army, and the mid-level leadership who are actually supposed implement them, remain skeptical of them. Thus the core of Army leadership at battalion, company, and platoon level become part of the overall organizational resistance. This contribution to resistance can both be deliberate as well as inadvertent, as explained in succeeding paragraphs.

Army culture is unique from other organizations in the sense that it is the sum of intellectual, professional and traditional values of its officer corps. This shared set of values is shaped by the specific frames of reference developed by the Army officers and it plays a central role shaping internal working dynamics as well as organizational interaction with its environment. An overwhelming number of Army officers consider this culture to be resistant to change but still a large number of them believe otherwise. The reason can be found in the peculiar social construct of military organizations where so-called decisive and can-do attitude is considered the hallmark of effectiveness. This discipline and steadfastness in the face of terrifying situations are no doubt
the vital ingredients of soldierly traits but they do come with byproduct of rigidity that discourages untried ideas, concepts, and innovations.

Bureaucracies are disliked all over the word for slowing down organizational processes on the pretext of due-process (Gates, 2016). Large organizations like Army have traditionally been found to be more prone to bureaucratic hurdles than the smaller ones. Our survey results however, shows interesting results where the respondents were almost equally divided in their opinion on military bureaucracy/ chain of command to be a hurdle in implementing organizational change. This anomaly can have two possible interpretations. One, the military leaders see the chain of command an inseparable and vital part of the way things are done in the Army. Second, is the notion that the more the higher leadership is out of contact with the organization at the grass root level, the more the bureaucratic friction. Senior military leaders, contrary to their civilian counterparts, are more relatable to their subordinates at much lower levels, and therefore seen less resistant to the change process.

SOPs and TTPs are a great tool in dealing with the uncertainties and complexities of the operation in large organizations. To ensure consistency and induce smoothness in its operation, Army make extensive use of SOPs and TTPs. They reduce friction by defining the routine functions, roles, and procedures for each individual and group. While aiming at standardizing and routinizing the operational procedures, they are the first ones to feel the effects of change initiatives (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). At times they act as the antithesis of change, are therefore declared a one of the biggest hurdles to change by our survey respondents.

People and their individual behavior a major component of the Army’s organizational structure. Army and all of its enterprises are essentially very human in nature. Individual members of an organization will react to change in different manners, but scholars have been highlighting
some consistency in these behaviors, nonetheless. Change initiative may result in a paradigm change in the organizational process and as a result some individuals may become redundant. This fear of redundancy and loss of job is considered one of the most important factor of individuals’ resistance to organizational change. Our respondents however, overwhelmingly rejected this notion. The reason can be found in the service structure and its terms, specific to Pakistan Army. As a policy, the Army makes a deliberate effort to retain its trained manpower, and adjusts the people laterally on other associated jobs, in case of aforementioned redundancies.

To embrace change, soldiers need to take a leap in faith and move in the direction of the unknown. Change initiatives result in anxieties and uncertainties among the individuals, both about their own individual future as well as that of the organization (Lawler & Worley, 2006). This results in foggy and risky situation, which further stimulates the natural resistant tendencies in such situations. Some change in the organizational processes may require a different skill set from its members, which further increase the default strain associated with change. These feelings of risk, strain, and uncertainty were therefore discovered to be significant factors contributing to resistance to change in the Army. These individual behaviors sum up and result in an overall organizational environment that is skeptical of change on its best day, and actively resist organizational change when goes unchecked.

**Recommendations**

Change is complex and difficult to execute, but it is also vital for the relevance and effectiveness of the Army in a dynamic and evolving operational environment. It is therefore of utmost importance that this realization is given its due importance. Army leaders need to realize both the inevitability and vitality of change. This realization then needs to be translated into action by making coherent plans. Change must not be taken for granted and deliberate courses of action
should be developed for its execution, taking all its facets into account. Like many other large organizations, the organizational architecture of the Army is designed to encourage consistency and stability. Routine functioning will therefore not assist in executing change, rather more than likely these mechanisms are going to resist change. It is therefore necessary that special measures are taken and specific procedures are adopted which are suitable and in-line with the change objectives. Based on the literature review and analysis of the research data, following measures are recommended to lessen resistance to organizational change in the Army.

- Army leaders must utilize the realization of the organization being resistant to change. The research discovered a great deal of realization in this regard across the battalion, company, and platoon level leadership, irrespective of their rank. The senior level leadership have a good starting point where they can further sensitize the organization as a whole. This can further be translated into feasible, suitable, and acceptable courses of action through coherent planning, incorporating all the stakeholders.

- All major change initiatives change the terms of their personal compact for the members of the organization. Unless the new terms are explained to them, members of the organization are going resist change. There needs be honest communication between leaders and their followers during the change process, more importantly before the process starts. The members need to be explained not only the decisions taken in this regard, but equally important is to let them know the very process through which the decisions were made. This make the members feel part of the process and create a sense of owning it. A good deal of emotional intelligence is required to be displayed by the leadership at appropriate levels. They need to take
into account not only the outcomes of their decisions in terms of “who all will be affected” by their decisions, but should take into account that “How” these decisions will be viewed.

- The culture of obedience to command is understandably needed due to the Army’s peculiar mission requirements. This must however, not be allowed to prevent honest retrospection, candid feedback, and tolerance for discerning views. Leaders at all levels must make deliberate efforts to ensure that they receive honest, candid, and firsthand feedback, without any censorships. German Army of the interwar period can be good role model for starters.

- An equally important and linked to the above point, is the promotion of a unit culture which encourages critical and creative thinking. While the “can-do” attitude is certainly the way in some specific situations, encouraging novel ideas and difference of opinion is definitely the recipe for long term organizational progression. Senior leadership must therefore not only encourage down-up flow of ideas, they must actively invest in the training, education, and grooming of junior level leadership, to make these ideas worthwhile.

- SOPs and TTPs are helpful in the smooth functioning of the Army in routine matters. Too many SOPs however, result in an organizational mindset of doing things as they have always been done. This mindset becomes one of the biggest contributing factor to organizational resistance to change. Unit SOPs and TTPs should therefore be more descriptive than prescriptive. They must allow room for disciplined initiatives within the overall confines of the mission. Providing greater
latitude to the executioner during routine, low risk tasks can foster an organizational culture which readily accepts novel ideas.

- Human apprehensions about the future and risk perceptions were found one of the largest reasons of individuals’ resistance to organizational change. The uncertainties and fog associated with change, make it a phenomenon of leap in faith. It entails the members of organization to move in the direction of unknown, which in itself is a risky undertaking. People will only take this leap, if they are convinced that something better lays ahead, at the other end. This becomes leadership’s responsibility to make it easy for their under-command by bringing in transparency in the process, and removing uncertainty by explaining the end state in clearest possible terms.

Areas for Future Research and Study

This study aimed at identifying the factors contributing to organizational resistance to change in the Army. Army is very large organization by any definition of the term and has a number of peculiarities in its mission as well as organizational processes. The study was developed by drawing pertinent lessons from the huge amount of literature on organizational change in the civil or corporate world and relate them the specific requirements of the Army. Though the study was fairly successful in highlighting the major causal factors of resistance to organizational change, there still remain voids which warrant further study and research.

The study looked at the perspective of officers, JCOs, and NCOs on the issue at hand. It did make an effort to ensure representation from all these categories. Efforts were also made to seek the opinion of individuals with varying length of experience or association with the organization. It however, did not categorized their responses as such, into these categories. It will
be worthwhile to know the views of different generations like those of lieutenants with one-year service experience and of lieutenant colonels with more than 20-years under the belt. It would also be worth the exploration to find out and compare the opinions of officers, JCOs, and NCOs separately in their respective social groups.

Organizational change has traditionally been viewed differently by different levels of leadership. Senior leaders see change as an opportunity to strengthen the organization by aligning the operations with strategy, to take on new professional challenges and risks, and to advance their careers. Junior leaders and employees neither seek change or welcome it. For them, it is disruptive, intrusive, and it upsets the balance. This study tried to explain organizational change in the Army from the perspective of leadership at field grade and below. It will therefore be interesting and relevant to seek the perspective of senior leadership in any future study. Only then will we have a semblance of the complete perspective of organizational change in the Army.
ORGANIZATIONAL RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

References


Appendix A
Survey Questionnaire

Assessing the Individual’s Perspective of Change in the Army

Part I: General Demographic Information

1. What is your position/rank in the Army?
   - Officer
   - JCO
   - NCO

2. What branch of the Army are you serving in?
   - Infantry
   - Armor
   - Artillery
   - Engineers, Signals or EME
   - Logistics or Services

3. How long have you been serving in the Army?
   - 1 – 5 years
   - 6 – 10 years
   - 11 – 15 years
☐ 16 – 20 years
☐ More than 20 years

Part II: A self-assessment of Change’s effects on you as an individual

This part of the survey consists of 7 statements. You are to select the best answer to each statement.

The answers/options in response to these statements are based on Likert Scale, from 1 to 5. The key for grading your answers is:

Strongly Disagree (1); Disagree (2); Uncertain (3); Agree (4); Strongly Agree (5)

1. The organization that I am serving in; resists change.
   (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

2. The strict hierarchical structure and chain of command that I work in, facilitates change in my organization.
   (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

3. The working environment and culture of my unit is an impediment in implementing the organizational change.
   (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

4. Doing my job according to unit’s SOPs and TTPs in routine, proves to be an obstacle during implementing change.
   (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
5. I have felt threatened in the past, of losing my job as a result of a “Change” initiative in the organization.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

6. I have felt irrelevant or less important in the past, as a result of a “Change” initiative in the organization.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

7. I feel uncertain of either my individual future or that of my organization, at the start of “Change” in my unit.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)
Appendix B

Central Michigan University

Survey Consent and Information Form

**Research Title:** Why Army as an Organization Resists Change

**Student:** Anwar Habib, MSA Program  
57 Kansas Avenue, Fort Leavenworth  
Kansas, USA, 66027  
(913) 306 4180  
habib1a@cmich.edu, anwarhabib.2303@gmail.com

**Faculty Monitor:** Dr. Bob Weltzer, Jr  
weltz1re@cmich.edu

**Introduction to the Study:**

Classic military theorists like Carl von Clausewitz were of the view that implementing organizational changes in the Army is a simple phenomenon whereas modern theorists consider it to be a complex and challenging process. This survey is part of a research project aimed at determining whether Army as an organization resists change or otherwise. Your participation, while voluntary, is requested in order to gather first-hand data on your perceptions of different variables that affect organizational changes in the Army.

**What will you do in this study?**

If you decide to participate in this study, please complete the survey that follows.

**How long will it take me to do this?**

This survey consists of a total of three demographic questions and seven questions related to the research study. It would take you approximately 7 to 10 minutes to complete the survey.
Are there any risks of participating in this study?

This survey is both voluntary and anonymous. Your responses will not be associated with your identity in any way.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

This study aims to determine the sources of friction to organizational changes in the Army. Once trends are identified, a secondary aim is to find solutions to these problems. Your participation in this survey will help Army leaders implement organizational changes in a befitting manner.

Who can I contact for information about this study?

Contact information for the researcher and research monitor are provided above. Please feel free to contact either individual with any questions regarding this study. If you would like an electronic copy of the results of this research, please send a request by email to the researcher using the contact information above.

You are free to refuse participation in this research project or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time. Your participation will not affect your relationship with the institution(s) involved in this project.

Your completion of this survey implies your consent to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be made available to you, upon request, from the researcher listed above.

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report any complaints to Central Michigan University’s MSA Program (anonymously, if you so choose) by telephone at (989) 774-6525.

To complete this survey, please click the link below and follow the instructions provided for each section, answering the questions as accurately and appropriately as you can. Thank you for your time in completing this survey.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q9CKCW3
Appendix C
CMU Approval to Conduct Research

Research Review Application approval/A. Habib

Prout, Christina Leigh
Wed 12/7/2016 12:47 PM

Cc: Habib, Anwar <habibal@cmich.edu>;
Cc: Welzer J, Robert E <welzerj@cmich.edu>; Fort Leavenworth Center - CEL <fwmwh@cmich.edu>

Dear Anwar,

Your Research Review Application has been reviewed and approved. You may start your data collection. This approval will not expire as long as your topic and methodology remain unchanged. If your topic or methodology changes, please submit a new Research Review Application and supporting documents to your instructor by e-mail.

Please contact your instructor if you have any questions. Also, be sure to check with your instructor concerning the due dates for your project.

Good luck with your project. This is the only notification you will receive. Please keep a copy for your records.

Kim Gribben

Assistant Director, MSA Program

Christina Prout
Administrative Secretary Master of Science in Administration Program
Rowe 222 | Central Michigan University | Mount Pleasant, MI 48859
T: 989-774-5250 | F: 989-774-2575
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8: Visit us online

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### Appendix D

**Survey Responses**

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