

# Territoriality, Psychological Ownership and Emotion: Organizational Change in Public Service Organizations

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# Territoriality, Psychological Ownership and Emotion: Organizational Change in Public Service Organizations

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This study aims to investigate the dynamics of organizational change within public service organisations. More specifically, it explores the idea of territoriality, psychological ownership and emotion taking place during change. While territoriality is often associated with either animal or anthropological and sociological terms, this study employs such terms to instead reflect organizational territoriality. The study took place in three public organisations in Indonesia, including one-stop-service for licensing, vehicle registration, taxing and a state-owned insurance enterprise. Qualitative method informed by grounded theory was employed to analyse information gathered through semi-structured interviews with 35 respondents. The study exposed that people's involvement toward change determines their psychological ownership, reflecting territorial behaviour and impacts on their emotion toward the change. High involvement individuals showed rather different dynamics compared to those with less involvement. This study contributes to the idea that territoriality, psychological ownership and emotion may reflect people's acceptance as well as resistance to the existing changes and subsequent change initiatives. While generalisation is not sought in this qualitative research, further research is encouraged to examine the proposed findings. The paper includes implications for how changes in organisations can be managed better by understanding the sources of resistance to change, especially those related to the emotions of people and how they result in the acts of territoriality. This study fulfils the need for literature capturing the dynamic of change from the perspective of organisational territoriality.

**Key words:** *Organizational change, territoriality, psychological ownership, emotion.*



## Introduction

The reform movement, which began in the 1980s in many Western countries, including the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA) and also New Zealand (NZ), offers a new way of managing public service, in a way that public sector organizations (PSOs) need to manage the public as their customers (Bouckaert, 2008). Since then, topics related to public service change have become major themes for studies in public sector organisations.

Based on accessible literature, there are several topics commonly emphasized by the existing studies, namely, how change and innovation are related to reform movement (Kraemer & King, 2006 concerning information technology and administrative reform) and (Nieto Morales et al., 2013 concerning changes after reform in the Netherlands); factors triggering change and innovation (Beerepoort & Beerepoort, 2007, about the roles of government regulation in driving innovation and change) as well as the factors contributing to the successfulness or even failure of change implementation (Bartlett & Dibben, 2002, concerning innovation in local government and entrepreneurship); and the impact of change and innovation to public sector organizations (Worrall et al., 2000, concerning the impact of change on public sector managers). A small, yet, challenging number of works on organisational change and corruption are also worthy to note. An example is the work of Martin et al. (2009) that focuses on exploring how deinstitutionalisation of normative control in organisations leads to the occurrence of corruptions. These works are mostly written in the Anglo-American (European, American or Western) context (Batley, 1999b) but a small, yet growing number are conducted in an Eastern and/or Asian context along with the emerging reform movement in Asia (Beeson, 2001). It is worthy to note that, whilst the reform movement is universal, its impact on organizational reform is argued to be influenced by locality issues, including local interests and circumstances (Batley, 1999a).

Back in 1998, as a nation, Indonesia had gone through a significant event, a regime change, which contributed to changes in various aspects of governance and government at both national and local levels (Masduki, 2007). The reformation process ended the 32-year-long Soeharto regime, which was considered responsible for social and political crises of 'Korupsi (corruption), Kolusi (collusion) and Nepotisme (nepotism)', or, in Indonesian acronym, KKN, which was believed to be a major source of the poor performance of public service organizations as well as for economic problems (that is, high dependency on foreign debt) (LintasTerkiniNews, 2013).

Various changes have proliferated since that time, and many studies on government changes and innovation initiatives have been conducted. Altogether, as network governance and collaboration became an interesting way to manage public organization (Agranoff, 2007), it is, then, intriguing to explore how the reform brought changes to that type of organisations, from



an organizational perspective. It is also important to explore how inter-organizational collaboration, especially those having a longer collaboration timeframe, experience changes, considering that these are multi-organisations with different lines of command.

This study aims to capture this dynamic through the perspective of territoriality, psychological ownership and emotional attachment. Generally, ownership reflects the monitoring function (Salehi & Sehat, 2018). This, to some extent, represents territorial behaviour, in which people express their defending and marking mechanism toward one's perceived territories or objects, both symbolic and material. In light of this matter, this study aims to investigate how changes in public sector organizations can be understood from these perspectives in order to explore how people or individuals in organizations attach their emotions toward change initiatives and how their emotions and psychological attachment/ownership affects how they feel toward prospective changes. The rest of the paper delineates a review of relevant literature in the area of management of changes, organizational territoriality, psychological ownership and also emotions.

### **Literature Review**

This section discusses relevant literature related to public service changes, inter-organisational collaboration and also psychological ownership as well as emotion. While management of change literature helps in understanding the major reasons why changes and innovation take place within organisations, both inter-organisational collaboration, psychological ownership and emotions are expected to assist in framing the phenomena occurring in organisations.

### ***Changes and Innovation in Public Services***

There is a notable increase in public expectation (and also decrease in public satisfaction) toward the performance of public organisations in delivering services (Borins, 2001; Flynn, 2007; Pollitt, 2003). Sustainable good performance became a primary concern of every organisation (Hakim et al., 2016; Singh, 2018). This implies that the public gains more awareness toward the quality of services that they receive from public organisations, and compare them to services they enjoy from private organisations. As an impact of rising public expectation, some authors agree that there is an urgency for the advancement of information technology in public organisations' practices (Dunleavy & Margetts, 2000; Greer, 1994; Pollitt, 2003). Indeed, as stated by Pollitt (2003), public services can be provided in faster and cheaper ways –which leads to cost-efficient ways of doing things—by employing relevant information technology tools (Dunleavy & Margetts, 2000; Pollitt, 2003).

In the context of public services, most public sector organisations understand that, only by conducting changes and innovation, will they strive to grow and develop (Thompson &



Ingraham, 1996; Thompson & Riccucci, 1998; Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2005). This leads to the need for public sector organisations to have flexibility, routinization and adaptation to change, innovation and entrepreneurial activity (Frederickson, 1996; Hartley, 2006; Walker et al., 2002). Meanwhile, some studies assert that innovation in public service is very much laden with administrative/political belief at a particular time (Kling & Iacono, 1989; Kraemer & Dedrick, 1997; Kraemer & King, 1986, 2006; Kraemer & Perry, 1989; Niehaves, 2007). Peled (2001) argues that *'innovation in the public sector is a highly politicised process'*. His study provides insight into the critical roles of issue network, coalition around innovation and also institutionalisation. This aspect contributes to establishing a difference between private and public sector innovation as well as the question of why some public organisations innovate better than others within a similar institutional context.

### ***Interorganizational Collaboration***

An organisation, as a social unit, can be considered as a part of a social system, wherein its existence can only be understood or examined by considering the existence of or in relation to other entities within such social system (Negandhi, 1980). Internal organisation plays a key role in the firm's goals and performance (Eliyana & Ma'arif, 2019). It means that no organisation can actually live on its own self and that, to some extent, organisations are part of a social network or relationship (Gray & Wood, 1991). There are various perspectives which can be employed to understand inter-organisational collaboration. By this, the emphasis should be on the need to shift the focus from a mono-organisation or the organisation itself to the inter-organisational or multi organisational setting. Each perspective offers a rather different way to understand the dynamic of interorganizational collaboration.

Resource dependence theory is one of the main perspectives commonly used to comprehend inter-organisational collaboration. It emphasises on the importance of dependency of an organisation engaging in a relationship. Collaboration can help organizations to have better access to resources, yet, in an inter-organisational level, such easiness may lead to dependency creation, which, to some extent, can potentially reduce an organization's freedom of action (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

Compared to resource dependence theory, another major perspective, the political perspective of inter-organisational collaboration, emphasises on the existence of power and resources. This political perspective is rather similar to resource dependence, yet is different as it focuses on the political process. Recalling Benson (1975), the dynamic of inter-organisational collaboration or network is determined by interactions amongst actors, their vested interests and/or values, and also power dynamics amongst them, which determine different strength of influence between actors. However, as argued by Knights et al. (1993), perspectives emphasizing on rather critical aspects of collaboration are often neglected in the inter-





organisational collaboration literature. Authors such as Hardy and Phillips (1998) suggest that it is important to also focus on differences amongst collaborating organizations, regarding their interest, goals and even power as it helps to comprehend the dynamics of collaboration and potentials of conflicts within a collaboration. For other authors, understanding power within collaborations is important as it helps to define whether power is shared equally amongst collaborating organisations. Although the equal distribution of power seems to be an ideal state and is commonly aimed by collaborations (Gray, 1989), such a condition might be difficult to achieve in practice (Chen, 2008).

### ***Territoriality***

Originated from the field of zoology, biology and animal psychology (Ittelson et al., 1974), the territoriality concept has been adopted widely by anthropologists, sociologists and even psychologists to understand human behavior, not only related to physical space, but also non-physical aspects of life, such as roles, responsibilities and ideas (Thom-Santelli, 2010). The concept of territoriality is originally from animal behaviour, with territory understood as an area to be marked and defended. Referring to the work of Noble (1939) on the social life of birds, a territory can be understood simply as 'any defended area'. Territoriality usually involves the way various animal species mark and defend their territories and behaviour is aimed at maintaining space for individual animals, inhabitant regulation, the structure of dominance, inter-species fighting, maintaining security and also localizing species' waste (Edney, 1974; Lyman & Scott, 1967). It involves competition amongst living organisms, which also implies that domination is crucial as it increases the chance for survival as the winner will gain access to not only food resources, but also space and also female animals (Edney, 1974). All of these imply that territoriality involves the existence of physical areas as well as the need for an entity to control and defend their areas, as they perceive that the areas belong to them. While areas are accessible to anyone; it becomes a territory when any living organism considers that it is theirs and worth defending.

Within the literature of human territoriality, there are two main arguments, whether human territoriality is similar to that of animals. Ardrey (1967), in his early work on human territoriality, observes that humans share a similar pattern on territoriality with animals, in a way that humans also claim, by way of marking and defending, their territory. However, there are flaws in this argument, as humans are not similar to animals in many ways. Ardrey's work has attracted critiques from some scholars due to the way he analogized human territoriality with that of animals. Klopfer (1968) for example, while acknowledging that 'extrapolations from animals to man' to explain human behaviour has been used in evolutionary studies, he emphasised that it has errors in two aspects, 'ignorance and reason'. By ignorance, Ardrey (1967) is criticized for overlooking the fact that territorial behaviour is diverse, complex and



there is no single motive underlying the behaviour. Hence, it should not be oversimplified (Edney, 1974).

Anthropologically, territories have strategic importance as territoriality involves control over entities within territories. Territorial control can be imposed on inhabitants or any objects within one's territories (Sack, 1983). The need to control a territory may not always relate to instinct, but resonates culturally, which is imperative to man's origin as a social animal (Cohen et al., 1976). Further, they argue that control over territories can be achieved not only through dominance (strategic sub-orientation), but also through political process (political sub-orientation), such as the decision-making process. In this process, issues such as aggression, social inequality and property are also evidenced, especially in the context of a hunter-gatherer nature of population (Dyson-Hudson & Smith, 1978; Peterson, 1975). However, the view that territoriality is 'an evolutionary imperative', as well as part of human political behaviour, is argued to have less explanatory power as it does not address factors causing the behaviour. On this issue, Dyson-Hudson and Smith (1978) argue that economic dependability of resources is crucial for human territoriality by emphasizing that "territoriality is expected to occur when critical resources are sufficiently abundant and predictable in space and time, so that costs of exclusive use and defense of an area are outweighed by the benefits gained from resource control." Although the practice of territoriality, such as marking and defending, might be similar from time to time, the reasons underlying it are different, therefore, it is important to understand the motives underlying territoriality.

Such discussion shows that territoriality involves the motivated behaviour of people to express their possessiveness over various aspects of life, conveying ownerships (Brown et al., 2005), which is not only about spaces, objects, or things, but also includes more abstract aspects, such as ideas (Edney, 1974). In this sense, territoriality needs to be comprehended not only as the expressed actions or behaviour of people, but also requires a deeper understanding on what motivates people to communicate territoriality. The presence of others also implies that territoriality may still be attached to physical space; it represents the social functioning or relationships amongst individuals and orders within groups (Ardrey, 1967). In other words, the sociological perspective understands that territorial behaviour can be learned through interaction with other entities and has a purpose to express order toward others.

Insights from some works provide a rather different understanding how territoriality is understood as it becomes more abstract, yet, significantly represents that territories and territoriality are social constructions. In their introduction paper to the special issue of territorial organization in *Culture and Organization*, Maréchal et al. (2013) argues that, whilst territories and territoriality can still be associated with physical spaces, which resonates the ideas of classical territoriality works such as those of Ardrey (1967) and Lefebvre (1991), "these can



be freed from the confines of space and place.” It denotes a more subtle substance, such as the importance of attachments, culture and also organisational identities.

Territoriality is not only about defending space, regardless whether that space is physical or non-physical; instead, territoriality is about how people are connected, both with their territories as well as with their fellow members within territories. It means that territories also have social roles (Ittelson et al., 1974) as well as being socially constructed (Brown et al., 2005). This notion differentiates human territoriality from animal territoriality. In this context, individuals do not have to physically own particular objects to possess or have a direct relationship with the object (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011), as a ‘mere association’ representing a sense of belongingness is suffice (Mayhew et al., 2007).

Despite various perspectives, studies on territoriality have not yet widely and deeply been explored in organisational studies. The next section discusses a rather specific aspect of territoriality, which is ownership.

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### **Psychological Ownership**

In general, psychological ownership refers to the feeling of attachment or sense of ownership to any objects. Pierce et al. (2001) defines psychological ownership as a “state in which individuals feel as though the target of ownership (material or immaterial in nature) or a piece of it is ‘theirs’ (i.e., ‘It is MINE!’).” Concerning territoriality, Brown et al. (2005) indicate that being attached to a certain object is different from having a territorial behaviour as territoriality “is centrally concerned with establishing, communicating, and maintaining one’s relationship with that object relative to others in the social environment.”

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There are several points which can be drawn from this definition. The first is that psychological ownership involves a feeling implying that possession of objects may not be necessary for an individual to have attachment feeling. The second is that the objects can be both physical and non-physical objects, which means that people can feel attached to virtually anything. The third is that attachment involves claiming behaviour to convey that a particular object belongs to an individual. Similar to that of Sack (1983), territoriality involves defensive actions toward certain areas or objects. In this context, objects do not necessarily mean physical ones, as they can also be non-material objects, such as works, roles, or even other organizational aspects (Brown et al., 2005). It is argued that this sense of attachment or ownership is driven by three aspects. The first aspect is the need for individuals to have self-efficacy. In this sense, psychological ownership provides individuals with the feeling that they are able to control their environments (Pierce et al., 2001). The second aspect is the need to establish a self-identity that distinguishes one individual from others. Individuals communicate their identities through their attachment to particular groups, objects, or any aspects of life (Brown et al., 2005). The third





need that drives individuals to establish ownership is the need to have the feeling of security, both psychologically or physically, which is usually provided through a place called 'home' or the need to dwell in their own place (Brown et al., 2005; Pierce et al., 2001, 2003).

Although attachment is studied heavily as part of a psychological perspective on territoriality, the notion of attachment is already acknowledged as part of environmental orientations in social ecology, which are instrumental, territorial, sentimental and symbolic orientations (Cohen et al., 1976). The purpose of instrumental orientation is on the importance of environment as resources for individuals to achieve their objectives, which means that the environment serves as a means to an objective. As for territorial orientation, it emphasises that humans impose control over their environment or spaces they consider as their territories. Symbolic orientation refers to the symbolic function of environment for individuals, groups or societies. It emphasises on the perceived meaning of the environment and implies that a particular environment might be meaningful for some individuals and not for others. Meanwhile, the sentimental orientation refers to the idea that individuals or groups may be sentimentally attached to their environments, such as their towns, cities, or neighbourhoods.

### ***Emotion***

Emotion can be understood as bodily reactions when facing particular situations (Prezz, 1979). The nature and intensity of emotions are closely related to the cognitive activities of individuals as the results of how they perceive some situations. Meanwhile, according to Chaplin et al. (2005), emotion reflects how individuals respond to particular situations, in which such responses involve changes, including behavioural changes. In addition to this, Goleman et al. (2002) emphasizes that emotions also involve spontaneous responses from individuals. Hence, it can be concluded that emotion is a psychological state that can affect and attach to how individuals adapt to changes or any experienced situation, and such emotion can be understood to have the ability to stimulate changes in behavioural, mental and also physical responses.

The oldest theory on emotion was introduced by James (1884) and Lange (1887). While these scholars developed this theory individually, they have a similar understanding of emotion. In short, their theories understand that emotion is not directly influenced by individual perception toward a particular incident or situation, but more about individual bodily responses caused or stimulated by that particular incident or situation. This means that, in experiencing emotion, individuals need to experience bodily responses that reflect their emotion (such as, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeats, and sweaty palms). For example, when a criminal faces a police investigation, his or her heartbeats intensively, and his/her brain will understand this response as being nervous or afraid. However, further development on emotion theory finds that similar bodily responses can represent different emotions, such as intense heartbeats can mean both being angry and also being happy. Hence, bodies can respond both for a happy and frightening



situation in the same ways (Cannon & Bard, 1927). This implies that emotions and bodily responses take place independently

In general, there are two types of emotions experienced by individuals, positive and negative emotions. Positive emotion involves aspects of happiness and excitement (Liu & Perrewe, 2005). Positive emotion improves commitment and emotional engagement toward organisations (Staw & Barsade, 1993). Such engagement and commitment to organisations are believed to induce employee loyalty, especially when there are organisational problems or crises (Anderson & Guerrero, 1998; Liu & Perrewe, 2005 cited in Klarnar, 2011). On the other hand, negative emotions, including fear and sadness as well as jealousy/envy, are believed to lead to deviant behaviour in workplaces (Liu & Perrewe, 2005; Robbins & Judge, 2008).

### **Method**

In exploring the research question, this study purposively approached an organisation, which represented the context of inter organisational collaboration. This choice of determining the research setting aligns with the idea that the objective of this study is not to seek for generalisation or 'universal rules' (Aaltio & Heilman, 2010, p. 68). Instead, the objective is to explore the organisational phenomena, which is important to comprehend the case and its specific environmental characteristics. Furthermore, as argued by Bleijenbergh (2010), "case selection is the rational selection of one or more instances of a phenomenon as the particular subject of research." Therefore, in employing this selection rationale, some aspects of the organization were considered, including, first, its characteristics of being a public institution; second, the organization being involved in inter-organisational collaboration and third, the organization was understood to engage with several change initiatives. On this consideration, three organisations, were chosen as this was able to provide the most relevant setting for understanding the dynamics of changes in an inter-organisational context. However, for ethical reasons, this study committed to maintaining the anonymity of both individuals and organisations involved in this research. Hence, the organisations were identified only as PSOA (for the public institution responsible for vehicle registration and taxing) and PSOB (police unit) and a state-owned insurance company (PSOC)

To help with the investigation, this study employed a qualitative method, by using an approach informed by grounded theory. A qualitative method was chosen as the most suitable method to approach the phenomena as it helps to explore contextual explanation as well as the situated meaning and reveals prominent issues (Tracy, 2013). By employing a qualitative method, a more holistic view is expected to be gained as well as a comprehensive understanding of the situation (Huberman & Miles, 1994). In breaking down collected information and mapping the results, the method informed by grounded theory approach helps to ask questions regarding who, what actions, what context, what aims, how they did it and also how the conduct was.



Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews with 35 informants, who were contacted through a snowballing mechanism. These informants included organisation heads and staff from three collaborating organisations who were involved in change programs. Supporting documents were also collected from the organisations involved, as well as publicly available documents, to help with the analysis.

### **Findings and Discussion**

In general, several findings can be drawn from the analysis. The study found that there were emotional shifts from negative emotions to a more collaborative and appreciative kind of emotions during the change process, from the beginning through to the later stages of the process. Such negative emotions can also be associated with resistance to change. The resistance was found not as an overt action, but expressed more in terms of uneasiness, as people were worried that a change could disrupt their control over their territories. An example from ILGa, during the change process, computerization and electronic data recording had caused internal staff to worry that they might not be able to retain authority over their territories, within which they had been able to gain personal benefits, such as possible additional income. Yet, there were no reports of overtly dysfunctional actions from the members of the constituent organisations, nor any open protest. People remained with the uneasy feeling that resulted from their inability to predict the opportunities of getting additional income by becoming more radical. An interviewee shared his opinion:

*“Computerization was rather difficult as that was new to people. People were afraid of not being able to get additional and, yes, illegal income as the chance was lessened through automation. They complained. (PSO A6).”*

Moreover, respondents reported that, during the transitional period, staff showed some frictional resistance in intentionally presenting behaviour that disadvantaged the process, such as delaying the transfer of documents between stages of operation. This resulted in delays and thus, lengthened the time of document processing.

*“There was a time when people were really stubborn. We had a case where some officers intentionally kept the documents to themselves and waited until the last minute or even delayed to transfer documents from one desk to another. Just to make sure that they were heard and, sometimes, tried to turn back the time, back to the old practices (PSO A1).”*

This kind of action reflects the need for those individuals in marking their territories, or, in this sense, their tasks. They defended their territories by taking control of the process, which, in this case, was by postponing their assignment. In general, this reflects territorial behaviour in which staff aimed to mark their territories through their deliberate actions and imposed control



toward outsiders. This was considered to be an unintended negative side effect. Similar to ILGA, respondents from ILGB also shared the same experience. They reported that it was difficult to set a change program at the beginning, and people need to be pushed to participate in the initiation.

*“I think the same goes for us, in a way that people found themselves hard to change. They showed anger and reluctance in following the initiatives at the beginning. In time, I think they could not say no and finally, just accepted the changes (PSOB2).”*

In relation to the context of change, territoriality may affect members of organisations during change programs, especially when the change can potentially disrupt or challenge existing perceived territories in organisations, both material and symbolic. The literature on change and territoriality notes that, when changes take place, there is potential for members of organisations to resist these changes (Brown et al., 2005). Yet, this study also found that when there is a stronger perceived attachment towards one domain this may lessen the resistance of change in another domain with lesser attachment. A change in one domain may not be perceived to be significant, when the individual feels more attached to a different domain.

*“Ah well, I think, as a public officer, we need to understand that changes imposed on our organization, you just need to accept that and live with it. I think we have the responsibilities to support the government, overall, in improving the quality of public services (PSOA6).”*

On a rather different note, responses toward change initiation can also be positive. This especially takes place when there are no disruptions on one's territories. People are found to be quite permissive when their territories are not breached so that there will be no need to express territorial behaviour.

*“I do not think the change matters. I mean, while I know that this innovative approach to the process changed significantly how we do our jobs, but overall, at least, me, I am fine with the initiative. Moreover, as my tasks were not really changed significantly, I guess, we keep on doing what we have been doing so far (PSOC3).”*

Existing studies, such as that of Reebye et al. (2002) about territoriality between pharmacists and physicians in the UK primary care setting, propose that, on the basis of responses to encroachment, it is not always negative. They argue that there are three types of territoriality, which are neutral, positive and negative territoriality. Positive territoriality means that no parties are harmed or felt challenged by the encroachment. Neutral territoriality means that, although territoriality infringement is known to take place, the territoriality holders do not do any defending action to maintain their territories. As for negative territoriality, it occurs when territoriality is perceived to be harmful and threatening to the existing territorial holders. In this sense, territorial encroachment can be seen as an invasion that, in an extreme condition, can lead to a change in the territorial holder (Lyman & Scott, 1967).





In addition, psychological attachment or ownerships towards individuals jobs and their roles within jobs, the attachment also represents territorial behavior, in a way that people become very attached to their roles in that they have marked their contribution to the organization by putting forward what they thought was important for it, which is -in this case - the technological development.

*"I got disappointed when I found out that the head of the organization changed the system we used for the database. If I may say, I was not really fond of it, as it was me who initiated the previous change at the first place (PSOA11)."*

Stronger ownership or attachment to some change programs seems to influence the way individuals assessed the importance of change programs conducted by the organisation. It is found that they compared the ones with which they were directly involved with other changes, which resulted in different perceptions about the magnitude of the changes. From the perspective of change processes, the perceived magnitude of change seems to depend on the position of such program in 'organizational time', which is socially constructed by its members as they experience moments or events that they consider as being critical for them (Poole, 2004). Time is not only about the physical calendar, but also marks important values in human life (McGrath & Rotchford, 1983). In this sense, time has its own meaning as well as affecting how people construct the meaning of the changes.

*"The changes at this point of time are not considered to be significant, are they? We think that the one, such as our investment on information technology and database, was the foundation of such consequent changes (PSOA11)."*

This brings about the notion of nostalgia, in a way that people become emotionally attached to the past compared to the present as they have more involvement to past actions than to their current ones. Poole (2004) states that nostalgia can be considered as 'a common reaction' to any change program in organisations. Individuals react to change by comparing the present situation with the past, in which the past is considered to possess better characteristics than the present. During the change process, nostalgia may be manifested through resisting change.

In this sense, some changes were perceived to be less significant than others as they took place at different times. Some changes were considered more important while others were perceived to be less meaningful as they were conducted as succeeding changes. The sense of newness and difficulties faced in implementing the change in the past was considered to be more challenging than the present. Following this context of 'newness', some authors emphasise that the sense of newness is subjective, in the way that each organisation may experience the newness differently (Aiken & Hage, 1971; Damanpour & Evan, 1984; Walker et al., 2002). In this case, the changes, for example, the first computerization and network installation, were





considered to be considerable steps for some people, as they involved much more advanced technologies.

Stories shared reflect how people in organisations understand and make sense of the changes, which also means that each person can understand the changes differently (Reissner, 2011). This means that changes may not be like how people expect to see and experience them, which then, may potentially lead them to react or even resist changes. Psychological ownership, emphasising on the attachment of individuals to various aspects of life, especially in organisational context, has increasingly gained concern from scholars in the field of organisational studies (Pierce et al., 2001). In general, ownership or attachment is established as individuals have invested their resources to the particular objects so that they feel the particular targets or objects become 'theirs' (Pierce et al., 2003). Such investment of resources does not refer only to financial resources, but also involves less physical investments such as involvement with a particular target/object or even time spent. While such investment is made, it is important to note that the feeling of ownership does not necessarily need legal claims of particular objects, instead, 'mere association' representing a sense of belongingness may suffice (Mayhew et al., 2007).

This case shows indirect involvement, which means that the person considered that his or her role was important to facilitate the change to take place. A role as a leader, for example, plays an important part in ensuring that a change can take place or not. This point supports the idea that a change in the structure of leadership affects the way the changes are conducted in the organization. Leaders are to be able to make differences with changes that they decide to take on (Gill, 2002). The leaders' decisions to pursue particular changes was based on their judgments. Besides indirect attachment, such as facilitation of change, attachments were shown by those with direct involvement to change programs. Direct involvement may require people to invest more in their jobs by giving their skills, time and energy. This results in stronger attachment or ownership as such investment may fulfil the self-identity motive in that people see their jobs as their extended self (Brown et al., 2013b).

## **Conclusion**

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that, from the affective aspect of the changes, such responses to the changes can also be seen as a representation of territorial feeling that is rooted from strong psychological ownership. Organizational change has an emotional aspect as people may put much effort into conducting change so that they become 'passionate' about it. This also reflects the notion of psychological ownership, as people become attached to the changes, without necessarily having formal ownership. However, this study has not been able to find any existing literature capturing such dynamic from the perspective of territoriality, which, while sharing the attachment, territorial feeling and behaviour take on more than the



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feeling of attachment. People become very attached to the changes in which they were involved so that they marked it through stating their involvement and showing their defensive behaviour toward the changes by presenting that the changes conducted in the past had better features or characteristics compared to the present ones.

It is suggested for further study that the study could be expanded to involve more organisations and different sorts of collaboration. While it is not intended to generalize the findings, having a greater set of respondents would be beneficial to gather better understanding of the context and the idea of change.



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