Chapter 4B – A PROPOSED MODEL OF MILITARY TURNOVER

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4B.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turnover which is voluntary and dysfunctional is seriously costly to organizations. Hence, understanding the process within which turnover unfolds is vital for especially the military. Models of voluntary turnover have conventionally been attitude-centered, aiming to capture the psychological processes involved in voluntary turnover. That is, in these models, job-related attitudes, mainly job satisfaction and organizational commitment, are stated to influence turnover behavior through intervening cognitive processes such as thinking about quitting and turnover intentions. Recently, these models have been criticized for not being able to fully account for turnover behavior that rather develops quickly as a result of unexpected life events, or shocks, in the person's work or non-work life. Furthermore, available models of voluntary turnover focus largely on the withdrawal processes involved in the civilian context.

This paper presents a conceptual model of military turnover based on the reviewed military and non-military literatures and the work done by the members of the NATO Task Group on Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel. In the proposed model, factors expected to play a critical role in military turnover are grouped under three categories: distal factors, (i.e., job and organizational characteristics and perceived job alternatives), intermediate/mediating factors (i.e., person-environment – P-E – fit, quality of life – QOL – perceptions; and work attitudes, namely job satisfaction, continuance commitment, and affective commitment), and proximal factors (i.e., turnover intentions, unemployment rate, and shocks).

Job and organizational characteristics are hypothesized to influence job attitudes mainly through QOL perceptions. Consistent with the previous turnover models, the probability of finding a satisfactory job alternative, which is largely influenced by unemployment rate, is expected to influence turnover intentions both directly and indirectly, through work attitudes. Empirical evidence suggests that P-E fit, especially in terms of congruence of values and personality, influences employee withdrawal through work attitudes. Accordingly, in the proposed conceptual framework, P-E fit is hypothesized to affect employee withdrawal through job satisfaction and affective commitment. Furthermore, based on the evidence, the nature of the relationship between affective commitment and satisfaction is hypothesized to be a cyclical one in the military turnover process, and both types of commitment and job satisfaction are stated to contribute to turnover intentions, which are directly linked to turnover behavior.

Consistent with the unfolding model of turnover, shocks, as an important group of proximal factors, are expected to influence turnover behavior directly. Finally, unemployment rate is expected to influence voluntary turnover both directly and through perceived job opportunities.

The proposed model has important practical implications:

- First, systematic large-scale surveys tapping into quality of life perceptions, values congruence, and satisfaction and commitment levels of the members can be used as proactive tools to minimize dysfunctional turnover and different courses of action can be taken depending on the sources of problems.
- Second, related to the macro level factors playing a role in voluntary turnover, strategies can be developed to forecast the rate of turnover so that appropriate proactive actions can be taken to compensate for the expected losses.
- Third, assuming that the role of shocks has been established, more thorough, systematic approaches can be adopted to examine factors contributing to the decision to stay or leave.

Exit interviews and broad based surveys could be designed to understand the types of shocks as well as to identify groups of leavers distinguished based on the nature of shocks experienced.

4B.2 INTRODUCTION

Retention of the qualified military members is a major, if not number one, priority of most countries. Since, retaining qualified personnel requires a deeper understanding of the process of turnover, the retention issue is approached from a turnover perspective in this paper. Not all types of voluntary turnover are negative, yet, voluntary turnover that is dysfunctional can be very costly for the military, considering the scale of investments made in the recruitment, selection, classification, and training of the members. Identifying critical organizational, job, and individual factors in the turnover process has obvious utility implications for military organizations.

Early models of turnover were relatively simple, relating turnover directly to job attitudes like satisfaction and commitment (Newman, 1974; Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, 1974). Later models were more complex, yet still attitude-centered. In these models decision-making processes involved in withdrawal were emphasized (e.g., Dalessio, Silverman, and Schuck, 1986; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Hom and Griffeth, 1991; Hom, Griffeth, and Sellaro, 1984; Mobley, 1977; Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth, 1978). Among the latter models, Mobley's (1977) model, which proposes several intermediate linkages between job satisfaction and turnover, has received considerable research attention. The original formulation was later modified/ simplified by Mobley and colleagues (Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth, 1978), and the revised model has contributed significantly to the accumulation of the turnover literature. In the Mobley et al. model, job satisfaction is said to have an influence on thinking of quitting, which in turn leads to intention to search. Intention to search is hypothesized to influence intention to quit, which leads to turnover. In this model, in addition to its mediated/indirect influences on search intentions and intention to quit, job satisfaction is hypothesized to have direct effects on these two variables. Furthermore, probability of finding a satisfactory alternative is expected to influence both intention to search and intention to quit. Finally, age and tenure are proposed to influence turnover behavior through job satisfaction and probability of finding an acceptable alternative. Following the introduction of Mobley et al.'s (1978) model, several alternative models have been proposed (Bannister and Griffeth, 1986; Dalessio, Silverman, and Schuck, 1986; Hom and Griffeth, 1991; Hom, Griffeth, and Sellaro, 1984). These models can be conceived as offsprings of the revised Mobley model since they largely share the same structural network; they involve basically the same parameters, with changes in the direction and/or directness of a few parameter estimates.

Recently, Griffeth and Hom (2001) proposed a comprehensive model of turnover in which satisfaction and organizational commitment are treated as the major mediators in the turnover process. In this model job

satisfaction, which is assumed to be influenced by job-related factors (e.g., job complexity and group cohesion), individual-related factors (e.g., negative affectivity), and labor market conditions, influences turnover through perceptions of the costs and benefits of job seeking and turnover, job search, and finally, evaluation of alternatives. Organizational commitment, on the other hand, is influenced by job- and organization-related factors (e.g., procedural justice and job security) and individual-related factors (e.g., commitment propensity). Effects of commitment on turnover behavior are mediated by thoughts of quitting.

Many researchers have argued against the conventional wisdom that accumulated job dissatisfaction is the major and immediate cause of voluntary turnover (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, and Inderrieden, 2005; Lee and Mitchell, 1994). Holtom et al. state, "…organizational leaders … must develop clear strategies for attracting and retaining good employees. However, these plans must move beyond methods to combat job dissatisfaction if they expect to be effective. They also must systematically address shocks and the critical role of these shocks in the voluntary turnover process" (p. 337-338). Grounded in image theory (Beach, 1990), Lee, Mitchell, and colleagues proposed the "unfolding model" of voluntary turnover, which basically states that unexpected life events, or shocks, cause voluntary turnover more often than accumulated job dissatisfaction. Shocks, scripts, image violations, job satisfaction, and job search are the main components of this model. A shock is a jarring event that initiates the thoughts of quitting. Shocks vary in their valence and content. That is, they can be positive (e.g., an unsolicited job offer), neutral (e.g., change in supervisor), or negative (e.g., harassment), and also they can be personal, work-related, or professional. A script is a pre-existing plan of action; a plan for leaving that could be activated in response to a shocking event. Image violations take place "when an individual's values, goals and strategies for goal attainment do not fit with those of the organization or those reflected in the shock" (Holtom et al., 2005, p. 340). According to the model, job satisfaction decreases when the person feels that his/her job falls short of providing the desired intellectual, emotional, and/or financial benefits.

The unfolding model proposes four potential courses of actions or paths leading to turnover. In Path 1, a shocking event triggers the realization of a pre-existing plan of action, and the person leaves without considering alternatives or his/her attachment/commitment to the organization. In this path, job satisfaction/ dissatisfaction is basically irrelevant in turnover. For example, receiving an irresistible job offer that you had been hoping for may make you take the offer and go without evaluating your current feelings and attitudes toward your employer. In Path 2, a shock, usually a negative one, leads to image violations, which in turn forces the person to re-evaluate his/her attachment to the organization. In this path, the person is expected to leave without searching for alternatives. For example, a person may quit after being passed over for promotion. Job satisfaction levels before the shocking event is again irrelevant in this path. It could be relatively high, yet it is expected to fall after the negative critical event. In both Path 1 and Path 2, the process of turnover unfolds rather quickly.

In Path 3, there is again a shock resulting in image violations. This, in turn, initiates a search for alternatives, resulting in quitting the job. A job offer which makes the person seriously think about it and compare and contrast it with the current job and other available alternatives is an example for Path 3 type quitting or turnover. Although relative dissatisfaction is a possibility in Path 3, the person may be quite satisfied with the current job before the shock. The path to turnover takes longer in Path 3. In Path 4, turnover is an end product of mainly lower levels of job satisfaction. The person who is not satisfied with his/her job decides to leave with or without searching for alternatives.

Empirical evidence has in general yielded support for the unfolding model or the role of shocks in turnover (Holtom, et al., 2005; Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, and Ahlburg, 2005; Morrell, Loan-Clarke,

and Wilkinson, 2004). For example, Holtom et al.'s study indicated that in a sizeable proportion of decisions to quit, shocks, but not job dissatisfaction, played a critical role, and that Path 3 represented the most widely experienced shock-based pathway to turnover. Similarly, studying a sample of practicing accountants, who had either quit or thought about quitting, but had decided to stay in their jobs, Donnelly and Quirin (2006) were able to classify 86% of their respondents into one of the four decision paths theorized by the unfolding model.

Most of the turnover models presented in the literature have been based on civilian samples/organizations and, as stated above, they are largely attitude-centered, with few exceptions like the unfolding model. Although there have been some attempts to specifically understand turnover in the military context (e.g., Knapp, McCloy, and DiFazio, 1993), these attempts have not gone beyond examining the links between satisfaction, intentions, and turnover. Furthermore, as argued by Morrell, Loan-Clarke, and Wilkinson (2004), current literature on voluntary turnover is still largely descriptive in nature, and fails to offer decision makers the longed for prediction power concerning an individual's decision to stay or leave. The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual model of military turnover, amenable to empirical testing, based on the reviewed literature and the work done by the members of the NATO Task Group on Military Recruitment and Retention. An earlier version of the proposed model was presented at the Annual Meeting of Military Testing Association in Brussels (Sümer, 2004).

The proposed model classifies the factors expected to play a critical role in military turnover under three categories: distal factors (i.e., job and organizational characteristics and perceived job alternatives), mediating factors (i.e., P-E fit, QOL concerns, and work attitudes, job satisfaction, continuance commitment, and affective commitment), and proximal factors (i.e., turnover intentions, unemployment rate, and shocks). Figure 4B-1 depicts how these factors are hypothesized to be related to one another in the military withdrawal process. The model presented here aims to capture primarily the social-psychological processes involved in military turnover. Although labor-market conditions, especially unemployment rate, are acknowledged among the factors contributing to voluntary turnover, the proposed military turnover model is not an economy-based, or objective-indices-based model. However, it is important to note that there are theories focusing purely on macro-level labor market conditions in explaining turnover. For example, as stated by Kim (1999), standard competitive economic theory suggests that if the market wage rate is not matched in an organization, employees are likely to be lost to higher-paying competitors in the market. The major implication of job search and efficiency wage theories is that the number of quits will increase if "the expected discounted lifetime earnings in an alternative job are greater than the expected discounted lifetime earnings in the present job plus the disutility and cost of changing jobs" (Kim, 1999, p. 585). Nevertheless, Kim's own research indicated that absolute wage level and wage growth, but not relative wage level, had significant large effects on turnover rates.

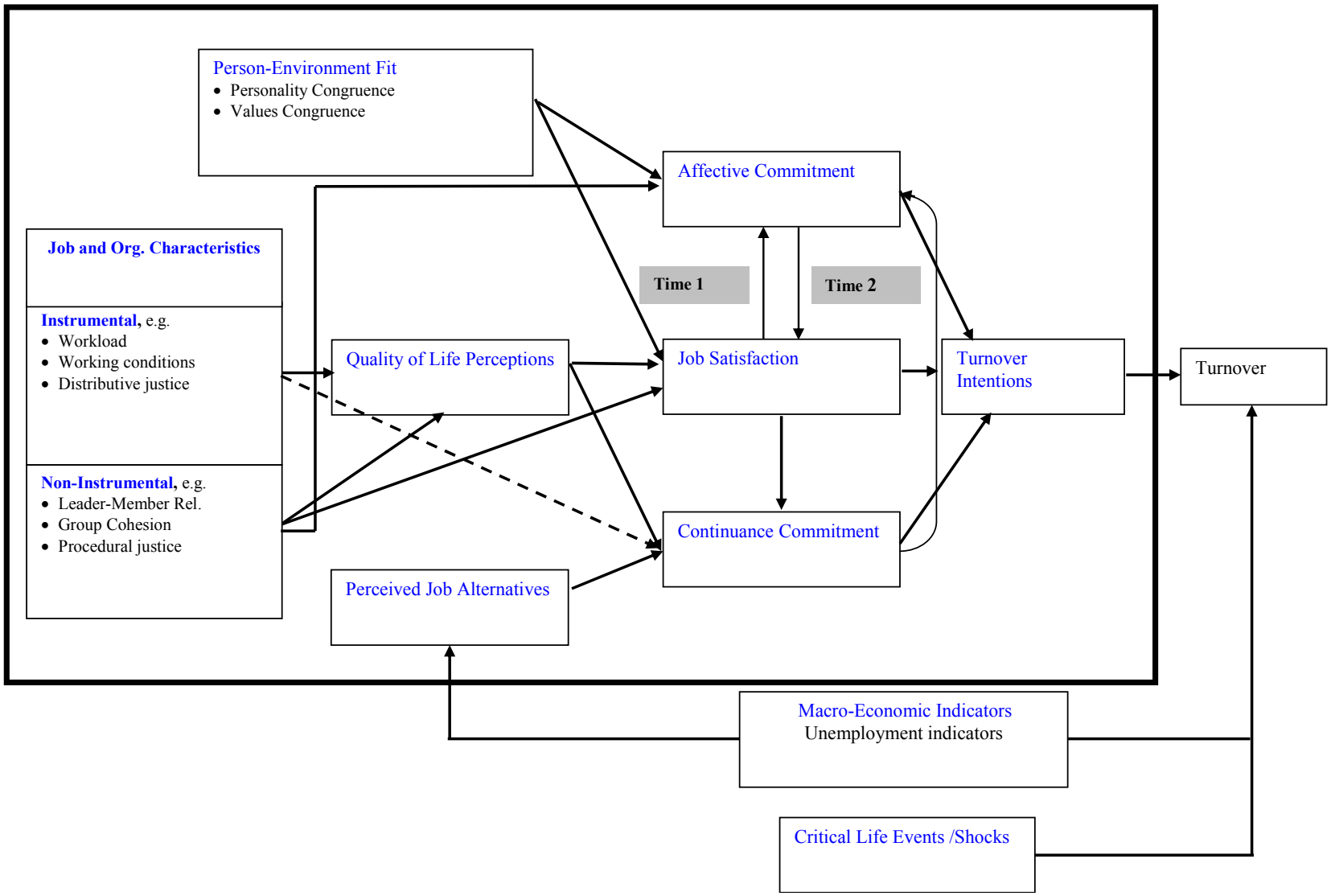

Figure 4B-1: Proposed Structural Model of Military Turnover.

In the proposed model, voluntary turnover is treated as a product of an individual subjective experience of the job and the organization, which exists within the broader social, economic, and cultural milieu. In other words, acknowledging the potential impacts of some macro-level labor market parameters, a micro-level, decision-making approach is adopted in explaining the military turnover process. This individual-centered approach is believed to have certain advantages over adopting a purely macro-level approach. First of all, it reflects the complex nature of the turnover phenomenon, which, in many cases, cannot be fully understood using macro algorithms only. Morrell et al. (2004) argued "leavers are not economic agents, who make rational choices to maximize expected utility. Instead they are actors, who negotiate complex social scenarios with reference to habit, learned schemata, and values." (p. 345) Second, an individual-centered approach helps decision-makers understand the role of relatively proximal factors playing a role in turnover. Finally, such an approach treats turnover as a more manageable and predictable phenomenon by the organization through the coordination of critical human resources management activities such as recruitment, selection, classification, and continuous monitoring.

4B.2.1 Distal Factors

4B.2.1.1 Job and Organizational Characteristics

It needs to be emphasized at the outset that in the proposed model, job and organizational characteristics refer to the perceptions of the person rather than the actual job and organizational characteristics. Job and organizational characteristics cover a broad range of factors. A distinction can be made between instrumental (e.g., compensation and workload) and non-instrumental (e.g., leader-member relations and work group cohesion) job and organizational characteristics relevant for the military turnover. This distinction between instrumental and non-instrumental characteristics can be better understood using the terms from psychological contract literature (see topic chapter *The Psychological Contract: A Big Deal!* for more details), where a distinction is made between transactional and relational contracts. Transactional contracts are more likely to be short-term, fixed contracts with well-specified performance terms, requiring relatively narrow involvement in the organization. The basis of such contracts is mostly instrumental/economic in nature. Relational contracts, however, are open-ended, have loosely defined performance terms, and require mutual loyalty and long-term stability. The basis of such contracts can be both emotional and economic. Instrumental characteristics playing a role in military turnover seem to reflect violations of transactional contracts, whereas non-instrumental characteristics seem to reflect violations of relational contracts.

There exists empirical and/or theoretical evidence concerning the role of instrumental factors in the development of negative work attitudes, which are well-established antecedents of turnover in general and military turnover, in specific. Among these factors are workload and/or job pressure, role clarity (e.g., Bliese and Castro, 2000; Dunn and Morrow, 2002; Sanchez, Bray, Vincus, and Bann, 2004), shift-work (Demerouti, Geurts, Bakker, and Euwema, 2004), OPSTEMPO and PERSTEMPO (e.g., Castro and Adler, 1999; Dunn and Morrow, 2002; Huffman, Adler, Castro, and Dolan, 2000), role stress (e.g., Griffeth and Hom, 2001), unmet expectations (e.g., Griffeth and Hom, 2001; Richardson, 2003; van de Ven, 2003), pay grade (Sanchez et al., 2004), and distributive justice (DeConinck and Stilwell, 2004; McIntyre, Bartle, Landis, and Dansby, 2002). Literature reviewed suggested criticality of three groups of instrumental factors in the military turnover process. These are workload related factors, working conditions, and distributive justice.

Using qualitative methods, Dunn and Morrow (2002) examined the members' reasons for leaving the Canadian Forces (CF). Workload as it related to PERSTEMPO and OPSTEMPO was identified to be the second most commonly mentioned reason for leaving the CF. In a relative recent study using a comprehensive data base collected from 24881 members of the Active Duty and Reserve/Guard components, Sanchez et al. (2004) examined psychological, demographic, and physical predictors of job satisfaction among military

personnel across the Armed Forces in the U.S. Job pressure was identified to be the most important predictor of job satisfaction for both Active Duty and Reserve/Guard members. Personnel with higher levels of job pressure were more likely to experience lower levels of job satisfaction. In another study on 1,786 lower enlisted soldiers in the U.S. Army, Bliese and Castro (2000) found that both workload and role clarity contributed significantly to the prediction of psychological strain experienced by the soldiers. As discussed below, role clarity buffered the negative effects of workload under certain conditions.

Although conditions of work can be examined under workload-related factors, unlike typical workload-related factors, they seem more representative of physical aspects of work, and hence, have a relatively independent impact on the process of work withdrawal. Frequent and long deployments, geographical isolation from family, overnight duty, long work hours, and high tempo, typical of most military jobs (see Dunn and Morrow, 2002; Sanchez et al., 2004), are likely to play a role in the process of turnover. Demerouti et al. (2004) examined the effects of rotation and timing of shifts on job attitudes, turnover intentions, work-home conflict, health, and absenteeism among the Dutch military police officers. They found that rotating shift workers held less positive attitudes toward their jobs. Those with fixed shifts, however, reported higher levels of job satisfaction and professional efficacy, lower turnover intentions, and cynicism.

Distributive justice, which basically refers to "fairness of outcome allocation" (Tepper, 2000, p. 179), is the third group of instrumental factors expected to be critical in the proposed model. The other two types of justice perceptions widely studied in the literature, namely, *procedural justice* [fairness of the procedures used to make allocation decisions" (Tepper, 2000, p. 179)] and *interactional justice* [fairness of interpersonal treatment individuals receive during the enactment of procedures" (Tepper, 2000, p. 179)] are not typical instrumental factors. DeConinck and Stilwell (2004) examined the relationships among organizational justice perceptions (both distributive and procedural), role states (role ambiguity and role conflict), pay satisfaction, supervisor satisfaction, organizational commitment, and withdrawal cognitions on a sample of 222 advertising managers. They found a positive relationship between distributive justice and pay satisfaction, which in turn had both a direct and indirect effect (through organizational commitment) on withdrawal cognitions. Along the same lines, McIntyre et al. (2002) used three random samples (each comprising 5000 records) from the U.S. Military Equal Opportunity Climate Survey database to examine the relationships between distributive justice perceptions (labeled "Organizational Equal Opportunity Fairness") and work group equal opportunity fairness, work group efficacy, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction of military members. These authors found that distributive justice at the organizational level influenced distributive justice at the group level, which influenced perception of work group efficacy. Perception of work group efficacy, in turn, had a strong effect on job satisfaction.

Reviewed empirical evidence and the conceptual work on the QOL (Dowden, 2000), reviewed below, suggest that instrumental characteristics influence job satisfaction (and possibly continuance commitment) through their effects on the quality of life perceptions/concerns of military personnel.

Among non-instrumental characteristics deemed relevant in the military turnover process are leader-member relations and/or person-supervisor fit (e.g., Britt, Davison, Bliese, and Castro, 2004; DeConinck and Stilwell, 2004; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades, 2002; Ferris, 1985; Frone, 2000; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Sanchez et al., 2004), group fit or group cohesion (e.g., Griffeth and Hom, 2001; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), and procedural justice (e.g., Clay-Warner, Reynolds, and Roman, 2005; DeConinck and Stilwell, 2004; Griffeth and Hom, 2001).

Leadership is critical not only for boosting motivation and performance, but also for improving general adaptation of military members (Britt, Davison, Bliese, and Castro, 2004). In a meta-analytic study examining

the effects of different types of fit, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found a relatively strong relationship between person-supervisor fit and job satisfaction (.44). In this review the relationships between person-supervisor fit and organizational commitment (.09), tenure (.09), and overall performance (.18) were relatively weak. Also, in their study on the U.S. Army soldiers, Bliese and Castro (2000) found that the effects of workload on psychological strain were moderated by role clarity only when organizational support from leaders was high. Similarly, Britt et al. argued and provided empirical evidence for the buffering effects of supportive leader behaviors against the effects of stress in the military context.

Kristof-Brown et al.'s (2005) meta-analytic study indicated that the relationships between person-group fit and the three widely studied outcome variables, namely job satisfaction (.31), organizational commitment (.30), and intention to quit (–.22), were considerable. Consistently, McIntyre et al. (2002) reported that perceived work group efficacy was especially predictive of job satisfaction ($\beta = .61$, $p < .000$) for the U.S. military members. Although significant, the effect of group efficacy on organizational commitment was relatively weak ($\beta = .06$, $p < .001$).

The third non-instrumental factor considered to be relevant in the process of military turnover is perceptions of procedural justice. Clay-Warner et al. (2005) examined the relationships between distributive and procedural justice and job satisfaction. They found that procedural justice was a more important predictor of job satisfaction than was distributive justice. Supporting this finding, on a sample of salespeople, Flaherty and Pappas (2000) found that perceptions of procedural justice related positively to trust in supervisor, and that trust in supervisor was related to job satisfaction. Distributive justice, on the other hand, had a relatively weak relationship with supervisory trust. DeConinck and Stillwell (2004) found that while distributive justice was predictive of pay satisfaction, procedural justice was predictive of supervisory satisfaction, which then was predictive of both organizational commitment and withdrawal cognitions.

Based on the reviewed military and non-military literatures and on Dowden's (2000) QOL model described below, non-instrumental job and organizational characteristics are expected to influence job satisfaction and affective component of organizational commitment directly. Furthermore, non-instrumental attributes are expected to have an indirect effect on job satisfaction through their influence on QOL concerns.

4.B.2.1.2 Perceived Job Alternatives

Individuals may develop intentions to quit their current job on the basis of their impressions/perceptions that they can find a job, probably a better suiting job (Kammeyer-Mueller, et al., 2005). Although perceived job alternatives may not be a precise reflection of actual probability of finding a job elsewhere, it has been shown to influence turnover intentions both directly (e.g., Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth, 1978) and indirectly (Dalessio et al., 1986; Griffeth and Hom, 2001; Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth, 1978) through work attitudes, mainly job satisfaction. In a recent methodologically sound longitudinal analysis, however, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2005) reported the effects of perceived job alternatives to be minimal especially as compared to actual occupational unemployment rates.

Despite the equivocal nature of the findings concerning the role of perceived alternatives in the turnover experience, in the proposed conceptual framework, perceived job alternatives are included as one of the distal factors influencing turnover intentions. Perceived alternatives, which are hypothesized to be directly influenced by unemployment rate, are proposed to have an effect on turnover intentions through their effects on continuance commitment (CC). As discussed below, CC represents an exchange-oriented bond to the employing organization, and taps into perceptions of the costs associated with leaving the organization. An increase in alternatives outside the organization is expected to reduce the cost associated with ending membership in the organization.

4B.2.2 Intermediate/Mediating Factors

4B.2.2.1 Person-Environment Fit

According to Mumford and Strokes (cited in Gustafson and Mumford, 1995), the fit between person and environment (i.e., P-E fit) can be expressed as the degree of adaptation an individual exhibits with respect to his/her vocational niche. Increased fit can be expected to result in positive organizational and personal outcomes such as increased satisfaction, motivation, morale, job performance, commitment, and retention. Both empirical and theoretical evidence suggests that the fit between the person (as represented by the personality attributes, interests, skills, abilities, and values) and the environment (as represented by the job or occupation, or the organization) play a critical role in a number of organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, career involvement, career success (all positively), and turnover intention and behavior (negatively) (see Kristof, 1996; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; Westerman and Cyr, 2004). Two different forms of P-E fit seem to be especially relevant within the context of military retention: fit in terms of personality attributes and fit in terms of person-organization (P-O) congruence (i.e., values congruence). Based on the reviewed literature summarized below, these two forms of fit are expected to be critical in the military turnover process.

4B.2.2.1.1 Fit in Terms of Personality Characteristics

Although not directly included in most turnover models, personal dispositions are acknowledged in the literature as critical factors in the process of turnover. For instance, Griffeth and Hom (2001) included negative affectivity, the tendency to perceive oneself and the environment negatively, among the factors contributing to job dissatisfaction in employee turnover. Similarly, in his conceptual model of QOL outcomes, Dowden proposed that personal dispositions are likely to influence three organizational outcomes (i.e., retention, absenteeism, and individual performance) through their effects on attitudinal factors, moral, motivation, and perceived stress.

Schneider's attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model, lends support for the criticality of personality fit in the turnover process (Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, and Smith, 1995). The model states that individuals are attracted to, selected by, and stay with organizations that suit their personality characteristics. The major assumption of the ASA model is that both the attraction and retention processes are based on some kind of person-environment (i.e., organization) fit. Schneider and colleagues state that people select themselves into and out of work organizations, and that environments are function of persons working in them. Furthermore, they assert that attraction to, selection by, and withdrawal from an organization result in trait homogenization in that organization.

The effects of personality in the employee withdrawal process have been examined either using a predictive/ regression approach or a commensurate measurement approach. Generally, the predictive/regression approach involves examining the effects of single personality characteristics on the outcome variables, such as satisfaction, turnover intentions, and actual turnover. Commensurate measurement approach to personality fit, on the other hand, requires measuring the congruence between the person's personality and the organization's ideal personality type using the same content domain.

Using the predictive approach, Boudreau, Boswell, Judge, and Bretz (2001) found that personality characteristics, such as agreeableness and neuroticism were predictive of employee withdrawal. Another attribute, called *job embeddedness,* has also been shown to predict voluntary turnover over and above organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez, 2001; Mitchell and Lee, 2001). Job embeddedness refers to an employee's:

1) Association with other people, teams, and groups within the organization;
2) Perceptions of his/her fit with the job, organization, and community; and
3) Perceived cost of leaving the job (i.e., what the person says he/she has to sacrifice if he/she leaves the job).

Although there exists some evidence concerning the predictive ability of personality characteristics in the turnover process, usually these variables fail to explain a significant portion of the variance in employee withdrawal. According to Westerman and Cyr (2004), because of their relatively weak direct effects on withdrawal process, personality variables are generally assumed to have indirect effects on turnover, through their effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Westerman and Cyr further argue that "… it may be overly simplistic to assume that any single individual difference variable, acting in isolation from consideration of its relevant environment, would have significant effects on complexly determined withdrawal cognitions and behaviors" (p. 259). These authors recommend the use of commensurate-measurement approaches in studying the effect of personality on employee withdrawal. According to Westerman and Cyr, commensurate approach "… provide(s) a more comprehensive picture of the 'chemistry' resulting from congruence between individual differences and organizational situations and may indicate potential to explain more of the variance in withdrawal cognitions and behavior" (p. 259). Consistently, in their study Westerman and Cyr measured personality congruence by correlating the personality profile of the prototypical successful firm member (by aggregating the "ideal personality" ratings given by participants from a given organization) to each individual's own personality profile. They found that personality congruence contributed directly to intention to remain with the organization.

Along the same lines, using data obtained from a sample of Navy subordinates and their immediate supervisor, Gustafson and Mumford (1995) tested the effects of person-environment fit in predicting job performance, job withdrawal, and job satisfaction. Using hierarchical cluster analysis technique they identified eight characteristic patterns of personality (i.e., *externally focused non-impulsives, overall uninvolveds, anxious unmotivated impulsives, anxious defensives, comfortable non-strivers, non-anxious strivers, low self-esteem impulsives,* and *internally controlled rigids*) and five subgroups of environment (i.e., *independent-simple, structured-complex, unstructured-unsupported, directed-undemanding,* and *protected-certain*). As an example, while anxious defensives were characterized by low job involvement and anxiety, non-anxious strivers were characterized by high job involvement, high achievement motivation, and low anxiety. Results suggested differential effects of personality type-on the three organizational outcome variables (satisfaction being the most critical one followed by performance and withdrawal). For instance, while non-anxious strivers reported high job satisfaction and their supervisors rated their performance as high, anxious defensives reported low levels of satisfaction and also their performance was rated low by their supervisors. Results also suggested differential effects of person subgroup (i.e., personality type) – situation subgroup (i.e., environment type) fit on the three organizational outcomes.

Although further studies are needed to advance our understanding of the interplay between person-environment fit and organizational outcomes, results of Gustafson and Mumford's (1995) study have important implications for personnel management practices in the military. That is, if best-fitting personality type(s) could be identified for given organizational/environmental types, then selection and classification efforts can be geared toward selection and classification of individuals into their ideal environmental types.

4B.2.2.1.2 Fit in Terms of Values: Values Congruence

Before discussing the role of P-O fit in the military withdrawal process, a distinction should be made between P-O fit and person-job (P-J) fit (see Cable and DeRue, 2002; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Lauver

and Kristof-Brown, 2001). While P-O fit refers to the extent to which an employee's personal values and the employing organization's values/culture are congruent or compatible, P-J fit refers to the extent to which abilities of the person and the demands of the job match or the needs of the person and what is provided by the organization are congruent (Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001). In other words, while P-O fit involves the compatibility of the individual with the employing organization, mostly at the level of values, P-J fit refers to a person's compatibility with the job in question (Kristof, 1996). Empirical evidence indicates that these two fit types are weakly but positively correlated (e.g., Cable and DeRue, 2002; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001). P-O fit seems to be especially critical in understanding the military turnover process as it refers to the similarity between deeply seated individual and organizational characteristics.

Several researchers reported P-O fit as being a sound and/or better measure of P-E fit predictive of important organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions (e.g., Cable and Judge, 1996; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991). Using a values profile matching process to assess person-environment fit, O'Reilly et al. (1991) found that P-O fit predicted job satisfaction and organizational commitment a year after the measurement of fit and that it predicted actual turnover even after two years. Similarly, Lauver and Kristof-Brown (2001) found that perceived P-O fit was a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = .40$) and intention to quit ($\beta = -.47$) for employees working in a large national trucking company. Predictive ability of P-O fit seemed stronger than that of P-J fit for especially intention to quit ($\beta = -.22$).

In another study, Cable and DeRue (2002) made a distinction between three types of fit perceptions: *P-O fit perceptions* (i.e., values congruence between the person and the organization); *needs-supplies fit perceptions* (i.e., match between what is needed by the person and what is offered by the organization); and *demands – abilities fit perceptions* (i.e., congruence between the demands of a job and the person's abilities). These authors examined whether these three types of fit were differentially related to organizational outcomes. The needs-supplies and demands – abilities fit perceptions tap into the P-J fit construct. Among the important findings of this study was that P-O fit perceptions were good predictors of turnover decision ($\beta = .48$), perceived organizational support ($\beta = .44$), organizational identification ($\beta = .42$), job satisfaction ($\beta = .28$), and citizenship behaviors ($\beta = .20$).

Westerman and Cyr (2004) examined the effects of values congruence (i.e., P-O fit), work environment congruence (needs-supplies fit), and personality congruence on job attitudes and turnover intentions using a sample of sales people in a number of organizations. They measured fit using commensurate measurement approach rather than relying on perceptions of congruence. They found that values congruence and work environment congruence were both predictive of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Also, job satisfaction and commitment mediated the relationship between these two types of congruence and turnover intentions. In addition to its influence through satisfaction and commitment, values congruence had a direct effect on turnover intentions. Finally, as mentioned before, personality congruence had only a direct effect on turnover intentions.

More recently, in their multiple meta-analyses on different types of fit, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found that P-O fit had substantial correlations with job satisfaction (.44), organizational commitment (.51), and turnover intentions (–.35). Although majority of the studies included in this meta-analytic study employed value-based P-O fit measures, there were some studies, using multidimensional, personality-based, or goal-based P-O fit measures. When value-based, goal-based, and personality-based P-O fit measures were compared in terms of their relationships with organizational attitudes, value-based fit measures were found to have stronger relationships with both satisfaction and commitment than both goal-based and personality-based P-O fit measures.

To summarize, based on the reviewed literature, both dispositional factors (in the form of personality congruence) and values congruence (i.e., value-based P-O fit) are expected to play a role in military turnover, and hence they are incorporated into the proposed conceptual framework as part of intermediate (as opposed to proximal or distal) factors influencing military turnover. P-E fit, as the generic term for both personality-fit and value-based fit, is hypothesized to influence military turnover especially through its influence over work attitudes, mainly job satisfaction and affective commitment.

However, it is important to note that the impact of values congruence is expected to be stronger than that of personality congruence because of two reasons, at least. First, the evidence concerning the primacy of values congruence as a predictor of work attitudes and turnover intentions over the other measures of fit, including personality, is quite convincing (e.g., Cable and Judge, 1996; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell, 1991; Westerman and Cyr, 2004). Second, as stated by Puente (2004, see also the topic chapter *Values Research*), values are especially crucial in the military context, in both recruitment and retention processes. According to him, as deeply seated individual differences factors, values influence individual and collective behavior, both directly and indirectly, through intervening variables such as attitudes and norms.

4.B.2.2.2 Quality of Life Perceptions

According to the results of U.S. Department of Defense's 2004 survey of both active-duty and reserve members, 14% of the respondents (20% for Army members) report that their desire to stay decreased as a result of tempo, or being away more than expected (U.S. Department of Defense, 2005). Similarly, the British Airmen and Non-Commissioned Aircrew Leaver's survey results indicated that "family stability" was the factor with the highest importance rating in the decision to leave especially for personnel with more than six years of tenure. Furthermore, high workload, lack of notice for postings, and frequency of detachments were among factors that had increased recently in importance as reasons for leaving (Brackley, 2003).

Research in the CF on retention has also examined the links between PERSTEMPO, OPSTEMPO, and attrition of military personnel. As discussed above, in focus groups conducted to determine members' reasons for leaving the military, the second most commonly mentioned reason for leaving CF was the workload as it related to PERSTEMPO (Dunn and Morrow, 2002). "It was frequently stated that primary duties, coupled with secondary duties and a high deployment tempo, were leading to some members feeling burnt out and to others leaving the CF. Members often stated that the high PERSTEMPO and workload were putting people in the position of having to choose between staying in the CF or losing their families. It was stated that the amount of time members had to spend away from home due to deployments, exercises, courses, and overtime was in many cases beyond the coping ability of their families" (Morrow, 2004, p. 1).

As the above experiences of the member countries indicate, aspects of both work (e.g., workload, tempo, and time away from home) and non-work (e.g., marital status, number of children, time for leisure, and recreation) domains and the way these domains interact are critical factors in the development of the decision to stay in or leave the military. Hence, it is vital to understand the role of work/non-work balance in military turnover.

Based on the work done by Kerce (1995) in the U.S. Marine Corps, and Dowden (2000) in the CF, QOL perceptions could be defined as an individual's global sense of well-being nourished by his/her feelings about various life domains, such as standard of living, job itself, leisure and recreation, health, marriage/intimate relationship, and relations with children. According to Kerce, perceptions of global QOL have behavioral consequences and contribute to organizational outcomes such as turnover and performance. QOL variables do influence people's intentions to remain in the military; they, for example, account for 10 – 20% of the

variance in people's stay – leave decisions over and above the influence of other variables in the CF (for more detail see Morrow, 2004 and the topic chapter *PERSTEMPO/OPSTEMPO and Quality of Life*).

Among the assumptions underlying Dowden's (2000) model of QOL are:

1) QOL domains such as income, job characteristics, marriage/intimate relations, and friends and friendship, are strong contributors of global QOL perceptions;
2) Personal dispositions influence global QOL perceptions;
3) Enhancing global QOL perceptions has an impact on subjective variables like satisfaction, commitment, and motivation; and
4) Global QOL perceptions influence important organizational outcomes, mainly retention, absenteeism, and performance through the mediating effects of subjective organizational variables.

In both Kerce's (1995) and Dowden's (2000) models, QOL perceptions are expected to mediate the relationship between environmental, dispositional, and individual factors and organizational outcomes.

Based on the available literature on QOL and turnover, it is hypothesized that QOL factors mediate the effects of, job, and organizational characteristics on job satisfaction and continuance commitment. The effects of QOL on job satisfaction seem self-explanatory. That is, satisfaction with different facets or domains of life, as expressed by the global QOL perceptions, is likely to influence satisfaction with one's work life. Continuance commitment, as discussed in the next section, represents an exchange-oriented bond to the employing organization. It is an end product of a cost-benefit analysis about continued membership in the organization. Perceptions concerning life domains, such as income and standard of living, health, and accommodation are likely to be in the equation in determining the continuance commitment of the person. Hence, it seems logical to expect continuance commitment to be influenced by global QOL perceptions. Since affective commitment reflects an emotional bond to the employing organization, it seems less likely to be influenced by the global QOL perceptions.

4B.2.2.3 Work Attitudes: Job Satisfaction, Continuance Commitment, and Affective Commitment

In most models of turnover, job satisfaction is assumed to influence turnover behavior through turnover thoughts and intentions (e.g., Dalessio, Silverman, and Schuck, 1986; Hom, Griffeth, and Sellaro, 1984; Mobley, 1977). However, meta-analytic findings as well as theoretical arguments suggest that because of contractual obligations, satisfaction is likely to have a weaker (yet still significant) influence on withdrawal cognitions and actual turnover for military samples than for civilian samples (e.g., Carsten and Spector, 1987; Farkas and Tetrick, 1989; Hom, Caranikas-Walker, Prussia, and Griffeth, 1992). Carsten and Spector, for example, found that predictability of turnover especially by satisfaction decreased with time, and this decrease was more evident in the military samples. Furthermore, the unfolding model of voluntary turnover suggests that a considerable portion of voluntary turnover is not induced by job dissatisfaction; shocks or significant life events seem to have more explanatory power in the experience of turnover (Holtom et al., 2005; Lee and Mitchell, 1994; Morrell et al., 2004). Yet, as stated by Holtom and colleagues themselves, the concept of shocks does not replace job dissatisfaction as an antecedent of voluntary turnover. Even in studies supporting the role of shocks in the turnover experience, dissatisfaction was the major predictor of turnover for some participants. In other words, irrespective of shocking events, when satisfaction levels are low, quitting can be anticipated. Hence, in the proposed model, job dissatisfaction (along with or irrespective of shocks) is expected to play a critical role in the process of withdrawal.

Organizational commitment, which refers to a relatively stable and more global attitude toward the employing organization, has been consistently shown to be related to variables associated with employee withdrawal. Commitment is assumed to affect actual turnover behaviors through its effects on behavioral intentions (e.g., Sjoberg and Sverke, 2000). In a meta-analysis Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner (2000) reported that organizational commitment predicted turnover (average corrected correlation coefficient = –.23) better than did overall satisfaction (–.19). The predictive power of commitment was even larger for military samples (–.28).

Meyer and Allen's (1997) conceptualization of commitment as a three-component structure (i.e., affective commitment, AC; continuance commitment, CC; and normative commitment, NC) seems to offer a framework to explore the nature of the relationships between satisfaction, commitment, and turnover in the military turnover process. Within the military context, AC refers to a soldier's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the military service or unit, it is the *want to* part of the construct of commitment. CC refers to perceptions of the costs associated with leaving the military, and it is related with *need to* aspect of commitment. CC taps into perceptions of both available job alternatives and the personal sacrifices to be made by leaving the organization. Finally, NC refers to a soldier's (or significant other's) felt moral obligation to stay with the military. NC refers to *ought to* aspect of commitment (Gade, 2003). All three commitment dimensions were reported to have correlated negatively with turnover intentions (e.g., Meyer, Allen, and Smith, 1993; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky, 2002), yet empirical evidence suggests that among these three dimensions, AC is a better predictor of variables associated with military withdrawal than the other two dimensions of commitment (Tremble, Payne, Finch, and Bullis, 2003).

Although both satisfaction and commitment have been identified as critical variables in the turnover process, there seems to be a lack of agreement concerning the nature of the relationship between these variables in relation to employee withdrawal. Some studies suggest that satisfaction is a precursor of organizational commitment and that commitment mediates the relationship between satisfaction and turnover intentions (e.g., Heffner and Gade, 2003; Williams and Hazer, 1986). However, the relationship between commitment and satisfaction seems much more complicated than a simple unidirectional relationship. A cyclical relationship has been suggested by Farkas and Tetrick's (1989) longitudinal study on a sample of Navy enlisted personnel. An important implication of the Farkas and Tetrick's (1989) study is that the relationships between satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions are not static at all, especially in the military context, and hence, in order to reveal the true nature of the developmental processes underlying turnover intentions, longitudinal research designs need to be employed. Similarly, Tremble, Payne, Finch, and Bullis (2003) emphasize the benefits of longer tracking periods in fully capturing the development of organizational commitment. For example, Van Maanen's study, cited by Tremble et al., using a sample of police officers indicated that it was not before the first 30 months of employment that organizational commitment stabilized.

Based on the available evidence it seems plausible to make the following assertions:

1) Both AC and CC (AC to a greater extent than CC) and job satisfaction contribute to turnover intentions;
2) The nature of the relationship between AC and satisfaction is likely to be cyclical in nature (i.e., satisfaction is expected to play a role in the development of AC, but once established, AC can be expected to have an influence on satisfaction); and
3) CC is expected to be influenced by satisfaction/dissatisfaction with specific, especially, extrinsic aspects of job, such as pay and benefits.

No predictions concerning the role of normative commitment have been made because of the conceptual overlap between AC and NC items (see Allen, 2003).

4B.2.3 Proximal Factors

4B.2.3.1 Turnover Intentions

Starting with the early models of employee turnover (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino, 1979; Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth, 1978), turnover intentions have been reported to mediate the relationship between job-related attitudes, especially job satisfaction, and turnover behavior. Almost all of these models suggested that job dissatisfaction influenced actual turnover through its effects on intentions to quit. In a meta-analysis of research on the relationship between intention to quit and turnover, Steel and Ovalle (1984) reported a weighted average correlation coefficient of .50 between behavioral intentions and attrition. This study also indicated that intentions were stronger predictors of turnover than overall satisfaction, satisfaction with the work itself, and organizational commitment.

In an earlier attempt to understand the process of military turnover, Knapp et al. (1993) reported that although predictive ability of satisfaction concerning turnover behavior was weaker, the association between turnover intentions and turnover seemed stronger in the military context. It seems plausible to argue that once turnover intentions grow, the path to turnover seems more definite in the military, most likely because of the contractual nature of the jobs. Accordingly, in the proposed model, turnover intentions, which are directly influenced by satisfaction and affective commitment, are treated as one of the direct determinants of turnover behavior.

4B.2.3.2 A Macro-Economic Factor: Unemployment Rate

Conventionally, voluntary turnover has been conceptualized as an act largely developing from an individual's subjective experience of organizational life and labor market conditions. Accordingly, in most models of turnover, perceived opportunities in the labor market, as a proxy for actual opportunities, have been included among the contributors of turnover behavior. However, as stated by Kirschenbaum and Mano-Negrin (1999), there exists convincing evidence regarding the impact of objective labor market conditions, such as general unemployment rate, occupational unemployment rates, pay levels, and hiring rates, on turnover rates. In fact, studies examining both subjective and objective indices of alternative jobs available in the labor market have identified objective indices, namely unemployment rate, to be a stronger predictor of actual turnover behavior (e.g., Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg, 2003; Kirschenbaum and Mano-Negrin, 1999). For example, in a longitudinal analysis, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2005) found that occupational unemployment rates had a substantial impact on turnover behavior, and that perceived alternatives were not significant predictors of turnover.

Based on aggregated data from cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, Hulin, Roznowski, and Hachiya (1985) presented strong evidence concerning the relationship between unemployment and voluntary turnover. They reported that unemployment rate and voluntary turnover rate were "strongly and negatively" correlated, sharing up to 70% of the variance. In a meta-analysis, Carsten and Spector (1987) reported that correlations between job satisfaction and voluntary turnover were stronger when unemployment rate was lower. This finding suggests job dissatisfaction is more likely to eventually lead to turnover when unemployment rate is relatively low. According to Hulin et al. (1985), market conditions seem to act as a releaser allowing job satisfaction to best predict employee turnover during periods of low unemployment. Using an occupation-specific linear combination of local and occupational unemployment rates, Trevor (2001) also found that satisfaction had a greater negative effect on voluntary turnover when jobs were plentiful.

Kirschenbaum and Mano-Negrin (1999) emphasized the need for inclusion of objective job opportunities at the organizational (i.e., internal organizational opportunities for advancement) and labor market level within a voluntary turnover model. Hence, based on the reviewed literature, unemployment rate is expected to influence voluntary turnover both directly and through perceived job opportunities.

4B.2.3.3 Critical Life Events/Shocks

Recently there has been an increased recognition that turnover is not always a "slow burn," deliberative process (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005, p. 646). As mentioned in the introduction section of this paper, according to the "unfolding model" of voluntary turnover (Lee and Mitchell, 1994), unexpected life events, or shocks, cause voluntary turnover more often than accumulated job dissatisfaction. Shocks are jarring, usually unexpected, events that prompt thoughts of quitting. Three of the four paths suggested by the unfolding model involve a shock as the triggering event for turnover. In Path 1, the shock leads to the execution of a pre-formulated script. In Path 2, the shocking event is negative and leads to a rather quick decision without a search for alternatives. In Path 3, the triggering event can be positive, negative, or neutral, and unlike the first two paths, resulting dissatisfaction initiates a search for and an evaluation of alternatives. Compared to the first two paths, Path 3 requires considerable deliberation. In Path 4, turnover process is not initiated by a shock; the decision to quit evolves rather gradually. In this path to turnover, lack of a compatible fit with the organization results in dissatisfaction and reduced commitment, which, in turn, leads to quitting with or without searching for alternatives (Donnelly and Quirin, 2006). In an empirical test of the unfolding model's predictions on a sample of voluntary stayers and quitters, Donnelly and Quirin found that when a shock event prompted the process, there was a much greater likelihood that the employee would quit.

In a relatively recent study, using cluster analysis technique Morrell et al. (2004) classified nurse leavers based on the nature of the shocks experienced. The leavers were classified into two clusters along five dimensions/items. In Cluster 1, shocks were typically more expected, more positive, more personal, more specific, and less avoidable, whereas in Cluster 2, shocks were typically less expected, less-positive, more work-related, less specific, and more avoidable. Among some of the specific findings of this study were:

1) Shocks that were expected were more likely to be positive, personal, and resulted in decisions to quit that were unavoidable;
2) Negative shocks were more likely to be work-related, and associated with dissatisfaction, and resulted in decisions to quit which were avoidable; and
3) Work-related shocks were less likely to be salient, associated with dissatisfaction, and search for an alternative and resulted in decisions to quit that were avoidable.

There are critical practical implications of Morrell et al.'s findings concerning the interventions that could be undertaken by the organizations. For example, it could be worth investing on interventions targeting shocks that are work-related and less salient (which usually result in avoidable quits). Morrell et al. argue that in such cases there is more scope for organizations to intervene as the decision to quit unfolds rather slowly.

Based on the reviewed literature, shocks are expected to play a role in the military turnover process, either along with or independent of the progression from dissatisfaction and reduced commitment. However, in the absence of a reliable taxonomy for shocks that is more relevant for military members, at this point a generic category of shocks is included in the model. Studies are needed to identify the categories of turnover initiating life events/shocks in the military context so that depending on the type of events (e.g., negative vs. positive, expected vs. unexpected, personal vs. work-related) different courses of decision-making can be predicted and different courses of interventions can be planned.

4B.2.4 Conclusions and Practical Implications

Evidence suggests existence of different dynamics for military withdrawal as well as the importance of individual differences factors other than attitudes in military turnover. The proposed military turnover model

is believed to contribute to the existing literature in several ways. First of all, it represents one of the rare attempts to capture the complex decision-making processes involved in military turnover. Second, departing from the descriptive approaches conventionally used to explore and understand military turnover, the proposed model presents a comprehensive causal framework that allows for prediction. Third, although the model focuses mainly on the psychological processes and the individual's subjective experiences, it also recognizes importance of at least one critical macro-level factor, namely unemployment rate, as one of the critical determinants of military turnover. In this sense the model establishes a link between micro-level, individual-focused psychological approach and macro-level, labor market-focused economic approach. Finally, by incorporating the concept of shocks, this model aims to account for turnover that is not necessarily attitude-based.

All told, we believe that the proposed model is a small step in the right direction. However, we also believe that the model presented here needs to be further refined before it is subjected to empirical testing. Refinement/revision efforts may focus on four issues. First, the proposed model implicitly focuses on late turnover, and factors playing a role in early turnover (e.g., turnover occurring during or right after initial training) are not specifically addressed or separated from the factors critical in late turnover. So, efforts may be directed at identifying antecedents of early turnover and, perhaps, linking them to both recruitment and late turnover processes.

Second, in the proposed model, demographic variables, such as gender and ethnicity, are not directly addressed; they are assumed to have an influence on work attitudes especially through quality of life perceptions. However, a more thorough examination of demographic variables critical in military turnover should be done and the mechanisms through which these demographic variables contribute to employee withdrawal need to be examined.

Third, at present the only macro factor included in the model is unemployment rate. Potential effects of other labor market conditions, such as absolute and relative pay levels, occupational unemployment rates, and hiring rates, need to be examined and, if necessary, should be incorporated into the model. Finally, studies are needed to develop a "shock" taxonomy to be able to make more precise predictions concerning the role of shocks in military turnover.

Following the finalization of the conceptual framework, the model should be subjected to empirical testing, preferably using a longitudinal approach. Since the proposed model is a generic one, the fit of the model in varying military contexts should be tested and compared. Result of this empirical testing is expected to both contribute to existing knowledge on turnover and have implications for military recruitment, selection, and retention practices. Keeping these potential avenues for improvement in mind, it is critical to mention some of the implications of this model for practice.

One major implication of this model is that military organizations should routinely monitor employee attitudes, mainly satisfaction and commitment (of both types), and factors contributing to the development of these attitudes. Systematic large-scale surveys tapping into quality life perceptions, values congruence, and satisfaction and commitment levels of the members could be used as proactive tools to minimize dysfunctional turnover. Strategies could be developed based on the sources of problems. For instance, while identification of problems concerning person-organization fit (i.e., values incongruence) may call for strategies directed at recruitment and selection (and perhaps training), problems associated with QOL perceptions, or work/non-work balance, may require strategies aiming to improve working conditions.

This model also allows for the possibility that turnover may not result from dissatisfaction or lack of commitment. Both macro-level external factors, such as unemployment rates, and/or unexpected life events

with or without job dissatisfaction (or reduced commitment) may play a major role in quitting. Concerning macro factors, although military cannot exercise control over labor-market dependent turnover, strategies can be developed to forecast the rate of turnover so that appropriate proactive actions can be taken to compensate for the expected losses.

Assuming that the role of shocks has been established, more thorough, systematic approaches can be adopted to examine factors contributing to the decision to stay or leave. Exit interviews and broad based surveys could be designed to understand the types of shocks as well as to identify groups of leavers distinguished based on the nature of shocks experienced. According to Holtom et al. (2005), broad-based surveys and follow-ups can help organizations to proactively address recurring issues concerning turnover. These authors present the following 6-step plan of action for dealing with shocks, which seems applicable to military situation.

1) Analyze exit interview data to assess the shocks that caused good people to leave.
2) Conduct surveys of current employees to better understand shocks they have experienced in the current organization as well as shocks that prompted them to leave their former employers.
3) Develop plans to specifically address shocks as they occur. Different types of life events require different interventions.
4) Train and encourage line managers to intervene as soon as possible after learning that a good employee has experienced a shock.
5) Measure the success of interventions and make revisions when necessary.
6) Proactively predict possible future shocks (e.g., frequent deployments).

Finally, an important practical implication of the proposed model is that it allows for making a distinction between types of voluntary turnover likely to be observed in the military context. It is critical to understand for whom and under what conditions a “slow burning, dissatisfaction-based” withdrawal is more likely and for whom and under what conditions critical life events (of different types) are likely to trigger turnover. Different strategies can then be developed to target different types of potential quitters. Such analyses may also help decision makers identify cases for which interventions are unlikely or unnecessary, resulting in significant cost savings.