THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXECUTIVES IN SHAPING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE: THREE CASES STUDIES OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN THE UK, CHINA AND SOUTH AFRICA

QUINTIN HEATH

Doctor of Business Administration

ASTON UNIVERSITY

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The effectiveness of executives in shaping organisational culture: three case studies of the sugar industry in the UK, China and South Africa.

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Thesis Summary

The study of organisational culture is again on the rise and retains significance for executives, yet its literature is fragmented. Whilst it is valuable to understand how the environment affects culture and how culture is maintained, these aspects have been afforded little research. In addition, how executives may alter culture is contested.

This study looks at how organisational culture changes over time and the impact of a firm's history, its immediate environment and agents' actions.

A qualitative process case study approach was used. The initial case study was a rare opportunity to examine change in the absence of an executive-led initiative, from which an initial conceptual framework was developed. This was then tested in two further case studies, combining inductive and deductive methods to retain the richness of a case study, and the theoretical robustness of multiple case studies.

The framework provided an important mid-level theory contribution and demonstrated that the environment influences culture through the challenges it poses. These are channelled through boundary sub-cultures and are answered by a combination of the managers' normal attentiveness to their daily tasks and by new toolkits from beyond the firm's boundary, provided by new challenger cohorts of managers who draw on other industries' registers. The change mechanisms (sub-cultures; cohorts) interact with a culture's maintenance mechanisms (routines; employment practices; boundary management; and mutual symbiosis) through a continual, low-level, long-term contest, creating a new culture.

This research contributes to the literature in four areas: the mechanisms that perpetuate culture; boundary sub-cultures; the role of cohorts; and its combined use of the cultural toolkit and values perspectives.

The processes identified occur in the absence of executives; therefore the study concludes culture is not solely generated by them. However, they may guide adaptation through thoughtful, long-term resourcing of change that is sympathetic to the underlying process.

Keywords: culture change; toolkits; perpetuation of culture; managerial cohorts; sub-cultures

Dedication

To Stephanie, my wife, for possessing the endless patience of a slant (*sic*) and for the unyielding encouragement she has given me in completing this DBA, and many other things.

To my mother; I think I finally found something interesting to say.

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Chapter 1:   Introduction

"like the river itself, always flowing but always different, like the water flowing in the river, sometimes walking steadily along andante, sometimes surging over rapids furioso, sometimes meandering with hardly any visible movement tranquilo, lento"

Aidan Chambers, *This is All: The Pillow Book of Cordelia Kenn*

Culture may be compared to a river, the water of the river is fundamental to the fish thriving but the fish themselves may not be able to explain what water is, and whether it is salted or fresh or brackish. The source of the river is important; its historic past influences its present and like large rivers, culture has more than one source. As the quote from Aidan Chambers suggests, a river is dynamic and constantly changing as it flows on a daily basis. It interacts with its environment, and is affected by it and its inhabitants, who can alter it. Finally, a river, like culture, is messy; its boundaries are not as clear as they appear from afar, its edges are muddy.

The study of culture is once again on the rise (Weber and Dacin, 2011 p. 1107, Giorgi et al., 2015) and is central to organisation studies at an individual, organisational and national level. Scholars and practitioners alike invoke it to remind us that the differences in actors' behaviour, and between organisations, are not the result of chance or individual character but may also be due to differences in culture (Giorgi et al., 2015, Weeks and Galunic, 2003). The high level of academic interest has led to the publication of over 4,600 articles on the topic between 1980 and 2011 (Hartnell et al., 2011). This study looks at how organizational culture changes over time in the sugar industry and specifically addresses the impact made by a firm's history, its immediate environment and agents' actions, which

are main drivers of culture change and stability. These themes will be developed further in this chapter.

The sugar industry represents an appropriate industry to study culture change in previously stable, industrial, regulated firms, as it is going through fundamental changes. This is due to reform initiated through the World Trade Organisation creating export opportunities for the more efficient producers in Brazil, Thailand and Australia. For example, the level of regulation within the EU is reducing, which will remove the production limiting quotas leading to higher production, increasing competition within the EU and increasing European exports (Szajner et al., 2016), thereby altering world trade flows, not just those into and out of the EU (OECD, 2007, Goodison, 2015). This creates a challenge for the suppliers in Europe and other territories who will need to change (for example, lower their cost base) if they are to compete effectively (LMC International, 2012, Fairtrade, 2015).

Organisations that fail to adjust to such changes in market conditions are a common theme in articles of the academic practitioner press; for example, the fate of household names like Kodak (Kanter, 2013, Anthony, 2016) and Nokia (McGrath, 2015) has attracted particular interest. This challenge is further illustrated by looking at the low survival rate of private companies in the US's S&P share index, which shows that over a 40 year period, to 1997, only 74 of its 500 members survived. These underperformed the index by 20% (Beinhocker, 2007) and around 60% of the largest companies in the USA in 1917 had gone out of business by 1987 (Foster and Kaplan, 2001). As the consequences of not adapting to market conditions are stark, executives seek to change their organisations. However, the record of success is reported as poor, with a failure rate of change initiatives in the region of 70% (Cheung - Judge, 2009, Shin et al., 2012); although few initiatives are utter failures, most underperform substantially (Kotter, 1995). In a similar vein, whilst

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regulatory reform presents an opportunity, this does not mean that change at the organisation level will occur (Kellogg, 2011).

For practitioners, culture is seen as a way of adapting organisations to meet the changing environment in which they operate. Writing from the perspective of CEOs of corporations, two Harvard Business Review articles summarised the prevailing zeitgeist as *"when organizations get into big trouble, fixing the culture is usually the prescription"* (Lorsch and McTague, 2016, p.97) and executives are "*convinced that a comprehensive overhaul of culture is the only way to overcome the company's resistance to major change*" (Katzenbach et al., 2012, p. 117). Articles in the business press routinely invoke culture to describe organisations and their response to everything from sexism in the workplace, to competitive advantage, to sports teams' success (Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

From' the perspectives of CEOs, organisational culture is frequently seen as a block to change (Katzenbach et al., 2012), therefore, to in order to change business you must first start with the culture. An extension of this argument has been put forward by a Cranfield University research team who found that together good people and culture were one of the four enablers of corporate longevity (Franken et al., 2014). A survey of CEOs and CFOs in 1,300 firms in the USA (Graham et al., 2016) found that 91% of executives consider culture as important (or very important) and for 79% of them organisational culture is one of the top five factors that makes their firms valuable. 92% believe that improving organisational culture would increase their firms' value.

Faced with the challenges of adjusting to environmental changes, the desire to design and lead culture change programmes remains of importance in an executive's role (Fleming, 2013, Hatch et al., 2015, Lorsch and McTague, 2016). This, along with the change track

record, raises the questions of how does organisational culture change over time, and how should executives best lead change programmes? This research topic may be summarised in the following research questions:

1. How does the immediate business environment influence the organisational culture?

2. How does organisational culture alter over time?

3. How can executives guide the change of organisational culture over time?

To answer these three questions, this research selected cases in the sugar industry in South Africa, the UK and China, with the anonymised names of Umfula, Bourn and Jiang respectively. Each firm has a substantial history. Umfula traces its history to 1890 (Somfula Sugar, 1991) and Bourn dates its history back to 1912, (Bourn, 2012). Jiang's facilities are the youngest in the study, their history dates back to the 1960s. All three firms have undergone substantial change. Umfula's history is interwoven with colonial development, and it had a privileged and protected position in the apartheid regime. Since 1994 it has consolidated in South Africa, where it now enjoys a less protected position (Cousins, 2011). Bourn has benefitted substantially from the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Holm, 2015), which in line with international trends, has been reformed and substantial further deregulation is expected to be implemented in September 2017. This next step of deregulation and the consequences of the decision of the British Government to leave the European Union ("Brexit") are expected to change Bourn's operating environment, creating novel problems; for example the removal of quotas and the potential introduction of tariffs with the EU27. In China, the sugar industry (and its Jiang factories) has traditionally been in government ownership. This changed with the turn to the private market in the 1990s when a number of factories went bankrupt

and the remainder were privatised (Geng and Yang, 2014). The financial position of the Chinese industry remains precarious.

In answering the research questions, this thesis is laid out in the usual structure of: a literature review; methodology; findings; discussion and contributions (Trowler, 2014, p.5). Each chapter starts with an introduction that provides a summary of the chapter, and to avoid repetition the chapter conclusions are concise.

The literature review (Chapter 2) addresses the fragmented literature on organisational culture, and in addition draws on the new institutional literature. It starts with the cognitive values school (Vaisey, 2009, Schein, 2010) which is the best known amongst scholars of organisation literature (Giorgi et al., 2015), and remains persuasive with executives (Fleming, 2013, Lorsch and McTague, 2016). Given the emphasis on change and the popularity of the cognitive values approach, there is a review of the cognitive values' approach to change, which has been critiqued for not providing clear explanations of the mechanisms relied upon (Gehman et al., 2013). The values perspective is followed by a review of the recent emergence of the toolkits approach (Swidler, 1986, Weber, 2005), which has particular relevance where change and exchange with the environment are the subject of a study from this approach (Weber and Dacin, 2011). To understand the interchange between firms and their immediate environment, and the importance of context for culture and change, the review utilises research from the new institutional tradition, in line with the recommendations of Zilber (2012) and Hinings (2012). After setting this out, the chapter turns to understanding how organisational culture is maintained; as the process of change requires an explanation of why organisational culture is enduring and how it is perpetuated (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). Lastly, it examines a practice lens which with its focus on the day-to-day lived experiences of

managers, is a suitable perspective for investigating culture (Whittington, 2006, Giorgi et al., 2015).

Based on this literature review, the research seeks to fill gaps in existing knowledge arising from a lack of understanding of the process of how culture emerges and functions (Giorgi et al., 2015), and in particular the mechanisms that perpetuate culture (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). This is done within the context that firms have a permeable external boundary (Giorgi et al., 2015) and that within them the sub-units respond in different ways to the immediate business environment (Greenwood et al., 2011), the dynamics of both remain understudied.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach adopted to examine the research questions and it builds on the practice approach set out in the literature review. An appropriate methodology is vital, as a coherent understanding of what knowledge is and how it is created is a foundation of academic rigour (Bell and Thorpe, 2014, Watson, 2011). The research questions require a methodology that is appropriate for cultural studies, the firm's environmental context, is sensitive to time, and addresses managers at different levels. As a result, a qualitative process case study approach viewed through a practice lens was chosen as this addresses the role of both time and context (Langley et al., 2013, Pettigrew, 2012, Stake, 2003, 2005). The initial Umfula case was an in-depth case study developed using a grounded approach, which was then extended to two further case studies. This approach both retains the richness of a single case study (Stake, 2005), and gains the theoretical robustness of multiple case studies (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). The selection of data sources (interviews, participant observation, documents) is similar to other research into culture change or maintenance (for example Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Dacin et al., 2010). In addition, a questionnaire was used to increase the range of participant voices (Goffee and Jones, 2003). The application of multiple sources both

provides triangulation and supports a practice lens (Van de Ven, 2007, Watson, 2011). The chapter then moves on to explain how the data was subjected to a rigorous and systematic process of analysis and reduction, in a manner which retained the potential to reveal fresh insights (Gioia et al., 2013). Overall, the method was inherently critical in the sense that it tested the intuitive understandings and taken-for-granted assumptions about how culture changes.

Chapter 4 sets out the findings of the grounded case study of Umfula. This case was chosen as, in contrast to most academic studies on change, there was no executive-led initiative being conducted at the time of the research as the executives did not perceive a requirement for change. In the absence of such a programme, this chapter provides an interesting and original contribution of catching a firm in flight as its culture is constantly evolving due to the interplay of finding three sources of culture - the past; exchange with the environment; and agency. It observes that managers going about their normal mundane work were a source of culture change and perpetuation, and this process worked through two separate sets of mechanisms; one set which perpetuates the current 'prevailing culture' and another that changed it. The maintenance mechanisms that were identified were surveillance, employment practices and boundary management; thereby privileging and reinforcing a logic of physical production. Left unchallenged, the maintenance mechanisms limit the organisation's access to different scripts and therefore its responsiveness to the functional requirements of the market, creating a path of dependency from the past. Two change processes were identified; the first was the interaction of boundary-spanning, specific sub-cultures located at the firm's external edge, which interact frequently with growers and customers outside the firm. The second was the introduction of the Disturber Cohort of managers who not only brought different scripts and logics to their daily practice, but also a different perspective on the issues facing the firm. These externally-sourced resources were disseminated through the firm and interacted with the maintenance mechanisms through a process of long-term low-

level continual contestation to create a new culture. The concluding section of the chapter draws together these emerging findings into the Umfula culture process flow, set out in Figure 4-9.

The next chapter (5) tests and further develops the culture process flow in the two subsquent case studies - Bourn (UK) and Jiang (China). This is a deductive step with the intention of understanding the creditability and transferability of the contribution of the Umfula case (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The aim is to enrich the findings of the first case and allow for the emerging theoretical ideas to be tested and deepened in two different settings to develop a richer theoretical framework (Langley et al., 2013). The case studies are in different contexts, however this chapter is interested in the transferability of the principles from one setting to another to allow theory to be developed (Gioia et al., 2013). The chapter presents new mechanisms that arose from the Bourn and Jiang studies; executive-led change process and mutual symbiosis. Mutual symbiosis is a low-agency coalition between those at various levels who had spent their career in Bourn.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings from the three cases, and develops the Umfula culture process flow into a process framework of culture adaptation (Figure 6-1 on page 188). The framework relies upon a range of literatures (in addition to the culture literature) to explain the phenomena from a firm-level perspective. The maintenance mechanisms make use of concepts from routine dynamics and strategy literature, and the interaction with the environment and change mechanisms draw on the new institutional literature. The framework (Figure 6-1) is presented with some heavy caveats; whilst it aids understanding of the phenomena it hides the complexity, muddiness and messiness of the underlying processes. These processes were not found to be as linear as a drawing may suggest and it is intended as an aid to understand the mechanisms of change observed in the case, and not as a deterministic model.

The process framework takes as its starting point the current Prevailing Culture (PC), which is a situated, embedded, and complex process. This is perpetuated by four maintenance mechanisms, which are now defined as: routines; employment practices; the management of boundaries; and mutual symbiosis. The pressure for change was found to be located outside the firm, and these exogenously-sourced currents were found to channel through the teams whose daily work put them into contact with those outside the firm's boundary. These counter currents were further amplified by challenger cohorts (of which the Disturber Cohort are an example) of managers drawing toolkits from different industry registers to find solutions to the daily challenges set down by the immediate external environment. Executive-led change was found to be successful when it was applied in a comprehensive manner (including the adjustment of maintenance mechanisms) and in concert with these external forces. These sets of mechanisms were found to contest with each other in low-level, continual, long-term conflict to resolve adaptations to the culture. Through this process, a new PC emerges over time, in turn becoming the past culture for the next future state. These findings do not preclude endogenous change; however in the cases studied the strongest currents were from external sources. This is not an argument about market forces as such, but one about a combination of the effects of market selection pressures, the availability of alternative toolkits to solve the issues that pressure presents and the strength of the maintenance mechanisms.

Two further findings emerge. Firstly, the impact of the executive-led change, boundary sub-culture and challenger cohorts is affected by the degree of change required by the firm to meet the current environmental needs. In the absence of clear signals from the environment, the change process was more muted. Secondly, whilst the two sets of mechanisms are categorised as maintenance and change mechanisms for analytical purposes, maintenance mechanisms may be the source of change, and change mechanisms may be the source of maintenance.

The final chapter (7) develops contributions to practice, theory, and method; highlighting the importance within a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) thesis of both relevance and academic rigour (Tushman and O'Reilly, 2007). This chapter hopes to go some way to demonstrate that the language and practices of academia and practice may not be as incommensurable as Bell and Thorpe (2014) fear.

From a practice perspective, the findings of the research are summarised in the culture change framework set out in Chapter 7 (Figure 7-1 on page 218). The principal insight for executives is that a firm's culture is constantly developing in response to both environmental stimuli and actions by managers as a result of their daily work, as well as the deliberate contributions of executives. In this continual process, the role of executives is found to be more limited than that set out in the normative literature and the concept that company culture is primarily an emanation of executives is misleading. The research demonstrates that an executive-led culture change initiative is complex and resource-consuming, and to be successful it requires considerable time and thought. The role of executives may best be conceived of as a guide, a helper of change, rather than a hero leader making a firm in their own image.

The principal academic contribution is the process framework for culture adaptation (Figure 6-1 on page 188), from which the practitioner's culture change toolkit was derived. This framework is a significant mid-level theoretical contribution which coalesces the findings of the three case studies and literature from new institutional theory, routine dynamics, strategy and cultural studies, to better understand the situated phenomenon of how culture is maintained and adapts over time. The framework shows that culture needs to be constantly reproduced and maintained to appear stable; is characterised by the simultaneous existence of different logics; and is embedded within a larger environment that exerts exogenous pressure that has the potential for change.

In addition, the study contributes to the literature on organisational culture by developing understanding of the following four areas: the role of routines and mutual symbiosis in the perpetuation of culture (drawn from the framework's maintenance mechanisms); the role of external forces in internal culture change; a deeper understanding of cohorts (both change mechanisms); and how culture may be perceived as both a toolkit and a set of values. Lastly, it makes two contributions in the methods it deployed: firstly, the way it makes use of inductive, deductive and inductive reasoning over the three case studies; and secondly its use of a mechanism to aid understanding of culture change.

Firstly, this study shows the important role of physically conducting routines (Dacin et al., 2010), such as budgeting and performance surveillance, which play an important role in cultural perpetuation. When new enacted routines are in conflict with the prevailing culture, current literature finds that they may not take hold (Canato et al., 2013, Bertels et al., 2016). In one case in this study the introduction of new routines was found to play an important role in cultural change, and this finding opens the possibility of successful normative culture adaptation through a change in maintenance mechanisms when used as part of a wider more comprehensive change programme. In addition this research also found a process of mutual symbiosis, where long-serving managers at different levels played their (different) part in supporting cultural perpetuation. In particular, longer-serving executives were observed as privileging the membership of cohort above that of their own role as change agents. This illustrates that managers at work access numerous cultures at the same time (for example that of their cohort, their level and their function), and reinforces the importance of understanding the web of cultures within a workplace.

Secondly, this research demonstrates the important impact of the immediate business environment's external forces on the internal culture change process. It foregrounds this more than prior research into practice-based change, and it posits that in the absence of

externally-sourced pressures such change will be muted. Most research continues to emphasise organisational culture within a firm as if it is sealed from the outside and that this allows leaders to draw upon a strong, stable organisational culture (Giorgi et al., 2015). Further, current literature underestimates the degree to which sub-units find different ways of responding to environmental demands (Greenwood et al., 2011). Through its findings on sub-cultures (and cohorts) this research has observed change driven at the firm-level by the changing requirements of the environment, based on toolkits drawn from beyond the firm's boundary, and this impact is observed in the absence of intentional support from executives.

Thirdly, this research makes a significant contribution in its development of the understanding of the role of cohorts, including the role of mutual symbiosis in the maintenance of culture. Cohorts are difficult to empirically validate, and this study teases out important micro-level mechanisms that have not been observed in a literature dominated by deductive, quantitative studies (Joshi et al., 2010, Mawdsley and Somaya, 2016). The study sets out three important features that affect the impact of challenger cohorts in particular: the achievement of insider status; the response to extant issues; and cohort retention.

The final contribution to the culture literature is in the understanding of the cognitive values and the toolkit approaches to culture (Giorgi et al., 2015), which have previously been viewed as being in opposition to each other (Weber and Dacin, 2011). This study makes use of both perspectives to explain culture, effectively utilising them as two different viewing positions and finds that toolkits may also explain stability as well as change.

Chapter 2:   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

As set out in the Introduction, the study of organisational culture is once again on the rise (Weber and Dacin, 2011), and yet despite this renewed interest culture research has become increasingly fragmented, as definitions and conceptualisations proliferate (Giorgi et al., 2015). In order to answer the three research questions around culture change, the role of executives, and the environment, this study draws on both the culture and new institutional literature, which are reviewed in this chapter in the following order.

The review starts with the cognitive values school (Vaisey, 2009, Schein, 2010) of culture studies, with a particular emphasis on how this may be viewed through a differentiated perspective rather than an integrated one (see Martin, 2002) and therefore the role of sub-cultures is covered (Balogun et al., 2015). The values approach remains the most well-known amongst scholars of organisation literature (Giorgi et al., 2015), and it remains persuasive with executives (Fleming, 2013, Lorsch and McTague, 2016). However, this review reveals that the values approach continues to have a number of unresolved questions, particularly around the exchange between a firm's culture with the environment, how culture changes over time and how culture is maintained; each of which are covered in turn.

The values perspective is followed by a review of the recent emergence of the toolkits approach (Swidler, 1986) where firms are perceived to create firm-level repertoires of cultural resources selected from within the legitimate registers of their industry, which consist of the entirety of accepted concepts available to interpret situations and develop strategies of action (Weber, 2005, Rindova et al., 2011). This approach has particular

relevance as change and exchange with the environment are the subject of this study (Weber and Dacin, 2011). Given the emphasis on change, there is a review of the cognitive values approach to change. To understand a different perspective on the interchange between firms and their immediate environment, and the importance of context for culture and change, the review utilises research from the new institutional tradition, in line with the recommendations of Zilber (2012) and Hinings (2012). After setting out this frame, the review turns to understanding on how culture is maintained, as the process of change requires an explanation of why organisational culture is enduring and how it is perpetuated (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014).

Lastly, in order to deploy this literature effectively, this research draws on a practice lens with its focus on the day-to-day lived experiences of managers, which is a suitable frame for investigating culture (Whittington, 2006, Giorgi et al., 2015). Although scholars have long argued that an organisation has a culture (Smircich, 1983), culture is also something people do and therefore some academics have included these practices in their conception of culture (Schein, 2010). A practice lens will help to better explain how culture influences a range of organisational processes, often without intentional planning or even conscious recognition by managers (Giorgi et al., 2015).

2.2   Culture

In the last few decades a variety of definitions for the concept of organisational culture have been proposed. In this thesis it is broadly defined as a set of mental assumptions which are shared to various degrees by members (Smircich, 1983), that guide interpretation and action in organisations by defining appropriate behaviour for various situations (Martin, 2002). Culture has a variety of functions within the organisation: it provides structural stability (Ashkanasy et al., 2000, Ravasi and Schultz, 2006); a sense of

identity (Hatch, 2000, Hatch et al., 2015); a feeling of affinity (Harrison and Corley, 2011); and a reflected glory of being part of something bigger (Swidler, 1986).

The initial wave of work, both academic and practitioner-focused, in the 1980s and 1990s concentrated on culture as a set of values. This cognitive values approach focuses on deep motivational structures of what is preferred, held dear or desired that unconsciously shape behaviours (Vaisey, 2009) through a multi-layered structure of artefacts, espoused beliefs and base assumptions; the observable and visible artefacts and behaviours are a representation of the members' espoused beliefs and values which in turn are based on taken-for-granted basic assumptions (Schein, 1990, 2010). This three-tier model aims to understand culture so that it can be altered, by transforming peoples' identities and selves; in essence restructuring their inner and interactional lives (Morrill, 2008), based on the assumption that *"culture shapes action by supplying ultimate ends or values toward which action is directed, thus making values the central causal element of culture"* (Swidler, 1986, p.273). Culture from this perspective is about how firmly held beliefs influence behaviour: it is historically determined; socially constructed; exists at a number of levels; and is therefore difficult to change (Tsui et al., 2006).

The first wave of academic literature was translated into managerial texts such as Peters and Waterman (1982), Collins and Porras (1994), and these ideas were persuasive and won the battle for the commanding heights of managerial discourse (Ogbonna and Whipp, 1999, Watson, 2001). Whilst the academic literature has developed considerably since the initial bow wave of managerialism in the 1990s (Pettigrew, 2000, Giorgi et al., 2015), this early body of work continues to be influential to academics and practitioners (Fleming, 2013) and the managerial discourse remains centred on many of the same issues of managerial control, change and the centrality of executives (see for example, Lorsch and McTague, 2016).

This early phase of practitioner-focused writing identified the idea of corporate culture, where culture could be used as a variable (Smircich, 1983). Treating culture as a managerial variable holds out the promise of providing executives with a method to control the firm, activate their strategies and gain a significant competitive advantage (O'Reilly et al., 2014), through changing workers' attitudes without addressing underlying processes of work (Watson, 2001). This form of control is considered as insidious by some (Ray, 1986), and its efficacy as a low-cost control mechanism has been questioned (Ogbonna and Harris, 2002), not least because it may duplicate other control mechanisms (Harris and Ogbonna, 2011).

The seminal managerial text by Peters and Waterman (1982) foregrounded the role of organisational culture in helping in the human search for meaning in ones' lives, and drew on work on how myths and fairy tales are used in society (see for example, Bettelheim, 1976). In this construct, employees are willing to yield a fair degree of freedom and adhere to organisational key values in return for freedom to act within the frame provided. The *"enterprise itself becomes sacred"* (Ray, 1986, p.290), offering a sense of belonging and morality beyond the individual, and diluting the influence of non-corporate life (Kunda, 2006). This may be seen as the company providing a direct replacement for some of the functions of civil society, which was seen to be in decline (Putnam, 1995).

Performance benefits can be seen as a particular feature of 'strong' cultures, in the sense that the culture is coherent rather than reflecting its content (Flynn and Chatman, 2001). Peters and Waterman (1982) and others, notably Kanter (1984) and Collins and Porras (1994), found that organisations with strong (consistent) cultures had a competitive advantage over their competitors. Kotter and Heskett (1992, p.15) found that this is:

> *"the most elegant of the culture/performance perspectives, and the one most widely reported, associates 'strong' cultures with excellent performance. In a strong corporate culture, almost all managers share a set of relatively consistent values and methods of doing business".*

Goffee and Jones (1996, 2001, 2003) however suggest that these cultures are atypical cases found at a moment and that over time this culture (and its benefits) are not sustainable.

Strong cultures have been observed to exert (tight) control on managers who work at a distance (loose) and therefore the distant managers continue to behave in line with executive expectations (Peters and Waterman, 1982, Weick, 2009, Galbraith, 2000). The advantages of this "loose tight" culture have been criticised by Ogbonna and Wilkinson (2003) who found that the perception of the benefits of these systems depends on whether you are at the centre or periphery, and that the homogeneity of thinking generated means that the firm is less open to change as the context fluctuates (Legge, 1995, Fox-Wolfgramm et al., 1998). However, in contrast Michel (2014) has observed coherent cultures that are based on continuous change and adaptation to the environment.

In the frame of strong integrative cultures, hero executives and legendary business leaders play a heightened, even mystic role in helping people to find meaning in their lives (Watson, 2001, Hatch, 2000). Charismatic leadership is an important avenue for instilling values and therefore engineering an organisation's values is an essential executive function (Kunda, 2006, Peters and Waterman, 1982), especially for a firm's founders (Schein, 2010). This central role of the executive is one reason for the enduring nature of these perspectives amongst executives themselves, because it is satisfying for them to believe their personal values are shared throughout the firm (Martin et al., 2006). Despite

the empirical persuasiveness and practitioner adoption of this approach, there is limited research on how individual and organisational values come together. This is a theoretical black box that has been largely neglected and this approach under theorises the connections between individuals and collectives, and relatedly, how abstract organisational values come to be embodied and manifest themselves in practice (Gehman et al., 2013). A further practical challenge to seeking a performance advantage over competitors, through defining superior values, is that empirically the descriptions all look remarkably similar; a challenge that has been referred to as the uniqueness paradox (Martin et al., 1983, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007).

Attempts to use this early body of work to enable change have proved difficult in practice, leading to the conclusion that organised attempts to alter culture are destined to limited success (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Schein, 2010, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007), in part as a consequence of their internal focus (Weber, 2005, Rindova et al., 2011).

2.3   Sub-cultures

The culture literature continues to neglect the impact of sub-cultures despite the strong suggestion by many scholars that organisations should be viewed as comprising of multiple cultures (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Balogun et al., 2015). Martin (2002) sets out three viewing positions: a single integrated culture; or differentiated into sub-cultures; or culturally fragmented. The sub-culture lens foregrounds the different logics of each sub-unit which in turn may give rise to tensions, cooperation and rivalries (Hinings, 2012). This research is interested in the impact of this dynamic, in particular that arising from sub-cultures created by different functional groups, managerial levels and lengths of service; each of these is covered below.

Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) identified that functional groups within a firm developed a specific way of working influenced by their interaction with their immediate environment and this led to them possessing varying formal structures, goals, time and interpersonal orientations. These functional groups form into sub-cultures which are well adapted to solving their narrow portion of the organisation's issues and yet they are loosely coupled with the wider organisation (Howard-Grenville, 2006, Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). These 'externally' facing departments are different from others in the same firm, and therefore the challenge is to develop an appropriate range of integrative devices (Greenwood et al., 2014). The idea that sub-cultures develop in response to environmental context is in contrast to the concept that they are created solely by hiring practices or the internal demands of the work to be conducted (Aldrich and Ruef, 2006).

Alongside functional sub-cultures it has long been argued that culture varies by the level of a manager in a firm and that middle managers experience organisational life differently to executives (Hatch, 2000, Watson, 2001). In research on mature businesses (similar to the sugar industry), Watson (2001), and Kunda (2006) recorded two competing cultures, one from powerful executives and the other from middle managers, the latter characterised by a more cynical tone. This resonates with the idea that culture is in some way an emanation of executives (Peters and Waterman, 1982) or a founding father (Schein, 2010), as Kunda (2006, p 224) says the firm was *"to some extent monopolized by [senior] management: a total institution of sorts"*.

In line with this, Langley and Denis (2006) argue that in firms there is a clear distinction between those who make decisions and those who implement them. However this may be critiqued as too simple a picture of a coherent senior team, who are the main movers in change, and a cascade process (Michel, 2014). Executives are important as they have more authority and more resources to lead others to enact strategic decisions than do middle

managers or lower-level employees (Kanter, 1984). However, other research shows a more complex picture, with the bifurcation of individual executives' roles between when they act as change agents and recipients (McDermott et al., 2013, Balogun et al., 2015). This demonstrates that an organisation should not be conceived as a unitary actor but instead seen as a collection of different communities which are not based just on hierarchy (Kaplan, 2008).

As discussed above, the existing research on the impact of sub-cultures is limited and this is particularly the case on the aggregate impact of employee mobility on organisational outcomes (Mawdsley and Somaya, 2016), and in particular the intra-firm dynamic (Joshi et al., 2010) and the impact of the cohort of new starters on culture (Harrison and Carroll, 2002). The term cohort is a heuristic device and it describes a loose group (Joshi et al., 2010). However, like all sub-cultures the shared meaning within each cohort tends to be more coherent than between cohorts.

In order to understand this phenomenon, this case study also draws on the inchoate literature around the impact of cohorts of employees joining firms. Aldrich and Ruef (2006) created an industry-level framework where the age of a firm affects the way that it operates (an age effect) and events that appear the same for all firms (a period effect) interact with the age effect to create different outcomes (a cohort effect). This research draws on this and applies it to managers' experiences inside the firm, where age is their length of service. A cohort is an aggregate of actors, that share a common set of experiences because they entered the same state (that is joined a firm) within the same time interval (Joshi et al., 2010). These individuals are exposed to similar experiences at each stage of their organisational tenure, leading to significant intra-cohort homogeneity in attitudes and work outcomes (Joshi et al., 2010, Marquis and Tilcsik, 2013, Hayward, 1963).

New hires into a firm often have different, specialist skills to the existing employees (Aldrich and Ruef, 2006). They bring with them practices from other businesses (Kraatz and Moore, 2002), and they may be less tethered to the current way of working (Smets et al., 2012). Their introduction may act to diminish consensus and unquestioning adherence to taken-for-granted practices, which may create social pressure to reduce the grip of a culture (Dacin et al., 2002). However these different practices, skills or attitudes may have been based in relationships from their previous firm (Adler and Kwon, 2002), especially as the transferees may not be aware of the extent to which their perspectives are rooted in their former social networks (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012). Therefore the extent to which the recipient firm learns from them remains to be resolved, as these attributes may be retained by the individual and rather shared within the firm (Mawdsley and Somaya, 2016).

The influence of a new cohort may be restricted due to their lack of understanding of the existing culture, or perhaps more importantly because these outsiders are not aware of what the existing culture will tolerate, whereas insiders are more aware (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011). This learning process has been observed to be particularly difficult for transferring experienced executives (Williams et al., 2017), where this lack of understanding limits their ability to attain a legitimate position, which may be necessary to introduce new ideas. The -development of legitimacy has been shown to differentiate long-term successful change in Canadian accounting (Greenwood et al., 2002) and museums (Townley, 2002), and where transferees do not have a legitimate identity to introduce such disruptive ideas, the existing workforce may negatively sanction them (Rindova et al., 2011).

These sub-cultures (functional, managerial-level or cohort) should not be conceived as islands of clarity in a sea of ambiguity, as within each there remains variance. However the

variances within each is less than that between the sub-cultures (Martin et al., 2006). Alvesson (2002) found that managers work comfortably in different cultures at different times when going about their normal work. In practice managers can experience, and successfully navigate, multiple sub-cultures in a working day. Within this landscape, research has shown that employee practices, and in particular the human resources department, act as an integrating mechanism, keeping the whole firm going on a long-term basis (Kunda, 2006, Watson, 2001). How divergent sub-cultures influence the wider business or a dominant culture was identified as an important topic in early culture studies (Meyerson and Martin, 1987), and it remains a critical culture problem (Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016).

2.4   Toolkits

The cognitive values approach, covered in the above sections, is based on the idea that *"culture thus affects human action through values that directs actions to some ends rather than to others"* (Swidler, 1986, p.274). However, a more recent research trend based on Swidler's work (1986, 2001, 2008) emphasises culture as providing a set of means for problem-solving and action arising (Giorgi et al., 2015). This turn in the literature responds firstly to the integrationist tendency of the cognitive values approach and the weakness of the concept that firms can uniformly instil values in their members. Secondly, it calls into question the explanatory power of values as many people constantly act in violation of their values. Swidler (1986) suggests that the adoption of certain values can only be weakly linked to outcomes: often the poor embrace middle-class values, such as a college education; however, they may fail to reach this goal because they lack the know-how, resources, or opportunities for continuing their schooling. Organisational culture influences actions of actors through more than values, *"[it] also supplies actors with the means - the tools - for solving practical problems and for navigating their environment"* (Weber, 2005 p.228). So rather than conceiving of culture as taken-for-granted values, and beliefs, acquired through socialisation which shape action in

predictable ways, this toolkit approach conceives of culture as a flexible toolkit of cultural resources used by individuals to develop different strategies of action and to achieve different goals, leaving more room for improvising to solve a particular situation than the notion of values (Rindova et al., 2011, Howard-Grenville et al., 2011). This suggests a reciprocal relationship between the interpretations that a culture sustains and the actions of its members, the culture creates a distinction between categories of problems and which are solvable and which are not (Howard-Grenville, 2006).

Swidler asserts that:

> *"we do best to think of culture as a repertoire, like that of an actor, a musician, or a dancer… It is in this sense that people have an array of cultural resources upon which they can draw"* (2001, p.24).

How individuals use cultural resources depends on their cultural repertoires (Swidler, 2001), which consist of those resources that individuals have selected from the broader societal cultural toolkits of symbols, stories, rituals, and worldviews (Swidler, 1986). However, an actor's repertoire is not unlimited (Swidler, 2008) because the *"available cultural resources make it easier to put together some strategies than others"* (Swidler, 2001, p. 104) and these tend to *"harden into formulas"* (Swidler, 2001, p.55), creating a *"path-dependent"* culture (Rindova et al., 2011, p.413).

This view of culture as a toolkit holds considerable promise for understanding strategic action and change at the organisational level of analysis, and this has been developed further by Weber (2005, 2008, 2009). He found that organisations create repertoires of cultural resources selected from within the registers of their industries (Weber, 2005, Rindova et al., 2011), these consist of the entirety of concepts produced by and available to members of a collective to interpret situations and develop strategies of action (Weber

2005). These registers are a set of cultural resources that are understood and accepted as appropriate and relevant for the industry., From these legitimatised industry registers competing organisations select a subset of resources that inform their specific practices and become their firm-level cultural repertoires (Rindova et al., 2011). Kellogg (2011) defines this as a *"grab-bag"* (p.483) of stories, frames, categories, rituals, and practices that people draw upon. In line with these definitions, in this thesis the industry-level 'grab-bag' is referred to as a register, the company's as a repertoire and the individual's as a toolkit.

The toolkit approach, embedded as it is in the development of industry-wide registers, considers how broader cultural forces outside a firm are valuable avenue for understanding how culture adapts to the environment (Giorgi et al., 2015, Weber and Dacin, 2011), as it chimes with an open-systems perspective and it conceives of culture as transportable across organisational boundaries (Harrison and Corley, 2011). The use of cultural resources from outside an organisation's industry register, for example the introduction of business concepts into the public sector or the arts, has been found to be difficult, risky and costly (Rindova et al., 2011). This is because even if different cultural resources are available, individuals tend to use the strategies of action that work well for them, because new skills and habits are *"hard to learn and deploy effectively"* (Swidler, 2008, p.615) as *"the correct use of [cultural] elements has to be learned and practiced"* Weber (2005, p.229). As a result, it remain poorly understood whether and how organisations can expand their cultural repertoires with new cultural resources from outside their industry registers and the resulting consequences for their strategies (Rindova et al., 2011, Howard-Grenville et al., 2011).

Deploying toolkits is dependent on the situational cues in the environment, therefore it is argued that the mechanic rests outside the person (Thornton et al., 2013), even if it is

enacted by agents (McPherson and Sauder, 2013). This begins to explain why different actors use the same toolkit and have different outcomes (Zilber, 2002), as they are wielded with a surprising level of discretion by local actors to solve the problem at hand (McPherson and Sauder, 2013). Therefore, this line of research may attribute greater agency to individuals and organisations than the cognitive values approach (Abolafia et al., 2014). Further, toolkits de-emphasise the coercive and normative constraints of values (Weber and Dacin, 2011, Canato et al., 2013) as it sees culture as a resource and a source of agency, rather than a constraint (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008), creating the opportunity to question the status quo (Weber et al., 2009) and to see culture as an enabling force (Morrill, 2008). It opens up the possibility for those other than executives in an organisation, indeed potentially anyone, to change culture (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011); it therefore chimes well with an approach that looks at the role of sub-cultures.

2.5   Managed culture change

As discussed in the Introduction (Chapter 1), practitioner press takes a particular interest in companies that fail to adjust to market conditions. Research on managed culture change emphasises the role of the personal charisma of organisational leaders (Kotter, 1995, Kotter, 2008) and focuses on the discursive practices through which organisational leaders openly challenge existing beliefs and invite members to embrace the new (Schein, 2010, Weick and Quinn, 1999), therefore enhancing firm performance (O'Reilly et al., 2014). Deal and Kennedy (2000) have argued that the most effective way to change outcomes arises through the cognitive change of employees, and to achieve this executives are encouraged to cultivate core values - embodied in artefacts, symbols and practices - (Collins and Porras, 1994), through visionary leadership, supported by training, coaching and role modelling (Schein, 2010).

However, other writers from the values perspective are more uncertain of the ability to transform culture, comparing the process to a rider and elephant; the elephant is the non-discursive practical side of culture which may be guided but not controlled by the rider (Vaisey, 2009). More broadly, Aldrich and Ruef (2006) critique this type of structured schema as it is limited in its ability to describe the actual process of change. The approach is also criticised as; reifying the role of executives which otherwise may be seen as quite mundane (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003, Denis et al., 2012); over-estimating the level of control that executives can exert (Thietart, 2016); and under-estimating the bidirectional nature of the relationship between artefacts, espoused values and basic assumptions (Hatch, 1993).

This programmatic n-step approach of change (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007) is based on the idea that the wishes of executives may simply be cascaded to the firm (Jarzabkowski, 2008), and it also presumes members' willingness to align their behaviour (Gehman et al., 2013). It has been criticised for reducing the complexities of working life to banal recommendations (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007). In practice, all aspects of an organisation shape employees, not just socialisation events led by leaders (Michel, 2014). From this perspective, organisational change is not a rare and dramatic episode imposed from above, but a natural process (Demers, 2007) as flux occurs naturally. This reverses the predominant assumption that stability is the norm (Michel, 2014), and in particular that change may arise from daily mundane gestures (Smets et al., 2012). There is a role for both endogenous and exogenous explanations as a firm evolves with its environment, and both stability and change are the norm (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010).

However, as discussed in the section on sub-cultures, it is problematic to view executives as a single group (Michel, 2014), as their roles are more nuanced as they may be caught

between acting as change agents and recipients (McDermott et al., 2013, Balogun et al., 2015).

Implicitly much research and practitioner work on change treats management teams and firms as uniform with a focus on outcomes for the *"whole"* organisation, without attention to differences within units (Balogun et al., 2015), which has a clear link back to the discussion on cohort, level and functional sub-cultures.

Programmatic change has been shown to have limited impact as McNulty (2002, p.362) noted: *"there were some pockets of change, but no organisational transformation. Change was patchy, difficult, and took much longer than originally expected"*. In practice culture change is difficult; after leading a multi-year project Schein concluded that culture changed in only peripheral ways (Schein, 2004). The process of change has the potential to be costly, uncertain and contradiction ridden (Weber, 2005), and to place high demands on resources; a serious task compared to surface adaption (Weber and Dacin, 2011).

The process of change creates sustained uncertainty, and it may not be determined in advance whether the new ways will be effective. However, if short-term failure does not deplete an organisation's resources, the sustained application of new cultural resources has been shown to enable the discovery of new strategies that are both different from those of their peers and acceptable to markets (Rindova et al., 2011). So, although the record of change is patchy, planned change initiatives have been found to lead to a partial change in the firm's cultural repertoire (Canato et al., 2013).

This is particularly the case where executive action has been supportive of change arising from practice. Kellogg (2011) describes this support as a political toolkit which requires the formal authority of more powerful members; she argues that creating culture change requires the application of this political toolkit. Similarly, Easterby-Smith et al. (2008), Carlile (2004) and Ferlie et al. (2005) found that systematic executive support for the transfer of new ideas is a necessary but not sufficient condition.

In a similar way, Detert and Pollock (2008), Smets et al. (2012) both observed the deliberate introduction by executives of new cohorts into organisations, in a process of Cosmopolitanism (Smets et al., 2012), where the cohorts were supported by executives with shared training, feedback and a safe *"relational space"* (Kellogg, 2009) to enact change.

The question arises in culture change as to whether a new culture replaces the existing one. In Rindova et al.'s (2011) long-term study of Alessi, new cultural resources did not replace, instead it was observed that concepts from all registers co-existed. Over time, Alessi's cultural repertoire included not only *"more culture,"* but also more diverse culture. In a similar way Howard-Grenville et al. (2011) found a process where the new met and engaged with the old. Bertels et al. (2016) found agents that did not avoid the new, they worked to navigate the contradiction between the existing culture and the demands of the novel, whilst Canato et al. (2013) found mutual adaptation of culture, which enriched and changed beliefs and created more culture.

This creation of more culture perspective is queried by others who posit that the adoption of new cultures *"necessitate[s the] partial forgetting or repressing of existing elements"* (Weber, 2005, p.229). In line with this, Hatch et al. (2015) found that to create new

culture you have to dis-embed, disenchant and disrespect the old, so as to remove the option to retain the former culture.

So far, this review has covered culture studies literature and its perspectives on sub-cultures and change. In order to understand the interaction between firms and their immediate environment, and the role of context from a different viewing position, the review turns to the new institutional literature.

2.6   New institutional theory and context

Culture literature tends to look at one organisation, new institutional theory helps to understand how actors draw meaning from outside the firm (Aten et al., 2012). Culture studies fail to connect the meaningful internal dynamics with the larger culture outside the organisation (Zilber, 2012) and therefore utilising the new institutional literature may allow an understanding of how meaning moves between organisations and their environment (Weber et al., 2008). In turn, the new institutional theory would benefit from understanding the internal working of the firm, in particular the role of agents and contestation (Hinings, 2012, Suddaby et al., 2013). Hatch (2012) criticises it for focusing on the past and privileging stability based on mindless reproduction. Despite the benefits of considering both areas of literature, few have done so (Aten et al., 2012).

The study of institutions has a long history in organisational analysis, beginning with Selznick's (1957) work which emphasised how they function to integrate organisations. Notably he defined institutions as being *"infused with value beyond the technical requirements at hand"* (Selznick, 1957, p.17), introducing non-rationale (as in not functional nor technical) responses to markets (Mutch, 2014, Gehman et al., 2013). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) found that organisations had to conform to the requirements

of external environments for legitimacy, creating a process of isomorphism at the level of organisational fields, and that parts of the organisation had to be loosely coupled from their technical core with an emphasis on legitimacy rather than efficiency as an explanation for the success and survival (Scott, 2008). This has been criticised for implying mindless agentic behaviour in response to a desire for legitimacy (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). However, the danger in responding to purely technical needs is that a firm decouples from its institutional frame and loses legitimacy, and this may lead to corporate misconduct, for example in financial services (MacLean and Behnam, 2010). This emphasis on legitimacy constrains change by exerting pressure to adopt particular managerial practices at least in appearance (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983); therefore, organisations embedded in the same environment, and thus subject to the same institutional pressures, tend to adopt similar practices (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012). Even ceremonial conformity to appear to be legitimate (for example, employing sustainability experts) has been shown to lead to longer-term adoption of institutional patterns of behaviour (Scott, 2008). It follows that changes that diverge from the status quo are particularly challenging to implement. They require change agents to persuade other organisation members to adopt practices that not only are new, but also break with the norms (Battilana et al., 2009, Kellogg, 2011, Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). Specifically, Thornton et al. (2013) have advocated for further development of a view of culture as closely linked with institutional realms. They point to the scholarly shift away from an assumed cultural preference for rationality to one of more situated cultural beliefs, norms, and behaviours that reflect particular areas of life.

In this study, the principle level of analysis is the intra-organisation and how this responds to its environmental context; functional markets on the one hand and institutional field on the other. This is in line with gaps in the current institutional literature , as work at this meso-level is more limited (Zilber, 2012) as the institutional change literature has tended to neglect intra-organisational dynamics in favour of field dynamics (Battilana and

Casciaro, 2012), leaving a gap in understanding how to design the organisation (Adler et al., 2014). The analysis is not extended to show change at the field nor societal levels, which is not uncommon in this area of literature (Thornton et al., 2013, Whittington, 2006, Suddaby et al., 2010).

Organisations may be thought of as open systems (Scott and Davis, 2016 [2007], Weber and Waeger, 2017), which suggests that cultures are influenced by institutions (Suddaby et al., 2010), but this perspective is rarely extended to culture (Harrison and Corley, 2011). The process of cross-boundary exchange enables cultural cultivation, and unlike traditional views of businesses, the perspective taken in this study is that external organisational boundaries are permeable (Rindova et al., 2011, Kwon and Adler, 2014), even where firms have strong market positions (Jonsson and Buhr, 2011).

The role of the firm is to manage the environmental uncertainty that surrounds them, to define their own boundary, to produce knowledge and apply it (Spender, 1998) and exploit knowledge better than the environment and markets can (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005, 2016 , Brown and Duguid, 2001, 1991). The role of the firm is also to create competitive advantage from superior knowledge governance rather than only compensating for market failures and reducing transaction costs (Fransson et al., 2011, Kogut and Zander, 2003).

The open system perspective implies that there is a relationship between a firm's culture and its institutional field (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008, Thornton et al., 2013), taken to its extreme that may have the consequence of there being no unique firm-level culture (Martin et al., 1983, Giorgi et al., 2015). This creates a paradox in that if the boundary is too open firms struggle to innovate and thrive. Change comes through interactions at boundaries (Carlile, 2004), and the creation of a boundary allows for the development of

safe space for managers to work together to innovate (Kellogg, 2009). Therefore, there is benefit in engaging in boundary work to create a suitable boundary (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010) that acknowledges that such boundaries are both more permeable than often considered, but also are necessary for innovation to thrive (for example, Harrison and Corley, 2011).

The implications of the open systems approach on interaction between a firm's culture and how its departments respond to the environment has echoes with contingency theory (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). This puts forward the perspective that departments in a firm would vary in their formal structures, goals, time and interpersonal orientations. These differentiated teams would be complemented by an appropriate range of *"integrative devices"*. Whilst contingency theory did not develop an analysis of change and was normally limited to discussion of formal structures (Greenwood et al., 2014), it did challenge the idea of one best way of organising and demonstrated that the way an organisation works is determined to some extent by the uncertainty in its environment (Van de Ven et al., 2013), which has implications for the understanding of the development of sub-cultures.

Although contingency theory was foundational to new institutional theory (Greenwood et al., 2014), new institutional theory's awareness of the context of organisations has receded (Suddaby et al., 2010), and there is a need for research that better accounts for the role of contextual factors in cultural processes (Giorgi et al., 2015). However, broadly speaking, contextual embeddedness has been somewhat neglected in cultural studies as well, in spite of clear recognition that *"culture's influence varies by context"* (Swidler, 2001, p.169). Pettigrew's (2012, 1990) work, with its emphasis on contextualism may be seen as an exception to this.

The idea that the fit between a business and its context is important for its success is a concern in the event of radical change in an environment, such as sugar industry deregulation. Looking at regulated industries, Oertel et al. (2016) found that if businesses are initially successful after radical change, then this will reduce their ability to change later, increasing their chance of failure in the longer term, as managers misinterpret short-term survival for fit (Fox-Wolfgramm et al., 1998). Indeed initial failure leads to more substantial change over time, assuming that the business survives its initial failure (Oertel et al., 2016).

2.7   Mechanisms for reproduction

Institutions need to be constantly reproduced and maintained as *"relatively few institutions have such powerful reproductive mechanisms that no ongoing maintenance is necessary"* (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.229). This instability arises from three sources. Firstly institutions are social constructions through the interaction of their structure and agents in a cyclical process of structuration (Giddens, 1984). Secondly, they are characterised by the simultaneous existence of different meaning systems and logics (Thornton et al., 2013). Thirdly, they are embedded within larger environments which inflict on them various exogenous pressures that introduce potentials for change (Greenwood et al., 2014). It follows from this that the stability of organisations and their force of constraint is overestimated, and the capacity of individuals to change organisations is underestimated, and they have to be maintained to stay still (Lawrence et al., 2009). Adapting these ideas from the inter-organisational level of new institutionalism to the intra-organisational level of culture studies allows for understanding how organisational culture is maintained (Zilber, 2012).

Supporting, repairing and recreating organisational cultures is essential to coherence (Dacin et al., 2010, Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) and this maintenance work is

undertaken by actors who *"maintain the system that generated them because actors who do not recognise their choices as such are less likely to alter the system in their own interests"* (Michel, 2014, p. 1085). Although this may not be deliberate action, the habit of cultural maintenance takes effort and is undertaken by self-conscious agents (Smets et al., 2012), who are neither hyper-rational nor *"cultural dopes"*(Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.219).

The understanding of how culture is perpetuated remains underdeveloped, and has only been contributed to sporadically (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). Understanding enablers and obstacles to changing culture is one of the most critical problems in culture studies (Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). This research focuses on the significant factors of historical legacy, organisation routines and employment practices. Each of these is addressed in turn below.

Part of the explanation of the stability of organisational culture may rest in the finding that organisations struggle to break with their historical legacy (Houchin and MacLean, 2005), specifically their initial conditions (Oertel et al., 2016) and especially the shadow cast by their founder(s) (Schein, 2010). This past has been seen to limit the range of possibilities that managers believe are acceptable in the present (Butler and Allen, 2008), which is termed as 'path dependence'. Path dependence creates a recursive loop where the present is influenced (randomly) by its own history (Greve and Seidel, 2015), and in which small historical events can be magnified by positive feedback, resulting in a current state that is based on chance decisions (Marquis and Tilcsik, 2013).

Routines are the repetitive patterns of interdependent organisational actions carried out by multiple actors (Parmigiani and Howard-Grenville, 2011), which are created over time

and therefore are part of a firm's historical legacy (Howard-Grenville, 2005). Routines that were associated with favourable outcomes in the past reinforce their suitability, even if they are unsuitable in the present (Oertel et al., 2016), and therefore the practice of routines is not based on current economic incentives nor efficiency (Feldman et al., 2016). Routines are both embedded in culture (Howard-Grenville, 2005) and also within one another (Bertels et al., 2016) creating a web of interdependency, making change difficult.

Although routines can change from one performance to the next and therefore appear to be the source of change (Denis et al., 2001), they have also been viewed as stable. Indeed, that they appear to be frequently changing may obscure that the underlying process has not changed, a dynamic referred to as (n)ever changing (Cohen, 2007). This stability of routines over time may be explained by the fact that they provide ontological security to managers (Giddens, 1984) and that administration processes in particular are perceived by managers to constrain their actions (Jarzabkowski, 2008). An existing culture, therefore, may in part be held in place by the mundane parts of organisational life, as Swidler (1986) observed that *"old orders are...resilient. Hiding their premises in the minutiae of daily life"* (p. 279).

However, deliberate change in mundane routines has also been the source of culture change. Kraatz et al. (2010) study of liberal arts colleges demonstrated that changes to enrolment management practices led to culture change, and Canato et al. (2013) found that the introduction of lean manufacturing practices led to some limited change in 3M's culture. The concept that routines have generative power in altering beliefs and values is at odds with the proposition that (for example, Schein, 2010, Smircich, 1983) behaviour is representative of underlying beliefs, and therefore practices and routines are seen as simply reinforcing values, as illustrated by Dacin et al. (2010). It is only recently that

practice change has been seen to iterate with, and be a mechanism to, change culture (Canato et al., 2013).

The last factor that may perpetuate culture is employment practices. Researchers have argued that when these are consistent, coherent and linked to both the espoused culture and the strategies of the organisation, they are more likely to contribute to cultural strength (Ogbonna and Whipp, 1999, Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). Employment practices that have previously been observed to play this role include selective recruitment, promotion from within, socialisation, training and reward management (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007).

Therefore, the impact of employment practices in perpetuating culture commences before employment begins, with the selective recruitment of managers who are committed to the underlying logic of the firm's culture (Smets et al., 2012). Once a manager starts work they undergo a process of socialisation, where they are taught the shared, basic assumptions of the business by those with longer service (Schein, 2010), and in this regard culture may be thought of as a mechanism of social control (Kunda, 2006). Values can also be reproduced by value-laden socialisation practices without the need for top-down, explicit indoctrination, such as social and dining events (Dacin et al., 2010).

2.8   Practice lens

Having set out a review of organisational culture above, the chapter now turns to the use of the practice lens, which the research makes use of in order to understand how the shared assumptions of managers are altered. This seeks to understand how structure and agents interact (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007), which is a useful counter-balance to both new

institutional theory and culture studies, which move between overly deterministic to overly agentive views (Zilber, 2012).

The practice lens draws on the work from sociology of practice (Giddens, 1984, Lave and Wenger, 1991) which sees social process resulting from actions that are bound by the social structure but also have the effect of reproducing and changing the social structure that they are bound by (Sminia, 2009). This approach is summarised by Michel (2014, p. 1107) as:

> *"through their mundane actions, the participants themselves created an organisational fabric that acted back on them, invited persons and objects to show up in ways that validated and thus cemented as fact cultural choice".*

The duality of structure allows for the process to be understood as simultaneously encompassing continuity and change(Scott, 2008). It is, therefore, a fitting approach to better understand culture (Giorgi et al., 2015), through a focus on the situated actions of individuals and groups as they cope with, and attempt to respond to, the demands of their everyday lives; the internal life of processes (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

The practice lens highlights the interaction of practices (shared routines), praxis (actual activity) and practitioners (Whittington, 2006). Understanding activity at these three levels is useful to explore how the introduction of contributions by new cohorts may turn into shared practice (Giorgi et al., 2015). Practices are embedded in the organisation, and create shared meaning and legitimacy (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). This lens foregrounds that praxis is hard labour, a process and a team effort, and not about hero practitioners who magic ideas out of thin air. The isolated actions of one practitioner do not change culture, for culture change to occur it needs to become embedded within shared practice (Whittington, 2006). This draws attention to the process of how ideas are transferred

between managers that share a common practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998, 2000) through associational communities of professionals, rather than the more common perception that they are carried by individual consultants or simply executive migration (Smets et al., 2012).

Viewing firms through the practice lens has demonstrated that individuals at the front line doing real work (daily mundane practice) can lead to change at the firm (Cohen, 2007) and institutional levels (Smets et al., 2012, Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007). This arises as most of the time people in the organisation do what they are supposed to do; they are intelligently attentive to their environments and their jobs. This situatedness of managers, reinforced by the urgency of their situation, leads to the adoption of new, shared practices and meaning. Hence, situated improvising generates change that may be viewed as *"accidental"* (Plowman et al., 2007, p.518). Novel challenges posed to managers in their roles, including from other sub-cultures (Smets et al., 2015), lead them to innovate and find pragmatic (rather than optimal) solutions altering their praxis, which in turn created novelty and reflexivity (Smets et al., 2012, Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). As it is a response to daily mundane work, change is viewed not as episodic, but as a continuous and cyclical process of flux (Langley et al., 2013).

This situatedness has implications for programmatic change. As formal change programmes unfold, managers will seek to make sense of them in terms of their daily practice and therefore re-interpret the programme messages (Sonenshein, 2010). This re-interpretation is often viewed as a dilution of executives' intentions and much research has focused on minimising and managing such perceived resistance(McDermott et al., 2013, McNulty and Ferlie, 2004). The practice perspective leads to the conclusion that it is less helpful to frame this as resistance; the managers may simply be attentive to the daily work problems they face (Smets et al., 2012). Employees may be thought of as ambiguity

reducers (Beinhocker, 2007); they seek stability in their lives, and defend themselves against the anxiety provoked by disequilibrium (Houchin and MacLean, 2005). Whilst individuals tend towards stability (Hatch, 2000), they also want to be part of a whole. Therefore, they absorb the change message from leaders, reflecting back acceptance of the message, and in so doing feel part of the organisation but reinterpret the change message in light of their daily work. People do not avoid change, but they avoid the anxiety created by the transition itself (Bridges, 2003).

Marshak (2006) reinforces this disconnect between managers and their followers. He found that executives overuse rational and logical argument, and fail to make use of the other approaches to change. Butler et al. (2009) found that overcoming affect was an important aspect of successful change, and their work in part confirmed the work of Kubler-Ross (1969) on the phases (transitions) that individuals experience when undergoing change. Ultimately, the black and white characterisations of change responses present in these theories of change and the value-laden judgments of responses as *"negative"* or *"resistant"* because they do not appear to conform, may not be helpful (McDermott et al., 2013).

2.9   Conclusion

This chapter has set out the related literature that this research relies on to answer the research questions. Based on this literature review the research seeks to fill gaps in the literature around the process by which culture is created and maintained, in particular by the immediate business environment and through the interaction of sub-cultures. The research will draw on organisational culture studies, the new institutional literature, and make use of a practice lens to examine the impact of daily mundane practice on change. This has implications for the research method to be deployed, as it requires a close

connection with the research site and observation (for example see, Kellogg, 2009, Smets et al., 2012, Canato et al., 2013) which will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3:   Methodology

3.1   Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach used to examine the research questions set out in the Introduction, and it builds on the practice approach set out in the Literature Review (Chapter 2). The purpose of this research is to "*generate situated understandings of complex phenomena which form the basis for more informed and reflective managerial practice*" (Bell and Thorpe, 2014, p. xv) and the methods were chosen to meet this purpose. The study makes two contributions in the methods it deployed; firstly, the use of inductive methods in the first study, followed by the use of deductive methods in deploying the emerging framework in the subsequent two cases; and secondly, its use of a mechanism to illustrate out how culture adapts.

An appropriate methodology is important, as it is a foundation of academic rigour, as opposed to effective journalism. For example, the podcast Serial (Koenig, 2015) is considered ground-breaking investigative journalism that sets out the real-life experiences of a person convicted of murder, however it does not demonstrate an understanding of existing knowledge as codified within an accumulated body of research literature, nor does it show an understanding of the principles of knowledge creation, including what knowledge is and how it is created (Bell and Thorpe, 2014). Koenig, as a journalist, does not seek to create knowledge; her test is whether there is an audience for the work. By contrast, the truth claims of research must stand up to close scrutiny to obtain social science credentials (Watson, 2011).

To obtain these credentials, this chapter starts with the underpinning critical realist philosophy of the researcher. Once this is established, the chapter tackles the methodical

implications of the research questions within the context of the researcher's chosen philosophy.

The research questions set out in the Introduction (see page 16) require a methodology that is appropriate for cultural studies (all questions), the firm's environmental context (questions one and two), is temporally sensitive (questions two and three), and considers managers at different levels (questions one and three). Table 3-1 shows how each of these requirements are met. Whilst the whole method was applied to each question, these areas provided particularly rich insights into the specific requirement.

Table 3-1: Link between research questions and the method applied

Requirement of the research questions	Research questions	Method applied
Cultural Study	1, 2, 3	A single case study for depth and richness Extended to multiple case studies Qualitative method to explore meaning Multiple data sources
Environmental context	1, 2	Process case study, embedded in an environment Interview data and document review
Temporal sensitivity	2, 3	Process case study, embedded in time Interview data and document review
Managers at different levels	1, 3	Managers at different levels studied through interviews; questionnaire; participant observation; document review

To create a methodology that answers these questions, after the philosophy section this chapter articulates the reasons for choosing a process case study approach, and sets out that this addresses the role of both time and context (Langley et al., 2013, Pettigrew, 2012, Stake, 2003, 2005). The chapter shows how an initial in-depth case study developed using a grounded approach and then extended to two further case studies, helps to explain how this approach retains the richness of a single case study (Stake, 2005), and gains the theoretical robustness of multiple case studies (Langley and Abdallah, 2011).

Next, it explains that in order to access the temporally evolving social structures of culture a qualitative approach was chosen, as this is best suited to exploring meanings rather than facts (Johnson and Duberley, 2015), and that the selection of data sources (interviews, participant observation, documents) is similar to other research into culture change or maintenance (for example Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Dacin et al., 2010). In addition, a questionnaire was used to increase the range of participant voices (Goffee and Jones, 2003). These multiple sources both provide triangulation and support a practice lens (Van de Ven, 2007, Watson, 2011). This is followed by a review of how these methods were applied to the three specific case studies.

The chapter then moves on to explain how a rigorous and systematic process of data analysis and reduction was adopted, whilst also retaining revelatory potential (Gioia et al., 2013, Langley and Abdallah, 2011). Prior to the conclusion, the ethical considerations of the research are covered.

3.2   Philosophy

Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) set out that in order to make a contribution to the field, it is necessary to have clarity about the theory of knowledge and how it is created. Sandelowski (2000) emphasises that the choice of research design is not just a technical choice of fitting the design to the research questions; but that also the researcher's philosophical perspectives are important. These perspectives may be seen as a viewing position, that cannot be easily adapted or changed by the researcher (Bell and Thorpe, 2014). Therefore, while data collection and analysis methods should suit the requirements of the research question, the interpretation of findings is a function of the philosophical perspective of the researcher. The philosophy and the methodology adopted should be coherent (Bryman, 1988, Hackley, 2005, Fleetwood, 2014). However this coherence does not restrict which

methods are available and researchers benefit from adopting methods from traditions other than their own (Moses and Knutsen, 2007).

Johnson et al. (2006) set out a range of philosophical perspectives: positivism, neo-empiricism, critical realism and postmodernism. The underlying assumption of positivism is that there is a real world, independent of human cognition, which science can neutrally access to produce privileged knowledge. However, the existence of inter-subjectivity in social science research means social phenomena are not determined by a single reality in the same way (Johnson et al., 2006). In contrast, postmodernism believes there to be multiple realities produced through discourses and language games (Fleetwood, 2014), and this leads to the use of qualitative methods to enable their deconstruction.

One important implication of inter-subjectivity is that it increases the importance of reflexivity (Johnson and Duberley, 2015). Reflexivity, or "*being aware of being aware*" (Hackley, 2005, p. 98), makes transparent the assumptions that the researcher brings to their research and is valuable in ensuring that the research method is not naïvely used in a way that predetermines the findings. Inter-subjectivity arises as people, through social interaction, actively constitute and reconstitute the culturally derived meanings which they deploy, to interpret their experiences and organise social action, and therefore the social world is emergent (Adler, 1997). Personal reflexivity allows a researcher to, in part, interpret outlier data rather than reject it as noise (Bell and Thorpe, 2014).

Taking the two stances of positivism and postmodernism, put forward by Johnson et al., as two contrasting views, there are a range of philosophies that fall between them (Bluhm et al., 2011). One of these is Critical Realism (CR), which is based on the assumption that:

"… we must assume the existence of an objective reality so that we can make claims about cause and effect relationships; even though these claims will be imperfect" (Lee and Lings, 2008, p.112).

In CR there is a tendency to use qualitative methods in order to develop understanding of the phenomena and its underlying mechanisms (Ackroyd, 2004). For a fuller description of the CR stance see for example Bhaskar and Lawson (1998), and Fleetwood (2014).

From the realist tradition, CR is criticised by Hammersly (2009) for its critical approach. He agrees that all research should be critical in the sense that it should subject knowledge claims to scrutiny. However, for him, CR is critical in the sense that society is defective. From a postmodernist stance, CR is critiqued for its realist ontological foundations and specifically that it is implausible to outline generative mechanisms that comprise reality (Kuhn and Putnam, 2014). However, from a CR perspective these mechanisms illuminate causal relations as a guide to action, rather than iron laws (Fleetwood, 2014).

For a practical researcher, the strength of CR is that it accepts the importance of the processes of social construction, researcher interpretation and discursive framing, without denying that there are realities which exist in the social world, independent of the way they are observed or interpreted (Watson, 2011).

The researcher's own philosophical perspective fits within the CR perspective, and this has informed the methodology and the methods used to answer the research questions. Now that the philosophical foundation has been laid, the next two sections will discuss the fields of process and case studies.

3.3   Process and case studies

The research questions require an understanding of how culture adapts over time, and within a firm's context, and therefore a process case study method is appropriate as this approach takes both time (Langley et al., 2013) and environmental and historical context seriously (Pettigrew, 2012).

Process as a research strategy focuses on the dynamics of evolving processes, rather than the systems of relationships among variables, and provides an understanding of the temporal sequence of events (Langley, 1999, 2013). Using it as a research strategy develops sequences of events, involving multiple levels (in this case sub-cultures and the firm-level) which have ambiguous environmental boundaries (Van de Ven, 2007, Pettigrew, 1990), with the aim of catching reality 'in flight' (Pettigrew, 2012). Process is a consequence of events and these consist of both continuity and change (Sminia and de Rond, 2012). Langley takes the view that:

> *"process is fundamental. The river is not an object but an ever-changing flow; the sun is not a thing, but a flaming fire. Everything in nature is a matter of process, of activity, of change"* (Rescher, 1996, p.10, cited in Langley et al., 2013).

This approach takes time seriously; why things emerge, develop, grow or terminate:

> *"process research, thus, focuses empirically on evolving phenomena, and it draws on theorizing that explicitly incorporates temporal progressions of activities as elements of explanation and understanding"* (Langley et al., 2013: p.1).

To do this, it needs to go beyond identifying processes and instead identify how these shape outcomes; as Anne Langley said, "*although temporal phenomena remain one of their distinguishing features, process data are not composed only of descriptions of discrete events*" (Langley, 1999, p.694). Process research has been critiqued as articulating

a linear sequence of events that leads to some outcome. To overcome this potential weakness in answering these research questions, a practice lens has been adopted. This ensures that the study describes the intelligent activities of individuals and organisations who are working to effect those events and achieve that outcome (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006).

Process thinking of this kind requires researchers to ask themselves what activities and 'doings' are implicated in the maintenance and disruption of everyday organising; to problematise the boundaries separating organisation from context. It is largely a process of *"abduction"* in which empirical observations and surprises are connected to extant theoretical ideas to generate novel conceptual insight and distinctions (Langley et al., 2013).

This research's questions aim to develop an understanding of the process of culture change rather than variance theory; it is interested in describing and explaining the temporal sequence of events involved in change (how culture adapts through time), rather than in identifying the relationships between variable levels of inputs and output. Therefore, it is suitable to take a process research approach when viewing how organisational cultures are created and maintained, and to juxtapose continuity and change.

As process studies are centred on organisations, they have a tendency to be largely oblivious to the general nature and consequences of environmental practices and the impact of practitioners (Whittington, 2006). Such a flaw has the potential to be problematic for these research questions, and therefore both a practice lens (see the Literature Review) and contextual approach have been adopted. The next section will deal

with the role of context in process research and then the chapter will turn to case study research.

3.3.1 Contextualism

Contextualism grew out of a desire to ensure research into organisations was not ahistorical, aprocessual and acontextual (Pettigrew, 1990, Pettigrew et al., 2001). Contextualism sees the world as a collection of events in their unique setting and takes the epistemological perspective that there is a local character to truth, in both time and space. This is important as the past always shapes the emerging future (Pettigrew, 2012), and therefore may be a factor in cultural stability (Butler and Allen, 2008). This contextualist approach takes the view that theoretically-sound and practically-useful research on culture change should explore the contexts, content, and process of a change, together with their interconnections over time. This focus presents a dual challenge; of attempting to catch reality in flight; and to study processes in their contexts, in order to elevate localised embeddedness (Sminia, 2009, Pettigrew et al., 2001).

In line with this perspective, the findings chapters for each of the three case studies start with a section placing them in their historical and environmental context. Further, the case study method, which involves placing processes in their natural environmental contexts, has been adopted (Denis et al., 2001) in order to answer the research questions about the influence of environment.

3.3.2 Definition of case studies

Case studies allow the story to be created, however they also require strict procedures to be adhered to during data gathering and analysis, to safeguard internal validity (Langley, 1999). Yin (2009) describes case studies as *"an empirical inquiry that investigates a*

contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (p.18). In particular, cases enable understanding of the dynamics present within a setting and with access to the participants' point of view (Eisenhardt, 1989), important to the study of culture through a practice lens.

Although case study research can take various forms, and there is no agreed case study method (Hackley, 2005), an important definition of case studies is that they are bounded and not too broad (Stake, 2003), even though these boundaries may be unclear (Punch, 2005). In this research, the boundaries set are the organisational boundaries of the South African, British and Chinese sugar companies. In each case, although the account is taken of their relationship with their respective parent companies, the case itself is the country-based business.

Case studies have attracted criticism for having a small N-problem (Tsang, 2014). However, Yin (2009) counters this by saying that the case is not a piece of data in its own right (a N of 1) but each case represents a collection of data. To further strengthen the robustness of the research, Yin advocates the use of multiple cases to make the findings more compelling, as in this case.

As discussed above, Hackley (2005) posits that there is no set case study method, and there is a wide variety of approaches. In particular, authors differ on the extent to which their research allows an approach that extracts variables from their context (for example Eisenhardt, 1989) and an approach that aims at rich, holistic explanations located in a situational context (for example, Stake, 2005).

Eisenhardt (1989) has developed a way of communicating and legitimising qualitative research from a quantitative perspective. The method she advocates sets out a very clear and transparent method, which much qualitative work does not do (Pettigrew, 2013). The purpose is more about building generalisable theory (nomothetic) and less about understanding, and therefore tends to cover a wider number (4-10) of case studies where the aim is to develop testable propositions. Yin (2009) shares this perspective that the role of case studies is to develop generalisable theory. He indeed goes further and suggests the development of propositions at the start of research; he conceives a case study as an experiment for the purpose of analytical generalisation.

For Bresman (2013), the Eisenhardt method is inductive, where the theory presented is emergent; it is *"situated in and developed by recognizing patterns of relationships among constructs within and across cases and their logical arguments"* (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007: p.25). In other words, it starts with specific observations from which general patterns are identified and theory developed. From this stance, the multiple-case approach enables a replication logic, central to theory building, in which cases are treated as a series of independent experiments. These experiments generate testable propositions, creating a bridge to deductive research (Eisenhardt, 1989, Yin, 2009).

Yin (2009) defines three types of case; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Lee et al. (2007) indicates an issue with Yin's taxonomy as having a tendency to have a quantitative bias, because only one of their approaches (explanatory) *"seeks to derive a detailed understanding of a particular phenomenon where it is not seen as ancillary to more quantitative methods"* (p.170).

The approach taken by Eisenhardt is viewed, however, as a variance study not a process one: it compresses time and reduces context (Pettigrew, 2012); covers each case in less depth; and is better suited to theory elaboration rather than theory development (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). It is therefore not suitable to answer this research's questions. Alternative methods to process research develop propositions that are less suited to being tested, but that is because it is not their aim, as they *"do not believe that formal propositions are necessary"* (Gioia et al., 2013: p.24).

In contrast to Yin's taxonomy, the Umfula case was selected for the opportunity it offered to learn (Stake, 2005); the focus was on understanding the complexity of the case, as *"each study is a concentrated inquiry into a single case"* (p. 136*)*. The aim is to have the richness of an in-depth case study, and the methodological rigour that arises from a multiple case study approach.

3.3.3 Extension of the initial case

Once the initial in-depth case has been developed, then how this is compared to another case is problematic, as the search for particularity competes with the search for generalisability; *"what is important about that case within its own world, which [is] seldom the same as the worlds of researchers and theorists"* (Stake, 2003: p.140). For Lee et al. (2007) it is the uniqueness, the 'particularisation', that constitutes the main strength of case studies, and there is no doubt that some of the richness of the subsequent cases is lost when the method is extended to subsequent cases.

Stake (2003) sets up three types of case - intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Intrinsic cases are those that are interesting for their own sake, to be understood in their own right. Instrumental cases are researched to understand why a particular case is different from

the general pattern, and therefore to learn something typical from something atypical. Collective cases are the study of multiple cases to understand a phenomenon.

However, these definitions are heuristic rather than deterministic and in this research an initial case has been developed that is intended to be of interest in itself (Umfula), and the purpose is to learn about that 'case of things'. This in turn is extended to two further cases (Bourn and Jiang), with the intention of not losing the particular of the initial case, but gaining methodological rigour. This approach enriches the findings of the first case in another setting and allows theoretical ideas to be tested and deepened (Robson, 2002) in different settings (Langley et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the research follows the advice of Langley (1999) when she says:

> *"in theorizing from process data, we should not have to be shy about mobilizing both inductive (data-driven) approaches and deductive (theory-driven) approaches iteratively or simultaneously as inspiration guides us"* (p. 708).

Therefore, the research uses a combination of deduction and induction that provides the basis for theoretical inferences, similar to the approach used in the research of Denis et al. (2001) on change in hospitals and Kanter (1977) in her work on gender roles in corporations.

The approach allows for creative insight from the initial case, and by relying on multiple and sequential cases studies, it allows for the use of deductive logic to foster the development of a richer theoretical framework. In this process, insights from the initial case (Umfula) generate emerging constructs or theoretical propositions (an inductive step) that serve as the basis for probing the process of culture change and maintenance in the

subsequent two cases; Bourn and Jiang (a deductive step). However, observations emerging from the subsequent cases are built into the final theoretical constructs (a further inductive step).

3.3.4 Transferability

In case studies, it can be difficult to separate theoretical relationships found in a case, which are applicable in other contexts, from idiosyncrasies associated with the specific case (Tsang, 2014). The local character and context may mitigate against any form of general knowledge; however, the generative mechanisms identified in process research have significance beyond the single case, and this suggests a multiple-case approach of comparing extreme or polar cases as a way to single out an underlying common process logic (Pettigrew, 1990). This is an inherent dilemma with regard to the overall creation of generalisable knowledge versus a contextualist orientation in process research (Johnson et al., 2006, Sminia, 2009). At one extreme, the contextualist stance is that everything is in flux, and at the other a pre-programmed outcome leads to statistical generalisation; in other words, there is a conflict between the uniqueness of the case over the relevance of the theory (Sminia, 2009). From a critical realist perspective, there is some doubt about the stability of social structures as they are a result of inter-subjectivity and therefore have a somewhat temporary character. This research adopts an intermediate position closer to the position of contextualisation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) are concerned with the concept of generalisability and prefer the term 'transferability' (paralleling external validity). This is because the 'sending' researcher can only know about the population of their own case and not the population of the receiving context, and therefore may not make assertions about an idea's applicability; transferability retains the idea that research is context specific. In contrast, Tsang (2014) is concerned that without the ability to generalise, there is no theory, therefore no insight,

and this begs the question of why conduct research at all. He defines generalisation as a proposition made from drawing inference from a particular observation and does not imply the creation of an iron-clad law. In this research, in order to emphasise the importance of context, the term transferability is preferred to those of external validity and generalisation.

Postmodernists would argue that structures and processes are necessarily idiosyncratic (see Stake, 2005), however many are similar across domains (Pettigrew, 2013), and it is identifying whether these principles transfer from one setting to another that allows theory to be developed (Gioia et al., 2013). Case studies derive their ability to generate theory, not because of similarity of populations, but because of the use of inductive logic (Johnson et al., 2006); and they establish the limits of theory, by finding the atypical example (Stake, 2003).

The aim of this research is to critically analyse culture, how it changes over time and with its environment, and the role that executives may play in this. Based on the Literature Review and the discussion outlined above, a process case study approach has been adopted to answer the research questions, with an intention to place the cases clearly in their context. The next section presents the adopted methods and approach to data analysis for this research.

3.4 Method

The research was granted unusual access to conduct an in-depth study of organisational culture processes at three sugar companies in three countries. In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative approach was adopted to provide well-grounded information through a practice lens (Whittington, 2006, Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). The

research questions require that the chosen method investigates culture, environmental context, and managers at different levels and time. Therefore, the data has been collected in a way that answers the questions and it has been situated within the historical, environmental and organisational context in which the culture occurred (Pettigrew et al., 2001).

To meet those requirements the research made use of a range of methods; namely interviews, participant observation, document analysis and a questionnaire. Watson believes that a single method approach (in his case participant observation):

> *"can be considerably strengthened if alongside it and possibly at the same time, interviews are carried out, documents analysed, and perhaps even small surveys undertaken"* (Watson, 2011: p.206).

The combination of the methods deployed here was intended to allow the research to get closer to the reality of 'how things work' (Watson, 2011) and is especially suitable for research looking at the construction of cultural norms, and patterns of workplace behaviour (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Overall, the method is critical in the sense that it tests understandings, and questions assumptions about how culture changes.

Before the adopted methods are addressed, it is important to understand why a qualitative approach was taken and how collectively the methods supported triangulation.

3.4.1   Why a qualitative approach?

Qualitative research has previously been used when research has focused on the nature of work (for example Watson, 2001) or the organisational control mechanisms (for example

Kunda, 2006). Quantitative methods are seen to impose an external researcher-derived logic which can distort rather than capture the actors' inter-subjectivity from the data collected (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

In order to access social structures, explanations must be generated through seeking understanding, inductive description and natural analysis of actors (Johnson and Duberley, 2015) in real settings (Stake, 2005). Furthermore, from a process perspective, a qualitative approach has the strength to capture temporally evolving phenomena (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). Schein (2000, 2010) argues that rich texture is needed to research processes and culture, and that qualitative methods are best suited to explore meanings rather than facts. This was summarised by Gioia et al. (2013) by repeating a quote often attributed to Einstein: *"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted"* (p.16).

In contrast, Edmondson and McManus (2007) have argued that the adopted method should reflect the level of maturity of the existing literature; as it could be argued that the literature is well developed in organisational culture, then a quantitative approach may be suggested. However, Gioia et al. (2013) argue that even in mature areas of research, a qualitative approach may challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, as it is the phenomena that is researched rather than the theory. A qualitative approach to this research question is therefore appropriate.

Qualitative work is seen as having enhanced naturalism (Locke, 2001), especially to non-researchers (Johnson and Duberley, 2015), as it provides *"a strong handle on what 'real life' is like"* (Miles and Huberman, 1994: p.10). Inductive studies require qualitative rigour, while retaining the creative and revelatory potential for generating new ideas.

However, qualitative research has been criticised for appearing to lack this analytical rigour (Bryman, 2008) and as having a natural tendency to exclude data that does not fit the working assumptions of the researcher (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). To overcome these perceived weaknesses, in this research analytical rigour was important to ensure credibility and trustworthiness (Gioia et al., 2013, Lincoln and Guba, 1985); and transparency of method was important to demonstrate this rigour (Bluhm et al., 2011, Pettigrew, 2012). Therefore the method adopted is set out below, following a discussion of the benefits of multiple methods.

3.4.2   Multi methods and triangulation

The selection of data sources listed above (see paragraph 3.4) are similar to other research in culture change or maintenance (for example Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Dacin et al., 2010), and are suitable for a practice lens (for example Smets et al., 2012). The benefit of using multiple methods is that they provide credibility and conformability (Robson, 2002, Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Data triangulation is intended here, not as a method to get closer to 'the Truth', but to provide different viewing perspectives to offer a plausible, credible and coherent interpretation of findings, that are well supported by the data (Hackley, 2005, Janesick, 2003).

Triangulation, however, goes beyond a range of methods. It is the inclusion of multiple perceptions to clarify meaning (Stake, 2003). This addresses implicit assumptions or the prejudice of informants; multiple informants representing a variety of perspectives. By exploiting multiple perspectives the robust features of reality become more visible than if one particular viewpoint or conceptual model is used (Van de Ven, 2007), as phenomena in the social world are so rich that no single informant has a full appreciation of them (Dacin et al., 2010). Therefore, emerging findings were triangulated with the perspectives of other methods and respondents with a different viewing position.

As part of this approach, a questionnaire was conducted in order to add to the rich picture developed from the other methods. It strengthened the research by increasing the numbers of people whose perspective was included (Ashkanasy et al., 2000).

Kerlinger and Lee (2000) set out three ways of using qualitative and quantitative methods together. The first two are where they are used sequentially. In this research the third method has been adopted, where the quantitative method of the questionnaire has been *"nested"* within the principally qualitative methods. This acts to supplement, but not to alter, the qualitative approach to the study.

3.4.3   Support by research assistants

The use of interviews as a research tool in three different countries presented two issues for the research. The first was a significant time strain on the researcher, and in addition a number of the Chinese managers who were interviewed had little command of English.

To overcome these hurdles, the services of two research assistants were used, one in the UK and one in China. In order to maintain high and consistent standards, a number of steps were put in place:

- Both were fully trained by the researcher in the interview process, and their initial work was closely monitored;
- The researcher conducted the initial interviews in each case study and agreed who would be interviewed;
- The research assistant in the Bourn case (Holly O'Brion) was undertaking a PhD at Aston Business School and therefore attended the Research Methods Course there. She conducted interviews in the commercial department and at Factory N.;

- The Jiang research assistant (Zhu Ying, 朱莹) holds a Masters in Communication with a major in research methodology, from the Communication University of China. She conducted the interviews at Factory Y. This allowed for these interviews to be conducted in Mandarin, without the need for a translator, thereby enhancing the natural flow of the interview;

- All analysis was undertaken by the researcher; and

- The findings of each case were reviewed by the relevant research assistant.

In the sections that follow, the specific methods will be reviewed in more detail, starting with interviews.

3.4.4 Interview process

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with executives and middle managers, which lasted between an hour and an hour and a half. In the initial Umfula case, 15 interviews were conducted; 18 at Bourn; and 17 at Jiang: a total of 50 interviews. The interviews came from a mix of managerial levels, locations and functions, providing a variety of perspectives within the management population to support the desired triangulation and the use of a practice lens. A more detailed review of those interviewed is set out in the separate findings chapters.

The interviewees were identified following an initial interview with the Managing Directors of each case. This was in line with the chosen purposive snowball sampling method, where those interviewed were selected to answer the research question, rather than chosen as a random sample (Bryman and Bell, 2011, Bryman, 2006), and as representatives of the population affected, rather than being seen as a randomised sample (Hackley, 2005).

A weakness of the snowball sampling method is that this elevates the initial interviewers to the role of gatekeeper (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015), and therefore care was taken to check that the interviewees suggested would provide the necessary variance of perspective to answer the research question. Interviews and site visits were directed to the areas where the interchange with the environment was either noticeable in the business (for example, in the procurement of raw material or sale of sugar) or was thought to be less noticeable (typically in factory operations). In addition, other executives were identified as beneficial to giving insight on cultural matters, so for example in two cases the Human Resources Directors were interviewed.

The interviews were semi-structured, using as a guide both Schein (1996, 2010) and the culture model developed by Goffee and Jones (2003). The interviews were structured to answer the research questions, centred on culture change over time, the influence of the external environment and the role of executives. The initial interviews with the Managing Directors covered the topics of the historical and environmental context; any deliberate change they were seeking to make in the business; and how they would describe the organisational culture in terms of the themes developed by Goffee and Jones (that is physical space, communication, time and identity). To give these perspectives depth, they were asked how this compared to other experiences in their career and their perceptions of different teams (sub-cultures) in the company. They were asked how the organisation had changed over time and to give examples of successful changes they had made and where change had been less successful. Even though a structure was constructed prior to the interviews, space was created within it for digression to allow other themes to emerge. After each, a summary was developed of the interviewer's reflections on the interview.

Each interviewee was provided in advance with a list of the general topics that the interview would cover. In order to ensure that the interviewees would be put at their ease,

the interviews followed a five-step process as set out by Robson (2002): introduction; a gentle warm-up with gentle, unchallenging questions (they were asked to describe their career to date); the main body of the interview that involved the discussion set out above and involved some periods of unsettling questions about workplace culture and change; a cool-down phase with unchallenging questions; and closure which included thanking them for their time.

The 'art' of the interview is to get under the surface of the phenomena, in order to illuminate the human experience and the contextual understanding it creates (Bryman, 2008), and therefore interviewers require social skill (Gillham, 2000). In this respect the experience of the researcher was important, as he has 30 years' experience of interviewing for different purposes and in different national contexts; this was particularly important in ensuring that there were no *"leading the witness"* interview questions (Gioia et al., 2013, p.16).

The tape-recorded interviews were fully transcribed by an external company and were checked by the researcher.

3.4.5   Participant observation

In addition to interviews, the other principal data source was participant observation. This research project included the researcher as a naturalistic researcher; not a detached *"scientist"* but a participant observer (Van de Ven, 2007), which allowed the researcher to gain richer descriptions of the culture, the context and environment of the case studies. This approach is advocated by Watson (2011) to support research with a practice lens, as it focuses on individual actors and generates detailed insights into their work (for example Kellogg, 2009, Smets et al., 2012). It is particularly sensitive to the researcher being able

to gain access; and in these cases unrestricted access was agreed with executives on site, which allowed access to back stage areas of the businesses which included informal social gatherings, as well formal meetings, in addition to the interviews (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015).

The close involvement of the researcher, through interviews and observation, showed that the picture was not as simple as that described in interviews, and that the reality of the working life of managers was more nuanced than the interviewees portrayed (Watson, 2001). The researcher was conscious that however much they promised that the discussion was confidential, there remained pressure on the interviewee to adopt a role as a representative of their firm (Watson, 2011) and to project a sense of competence (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Therefore, the data from the interview was placed in context, even if this is counter-intuitive, through participant observation.

In each case, observation was undertaken at business meetings- typically those of the executives of the business -, and site visits were conducted, to provide different data points on the built environment. In Umfula, two factories (M & S) were visited, as well as the head offices of Umfula and its parent company (Somfula). In Bourn, the head office and Factory N were visited, and in the Jiang case, the head office, and factories Y and Z were visited.

During the site visits, photography was used to capture data not disclosed or not disclosable in interviews, and to develop a richer understanding of organisational processes. These photographs acted as both an aide-mémoire in the course of fieldwork, but also as a source of data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). For example, in the Umfula case, they were useful in illustrating the use of corporate symbols; and in Bourn, the prevalence of

the values-led change initiative. The photographs were loaded onto Nvivo 10 software, which allowed them to be iterated with other data sources.

The researcher is employed within the same division (Mere) of Holm Food as the three case studies, so in that sense he was a participant member of the study. However, he does not work in any of the three businesses directly and therefore was able to maintain a detached perspective from the research. Even the UK business (Bourn) is located in a different part of the office building and shares few resources with the researcher's organisation. His occasional involvement in the business distinguishes the method adopted (participant observation) from the methodology of ethnography (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, the researcher shares the businesses' language, enabling him to index the interviews appropriately (Hackley, 2005) and *"decipher the social structure that binds them together"* (Punch, 2005: p.183). Therefore, he was able to combine the roles of emic (insider) and etic (outsider) stances (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Given the researcher's professional links with these businesses, he may be considered to be a participant observer in a familiar situation (Bryman and Bell, 2011), and this required the researcher to have a high degree of self-awareness so that he did not take for granted what was observed, and this was a addressed through the rigorous analysis of data (see section 3.6, Data Analysis).

Within the framework put forward by Gold (1958), the researcher adopted a stance of participant-as-observer or a privileged observer (Punch, 2005). This level of immersion allowed for active interaction and to share experiences with the participants in a manner going beyond simple observation (Watson, 2011). Robson (2002) lists a hierarchy of descriptive observation, from Space (physical settings), through Actions to Feelings

(emotions). Watson (2011) takes the view that through this type of method we may not know the subjective experience, and therefore the research has limited access to people's lived experience and emotions. So, following Watson, the use of observation in this research focuses on the connection between the actions and utterances of people in a social setting, with the culture and structures within which they occur.

3.4.6   Document analysis

In line with Easterby-Smith et al. (2008), documents were used as a supplementary data source. The documents sought were limited to institutional memoranda, reports and meeting minutes. Documents made available to the researcher included: organisational charts; historical, financial and production data; strategic plans and budgets; and reports. These were particularly useful in understanding the firm's context and as cultural artefacts, and they provided a rich vein of analysis with which to triangulate other data (Punch, 2005). The documents were assessed to ensure that they were authentic and genuine, credible (accurate) and representative of documents of their class and meaning. If the documents were provided as digital copies they were loaded onto Nvivo 10 software, which facilitated their merging with other data sources.

3.4.7   Questionnaire

To provide further support to the methods listed above, a questionaire was used, as set out in the work of Goffee and Jones (1996, 2001, 2003). This was in order to include a higher number and a wider range of contributors, and was used in conjunction with other data sources.

The questionnaire measures the corporate climate, which is the surface representation of the underlying culture (Martin, 2002). Climate is a concept normally invoked to research

individuals' perceptions of an observable and narrow aspect of the work environment (Chatman and O'Reilly, 2016). Most climate questionnaires assume an integrated culture across the organisation; that is not the intention of this questionnaire. The data was used to see if sub-cultures could be identified within the population, and in conjunction with other data sources.

The questionnaire in each case was issued to the leadership team and the next two levels of the organisation. In Umfula, 42 managers completed the questionnaire (82% completion rate); at Bourn, 93 responded (85%); and Jiang, 86 responded (72%). In total, 221 managers completed the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 79%.

The questionnaire was in English for South Africa and the UK. In China, the questionnaire was issued in English or Mandarin, depending on the first language of the respondent. To create the Mandarin version, the process of back translation was adopted (Tsui, 2006). The English version was translated by Zhu Ying (research assistant), and then passed to a second translator to translate back into English. The differences between the re-translated version and original version were reviewed until any nuanced differences were resolved.

The questionnaire was administered through Survey Monkey and the anonymous returns were analysed using SPSS 20. Although plurality of methods is advocated by many qualitative researchers, the Literature Review did not uncover similar research that adopted survey research. Therefore, the analysis followed standard statistical approaches for the social sciences. Descriptive statistics were generated using the approach advocated in Diamantopulos and Schlegelmilch (2000). More detailed ANOVA analysis was conducted using methods set out in Sirkin (2006) and Norusis (2012), to examine the variance in results by length of service, gender, function, managerial level or location. The

questionnaire produced limited statistically significant findings due, in part, to the small size of the population that completed the survey in each case. Descriptive statistics and answers to individual questions provided interesting findings and these were incorporated with the other data sources to provide insights from a wider range of managers than otherwise would be allowed for.

3.5 How the methods were applied in each case

3.5.1 Umfula

The interviewees and sites to be observed were identified following the initial interview with the Managing Director (MD), in line with the chosen snowball method (Bryman, 2006). The interview with the MD showed that the pressure for change was noticeable in two areas; the sales or commercial team and the agricultural team, who were selected to understand the effects of the constriction of the supply of raw materials. Those interviewed are set out in the organisation chart (see Figure 3-1). In addition, a factory operations team at Sizana was included, to contrast the culture in that area and understand how culture gets diffused. Also, Sizana was a good exemplar of the reduction in available volume of sugar cane. Three additional sites were visited: Factory M, the Umfula Head Office and the Somfula Head Office. Participant observation was undertaken at these sites and at three meetings of the general managers; these involved the Leadership Team of Umfula and the five factory managers.

The interviews were drawn from three layers of the organisation: the leadership team, their direct reports and a level below this. Given the size of the firms studied, this population represented all senior and middle managers and excluded front-line managers and supervisors. Inferences therefore can be made about what daily life is like for this group, and not for the non-managerial population. There were 15 semi-structured

interviews of executives and middle managers; each was an average of an hour long Figure 3-1 visually represents the level of the interviewees (Level one to three) and also their function, shown in the key. The interviewees for Bourn and Jiang are shown in Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-3. All three figures show that the interviews came from a mix of levels, locations and functions, providing a variety of perspectives within the management population to support the desired triangulation.

Figure 3-1: Interviewees at Umfula represented in an organisation chart
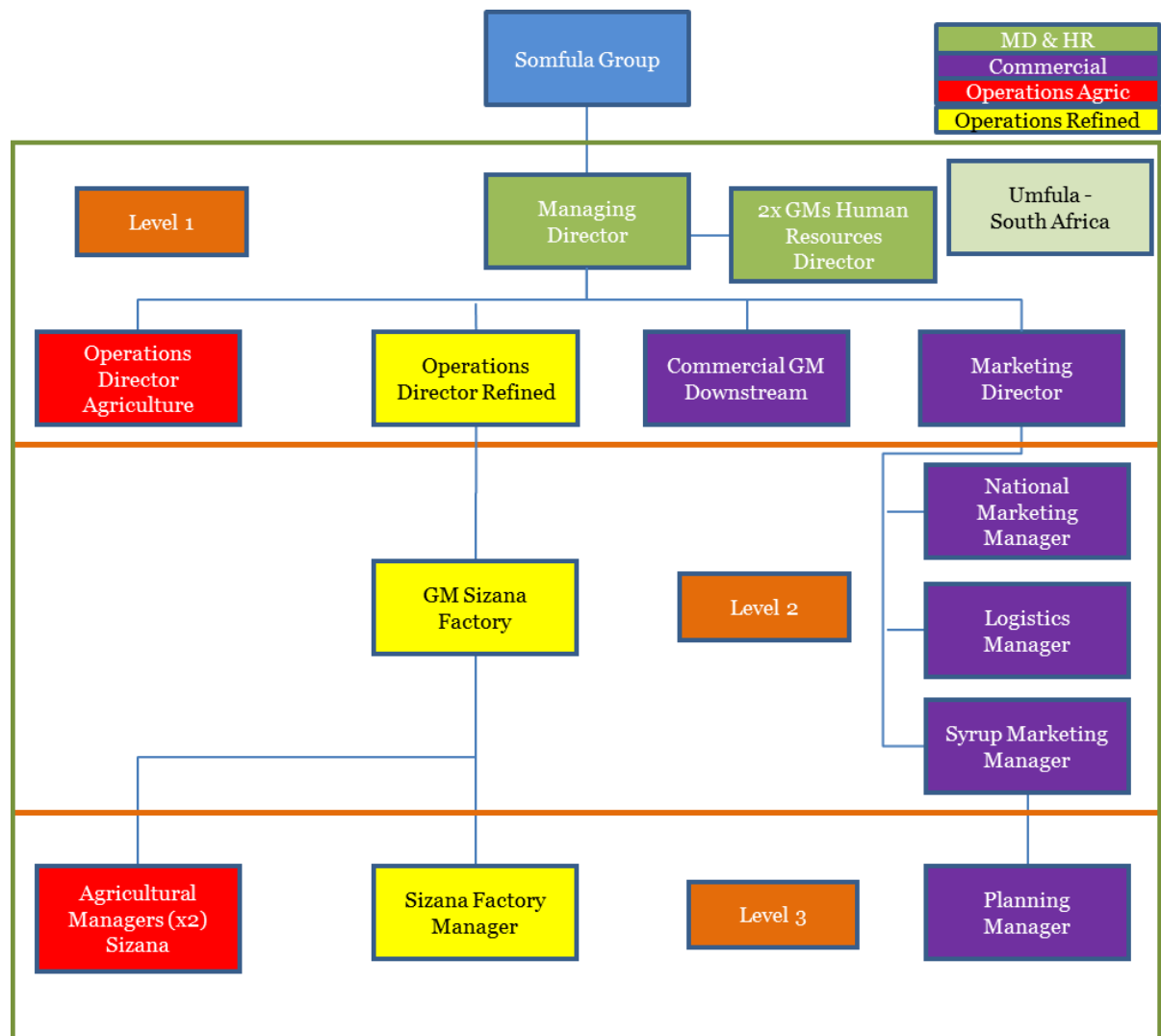
Following these interviews, the top three levels of the organisation were invited to complete the corporate climate questionnaire (Goffee and Jones, 2003). There were 41 responses (an 82% completion rate). Documents analysed included strategy documents, budget presentations, meeting packs, annual accounts and an official history. The emerging findings were validated by the senior management group in a workshop, to provide credibility or internal validation (Van de Ven, 2007), see section 3.6.3.

3.5.2   Bourn and Jiang

To answer the question of transferability and dependability, reviewed in sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4, similar data collection methods were applied to the Bourn and Jiang case studies as in Umfula. The data was coded using the structure developed in Umfula, and additional codes were added as they emerged from the data.

The interviewees and locations for site visits were identified following the initial interview with the managing directors. Interviewees were chosen to provide a mix of long-serving managers and new hires from a range of managerial levels, and some individuals were added to provide contrasting perspectives. In Bourn, the MD identified that the pressure for change was most noticeable in the market for the sale of sugar. Therefore, the sales team were selected to understand the interaction with the customers for sugar, and one of the four factories (Factory N) was chosen as a good exemplar of an operational site that was adapting to the needs of the customers. In Jiang the pressure for change was most noticeable in the procurement of sugar beet, and Factory Y (one of seven) in Heilongjiang province was chosen as an archetype of this dynamic. In addition, in each case the head office environment was examined, providing further data on the visible artefacts and the built environment. Photographs were taken at each site of key cultural artefacts. Each study provided good access to documents, including financial data and operational and

strategic presentations. Jiang was acquired by Mere in 2007; the case for acquisition and the integration plan were examined in detail.

Figure 3-2: Interviewees at Bourn represented in an organisation chart
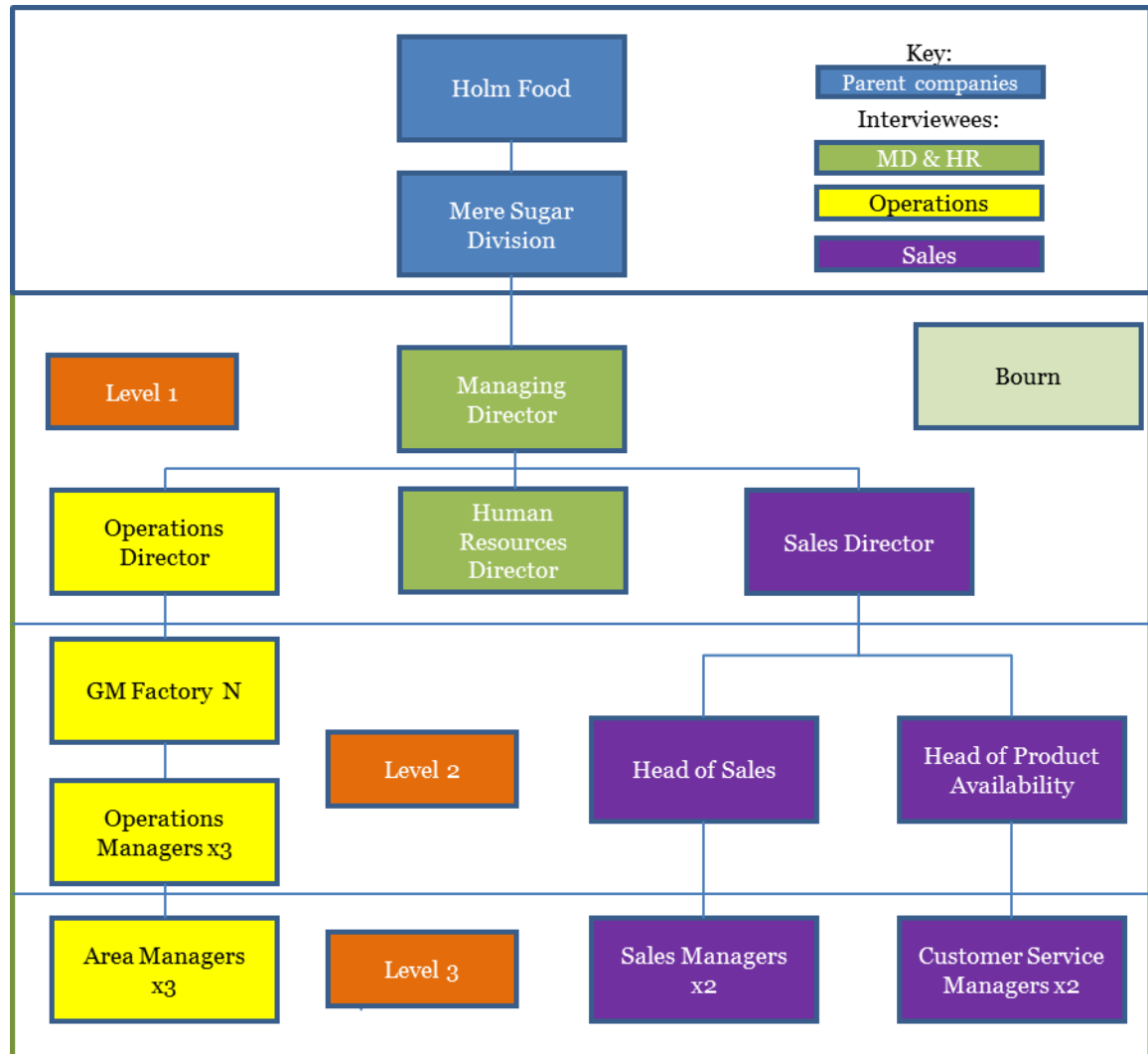
In Bourn there were 18 semi-structured interviews of executives and middle managers; on average these were around 75 minutes long each, these are shown in the organisation chart (Figure 3-2). It shows that in addition to the focus on Factory N and the sales team, the Human Resources Director was selected for interview, as they had served over a substantial period of time and had previously worked at the Mere (divisional) level and

therefore provided a rich viewing perspective. The figure also shows the relationship of Bourn to its parent companies.

Figure 3-3: Interviewees at Jiang represented in an organisation chart
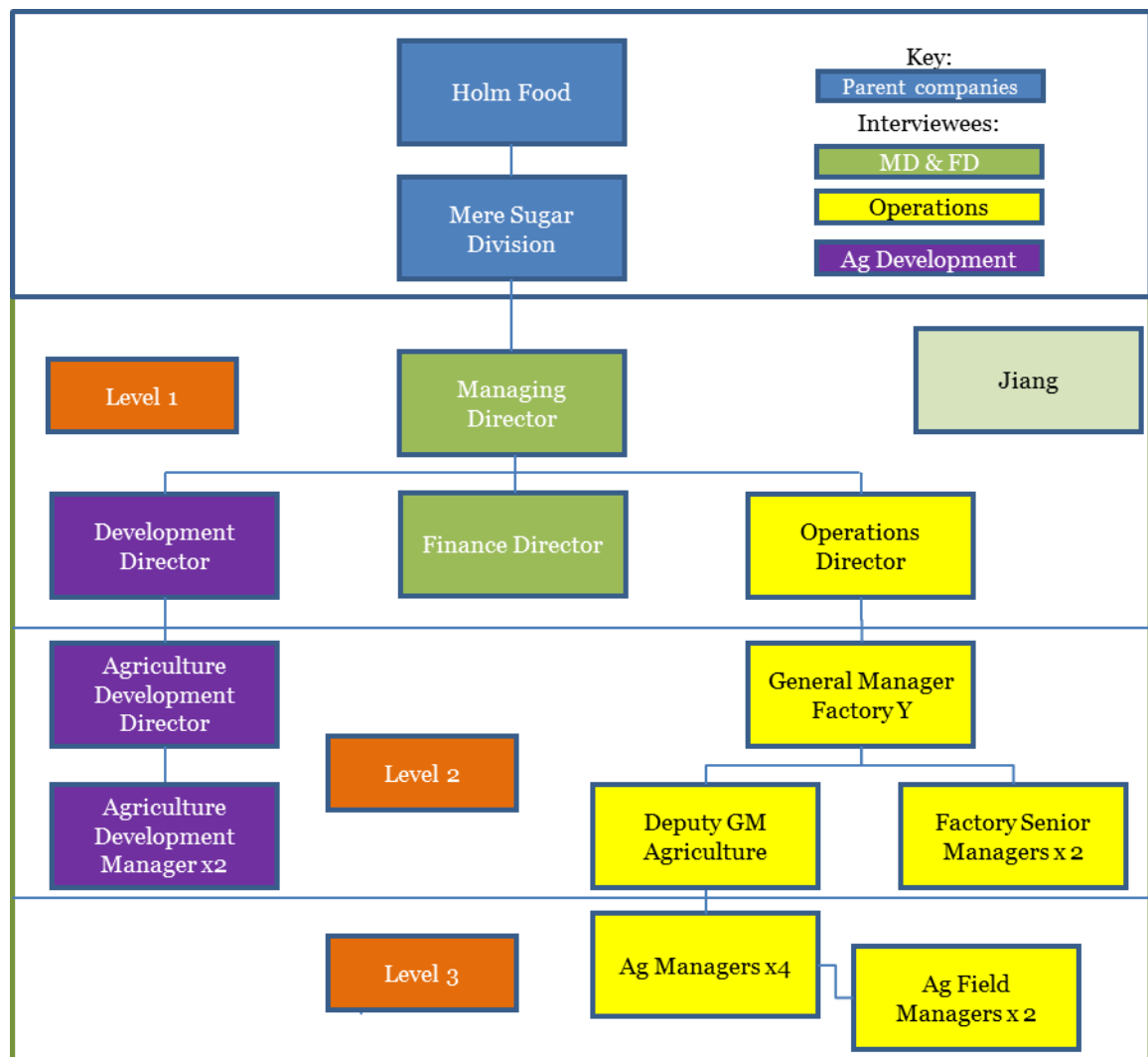
In the Jiang case study, there were also 17 semi-structured interviews of carefully chosen executives and middle managers. These are shown in the organisation chart (Figure 3-3). The development function, including Agriculture Development was a head office function led by UK expatriates, whereas Factory Y was staffed exclusively by long-serving managers. In addition to the two areas of focus, the Finance Director was also included as

they were involved in the acquisition of Jiang on behalf of Mere and therefore offered a longer-term perspective. The figure once again shows the relationship of Jiang to its parent companies.

Further, in each case the top three levels of the organisation were invited to complete the Goffee and Jones (2003) corporate climate questionnaire; in Bourn there were 93 responses (an 85% response rate), in Jiang there were 86 responses (72% response rate).

3.6   Data Analysis

Rigorous data analysis was undertaken to ensure that what is socially constructed by the researcher is not mere fictions of his imagination but are real generative mechanisms (Johnson and Duberley, 2000: 155). The analysis followed the tradition in social science of using qualitative data to inductively develop theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Lincoln and Guba, 1985, Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This approach provides deep and rich theoretical descriptions of the contexts within which organisational phenomena occur (Gioia et al., 2013). The data was reduced using an approach along the lines suggested by Gioia et al. (2013), and Langley and Abdallah (2011), in a desire to create a rigorous and systematic process, whilst retaining the revelatory potential. In this inductive, open-ended analysis, the process travelled back and forth between data, literature, and emerging theory (Locke, 2001). That process started with the handling of the interview material.

3.6.1   Interviews

The interview tapes were listened to several times to ensure familiarity, and then the (externally generated) transcripts were read and reread to allow themes to arise (Hackley, 2005). Before coding began, reflections on each interview were written up, and added to

the post-interview summary. These summaries were iterated upon during the data reduction process to ensure that important meanings were maintained.

3.6.2 Coding

Once familiarity was established with the interviews in a case, the coding process was started using Nvivo 10 software. The use of software such as Nvivo has been criticised by Bell and Thorpe (2014) as creating a tendency for over-coding and distancing from the data. To avoid this, the findings from the coding were iterated with the interview summaries to ensure important themes were not overlooked.

The coding categories were developed using terms emerging from the interviews, and to a lesser extent, from the literature examined in this research. This begged the question of the role of literature (Suddaby, 2006), which is especially important in inductive work in order to ensure rigour (Johnson and Duberley, 2015). The literature was used as a preliminary guide; to do otherwise would be to create the pretence of complete objectivity, which does not exist (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

Following the approach of Smets et al. (2012), the researcher got lost in the data, as you have *"got to get lost before you get found"*. At this stage of the process the researcher felt like a *"glorified reporter"* (Gioia et al., 2013, p.17). Once the first order codes had been developed, similarities were sought among the data categories to distil them into emergent second order themes and this created a more manageable number (30 codes in the Umfula case). The second order themes were developed further into the theoretical realm; into second order aggregate dimensions, which became the theoretical framework that created a data structure (as set out in Table 4-1. At this stage the data and the literature were iterated in a form of abductive reasoning (Van de Ven, 2007).

The first order analysis was seen in informant-centric terms and the second order as researcher-centric; therefore, both voices (researcher and informant) were used in tandem. Examples of this type of data structure were examined, in particular in Corley and Gioia (2004), Dacin et al. (2010), Harrison and Corley (2011), Rindova et al. (2011) and Smets et al. (2012), to guide how the data was reduced and presented. In line with the research practice used in these articles, appropriate direct quotes have been utilised in the findings chapters to strengthen the presentation. The adopted method differs from, for example, Eisenhardt (1989), as it favours emergent categories rather than a-priori conceptualisations, and therefore it retains flexibility and embraces the messy nature of the data and research.

Throughout the process, the researcher was aware that the approach suggested by Gioia, and the aggregation process in particular, may potentially decontextualise tensions and could subsume both tensions and disagreements in favour of a unified model (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). Therefore, throughout the process, the emerging themes were challenged, by using the interview summaries and observation logs to ensure that important themes were not lost, and to avoid the perils of the aggregation process (Bell and Thorpe, 2014).

Given the weight of interview data, care had to be taken to ensure that this data source did not overwhelm the other sources, such as observation, photographs, questionnaire data and documents, and that the strength of data triangulation was maintained, the richness of the underlying data was not lost, and theorising did not become a mechanical process. This was achieved through reflexivity and iterating on all the data sources.

3.6.3 Trustworthiness

A number of practical steps were undertaken to validate the study and enhance its trustworthiness. In the Umfula case, the emerging findings benefitted from being validated by the senior management group in a workshop (Van de Ven, 2007). At the three-hour workshop, the findings up to that point were collated and presented to thirteen senior leaders, to test whether the classifications coincided with practitioners' perceptions (Van de Ven, 2007) and to provide credibility to the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Caution was taken to ensure that the purpose of the workshop was a rigorous examination of the output, rather than to develop a consensus or to collaborate with the managers (Kieser and Leiner, 2012).

The trustworthiness and credibility of the research was further enhanced by subjecting it to peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985): at Aston Business School DBA colloquiums, where the emerging concepts received constructive criticism by academics and students; and at the Association of Business Schools 2015 annual colloquium, where the findings from the Umfula chapter and the grounded framework were reviewed. As discussed earlier, the research assistants also reviewed the relevant case study. Lastly, as they were developed, drafts of the case study chapters benefitted from generous feedback from four different academics, in addition to that of the thesis supervisors.

3.6.4 Framework of cultural adaptation

Once the second order aggregate dimensions were defined, three ways of presenting the data were developed, following the advice of Martin and Eisenhardt (2010) to show evidence in tables and figures. Firstly, a timeline for Umfula (see Table 4.2) was developed in line with suitable strategies for process studies (Langley, 1999). Secondly, tables of representative data were created (Table 4-1 on page 95). This is recommended by Gioia et al. (2013) as the meta message is *"this is what informants told us. We're not making this*

stuff up" (p.23). Thirdly, a graphic representation was developed to aid the presentation and understanding of the findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994), with the intention of illustrating a vibrant, inductive model grounded in the data. This conceptual model was developed into the Umfula culture process flow (Figure 4.9), which shows the relationships between events in the Umfula case and further developed into Figure 6-1 (the process framework of culture adaptation) following the critical examination of the Bourn and Jiang data. Whilst these figures aid the understanding of the phenomena being studied, like all visual maps, they have the limitation of hiding the complexity and messiness of the underlying processes.

The development of the framework is one of the method contributions of this research. The framework illustrates the mechanisms that enable cultural processes, and its development was encouraged by Giorgi et al. (2015) who posit that:

> "*although scholars have recognized the nested nature of cultural phenomena and processes, there is a relative dearth of research adopting a mechanisms-based approach to theorizing and empirics*" (p. 39).

Mechanisms describe the interacting parts that, when acting as an assembly, produce an effect that differs from any one of them; it sets out the cogs and wheels by which an outcome is produced (Hernes, 1998). This framework is intended to assist understanding of how culture emerges and functions, explaining a social phenomenon through a rigorous, thoughtful, mid-range theory with the prospect of applicability beyond its original location, rather than trying to predict universal outcomes (Davis, 2006).

3.6.5   Subsequent cases

As discussed in the 'Process and case studies' section of this chapter, the constructs of the initial case (Umfula) served as the basis for analysing culture change in the subsequent case studies (Bourn and Jiang), in line with Denis et al. (2001). The data was coded according to the framework shown in Umfula's culture process flow (Figure 4.9) to

understand the transferability of the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and to enhance the conceptual model. In addition, further open coding was allowed in the subsequent case studies to allow other findings to emerge. These findings were further iterated on with the literature to enhance the emerging theoretical model. By adopting this approach the intention is to capture the richness of the Umfula case (Stake, 2005) and gain the theoretical robustness of multiple case studies (Langley and Abdallah, 2011).

3.7   Ethics

The researcher was conscious of the guidance given by Stake that *"qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world, their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict"* (Stake, 2003: p.151). Therefore, care was taken throughout the research process to ensure that ethical standards were met, as set out by the ethics committee guidelines (Aston University, 2010). The steps taken in this regard are outlined below.

The appointment of two research assistants required a process to be put into place to maintain ethical standards, and these were set out in the above section 3.4.3, *"Support by research assistants"*. All of those interviewed provided written informed consent (see Appendix 1) and were made aware of their right not to answer any particular question and to withdraw from the interview at any time. The interviewee was provided in advance with a list of the general topics that the interview would cover. To retain confidentiality and anonymity, the recordings and transcripts of the interviews are stored on a secure (password protected) personal computer and backed up. The transcripts were rendered anonymous, and most individuals are not identifiable within the case studies.

Similarly, those completing the questionnaire were advised that their answers would be kept confidential, and if they were not happy answering any question then they were free not to answer (see Appendix 2). Further, they were told that they may stop the questionnaire at any time and that their answers would be stored electronically and securely. Onsite observations took place only with the consent of the manager responsible for that site.

3.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, both from the researcher's philosophical perspective and in terms of the research questions, the methodology chosen was a grounded, qualitative case study that allows for analysis of culture, the environmental context, time and different levels of managers. To answer the research questions, the method chosen brought together interviews, participant observation, document analysis, the relevant literature and a questionnaire. This mix provided a rich and in-depth understanding of the cultural change process from different perspectives.

Cultural change is a situated phenomenon that unfolds over time, and therefore the research used a process case study with a practice lens. The method was chosen in order to critically test taken-for-granted assumptions and innate understandings about culture and how it changes. Although using a multiple-methods approach, including a short questionnaire, it was heavily reliant on qualitative methods that suit inductive theory generation. The method adopted provides two contributions; the use of inductive and deductive approaches within one study, and the creation of the framework as a mechanism for exploring how culture adapts. This methodology was initially applied to the Umfula case, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Umfula - a South African Case Study

4.1 Introduction

This study looks at how organisational culture changes over time and specifically addresses the impact made by a firm's history, its immediate environment and how agents' actions alter culture. This case was chosen as, in contrast to most studies on change, there was no executive-led initiative in progress neither to maintain nor change culture, at the time of the research. This allows for change processes to be understood in a context where executives, who were attentive to their daily work, did not foresee a requirement for change.

The South African sugar industry and Umfula experience a high level of government regulation, organised through an industry body (South African Sugar Association) that governs both relationships with cane-growers and the sale of sugar. Further, the company exhibits a coherent culture, which values operational performance and expert knowledge. Previous studies have shown that government regulation and a coherent culture indicate a higher resistance to change (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012, Flynn and Chatman, 2001). On the other hand, globally, the sugar industry is undergoing substantial change as the levels of protection offered to EU based producers and farmers is reducing, due to reform initiated through the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The changes in the sugar regime in the EU are altering world trade flows, not just those into and out of the EU (OECD, 2007).

With these factors in mind, the research was embarked upon with an open mind as to whether culture change would be observed at all, and what form it would take

(Smets et al., 2012). The purpose was to catch reality of change in flight (Pettigrew, 2012) and to investigate with maximum realism (Weick, 2009).

The study is of interest, as in the absence of a formal change programme, it looks at how managers going about their normal, mundane work were a source of culture change and perpetuation, thus giving a detailed insight of a phenomenon from the perspective of those closest to it (Harrison and Corley, 2011, Rindova et al., 2011). Two conflicting mechanisms are observed in this chapter, one set that perpetuates the current Prevailing Culture (PC) and one that plays a role in changing it. These mechanisms are summarised in the following three paragraphs and they are explained in more detail in the findings section, which also sets out representative evidence on which they are based.

This study identified the following maintenance mechanisms: surveillance; employment practices; and boundary management. Although some research suggests that coherent cultures do not require strong control mechanisms, in Umfula both were found to co-exist. Surveillance was experienced as the daily practice of chasing physical performance in the factories; through privileging a large array of detailed production metrics and a rhythm of meetings that reinforces the logic of physical production. Secondly, there was a strong control on employment practices (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007), particularly the hiring and promotion of managers, where long service is privileged. The longevity of tenure of management, and the lack of professional networks around Umfula, reinforced the strength of the PC (Harris and Ogbonna, 2011). Lastly, the executives carefully defined the boundary of Umfula, moving any challenges to existing logics to outside the organisation, and consciously denying other managers the thinking space and isolation to develop responses to their environment (Kellogg, 2009). Left unchallenged, the maintenance mechanisms limit the organisation's access to different scripts, and therefore its responsiveness to the functional requirements of the market,

creating a path of dependency from the past (Houchin and MacLean, 2005, Butler and Allen, 2008). This mechanism informs the third research question, as in this particular case one way in which executives influenced culture change was by resourcing processes that perpetuated the PC.

In a provisional answer to the first research question, two practice-based change processes were identified; together these begin to explain the influence of the immediate business environment on organisational culture. The first is the interaction of specific sub-cultures located at the firm's external boundary with their immediate (market) environment. The need for research at a sub-cultural level is well documented (Martin, 2002). However, most research continues to emphasise the organisation as a single unit, and the role of the local environment is understudied (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Dacin et al., 2002). Commonly research ignores the similarities and differences between subcultures that may give rise to tensions and cooperation. This case study sees that the proximity of 'boundary spanning' teams to their firm's customers and suppliers played a role in the development of a sub-culture, and shows how local external forces are brought inside the firm and disseminated, through a process of long-term, low-level continual contestation.

The second change mechanism is the impact that a manager's cohort has on how they experience and contribute to the firm. Whereas current research focuses on the socialisation process of new-comers to the firm (Aldrich and Ruef, 2006, Schein, 2010) and deliberate attempts to inject new logics (Smets et al., 2012), this case applies the idea of cohort analysis in a novel way, and shows that a cohort process exists. Although linked to length of service (the age effect), a distinct phenomenon is demonstrated where the timing of joining the organisation (the period effect) impacts on the sense of meaning shared by that cohort. In this case, the Disturber Cohort not only brought different scripts and logics to their daily practice, and had a stronger sense of belonging to their profession,

but they also underwent different socialisation processes. These dynamics meant that over time their sense of meaning continued to differ from the cohorts engaged before them.

This chapter is laid out in the following order. The next section is 'the findings' which starts with Table 4-1, showing a summary of the first order categories and second order themes that have been developed from the data, and then the case study is placed in its industry context. The order of the remainder of the chapter is based on the distilled themes from Table 4-1: first the past (as perceived by the participants) is reviewed, followed by the PC. Once this has been described in-depth, the chapter moves on to outline the immediate environment in which Umfula is situated and how this helps to create the conditions that disturb Umfula's PC, through boundary sub-cultures and the Disturber Cohort; a process of low-intensity, long-term conflict. In turn, this gives rise to the emergence of a new culture and its tool-kit. This chapter provides an understanding of how organisational culture adapts overtime (the second research question). The concluding section of this chapter draws together the emerging framework, which is set out in Figure 4-9: Umfula culture process flow.

4.2   The findings

Following the approach suggested by Gioia et al. (2013), first order categories were distilled into second order themes. The analysis of these themes and the existing literature showed the importance of the different internal and external dynamics. These dynamics have been developed into a culture process flow with seven themes; the past (theme 1) informs the current PC (theme 2) of the firm, which in turn is perpetuated by maintenance mechanisms (3). The immediate external environment (4) interacts with the firm, principally through boundary sub-cultures (5) and new hires (who create a Disturber Cohort). These change mechanisms disturb the flow of the PC and interact with the maintenance mechanisms in a process of low-intensity, long-term conflict (6). Through

this process a new culture emerges (7) which forms the past for the next future.

Representative evidence for each of these themes is shown in Table 4-1 and the culture

process flow is summarised in the discussion section as Figure 4-9.

Second order Themes (numbered) and first order Categories (letters)	Representative Data
Table 4-1: Culture process flow: Second order themes, first order categories and representative data	

Table 4-1: Culture process flow: Second order themes, first order categories and representative data

Second order Themes (numbered) and first order Categories (letters)	Representative Data
	1. The Past
a. Superior returns from a regulated industry	*"They [high returns] were greater, they were guaranteed. Because not only did the regulation absolutely prevent, or pretty much prevent any sugar from coming in, you didn't even have to compete against your competitors, because the likes of Somfula and ourselves marketed our sugar through a single marketing organisation. So your ancillary costs of competitional sales just went dead, because you didn't have to do it."* (Commercial manager describing the former sugar market.)
	"you could see exactly what your role was like, prescribed, and you knew exactly what was expected of you" (Human resources manager)
b. End of isolation of apartheid allowed Somfula to expand outside South Africa	*"suddenly the doors opened and we were able to invest into Africa… And very quickly got invested in the neighbouring countries. … the growing conditions were better than in South Africa and the markets were better than in South Africa. And as a result of that, our expansion and capital and a lot of the drive in Somfula Sugar focused outputs."* (Executive describing how the expansion into Africa of Somfula.)
	Somfula goes from being solely a South African business to one where only 35% of its production and 14% of its profit are sourced from South Africa in 2011. (Somfula Sugar, 2012b)
c. Land redistribution impacts on cane supply	*"there's land hunger and there needs to be redistribution of land"* (Interview with executive)
	"The South African sugar industry has this big cloud hanging over its head, as indeed the entire agricultural industry in South Africa, and that is land reform." (Executive describing the impact of land redistribution.)
	2. Prevailing Culture as defined by the basic assumptions
a. Wisdom is held by executives	*"A lot more power resides at the centre because of the way we operate."* (Executive)
	"at Umfula it was I think most of the major decisions were made by top echelons, director level, MD or 2iC. Yes, I think it was a very much more hierarchical structure." (Commercial manager)
b. Maintaining stability is important; time/speed are less important	*"I've got to finish a board paper, or I've got to get to an industry meeting. We'll pick this up tomorrow, and tomorrow becomes the day after, the day after. And then you've got to rehash the whole thing again, and before you know it, 6 weeks have gone past and the same decision ends up being made, that could have been made 6 weeks before"* (Commercial manager)
	"we move at a pedestrian pace, is what really I'm saying. I don't think we move decisively on anything. And I don't think we are a company strike while the iron is hot, we'll want to have meetings and call for reports and go to the board meeting and I think that's how we work" (Commercial manager interview)
c. We are a family and take care of each other: a family is a hierarchy	*"I think we have quite a deep level of sharing of information, whether it be family, spiritual, social, whatever the case may be. We might not eat dinner at one another's houses on a Saturday night but we share intimate things".* (Middle manager)
	"I can't think of a single incident of where a poor performer was dismissed" (Operations manager on the impact of the extended family concept on performance management.)
d. If you maximise sugar production success will come	*"We are a production driven organisation. Let's not kid ourselves"* (Commercial manager)
	"You must make X amount of tonnage, irrespective of the quality. You must produce it and we must pack it and then make it other people's problem." (Commercial manager)
e. The industry regulations will protect the level of profit.	When discussing declining prices at a management meeting, the emphasis is on bolstering further regulation. (Meeting observation)
	"We occasionally look at our position and see how they're doing but we serve with our opposition on a lot of industry committees. So Hewlett's, TSB, we would be sitting together in the same room and we know each other" (An executive talking about relations with Umfula's competitors.)
f. Accumulated sugar knowledge is the source of truth	The annual accounts reify the importance of the number of years of sugar experience each executive has. (Document review)
	"the other thing that I found quite interesting is people like to reengineer things. They need put a sugar label on it" (Interview with an operations manager referring to the need for equipment and processes to be sugar specific.)

Culture process flow: Second order themes, first order categories and representative data continued	
Second order Themes (numbered) and first order Categories (letters)	**Representative Data**
**3. Maintenance Mechanisms**
a. Surveillance	*"There's a whole lot of obviously rules and regulations and procedures that are in place, that are adhered to. But it's a fairly autocratic decision making process. And so it goes up the system."* (Commercial manager)
	"You can do it, but the problem is, is that you end up with a - the problems compound themselves. Because you are not operating within the agreed parameters of how Umfula will do business. Don't go there until you have done it, you've crossed the 'I's and dotted the 'T's. Because invariably those things will come back to bite you." (Agricultural manager on why it's not worth fighting the system.)
b. employment practices	*"Because [they] are plucking out people that, I don't know if they even want to go, number one. And then you're souring relationships with a whole load of other people who have a desire to go. So I think that system - the system needs some serious thought there"* (Commercial manager referring to how promotions are decided.)
	"Sometimes people will actually sacrifice their views you know, for the sake of a relationship. One of the phrases that I learnt quickly when I joined Somfula was that might be a career-limiting comment" (Human resources manager referring to the control on promotions.)
c. boundary management	*"we then looked at the South African business and found that there were underperforming areas and we sold them off"* (Executive explaining the sale of three mills.)
	"we knew that it needed to assist the whole land redistribution process and economic development of the previously disadvantaged which was a really good way of doing it. And also to mitigate our risk" (Executive on the sale of land in 1990s.)
**4. Immediate Environment**
a. Reduction in sugar cane supply due to land transfers to less experienced and resourced farmers	*"we're in a situation where our factory is short of raw material and we need to secure our cane supply and the strategy there has simply been to identify underperforming parts of our supply chain, and then target those with interventions. And from what I've already explained, it's clear that those interventions need to be in the small-scale grower and new freehold grower areas."* (Interview with Agriculture Manager)
	" [we have] replaced our body of growers with a weaker group and when the times got tough, you notice that" (Interview with agriculture manager)
b. Reduction in sugar cane due to the uncertain environment for commercial farmers	*"I think that's had a major impact on the total cane supply that's available. Obviously with uncertainty around whether you own your farm or you don't own it has prevented some of the big commercial growers from reinvesting in their crops because they're not sure about the future. So I think that in general we've seen the cane yields in South Africa dwindling as a result of that."* (Commercial manager)
	"I need to plant [re-invest in] one tenth of my farm, those fields over there. Oh, but if there's a land claim hanging over this farm's head, maybe I'll get another yield out or another two" (Executive referring to the underinvestment by commercial growers)
c. Customers demand quality sugar	*"[Name of an international soft drinks company] had the pressure from overseas to meet the standards, so they've been a benchmark for a lot of manufacturers in this country... nowadays most manufacturers have been upgraded to that kind of standard"* (Interview with a commercial manager)
	"I think that competition in the markets, especially in the local market, has become a lot more competitive ... the markets and the suppliers in the markets haven't really changed that much" (Senior commercial manager on the increase in competition)
d. Selling three mills created competition and reduced refined (quality) sugar capacity	*"So that's a new competitor for brown sugar. So we've got a new competitor for white sugar, a new competitor for brown sugar; both are supplying sugar to customers that used to be Umfula customers."* (Commercial manager referring to the complex impact of selling three mills on the market for sugar.)
	"our access to refined sugar has declined because two of the mills that we sold off did our converting and had refineries and so therefore we've only got one refinery now" (Executive interview)

Culture process flow: Second order themes, first order categories and representative data continued	
Second order Themes (numbered) and first order Categories (letters)	**Representative Data**
5. Change mechanisms that disturb the flow, by different cohorts and boundary sub-cultures	
a. Disturber Cohort	*"They have partners who are pursuing their own careers. So you find that it is relatively hard for them to uproot themselves."* (Human Resources GM referring to lifestyle choices by a new generation.)
	"I think people disagree and then they don't dispute it. There is no climate of allowing people to voice say, sorry I disagree with you." (Operations manager on his frustration with the lack of public disagreement)
b. boundary sub-culture	*"What they're not in control of and what is the - where the problem lies is in the availability of raw materials. We are now totally reliant, or far more reliant on people to bring the cane into the mill at the right time, and if they decide to not do it or they decide to do their own thing"* *(Agriculture manager)*
	"The organisation needs to do that, it's not keeping up with the demands of the market....because I interact with the customers, I know what they need ...but we're just not so far willing to spend the money to do that." (Commercial manager)
6. Low-intensity, long-term, continual conflict	
a. The Prevailing culture and its maintenance mechanisms come into contact with the disrupting forces. This creates low-intensity, long-term conflict. Examples are drawn from agriculture	*"it just seems to be a - nothing seems to happen. And that might not be due to a lack of leadership by our senior managers."* (Agriculture manager)
	"I have been very vocal about the lack of response and I am sure if you ask [name of peer] that question, he will voice some frustration as well. We've certainly rung the alarm bells" (Agriculture manager)
b. Commercial	*"I think only now the guys are seeing, actually realising that you've got to produce quality. You can't just be efficient and effective producers. You've actually got to produce quality... And I think that's been a huge learning curve for Umfula"* (Commercial manager)
	"I say my piece but I think there's a lot of things that aren't being said at the moment about quality and things and you know" (Commercial manager on his discussions on quality of sugar.)
c. Overall business	*"well if you have a look at our returns they're just simply not sustainable. There's no way that any shareholder in the long-term would want to invest in this business."* (Executive commenting on the influence of external forces)
	"South Africa is very much under pressure at the moment." (Executive on the pressure from the reduction in raw material and pressure in the sales market.)
7. New culture & toolkits emerge	
From the low-intensity, long-term conflict a new culture and toolkit emerge, on ways to approach the lack of raw material and improving sugar quality.	*"I'm so excited because for the very first time cane supply is now top of our list. I believe that's right... we had a visit from the group and South African directors to come and encourage us and really offer us an opportunity to take a white piece of paper and redesign what we do. I believe that is what we need. And I am very pleased that we have been heard. It's taken a while"* (Agriculture manager)
	"think for a long time the marketing department has been saying, guys - our quality is not good, duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh and it's only now kind of sinking in that, yes, we have got a lot of catching up to do. And I think it's, they're trying to change it very, very fast ...we've got an outside pressure helping us fight the causes as it were" (Commercial manager)

4.3 The industry context

Prior to the presentation of the key findings of the case, it is useful to provide a brief description of the context of this study, as this combined with the past are key determinants of the present day Umfula (Langley et al., 2013, Pettigrew, 2012)

The sugar industry has a long heritage in South Africa, where sugarcane was first planted in 1848, and indentured workers arrived from India in 1861 (Somfula Sugar, 1991). The industry's history is interwoven with colonial development, and it had a privileged and protected position in the pre-1994 regime, with considerable regulation and a lack of competition (Cousins, 2011). The sugar industry plays an important part in the economics of KwaZulu Natal province, directly employing 74,000 people or 5% of all those employed (National Agricultural Marketing Council of South Africa, 2013). The cane supply comes from three sources the farms owned by sugar producers (miller-cum-planter or MCP; 8% of supply in 2011/12); large-scale commercial growers (LSG) predominantly owned by white farmers (83%); and smaller scale growers (SSG) who are predominantly black growers (9%) (South African Sugarcane Growers Association, 2014).

Umfula and its parent company, Somfula, have a history dating back over 120 years; its first mill was established in November 1890. It has been the largest player in the South African industry for some time; prior to 2005 it produced 60% of all sugar in the country. Since three mills were sold, this share has reduced to 30% (SASA, 2013). Umfula currently has four sugar mills.

The sale of sugar is regulated in South Africa, through the Sugar Act 1978 and Sugar Industry Agreements (SIAs). The latter are determined by the South African Sugar Association. There is a structure through the SIAs that partially redistributes income

between firms for both export and South African sales, reducing the impact of price competition on sugar producers.

The sugar industry's prior history of having a large market share, stability and benefits from regulation, have in prior research been associated with it being resistant to change (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012) especially when the firm has been successful immediately after a change in regulation (Oertel et al., 2016). The increase in competition for sugar sales and externally-sourced raw material may, therefore, be anticipated as requiring an adjustment in the organisational culture (Fox-Wolfgramm et al., 1998).

4.4   The past

As shown in the previous section, the sugar industry in South Africa was privileged in the apartheid era. Table 4-2 illustrates the development of Umfula from the late apartheid era onwards. It shows that under the apartheid regime the business can be perceived to be stable, as in the period leading up to its end in 1994, the sugar market was highly regulated, factories were running at full production and the business was highly profitable. Given the high level of capital expenditure, running the assets at full capacity optimises profitability (Umfula, 2011). In this period there was a steady flow of qualified engineers, as an operations director said:

> *"Back in those days when I first joined, everything was so sure, so predictable and the industry was highly regulated. So basically you knew where the industry was going and the career paths of individuals were also very clear."*

The theme that the past was more stable than the present is a recurring idea arising from the data sources; it is not possible to assess the strength of the claim.

Table 4-2: Timeline of the development of Umfula

	Past (pre 1994)	Prevailing Culture	The flow is disturbed
	Superior returns, perception of stability	Widespread, and frequently observed	Immediate environment changes
Summary	Highly regulated market; full factories; profitable. c60% market share Lifting of sanctions permits expansion into Africa Steady supply of engineers & accountants, who over time are promoted into any role	The basic assumptions: - Accumulated sugar knowledge - Wise executives - Stability - Production - Family	c30% market share International quality standards Demand for product changes Restriction in raw material & supply of consumer grade sugar Different cohorts recruited, with new scripts and knowledge
Reduction of Cane Supply	Cane grown by either Umfula or reliable commercial growers UMFULA was a significant land owner. Agricultural land predominantly owned by companies and white farmers	By 1999, half of all cane land under claim (68,722 ha) 1996 Umfula sells half of its cane land to new growers, in response to the nation's transformation imperative.	Only 22% of land claims resolved by 2012 Cane supply has reduced by 3.1% each year from 2001-11 2012 Small growers deliver 140k t of sugar cane (a reduction of 60% from 1994)
Customers	Industry regulation & apartheid restrict competition Customers have limited choice, accept sugar delivered	UMFULA is internally focused, on its operations, not on customer needs Sale of two mills reduces the ability to service customers *"quality"* sugar (2004, 2009)	Customers' expectations increase as they become internationalised Customers demand more *"quality"* sugar

Analysis of strategy documents reveals that in agriculture, the combination of Umfula-owned cane farms (MCP) and the strong commercial grower sector provided a reliable, steady supply of raw material and this environment supported the development of the PC of Umfula.

The historical landscape began to change in the early 1990s; Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990, sanctions were lifted and the first full franchise elections took place in 1994. The new ANC government was less interested in the sugar industry and favoured less protective regulation (Nowicki, 2004). In addition, it put in place legislation to return land to those who were dispossessed since 1913 (restitution), and to redistribute farmland to address the highly skewed ownership along racial lines (Cousins, 2011). Against this backdrop Somfula Group decided to sell off half of Umfula's directly-owned farms, ahead of the legislation (McGregor and Pearce, 2007).

With the lifting of sanctions, Somfula expanded into other African countries, purchasing controlling interests in parastatal businesses in Mozambique (1996) and Tanzania (1998); and other sugar companies' interests in Malawi and Swaziland (1997), and Zambia (2001). The consequence of this was that Somfula went from being a South African business to one where only 35% of its production and 14% of its profit arose in South Africa (Somfula Sugar, 2012b). Given the expansion of Somfula, the Umfula division was created to manage the South African business. The longer-serving managers in Umfula joined the business before the creation of the separate business unit. This change of geographic focus has been felt in Umfula, with an executive observing that his staff has *"been repeatedly canvassed"* to relocate to the African operations. A middle manager commented:

> *"Of course it has changed the dynamic significantly as an organisation. And there was a lot of focus on the African side. There was a time when it felt like all South Africa was doing was a nursery ground for people to then move into Africa."*

Executives were also conscious of the reduction in investment in Umfula that has accompanied the regional growth of Somfula. An executive commented:

"certainly there has been no investment and capacity in the plants in South Africa. And yeah, I guess the whole focus of the groups have not been on investment in the South African business."

The change of focus by Somfula, and the change in the markets for sugar cane and sugar create a different context for the future of Umfula. The next section will describe the current PC, and the following section will outline the immediate environment, and how the change in context is being registered in Umfula.

4.5   The Prevailing Culture

Within Umfula there is a PC; prevailing in the sense that it is widespread and frequently observed; like a 'prevailing wind.' This section describes the PC as observed by those whom experience it on a daily basis. Although widespread, through the research it has become clear that the strength of this prevailing wind and its full nature was not obvious to any individual in the case study, a phenomena observed in other studies (Dacin et al., 2010). At the risk of mixing metaphors, culture is *"like water is to the fish... [it] enables and structures our behaviour without us being aware of it"* (Morris et al., 2008 p.517), and even a coherent culture such as the one at Umfula may not be described by any one person. Given the lack of overt understanding of the full nature of this culture by those directly involved, a detailed analysis was undertaken using Schein's (2010, 1996, 1990) three levels of culture: visible artefacts; espoused values; and basic assumptions. These are examined each in turn below, and additional supporting evidence for these is set out in Table 4-1.

4.5.1   Visible artefacts

During the site visit, it was observed that on entering the offices and factory administration areas there was a locked, secure entrance that had to be navigated. In the office areas, it was striking how quiet the space was, with people huddled in their own offices. In the older buildings, this meant long silent corridors.

Alongside these physical barriers the emphasis, as evidenced by discussions at the General Managers' Meeting, was on working alone to solve issues, and writing formal reports to be considered at a series of Board Meetings. The tone in observed formal and informal conversations was civil, with deference to executives. Yet, at the same time as this quiet reflexivity, there was a sense of friendliness, with communal lunches and Friday afternoon drinks in the purpose-built bar area (the *"Sickly Aloe"*). As an executive observed, *"we certainly socialise together on a Friday afternoon you know, sort of 4.30 comes and we go to the pub downstairs and most people come and have one or two drinks".*

On site visits, it was striking how prominently the logo of the parent company (Somfula) was proudly displayed, not only in reception but also on clothing and even on the glassware (see Figure 4-1). Although Umfula has its own logo, it is noticeable that the more dominant one is that of the parent company, Somfula. The desired dress code for men was jacket and tie, although not necessarily suits.

Document analysis demonstrates how the management team tended to have long service; their median length of service was 25 years. They had known each other over a sustained period of time and started their careers in the remote sugar mill environment, living in assigned company housing, with their families socialising together. An executive explained

that: *"we still know each other very well. Wives still get together even though we're not working on the estate anymore and so on. And there's a lot of that, there is a lot of that."*

Figure 4-1: The logo of the parent group is prominently displayed throughout the building

Aston University

Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

Figure 4-2: The Sizana time machine

Aston University

Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

At a management conference that was attended as part of the research, there were displays of the photos from the past (see Figure 4-2) included historical photos of managers fishing together, family days out, and a wedding; in this photo montage priority was given to showing executives. Visits to the head office revealed that there was an emphasis on long working hours and being in the office before the official start time (8 am). This was confirmed by a long-serving manager, who observed: *"none of us ever worry about the hours we work, it's not an issue of hours. It really was an issue of belief in the company, pride in what you're doing".* Being visible and available was important, to be in the office and to be seen to be in the office. At the end of the working day, the office emptied promptly. On occasion, the

research interviews went on beyond normal working hours of 4 pm, by which time the last interviewee and researcher would be the only people left in the office.

4.5.2 Espoused values

The second tier of Schein's model, espoused values, are the beliefs that managers indicated were important to them, which they valued (Schein, 2010). In Umfula the discussions with managers about the PC revealed three key features; identity, control and sociability. The control feature underpins the cultural maintenance mechanism, theme 3 in culture process flow.

Somfula gives Umfula its sense of identity, managers identified strongly with the parent company, displaying fierce loyalty. The sense of identity had two features; belonging to the wider Somfula Group, as demonstrated by the visual prominence of the corporate logo, and belonging to the even wider sugar industry. A relatively short-service operations manager explained what he had observed: *"they need put a sugar label on it...tinkering and changing things and you say, 'but other industries do that'. No a pump in the sugar industry is not specific to the sugar industry"*. In this case, specific sugar knowledge is privileged over institutional professional knowledge. A further example is the annual accounts of Somfula, in which the description of each Executive Director lists their years of sugar industry experience (Somfula Sugar, 2012a). This development of a sugar identity, rather than a professional identity, allowed managers to adopt roles not associated with their profession; for example a logistics planner who was an accountant and a commercial director and the former head of government relations.

Control over daily production is an important surveillance mechanism that perpetuates the PC. An operations manager talked about the impact of micro-managing on his daily

work, as illustrated by his (A4) daily production schedule shown in Figure 4-3 ; he always had to be prepared for the daily calls that could discuss this wide range of measures:

"It's challenging, it's very challenging. It's because we measure so many things … I think we do too much micro-managing …So my day starts off in the morning by 6 o'clock getting feedback on my cell phone, and this is how much cane we crushed and duh-duh-duh-duh …[my boss] will call me. How's it going? Not every day. But there will be the days, so I've got to be prepared every day."

Figure 4-3: Sizana daily production report

In this tightly control environment, a factory manager proposed altering the manufacturing process to reduce cost and increase profitability, but it would have involved reducing sugar production. He explained: *"I had to go – how many levels? One, two, three, four, five levels above me to go and justify why that's the right thing to do".* The

proposal went to the Operations Director of Somfula, and was rejected. This example illustrates that for a relatively straightforward operational question, the Somfula surveillance mechanisms are intrusive and effective: maximising the volume of sugar is privileged over other considerations. An executive, commenting on the factory manager's actions referred to them as *"a campaign"* to try to get his way. He went further *"you don't do that and that's it finished, no more argument. So that's … he's had his chance to speak his words, to say what he wants but he's been overruled"*.

As a senior HR manager remarked, *"decision-making powers are still located at the corporate level"*. This is viewed as an exhausting bureaucracy by middle managers, as a commercial manager reported *"often the system constrains your ability… it's tiring! [laughs]"*.

An important employment practice - and a control mechanism that maintains the culture - is that of the Somfula Executive retaining the decision-making rights over managerial appointments in Umfula. This was a closed process; a GM of HR reported that *"this selection process is not clear, just the prerogative of the Executive"*. He went on to say:

> *"if they hear something about you, they just believe that without investigating. And sometimes they feel that the Executive will use very superficial information on individuals."*

Managers felt frustrated by this process, as an agricultural manager who had not received a promotion reported:

"[I've] put my name down three times, and nobody has contacted me. I think - and that has annoyed me intensely and I've written to the Human Resources Director and I've been to talk about it. ... not even an acknowledgement that I've actually submitted my request and so on. That's been frustrating for me. Because I've been exceptionally frustrated here at Sizana. You get stale after a while doing the same thing, 23 years and you need, sometimes you need a change."

This control privileged stability over quick decisions, leading a commercial manager to comment that Umfula is *"a very conservative, fairly old-fashioned, slow-moving giant"* and another manager commented that *"we move at a pedestrian pace, is what really I'm saying. I don't think we move decisively on anything"*. This sense was reflected in the built environment, observed on site visits.

The informal conversations observed revealed that there was a high-level of sociability, a friendliness in the organisation. This was confirmed by the questionnaire (Goffee and Jones, 2003) results, which included a sociability score of 41: a score above the mid-point of 34 indicated raised levels of sociability. In addition to the survey data, the finding of sociability is also evidenced by the level of knowledge displayed about each other's families in interviews. As one manager said, *"I think we have quite a deep level of sharing of information, whether it be family, spiritual, social, whatever the case may be."*

The closeness arose in part from the long employment service of managers; the close familial mill environment they were acculturated in; and that their families still socialised together. When they were serving at the mills, they lived in houses in a company-owned village, and on site visits it was noted that these are located immediately adjacent to the mill. There were two consequences of the sociability articulated by managers; a reticence

to dismiss managers and an aversion to public conflict. An operations director gave the example of how he managed disagreements with colleagues:

> *"[in private] we would argue like hell with each other. ...we would argue like hell on certain issues. And by the time we got to our meeting, our head of department meeting, we'd resolved our differences".*

A consequence of the sociability, and a feature of the employment practices, was a reluctance to tackle individual performance. It was reported by executive and middle managers that there have been no dismissals for the poor performance of managers. An analysis of the documents provided recorded that a policy for performance management was in place, although as an operations director observed, *"you're going to say to me give me an example [of a dismissal] and I can't!"* and an operations manager noted, *"I can't think of a single incident of where a poor performer was dismissed"*. The Goffee and Jones questionnaire drew out this important value in Umfula, with 68% of respondents agreeing that poor performance was not dealt with quickly and firmly.

Aspects of the espoused values form an important part of the maintenance mechanisms set out in Table 4-1, in particular the surveillance and employment practices set out above and these will be discussed in more detail in the discussion section 4.8.1.

In conclusion, the espoused values that were articulated by managers, and supported by the survey data, are those of: sugar identity; central control; and high sociability. These are a reflection of deeply embedded basic assumptions.

4.5.3   Basic assumptions

An analysis of the espoused values, and their link to the visible artefacts, was undertaken to codify the basic assumptions, the third tier of Schein's model. Figure 4-4 sets out the basic assumptions of the PC.

As Figure 4-4 depicts, the production-led ethos shown in the previous two sections is an important cornerstone of the business, based on the premise that maximising production will optimise profits. This assumption is closely linked to a second one, that industry regulations will maximise profitability of Umfula by minimising national competition and preventing imports. As we shall see, these linked assumptions are contested by the immediate environmental forces. The source of truth in Umfula is accumulated sugar knowledge; developed by years of experience and practical understanding of sugar. The number of years a manager has been working in the sugar industry is of the upmost importance, and equipment (like pumps) should be purpose-built for the sugar industry.

Figure 4-4: The basic assumptions of the Prevailing Culture of Umfula

Boxes:
- If you maximise sugar production success will follow
- The industry regulations will protect the level of profit.
- Accumulated sugar knowledge is the source of the truth
- Maintaining control is important; time/ speed are less important
- Wisdom is held by executives
- We are a family and take care of each other: a family is a hierarchy
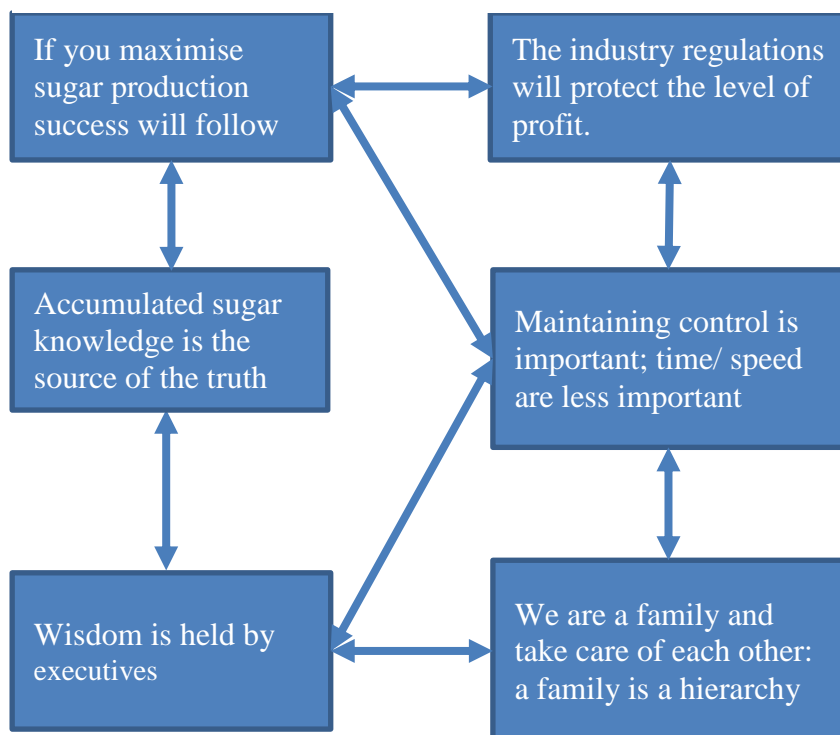
The strength of the organisation was in its accumulated, tacit body of knowledge, making sugar was compared to an art (an operations manager compared it to "*baking a cake*"), and this knowledge is understood to reside in the executives. Simple operational decisions were taken by executives, as shown by the example of the factory manager being overruled by a Somfula executive. The underlying world-view was one of a steady business, where if you maximise production, put up regulatory barriers and follow executives, success is guaranteed. Maintaining this stability was privileged over 'hasty' decisions, leading to the middle managers' comments that Umfula is a conservative, pedestrian-paced place to work.

The business was described (for an example, see the espoused values section 4.5.2) as a family or having a family feel, a family providing shelter and structure, evidenced by the security of employment discussed in the previous section. In return for this shelter, managers were expected to obey their executives, as the factory manager was expected to do.

In summary, the important features of the PC are: a focus on physical sugar production; regulation and the view that the Sugar Industry Agreement will always protect the business's profit; that the basis of truth is accumulated tacit sugar knowledge and this wisdom resides in executives; that stability is of the upmost importance; and that the business is a hierarchical family. Having set this out, the next section will cover one of the challenges to these basic assumptions, the Immediate Environment.

4.6   Immediate business environment

In the immediate business environment (theme 4 in culture process flow), there are two recurring themes that place sustained pressure on the firm's way of working: the

procurement of sufficient sugar cane; and the supply of the right 'quality' of sugar. Understanding the influence of these themes is useful in answering the first research question. These will be dealt with in turn.

As set out in the industry context section (4.3), in 1994 (at the end of Apartheid) Umfula owned 18,000 hectares of farmland; it was one of the largest land owners in South Africa. The company was not in a comfortable position as a business with a colonial history in a country with an empowerment imperative. In advance of anticipated government legislation, the company decided to sell about half of its cane producing land (9,618 hectares) to Smaller Scale Growers (SSG). Other land was transferred from Large Commercial Growers (LCG) to SSGs as part of the government's land reform programme. These new growers have struggled to maintain output for two principle reasons: a lack of experience and knowledge; and a lack of working capital. Some land has gone out of use and in the remainder productivity has fallen.

The government's programme hit funding constraints and the transfer process slowed to a trickle. In 1998 50% of cane land (68,722 ha) was the subject of a Land Claim. By 2013, just 22%% of these claims (14,821 ha) had been resolved, of which two-thirds was restituted (Umfula, 2013). An executive added this issue to other factors facing farmers:

> *"with Somfula moving off into Africa there are some growers saying that eh is Umfula here to stay? Or are they bent on going off? So there is some uncertainty amongst the growers as well. There is that, over and above land claims and the weather and things like that".*

This slow process created uncertainty for the farming community, and combined with Somfula's expansion into Africa, resulted in an under investment by commercial farmers

and a further reduction in the cane supply. In total, sugar cane deliveries have reduced by a cumulative annual rate of 3.1%, as shown in Figure 4-5 below (Umfula company data).

Figure 4-5: Volume of cane supplied to Umfula in millions of tonnes 2001 to 2011
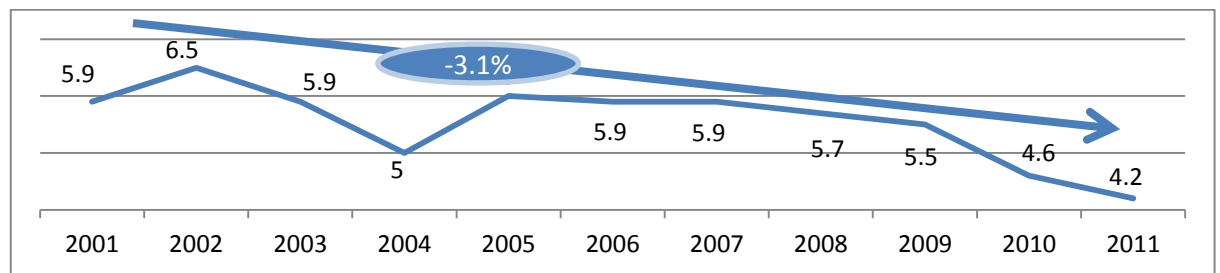
As analysis of financial performance results reveals, this impacted heavily on the performance of mills, *"in fact all of our mills are running under-capacity because of the decline in cane suppliers"* (an operations director).

This loss of supply was a challenge to the internally-focused Umfula, who privileged control and stability. This was summarised by an agriculture (middle) manager:

> *"(the factory) are always in control of their processes. What they're not in control of and what is the - where the problem lies is in the availability of raw materials. We are ... far more reliant on people to bring the cane into the mill at the right time, and if they decide to not do it or they decide to do their own thing"*

In a highly operationally geared business this reduction in raw material supply led to a substantial decline in profits from ZAR 314 million in 2002 to a loss of ZAR 22 million in 2011 (Umfula, 2011).

The other external market force on Umfula is an increase in the demand for the right quality of sugar. The transition to democracy brought international companies into the marketplace, including soft drink companies. At the same time, Somfula took the significant decision to sell three factories that produced the consumer-grade sugar that these companies demanded. This left Umfula with most of its production being only export standard, which requires reprocessing before consumption. Previously, in a market where supply was constrained and regulated, the business was more insulated from the demands of the customers. But, in a similar way to the situation with cane supply, over time the market changed and this put Umfula in a position where as the Managing Director put it, *"every bag of sugar that's produced needs to be of a high quality"*. This, however, is a challenge in a business with the Basic Assumption that production quantity is privileged over its quality.

4.7 The flow is disturbed and changed

In the following section, the pressure from the immediate external environment is reviewed and shown to be transmitted into Umfula (see: culture process flow, theme 5) through two mechanisms. Firstly, through the managers whose roles are adjacent to the firm's external boundary (dealing with customers and growers), and secondly, from different cohorts of managers joining the business. As shown in the simple value chain in Figure 4-6, the two groups that occupy the boundary positions are the agricultural and commercial managers, as the former procure cane and the latter sell sugar. Due to their position they develop boundary sub-cultures. These two groups will be reviewed in turn, starting with the agricultural managers.

Figure 4-6: A simple value chain showing the location of the agriculture and commercial
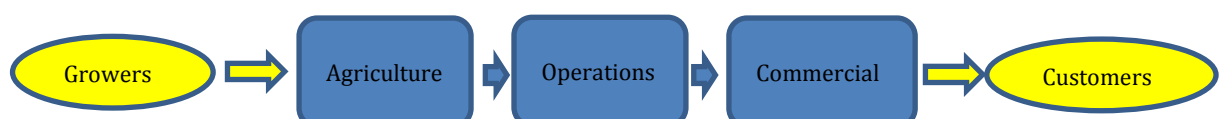
4.7.1 Boundary sub-cultures

As discussed previously, the reduction in cane grown by Small Scale Growers (SSG) was due to structural problems brought about by a lack of farming knowledge and working capital. Part of the SSG estate was created through the sale of land from Umfula. Commenting on those sales, an agriculture manager reported:

> *"I don't think there was a follow through of well, where's the capital going to come from? Where are the resources going to come from? Where's - you need all those things to try and make this thing happen".*

In this sense, part of the cane volume issue was created by Umfula's lack of a coherent transition process at the time of the sale of land to SSG. One of the agricultural managers at Sizana, responsible for putting in place solutions to these issues, put this lacklustre response down to a lack of understanding in the wider business about the scale of the challenge. He continued to be measured on the single figure of cane delivered from the business's own land (MCP) to meet the hourly and daily schedule of the factory. *"Yes, and that's something that has absolutely intrigued me....I often feel like a single figure manager".*

Company documents that track performance (for an example see Figure 4-3) reveal that there were no measures for success in developing cane supply from smallholders. Historically the agriculture manager struggled to have substantial dialogue on how to achieve this. He perceived a conflict between what he was being measured on and the overall need to deliver a sustainable cane supply, however he felt constrained not to work around the system. The survey showed that 68% of managers disagreed that "to get something done you can work around the system". As this agricultural manager said:

"Obviously one has to be very careful there to not break too many rules along the way. And I want to say that our audits are clean. And so that [rule breaking] can't be happening too much."

An agricultural manager referred to his dialogue with executives about the challenge to procure cane. Over a three-year period he repeated the same presentation:

"I have had presentations from 2009, when I think I was to speak again; I've just repeated the presentation. Guys, you know -I have spoken about this last time...the presentation was well received and I had lots of compliments, but nothing's happened. So you know what? You're going to listen to me again. Because the problem ain't gone away!"

This process of persistent contestation (theme 6 of the culture process flow) has had some effect. Belatedly (in the view of agriculture managers), executives agreed a plan to start addressing the needs of smaller scale growers. The agricultural manager went on *"I just hope that with [executives] coming in, I believe, certainly the meeting I had with [them] the other day, it just seem like a breath of fresh air"*. He went on to explain *"I'm so excited because for the very first time cane supply is now top of our list"*. When relaying the news to his team he reported himself as saying *"guys, put the sails up, the wind's blowing in a different direction. Expect to go where you haven't been before!"*

The long process of addressing the needs of this group of farmers appears to have begun. However, the bureaucratic process continues to be recursive. In Umfula, the budget is an important surveillance mechanism, and when the next budget was drawn up for the financial year 2012/2013, this focused the agricultural team on increasing cane supply from MCP, which make up just 7% of Umfula's raw material supply. An analysis of the documents showed that there remained no budget targets or Key Performance Indicators

for the 93% of the cane supply (SSGs and LCGs) that the business does not directly farm (see Figure 4-7).

Figure 4-7: Budget summary focuses on internal cane (MCP) production

South Africa – Statistics

	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Forecast	2013 Budget
Tons cane - MCP	361 002	266 963	241 574	344 989
Yield tons/hectare - MCP	69.9	51.8	58.2	70.6
Sucrose % cane - MCP	13.5	14.6	12.2	13.7
Tons Cane per Hour -TCH	1 137	1 059	915	1 103
% of Installed TCH	87.9%	81.8%	88.5%	85.2%
Overall Time Efficiency	83.1	84.6	80.6	83.9
Overall Recoveries	85.6	84.7	82.8	85.5
Sugar Production - tons	662 936	577 639	437 322	596 115

646 115 tons less 50 000 tons (crop provision) = 596 115 tons

At the other end of the Umfula value chain (see Figure 4-6), commercial managers have experienced a similar issue. As discussed earlier, in the market for sugar there have been two themes that have combined to challenge the commercial team in Umfula. Firstly, the customers have raised their product standard and secondly, Umfula has reduced its capacity to supply that quality of sugar, as a result of its sale of factories. This has sandwiched the commercial team between demanding customers and the production ethos of the PC. Middle managers, in an echo of the agricultural managers, put this lack of response down to:

"our senior management has been too insular in the sugar industry. And let me

clarify that. They haven't been exposed enough to other companies. In other

words I don't think they've ever been to, the coke bottle facility, I don't think

they've ever been to, like Beacon, Cadbury's, Nestlé and all those manufacturing

facilities."

A discussion on quality at a General Managers Meeting illustrates this lack of interest in the external environment. When a reduction in sales was discussed there was disinterest in the purchases of individual customers. This is because from their perspective the Sugar Industry Agreements share sales revenue between competitors, dampening the direct impact of a loss of these sales. Further, the resulting action agreed at the meeting was to raise the matter at an industry meeting rather than with the customer. Further, while the company's surveillance mechanisms require rigorous reporting by the business, from the commercial team's perspective this overlooks quality:

 "Every Monday morning the mill will submit reports to the directors of their

performance of the previous week. And it's all about recovery; it's all about

percentage, efficiencies and stuff like that. And there's no quality on that. So if

your factory ran at 100% [of the time] and all that but produced poor quality

sugar, it doesn't really matter. Doesn't really matter. That's your factory had a

good week. And I mean that's the core that Umfula's run on."

Table 4-3: Distribution of references to sugar quality in Umfula

Level	Commercial		Operations		Agriculture		MD	
	Interviews	Mentions	Interviews	Mentions	Interviews	Mentions	Interviews	Mentions
Total	6	34	3	1	3	0	1	6

Like the agricultural team and their issue with growers, the idea of sugar quality has gradually diffused to other parts of the firm. Table 4-3 shows the concentration of

references to sugar quality in the interviews. It illustrates that the narrative of the commercial team is beginning to spread and a new culture is emerging. This stance now has a supporter in the Managing Director who reinforced that *"every bag of sugar that's produced needs to be of a high quality"*.

4.7.2 Cohorts: the impact of when managers join

The boundary sub-cultures are influenced by the interaction those functions have on a daily basis with actors outside the firm's boundaries; farmers and customers. In addition, a further source of contestation with the PC is the cohort that a manager belongs to. There is an observable difference between the responses of managers recruited in different periods of Umfula's life. This is in part explained by their professional capabilities prior to joining and also their experiences since joining. Those who were substantially influenced by the company's pre-1994 phase (see Table 4-2: Timeline of the development of Umfula) spent their early years at Umfula at one of the factories and living in company housing. For this cohort this meant that they knew each other very well, and their families continued to socialise together.

This important socialisation process was not available to those who joined Umfula in its current phase, for two reasons. The career structure was different, with the latter group joining in the middle of their careers; and secondly, the company housing had been sold off and the social structure that went with it had dissipated. For this cohort, referred to here as the Disturber Cohort (DC), this led to a reduction in affinity for their work colleagues. As a manager from this cohort reported, *"I think there is not that much personal ... close personal relationships between the guys"*. This is reinforced by another, who said: *"I don't think people share those type of things, about personal matters"*.

Previous cohorts are referred to as Cohort U.

Schein's framework was used earlier in this research to identify the basic assumptions of the PC. In line with these, Umfula has historically put managers into roles based on a level of trust and confidence, rather than their particular area of expertise. This earlier cohort shares either an engineering or accountancy background; of the accountants interviewed none currently worked in finance, and importantly they were seen to have strong sugar industry experience. The perception of managers was summed up by one as *"Umfula is bought on two things - engineers and accountants".*

However, the professional background of managers was changing, as shown in Table 4-4. The DC was more likely to have experience of their role from another industry. For instance: in the Commercial function the previous cohorts (Cohort U) were drawn either from accountancy or government relations; whereas the DC was drawn from a sales background, in for example textiles or packaged consumer goods; and a technical sales manager had a PhD in the relevant area. In Operations, the DC were graduates and referred to research from outside Umfula, such as the International Sugar Journal; evidence of a closer association with their institutional profession.

Table 4-4: Examples of professional backgrounds of Cohort U and Disturber Cohort

Cohort U		Disturber Cohort	
Role	Example Background	Role	Example Background
MD	Accountancy	Human Resources	HR graduate; Trade Unions
Commercial	Accountants; regulatory body	Commercial	PhD engineer; sales in textiles; and consumer goods
Operations	Apprentices with Umfula	Operations	Engineering graduate; Agric graduate & family farm

Table 4-4 shows a marked contrast between cohorts, with the DC bringing expertise in a wider range of professions and industries, working in an area of their expertise; none were accountants! The growing pressure from the immediate environment to improve the quality of staff in Commercial, for example, has led the business to employ specialists. The DC supported the production of the new narratives discussed in the boundary sub-culture section above. The DC perceived themselves as being embedded in their professional status and having less of a sugar identity, as one manager put it *"I'm not steeped in sugar like most of the people I guess you might be interviewing"*.

4.7.3   The new office: breathing space

On-site observation showed that the Umfula office was an interesting confluence of the PC and disturbing forces. The Umfula management team moved out of Somfula Head Office, motivated by a lack of space. However, the Umfula Leadership Team saw this as a good opportunity to establish a new *"vibe"*, and made statements in the choice of the built environment. The magnolia of the Somfula building was replaced with vibrant greens and reds; in place of the oil portraits of founding fathers in Umfula's offices were more contemporary displays (see Figure 4-8).

Disturber Cohort managers worked in the head office expressed hope that the office move would enable a change in the culture:

> *"I think that here we're able to work on our own culture. It's a lot younger, a lot more modern, a lot more flexible. I don't have to be here at 8 o'clock and go at 4 o'clock. And if I go off on a golf day with customers, I don't have to take half a day leave or … it's a lot more flexible".*

They also reported that the dress code had been relaxed now that they were not under the watchful eye of the Somfula Executive; *"we dress differently as the, we're far more relaxed and we're not the suit and tie brigade any more"*, with the result that it was felt a more relaxed place to visit. This was confirmed by a visit to Somfula Head Office, where the dress code was observed to be more formal.

Figure 4-8: Oil portraits on magnolia walls have been replaced with modern displays on colourful walls in the new Umfula office.
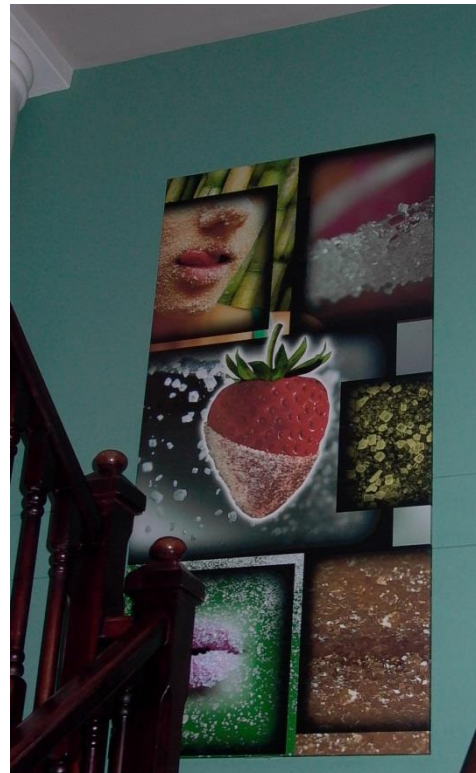
However, this process of change was contested, and has caused friction with managers in Somfula. This led to a frustration that expectations of a new beginning were not being met; *"you almost get a sense that you're getting exhausted trying to do this breakaway, and that's not happening"* and *"I haven't seen a material difference to date"* (commercial

manager from the Disturber Cohort working in the head office). This lack of material difference would indicate that this very observable initiative had yet to fructify.

This section has provided a rich description of Umfula's past and its current PC, based on the multiple data sources collected. Further, it has set out the conditions in the immediate environment and how these have influenced the boundary sub-cultures and new cohorts to search for new solutions and scripts. In this contest the PC presents a significant and exhausting barrier to change, as a middle commercial manager reported: *"we're meeting our internal requirements but external we don't really care about"* (senior commercial manager). This summation however fails to appreciate the shift that has occurred in Umfula's culture, which will be set out in the discussion below.

4.8   Discussion

This study centres on understanding the factors affecting the development of culture, from the organisation's history, its immediate environment and its agents in a previously stable, industrial, regulated firm. Agency may be understood to encompass a range of actions, from mundane daily practice to strategic executive-led interventions. This research is focused on how the interaction of these three factors affects culture over time, and the findings are summarised in Figure 4-9, a culture process flow, which is based on the structure of second order themes set out in Table 4-1. Whilst the figure aids understanding of the phenomena, like all visual maps, it is limited in illustrating the complexity.

The organisational culture of Umfula was maintained, intentionally and unintentionally, by a combination of internal forces and, at the same time, external forces that created the impetus for internal agency to work to adapt this culture. These exogenously-sourced counter currents were channelled through the teams whose daily work brought them into

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contact with the immediate external environment. Therefore, these teams developed

differentiated boundary sub-cultures. The counter currents were further amplified by

different cohorts of managers drawing from different repertoires of scripts to find

solutions to the challenges set down by the immediate external environment.

Figure 4-9: Umfula culture process flow
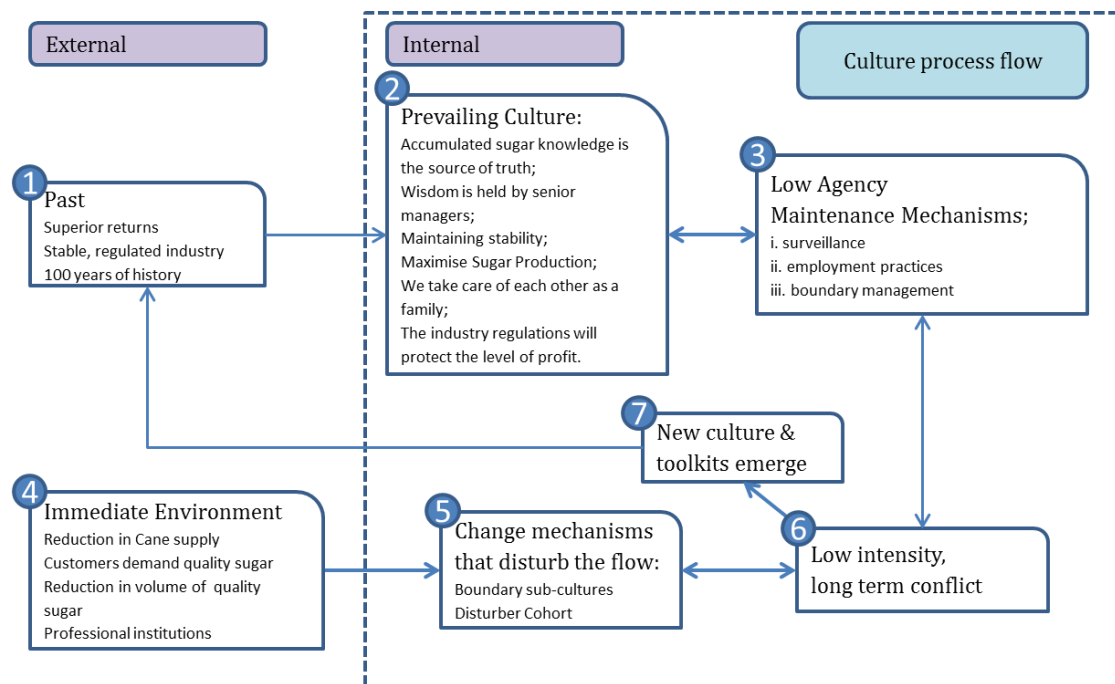
In Figure 4-9 the numbered boxes refer to the second order themes set out in Table 4-1:

Culture process flow: Second order themes, first order categories and representative data.

The boundary around the firm is shown as a dotted line to represent that it is permeable.

In this discussion section, the culture process flow is explained, firstly by setting out the

maintenance mechanisms (surveillance, employment practices and boundary

management) of the PC, and examining how when they are jointly experienced in everyday

life they provide a powerful connected defence mechanism. This is followed by a

discussion on the effects of the environment on the boundary sub-cultures and the Disturber Cohort, and how this results in low-intensity, long-term conflict with the maintenance mechanisms, which in turn allows a new cultural toolkit to emerge.

4.8.1 The maintenance mechanisms

Three practices maintained the traditional PC at Umfula: surveillance; employment practices; and boundary management. Some of these were sourced internally and some in its parent company, Somfula. These processes were in constant use and necessary for the organisation to stay still; hence in this research they are referred to as maintenance mechanisms.

The first process is surveillance. The coherence of the PC may be seen to act as an effective (if insidious) control mechanism (Peters and Waterman, 1982, Ray, 1986, Deal and Kennedy, 2000), but contrary to previous literature, in Umfula it did not replace the company's bureaucratic control and surveillance; it worked in tandem with them (Harris and Ogbonna, 2011). In Umfula, surveillance was experienced as the daily practice of chasing physical performance in the factories, and privileging a large array of detailed production metrics. This is backed up by a rhythm of focused management meetings on a daily and monthly basis that reinforced the logic of physical production. In this rhythm, the new logics about product quality and new sources of cane were marginalised.

Secondly, the Somfula management maintained a strong control on employment practices (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007), particularly the hiring and promotion of managers, without reference to the Umfula management team. Therefore, the long-term careers of managers were tightly managed through this central control on appointments, and institutional professions have a limited foothold, as evidenced by the

desire for all knowledge to be Umfula specific. The longevity of the those in management, and the lack of professional networks around Umfula and Somfula, reinforced the strength of the PC (Harris and Ogbonna, 2011).

Lastly, the Somfula executives carefully defined where the boundary of Umfula was drawn, taking action to move any challenges to existing logics, that were not solvable from within the current culture, outside the organisation. For example, this is evidenced by the sale of factories that sat outside the geographic heartland of Umfula and farming land; in neither case were the business implications (loss of consumer grade sugar and sugar cane) sufficiently addressed. This approach to boundary management has its limitations as critically assessed by Spender (1998), who cited that although the disposal of business units is a preferred management perspective, it does not address the way the business itself operates. Kogut and Zander (2003) further critique this approach; they describe it as the 'Lego view' of the firm, where there are *"engineering conceptions of firms as Lego-modular pieces that can be easily shifted, bought, and sold"* (p. 505). The removal of modular pieces (in this case, three factories) created more complicated consequences than those anticipated by executives.

Boundary management is also apparent in the resistance to allowing a separate Umfula identity to develop. By doing so, the Somfula management prevented Umfula from developing its own response to its environment (Kellogg, 2009, Howard-Grenville et al., 2011). A clear example of this was the relocation to the new office; the Disturber Cohort had an aspiration that this would allow them to develop a new identity, which was contrary to the PC.

These three mechanisms have developed and maintained a strong culture (Peters and Waterman, 1982, p.75) in the sense that it is coherent, rather than reflecting its content (Flynn and Chatman, 2001). The long-term nature of the PC means that in this case it was embedded as a shared meaning; it was enduring, self-producing and required minimal agency (Dacin et al., 2010, Kunda, 2006). Left unchallenged, the maintenance mechanisms limit the organisation's access to different scripts and in turn its responsiveness to the functional requirements of the market, creating a path of dependency from the past (Houchin and MacLean, 2005, Butler and Allen, 2008). Therefore, in terms of the third research question, it has been found that executives at both Somfula and Umfula played important roles in resourcing the mechanisms that perpetuate the PC.

4.8.2   Environment leads to change in practice

Together the coherence of the PC and the maintenance mechanisms appeared to present a considerable and recursive limit on the firm's responsiveness to the external environment (Goffee and Jones, 2003, Legge, 1995). However, the pressure from the immediate environment of Umfula was equally unremitting, influencing the organisational culture. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) developed the idea that parts of an organisation are affected by the external environment in different ways; the organisation then balances this by integrating the differentiated functions. However, they did not develop a concept of how this develops over time. Researchers on culture, such as Schein (2010), incorporate the balancing of external and internal forces, however they privilege the internal forces and especially the shadow of the founder.

Culture is a process, changing on a constant basis at different levels in the firm. Most of the time people in the organisation do what they are supposed to do; they are naturally responsive to their environments and their jobs (Smets et al., 2012). The challenge of

sourcing raw materials and providing quality products leads attentive managers to seek pragmatic solutions, rather than optimal solutions. The solutions that are developed are in conflict with the existing ways of working, which in turn creates novelty and reflexivity (Smets et al., 2012, Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). At Umfula, agricultural managers were confronted in a daily, mundane way by the need to source cane from a dwindling sector, small-scale growers. The commercial team were faced with customers demanding a different specification of sugar from the one readily available in Umfula. In both cases, change arose from a need to find a new settlement as the external challenge persisted. Over time this created urgency, as the consequences of not responding become visible. This is not completely unintentional either, as the commercial and agricultural managers are aware of the long-term contest they are taking part in.

This case differs from the literature of change in four important ways. Firstly, in contrast to Smets et al. (2012) and Rindova et al. (2011) studies, the dynamic of change through mundane practice has been observed in this case study. This is even though there is no evidence of either enabling mechanisms for change at a firm-level or the support of executives. Indeed, in this case the maintenance mechanisms (including control by executives) militated against change.

Secondly, the change here is seen as a process of continuous, low-level intensity contestation and competition, as opposed to the conscious and smooth blending process described by Harrison and Corley (2011) or the conscious adaptation and conflict of Weber et al. (2009). In those two cases, the process was more transparent, reducing the level of conflict. In this case, the absence of overtness in the change process served to increase the level of conflict (Marshak, 2006).

Thirdly, this change did not arise from an event, an exogenous jolt often observed by the change literature (for example (Morrill, 2008, Swidler, 1986), but from a process of continual pressure to find a new solution to the issues of the markets.

Lastly, the literature does show exemplars of the successful transfer of culture between businesses and the environment (Weber et al., 2008, Harrison and Corley, 2011, Maurer et al., 2011). However in those cases the process was (once again) part of an intentional initiative on the part of a firm, typically its founders, and was suitably resourced. In this case, the process was observed as being without allocated resources.

4.8.3   Cohort effect; introducing and maintaining different logics

In this study, managers employed within the last fifteen years (referred to as the Disturber Cohort) enhanced the process of cultural contestation, alongside boundary sub-culture differentiation. The effects of managers having different perspectives arising from when they first joined a firm are under-studied, in particular in relation to the dynamic inside an organisation (Joshi et al., 2010).

Following the industry-level framework in Aldrich and Ruef (2006), it is necessary to separate out the effects of Age, Period and Cohort. Age in this case is the time that an individual has been employed by Umfula (length of service). Period is the events and forces that affect all employees and Cohort is the interaction between Age and Period effects, and therefore depends on when an event occurs in a manager's life-course within an organisation. An example is given in the section below; Figure 4-10 shows the distinction between the three effects. As Aldrich and Ruef (2006, p.177) warn, this shows the relationship in a linear fashion, when in practice the Cohort effect is messy and non-linear. Therefore, the figure is only an approximation of the dynamic being described.

Figure 4-10: Diagram representing cohort, age and period effects

Figure 4-10: Diagram representing cohort, age and period effects
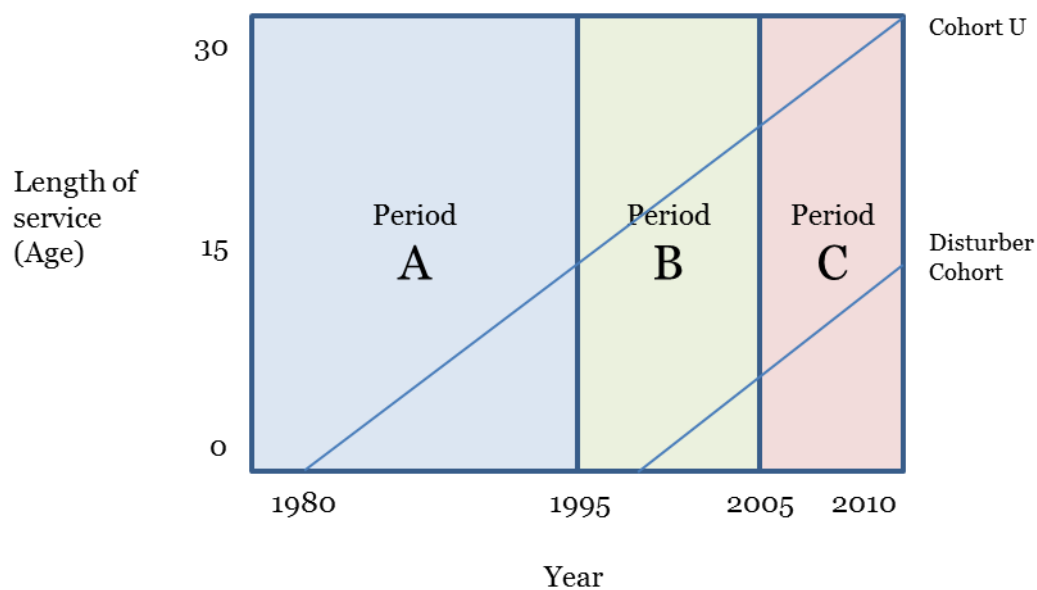
In period A, Umfula was a smaller, South African-focused business, with a dominant sales market position and a reliable supply of cane. When Cohort U (in contrast to the DC) managers joined, they were early in their career and had a common work history based on prolonged periods at remote locations which, alongside their long service history, created a process of institutional socialisation (Kunda, 2006) and an effective means of acculturation (Schein, 2010). In particular, through their long service and significant socialisation process, previous cohorts (such as Cohort U) have adopted a sugar identity, putting that before their professional identity. The development of a sugar identity allowed them (the previous cohorts) to move freely into roles not associated with their previous profession. This reduced their identification with an external professional institution and in turn reinforced the effectiveness of the maintenance mechanism of employment practices.

In period B, Umfula experienced significant change: as it operationally became a separate business; Somfula rapidly expanded into five African countries; three factories were sold off reducing Umfula's market share by half to 30%; customers started to demand a better

quality product; and cane production entered a period of steady decline. In contrast to Cohort U, the DC did not undergo the intense factory-based socialisation process. For those in the Disturber Cohort, joining at this time, this is Umfula.

This Disturber Cohort is a loosely-bound group that has access to different logics from different industry registers, compared to their co-workers in earlier cohorts, bringing with them a different way of viewing challenges. They were recruited mid-career after they had acquired specific skills and knowledge not available within Umfula; for example in human resources and market-orientated perspectives from the consumer goods sector.

The impact of employing managers who are less tethered to the given way of working, with access to other industry registers, accelerates the practice–based change described above. This change clusters around those within the organisation that are more open to improvisation and negotiated approaches. The DC have less attachment to the existing logics of the organisation, as they are seeking to solve the issues they face, not utilising prevailing scripts that solved previous issues. This process of Cosmopolitanism has previously been observed as an installed practice (Smets et al., 2012), however in this case it was observed to be without intentionality. There was no conscious decision to recruit one type of commercial manager (those with sales experience) rather than another (accountants with sugar knowledge). The Disturber Cohort demonstrate access to a wider range of professional identities (Kellogg, 2011) and privilege sugar knowledge less.

These three dynamics (logics; socialisation process; and perspectives on events) are nested together to create a powerful cohort mechanism; they are not primarily a function of time-served but of the timing of when they joined the business. Each cohort wades into the firm's 'river' at a different point in its history to their colleagues, changing their experience

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and meaning of the firm. Aldrich and Ruef (2006) postulate that at the limit, if the cohort effect is too idiosyncratic, then this will reduce the transfer of knowledge between cohorts. In this case, the cohort effect is discernible, however not to the extent that it prevents the sharing of meaning and the creation of a new culture.

4.8.4   Culture as a toolkit

Umfula derives its repertoire from the sugar industry register, with its underlying assumptions of stability created by regulation; this supports the script that physical production is of utmost importance. Umfula's current script is set out in the PC, and the resources/processes used to reinforce this are set out in the maintenance mechanisms. Previous studies have shown toolkits being used by executives to create change (see Rindova et al. (2011) study of Alessi and Weber et al. (2008) on grass-fed cattle). By contrast, this study sets out an organisational toolkit that maintains the current status quo. However, at the same time new scripts are being developed by sub-cultures, that have been borrowed from other industries, such as textiles, consumer-packaged goods and steel. A new repertoire is also being developed around a narrative of sugar quality, on the one hand, and change in farming practice, on the other. These new scripts are incompatible with the existing repertoire of the PC, and even in the absence of an intentional change programme, a process of contest is occurring. Over time this will lead to the forming of new individual scripts and firm-level repertoires for future use.

It is likely that this process has been underway for some time, and that the current PC was itself created through a similar process. Those interviewed made reference to the past being more stable than the present, but with the research method applied it is not possible to opine on the validity of this construct. It is equally as likely that the past was as subject to change as the present, through similar processes of sub-cultures being contested within the then PC.

4.9 Conclusion

This research's questions seek to understand the interplay between the immediate environment of the firm and culture, and how culture unfolds over time. From this, it seeks to understand how executive agency can alter these processes. This chapter provides an interesting and original contribution to the literature; catching a firm as its culture evolves, in the absence of an intentional executive-led initiative. The case study has identified three sources of culture: the past; exchange with the environment; and agency. The firm was found to be constantly changing and, therefore, required maintenance mechanisms to perpetuate the PC. These mechanisms interplayed with practice-based change mechanisms to allow for a new culture to emerge.

This study has shown how boundary sub-cultures develop scripts in response to the challenges of the immediate business environment, and then they diffuse these throughout the firm. In this case, change was sourced in these boundary sub-cultures and also in newer, different cohorts of managers. These interplayed with the PC to create a process of change characterised by low-intensity, long-term, and continual conflict.

The next chapter (5) tests and further develops the culture process flow (set out in Table 4-1 and Figure 4-9) in two further case studies - Bourn (UK) and Jiang (China). This is with the intention of understanding the creditability and transferability of the contribution of the Umfula case (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), through applying a deductive approach. The culture process flow is then developed into a process framework of culture adaptation which is set out in the discussion chapter (6) in Figure 6-1.

Chapter 5:   Bourn and Jiang case studies

5.1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to test, and further develop, the themes that emerged from Umfula, as illustrated in the culture process flow (and captured in Figure 4-9) through applying them to two further case studies, Bourn (UK) and Jiang (China). In particular, it will focus on the themes' transferability and enhance the dependability (reliability) of the research.

The aim is to enrich the findings of the first case and allow for the emerging theoretical ideas to be tested and deepened (Robson, 2002) in two different settings, in order to develop a richer theoretical framework (Langley et al., 2013) and more robust guidance for practitioners. The insights from the initial case (an inductive step) serve as the basis for understanding the process of culture change and maintenance in the subsequent two cases (a deductive step). Observations emerging from the subsequent cases are built into the final theoretical constructs and advice for practice (a further inductive step) (Denis et al., 2001).

The cases were carefully selected on the basis of replication logic (Yin, 2009). Bourn has a similarly regulated historical context to Umfula (providing literal replication), and in addition provides an example of executive-led change. Jiang was chosen as it operates in a materially less regulated context and provides a contrast to the first two cases (theoretical replication). The additional two cases, therefore, enhance the dependability (or reliability) of the overall research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, Johnson et al., 2006). This is an area that case study researchers, and qualitative ones in particular, have been urged to pay attention to (Tsang, 2014, Gibbert and Ruigrok, 2010).

The case studies do differ from one another, however, this chapter is interested in the portability of the principles from one setting to another to allow theory to be developed (Gioia et al., 2013). These case studies derive their ability to generate theory not because of similarity of populations, but because of the use of logic (Johnson et al., 2006); and the subsequent cases establish the limits of theory by providing difference (Stake, 2003). However, there was a danger of only examining the data in the later cases that fitted the initial findings or of data being discounted prematurely because it did not fit with the earlier case (Lee et al., 2007). Therefore, care was taken in the data reduction process to allow novel findings to emerge; by creating additional codes as necessary and reviewing the summaries of the interviews and site observations.

The Umfula study led to the development of the culture process flow, (see Figure 4-9: Umfula culture process flow). This chapter will focus on the maintenance (theme 3) and change (theme 5) mechanisms, as these provide the theoretical and practical contribution of the research. Additionally, it will outline specific novel findings that arose from the Bourn and Jiang studies; namely mutual symbiosis and the executive-led change process.

At Bourn, mutual symbiosis (which is defined in the section below) was found in a low-agency coalition between those at various levels who had spent their careers at the firm. This contributes to the understanding of the role of executives in culture change. This coalition was not deliberate; however it was not unintentional either. The managers involved were aware of the long-term conflict they were involved in; between the PC and the leadership team's intention to change it. In previous studies of culture in established engineering firms (Watson, 2001, Kunda, 2006), internal conversations in firms have been stylised as conflict between that broadcast by remote executives and that of those people who make things happen, the middle managers. In Bourn, rather than the distinction being between managerial levels, the process was more nuanced and less

coherent. The PC was maintained by managers at varying levels, with access to different resources; it was not monopolised by one level of management, but balanced with different groups playing their part in creating a stable equilibrium.

In both cases, distinct sub-cultures were found working at the firm's boundary, providing evidence of how the immediate business environment influences the organisational culture. The Bourn case reveals a limit on the role of sub-cultures to alter the PC. In that case, a distinct boundary sub-culture was observed to be intentionally seeking change. However, the requirement for immediate change was less substantial than in either Jiang or Umfula, and the functional signals of the need for change were less successful at influencing the PC. Therefore as managers throughout the firm were attentive to their daily work, the impact of the boundary sub-culture on the PC was affected by the degree of change required to meet the current environmental needs. This contributes to the literature discussion on how exogenous forces influence culture (Giorgi et al., 2015).

In response to the third research question (how can executives guide change of organisational culture change over time?), Jiang presents a study in which executive agency brought about change in the managers' daily practice. It was a complex initiative that emerged over time (rather than a pre-planned approach). It contrasts the Umfula and Bourn cases, as it found that maintenance mechanisms were altered to create change, rather than to perpetuate the current culture. This process was used in concert with: the introduction of new logics via a cohort; a socialised change agenda; and being attentive to the boundary sub-culture. As a result of this combination, executives observed the adoption of a new toolkit from other industries' registers (Weber, 2005). This was a thoughtful and adaptive change process, with more specific, actionable plans than the less tailored, value-led, non-specific ROCKS programme in Bourn. In addition, the change was

successful in a context; the environment was providing Jiang with strong signals and the adjustments to the economy in China generally provided institutional legitimacy.

This finding on executive-led change processes provides insight into the impact of cohorts (Joshi et al., 2010, Mawdsley and Somaya, 2016). In both Jiang and Bourn new cohorts were deliberately recruited by executives to introduce new logics from other industries' registers and to disturb the flow; however they had markedly different outcomes. The understanding of the cohorts' impact contributes to answering two research questions: the influence of the immediate environment; and how executives may guide culture change. In both studies, these cohorts possessed different logics and experienced different socialisation processes to the longer serving managers, and were observed to hold a different perspective on current events. In Bourn, the newer cohort (referred to as the FMCG Cohort, as many had previously worked in the fast moving consumer goods industry) did not resolve its discomfort with Bourn's PC. In Jiang, the newer cohort (referred to as the International Cohort as most had experience from international companies) overcame initial disappointment, intentionally achieved insider status (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011) and contributed to the transfer of new logic into the business.

The next sections cover the contexts that give an insight into the historical path of each case. The remaining body of the chapter is organised in two parts (maintenance and change) and, within these, the findings from each case study are set out.

5.2   Context

5.2.1   Bourn

Bourn dates its history back to 1912, it grew with the industry and by the 1930s there were 13 companies and 18 factories (Bourn, 2012). The government purchased the industry in 1936 to create Bourn, a monopoly processor of sugar beet (Bourn, 2015). Bourn was privatised in 1981, and in turn was acquired by Holm in 1991, with an expectation of around four to five years of high financial returns before the reform of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) would cause profitability to drop (Holm, 2015). Bourn was the first sugar acquisition by Holm, and subsequently Bourn and other sugar businesses were organised into the Mere division.

Under the CAP, the market operated as a tightly controlled system, where the prices of the raw material (sugar beet) and minimum sugar sales were determined by regulation (OECD, 2007). The reform expected by Holm in 1991 finally came in two phases, announced in 2004 (implemented in 2006) and 2012. It was anticipated that the 2012 reforms would be implemented in 2015, and this was an important part of the management narrative in Bourn. At the time of writing, it is expected that the reforms will be implemented in September 2017. In addition, Brexit may adjust the market conditions for Bourn, particularly if tariffs are introduced between the UK and the EU27 countries.

The long-anticipated 2004 partial reforms were the first in forty years. The intention was to increase competition in the EU, and the reforms had an initial adverse impact on the industry's profitability: the European industry responded by closing 80 factories, Bourn closed two. After 2009, there was a slower than anticipated increase in imports from Less Developed Countries, and world sugar prices rose sharply due to global supply deficit: the operating hypothesis envisaged by the EU unravelled (Holm, 2015). After the initial fall in

profits, EU prices and profits (and therefore the return on capital employed or ROCE) rose above their pre-2006 levels, as shown in Table 5-1 below.

Although the 2004 reforms led to increased volatility in profit, Bourn remains successful as measured by ROCE. The combination of a long-anticipated need for fundamental organisational change and its counter-indicative financial success is an important factor in Bourn's change process.

Table 5-1: Financial results for Bourn 2002 to 2012

Description of regulation		Fully regulated market				Price regulation removed						
Year		2002	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	2010	'11	'12
Sales	£m	452	493	521	499	473	407	407	453	498	486	710
Return on Capital Employed (ROCE)	%	33%	38%	35%	30%	27%	22%	14%	24%	32%	36%	77%
Source: Bourn Management Strategy presentation												

5.2.2 Jiang

The Chinese sugar beet industry has also enjoyed a long history. The first factory was opened in 1906, at Acheng in Heilongjiang province (Geng and Yang, 2014). One of the intentions of Mao's great leap forward of 1958 – 1962 was for Chinese agriculture to overtake UK performance by 1973 (Dikötter, 2011), and as a result the local government expanded the sugar beet industry. Heilongjiang, where Factory Y is located, is the geographic centre of the industry (Chen, 1971). The national industry reached its zenith in 1990, with more than 100 factories producing 11.8 million tonnes of beet (Geng and Yang, 2014).

As part of the Chinese Government's turn towards private markets in the 1990s, state-owned companies that were in financial difficulty were permitted to go bankrupt (about

30% did) and many others were privatised (Bouée, 2011). Sugar beet was no exception; the industry was consolidated by local and international sugar groups (Geng and Yang, 2014). There were 81 factories in 2000, 44 in 2008; by 2012 only 23 factories remained in the industry. The iconic Acheng factory was closed in the late 2000s.

Mere decided to acquire 12 privatised beet factories in 2007. By then, the beet industry had passed its high water mark; and by the time of this research in 2012, the 23 factories processed 4.4 million tonnes of beet (Chinese Sugar Association, 2016). The decline of the industry is due, in part, to the lower level of regulation in China, which allows direct exposure to the volatile sugar world market. A result of the turn to the private market is that farmers have been given a choice as to which crops to grow, and there has been a trend for them to favour crops other than beet. In response to this competition, processors have increased the price they pay for raw material and this has led to overall costs that are higher than the world average, and therefore the enterprises have struggled.

These dynamics led to Jiang making financial losses in most years, and as the world price for sugar decreased after 2011, this had a marked impact on the ROCE (see Table 5-2).

Table 5-2: Financial results for Jiang 2008 to 2013

Year	Return on Capital Employed
2008/9	-46.5%
2009/10	-10.4%
2010/11	1.1%
2011/12	-5.3%
2012/13	-37.2%
Source: Jiang Management Strategy presentation	

Given these contexts, the remainder of the chapter will focus on the findings in each case, starting with maintenance mechanisms.

5.3   Maintenance mechanisms

As set out in this chapter's introduction, culture is constantly coming under pressure to adapt from the requirements of the external environment, the inconsistent application of routines and the agency of staff at all levels (Demers, 2007, Lawrence et al., 2009). Yet, the organisation's past, through its path of dependency creates a recursive loop, a process where outcomes are a function of their own history (Greve and Seidel, 2015). The maintenance mechanisms of surveillance, employment practices and boundary management help to create this recursive loop. Therefore, for a PC to remain stable it requires mechanisms to maintain it (Dacin et al., 2010, Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). However, these are understudied in the existing culture literature (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). However, in this study it was found that in each case executives made a significant contribution to the firms' cultures by resourcing the maintenance mechanisms.

In the Umfula case, the three mechanisms that perpetuated the PC were identified as surveillance, employment practices and boundary management. In addition a fourth maintenance mechanism was identified in the Bourn case: the mutual symbiosis of long-serving managers at different levels. The use of the word symbiosis reflects how senior and middle managers hold different roles and work in close association with each other. This relationship is seen as mutual as both groups benefit from the association, this may be seen as distinct from commensal (where one group benefits and the other is not significantly harmed or helped), parasitic symbiosis (where one benefits while the other is harmed) or even amensalism (where one group is inhibited or completely obliterated and the other is unaffected).

To aid understanding, the findings for each mechanism at Umfula, Bourn and Jiang are summarised in Table 5-3. This is followed by a section on each of the mechanisms. These are introduced with a description of the findings from the Umfula chapter and a summary of the findings from the Bourn and Jiang cases, followed by more detailed data from each case. The mechanisms are discussed in the order set out in Table 5-3, starting with surveillance.

Table 5-3: Summary of maintenance mechanism findings

Maintenance mechanism	Description for Umfula culture process flow	Bourn finding	Jiang finding	Implications for the Umfula framework
Maintenance mechanisms	These perpetuate the culture against constant pressure to change; these are understudied.	The mechanisms are deeply embedded in the firm within its middle manager layers. Contrary to literature this is not imposed by executive.	Executives intentionally introduce new routines to create change to a new externally responsive culture.	Jiang illustrates that maintenance mechanisms may also be deployed to create change.
Surveillance	Executives monitor work to ensure it does not deviate from allowable norms, in addition to a coherent culture.	Routines and policies create a frame for the maintenance of culture. Surveillance may be seen as a form of routines.	New financial routines introduced, creating a matrix structure with an enhanced role for finance and stronger performance surveillance.	The category of surveillance is observed to be part of a larger category of routines that acts as a maintenance mechanism.
Employment practices	Executives promote those managers who reinforce norms. Previously there was a substantial socialisation process. These practices create a sense of belonging through a sugar identity.	The HR policies maintain the PC, even as executives seek to change it. Some policies have been retained for over 30 years, supporting the feel of a *civil service*.	Competition for jobs and performance management introduced; these give executives more control and break the *iron rice bowl*.	Employment practices are a form of routine that has a high impact on cultural perpetuation.
Boundary management	Parts of the firm that are less understood are placed outside the boundary, but internal routines do not reflect this change. The parent group maintains an open boundary with Umfula, restricting the pace of change.	The response to environmental change was to close factories, but internal routines do not reflect this change. Bourn has a closed boundary with the parent group reducing the pace of change.	In contrast to Umfula and Bourn, the boundaries to both the parent and the external environment are open. Former owners of the factory continued to exert influence, and the transfer of knowledge between parent and Jiang accelerated change.	Both the strength of the boundary between the focal companies and their parent firms, and the impact of movement of the boundary through acquisition affect cultural change.
Symbiotic role of SM and MM	Not observed.	In contrast to Umfula, Cohort B maintains culture in a coalition of longer-serving manager from different levels with access to different resources.	Cohort J at different levels initially plays a similar role to Cohort B.	Executives have conflicted roles and may not be a coherent group. They may owe more fidelity to their cohort than their level.

Note: Cohort B(ourn) and J(iang) comprise longer-serving managers

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5.3.1 Surveillance

5.3.1.1 Summary

The coherence of a PC may act as an effective control mechanism (Peters and Waterman, 1982, Ray, 1986, Deal and Kennedy, 2000). However, contrary to this literature, in Umfula the strong culture (Martin, 2004) did not reduce the level of bureaucratic control and surveillance; the coherence worked in tandem with control mechanisms (Harris and Ogbonna, 2011). In that case study the surveillance was experienced, for example, as the daily practice of chasing physical performance in the factories, and privileging of detailed production metrics. This was backed up by a rhythm of focused management meetings on a cycle that reinforced the dominant production logic, and which marginalised new logics based on customer's or farmer's preferences.

By contrast, in Bourn the day-to-day routines, for example the budget, played a more important role in maintaining the culture, than the direct surveillance of managers' activities. In Bourn, in the event that new challenges arose and the routines were observed to be insufficient, executives took direct control. In addition to solving the immediate challenge, this provided executives with a sense of achievement, which would not otherwise be available to them through their constrained roles. Overall, this way of working was described by shorter service managers as being like a civil service, a theme that is covered further in the employment practices section (see 5.3.2).

In Jiang, the executives had intentionally introduced routines to create a culture responsive to the needs of the local environment. This will be developed further in the executive-led change section (see 5.4.3.3). In contrast to the previous two cases, routines were used to create change, rather than maintain the current culture. As a result of the

observations in these further cases, the category of surveillance has been developed into a wider concept of routines, which includes surveillance as a form of routine.

A coherent culture was observed in Bourn and, as in Umfula, this was based on a production logic. However, pervasive surveillance was not observed, this was replaced with the development of rules and routines (Feldman et al., 2016) and these set the boundaries for permissible action.

The role adopted by executives was to set the routines and frameworks, for example, through budgets and policies. The annual budget set both financial and production targets and it was observed as an important artefact. This was confirmed by a new middle manager, who observed: *"meeting budget is the most important thing"*. Further, analysis shows that the targets set were an incremental step from the previous year, and therefore reinforced a culture that privileged stability over change. The budget played a nuanced role, as it also set an upper limit on outcomes, as the GM of Factory N observed:

> *"one of the things that constrains our business I believe is, are we are just so committed and so infatuated with budgets … you can't target something that's beyond a budget of course"*.

In addition, a review of the firm's intranet showed that the publishing of multi-page policies was common, and although in informal conversations these were described as not being rigorously policed, they set the frame for acceptable managerial scripts. As a long-serving Leadership Team member (LT) cynically stated, *"you know you get a 23-page guidance document on how to use the telephone or something, yeah, with a 29-page user guide"*. He went on to say that the authors (including him):

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"must be smoking something 'cos if you think anybody's going to read it or anybody's actually going to take any notice of it, or if anybody actually has the ability to follow these instructions…until something happens there's no consequence, there's still risk but there's no consequence."

Constrained by these frameworks, newer managers felt that the pace was slow and that executives had to intervene to make things happen, as a new recruit observed: *"so actually things take more time to be done, umm, it triggers senior management to micro manage"*.

5.3.1.3 Jiang

At Jiang, executives had intentionally installed routines in the previous few years to control the actions of middle managers. Examples of control processes that were observed included: the budget process; business planning; and the pivotal role of the finance function, replacing the 'one pen' patronage of local factory managers. The GM of Factory Y, a previous beneficiary of the 'one pen' approach, was supportive of the change:

"The techniques and expertise are introduced to [Factory Y] to facilitate our management in aspects such as the budgeting system…in conclusion, the influence was very remarkable. You know, in the past, in the earlier stage of [Jiang's] development, we preferred the system of 'one person ruling the whole'".

The system had a particular focus on planning activities and the finance system. The MD of Jiang explained that these processes were part of an integrated approach:

"They will go into an annual operating plan [AOP] process-led ... from there we then look at all the key things you need to do; do the latest forecast and you do a budget, right. So [this may be described as] a classical AOP process".

This process of planning and the surveillance of day-to-day activities is backed up by the way head office controlled expenditure; this meant that the finance team had an elevated position in the business. Outside of interviews, there were frequent comments about finance's micro-management of expenses. As the MD observed, *"our Finance Department is the most important in the organisation".* From a factory manager's perspective the role of finance had been transformed:

"I think the finance department in the past was really a service department. But now finance department is like a managing department. They serve less but manage more".

The benefits of these routines are acknowledged by some middle managers, of which one consequence is the encouragement of co-ordination across the firm, even though this creates its own issues:

"[you] cannot do it all by one department. The decision covered all the departments including agriculture, operation, management and control and finance departments. It's hard for some department to coordinate with other".

This matrix approach was new in Jiang. A factory manager was supportive of the standardisation of processes when he said that: *"it's exactly what we need. The most obvious example is the matrix management system that prevails in Jiang among different departments".*

The process of surveillance created by Jiang Head Office affected the daily lives of middle managers. Similar frustrations to those observed at Umfula were recorded at Jiang as well. A middle manager in operations reported that: *"the process of obtaining approval is too complicated at least for me",* and even at a lower level in agriculture, a front line supervisor suggested that *"the reporting forms, we workers think it too troublesome".* Overall, this process of installing new routines was described by a factory middle manager as *"this changed the company to law-oriented from man-oriented".*

5.3.2   Employment practices

5.3.2.1   *Summary*

In the Umfula case study, the executives maintained strong control on employment practices, particularly the hiring and promotion of managers. This centralised process tightly controlled the long-term careers of managers, and as a result institutional professions had a limited presence; this lack of penetration by professional networks around Umfula reinforced the strength of the PC. A further feature of employment practices in Umfula was the limited use of individual performance management; such processes were seen as creating unnecessary conflict. Previous research has found employment practice to be a mechanism for perpetuating culture (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007).

In Bourn, there was a conflict between the desire of executives to change the culture and the HR practices that perpetuated it. On the other hand, Jiang represents a case where the introduction of employment practices was a tool used by executives to adapt to a more individual performance culture. Two factors enhanced this introduction. Firstly, the poor financial situation of Jiang meant that there was strong pressure for the firm to perform better. Secondly, the environment in China meant that the breaking of the iron bowl was

occurring in many businesses at the same time (McGregor, 2010), and therefore had legitimacy within the institutional field.

The role of executives in Bourn was different to that at Umfula, as set out in the previous section. Their primary focus was on developing routine and frameworks, rather than direct control of Umfula. The Human Resources department played an important role in the administration of employment practices at Bourn. The overall headcount number was managed tightly through the budget process, with specific permission needed to recruit each role and to move beyond the set complement. An operations manager explained his frustration at the approach to recruiting additional roles, *"if we want to increase our head count... pay them £30,000 a year and I guarantee that they will deliver £200,000 worth of saving back, I'd be banging my head against a brick wall"*. Whilst the control process was tight, in contrast to Umfula where recruitment was the purview of Somfula executives the decision on who to appoint was taken by middle managers.

A review of policy documents showed that, although Bourn has been in private ownership for 30 years, some of the terms of employment continue to reflect its earlier nationalised status. For example, the sick leave entitlement of employees of Bourn continues to be at the higher end of UK practice, at 26 weeks' full pay and a further 26 weeks at a reduced rate (Source: Bourn Sick Pay Policy). Figure 5-1 shows that less than 20% of private companies pay more than 21 weeks full sick pay, whilst in the public sector this figure is closer to 70% (CIPD research, cited in Black and Frost, 2011). In this respect, Bourn's practices continue to be consistent with the norm in the public sector.

A further employment practice was the veneration of long service with associated awards of certificates and gifts, which were presented at departmental gatherings. Seven of those

interviewed had service in excess of 25 years. This was summarised by one middle manager, who thought that to operate effectively in the company you needed substantial service; *"[the] level of competency in our business does not come quickly"*.

Figure 5-1: Comparison of UK public and private sector provision of sick pay for employees

Source: CIPD/Simplyhealth Absence Management Survey 2010, Table 9.
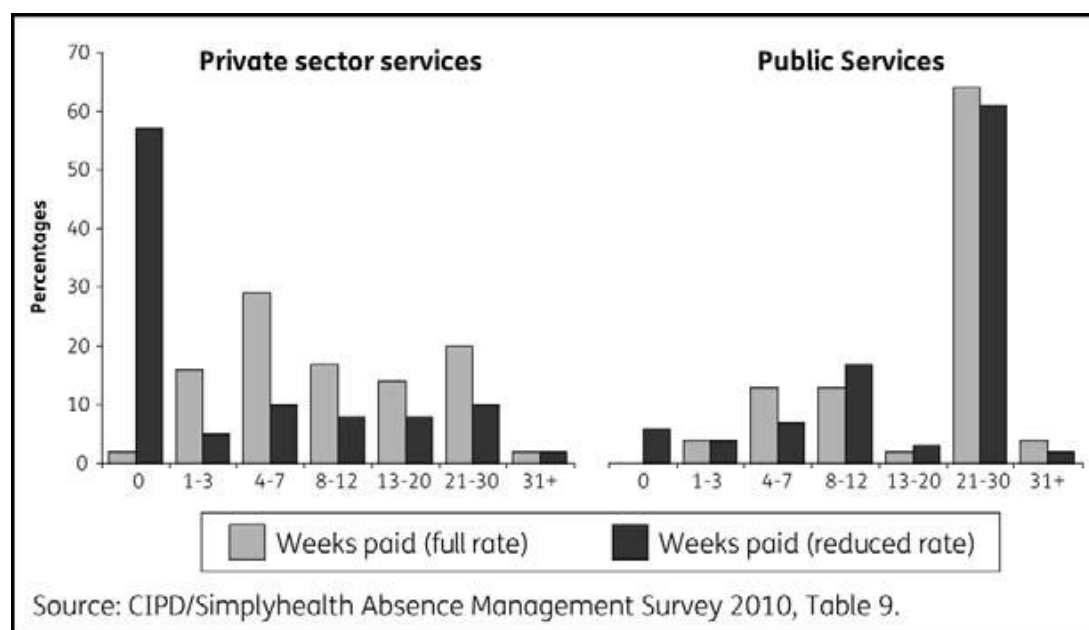
These practices led newer recruits to describe Bourn, pejoratively, as being like a "*civil service*" (commercial manager); for example the Managing Director outlined his impressions of the style of the business, which is consistent with the themes in the surveillance section (see 5.3.1.2):

> *"nine to five management. Erm erm waiting to be told. Er er coasting into retirement. Erm er very procedural you know the obsession with the business management system and putting policies and documents into the business management system rather than following up actually, whether we actually did what the business management system said (high tone) …But you're so obsessed with getting the policies into the system that you don't implement them."*

Those making these observations had no particular insight into civil service working practices; they were describing their reaction to being immersed in Bourn in comparison to their previous private sector workplaces. This perception was linked by interviewees to the low noise level in the offices and reinforced by the dull brown colour palette of the corridors and stairwells of the head office building; both of these observations were verified by the researcher.

5.3.2.3   Jiang

Prior to the acquisition of the business by Mere, Jiang operated a system referred to as the 'iron rice bowl'; where managers were guaranteed employment and an 'iron wage' of a guaranteed income and pension, which were common in Chinese industry before 2000 (McGregor, 2010). At Factory Y this was referred to as the *"we-all-eat-together-in-the-canteen way"*.

Jiang replaced the 'iron rice bowl' when it introduced 'competition for position', in which all vacancies were openly advertised and then appointments and salary decisions were made by more senior managers in Factory Y. From the perspective of the GM of Factory Y, this meant appointing the right people for the right job, rather than the most connected person; and also it encouraged people to be more active in their role:

> *"Only by these approaches, can we put an end to the phenomenon of securing advantages through connections or relations, can we remove people's worries and their wait-and-see attitudes to encourage them to participate"*.

This mechanism sought to create a culture of individualistic performance management, he continued, *"the traditional public canteen meal has gone, and they began to be aware of that. They knew that they have to live on their own and complete their mission"*.

For managers the impact was very real: if they did not deliver in their current role then they would lose their jobs in the next year. As an operations manager said, *"we never had such heavy pressure when the factory was state-owned… If I cannot reach the target this year, I will lose the opportunity to compete for the supply manager"*.

A factory management team member, who supported the new mechanism, said that managers had been:

> *"afraid that they could get no salaries if they failed to complete their assignment…those who were devoted to their assignments would get a considerable payment for sure. The system in itself is good"*.

Another member of the factory management team was less supportive, as it reduced the importance of long service and was creating a tense work environment:

> *"the work in state-owned company impressed me the most because at that time we didn't have much pressures … But when we joined Mere, the promotion system changed a lot… the atmosphere now is tenser than before"*.

This perspective was shared by a longer-serving factory manager, *"the managers and workers felt dissatisfied. They cannot feel their value"*.

5.3.3   Boundary management

5.3.3.1   Summary

The external boundaries of Umfula have been carefully developed by executives to place challenges to existing logics outside the firm. For example, the sale of factories that sat outside its geographic heartland of south and middle KwaZulu-Natal removed factories for

which operations were less well understood. This approach is critiqued as not effectively addressing the way the business itself operates, and therefore not solving the underlying challenge.

A further dimension to boundary management is the management of the permeability of the boundary, and therefore the flow of ideas across it (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). In Umfula, this included the resistance by Somfula executives to the development of a separate Umfula identity. The Umfula management were thereby denied the relational space to develop their own response to their environment (Kellogg, 2009, Howard-Grenville et al., 2011).

The definition of the organisation boundary plays a significant role in the development of culture. It may be conceived of in two ways: where the boundary is drawn, and its degree of permeability. Executives have considerable control over the first of these, and they may use this to place the unknown outside of the organisation; in Bourn and Umfula this related to underperforming facilities. However, in both cases, middle managers were critical that care was not taken with the management of the consequences of these changes. In Jiang, in a similar way, the government was placed outside of the boundary; however daily practice continued to involve it in the procurement of raw material.

The permeability of the boundary with parent companies can be seen to directly affect the flow of knowledge between them. The rigid boundary at Bourn was seen as at the detriment to responsiveness, whilst at Jiang the openness of the relationship was seen as a factor in the faster development of the firm.

Boundary management at Bourn was observed in two ways; the reduction in the number of factories and the relationship with its parent companies.

As in Umfula, evidence from the review of strategy documents showed that there was an active process of reduction in the number of factories from 18 sites in 1970 to four in 2007, to reduce costs through improved productivity. An executive critically contrasted the relative ease by which managers altered the boundary by closing factories, as opposed to the difficulty of implementing other cost reduction initiatives:

> *"we don't really do much, we close a few factories we don't really do anything else: we've survived...there was a big drop in profitability but what did the business actually see as a result of that? Nothing. Did it change behaviour in this organisation? No. Did we become cost conscious in this organisation? No!"*

The closure of this large number of factories meant that the firm's policies were now designed for a different factory configuration, and they were seen by managers to no longer make sense. A middle manager in operations observed, *"we don't look wide enough on the implications of that change to be able to tidy up and make sure the legacy doesn't get in the way"*. Managers felt that the consequences of the closure programme had not been addressed in a coherent manner.

The second aspect of boundary management in Bourn was the relationship with its parent group, Mere and Holm. Managers felt that they had a high degree of freedom from its parent group in their actions, as a sales manager said, *"we've done what we fancy, we've had whole years of basically doing what we fancy"*. This was further illustrated in a discussion with the GM of Factory N, who liked the *"the amount of, umm, umm, flexibility*

that we need to actually manage the things that happen within our business". However, he went on to outline that he was less sympathetic about requests to help other parts of Mere, as these interfered with his daily practice:

> *"it becomes a lot more challenging you know, you always want to keep the day job so to speak, right and therefore possibly things like the opportunities that Mere have with others, it isn't at the forefront as possibly as much as Mere would like it to be."*

Site observation showed an absence of visual representation of Bourn's parent companies, which was in stark contrast to Umfula, where Somfula imagery was prevalent. Further, it was observed that employees who transferred to other group companies were described in internal announcements as *'leavers'* from Bourn.

This conflict in perspectives between different layers of the company group led another manager to conclude that the confusion had consequences for the responsiveness of the firm to external stimuli:

> *"the Bourn leadership team and on the, on the er Mere board... it's pretty clear that they're not joined up, they're not aligned ... we don't feel we can adapt quick enough I don't think, because of that confusion".*

In Bourn, the tightly drawn boundary described above is a maintenance mechanism that militates against boundary bridging change, even from within the same group of companies.

As was noted in the context section (see 5.2.2), Factory Y was previously owned by the local government, in common with all sugar facilities in China. Within this wide functional organisation, the factory itself took on a comprehensive local remit. A tour of the factory site showed that this once included the building and maintenance of housing, schools, hospitals and roads, and this period continues to be viewed with some nostalgia. Although no longer run by the factory, some (for example, a nursing home) are still run from factory buildings. A long-serving manager observed:

"at that time, the factory provides us good kindergarten and schools. The road was of bad condition; the factory would build a nice road and also improve our living environment. It was very good".

In the past, it was relatively easy to obtain more raw material (sugar beet) with government support, due to the factory's high standing in the community. As another middle-level manager observed:

"The work was easy to do. At that time, our company was a factory directly subordinate to Heilongjiang Light Industry Office. We are of high level [in society]. If [we] needed 100,000 mu[1] to grow beet, the Light Industry Office would tell the County government".

Due to the changes in ownership, the formal relationship with the government has been redrawn. However, the historical ownership structure continues to exert considerable influence on ways of working in the business. It also constrains, in the opinion of Jiang executives, the ability of the factory teams to respond to the sugar beet market. An

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[1] Fifteen mu are equivalent to approximately one hectare.

executive said that if the factory needed to increase the volume of beet then the response would be *"let's talk to government about growing more mu. They will grow more mu of sugar beet for us. If I cannot deliver, I will go to government (laughs)"*.

In the current context, this reliance on the local government is seen as unhelpful by executives, as the factory does not accept responsibility for encouraging farmers to grow more beet. An executive reported *"that will slow down the organisation. There was less creative, more excuse not to deliver. I cannot control government so I can – I don't have to deliver results"*. Therefore, although the ownership (boundary) of the factory had changed fifteen years earlier, the path of dependency on local government support remained a part of the daily management narrative.

The relationship between the group layers was observed as being more coherent in Jiang than in Bourn. The General Manager of Jiang's Factory Y outlined that a *'foundation'* for success had been created through Mere's financial investment, and knowledge, which he described as *"wonderful back-ups, manpower, technologies, teams"*. The boundary between Jiang and Mere was more permeable, and this had permitted the transfer of knowledge between them, which is a theme that will be analysed further in the executive-led change section (paragraph 5.4.3.3).

5.3.4 Mutual symbiosis

The executives at Umfula played a significant role as a group in maintaining the PC, through their direct role in the maintenance mechanisms. However, at Bourn a different dynamic was observed, where the longer-serving managers (referred to as Cohort B) at varying managerial levels played different, but mutually symbiotic, roles. Mutual symbiosis is a process observed at Bourn, it was not observed at Umfula. The literature

focuses on the superior resources of executives (Michel, 2014), and there is less understanding of the role middle managers may play in the perpetuation of culture (see Ogbonna and Harris, 2002).

The longer-serving (Cohort B) executives at Bourn were seen to adopt two roles: that of the change agent on the one hand, when discussing the future needs of the firm (as a Leadership Team (LT) member); and on the other that of the change receiver as a member of Cohort B. This may be contrasted with taking on the dual roles of change receivers (from a parent company) and agents. The role of Cohort B members at different levels of the firm created a complex maintenance mechanism. This may be seen as symmetrical to that of the role of newer cohorts in altering the culture. This mechanism is set out in more detail below.

Bourn had put in place a sophisticated change process (which is analysed in greater detail in the executive-led change section 5.4.3.2) to prepare itself for deregulation, designed and agreed by the LT. However during the interviews, Cohort B LT members demonstrated ambivalence about it, as one said:

> *"you know if you look at what's on there [strategy] you can actually put that in any organisation, other than the word 'sugar'. Right, there's nothing that you would say you know unique".*

This level of ambivalence was not consistent with the high level of visual promotion of ROCKS and the associated values which was observed on mouse mats and coasters as well as displays in offices, reception areas and meeting rooms, see also Figure 5-5 on page 178), demonstrating the importance of interviews as well as site observation.

The limitations of the role of the LT and the emboldened role of the middle managers may be observed in mundane decisions, such as the provision of safety glasses for the 500 factory staff. The relatively new MD was puzzled as to why these varied by location: *"we are four factories there can only be one right policy, what is the best eye protection? Do you know how many different eye protections we have in...in Bourn? (Laughter)"*. This demonstrated a lack of cost consciousness to him and did not match with the agreed standardisation strategy. The Operations Director (Cohort B) had a different perspective, he did not see the benefits of standardisation, but he also doubted that he could influence the middle managers to adopt a common procurement policy: *"how much do you believe that you can influence? How much do you want to influence, and how much do you? Yeah, but how much control do you have?"*

Cohort B LT members saw their ability to influence daily practice as limited and their Cohort B middle manager colleagues responded to this by limiting the scope of managerial initiatives. The limitations that some executives felt in their role were also a theme in the surveillance section (5.3.1.2).

Over time the LT developed a number of well-resourced initiatives with the intention of changing working practices, for example the introduction of continuous improvement (CI) and individual performance management programmes. Evidence for these was seen on company noticeboards. It was reported by middle managers that when one initiative stopped, a similar one was launched at a later time. Middle managers reported this as going around in a circle. This is supported by the following comments:

> *"I have seen various things come and go. I think the last big thing I can remember was 'stimulus for change' and it was, you know we all went off on a team exercise and I think they [executives] tried very hard but it just died a death".*

An operations middle manager reinforced this perspective when he reported on previous change initiatives; *"a tweak here, a tweak there. Erm, we do try to change things in Bourn but my experience is they're very unsuccessful"*.

A long serving middle manager thought that this 'resistance' was based on a need to make sense of the change, *"there is quite a lot of resistance to say well I don't believe in it. So it's not invented here syndrome. So if it's not my idea then why would I support it?"*

The ability for middle managers to withhold their support and maintain the status quo is reinforced by the way meetings are structured and roles defined. There are frequent meetings of managers, which serve to engage the participants rather than to make decisions (minutes are uncommon). An operations middle manager observed, *"How many times did some people just turn up in a meeting and, err, have not contributed anything and... and walk out of it?"* A new sales manager was surprised at their lack of structure, but concluded that this is what managers enjoyed: *"we have meetings, we talk about things – and people like that"*.

This lack of clarity was also reflected in the roles of middle managers, as evidence by the following quote: *"I don't think I've ever had a job description, when you get that ambiguity it's not clear who's responsible and accountable"*. This ambiguity gives Cohort B managers the opportunity to involve themselves in different work areas, as one said *"I started getting involved in sort of things that probably weren't directly on my job description"* and although this benefitted him, he also saw that *"the confusion comes as to who, who is responsible"*.

In summary, the Cohort B LT members perceived that they have limited influence over the mundane practice of middle managers. This is a narrative reflected by Cohort B middle managers who demonstrated the capability to prevent the adoption of new practices. This symbiotic relationship is active on a daily basis and is illustrated by the layered and ambiguous structure of meetings and role accountability. These create the space in which any forces that may adjust the PC are constrained, to the advantage of those whom enjoy the privileges of the current arrangements, the longer-serving cohorts.

5.3.5   Conclusion

The maintenance mechanisms observed in the Umfula case were also observed in the additional studies, although with important qualifications (see also Table 5-3 on page 143 in this regard). The use of close surveillance and employment practices in Umfula was not seen directly in Bourn, but were instead replaced by a series of routines that performed a similar role. Both were observed in Jiang. However, in that case they had been installed by the executive team as mechanisms to promote a new culture. As a consequence, the surveillance mechanisms in Umfula may be better seen as fitting within a wider category of routines.

The influence of the boundary of the organisation has been observed in all three cases, and previous adjustments to the boundary continue to have an influence on the culture of today. The permeability of the boundary with parent companies appears to have an important impact on the transfer of ideas into the firm. An additional mechanism of mutual symbiosis was observed in Bourn, where the longer-serving executive members combine with their middle manager colleagues in a constant symbiotic relationship, which constrains forces seeking to alter the PC. This is to the advantage of those who enjoy the privileges of the current arrangements, the longer-serving cohorts. Having concluded this

section on the maintenance mechanisms of the culture process flow (set out in Figure 4-9), the chapter now moves on to review the findings with relation to the change mechanisms.

5.4   Change mechanisms

Change mechanisms may be thought of as a range of different processes, from intentional to unintentional, and from programmatic to practice-based change. As set out in Chapter 4, there was no programmatic change in Umfula. The observed change came through adjustment to daily practice, which emanated either from the Disrupter Cohort or the boundary sub-culture answering novel questions that arose from the environment, which the firm's repertoire could not resolve. The extent to which these dynamics were observed in the subsequent cases is set out below.

In each case study, a level of practice change was observed in boundary teams, which was in response to changes in the immediate business environment. Although, as will be explained, this was muted in Bourn. In addition to practice-led change observed in Umfula, in Bourn and Jiang executive-led change programmes were observed and the experience of these two programmes will be contrasted.

In order to aid understanding, the findings from Umfula, Bourn and Jiang for each mechanism are summarised in the Table 5-4, which is followed by a section on each of the change mechanisms. As with the maintenance mechanisms, these are introduced with a description of the findings from the Umfula chapter and a summary of the findings from the Bourn and Jiang cases, and this is followed by more detailed data from each case. The mechanisms are discussed in the order set out in Table 5-4, starting with boundary sub-cultures.

Table 5-4: Summary of change mechanism findings

Change mechanism	Description from Umfula culture process flow	Bourn finding	Jiang finding	Implications for the Umfula framework
Change mechanisms	Change occurred through the daily practice of managers answering novel questions that the firm's repertoire could not resolve. Solutions were drawn from beyond the firm's boundary by either the boundary sub-culture or Disturber Cohort.	In established firms change mechanisms will be effective when they have legitimacy and the change answers a presenting question. At Bourn change was not adopted as neither were demonstrated.	Novel solutions introduced from legitimate sources, that answered pressing challenges (a chronic lack of raw material). However only adopted once the International Cohort (IC) had established themselves as insiders.	Change occurs unintentionally without the support of executives, through sub-cultures and cohorts. It may occur intentionally where these forces are harnessed and placed within a comprehensive programme.
Sub-cultures	Those closest to the boundary receive signals from the environment/functional market of the need to adapt, in advance of the rest of the organisation. They transmit these to the rest of the firm.	Despite high-level of change anticipated, the environment provided only weak signals of change, few novel problems, sub-cultures had limited impact. This shows the limitations of sub-cultures in sponsoring change in the firm.	As a consequence of substantial demand from the immediate environment, the agriculture team played a significant part in orientating the firm towards the needs of farmers.	Sub-cultures play an important role in transmitting changes in the environment into a firm. However, where the sub-culture develops an agenda in advance of functional needs, their impact may be limited.
Cohort	Introducing new cohort was unintentional. New cohorts brought toolkit from other industries' registers, deployed to solve novel problems. DC socialised enough to have legitimacy and be seen as insiders. Reduced access to labour markets.	FMCG Cohort intentionally introduced to bring in new toolkits from other registers. Few problems that required these novel solutions. New cohort were not socialised and perceived as outsiders. The new cohort perceived themselves as unsuccessful and made use of their access to the labour market and left the firm.	IC introduced knowledge from other registers, which solved an extant problem. After initial failure, the IC gained legitimacy (seen as knowledgeable and gained insider status). Some IC left, but others had limited access to an alternative labour market; therefore there was pressure to engage in the firm.	New cohorts are able to transfer new toolkits when the toolkit solves extant problems and the cohort is perceived as legitimate. Further change is a personally exhausting process, so cohorts that have access to alternative employment may be less successful at change.
Executive-led deliberate change	No deliberate change programme observed.	ROCKS, a values-led well-resourced change programme, introduced to prepare for a deregulated world. Immediate environment did not reflect this need and change was not translated into practice. Therefore change was not successfully adopted. Some executives displayed dual identities (executives and Cohort B) and were ambivalent towards the change.	Executive agency may lead to change in the day-to-day practice of managers. It was a complex initiative that altered maintenance mechanisms; blended the logics of the IC and the understanding of the boundary sub-culture. The IC gained insider status and socialised with Cohort J. As a result a new toolkit from other industries' registers was adopted.	Executive agency may successfully introduce new logics, when the change is focused on; a change in daily practice (routines) in a targeted area; removes mechanisms that perpetuate the PC; attains legitimacy; and blends, rather replaces the existing.

5.4.1 Boundary sub-cultures

5.4.1.1 Summary

At Umfula, distinct sub-cultures were observed. In particular, those departments who worked most consistently with people in the firm's external environment may be thought of as working at the firm's formal boundary. As a result of their constant interaction with customers or farmers outside the firm, the sales and agriculture departments differed from the rest of the firm in the way they worked, and they received signals about changes in the immediate environment in advance of the rest of the organisation. They played a significant role in transmitting these signals to the rest of the firm which led to practice change. Through this process, the immediate business environment was able to influence the organisational culture (the first research question).

Distinct sub-cultures were found at the firms' boundaries in both Bourn and Jiang; working with customers in one case and growers in the other. In Jiang, as a consequence of substantial demand from the market environment, the agriculture team played a significant part in orientating the business towards the needs of farmers. In Bourn, the functional and practical requirement for change was less substantial at the time of study, as the market was making less novel demands; and in that case the sub-culture's signals of a future need for change were less successful in adapting the PC.

5.4.1.2 Bourn

As set out in the surveillance/routines section (5.3.1.2), a coherent PC based on a production logic was experienced at Bourn. The overall attitude in Bourn to customers was summarised by a LT member as an *"arrogance based on very internally-focused right, so an arrogance based on what we do we do really well and we're good and therefore customers will come to us"*. In contrast, a distinctive sub-culture was observed in the sales

team, who were located in a large, cramped, open-plan office, which was livelier than other parts of the building. As in Umfula, the sub-culture was not a homogeneous group, but they were more similar to each other than to their colleagues with less customer contact. Their working patterns were described by a sales manager as *"sometimes we can spend a day not even talk to anybody at Bourn, it's all customers"* and this led the team to see themselves as:

> *"We're a little bit immune here. Er, we perhaps shouldn't be because we should, we should be more in touch with what happens in the rest of the business but erm... we, our timetable is probably more dictated by our customers".*

Therefore, from the perspective of an operations manager *"they're definitely a different breed"*.

The LT anticipated that the sales team would play an important role in the firm after deregulation, when the Sales Director expected that *"it's going to get more competitive"*. Therefore, the team was putting in place processes focussed on service levels to customers, as well as sales volume, *"stuff normal FMCG companies would do on a regular basis … we're looking at not just across how many tons have we sold you [but] what's our delivery performance been like"*. The more dominant operations team were conscious of this narrative, as the GM of Factory N said, *"I think [regime reform] will be a revolution as well for us, umm, and err, I think people realise now that you know, we really do have to make a difference in our everyday jobs"*. However, currently the attitude in operations is more constrained, and in line with the *'arrogant'* narrative: *"I don't think we have a particularly aggressive approach to our competitors...we don't need to beat them"* (operations middle manager).

As a result of this difference in perspective, sales managers experience a difficult relationship with the operations team; as a sales manager said, *"they're really welcoming but it's a very, it, it was quite a cynical attitude to... what, what we do up here"*. They were frustrated that they had little influence with operations but had to deal with the consequences; as another sales manager stated, it is *"more difficult to penetrate in terms of you know, we are receivers of the output of ops rather than being part of the decision making process"*.

The executive-sponsored narrative in the business is that regime reform will require a substantially different approach to customers in the future. However, the functional (commercial) market is currently presenting the firm with few novel problems. Therefore, in contrast to Umfula, the boundary sub-cultures have had limited impact on the wider organisation. This shows the limitations of sub-cultures in sponsoring practice-based change in the firm, in the absence of requirements from the external market.

5.4.1.3   Jiang

In contrast to Bourn, Jiang received strong signals from its immediate environment and these were channelled through the agriculture team to the firm. This has led to a significant change of narrative amongst the executive, and in turn led to the development of a specific change initiative (the Beet Academy) to increase the effectiveness of the function.

Mere's post-acquisition, five-year plan for Jiang focused extensively on the development of factory engineering. The plan was summarised as: *"use international experience to develop factory scale and performance"* (Jiang, 2007: p.4). An example of this initial investment was the substantial investment in the conveyer system at Factory Y, shown in

the photographs below (see Figure 5-2). During a site visit, these were seen by factory managers to be the highlight of any factory tour for visitors. This tendency was summarised by senior head office managers that the firm was proud of *"engineering"*, *"shiny pipes",* and *"clever chemistry"* on the one hand, and *"internally focused"* on the other.

Figure 5-2: Initial investment at Factory Y focused on engineering requirements

However, the narrative of the agriculture team at Factory Y was markedly different, and their main concern was about the disadvantages to farmers of growing beet in the new Chinese market style economy, as two junior managers in agriculture said:

> *"This is because of the opening up and loosening of land management patterns. As a result, growers can decide for themselves. And it's different what we do under market economy from when there's more government interference...Growers make decisions all by themselves. Consequently, beet growers reduced, because people tend to grow more profitable, lucrative crops".*

In a free-market environment, the difficulty in growing beet compared to other crops would disadvantage Jiang as, *"the whole process [farming sugar beet] takes efforts... That's why sugar beet was gradually replaced by other crops. Crops like corn require*

little manual efforts". A head in agriculture development at head office echoed these sentiments when he said that: *"agriculture has not had the focus... the obvious connection is that you need the raw material throughout the business".*

This was demonstrated in the documents analysed by this study: a company review was conducted after four years of ownership and this showed that the messages of the local team had been understood by the head office. It stated that *"the key learning is more attention should have been paid to the true agriculture situation"* (Jiang, 2011b: p.4). This increased focus on agriculture meant that it was the *"key driver"* for success (Jiang, 2011a: p.20). Discussion about agriculture was an important part of the agenda at management team meetings, which included reviewing the KPIs that were developed for tracking the performance of farmers (shown in Figure 5-3). This shows that Factory Y's volume of beet was 131,900 tonnes ahead of target, the best performance of any factory.

Figure 5-3: KPIs were developed to track farmer performance

factory	volume (10k ts)			Sugar content (%)			yield (ts)			Volume paid	
	target	actual	variance	budget	actual	variance	budget	actual	variance	actual (10k ts)	Variance (ts)
Z	40	39.2	-0.8	16.75	15.42	-1.33	2.23	2.19	-0.04	39.33	1,305
Q	40	41.88	1.88	15.75	14.82	-0.93	2.28	2.39	0.11	42.36	4,835
C	25	24.21	-0.79	15.25	15.04	-0.21	2.69	2.6	-0.09	24.23	199
B	13	15.86	2.86	14.9	13.44	-1.46	1.55	1.64	0.09	15.86	263
W	38	28.9	-9.1	14.65	13.23	-1.42	2.2	2.4	0.2	28.89	-1,977
Y	43	56.19	13.19	15.3	13.59	-1.71	1.72	2.56	0.81	55.67	-5,245
G	42	47.33	5.33	15.15	14.08	-1.07	2.1	2.33	0.23	47.33	-971

The Managing Director of Jiang responded to this discussion by putting in place a change process to meet the changing requirements of farmers, through the agriculture function,

which he likened to a sales department. He sought to *"make agriculture important, because agriculture is my Sales and Marketing Department. So agriculture should come out, step out, and then we can start to get a good result"*. This initiative, the Beet Academy, is examined in more detail in the executive-led change process section (5.4.3.3).

5.4.2   Cohorts

5.4.2.1   Summary

Middle managers who were employed by Umfula within the last fifteen years (the Disturber Cohort or DC) have enhanced the process of cultural contestation, alongside boundary sub-culture differentiation. The DC supported the production of new narratives around the needs of customers and farmers; they perceived themselves as being more embedded in their professional status than their longer-serving colleagues, and as not being steeped in a sugar identity. Although the introduction of a distinctive cohort was unintentional at Umfula, the DC differed to other employees in three ways: their access to different logics; the way they were socialised; and their perspective on events. The Burn and Jiang cases add a fourth dimension: access to the labour market. The term cohort (Joshi et al., 2010) is a heuristic device and it describes a loose group. However, as in boundary sub-cultures, the attitudes within each cohort tended to be more coherent than between cohorts.

New cohorts were deliberately introduced by executives in both Jiang and Bourn, as a way of guiding culture change by introducing new logic from other industries' registers and disturbing the flow. However, they had markedly different outcomes.

The FMCG Cohort at Bourn did not resolve its discomfort with the Prevailing Culture (PC), describing it as not *"a normal business"*, not in the *"real world"*, and that their

colleagues were not *"really ready for the change"* (quotes from two different FMCG Cohort managers). They were appointed directly into senior roles and, therefore, experienced a different socialisation process to Cohort B. They joined the firm on the brink of regime reform, which meant that they perceived that particular event in a different light (that is with more urgency) than their established colleagues. The fact that they left Bourn towards the end of the research demonstrates their readiness to make use of their differentiated access to labour markets.

The International Cohort (IC) at Jiang had a degree of legitimacy due to their agriculture knowledge; however, their tools were not initially adopted as Cohort J perceived them as outsiders. In contrast, once they were established as insiders, the new logic spread and blended with the existing practices. This was also assisted by the perception that the IC's toolkit provided part of the solution to the extant problem of a lack of raw material supply.

The understanding of the differing impacts of these two cohorts groups builds knowledge of how culture alters over time (second research question)

5.4.2.2   Bourn

Managers with consumer goods experience (the FMCG Cohort) were intentionally recruited into Bourn in anticipation of regulatory reform and the more dynamic market conditions this would produce. Their new toolkits from other industries' registers would disturb the flow at Bourn. For example, the newly-appointed Managing Director of Bourn came from a FMCG background. However, managers were attentive to the needs of their daily work, and the immediate environment did not pose challenges that required the novel solutions that the cohort provided. Further, the FMCG Cohort was perceived to be outsiders, insiders, such as Cohort B LT members, were ambivalent towards them.

Ultimately, the cohort was unsuccessful in altering Bourn, as there were few problems that required their novel solutions.

In contrast to the Disturber Cohort, the FMCG Cohort talked about a desire to turn Bourn *"into a normal business"*; by introducing *"again stuff normal FMCG companies would do on a regular basis, we're now just starting to look at"* (quotes from two different FMCG managers, one senior and one middle manager). This adoption of logics from other industries' registers was greeted with confusion by those who had only experienced Bourn's scripts before, as a Cohort B LT member said of a colleague:

> *"he'd obviously used that methodology and that process in some of his [FMCG business] … he was talking about it and I'm sort of sitting there scratching my head going I don't actually, you know, I don't get the point. Is this, well do I need this, what purpose does this, this actually fulfil?"*

Many (but not all) of the FMCG Cohort entered the sales department directly. This was in contrast to the previous practice where, in a manner similar to Umfula, Cohort B managers would typically join as (operations) graduates and then work their way into more senior roles in all departments over a period of 15 to 30 years. Direct recruitment was thought to reduce the effectiveness of the FMCG Cohort, as a Cohort B manager' identified about them:

> *"I think people form strong relationships… Whereas you used to hear of people sort of moving their way up through the ranks, you do tend to get a lot of people coming in now at senior level … if they come in without the knowledge of that area of the business (laughs)… that isn't good for a team".*

In contrast to the DC of Umfula, the FMCG Cohort were disparaging of their longer-serving colleagues (Cohort B) and their relaxed view of the need for change, as one said:

> *"And I think that's a fear that certainly I have and you know I think a number of other people who've not been here that long is how many, how the old stagers, you know the lifers, the Bourn lifers are they really ready for the change, and do they really know what normal business looks like, what the real world looks like?"*

The long-term, daily, low-level conflict between the cohorts appears to have had an impact on the FMCG Cohort. Of the 18 managers interviewed, 12 were Cohort B. In July 2015, all Cohort B managers remained employed in Bourn in similar roles, whereas all six of the FMCG Cohort had left the business. Follow-up interviews have not been conducted with those who left to analyse their reasons for leaving. However, the contrast between the paths of the cohorts is remarkable, and demonstrates that the FMCG Cohort were able to access the external labour market.

5.4.2.3   Jiang

The introduction of a new cohort (the International Cohort) was also a deliberate strategy at Jiang, following its acquisition by Mere, to introduce logic from other industries' registers to bring about change. The International Cohort (IC) comprised of both of European managers, with sugar industry experience, and also Chinese nationals, who had worked outside of China or for other multinationals in China.

As set out in the context section (5.2.2) the Chinese sugar industry was going through a period of instability, with many factories closing. As experienced in Umfula, the industry's underlying issue was the provision of raw material (in this case sugar beet) at a sustainable

cost. The welfare logic carried over from the previous period of government control was not able to solve this challenge. The purpose of the IC was summarised by one of its members in these terms:

> *"we have brought in different people from different businesses within China. Chinese nationals. ... some from different walks of life, who can bring different skillsets and different knowledge to try and complement the Chinese business."*

Longer-serving managers (Cohort J) saw this new logic as beneficial; as a long-serving middle manager said, *"They [IC] are more advanced. We should admit that they develop several tens of years earlier. Talking with them can widen our horizon"*.

However the IC was initially unsuccessful, as the new practices it advocated were not adopted, as an IC executive observed:

> *"unsuccessful ... so first of all the workers even in the land that Jack [an IC agriculture development manager] could control, wouldn't, wouldn't and couldn't follow the protocols that he wanted to"*. Cohort J members also recalled that *"first year when Jack came ... I remember the weeds grew very tall and cover all over the sugar beet and therefore the company lost millions [of RMB] in that year"*.

In a similar way to at Bourn, this lack of success led to some of the new cohort leaving, as a British executive recalled:

> *"we were still struggling to influence the people... and also conscious that erm some of the new people that we had brought in had left as well. ... we needed to, needed to do something about it"*.

Within the IC there was a narrative that reflected on this failure, as one member said: *"Sometimes we, we, we have to stand back and question ourselves as well"*. This tension was also felt by Cohort J; one of them remarked that *"you know er there was er a kind of lack of adequate communication or understanding about each other"*. As a result of this introspection, members of the IC decided to work hard to associate more directly with long-serving managers by *"karaoke-ing together, working hard but but also er an increasing sense of association"*.

Figure 5-4: Artwork in Jiang showing Cohort J and the IC working together

Once the IC was perceived as insiders, this assisted the spread of their logic. A member of Cohort J confirmed that he wanted to continue the work that Jack started; *"the work Jack was doing is exactly what I want to do ... I would very much like to continue this job"*. This desire to bring the learning of the two cohorts together was captured in a statue on

display in the Jiang Head Office, which was an entrant in the firm's art competition, showing the two cohorts working together. This is shown in Figure 5-4.

A middle manager in Cohort J explained that the cohorts were now able to merge their thinking:

> *"we couldn't merge our thinking and understanding together. It's not about who's right and wrong, it's just we couldn't agree with each other. Now it's changed and getting better gradually. People's thinking changed too".*

5.4.3   Executive-led deliberate change

5.4.3.1   Summary

The third research question is focused on how executives may steer the organisational culture. Therefore, in addition to the unintentional mechanisms revealed in the Umfula case, it is instructive to closely examine intentional change. At Umfula, there was no deliberate change programme occurring, whilst executive-led change initiatives were observed in the other two cases. This was a values-led strategic change programme at Bourn, known as ROCKS, and in Jiang it was the introduction of a new toolkit into the agriculture team, through the Beet Academy. This permits the comparison of two different approaches to executive-led change. The two initiatives are summarised in Table 5-5.

As shown in Table 5-5, ROCKS was unsuccessful in the terms set out for it by the LT, and the programme was discontinued. In that case, the LT sought to directly alter the managers' behaviours through enhanced communications, training events and performance reviews. However, from the middle managers' perspective, these did not address the specifics of a sugar business, their mundane daily practice nor solve their

Table 5-5: Summary of different change initiatives; ROCKS and Beet Academy

	Bourn (ROCKS)	Jiang (Beet Academy)	Feature of the more successful programme
Outcome	Limited impact, programme discontinued. FMCG Cohort left.	Programme changed practice and increased beet acquired.	The Beet Academy was more successful in the terms set by the executives.
Programme type	Pre-planned, well resourced.	Initially planned and then emergent.	Emergent nature, responded to initial rejection by Cohort J.
	Values-led	Practice-led	Practice-led
Perceived the firm as	Integrated: one business.	Differentiated	Differentiated, focused on one practice area: agriculture.
Objective	Behaviour change	Practice change	Practice change
	To solve future regime change.	To solve existing need of low raw material.	Existing challenge
Tools deployed	Workshops, performance management, communication, newsletters, FMCG Cohort.	Workshops, performance management, communication, newsletters, IC Training in new practices.	Training in new practices (the other factors may be necessary but not sufficient).
Role of routines	Not changed.	Routines and employment practices changed to enhance the intended change.	Routines and employment practices may be used to create change.
Boundary sub-culture	Sales given primary role by executive.	Agriculture initially ignored by executive, then executive responded to the signals they were sending.	Response to functional signals, rather than a future need.
Cohort narrative	FMCG saw their role as making Bourn normal.	IC saw their role as working with Cohort J to improve agriculture practice.	Sought to blend, not to disrespect and replace.
	Remained outsiders	Socialised with Cohort J.	Sought insider status.
Demands of immediate external environment	Limited, no clear signals received from external environment.	With deregulation more choice for farmers, reducing supply of raw material.	Practice-based change more likely in environment with clearer signals from the environment.

extant issues. The immediate environment was making limited novel demands on the business.

The evidence from the Jiang case study is that executive agency may lead to change in the day-to-day practice of managers. It was a complex initiative that emerged over time and

brought together different mechanisms. Firstly, the executives altered maintenance mechanisms (employment practice and surveillance/routines) to align them with their desired outcome; secondly, they blended the different logic of the IC with the boundary sub-culture's understanding about farmers; thirdly, they reframed the status of the agriculture department, through enhanced remuneration and specific training programmes; lastly, they (the executives) responded to the novel demands from the environment, in this case a reduction in supply of the raw material. The IC deliberately sought and gained insider status and socialised with Cohort J in order to effectively deploy this range of maintenance and change mechanisms. Executives observed, as a result of this initiative, the adoption of a new toolkit from other industries' registers.

5.4.3.2   Bourn

The Bourn LT developed a change programme aimed at transforming the culture of the business, in readiness for deregulation. The structure that was developed was derived from that advocated in practitioner literature, for example Kotter and Heskett (1992), and Slap (2015). The strategy (which emphasised the importance of satisfying the needs of the customer) was summarised in an acronym, which the research refers to as ROCKS, where S stood for *"support a culture of ambition and achievement"*

In addition, five behavioural values were identified by the LT, in the understanding that if these were exhibited by all employees then the strategy would have been fully implemented. The values assumed a unitary, integrated culture, with no adjustment for the sub-cultures identified earlier. At the time of the research, ROCKS had been in place for four years and this longevity was remarkable for the reasons set out in the mutual symbiosis section above (5.3.4). The Managing Director believed that *"what people would recognise is the inception, promotion and living by the ROCKS strategy and the ROCKS mantra will drive the business forward"*.

The change process was well-resourced and a number of important features were identified through site and participant observation, for example: frequent discussion at the LT meetings; a meeting of all 850 employees every 18 months; quarterly newsletters; and 'town hall' meetings in each location. The values were integrated into training programmes and annual performance reviews, and promoted through highly visible displays. For example, prominent meeting rooms in the head office were redesigned to promote the values, as shown in Figure 5-5. Lastly, a deliberate decision was made to recruit managers who had experience and knowledge gained from industries other than sugar. As the needs of the customer and the role of the sales function were seen as more important than in the past, new managers with experience of the FMCG industry were particularly sought after.

Figure 5-5: Behavioural values are prominently displayed on a Bourn meeting room window

The energy of the initiative was generally well received by middle managers, and the clarity and the constant communication was perceived positively. A middle manager made an appropriate comment in this regard:

> *"So one thing that ROCKS has given is a very, very clear structure and the message has been erm a bit relentless. Erm and it's one of the things that's er impressed me about it is that we've actually stuck to it because we do get a lot of initiatives in Bourn that come as the new erm, the new important thing, er and we don't always stick at it".*

Some managers felt personally supported; for example, an operational middle manager said *"so it helps us because … the Managing Director he's almost standing behind you".*

However, in terms of daily practice the programme had limited impact, even after four years of concerted effort. Some thought the impact was diluted as it cascaded, as a middle manager said, *"down from the management team to the next level to the next level and so forth, so does it get diluted and then diluted a little bit more?"* . The initiative did not appear to change managers' actions; instead they reported using the framework to articulate their existing working patterns. An operations manager said: *"you can normally align everything [you are doing already] to one of the different things and if you, if you are working towards one of the letters of ROCKS".* A LT member said, of his own work, that without ROCKS *"we would have done that anyway".* This is suggestive of ROCKS being adapted to suit managers' needs at different levels; rather than being diluted.

A reason posited as to why this phenomenon occurred is that the articulated strategy was not specific enough to the sugar industry context; it lacked meaning. A LT member said, *"what, what is ROCKS in itself apart from five very, very basic very key messages that frankly are, are broad enough that they could work in any business".* In a business that privileged sugar specific knowledge (as in Umfula) this was a value laden critique.

Despite this visibly resourceful process, middle managers were less convinced of the efficacy of the values. A sales manager reported his disappointment that the values lacked specific meaning, *"I think the S piece there is... what does that actually mean? How does that translate into reality?"* However he went on to note that *"the values are... are in theory great but not followed by the people who are leading the floor"*. The values may be seen to have lacked the necessary specificity to allow managers them to enact them, and in addition to this lack of meaning it was perceived that they were not role modelled by the LT. This indicates that the values acquired the meaning that the middle managers had given them, rather than the meaning intended by their executive authors.

In conclusion, one Cohort B LT member said of ROCKS *"(Short pause 5 seconds), does it add value and make a difference to me? I'm not completely sure that it does",* and a manager with forty years of service said: *"well to me no because all the time we've been doing that anyway ... it's not actually changed my core thoughts of the last 30 years"*.

ROCKS, and its values, was a well-resourced highly visible programme that was unsuccessful in changing managers' daily practice, as it was thought to lack the specificity to legitimise it, and managers adapted the tools for their own purposes. A change approach, based on a values model and with the assumption of an integrated business, is fraught with difficulty and has limited academic literature to support it: (Martin et al., 2006, p.16) refers to *"integration theories of culture as having some of the qualities of Lazarus; just when one thinks they are dead, they pop up, full of life"*.

A further problematic area for this change process is that managers are attentive to the needs of their daily work, and this did not require new ways of working. In designing ROCKS the LT were looking ahead to regime reform. However, the immediate

environment did not pose the challenges that required the novel solutions that ROCKS provided, and, therefore, managers struggled to make sense of the initiative. A further hindrance was that it was promoted by managers perceived to be outsiders (FMCG Cohort) and so insiders, such as Cohort B members of the LT, were ambivalent toward it. The ROCKS programme was discontinued towards the end of 2012.

5.4.3.3   Jiang

Jiang also demonstrated a deliberate executive-led change process, which sought to add a new toolkit into its agriculture function, under the name of the Beet Academy. This was in response to the challenge of encouraging farmers to grow sugar beet, as set out in the Jiang boundary sub-culture section (5.4.1.3). In contrast to the findings in Bourn, this programme had some success in changing the daily practices of managers.

The component parts of the Beet Academy were: an increased level of reward; specific training on the new toolkit; close supervision of performance; and the provision of a sense of pride and belonging to the agricultural function. Two of its salient features were the way it responded to challenges from the immediate environment and the practice-based solutions put forward that solved extant problems.

Historically the agriculture function had been junior to the dominant operations function. In previous years, the agriculture (Ag) function in Factory Y had been a less desirable place to work than factory operations, and, therefore, had tended to attract less well-qualified managers. This is explained by an executive at head office:

> *"Originally, nobody wanted to go, go to the Ag department, you know you may have to, to ask them to apply, and even to the point of they don't want to go, because they'll say this is a dead end job".*

In response, executives sought to make the roles desirable by increasing the total level of remuneration and attracting new staff through open competition, as described in the employment practice section (5.3.2.3). An executive explained:

"So we increased the salary, we started to ask them to compete for the position. But we put in the salary, we, we change the salary structure and put in the incentive scheme, make it so, er, er, er attractive that people started to come in".

In conjunction with enhancing the financial status of the roles, the agricultural teams received substantial training in tools designed to focus them on their customers (growers), akin to a FMCG sales function (see section on boundary sub-culture 5.4.1.3). This was an ideal opportunity for the IC to transfer different logic to the Cohort J managers. As a Cohort J manager said:

"Several trainings to agriculture staff by both expat and Chinese experts or managers [the International Cohort] …, it includes a great deal of work, workload including er the development of all kinds of materials, propaganda".

A long-serving junior manager in the factory reported that this combination was very successful for him: *"the Beet Academy is very inspiring and very helpful… This workshop provided a platform to widen employees' knowledge. I think it's very helpful and I cherish such opportunities".*

In addition to better career structures (see also section 5.3.2.3 on employment practices) and conferences, the agricultural team's performance was closely managed through a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which were discussed at LT meetings (see Figure 5-3). This combination was observed to have changed managers' daily practice; as

an executive in the head office commented, *"people are driven by those KPIs, they are performance related KPIs ...they have changed behaviour"*.

In addition to the specifics outlined above, a member of the IC identified that the socialisation process, involving conferences and KPI setting, was an important part of its success. This socialisation process created a sense of community in agriculture, which was observed at conferences where the two cohorts were seen to interact freely and engage in lively drinking throughout the night. This helped make agriculture a desirable function to belong to:

> *"I would say though is, is that because we've created this agricultural thing and sharing best practice and coming together for agricultural conferences there is a sense of why we're an agricultural community, and they want to get to know one another better and there is a deeper insight into each other's differences and so on"*.

The agricultural conferences were training events that combined class room teaching by the IC and in field, practical work. The overall impact of this initiative has been felt in the mundane, daily practice of agricultural managers in Factory Y. In line with the above observation by an executive, this combination of socialisation and workshops had a significant impact; an agricultural supervisor reported that this programme had had a profound effect on his team's attitudes: *"before we worked as what the managers said. People could only do what managers asked. Now the workers try their best to make profit for the factory and for themselves"*. A junior manager reported that Factory Y is *"treating clients with sincerity and integrity—we understand growers"*. Or as another manager said, *"It changes now. We have the service consciousness to the farmers after the training by our company"*.

Executives believed that the Beet Academy met their objective for the firm to successfully adopt a new toolkit for engaging with farmers, and provided them with a competitive advantage. The success of the Beet Academy programme (focused on the agricultural team) benefited from: the changes made to financial routines and employment practices throughout the firm (see section 5.3.1.3and 5.3.2.3); the introduction of the IC (see section 5.4.1.3); and the extant requirements of the external environment channelled through the agricultural boundary sub-culture (see section 5.4.2.3). One member of the IC said that *"it has really improved our staff quality, and really lead us to a promising future. This is really what other companies have not"*.

Visits by the regional government remained important to the factory team, with the formal photographs of these events displayed on walls, and it was observed that significant care was placed in planning these events. The pride of the local factory team was further enhanced when an important delegate from the regional government was so impressed with the materials that he *"asked his assistant to take a copy. He said 'look at this enterprise, they've done very well. The presentation of the plan was excellent and the content was good too'"*.

5.4.4 Conclusion to change mechanisms

This section on change mechanisms supports the Umfula findings on the influence of the immediate business environment, in so far as there is evidence of the effectiveness of boundary sub-cultures and cohorts in leading change in practices. The potential benefit is negated where there is a lack of environmental drivers and is enhanced when the immediate external environment is supportive of the change. Cohorts are more likely to be successful when they have obtained insider status (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011), thus combining their different toolkit with knowledge of the firm's PC. The Jiang case showed that, combining these elements with adaptations to maintenance mechanisms and a

thoughtful socialisation process, laid the foundations for executives to successfully guide organisational culture change over time.

5.5   Conclusion to the Chapter

In this chapter, Umfula's culture process flow (see Figure 4-9) has been tested to examine the transferability and to enhance the dependability (reliability) of the research. These case studies confirm the finding from Umfula that culture constantly comes under pressure to adapt: from the requirements of the immediate external environment; the inconsistent application of routines; and the agency of managers at different levels (Demers, 2007, Lawrence et al., 2009), and that cultural stability is achieved through maintenance mechanisms. Additionally, specific novel findings arose from the Bourn and Jiang studies: mutual symbiosis and the executive-led change process respectively. This chapter's findings will be used in the following discussion chapter, to develop a process framework of culture adaptation (see Figure 6-1), which blends the findings of all three cases.

Chapter 6:   Discussion

6.1   Introduction

This study looks at how organisational culture changes over time and specifically addresses the impact made by a firm's history, its immediate environment and how agents' actions alter organisational culture in previously stable, regulated, industrial firms. This chapter discusses the key findings of the previous two chapters to answer the three research questions set out in the Introduction (Chapter 1). These are:

1. How does the immediate business environment influence the organisational culture?

2. How does organisational culture alter over time?

3. How can executives guide the change of organisational culture over time?

The three cases studies have each provided a perspective on the phenomenon of culture change, both with and without executive support, when it has been considered successful and when it has not. An understanding of the impact of executive support specifically informs the third research question.

The Umfula case provided unusual access to a firm at a time perceived by executives and the field's institutions to be settled, and when as a consequence no specific top-down change process was underway. However, a process of low-level contested change was found, derived from the functional needs of the market and led by managers whose daily work led them to interact with these markets. The framework developed from this data

(see Figure 4-9) was compared in two contrasting contexts. At Bourn, the functional needs of the market and the institutional field were stable. However, the executives perceived them as unsettled and sought to resource a cultural change process that had limited impact; an outcome similar to that of studies in a large corporation (Canato et al., 2013) and the public sector (McNulty and Ferlie, 2002). By contrast, in the Jiang case study, the functional needs of the market and the institutional field sent out strong signals that change was necessary. A managerial initiative was successful in comprehensively addressing the extant daily problems, which was perceived to be legitimate by employees. Therefore, executives may successfully sponsor change; however, as the Bourn and Jiang cases show, change is a time-consuming, resourceful, costly and cognitively demanding process.

The research findings have led to the development of the process framework for culture adaptation, which is set out below (in Figure 6-1). This is set out in such as a way as to assist in answering the research questions; by showing the influence of the immediate business environment, the mechanisms by which culture adapts over time, and how executives' agency may guide culture. The figure shows that culture is a situated, embedded, complex process that is perpetuated by a web of maintenance mechanisms. This final framework has been developed from the initial Umfula culture process flow framework (Figure 4-9)) set out in Chapter 4, to incorporate the findings from the subsequent cases (Bourn and Jiang that were analysed in Chapter 5). Furthermore, the framework, developed through a grounded method, is intended as an aide to understanding the mechanisms of change observed and not as a deterministic model; the reality is messier and less linear than the figure may suggest. The framework proposed here makes no claim for perfection or completeness.

Figure 6-1: Process framework of culture adaptation
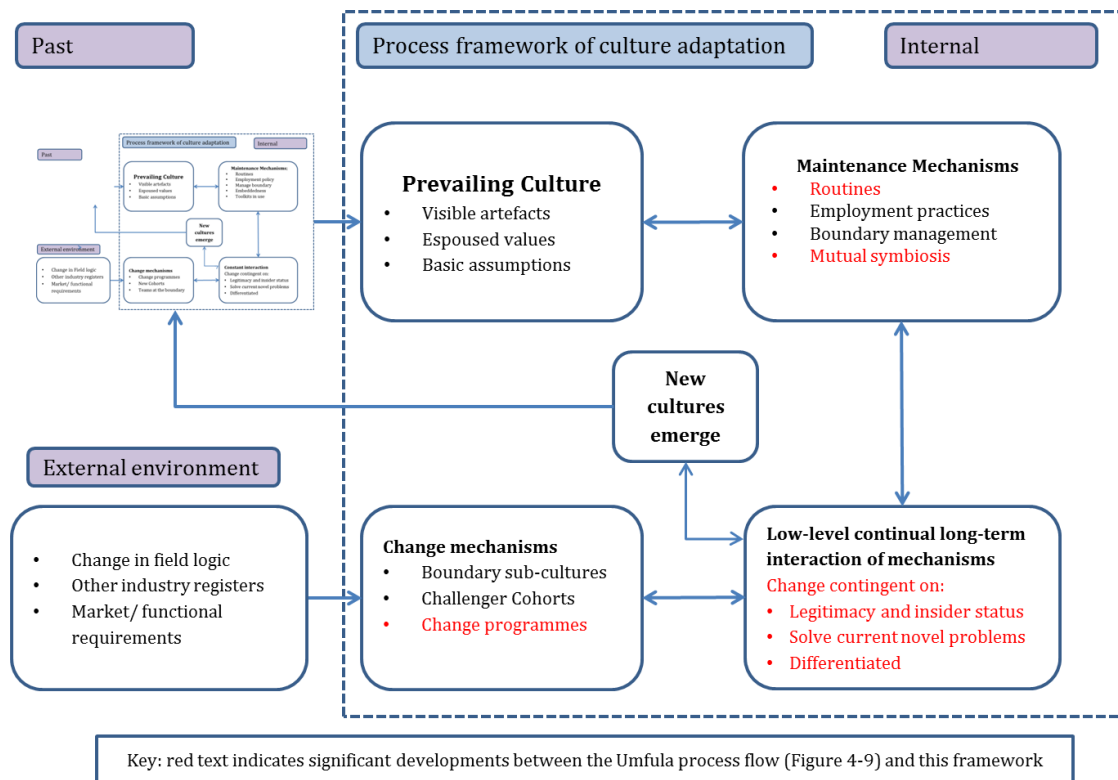
The process framework takes the PC as its starting point. This is perpetuated by maintenance mechanisms, which in these cases were found to be routines (Bertels et al., 2016, Feldman et al., 2016), employment practices (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007), the careful management of boundaries (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006, Spender, 1998), and the embeddedness of managers (from previous cohorts (Marquis and Tilcsik, 2013), which the research refers to as a process of mutual symbiosis. Following the integration of the data from the Bourn and Jiang case studies, the maintenance mechanisms of the Umfula process flow were revised and, in particular, the surveillance mechanisms were broadened to include the wider concept of organisational routines; and a new mechanism of mutual symbiosis was introduced.

In answering the first research question, this study has found that the pressure for change was located outside the firm. The specific findings in the Umfula case (for example, the reduction in cane supply) have been placed within the broader conceptual categories of change: at the institutional field level; in other industry registers; and in response to technical market requirements. These exogenously-sourced currents were found to channel through the teams whose daily work put them into contact with the immediate external environment (boundary sub-cultures Martin, 2004). These counter currents were further amplified by different cohorts of managers drawing from different industry registers, such as a FMCG approach to quality and sales (Swidler, 1986, 2001, Weber, 2005), to find solutions to the daily challenges (for example, how to source raw materials) (Smets et al., 2012) set down by the immediate external environment.

In the additional case studies, executive-led programmes for culture change were observed, and designing and leading these programmes remained an important aspect of management (Fleming, 2013, Hatch et al., 2015). This research was in a privileged position to observe differing cases of change: where there was no executive sponsorship; where there was sponsorship; as well as a case where that sponsorship failed. The findings set out in the chapter on Bourn and Jiang open the possibilities of the success of executive-led change processes through the alteration of both maintenance and change mechanisms.

The maintenance and change mechanisms were found to contest with each other in low-level, continual, long-term conflict to resolve adaptations to the culture, and through this process a new PC emerged over time. In the revised version of the framework, change was observed to occur where change agents achieved legitimacy and insider status; solved current novel problems; and responded to differences in sub-cultures. This new culture becomes the past culture for the next future state, shown in Figure 6-1 by the loop from

'new culture emerges' to the 'past'. These findings do not preclude endogenous change (see for example, Howard-Grenville et al., 2011); however, in the cases studied the strongest currents were from external sources.

The framework relies upon a range of literature (in addition to the culture literature) to explain the phenomena from a firm-level perspective. The maintenance mechanisms make use of concepts from routine dynamics and boundary management in strategy literature. The interaction between the environment and change mechanisms draws on the new institutional literature.

In using this literature, the research looks inside the black box of how organisations respond to their environments (Suddaby et al., 2010). Culture is one aspect of the structure of organisations that is found to be, in part, contingent on the functional requirements of the market, as well as the institutional field (Greenwood et al., 2014, Van de Ven et al., 2013). This is not an argument about market forces as such, but one about a combination of the effects of market selection pressures, the availability of alternative toolkits to solve the issues that this pressure presents, and the strength of maintenance mechanisms.

As organisation studies has developed, it has increasingly specialised into separate micro (individual), meso (organisations) and macro (industry and field) domains (Adler et al., 2014). Once the core of such studies, the meso level has dissipated and stagnated (Adler et al., 2014, Greenwood et al., 2014). The research seeks to illustrate a situated phenomenon at the meso level of the firm, and encourage more discussion of this domain.

In this discussion, the process framework of culture adaptation is explained, firstly by critically reviewing the maintenance mechanisms set out in Figure 6-1. This is followed by a discussion on the effects of the environment on the boundary sub-cultures and the challenger cohorts, and how these result in low-intensity, long-term conflict with the maintenance mechanisms. In line with the guidance of Eisenhardt et al. (2016) for multiple cases (such as Battilana and Dorado, 2010), construct tables have been developed and these are set out in two tables. Table 6-1 sets out a comparison of the findings for each maintenance mechanism from each case, and the last column of this table shows the principal literature used to critically understand these dynamics. Table 6-2 does the same for the change mechanisms.

	Umfula	Bourn	Jiang	Principal Literature
Maintenance mechanisms	These perpetuate the culture against constant pressure to change. Executives are seen to play an important role.	The mechanisms are deeply embedded in the firm within different management layers. Contrary to literature this is not imposed by executives.	Executives intentionally introduce new routines to create change to a new externally responsive culture.	Change Langley and Denis (2006), Demers (2007) New institutional: Kraatz et al. (2010), Dacin et al. (2010)
Routines	A strong culture with bureaucratic control and surveillance. These were unsuitable for the current functional challenges.	Entangled web of routines and policies create a frame for the maintenance of culture, allowing individual latitude for action in a rigid cage.	New matrixed controls introduced by the executives a source of cultural change. Incorporated both surveillance and routines.	Routines literature Bertels et al. (2016), Spee et al. (2016), Parmigiani and Howard-Grenville (2011), Cohen (2007), Howard-Grenville (2005)
Employment practices	Executives consciously promote those who reinforce norms, privileging a focus on sugar identity, creating stability in management and reducing the reach of professions.	The HR policies maintain the PC, even as executives seek change. As Umfula, individuals appointed to varied roles based on service not knowledge.	Competition for jobs and performance management introduced. These give executives more control, a powerful change mechanism that breaks the *iron rice bowl*.	Routines (see above) Culture: Ogbonna and Harris (2014), Alvesson and Sveningsson (2007)
Boundary management	Parts of the firm that are less understood are placed outside the boundary, but internal routines do not reflect this change. The parent group maintains an open boundary with Umfula, restricting the pace of change through the denial of relational space.	The response to environmental change was to close factories, but internal routines do not reflect this change. Bourn has a closed boundary with the parent group reducing the pace of change as the parent cannot impact routines and practices.	In contrast to Umfula and Bourn, the boundaries to both the parent and the external environment are open. Former owners of the factory continued to exert influence, and the transfer of knowledge between parent and Jiang accelerated change.	Institutional logics Thornton et al. (2013), (2008) New institutional Zietsma and Lawrence (2010), Kellogg (2009) Culture: Martin et al. (1983), Giorgi et al. (2015), Kellogg (2011)
Mutual symbiosis	Not observed.	In contrast to Umfula, Cohort B maintains culture in a coalition of longer-serving manager from different levels with access to different resources.	Cohort J at different levels initially plays a similar role to Cohort B.	Culture: Kunda (2006), Watson (2001), Schein (2010) Sensemaking: Balogun et al. (2015), Ravasi and Schultz (2006)

Table 6-2: Comparison of findings for each change mechanism by case study

	Umfula	Bourn	Jiang	Principal Literature
Change mechanisms	Change occurred through the daily practice of managers answering novel questions that the firm's repertoire could not resolve. Solutions were drawn from beyond the firm's boundary by either the sub-culture or Disturber Cohort.	In established firms change mechanisms will be effective when they have legitimacy and the change answers a presenting question. At Bourn change was not adopted as neither was demonstrated.	Novel solutions introduced from legitimate sources that answered pressing challenges (a chronic lack of raw material). However only adopted once the IC had established themselves as insiders.	Change may come from beyond the firm's boundary, new institutional: (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010, Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006)
Boundary sub cultures	Those closest to the boundary received signals from the environment of the need to adapt, before other parts of the firm. They transmitted these to the rest of the firm.	Despite high level of change anticipated, the environment provided only weak signals of change, with few novel problems, limiting the impact of sub-cultures.	As a consequence of substantial demand from the environment, the agriculture team played a significant part in orientating the firm towards the needs of farmers.	Culture:(Martin et al., 2006) Practice: (Smets et al., 2012, 2015) Cultural toolkits (Swidler, 1986, Weber, 2005) Contingency: (Van de Ven et al., 2013, Greenwood et al., 2014)
Cohort	Introducing DC was unintentional, they brought toolkit from other industries' registers, and praxis became embedded practice to solve novel problems. DC socialised enough to have legitimacy and be seen as insiders. They had reduced access to labour markets.	FMCG Cohort intentionally introduced to bring in new toolkits from other registers. Few problems that required these novel solutions. FMCG were perceived as outsiders; they perceived themselves as unsuccessful and made use of the labour market their access to the labour market and left the firm.	IC introduced knowledge from other registers, which solved an extant problem. After initial failure, the IC gained legitimacy, was seen as knowledgeable and gained insider status. Some IC left, but others had limited access to an alternative labour market; therefore, there was pressure to engage in the firm.	Cohort: (Joshi et al., 2010, Mawdsley and Somaya, 2016, Aldrich and Ruef, 2006) New institutional: (Smets et al., 2012, Kellogg, 2009) Cultural toolkits: (Swidler, 1986, Weber, 2005, Kellogg, 2011) Culture: (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011, Hatch et al., 2015)
Executive-led deliberate change	An opportunity to observe change occurring in the absence of a deliberate change programme, as executives did not believe any change was necessary.	ROCKS, a values-led well-resourced change programme, introduced to prepare for a deregulated world. Limited impact. Some executives displayed dual identities (executives and Cohort B) and were ambivalent towards the change.	Executive agency led to change in day-to-day practice of managers. It was a complex initiative that altered maintenance mechanisms; blended the IC and agric sub-culture logics. The IC gained insider status and socialised with Cohort J. As a result a new toolkit from other industries' registers was adopted.	Culture: (Schein, 2010, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007, Canato et al., 2013, Martin et al., 2006, Howard-Grenville et al., 2011) Change: (Kotter, 1995, 2008)

6.2 The internal maintenance mechanisms

6.2.1 Introduction

Cultural stability is more remarkable than change, as daily routines are repeated inconsistently over time, creating change (Langley and Denis, 2006) and culture never stops changing (Hatch, 2000, 2012). It is being constantly remade as organisational activities are continuous, are in flux at any moment (Smets et al., 2015, Langley et al., 2013), and have constant interaction with the external environment. Therefore, a culture requires sustaining mechanisms and agentic work to be maintained (Kraatz et al., 2010, Dacin et al., 2010). The stability these processes provide are important for the pivotal role that culture plays for managers (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006), and the observed path dependency (Butler and Allen, 2008, Houchin and MacLean, 2005). However, there remains limited empirical research into how the core cultural traits are maintained (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). Ogbonna and Harris (2014) observed four dynamics that maintained culture; history, symbols, subcultural dynamics and employment practices. This research has found a similar role for history and symbols; however, it draws out the added importance of organisation routines, boundary management and mutual symbiosis, as well as identifying employment practices as a primary factor. Furthermore, it has found that where these mechanisms are altered (as in the case of Jiang) they become mechanisms for change.

6.2.2 Routines

Routines may be defined as repeatable patterns of interdependent behaviour (Bresman, 2013), carried out by multiple actors (Howard-Grenville, 2005). From a routine dynamics perspective, there is a close connection between routines, practices and process (Feldman et al., 2016). This study has found that routines play an important role in the stability of organisational culture and may be used to create change.

Umfula and Bourn were both observed to have coherent (strong) cultures (Flynn and Chatman, 2001), but contrary to the previous findings (Kunda, 2006), in Umfula this strong culture did not replace the routines of bureaucratic control and surveillance, instead it worked with them (Harris and Ogbonna, 2011). In Bourn, however, the routines were structured in a different way. Rather than focusing on day-to-day surveillance, they worked as an overall frame and focused on annual budget-setting and extensive written policies. Within this, individual managers had flexibility to vary the way a routine was completed. However, this individual variability should not be confused with a change of the routine itself; in line with Cohen (2007) this may be viewed as (n)ever changing routines. The latitude awarded to managers was within the context of strong culture that privileged stability over change (Legge, 1995, Watson, 2001), and as Swidler (1986, p.279) states "*old orders are…resilient. Hiding their premises in the minutiae of daily life*".

In both cases, the routines were embedded within one another, in that they were part of an entangled web (Bertels et al., 2016). For example, at Umfula, the focus on cane grown by its own farms (MCP) was part of both the daily surveillance process and annual budgeting. In Bourn, the budgeting process set the headcount, which was then used by the HR department in the recruitment process. These were observed to be relational, in that they supported other routines, rather than being rational or for effectiveness (Feldman et al., 2016). Over time, however, the routines provided favourable outcomes (from the perspective of longer-serving managers, Cohorts U and B), which reinforced their suitability, even though from a functional perspective they were unsuitable (Oertel et al., 2016). In turn, this increased the firm's long-term chances of failure, as managers misinterpreted survival for environmental suitability (Fox-Wolfgramm et al., 1998). The observed stability of these routines was in itself an accomplishment and a result of work by skilful actors (Spee et al., 2016). The routines were embedded within the culture and technologies, acting to constrain change overtime (Howard-Grenville, 2005). Therefore, in

both Umfula and Bourn, routines were found to be important maintenance mechanisms, although they were observed to have different forms.

A different finding was observed at Jiang. In this case, routines were a source of considerable change; new routines (financial controls; monitoring of beet supply) that allowed for a matrix of control replaced the previous historical system of its powerful local GMs. These new routines focused on financial control and the close surveillance of production targets, and this change in routines tipped power away from previously powerful roles (Kraatz et al., 2010). Whilst some Cohort J managers were still struggling with their introduction, overall it was observed that the company had changed from local factory control to a control based on rules and routines. This provides an exemplar of the proposition put forward by Feldman et al. (2016) that routines contribute to both stability and change in firms, and that although managers perceive themselves as constrained by administration they can affect it (Jarzabkowski, 2008). Prior research has focused on the need for new routines to be a good fit with the PC (Edmondson et al., 2001, Canato et al., 2013). However, in this case they were not a good fit initially (for example, when changes were introduced they directly challenged the role of the GM within the PC). Their introduction (in this case) involved cultural work by executives and middle managers, to iterate between the culture and the routines to create a fit (Bertels et al., 2016, Rindova et al., 2011) as part of a wider change process, which will be discussed further in section 6.3.4 (Intentional change).

6.2.3   Employment practices

Employment practices (for example, recruitment or induction) are a form of routine, in that they are repetitive patterns of interdependent organisational actions carried out by multiple actors (Parmigiani and Howard-Grenville, 2011). However, compared to other

routines, they do have an impact on the culture because it has been argued that when they are consistent with the PC they contribute to its coherence (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). Practices previously observed in other studies include selective recruitment, promotion from within, socialisation, training and reward management (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007).

In all three cases, the twin impact of not recruiting from within and changing the socialisation (induction) process was observed to reduce the stability of a firm's culture. In each case, challenger (the collective name for the Disturber, FMCG and ICC) cohorts (see 6.3.3) were externally recruited and underwent different induction processes to earlier cohorts, and as will be discussed later, this was part of a process that distinguished these cohorts from those whom had gone before, and played a part in their access to different toolkits. This adaptation to the socialisation process of employment practices may be seen as an important weakening of the employment practice mechanism.

The management at Umfula maintained a conscious control of employment practices, particularly the hiring and promotion of managers, and this ensured that managers were rewarded for being aligned to the PC, assisting the perpetuation of basic assumptions. The longevity of the management, and the lack of professional networks within Umfula, reinforced the strength of the PC (Harris and Ogbonna, 2011).

The practices of the HR function at Bourn played a similar role in the perpetuation of the PC, even as executives sought to vary other routines to adapt it. This disconnect between the actions of HR managers and the executive intent fora change programme has been previously documented (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007). Although, middle managers were provided with more latitude to act at Bourn, as opposed to the tight central control of

Umfula, the outcome was the same; in that the predominance of recruiting from within perpetuated the existing culture. In both cases, this included promoting managers into roles not associated with their initial training. For example, engineers were appointed into significant commercial roles. These varied internal careers reinforced the PC, created a focus on a sugar identity, and reduced the influence of the professional institutions that may initiate change (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006).

However, the introduction of novel employment practices in Jiang (for example, competition for jobs and a change in the application of selective recruitment) was a tool used by executives to adapt to a more individual performance culture. Therefore, employment practices were developed as a powerful change mechanism, especially where the practice (breaking the iron rice bowl) had legitimacy in the institutional field (McGregor, 2010). This change in practice had an impact on the culture, even though the vast majority of those appointed came from within. In this case, a coherent and consistent set of employment practices supported a change process, and Alvesson and Sveningsson (2007)'s categorisation of employment practices (set out above) may be extended to include the concept of individual performance management and target setting.

6.2.4   Boundary management

Culture is the idea of shared meaning, and with whom this meaning is shared is a critical dimension. For executives, defining the scope of the firm is an important task. In this study, the boundary of a firm was defined as its legal boundaries, as this is consistent with the definition typically conceived of by executives, even though the boundaries may be more porous than they are often perceived (Crilly, 2013). Prior research, however, has shown that there is an interchange between a firm's culture and the institutional field, which suggests that the boundary between the two is open (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008),

and taken to an extreme it has been posited that there may be no unique firm-level culture (Martin et al., 1983, Giorgi et al., 2015). This discussion covers two aspects of the boundary; the effect of the strength of the boundary between the focal companies and their parent firms, and the impact of the movement of the boundary through acquisition.

In each case, the focal firm was part of a larger parent sugar company, and the openness of the boundary between the two had an impact on the propensity for the culture to adapt, as set out in the Table 6-3. Managers viewed the parent company as a form of institution that provided legitimacy for actions. In two cases, where the boundary may be described as open, the impact of the parent was accentuated; in the other case, where the boundary may be described as closed, the influence of the parent was reduced, illustrating that the development of such a boundary protects the autonomy of the focal firm (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010).

Table 6-3: Impact of parent company on focal business

Case	Parent	Boundary with the parent	Degree of change deemed necessary by the parent	Speed of adaptation of focal firm	Boundary with the environment
Umfula	Somfula	Open	Low	Slow change	Closed
Jiang	Mere	Open	High	Faster change	Open
Bourn	Mere	Closed	High	Slow change	Closed

The parental boundary was seen to be open at Umfula, and Somfula consciously prevented the creation of a separate identity, denying the Umfula management the relational space and isolation necessary to develop their own response to their immediate environment (Kellogg, 2009, Howard-Grenville et al., 2011). This included Somfula having direct influence over routines (surveillance) and employment practices.

In contrast, a reverse dynamic was observed in Bourn, where the parental boundary was observed to be closed. Managers guarded the flexibility, provided by their autonomy, to manage events in their business. Mere unsuccessfully sought to influence the adaptation of Bourn's culture; it was unable to influence its daily practices and routines.

However, in Jiang, the openness of the boundary allowed Mere managers to use their bridge-building position (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). As this boundary was crossed, new repertoires (such as the approach to purchasing sugar beet) were developed (Carlile, 2004),which included changes to routines and employment practices. Therefore, the permeability of the boundary may be seen to directly affect the adoption of novel practices.

Zietsma and Lawrence (2010) found that strong boundaries provide firms with stability and prevent continuous adaptation, and Harrison and Corley (2011) found that permeable boundaries allowed for better exchange; however, this research finds that it is more nuanced. In one case, a weak boundary (between Somfula and Umfula) created the stability and prevented adaptation. Therefore, the impact of the boundary is dependent on the degree of change promoted by the institution; an open boundary may slow the pace of change. Change may come from beyond the boundary or where boundaries intersect, however stability may also arise from these places; a permeable boundary may act as a maintenance mechanism.

The second aspect of boundaries that has arisen from this study's data is the effect of executive initiatives. In all three cases, the executives used their authority to redraw the formal firm boundary by the closure or purchase of factories. Such acquisitions and disposals may not necessarily alter the way the firm itself operates (Spender, 1998), and this has been compared to perceiving a firm as a series of building blocks. This view of the

firm assumes that pieces (for example, factories) of a business can easily be bought and sold (Kogut and Zander, 2003). In this research's case studies, these transactions had more complicated consequences than those anticipated by executives, as the firms retained routines that were no longer optimal. As previously discussed, routines (section 6.2.2) form an interrelated, entangled web, that can remain in place when they no longer produce optimal outputs. In the acquisition of a factory by Jiang, the previous owner (government) continued to exert influence on daily practice, as the institutional field's logic continued to penetrate the firm's boundary (Thornton et al., 2013) and the prior routines (of consulting with government) remained in place. In this case, the influence of the permeable external boundary was a factor in perpetuating the culture. Therefore, boundary work by executives (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010) needs to consist of more than Lego-style restructuring, and should include an understanding of the permeability of boundaries and the impact of legacy routines.

6.2.5   Mutual symbiosis

At Umfula and Jiang, the maintenance mechanisms (routines, employment practices, and boundary management) were enabled and resourced by executives, and in line with previous research, a difference was observed between different levels of managers (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 2003, Kunda, 2006). In contrast, the Bourn maintenance mechanisms arose from the interaction of similar responses by longer-serving managers in both senior and mid-level roles, which created a more nuanced understanding of the role of the leadership team members in maintaining and changing culture.

In Bourn, there was a distinction between when the longer-tenured members of the LT acted as agents to support the change processes, and in their role as members of Cohort B, where their actions maintained the PC. This is a similar distinction to that found by

Balogun et al. (2015) between managers' roles as both change agents and recipients. The executives articulated this as the culture constraining their room for action; however, it may be better seen as an example of their agency creating the structure, which reinforced their own agency (Giddens, 1984). The managers' acceptance of their limitations to create change was part of a mutually symbiotic process with the Cohort B middle managers; a coalition between those at different levels who had spent their career at Bourn. The managers were aware of the nature of the long-term conflict in which they were involved; between the PC (and the intentions of the parent company) and newer executives to change it.

In previous studies of outwardly-stable, capital-intensive businesses (Watson, 2001, Kunda, 2006), two competing discourses have been recorded; an official one (articulated by powerful executives) and an alternative, off-stage one from middle managers. Furthermore, prior research tends to analyse by managerial layer; for example, senior manager, middle manager and subordinate (Kellogg, 2009) or wage structure (Kunda, 2006).Culture maybe thought of as an emanation of senior management (Peters and Waterman, 1982), a founder (Schein, 2010), or the firm being monopolised by executives (Kunda, 2006).

At Bourn, rather than the distinction being between managerial levels, the process was more nuanced and less coherent than this explanation implies. Cohort membership played a more significant role than managerial level. Rather, the PC was maintained by managers of the same cohort at varying levels, with access to different resources. The institutional professions had a limited foothold; sugar knowledge and its production logic were more prevalent than professional logic. It is important to note that specific self-interest or success in the markets was not observed, it was more the protection of a professional perspective (Thornton et al., 2013), albeit in this case the profession was a sugar identity.

This created, in Bourn, an institution of sorts (Kunda, 2006), which embedded these managers in that identity and reduced their propensity to change (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006); the subsequent stability played an important part in managers' sense-making (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006).

Whilst the PC may be described as coherent at both Umfula and Bourn, there was a distinction in how it was maintained. Umfula's PC may be viewed as being resourced by a hierarchical structure, as seen in previous studies. The cohort lens of this research at Bourn revealed, however, that the maintenance of its culture benefited from a coalition of long-serving managers at different levels; mutual symbiosis.

These four maintenance mechanisms support the perpetuation of the culture, or as seen in one case, may be mobilised to support the change process. The next section will cover the core change mechanisms.

6.3   Change mechanisms

6.3.1   Introduction

In the previous section, the four maintenance mechanisms that were observed were set out: routines; employment practices; boundary management and mutual symbiosis. It was noted that whilst routines were generally observed as supporting stability, they may also promote change. In the following section, the change mechanisms of sub-culture, cohort and intentional change will be covered. This research found the pressure for change to be located outside the firm, at the institutional field level from other industry registers, and in response to technical market requirements. These exogenously-sourced currents were most obvious in the boundary sub-cultures, and these forces were further amplified by

varying cohorts of managers, who drew from different non-sugar industry registers to solve practical challenges.

Furthermore, the research was able to examine a case where there was no management-led change programme, and compare this to two where such initiatives were observed. These findings open the possibility of executive-led change processes being successful in some circumstances. These findings do not preclude endogenous change, however, in these cases the strongest currents were from external sources.

In the maintenance section, the importance of actors undertaking cultural work to maintain the firm's culture was set out. This section will examine how agency may disrupt it (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). The literature on institutional work sets out that change comes from the periphery, new entrants and those at the boundary (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010); this study finds a similar phenomenon.

6.3.2   Sub-culture

The existence of sub-cultures are well documented in literature (Martin et al., 2006). However, studies of culture continue to emphasise an internally-focused unitary organisation and ignores the dynamic that sub-cultures create (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). This research observed the formation of distinct sub-cultures, in which managers worked on a regular basis with others from outside the firm's boundary (for example, customers or suppliers), referred to as boundary sub-cultures. The differences, between the PC and sub-cultures, arose from their day-to-day situated practice (Smets et al., 2015). These sub-cultures were not neat and coherent, or islands of clarity in a sea of ambiguity (Martin et al., 2006), and within each there was variability. However, variability was less and cohesion higher within the sub-culture, than between sub-cultures. The phenomena of

a sub-culture being an observable conduit for external pressures may be a feature of firms where a relatively limited number of employees have contact with clients (for example, engineering firms), and may be less observable in professional services or education.

The sub-cultures developed in response to the differing practice requirements of the managers' daily work, and therefore the sub-cultures overlapped with the external environment (Weber, 2005, Weber and Dacin, 2011). This implies that although the external boundary appeared to be difficult to cross, for these managers they operated, to an important degree, in a liminal state: between the PC and that outside the firm. Most of the time these managers simply did as they were supposed to do; they were intelligently attentive to their environments and their jobs. The challenge from the outside led attentive managers to seek pragmatic solutions, rather than optimal solutions. These solutions created a contradiction with the existing logics of the firm, which in turn created novelty and reflexivity (Smets et al., 2012, Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006), which was transferred to other managers through a process of situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998).

Similar exchanges with the external world have been shown to transfer culture (Harrison and Corley, 2011, Maurer et al., 2011, Weber et al., 2008), and change mundane practice (Smets et al., 2012). However in those cases the process was resourced by executives who supported the creation of enabling mechanisms. Furthermore, this does not arise from an event, an exogenous jolt often observed by the change literature (for example, see Morrill, 2008 and Swidler, 1986), but from a process of persistent pressure for a new solution to functional issues. Even if different cultural resources are available, individuals tend to use the strategies of action that work well for them, because new skills and habits, the building blocks of strategies of action, are "*hard to learn and deploy effectively*" (Swidler, 2008, p.615). The actions of one practitioner do not change culture, the introduction of a new

toolkit by a new manager in isolation does not alter culture; culture is more than a one-off behaviour (Schein, 2010, p.20). For this change to occur, the praxis needs to become embedded within shared routines (Whittington, 2006). Similarly, Weber observes that "*the correct use of [cultural] elements has to be learned and practiced*" (Weber, 2005, p. 229); enacting different cultural resources is individually costly, difficult, or risky. Individuals tend to stick with the strategies of action that they know have worked (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011), until the benefit of adapting is obvious. This is not a strategic change but nor is it entirely unintentional either, as the managers involved are aware of the tension they experience with the PC.

The boundary sub-cultures in the commercial and agriculture teams in Umfula demonstrated a process consistent with the literature set out above. In their daily work, the customers and farmers posed novel questions to the teams, and who then sought to answer these, drawing on scripts from other industries introduced by the Disturber Cohort. This individual praxis became practice as the work became embedded in shared routines, and this process of situated improvising may be viewed as accidental change (Plowman et al., 2007). The exchange with the environment occurred without such intentionality, nor executive sponsorship, nor a specific jolt, but a process of persistent pressure. This gradual process of responding to mundane requirements reduced the risk of change for individuals.

The members of the sub-culture at Bourn were similarly aware of the slowly evolving needs of their customers. However, these needs were less immediate, less urgent. So although their narrative was similar to that of their peers' at Jiang and Umfula, they could identify fewer consequences for ignoring requests. Therefore, the requirement for novel solutions was diminished, individual acts of praxis did not become embedded in shared routines, and so signals from the environment were not translated into changes in the PC.

The external environmental requirements could be solved with existing toolkits. The sub-culture's additional narrative (the need for more customer focus) was perceived as more onerous than the actual requirements of the market and, therefore, this was perceived by others as an abstract construct and not part of their current lived reality; the PC had to adapt little to survive and thrive. Therefore, this study has shown that the impact of the boundary sub-culture on the wider PC is affected by the degree of change in daily mundane practice required to meet the specific and current environmental needs.

6.3.3   Cohorts

This research has shown that culture change is affected by the access that managers have to new toolkits from other industries' registers to resolve novel problems, and that a source of these is the introduction of challenger cohorts. The term challenger cohorts is used here to refer collectively to the attributes of the Disturber, FMCG and International Cohorts. The research on the impact of employee mobility on organisational outcomes is highly fragmented (Mawdsley and Somaya, 2016), and in particular the dynamic inside an organisation is less well studied (Joshi et al., 2010). This research identified and observed specific cohort group; 'cohort' being understood as a heuristic device, and used in a similar way to boundary sub-cultures in that it brings together a loosely-bound group that had variances within the cohort. It was observed that managers with less service (the challenger cohorts) had distinct characteristics when compared to the previous (prevailing) cohorts.

Managers recruited from outside the firm represent agents of change (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) as they have access to different toolkits from different industries' registers than their co-workers in earlier cohorts (Kellogg, 2009). The hiring of managers who are less tethered to a given way of working enables practice-driven change, by clustering within the firm practitioners who are more open to improvisation (Smets et al., 2012).

This diminishes consensus and unquestioning adherence to taken-for-granted practice, which may create social pressure to alter culture (Dacin et al., 2002), and through their different practices this can lead to unintentional change (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007). Logics are rooted within their field, and are part of a coherent whole (Thornton et al., 2013), and therefore toolkits from other industries' registers are less accepted, potentially creating conflict (Weber, 2005). This is especially so in mature settings where new entrants (and their different logics) may be severely undermined by powerful incumbents (Wijk et al., 2013). Furthermore, the impact of their different perspectives may be limited, if they are rooted in relationships from their previous firm (Adler and Kwon, 2002), which mobile managers may be unaware of (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012), meaning that the learning may be retained by the individual and not shared with the firm (Mawdsley and Somaya, 2016).

The findings sections set out that the defining features of the challenger cohorts were that they: had access to different logics; underwent different socialisation processes when joining the firm; differed in their perspective on events (for example, more attentive to external events); and had different access to labour markets. In this research, the challenger cohorts retained these differentiating perspectives, and were able to transfer these toolkits to the host firm when an extant problem required it; they had acquired insider status; they remained in the firm (despite their distinctive status); and this process was accentuated when they received support from executives. Each of these is discussed in turn below.

As set out in section 6.2.3., the challenger cohorts experienced different socialisation processes as they were recruited mid-career and, therefore, they had not undergone the intense factory-based experiences of earlier cohorts; this reduced their institutional socialisation (Kunda, 2006) or acculturation (Schein, 2010). In part, due to this reduced

socialisation process, and also their previous professional experience; they exhibited less of an association with a sugar identity.

However, even though they retained a professional identity, the question arose as to under what circumstances the new cohorts were able to transfer their toolkits to the focal firm. This research has revealed that for this to happen the toolkits needed to be skilfully used in practice. To be applied, the praxis must be relevant to extant problems. In addition, for the praxis to develop into a practice, the cohort must attain insider status, which includes demonstrating an awareness of the PC.

The change in hiring practice at Umfula was not as a result of an alteration of policy; no evidence was found of an intentional change in practice. Nevertheless, the firm assembled a cluster of managers amenable to unfamiliar ways of working, but with a deep appreciation of Umfula that led them to being effective. They were embedded in the organisation, different but not apart, combining the roles of insider and outsider (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011). Insiders open crevices, not problematising the familiar but unproblematising the unknown, combining new and old cultural resources without the need for an external jolt (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011, Rindova et al., 2011). This process of cultural blending allows both registers (old and new) to co-exist and over time the firm's cultural repertoire becomes more diverse (Rindova et al., 2011). On the contrary, Hatch et al. (2015) found that in order to create new culture, the old has to be disembedded, disenchanted and disrespected, so as to remove the option to retain former culture. The FMCG Cohort at Bourn adopted an approach similar to this, disrespecting the PC, characterising it as abnormal, and this resulted in them remaining outside and apart from it. Aldrich and Ruef (2006) postulate that, at the limit, if as cohort is perceived as too idiosyncratic, then this will reduce the inter-cohort transfer of knowledge; this appears to

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have been the case for the FMCG Cohort. Lacking legitimacy and being seen as disrespectful of the firm's traditions, they were negatively sanctioned.

The challenger cohort in Jiang benefited from the support of executives, a process referred to as cosmopolitanism (Smets et al., 2012) or a political toolkit (Kellogg, 2011), and once they had achieved insider status (in combination with addressing an extant challenge), this support was seen to accelerate the transition of their toolkit from individual praxis to shared practice. This transition was also observed in the absence of such executive support (in Umfula). However, in Bourn, it was found that a new repertoire could not be developed if there was cosmopolitanism without the opportunity for the practical application of new toolkits, and without the attainment of insider status.

The process of working with different toolkits from your colleagues leads to long-term, low-level conflict, which when unrewarded is fatiguing, illustrating the very personal costs that can be associated with change. New cohorts have previously demonstrated their access to the labour market and a higher propensity to be mobile. Where the challenger cohort had continuing access to the labour market (in Bourn, and initially some of those in Jiang) they tended to leave the firm, even when they had political support from executives.

6.3.4   Intentional change

The researcher was in a privileged position to observe cases of culture change were there was no executive sponsorship; and where there was sponsorship; as well as a case where that sponsorship failed, and this allows for analysis between the three contexts. The third research question is *'how can executives guide the change of organisational culture over time?'* Therefore, in addition to understanding how culture responds to the environment though time, it is also instructive to understand the impact of executive-led change

programmes. Two contrasting initiatives were observed; at Bourn a programme sought to change behaviour through promoting new values, whereas in Jiang executives introduced new practices into the agriculture team.

The LT at Bourn intended to bring about change by using their authority and resources (Kanter, 1984). This included enhanced communications, training events and performance reviews (Schein, 2010), as well as intentionally changing hiring practices to recruit the FMCG Cohort, including a new Managing Director, in order to transfer new ideas (Kraatz and Moore, 2002, Canato et al., 2013). It was intended to prepare the firm for future deregulation in 2017 and to introduce rationalised myths of good management, regardless of cultural fit (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). However, from the middle managers' perspective it did not address the specific needs of daily practice nor solve their extant issues. Like 70% of change efforts (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007), the initiative was ultimately considered unsuccessful in the terms set out for it, and was discontinued.

The integrated values-engineering approach to culture change emphasises the role of organisational leaders' personal charisma (Kotter, 1995) and focuses on the discursive practices that invite members to embrace the new (Schein, 2010, Weick and Quinn, 1999), and therefore enhance the firm's performance (O'Reilly et al., 2014). These are based on an unproblematic notion that the consensus of the top managers is simply being cascaded (Jarzabkowski, 2008), and they also presume members' willingness to align their behaviour to their leaders' new beliefs. Changes in administrative practices are usually understood as secondary reinforcement mechanisms, needed to support the content of a charismatic vision (Canato et al., 2013). This kind of planned approach has been criticised for reducing the complexities of working life to banal recommendations (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007), and has been seen to be, at best, partially successful (Canato et al., 2013).

Executives understandably would like to believe that culture can be a tool; that their personal values can be shared by their employees and reflected in consistent behavioural norms; and that these will generate loyalty, productivity, and financial outcomes. These are seductive promises, and whatever the weaknesses of the empirical record (supported by this research), their appeal has not deteriorated (Fleming, 2013). In addition to its cognitive attractiveness, this approach has strong appeal as it calls for obvious actions to be undertaken (communicate, run a workshop, be role models) (Martin et al., 2006).

Langley and Denis (2006) argue that change is an asymmetrical process between those who decide and those who implement. However, this paints a simple picture of a coherent senior management and a cascade process, where top management are seen as a single group and a prime mover in change (Michel, 2014). However, the process of mutual symbiosis (see section 6.2.5) shows a more complex picture with the bifurcation of the executives' roles between change agents and recipients (McDermott et al., 2013, Balogun et al., 2015), showing the limitations of reifying the organisation as a unitary actor (Kaplan, 2008). Implicitly, much research and practitioner work (exemplified by Bourn) on change treats organisations as uniform, with a focus on outcomes for the "whole" organisation, without attention to differences within units (Balogun et al., 2015).

By contrast, Jiang provides evidence that executive agency may lead to change in the day-to-day practice of managers. It was a complex initiative that emerged over time and applied both maintenance and change mechanisms. Employment practices and routines were altered to align them with a desired future culture and the challenger cohort applied their toolkits, drawn from other industries' registers, and consciously sought insider status. This approach resulted in the blending of their logic and that of the agriculture boundary sub-culture, and led to the creation of a new team-level repertoire.

In contrast to Bourn, the programme in Jiang engaged with the agriculture sub-culture specifically (rather than as part of a unified whole) through the development of practices rather than values. It did include a process of coerced routine change (Canato et al., 2013), where the iron rice bowl was replaced with a more individual performance related system (employment practices) and the closer surveillance of outcomes (routines). When initially unsuccessful, the executives re-engaged with the middle managers to develop a process that unfolded overtime and brought together different mechanisms. In addition, they overcame the difficulty of transferring the IC's toolkit and responded to the emerging signals from the agricultural boundary sub-culture. To deploy this range of maintenance and change mechanisms effectively, the IC deliberately sought to gain insider status and socialise with Cohort J (Howard-Grenville et al., 2011).

The programme sought to provide specific solutions to daily problems provided by the external environment, giving it legitimacy to longer-serving managers and increasing its ability to act as a bridge between the former welfare and future market logics (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). The practical application of these solutions was an important part of embedding this knowledge into daily practice (Bresman, 2013). The executives appeared to avoid black and white characterisations of people as negative or resistant, or diluting (or not 'normal' in Bourn) because they did not appear to conform to the initial approach (McDermott et al., 2013). As the programme unfolded, it was acknowledged that managers were trying to make sense of the process (Sonenshein, 2010), and this allowed them to interpret and translate it into daily practice rather than being seen to diffuse or dissipate the initiative (Aten et al., 2012). As a result of this combination, executives commented on the adoption of a new toolkit from other industries' registers. These observations drew attention to the importance of the deep and extended engagement in new practices when encouraging cultural change.

6.4   Conclusion

In this research, it was observed that change tended to be sourced externally from the firm, and was channelled through one of three change mechanisms: sub-culture; challenger cohorts and executive-led initiatives. At the same time, the PC was perpetuated by the maintenance mechanisms of: routines; employment practices; boundary management; and a process of mutual symbiosis. Although a distinction between the two series of mechanisms has been drawn for analytical purposes, maintenance mechanisms can accentuate change and the change mechanisms may provide stability. The culture was constantly evolving through the interaction of these mechanisms.

Change occurs when those seeking it have legitimacy and insider status and are using their toolkits to solve current, specific, novel problems, normally generated by the external environment; this is an interaction that has been seen to work in the absence of intentionality. Therefore, firm-level support mechanisms may be helpful to change, but are not always necessary if the environment sends out strong enough signals. Conversely, firm-level support mechanisms (typically designed by executives) may not create change if they are not deployed skilfully or are in the absence of environmental signals.

The next chapter takes forward this discussion by elaborating on the contributions of this research for both theory and practice.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Contributions

7.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the prior discussion and findings chapters, draws the work to a conclusion and sets out the contributions to practice, theory and method. It also acknowledges the main limitations of this study and makes recommendations for future research. The dual criteria of contributing to both practice and theory is an important feature of business school research (Tushman and O'Reilly, 2007) and the DBA, and this is in line with the desire of Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) that research has an impact or *"change or benefit … beyond academia"* (HEFCE et al., 2012, p.26). This moves the impact of research from simply one of productivity and citation counts to one which has a greater involvement with a set of stakeholders beyond the academic (Pettigrew and Starkey, 2016).

To address the research questions set out in the Introduction and the Discussion chapters (see pages 16 and 186), this study has had access to three case studies with different levels of executive engagement with the process of change. It has shown that the immediate business environment has a direct bearing on a firm's culture, through the questions the environment poses to the organisation. These can either accelerate the dynamic of change, when the questions are novel, or it may retard the pace of change, when they may be answered by a business's existing repertoire.

These questions from the immediate environment (for example, from customers or suppliers) are channelled into a firm through the boundary sub-cultures, and answered by a combination of the normal attentiveness of managers to their daily jobs (Smets et al., 2012) and by new toolkits (Swidler, 1986) made available from beyond the firm's

boundary (Weber, 2005). This highlights that managers privilege the day-to-day requirements of their role over requests for change from executives, even when these requests are supported by professional corporate communications programmes. The toolkits enter the firm either through the boundary sub-culture (Howard-Grenville, 2006) or through new cohorts of managers (Aldrich and Ruef, 2006). The dynamic created by this change process interacts with a culture's maintenance mechanisms (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014), here found to be: routines; employment practices (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007); boundary management (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010) and mutual symbiosis. The process of cultural alteration was found to occur through the continual, low-level, long-term interaction of the change and maintenance mechanisms. This process was observed to occur in the absence of executive sponsorship, and it follows that a firm's culture is not solely generated by the executive. It has been found, however, that the executive may guide the process of cultural adaptation by the thoughtful, long-term resourcing of a change process that is sympathetic to this constant process.

In answering the three research questions, this chapter will cover its contributions to theory and method, address its limitations and set out a future research agenda. But first the chapter begins with contributions to practice.

7.2   Practice contributions

This section specifically addresses executives and gives guidance on how they may seek to engage with the culture change process. The principal insight for practice is that a firm's culture is constantly developing due to environmental stimuli, and the actions of managers in response to their daily work, including in the absence of executive-led initiatives. In this continual process, the role of executives is found to be more limited than that set out in the business press; the concept that company culture is an emanation of executives may be unhelpful. This study demonstrates that successful change initiatives

are resource-intensive, and need to encompass a wide range of features and be maintained over an extended period of period. Lastly, the role of executives may best be conceived of as a guide, a helper of change, rather than a hero-leader making a firm in their own image.

Culture change retains of high importance to practitioners (Lorsch and McTague, 2016, Fleming, 2013), undiminished in its popularity since Watson's (2001) critique of the early wave of practitioner-focused writing on culture, exemplified by Peters and Waterman (1982), Deal and Kennedy (2000, [1982]), and Kotter and Heskett (1992). The normative literature on culture change continues to take both a cognitive values (for example, Slap, 2015, Bowles and Cooper, 2012) and an n-step perspective (see for example, Kotter, 2008). These approaches have been described as part of the Heathrow Organisation Theory (Clark and Rowlinson, 2007), with their focus on founders and executives, which will tend to show a consensus of meaning and culture (Jarzabkowski, 2008), and a lack of appreciation of the limitations of executives (Spender, 1998, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003). This body of research also underestimates the influence of the environment on company culture (the term company culture is used in this section as is the norm in the practitioner-focused literature). This literature has continued to thrive as it speaks to executives' desire to see organisations as an emanation of their own personalities (Martin, 2002) and fits with the individualistic narrative of human resources (Legge, 1995). This section covers three topics: how to engage with practitioners of culture change; the overall themes of the framework; and implementation.

One of the practical contributions of this research is that culture change is more effective if it is seen to come from insiders, respecting the old/traditional whilst blending it with the new. It finds that building on previous logics and smoothly blending them with new logics is a more effective approach that creates more opportunities, not less. Therefore, those seeking to engage with practitioners on culture change need to address the practical utility

of the normative literature and its focus on the cognitive values approach. This provides

executives with a description (that they can engage with) of the current PC and what

workplaces are like to live in. Therefore the recommendations for practice set out below

incorporate the descriptive contribution of a values based approach.

Figure 7-1: Culture change toolkit
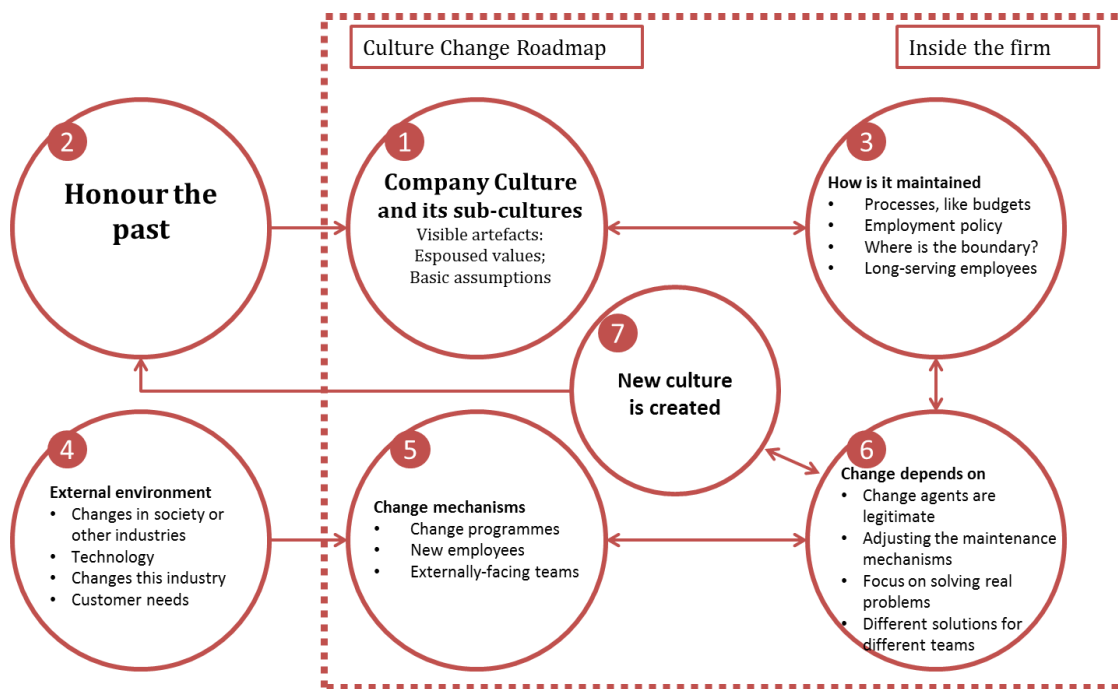
The cultural change toolkit set out in Figure 7-1 is an adapted version of Figure 6-1. It is

intended to show the same dynamic and express it in practice-based language and

activities, and in less theoretical terms. The circles in Figure 7-1 have been numbered in

the order that they are summarised below. The diagram shows that the existing culture of

a business is the outcome of a long-standing process that combines a company's values,

processes and capabilities.

Culture change is hard work; executives may play an important role as they are required to be engaged in the process, curious about what is working and resilient to stay the arduous course. Any change initiative is complex, resource consuming, and takes considerable time and thought. Whilst the process may be accelerated and the probability of a positive outcome enhanced, there is, unfortunately, no short cut and no evidence that charismatic and hero-leaders make a substantial difference. In recognition of the valid critique of n-step programmes (for example see, Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2007), the stages are referred to as themes. Although there is a logical order to address them, a specific process may require iterating between themes. Also the n-step approach implies that there is a defined end to the process. In contrast, this research shows that the change process is a continual cycle of change that the executive is stepping into. There is no preferred firm culture to be created by this process; the new culture created (as defined by Schein's three-tier model) will depend on the interaction of the executive-led change process, the actions of managers, the environment, the current PC and any retained maintenance mechanisms.

As with all frameworks, this approach will be more useful in some circumstances; it is anticipated that the approach is likely to work best in established, larger organisations undergoing a period of externally-driven change, including changes to markets, deregulation or privatisation. This framework speaks most effectively to these larger firms, as opposed to smaller, newer firms, as the number of interactions (and therefore complexity) grows exponentially as its size increases (Beinhocker, 2007). The type of industry may also be a factor in determining the use of this approach, as it may be more effective in a product-based firm, in which there is a clearer distinction between the minority who interact mainly with those outside of the firm, and the majority who do not. Therefore, some parts of the framework may be less effective in service companies or in the education sector.

This study took place in a firm that is majority-owned by the family of the founder and in which a member of that family remains the Holm CEO. Although, in this case, the shadow of the founder was not found to be discernible, this framework may be less applicable in circumstances where that shadow was observable; perhaps if the firm is smaller, or newer. Lastly, the observed executive-led change was in concert with environmental changes. It illustrates environmentally–led change in the absence of executive support. However, it does not demonstrate an executive-led change process in the absence of an environmental requirement. Each theme is presented in turn below, with a summary action and an explanation:

Theme 1:

Summary: Describe the current company culture using Schein's three-tier model, including its significant sub-cultures.

Explanation: It is easier to engage in the evolving nature of culture change than it is to see the purpose to change it. Therefore, a clear understanding of the current company culture is an important foundation and starting place. The company culture may well be described in the same manner as a person's personality and Schein's three-tier model is a good way of defining this. Once the overall company culture has been described, executives should be cognisant of the multiple cultures within the firm, based on length of service, managerial level, profession, function and workplace location. Understanding the complexity of the sub-culture map will be fruitful.

Theme 2:

Summary: Be seen to honour the firm's history, when developing or communicating the plan.

Explanation: The culture of an organisation has developed for a historical purpose and, in order to encourage or guide the culture change process, this legacy needs to be both understood and honoured, not least as a way of ensuring the engagement with long-serving managers.

Theme 3:

Summary: Audit company processes to understand which maintain the current culture, for example: budgeting, finance performance tracking, and human resources practices.

Explanation: The culture is maintained by a series of mechanisms, including internal processes, employment practices, long-serving employees' knowledge, and also how and where executives decide to draw or define the organisation's boundary. Existing cohorts of managers, irrespective of their level, may feel more conflicted than is imagined between their role as a manager and their length of service.

Theme 4:

Summary: Audit what is the business strategy, what is changing in the business environment, and include discussions with the boundary teams.

Explanation: Companies are adapting on a continuous basis, due to influences from outside the firm. These include changes in societal norms (for example, attitudes to women's participation in the workforce) or in other industries (such as technology or customer service). An organisation will also be influenced by the dynamics of competition in the core market and changes in the industry (such as changes in regulation). Understanding the external pressures and how they may be used constructively for the firm is an important part of the change journey.

Theme 5:

Summary: Create the change plan! Set out what the new culture will look like, which maintenance mechanisms will change, the communications plan and detailed training plans for the main functions. Use current problems as the pivot for change, and support managers to do a better job today.

Explanation: Do not aim to directly fix the culture, it will evolve as the important work of managing is done, and it is better thought of as an outcome, rather than an input. Set out clearly what the new culture is, by developing a new set of values. It is a necessary (but not sufficient) step to engage employees by using enhanced communications and events to explain the future culture; see the new set of values as a tool to aid communication. Although it is important to understand and honour the current success of the firm and its legacy, it is equally important to focus on the future state, and not focus on correcting perceived weaknesses in the current culture.

Significant change comes from practically grounding the new ways of working in daily activities and company processes. Interventions need to be differentiated to match the specific needs of each department; consider how this approach translates into their daily practice or solves their existing problems. The change process will be more successful if it

engages at the level of quotidian work, and this could well be done through interactive team workshops. Remember that the teams distant from the core of the firm, for example a sales team who spend most of their time with customers, are a good source of understanding change.

As part of the change programme, it is worth considering introducing new skills into the company, by recruiting groups of new employees, but be careful that this is a managed process where existing employees are respected, and seen to be respected. In order to succeed, the new employees will require safe space to discuss their observations, and contact with and feedback from executives. A firm has to work hard to retain these change agents, and others, as they are under more pressure than has been traditionally understood and have a tendency to a quicker turnover.

Theme 6:

Summary: Check that change agents have legitimacy and that the change plan is addressing current issues.

Explanation: Change is a long-term process of blending the successful parts of the existing culture with the future needs of the firm. Success is more frequently observed when the change agents (at any level, including new employees) are seen as legitimate. Legitimacy is achieved through consciously honouring the past, socialising widely and talking positively about the future. It is more beneficial to focus the new ways of working on solving real problems today, as a practical grounded demonstration of what is intended.

Take away the barriers to change, by adapting the important company processes (like budgeting and planning cycles) and employment practices, to ensure that they support culture change, rather than unintentionally against it.

Theme 7:

Summary: Check progress on a regular basis and adjust plan.

Explanation: Over time a new culture will emerge, and this will inform understanding of the effectiveness of the plan. This new understanding will aid the development of a new plan.

7.3   Theory Contribution

The new institutional literature posits that institutions need to be constantly reproduced and maintained (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), as they are characterised by the simultaneous existence of different logics (Thornton et al., 2013) and they are embedded within larger environments which inflict on them various exogenous pressures that introduce the potential for change (Greenwood et al., 2014). Zilber (2012) raised the question of whether these three concepts could help explain how culture is maintained and adapted. In response, this research has drawn on new institutional and culture literature to develop Figure 6-1: Process framework of culture adaptation. This framework demonstrates how, in the absence of executive intentional change, sub-cultures (both boundary and cohort) provide multiple logics within a firm, and their interplay with the firm's larger environment creates pressures for change. These multiple logics do so by interacting with the company culture's reproduction and maintenance mechanisms to create a process of continual change. Therefore, the framework illustrates how all three of the concepts Zilber draws from new-institutional theory have a role in explaining how culture adapts over time, and this is a significant mid-level theoretical contribution.

As set out in the Discussion (Chapter 4), this framework coalesces the literature from routine dynamics, strategy, new institutional theory, and culture studies to better

understand the situated phenomenon of how culture changes. The principal literature used to theorise the maintenance mechanisms is set out in Table 6-1 and the change mechanisms in Table 6-2. Here the term mid-level theory is used in the sense that this study is focused on an empirical enquiry about a specific phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989), as opposed to a grand theory that operates at a more abstract and general level, for example Giddens's (1984) structuration theory (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

In particular, this research contributes to the literature on culture in four ways that are drawn from the mechanisms in the process framework: its understanding of the role of the maintenance mechanisms, in particular enacted routines and mutual symbiosis; its understanding of the way in which external forces pass through an organisation's permeable boundary via sub-cultures; its in-depth perspective on the role of cohorts (both change mechanisms); and its understanding of culture as both a toolkit and a set of values. Each of these is discussed in turn below.

7.3.1   Maintenance mechanisms – routines and mutual symbiosis

There remains limited empirical research into how culture is maintained, particularly in the context of management change efforts (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014); and previous research has foregrounded the role of symbolic work and rituals (Vilnai-Yavetz and Rafaeli, 2011). However, this study examined the factors that explain cultural stability in both the context of these efforts and the continuous change sourced from the environment. Maintenance mechanisms were identified as: routines; employment practices; boundary management; and mutual symbiosis. Besides the overall development of the construct of maintenance mechanisms, the research contributes to the literature in this area in two ways: in its understanding of how enacted routines both reflect and change norms; and the role of mutual symbiosis in cultural maintenance (a form of the concept of cohorts).

Firstly, this study shows the important impact of physically conducting routines (Dacin et al., 2010), such as budgeting, and performance surveillance, which were seen to create important frames that fostered norms through guiding action. In contrast to seeing routines as being *"cognitive and symbolic resources that members flexibly draw upon to support different 'strategies of action'"* (Canato et al., 2013, p.1726), here the causation was reversed, and actions led to the redefinition of norms. Canato et al. (2013) found that when routines with a low cultural fit were introduced, they had only a partial impact upon culture; and Bertels et al. (2016) suggest that where there is a contest between culture and newly installed routines, then the PC will prevail.

These enacted routines supported the PC in the Bourn and Umfula cases. In contrast, in the Jiang case study, the adaptation of routines was observed as part of a culture change programme. Initially, these new routines (for example, financial controls, budgeting and employment practices) had a low cultural fit, but as part of the wider, more comprehensive programme (involving a challenger cohort and a focus on a boundary sub-culture) they were found to be a source of cognitive cultural change. Therefore, this research suggests that the introduction of routines with a low cultural fit is possible, when initiated with an emphasis on practice rather than through a cognitive mechanism. When the change in embedded routines is a necessary part of wider change (as in Jiang) then cultural change can occur. This research develops the literature by showing that adaptation of the embedded routines can support the change in norms. This finding opens up the possibility of successful normative culture change, through a change of routines, even those with an initial low cultural fit, when used as part of a wider, more comprehensive, change programme.

Secondly, this study concludes that longer-serving cohorts play a significant cultural maintenance role. However, the seminal literature on industrial firms (Watson, 2001,

Kunda, 2006), and Kellogg's (2011) study, found that cultures were better explained along hierarchical lines. This is reflected, for example, in Schein's use of hierarchical position and the pre-eminence awarded to founders, who represent a particular level in a hierarchy (Schein, 2010). Executives are important for change, as they have access to higher levels of resource (Langley and Denis, 2006). However this paints a simple picture of a coherent executive team, who are the prime mover in change (Michel, 2014). Whilst other research shows a more complex picture, with the bifurcation of the executives' roles between change agents and recipients (McDermott et al., 2013, Balogun et al., 2015), it has not explored this in a context where the roles were complicated by the length of service of the executives. This is important in order to understand culture change in firms with a propensity to long service.

This research found a process of mutual symbiosis, where long-serving managers at different levels were more influenced by their cohort membership than by their role. This informed their actions and was observed to limit to their perceived range of action. Furthermore, this cohort at different levels played its (different) parts in supporting cultural perpetuation. Managers each accessed numerous cultures at the same time; that of their cohort, their level and their function, reinforcing the importance of understanding the web of sub-cultures within a workplace. This study develops the literature on culture by demonstrating that whilst culture may vary by organisational level; longer-serving members at different levels may also share meaning.

7.3.2   Change mechanisms - external influence within the firm

As has been shown, the first wave of culture studies has a number of strengths. However it has under-researched two aspects; the heterogeneous nature of culture in organisations, and the way these cultures interact with the environment. In contrast, this study has shown that both play an important role in the development of culture. Most research

continues to emphasise organisational culture, as if it is within a single unit sealed from the outside, where leaders can draw from a strong, stable organisational culture (Giorgi et al., 2015). Most empirical studies assume or imply that firms are unitary and, in so doing, largely ignore the fact that different sub-units find heterodox ways of responding to the demands of their environment (Greenwood et al., 2011).

Through its findings on sub-cultures and cohorts (see next section), this research has observed change, driven at the firm-level, by the shifting requirements of the environment, based on the use of toolkits drawn from beyond the firm's boundary. Although managers in the firm undertook change work consciously through intelligent situated action (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, Suddaby et al., 2013), this research constructs this as exogenously-sourced change. It, therefore, contributes to the discussion on how exogenous forces influence culture, and how cultural resources are put to use.

Whilst the culture literature has tended to neglect the influence of the environment, institutional literature has tended to neglect intra-organisational dynamics in favour of field dynamics (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012, Greenwood et al., 2014). This study contributes at the boundary of these two areas of literature, in showing that the environment influences culture and suggesting some mechanisms by which this occurs. Below are set out two specific contributions to this academic debate; the role of executives in supporting continual change; and the importance of messages from the external environment.

This study extends the work of Smets et al. (2012) and Kellogg (2011) on change arising from the introduction of cohorts and other sub-cultures with executive support. In those studies there was a level of executive intentionality, as evidenced by the process of

cosmopolitanism and political toolkits respectively. In this research, where executive support was observed it was seen to accelerate the transformation process, when it was sympathetic to changes arising from the environment, and when the support was translated into changes in daily practice (Jiang), and to have limited impact when it was not (Bourn). The Umfula study was fortunate to be able to research change in the absence of such executive support, and the impact of sub-cultures within a firm was observed in the absence of intentional support from executives. It, therefore, suggests that the change observed in those two studies may have occurred without the interventions of senior management, albeit in a different form or with a reduced cadence.

This research contributes to the understanding of not only how ideas travel from outside to within a firm (Aten et al., 2012), but also the importance of the outside in generating change within. In so doing, it extends Harrison and Corley (2011) primary contribution, which provided the "*foundation for an open-systems perspective on organizational culture*" (p.408), a perspective that directly applies to organisations actively attempting to seed external cultures and vice versa. This study extends the idea to the constant and unintentional seeding by the external into an organisation, and indeed the importance of such seeding for the development of a firm's culture.

Further, this study demonstrates the importance of external forces on internal change processes, whilst other practice literature underestimates its effect. Smets et al. (2012) discerns that "*demanding and powerful clients*" (p.900) create the "*precipitating dynamic*" (p.892) through pressure to get the deal done, which leads to the experimentation that produces change. In the Kellogg (2011) study, she concludes that "*public policy changes may be critical to permitting less powerful members to change daily work practices*" (p.499). This study questions whether, in the absence of the '*demanding and powerful*' external force or '*public policy changes',* the change processes

identified would have taken place? Therefore, it augments the literature on practice-based change to indicate that it may only take place with the existence of externally-sourced pressures, and highlights that the importance of this concept has been underdeveloped in previous research.

7.3.3   Change mechanisms - cohorts

This research makes a significant contribution to literature through its development of the understanding of the role of cohorts in firms, not least the role of mutual symbiosis in the maintenance of culture. It develops the idea of cohorts through the use of a qualitative method to tease out important micro-level mechanisms. These have not been observable in a literature "*dominated by [large] deductive, quantitative studies*" (Mawdsley and Somaya, 2016, p.107), which has meant that cohorts have been difficult to empirically validate (Joshi et al., 2010). Previously, literature has doubted the extent to which change at the firm-level can be attribute to cohorts, as the toolkits do not diffuse from an individual following their appointment (Singh and Agrawal, 2011).

To address these gaps in the literature, the industry-level model developed in organisational "*evolutionary theory*" (Aldrich and Ruef, 2006, p.xvii) was amended for use at a firm-level, separating out age (length of service) and period (of joining), to identify clear cohort effects amongst managers. This analytical tool allowed the voices of the different cohorts to come through in the data reduction process, and teased out the important, individual-level differences between cohorts. This close-up examination of the impact of new cohorts empirically validates a cohort effect, adds a deeper understanding of their operation and shows that new ideas from the toolkits of new cohorts may diffuse into the firm's practice, given the right conditions. In addition, the study contributes three important features to the literature, which define the impact of challenger cohorts in

particular: the achievement of insider status; the role of extant issues; and overcoming the mobility of the cohort. Each of these is discussed below, in turn.

Firstly, this research extends the work of Howard-Grenville et al. (2011), who defined the concept of the importance of insiders in an intentional change process, where the role of insider and outsider is combined in one person, or "*outsiders within*". She contrasted this with the importance normally placed on the use of consultants with expert change skills and executive support (for example, Argyris, 1977, Schein, 1996). This study reinforces the significance of change agents achieving insider status; however, it also extends this idea by understanding the conditions necessary to achieve that position. Howard-Grenville et al. (2011) says:

> "*It is worth noting that each of our focal actors had spent more than 15 years in his or her respective organization, and all had spent considerable time in non-management roles*" (p.537).

In contrast in this study, where managers intentionally or deliberately sought to gain insider status, they were able to achieve this in a 12-month period (in the Jiang case), or where this was less deliberate (in Umfula) this status was observed after five years' service. The members of the challenger cohorts who achieved insider status came from outside; had not spent considerable time in non-managerial roles; and had served considerably shorter periods in the focal firm. Therefore, whilst insider status was found to be an important aspect of culture change, the numbers of managers who may adopt this role are higher than previous work anticipates, leading to the conclusion that this status is a function of more than time served and organisational experience.

Secondly, processes similar to Smets et al. (2012)'s cosmopolitanism were observed in all three studies, however, the effect differed across the studies. This study is fortunate to have observed a case (Bourn) where the process of cosmopolitanism was unsuccessful. It found that the impact of the cosmopolitan cohort varied according to whether the practices offered by cosmopolitans addressed specific extant issues in the business. Where the cohorts perceived a need for change or a new way of working, but their novel toolkits were not required to solve problems that arose, they could not apply their toolkits and their practices did not become routines (for example, in the Bourn case). This lack of transfer was observed even when the toolkits were in line with the articulated business strategy and solved problems articulated within the values. Therefore, this need for new toolkits to be useful *in practice* is a limitation on the effectiveness of a challenger or cosmopolitan cohort to effect change. This argument may also be extended to the impact of other sub-cultures, such as departments, where their impact on the direction of culture change was a function of the efficacy of their toolkit in solving daily, mundane problems.

Lastly, Kellogg's study took place in a healthcare setting where the challenger cohort assumed that their discomfort was temporary, as they assumed that in due course they would join the elite (Kellogg, 2011, p.499). The same incentive was not in place in this research's industrial setting and the unsettled members of the challenger cohorts in Bourn and Jiang (including executives) had a high propensity to seek advancement elsewhere, in the face of the long-term, low-level conflict of culture change. In the circumstances where external advancement opportunities were curtailed (in Umfula and the remainder of the Jiang cohort), the challenger cohorts worked to achieve insider status and were successful in transferring their novel scripts.

7.3.4 Toolkits and cognitive values

The final contribution to culture literature is in the understanding of the cognitive values and the toolkit approaches to culture (Giorgi et al., 2015). Although the toolkit approach was first advocated by Swidler in 1986, it was first used in organisational culture studies by Weber in 2005, and established itself as new relatively recently, with the publication of the Organization Science special edition in 2011 (see Weber and Dacin, 2011). In this article the values and toolkits perspectives were viewed to be in opposition with each other, and toolkits were defined as a way of analysing change. This study makes two specific contributions in this area. Firstly, the toolkits and values approaches may be used together, from effectively two different viewing positions, to explain culture; secondly, contrary to their current use, toolkits may also explain stability as well as change. These are discussed in more detail below.

The cognitive values perspective, with its much longer history in organisation studies (see Smircich, 1983), under-theorises the connections between individuals and collectives, and has a tendency to paint cultures as monolithic entities (Ogbonna and Harris, 2014). These integrated firms can uniformly instil values and norms in their members, and therefore create a constraint (Canato et al., 2013). Hence, this approach is less effective at explaining how the culture adapts over time. The strength of a values frame is that it creates a language for those in the firm to describe their daily life (Hatch et al., 2015), and it continues to be influential on practitioners and academics alike (Fleming, 2013). In contrast, the toolkits approach provides a better explanation for the observed change, through illustrating the extra-organisational source of the different scripts and solutions (Weber and Dacin, 2011).

However, this research argues that despite its weaknesses, the cognitive values perspective has a significant role in cultural research. This is not because of the argument of Patterson

(2014) that to replace the use of values and norms represents an " *untenable ditching, with the bathwater of foundational concepts*" (p.2) which most scholars in other disciplines would find simply preposterous, but because they have an enhanced utility in explaining both the current, and potential future cultures, to managers. As Vaisey (2009) notes, in articulating what is valued within a firm, this the values approach has the potential to alter decisions before the envisioned culture is achieved. In this study when describing the processes of change, especially where this involves interaction with the environment, while the toolkits approach has provided a robust explanation, it does not explain how these toolkits cohere into sub-cultures, nor describe the lived experience of organisational life. Without understanding these aspects, it has lower utility in explaining shared meaning and justification for actions, both of which are important to the change process.

Canato et al. (2013) see the two perspectives as not necessarily being in opposition (Weber and Dacin, 2011), and this research would concur with that, although not for the reason Canato et al., articulate. They see the toolkits perspective as being within a cognitive and symbolic approach, and fitting within the cognitive anthropology. This research sees the two as different perspectives, and identifies the benefit of toolkits when they support differing strategies of action, rather than for being symbolic.

Patterson (2014) views the difference between the two schools as arising from one's viewing position; he uses the example of two people describing different parts of an elephant. Giorgi et al. (2015) uses the analogy that researchers are viewing a pendulum; at different points of the swing, one approach provides a better view than the other. This research is attracted to this dynamic view of culture as a pendulum, however the pendulum is constantly moving. The benefit of one approach over the other is not that one explains different parts of the swing better; it is to be found in whether you are trying to

describe the character of the pendulum itself (when the values perspective provides a vivid descriptor), or you are seeking a better understanding of the way that it is swinging (as supplied by the toolkits perspective).

The two perspectives may be thought of as constantly interacting, the individual strategies of action from a toolkit approach affect the collective cognitive commitments of the PC (better understood through values), which in turn alters the resource commitments and routines. Consequently, although behaviour and artefacts may be seen as representative of deep-seated basic assumptions, this research finds that routines and practices have generative power in altering beliefs, values and ideas.

Given this generative power, a toolkit perspective on culture may be used to argue for cultural transience or environmental interchangeability. Previous studies on toolkits have shown them being used by senior managers to create change (see Rindova et al. (2011); and the study of Alessi and Weber et al. (2008) on grass feed cattle). However, the toolkit approach may also be used to understand stability. The maintenance mechanisms may be thought of as part of the firm's repertoire of acceptable scripts; its toolkits. In that context, they describe stability, and this gives the PC significant staying power, in a similar way to traditional ideas about the permanence of values-based cultural models.

7.4   Contribution to methodology

There are two principal contributions to methodology from this work, the first being the relatively rare combination of an in-depth initial case study and the findings being subsequently tested in two further studies. The second is the development of a process mechanism that responds to a recent call by Giorgi et al. (2015) to increase the usage of mechanisms in culture studies.

A case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context Yin (2009). Authors differ on the extent to which their research privileges an approach that extracts variables from their context (for example Eisenhardt, 1989) or an approach that aims at rich, holistic explanations located in a situational context (for example, Stake, 2003). This is an inherent dilemma with regard to the overall creation of generalisable knowledge versus a contextualist orientation in case study research (Johnson et al., 2006, Sminia, 2009); contextualist privileging the single, in-depth case study approach (Stake, 2005). In contrast, the use of multiple case studies is advocated to strengthen robustness and to make the findings more compelling (Eisenhardt, 1989, Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The structures and processes of Umfula may be seen to be idiosyncratic (Stake, 2005), however, many were similar across contexts (Pettigrew, 2013), and it was the portability of these principles from one setting to the others that allowed the framework to be developed (Gioia et al., 2013).

In this research, an initial case has been developed that is intended to be of interest in itself (Umfula), and the purpose is to learn about that 'case of things'. This was extended to two further cases (Bourn and Jiang), retaining the particular of the initial case but gaining academic rigour. This approach enriches the findings of the first case and allows theoretical ideas to be tested and deepened (Robson, 2002) in different settings (Langley et al., 2013). Although it may be criticised for losing its richness and uniqueness from the subsequent cases (Lee et al., 2007), care was taken in the proceeding cases to allow new findings to emerge.

This approach used a combination of deduction and induction that provides the basis for theoretical inferences (Langley, 1999) and is a method infrequently used (for notable exceptions see Denis et al. (2001) and Kanter (1977).

This research's contribution is in the development of an approach that allows for creative insight from the initial case, and by relying on multiple and sequential cases studies allows for the use of deductive logic to foster the development of a richer theoretical framework. In this process, insights from the initial case (Umfula) generated theoretical propositions (an inductive step) that served as the basis for analysing the subsequent two cases (a deductive step). However, processes that were identified in the Bourn and Jiang cases were incorporated into the final theoretical constructs (a further inductive step). This inductive logic enabled the framework to be generated, and for some its limits to be found (Johnson et al., 2006, Stake, 2003). This process led to the development of a mechanism, summarised in Figure 6-1.

In developing the research in this way, it contributes to the request by Giorgi et al. (2015) to focus on the mechanisms that enable cultural processes "*as a mechanisms-based approach seems well suited to explaining cultural phenomena*" (p.39). They argue that there is a relative dearth of research addressing how culture emerges and functions. Mechanisms describe:

"*a set of interacting parts—an assembly of elements producing an effect not inherent in any one of them. A mechanism is not so much about 'nuts and bolts' as about 'cogs and wheels'— the wheelwork or agency by which an effect is produced*" (Hernes, 1998, p.74).

There are two main dangers with a mechanism, such as this research's process framework; it can end up with a theory that appears to be mechanistic and linear, a machine-like view of organisation (Weber, 2006); equally there is also the risk of it becoming overly empiricist, of simply being like business journalism (Davis and Marquis, 2005).

This framework is put forward with these risks in mind, to aid the understanding of the phenomena, and in the knowledge that it has the limitation that it hides the complexity, muddiness and messiness of the underlying processes. The framework, developed in a grounded method, is intended as an aide to understand the mechanisms of change observed in the case, and not as a deterministic model. It is presented as a mid-level theory that addresses the question of how culture emerges and functions, explaining a social phenomenon rather than trying to predict universal outcomes.

7.5   Limitations of the study

The research has a number of limitations based on the nature of the industry studied; the population investigated; the different geographies of the cases; the use of the case study approach and the researcher himself.

The study selected firms for examination that were in a single industry - the production of sugar. As a result of this common industry, these cases shared three characteristics; they had been regulated; had a strong operational core and were long standing. In the past, each had been subject to, and benefitted from, a comprehensive form of government regulation, including the definition of price and restrictions on production volume; in two cases the firm had previously been owned by governments. Further, in these studies there was a clear distinction between managers who worked in the operational core, who may be thought of as facing inwards into the firm, and a minority of managers who formed distinct teams that faced outwards and had a boundary-spanning role with the external world. Lastly, all cases were within a long-established industry; two of the case studies could trace their firm's history back over 100 years and all of the cases were reported as having periods of prior stability. As a result of these three common characteristics, these cases are not representative of all organisations and the findings may have less relevance to others. The study is relevant to organisations that are undergoing change in their

environment, whether that is as a result of deregulation, privatisation, or technological change.

The research was aimed at understanding the organisational culture, particularly from the perspective of executives and middle managers. It had limited exposure to front line managers and other groups of employees were excluded from the study. Therefore, inferences can only be made for what daily life is like for the group studied, and not for other groups of managers and the non-managerial population. A useful area for future research would be to extend the study to supervisors and staff. With its narrower focus, the study was able to draw out clear distinctions, not only between levels of managers but also, within a given managerial level by service (for example the process of mutual symbiosis).

The case studies are located within different national cultures in three continents, and the role that national culture may have played in each study has not been investigated. Such an investigation of the role that national culture plays in culture adaptation, using a cultural dimensions framework (for example, Trompenaars, 2012, Hofstede et al, 1990, and Hofstede, 2006), may present a rich area for further research. By researching in different geographies, the study was able to understand the effects of varying immediate business environments with different traditions of government relations, regulation and markets.

The chosen method of qualitative case study is vulnerable to the criticism of lacking the rigour of more positivist research (for example, Eisenhardt, 1989), and in particular, it does not allow for generalisations to be made from these specific cases to the general population. The huge piles of data produced are vulnerable to the researcher making the

interpretations they would like. The adopted approach had the benefit of developing a rich understanding of each case study and the context within which it operated. This was then extended to two further case studies to enhance the transferability of the study, an approach which is less common. Lastly, the application of commonly-used data reduction methods and techniques avoided researcher bias.

Finally, of course, the findings of the study are limited by the skills of an inexperienced researcher. His attentiveness to data, and ability to analyse and interpret, placed a constraint upon the research. The delay in writing the thesis based on the data collected in 2012, caused by the researcher being in full time employment, has the implication that the findings may no longer be contemporary.

The researcher works as an executive within the Mere sugar division, which is involved in the work of all three cases. Whilst this viewing perspective had the benefit that the researcher understood the context and language of the interviewees, and steps (set out in the methodology chapter) were taken to ensure the robustness of the analysis, the above characteristics of the researcher remain a potential limitation. Potential researcher bias was mitigated by the use of research assistants to conduct some interviews, the discussion of the emerging findings with his supervisory team, and in the case of Umfula with the executive team of the focal business. Furthermore, the findings were presented on a regular basis to Aston DBA colloquiums and an Association of Business School colloquium. Lastly, drafts of the findings chapters benefitted from the commented of four other academics.

7.6 Future research agenda

Areas of future research arise from this study: further research into the process framework of culture adaptation; the impact of the change observed at the institutional field level; firm- level change without signals from the environment; and further research into cohorts.

Firstly, as set out in Limitations of the study (7.5), the process framework for culture adaptation has been developed within one industry, with three firms that share a common purpose and three dimensions that appear to define them: regulation; a long history; and a distinct operational core. The chosen case study approach developed a grounded model that has initially been tested in two further studies. Further research could test the transferability of that framework, using different methods in a different range of organisational settings, to understand how culture adapts in other industry contexts.

Furthermore, future research could seek to separate these three defining elements, to understand the role each of them plays in particular in the development of culture and the maintenance mechanisms that perpetuates them.

Secondly, this research has used the practice lens to understand the daily experiences of managers and to provide insight at the firm-level. This approach differs from the position taken in much of the practice literature, which seeks to understand change at the field level (Whittington, 2006, Smets et al., 2012). Furthermore, it does not look at a full cycle of how culture and institutions inform each other (Aten et al., 2012, Thornton et al., 2013), it only looks at how culture is informed by the immediate environment. A fruitful area for further research is to understand how the practice-based changes set out in this work have

affected the field-level institutions, such as the Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre (European Association of Sugar Manufacturers) and the South African Sugar Association.

Thirdly, this research has observed a case where executive-led culture change was successful (in the terms of the executive) when it was undertaken in concert with demands from environmental changes. However, it has not demonstrated a case of successful executive-led change in the absence of an environmental requirement. But it does show an environmentally–led change in the absence of an executive requirement.

Oertel et al. (2016) found that if businesses are initially successful after radical external change (such as mass privatisations), then this will reduce their ability to change later, increasing their chance of failure in the longer term, as managers misinterpret short-term survival for 'fit' (Fox-Wolfgramm et al., 1998). This is the case even though the way the organisation works may be seen as sub-optimal from a functional perspective, as inplastic cultures may be developed (Fox-Wolfgramm et al., 1998), which diminishes the long-term survival chances of the business (Oertel et al., 2016). In a similar vein, Ogbonna and Harris (2014) conclude that firms with a strong history of previous success, and which have robust internal and external forces that perpetuate culture, are less susceptible to management control and executive-led culture change programmes. This creates a rich future research seam in which to explore; how executives may lead change in firms, which has had previous success, but where the firm's current performance (however that may be measured) is sub-optimal and there is no pressure at the time from the environment for change.

Lastly, this research makes a significant contribution in the inchoate cohort literature developed from Aldrich and Ruef (2006); a way of analysing cohorts by separating out the

age, period and cohort effects. This perspective has led to a deeper understanding of cohorts within these three situated contexts, and to setting conditions for their effectiveness. The development of this firm-level, quantitative tool provides the opportunity for this analysis to be conducted in other settings, to investigate if the conditions identified are contextual or transferrable.

7.7   Conclusion

This study has examined how culture alters over time, the influence of the immediate environment and the impact of agents' actions on the organisational culture in, previously stable, regulated, industrial firms. As a result of focusing on these areas, the study has also analysed how culture is maintained.

To understand these situated phenomena, a qualitative process case study approach with a practice lens was used. The initial grounded case study was a rare opportunity to examine change in the absence of an executive-led initiative. The data from this first study was developed into a framework, which was then tested in the two further case studies, where executive sponsorship of change was observed.

The (revised) process framework for culture adaptation, and the practice-focused, culture change toolkit, reveal that culture is a situated, embedded, complex process that is perpetuated by a web of maintenance mechanisms and altered by their interaction with externally-resourced change mechanisms. The developed framework is intended to help understand the phenomenon, rather than determine it. The influence of the environment, as presented here, is not an argument about market forces as such, but about a combination of the effects of market selection pressures, the availability of alternative

toolkits to solve the issues that pressure presents, and the strength of maintenance mechanisms.

This framework provides an important mid-level theory contribution and demonstrates that the immediate business environment influences a firm's culture through the challenges it poses. These are channelled through boundary sub-cultures and are answered by the normal attentiveness of managers to their daily tasks, and by new toolkits made available from beyond the firm's boundary; change occurs when the praxis of individuals is embedded in shared practices. In this study, a significant source of new toolkits was challenger cohorts who drew on their knowledge from other industries' registers. However, for these cohorts to be effective they need to establish insider status, address extant issues and remain in role. The change mechanisms (boundary sub-cultures; cohorts) interact with a culture's maintenance mechanisms (routines; employment practices; boundary management and mutual symbiosis) through a continual, low-level, long-term contest, creating a new culture.

In addition to the contribution of the overall framework, this research has contributed to the literature on culture in four ways: its understanding of the role of enacted routines and mutual symbiosis (maintenance mechanisms); its identification of the role of external forces in internal culture change; its deeper understanding of the role of cohorts (both change mechanisms); and by providing a richer comprehension of cultural change through its combined use of the cultural toolkit and cognitive values perspectives. In addition, the study makes two method contributions; firstly, in its combination of inductive and deductive methods to retain the richness of a single case study, but gain the theoretical robustness of multiple case studies; and secondly, a visual mechanism was developed to illustrate the process by which culture adapts.

The processes identified in this research occur in the absence of executive sponsorship, and consequently a firm's organisational culture is generated by the daily practice of managers and not solely by executives. However, the executive team may guide cultural adaptation by thoughtful, long-term resourcing of change that is sympathetic to the underlying continual process. Therefore, from a practice perspective, the study concludes that managers may successfully intervene in the process of culture change; however change is recognised as a time-consuming, resourceful, costly and cognitively demanding process.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample consent form

Organisation change in the sugar industry research project

Consent Form for participants

The study, which is part of Quintin Heath's doctorate work, is looking at how organisations are changing in sugar businesses in China, South Africa and UK. There will be interviews in each of the three businesses, and the results will be used to improve how we can manage culture change more effectively in the future.

[In some cases another member of the research team will carry out interviews, and your meeting will be conducted by [Laurie O'Broin/ Zhu Ying], who has been fully trained in the process and standards we are using. The principle researcher for the project is Quintin Heath, who will analyse all the information collected] – to be inserted & amended when necessary.

Your interview is important to the success of this investigation, and your participation is much appreciated. It is equally important that high levels of ethical standards are maintained throughout the work and therefore the method being used has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Aston University, UK.

Important points about the interview and your answers;

1. The interview will last between an hour to an hour and a half;
2. Your answers will be kept confidential;
3. The study will be written up so that your identity will not be revealed;
4. With your permission, the interview will be recorded, and then fully transcribed;
5. If you are not happy answering any question, then you are free to not answer;
6. You may stop the interview at any time;
7. The interview will be stored electronically and securely.

I am keen that you understand what you are agreeing to participate in. Please raise any questions you have about the research generally or the points above and I will be happy to answer them. My contact details are set out below

Thank you for your time.

Quintin Heath

Mobile number: +447*xxxxxxxx*: Email:⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛

I agree to take part in the research summarised above;

Signed;

Name: Date:

Organisation change in the sugar industry research project.

This survey, which is part of Quintin Heath's doctorate work, is looking at how change occurs in sugar businesses in China, South Africa and UK. In addition to the results from this short survey, a number of interviews will be held in each business, and the combined results will be used to improve how we can manage change more effectively in the future.

This survey is an important part of the research project and your participation is much appreciated. It is important that high levels of ethical standards are maintained throughout the work and therefore the method being used has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Aston University, UK.

Important points about the survey and your answers;

1. The survey is 47 questions long and will take about 10 – 15 minutes to complete;
2. Your answers will be kept confidential;
3. The study will be written up so that your identity will not be revealed;
4. If you are not happy answering any question, then you are free to not answer;
5. You may stop the survey at any time;
6. Your answers to the survey will be stored electronically and securely
   .

I am keen that you are fully informed, please raise any questions you have about the research generally or the points above and I will be happy to answer them. My contact details are set out below.

Thank you once again for your help.

Quintin Heath

Mobile telephone: +447*xxxxxxxxx*.

Email: █████████████