Case study: identifying resistance in managing change

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Abstract *Examines stakeholder attitudes about change and resistance to change in a management initiative within the US State Department. Resistance to change may be an obstacle to successful implementation of reinvention initiatives based on how individuals and organizations perceive their goals are affected by the change. This study suggests that improved identification and understanding of the underlying factors of resistance may improve implementation outcomes.*

Within the embassy system, there has been significant expansion of the overseas presence of foreign and non-foreign affairs agencies owing to increased globalization. Consequently, the function of diplomatic posts has expanded, reflecting the broader interests of US agencies in fields like energy, environmental protection, technology, customs, and immigration control, to name a few. This escalation increased the demand for management support and services provided by the State Department. Traditionally, the State Department, a sole service provider and economic principal for resource management, supported Foreign Affairs staff and co-located federal agencies in US embassies worldwide. A major initiative to restructure the business and administrative management support infrastructure was implemented in response to demands to reduce the cost of government. This initiative had the impact of altering traditional governance systems and changing the interface between federal agencies and the State Department. Implementation of such large-scale initiatives have far-reaching consequences for human and organizational systems. Yet much of the implementation planning typically focuses on technical, procedural and operational aspects of the bureaucracy and its infrastructure. Resistance to change, which shows up in the social, cultural and political systems is largely an unmanaged process.

Resistance: a powerful organizational force

Major organizational changes or innovations can anticipate resistance, especially if proposed changes alter values and visions related to the existing order. Programs that satisfy one group often reduce satisfaction of other groups because the survival of one set of values and visions may be at the expense of the other.

This study identified constructs and dynamics of resistance that can undermine organizational change and suggests that resistance effects should be assessed and managed as a part of the implementation strategy. These factors may be understudied dimensions of resistance. The study of these

variables and factors are important to developing successful implementation models. To examine the resistance phenomenon in this change initiative the study posed the following research questions:

- *RQ1.* What variables are related to resistance?
- *RQ2.* What factors are underlying causes of resistance?
- *RQ3.* What is the level of resistance?

Value of study
In this project the researcher was provided considerable client access which allowed the gathering of empirical data on difficult to access multi-actor perspectives. As a result the findings may yield useful insight for managers, evaluators of implementation outcomes, change management practitioners and other interested researchers. This study provides value by going beyond change readiness assessments of resistance barriers and demonstrates the need to gain a deeper understanding of the fragile and complex character of organizational affairs that resistance represents. An implication of the findings suggest that resistance behavior requires risk management.

Resistance reflects the subtext of organizational humanity on stage during organization transformation efforts. Future resistance studies and change implementation strategies must recognize and situate this humanity at play. Future research might also examine the nature of resistance in public vs private organizations to determine if similar effects are enacted during organization transformation processes. Additionally, research would benefit from the application of postmodern organizational analysis tools to examine this theater. The postmodern perspective offers frameworks that look at achieving organizational justice (Wooten and White, 1999) in change outcomes that may serve to decrease obstructing behavior. Other postmodern analysis tools examine competing views and conflicting interests that are often significant sources of resistance. Such a lens would look strategically at the impact of power coalitions, the advantaging of the *status quo*, the consequences of disenfranchising them, the impact of changing enculturated traditions and recognition of marginalized perspectives. Findings from this kind of analysis could legitimate resistance as an organizational effect that must be consciously managed.

A pathology of resistance to implementation strategies in public sector reform
Today's federal management reform efforts reflect a shift in the traditional administrative management paradigm to a more entrepreneurial federal administration. Public sector managers, not unlike private sector managers, are being pressured with turbulence and substantial change. These new forces demand efficiency and economy in order to withstand the budgetary pressures brought on by the demand for a balanced federal budget and by anti-bureaucracy sentiments. To move in this direction, however, a strong case

must be made for change. Existing stakeholders often perceive that these changes result in disenfranchisement and a redistribution of benefits as a result of the actions taken. Consequently, organization designs for major change often result in failure or a struggle between forces supporting change and those resisting change followed by long and bitter implementation battles. It is critical to understand how stakeholders are affected and understand the often hidden dynamics and cost of change.

In one of the more comprehensive reviews of implementation studies, O'Toole (1986) found that while there was a trend in the growth of academic literature about implementation of public policy, there was no theory of implementation that commanded general agreement. He noted that researchers continue to work from diverse theoretical perspectives, do not agree on the outlines of a theory of implementation, or on the variables crucial to implementation success.

O'Toole identified variables from over 100 studies noting those considered key to the implementation process. He found that half of the studies identified policy characteristics (clarity of goals, procedures, validity of the policy) and approximately the same number indicated that resources are crucial, along with other frequently identified categories of variables that included the multi-organization structure, the number of actors, attitudes and perceptions of implementing personnel.

Variables identified by O'Toole in his comprehensive review have a direct relevance to resistance and helped inform the development of the author's survey instrument. Some of those include: resources and interorganizational structure (Ackerman and Stienmann, 1982); interests of subordinates, (Baum, 1976); degree of resistance (Berman, 1980); operational demands (Chase, 1979); complexity of the change mechanism (Cleaves, 1980); structure of power relationships (Elmore, 1985); type of policy (Hargrove, 1983); administrative linkages (Lazin, 1980); incentives (Luft, 1976); political constraints (Mead, 1977); configurations of intergovernmental relationships and institutional relationships (Menzel, 1981); level of conflict, (Scharpf, 1977); and degree of change required (Mueller, 1984), all as cited in O'Toole (1986).

In the Berkley Symposium on *Initiating Change: Public Policies and Institutions*, Lindblom (1994) of Yale University points out that initiating change is a competitive, often hostile activity. Anyone who wants change has to overcome massive inertia. Change initiation is a kind of warfare. Lindblom notes that while it is possible to find policies or changes that benefit almost everyone, changes ordinarily benefit some people by injuring others, particularly where change is feared and members of the organization are not made to see its possibilities.

Lindblom argued that the best way to block change is to render people unaware of possibilities. If those most affected are the dominant stakeholders, they may use communication less for exposing others to the possibilities and more for maintaining control, thus giving messages that are designed to hide, misrepresent or put a better face on the *status quo*. He noted that dominant

stakeholders often possess powerful incentives to resist along with formidable capacities to resist.

Lindblom defines this collective defensive behavior within the organization as impairment and states that this kind of impairment is an instrument of resistance to change. Because these stakeholders are dominant and powerful, their advantages include an overwhelming capacity to communicate and in other ways influence the thinking of significant numbers of others in the organization, thereby increasing the pattern and depth of change obstructing impairments. Change is resisted according to Lindblom, often more successfully than it is initiated, because its opponents are many and powerful. A profound struggle occurs wherein systematically impaired minds are fundamental barriers to change. These impairments are not the consequence of accident or apathy, but the practices, some deliberate and some not, of the advantaged. The latter struggle to resist perceived disadvantaging change. Resistances to change are powerful and persistent. Lindblom (1994) argues that if we want changes, we have to engage in a political struggle; no important changes will come without it (Lindblom, 1994).

Chris Argyris (1994) of Harvard University agrees with this diagnosis of impairment as an obstacle to change. He describes it as "cognitive impairment" that is a result of striving for control that results in defensive reasoning. Such defensive reasoning is self-serving, anti-learning, and overprotective. It is used to maintain and reward existing patterns of behavior. These organizationally defensive routines reflect actions, policies or practices that prevent members from experiencing embarrassment or threat and protect positions of power and control. Thompson and Ingraham (1996) conducted an exploratory survey of reinvention laboratories to ascertain if tensions arose, and to see where resistance might occur. Their study recognizes the importance of addressing politically based resistance and underscores the need to understand those organizational forces. In examining reinvention laboratories, projects so designated by the National Performance Review (NPR) as efforts to promote innovation within agencies, found resistance to change could be a formidable obstruction to attempts at governmental reform.

A new model of change management might include organization analysis of resistance factors as a component of the implementation plan (see Figure 1).

Institutional reform: the imperative for system-wide change
The recent Washington, DC political environment has focused on reducing the cost of government and balancing the national budget in response to the national deficit and anti-big-government public opinion sentiments. In response to the demand for government reform, "the reinventing government movement" took on a life of its own. The Clinton Administration introduced the NPR, which was designed to initiate long-term change in the culture of federal operations, recommend appropriate forms of organization and management, and introduce new forms of entrepreneurial administration. The Republican majority in Congress expressed its views on restructuring

Figure 1.
Change strategy

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Change strategy
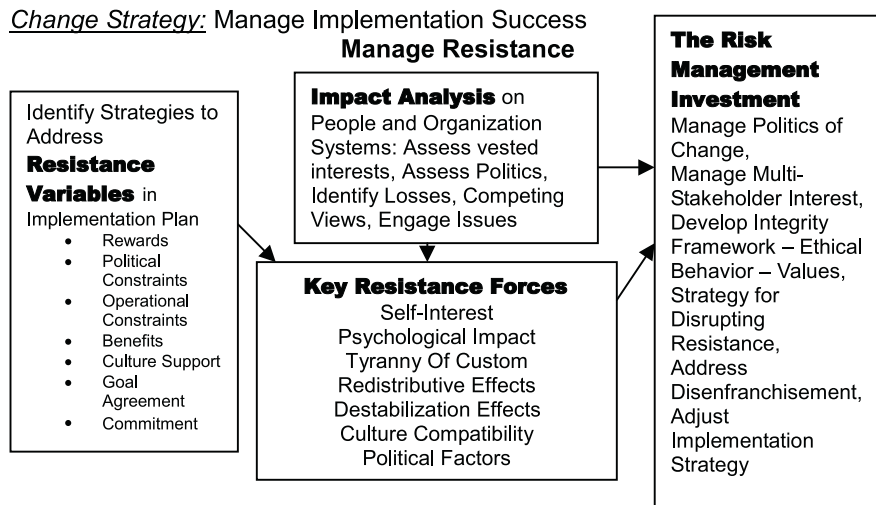
government through the publication of the Horn Report (Carroll and Lynn, 1996), which stated that Congress should drastically restructure government. Hence, both political parties pursued initiatives that would drive institutional changes designed to "focus on reductions in the cost of government, examine federal administrative management, reinvent government and produce a balanced budget."

State department reform

In response to pressure for reform, The President's Management Council (PMC) undertook a study to identify specific steps that could be taken to streamline overseas foreign affairs operations linked to embassies. This change initiative is known as the International Cooperative Administrative Support Service (ICASS) System, an outgrowth of the renewed emphasis in the *Reinventing Government* movement. Under ICASS, greater responsibility and authority for managing resources and making decisions about paying for common administrative support services are delegated to the post (embassies).

At the inception of ICASS, the expectation was that it would better rationalize the delivery of overseas administrative services, identify measures that could be taken to streamline overseas operations, reduce the cost of administrative services and make better use of information systems and communications technology (United States General Accounting Office (1996). The need for change was widely recognized. Congress, NPR, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and United States General Accounting Office (GAO), all saw a need to manage with fewer resources. At the same time it was important that twenty-first century diplomacy was not threatened with irrelevance because it lacked the infrastructure necessary to support its mission (Burt and Robison, 1998).

ICASS implementation

The 1996 Department of State Appropriations Act required that allocations for the full cost for each department and agency's overseas presence be in place by fiscal year 1997. Under the sponsorship of the President's Management Council the State Department and other US agencies with presence at US embassies developed a system that devolved authority for overseas support to individual embassy interagency councils, and shifted financial responsibility for administrative resource support to those overseas agencies. This was a radical change in philosophy from the previous unilateral management of the State Department administrative support platform overseas.

This change effort occurred in an environment where the coexistence of multiple cultures with conflicting objectives could result in significant conflicts. The ICASS concept incorporates many of the principals of the NPR and the PMC. The process sought to facilitate culture change, particularly at the embassy level, by:

- offering agencies choice in the provision of administrative services;
- decentralizing and shifting decisions and costs for resource allocations to principal agencies;
- providing more effective embassy management;
- enhancing service provider competency and efficiency; and
- introducing service standards that maintain an administrative support platform in concert with country diplomatic objectives.

In general, ICASS is regarded as a better way to deliver administrative services. Some State Department representatives believed that "it was the most significant management change in the last 25 years, but that this was realized more overseas than in Washington". Federal Agency representatives noted that "it was an eye opener because they never knew what particular services cost, we paid a token amount, this is making better managers out of us." ICASS took an administrative system that was run inefficiently and forced it to improve. While the majority of stakeholders may have agreed that ICASS is a better way to deliver services, it did not change the fact that organizational transformation processes that effect roles, culture and governance structures would produce resistance. ICASS gave the State Department financial relief but forced it to share control. A reform initiative of this magnitude becoming a theatre of conflict was a predictable response.

Method

This empirical study represents an exploratory, non-experimental, descriptive research design using case study methodology to assess resistance phenomena in a federal agency implementing a "reinvention of government" (REGO) initiative. While this case study was done in the context of a single federal agency, data was collected worldwide, from multiple organization units that function autonomously (e.g. globally co-located foreign affairs agencies and

embassies. The study combined ethnographic observation, qualitative interview methodology and quantitative procedures of descriptive statistics and factor analysis.

The study was conducted in multiple phases over a two-year period. Prior to data collection the researcher was given the opportunity for ethnographic observation through site visits to embassies in three countries involved in the pilot implementation of this initiative. The researcher was provided access to the interagency assessment findings of the "virtual" implementation of the ICASS project in 19 pilot embassy sites. Additionally, the researcher observed council and working committee meetings in Washington Headquarters and the field. During the second year of the study, survey interviews and survey questionnaires were administered. The results of this data are the basis of this article.

Participants
Participants in the survey interviews and the survey questionnaire were in a sampling frame within the State Department or other federal agencies that have ICASS oversight responsibility, or an ICASS implementation responsibility. The survey interview population consisted of 38 State Department and federal agency executives and senior foreign affairs officers. Of those interviewed, 23 (65 percent) were State Department employees, one former State Department Under Secretary and 11 (32 percent) federal agency personnel. A total of 600 survey questionnaires were distributed to 35 embassies in six global regions as defined by the State Department's global database (Europe, Near East, Africa, Asia, South Asia, Western Hemisphere). Survey respondents reflected the following professional categories: career service and political appointees, embassy-based personnel, Ambassadors, Chiefs of Mission, State Department and federal agency Foreign Affairs Officers, and Foreign Service Nationals. Federal agencies with overseas presence were represented by, but not limited to USAID, Department of Defense, Agriculture, Justice, Treasury, and Peace Corps. Of the 107 survey respondents, 55 persons or 53 percent of the sample were State Department employees and 49 persons or 47 percent of the respondents were federal agency personnel.

Procedure
Phase I defined the population for the study and developed a survey instrument. Phase II involved pilot testing the interview protocol and survey instrument and its administration. The interview protocol and survey instrument developed were used to determine if there was resistance and, if found, its source. The questions in the interview protocol and survey instrument form the basis for the study of the variables that were examined. Organizations or departments identified as interview candidates received a letter from the State Department's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) within the Office of the Undersecretary for Administration and Management. Similarly, the distribution of surveys was

preceded by letters to the Deputy Chiefs of Mission (DCM) issued from the State Department's Chief Financial Officer requesting embassy participation in the survey. This introductory letter to survey participants indicated that the questionnaire was designed to assist in understanding the degree of support for change in the organization as it related to the US State Department's ICASS Implementation Initiative. The letter stated that bringing about change in a large and complex organization is a challenging task with a recognition that change in one component of the organization may have consequences for other areas. Survey participants were informed that their participation was essential to providing a greater understanding of organizational factors vital to managing the successful implementation of ICASS.

In Phase III the acquired data set was analyzed. Interview data was coded and content analyzed using ATLAS/ti software, which offers a systemic approach that gets at the complexity of underlying qualitative data. The survey questionnaire was developed by the researcher to assess employee perceptions of the transition to the ICASS, identify primary sources of resistance, understand which variables correlate most to resistance and examine the relationship between them. Identification of variables of interest were informed by the literature search and other validated surveys.

All of the variables in the analysis were evaluated using the one-to-five Likert ordinal scale to determine levels of measurement. The survey design involved 40 questions in a five-part questionnaire. Once statistical analysis of the data was performed to identify key variables, factor analysis was then used to refine the variables, identify the existence of fewer, more basic, and unique variables underlying the large number of variables that demonstrate the strongest efficacy to the construct of resistance.

Results
This research began with a premise that resistance as a response to change could undermine implementation of change initiatives particularly if the scope of the change and range of the changes affected roles, boundaries, resource allocations and budget politics. Such potential consequences make it important to understand the cost of change and understand how stakeholders are affected. The findings are discussed under the research questions.

RQ1. What variables are related to resistance to change?
Factor analysis generates an "eigenvalue", which is a measure of the efficacy of the 24 questions representing survey variables. Variables selected were those where the eigenvalue loads 0.90 or higher. This level of significance was chosen in order to obtain greater explanatory power and identify underlying effects that may be important below 1.0 level. The identified variables were reward, political constraints, operational constraints, capacity to handle additional work, cultural support for change, goal agreement and commitment. Eigenvalues were then used to determine the research variables with the highest factor loadings. Correlation is shown in Table I.

These eight variables accounted for 92.08 percent of variance in the 24 variables considered.

RQ2. What factors are underlying causes of resistance?

Analysis of the factor pattern structure

A factor is a construct or latent variable that is assumed to underlie tests or measures (Kerlinger, 1992). Factor analysis is valuable for the very purpose of identifying unobservable constructs and because it posits that any correlation among the indicators or variables is due to common factors. A varimax rotation was performed on these variables to yield a factor matrix, a table of coefficients that express the relationship between the test and the underlying factors called factor loading. In this study, ten factors were derived from the loading of the eigenvalues[1]. Only seven of those factors had significant loadings (factors one through six and eight). The identified factors are as follows: self interest (factor one); psychological impact (factor two); tyranny of custom (factor three); destabilization factor (factor five); and, political effect (factor eight), see Table II. Factors with statistically significant negative correlation were: redistributive factor (factor four), and culture compatibility (factor six) see Table II.

Factor one: self interest

The relationship of variables to this factor suggest that individual buy-in is affected to the degree that interests are met. People must see ways they will benefit from change in order to buy-in and support it. Depending on how the changes preserve, erode or promote one's position this may lead a person to act in one way or another (Morgan, 1997). This is not only evident in the effect on the Regional Bureaus but was evident in key support roles within the embassies like that of the administrative officer. This position had significant autonomy in managing the administrative platform within the embassy. Many role incumbents perceived the position as having limited flexibility in their newly designated service provider role. Administrative officers must take direction from a post counsel of advisors, who would set service standards and assess service levels, a change many viewed as threatening.

Variable	Eigenvalues	Percentage
Rewards	3.743176	25.19
Political constraints	2.199659	14.80
Operational constraints	2.251283	15.15
Capacity	1.451603	9.77
Benefits achieved	1.168242	7.86
Culture support	0.989753	6.66
Goal agreement	0.979948	6.59
Commitment	0.900122	6.06

Table I.
Research variables and their eigenvalues

Factor one: self interest/buy-in		Factor two: psychological impact		Factor three: tyranny of custom		Factor four: redistributive factor		Factor five: destabilization factor		Factor six: cultural compatibility		Factor eight: political constraints	
Commitment	0.78	Job security	0.88	Low tolerance for change	0.83	Benefits	0.25	Turnover	0.66	Reward	0.27	Political constraints	0.73
Beneficial	0.73	Loss of expertise	0.73	Limited understanding of change implications	0.73	Agreement state dept. goals	0.22	Communication processes shift	0.55	Support for culture change	0.27		
Rewards	0.72	Loss of social status	0.47	Loss of social status	0.48	Over control	−0.71	Incompatible culture	−0.63				
State dept goal agreement	0.70			Funding, policies and procedures	−0.60								
Fed. agency goal agreement	0.61			Operational constraints	−0.40								
Cultural support for change	0.53			Political constraints	−0.24								
Capacity for additional work	0.50												

Note: Factor seven was eliminated

Table II.
Factor pattern structure

Factor two: psychological impact
This factor addresses perceptions of threat in the form of job security, one's professional expertise and one's social status in the organization. This phenomena was reflected in the interview data. An exemplary comment: "the majority of people who have to do it don't want the change, not that they don't think it is right, they don't like how it will affect them." Resistance behavior reflects emotion that expresses people's feelings about how they personally experience the impact of the change. The psychological impact of change was evident in anecdotal data from field visits, e.g. some administrative officers preferred retirement rather than dealing with this new change and being micro managed. Others saw its possibilities even though it changed their roles.

Factor three: tyranny of custom
James O'Toole (1995), in writing on resistance, draws on the insights of John Stuart Mill who pointed out that the despotism of custom inhibits change. People who are in the driver's seat are often more content with the established order. They have more to lose if it is overturned. The majority of those interviewed believed that State Department culture was difficult to change: "The way the State Department is set up there is no real incentive to reform, we have a very unresponsive structure". Others indicated that when change occurred "it comes from without not within"; "change comes when there is a condition of crisis"; or change "has been by force".

Factor four: the redistributive factor
This factor was marked with statistically significant inverse relationships on issues related to the loss of control, funding, policies and procedures, operational and political constraints. Issues exemplified this over the focus of post authority and what the relationship should be to the ICASS Support Center (ISC) and to Regional Bureau (RB). Changing policy and funding strategies redistributed resources, power and changed institutional relationships. These issues were so emotionally charged that if ISC or RB convened offsite meetings to address these problems they would deliberately exclude each other.

Factor five: the destabilization effect
Field interviews shed light on this variable and suggest that it is related to the challenges faced by post councils when Foreign Affairs Officers (both State Department and federal agency personnel) change assignments, and move on to new posts. In this process, turnover effected this new council system of governance. Agreements on management processes and service levels might be disrupted by new members not trained or invested in existing agreements. The shift in control within the Washington support structure and the pushing of responsibility to the post level may result in destabilization until the changes were leveraged highly enough in Washington. Some executives thought this was a "Faustian deal" for indicating that the State did not really want agencies

to assume their fair share of costs because they would be forced to share control, and control is important in bureaucracies. Others thought that destablization occurred because the system was shifting to a "business way" of operating for which people were not trained.

Factor six: culture compatibility
The inverse relationships in this factor suggest conflicting currents at work. The radically new approach to resource management in this case study (embedded with principles of participation, accountability, customer-driven, local empowerment, entreprenuership) conflicts with bureaucratic structures that have been traditional monopolies. This approach may be inhospitable to the way the existing culture operates.

Factor eight: the political effect
Political systems are the ordering concept of the dynamics of organizations. Who makes what decisions in whose interests and how? (Dyson, 1976). Resistance occurs because proposed reforms threaten the values protected by present arrangements (Kaufman, 1956). This factor makes it clear why political constraints are viewed as hampering implementation of ICASS. Significant change upsets the balance of power among groups and affects individual and group relative positions of power and control.

Qualitative responses
Interviews were conducted with State Department and other federal agency personnel involved with the ICASS project. These interviews included members of an interagency board and working group, Regional Bureaus, the ICASS Service Center (ISC), personnel from four embassies, senior State Department executives including a former Under Secretary, and an Assistant Secretary.

Software for qualitative analysis was employed for a systematic approach to content analysis to get at the complexity underlying the qualitative data provided by the interviews. The content analysis generated a number of themes. Those occurring with the greatest frequency across the majority of the classes of respondents are identified. Selection was based on those themes where more than 50 percent of the interview participants addressed the issue as a concern. The dominant themes from the interviews supported the factor analysis pattern that emerged and supported the assessment of the level of intensity evident in this system (see Table III).

RQ3: what is the level of resistance?
Narrative data from the interview analysis definitively identified sources of resistance to change that are far more pronounced in the Washington, DC headquarters than in the US embassy system concerning ICASS. Three levels of intensity of resistance were considered as described by Mauer (1996). Level One, where people question or oppose the idea; Level Two, where resistance is

Theme	Frequency	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
Role	66	25	71
Adaptability to change	27	25	71
Buy-in	45	24	68
Support	52	23	66
Resistance	71	20	57
Control	56	20	57
Regional bureau	38	20	57
Conflict	41	19	54
Threat	30	19	54
Politics	20	17	49
Cultural change	37	17	49
Career	18	17	49
Governance	41	14	40
Vision	31	14	40
State	20	12	34

Table III.
Frequency of response by theme

deeper than the change at hand indicating there are other forces at work, such as distrust, culture change, and loss of control; and, Level Three, where there is deeply imbedded, deeply entrenched form of resistance. The themes from interview data were compatible with the explanatory variables generated in the factor analysis. The narrative on qualitative data findings reflected Level Two resistance. Interview findings indicated that ICASS created a better interagency community in Washington and overseas and generally there was wide spread support. However in the Washington support structure tremendous animosity existed between the ISC and the RBs. The ISC had implementation responsibility for ICASS and the RBs integrated policy and management issues to support political initiatives. RB prestige and status flowed through linkages to the prestigious "P" (political) side of the State Department, where as ICASS authority flowed through the Secretariat for Management and Administration, the "M" side of the State Department. The Bureaus had policy and budgetary discretion needed to meet emergent needs of posts and were resource brokers with a great deal of autonomy. They feared loosing this control and ability to respond. Under ICASS much of their autonomy is taken away. Consequently some believed that ICASS administration was "not exactly democratic", that ICASS "directives to the field needed to be cleared through the regional bureaus". Within the RB and in other departments in the Washington support structure the ISC was described as "militant and aggressive in manner". The feeling that "the vision was not grand enough to overlook the antagonism" coupled with beliefs that the Administrative side of the organization merely wanted to "be able to check the appropriate boxes in reinventing government, get a 'Hammer' award and tell Congress that they were implementing the changes". Some viewed the ISC as constantly under attack. These sentiments reflected the antipathy between the

ISC and the RBs. Yet almost every interview expressed the view that State Department culture was very difficult and slow to change, suggesting that the level of inertia to be overcome required compelling forces for change.

Level Two resistances indicate that there is still the need to respond to those who believe their roles, political authority and operational effectiveness, are marginalized by this change.

Interestingly, this level of resistance was localized to the Washington, DC support structure and was not pervasive in the embassy system. Despite these contentious relationships among key players there was considerable buy-in among overseas posts. In fact, data on the commitment variable from the survey suggested substantial commitment to ICASS in the field. For an organization with near unanimous agreement on the difficulty of adapting to change, and the absence of cultural support for change, the implementation and field acceptance of this revolutionary change was considered to be a major accomplishment.

Summary and conclusions

Pursuing change and transforming organizations is hard work. Many change initiatives fail because cultures do not readily accept change, and do not effectively anticipate the impact on human systems. This is where bitter implementation battles and strident resistance can occur. Increasing the success of implementation strategies demands leadership in the management of resistance.

The resistance management model suggested as an outcome of the findings of this study proposes the following approach: strategies to address resistance variables should be part of the execution of the implementation plan. An organization impact analysis should be done to determine impact on people and organization systems affected by the change. The representational effects of key resistance forces and dynamics should be clearly characterized in order to understand and manage conditions creating internal tension and bifurcation points. The key resistance forces identified in the study included the following: self interest, psychological impact, and tyranny of custom, redistributive effects, destabilization effects, culture compatibility, and political factors. It is important to map these dynamics if leadership is to create a new context which will break the hold of the forces of resistance.

A risk management framework is a useful paradigm for managing resistance phenomenon and addressing the tensions inherent in multi-level, multi-actor systems. This framework would include managing organizational politics at the "super political level" (interagency/executive), managing politics at the "organizational level" (addresses power relationships and jurisdiction issues across organization/departmental boundaries), and managing politics at the "implementation level" (local politics – in this instance embassies). Stakeholder interests must be managed at every level. Organizational players experience different frames of reality and face different organization forces that drive their behavior and interactions. In multi-actor agencies (e.g. State

Department and Federal Agencies) executive leadership at the strategic political level must assure that all stakeholders have a clear vision about the nature of the change. Some sectors believed ICASS was primarily a cost management mechanism and did not buy into reform. Others embraced the management vision as a genuine reinvention of government. All stakeholders must understand the full impact of the change, understand the vision and be clear about expected outcomes.

Leaders should develop guidelines for ethical behavior and interactions which includes development of a set of principles around how people are to be treated, informed, and listen to. This could insure that marginalized voices are heard and that a concern is demonstrated for the effects of disadvantaging change. Executive leadership must be exercised to assist individuals and organization units in preparing and adjusting to change goals and to settle disputes – when deeply entrenched cultural traditions support the status quo – when there are disagreements over the role of new centers of bureaucratic power – when powerful coalitions exhibit change obstructing behaviors. Cultures with very strong traditions require unambiguous signals about the commitment of leadership to avoid a crisis of legitimacy in the change initiative. Managing implementation success requires constant vigilance over forces working in the opposite direction, and requires constant adjustment to the implementation strategy to assure that genuine concerns are addressed and that outcome success is not sub-optimized.

Note

1. To increase the explanatory value, levels of significance were identified above the 0.20 range. Kerlinger (1992) reports that there is a newer trend of thinking that advocates reporting the significance of all results. While it is recognized that some would object (significance levels above 0.20), this is an exploratory factor analysis where there was no advance knowledge about the factor structure and not a lot of theory on resistance. The character of resistance is subtle and may be deeply embedded and factor analysis is valuable for identifying unobservable constructs. The researcher noted in some instances that negative correlations were very strong and that such indicators should be examined for statistical significance in the opposite direction.

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