

EXPLORING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PROCESSES

**“Towards an Understanding of the Forces, Phases and Influencers of
Strategic Change Processes in the Omani Context”**

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Doctor of Philosophy

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and Influencers of Strategic Change Processes in the Omani Context

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Summary

This study explores the forces, phases and influencers of strategic change (SC) processes in government businesses (GBs) of Oman. The aim of the study is to develop the first process framework of SC in Oman and the Arab Gulf countries that combines the environmental and organisational forces, the sequence of events and the main influencing factors that shape the process. Three objectives were set and three main research questions were asked.

Five recent cases of SC processes that occurred in five different GBs operating in five different sectors were purposively selected. Forty-two managers (CEOs, GMs, Senior Managers, HODs and Supervisors) and non-managers from four-five different divisions were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. The study uses the process approach, critical realism and the contingency perspective to explore SC. Four key findings were reached to by thematically analysing interview data.

First, the external environment was found to be a predominant force of rational reactive adaptation. Second, SC processes were found to unfold in a general pattern made up of six phases and combine the assumptions of planned and emergent change. Third, the study revealed that people, leadership style, change management approach and HRM are the main influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman. People's needs were found to moderate the effect of the main influencers on organisational performance. Fourth, the study demonstrated that SC processes can be planned and managed in an orderly manner and achieve high performance (positive behavioural and financial outcomes) if there is, among other conditions, leadership-people fit, change management-people fit and HRM-people fit.

This study contributed to the Organisational Change, Strategy, Leadership and HRM literatures and offered a unique framework and compelling context-specific insights based on a deep understanding of practice.

Key words:

Strategic Change (SC) – Government Businesses (GBs) – Oman

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Chapter 1 - Introduction to the Study

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rationale for the study by establishing the need for the research, clarifying how it will be done and what contributions it will make to the field. The chapter commences by highlighting a gap in both the theory and practice of strategic change (SC) in Oman and the Arabian Gulf region. Then, the problem statement, purpose, aim, research questions and objectives of the study are presented. After that, the scope and delimitations are outlined followed by the research procedure and weaknesses of the study. The chapter ends with a summary and a lead in to the next chapter.

The main problem that triggered this study is the frequency of change in government businesses (GBs) of Oman and the absence of context-specific knowledge on organisational change (OC) processes in Oman and the Arabian Gulf countries. Despite the many large-scale changes that GBs in Oman and the region have undergone, there is little uptake of OC studies on the Arab Middle Eastern context in general and the Arab Gulf countries in particular and an astounding absence of process studies of change.

“Exploring organisational change processes: Towards an understanding of the forces, phases and influencers of strategic change processes in the Omani context” was done with the purpose of exploring the forces of SC in GBs of Oman, the major phases that the change processes pass through and the main environmental and organisational factors that facilitate and inhibit the change processes. The research is the first process study of SC in Oman and the Arabian Gulf countries. It took the lead and contributed with new and highly needed context-specific insights and recommendations grounded in a deep understanding of practice.

The thesis is structured around eight chapters. Chapter 1, the ‘Introduction’ provides the rationale for the study and offers information on the context and background of the research problem, the research procedure and contributions of the study. Chapter 2, ‘The Literature Review’ relates the study to the relevant literature. Chapter 3, ‘The Contingency Theory’ discusses and justifies the use of the contingency perspective in the study. Chapter 4 ‘Methodology’ discusses the choices made in the research approach, philosophy, design and methods. Chapter 5 ‘Case Analysis’ describes and analyses the five cases and presents their similarities and differences. Chapter 6 ‘Findings’ presents the patterns identified and key findings of the study. Chapter 7

‘Discussion’ links the findings to the literature and builds a process framework. Chapter 8 ‘Conclusion’ concludes the study and presents the contributions, implications and way forward.

1.1 The Research Context

“Processes are imbedded in contexts and can only be studied as such”

(Pettigrew, 1997, p. 340)

This section introduces the research context, the environment in which the research problem was observed and where the primary data were collected. Describing and analysing the context of the research problem is crucial for any investigation because it situates the study in specific contextual conditions and time period. This helps offer explanations for the phenomenon and enhance theorizing whereas neglecting contextual conditions and time could result in an incomplete if not misleading understanding of the case being studied (Yin, 2014). According to Pettigrew (1997, p. 340), one of the main guiding assumptions of a process study is the need to show how the context shapes the change process because “processes are imbedded in contexts and can only be studied as such”. Hence, the section shows how organisational contexts shape change processes. The outer context includes the social, political, economic, competitive and sectoral layers of the environment and the inner context is the structural, cultural and political environment of the firm (Pettigrew, 1997). Knowledge of the context is then used in the empirical chapters to offer explanations for the forces, process and influencers of SC.

Before describing the research context, a framework for the context is presented to show the reader how the researcher views the context.

1.2 Research Context: Combining the Process and Critical Realist Ontology

The researcher developed a framework of the context that has its roots in the process view of change (Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew, Woodman & Cameron, 2001) and the stratified ontology of Critical Realism (CR) (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989). The framework served as a guide in exploring the research context and explaining the research phenomenon. It helped reveal and understand the forces and influencers of SC processes from different levels. See figure 1.1 for details.

This study views OC as a social process imbedded in an interactive context. The view is based on Pettigrew’s argument that “Social processes are deeply imbedded in the contexts that produce and are produced by them ...” (1997, p. 304). In addition, the view is inspired by CR’s stratified ontology that sees reality made up three levels - the empirical, the actual and the real (Bhaskar, 1978; 1989). This ontology argues that reality does not only exist in our experiences and observations (i.e. in the empirical world), we need to go beyond what we have directly experienced and seek the events that caused what we observed (i.e., in the actual world). Also, knowledge seeking should not stop at the level of events because what

exists out there is not limited to what we know about it. We need to go further and attempt to find the mechanisms and structures that generated the events. This follows that there is a real world out there that exists independent of our knowledge about it. Hence, there can never be a complete and unbiased account of anything and we need to be critical of the ways that we use to seek knowledge and the knowledge that we generate from them.

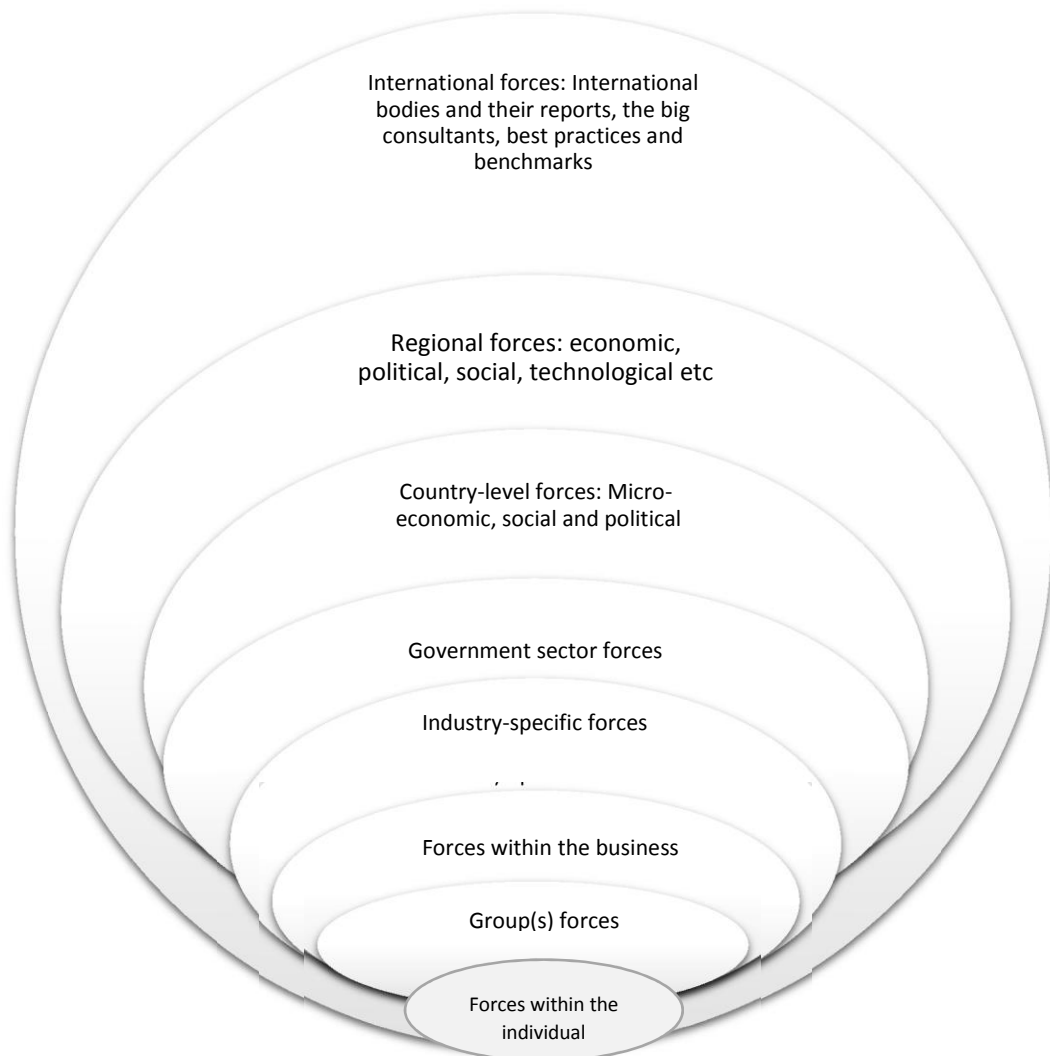


Figure 1.1: The context of change for GBs of Oman

Source: Developed for the study from Pettigrew (1997) and Bhaskar (1978, 1989)

Based on this view, each layer in the context has multiple on-going processes that act and react upon each other and on those occurring in other layers. Within this view, change is a continuous process occurring within a complex nested arrangement of networks of structures and other processes. In other words, OC is a process within an amalgam or ensemble of other processes. People's awareness and interpretation of what happens around them will contribute in determining their decisions and actions and thus help shape the

change process. This complex holistic interactive view of the context is the frame of reference for the study when envisioning the occurrence of OC and when explaining it. The next section presents information on the research context and highlights how various contextual factors force and shape change in GBs of Oman. Due to the thick and detailed nature of context descriptions in process studies, additional details are available in appendix 1, 'The Omani Context: Culture and Society'.

1.3 The Omani Context

Oman is influenced by multiple environmental factors that push the government and its businesses to change. The country's social, cultural, political and economic contexts with regional and international developments all affect the government and its businesses. The current environment has been forcing organisations to change to adapt to environmental changes. But as in any other country, some OC programs succeed, some fail and stop, other programmes are modified or postponed and some other remain as promised projects on papers only and get forgotten with time. Understanding the contextual conditions in more detail can reveal forces of change and explanations for why change unfolds in certain patterns.

1.3.1 The Omani Culture and Society

The Omani Culture

The Omani societal culture is not yet fully studied (Common, 2011; Al-Araimi, 2012; Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016) neither by scholars like Hofstede (2001, 1993) nor in projects like the GLOBE (House et al., 2004). It is often assumed that the cultural values of the Omani society fall within the Arab Middle Eastern cluster (Hofstede, 2001, 1993) of high power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism and low masculinity. The dominant belief in the literature is that these scorings are a determinant of people's behaviours. But, we cannot be sure that these assumptions apply on the Omani society until the Omani culture is studied comprehensively.

So far, several researchers believe that the Omani societal culture is different and is made up of different cultures. Researchers have pointed out to factors that indicate the prevalence of a relatively different societal culture among its neighbours (Jones & Ridout, 2013; Common, 2011; Albarwani & Albeely, 2007; Cecil, 2006; Pridham, 1987). Oman is believed to have a 'distinctive culture' that is based on an ideology of politeness demonstrated in placing others before oneself, tolerance, a strong commitment to anti-sectarianism, the practice of 'Shura' and a preference to avoid open expressions of differences, criticism and disapprovals (Barth, 1983; Jones & Ridout 2013). The descriptions of the Omani culture and its people when considered in conjunction with the

cultural dimensions of other Arab Middle Eastern countries seem to indicate the existence of a collectivist feminine culture that shows tolerance for differences, politeness and a preference for participative consultation.

Since culture is ‘the manner in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas’ (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998), it will be interesting, for example, to see if whether Omani change managers use some forms of a bottom-up approach like the ‘shura’ consultative style during OC or not. This is because, “Among all other aspects of the Omani culture, ‘Shura’ stands out as an influential component in the lives of the Omanis” (Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016, p. 90). Hence, a deeper understanding of the Omani societal culture can help answer the question how organisations change and explain why they change the way they do. For more details, see appendix 1 on page 252.

The Omani Society: Emergence of a New Generation of Employees

Oman has a total of 4,608,835 million people (National Centre for Statistics and Information, [NCSI], 2017). Omanis and expatriates make up 54.60% and 45.40% respectively. The population has been increasing at a fast rate (see table 1.1). Between 2015 and 2040, Oman’s population is expected to increase by 2.4 million (NCSI, 2015).

Like other countries in the Middle East, Oman has an increasing youth bulge where 50% of the Omanis are below the age of 25 (OBG, 2016) and only 6% are in their 60s and above (NCSI, 2017). The Omani woman gives birth to an average of 4 children during her lifetime and the average size of the Omani family is 7.8 individuals. It is estimated that with the current fertility and fatality rates, the population of Omanis is expected to double in 25 to 30 years.

Table 1.1: Total population in Oman from 2013-2017

End of Year	Total Population	Omani	Expatriates
2013	3.855 million	2.17	1.68
2014	3.993 million	2.26	1.73
2015	4.159 million	2.34	1.81
2016	4.550 million	2.46	2.08
22 Aug 2017	4.608 million	2.517 (54.6%)	2.091 (45.4%)

Source: NCSI (2017)

One of the main challenges facing the government of Oman are providing jobs for the growing numbers of young job-seekers. Every year, thousands of graduates seek jobs in the public and private sectors. The country is facing a challenge because the annual number of higher education graduates exceeds the annual number of jobs available (Al-Barwani, Chapman & Ameen, 2009). But, while an increasing number of young locals seeks jobs

every year, private sector businesses in general have been showing a preference for hiring trained and experienced foreigners. By the end of 2016, Omanis made up only 12% of the private sector workforce. There were only 209, 620 Omanis (12.35%) while expatriates had reached to 1,697,671 million.

The rising number of job-seekers has created a sense of urgency in Oman. To solve the problem, the government reacted by putting more pressure on businesses to reduce their dependence on foreign labour via Omanisation quotas, penalties and a two-year visa ban on leaving expatriates.

With this focus on Omanising jobs, GBs in Oman have been witnessing an influx of younger generations of Omanis born in the 80s and 90s whose values, expectations and behaviours are different from the government employees who joined work since the 1970s and 80s. Most of the new Omani employees and job seekers are between the ages of 18-29 (NCSI, 2017). These employees have been increasingly demanding job security, better jobs, higher salaries, career growth and more transparency. Their needs are very similar to the work needs and values of Millennials (Patota, Schwartz & Schwartz 2007; D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008 among others) and the needs of employees in the career establishment (21-26 years) and career advancement (26-40 years) stages (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Taking these two into consideration means that the majority of young Omanis will be concerned about finding the right job opportunity, getting trained, performing as expected and advancing in their careers. They will also be seeking more modern ways of managing employees and rejecting top-down approaches.

Understanding the influence of the changes in the socio-cultural environment in Oman can help answer the questions why GBs change in Oman, how they implement the changes and what facilitates and inhibits their change processes.

1.3.2 Regional Political Upheavals and Local Demands for Jobs and Reforms

A critical incident that occurred in Oman and brought to the surface people's demands for major changes in employment and workplaces was the 2011 nation-wide demonstrations. These demonstrations illuminated the top needs of the fastest growing generation in the Omani workforce, the Millennials. The collective actions were largely made up of disgruntled Omani workers who had stagnated in their careers and frustrated job-seekers.

The regional political upheavals and mass demands for change reached Omanis through popular news channels like Al Jazeera and social media tools like Twitter and WhatsApp and they triggered collective actions and call for changes at work. The demands were all work-related and included offering more and better job opportunities for locals, better pay

and working conditions, hiring more Omanis in senior management positions, adding transparency and accountability at work and eradicating and punishing workplace corruption. Employees of several large organisations also went on strike and some demanded the resignation of their CEOs.

The government quickly intervened, listened to the demands and made quick unprecedented changes, which included the largest cabinet reshuffle in Oman's history. Several new ministers were appointed, 50,000 government jobs were created for Omanis, salaries were increased and decision makers were prosecuted for unethical practices. The government also introduced 'The National CEO Program' that trains and qualifies Omanis to become CEOs instead of hiring foreigners.

These changes had clear repercussions. They calmed people down but also raised their expectations and made them aware of their collective power. Several large GBs had to hire hundreds of employees to reduce the number of job-seekers. Boards and top management teams developed a fear of losing public's trust and the emergence of work strikes. Large organisations began introducing anti-corruption policies, whistle blowing policies and a new focus on employee engagement initiatives emerged.

Due to the additional salary expenses from the new 50,000 government jobs that coincided with a fall in oil prices and declining government revenues, the economy was heading towards a budget deficit. The government has been addressing the new situation with reducing public expenditure and borrowing. Between 2013-2017, the government pursued ways to reduce its spending, increase the efficiency and profits of its businesses, focus on developing other promising industries to reduce its reliance on oil revenues and exploring public private partnerships both locally and internationally. In addition, increased competition caused organisational-wide changes like the mergers, restructurings and appointment of new CEOs like in Oman Air, Oman International Bank and Omantel among other examples.

Understanding how this critical incident affected employees of GBs can help us explain the forces, sequence of events and influencers of SC processes.

1.3.3 Political Structure, Preferred Leadership and Decision-Making Styles

Oman has been led by Sultan Qaboos bin Said since the 23rd of July 1970. The Sultan rules by decree and is supported by the council of ministers, special advisers and the council of Oman, which consists of the Shura Council and the State Council (Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016). The Sultan's foreign policy aims to "maintain security and stability with all nations through cooperation and peace rather than conflict" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015).

As a result, Oman has been consistently ranked as one of the most peaceful nations of the world (Global Peace Index, 2013, 2017; World Economic Forum, 2017). Oman has always avoided direct interventions in regional conflicts (Katzman, 2017). It always takes a neutral stand; it neither joined the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen nor the isolation of Qatar. Oman also has close ties with Iran, a regional power in constant conflict with the Saudi government. Due to this foreign policy, Oman has not been involved in any regional or international conflict for four consecutive decades since Sultan Qaboos started leading the country (Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016).

This study believes that Islam and the Omani culture have shaped the political leadership style of Oman. Common (2011, p. 220) emphasised that “Given the cultural context of Oman, it is possible to emphasize the features of Omani (rather than a generic Arabic) culture in relation to leadership”. There is evidence that culture has a significant effect on leadership behaviour (Bolden & Kirk, 2009).

Hence, if we consider Islam and ‘Shura’, one of the influential factors in the Omani culture and society, we can see how these two shaped the political leadership of the country. “Islam plays a central role in the lives of Omanis ... [and it is] viewed as a code of life ...” (Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016, p. 91) and ‘Shura’ or consultation has been repeatedly reported as a unique cultural component of Oman (Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016; Jones & Ridout, 2013; Almoharby, 2010). Shura is in fact an Islamic approach to decision-making. The Qur’an has a whole chapter called ‘Ash-shura’ and there are verses spread across the 114 chapters of the Quran that call for Shura. In the chapter of ‘Ash-shura’, Muslims are urged to follow a consultative decision-making approach when addressing people’s affairs:

“And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend”
(Qur’an, Ash-shura, verse. 38)

“And consult them in affairs, then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, for Allah loves those who put their trust in Him”
(Qur’an, Al Imran, verse. 159)

Prophet Muhammad, the most influential man in history (Hart, 1978), followed a participative consultative approach with his followers. With religion being one of the most influential factor in the Omani society (Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016), it shouldn’t be a surprise to see the spread of the ‘Shuratic’ (Almoharby, 2010) decision-making style in Oman. In fact, according to Almoharby, ‘Shura’ has been maintained and practiced by Omanis over the centuries.

In Oman, besides the influence of Islamic principles, leadership is synonymous with the Sultan (Common, 2011), the leader of the blessed renaissance, as often called during

national occasions. The Sultan's leadership style is a participative consultative one. Schieffer, Lessem and Al-Jayyousi (2008, p. 340) described it as a model of high visibility with a form of participative consultation i.e. 'Shura'. Al-Araimi (2012) demonstrated that Sultan Qaboos exhibits behaviours of transformational leadership.

There is empirical evidence that shows subordinates tend to follow their immediate superior's style (Hammer & Turk, 1987). Hence, local top managers are expected to follow the Sultan's leadership model. In fact, Al-Araimi (2012) found that Omani managers in civil service organisations use both transformational and transactional leadership styles. The same finding was confirmed by Al Maqbali (2017) in the higher education sector of Oman. Hence, it seems from the bits of available evidence that the preferred leadership style in Oman is transformational leadership and the preferred approach to decision making is a participative consultative approach. Understanding these factors in more detail can help develop an appreciation of how change is led and managed in Omani organisations.

1.3.4 The Omani Economy

In 1995, the government of Oman realised that its oil resources would be depleted by 2022 and that its youth population was growing fast. As a result, the country was the first in the Arab Gulf region to craft a strategic plan 'Vision 2020' for diversifying its economy, reducing the oil sector's contribution to the GDP and creating more jobs for the increasing numbers of Omani job seekers. Vision 2020 was formalised in 1995 to take Oman 25 years into the future via the implementation of a series of five-year development plans. This vision has been the main guiding force for the country and its businesses. The last plan of Vision 2020, the 9th five-year development plan of 2016-2020, was launched at the start of 2016 and is the final portion of Oman Vision 2020. The plan continues the country's drive towards social development, the economic diversification of many production sectors and the ideal utilisation of available natural resources. The five-year plan addresses the main challenges faced by the country. These challenges are also the forces of change - the instability and decline in oil prices, which led to the need to reduce reliance on oil and diversify sources of income. The need to create jobs for the increasing numbers of local job-seekers led to tougher rules and regulations on achieving workforce localisation quotas and the geopolitical tensions in the region led to new trade agreements between Oman and some regional powers.

Besides Vision 2020, changes in oil prices have been a main source of change in Oman. Oil revenues have been the primary source of income for development and infrastructure in Oman since 1967. Petroleum accounts for 64% of total export earnings, 45% of government revenues and 50% of GDP (NCSI, 2015). There is still heavy reliance on oil

revenues because the country began general development quite recently and other sectors contribute in relatively small amounts. The oil and gas revenues as percentage of total revenues in Oman were 85.7%, 84.3% and 78.7% during 2013-2015 (see Table 1.2 for details). While less hydrocarbon-rich than its GCC neighbours, the sultanate's diversification efforts are a driving force behind its economic growth. Its long-term development strategy emphasises industrialisation, privatisation and Omanisation.

Table 1.2: GDP, revenues, expenditures and oil and gas revenues during 2013-2015

Year/Indicator	Total GDP (Billions) RO 1 = GB £2.03 (as of 24 Aug, 2017)	Total Revenues (Billions)	Oil & Gas Revenues as % of Total Revenues	Total Expenditures (Billions)
2013	RO 30,351.9	RO 13,907.6	85.7%	RO 13,990.2
2014	RO 31,157.7	RO 14,107.5	84.3%	RO 15,171.8
2015	RO 26,850.3	RO 9,067.5	78.7%	RO 13,698.8
2016	RO 25,489.8			RO 12,908.2

Source: Monthly Statistical Bulletin, August, 2017, Vol. 28, www.ncsi.gov.om

Due to decreasing oil revenues, the government has been working towards diversifying its sources of income. It is aiming at achieving a 29% increase in industrial contribution to the GDP and a 9% reduction in oil contribution by 2020 (Ministry of National Economy, 2015). According to NCSI (2017), there was a 29% increase in the total government revenues until end of June 2017 compared with the same period of the previous year. But due to dwindling oil prices and high public expenditures, the registered deficit till the end of June 2017 was RO 2 billion. Government expenditure remains heavily dependent on oil prices and Oman has been using various means of financing like loans, reserves, grants and use of surplus accounts of previous years. According to Royal Decrees Nos 1/2015, 2/2016 and the Minister responsible for Financial Affairs' press statement of 03/01/16 (Price Water Cooper, 2016), the government has managed to reduce public expenditure via austerity measures. It has been focusing on maximising revenues from non-oil and gas sectors and has formulated plans to partly privatise some of its businesses. In addition, there are proposed increases in corporate income tax, which are already approved by the Shura Council. Moreover, the government managed to reduce subsidy spending by 64% in areas like housing loans, utilities and petroleum products. Table 1.3 presents the key economic indicators of Oman by the end of 2016.

Table 1.3: Economic indicators of Oman

Measure	Figures (as of Dec 2016)
Population	4.550 million (2.46 Omanis-2.08 Expatriates)
Currency	RO 1 = GB£ 2.03 (as of 24 Aug, 2017)
GDP	RO 25,489.8 billion
Unemployment Rate	15%
Inflation Rate	2%
Oil Production	860,000 barrels per day
Oil Exports	750,000 barrels per day
Oil Reserves	5 billion-5.5 billion barrels
Natural Gas Production	875 billion cubic feet per year
Natural Gas Exports	407 billion cubic feet per year
Natural Gas Reserves	30 trillion cubic feet
External Debt	RO 7.89 billion/GB£ 16.03 billion/US\$ 20.5 billion
Major Trading Partners	China, UAE, South Korea, Japan, India, United States and Saudi Arabia

Source: Katzman (2017) and NCSI (2017)

Besides Vision 2020 and the fall in oil prices, changes in Oman are influenced by the economies of the major trading partners of Oman, the political instability in the region that could spill over into economic and financial instabilities and also by Oman's membership in the WTO and the FTA agreement with USA. Also, international reports and recommendations from the IMF, UNDP and ILO among others also shape and support the development initiatives. All in all, the Central Bank of Oman reported a positive outlook for the economy in 2018-2022 (CBO Financial Stability Report, 2017). Understanding the economic context of Oman can help answer why and how GBs undergo SC in Oman.

All in all, due to various contextual forces, GBs in Oman have been facing new expectations to increase their efficiency, reduce their reliance on government funding, become self-funded, grow, maximise their profits and increase their contribution to the GDP. The businesses have responded with major structural changes in search for efficiency and growth. Examples of these changes are mergers and vertical integrations, creation of subsidiaries, recalling subsidiaries, internationalisations, restructurings and CEO changes. The aim of these changes is to improve the efficiency and management of businesses that are crucial to the national economy and to reduce reliance on government funding and maximise revenues. But despite being major contributors to the GDP and major employers, no studies have explored, described or explained the major changes that GBs undergo. After describing the context, the next section explains how interest for the study arose.

1.4 How Interest for the Study Emerged

This section explains how the researcher's interest in the study arose. This is followed by identifying the gap in the literature. It wasn't clear why and how GBs underwent large-scale changes in Oman. The researcher was aware that the government was diversifying its sources of income but the whole changing process in its businesses was like a black box. The stories one would hear were isolated narratives from employees who were hurt by the changes. A fuller and more balanced picture was needed from across businesses, across levels and divisions on what had happened, why and how.

Knowing that there was already substantial work in the area of OC, the researcher was curious to know if any of those works captured the essence of the type of change that was happening in GBs of Oman. This motivated her to embark on a reading journey to identify if there was a relevant body of knowledge that would answer the questions in the OC literature. The search led to identifying a knowledge gap in the literature.

1.5 The OC Field and the Research Gap

The field of OC is a complex and fragmented body of literature that has been informed by many different disciplines and lacks an agreed upon framework for managing change. It has been described as complex and containing many contradictory and confusing theories and research findings (Todnem, 2005; Fernandez & Rainey, 2006 among others). Many of the change models and solutions have been judged as rather abstract in nature and difficult to apply (Burnes, 2004) and each model of change is different and presents a mere combination of concepts in steps that lack research evidence (Iles & Sutherland 2001). They are "... general recipes for success ... which often lack a sound empirical basis and an eye for sector specific issues" (Kuipers et al., 2013). Todnem (2005) describes them as 'contradictory and confusing approaches that lack empirical evidence and built on unchallenged assumptions on the nature of change'. The OC field has been criticised as too fragmented either because it borrows too much from a wide array of disciplines to build its assumptions or because it lacks successful attempts at theory consolidation or integration (Shwarz & Huber, 2008).

Major researchers in the OC field have also pointed out that 'the organisational change literature is dominated by US/Anglo-centric perspectives' (Pettigrew et al., 2001) and these dominating theories and models of change are based on western ideologies, which might not work in non-western contexts. Researchers argue that the existing change management models and solutions do not take into consideration contextual differences and effects like the influence of historical events, political, economic, industrial and socio-cultural environments on change (Pettigrew, 1985; Armenakis & Bedeian 1999; Pettigrew et al., 2001). This is because the OC literature and practitioners tend to ignore contextual

differences and offer universal solutions (Pettigrew et al., 2001; Sorge & van Witteloostuijn, 2004). This assumed universality of solutions is seen as one of the causes of failure in change initiatives (Jansson, 2013). Biases can develop when studying or managing change in different countries using the US/Anglo-Saxon perspectives (Kuipers et al., 2013) because their underlying assumptions can contradict with the different cultural and behavioural systems worldwide. Unlike what many practitioners and consultants think, “The choice of a change theory or model is not arbitrary because each model of change represents a different ideology with its own assumptions about the nature of human beings and social organizations” (Kezar, 2001).

With the aforementioned criticisms in mind, one doesn’t get surprised to learn that many major change efforts fail. It is widely reported in the literature by both scholars and consultants that OC is a challenging phenomenon that is often associated with high failure rates (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Cinite et al., 2009; Burke, 2011). Beer and Nohria (2000) claim that almost two thirds of all major change efforts fail. Others claim that almost 70% of all large-scale changes fail (Kotter, 2008; Senturia, Flees & Maceda, 2008; Hughes, 2011). Several other researchers have consistently reported high failure rates over years emphasising that the situation isn’t getting any better (Jansson, 2013; Rouse, 2011; Chatterjee, 2007; Stickland, 1998; Rogers, Meehan & Tenner, 2006). Even the big consultancies like McKinsey & Co. (2009) found substantial evidence that managing change successfully is extremely difficult. Bain & Co. said that the failure rate is around 70% (Senturia, Flees & Maceda, 2008). CIPD (2014) also reported that less than 60% of reorganisations succeed. This astonishing high failure rate is not for specific types of changes, statistics have long showed that failure rates are consistent across all major types of change (Orgland, 1997). A study of large European, Asian and North American companies by Bain & Co. reported a shocking 90% failure of culture change efforts (Rogers et al., 2006). Burnes (2014) also reported that studies have shown high failure rates for new technology projects, TQM and Business Process Reengineering.

Several researchers tried to offer explanations for the high failure rates. For example, according to Todnem (2005) the lack of empirical research within change management, and the apparent lack of a valid framework for OC management within organisations can be observed through the poor success rates of many change management programmes in operation within the working environment. Although researchers are continually offering models and solutions, many researchers do not believe that the discipline has provided any lasting answers (Dawson, 2003, p. 11). In fact, this is not a new observation, ‘... there is a continuing debate about whether change research is developing as a cumulative and falsifiable body of knowledge’ (Weick & Quinn 1999). This is obvious in the assessment of the change literature decades back in the 70s by Kahn (1974) that led to several

criticisms. Similar sentiments can be found in Woodman (1989) and Golembiewski and Boss (1992) among others. Hence, perhaps the reason lies in what Burnes (2011, p. 447) cautioned, ‘...we may be offering change approaches which address the wrong problems...’. Some researchers have concluded that most change initiatives fail not because of poor planning or lack of competence or commitment per se but because of ‘a clash of values between the organisation, the type of change and the approach used to manage the change’ (Burnes & Jackson, 2011). Gill (2003) referred the failure to lack of effective leadership. Another reason could be that “we do not possess at present an approach to change that is theoretically holistic, universally acceptable, and which can be practically applied” (Burnes, 2014, p. xiv). The researcher also argued that failure could also be due to a lack of understanding of theories of change and organisations and that this lack of understanding “follows that choices with regard to the appropriateness of particular structures and practices, the way they are chosen and implemented, are founded on limited knowledge and perhaps false assumptions” (Burnes, 2014, p. xv). But, even when managers understand, “much of the influential literature on strategy, important as it is, has left the manager bereft of insights, let alone guidelines for action...” (Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003, p. 5). Pettigrew (1985) related the failure of change research to identify clear insights and offer rigorously grounded solutions to its ahistorical, acontextual and aprocessual nature. Since then, there have been increasing calls for studies that take into consideration the internal and external environments of the organization in question, content factors like organization’s strategies, structures and systems, the process of change, and the behaviours and experiences of those involved (Armenakis & Bedeian 1999; Pettigrew et al., 2001; Kuipers et al., 2013). Other researchers also suggest taking into consideration the temporal perspectives of change arguing that the past informs the present and shapes the future (e.g., Weick & Quinn 1999; Van de Ven & Poole 2005, among others).

Since Pettigrew (1985) critiqued the literature for being acontextual, ahistorical and aprocessual, ‘... research and writing in organizational change [has been] undergoing a metamorphosis’ (Pettigrew et al., 2001). An increasing number of researchers and practitioners have come to believe that ‘each context produces unique challenges such that change strategies that work in one place may prove unsuccessful elsewhere’ (Gray et al., 2012). In other words, it is more accepted today that ‘there can never be a universal theory [or model] of organisational change’ (Dawson, 2003). Furthermore, since then, key change researchers have been highlighting the importance of contextual considerations in understanding how change succeeds or fails in practice (Pettigrew et al., 2001 among others). They suggest that new research should focus on the context, content and process of change and the interactions of these dimensions overtime to reach to useful insights on the causes of change failure and pre-requisites of success. Consequently, instead of making

assumptions about the nature of change and aiming for universal prescriptions and generalizations, major researchers and premier journals like the Academy of Management have been calling for change studies that focus on details of the contexts, on the process, content, history, time, action and performance outcomes of change (see Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew et al., 2001).

Alharthy, McLaughlin and Rashid (2016) recently reported that many western organisations failed in implementing strategic changes in the Arab Middle East region. Also, there is evidence that many Western management techniques have been unsuccessful in the Arab Gulf region because of the strong traditional culture of the region (Jabbra & Jabbra, 2005, cited in Common, 2011). This is not a surprise because people are the most important component of change (Kesterson & Broome, 2005) and their culture determines how they react to problems. McKinsey and Co. (2009) found that the reasons for the high failure rate of change worldwide are related to the behaviours of managers and employee attitudes.

Studies have shown that culture is a key consideration in change programmes and ignoring it is one of the causes of failure (Burke, 1995). What has been happening in the Arab Middle Eastern region is ‘a paradox between western approaches to change [that are built on western ideologies and assumptions] and approaches to management associated with [the strong] national cultures in the region’ (Rees & Althakri, 2008).

Consequently, the OC literature was reviewed to find out if there was a body of knowledge that explored, described and explained OC processes in Oman and the Arab Gulf countries. Unfortunately, despite the many changes that have been happening in Oman and the surrounding countries, no study has taken a holistic process approach and explored ‘how’ SC processes unfold, what change management approaches are used and what environmental and organisational factors influence the process. It is not known, for example, if whether major changes are mostly externally driven or triggered internally. Researchers like Cummings and Worley (2001) described change management in the Arab world as “slow placed, centrally controlled, and aimed at achieving technical rationality and efficiency”. But, it is not known if this description is applicable on the way OC is managed in GBs of Oman or not. Likewise, it is not known if SC processes in Oman follow a top-down approach as generalised by Rees and Althakri (2008) in their study ‘Organisational Change Strategies in the Arab Region: A Review of Critical Factors’. Since Rees and Althakri’s study didn’t include Oman, is there a possibility that some form of a bottom-up pattern is used in implementing OC in Oman like the Shura (consultative) style which is one of the strong features of the Omani culture (Almoharby, 2010; Jones & Ridout, 2013; Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016).

The OC literature has a very limited number of studies on OC in the Arab region (Al Blori, 2005; Rees & Althakri, 2008) and there is limited localised knowledge and solutions on how to manage change in Arab Middle Eastern organisations (Angehrn, Schloderer & Cheak, 2008). Table 1.4 lists the studies found by the researcher on OC in Oman and the Arab Middle Eastern countries, mainly the Arab Gulf countries. The researcher looked for studies that were published during 2005-2017 using Google scholar first. Then, online databases offered by the libraries of Sultan Qaboos University and Aston University were used. The search resulted in less than thirty works spread across journals and UK theses conducted mainly by Arab researchers and Arab Gulf post-graduate students mainly from Oman, Saudi Arabia and UAE. The focus of these studies ranges from public sector reform, managing change in health care and e-government initiatives. No claims are made that the table offers a complete list of all the OC studies conducted on the Arab Gulf region between 2005-2017. To check if there are more studies, the researcher looked through all the 'related articles' and works that cited each of the papers listed in the table and couldn't find any relevant works. Hence, we can confidently say that there is very limited research on OC in Oman, the Arab Gulf countries and the larger Arab Middle Eastern context.

None of the reviewed studies investigated OC from a process perspective. All of them focus on a single case and a single or few concepts rather than adopt a holistic process perspective of the phenomenon. The majority use questionnaire surveys. Very few use interviews and/or mixed methods designs combining surveys and interviews as well. Also, most of the available papers look at e-learning and e-government. See table 1.4 for details.

Table 1.4: OC studies on Oman, Arab Gulf Cooperation Countries and other Arab Middle Eastern countries between 2005-2017

#	Author(s)	Topic	Publication
1	Yousef, Darwish, A. (2000)	Organisational commitment and job satisfaction as predictors of attitudes toward OC in non-western settings	Journal Article
2	Khassawneh, A (2005)	Change resistance in bureaucratic organisations in Jordan: Causes and implications for future trends of administrative reform development	Journal Article
3	Jabra, J. G. and Jabra N. W. (2005)	Administrative culture in the Middle East: The case of the Arab world	Book
4	Al Blori (2005)	Staff attitude toward OC: A survey study in civil aviation in Jeddah	Journal Article
5	Al Abri, Rashid. (2007)	Managing change in health care	Journal Article
6	Randeree, K. (2008)	Managing organisational change: challenges to the e-learning paradigm in the UAE	Journal Article
7	Rees, E. J. and Al Thakri, R. (2008)	Organisational change strategies in the Arab region: A review of critical factors	Journal Article
8	Angehrn, A., Schloderer, F. and Cheak, A. (2008)	Training for change & innovation management competencies in Middle Eastern organisations – A multimedia simulation approach	Online document
9	Al Busaidy, M and Weerakkody, V. (2009)	E-government diffusion in Oman: A public sector employees' perspective	Journal Article
10	Al Azri, A. and Al Salti Z. (2010)	Successful implementation of e-government transformation in Oman	Journal Article
11	Al-Araimi (2012)	Thesis - The relationship between the full range leadership styles and employees' creative performance in civil service organisations: A field study of Omani civil service managers	Thesis
12	Ali and Hadi (2012)	Surveying and identifying the factors affecting successful implementation of business strategies in companies of Fars province industrial towns (case study: companies of food industries)	Journal Article
13	Al Mamari, Q. (2013)	Thesis – E-government Adoption: Motivating factors from a government perspective	Thesis
14	Al-Kandi, M. Asutay and R. Dixon (2013)	Factors influencing the strategy implementation process and its outcomes: evidence from Saudi Arabian Banks	Journal Article
15	Al-karaghoul, W., Al Azri, Al Salti, Z. (2013)	E-Government and EIS Change Management & Critical Success Factors: An Omani success story	Book chapter
16	Sidani, Y. and Showail, S. (2013)	Religious discourse and organisational change: Legitimising the stakeholder perspective at a Saudi conglomerate	Journal Article
17	Rajasekar (2014)	Factors affecting effective strategy implementation in a service industry: A study of electricity distribution companies in the Sultanate of Oman	Journal Article
18	Al-Khouri, A. M. (2014)	Strategy and execution: Lessons learned from the public sector	Journal Article
19	Sarrayrih, M. A. and Sriram, B. (2015)	Managing challenges in developing successful e-government	Journal Article
20	Bin Taher, N., Krotonov, V. and Silva, L. (2015)	A framework for leading change in the UAE public sector	Journal Article
21	Al Moosa, N. H. (2016)	Using change management to redesign Oman's health professions.	Journal Article
22	Yousef, Darwish, A. (2016)	Organisational commitment and job satisfaction as predictors of attitudes toward OC: A study in the local government	Journal Article
23	Alharthy, McLaughlin and Rasheed (2016)	Conference paper	Conference paper
24	Baddah, A. (2016)	The direction of change management in United Arab Emirates	Journal Article
25	Al Maqbali (2017)	Thesis – The impact of leadership styles of deans on the faculty members' level of job satisfaction in nursing education in Oman.	Thesis
26	Al-Ali, A. A., Singh, S. K., Al-Nahyan, M. T. and Sohal, A. (2017)	Change management through leadership: The mediating role of organisational culture	Journal Article

Source: Developed from the review of the literature

With this astounding absence of process studies of change on the region, change managers have no choice but to rely on popular imported theories and models presented by international consultants as best practices and then stumble over the blunt and ambiguous implementation process by themselves using the trial and error approach.

All in all, there is clear evidence that SCs have a reputation of failure across the world. Also, there is a knowledge gap in the theory and practice of OC in the Arab Gulf countries in general and the Omani context in particular. Consequently, five reasons raised interest to embark on a PhD study that would explore large-scale change processes in Omani organizations:

1. The frequency and pace of large-scale OC in Oman and the Arabian Gulf countries in general without any context-specific guidelines that are grounded in a deep understanding of practice
2. The existence of very few OC studies on the Arab context and the absence of process studies of change on Oman and the Arab Middle Eastern region in general
3. The lack of change theories and models suitable for studying or implementing OC in the Omani context and the region
4. The calls for more contextual and process studies of change by major change researchers
5. The fact that large-scale change in GBs has a very big impact on government revenues, the economy and the lives of thousands of employees as these businesses are the largest employers and the largest contributors to the national economy.

In response to these issues, the researcher decided to take the lead and conduct an in-depth investigation of multiple cases of major change processes in large GBs of Oman to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and advance the OC field with a context-specific process study of change from an under-researched non-western context.

1.6 The Research Problem

The frequency of change in GBs of Oman and the absence of context-specific knowledge on OC processes in Oman and the Arab Middle Eastern Region is the main problem that triggered the study. Despite the frequency of large-scale changes in GBs of Oman, and the neighbouring Arab Gulf countries, there is little uptake of OC studies on the Arab Middle Eastern context in general and an astounding absence of process studies of change. There are no answers to what makes GBs undergo major changes, how they change and what influences their change processes. Also, there are no context-specific guidelines on how to manage SCs in Oman and the surrounding countries, which share great similarities with Oman.

This study takes the lead and contributes with new and highly needed context-specific process knowledge to the field. Offering insights and recommendations grounded in a deep understanding of how SC unfolds will help advance our understanding and push the literature to a more diagnostic and context-specific approach to theorising. This approach will help reduce the dominance of the reductionist acontextual approaches that led the OC literature for years to oversimplification of the nature of OC, universalised change management models and ready-made recipes for implementing change.

1.7 Purpose and Aim of the study

This study set out to explore and describe five purposively selected cases of SC processes in five different GBs of Oman that occurred during 2007-2015 via in-depth semi-structured interviews and documentary evidence to gain a deeper level of understanding on why these businesses changed, how they changed and what influenced the way they changed. The study does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to the phenomenon but seeks to generate an understanding of SC that is grounded in practice in the Omani context.

The aim of the study is to develop a new context-specific process framework that highlights the forces, phases and influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman. The intention is to increase our understanding by highlighting the contextual factors that can force GBs to change, the main influencers that shape change processes and a process view of how SC unfolds in terms of sequence of events. Hence, by achieving the aim, the study brings to the surface the relevant issues that managers need to pay attention to during planning and implementing change. All those interested in or involved in large-scale organisational changes in the Omani context or similar neighbouring contexts are expected to find the framework useful.

1.8 Research Questions and Objectives

The research questions created the foundation, direction and boundary for the study. They guided the researcher in the literature review, the kind of research design to use, the type of data to collect and from whom, the kind of data analysis to perform, and the writing-up (Bryan & Bell, 2011). In fact, “Research questions embed values, worldview and direction of an inquiry. They are also influential in determining what type of knowledge is going to be generated” (Trede & Higgs, 2009, p. 18). Figure 1.2 demonstrates the central role of the study’s research questions in the overall research process.

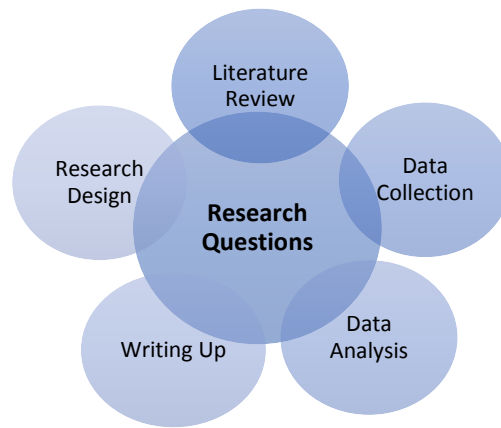


Figure 1.2: The central role of research questions as envisioned by the researcher
Source: Adapted from Bryan and Bell (2011)

Three main research questions guided this investigation:

1. What makes GBs undergo SC in Oman?
2. How do strategic changes unfold in GBs in Oman?
3. What contextual factors facilitate and inhibit SC processes in GBs in Oman?

By answering the three main questions, the following three objectives were met:

1. To identify the forces of SC in large GBs in Oman
2. To determine the major phases of SC processes in GBs in Oman
3. To highlight the main situational/contextual/contingent facilitators and inhibitors of SC processes in GBs of Oman

The intention of this study is to tell a story of SC in the Omani context, not a single story from a single industry but a broader and far-reaching one that presents a picture of patterns of SC with compelling evidence from multiple cases on why large- scale change occurs in GBs, how it occurs and what influences it.

1.9 Research Procedure, Scope and Limitations

This study explores and compares five purposively selected cases of SC processes that took place during 2007-2015 in five GBs operating in five different industries in Oman. The experiences and viewpoints of 42 managers (top, middle and lower) and non-managers from four-five different divisions were gathered via 42 one-two hours face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Media and company documents, formal case reviews, follow-up emails and phone calls were also used for confirming and complementary purposes. Data was analysed using thematic analysis and manual coding.

The following seven points stood as scope and delimitations:

1. Choice of the research problem, questions and aim of the study
Although many contextual issues related to the phenomenon are important and deserve a study on their own to see how they affect and get effected by SC, it was necessary to first explore and describe the phenomenon.
2. The geographical location
This study covered GBs of Oman only. There was no interest to explore GBs of the other Arab Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain) because the intention was to first understand the logics and dynamics of the phenomenon at home. Also, it would have been costly to travel to other countries and getting approval to conduct the research would have been very difficult.
3. The time period of the cases
The study explored five retrospective cases of SC that occurred between 2007-2015. All the changes took at least 5 years. The researcher was forced to select the most recent SCs that had occurred during that time period of data collection for the PhD study. Selecting cases that occurred farther back to pre-2007 and the late 90s would have been very difficult because employees would have forgotten the details and many managers and non-managers who had experienced the changes would have been in other organisations and it would have been hard to reach them.
4. A multiple case study ‘why not another design?’
The intention was to gain a picture of the patterns of SC that occur across GBs and generate insights and practical guidelines for other GBs. The lessons generated from multiple cases help build a more compelling and convincing argument rather than those from a single case. Also, the emergence of two contrasting clusters of cases, helped identify generative mechanisms that have significance beyond a single case. Other qualitative designs like ethnography and grounded theory were not appropriate to use because they required longer time, specific techniques and are not suitable for comparing multiple events. Also, experimental designs and surveys were not selected because they would not have generated the in-depth information and stories needed to answer the research questions.
5. Process and not variance study
The initial plan of the study was to conduct a mixed methods study that would build a theory from multiple cases and then test it via a variance study. However, due to lack of time and the density of analysing five processes, the study was reduced to the qualitative phase only.

6. Relevant alternative theoretical perspectives that could have been used

This study used the adaptation and growth perspective of the contingency theory to explain SCs in Oman because its assumptions fit well with the process approach, OC and findings of the study. There are many alternative adaptation and selection perspectives that could be used for the study like Child's (1972) Strategic Choice, Institutional Theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Di Maggio & Powell, 1983), the organisational learning perspective (Cyert & March, 1963; March, 1991) and Punctuated Equilibrium (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985; Gersick, 1991). Explanations for why these perspectives were not selected are offered in Chapters 2 and 3, Literature Review and The Contingency Theory.

7. Generalizability of the study

Investigating SC processes in GBs alone implies that the findings cannot be generalised outside the population of GBs. This delimitation is challenged by the fact that GBs are a hybrid of public and private forms (Perry & Rainey, 1988). They share similarities with both sectors. Another delimitation is - in process studies "contextualism and generalisation do not match" (Sminia, 2009, p. 106). This can be true in single case studies. But Pettigrew (1985, 1997) advised the use of multiple cases and comparing polar cases to identify mechanism that can be generalised.

During and after conducting the study, five limitations were experienced. The first limitation realised was lack of access to company documents on the changes. This made the interviews the main source of information. The second limitation that was discovered was lack of additional time needed to complete the dense process research. The number of cases included in the study is the third limitation. The study covered five core GBs of Oman out of the population of more than 65 businesses. The intention was to study eight of the most important GBs from the eight industries of GBs. But, two businesses rejected to participate and one case was dropped due to insufficient data. However, 4-10 cases are sufficient to generate compelling findings and build a theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Also, major process researchers present robust process studies with five to six cases too (e.g. see Denis, Lamothe & Langley, 2001; Martin & Eisenhardt, 2010). The fourth limitation is the number of interviewees in each organisation. It was not possible to meet more than eight employees due to time limitations. However, the time given for interviewing was sufficient as most interviewees did not have any further information to share by the end of each interview. The number of interviews was sufficient also because by the fourth and fifth interview in each organisation, no new information came out from the subsequent interviews. It was a clear indication that the saturation point was reached. The fifth and last limitation is the inability to meet three out of the five CEOs and any of the board members.

Due to time constraints, the researcher could not wait to meet the CEOs as they were either outside the country or busy with prior commitments. Also, it was not possible to meet the non-executive board members because they were either not known to many in the organisations or their contact details were not shared or not available.

1.10 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the OC literature with new theoretical knowledge on the forces, phases and influencers of OC in large GBs of Oman. The findings advance our understanding of the logics and dynamics of OC in an under-researched context that is very different from the dominant western context of most OC studies. Five cases from five core industries offer compelling empirical evidence and expanded generalisability.

It is worth mentioning that this study does not explore a new topic but stands as the first multiple case process study of SC on GBs in Oman and the Arabian Gulf region. It seeks to explore and understand the topic in a new setting that greatly differs from the dominant Anglo-Saxon research contexts of most change studies. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the study is also the first multiple case process study of SCs in an Arab country. Very little OC research has been done on Arab countries and no process research has been done on OC in Oman or the Arabian Gulf countries. As such, this study has laid the groundwork that will lead to future process studies on OC in Oman, the neighbouring countries in the Arabian Peninsula and other Arab countries in Asia and Africa. The significance of the study lies in the insights it offers on OC. New insights are offered from a rare philosophical perspective. Majority of the qualitative studies on change look at the phenomenon from a purely social constructivist perspective whereas this study views it from a CR angle. This philosophical worldview coupled with the contextual approach of process studies and Pettigrew's (1997) view of the interaction field in which change occurs adds more insights to the analysis of the phenomenon and the findings. Unlike the mono-level perspective of socially constructed knowledge where knowledge is captured from only one layer, the complex stratified reality of CR and the multiple layers of the interactive context of process studies lead to broader and richer explanations, which are closer to reality.

Because this study is the first of its kind not only in Oman but the Arab Gulf region too, the outcomes will be of significant value and will have an impact on OC researchers, academics, managers, consultants, policy makers and all those who are involved in approving, initiating, implementing, and institutionalising SCs in large GBs of Oman and other Arabian Gulf countries.

1.11 Structure of the Thesis

This section presents the chapters that make up the thesis, their titles and purposes. The purpose of the table is to give the reader a bird's eye view of the structure of the thesis.

Table 1.5: Structure of the thesis

#	Chapter	Purpose
1	Introduction	Provides information on the context and background of the study
2	Literature Review	Relates the study to the relevant literature
3	The Contingency Theory	Discusses and justifies the Contingency Theory of strategy and change
4	Methodology	Discusses the choices made in the research approach, philosophy, design and methods
5	Case Analysis	Describes and analyses five cases and presents their similarities and differences
6	Findings	Presents the similarities, contrasts and patterns identified between the two clusters
7	Discussion	Links the findings to the literature and builds a process framework
8	Conclusion	Presents the conclusion of the study and the implications

1.12 Chapter Summary

What makes GBs undergo SC in Oman? How do they change and what influences their change processes? The government of Oman and those in the surrounding Arab Gulf countries and the rest of the Arab Middle Eastern are facing waves of change. Large-scale changes are implemented without any valid context-specific knowledge on what works and what doesn't. In Oman, an increasing number of GBs have been undergoing SCs. These changes touch the lives of thousands of employees and directly impact the economy that has been struggling with dwindling oil revenues and the demands of a growing population. There is no body of knowledge that practitioners and policy makers can rely on to gain guidelines that are grounded in a deep understanding of practice and navigate government assets to the required levels of efficiency, growth and profitability. This is the first process study of multiple cases of SC processes in Oman. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, it is believed to be either the first of its kind or one of the very few in the Arab Middle Eastern region too. The outcomes of the study are expected to have significant value and impact on OC researchers interested in studying the phenomenon in the region, academics, managers, consultants, policy makers and all those who are involved in SCs in large GBs of Oman and other Arabian Gulf countries. The next chapter presents a review of the relevant perspectives of change in the OC and SC literatures. It looks at the different typologies of change, the different views on what makes organisations change, how they change and what influences change initiatives.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

“Sound empirical work begins with a strong grounding in relevant literature, identifies a research gap, and proposes research questions that address that gap”

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007, p. 26)

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to develop ‘an understanding of the research topic, identify what has already been done on it, how it was investigated and what the key issues are’ (Hart, 2011, p.1). The chapter offers a review of perspectives relevant to the three research issues - forces of change, process of change, and change influencers. First, the different typologies of OC are presented. Then the chapter looks at change ontologies and two main approaches to studying change. After that, a discussion on the two main views of how change processes unfold is provided. This is followed by a review of organisational theories with a justification for the use of the contingency theory for this study. The chapter ends with a conclusion where the key gaps in the literature are highlighted and the position of the study within the OC literature is articulated.

2.1 Types of Organisational Change in the OC Literature

Change has different types and occurs in different forms. Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. xi) described organisational change as “a difference in form, quality or state over time in an organisational entity. The entity may be an individual’s job, a work group, an organisational unit, the overall organisation, or larger communities of organisations such as industries”. With so many types of changes observed in organisations, “the question of how we differentiate different types of change remains open to debate” (Dawson, 2003, p. 16). To tackle this problem, researchers created typologies and competing frameworks that show the various types of change based on different dimensions or characteristics like scale and scope of change (Dunphy & Stace, 1990), speed of change (Quinn, 1980) among other defining characteristics.

One of the most popular typology of OC was presented by Weick and Quinn (1999). They emphasised that most types of OC can be characterised in terms of their tempo (i.e., rhythm or pattern). Hence, they proposed episodic and continuous change types. Episodic change is a kind of change that is associated with planned and deliberate interventions (Ford & Ford, 1995). “It is infrequent, discontinuous and intentional” (Weick & Quinn, 1999, p. 375). It is dramatic in nature and requires a break from the past (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). It replaces the existing order with a totally new equilibrium and is likely to occur in conditions of uncertainty (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). This change is similar to Tushman and Romanelli’s (1985) radical change and Meyer, Brooks and Goes’s (1990) second order

and discontinuous change among others. Majority of the papers on OC focus on episodic large-scale transitions and transformations and the reasons is “The velocity and vulnerability of such change initiatives draw them to the attention of academic researchers, the media and the business community; and yet, many of these change initiatives do not succeed in practice” (Dawson, 2008, p. 2).

According to Weick and Quinn (1999, p. 375), unlike episodic change, organisations face continuous change, which is “small continuous adjustments, created simultaneously across units”. It is similar to incremental change (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985), first-order change and continuous change (Meyer, Brooks & Goes, 1990) among other similar types. Despite being small adjustments, this type of change can accumulate over time and lead to large-scale alterations that impact the whole organisation. As Poole and Van de Ven (2004) explained, “continuous change is conceived as ongoing, evolving and cumulative” (p. 5). The OC field borrows the idea of small continuous and cumulative change from ‘gradualism’ in Geology, which is based on the findings of James Hutton and Charles Lyell. Gradualism sees major changes as the result of very small changes that accumulate over time. Charles Darwin also adopted this idea in his ‘Theory of Evolution’ to explain how evolution happens over time. The distinction of episodic and continuous change is similar to many other distinctions in the OC literature. Burnes (2014) reviewed various types and models of OCs and concluded that all researchers view change “as running along a continuum from incremental to transformational” (p. 406). Table 2.1 shows how various researchers view OC on a continuum.

Besides the types mentioned in table 2.1, there are other types of change offered by other scholars such as Carnall (2003), Dawson (2003), Stickland (1998) and Wilson (1992), among others. Burnes (2014) explained that OC researchers view incremental change as fine-tuning and targeted towards changing behaviours and attitudes, activities and performance, whereas transformational change as changes to the structure, processes and culture of the whole organisation. His review highlights that some researchers view incremental changes as isolated events like Stace and Dunphy (2001) and Pettigrew, Ferlie and McKee (1992) while others see them as part of a larger plan to transform the organisation like Kanter, Stein and Jick (1992) and Senior (2002). On transformations, Burnes (2014) observed that all researchers agreed that this type of change is strategic and important but differed on the speed of transformations. Some see it as a slow process (Kotter, 1996), some see it as rapid (Peters, 1989) and others see that it can be slow or rapid (Kanter et al., 1992; Stace & Dunphy, 2001).

Besides the continuum of incremental and radical changes, Kuipers, Higgs and Kickert (2014) identified orders of change. These researchers found three types of orders: sub-system change representing the first order, OC as the second-order and sector change the third-order. Table 2.2 presents these different types of change. This study investigates second-order organisation-wide change.

Table 2.1: Major change types

Researcher	Types, Models and Forms of Change
Senior (2002) drawing on the work of Grundy (1993)	Smooth incremental (slow), Bumpy incremental (slow but accelerates over time) and Discontinuous change (like punctuated equilibrium)
Kanter et al. (1992)	Approaches to transformational change: A bold stroke approach - rapid A long march approach – incremental extended overtime leading to a transformation
Beer and Nohria (2000)	Two archetypes/theories of change: Theory E (like Kanter et al.'s bold stroke; a hard approach) Theory O (like Kanter et al.'s long march; a soft approach)
Cummings and Worley (2001)	A continuum ranging from incremental to quantum changes that alter how organisations operate
Stace and Dunphy (2001)	A four-stage continuum: fine tuning, incremental adjustment, modular transformation and corporate transformation Corporate transformations can take four forms: developmental transitions, task-focused transitions, charismatic transformations and turnarounds
Peters (1989)	Change can only be rapid and disruptive or continuous
Quinn (1996)	Incremental and deep, radical change
Pettigrew et al. (1992)	A change continuum from operational (small-scale and relatively unimportant) to SC (major and important structural changes)
Buchanan and Boddy (1992)	Continuum of incremental and radical change
Kotter (1996)	Ignores continuums and argues that organisations need to change continuously
Weick and Quinn (1999)	Continuous and episodic change

Source: Adapted from Burnes (2014, pp. 404-409)

Table 2.2: Orders of change

Orders of Change	Description	Researchers
First order: Subsystem	Adaptation of systems or structures Occurs within part of an organisation or sub-system Is incremental	Burnes (2004); Carnall (2007); Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (1974)
Second order: Organisation	Transformational change Movement in core organisational paradigms Organisation-wide Whole systems change	Burnes (2004); Carnall (2007); Watzlawick et al. (1974); Van de Ven and Poole (1995)
Third order: Identity and Sector	Identity change Cross-organisational change Change spans specific organisational boundaries Affects many organisations/sector wide change	<i>Johnston (1987)</i> ; Tsoukas and Papoulias (2005); Gratton (2005)

Source: Taken from Kuipers et al. (2014, p. 6); Johnston (1987) is added to the table as he is the one who initiated third-order change.

Besides the above orders, Buckley and Perkins (1984) used the terms, minor, major and transformative to refer to first-order, second-order and third-order changes. In addition to the change continuums, and orders of change, other researchers developed broad categories of OC. For example, Van de Ven and Poole (1995) developed four broad categories each representing a different theoretical model on its own: life cycle, teleology, dialectics, and evolutionary. According to these researchers, life cycle and evolutionary changes run in a prescribed mode, while teleological and dialectical theories function in a constructive manner (i.e., episodic) generating totally new organizational forms. These episodic changes mark a break from the past by replacing the old order with a totally new one. Likewise, Cummings and Worley (2001) identified four types of strategic changes based on the extent of change in the organisation and the extent of change in the strategy – adaptation, reorientation, convergence and strategy revision. Balogun and Hope-Hailey (2008) also identified four types of changes based on the result and nature of the change that occurs in organisations (2008, p. 20-23): adaptation, evolution, reconstruction and revolution.

OC is also seen as either continuous adaptation or as a process of punctuated equilibrium where periods of gradual adaptive changes are interrupted by shorter periods of revolutionary change. Researchers believe that “both models of change are right but apply to different types of organisations and maybe different stages of an organisation’s life-cycle” (Balogun & Hope-Hailey 2008, p. 4). Continuous change is more likely to occur in more competitive environments where the pace of change is faster whereas revolutionary change is more likely to occur in stable industries where organisations remain competitive for very long without changing. Burke (2002) asserts that a very high majority of

organisational changes occur evolutionarily or gradually but most organisations require a discontinuous ‘jolt’ to the system in order to change the ‘deep structures’ and make way for revolutionary change.

Nevertheless, although there are distinct types of changes, researchers argue that any major change generally involves more than one type of change (e.g., Poole & Van de Ven, 1995). It can start as one specific type but later during the change process, the type may shift due to the necessary adjustments needed (Balogun & Hope-Hailey, 2008). This proves that although episodic and continuous changes are distinct types of change, when change unfolds, these two types are not mutually exclusive. Dawson (2008, p. 2) argued that between the transformational and incremental changes

“lie a raft of other change initiatives including branch and divisional restructuring, the reconfiguration of operations in the production of a given good or service, and the transition from some current state to a well-defined new state over a planned timeframe. Within these distinctions, the notion of the known and unknowable arises, especially with respect to the vulnerability and scope of the change in question”

Weick and Quinn (1999) argue that “the contrast between episodic and continuous change reflects differences in the perspective of the observer” (p.362). These researchers see that from the broadest macro-level view, SC appears as discontinuous but when a micro-level analysis is done, the same SC appears to go through continuous phases of adaptation and adjustment.

Brown and Eisenhardt (1997, p. 28) found a similar insight in their study on the computer industry:

“The rate and scale of innovation ... was such that the term ‘incremental’ seemed, in retrospect, stretched. Yet it was not radical innovation such as DNA cloning, either ... Similarly, managers described ‘constantly reinventing’ themselves. This too seemed more than incremental (i.e. unlike replacing top managers here and there) but also not the massive, rare, and risky change of the organisational and strategy literature. And so, we realised that we were probably looking at a third kind of process that is neither incremental nor radical and that does not fit the punctuated equilibrium model”

Burnes (2014) reported that in the current OC literature, there are three models of change being promoted based on the frequency and magnitude of change – the incremental model, the punctuated equilibrium model of organisational transformation and the continuous transformational model. The incremental model is like Weick and Quinn’s (1990) continuous change and the punctuated equilibrium model argues that long periods of incremental change are disrupted by short periods of rapid, i.e., revolutionary change (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994; Gersick, 1991). The continuous transformation model is for turbulent environments where organisations have to continuously change to survive (Weick & Quinn, 1999; Greenwald, 1996). This later is the type of change that Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) saw in the computer industry. However, according to Burnes (2014),

these are not three universal models of change, instead, there are “three situational or contingency theories which apply to different organisations in different situations at different times” (p. 327). Despite the different views on types and models of change, Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. 6) believe that “the fact that some changes appear to us to be gradual and almost indiscernible, whereas others are attended by major breaks and disruptions, continues to give the episodic-continuous distinction traction”.

Theories of change can be categorised under the episodic-continuous change typology too. According to Poole and Van de Ven (2004), examples of episodic change theories are punctuated equilibrium theory, strategic choice theory, Schein’s theory of culture change, evolutionary economics, among others. Examples of continuous change theories are the contingency theory, the population and community ecology theories and the theory of learning organisations, among others. The researchers also indicate that there are theories that incorporate elements of both types of change like complex adaptive systems.

Hence, we can conclude that the OC literature categorises change into various types and these can be broadly viewed under episodic or continuous changes following Weick and Quinn’s (1999) distinction. Also, any major change will involve small and continuous adjustments, which can be identified when change is studied at a micro-level. In addition, different environments will demonstrate different models of OC, i.e., incremental, punctuated equilibrium and continuous transformation.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study explores SC processes in GBs of Oman, a type of change that involves decisions, actions, events and developments that influence the whole organisation (Bryson, 1988). The word ‘strategic’ refers to the influence of strategy, structure, culture, technology, capabilities, resources or control systems have on major sub-systems in an organisation (Balugon et al., 2008). Because this type of change affects the structure, processes and culture of the whole organisation (Burnes, 2014), SC is used interchangeably with revolutionary, transformational and episodic change (Weick & Quinn, 1999; Rajagopalan & Rasheed, 1995). The next section reviews the two main change ontologies and two main approaches to study OC.

2.2 Two Ontologies and Two Approaches to Studying OC

When studying OC, it is helpful to know how other researchers view and study the phenomenon. This section looks at OC ontologies and the various methods used to study it. As highlighted above, OC researchers have different views on the nature of change and thus describe it differently and ‘consider it from different perspectives’ (Higgs & Rowland, 2005). According to Tsoukas and Chia (2002), the different ontologies and epistemologies of change have led to differing views about whether change is a thing, i.e., ‘an object’ or

‘a process’. Researchers like Weick (1979), Heath and Sitkin (2005) and Whetten (2005), among others, view organisations as structures and change as nouns. On the other hand, Bartunek (1984), Pettigrew (1985), Pentland (1999), Poole, Van de Ven, Dooley & Holmes. (2000) and Tsoukas (2005), among others, view organisations and change as organizing events and processes. Figure 2.1 demonstrates how these two contrasting ontologies have helped researchers study change in two different ways.

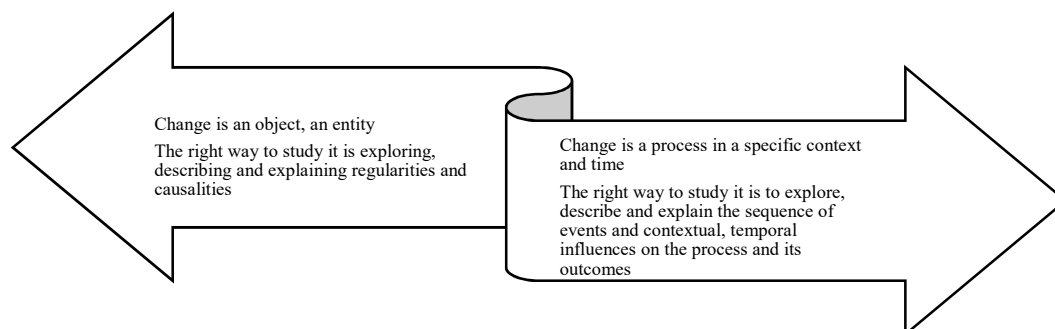


Figure 2.1: Two change ontologies and epistemologies

Source: Developed by the researcher for the study

The differing change ontologies led to studying OC in two different ways: the variance approach and the process approach (Mohr, 1982). Each of these two have their methods, advantages and criticisms. The variance method has been the dominant approach in studying OC (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). Its aim is to explain change in terms of relationships via survey designs, laboratory, times series and event history models (Mayer & Tuma, 1990). According to Mohr (1982, p. 42), “*The variance theory model of explanation has a close affinity to statistics*”. In this approach, the actual process of causality is considered unobservable, i.e., “the black box”. But, if consistent relationships (i.e., regularities between input variables and outputs) can be identified then causality can be proved.

On the other hand, the process approach explains how a sequence of events unfolds overtime with a special focus on the contextual influence and the underlying factors that cause and shape the events, their sequence and how they lead to certain outcomes (Pettigrew, 1985). Its aim is to explain how the change processes occur. Mohr (1982) called this approach to explaining causality as process theory.

In this approach, “the black box” is opened and the inner workings of the process are uncovered to show the ways in which things come about (Salmon, 1989, p. 182). The processes or mechanisms uncovered are not seen as general laws but as dependent on the situation, i.e., the context is part of the causal process (Pawson & Tilly, 1997). Process explanations are less amenable to statistical approaches as they require in-depth studies of

one or a few cases, observations and interviews and analysis of detailed textual forms of data to capture time and other contextual conditions between events (Maxwell, 2009, p. 36-37). But majority of process studies employs a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004) to confirm the causalities and sequence of events.

There is no right or wrong approach to study change because each way has its advantages and disadvantages. The variance approach is very good at offering relationships and causations of change but it does not consider contextual influences, how events influence and lead to one another, the micro-level explanations of change and how the overall change process develops (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). In terms of generalizability, the variance approach can investigate a larger number of change cases and thus achieve more generalizability than process research, which can only consider a small number of cases via complex in-depth investigations. While the variance perspective helps us empirically investigate change and its causal relationships, the process perspective helps us understand the detailed complex nature of the change process and what lies underneath the surface description. Table 2.3 compares the two approaches.

Table 2.3: A comparison of variance and process approaches

Variance Approach	Process Approach
Focus: Fixed entities with variable attributes	Focus: Entities that participate in events and may change over time
Satisfactory explanations specify necessary and sufficient causality	Satisfactory explanations specify necessary causality
Satisfactory explanations are comprised of efficient causes	Satisfactory explanations may be comprised of final, formal, and/or efficient causes
Generality of explanation depends on uniform explanation across range of cases and context	Generality of explanation depends on its versatility
Monotonic “well-behaved” causal relationships	Causal relationships are not monotonic or “well-behaved” Temporal ordering is critical Explanations include causal factors operating at different levels and for different time spans

Source: Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. 12)

We can conclude that researchers in the field of OC see change as either a fixed entity or a process. Also, there are two main approaches to studying change - the variance approach that seeks regularities, confirms causalities and generalises them using statistical methods, and the process approach that sees change as context-specific and seeks to understand and explain how change develops in its context over time. This approach often relies on qualitative methods but also uses quantitative methods to confirm associations and sequence of events.

This study does not seek reducing SC to causalities but rather pursues a process approach to gain a detailed understanding of why and how SC processes unfolded and identify the contextual factors that influenced and shaped the processes. The main purpose is not to predict future regularities but rather to explore and advance our understanding of the phenomenon by uncovering the processes and patterns and their inner working. The next section presents the two main views of how organisations change.

2.3 Organisation Change: Planned and Emergent

Since one of the main research questions is concerned with how change unfolds, it is important to know the two primary views on how organisations change. There is no single answer for how organisations change given the wide array of possibilities and directions that change can take place. Whether change happens continuously in small steps over time or episodically and abruptly the status quo of the organisation (Weick & Quinn, 1999), it can unfold linearly as planned or oscillate and spiral or get delayed or remain stuck for long or even get cancelled. Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. xi) described the many forms that change can take:

“Change can take many forms; it can be planned or unplanned, incremental or radical, and recurrent or unprecedented. Trends in the process or sequence of changes can be observed over time. These trends can be accelerating or decelerating in time, and they can move toward equilibrium, oscillation, chaos, or randomness in the behaviour of the organisational entity being examined”

The question of ‘how’ change occurs is a question of a process. Enquiring how organisations change or how change unfolds leads our minds to think of the process and envision it in steps, phases, patterns and pathways. Such a question pushes the mind to look for a map or diagram that illustrates how change occurs. This section presents an explanation and visual illustrations of the two main views on how change unfolds in the OC literature. This is relevant to the second research question of the study that explores how SC processes unfold in GBs of Oman i.e. the sequence of events in context over time. From a ‘how’ standpoint, OC is broadly viewed as either planned or emergent in the literature. The planned view is associated with linearity whereas the emergent view is associated with unpredictability and messiness. This later view came to replace the highly criticised planned view of change. But, despite the criticism, emergent view researchers do explain that “...it is the uncertainty of the environment that makes planned change inappropriate and emergent change more pertinent” (Burnes, 2014, p. 373).

This issue of linearity and messiness of change has divided researchers since the 1980s into two distinct groups in the OC literature. One group views change as linear, which can be planned and managed in an orderly manner. The other group sees change as complex,

bottom-up, emergent, messy and unpredictable. These researchers argue that change cannot and should not be managed using planned staged models and that every organization will need to come up with a distinct process that fits its specific environment (Weick, 2000; Pettigrew, 2000; Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991; Dawson, 1994). The reason is that “Context and action are inseparable” (Pettigrew, 2000, p. 243) and every organisation will need “a model of change that is a situational or contingency model” (Dunphy & Stace, 1993, p. 905). Due to this outlook, “Advocates of the emergent change tend to adopt a contingency perspective” (Burnes, 2014, p. 373). The following sub-sections discuss the two views on how organisations change before specifying the stance of this study on the issue of planned and emergent change.

2.3.1 Planned Change: A Linear View

The term ‘Planned Change’ was first coined by Kurt Lewin to differentiate between change that was intended by the organisation and change that was forced or came by accident or by misunderstanding (Marrow, 1969). Lewin’s model is one of the earliest change management models. It visualises OC in three stages of unfreezing, moving and refreezing (Lewin, 1947, 1951). Lewin assumed that change can be planned. According to Burnes (2014), a wide misconception exists amongst scholars about what the word ‘planned’ means in the term ‘Planned Change’. Burnes (2014, p. 334) explains what ‘planned’ means:

“... ‘Planned’ in this case, does not mean that someone sits down in advance and writes a detailed plan stating what will take place, and when and how it will be achieved. Rather it means that the organisation proactively identifies an area where it believes change is required and undertakes a process to evaluate and, if necessary, bring about change”

Planned change can be incremental or strategic. Examples of planned change are re-designing a job, introducing a better software and training employees on using it, changing the reward system to fit with newly introduced cross-functional teams, combining two or more departments, downsizing, spinning off part of a business, internationalizing, privatizing, merging and restructuring. Incremental change involves limited dimensions and levels of the organization and occurs within the existing strategy, structure and culture to improve the status quo (Cummings & Worley, 2015, p. 30) whereas SC is directed at altering how the whole organization operates.

As per the planned change view, OC is seen to unfold in a rational and linear manner. This view of change imposes order and assumes that managers can predict, pre-plan, implement and control change in a linear manner. The view is depicted in many staged models of change (see Figure 2.2 for an illustration).

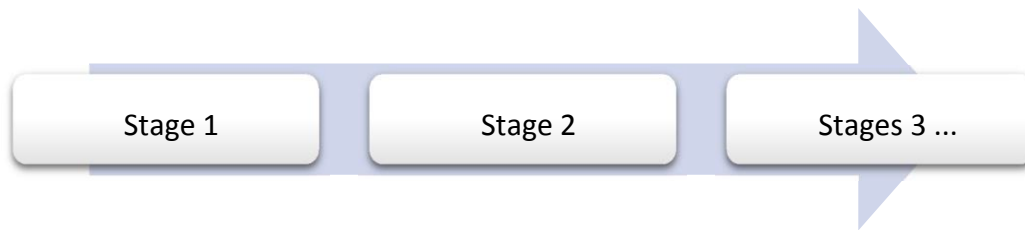


Figure 2.2: The planned view of change is one-directional and linear
Source: Developed for the study

According to Cummings and Worley (2015, p. 40-42), critics have identified several problems in the way planned change is conceptualised and practiced. Criticisms regarding the conceptualisation of planned change are:

1. It is viewed as a series of steps to be followed but there is a knowledge gap in the literature on how the steps should be performed in different situations. Hence more research is needed in this area to identify the situational factors that may require changes in the stages and steps of planned change.
2. Planned change is described as “a rationally controlled orderly process”. But this is a misleading conceptualisation of the process because as change unfolds, unexpected events, problems and demands emerge making planned change “a far more disorderly and dynamic process than is customarily portrayed ...”
3. It is often described as a process with a clear beginning, middle and end mainly due to Lewin’s unfreeze, move and refreeze model. But, due to increasing globalization and turbulence, “it is unlikely that change will ever be over”. Hence, the current conceptions of planned change need to capture the reality of this phenomenon.
4. The relationship between planned change and organisational performance is not clear. The weak evaluation or lack of it is due to the complexity of change, lack of sophisticated analyses that can help measure performance and the long periods needed to see the results.

According to Cummings and Worley (2015, p. 40-42), Criticisms around the practice of planned change are:

1. Consultants and practitioners prefer some planned change techniques and ignore others that maybe more appropriate to the situation
2. Organisations often do not invest in the needed time and money for diagnosing and identifying problems but rather rely on preconceptions about the problems and hire consultants to solve those problems.

3. Some organisations want quick solutions and refer to consultants for quick fixes. Many consultants have pre-packaged solutions that appeal to managers because of their clarity i.e. clear steps and explicit time and cost commitments.
4. Some managers do not realise that a solution in one part of the organisation will need some changes in other parts to support the solution and hence do not agree that other interventions are introduced in other parts of the organisation.

Despite the criticism, the planned approach to change “is still far and away the best developed, documented and supported approach to change” (Burnes, 2014, p. 366). The approach was used on small groups only at the beginning but later extended to organisation-wide initiatives. But, covering organisation-wide change led to some confusion between OD’s planned change and transformational change of strategic planning (Beer & Nohria 2000; Mintzberg 1998 cited in Burnes, 2014, p. 366). Due to the increasing uncertainty in the business environment, the planned change approach got challenged and was seen as an oversimplification of the true nature of change, imposing order and assuming linearity when change in reality is messy, fluid and its stages overlap (Kanter et al., 1992; Buchanan & Storey, 1997). As Dawson (1994, p. 3) explained,

“Although [Lewin’s] theory has proven to be useful in understanding planned change under relatively stable conditions, with the continuing and dynamic nature of change in today’s business world, it no longer makes sense to implement a planned process of ‘refreezing’ changed behaviours”

2.3.2 Emergent Change: A Non-Linear Messy View

Opposing the planned view of change, many researchers view change as non-linear and criticised the planned change view. “Non-linearity occurs when some condition or some action has a varying effect on an outcome, depending on the level of the condition or the intensity of the action” (Stacey & Mowles, 2016, p. 102). Schein (1996), for example, criticised that Lewin’s unfreezing stage has many challenges and is not as easy as described by the model. Unpredicted actions, events and reactions occur that make change non-linear in practice. Weick and Quinn (1999) also believe that change unfolds in a non-linear manner. Increasing criticism of the planned change view and debates on the usefulness of the planned approach to change, paved the way for a different view - the emergent view of change. This view sees change as a ‘continuous, unpredictable and political’ process (Wilson, 1992; Dawson, 1994; Pettigrew, 1985, 1997). From the early 90s, this view of change gained popularity. Proponents of emergent change see OC as “... an emerging and ongoing process ... that unfolds in an unpredictable and unplanned fashion” (Burnes, 2014, p. 368).

Also, OC is seen to unfold in its context and over time in a non-linear and messy manner. This view emphasises complexity and uncertainty and assumes that managers cannot predict, pre-plan or control change. Planning is seen as important but it is inhibited and affected by “the complex untidy and messy nature of change” (Dawson, 2003, p. 25). Thus, unlike the planned view, emergent change rejects prescriptive solutions and simple explanations of events (Burnes, 2014).

Whereas the planned change view conceptualises and illustrates how change occurs in linear stage models, proponents of emergent change who adopt the processual approach to studying change draw change processes in cycles and spiral patterns. Weick and Quinn (1999) describe change unfolding in a spiral pattern before entering the maintenance and termination stages. Likewise, researchers like George and Jones (2001), Denis et al. (2001), Hargrave & Van de Ven (2006) describe change unfolding in a cyclical pattern. Figure 2.3 illustrates change as forward and/or backward moving cycles (spiral) that combine elements of both linear and cyclical change.

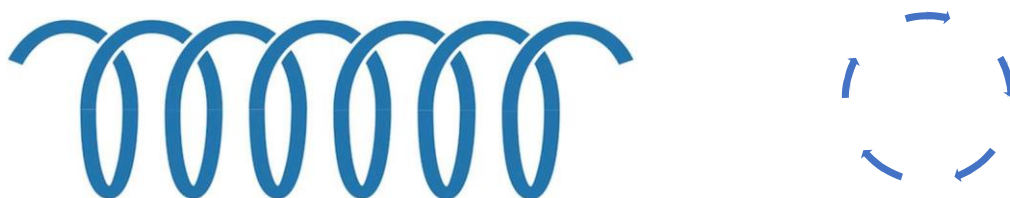


Figure 2.3: A spiral and cyclic nature of change processes

Source: Developed for the study

But, like the planned approach, the emergent approach with its processual strand to change has several criticisms:

1. Although proponents of this approach are against universal rules and steps on managing change, most of them have proposed advice and/or models for successfully managing change like Wilson (1992), Kanter et al. (1992), Pettigrew and Whipp (1993), Dawson (1994) and Kotter (1996).
2. The advice offered on how to manage change is too general and difficult to apply.
3. It is debatable that ‘environmental instability and unpredictability’ are the natural state of affairs and organisations should address these by continuous changes, which emerge from the bottom up and not the top down (Burnes, 2014, p. 39).
4. It is not clear what processual researcher’s view of culture is because some advocate culture change (e.g., Kanter et al., 1992) while others recommend working with the existing culture (Pettigrew, 1997).

5. The processual approach is strong in analysing change and theoretically rigorous but it is weak in practice (Buchanan & Boddy, 1992; Morsing, 1997; Bartunek, 2007 cited in Burnes, 2014). Unlike the planned approach, the emergent approach doesn't possess any specific and practical tools and techniques for its application (Burnes, 2014, p. 393).

The distinctions highlighted between the two major views (planned and emergent) on how change unfolds show the existence of two dichotomies which have contrasting assumptions on how to view and manage change. Both views have advantages and criticisms and neither view is better than the other (Burnes, 2014). The most recent development in this area is the attempts to understand how planned and emergent changes interact (e.g., Livne-Tarandach & Bartunek, 2009; Tavakoli & Perks, 2001). Beer and Nohria (2000) advocate the use of both types of change concurrently after noticing that planned change initiatives can experience unpredictable outcomes that could lead to a loss of order.

Due to the qualitative data-driven nature of the study, the researcher did not take an either-or stance towards planned and emergent change but instead considered linearity and emergence as an outcome that is determined by organisational and environmental factors. See figure 2.4 for an illustration. As Balogun and Hope-Hailey (2008) explained, change is more likely to occur in a linear manner in stable environments and it is likely to be messy in more turbulent situations. Hence, "Neither approach can be effective for all situations and all types of change" (Burnes, 2014, p. 407).

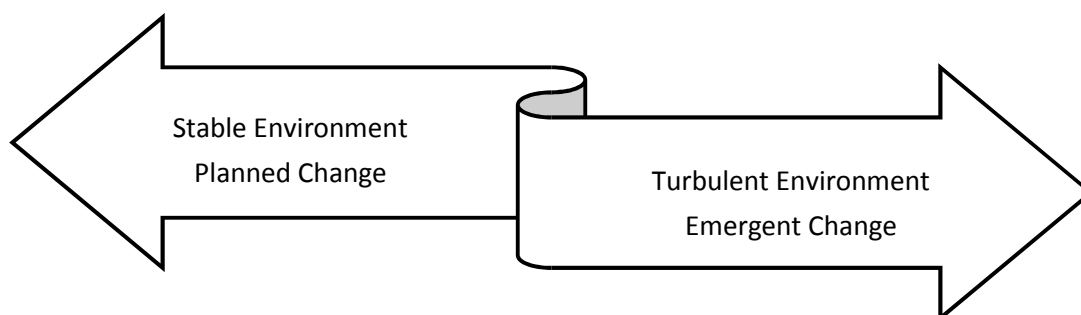


Figure 2.4: Approaches to change and environmental stability

Source: Adapted from Burnes (2014, p. 407)

Hence, this study sees that change can occur in a linear and/or emergent way for two reasons. First, the researcher believes that linearity and emergence are not choices to be imposed by researchers but are rather characteristics determined by the interplay of various factors in the change situation. This reasoning follows that the researcher has the responsibility to explore changes without being influenced or controlled by the assumptions of these two views which meets well with the nature of qualitative research. The second reason for such a stance is that although it is true that the context of GBs in Oman is

changing and undergoing reforms, but it is not as unstable, unpredictable and uncontrollable as the emergent approach assumes. Managers can predict, plan and control change processes. Therefore, assumptions of both planned and emergent view are seen as applicable depending on the specific situation of each case organisation.

After reviewing the two main change ontologies, the two main approaches to studying change and the two main views of how change unfolds, the following section presents an overview of the different theoretical perspectives and approaches in the OC field. It is important to know what perspectives different researchers use to explore, describe and explain OC.

2.4 Organisational Change Theories

It is not easy for a new researcher to grasp all the different theoretical perspectives that researchers use in a fragmented and growing field like OC. However, several researchers over the years offered reviews, syntheses and typologies that organised and discussed the OC literature. These are Starbuck (1965), Child and Keiser (1981), Pettigrew (1985), Van de Ven and Poole (1995), Rajagopalan and Spreitzer (1997), Weick and Quinn (1999), Aldrich (1999) and Huff, Huff and Barr (2000). According to Demers (2007), these researchers offered only brief accounts of the field along with syntheses and typologies reflecting their own perspectives on OC. Demers (2007, p. 6) presented “a comprehensive treatment of the scholarly literature on OC with the purpose of exposing its variety and richness”. The overview presented here is based on the reviews of both Demers (2007) and Poole and Van de Ven (2004) who offered a dense exploration of the most popular theories of change and the emerging theoretical perspectives. According to Demers (2007), themes and theoretical perspectives in the OC literature can be categorised under three time periods. In each time period, change was looked at from a different angle and perspective:

1. Post-World War II to the late 1970s: Change was looked at from outside the organisation. It was seen from an adaption and growth or selection and imitation perspective.
2. After the 1970s sharp increase in global oil prices and the recession to the end of 80s: Change was looked at from above. It was viewed as transformation or major evolution.
3. From the end of the 80s to the 90s and beyond: Change has been looked at from the inside the organisation. It is viewed as natural evolution or social dynamics.

Details of the views and theories of each time period are briefly presented along with a brief summary of the relevant theories.

2.4.1 Organisational Change in the Post-World War II Period - late 1970s:

Adaptation or Selection and Imitation - This is the first period when OC emerged as a field of study. Researchers viewed change as an adaptation to the environment or selection. The main debate that aroused is on whether change happens due to environmental determinism or managerial choice/voluntarism. The main theories are rational adaptation theories, organic adaptation, life cycle, population ecology and neo-institutionalism theories. Figure 2.5 presents a comparison of the theories based on the reviews of Demers (2007) and Poole and Van de Ven (2004). For a detailed comparison of all the theories reviewed, please see appendix 2, 'Comparison of Change Theories'.

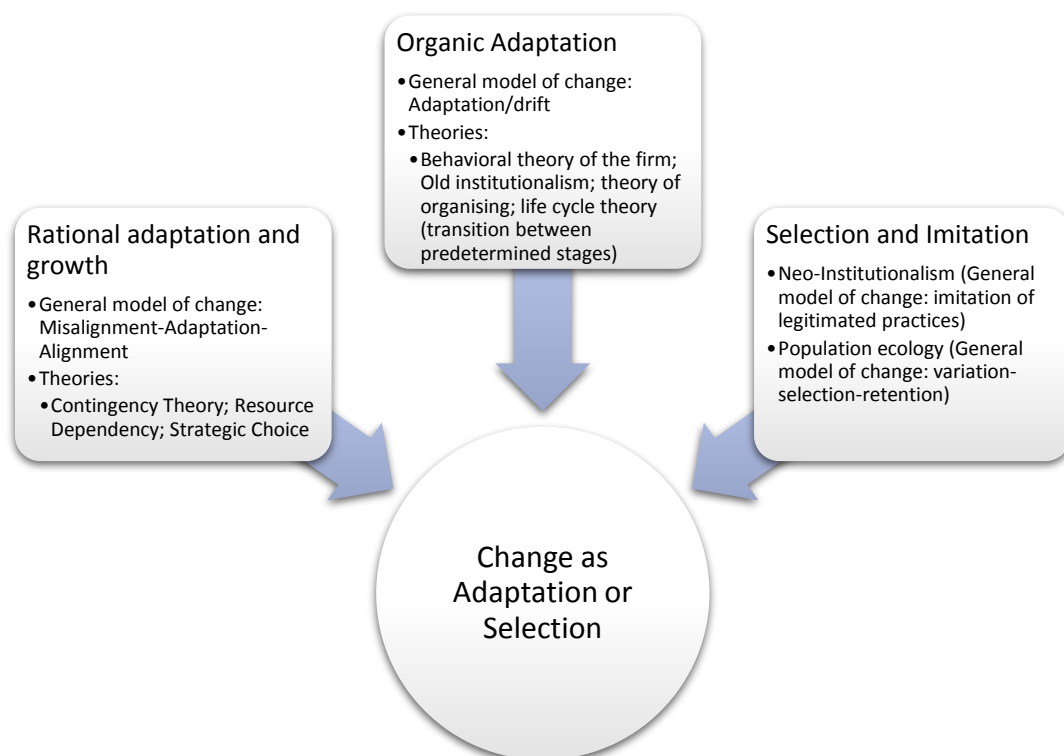


Figure 2.5: Adaptation and selection-imitation theories; Source: Designed for the study based on the reviews of Demers (2007) and Poole and Van de Ven (2004)

All of these theories (see Figure 2.5) view change as an outcome, e.g., a stage of development in life cycle theory, a structural change in contingency theory, a strategic response in resource dependency and a new organisational form in population ecology and neo-institutionalism. The theories focus on what changes rather than how change happens and managers are seen as rational decision makers who respond to changes in the external environment. With the exception of old institutionalist like Selznick (1949) and Child's strategic choice perspective (1972), the remaining theories don't look at the cognitive processes in managers. All in all, change is viewed as "a normal, general positive, and

expansive process, an incremental adjustment designed to maintain equilibrium” (Demers, 2007, p. 47).

2.4.2 Organisational Change after the 1970s Global Oil Crisis and Recession: Transformation or Evolution

In the 80s, unlike the first era, change was viewed as a period of discontinuity and disruption and was described in terms of transformation and revolution rather than incremental or gradual alteration. It was seen as a planned top-down process that is largely in the hands of top managers. Researchers recognised that some changes are revolutionary. Attention was thus given to differentiating incremental and transformational change and to examining the process by which transformational change occurs (Miller & Friesen, 1984; Tushman & Romanelli, 1985). Questions relating to what is changed, the nature of change and how change occurs took the lead in the literature (e.g. Pettigrew, 1985; Van de Ven & Poole, 1988). The concept of change became the focus of attention in the 80s and the emerging streams of research on change started to form a field of study. The dominant model of change at that time was the transformational change and its associated punctuated equilibrium model. Because change was viewed as a planned top-down process, many researchers believed in the influential role of managers in initiating and implementing OC. They asked how much control managers and other organisational members have over change processes. The theoretical approaches used to study change in this period are the configurational approach, the cognitive, the cultural and political approaches. Figure 2.6 presents a summary of the theories and approaches based on Demer’s (2007) analysis.

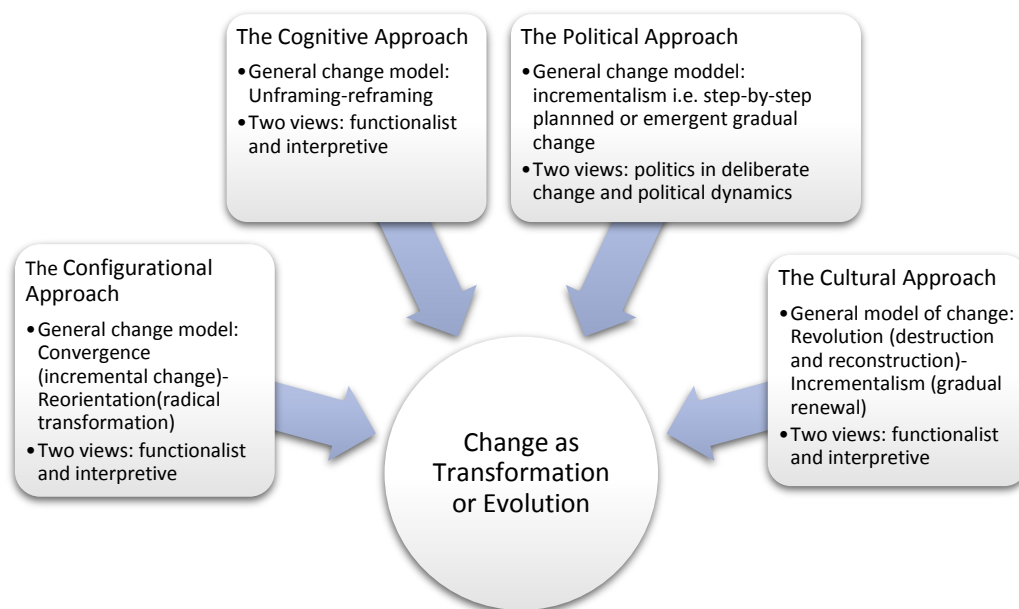
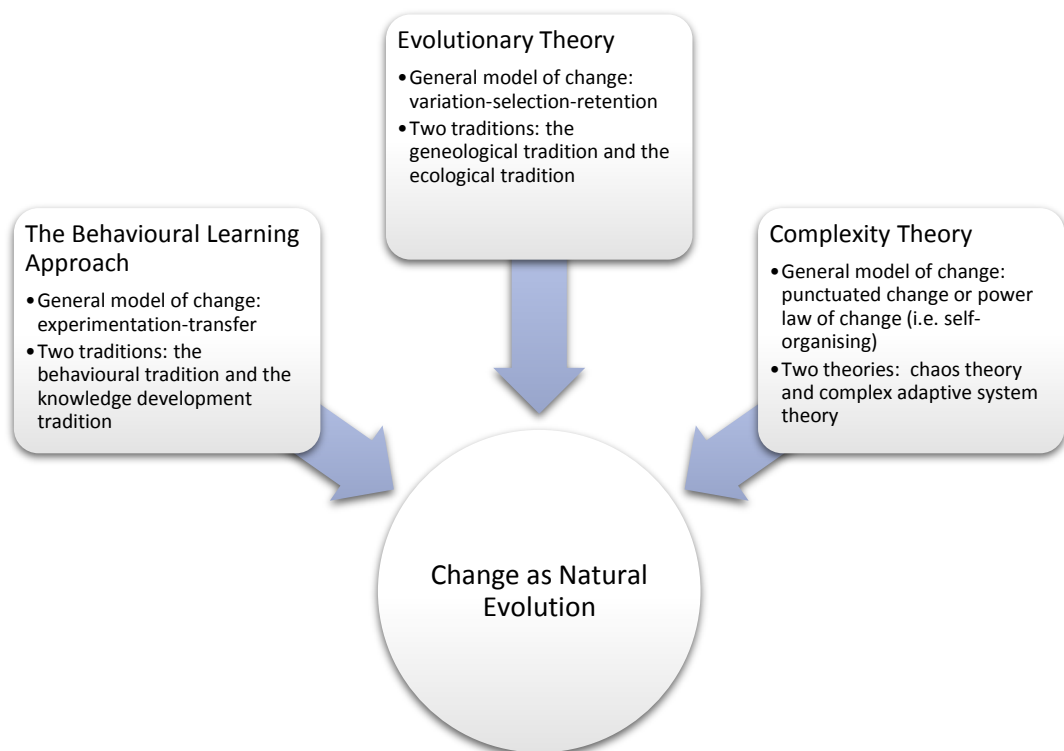


Figure 2.6: Transformation and evolution theories; Source: Designed for the study based on the reviews of Demers (2007) and Poole and Van de Ven (2004)

2.4.3 Organisational Change from the end of the 1980s, through the 90s and beyond: Natura Evolution or Social Dynamics

At the end of the 1980s, a rare and dramatic view of change emerged. Change was no longer viewed as a disruptive period of discontinuity but a process without a clear beginning or end. The field moved from viewing change as a crisis, a temporary disruption to an emergent and never ending indeterminate process. The question is no longer about how to adapt or react to a crisis but rather how to be proactive and continue renewing the organisation. In the 90s, the OC field started fragmenting to many streams. Major topics related to change processes came under their own labels and created their own streams such as learning (Glynn, Lant & Milliken, 1994), innovating (Cheng & Van de Ven, 1996), narrating (Tenkasi & Boland, 1993) and becoming (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), among others. During this period, some convergence, though with confusion emerged. Researchers started sharing terms and frameworks but used them differently. Also, calls for combining theories or some of their concepts emerged too. See figure 2.7 for a summary of the theories and approaches. Further details can be found in appendix 2.



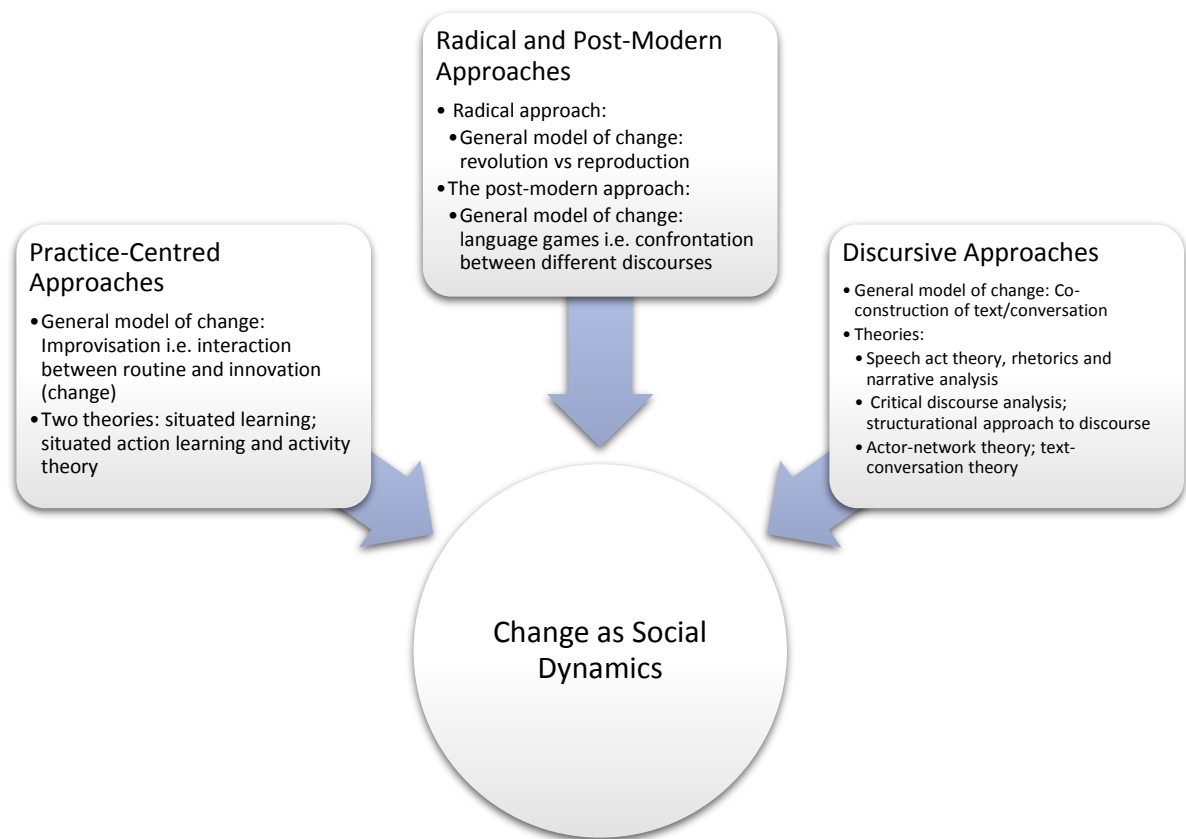


Figure 2.7: Natural evolution and social dynamics theories

Source: Designed for the study based on the reviews of Demers (2007) and Poole and Van de Ven (2004)

The first group of studies is inspired by natural sciences and mathematics. Researchers in this group, mainly Americans, argue that models developed to explain change in biological and physical systems can also be useful for explaining evolution of social systems. The researchers use behavioural learning, evolutionary and complexity approaches to study change.

The second group of work is inspired by social studies and the humanities, a very strong stream in Europe. It sees that social systems are irreducible because they are made up of human beings who are purposeful and reflexive. They believe that it is critical to make sense of events from narratives. These researchers use the radical and post-modern approaches, and the discursive and practice-centred approaches to study organisational change. Their aim is to develop conceptual and theoretical frameworks that help us understand change rather than reduce it to general laws.

After reviewing the popular and most recent OC theories, the next section seeks to understand the most appropriate theoretical perspective to use in exploring, describing and explaining SC processes in GBs of Oman.

2.5 Change in Oman's GBs from the Adaptation and Growth Perspective: A Comparison of Three Rational Adaptation Theories

Faced with depleting oil resources, dwindling oil prices in international markets and decreasing government revenues, the government of Oman had to focus on reducing expenditures and diversifying its sources of income. However, a large percentage of government expenditures goes to funding GBs. These businesses suffer from inefficiency and overspending and despite their concession agreements with the government, they have continued their reliance on government funding for longer than expected. To reduce spending, the government has been pushing its businesses to improve efficiency, professionalise its management, become self-funded, grow and generate more profits for the government so that it can move away from its heavy reliance on oil revenues.

Diversification of sources of income has been a main strategy in Oman's strategic vision since its inception of Oman Vision 2020 and the following Vision 2040. But the strategy gained a sense of urgency due to falling oil prices. In response to the government strategy and growth expectations, CEOs and top managers of GBs felt the urge to meet government expectations and help the economy. The five cases studied demonstrate major structural responses to internal and external changes. The businesses underwent mergers, integrations and major restructurings to improve their efficiency, grow, break even, become self-funded and increase government revenues.

In such a scenario of structural responses and expansions due to changes in the external environment, the most appropriate OC perspective is one of 'adaptation and growth' (Demers, 2007). The general model of change under this perspective is one of misalignment due to new environmental changes and adjustments to achieve alignment. For the case of GBs in Oman, a sudden feeling of misalignment to new demands and expectations was created by the government's emphasis on reducing expenditure and maximising revenues from its profit-oriented businesses. All of a sudden, the CEO's were faced with higher expectations that moved them out of their comfort zone and forced them to reassess the set-up of their businesses and think of ways to reduce spending, grow and generate more income for the national economy. All the changes that happened can be seen in terms of growth and adaptation. The CEOs deliberately adjusted the structures to achieve efficiency and meet the new demands and expectations. The restructurings in GBs of Oman are all seen as part of a response to change in the external environment. This clearly indicates that rational adaptation theories are most appropriate for explaining the cases.

According to Hannan and Freeman (1984), rational adaptation theories are the contingency theory, resource dependency theory and strategic choice. The three theories agree that organisations change in order to adapt and return to stability. They also agree on the

significant role of rational top managers and the outcome of change – a new equilibrium. Hence, these three rational adaption theories are the most appropriate ones to study why GBs undergo strategic changes in Oman. But, which among these is the most appropriate one for exploring the forces, phases and influencers of SC in GBs of Oman? Table 2.4 compares the three theoretical perspectives to help reach to a selection of the right theory among these for the study. The comparison is based on views of three highly respected OC researchers, Poole and Van de Ven (2004) and Burnes (2014) and the comprehensive review of OC theories by Demers (2007). Since the table combines the ideas and words of two sources, Poole and Van de Ven's (2004) ideas are italicised.

Table 2.4: Comparison of three adaptation and growth theories of change

Comparison/Theory	Rational Adaptation Theories		
	Contingency Theory <i>A boundary theory that links the firm to the institutional or competitive environment</i>	Resource Dependency <i>A boundary theory that links the firm to the institutional or competitive environment</i>	Strategic Choice <i>A theory that focuses on the firm</i>
Authors	Burns and Stalker (1961); Lawrence and Lorsch (1969); Thompson (1967); Donaldson (1996)	Pfeffer and Salancik (1978); Oliver (1991); Sherer and Lee (2002)	Child (1972, 1997) <i>Miles and Snow (1978)</i>
General model of change	Misalignment – Adaptation – Alignment Misalignment due to environmental change(s) forces organisations to adapt (i.e. organisational adjustment) to achieve alignment (i.e. return to stability)		
Organisations as ...	Rational, flexible tool; structured system	Rational, flexible tool; black box	Rational, flexible tool; structured system
Unit of Analysis	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Organisation within its environment</i>	<i>Organisation/management</i>
Change agent	Rational top managers		
Determinism/Voluntarism	From constrained managerial voluntarism to "pure" voluntarism		
Central focus	Level of discretion of managers in achieving adaptation <i>Contingency theory: organisational structure-environmental contingency fit; strategy-structure fit; centralisation vs. decentralisation; differentiation of organisational structures and coordination among them</i> <i>Resource dependency: reduction of environmental uncertainty; interfirm relationships; power constellations and interorganisational power relationships</i> <i>Strategic choice: strategic renewal and repositioning; strategic choices of organisations; strategic types (prospector, analyser, defender and reactor)</i>		
Empirical focus	<i>Cross-sectional studies; bivariate contingency constellations; case studies</i>	<i>Explicating enactment of the environment; interlocking directorates; board compositions; most studies cross-sectional</i>	<i>Applications of Miles and Snow's typology; cross-sectional studies; strategic choice vs. determinism</i>
Process of change	Reactive, deliberate, piecemeal, gradual change of strategy and or/structure to achieve functional equilibrium in reaction to change in contingencies	Planned responses to preserve autonomy in the face of environmental constraints, ranging from avoidance to compliance and manipulation	Proactive, deliberate, gradual change aimed at achieving strategic fit by choosing or influencing the environment
Outcome of change	New internal/external equilibrium		

Source: Demers (2007); Poole and Van de Ven (2004)

Based on the comparison, the contingency theory appears to suit the study more than resource dependency and strategic choice. The reasons are elaborated below:

1. This study focuses on reactive structural responses to changes in the environment. This is a focus of the structural contingency theory (Burnes, 2014; Demers, 2007; Poole & Van de Ven, 2004; Donaldson, 2001). The external environment is seen as more powerful and organisations are seen as adapting to the external environment (Donaldson, 1996). The study does not focus on how organisations manage their resource flows and interdependencies (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), or their interfirm relationships and ways of reducing reliance on other firms like in resource dependency studies. Also, the study does not focus on proactive strategic repositions and the different strategic types that managers decide on like in strategic choice studies (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). In fact, none of the cases studied represents a scenario of a real proactive change. Two cases (R1 and M3) where CEOs initiated change were in fact driven by a reactive need to achieve a fit with external and internal contingencies. Therefore, there was no real strategic choice in both cases.
2. Most of the research using contingency theory “looks at the link between environmental variables, organisational variables and strategic change, and the impact of strategic change on performance” (Demers, 2007, p. 10). This study explores what environmental and organisational factors force GBs to undergo SC. It also looks at performance in terms of behavioural and financial outcomes of the firms during and after SC.
3. Several contingency theorists also look at the likelihood of SC based on characteristics of top managers (e.g. Grimm & Smith, 1991; Wiersema & Bantel, 1992), among other studies. Characteristics of decision makers and change agents have emerged as one of the most influential factors in the study. The researcher has linked these characteristics to specific outcomes of SC by using contingency reasoning i.e. by associating specific characteristics of decision makers and change agents to increased likelihood of specific outcomes.
4. The contingency theory argues that the performance of an organisation is dependent on achieving a fit between situational features like forces in the environment and the size of the organisation along with structural features (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969; Khandwalla, 1973). This study has found that the performance of GBs during and after major restructurings depend on achieving a match between certain situational factors and structural features. Hence, this theory is appropriate to explain these associations.

5. This research relies on multiple cases of SC, an approach that is similar to the seminal works of the earliest contingency theorists (i.e. Burns and Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969).

After concluding the appropriateness of the contingency theory for the study, the next chapter presents a detailed discussion of the contingency theory (Donaldson, 1996; 2001). The discussion looks at how the theory contributes to our understanding of OC. It highlights the assumptions and criticism of the theory. Then, each of the major research issues is discussed using the contingency perspective.

The next section presents a review of the OC literature on what makes organisations change. This review will help understand and discuss the findings of the first research question about ‘forces of strategic change’.

2.6 Forces of Change

The first research question of this study investigates what makes organisations change. This question is concerned with the external and internal conditions that can trigger changes. Forces of change are also referred to as antecedents, triggers, causes and drivers of change in the OC literature. The question of what makes organisations change indicates two things. First, change does not occur in isolation, i.e., something triggers it. What is it? Second, when organisations change, they are trying to achieve something. What is it? A general answer for what makes organisations change is that they do so because they are either forced internally or externally or because they have a desire to change. What do they all want to achieve from change? There is one term which embraces all these different reasons for change – ‘organisational effectiveness’ (Burnes, 2014, p. 303).

Since the late 70s, there has been a large body of literature that tries to understand why and how SCs occur in organizations (Rajagopalan & Spreitzer, 1997; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Researchers have offered different findings and theoretical perspectives over the years leading to controversies around issues like adaptation-inertia or environmentalism and voluntarism. But, despite the controversies, most of the empirical studies around forces of change offer mixed results (Zuniga-Lorente & Vicente-Lorente, 2006). For example, several studies confirm that managers are a force of SC (e.g. Barker & Duhaime, 1997; Lant, Milliken & Batra, 1992; Miller, 1993) whereas several others do not support this finding like Boeker (1997) and Sakano and Lewin (1999). There are also different findings around factors like CEO succession, firm size, age and environmental conditions too (Zuniga-Lorente & Vicente-Lorente, 2006). The later researchers report two reasons for these contradictory results around forces of SC– research design and methods (differences

in sample sizes, cross-sectional versus longitudinal designs and data analysis methods) and the theoretical perspectives adopted by the researchers.

However, despite the mixed results around forces of change, decades have passed and leading strategy and management gurus have been talking about the increased pace of change. It has been proved that over the years, there has been an increase in the frequency and magnitude of change initiatives (IBM, 2008). Changes in the external environment have not only been occurring at a faster pace and larger scale but these have also been occurring simultaneously. This complexity and turbulence can be overwhelming to managers because it creates a constant need to be attentive, aware of what's going on in the environment and able to adapt their organisations to environmental changes. In fact, the pace of OC has increased with most organisations changing every year (Prochaska, 2000; Blount & Janicik, 2001; Mohrman & Lawler, 2012).

Hence, it doesn't come as a surprise that the OC literature shows that most organisational changes are triggered from the external environment rather than an internal desire or need to change (Susman, Jansen & Michael, 2006; Nadler, 1983). According to Dawson (2003, p. 15), the change literature has identified a range of external triggers of OC - 'government laws and regulations, globalisation of markets and the internationalisation of business, major political and social events and changing social expectations, advances in technology, organisational growth and expansion and fluctuations in business cycles'. In addition to these, due to increasing competition and uncertainty, organisations also initiate change proactively. Many of these organisations undergo change based on imitation, i.e., following what the successful businesses have done (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983; Thompson, 1967). But like other changes, imitation does not always guarantee success.

Because the external organisational environment is believed to be the most powerful driver of organisational change, today's organisations are expected to have the ability to adapt to the environment (Paton & McCalman, 2008). This ability to change has become an important competency for managers and a competitive advantage for leading organisations (Rigby & Bilodeau, 2011). Due to their importance, increasing numbers of studies are done on change competencies and change capacity. Palmer, Dunford and Buchanan (2017, p. 63), succinctly describe the expectations put upon today's managers in the midst of increasing turbulence: "Managers are expected to stabilise the unstable and destabilise the rigid; adapt to the present and anticipate the future; improve what is and invent what is to be; lead a renaissance while preserving tradition ...".

Besides forces in the external environment, the literature also shows that there are internal forces of change. It is widely believed that changes that are done because of an internal need or desire are done mainly to achieve efficiency (Mohrman & Lawler, 2012). Leavitt's (1964) classic classification of the main internal factors of change still holds true - human resources (people), administrative structures, technology and the history and culture of an organisation can all lead to changes in the organisation. Dawson (2003) explained how the history of an organisation in Leavitt's classification acts as a force of change. He says that organisations will have competing change stories that can get refined, replaced and developed over time and "these change stories may in turn shape, constrain and promote the direction and content of future change programmes" (p. 47). In addition, change stories that are shared to other organisations are taken as learning and can act as a force or facilitator of change.

Away from the internal and external forces, research that looks at forces of SC has focused on three broad areas – industry forces, organisational forces and managerial characteristics (Crossland, Zyung, Hiller & Hambrick, 2014; Rajagopalan & Spreitzer, 1997). Under industry forces, the most famous model is Porter's (1980) five forces model. The model shows competitive forces that together shape intensity of the competition and thus force organisations to change. Porter tried to determine the SCs that managers make in businesses based on an analysis of the external environment. The five forces are threat of new entrants, substitute products or services, the bargaining power of buyers, the bargaining power of suppliers and intensity of competitive rivalry (Porter, 1980). The researcher suggested cost leadership, differentiation, and market segmentation or focus (Porter, 2004) as the three possible strategies that organisations can adopt to deal with the five competitive forces. Besides Porter's five forces model, one of the most popular adaptation theories, the punctuated equilibrium, cites change in regulations and technological innovations as the main external forces that can lead to radical changes (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994). Under organisational forces, the same theory cites change in CEO, product life cycle maturation and below-average financial performance as strong internal forces of change (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994). Under managerial characteristics, several researchers have identified various managerial characteristics that increase the likelihood of SC and facilitate change as well (Alexander, 1985; Govindarajan, 1989; Minnaro-Viseras, Baines & Sweeney, 2005; Harrington, 2006).

Another approach to identify the forces of change in the literature is to look at the assumptions of the different change theories on what makes organisations alter themselves. For example, change can happen due to changes in contingencies like the environment, technology and size of the organisation (contingency theory) or due to uncertainty in resource interdependencies (resource dependency). Change can happen simply because of

the CEO's choice (strategic choice) or because of political bargaining (behavioural theory of the firm). Natural evolution of a business over time (life cycle theory), coercion to adopt institutionalised practices (neo-institutionalism) and unlearning and learning (behavioural learning theories) can all cause change too. Radical or gradual changes in culture (culture theories), negotiation and competition among political groups (political theories), chaos and self-organisation (complexity theory) and changing stories (speech act theory) can also act as forces of change.

Overall, SC can be triggered internally or externally. Also, SC can be reactive like what Tushman and Anderson (1986) and Romanelli and Tushman (1994) believe or proactive and predictable like what Gersick (1988, 1989) argued.

Regardless of the source of change, this study views organisations as open-systems residing in the larger external environment. The view is in line with Stickland's (1998, p. 14) succinct explanation, "Systems exist within a hierarchy of other systems. They contain subsystems and exist within some wider system. All are interconnected". Hence, even after change is initiated, "both external and internal factors link and overlap in determining the speed, direction and outcomes of change" (Dawson, 2003, p. 16).

The next section looks at how change processes unfold. This is a crucial area to review because this study explores five processes of strategic change.

2.7 Change Implementation

One of the questions in this study is concerned with exploring how SC processes unfold. Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. xi) said,

"Change can take many forms; it can be planned or unplanned, incremental or radical, and recurrent or unprecedented. Trends in the process or sequence of changes can be observed over time. These trends can be accelerating or decelerating in time, and they can move toward equilibrium, oscillation, chaos, or randomness in the behaviour of the organisational entity being examine".

A question on how change unfolds is closely entwined with how change is implemented. SC implementation or also known as strategy implementation is one of the stages of the strategic management process (Certo & Peter, 1988). The dominant view in the literature sees strategy implementation a separate phase that comes after strategy formulation (Guth & MacMillan, 1986). But an increasing number of researchers have criticised this view and recommend seeing planning and implementation as an ongoing inter-related process (Mintzberg, 1990; Atkinson, 2006). After reviewing a host of definitions in the literature,

Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008) defined strategy implementation as a:

“dynamic, iterative and complex process, which is comprised of a series of decisions and activities by managers and employees – affected by a number of interrelated internal and external factors – to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic objectives”.

Strategy and change researchers view strategy implementation from three different perspectives - process, behavioural and hybrid perspectives (Li et al., 2008). The process perspective sees strategy implementation as a sequence of planned steps, the behavioural perspective sees implementation as a series of actions and the hybrid perspective combines both. Tsoukas and Chia (2002) argued that to understand how change is accomplished, “change must be approached from within” (p. 572). Also, several other pioneering researchers in the OC and strategy fields argue that the most appropriate way to conduct a comprehensive investigation of SC is from a contextual and process perspective (Pettigrew, 1985; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995; Dawson, 2003). “By studying strategic change from a process perspective, the change antecedents, the process dynamics, the contextual factors and their influence on each other are all uncovered (Pettigrew et al., 2001). Such an approach will uncover the stages of change and increase our understanding of how change unfolds (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). Increasing our understanding of how change unfolds can help increase success in future change processes.

Many studies have emphasised the importance of strategy implementation (Eisenhardt, 1989; Porter, 1996; Gadiesh & Gilbert, 2001) but only limited and fragmented studies exist in this area (Thompson & Stickland, 1986; Morgan, Hanley, McMahon & Barer, 2007; Li et al., 2008). Within these, most studies are prescriptive and lack a theory (MacLennan, 2011). In the Arab Middle Eastern region, there is an astounding absence of process studies of change. It doesn't surprise one then to know that there is no localised context-specific knowledge on how to implement SC in the region (Angehrn, Schloderer & Cheak, 2008).

The reason why only limited studies exist in the area of strategy implementation worldwide could be due to the nature of SC and the challenges of studying SC processes. SC is a “context-dependent, unpredictable and non-linear process” (Balugon & Johnson, 2005, p. 1573). The way it unfolds is complex and difficult to understand, describe and manage (Kanter, 1983; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Also, the process data collected to study SC are messy and understanding them is a constant challenge for researchers (Langley, 1999, p. 691). Consequently, investigating and theorising these change processes is a challenging task.

But how do organisations implement SC? The literature shows that there are three main implementation approaches for SCs - the top-down, bottom-up and the continuous improvement approach:

1. Top-down strategy implementation

This is a common approach where planning is centralised at the top level and then parts of the plan are delegated to others for implementation (Nutt, 1986). Change is imposed on others in the organisation (Speculand, 2014). Many use structure, rewards, culture and other controls to help in the implementation of this approach (Ali & Hadi, 2012; Alexander, 1989; Miller, 1997). But, the approach leads to many problems. Lack of employee involvement in formulating the strategy and in implementation leads to objections and delays (Rajasekar, 2014; Guth & MacMillan, 1986) which can affect the performance of the organisation (Van der Mass, 2008). Successful implementation requires employees' support and this comes from involvement.

2. Bottom-up implementation

This is a participative approach for strategy implementation. It increases commitment and motivation (Reid, 1989). It is known that failure happens due to lack of employee involvement in planning (Alexander, 1989). When top managers involve other subordinate managers from all levels and non-managers too, the interactions and exchange of information leads to aligning employees' and organisational goals (Guth & MacMillan, 1986). But studies have shown that "it only really works if the change leaders are committed to the process and involved in it actively" (Banyard, 2016, p. 230). Involving employees helps identify mistakes in the new plans that are designed by top managers (Al-Kandi, Asutay & Dixon, 2013; Brenes, Mena & Molina, 2008; Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). Researchers argue that employees who will be affected by the SC should be involved in formulating the strategy (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1984) and they should be made aware that their participation is needed and appreciated (Reid, 1989). The approach requires more than listening, as Banyard (2016, p. 231) explains:

"But the inclusive approach requires effort, and it has to be sincere ... you can't just go through the motions of listening ... you have to be prepared to respond to them and that means at times adopting their suggestions – which may not be what you originally had in mind"

3. Continuous improvement

In this approach, organisations seek to continuously improve themselves. It involves two-way communication and is time-consuming because it requires regular reviews and adaptations (Delisle, 2015). Top managers put the big plans and then all employees are involved in adapting these (Watson, 2000). Although it

is time-consuming, organisations are more likely to succeed with continuous improvement (Hrebiniak, 2013).

Which of these approaches do GBs of Oman follow? Some researchers have long reported that in the Arab world, change is centrally controlled and implemented using a top-down approach (Rees & Althakri, 2008; Cummings & Worley, 2001 among others). This is in line with the general agreement among researchers that Arab managers are authoritarian (Branine & Pollard, 2010; Kaynak, 1986). But, other researchers like Ali (1990) and Muna (1980) previously emphasised that Arab managers are very consultative. No study has looked if large-scale change processes in Oman follow a top-down approach or some form of a bottom-up pattern like the Shura (consultative) style which is one of the strong features of the Omani culture (Almoharby, 2010; Jones & Ridout 2013; Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016). In Management terms, Shura is similar to participative and consultative styles. It is “negotiation and dialogue to reveal what is right ... it is to listen to different opinions and deduce suitable solutions” (Hammoudeh, 2016, p. 6). Islam orders its followers to use Shura, Prophet Muhammed used this style and this has been Oman’s decision-making style for centuries including that which is followed by the current Sultan of Oman. As such, it is assumed that Shura – a consultative participative approach is the preferred way among Omanis. To find out, we need to use the process approach to explore. The next section looks at the main approaches that researchers use in process studies.

2.8 Process Studies of Change: Main Approaches

There are different types of change studies that follow the process approach (Van de Ven, 1992; Langley, 1999; Poole et al., 2000; Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas & Van de Ven, 2013). According to Van de Ven (2004, p. 12), these studies can be categorised to four main approaches that range from highly interpretive to quantitative (see Figure 2.8).

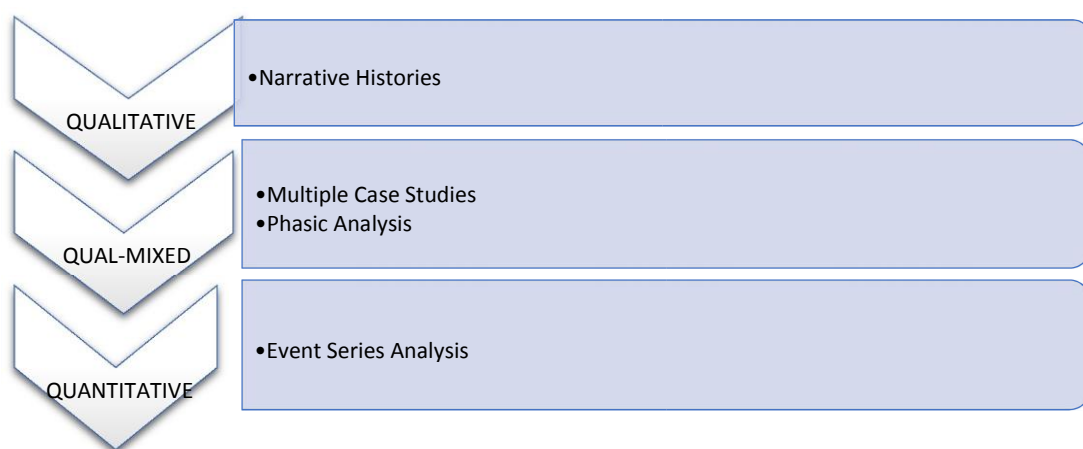


Figure 2.8: Four main research designs and methods in process studies
Source: Developed for the study from Van de Ven (2004, p. 12).

1. Narrative histories

These studies tell a detailed story. The stories are rich with multiple themes. Examples of the most influential works that followed this approach to studying processes are Chandler (1964), Bartunek (1984) and Pettigrew (1985). Thick in-depth descriptions make deriving parsimonious theories quite challenging (Langley, 1999).

2. Multiple case study

This approach is quite focused. It compares and contrasts a small number of cases for literal or theoretical replication. Detailed qualitative analysis is done and rich accounts are written but these are not as detailed as the narrative histories. Researchers use a variety of methods to summarise and display case findings like visual mapping (Quinn, 1980; Langley & Truax, 1994; Van de Ven & Grazman, 1999) and matrix displays (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Kuhn & Poole, 2000). The most influential work that followed this approach was done by Leonard-Barton (1990). This study follows the multiple case study approach.

3. Phasic analysis

Studying processes in terms of the sequence of phases or stages (e.g. Fisher 1970; Poole, 1981; Langley & Truax, 1994) is an established research tradition since the times of Lewin. Researchers following this approach identify the phases of a process and their sequence (e.g. Poole, 1983; Saberwhal & Robbey, 1993). There are different qualitative and quantitative methods that help identify phases and the sequence of events (Poole et al., 2000).

4. Event series analysis

This is a quantitative approach to studying processes. Researchers use quantitative methods like Markov analysis and multivariate time series techniques and either large samples or one or two cases with a large number of events and analyse the event series in detail (Van de Ven & Poole, 2004). Studying processes quantitatively adds rigor to the study of processes.

Therefore, process studies range from highly interpretive to quantitative studies and majority of these studies derive theory from observation and in some cases, they test hypothesised models of the change process (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). According to Langley et al. (2013), a good deal of process studies adopts qualitative or ethnographic methodologies and there is a need for more quantitative methods for event and sequence analysis in elaborating process understandings. In terms of data collection, the main source for several process studies is longitudinal archival data (Langley et al., 2013) and other

common approaches and research methods like ethnographic studies, observations and interviews (Maxwell, 2009).

This research studies change from within (i.e. the experiences of managers and non-managers) and follows Pettigrew's (1985, 1997) contextual process approach in exploring how multiple SC processes are implemented and unfold. The study aims at understanding the inner workings of SC processes in five different GBs with a focus on the context as an integral part of the process. The researcher pursued a purely qualitative multiple case study design using in-depth data from semi-structured interviews and documents. Change was viewed as a process with phases and the researcher had to identify the phases over time from major events based on narratives of change agents and recipients and develop a process framework of change. There are many advantages to this approach. Miles and Huberman (1994) argued how this approach can provide credible accounts of processes:

“qualitative analysis with its close-up look, can identify mechanisms, going beyond sheer association. It is unrelentingly local, and deals well with the complex network of events and processes in a situation (p. 147) ... if you've done it right, you will have respected the complexity of local causality as it has played over time and successfully combined 'process' and 'variable' analysis (p. 160)”

Insights generated from the study can help change managers and policy makers in Oman plan and manage SC processes in a more informed and confident way. Besides uncovering the sequence of events and learning how change unfolds, it is important to find out what factors in the change context can facilitate and inhibit change processes.

2.9 Contextual Factors Influencing SC Implementation

In general, discussions around what influences OC of all types and in particular SC increased with the debates between environmental determinism and choice, i.e. between Child's (1972) strategic choice and Hannan and Freeman (1977) population ecology view. Since these researchers began their debates, a variety of assumptions have been made about the ease or difficulty of change and the likely outcomes (e.g., Hannan & Freeman, 1984; Tushman & Romanelli, 1985; Zammuto & Cameron, 1985). More recently, researchers have identified a number of situational factors that can facilitate or inhibit change efforts. These have different names in the literature. They are called critical success factors, change enablers, change drivers, change facilitators and change barriers or inhibitors. Despite the different labels, these are all names for situational factors that can make change easy or difficult and thus increase chances of success or failure. Before looking at what researchers have identified as change influencers, it is important to identify what proponents of the planned and emergent approaches stress on. According to Burnes (2014), planned change researchers believe that the underlying assumptions and values of the OD approach can help facilitate change, i.e. empowering employees, open communication, facilitating

ownership of the process, promoting a culture of collaboration and continuous learning. Burnes states that although proponents of the emergent approach reject offering recipe-like guidelines, researchers stress on five key organisational features that can promote or impede organisational change: organisational structure, culture and learning, managerial behaviour and power and politics (2014, p. 10).

Researchers in the OC and strategy literatures in general identified several change influencers. For example, Minnaro-Viseras et al. (2005) identified 36 factors and categorised them into people, organisation, and systems related factors. Balogun and Hope-Hailey (2008) identified eight features that influence change initiatives. These are time, scope, readiness, power, capability, capacity, preservation and diversity. The researchers said that these features can be found in the external environment and within organisations at the organizational, team and individual level. Several other researchers reported barriers to change like Sloyan and Ludema (2010), Ford and Ford (2009) and Bartunek (1993).

There is an agreement among researchers that top managers should have an understanding of the contextual factors that can enable and constrain change implementation. But as Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. 108) explained, the degree to which managers can do this varies depending on a host of factors within the individuals:

“managers and individuals vary greatly in their information processing and decision making due to social cognition, selective perception, managerial construction of the environment, individual traits, judgment and decision-making biases, escalation of commitment and contextual interaction outcomes”

One of the most recent comprehensive reviews on factors that influence SC implementation was done by Li et al. (2008). The researchers reviewed the literature during a 24 years period on the most frequently cited change influencers. They found that nine factors were most frequently cited under the broad categories of soft, hard and mixed factors. The first set of factors are soft factors (i.e. people-related) and these include managers and employees, communication, implementation tactics, consensus and commitment. A descriptive summary of the most common soft factors that influence SC are in table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Commonly cited soft factors that influence the implementation of SC

#	Type of Soft Category	Researchers
1	<p>Strategy executors/change managers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and capabilities:</p> <p>Researchers found that top, middle and lower-level managers' knowledge, skills and attitudes have a strong influence on the implementation process. Fewer studies exist on the influence of lower-level managers and non-managers</p>	<p>Alexander (1985); Govindarajan (1989); Peng and Litteljohn (2001); Minnaro-Viseras et al. (2005); Harrington (2006).</p> <p>Top managers: Hrebiniak and Snow (1982); Smith and Kofron, (1996); Schmidt and Brauer (2006); Schaap (2006)</p> <p>Middle managers: Gupta and Govindarajan (1984); Guth and MacMillan (1986); Govindarajan (1989); Judge and Stahl (1995); Waldersee and Sheather (1996); Wooldridge and Floyd (1997); Heracleous (2000)</p> <p>Fewer studies on lower-level managers and nonmanagers: Gronroos (1985); Alexander (1985); Noble (1999)</p>
2	<p>Communication, commitment and coordination:</p> <p>Researchers found that these were the most frequently mentioned in the literature and that communication is linked to people issues and change failure</p>	<p>Alexander (1985); Rapert and Wren (1998); Noble (1999); Peng and Litteljohn (2001); Heide et al. (2002); Rapert et al. (2002); Forman and Argenti (2005); Schaap (2006)</p>
3	<p>Consensus:</p> <p>Researchers emphasised the importance of consensus on implementing SC; it can be increased by increasing understanding and commitment</p>	<p>Nielsen (1983); Floyd and Wooldridge (1992a); Dess and Priem (1995); Rapert et al. (1996); Noble (1999); Dooley et al. (2000)</p>
4	<p>Commitment to change:</p> <p>Many studies highlighted the strong influence commitment has on the implementation process</p>	<p>Alexander (1985); Guth and MacMillan (1986); Rapert et al. (1996); Noble and Mokwa (1999)</p>
5	<p>Implementation tactics:</p> <p>Many studies related the impact implementation tactics have on change processes</p>	<p>Nutt (1989); Bourgeois III and Brodwin (1984); Lehner (2004); Sashittal and Wilemon (1996); Akan et al. (2006)</p>
6	<p>Learning, training and development:</p> <p>Researchers argued that training and developing is an essential part of any SC process and is one of the top factors in implementing SC</p>	<p>Alexander (1985); Heide et al. (2002)</p>

Source: Li et al. (2008)

The second set of most cited factors that influence strategy implementation are hard factors (i.e. institutional) and these consisted of structure and other administrative systems. Table 2.6 provides an overview of the factors involved.

Table 2.6: Most commonly cited hard factors that influence the implementation of SC

#	Type of Hard Factors	Researchers
1	Organizational structure and power structure: Researchers found that structure is one of the most influential factor when implementing SC.	Heide et al. (2002); David (2007); Drazin & Howard, (1984); Gupta, (1987); Noble, (1999); Olson et al. (2005) Minnaro-Viseras et al. (2005); Schaap, (2006); Hrebiniak, (2006)
2	Administrative and control systems	Drazin and Howard, (1984); Govindarajan, (1988); Govindarajan and Fisher, (1990); Roth et al. (1991); Nilsson and Rapp, (1999); Minnaro-Viseras et al. (2005); Schaap, (2006).
3	The external environment: Researchers found that factors in the external environment that are beyond the control of the organisation influence the implementation of SC like factors in the political and societal culture	Alexander, (1985); Wernham, (1985), Mintzberg and Quinn, (1991); Heide et al. (2002); Heracleous, (2000); Heide et al. (2002); Schaap, (2006).
4	Availability of resources: Researchers found that without the needed tangible resources, implementing SC can be next to impossible	Alexander, (1985); Wernham, (1985); Heide et al. (2002)
5	Firms size and market orientation	Harrington, (2006); Homburg et al. (2004).

Source: Li et al. (2008)

The third and last set of most cited influential factors that Li et al. (2008) identified in their extensive review are mixed factors. These factors combine both the hard and soft factors and include planning and relationships among work groups (i.e. divisions, departments and units).

Table 2.7 Most commonly cited mixed factors that influence strategy implementation

#	Type of Mixed Factors	Researchers
1	How the strategy was developed i.e. strategy formulation/planning and the kind of implementation plans and guidelines	Alexander, (1985); Kim and Mauborgne, (1991), (1993); Singh, (1998); Hrebiniak, (2006); Allio, (2005); Govindarajan and Fisher, (1990)
2	Relationships among work groups	Walker and Ruekert, (1987); Gupta, (1987); Slater and Olson, (2001); Chimhanzi, (2004); Chimhanzi & Morgan, (2005)
3	People management and leadership: Researchers argued that these are one of the top influential factors and if a strategy ignores these factors, they can face very high resistance during implementation	Alexander, (1985); Heide et al. (2002).

Source: Li et al. (2008)

After presenting the most cited factors in the OC and strategy literatures on what influences change initiatives, we now turn to what factors influence SC implementation in GBs of Oman, the neighbouring countries or even the larger Arab Middle Eastern region. There are limited studies that explore change influencers in these countries. The few studies that exist report that religion, cultural values, top managers, consultants, the weather and the new generations of young Arab employees who are aware of their collective power are some of the main factors.

One of the most recent works in this area is a conference paper by Alharthy, McLaughlin and Rashid (2016). The researchers said that there are many major change projects in the Arab Middle Eastern region that were delayed or cost far more than expected or failed and got cancelled because change agents and managers did not take into consideration the contextual factors that influence strategy formulation and strategy implementation. The researchers argued that religion, cultural values and the weather are three of the most influential factors in planning and implementing strategies. They also said that there are many cases of western companies that failed initially in implementing changes in Arab Middle Eastern markets because they didn't consider these contextual factors in their planning and implementation.

The researchers cited that religion is a very sensitive and influential factor in change implementation in the Arab Middle Eastern region (Alharthy et al., 2016). They clarified the influential role of religion with an example - "If the organisation were to produce a [new] product, it has to be approved by the religion [i.e. religious authorities]". This is similar to what Weir (2001) said on innovations in the Arab world - managers have to "consider the social context of the market rather than only the application of the laws of supply and demand". The influential role of religion on change implementation was also demonstrated in a study on a large Saudi organisation that facilitated change using a religious discourse (Sidani & Showail, 2013). Similarly, Ali (1996) urged that that Islamic values can facilitate the implementation of OC in the Arab world. Moreover, when concluding their contextual exploration of HRM in Oman, Al Jahwari & Budhwar (2016) suggested that "when attempting to transform their HR functions, organisations [in Oman] might want to consider grounding and justifying their existing or new policies and practices using Islamic principles" (p. 113). The researchers gave an example of how the Omani private sector has been combating nepotism and Wasta. They said that despite these practices being a strong component of the local culture - "This change against Wasta and nepotism could not be resisted as the ethics of the new HR practices were clearly aligned to Islamic values" (p. 113). The researchers concluded that

"Change in people management practices and behaviour via a well-designed Islamic discourse is more likely to gain the acceptance, commitment and support needed [in Oman] due to the strong influence of Islam and the high trust Muslims have in verses and stories from the Quran and Sunnah (Al-Kandari & Gaither, 2011; Sidani & Thornberry, 2013)".

Besides religion, cultural values also play an influential role in implementing changes in the Arab Middle East region. Culture, among other factors, determines behaviour. Hence, managerial styles and people's reactions to change can be determined and explained by

culture to some extent. “When we talk about common culture and management behaviour, attitudes and standards which are based on a recognised pattern of belief, it is seldom recognised in management textbooks that the largest single community of believers in an immanent deity is that comprised by Islam” (Weir, 2001, p. 3).

Researcher’s urged that “western managerial theories and practices should not be applied without adapting them to fit the norms and traditions popular in Arab countries” (Obeidat, Shannak, Masa’deh & Al-Jarrah, 2012, p. 519). According Weir (2001), ‘Arab countries fall half way between the extreme positions in Hofstede studies (1980). They are midway between individualism and collectivism, in the middle on uncertainty avoidance, they are moderately masculine and strong in their emphasis on kinship and interpersonal networks’ (p. 15). So, how do these affect change management and employee’s reaction to change? Although the general thinking in the literature is that Arab Middle Eastern managers follow an autocratic or consultative style, the diverse management practices and styles reported by various Arab researchers like Muna (1980), Younis (1993) and Attiyah (1993) among others prove that Arab managers use a variety of management styles based on the situation (Weir, 2001).

Besides the influence of culture on change initiatives, Alharthy et al. (2016) also urge that the extreme hot weather in the Arab Gulf region if not taken into consideration while planning and implementing strategy can result in delays and/or failures. As trivial as this factor might first appear, the immense impact of weather on strategy implementation was evident during 2007 when a major cyclone struck Oman. The cyclone caused major damages to the capital city and paralysed businesses for weeks. A new multi-billion Omani Riyals airport project was undergoing construction but the weather devastated it and caused major changes in the plans and delays. The delays caused financial losses and resignations among staff in the airport management company that had undergone a major restructuring, hired new staff and trained them to operate the new airport. Like other researchers in the strategy and change literature, Alharthy et al. (2016) emphasised that:

“successful implementation requires a better understanding of these factors. But, unfortunately, the existing literature does not provide a rigorous and structured conceptualization of these factors ... nor is their influence on strategy implementation precisely explored ... the literature does not offer a comprehensive framework of these factors”.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the change literature and clarified the position of the study within it. Various types of change and theoretical perspectives were discussed relevant to the research questions of the study. Table 2.8 provides a summary framework of the reviewed concepts and shows the position of the study in each.

More than ten years back, Poole and Van de Ven (2004) said, “Thousands of studies have been conducted on change processes in individuals and groups, and in organisations and populations or communities of organisations ... Though impressive, the sheer volume of research is also daunting. It is difficult to get the big picture.” (p. xii). This is still the case. There are still no generally agreed upon frameworks in the OC literature.

When it comes to managing change in the Arab world or the Arab Middle Eastern region, there are very limited studies on the phenomenon and an absence of localised context-specific knowledge on what works and what doesn’t despite the major change initiatives that are being implemented in core government assets of the region.

The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study. It discusses the contingency theory and shows how the three main issues of the study - forces, process and influencers of SC can be explained using the contingency lens.

See table 2.8 in the next two pages for a summary of all the concepts reviewed in this chapter in relation to the main research questions.

Table 2.8: Summary framework of reviewed concepts and position of the study

Section	Concepts Reviewed	Position of the Study
2.1	Types of OC: The OC literature categorises change into different typologies, models, orders and continuums. However, all of these can be broadly viewed under Weick and Quinn's (1999) distinction of episodic and continuous change.	This study explores SC, a type of change that affects the whole organisation. SC is similar to revolutionary, transformational and episodic change (Weick & Quinn, 1999; Rajagopalan & Rasheed, 1995).
2.2	Ontologies and approaches to studying OC: Researchers have two different views on the nature of change (change is an entity or change is a process) and thus look at it from two different perspectives (Higgs & Rowland, 2005). This has led to studying OC in two different approaches, the variance approach and the process approach (Mohr, 1982; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). The variance approach focuses on identifying regularities and causalities and has close affinity to statistics. The process approach describes and explains sequence of events and the contextual and temporal factor that affect the process and its outcomes (Pettigrew, 1985).	This study views SC as a process and seeks to explore, describe and explain the sequence of events and identify the contextual factors that influence the process and its outcomes. It follows Pettigrew's (1985; 1997) process approach to studying OC.
2.3	Planned and emergent change: The OC literature has two main views on how change unfolds and how it can be managed – planned and emergent change. The planned change view sees OC as unfolding in a rational and linear manner and believes that managers can predict, plan, implement and control change. The emergent change view sees change as unfolding in a complex, bottom-up, non-linear and messy way. This view believes that change cannot be managed using planned staged models (Weick, 2000; Pettigrew, 2000). Proponents of this view 'tend to adopt a contingency perspective' (Burnes, 2014).	This study has not taken an either-or stance towards planned and emergent change because the researcher believes that linearity and emergence are not choices to be imposed by the researcher but are rather characteristics determined by the situation. This is similar to the stance of Balogun and Hope-Hailey (2008) and Burnes (2014, p. 407) who said, "neither approach can be effective for all situations and all types of change".
2.4-2.5	Theoretical perspectives in OC: The OC literature has many theories and perspectives. There are reviews, syntheses and typologies that organise and discuss the OC literature (e.g. Child & Keiser, 1981; Pettigrew, 1985; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995; Huff, Huff & Bar, 2000 among others). But according to Demers (2007), these are brief accounts and reflect the researchers' perspectives on change. This study looked at 24 theoretical perspectives used in the OC literature based on the reviews of Demers (2007) and Poole and Van de Ven (2004). See the tables in section 2.4.	This study looks at OC from a rational adaptation and growth perspective. The perspective consists of three theories: contingency, resource dependency and strategic choice (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). The contingency theory (Donaldson, 1996; 2001) was seen as the most appropriate to explore multiple cases of SC in GBs of Oman for several reasons. See table 2.4 for details and appendices 2 and 3.
2.6	Forces of OC: Most of the studies on forces of change offer mixed results due to differences in research designs and methods (Zuniga-lorente & Vicente-lorente, 2006). The focus has been on three broad areas- industry, organisational and managerial forces (Crossland et al., 2014). Despite the mixed results, there is increasing evidence that the pace and magnitude of change are increasing mainly due to external changes.	This study explores forces of SC in GBs of Oman. It looked at both internal and external forces.

Source: Created for the study from the literature review

Table 2.8: Continued

Section	Concepts Reviewed	Position of the study
2.7	<p>Change implementation</p> <p>SC implementation is one of the stages of the strategic management process (Certo & Peter, 1988). Strategy and OC researchers view strategy implementation from the process, behavioural and hybrid perspectives (Li et al., 2008). Many researchers in the Strategy and OC fields argue that the most appropriate way to conduct a comprehensive investigation of SC is from a contextual and process perspective (Pettigrew, 1985; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995; Dawson, 2003; Nutt, 2003). Limited studies exist in this area and they are prescriptive and lack a theory. The literature shows that there are three main approaches to implementing SC – the top-down, bottom-up and the continuous improvement approach.</p>	<p>This study set out to explore how SC is implemented in Oman without any assumptions although there is evidence that a more consultative participative approach could be the preferred approach in Oman. This is because Shura is a unique component of the Omani culture and Islam orders its followers to use a consultative participative approach. Studies have reported conflicting views on how change is implemented in the Arab world. Researchers in the past had emphasised that Arab managers are very consultative (Muna, 1980; Ali, 1990). But some researchers have reported that a top-down approach is followed in the Arab world (Rees & Althakri, 2008; Cummings & Worley, 2001). The later supports the finding that Arab managers are authoritarian (Branine & Polard, 2010).</p>
2.8	<p>Process studies of change: Main approaches</p> <p>The literature shows that there are four main approaches to study change processes ranging from highly interpretive to quantitative – narrative histories (qualitative), multiple case studies and phasic analysis (qualitative and mixed methods) and event series analysis (quantitative) (Van de ven, 2004)</p>	<p>This study followed a purely qualitative approach using multiple cases to understand the what, how and why of SC processes in GBs of Oman. Data was analysed from semi-structured interviews and some documents. Pettigrew's (1985, 1997) contextual approach was used to explore SC processes</p>
2.9	<p>Contextual factors influencing SC implementation</p> <p>The literature reports several factors that influence SC (Bartunek, 1993; Minnaro-Viseras et al., 2005; Ford & Ford, 2009; Sloyan and Ludena, 2010; Sidani & Showail, 2013; Alharthy et al., 2016). One of the most recent comprehensive reviews was done by Li et al. (2008). The researchers found several soft, hard and mixed factors.</p>	<p>This study did not assume that specific factors influence SC processes in GBs of Oman. It set out to explore all the external and internal forces, facilitators and inhibitors of the change processes investigated.</p>

Source: Created for the study from the literature review

Chapter 3 - The Contingency Theory

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. First, the key concepts of the study are defined to give specificity and direction. Then the topic of SC in GBs of Oman is revisited from an adaptation and growth perspective. After that the contingency theory is discussed and the main assumptions and criticism of the theory are presented. This is followed by a presentation on the role of human agency, level of analysis and time in the contingency approach. Next, the three research issues of the study - forces, process and influencers of SC are discussed from a contingency perspective. The chapter ends with a summary.

3.1 Key Concepts of the Study: Forces, Phases and Influencers of SC Processes

This section begins with a reminder of the research problem and questions and draws from them the key concepts that make up the theoretical framework of the study. The section offers definitions of the key concepts related to each research question to help give direction and provide scientific justification for the study.

3.1.1 The Research Problem

Due to its aim to reduce reliance on its decreasing oil revenues, the government of Oman has been diversifying its sources of income and seeking increasing contributions from its GBs. It has been encouraging its businesses to improve their efficiency (i.e. stop overspending), break-even and become self-funded, grow and maximise their contribution to the economy (Oman Visions 2020 and 2040). Despite the number of large-scale changes that have occurred in several GBs and others in the pipeline, there is no body of knowledge that looks at what specific factors make these businesses undergo SCs, how they change and what enables and inhibits their change processes.

Without this knowledge, GBs will continue to rely on international consultants who use change models that worked elsewhere. This approach to planning and managing large-scale change can lead to failure because there is no-one best way to changing and managing OC. Each organisation will require an approach that suits its specific context. A need therefore arises to develop an understanding of how the phenomenon emerges in its context (Pettigrew 1985, 1997; Poole & Van de Ven 2004) and generate guidelines that are grounded in practice rather than follow abstract, aprocessual and acontextual models that don't guarantee success. Such a knowledge can have high impact as it will make change agents act in a more informed and confident way, avoid obstacles that can be predicted and

help GBs improve their efficiency, break-even, grow and generate more revenues for the economy. To uncover why and how SC processes occur and what influences them, three research questions were asked.

3.1.2 The Research Questions

Stemming from the research problem, this study is guided by three main research questions.

1. What are the forces of SC in GBs of Oman?
2. How do SC processes unfold in GBs of Oman?
3. What are the influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman?

Accordingly, there are three key concepts in this study that need to be defined before discussing the theory underpinning this research. These include the forces of change, change processes and change influencers.

3.1.3 Defining SC Process, Forces and Influencers

The dictionary meaning of the word strategic is “of, relating to, or marked by strategy; necessary to or important in the initiation, conduct, or completion of a strategic plan ...” (“strategic”, 2017). In the OC and strategy literatures, “strategic change involves changes in the firm’s scope, resource deployment, competitive advantages and synergies so that they align a firm more suitably with a changed environment and allowing it to meet its objectives (Rajagopalan & Spreitzer, 1997; Boeker, 1989 in Walsh, 2005, p. 114). The term is used to show the influence of strategy, structure, technology, capabilities, culture, resources or control systems have on major subsystems (Balogun, Pye & Hodgkinson, 2008; Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald & Pettigrew, 1996). Change in an organisation is considered as strategic when it covers the whole entity (Bryson, 1988). That is why the term is often used interchangeably with other terms like episodic change (Weick & Quinn, 1999) and transformational or revolutionary change (Balogun & Hope-Hailey, 2008; Porras & Robertson, 1992; Nutt & Backoff, 1997; Rajagopalan & Rasheed, 1995).

Pioneering researchers in the field describe SC as a sequence of events in a context in which change agents and change recipients promote actions that lead to major change in an organization (Langley, 1999; Poole et al., 2000; Van de Ven, 1992). SC has an impact on the overall organization and its major subsystems. As Rajagopalan and Spreitzer (1997) and Tichy (1983) argued that although it is a rare event, its occurrence is consequential. Balogun and Johnson (2005, p. 1573) described it as a “context-dependent, unpredictable, non-linear process” rather than a planned process that unfolds in a linear pattern.

SC can occur reactively or passively (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Thompson, 1967) and it can also occur in various degrees (Boeker 1997; Greenwood & Hinings, 1993). Hence, an organisation can implement a range of incremental changes leading to a SC or it could take a radical leap (Anderson & Tushman, 1990). Also, an organisation can undergo a SC that replaces its identity and what it does with a totally different identity and specialisation, i.e., a frame-breaking, revolutionary change. Another organisation could undergo SC in its area but keep its identity i.e. major evolutionary change.

Forces of change are also referred to as antecedents, determinants, triggers, causes and drivers of change in the OC literature. The literature reports external (i.e. environmental) and internal (i.e. organisational) forces of change. Different theories of change have different assumptions on the main causes of change. See Chapter 2 (section 2.4) for details. This study explores both types of forces.

Change influencers are also called critical success factors, change enablers, change drivers, change facilitators and change barriers or inhibitors. Researchers have identified a number of situational factors that can facilitate or inhibit change efforts. They are all situational factors that can make change easy or difficult and thus increase chances of success or failure. In a comprehensive review of the literature on influencers of strategy implementation, Li et al. (2008) found a total of nine factors that were most frequently cited under the broad categories of soft, hard and mixed factors. The first set of factors are soft factors (i.e. people-related) and these include managers and employees, communication, implementation tactics, consensus and commitment. The second set are hard factors that include the structure and administrative systems. The third set of factors are mixed factors and include planning and relationships among work groups. See Chapter 2 (2.9) for details. This study explored a range of situational factors that facilitated and inhibited SC implementation.

All in all, after defining the main concepts, this study looks at the type of SC that involves alterations in all the major subsystems of the businesses, i.e. the strategy, structure, power, culture/people, product and technology. A change that doesn't replace what organisations do with something new but rather one that helps organisations expand and maximise their profits, i.e., do more of the same thing that they do but more efficiently. The study also looks at SC from a process perspective (Pettigrew, 1985, 1997). It explored the external and internal forces and influencers of change too.

For the purpose of framing the phenomenon within the process view of change (Pettigrew, 1985, 1997) and the realist ontology of CR (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989), the researcher developed a definition of SC that combines the two views and fits the study:

“SC is a major process that occurs in an open system that resides in an interactive multi-layered context and impacts the whole organisation and its subsystems. The change process unfolds incrementally or rapidly at different speeds and in various directions. In the heart of the context and the open system is a need-driven individual who belongs to groups in and out of the organisation that operates in an industry within a sector in a country that is part of a region that acts and reacts to observable and unobservable structures and processes from the international field and beyond”.

(Misida Al Jahwari, 2017)

An illustration of the interactive multi-layered context is depicted in Chapter 1 (section 1.2). The next section builds an argument on change in Oman’s GBs from the adaptation and growth perspective which the contingency system belongs to.

3.2 SC in Oman’s GBs from the Adaptation and Growth Perspective

The government of Oman had to focus on reducing its expenditures and on diversifying its sources of income due to dwindling oil prices in international markets, decreasing government revenues and a growing population. Diversification of sources of income has been a main strategy in Oman’s strategic vision since the inception of Oman Vision 2020 in 1995. But the strategy gained a sense of urgency in mid-2014 due to falling oil prices that resulted from OPEC’s decision to increase oil production. The government reacted with several strategies including reducing spending on its businesses and seeking ways to generate more revenues from them.

A large percentage of government expenditures goes to funding its 67 businesses. However, these businesses suffer from inefficiency and overspending. Despite their concession agreements with the government, the businesses have continued to rely on government funding. To reduce spending and maximise revenues, the government has been pushing the businesses to improve their efficiency, professionalise their management, become self-funded, grow and generate more profits so that Oman can move away from its heavy reliance on oil revenues.

This heightened attention on improving efficiency and maximising revenues created a feeling of instability among government boards and top management teams of GBs. CEO’s were faced with higher expectations that forced them to reassess the set-up of their businesses and think of ways to reduce spending, grow and generate more income for the national economy. In response to the government strategy and growth expectations, CEOs and top managers of GBs felt the urge to adapt their businesses and meet government expectations. The socio-economic environment related to people and their demands also forced these businesses to improve.

In such an environment, the most appropriate OC perspective is one of rational ‘adaptation and growth’ (Demers, 2007). This is because the general model of change under this perspective is one of rational reactive adaptation to environmental changes (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). According to Hannan and Freeman (1984), rational adaptation theories are the contingency theory, resource dependency theory and strategic choice. See the comparison of the three theories in Chapter 2 and the explanation why the contingency theory is the most appropriate lens to study the structural adaptations that GBs made during 2007-2015. The next section discusses the contingency theory, its assumptions and criticism.

3.3 The Contingency Theory

The contingency theory as commonly known is not one theory but rather a host of theories or a perspective and approach that rejects universal principles or a single best solution for all situations. Common to all the theories and models under it, “is the proposition that performance is enhanced by an external fit between the demands of an organisation’s environment and the design of its internal structure, as well as an internal fit among key design components of strategy, structure, systems and culture (Miller, 1992)” (Van de Ven, Ganco & Hinnings, 2013, p. 395). ‘It differs from all universalistic theories’ (Donaldson, 2001, p.4) and argues against Taylor’s ‘Scientific Management’ approach (the one best way) by directing our attention to the importance of situational relationships in determining effectiveness. The theory believes that high performance is a result of achieving a fit between the organisation and environmental and organisational contingencies. That is why this theory is one of the few Western theories that can work cross-culturally because of its focus on situational variables (Strube & Garcia 1981; Triandis 1993; Erez & Earley, 1993 and Dorfman et al., 1997). The contingency theory offers a coherent paradigm for the analysis of organizations (Donaldson, 2001). The theory enables a researcher to conduct a careful analysis of the specific internal and external conditions of organisations away from any universal assumptions and the so-called best practices on how OC should be managed.

The contingency perspective originated from Fiedler’s (1967) works on leadership and motivation in which he found that the best leadership style/the most effective one depended on the situation, i.e., the relationship between the leadership style and situational variables/contingencies. During the 1970s, this thinking of ‘it depends on the situation’ quickly became a dominant approach in organisation design and management. The term contingency is “any variable that moderates the effect of an organisational characteristic on organisational performance” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 7). In other words, the relationship between organisational characteristics and performance is influenced by other factors and managers need to identify these influencing factors and adapt the organisation to them so

that effectiveness is achieved. There will be many moderators in a situation but only some will be contingency factors because they will determine significant changes in performance. See figure 3.1 for an illustration.

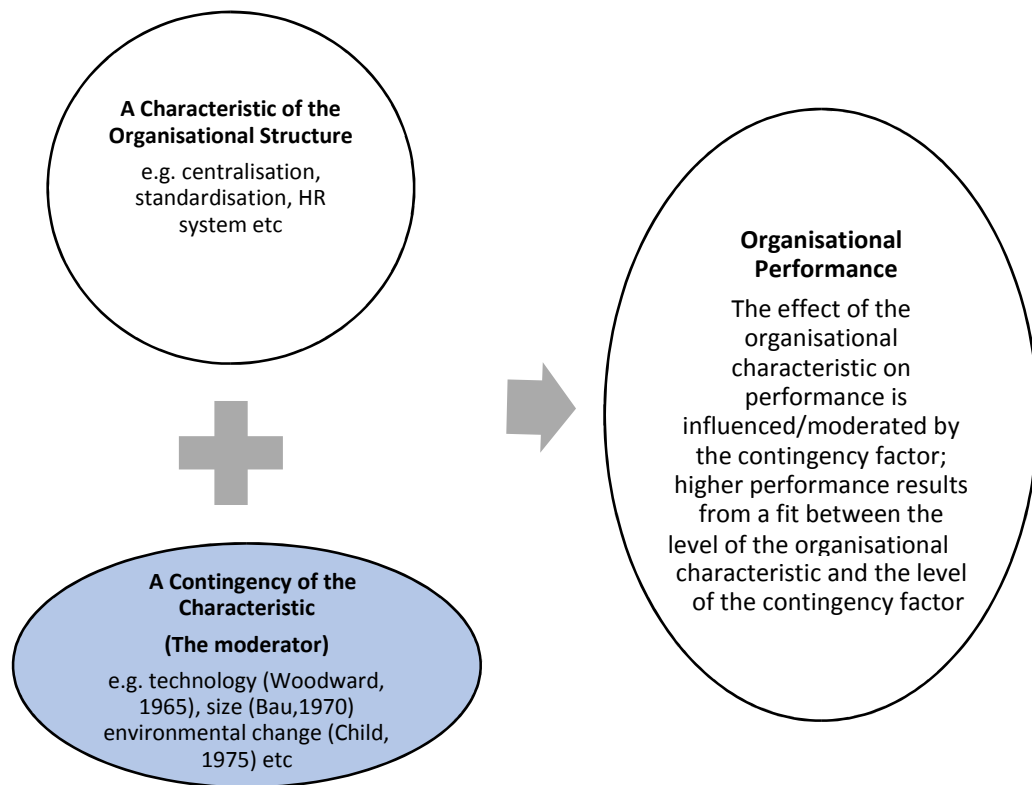


Figure 3.1: The relationship between organisational characteristic, contingency factor and performance; Source: Developed from Donaldson's (2001, p. 7) explanation.

Several contingency frameworks were conceptually and empirically developed by the earliest researchers in the fields of Organisation Theory (e.g. Burns & Stalker, 1961), Organisational Behaviour (e.g. Fiedler, 1967) and Strategic Management (e.g. Porter, 1980). These frameworks "employ a single dimension ... or construct 2X2 matrices that dichotomise two critical contingencies" (Zeithaml, Varadaragan & Zeithaml, 1988, p. 40). See table 3.1 for a list of some of the earliest contingency frameworks.

Table 3.1: Summary of contingency frameworks

Researcher	Contingency Variable(s)	Response Variable(s)
Burns and Stalker (1961)	Markets and technology: Stable vs changing	Management style: Organic or Mechanistic style
Chandler (1962)	Growth strategy: Internal growth Diversification	Structure: Centralised functional vs Decentralised multi-divisional
Woodward (1965)	Technological type: Custom Mass production Continuous process	Structure: Tall vs flat design
Fiedler (1967)	Task structure Leader-member relations Leader position power	Leadership behaviour: Considerate Task-oriented
Lawrence and Lorsch (1967)	Task environment: Uncertainty	Structure: Differentiation and integration
House (1971)	Subordinate needs Task characteristics	Leader behaviour: Directive Supportive Achievement Participative
Vroom and Yetton (1973)	Decision situation characteristics	Decision style: Autocratic Consultative Group
Porter (1980)	Industry competitive forces	Business strategy: Differentiation Focus Cost leadership
Hambrick (1983)	Environmental dimensions	Business strategy: Differentiation Asset parsimony Cost-efficiency Scale/scope

Source: Zeithaml et al. (1988)

In the field of Organisational Behaviour, for example, the contingency theories of leadership see the effectiveness of a leader contingent upon various situational variables imposed by the situation (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; House, 1971). In the field of Organisation Theory, Chandler (1962), Woodward (1965) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) among others argue that the most effective structure is one that fits various environmental and organisational contingencies. More recently, the structural contingency theory (Pfeffer, 1982) or the structural adaptation to regain fit theory (SARFIT) (Donaldson, 1987, 2001) also “holds that the most effective organisational structural design is where the structure fits the contingencies” (Donaldson, 2006, p. 19). The contingency approach in the field of Strategy sees that effectiveness of a particular strategy depends on the competitive setting of the business e.g. the market share, industry growth, product life cycle, degree of competition etc. (Zeithaml & Fry, 1984, p. 44). Examples of these are Porter (1980), Hofer, (1975) and Hambrick (1983).

After the plethora of empirical and theoretical work during the 1960s-80s on changing internal structural arrangements to fit a changing environment, the study of organisational contingency theory declined (Barry, 2011). However, due to the increased frequency and magnitude of change in the external environments, today's managers are "designing [their organisations] for innovation, searching for distinctive and competitive ways to increase innovative capacity both with and outside of their organisations" (Van de Ven, Granco & Hinnings, 2013, p. 395). As a result, unlike the engineering approaches of the past, more creative and flexible approaches to designing organisations have been emerging (Boland & Collopy, 2004) and contemporary theories on institutional design and change (e.g. Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012; Reay & Hinnings, 2009; Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2006).

Today there are different kinds of contingency theories all focusing on the relationships between situational variables and achieving effectiveness/high performance. According to Van de Ven, Granco and Hinnings (2013, p. 395), "Management scholars have been rediscovering contingency theory in more profound ways". Besides being the basis of contemporary theories in institutional design and change, there is an emerging trend among researchers that sees "any proposition that contains a moderating variable is a contingency theory ... For them, a contingent view is one that examines the conditions or boundaries in which particular structures and processes hold" (Van de Ven, Granco & Hinnings, 2013, p. 395). The researchers mentioned the recent works of Battilana and Casciaro (2012) and Gulati, Wohlgezogen and Zhelyazkov (2012) as examples. Also, unlike the simple frameworks of the earliest contingency researchers, the current trend in contingency theory is "to expand these frameworks through the development of contingency theories that employ multiple dimensions or contingency variables" (Zeithaml et al., 1988, p. 40). For example, the field of HRM has a general contingency model which argues that a firm's performance will depend on the fit between various HR practices and contingency factors (Delery & Doty, 1996; Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Several researchers have studied the HR-Performance relationships and explore the effect of various environmental and organisational contingencies (Huselid, 1995; Neal, West & Patterson, 2005; Katou & Budhwar, 2006 among others). Researchers in this area look at internal design fits and performance and fits between strategy, HRM practices and performance.

Since the beginning, the contingency theory has been focusing on effectiveness which is a broad word that encompasses many meanings. In fact, until today, "There is no universally accepted theory of organisational effectiveness. Neither is there a universally accepted definition and a set of criteria that allows the effectiveness of an organisation to be measured" (Rollinson, 2002, p. 468). According to Donaldson (2001, p. 6), the terms

organisational performance and effectiveness are similar concepts and “effectiveness can be defined as the ability of the organisation to attain the goals set by itself (Parsons, 1961), or by its ability to function well as a system (Yutchman & Seashore, 1967), or by its ability to satisfy its stakeholders (Pfeiffer & Salancik, 1978; Pickle & Friedlander, 1967)”. This study focuses on both behavioural and financial outcomes to prove the fit-performance relationships in the change processes. It uses the terms performance and effectiveness interchangeably like Donaldson (2001). But it is worth mentioning here that “the term performance is more specific than effectiveness” and “researchers usually refer to the term effectiveness when they consider multiple outcomes of performance in their studies” (Darwish, Singh & Mohamed, 2013, p. 3344-3345). The next section discusses the theoretical foundations and main assumptions of the contingency approach.

3.4 Theoretical Foundations and Main Assumptions of the Contingency Approach

The contingency approach borrows ideas from general systems theory and the open systems perspective (Boulding, 1956; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Von Bertalanffy, 1951) in addition to the works of Simon (1957), March and Simon (1958) and Cyert and March (1963). Thompson (1967) in his book ‘Organisations in Action’ recognised the intersection of these traditions and laid ‘a landmark work that represents a cornerstone of the contingency approach’ (Zeithaml et al., 1988, p. 38). Figure 3.2 shows the characteristics borrowed from the open systems perspective and the works of Simon (1957), March and Simon (1958) and Cyert and March (1963) which make the main assumptions of this approach.

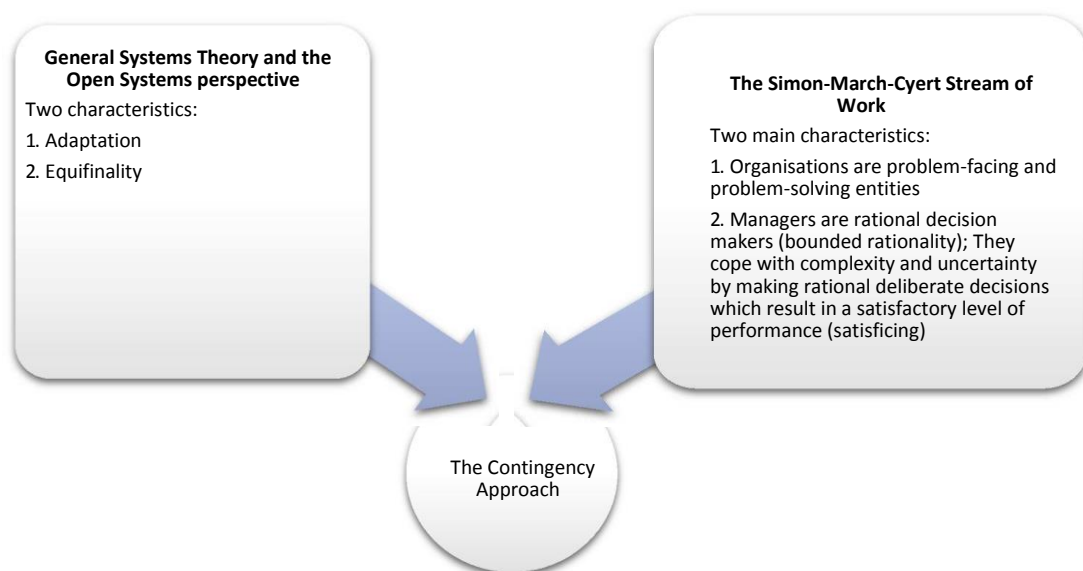


Figure 3.2: Theoretical foundations of the contingency approach
Source: Figure developed from Zeithaml et al. (1988)

Combined with the views of Donaldson (2001), below are the main assumptions of contingency theories:

1. Organisations are open-systems that react to their interactions with the larger environment to restore stability and performance. Based on this, two open system principles are adopted: adaptation and equifinality. Adaptation means that “a change in one structural element [of the system] must be followed by adaptive changes in other elements for coherence to be maintained” (Demers, 2007, p. 6). Hence, organisations are seen to continuously adapt to the changing external environment to achieve high performance and survive. But, unlike the universalistic approaches, the contingency approach sees that adaptation can be achieved in more than one way and get the same outcomes (equifinality). According to Donaldson (2001, p. 194), equifinality means “there are several different fits that are equally effective in the same situation”. For example, there is more than one way to organise a business and achieve the needed performance. Similarly, there is more than one way to compete and more than one leadership style that can effectively influence people and achieve unity of direction. Hence, the contingency approach suggests that there are many paths to effectiveness but it also emphasises that “these variations are not random” (Zeithaml et al., 1988, p. 39). According to Donaldson (2001), organisations are constrained by situational variables i.e. they are restricted to the fits that they can feasibly attain. Point 4 in this list further elaborates the fit-performance relationship.
2. There is an association between contingency and organisational characteristic (i.e. aspect of the structure). Besides the open system view, dominance of the external environment, adaptation and equifinality, the contingency approach assumes that there are associations between organisational characteristics and contingency factors. According to Donaldson (2001), contingency researchers show these associations as a central part of their empirical findings and they can be linear or curvilinear and presented as cross-tabulations like in Woodward (1965) or correlations like in Holdaway, Newberry, Hickson and Heron (1975, p. 48).
3. A change in the contingency causes a change in the organisational characteristic(s). To explain the assumption that a change in contingency leads to a change in aspects of the organisation, two examples are given. When a change happens in a contingency like an increase in the number of employees (i.e. size) or increased diversification in the firm’s strategy and the organisation doesn’t modify any of its characteristics, performance will be negatively affected. To maintain stability and restore performance, the organisation will have to adapt to the increased number of employees by increasing governance control and bureaucracy (Pugh & Hickson,

1976). To adapt to increased diversification in its strategy, the organisation will have to adopt a divisional structure (Chandler, 1962; Rumelt, 1974). If these adaptations are not done, performance will suffer. Studies have proved these associations - “the size contingency affect bureaucratic structure [and] the strategy contingency affects divisional structure” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 2-3). Today, many researchers explore a range of other contingency factors besides the three classical ones of environment (Burns & Stalker, 1961), size (Child, 1975), and strategy (Chandler, 1962). Contemporary researchers try to identify contingencies and which parts of the organisation they affect (e.g. Katou & Budhwar, 2006; Katou, 2008; Sillince, 2005; Birkinshaw, 1999).

4. The Fit-Performance Relationship:

This assumption is at the heart of the contingency approach. “Contingency theories hold that there is a fit between organisational [characteristics like] structure and contingency that has a positive effect on performance ... where the structural variable is at the level that fits the level of the contingency, high performance results” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 10.). Based on this concept, effectiveness or high-performance results from matching organisational aspects with contingency factors. To prove this relationship, the researcher has to demonstrate that a fit between an organisational characteristic and some contingency results in high performance (i.e. a positive relationship) and a misfit causes low performance. Just because a variable causes a change in organisations doesn’t mean that a fit-performance relationship exists. For a variable ‘to be established as a contingency, it needs to be shown that there is a fit between that variable and an aspect of the organisation that affects performance and that this is the reason why it caused changes to the organisation’ (Donaldson, 2001, p. 91). Two classical examples of this fit-performance relationship were proved by Woodward (1965) on fit of supervisor’s span of control and technology and Child (1975) and Khandawalla (1973) on fit of bureaucratic structure to size. In addition to these, many theorists view national culture as a contingency factor (e.g. Hickson & McMillan, 1981). The right way to prove that national culture is a contingency factor is to “deduce from theory about national cultures, hypotheses that are tested prior to the research (Tayeb, 1987), or to show that variations in organisational characteristics are correlated with variables that directly measure national culture” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 90-91). All in all, researchers empirically prove that the fits positively affect organisational performance. Considering all the assumptions mentioned so far, one wonders who decides on why, how and when to adapt organisational characteristics to fit with the contingency? This question leads us to the assumption of the contingency approach on the role of managers and their choices.

5. Managers are rational decision makers:

The works of Simon (1957), March and Simon (1958) and Cyert and March (1963) added to the open system view that organisations face problems and it is the managers who solve these problems through decision making. The managers' bounded rationality results in satisficing, i.e., achieving a satisfactory level rather than an ideal level of performance (Simon, 1976). Managers, in the contingency approach, are seen as strategic thinkers who rationally plan and start changes to improve the performance of organisations (Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997). Hence, besides being viewed as an open system that interacts with the environment and achieves effectiveness by fitting organisational characteristics to contingencies, organisations are seen as 'instruments in the hands of rational managers who react to changes in the external environment by modifying the organisational characteristics ...' (Demers, 2007, p. 6-8). This means that the contingency approach agrees to some extent with Child's (1972) strategic choice perspective but it rejects the dominance of human agency over the power of environmental contingencies. It is believed that a crisis of poor performance is required to trigger adaptive changes (Chandler, 1962; Donaldson, 1987) and the success or failure of these adaptations is seen as the result of manager's decisions and actions.

To sum up, the contingency approach assumes that organisations are open systems that interact and react to the external environment and managers are rational decision makers who react to changes in the contingencies and adapt their organisations accordingly to achieve higher performance. Higher performance is achieved when there is a fit between the level of an organisational characteristic and the level of the contingency factor. Now that we have discussed the main assumptions of the contingency approach, the next section clarifies the role of people, space and time in the contingency theory.

3.5 The Role of People, Space and Time

Since we have decided on the contingency perspective, it is crucial to clarify the three key decision points in any change theory. According to Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. 16-25), there are three key common concepts in all theories of change that need to be clarified by the researcher whether their aim is to build a theory or test one. Change theories differ in the attention they give to the role of human agency, the level of analysis and time. The benefits of deciding on these three concepts lie in encouraging both the theorists and readers to probe about the theory for consistency and ask what it has omitted, check whether the theory maybe oversimplifying things or is too complex and facilitate comparing and contrasting different theories (p. 25). Articulating these three decision points is a

fundamental step in this study because it aims to develop a process framework of SC for GBs of Oman. Hence decisions about the role of people, level of analysis and time will help make the process framework clearer and stronger.

3.5.1 The Role of Human Agency in the Contingency Approach

OC is a social phenomenon that involves multiple actors. Theories of change make different assumptions “about the nature of human action and how it connects to broader changes” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 17). The question of human agency is a question of who has more ability to bring change to organisations - the human, the organisation or the external environment? Schein’s (1992) theory of organisational culture and cultural change and Child’s (1972) strategic choice for example, highlight the dominant role that the individual can play in bringing about change to organisations. These theories believe that the CEO, for example, can be the main force of OC. But in many cases, the external environment can be more powerful than the individual and organisations that have multiple actors who interact with each other. Hence, “it is difficult to know whose intention counts in such cases” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 18). Due to this challenge, some theories of change put agency in the group (i.e. the team, the organisation or the industry) rather than in one individual. The adaptive learning approach, population ecology and the resource dependency theory all share this view of human agency. Some other theories take a more complex view of human agency and how organisations adapt to change. They consider groups, organisations and industries as agents that make rational choices in their environments. Institutional theories and theories of cultural change in response to external events take this approach. But these theories have been criticised too. For example, Pfeffer (1982) questioned if whether it makes any sense to study agency at levels other than the individual level. Other theories take a middle approach and give individuals and organisations equal attention in terms of agency. These include interactionism, theories of structuration, and Coleman’s (1999) theory of social action.

The contingency theory is a theory that links the organisation to the environment and assumes that the external environment has a more powerful role in bringing change to organisations. It is assumed that “organisations that fail to adjust their forms appropriately will underperform, and, ultimately, be selected out of the market” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 129). But the theory also assigns “a critical role to top management to successfully interpret contingency factors and implement appropriate changes ... [hence] ... the mechanisms leading to success or failure are viewed as fundamentally linked with decisions made by the firm’s actors in response to environmental changes” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 129). That is why one of the main managerial implications of the contingency approach in organisation design, strategy and management is that managers

should continuously monitor the environment and differentiate their structures to fit to the changing contingencies. In short, the role of the external environment is predominant over human agency. But, managerial agency (awareness and decisions) is seen as important in determining the success or failure of change. Next, we look at the level of analysis and temporality.

3.5.2 Level of Analysis and View of Time in the Contingency Approach

“It is becoming accepted that organisational theory in general and theories of change and innovation in particular must incorporate multiple levels of analysis” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 17). According to the researchers, the contingency theory is a boundary theory that links organisations to their environments and the level of analysis in this theory is the organisation. Also, the central focus of the theory is aspects of the organisational structure and their fit to environmental contingencies (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 144). But due to the complex and interconnected nature of change as a social phenomenon, there is no clear-cut line between the levels of analysis. Change is a people’s phenomenon, hence even when one studies it at the organisational level, it remains to be intimately entwined with the actions and reactions of groups and individuals within the organisation.

Time has been relatively neglected in the study of OC but an increasing number of researchers have been paying attention to the role of time. Since OC occurs over a period of time, it is helpful to understand how change unfolds over time and how time and timing affects change (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). This study looks at how change processes initiated and unfolded over a period of five to six years using retrospective case studies. Poole and Van de Ven (2004) identified four roles that time plays in theories of change – time as a medium of events, time as an independent, dependent or moderating variable and a factor in change, time as ‘temporal dispositions of people, organisations and cultures’ and time as a socially constructed part of change. Here again, there are no clear boundaries between the four roles because “time is intimately bound up with change ... but also because of the complex way in which time enters into human activity” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 23). Most contingency theory studies are large-sample cross-sectional (Demers, 2007) that try to capture the fit-performance relationships at one point in time. Hence, time in this sense is seen as a backdrop or medium where events occur. Similarly, the predominance of the quasi-stable environment and the incremental adaptations that organisations make to restore performance and lead to growth over time seem to view time as a medium too. “On this view ... time is treated as a transparent background for other phenomenon that are the primary focus of the investigation” and ‘temporal metrics are used to generate fine to evenly spaced units for longitudinal analysis or case studies and ethnographies’ (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 22).

This study sees the external environment as a more powerful force of change than agency but “the mechanisms leading to success or failure [of change] are viewed as fundamentally linked with decisions made by the firm’s actors in response to environmental changes” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 129). The three key decision points in any change theory were clarified. In terms of level of analysis, change is viewed as a people’s phenomenon. Hence even when one studies it at the organisational level, it remains to be entwined with the actions and reactions of groups and individuals within the organisation. Due to the multi-level nature of SC, the study leans towards the contemporary view of the necessity of incorporating multiple levels of analysis in organisational theories (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). In terms of time, due to the process nature of the study, the intention of identifying sequence of events and the heavy reliance on interviews, the study views time as a medium of events.

After clarifying the theoretical foundations of the theory, the main assumptions and the role of agency, level of analysis and time in the contingency theory, the next section discusses the criticism of this approach and how this study addresses them.

3.6 Criticism of the Contingency Approach

Although it was seen as a better approach to ‘the one best way’ (Child & Kieser, 1981), the contingency theory has its share of criticisms. A summary of these is presented here and the details are offered in appendix 3, ‘Criticism of the Contingency Theory’.

First, the contingency theory is criticised for overestimating the role of the environment and downplaying the role of human agency. According to Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. 129), “Contingency theory is sometimes criticised for focusing solely on reactive adaptation ignoring the opportunity that firms may have to influence their environment”. Second, the theory is criticised for being a static theory i.e. it doesn’t consider the process that leads to the outcomes and it doesn’t consider the continuous changes in the external environment (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Van de Ven & Drazin, 1985). The third criticism is on the linear fit-performance relationship line that is seen as a line of iso- performance, i.e., there is equal performance at all points of fit along the line. The fourth criticism of the contingency theory is ‘it is unclear how managers know what exact characteristics fit the different contingencies (Donaldson, 2001, p. 270). The contingency theory believes that managers often wouldn’t change their organisations until they are in a misfit and organisational performance is low (Chandler, 1962).

After reviewing the assumptions and criticisms of the contingency approach, the next section discusses how the study views and explains forces of SC, process of change and change influencers from a contingency perspective and how the fit-performance relationship is proved using the contingency theory.

3.7 Forces, Process and Influencers of Strategic Change: A Contingency Perspective

The strategic changes explored in this study are all viewed as deliberate rational and reactive structural adaptations to changes in environmental and organisational contingencies. As explained earlier, when the external environment changed, GBs of Oman were faced with new levels of contingencies which forced top managers and the boards to react. The businesses had to do something to be in 'fit' with the changes to ensure efficiency and avoid performance loss. As Donaldson emphasised, "Organisational structures are determined to a high degree by contingencies ... This holds also for large organisations that enjoy dominant market positions, because of the substantial performance they lose from being in misfit" (2001, p. 136).

To prove that all the major forces of change are linked to the larger external environment, the study relies on three views – the contextual process view of Pettigrew (1985, 1987, 1997) that sees changes and the context as inseparable, the open systems view of organisations which is one of the theoretical foundations of the contingency theory and the stratified ontology of CR (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989). Pettigrew (1985, 1997) argued that organisations need to be studied in their contexts taking into consideration the constraints and opportunities offered by the environment and the relationships of these to the interests of the people who work within these organisations. Pettigrew views the context as producing and being produced by the change. Also, drawing on systems theory, Stickland (1988, p. 14) argued that "Systems exist within a hierarchy of other systems. They contain subsystems and exist within some wider system. All are interconnected". The study views that organisations do not act and modify what they do in isolation but rather everything that organisations do can be linked back to a source in the external environment. Adding to these views is the CR ontology that sees reality made up of the empirical, the actual and the real worlds (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989). This worldview pushes one to ask what led to the experiences in the SC processes and going further backwards to uncovering the events, mechanisms and structures that caused the changes. "Critical realists recognizably use two distinct explanatory logics, moving from the empirical to the real through the use of abduction and retrodution" (Edward, O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014, p. 17). Used in conjunction, abduction and retrodution can lead to the formation of a new conceptual framework or theory (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen & Karlsson, 1997). This view emphasises the idea that any change that happens within an organisation has its roots in the larger external environment.

Considered altogether, the process view, the systems view and the stratified ontology of CR and its two explanatory logics, the study aligns itself with one of the main assumptions of the contingency theory – the predominant role of the external environment in causing organisational changes (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Thompson, 1967; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969). In other words, whatever happens within the organisation at the organisational level is actually triggered by changes in the external environment.

The study explained processes of change from a contingency perspective by explaining the variations observed in the sequence of events, the timing and outcomes to situations of fits and misfits between organisational characteristics and contingencies. The process approach helped identify the sequence of events within the process of changing and the contingency approach helped explore the links between the contingency factors that emerged as most influential in causing the change, shaping the way the processes unfolded and causing variations in organisational performance. The study relied on the guidance and steps offered by Donaldson (2001) on proving contingencies, identifying the fit-performance relationships and validating the fit model. These are all elaborated and demonstrated in Chapters 6 and 7.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical framework of the study. It connected the study to existing knowledge and helped articulate its theoretical assumptions and offer directions to explaining SC in GBs of Oman. The chapter commenced by revisiting the research problem and questions and deriving from them the main concepts of the study. The concepts were defined to give specificity and direction to the study. Then, the occurrence of SC in GBs of Oman was explained from an adaptation and growth perspective as a lead in to the contingency theory. After that, the contingency theory was discussed and its theoretical foundations and main assumptions were highlighted. Next, the role of human agency, level of analysis and role of time in the theory were clarified taking into consideration the nature of the study. Then, the criticisms of the theory were presented and addressed. At the end, the chapter clarified how the three main research issues -forces, phases and influencers of strategic change, are viewed and explained from a contingency perspective. Clarifying the theoretical stances of the study helped the researcher transition from describing the phenomenon to linking it to established knowledge and generalising about various aspects of that phenomenon and identifying the limits to those generalisations. The next chapter presents details of the methodological choices made to answer the research questions and achieve the aim of the study.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the methodological choices made in the study to answer the research questions and achieve the aim of the investigation. The chapter describes and justifies the research approach and the related philosophical worldview. Then, the research design and methods of data collection, coding and analysis are presented along with the associated delimitations and ethical considerations. Then, challenges of the methodology and practical limitations of the study are presented followed by a description of how credibility was established. The chapter ends with how quality was ensured and a chapter summary.

4.1 An Overview of the Methodological Choices

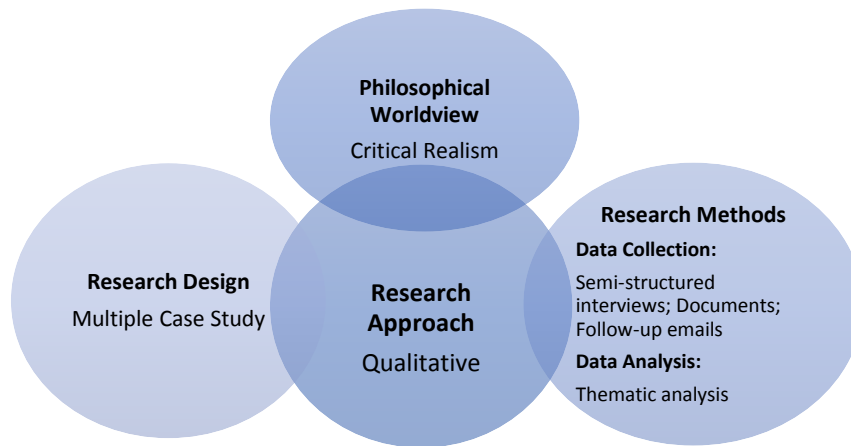


Figure 4.1: Interaction of the three methodological choices

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2014, p. 5)

This study set out to explore what makes GBs undergo major changes in Oman, how they change and what influences their change processes. The methodological choices made to answer the research questions are summarised in figure 4.1. As depicted in the figure, the study followed a qualitative approach. It is positioned within Critical Realism and thus assumed a realist ontology and an interpretive epistemology. A multiple case study design (Yin, 2014) was adopted to explore five cases of recent SCs that occurred in five different GBs of Oman between 2007 and 2015. The cases were purposefully selected (Patton 2002) from five different industries based on availability. Data was collected in Oman via 42 face-to-face semi-structured interviews during December 2014 to May 2015. A total of 22

managers and 20 non-managers from different divisions and departments of each business were selected and interviewed in their offices for 60-120 minutes based on their involvement in the change processes. Although few, additional data was gathered by examining company annual reports and media documents that covered the events. All the 42 interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Data analysis was guided by Bryman and Bell (2011), Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), Saldana (2016), Bazeley (2013), Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013), Yin (2014) and Maxwell (2012). All data were analysed using specific coding methods (see Saldana, 2016) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clark 2006). During coding and analysis, two clusters of cases emerged. One cluster followed a highly-centralised top-down approach to planning and implementing change and the other followed a participative consultative approach.

4.2 The Research Approach: Qualitative

This section describes and justifies the research approach selected for the study. First, the three main research approaches are reviewed and a justification is presented for the qualitative approach as the most appropriate one for the study.

4.2.1 Three Main Approaches to Research

A research approach includes the plans and procedures for a study that cover the broad assumptions that guide the investigation to details of data collection, analysis and interpretation methods (Creswell, 2014). There are three main approaches to research, the qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approach. Although each of these approaches has its philosophical assumptions, research designs and research methods, researchers believe that they should not be seen as rigid types but rather different ends on a continuum with mixed methods lying in the middle borrowing characteristics of the qualitative and quantitative approaches (Newman & Benz 1998; Creswell, 2014). See table 4.1 for details of the three approaches.

Table 4.1: Three approaches to research

Tend to/Typically ...	Qualitative Approaches	Mixed Methods Approaches	Quantitative Approaches
Philosophical Assumptions	Constructivist / transformative knowledge claims	Pragmatic knowledge claims	Post-positivist knowledge claims
Strategies of Enquiry	Phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study and narrative	Sequential, concurrent and transformative	Surveys and experiments
Methods	Open-ended questions, emerging approaches, text or image data	Both open and closed ended questions, both emerging and predetermined approaches, and both quantitative and qualitative data analysis	Close ended questions, predetermined approaches and numeric data
Research Practices	Positions him/her self Collects participants' meanings Focuses on a single concept or phenomenon Brings personal values into the study Studies the context or setting of participants Validates the accuracy of findings Makes interpretations of the data Creates an agenda for change or reform Collaborates with the participants	Collects both quantitative and qualitative data Develops rationale for mixing Integrates the data at different stages of enquiry Presents visual pictures of the procedures in the study Employs the practices of both qualitative and quantitative	Tests or verifies theories or explanations Identifies variables to study Relates variables in questions or hypotheses Uses standards of validity and reliability Observes and measures information numerically Uses unbiased approaches Employs statistical procedures

Source: Creswell (2014, p. 18)

4.2.2 The Qualitative Approach

This study followed the qualitative approach where research focuses on “observing, describing, interpreting and analysing the way that people experience, act on or think about themselves and the world around them” (Bazeley, 2013, p. 4). Selecting the qualitative approach was mainly influenced by the purpose and aim of the study, the research problem and questions, the researcher’s training and the target audience of the study (Creswell, 2014). Please refer to Chapter 1 (sections 1.6 and 1.8 on pages 24-26) for a quick reminder of the research problem, purpose, aim and research questions of the study. Taking into consideration the research problem, purpose, aim and research questions of the study, a qualitative approach was selected for the following reasons:

1. The purpose, overall aim and main research questions called for a detailed analysis of an unexplored context-specific social phenomenon directly from the people who experienced it.
2. The purpose, aim and research questions also entailed exploring the context to understand where the phenomenon occurred. There were two main reasons for studying the context: a) there were no clear boundaries between the phenomenon and the context (Yin, 2014), and b) the researcher had knowledge of how several contextual factors had shaped the phenomenon. As Miller (2000) described, qualitative research “produces an understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors”.

3. In addition, due to absence of research on SC processes in the Omani context, the only way to explore and gather data was to collect participant views and meanings on the phenomenon. For cultural reasons and because of the need for in-depth first-hand information, the most appropriate method to gather data was face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions.
4. To build an overall understanding of the phenomenon, answer the research questions and achieve the aim of the study, the researcher had to make interpretations of the data.

According to major qualitative researchers like Miles and Huberman (1984), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Patton (2002), Marshall and Rossman (2011), Creswell (2014, p. 18), Bryman and Bell (2011), Maxwell (2012) and Bazeley (2013, p. 27-28), all the aforementioned methods fall under the range of practices of the qualitative approach. In fact, there is common agreement among major writers of qualitative research on the characteristics of this approach. For details on how the core characteristics of qualitative research are met in this study, please refer to appendix 4 ‘Meeting the Core Characteristics of Qualitative Research’. The following sections present details of the philosophical assumptions of the study, the research design and the research methods used respectively.

4.3 The Research Paradigm

As mentioned earlier, a research approach involves three main decisions, the philosophical assumptions that the researchers bring to the study, the research design adopted and the research methods used to collect and analyse data (Creswell, 2014). This section describes and justifies the philosophical assumptions of the study also known as research paradigms. First, an overview of the main paradigms is presented. Then a description of how and why the researcher selected Critical Realism as a paradigm for the study is given along with a justification as to why the researcher saw it as the most appropriate worldview for studying the phenomenon of interest. Later, the strengths and weaknesses of the paradigm are discussed.

4.3.1 Three Main Research Paradigms in the Social World

A research paradigm is “a set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed” (Kuhn, 1962). It can be considered the “basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 105). Any research paradigm can be described by its ontology (assumptions of what is reality and knowledge), epistemology (how we know something) and methodology (the process used to study it) (Guba, 1990).

Traditionally, there are two dominant paradigms - Positivism and Interpretivism (Creswell & Plano, 2007). Other researchers like Burnes (2014, p. 156) frame them as Modernism (i.e.) Positivism “which believes in objective reality, logic and reason” and Post-Modernism “which sees multiple and competing realities which are socially constructed”. According to the researcher, over the past 20 or 30 years, the Post-Modernist perspective has been the dominant one in the field of organisations. However, this two-paradigm picture has extended to Constructivism, Transformative and Pragmatism (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009). There are several other paradigms besides those mentioned like Structuralism, Critical Theory, Post Marxism and Empiricism among others. Due to the many different paradigms, understanding and appreciating all the worldviews is challenging, especially for new researchers. One reason is “... there are many ways of framing paradigms” (Lee & Lings, 2008). Another reason is the existing paradigms overlap at many points. For example, Realism overlaps with Positivism but also shares commonalities with Constructivism. The Interpretivist worldview comfortably shares many similarities with its origin ‘Hermeneutics’ and with Postmodern Critical Theory, Constructivism and Participative Inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

To reach the most appropriate worldview for this study, three of the most influential research paradigms in sociology were considered - Positivism, Interpretivism and Realism (Bryman, 2001; Hibberd, 2010). Table 4.2 shows the main assumptions of each. This is followed by a section on the philosophical worldview selected for the study.

Table 4.2: Comparison of three most influential paradigms of the social world

Dimensions/Paradigm	Positivism	Interpretivism	Realism
Ontology 'reality is ...'	Single objective measurable reality	Multiple subjective realities; socially constructed; intangible and can change	Objective reality that exists independently of our knowing, our thoughts and beliefs but is interpreted through our own perspectives
Epistemology 'knowledge is ...'	Observable facts; focus on cause and effects and generalizable laws; prediction	Subjective meanings; focus on details of situation; give detailed descriptions	Observable facts; focus on patterns, generative mechanisms and explaining within the context
Logic of discovery	Deduction	Induction	Abduction or retrodution
Axiology 'the role of values in research'	Research is value-free; researcher is independent and objective; disregards subjective viewpoints	Research is value-bound; researcher is biased and part of what is being researched; researcher and research cannot be separated	Research is value-laden; researcher is biased and influences the study
Research approach; designs methods	Quantitative; experiments; surveys; large sample; questionnaires; statistical analyses	Qualitative; observations; in-depth investigations; narrative research; phenomenology; grounded theory; ethnography; case study; observations; interviews; qualitative analyses	Qualitative or quantitative; methods chosen that fit the nature of phenomenon investigated; case study; surveys
Goal of research	To test theories; identify regularities and patterns; develop time and context-free generalised laws	To find out how individual and/or groups experience and understand their worlds; to interpret and understand	To identify the structures and generative mechanisms that cause events; to identify patterns of events that can be observed; to explain
Outcome of research	Objectively determined facts governed by natural laws; cause and effects; falsifiable statements	Socially constructed knowledge; narratives with thick descriptions; no time and context-free generalisations; only socially constructed knowledge that can change	Propositions and testable statements

Sources: Neuman (2000); Creswell (2014); Lincoln and Guba (1985); Bhaskar (1989) and Maxwell (2012)

4.3.2 Critical Realism (CR)

This research is positioned within a specific kind of Realism called Critical Realism associated with the works of Roy Bhaskar (1978, 1989, 2011). Major contributors to this philosophical paradigm are Margaret Archer (1995, 1996, 2000), Sayer (1992, 1999, 2000), Layder (1994), Manicas (2006) and Collier (1994) among others. According to Maxwell (2012), critical realists believe that it is impossible to get a single, objective and correct understanding of the world, i.e., a “God’s eye view” (Putnam, 1999) because all knowledge is grounded in a particular perspective. In other words, since all knowledge comes from a specific perspective then “all knowledge is partial, incomplete and fallible ... and there can be alternative valid accounts of any phenomenon” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 5). Critical realists also believe that “there can be more than one scientifically correct way of understanding reality” (Lackoff, 1987, p. 265). That is why CR is critical about the objectivity and completeness of our knowledge and our ways of knowing.

A Realist Ontology

CR is based on a realist ontology that believes in the existence of a reality that has both observable and other unobservable truths independent of our knowledge (Bhaskar 1975; Archer et al., 1998). In other words, "... entities exist independently of being perceived, or independently of our theories about them" (Phillips, 1987, p. 205). The realist ontology of CR believes in the existence of an objective reality that is independent of our knowledge. It also believes in the existence of our multiple perspectives of that reality. But CR rejects the "... radical constructivist views that deny the existence of any reality apart from our constructions" Maxwell (2012, p. 5).

A major assumption of CR is the existence of a stratified ontology that is divided into three domains: the real, the actual, and the empirical (Bhaskar 1978, 1989). The empirical world is the observable measurable reality experienced by the senses, the actual is a subset of the real and includes the events generated by mechanisms in the real and the real domain includes 'the mechanisms and structures which generate the actual world together with the empirical' (Edwards, O'Mahoney & Vincent, 2014). It is important to differentiate between the words mechanism and structure here. 'A mechanism is basically the way of acting or working of a structured thing ... Structured things [i.e. objects or social processes] possess causal powers which, when triggered or released, act as generative mechanisms that determine the actual phenomena of the world (Lawson 1997, p. 21).

Hence, when studying a phenomenon within the CR philosophy, it is not sufficient to prove relationships of what we observe; one should also seek to identify and understand the deeper lying unobservable mechanisms (i.e. processes) which caused the phenomenon. Bhaskar describes this as a shift from epistemology to ontology, and within ontology, as a shift from events to mechanisms (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Bhaskar argues against what he calls "the epistemic fallacy", a tendency to couple ontology and epistemology and to confuse that which exists with the knowledge we have about it (i.e. what we believe). These things should be kept separate.

In this research, studying OC based on CR's realist ontology requires an understanding of the objects and processes that interact at different levels and the contextual conditions that these interactions take place in. For this reason, the study focused on the contextual conditions, the systems, structures and human agents within.

According to Maxwell (2012, p. 6-9), "Realist views are widely accepted in the philosophy of social sciences but realism has not had a direct influence on qualitative research ... and there have been relatively few explicit statements of realist approaches to qualitative research". Examples of the few explicit works of realist approaches in qualitative research are Porter (2007) and Manicas (2009).

This study adopted a realist perspective to generate new and important insights into a popular social phenomenon, SC in GBs. As Maxwell (2012, p. 13) argued, "... realism can do useful work for qualitative methodology and practice if it is taken seriously ...[and] a realist perspective can provide new and useful ways of approaching problems and can generate important insights into social phenomenon".

An Interpretive Epistemology

CR's interpretive epistemology is concerned with understanding and this is reflected in the study's research questions and how the researcher answered them. The researcher set out to understand a social phenomenon (a change process) as observed and perceived by individuals (i.e. in the empirical world) in a specific social setting by collecting their subjective experiences, interpretations, alternative viewpoints and factors unique to their context (internal and external). Interpretivists believe that the main objective of research in management is understanding, not prescribing and that is why they are "wary of recipes and routines" (Weick, 1995).

The main goal of CR is to explain rather than predict 'by studying the unobservable and relying on interpretive forms of investigation' (Archer, 1995). This too is the aim of the proposed study - to develop a framework of SC processes that would reveal and help understand the forces, process and influencers of SC in the Omani context. The aim here is to identify the mechanisms and structures in the context (both observable and unobservable) that cause and shape the phenomenon.

Many research studies do not explicitly state their philosophical stances lest demonstrating their commitment to the assumptions of a particular paradigm. This is viewed by the researcher as adding ambiguity to research as the reader is left in the dark to guess as he/she reads along the research procedure up to the results and their interpretations. Stemming from a commitment to make this multiple case study transparent and thorough, it is important to discuss how the researcher explored the phenomenon from the CR worldview. The next section clarifies the methodological commitments made to align the study with CR.

4.3.3 Critical Realism and Methodological Commitments

For CR, the link between the assumptions about reality (ontology), the idea of how knowledge is possible and of what (epistemology), and the choice of methodological approach is of major importance (Zachariadis & Barret, 2013). When outlining the logic of CR's research design, Edwards et al. (2014, p. 24) emphasised that,

“For CR researchers, one goal of research is to identify the sequences of causation or causal mechanisms at work. Case studies are a suitable vehicle for examining such sequences, with successful designs identifying a context in which a specific causal mechanism is identified and explored. The aim of the research is to bring to light formative processes which cause particular outcomes, when they operate, and which are best conceived in their totality or as near to it as possible. The logic applied in reaching for this complete process is abduction (as opposed to induction or deduction). When such processes are found, there is every reason to suppose that the same mechanism is operative in many places, working itself out in similar ways and indeed everywhere that similar outcomes are noted”

Based on the techniques suggested by Edwards et al. (2014), Maxwell (2012), Sayer (2000) and Easton (2010), the methodological choices made are:

1. Describing a process: In this study, explicit processes were described outlining how changes unfolded in a clear sequence of events highlighting their outcomes too. This approach constitutes a major feature of not only a process study but a realist study too.
2. Using case studies to explore processes: Case studies are the most appropriate research design for this purpose. According to Easton (2010, p. 118), “Few authors of case-based papers offer a defence of their choice of the case method on formal epistemological grounds”. This study has selected the case approach to study processes based on the epistemological grounds of CR. This choice is supported by major writers like Yin (2014), Maxwell (2012), Pettigrew (1987), Edwards et al. (2014) and Easton (2010) among others. Details are presented in the next section.
3. Recognising that meanings, behaviours and context interact to cause outcomes.
4. Recognising that each case is context-specific and unique: The study treated each SC as a unique case that needed an understanding of the conditions and process involved. This required using techniques like studying the specific context of each organisation, using line-by-line coding of each interview transcript, developing a change process with a timeline and writing a detailed description for each case. This not only supports Pettigrew’s (1985, 1997) process view of the role of context but also the CR’s view that the generative mechanisms are in the context (Edwards et al., 2014).
5. Using two reasoning logics: This study used abduction and retroduction to explore, describe and explain the generative mechanisms that cause and shape SC in Oman. “Critical realists recognizably use two distinct explanatory logics, moving from the empirical to the real through the use of abduction and retroduction” (Edwards et al., 2014, p.17). Used in conjunction, abduction and retroduction can lead to the formation of a new conceptual framework or

theory (Danermark et al., 1997). This is the aim of the study - to develop a new theoretical framework. Also, “By relying on multiple and sequential case studies, one can also use deductive and inductive logic iteratively to foster the development of a richer theoretical framework overtime” (Denis et al., 2001, p. 812). The study involved ‘abduction’ by trying to fit together interview answers, documentary evidence and theories to outline a pattern of the events in each change process and explain the mechanisms that caused the events. When pursuing a retroductive approach, several researchers argue that the approach embraces a wide variety of methods that can be integrated to identify and explain the phenomena in question (see Downward & Mearman 2006; Wynn & Williams, 2012; Venkatesh, Brown & Bala 2013).

6. Generalisability: This study does not believe that a complex social phenomenon can or should be reduced to general laws. This is because, as explained earlier, the context is considered part of the process. Hence, even though the change patterns observed and lessons learnt across the five cases could be applicable in other GBs in the Omani context, it is believed that when the contextual conditions will differ, the outcomes of the processes will also differ from those stated in this study. This belief is based on the concept of generalisability in qualitative research and in realism - “the same process in different situations can lead to different results” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 141). This is also in line with Pawson and Tilly’s (1997) realist principle that mechanism + context=outcome. But, it is worth mentioning here that “With intensive studies [in Critical Realism], it is assumed, a generative mechanism is more formative in shaping outcomes than is the context. However, the actual interaction between context and mechanism is often unknown” (Edwards et al., 2014, p. 31).

The next section discusses the case study as the preferred research design.

4.4 Research Design: Multiple Case Study

The section presents a description and justification of the multiple case study design. First, an overview of the main qualitative research designs is presented. Then a detailed justification is offered as to why the multiple case study is the most appropriate design to answer the research questions and achieve the aim of the study.

4.4.1 Overview of Alternative Qualitative Designs

A research design is a framework that guides the researcher on how to generate useful answers to their questions (Lee & Lings, 2008, p.180). “The main purpose of the design is to help avoid the situation in which the evidence does not address the initial research questions” (Yin, 2014). Consequently, a study’s design depends greatly on the nature of the research question. The research question(s) can tell us what kind of information the study should collect and this in turn can help us determine how the study should be carried out.

According to Creswell (2014), there are at least five main qualitative research designs. These are narrative research (Clandinin & Conelly, 2002), phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), ethnography (Fetterman, 2010; Wolcott, 2008) and case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Other approaches are participatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) and discourse analysis (Cheek, 2004). This study adopted the multiple case study design for various reasons. The next section elaborates these.

4.4.2 The Multiple Case Study Design

This study followed the case study design (Yin, 2014) to explore the “what” and “how” of SC processes in the Omani context. According to Yin, “a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon ‘the case’ in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 16). Similarly, Stake (1995) describes the case method as ‘the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances’ (p.11). Case studies are also valid designs for descriptive and explanatory purposes too (Yin, 2003).

According to Edwards et al. (2014, p. 24), a case study is one of the realist research designs that “represents an opportunity to identify the operations of a mechanism or a process in whole or in part”. In fact, much of case study research appears to be oriented towards a realist perspective but researchers can also excel when applying different epistemological orientations to their case study (Yin, 2014). A classic example of a realist case research is Burawoy (1979). Other examples are Taylor and Bain (2005), Delbridge (1998) and Burawoy (1985). This study opted for multiple cases to increase explanatory power and generalisability (Miles & Huberman 1994). “Although all designs can lead to successful case studies, when you have the choice and resources ... having at least two cases should be your goal” (Yin, 2014, p. 64). This is because the evidence is more compelling and the study becomes more robust (Herriot & Firestone, 1983). Similarly, in CR, comparing

multiple cases “allows processes and outcomes, generative mechanisms, and conclusions about cases and outcomes to be drawn more effectively” (Edwards et al., 2014, p. 31).

The overall purpose of this study is to explore and advance our understanding of a significant phenomenon in an under-researched context and as such, the exploratory case study was selected. According to Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 547), “The selection of a specific type of a case study design will be guided by the overall study purpose”. Exploratory cases “describe the context in which an intervention occurred and the intervention itself” (Benbasat, Goldstein and Mead, 1987, p. 378). When a researcher uses multiple exploratory cases, they “explore differences within and between cases to replicate findings across cases” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 547).

The cases in this study were selected purposively but also based on availability. Purposive samples have logic and power and offer rich information (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Eisenhardt (1989) emphasised that “while there is no ideal number of cases, a number between 4 and 10 cases will usually work out well”. Yin (2014) urged that a researcher should follow a replication logic when opting for multiple cases and consider each case similar to an experiment with contrasting or similar results predicted from the beginning of the study. This study investigates five cases which were predicted to produce similar results due to the great similarities in the way GBs are organised and governed. Process studies like that of Martin and Eisenhardt (2010) and Denis et al. (2001) include six and five cases respectively. This indicates that the number is sufficient to offer robust analytical conclusions and increase external validity.

Initially, eight organisations that had undergone recent changes were contacted. Two organisations led by foreign CEOs refused to participate in the study. Their reason was that the questions were too intrusive and it was not in the best interest of their organisations to participate at that time. The remaining six organisations accepted. But, one case had to be dropped due to insufficient data and lack of interest and commitment from the CEO’s office. Here again, the CEO of this organisation was a foreigner. The remaining five case organisations, all led by Omani CEOs, were investigated. Unlike the foreign CEO’s who either rejected to participate or ignored the invitation and showed no commitment, all the five local CEOs expressed great interest and support for the study.

Due to absence of other data sources, this study relied on interview data and documents. Case study evidence can come from many sources, the most commonly used are documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts (Yin, 2014). Other sources include films, photographs and videotapes, projective

techniques and psychological tests, proxemics, kinesics, street ethnography and life histories (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

To increase the reliability and validity of the multiple case design, three major decisions were made before commencing data collection (Yin, 2014). First, a screening procedure to identify the final cases was conducted. Initially eight organisations were identified but later only five were included in the study. As mentioned earlier, two rejected the invitation and one was dropped due to insufficient data. The screening procedure involved setting criteria that helped qualify some organisations and disqualify others. The criteria entailed that 1) the case organisations should be businesses that are either fully or majority owned by the government 2) operating in the capital city Muscat, Oman 3) businesses that underwent organisation-wide changes in not more than the last past five years, and the 4) changes should be completed.

Second, decisions on the unit of analysis and defining the boundaries of the cases were made. The unit of analysis is the case that you want to analyse. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 25), it is “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”. The unit of analysis can be determined by the research questions, the type of organisations that the researcher selects and choices that other researchers made in similar previous studies (Yin, 2014). This study explores the forces, phases and influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman. The main focus is exploring the change process in each business; hence, the unit of analysis is the change process. “The boundaries [of the case] indicate what will and will not be studied in the scope of the research project [and] ... binding the case will ensure that your study remains reasonable in scope ...” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, pp. 546-547). A case can be bounded by time and space (Creswell, 2003), by time and activity (Stake, 1995) and by definition and context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Because this study uses a process view, the contingency perspective and CR, the context is a very important part of the case. This is in line with the role of context in case studies, in which the boundaries between the case and the context are not clear. Also, due to absence of other data sources on the changes, the study includes managers and non-managers from all levels and divisions who experienced the change from start to finish. But, the study did not include any board members, owners, government officials or consultants. Also, none of the resigned or retired employees were met. In addition, the study did not focus on the design details of the new strategies or structures but rather viewed these changes as strategic in general and focused on how the companies planned, introduced and sustained the changes. The focus was on the changing process rather than what was changed because this is not a study of designing structures or formulating business strategies but rather a study of how changes unfold. Moreover, the study did not look at details of the financial, legal and

technological sides of the business. The bulk of the study was on how the change unfolded, how it was led and managed and what influenced it. All of this was learnt from the individuals who planned, decided, acted, reacted and experienced the change processes.

A third decision made in preparation for data collection was designing a case-study protocol (Yin, 2014). For details, please see appendix 5 ‘Case Study Protocol’. These three decisions helped guide the researcher in carrying out data collection and increased the reliability of the case study research (Yin 2014, p. 84). In addition to the three decisions, an excellent case study goes beyond methodological procedures. This study followed the five hallmarks of an exemplary case study emphasised by Yin (2014). Table 4.3 details the hallmarks and how the study meets them.

Table 4.3: The five hallmarks of an exemplary case study

The hallmarks of an exemplary case study	How this study meets the hallmark
The case study must be significant	This case is unusual and of great interest to the government of Oman, Ministry of Finance, boards of directors, policymakers, CEOs, academics and the big international consultants of GBs in Oman and the region. It is the first study that explores multiple SC processes in GBs in the Arab Middle Eastern region and the Arabian Gulf countries. The underlying issues are nationally important because the case organisations and the change processes analysed greatly influence the GDP of the country.
The case study must be complete	The boundaries of the case are clear and special attention is given to the context. The researcher exerted effort in collecting data and exploring rival explanations for the phenomenon. The reader can see the length and depth of the study and the cases as proof. The case study is complete because no more interview data was needed and the study was not forced to come to an end due to a resource or time constraint
The case study must consider alternative perspectives	Starting from data collection and up to data analysis and reporting, the researcher paid special attention to exploring rival explanations. Also, the researcher opted from a maximum variation purposive sampling to capture all the alternative perspectives of the phenomenon.
The case study must display sufficient evidence	The researcher also proved that she knows the subject very well. She showed clearly how the investigation was conducted, how data was collected, analysed and interpreted. Evidence is presented for all claims made and all sources are cited
The case study must be composed in an engaging manner	The researcher tried her best to present a case study in a clear and engaging manner. She tried to capture the attention of the reader and raise their interest throughout.

Source: Yin (2014, p. 200-206)

The next section discusses and justifies the two data collection methods used - interviews and documents.

4.5 Research Methods for Collecting Data

This section describes and justifies the methods selected for gathering data. A research method is simply a technique for collecting data (Bryan & Bell, 2011, p. 41). For this multiple case study and due to lack of documentary evidence, semi-structured interviews were used as the main method to gather detailed information about the topic of interest. In data collection, the researcher was guided by guidelines, methods and techniques suggested by Dawson (2003), Yin (2014), and Galletta (2013), among others.

4.5.1 Designing and Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews

Because it was not possible to learn details about the change processes from other ‘sources of case study evidence - archival records, direct observations, participant observation and physical artifacts’ (Yin, 2014), the only way of knowing what really happened and how the changes unfolded was by interviewing the people who experienced the change processes. In fact, “One of the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview” (Yin, 2014, p. 110). It is “a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the interviewee” (Kvale, 1996, p. 174). This research method was used to elicit answers on all the research questions from the point of view of the people involved. It “... tap[ped] deeply into the respondents’ own experiences, feelings and opinions” (Lee & Lings, 2008). The strength of interviews lies in two features – their focus on the case study topics and their ability to provide personal views and explanations (Yin, 2014). But despite their strengths, interviews in case study research have their weaknesses. They can have biases due to quality of the questions, response bias, and inaccuracies due to poor recall (Yin, 2014).

To overcome the weaknesses, interview questions were developed using guidelines of a pioneering researcher in the field of OC processes (Dawson, 2003). They were also pilot tested and revised for clarity. For details, see appendices 6 and 7, “Interview Questions” and “The Pilot Test”. Response bias was addressed by repeating each question at least twice in two different ways, probing about possible alternative explanations for each major issue that emerged during interviews and summarising the interview at the end for each interviewee to gain confirmation, corrections and clarifications on what was said. Inaccuracies due to poor recall were avoided by studying cases that were not more than five years old. Also, allowing interviewees to go back and forth in their answers, repeating the questions whenever it felt necessary during the interviews and putting the events in a sequence on a timeline on a paper. This later technique helped interviewees recall many details and the sequence of events during the change processes.

This study relied on the semi-structured interview because “it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee's responses” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 88). An interview protocol with a checklist was used to ensure that all questions were asked. A checklist “allows for in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters traced out by the aim of the study” (Berg, 2007, p. 39).

For this study, interview questions were designed from the three main research questions. Knowledge of forces of change, phases of change and influencing factors from the OC literature helped in designing the questions. Also, knowledge of the Omani context helped ‘locate people’s experiences within a broader social, economic and political environment (Galletta, 2013). Formulating interview questions to explore change processes was directed by Dawson’s (2003, p. 180-185) guide for interviewers in his book ‘Understanding Organisational Change: The Contemporary Experience of People at Work’. Yin’s (2014) suggestions were followed on designing case studies, preparing to collect evidence and data collection. Anne Galletta’s (2013) in-depth step-by-step guide to the use of semi-structured interviews was relied on too. For example, case and interview protocols were designed based on the guidelines of Yin (2014) and Galletta (2013). An interview guide was developed from the documentary evidence, and review of the relevant literature. The guide helped ensure that all interviewees were asked the same [theory-driven] questions and also avoided two undesirable situations, the chaos of irrelevant stories and the awkward silence that occurs when you don’t know what to say next (Lee & Lings, 2008). Examples of questions that were asked are, ‘Why do you think your organization decided to change?’, ‘How did the change process take place?’, and ‘What do you believe helped facilitate the change process and what hindered it?’ See the interview protocol and questions in the appendices.

After preparing the interview questions, all of them were pilot-tested with three real managers from Oman whose organisations underwent major changes. Please see appendix 7 for details. The purpose was to ensure the appropriateness and clarity of the questions, refine them and check the time needed to answer all the questions and the usefulness of the interview as a research method (Creswell, 2009). Two of the pilot-test interviews were video-taped after gaining permission from the interviewees to identify the researcher’s mistakes and improve her interviewing skills before conducting the actual interviews. The wording of the questions and timing of the interviews were modified after the pilot-tests. It was observed that some of the questions were ambiguous and that the interviewees needed more time to answer and more probing to elaborate on their experiences. Also, after realising the depth and length of the interviews in the pilot-test, the researcher developed a

flow chart of how the interview would flow. This turned out to be a very useful technique as it helped keep the interviewees focused within the scope of the interview topics and navigate by themselves from one topic to another. The flow chart was presented to the interviewees in beginning of the interviews as a guide and it was kept in front of them to help them move from one topic to another.

The study used purposive sampling which is a type of a judgmental, selective and non-probability sampling (Patton, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher asked the CEOs' offices to select managers and non-managers from all levels and divisions who experienced the changes from the beginning to the end. '...the purpose here is to sample cases or people who are relevant to your research question' (Lee & Lings, 2008, p. 214). The researcher wanted to capture the different experiences from all divisions and levels. This purposive sampling technique is called the maximum variation or heterogenous sampling and its aim is to identify the existing variations in perspectives from the typical to the extreme ones (Patton, 1990, 2002; Kuzel, 1999). The other six types of purposive sampling techniques do not meet the needs of the study – homogenous, typical, extreme, critical, total population and expert sampling (Patton, 2002).

The sample size for the interview study was set at ten individuals in each organisation (i.e. five managers and five non-managers) but the sizing relied on the concept of "saturation" or the point at which no new properties, dimensions, or conditions are seen in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). When Guest, Bruce and Johnson (2006) analysed data from 42 in-depth interviews, they found that saturation could occur as early as six interviews or within the first 12 interviews. In this study, saturation occurred after four or five interviews in each case organisation i.e. after meeting two managers and two non-managers only. But additional three or four interviews were conducted in each organisation just to verify the saturation point.

The organisations were emailed the necessary information pack of the study which included the invitation letter, a participant information sheet and the consent form. Please see these in appendices 8, 9 and 10. The researcher was emailed names of employees who agreed to participate and interview schedules were arranged with top managers. Meeting times with the top management teams were assigned to the researcher via the CEO offices. However, the researcher was given all contact details and advised to get in touch with all participants as and when they wished. Meetings with non-managers were mutually agreed upon with the participants via emails and then phone calls. Once in the organisations, the researcher managed to meet other staff and receive recommendations on who was a better person to interview. On three occasions, snowball sampling was used with the permission of the CEOs' offices. Although the organisations at first selected employees, the researcher was

allowed to meet whoever they wanted as long as the employee accepted. Hence, the final selection of the qualitative sample was left up to the researcher to decide who to interview. Consequently, data was collected via 42 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with purposively selected managers and non-managers from all levels and four-five divisions who experienced SCs in five different GBs. As mentioned earlier, purposive sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002) was used to make sure that both the cases and the interviewees would cover the variation in the phenomenon of interest.

The actual interviews were conducted in closed offices that the participants themselves selected to ensure privacy and help each interviewee relax and express themselves freely. It was confirmed by the CEO offices that there were no hidden surveillance cameras or speakers in the interview rooms. All the sessions were tape-recorded with the permission of the individuals. Each interview ran for 60 to 120 minutes depending on the level of the interviewee. Managers took 90-120 minutes to tell their stories of change. If meeting respondents face to face at work would have been an obstacle, the second option was to ask respondents to write letters or answer open ended questions in writing. Although social and organizational researchers have not utilized these methods as often, historical and political researchers commonly use personal letters and diaries as sources of data in their research (Lee & Lings, 2008). The last options were telephone interviews and questionnaire surveys. But, all the face-to-face interviews were conducted and tape recorded as planned and the researcher did not need to use any other methods.

The interviews followed the ethical considerations around the use of participant consent and opened with a reminder of confidentiality and participant's rights to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. See the "Consent form" in appendix 10. Each participant was also asked to confirm if they had accepted to be tape-recorded. Each participant was asked to introduce himself/herself and explain their association with the government business and then discuss how and when the change started, what caused it, how it unfolded, what helped the process and what restrained it, what worked well and what went wrong and why, how they would do it better next time, what they learnt from the change experience and what they were still waiting for. While interviewing, the researcher asked if they could have copies of relevant company documents. These were requested but among the six organisations, only two provided change-related documents. Hence, media and government documents were used. The next section discusses the use of documentary evidence.

4.5.2 Documentary Evidence

The use of documents came before interviews in this study to describe the research context in general and to build a specific context in which the change processes occurred. “The goal is to obtain a rich set of data surrounding the specific research issue, as well as capturing the contextual complexity” (Benbasat et al., 1987, p. 374). Reading documents also helped create an initial timeline for the change processes that were going to be explored via interviews.

The researcher started with an internet search for information on the case organisations and media documents that covered major events of the change programs. This search helped answer why GBs changed and offered names of CEOs and dates of major events. It also offered details on the financial performance of the businesses and future plans.

But utilising documentary evidence involved deciding on important issues like: Which kinds of documents to collect? What to look for in the documents? How far back into time should the researcher read and when to stop? The plan was to look for accounts of organization-wide programs that occurred during the period 2007-2015 in at least 8 Omani organizations. But the researcher did not succeed in getting sufficient documents mainly due to confidentiality and the absence of such records.

According to Bryan and Bell (2011), such accounts can be found in personal documents, public documents, organizational documents, mass media outputs, and some visual and virtual documents. Based on the researcher’s knowledge of the Omani business environment and the local culture, it was expected that either no access or very limited access would be given to personal documents as these are considered highly confidential. The same applied on public documents like public inquiries and proceedings of critical organisational events or disasters. These too might not be shared as they are considered highly confidential and sharing them will be a breach of both confidentiality/privacy laws and social values. The expectations were right and the researcher got only three internal documents from the six case organisations and had to rely on media documents. Later on, after contacting the Ministry of Finance and updating them on the significance of the study and the need for data, the researcher was given a copy of an internal document from the ministry and was asked to keep the source confidential.

To overcome the weaknesses of documents, the researcher used Atkinson and Coffey’s perspective (2004, p. 58) on what they refer to as ‘documentary reality’. “... we cannot treat records-however official- as firm evidence of what they report” because documents represent a distinct level of reality ‘documentary reality’ and should be examined in terms of the context in which they were produced, mentality of the writer/photographer etc., the issues they intended to emphasize, the purpose, the targeted reader etc. Furthermore,

because some of the collected documents were expected to be incomplete, inaccurate or even incorrect, four criteria for evaluating the quality of documents were used in the study – authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Bryan & Bell, 2011).

All in all, documents were used with care. They were useful because they helped create a historical context in which stories of how organization-wide change unfolded. Being able to create a context for the change stories was a very useful outcome because in process studies and within CR it is recognised that ‘people’s experiences are shaped not only by their individual agency but also by the structures within which they are situated i.e. the larger milieu of social, political and economic conditions as well as legislative and judicial decisions that influence individuals and organisations’ (Galletta, 2013, p. 11). Analysing documents also enabled converging data to determine consistency of findings (Yin, 2014; Benbasat et al., 1987).

In collecting qualitative data, several issues of quality and significance were addressed like the issues of transparency, generalisability and transferability among others (Bazeley, 2013). To ensure quality, several suggestions offered by researchers were taken into consideration - Scott’s (1990) criteria for rigor and validity in qualitative data collection, Lincoln and Guba’s (1990) criteria for judging the quality of case study reports, Seale’s (2004) criteria for quality and generalisation in qualitative research and Maxwell’s (2012) strategies for increasing validity from a CR perspective. To increase the overall validity and reliability of the multiple case study design, Yin’s (2003) guidelines were used. These are clarified in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Increasing reliability and validity of a case study

Measure	What is it	How to achieve it	When to do it
Reliability	Consistency in how the researcher handles each case	Develop a case study protocol and follow it; Maintain a database for each case	Before, during and after data collection
External validity	“the extent to which the findings from a case study can be analytically generalised to other situations that were not part of the original study” (Yin, 2014, p. 238). Analytic generalisation is “the logic whereby case study findings can extend to situations outside of the original case study, based on the relevance of similar theoretical concepts or principles” (p. 237)	Use the replication logic in multiple cases	During research design, data collection and analysis
Internal validity	“the strength of a cause-effect link made by a case study, in part determined by showing the absence of spurious relationships and the rejection of rival hypotheses” (Yin, 2014, p. 239).	Use pattern matching and rival explanations;	During data analysis

Source: Yin (2003, 2014)

After describing and justifying the data collection methods and procedures, the next section looks at the scope and delimitations of the research design.

4.6 Scope of the Study and Delimitations of the Research Design

After discussing the research approach, design and methods, this section highlights the delimitations. The following seven points stood as scope and delimitations:

1. Choice of the research problem, questions and aim of the study

Although many contextual issues related to the phenomenon are important and deserve a study on their own to see how they affect and get effected by SC, it was necessary to first explore and describe the phenomenon. Once the general patterns are identified then details can be filled. The intention of the study was to develop an understanding of the phenomenon first and that determined the choice of the questions and aim.

2. The geographical location

This study covered GBs of Oman only. There was no interest to explore the causes, phases and influencers of SC processes in GBs of the other Arab Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain) because the intention was to first understand the logics and dynamics of the phenomenon at home. Also, it would have been costly to travel to other countries and the chances of getting approval to explore people's experiences of SCs in GBs of other countries are very low. In addition, to conduct a process study of change in another country requires a deep understanding of the context of the country and this would have taken a long time. The researcher also doesn't feel that she would have had sufficient time to fairly cover the contextual factors and represent them accurately.

3. The time period of the cases

The study explored five retrospective cases of SC that occurred between 2007-2015. All the changes took at least 5 years. The researcher was forced to select the most recent SCs that had occurred during that time period of data collection for the PhD study. Eight recent cases were identified, two rejected to participate and one was removed from the study due to insufficient data. Selecting cases that occurred farther back to pre-2007 and the late 90s would have been very difficult because employees would have forgotten the details and many managers and non-managers who had experienced the changes would have been in other organisations and it would have been hard to reach to them.

4. A multiple case study 'why not another design?'

The intention was to gain a picture of the patterns of SC that occur across GBs and generate insights and practical guidelines for other GBs. The lessons generated from multiple cases help build a more compelling and convincing argument rather than those from a single case. Also, the emergence of two contrasting clusters of

cases, helped identify generative mechanisms that have significance beyond a single case. It was not possible to opt for a single case because there wasn't any single case that the researcher was aware of as a 'unique' or 'representative' case (Yin, 2014) that satisfy the conditions of when a researcher should opt for a single case. Other qualitative designs like ethnography and grounded theory were not appropriate to use because they required longer time, specific techniques and are not suitable from comparing multiple events. Also, experimental designs and surveys were not selected because they would not have generated the in-depth information and stories needed to answer the research questions.

5. Process and not variance study

The initial plan was to conduct a mixed methods study that would build a theory from multiple cases and then test it via a variance study. However, due to lack of time and the density of analysing five SC processes, the study was reduced to the qualitative phase only. The process approach was preferred because it generates details and helps develop a fuller understanding. The variance approach would have identified correlations but no process data. The intention after the PhD is to test if what was found in five cases can be generalised to the larger sample of other government and private sector businesses that underwent major reorganisations.

6. Relevant alternative theoretical perspectives that could have been used

This study used the adaptation and growth perspective of the contingency theory to explain SCs in Oman because its assumptions fit well with the findings of the study. There are many alternative adaptation and selection perspectives that could be used for the study like Child's (1972) Strategic Choice, Institutional Theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Di Maggio & Powell, 1983), organisational learning perspective (Cyert & March, 1963; March, 1991) and Punctuated Equilibrium (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985; Gersick, 1991). Explanations for why these perspectives were not selected are offered in Chapter 2, Literature Review.

7. Generalizability of the study

Investigating SC processes in GBs alone implies that the findings cannot be generalised outside the population of GBs. This delimitation is challenged by the fact that GBs are a hybrid of public and private forms (Perry & Rainey, 1988). They are profit-oriented entities that compete with regional and international players and their practices do not differ from those in large privately held businesses. The boards on both types of organisations are very powerful. In the private sector, the chairmen and women are the business owners and in GBs, they are top government officials including former ministers. Another delimitation is - in process studies "contextualism and generalisation do not match" (Sminia, 2009,

p. 106). This can be true in single case studies. Pettigrew (1985, 1997) advised the use of multiple cases and comparing polar cases to identify generative mechanism that can be generalised.

The next section explains how the researcher ensured the ethicality of the study.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations play a fundamental role in modern research. Unethical research studies can cause emotional and financial harm, and damage the reputation of researchers, their funding bodies, participants and the wider society. At times, when participants are identified, they could be disadvantaged at work. Researchers who violate rules of ethics in conducting research can get prosecuted and lose their reputation and professions in the worst cases. Today there are major professional organizations that call for a range of ethical and legal considerations when conducting research. Examples of these can be seen in the codes of ethics of professional associations like the Social Research Association (SRA), American Academy of Management (AoM), Market Research Society (MRS), British Sociological Association (BSA) and others. There are also research ethics frameworks developed by research funding bodies like the ESRC and the European Union, which supplement and develop the existing codes. In this study, all the ethical requirements of Aston University were met and the study was approved before data collection.

There are a range of ethical issues that can arise at various stages of any research study. These have been carefully and usefully divided into four main areas by Diener and Grandall (1978) mentioned in Bryan and Bell (2011, p. 128-138):

1. Whether there could be harm to participants
2. Possible lack of informed consent
3. Invasion of privacy
4. Whether deception could be involved

In addition to these, legal considerations were made. These were very important considerations as the study explored six of some of most important and sensitive GBs in Oman during a time of dwindling oil revenues, political upheavals and changing political, economic and social contexts in the Arab Middle Eastern region and the Arabian Gulf countries. The researcher had access to inside confidential stories on politics, the economy and top managers. The CEOs who participated had clearly asked that the results of the study should not be disseminated before sharing them with the participating organisations and the concerned ministries. The legal considerations included data management (the collection, storing and sharing of data), copyright issues, reciprocity and trust in the

researcher-subject relationships and issues related to research funding, affiliations and conflicts of interest (Bryan & Bell, 2011, p. 138-1440.). After careful consideration, a decision was made in the fourth year of the study not to share the results of the study in any conference before reporting these to the government of Oman, the scholarship provider and the main beneficiary of the results. A decision was also made not to make the thesis available for the public after the completion of the studies.

All in all, the researcher was aware of the potential ethical issues associated with the study from the early stages during the design phases and the level of awareness increased as the study reached to the end. The training offered in Aston Business School and the reading enabled upholding the various ethical guidelines. A detailed plan was submitted to Aston Business School for ethical approval before data collection commenced in Oman. Ethical approval was granted and data collection span from December 2014-May 2015.

After spending four months collecting data in Oman, the researcher returned to UK with voluminous, in-depth, complex data waiting to be analysed and made sense of. The next section discusses the strategies and techniques used to analyse the evidence collected and present the cases that would make a lasting contribution to the field.

4.8 Methods for Data Analysis and Synthesis

This section discusses the procedure and methods used for analysing qualitative data. Qualitative interviews result in large amounts of data (Neuman, 2007) and when the research involves a process study then it tends to be messy because of the complex data involved (Langley 1999; Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). Data analysis involved examining data, organizing it, cleaning it by removing errors and irrelevances, describing its nature and relationships and reducing it to meaningful chunks which could lead to the discovery of useful information and the answering of research questions.

Being a qualitative process study of multiple cases of SC, the amount of data in this investigation was enormous, interconnected and very complex. Organising, understanding, interpreting, comparing and contrasting and drawing conclusions was a long, tedious and challenging endeavour. Every bit of detail on the context and change stories shared seemed to be linked and played a role in the overall open system view of the change processes. Forty-two interviews resulted in about 63 hours of recorded interviews with non-managers and 42 hours with managers). Managers had more information to share and thus took 90-120 minutes in interviews in comparison to non-managers who took no more than 60 minutes. In terms of transcribing hours and papers, every one-hour interview took about six to seven hours to transcribe and about 40-50 pages of transcripts.

The main focus of data analysis was to identify the forces that led to each SC, the main events and construct a timeline for each case and the contextual and situational factors that influenced the change processes. The researcher relied on guidelines offered by Yin (2014) in case study research, Saldana (2016), Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) and Bazeley (2013) on coding and data analysis, Braun and Clark (2006) on thematic analysis, and Maxwell (2012), Edwards et al. (2014) on a realist approach in qualitative research. The researcher also relied on guidelines from Bryan and Bell (2011), Bazeley (2013) and Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) among others.

In analysing the interviews, the study did not start with any theoretical propositions. There were no pre-determined codes that the researcher scanned the transcripts for. The approach followed was to analyse the hundreds of pages of transcripts line by line from the ground up but also keep an eye on answers for the research questions. Hence, it is the research questions that gave a sense of direction in analysing the data. Each interview was analysed individually. Each case was also initially analysed separately. Emerging themes were recorded and kept in mind as the analysis moved to the second, third and up to the fifth case and the replication logic was used. The next section presents details of how interview data was analysed from quotes, codes, and categories to themes. According to Yin (2014), the best preparation for conducting case study analysis is to have a general analytic strategy that links the case study data to some concepts of interest and give a sense of direction in analysing the data.

4.8.1 Thematic Analysis, Coding and Developing Themes

To prepare for analysis, the researcher organized and arranged the data into different types based on the sources of information (interview, documents, follow-up emails). This stage involved transcribing interviews, checking transcriptions for accuracy (Galletta, 2013), cataloguing and sorting materials and then reading all the data to capture an overall meaning (Creswell, 2014). After organising the case evidence, the researcher followed the six steps of thematic analysis by Braun & Clark (2006). This involved using multiple coding methods (Saldana, 2016) to turn the data into fragments, then classifying the data and creating displays (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). The researcher used matrices and/or diagrams to highlight the emerged concepts and any relationships (Lee & Lings, 2008).

Thematic Analysis

According to the guidelines offered by Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis was done by 1) first gaining a familiarisation with the data by skimming through the transcripts. 2) Then, the researcher moved to coding. 3) After that, she searched for themes and gathered

the representative quotes in tables for each theme. 4) Then the themes were reviewed and a thematic map that resulted from coding was developed. 5) The next step was to define and name the themes. 5) At the end, the researcher wrote the case descriptions around the themes and used the supporting quotes. The description addressed the research questions and was later linked to the literature.

After skimming through the transcripts for accuracy and familiarisation, the researcher moved to coding, the second step in Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis. As mentioned earlier, it was performed using Saldana's (2016) methods and guidelines. Coding is "the process of organising the material into chunks or segments of text and assigning a word or phrase to the segment in order to develop a general sense of it" (Creswell, 2014, p. 241). But coding in this study followed a purely inductive data-driven bottom-up approach to analysing interviews. The researcher's concern was to allow all ideas to emerge and get captured. But, the research questions and their main concepts (forces, process and influencers of SC) gave scope and direction to the analysis. According to Saldana (2016), "coding and analysis are not synonyms ... coding is just one way of analysing qualitative data, not the way ... [it] is not a science; it is primarily an interpretive act ... [and] the transitional process between data collection and more extensive data analysis" (p. 3-5). The process is interpretive because "we bring our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions and our quirks to the process" (Sipe & Ghiso, 2004, p. 482-483). Hence, "A code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolises or translates data" (Vogt, Vogt, Gardner & Haeffelle, 2014, p. 13) and captures "a datum's primary content and essence" (Saldana, 2016, p. 4). Codes are very important because they are like 'the bones of your analysis' (Charmaz, 2014). In fact, "the excellence of the research rests in large part on the excellence of the coding" (Strauss, 1987, p. 27).

The researcher in this study was open for all possible ideas and meanings during coding but she also searched for bits and chunks that addressed the research questions throughout. The question "what is the relation of this to the research questions?" guided the whole process. For each interview transcript, coding was done in two cycles. The first cycle of coding included initial and structural coding and the second cycle used pattern and focused coding. The nature of the research questions and the answers the researcher looked determined which coding methods to use (Saldana, 2016). "carefully consider which coding method(s) may generate the types of answers you need, based on the forms of questions you pose" (p. 70-71). The right coding methods were selected in this study. For example, for a data-driven exploration, the researcher had to use line-by-line coding, for identifying forces and influencers of change, the researcher used causation coding, for capturing processes and

sequence of events, the researcher used both process and causation coding. Also, to capture the exact words of the interviewees in some cases and not distort or lose the essence of their meaning, Invivo coding was used.

In the first cycle, the initial coding was an open-ended stage where the researcher did line-by-line coding and also used Invivo, process and causation coding methods. Line-by-line coding helped promote a more trustworthy analysis (Charmaz, 2008). “It reduces the likelihood of imputing your motives, fears or unresolved personal issue to your respondents and to your collected data” (Saldana, 2016, p. 24). Due to the semi-structured exploratory nature of the interviews, the researcher also used structural coding where she applied phrases to chunks of data that were related to the three research questions and their main concepts. This followed more detailed coding to each chunk.

The second cycle coding included methods that require analytical skills to classify, integrate, conceptualise and work towards theory building (Saldana, 2016). The researcher used pattern and focused coding. In pattern coding, the researcher identified similarly coded data and organised the codes into sets and themes. In focused coding, the researcher used causation, process and Invivo codes to prepare evidence that addresses the research questions. All the processes and cause-effect associations that emerged were depicted in flow charts. The researcher coded in ways that allowed her to address the research questions (Bazeley, 2013; Vogt et al., 2014, Galletta, 2013). Similar codes were then grouped and placed under the relevant research question that they addressed.

During process and causation coding, various sequences of events emerged. Each event was associated with its narrative and representative codes and put on a timeline. Pathways were developed for each interviewee to show the assumptions and explanations of their behaviours and also the events they recalled (Bazeley, 2013). The chronological order of events in each case and the representative codes helped developed a process description for each case. Events were added to the timeline only when they were mentioned by at least three interviewees, corroborated by managers and non-managers and mentioned in the company annual reports or special issues. As mentioned earlier, after the fourth or fifth interview in each case, the saturation point was reached and a clear sequence/timeline of events emerged.

In each interview, the researcher identified 70-100 codes from the first coding cycle. These were organised to 20-30 categories in the second coding cycle. Then, the categories were synthesised into 5-7 major concepts. “The final number of major themes or concepts should be held to a minimum to keep the analysis coherent, but there is no standardised or magic number to achieve” (Saldana, 2016, p. 25).

The third, fourth and fifth steps in thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) are related to finding the themes, drawing a theme map and defining and naming the themes. “A theme can be an outcome of coding, categorisation or analytic reflection” (Saldana, 2016, p. 15). The coding process was repeated for all the 42 interviews. Then, major themes were identified at the case level. These too were 5-7 in number for each case. Constant comparison was done at the case level, just like the way it was done within each case, and the final themes reached to after the cross-case analysis were 5. Under each theme came multiple codes. See details of these in the Analysis and Findings chapters. The next table presents one of the findings “at a glance” based on Henwood and Pidgeon (2003) recommendation of using matrix data displays of the codes, the supporting representative quotes and the researcher’s interpretive summary. This table exemplifies how the researcher moved from interview quotes, codes to a theme that addressed one of the research questions. After table 4.5, see the thematic map of the study in figure 4.2.

Table 4.5: Example of a finding at a glance

Representative Quotes	Code	Theme	Researcher's Interpretive Summary
<p>“we had to restructure for growth and expansion ... the government wanted this” (Case R1)</p> <p>Plus, other similar quotes from across divisions and levels</p>	Change initiated by government board for growth and expansion	Government growth strategy and expectations for its businesses is a major force of SC in GBs of Oman	<p>It was noticed that all the five GBs underwent major reorganisations/structural adaptations to expand with the aim of meeting government growth expectations – to breakeven, maximise profits, become self-funded and increase contribution to the national economy that is facing declining oil revenues and a growing population</p> <p>This finding addresses the first research question on what makes GBs in Oman undergo SCs.</p>
<p>“The idea came from the chairman ... this change happened so that we can prepare for the new expanded government facility” (Case R2)</p> <p>Plus, other similar quotes from across divisions and levels</p>	Change initiated by government board to prepare for managing a new expanded facility		
<p>“The decision came from the board to save the three companies ... we have growth aspirations and this was seen as a mean to expand and grow” (Case M1)</p> <p>Plus, other similar quotes from across divisions and levels</p>	Change initiated by government board to save three companies and help them expand and grow		
<p>“We changed to prepare for the new competition ... we are expected to grow and expand too you know” (Case M2)</p> <p>Plus, other similar quotes from across divisions and levels</p>	Change initiated by managers and board to prepare for new competition and meet government expectation for expansion and growth		
<p>“this was a way to meet government growth expectations” (Case M3)</p> <p>Plus, other similar quotes from across divisions and levels</p>	The need to meet government growth expectation		

Source: Developed for the study; Idea of matrix data display taken from Henwood and Pidgeon (2003), Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) and Saldana (2016).

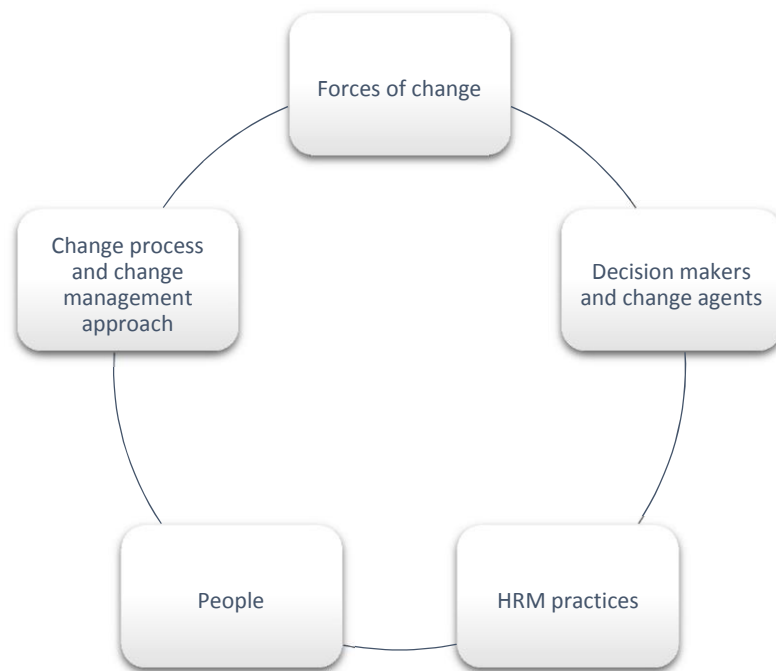


Figure 4.2: Thematic map of the case study
Source: Developed for the study; Inspired by Braun & Clark (2006).

The last step in Thematic Analysis is to write the case descriptions around the themes, address the research questions and link back to the literature (Braun & Clark, 2006). This study ‘developed case descriptions’ which is one of the strategies to organise a case study (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 140). But, one of the biggest challenges faced in doing this was how to present the enormous amount of data in each case. Pioneering researchers in process studies who use multiple cases have emphasised that it is not easy to present detailed change processes concisely (Denis et al., 2001). To overcome this difficulty, the researcher decided to summarise how each process unfolded on a timeline. Then she wrote the detailed case description around the process. As the reader will see in the Case Analysis chapter, the case descriptions start with the initial situations that led to the changes and then proceed to describing the main phases that include the actions, issues and outcomes. Besides the description, the forces, phases and influencers are summarised and presented in a table format to give the reader a bird’s eye view of each case.

The idea of handling one case at a time and writing each case as a single short description first and then gradually adding details to it was taken from Eisenhardt (1989). Developing a summary of descriptions in tables was adopted from Yin (2014) who suggested that when writing case descriptions followed by a cross-case synthesis, one can create “... word tables that display data from individual cases according to one or more uniform categories” (p. 165). Denis et al. (2001) in their process studies used tables as well and referred to them as

‘phase-by-phase process descriptions’. Using tables did not only help write the case descriptions more accurately but also made the cross-case comparison easier. Likewise, Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2016) emphasised the use of matrices and their benefits. The reader of this thesis is expected to find it easier to compare and contrast the cases using the tables provided in the following Case Analysis chapter.

Writing the single case descriptions was done simultaneously with the within-case analysis. After organising the study around case descriptions, the specific analytic strategy used, which applies only to the analysis of multiple-cases, is the ‘cross-case synthesis’. This technique “treats each individual case study as a separate study ... the technique does not differ from other research syntheses – aggregating findings across a series of individual studies” (Yin, 2013, p. 164-165). This involved compiling the case data in tables, examining the results for each case and each cluster and seeking patterns across the cases. Detailed single case descriptions were written although the intention of the study is not to focus on any single case but rather to synthesise the findings of the multiple cases. The descriptions are presented to offer the reader proof that each case was treated fairly and comprehensively (Yin, 2014). See appendices 11 and 13 for examples. The intention of the analysis is to identify the similarities and differences across the five cases, highlight general patterns and derive lessons from them. By offering the single case descriptions before the cross-case synthesis, the researcher proves that “the cross-case analysis has not been biased by undue attention to one or a few of the cases” (Yin, 2014, p. 205). After the cross-case analysis and the identification of the major themes, a general pattern of the change process was identified including the phases and influencers and a general phase-by-phase process description that covered all the five cases was offered. This later technique, as mentioned earlier, was learnt from Denis et al. (2001). At the end, the researcher drew conclusions and reported how the conclusions answered the research questions using guidelines and techniques from (Saldana, 2016) and Yin (2014). Then, the conclusions were verified by checking for qualitative validity and reliability (Yin, 2009; Guest, Mac Queen & Namey, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Saldana, 2016). See the Case Analysis chapter for the case descriptions and within-case analyses and the Findings chapter for the cross-case synthesis.

Before ending the methodology chapter, details on the challenges and weaknesses of the research procedure are offered followed by information on how the researcher attempted to establish quality in this qualitative study and a chapter summary.

4.9 Challenges of the Methodology and Practical Limitations

After describing and justifying the methodological choices made for the study, this section presents the challenges faced and the practical limitations of the choices made. All research studies involve challenges and it is a good practice to be proactive, anticipate the challenges and set solutions to overcome them or reduce their negative results. This study involved several challenges. First of all, the challenges posed from process research are discussed. Then, the issue of generalisability within CR is presented.

4.9.1 Addressing the Complexity of Process Research

Using the process method is more difficult than the variance alternatives for various reasons. First, “Process data are messy, making sense of them is a constant challenge” (Langley, 1999, p. 169). The complexity of the data comes from the interconnected nature of events in processes, the different time horizons involved, the eclectic nature of information sources and the impact of history on processes (Hai-Jew, 2015, p. 399). Because process researchers collect and analyse large amounts of detailed complex data to describe and explain change processes, they face the danger of ‘data asphyxiation’ (Pettigrew, 1990). To overcome these challenges, the researcher relied on guidelines and approaches offered by various scholars for studying processes, analysing process data and building theories from narratives and process data e.g. Langley (1999), Pentland (1999), Pettigrew (1997), Dawson (2003), Poole et al. (2000), Pratt (2009) and Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2012) among others.

Another challenge that lies in working with process data is the required skill and creativity in applying analytical methods and in building process theories and models from the data. This is seen as largely a process of ‘abduction’ (Locke, Golden-Biddle & Fieldman, 2008) in which empirical observations are connected to theoretical ideas to generate conceptual insights and distinctions (Langley et al., 2013). According to Van de Ven and Poole (2005), “becoming a skilful process researcher requires repeated use and practice of these methods”. To address this challenge, the researcher attended seminars and workshops in Aston Business School, participated in the Mixed Methods Research conference in Durham University and had a chance to discuss methodological issues with pioneering researchers in qualitative approaches like John W. Creswell and Patricia Bazeley. The researcher also read extensively on process research before and during data collection and analysis.

4.9.2 Addressing the Issue of Generalisability

The generalisability of the conclusions is to some extent limited in this process study because of the small number of cases analysed (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005) and the nature and orientation of the process approach. In process studies “contextualism and

generalisation do not match” (Sminia, 2009, p. 106) because the processes or mechanisms uncovered are not seen as general laws but as dependent on the situation, i.e., the context is part of the causal process (Pawson & Tilly, 1997). However, according to Poole et al. (2000, p. 43), with the process method, generalisability depends on versatility i.e. “the degree to which it [i.e. the method] can encompass a broad domain of developmental patterns without modification of its essential character”. With regards to CR, this paradigm has been criticised by several researchers like Mutch (2002) and Klein (2004) among others. The main challenge posed from CR on this study is also the issue of generalisability. The issue of generalisability from this paradigm’s point of view revolves around the argument that it does not make sense to generalise correlations and causalities found in a specific research setting under specific contextual conditions. This is because CR believes that mechanisms do not operate independently of their contexts (Edwards et al., 2014). This can be true in single case studies. Pettigrew (1985, 1997) advised on overcoming this challenge. He advocated the use of multiple cases and comparing polar cases to identify mechanism that can be generalised. The patterns that emerge are then not occasional exceptions but rather underlying mechanisms that can be generalised to similar contextual conditions.

4.10 Establishing Quality in Qualitative Research

It is true that qualitative research involves participants’ experiences and researchers’ interpretations but this does not mean that qualitative work is unjudgeable. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014, p. 311) explained:

“Our view is that qualitative studies take place in a real social world and can have real consequences in people’s lives; that there is a reasonable view of what happened in any situation...; and that we who render accounts of it can do so well or poorly and should not consider our work unjudgeable. These are matters of merit, rigor, integrity, ethics and accountability”

Several researchers have offered criteria to ensure reliability and validity in qualitative research (e.g. Yardley, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Some researcher’s like Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis and Dilon (2003) produced long lists of quality criteria. More recently, Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) offered guidelines to address five issues in qualitative research: objectivity (confirmability), reliability (dependability), internal validity (credibility), external validity (transferability) and utilisation (application). See table 4.6 for some of the guidelines offered.

Table 4.6 Quality issues and some practical guidelines

Quality Issue	Meaning	Guidelines
Objectivity / Confirmability	Neutrality and reasonable freedom from unacknowledged researcher bias	Methods and procedure described explicitly and in detail; another researcher can follow the procedures; researcher explicit about personal bias; rival conclusions have been considered; the study's data retained and available for reanalysis by others (if and as allowed by institution and any agreements with participants)
Reliability / Dependability	Consistency and stability of research process over time and across researches and methods	Research questions are clear and features of study design are congruent with them; researcher's role described; basic paradigms used are clearly specified
Internal validity /Authenticity	Truth value	Descriptions are context-rich; the accounts make sense; data presented linked to prior or emerging theory; uncertainties identified; rival explanations considered; conclusions considered accurate by participants
External validity/ Transferability	Do the findings and conclusions fit and can they be generalised to other contexts	Samples of persons, settings, processes etc fully described to allow comparisons; findings are congruent with or connected to prior theory
Utilisation	Application/action orientation	Be explicit about any value-laden or ethical concerns and dilemmas in the report; level of usable knowledge offered is worthwhile; the recommended actions help to solve a problem; users of the findings have learned or developed new capacities

Source: Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), p. 310-314

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodological choices used to answer the three research questions and achieve the aim of the study. The chapter described and justified the qualitative research approach and CR as the philosophical paradigm of the study. Five qualitative research designs were reviewed and the multiple case study was adopted. Details were presented on how the case study was designed and implemented and how quality was ensured. The chapter justified and described the use of semi-structured interviews and some documents. The use of thematic analysis and various coding techniques was explained. Towards the end, the chapter addressed two main challenges of the study - the complexity of conducting a process research and the issue of generalisability in process studies and critical realism. The chapter ended with ensuring quality and a summary. The next chapter presents the five cases. During the analysis, two clusters emerged creating contrasting examples of SC processes in GBs of Oman. Interesting patterns were found.

Chapter 5 - Case Analysis

“Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better”

Albert Einstein

5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to familiarise the reader with the five cases. It presents case profiles, descriptive summaries and a phase-by-phase view of each case to give the reader sufficient background information and prove that equal attention was given to each case. The chapter then delves into the analysis of the two clusters that emerged, Cluster I and II. Focus is given on this latter part of the analysis because the purpose of the study is not to focus on any single case but rather to explore and describe the phenomenon across multiple cases and highlight the similarities and differences.

5.1 Case Profiles and Summaries

This section presents descriptive details of the five cases. The cases are named R1 and R2 i.e. restructuring 1 and 2 and M1, M2 and M3 for mergers 1, 2 and 3. These names will be used throughout the remaining parts of the thesis. The industries the cases belong to are not mentioned as each case is a monopoly or an oligopoly and mentioning the industry will easily identify the case organisation and its participants. See table 5.1 for the case profiles.

Table 5.1 Profiles of the five cases

Case	Ownership	Years of Operation	No. of Employees	Type of Change	No. and type of interviewees
R1	100% Govt	10-15	500-1000	Restructuring due to CEO decision to address structural inefficiencies and career stagnation and a later board decision to expand to meet increasing public demand	10 employees (6 managers and 4 non-managers): CEO, 2 general managers, 2 senior managers including HR, 1 supervisor and 4 non-managers from 4 divisions
R2	100% Govt	10-15	500-1000	Restructuring due to board decision to enable the company to manage an expanded government facility and to address career stagnation	8 employees (4 managers and 4 non-managers): 2 general managers, 1 senior manager, 1 supervisor, 4 nonmanagers from 4 divisions including an HR specialist
M2	More than 50% Govt shares	20-25	1000-5000	Restructuring due to company and board decision to merge a successful modern subsidiary back to the parent in the face of new competition	8 employees (4 managers and 4 non-managers): CEO, 2 Senior managers including HR, 1 general manager and 4 nonmanagers from four departments
M1	More than 50% Govt shares	35-40	2000-3000	Unplanned revolutionary change Integrating three interdependent entities due to unprecedented financial crisis and interorganisational conflicts	8 employees (4 managers and 4 non-managers): 1 interim CEO, former HR manager and senior advisor to the CEO, 2 general managers, 1 HOD, 4 non-managers from 4 divisions
M3	More than 50% Govt shares	20-25	500-1000	Planned evolutionary change Integrating parent (operator) and subsidiary (contractor) due to CEO's ambition to increase value and meet govt expectations	8 employees (4 managers and 4 non-managers): Chief Financial Officer, Advisor to CEO on HR matters, Integration director. HR manager, 4 non-managers from 4 departments

Source: From interview data

The next two sections (5.2 and 5.3) present the five cases in two clusters as they emerged during analysis. First, cluster I cases (R1, R2 and M2) are described and analysed and then cluster II cases (M1 and M3).

5.2 Cluster I Cases: R1, R2 and M2

R1, R2 and M2 are cases of two major restructurings and a merger. The three cases emerged as a cluster during data analysis due to the striking similarities that they shared in the leadership style, change management approach, role of the HR department and outcomes of the change process. The three cases are examples of large-scale evolutionary changes that were caused by external forces. The change in each case is large-scale because it covered the whole organisation and it is evolutionary rather than revolutionary because it did not result in a totally new business but rather made major developments to the existing entities. The change in each case involved growth aspirations and government expansion strategies, heavy reliance on international consultants, the introduction of new structures, new work processes and the need to train employees to learn new behaviours and skills. The cases also involved new jobs, job descriptions and new salary grades.

Analysis of the three cases demonstrated 1) a laissez-faire leadership style during implementation where the CEO didn't demonstrate any change leadership but fully delegated announcing, leading and implementing change to general managers without guidelines 2) a similar change management approach – centralised planning, deliberate lack of communication and employee involvement, lack of attention to people issues during planning, a reactive role of the HR department, lack of change evaluation and absence of a plan to sustain the new order in the post-change period (3 the emergence of similar outcomes during the implementation and post-implementation phases - high resistance (complaints, grievances, resignations, work strikes, rejection of the new structure), longer than expected planning and implementation phases and lower than expected financial performance.

The analysis found that the major restructurings that occurred in the three cases were triggered by four main forces of change:

1. Expansion due to government growth plans and profit expectations
2. Structural issues including organisationally caused career stagnation
3. Changes in power
4. Entrance of new major competition in a monopoly

The analysis also showed that change was implemented and managed in a similar way using a top-down approach. In the three cases, planning was centralised - only the CEOs, top

managers and consultants were involved. Employees were neither involved in planning nor implementation. Communication was deliberately kept to the minimum so as not to disrupt work and the organisations relied on top managers to gradually cascade information down to their subordinate managers and non-managers. In all the three cases employees were not shown the new organisational charts. Also, in all the three cases, the HR departments were not proactively involved in the change processes. They played a purely reactive role in both planning and implementation. The HR managers didn't consider addressing employees' needs during planning and hence had to react to complaints, collective actions and resignations during and after implementation. In all the three cases, the CEOs did not demonstrate any change leadership; division managers were made fully responsible to announce, implement and manage the change in their work groups after the proposals were approved by the boards. There were no post-change plans to integrate people and work. Also, there were no plans to evaluate the changes. The focus was mainly on the technical and financial outcomes only.

Four main categories of influencers were identified as main facilitators and inhibitors of the change processes - the role of decision makers and change agents which was determined by the CEOs leadership style, employee's needs, the role of the HR department and its practices and the change management approach use. Also, all the case organisations experienced similar outcomes due to the way the change processes were led, planned, implemented and managed. There were many people issues during and after implementation. High resistance from managers and non-managers led to increase in employee complaints, grievances, and resignations. The new structures were rejected, work strikes and other forms of collective actions erupted, the CEOs were asked to resign, revisions were done by involving people and new HR reforms were rolled out. In all the three cases, the planning and implementation phases took longer than expected (i.e. 27-30 months) instead of the aspired 12 months due to people issues. The period from the time the change was decided and announced to when the restructuring ended was 40-42 months. In each case, the whole change processes took 6 years and by the 5th and 6th year there were still many unresolved people issues in the three cases. All three organisations experienced lower than expected financial performance.

Due to the depth and length of the case descriptions and the word limit given, summaries of all the three cases are presented. The next three sections (5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.3) offer summaries on each case. The associated tables present the main forces of change in each case, the phases identified in each change process and the main facilitators and inhibitors that influenced each change. For a detailed case description, the reader is advised to go to "R2 Case Analysis: A Restructuring for Managing an Expanded Government Facility and Addressing Career Stagnation" in appendix 11. Case R2 was selected because it represents

what happened in both R1 and M2 in terms of the leadership style used, the planning, implementation and change management approaches adopted, the role the HR departments played, the people issues that emerged and the change outcomes.

5.2.1 Summary of R1 “A Case of a Major Restructuring Due to Structural Inefficiencies, Career Stagnation and a Board-Imposed Expansion”

This is an interesting case of a planned major restructuring that was initiated internally by the CEO and his executive team to address structural inefficiencies and career stagnation that were frustrating employees and impeding the performance of divisions. During the planning phase, the top management was surprised by an unplanned board-imposed decision to expand the company. From serving one geographical region, the company was required to grow, stretch out and serve all except one region in the country. This was a major expansion that needed a major reorganisation. It was different from the initial plan that the top managers had in mind. The ramifications of the board-imposed decision were contrasting views and expectations between managers and non-managers on why the business had to restructure and what would employees get out of it. Are we restructuring to solve our internal problems? (i.e., to address the structural inefficiencies and the organisationally caused career stagnation). Or are we restructuring to expand geographically? Or both? The contrasting views along with lack of communication and involvement later led to many unmet expectations, disappointments, resistance, collective actions, resignations, longer than expected planning and implementation phases and an undesirable financial performance.

This case also represents the critical role of CEO's behaviour and in particular their change leadership style and the behaviours of their top team. The case demonstrated that the CEO and top managers knowledge, skills, abilities and other personal characteristics determine how the change will unfold, what change management approach will be used and what outcomes will be observed. To preserve stability and avoid chaos, communication and employee involvement were deliberately kept very low during the planning and implementation phases. The CEO centralised the planning and designing of the new structure. He then adopted a laissez-faire leadership style “hands-off” during implementation. He fully delegated the responsibility of implementing and managing change to his general managers with the assumption that they were capable of doing the job. After working with the consultants on proposing the right structure for their work groups, each general manager was expected to announce the change, implement and manage it in their groups “in the way they felt was appropriate”. Each general manager was expected to follow his own leadership and management style in the absence of a change leader, a vision for the change, clear guidelines on how to change, on-going evaluation and without change competency. The

result was managers working in silos and a prolonged and messy implementation phase that got troubled with conflicts among managers, staff complaints, two work strikes, demands for the resignation of the CEO and several HR reforms. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the case. For quotes, codes and themes of this case, please see appendix 12 “Cluster I cases”.

Table 5.2: Summary of R1

R1 Causes/Forces of Change	R1 Phases	R1 Facilitators	R1 Inhibitors
Structural inefficiencies Career stagnation The new CEO The decision to expand the business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Antecedents, Felt Need and New CEO 2. Negotiating, Planning the New Management Structure, Decision Making and Announcing 3. Top-Level Internal Planning for the Whole Organisation, Government Decision to Expand and Board Approval 4. Implementing and HR Interventions 5. Continued HR Interventions and other Incremental Changes 	<p>Decision makers and change agents:</p> <p>New CEO Government and board support Role of the consultant A felt internal need</p> <p>Change management approach:</p> <p>Promise of no job loss or salary deduction</p> <p>People and HRM Interventions:</p> <p>Employee expectations and motivation Very low initial resistance Internal recruitment Training and development opportunities People’s humour, hope and quick adaptation (Omani culture)</p>	<p>Decision makers and change agents:</p> <p>Lack of change leadership – lack of a vision and direction CEO’s personality and management style Incompetent board members Incompetent and very political GMs (change managers) Role of the consultant</p> <p>Change management approach:</p> <p>Ineffective planning Lack of communication and transparency Lack of employee involvement Lack of control (standards follow-up, evaluation, corrective action, feedback) Very slow planning and implementation</p> <p>People issues and HRM interventions:</p> <p>People’s attitudes and unmet expectations Career stagnation Social comparisons and perceived inequities High voluntary turnover (resignations)</p>

Source: Developed from interview data.

5.2.2 Summary of R2 “A Major Restructuring for Managing an Expanded Government Facility and Addressing Career Stagnation”

This is a case of a major restructuring in a government organisation that was responsible for managing multiple government facilities. One of the facilities was undergoing a major expansion and the case organisation was required to prepare its staff to operate the new facility once it was ready. Like all other GBs, the organisation was expected to improve its efficiency, grow, hire more locals, develop them, generate more profits, become self-funded and increase its contribution to the national economy so that the government could reduce its reliance on the dwindling oil revenues.

Internally, managers and non-managers were frustrated by years of lack of promotion and salary increases. With the near completion of the multi-billion Omani Riyals facility, the government appointed a powerful chairman to oversee the transition in the case organisation. A decision was quickly made to restructure the company, add several new work areas, train existing employees and hire many others. The existing CEO was informed and he supported the decision. Managers and non-managers believed that the restructuring was decided on to address the long-time issue of career stagnation and also to enable the business to operate the new facility.

Planning took longer than expected and coincided with the March 2011 nation-wide employment-related demonstrations. These collective actions encouraged employees to demand for better jobs and salaries. Like several other CEOs, the CEO resigned and everything was under the control of the chairman. Similar to R1, there was no official announcement of the change and planning was done at the top levels with the help of consultants and the HR department, all behind closed doors. The chairman then finalised the plans alone with the consultants without involving the concerned managers.

Once the plan was approved, employees were simply informed in writing that they would be assigned to new jobs and would have to undergo training. This was done and many new external hirers were brought in as well. It was easy for the new hirers to accept the changes. However, the change was not easy on the existing employees as they had to continue doing their old jobs while holding new job titles without job descriptions, salary information or career paths. The ambiguity led to many enquiries and complaints. HR quickly prepared job descriptions behind closed doors and sent employees for training. However, due to delays in the government project, employees had to wait for years to be able to apply what they had learnt and get their new salaries. This led to frustrations and many resignations. When the new structure was implemented across work groups, strong resistance erupted. This resulted in the emergence of new positions and job titles added by the departments. The board did not reject these so as not to further agitate employees during that year.

By the fourth year, HR reported to the board that the restructuring was completed. However, the end was never officially announced and neither the managers nor non-managers had a clear idea of whether the restructuring had ended or not. Complaints, slow-downs, no-show-ups, demands for promotions and better grades continued. In the 6th year of the change, a new CEO was appointed and staffing and new HR interventions continued. Change has not stopped in this organisation. It was estimated by the top managers that change will continue for at least the next five years. Table 5.3 provides a summary of the case. For quotes, codes and themes on this case, please see appendix 12 'Cluster I cases'.

Table 5.3: Summary of R2

R2 Causes/Forces of Change	R2 Phases	R2 Facilitators	R2 Inhibitors
Government expansion project Career stagnation New chairman	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Antecedents, New Chairman and Decision to change 2. Planning the New Management Structure, Nation-Wide Work-Related Demonstrations and CEO Resignation 3. Announcing the Board Approval, Hiring Top Managers, Top -Level Internal Planning for the Whole Organisation 4. Implementing and HR Interventions 5. HR Interventions, New CEO and Incremental Changes 	<p>Decision makers and change agents:</p> <p>Role of the chairman The new CEO Role of the consultant</p> <p>People and HRM interventions:</p> <p>Low initial resistance and positive expectations for change The Omani' culture-friendly, optimistic, hospitable and quick adaptation New job descriptions, training opportunities and new salaries External recruitment- New hirers accepted and supported the change</p> <p>Change management approach:</p> <p>Increased caution over managing people The ability of departments to add new jobs and titles</p>	<p>Decision makers and change agents:</p> <p>Absence of change leadership – lack of a vision and unity of direction Board interference, politics and incompetence - making changes with the consultant without discussing with the GMs Incompetent and highly political GMs (management styles and change management) Heavy reliance on consultants</p> <p>People and HRM interventions:</p> <p>Career stagnation, resignations Characteristics of new generation of employee Low competency levels of many managers and non-managers Problems of new job titles without job descriptions or salary details Problems with external recruitment (no work experience, Wasta and overstaffing)</p> <p>Change management approach:</p> <p>Ineffective planning and management Lack of communication and transparency Lack of employee involvement and attention to people's issues New facility project delays Lack of evaluation and learning Lack of post-change people integration</p>

Source: Developed from interview data

5.2.3 Summary of M2 “A Case of Merging a Successful Subsidiary Back to the Parent Company Due to New Competition”

This is a case of a merger between a parent company and its subsidiary. The change was caused by a major external threat – the entrance of a new major competitor in a monopoly and the associated fear of losing market share. Once the board and the parent company became aware of the entrance of an integrated competitor, an urgent need was felt to reorganise the company by integrating its services. To become faster and more efficient, it was decided that it would be in the best interest of the company to bring back its young, modern, fast and successful subsidiary. The subsidiary was needed to help the old parent face the new competition and preserve market share. There were many differences between the old and slow parent and its young subsidiary. The later was faster, modern in its work

processes and technologies. It had a relatively younger workforce made up of college graduates who were computer savvy, competitive in their approach and close to the CEO and other top managers.

Like in R1 and R2, planning was done at the top level behind closed doors and it took a whole year. Once the plan was approved, it was announced in both companies with the new management structure. This structure was faced with strong resistance from across levels and resulted in too many complaints and resignations. In only a few months of internal turmoil, the structure got officially rejected by the board and the CEO was asked to resign. The COO was asked to step in and lead the change. Having led the subsidiary successfully with a totally different style from the parent company CEO, there was hope that this new CEO would revise the structure and manage the new integrated company effectively.

Entrance of a new CEO marked a turning point in the change process. The new structure was quickly revised and staffing continued. Employees of the two companies were integrated by moving to a new building, creating a new identity and building a new culture of participation and transparency. There were many culture clashes and notions of winners and losers. However, moving to a new building, initiating a culture change and engaging employees helped employees break from the past. “Doing this for Oman” and values of the Omani societal culture helped employees quickly adapt to the new order.

In the new building, job titles and job descriptions were reviewed and all managers got trained. These activities created expectations that salaries too would increase. However, employees had to wait for long. When the nation-wide employment-related demonstrations erupted in Oman, frustrated employees decided that they too needed to be heard. Employees went on strike and demanded salary increases and solving the pending promotion and pension issues. The incident was quickly handled with care. The new CEO listened and engaged employees. A special committee was created to address peoples’ issues and salaries and grades were increased.

By year 6, the change had come to an end. There was unity and the feeling of ‘togetherness’ resided. The new ways of doing things were seen as routine work. But, despite the satisfaction, there were many unresolved compensation issues. In the same year, the CEO resigned and one of the top managers moved in as the new leader. Several incremental changes are continuing in this organisation. Table 5.4 presents a summary of M2 forces, phases and influencers. For quotes, codes and themes, please see appendix 12 ‘Cluster I cases’.

Table 5.4: Summary of M2

M2 Forces of Change	M2 Phases	M2 Facilitators	M2 Inhibitors
Entrance of new competition in a monopoly Government growth and profitability expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Antecedents, New competition and Decision to Merge 2. Top Level Planning and Board Approval 3. Announcing, Building Support and Implementing 4. Rejection of New Structure, Resignations, New CEO, Modifying the Structure and Staffing 5. Moving to a New Building and HR Interventions 6. Unresolved People Issues, New CEO and Incremental Changes 	<p>Decisionmakers and change agents</p> <p>New CEO during the merger and his leadership style Government and board strong support for change Role of the consultant</p> <p>People and HRM interventions</p> <p>A felt internal need within the parent company to merge Assurance of no job loss or salary reduction before the change Employee's patriotism and 'doing it for the country' People's friendliness, humour and quick adaptation (Omani culture) Post-merger employees' felt need to learn and master new jobs</p> <p>Change management approach</p> <p>Better communication, unity of direction and employee engagement after the merger with the new CEO Moving to a new building signalled a break from the past and a new beginning for employees External recruiters in panel interviews added fairness to staffing Post-merger job descriptions added clarity to work roles Increased salaries and benefits after the merger and the strike calmed employees</p>	<p>Decisionmakers and change agents</p> <p>First CEO lack of change leadership Board members' interference and flexible view of time Too much politics, personal interests and connections at senior levels led to lack of trust in selection and other decisions made</p> <p>People and HRM interventions</p> <p>Too many resignations among vice presidents, middle managers and talented non-managers Post-merger instability in departments due to frequent changes in HODs Post-merger clashes between two very different cultures and the notion of winner and loser Post-merger pay structure came too late and was very disappointing Too many post-merger reward and promotion related complaints – salaries, grades, pensions and unclear promotion criteria for non-managerial positions</p> <p>Change management approach</p> <p>Lack of vision and direction with first CEO Deliberate lack of communication, transparency and employee involvement with first CEO (so as not to waste time) Problems with the new structure during times of first CEO: too many managers, ineffective distribution of staff and departments and no considerations for people's motivational needs Rejection of first management structure caused delays and resignations Ineffective planning: lack of scenario planning and lack of planning for people issues</p>

Source: Developed from interview data

The next section presents the common patterns identified within Cluster I cases.

5.3 Common Patterns Identified in R1, R2 and M2

Research Issue 1: Forces of Change

What makes GBs undergo SC in Oman?

This question looked at the external and internal conditions that caused the reorganisations.

The following figure shows the flow of events from antecedents to the decision to change in the three cases.

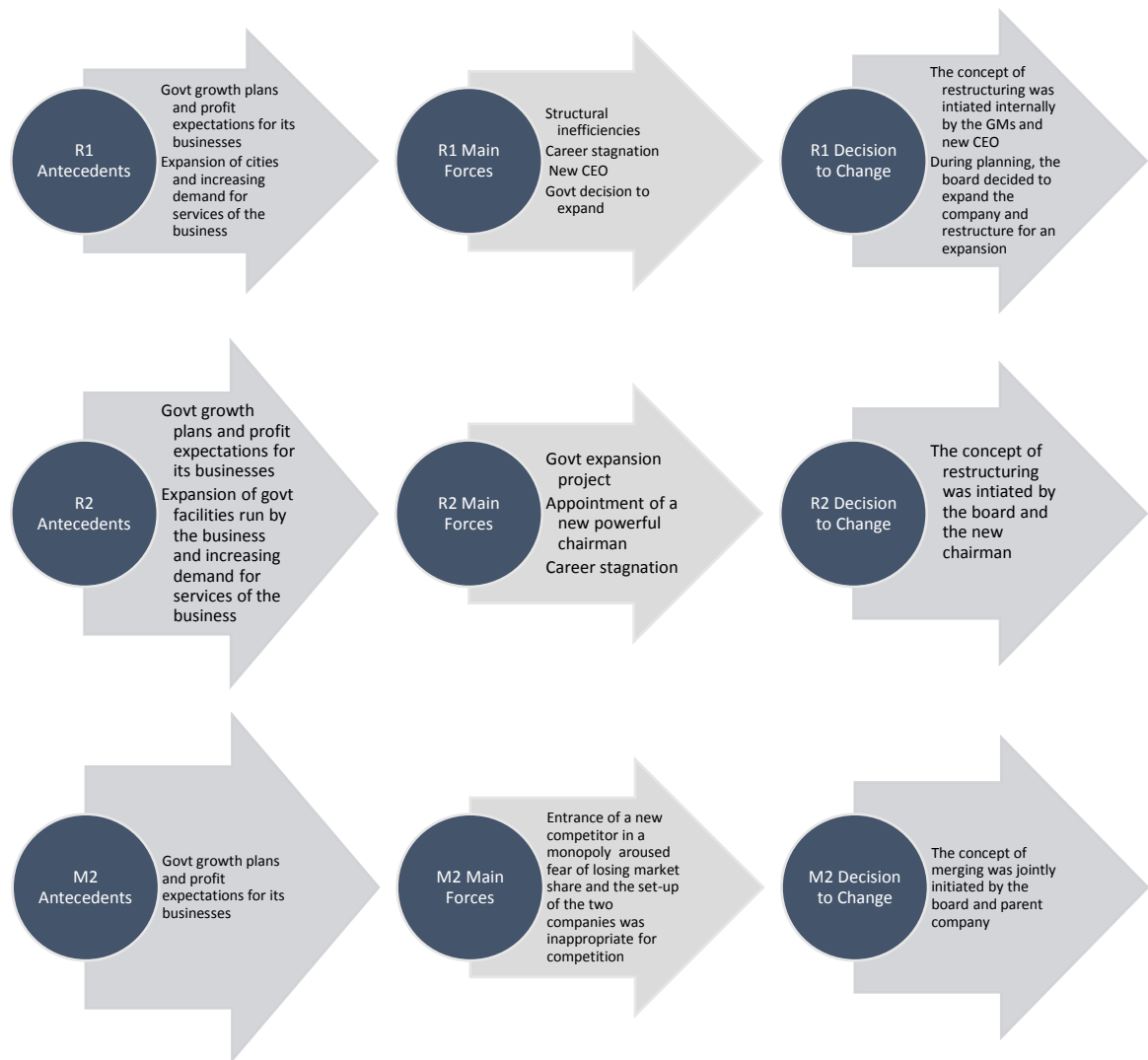


Figure 5.1: From antecedents to the change decision in Cluster I
Source: Developed from interviews

As can be seen from the figure, the cases shared similar antecedents:

1. The first and foremost being the government's growth plans and profit expectations for all its business. The reason behind the growth plans and push for more profits is the need to generate more revenues from non-oil sectors during a time of declining oil prices and oil revenues. Reduced reliance on oil revenue has been one of the main objectives of the government of Oman since the inception of the 25 years' strategic plan, Vision 2020 in 1995.
2. Expansion is a growth strategy that the government of Oman has adopted to maximise revenues from all its sectors in particular the non-oil sectors and also to satisfy the increasing demand for government services due to population growth.

As for the main forces that led to the strategic changes:

1. The most compelling of all forces is 'expansion'. The board's decision to expand the business to meet increasing demand (as in R1) or the board's decision to prepare the business for running an expanded government facility (as in R2) necessitated a change in the structures. Also, the company's and board decision to merge the subsidiary back to the parent and prepare for competition in M2 entailed a major structural change. The idea was to become larger but also faster. In the three cases, the change involved increasing the number and sizes of work groups and their specialisations with a focus on hiring locals (Omanisation) to help reduce the increasing numbers of young local job-seekers.
2. The second common force of change between the three cases is 'structural inefficiencies'. In all cases, the need for 'expansion' made the structures of the businesses inappropriate. In R1, although the CEO and his general managers initially proposed a major restructuring to address inefficiencies in the existing structure, the decision to expand the business made the proposed structure inappropriate. In R2, the structure became inappropriate for running the new expanded government facility. Like in R1, the existing structure had insufficient numbers and types of employees to meet the requirements of an expansion strategy. Similarly, in M2 the parent company's structure became inappropriate to enable the company to face a major competitor and preserve its market share.
3. A third common force of change is 'career stagnation'. This force was caused by the pyramid structures in R1 and R2, the wide spans of control, limited opportunities for promotion and absence of career development programs and career paths. Employees stagnated across levels as opportunities for promotions and salary increases were limited. Hence, in cases R1 and R2, career stagnation was clearly reported as a main internal force of change that was organisationally caused. Although career stagnation was not raised as a main force in M2, the parent company ailed from a tall pyramid structure that slowed work and career advancement.
4. 'Change in power' is the fourth common force of change in all the three cases. Appointment of a new CEO in R1 led to negotiations and a decision for a major restructuring due to pre-existing structural inefficiencies and career stagnation. In R2, appointment of a new chairman near the completion of a major government facility that had to be run by the business led to a board decision to restructure the business to increase the numbers and types of staff and their specialisations. This was required to prepare the company for operating the new government facility. In M2, the existing CEO implemented the change. But, when the structure was rejected and the CEO was asked to resign, the COO took over and made major changes in the structure, identity and culture of the integrated business.

5. 'Entrance of a new competitor' is the fifth force of change. This was present in M2 as the main force of change.

To sum up, it was observed that the three cases shared similarities in forces of change:

1. Expansion due to government growth plans and profit expectations
2. Structural issues
3. Organisationally caused career stagnation
4. Changes in CEO, chairman or board
5. Entrance of new major competitor

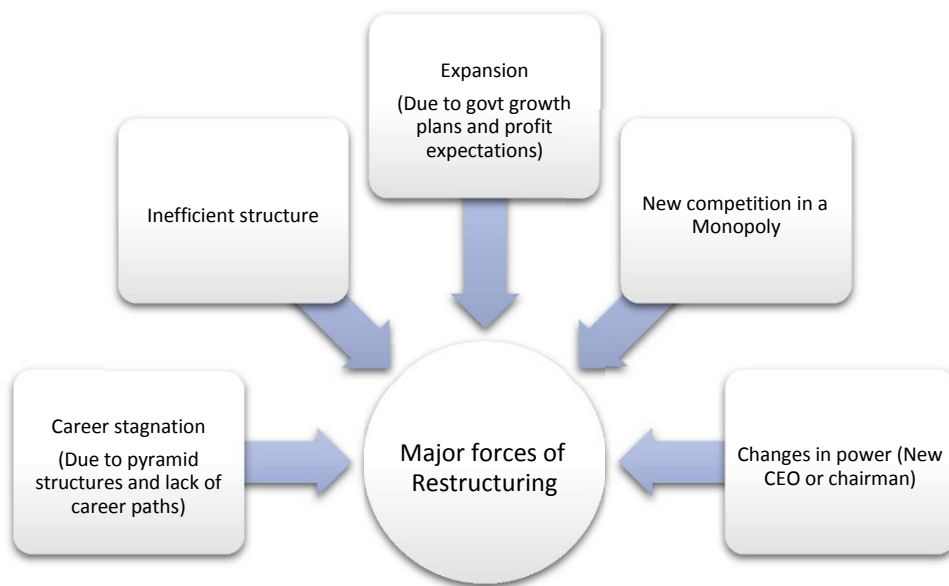


Figure 5.2: Main forces in Cluster I

Source: From interview data

Hence, we can conclude that GBs of Oman will have the tendency to undergo major restructurings due to structural inefficiencies, career stagnation, government decision to expand the business, change in power (CEO, chairman and board) and entrance of a new major competitor into a monopoly.

Research Issue 2: Phases of Change

How do SC processes unfold in GBs?

This question explored the sequence of events that showed how the change process unfolded in each case organisation. The three figures show that the two restructurings and merger unfolded in a similar pattern. This is true despite the change that occurred in M2 after the new CEO moved in.

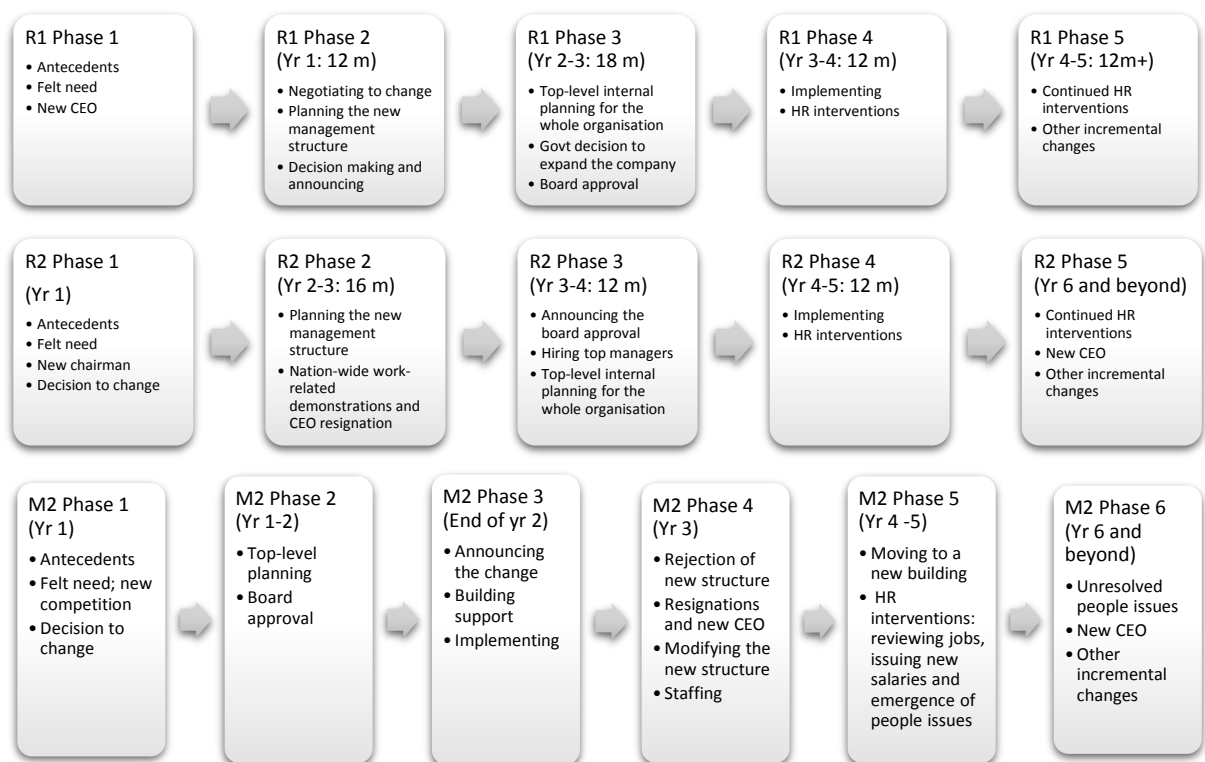


Figure 5.3: Phases of change in cluster I
Source: Developed for the study from interview data

As can be seen in the figures, the restructurings unfolded in five-six major phases:

1. Faced by antecedents, a felt need to change emerged either at the board level or internally. This phase included a major change in power. When the need was felt internally, the CEO initiated the concept of change and negotiated for it at the board level after consulting his executive team. But, when the need was felt at the board level first, the concept of change was initiated by the board, a decision was made and the CEO was informed
2. Negotiating for change included doing cost-benefit analyses, preparing feasibility studies and the new management structure. A decision was made and announced in the businesses along with the new management structure
3. Soon after the announcement of the new management structure, new top managers were hired internally and externally. Internal recruitment followed succession plans and the selection process for top managers was done at the CEO and executive team level. This involved interviews or direct assignments to new positions. In external recruitment, new managers were mainly brought from ministries and other public-sector organisations. These managers brought with them management styles that work in pure public-sector organisations i.e., top-down, command and control type. Once the top managers were in their new positions, they were involved in planning the new

structures along with the CEOs or chairmen (in the absence of a CEO), the consultants and members of the HR departments. The general managers were assigned the responsibility of planning for the number and type of employees needed in their new or expanded work groups (i.e. division). No training was given to the general managers on how to perform their new roles as division managers or their role as change managers. This phase also included board rejections of proposals and receiving the final approvals.

4. Once the new organisational structures were approved, the CEOs fully delegated the responsibility of announcing, implementing and managing the new structure to the division/general managers, each in their work group. The delegations lacked leadership, visions, clear strategies on what to do, how to do it, what to evaluate, how, when and learning. The new structures in the three cases were neither announced nor shared in one message to all the staff. Each general manager decided how they wanted to announce, implement and manage the change within their work groups. The HR departments helped the general managers in directly assigning people to new roles, in designing job descriptions, posting job vacancies, selecting and training. The HR departments also addressed employee questions and concerns about their jobs, salary grades, training and promotion opportunities. This phase was the most challenging and most problematic for managers and employees in the three cases due to unmet expectations, comparisons with others and perceptions of being worse off, complaints and resignations. General managers, department heads and non-managerial employees rejected parts of the new structures and pushed for modifications within their work groups. The major issues that emerged in this phase were lack of announcing and sharing the new structure, absence of a change leader or a change management team, absence of a plan on how to implement the change, managers and non-managers not fully aware of what was going on, not involving staff in the creation of new job titles, directly assigning employees to new jobs and the creation of new job descriptions without involving job-holders. All these resulted in ambiguous or unrepresentative job titles, late or unrepresentative job descriptions and rejected roles and jobs. In addition to those, employees complained about lack of promotion opportunities, lack of better salaries, lack of immediate training on the new jobs and absence of career paths.
5. Last, once all employees were in their positions and departments started functioning, change was considered completed. HR reported the completion to the boards and it was approved. However, in all the three cases, the end was not announced and HR interventions continued to address the many unresolved people issues. Employees turned to collective actions (work strikes, slow-downs and no-show-ups) as their last resort after complaining. Career stagnation, inequities in salaries, long waiting and resignations continued and organisational performance was not at the aspired levels.

Both R1 and R2 embarked on improvement projects and continued building on their expansions. R1 continued with the same CEO who initiated the restructuring despite calls for his resignation in two work strikes. R2 had a new CEO who joined in year 6 after the decision to change was made. M2 had two new CEOs, one who took over after the new structure collapsed and the other who came in year 6. All new CEOs cause incremental changes including modifying the department structures and HR reforms. The following figure captures the general sequence of events observed in R1, R2 and M2.



Figure 5.4: Common pattern of changing in Cluster I
Source: Developed from interview data

Research Issue 3: Influencers of Change

What factors influence SC processes in GBs of Oman?

This question explored the factors that facilitated and inhibited SC processes in both cases. It was observed that all the facilitators of R1, R2 and M2 can be grouped under three main areas:

1. Decision makers and change agents
 - a. Role of the new CEO or chairman
 - b. Role of the consultants
 - c. In all cases, there was a felt internal need to change and that helped people accept the change. Also, the changes gained strong support from the government and board members. This support was necessary as the government is the majority shareholder.
2. People and HRM
 - a. Aspects of the Omani societal culture like humour, friendliness and quick adaption to change
 - b. Low initial resistance due to people's positive expectations
 - c. Internal recruitment gave people the opportunity to move to the jobs they wanted
 - d. New job descriptions and training opportunities clarified the new roles
 - e. New salaries that came after strikes motivated people and made them satisfied

3. Aspects of the change management approach:

- a. In all three cases, employees knew that they would not lose their jobs or get salary deductions. This was expected in R2 but in R1 and M2 it was reported as a main facilitator of change
- b. In R2 and due to the significance of the industry, ‘increased caution’ was exercised over managing people and great ‘flexibility’ was given to departments to add new jobs and job titles to the official organisational structure. These two factors were mentioned as facilitators.

Table 5.5 demonstrates the main facilitators that emerged across the three cases. For details on the quotes, codes, categories and themes, please see appendix 12 ‘Cluster I cases’.

Table 5.5 Similar facilitators in Cluster I

Major facilitators	R1	R2	M2
Decision makers and change agents	New CEO Government and board support Role of the consultant	The new CEO Role of the chairman Role of the consultant	New CEO leadership style Government and board support Role of the consultants
People and HRM	A felt internal need Employee expectations and motivation Very low resistance People’s humour, hope and quick adaptation (Omani culture) Internal recruitment gave existing employees opportunities Training and development opportunities	Low resistance Positive expectations for change The Omani’ culture: friendly, optimistic, hospitable and quick adaptation (Omani culture) New job descriptions, training opportunities and new salaries External recruitment: New hirers accepted and supported the change	A felt internal need Employees’ patriotism-doing it for the country Employees’ felt need to learn and master new jobs People’s friendliness, humour and quick adaptation (Omani culture) New job descriptions added clarity External recruiters in job interviews added fairness Increased salaries and benefits calmed employees
Aspects of the change management process	Promise of no job loss or salary Deduction	Increased caution over managing people The ability of departments to add new jobs and titles	Assurance of no job loss or salary reduction Better communication, unity of direction and engagement with new CEO Moving to a new building

Source: Developed from interview data

Likewise, it was found out that all the inhibiting factors can also be grouped under the same three areas:

1. Decision makers and change agents
2. People and HRM
3. Aspects of the change management approach

See table 5.6 for the main inhibitors that emerged across the three cases. For details on the quotes and codes, please see appendix 12 ‘Cluster I Cases’.

Table 5.6 Similar inhibitors of Cluster I

Major inhibitors (broad dimensions/areas)	R1	R2	M2
Decision makers and change agents	<p>Lack of change leadership – lack of a vision and direction; CEO's personality and management style</p> <p>Incompetent board members</p> <p>Incompetent and very political GMs (change managers)</p> <p>Role of the consultant</p>	<p>Absence of change leadership – lack of a vision and unity of direction</p> <p>Board interference, politics and incompetence - making changes with the consultant without discussing with the GMs</p> <p>Incompetent and highly political GMs (management styles and change management)</p> <p>Heavy reliance on consultants</p>	<p>First CEO lack of leadership</p> <p>Board members interference and view of time</p> <p>Politics and personal interests at top levels led to lack of trust</p>
People and HRM	<p>People's attitudes towards work, promotion, training and unmet expectations; A lot of social comparisons and perceived inequities</p> <p>Career stagnation and high voluntary turnover (resignations)</p>	<p>Characteristics of new generation of employee (wants to grow fast; impatient; compares a lot etc)</p> <p>Career stagnation and resignations</p> <p>Low competency levels of many managers and non-managers</p> <p>Problems with homing (job titles and job descriptions)</p> <p>Problems with external recruitment (no work experience, Wasta and overstaffing)</p>	<p>Too many salaries, grades, pensions and promotion issues remained unsolved</p> <p>Too many top-level resignations and among talented employees</p> <p>Clash between two different cultures</p> <p>Instability in departments due to frequent changes in HODs.</p>
Aspects of the change management approach	<p>Ineffective planning</p> <p>Lack of communication and transparency</p> <p>Lack of employee involvement</p> <p>Lack of control (standards, follow-up, evaluation, corrective action, feedback)</p> <p>Very slow planning and implementation</p>	<p>Ineffective planning and management</p> <p>Lack of communication and transparency</p> <p>Lack of employee involvement and attention to people's issues; lack of post-change people integration</p> <p>Lack of evaluation and learning</p> <p>New facility project delays</p>	<p>Ineffective planning</p> <p>Deliberate lack of communication, transparency</p> <p>Deliberate lack of employee involvement with first CEO</p> <p>Problems with and rejection of the new structure caused many people problems and delays</p>

Source: Developed from interview data

To sum up, answers to the three research questions for Cluster I cases R1, R2 and M2 are:

1. *What makes GBs undergo SC in Oman?*

Forces of change: GBs undergo major restructurings due to expansion, structural issues, new competition, organisationally caused career stagnation and changes in CEO/chairman

2. *How do SC processes unfold in GBs of Oman?* Phases of change: Major restructurings in GBs in Oman unfold in a pattern made up of five or six major phases

3. *What facilitates and inhibits SC processes in GBs of Oman?*

Influencers of change: Restructurings and mergers in GBs of Oman are facilitated and inhibited by characteristics, behaviours and competencies of decision makers and change agents and in particular those of the CEO. People's needs and the role of HRM and the change management approaches followed greatly influence the processes too.

The next section presents the analysis for cases M1 and M3 which emerged as Cluster II.

5.4 Cluster II Cases: M1 and M3

The two mergers (M1 and M3) or integrations, as preferably called by the interviewees, emerged as a cluster because they shared striking similarities in 1) the change management approach used - participative approach in planning and implementing the change, a focus on communication and employee involvement, early attention to people issues during planning, a proactive role of the HR department, plans for evaluating change and sustaining the new order in the post-change period, 2) the use of transformational leadership behaviours by the CEO and 3) the emergence of similar outcomes during the implementation and post-implementation phases – very low resistance and resignations, acceptance of the new structures, no changes in the CEOs and a higher financial performance after the change. These cases also showed the existence of humour and friendly work cultures. It is also worth mentioning that unlike Cluster I cases, both case organisations had relatively younger CEOs and HR managers who directly reported to the CEOs and who got actively involved in all top-level change-related meetings from the earliest stages.

Here too, the two cases are examples of large-scale evolutionary changes that originated from outside the organisations. The change in each case is large-scale because it covered the whole organisation and it is evolutionary rather than revolutionary because it did not result in a totally new business but rather made major developments to the existing entities. Change in each case involved growth aspirations and government expansion strategies. However, unlike Cluster I, these cases demonstrated heavy reliance on cross-functional teams of managers and non-managers during planning and implementation rather than international consultants. The cases involved the design of new organisational structures, changed work processes, the need to train employees to learn new behaviours and skills. They also involved new jobs, job descriptions and new salaries.

Analysis of the two cases found that major restructurings that occurred were triggered by four main forces of change:

1. Expansion due to government growth plans and profit expectations
2. Structural issues including organisationally caused career stagnation
3. Changes in power
4. CEO choice

Also, it was found that change was implemented and managed in a similar way using a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. Planning was participative and done in cross-functional teams with managers from all levels and top performing employees from all work streams in both organisations (the parent and the subsidiaries). There wasn't heavy reliance on consultants because they were seen as facilitators only rather than planners. Employees were actively involved in planning and implementation. Communication was regular and formal using the staff portal. It was handled by a team and it constantly addressed employees' needs. Employees were updated on a day to day basis on what had happened and where the implementation had reached. Unlike Cluster I cases, employees in M1 and M3 were shown the new organisational charts. The HR departments were actively involved; they played a proactive role in both planning and implementation. They identified employees' needs and expectations during planning and ensured that these were addressed as early as possible. Resisters (among managers and non-managers) were identified during planning and dealt with early by moving them from key positions and involving them in consultative roles. The CEOs played a significant role in these two cases. Unlike Cluster I, these CEOs were visible – they regularly walked around to be seen and built friendly relationships with employees. They entered departments and talked to employees about the need for and benefits of the change. They promoted visions and listened to and addressed employees' questions and concerns. The CEOs inspired employees and used patriotic-rhetoric to win their support – “let's do this for Oman and the future generations”. They also ensured that people issues were followed-up and solved as soon as possible by direct managers. In addition, the CEOs role-modelled the behaviours they wanted to see in employees. Implementation in this cluster was a shared responsibility and unlike Cluster I, change was done in a staged manner with the small and the most important functions integrated first. Unlike Cluster I, change was handled as a project with clear schedules, milestones, responsibilities and deadlines. There was regular follow-up in team settings, concurrent evaluations were done, timely corrective actions were taken and the lessons learnt were shared. The post-change period was well planned for in advance on how to integrate people and work in the new order.

Similar to Cluster I, four main categories of influencers were identified as main facilitators and inhibitors of the change processes - the role of decision makers and change agents which was determined by the CEOs leadership style, employee's needs, the role of the HR department and its practices and the change management approach used.

All the case organisations experienced similar outcomes due to the way the change processes were led, planned, implemented and managed. There were relatively fewer people issues during and after implementation. Low resistance from managers and non-managers led to very low numbers of employee complaints, grievances, and resignations. The new organisational structures were accepted by employees and no revisions were done, no work strikes or any other forms of collective actions emerged. Also, unlike Cluster I cases, the CEOs were not asked to resign. In addition, the planning and implementation phases took 8-17 months only. They were not as long as those in Cluster I (27 -30 months) due to fewer people issues. The period from the time the change was decided and announced to when the restructuring ended in each case was 18 – 20 months only compared to 40-42 months in Cluster 1. The whole processes ran for 4 years rather than the 6 years observed in cluster I. As a result, both M1 and M3 experienced good financial performance after the restructurings.

Due to the depth and length of the case descriptions and analyses, descriptive summaries are presented on both cases in 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. For a detailed description and analysis on one of the cases, please go to Case M1 in appendix 13 'M1: A Case of Unplanned Change Due to an Unprecedented Financial Crisis and Severe Interorganisational Conflicts'. The description offers a detailed analysis around the three main issues of the study - forces of change, phases of change and influencers. The next two sections descriptive summaries of M1 and M3.

5.4.1 Summary of M1 “A Case of Unplanned Change Due to an Unprecedented Financial Crisis and Severe Interorganisational Conflicts”

M1 is an unprecedented case of three interdependent GBs (a supplier, a manufacturer and a distributor) operating in a core industry. Due to a wrong set-up between the three companies, technical constraints, inability of the supplier to meet the required product specifications and frequent shut downs of a crucial plant for maintenance purposes, the three organisations entered into conflicts, litigation and financial losses. When one of the businesses went bankrupt, the board intervened and imposed an urgent integration of the three entities to resolve the financial crisis, internal conflicts and litigation. M1 is a unique case of a major unplanned change. The change was unplanned because it did not originate from the managers; the board imposed it to quickly save the GBs and preserve one of the

country's main sources of income. The case resulted in a totally new entity through vertical integration. The new entity replaced the three businesses and possessed a new name, identity, strategy, structure, work processes, and culture. It became one of the largest and fastest growing companies in the Middle East. The change process was led by a new young CEO from outside the three entities. He demonstrated transformational leadership behaviours and adopted a participative consultative approach in the planning and implementation phases of the integration. Table 5.7 presents a summary of the M1 forces of change, phases, facilitators and inhibitors. For quotes, codes and themes, please see appendix 14 'Cluster II cases'.

Table 5.7: Summary of M1

M1 Forces	M1 Phases of Change	M1 Facilitators	M1 Inhibitors
Financial crisis Internal conflicts among highly interdependent businesses due to a wrong set-up, technical constraints and delays Pre-existing growth plans and government expectation for more revenues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Antecedents; Financial Losses; Litigation; Decision to Change and Announcement 2. New Group CEO; Top-Level Organising and Planning 3. Communicating the Need for Change; Planning and Engaging for Support 4. Announcing, Implementing and Celebrating the End 5. Continued Staffing, Integrating Work and Harmonising Salaries 6. Incremental changes 	<p>Decisionmakers and change agents: A powerful and visionary new CEO; Strong government and board support</p> <p>People and HRM: A felt internal need Promise of no job loss or salary deduction Managing employee expectation</p> <p>Change management approach: Planning done by a small cross-functional team of internal and external experts from the three companies Transparency and regular and clear communication Clear roles and deadlines during planning and implementation Extensive employee engagement in designing the new structure Instilling a new culture Recognising and rewarding contributors Celebrating achievements and milestones along the way</p>	<p>Decisionmakers and change agents: Managers who opposed the change became political Top managers seen as not keeping their promises</p> <p>People and HRM: Making all jobs open for applications; the feeling of being jobless Brief and complicated job descriptions were used during recruitment Announcing new salaries after staffing New salary grades were based on job descriptions that were perceived as oversimplified and unrepresentative Too many comparisons and perceived inequities Relocating employees to another city with short notice and with employees not believing that there was a need to relocate Too many resignations</p> <p>Change management approach: Too much communication and too many workshops to attend Lack of post-merger support for employees and HODs "feeling of being left on their own and lack of role clarity" Instability within departments due to frequent changes in department managers Employees' expectations not managed well</p>

Source: Developed from interview data

5.4.2 Summary of M3 "A Case of a Management Integration to Increase Value and Meet Government Expectations"

M3 is another case of an integration that occurred between a parent company and its subsidiary in Oman. The parent company was the operator and the subsidiary was the commercial arm (contractor). The scenario in this case does not involve any compelling external or internal force of change that necessitated an urgent adaptive response. It demonstrates how the desire and ambition of a CEO can lead to a major change. This desire

was driven by a need to meet government expectations of increasing efficiency, maximising revenues and becoming self-funded. The subsidiary CEO identified duplications between the two businesses that led to unnecessary costs and rivalry between the parent and its subsidiary in international markets. He was also not happy with the confusion that international clients at times experienced when trying to decide who to do business with. Due to the subsidiary CEO's dissatisfaction with the status quo and a strong desire to meet government expectations, add value to the country and do good for the future generations, a major change occurred. He initiated the idea of an integration with the parent company to achieve synergy, add value and meet government expectations. After the 2011 nation-wide demonstrations, the parent company's CEO resigned and with a new minister and board in the scene, the subsidiary CEO managed to gain support for his idea and lead a successful integration. M3 is a case of a planned evolutionary change that occurred between two entities due to a CEO's desire and ambition to improve the current status quo and meet government expectations of becoming self-funded and maximising revenues. The change was planned because it originated from the CEO and was not directly imposed externally. It was evolutionary because it made major developments to the existing entity (the parent company) and did not replace it with a totally new business.

After the integration, both the parent and the subsidiary continued working in their areas of speciality but possessed one name and functioned under one roof and one top management team. The change helped solve the problem of overspending due to duplications, the confusion of international clients in dealing with the two companies and the rivalry that at times occurred between the parent and the subsidiary in international markets. It also helped increase the revenues of the entity and enabled the company get closer to becoming self-funded. Like M1, this change process was led by a young CEO who demonstrated a transformational leadership style and adopted a participative consultative approach in planning and implementing the integration. Table 5.8 presents a summary of M3's forces, phases, facilitators and inhibitors. For quotes, codes and themes, please appendix 14 'Cluster II Cases'.

Table 5.8: Summary of M3

M3 Forces	M3 Phases	M3 Facilitators	M3 Inhibitors
Subsidiary CEO's desire to meet government expectations of becoming self-funded and maximising revenues Change in minister and board members (i.e. change in power)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Antecedents, Main Forces; Felt Need; Integration Idea Raised to Board but Rejected 2. Govt. Reshuffle-Change in Minister, Board and Resignation of Parent Co CEO; Concept of Change Raised Again by Subsidiary CEO 3. Subsidiary CEO Appointed as Parent Co CEO; Govt Requests Feasibility Study, Integration Proposal Presented 4. Decision to Change; Announcing, Organising for Change; Joint Planning; Adjusting Salaries 5. Implementing; Moving to a New Building; Clash of Cultures; Need for New Work Processes; Rewarding Contributors; Consultants Leave; HODs Made in Charge 6. HR Interventions and Other Incremental Changes 	<p>Decisionmakers and change agents: Govt, shareholders, CEO and top management support Role of the CEO Role of the consultant</p> <p>Change management approach: Communication and transparency Early engagement and involving staff from all departments in planning and implementing the change Learning from others on how to change Using the work stream model Moving to a new building</p> <p>People and HRM: Addressing HR issues early Omani culture and employee patriotism</p>	<p>People and HRM: Clash of two cultures No plan on how to integrate people and create a new culture Staff separated on two floors due to insufficient space Some managers and non-managers opposed the change Many comparisons and felt inequity Some staff opposed the new open plan offices Complaints due to absence of career paths and loss of promotion years in new positions</p> <p>Change management approach: Conducting the ERP and integration simultaneously</p>

Source: Developed from interview data

The next section presents the common patterns identified within Cluster II cases.

5.5 Common Patterns Identified in M1 and M3

Research Issue 1: Forces of Change

What makes GBs undergo SC in Oman?

Looking at the antecedents and forces of each integration, it seems from the outset that the changes happened for different reasons. But, a closer look shows that the two cases shared great similarities in forces of change. The following figure places the two flow charts of 'forces of change' together to facilitate cross-case analysis and comparison.

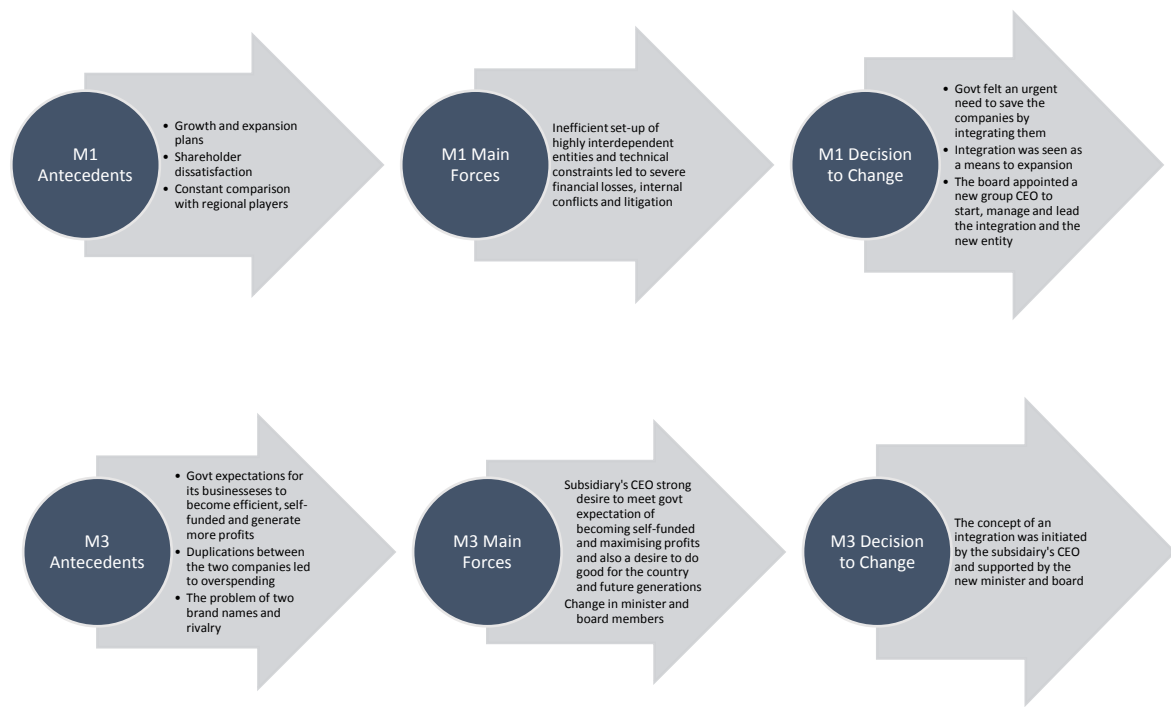


Figure 5.5: From antecedents to the change decision in Cluster II

It was noticed in the two cases:

1. All the two businesses shared government's growth plans and profit expectations as a common antecedent that acted as an external driver for change. It was this external drive of change that haunted all CEOs.
2. As for the main forces that triggered the changes, it seems that each business changed for a very different reason. But closer scrutiny and contemplation of what made the businesses integrate reveal striking similarities in what triggered the changes. The owners and decision makers in M1 and M3 were all concerned about one common issue – the financial performance of their businesses. This was also a concern of the government that was pushing all its businesses to become more efficient, breakeven, become self-funded and generate more revenues. It was clear that M1 changed because of the unprecedented decline in financial performance. M3 changed because of dissatisfaction with the status quo and a desire to meet government expectations of becoming self-funded and generating more revenues. Hence, 'financial performance' or 'financial concerns' was the common force of change.
3. The second common force of change identified is 'structure'. The organisational structures in the two cases do not appear from the outset as a main force of change. This is because interviewees reported the symptoms of inappropriate structures like conflicts in M1 and duplications in M3. When analysing what happened prior to

decision making, structure does appear to be a common force that cuts across the two cases. For example, in M1, managers talked about the wrong set-up and conflicts between three highly interdependent businesses. A ‘wrong set-up’ is a wrong arrangement or way of organising for work. Hence, the way the three interdependent businesses were organised caused inefficiencies. This, in other words, is a structural inefficiency. In M3, overspending occurred due to duplications between the parent and the subsidiary. Duplications are a structural issue because it is the organisational structures that determine who does what and how. Hence, when two or more individuals or work groups perform the same tasks, this happens because of structural decisions – the way work is distributed. Therefore, from the analysis, structure emerged as the second underlying common force of change in M1 and M3.

4. ‘Change in power’ is the third common force of change between M1 and M3. This force manifested itself in the appointment of a new CEO in M1 and the appointment of a new minister and a major change in board member composition in M3. Appointment of a new group CEO in M1 came after the urgent top-down government decision to save the three interdependent businesses. Without the new group CEO, the integration wouldn’t have happened. A government reshuffle and appointment of new board members gave the subsidiary CEO in M3 to express his ambition/intention for an integration after it had been shelved for almost two years due to the previous minister’s and board rejection. In other words, without major changes in power, the integrations wouldn’t have occurred. Hence, change in power (the appointment of a new CEO, or a major change in board composition or a new minister) was observed as a main force of change in the two cases although it occurred at different points in the change processes. In M1, change in power occurred after the board decided to integrate the three companies and create a new entity. In M3, changes in power occurred after the unprecedented 2011 nation-wide employment-related demonstrations and work strikes. The demonstrations led to the appointment of new ministers and board members and the work strikes led to resignations of CEOs including that of the parent company in M3.

To sum up, it was observed that the two cases shared similarities in forces of change:

1. Structural inefficiencies
2. Financial concerns
3. Changes in power
4. CEO choice

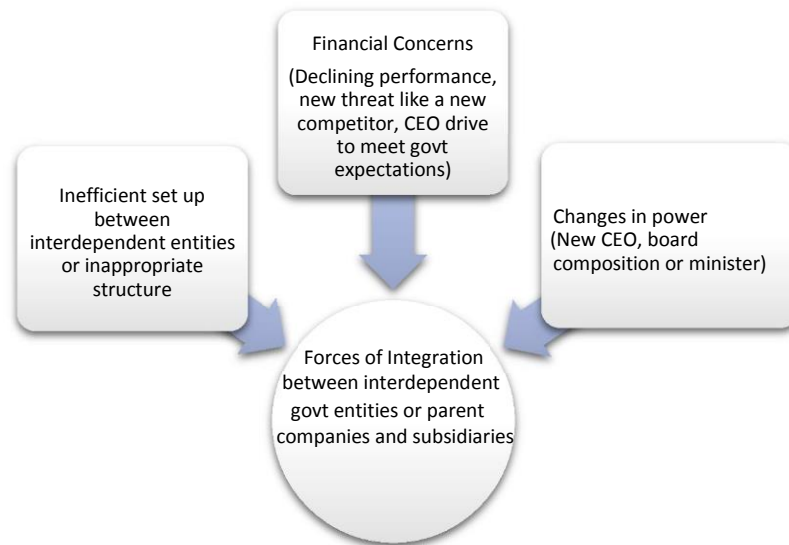


Figure 5.6: Main forces in Cluster II
Source: Developed from interview data

Research Issue 2: Phases of Change

How do SC processes unfold in GBs of Oman?

A closer look at the sequence of events in the integrations shows that the two cases shared similarities and some differences in the way they unfolded. The following figure facilitates seeing the two processes together and enables comparing.

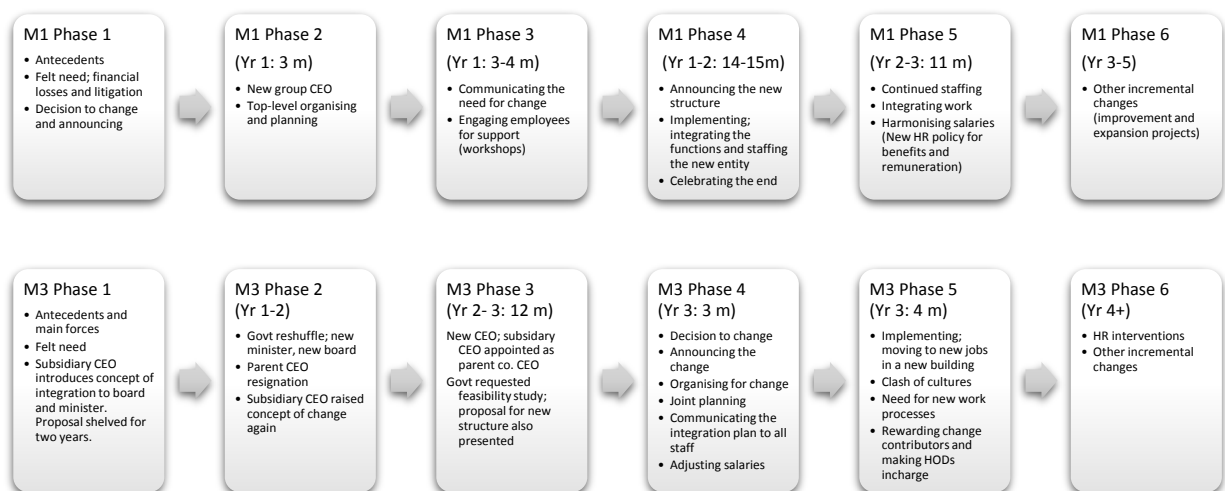


Figure 5.7: Phases of Change in Cluster II
Source: Developed from interviews

Looking at the way the two change processes unfolded, it was noticed that:

1. Both cases began with a phase where the antecedents, main triggers and a felt need to change emerged.
2. This was followed by negotiations for a major change either initiated by the CEO or the board. Change in power occurred in this phase either before the negotiations or after the board decision to change. This phase also included decision making and top-level planning and organising.
3. After that, the decision to change was announced and communicated along with the new management structure. New managers were quickly hired, the management team got organised and top managers communicated the change to win support. Then the organisations entered a planning phase for designing the structure of the whole organisation. This was followed by obtaining board approvals for the reorganisations.
4. The implementation phase included staffing and moving employees to new positions. Moving included moving to a new building that would accommodate all employees of the integrated business or moving employees to jobs based in another city. HR practices of recruitment, selection and training coincided the implementation phase and continued until all positions were filled.
5. In the last phase, managers tried to sustain the change. The integrated businesses quickly embarked on other improvement and growth projects.

It was observed that these two cases share a common pattern of changing as illustrated in figure 5.8.

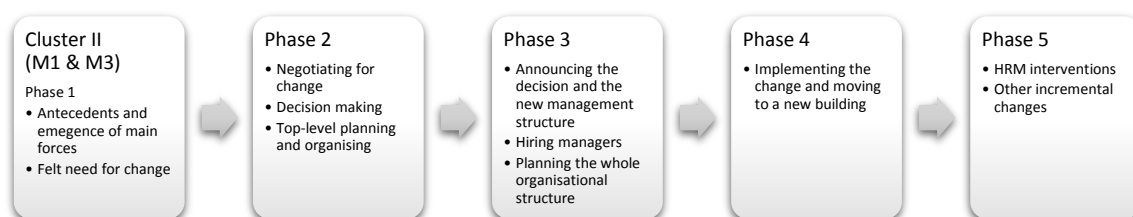


Figure 5.8: A common pattern of changing in Cluster II

Source: Developed from interviews

Research Issue 3: Influencers of Change

What factors influence Sc processes in GBs of Oman?

Looking at the numerous situational factors that facilitated and inhibited M1 and M3, it appeared from the outset that these were unique factors. However, a closer look and comparison uncovered great similarities in what influenced the two change processes. For

details, go back to the corresponding tables 5.7 and 5.8 of facilitators and inhibitors of M1 and M3 in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 on pages 141 and 143 respectively. With the aim of reducing the number of influencing factors, the researcher grouped the factors under the general areas they belonged to. For example, planning, communication, identifying resistors, instilling a new culture and the like were all practices initiated by managers and related to the change process and the change management approach. Issues like social comparisons, salaries, job descriptions, resignations were all grouped under 'People and HRM'. Similar to Cluster I analysis, the result of this exercise was the identification of three broad areas/dimensions which subsumed all the change influencers:

1. Decision makers and change agents
2. People and HRM
3. The change management approach

To sum up, the analysis of Cluster II cases found similarities in the forces, phases and influencers of SC processes.

1. *What makes GBs undergo SC in Oman?*
Forces of change: GBs undergo major changes due to financial concerns, structural inefficiencies, changes in power and CEO choice.
2. *How do SCs unfold in GBs of Oman?*
Phases of change: SCs in GBs of Oman unfold in a pattern made up of five phases.
3. *What facilitates and inhibits SC processes in GBs of Oman?*
Influencers of change: SCs in GBs of Oman are facilitated and inhibited by characteristics, competencies and behaviours of the CEO, other top managers and change agents, people's needs, HRM and aspects of the change management approach adopted.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter familiarised the reader with the five cases. It presented case profiles, offered detailed case descriptions and analyses along with illustrations on each change process. The chapter presented the analysis of the five cases in two clusters, I and II. In each cluster, one detailed case description and analysis was offered along with summaries of the other cases. Cases in each cluster shared striking similarities in the change leadership style used by the CEO, the kind of people's needs and issues that emerged, the role that HRM played, the change management approach followed and the behavioural and financial outcomes of the SC. The analysis focused on the similarities within cluster cases and the contrasts between the two clusters. The next chapter presents the cross-case findings i.e. findings that cut across Clusters I and II. The cross-case analysis identified an interesting change process that transitioned from Cluster I to II characteristics. This case is highlighted in the beginning of the next chapter along with the main findings of the study.

Chapter 6 – Findings

6.0 Introduction

The aim of this study is to develop a new process framework that highlights the forces, phases and influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman. Thematic analysis of data from 42 semi-structured interviews on five different cases of SC revealed two contrasting clusters. The two clusters are like polar cases that demonstrate variations in SC outcomes associated with variations in the main influencers identified. A representative case was identified that transitions from Cluster I characteristics to Cluster II due to a change in the CEO.

The chapter first presents the cross-case findings. Then the representative case is identified and its importance is highlighted. After that, each cross-case finding is described and explained. The chapter ends with a fit-performance relationship identified using the contingency perspective and a summary that leads to the discussion chapter.

6.1 The Cross-Case Findings

A cross-case analysis of the two clusters led to four key findings that highlight similarities and general patterns in forces, phases and influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman:

1. The external environment is a predominant force of rational reactive adaptation in GBs of Oman.
2. SC processes in GBs of Oman unfold in a pattern of six phases and combine the assumptions of both planned and emergent change.
3. People, leadership style, change management approach and HRM are the main influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman.
4. SC processes in GBs of Oman can be planned and managed in an orderly manner and achieve high performance (positive behavioural and financial outcomes) if there is, among other conditions, leadership-people fit, change management-people fit and HRM-people fit.

6.2 The Unique Representative Case: M2 from Cluster I to Cluster II Characteristics”

Despite being placed in Cluster I, M2 was a unique case. In terms of its changing dynamics, the case straddled between Cluster I and II. This is because the change process witnessed two CEOs who led and managed in two contrasting ways -the first CEO who initiated and implemented the merger and the second CEO who took over after the new structure was rejected and the board asked the first CEO to resign. During the time of the first CEO, change was led and managed like in Cluster I cases (R1 and R2) – a top-down approach

with centralised planning, a reactive HR department, lack of employee involvement and communication and a laissez-faire leadership style during implementation. However, after the new structure got strongly rejected by both managers and non-managers and a new CEO was appointed by the board, the case witnessed a turning point. The new CEO, who was a serving top manager and the CEO of the merged subsidiary, led and managed in ways like Cluster II CEOs. Here, an interesting pattern was identified that later led on to what Saldana (2016) calls “a serendipitous theoretical crystallisation”. It was observed that with changes in the CEO’s leadership style, the management approach and in the role of the HR department, the behavioural and financial outcomes of M2 shifted and became like the outcomes witnessed in Cluster II cases! This case proved that the identified differences in performance outcomes between Cluster I and II cases existed because the leadership style, change management approach and HR practices used in Cluster I cases did not fit people. It was concluded that the shift that happened in performance outcomes in M2 after the leadership, change management and HRM practices changed was not an occasional exception but rather a pattern indicating an underlying mechanism demonstrated as fit-performance relationships.

Hence, the emergence of two contrasting clusters, the discovery of a unique case that shifted from characteristics of Cluster I to Cluster II and the changing patterns and associated relationships led to four key findings of the study. The next sections include details of each key finding, what research issue it addresses, how it was reached to and where it leads us to.

6.3 On Research Issue 1 “Forces of Change”

The first research question explored the environmental and organisational factors that make GBs in Oman undergo SC. The study identified six main forces of change:

1. Government strategy and expectations
2. Entrance of a new major competitor
3. Financial concerns
4. Structural and people issues that impede performance and inhibit growth
5. Major changes in power (New CEO, chairman, minister)
6. CEO choice

After analysing the two clusters around this issue, a key finding emerged:

The external environment is the predominant force of rational reactive adaptation in GBs of Oman

The external environment emerged as the predominant force of change because government growth strategies and expectations emerged as the most powerful force on GBs of Oman. It also emerged as a main driver behind each of the other five forces of change, even the internal ones. As mentioned earlier, the growth strategy and expectations that the government has for its businesses to become efficient, to breakeven, become self-funded and increase their contribution to the economy emerged from the decreasing oil revenues and increasing local demand for government services. It was noticed that through restructuring, all of the five case organisations expanded with the aim of breaking-even and increasing their contribution to the national economy. But, despite the government's need for more revenues from its businesses, expansion was not imposed by the boards on any of the businesses unless there was a compelling need like the threat of a new major competitor (M2), a major increase in public demand for services (R1, R2) and an unprecedented decline in financial performance (M1).

An analysis and discussion of each major force of change shows that change in each case was environmentally driven. A deeper look at what was behind each force of change in each case shows that government strategies and expectations was a major direct or indirect force behind it. The following list shows how each decision to change in each case was linked to government's growth strategies and expectations:

1. R1: The initial structural and people issues that made the new CEO negotiate for a major restructuring had government expectations as a main driver behind them. The new CEO was inclined to improve the structure and meet the new government expectations. He clearly explained that the government was pushing the company to break-even. Hence, change in R1 was initially triggered internally after years of gradual incremental changes in the inefficient structure of the company. But due to population growth and increasing demand for the company's services and products (external forces), the board imposed an expansion on the business so that it could adapt to the new demand.
2. R2: The appointment of a new powerful chairman who decided on an expansion and led it in R2 was driven by the need to manage an expanded government facility. The facility was expanded to help generate more income for the government and accommodate for increasing demand. The case organisation was the operator and it had to expand to manage the new facility. Hence, in R2, the company had to expand and add new work groups to prepare itself for operating an expanded government facility (an external force). The board imposed an expansion on the business to help it adapt to the increased demands of the changed government facility.

3. M1: The reactive board decision to merge the three conflicting entities in M1 was driven by a fear of losing an important source of income in a time of declining oil revenues (an environmental factor) and a focus on diversifying sources of income. Uniting the interests of the three companies and appointing a new external CEO ensured that the conflict would be resolved and change would start.
4. M2: Entrance of a new major competitor (an external force) in a government monopoly led the board to decide on a defensive strategy to adapt to the new competitive situation. This happened due to fear of losing market share, revenues and in turn not being able to expand. Hence, in M2 the company was forced to change due to a change in an environmental factor – the entrance of a new major competitor. Both managers and the board jointly decided on an integration to help the company grow, beat competition and preserve its market share.
5. M3: The new CEO saw opportunities for growth and ways to reduce costs. It is believed that without the new government strategies and expectations (an external factor) that turned all CEOs' attention to seek efficiency and growth, it is unlikely that the subsidiary's CEO in M3 would have been motivated to integrate the two businesses. Hence, even in this case, CEO's choice was driven by the government's growth strategies and new expectations.

All the five cases showed the dominant role of the external environment in initiating change. Change was viewed as positive progress and associated with growth. Also, it was 'adaptive' and 'deliberate'. These descriptions fit very well with the adaptation and growth perspective of the structural contingency theory explained in chapters 1 and 3. But what about the cases that changed due to the internal forces - career stagnation, changes in CEO and CEO choice? The analysis shows that these factors are linked to changes in the larger socio-economic environment of Oman supporting the argument that the external environment is the predominant force of rational adaptation in GBs of Oman. The next three sections present arguments for each internal force demonstrating that each internal force of change was in fact environmentally driven.

6.3.1 Career Stagnation Complaints: A Response to Environmental Changes in the Socio-Economic Context of Oman

Organisationally-caused career stagnation was identified as a major internal force for change. Stemming from the open-systems view of the contingency theory, the process approach to change and the CR ontology, in order to understand the escalation in career stagnation complaints we need to link this force to changes in the larger external environment of GBs. In doing so, at least three external factors in the socio-economic

environment of Oman appear to be closely associated with the escalation of complaints around career stagnation during 2011 and beyond. The three factors are unemployment, the March 2011 demonstrations and the influx of a new generation of employees into workplaces. Each of these factors was described in chapter 1. The following presentation explains how these factors led to increased complaints on career stagnation which in turn led to major structural adaptations in GBs.

The Effect of Unemployment and the 2011 Political Upheavals in the Region

Complaints around work-related issues including career stagnation got fuelled in Oman during 2011, a time of the political upheavals in the Arab Middle Eastern region where protesters called for major reforms across countries. In Oman, people saw it as an opportunity to call for the removal of long serving ministers, ending corruption, providing job opportunities for the increasing numbers of local job-seekers and increasing salaries among other demands. Omani youth in four major cities took to the streets and demanded for job opportunities and better salaries. International reports say that unemployment during that period had reached to more than 15% or 25% among youth. The city of Sohar, the second largest industrial city in Oman, where the first demonstrations erupted, had the highest percentage of youth unemployment. The government quickly responded with an unemployment allowance, a 70% increase in the minimum wage, 50000 government job opportunities and a major cabinet reshuffle. With these changes, people calmed down but their expectations rose and employees realised their collective power in causing change.

Hence, besides the demonstrations, work strikes or threats of strikes and other forms of collective actions sprouted across large organisations in Oman, including GBs. For example, in March 2011, ground staff of Oman Air went on strike for higher wages and pilots threatened to go on strike. One employee said,

“We have a new deadline on Tuesday at 4pm to give the company more time. If no positive steps are taken, then we don’t fly,”. Manager of corporate communications at Oman Air, said *“Today, our board of directors had a meeting with our management team and they are serious to resolve the problem,”* (Al Shaibany, March 8, 2011).

According to a top manager in M2, the 2011 incident in their organisation (a strike) was a set-back but,

“it led to major salary increases and employee engagement programs in large organisations in Oman. During the strikes, top managers were shocked to see that they were actually very far away from their employees. There were too many demands and too much shouting”.

Four of the five change processes studied (i.e. R1, R2, M1 and M2) were affected by either work strikes, slow-downs or no show-ups due to promotion and salary issues. Employees

in M1 did not strike due to their rejection of the new organisational structure like in the other cases. They were frustrated by the new salary structure that was issued unexpectedly after the integration of the three companies. But, this strike coincided with nation-wide demonstrations in Oman. Figure 6.1 shows a timeline that indicates the start and finish date of each case and when collective actions emerged in each in relation to the period 2011-2012. The aim here is to prove that complaints about career stagnation were triggered externally from the larger social, economic and political environment.

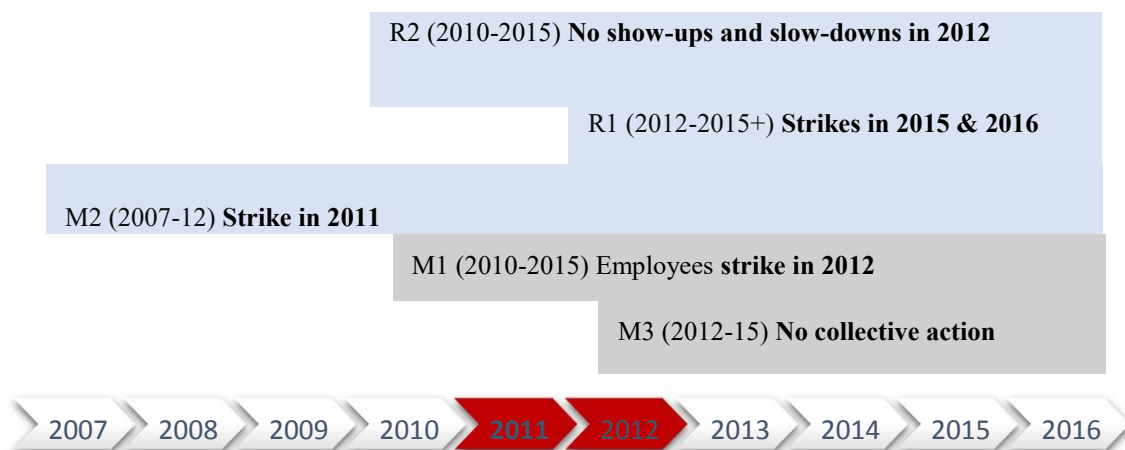


Figure 6.1: Duration of SC processes (2011-2012 demonstrations and work strikes);
Source: Developed for the study from interview data

Looking at the timing of the collective actions in the case organisations (2011 and beyond), it is arguable that complaints around career stagnation (lack of promotions and salary increases) were in fact triggered by conditions and events in the larger socio-economic environment, i.e., unemployment, the political upheavals in the region and the 2011 nation-wide demonstrations for work reforms. But work strikes occurred later in post 2015 and 2016 in case R1. This is because implementing the new structure started late in 2014. M3 was the only case that didn't witness any collective action from employees against top managers. This is because decision makers and change managers learned from the mistakes of other restructurings in GBs. Change managers in M3 clearly mentioned in the interviews that they learnt from others' and ensured that they planned for all people-related issues early on. This learning helped managers avoid many people issues that emerged in other cases. The integration manager of M3 said,

"Looking back, I think we did extremely well. See what happened in [company X] when they did their merger. Although it is a completely different animal from ours but we learnt a lot from them. As a result, we did not get most of the challenges they faced. There wasn't any formal coordination with them; we didn't contact them directly but we had all their issues at the back of our minds. We asked, 'could we face the same issues here?'. We took them all on board, all the personnel related issues"

The third factor in the socio-economic environment of Oman that is closely linked to the escalation of complaints around career stagnation during 2011 and beyond is the increasing numbers of new generations of Omanis entering workplaces. The next section elaborates on this factor and links it to the issue of career stagnation.

The Increasing Influx of Millennials into Workplaces and Their Top Needs

Every year in Oman, thousands of young college graduates join workplaces in the public and private sectors. Born in the late 80s and 90s, these new employees bring new needs, values and expectations that are different from those of the previous generations. According to a national study (NCSI, 2015), the new generations of Omani employees have job security, better jobs and higher salaries as their top needs. But, promotion to a higher position is not easy to obtain in the government sector of Oman. Every four-five years, batches of employees are promoted to higher salary grades rather than higher positions regardless of their performance. Due to the pyramid structures, employees can remain stuck in their jobs for longer than five years.

With job security and higher salaries as their top needs (NCSI, 2015), the long-time taken-for-granted phenomenon of ‘career stagnation’ in government bureaucracies emerged as an unbearable obstacle towards advancement for the new generations of employees during 2011-2012. Hence, societal, economic and political changes triggered demands for promotions and higher salaries.

The next section looks at how the last internal force of SC ‘change in power’ was actually triggered by changes in the larger external environment.

6.3.2 Major Changes in Power: An Adaptation to Changes in the Environment

Change in power was identified as a major force of SC in the study. A look at the conditions in the external environment of Oman during 2010-2015, the time when the five cases occurred, we see that the appointment of new CEOs, new boards and new ministers was in fact environmentally driven. Each of the five cases involved major changes in power during 2007-2015 (i.e. the period that covers the start and end of all the five change processes):

1. In M1, a new group CEO was appointed to lead the integration of three conflicting government entities that were in a financial crisis
2. In M2, the COO was appointed to replace the CEO after the collapse of the new structure in 2010 that triggered a work strike in 2011.

3. In M3, the parent company CEO resigned after the 2011-2012 demonstrations and the subsidiary CEO was later appointed to lead the integration of the parent and the subsidiary. Also, the minister and the board composition changed during the same period.
4. In R1, the CEO resigned in 2012 and a new CEO was appointed during the same year. Also, major changes in board composition occurred in 2014.
5. In R2, the CEO resigned and a powerful chairman was appointed in 2010 to lead the expansion. Then, an acting CEO was appointed in 2014. In 2015, a new CEO joined.

What led to these major changes in power? One of the aftermaths of the 2011 demonstrations and work strikes was in fact major changes in power at the government level and at CEO levels in GBs and some of the largest private organisations and family businesses in Oman. One of the first demands in the March 2011 demonstrations was the removal of long serving ministers and ending corruption at the top levels. Al Jazeera News described the situation on 7 March 2011 as:

“A peaceful sit-in at a roundabout in Sohar entered its ninth day on Monday, with activists demanding the sacking of more ministers for alleged corruption. Another crowd has maintained an anti-corruption sit-in outside the consultative council in Muscat, the capital, which is the sultanate's equivalent of parliament but without legislative authority.”

The Sultan took quick action and made headlines in the region as he “dissolved the office overseeing economic affairs and removed 10 cabinet ministers, including some who held those jobs for decades” (Al Shaibany, March 8, 2011). Hence, a major cabinet reshuffle took place due to people’s complaints about conflict of interest among senior officials and demands for more accountability at top levels. To convince people that real change was about to happen, royal decrees announcing major changes in power were issued. Within the removed ten ministers was one of the longest serving ministers in modern Oman (i.e. since 1970). According to Reuters (February 27, 2014).

“Oman's Sultan Qaboos has waged an anti-graft campaign to defuse mass protests in several Omani cities in 2011 that were mainly directed against graft [i.e. corruption/bribery] and to demand jobs, issues that fuelled uprisings around the Arab world in the same year... More than 20 civil servants and businessmen have gone on trial in Oman since last year.”

During that period, several ministers were replaced, board chairs and other members changed and a number of CEOs resigned too. Among these is the CEO of R1, the parent company’s CEO in M3 and the female Omani CEO of Oman International Bank (OIB), one of the largest banks in Oman. In addition, protesters demanded devolution of power to the Shura Council and the Sultan responded with shifts in law making powers. “Sultan

Qaboos grants legislative powers to two councils, one elected and another appointed in a bid to stem protests” (Aljazeera.com, March 13, 2011). Likewise, Reuters (March 13, 2011). On the same date reported, “Oman sultan to cede some powers after protests”. But during the same time, Reuters also reported:

“Demonstrators carry banners during a March against the unrest which took place in neighbouring city Sohar and expressing support for ruler Sultan Qaboos bin Said, in Muscat March 1, 2011. The banner reads, "Year after year you flourish... Qaboos you are the heart of this nation... Qaboos we are your loyal and true soldiers... We sacrifice our souls to you loyally and unconditionally."

These counter protests were a clear indication that people were against decision makers and not the Sultan himself, a highly respected and loved leader of Oman. Besides curtailing corruption, making decision makers accountable and devolving power, demonstrators demanded having more Omanis in top management teams of the private sector. The government responded by launching the National CEO program in 2015. “It is the first of its kind in the Sultanate and its goal is to develop the next generation of private sector Omani leaders and executives ...” (National CEO Program, 2015). The program helps qualify locals for CEO positions in the private sector. With all these changes occurred in the external environment of GBs, it is arguable that the major changes in power that occurred during that time were linked to changes in the socio-economic environment in Oman. The next section looks at how CEO choices in R1 and M3 were also environmentally driven.

6.3.3 CEO Choice in GBs of Oman: An Environmentally Driven Choice

This study takes the side of contingency theorists and views strategic choice as a reactive choice. As Donaldson (2001) argued, there is no such thing as strategic choice. Even in cases where the change was initiated internally by the CEO and top management, the driving force behind initiating the change was the feeling of accountability towards the boards and the need to meet the new government expectations. At a time when the country had experienced unprecedented socio-economic changes and even worse, a time when the economy was struggling with declining oil revenues and the government was expecting more revenues from its non-oil businesses, existing and newly appointed CEOs experienced pressure to make changes and improve the financial performance of their organisations. Hence, when change emerged as a choice of the CEO, the urge to change the organisations did not come from a free proactive choice but rather a response to adapt the businesses to the changes in the external environment, i.e., to the new government need and expectations for more revenues from its businesses. Figure 6.2 illustrates how a CEO’s choice is connected to events in the larger external environment. The next section discusses the findings on how strategic processes unfold.

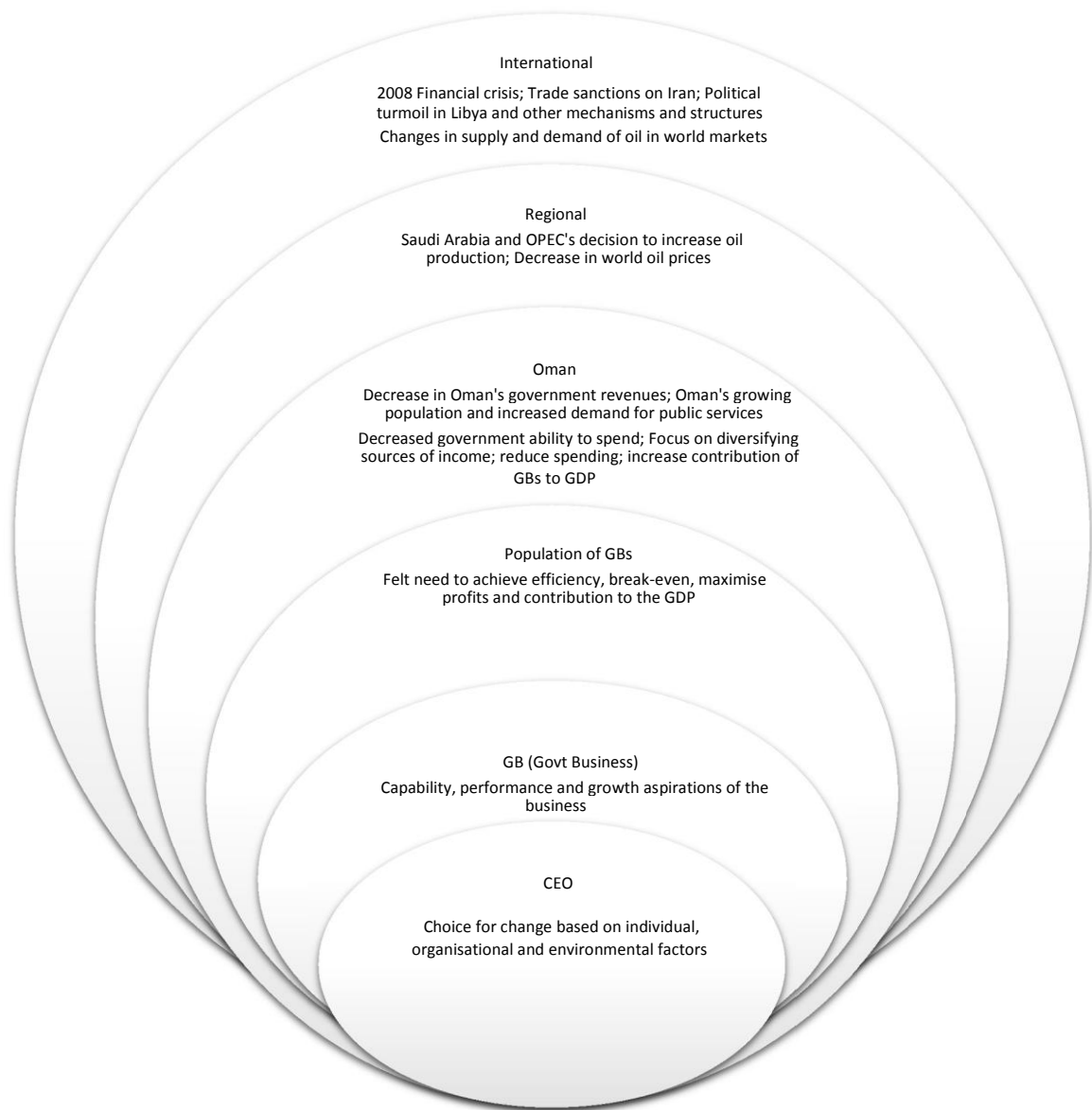


Figure 6.2: An environmentally driven nature of organisational adaptation based on Pettigrew's process view of change (1985, 1987)

6.4 On Research Issue II "Process of Strategic Change"

The second research question focuses on how SC processes unfold. According to Poole and Van de Ven (2004), studying how change processes unfold will depend on how the researcher defines a process. In this study, a process is defined as a sequence of events unfolding in context over time (Pettigrew, 1985, 1997). Studying events will inevitably involve the associated outcomes that emerge from the various actions, decisions and other contextual factors.

A detailed analysis and iterative comparison of the way change unfolded in the two clusters and each of the five organisations led to the identification of a pattern that repeated across the cases. It became evident that all the processes passed through six phases:

1. Antecedents, main forces and emergence of a felt need
2. Negotiating and deciding to change
3. Announcing and planning
4. Implementing and moving
5. Institutionalising the change
6. Changing incrementally

Analysis and iterative comparison of the way change unfolded and the issues that emerged across the five cases led to the second major finding of the study, i.e.:

SC processes in GBs of Oman unfold in a pattern of six phases which combine the assumptions of both the planned and emergent approaches to change.

How were the common phases identified? This study developed a pattern showing how each process unfolded based on the stories narrated by the managers and non-managers. The researcher identified the phases by developing timelines that depicted when the major events occurred. Timelines were used as a visualisation tool to help gain a bird's eye view of how each process unfolded. There was a total of 42 timelines from 42 interviews. All the timelines from each case were then cross-analysed and combined to create one representative timeline that showed the sequence of major events that took place in that organisation. The end result was five timelines of five different SC processes. These can be seen in chapter 5. Then, each cluster was represented by a timeline that showed the major events that took place and their sequences. When the researcher compared the cluster timelines, it was striking to see that the same major transitions occurred across the five cases in different businesses and over different time periods. This analysis led to the discovery of a common pattern in the way SC unfolds in GBs of Oman. See figure 6.3 for the pattern identified. It demonstrates the general phases that SC processes in GBs of Oman pass through.

A General Pattern of How Strategic Changes Unfolded

The cross-case analysis of the phases that emerged between cases and clusters led to the identification of a general pattern made up of six phases. See Cluster I and II timelines and the general pattern identified in the following figure. The timelines are presented again here to give the reader a bird's eye view of the order of major events in each cluster and to enable the reader to compare the sequence of events at a glance.

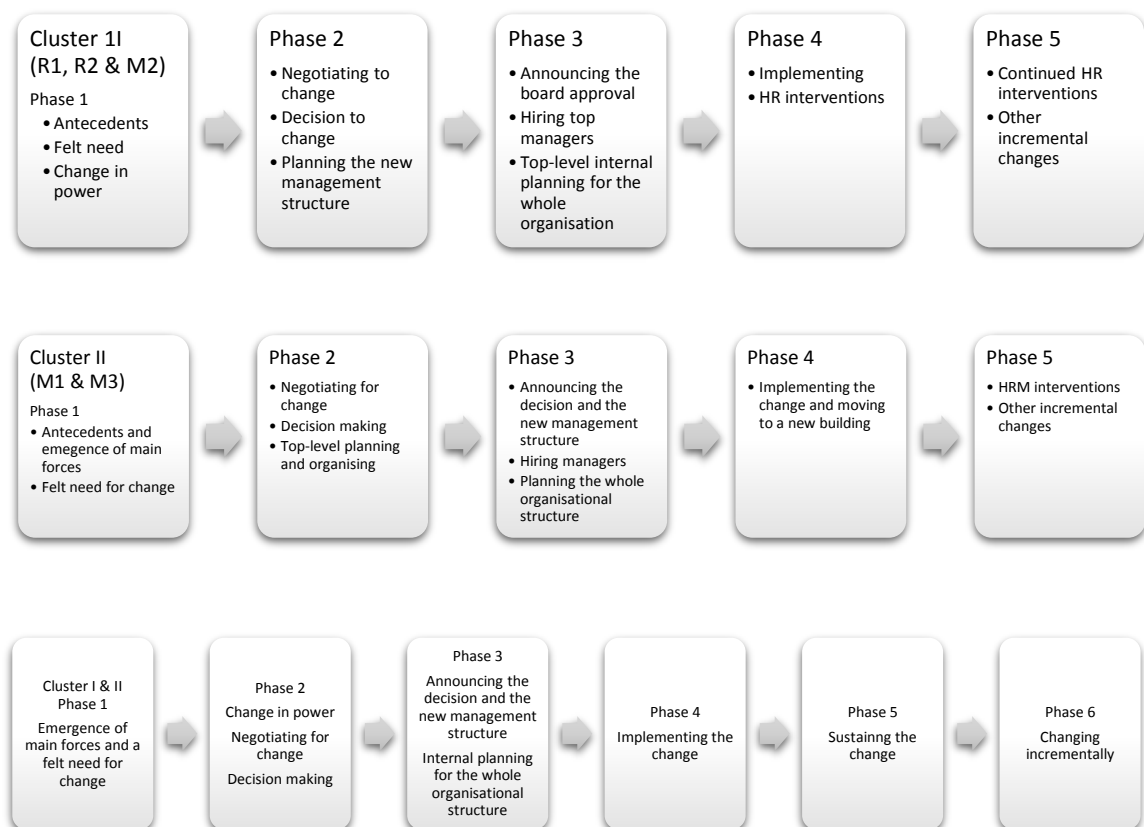


Figure 6.3: Pattern of changing in GBs of Oman

The six major phases are briefly described to show exactly how the change processes unfolded in terms of sequence of major decisions, actions and events:

1. All organisations shared similar antecedents (i.e. the conditions that existed before the main forces emerged and triggered a strong need for change). These included the new government strategies, growth aspirations, concerns around inefficiency (mainly overspending) and the government push to break even, grow and generate higher profits. In the midst of new government expectations, another silent driver was the need felt by the boards and executive teams to make GBs not less than their regional counterparts. The emergence of main forces triggered a felt need to change the structure and achieve better performance.
2. Negotiations for change occurred internally among top managers if the change was initiated internally. However, negotiations happened at the board level if the concept of change was initiated and imposed by the board. Among the five cases, three cases were initiated by the board (R1, R2 and M1). Among these, R1 CEO negotiated for a restructuring before the board imposed its expansion strategy. In R2, with the near completion of an expanded government facility, the board felt the strong need to prepare the operating company to manage the facility by expanding it. A new chairman was appointed who quickly decided on a major

restructuring for an expansion. The need to merge the parent and the subsidiary in M2 was initiated jointly by the parent company and the board as a defensive strategy to protect the market share of the business in the face of a new major competitor. The management integration in M3 was initiated by the subsidiary's CEO. Changes in the board composition and minister helped the CEO obtain an approval. Change in power occurs when the felt need emerges at the board level. The board appoints a new CEO if the position is vacant, or if there is an acting CEO or if the intention is to merge a parent and its subsidiary(ies) and the entities are not performing well and/or have conflicts. The decision to change is made after negotiations, conducting feasibility and cost-benefit studies.

3. Top level planning for the new management structure is done either during the negotiations phase or after depending on whether the change was initiated by the CEO or the board. If the change was initiated internally, the top management team presents the new management structure along with the feasibility study to the board. Then the decision to change is made and announced to all employees along with the new management structure. However, if the change is imposed by the board then top-level planning happens after the decision is made and after the appointment of a new CEO.
4. This follows internal planning for reorganising the whole business and seeking board approval. In Cluster I, planning was centralised at the level of the top management team which included the external consultants and a representative of the HR department. In the three cases under this cluster, the whole change was crafted and implemented by this team. The HR department played a reactive role only; it responded to the demands of the planners and implementers during planning and implementation. There was heavy reliance on external consultants during planning and non-managers were neither involved in planning nor implementing the change. The CEOs met each functional/divisional manager individually during planning. Final changes to the plans were made between the CEO and the consultants and again between the CEO and the board without consulting the concerned managers. In Cluster II, planning was participative and consultative; it occurred in cross-functional collaborative teams of managers and non-managers. In this cluster, there were four types of teams working together during planning and implementation. The executive team headed by the CEO had the ultimate responsibility for the whole change, the change project team worked closely with external consultants and was headed by a project manager (i.e. a restructuring or integration manager) and the functional/divisional teams headed by the new function or division heads. In addition to these, there were different work stream teams under the functional/divisional teams and each was headed by

two non-managers representing the work stream of the parent and subsidiary(ies) (e.g. finance stream, HR stream etc.).

5. Once the board approves the new organisational chart, implementing, recruitment, selection and moving employees to new jobs and a new building in cases of mergers or expansions. When Rosabeth-Moss Kanter (2009) said, “Welcome to the miserable middles of change. Everything looks like a failure in the middle”, she meant that no matter what you do, there will be people who will resist and there will be issues that will surprise you. This is exactly what happened in all cases but at various degrees. Cluster I cases had more people issues and long implementation phases. Implementation was followed by sustaining the change with HRM reforms and other incremental changes.

The key finding from exploring how SC processes unfold is the general pattern identified but there was also another peculiar observation that illuminated in all the five cases. It was observed across the five cases that it was the change leader’s leadership style, the change management approach used, the HRM practices that were rolled out and people’s reactions to all of these that shaped the change process. These factors will be elaborated when explaining the next key finding on what influenced SC processes.

6.5 On Research Issue III “Influencers of Strategic Change”

What influenced SC processes in GBs in Oman is the third main research question of the study. This question explored what contextual and situational factors facilitated and inhibited the change processes. Comparison of influencers in the two clusters and across the five cases led to the emergence of four main categories. These are:

1. Decision makers and change agents. In this category, CEO’s leadership style emerged as the dominant influencer. Hence, we shall refer to leadership instead of the whole category.
2. People’s needs
3. HRM practices
4. Change management/change implementation approach

Hence, the finding reached to is:

People’s needs, CEO leadership style, the change management approach and HRM practices are the main Influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman

How did the researcher identify these main influencers? In the beginning of the study, the researcher investigated the issues guided by two distinct sub-questions: What factors facilitated SC processes in GBs? And what factors inhibited SC processes in GBs? Consequently, while interviewing, coding and doing the within-case analyses, the researcher searched separately for factors that facilitated change processes and those that inhibited them. Because of this approach, two sets of influencers were derived from the interview data – a set of facilitators and another set of inhibitors. These were summarised as 15 facilitators and 15 inhibitors as shown in table 6.1.

During the iterative comparison and just before writing the cases, an interesting truth got uncovered unexpectedly. While comparing the factors, the researcher was astonished to see that what she had listed as facilitators emerged as inhibitors when they were absent or applied inappropriately in terms of style or timing. This led to a discovery of a major finding for this research issue. Consequently, it was concluded that SC processes in GBs in Oman did not have a different set of facilitators and inhibitors but were influenced by the same set of factors that acted as facilitators or inhibitors depending on if they were present, how they were used and when. It was clear that the mere presence of one of these factors did not give it the facilitating power. It was rather the appropriateness of the factor to the situation (e.g. a particular leadership style) and the timing of that factor (e.g. adjusting salaries before or after the restructuring) that determined whether it facilitated or inhibited the change process. This was a major observation that later proved to fit very well with the contingency perspective. Further analysis and summarising of the factors and conditions that facilitated and inhibited change processes led to the identification of five major areas under the research issue “Influencers of SC processes”. These are illustrated in Figure 6.4.

Table 6.1: Facilitators and inhibitors of SC processes

#	Facilitators	Inhibitors
1	A felt need for change	Not everyone believed that the organisation had to change
2	Visible change leadership and shifting leadership styles	Lack of change leadership and absence of a vision for change and unity of direction
3	Regular, centralised communication and transparency	Deliberate lack of updates and secrecy of the change
4	Planned employee involvement	Deliberate lack of employee involvement
5	Top managers' competency, support and management style	Managerial incompetency, resistance, resignations, power struggles, personal interests and the practice of Wasta
6	Consultant as a facilitator only	Heavy reliance on consultants and incompetent general managers; changing by delegation without leadership from the CEO
7	Effective planning	Ineffective planning; lack of scenario planning, how to plan, how to change, how to manage the change, how to control the change; how to address the people side of change and what to do in the post-change period
8	Board support	Board incompetency and too much interference
9	<p>People's needs, expectations, attitudes and their societal culture</p> <p>Needs: promotions, clear career path, salary grades, clear job descriptions, training, family-like work culture, and good work environment</p> <p>Expectations: promotions and better salary grades</p> <p>The Omani cultural values of friendliness, humour and optimism helped people adopt change quickly</p>	<p>Wrong attitudes: change will bring something good and satisfy my needs; I have to be involved in planning the change; The best training is given overseas; Career growth is an upward move only; I have to be promoted to a higher position with a better salary grade every x years as long as my performance is accepted</p>
10	Proactive HR. HR reforms and interventions before, during and after the change	<p>Reactive HR. Reforms rolled out after the change and resistance.</p> <p>HR problems (staffing, salaries, training and career paths): late or lack of new salaries and career paths: salary adjustments and lack of career paths after the change</p>
11	Organisation-wide agreement and support for new structure	Rejection of the new structure - In both R1, R2 and M2, the new structures were not shared with employees. The new structure was seen as not right in R2. Departments rejected it and added the jobs and titles they needed; In R1, revisions were made; In M2, the structure collapsed and the CEO was replaced, major revisions were made by the new CEO
12	Unified change management approach; A specific change management team; Implementation was fast and collaborative	<p>Lack of consistency in the change management approach;</p> <p>Absence of a change management team; No collaboration;</p> <p>Each work group implements change in their own way;</p> <p>Delays; Slow implementation and managerial procrastinations</p>
13	Post-change people and work integration plans; Employees motivated by open-door policies and participatory and consultative leadership and management styles	Clash between cultures; Lack of post-change people and work integration; Many work conflicts between 2 or more entities, between old and new staff, between government appointed GMs; Employees prefer open-door participatory management styles rather than the closed-door authoritative management styles
14	Very low resistance and resignations	Non-managers' post-change disappointments; High resistance and many resignations of talented managers and employees during and after the change
15	Regular evaluation and learning	Absence of evaluation and learning

Source: Developed from interviews

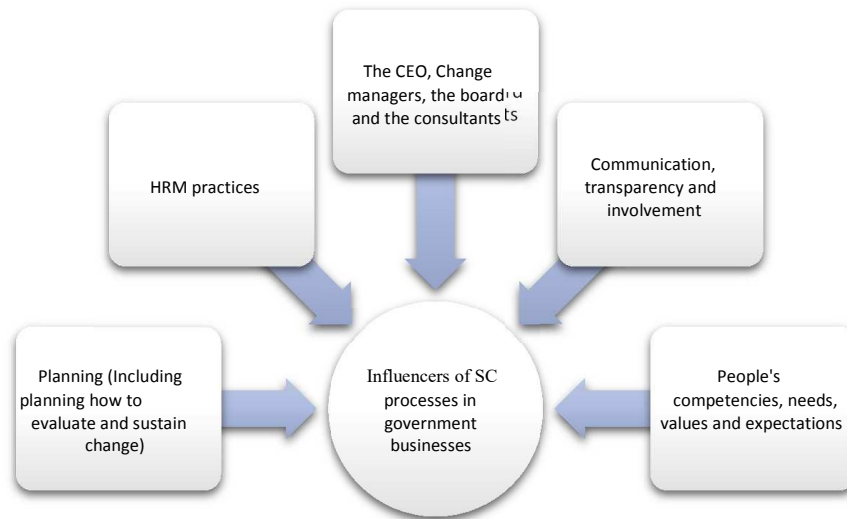


Figure 6.4: The five influencers of SC processes
Source: Developed from interview data

Further analysis showed that among all other factors under ‘decision makers and change agents’ the leadership style emerged as the decisive factor of how change was led, implemented and managed. Also, the people side and HRM practices were closely entwined and had to be explained together with the argument that each need could be satisfied with a particular HRM practice. Also, planning, communication, employee involvement, evaluating and sustaining the change are aspects of the change management and implementation approach used. These were grouped under “The change management approach”. Hence, it was concluded that SC processes in GBs of Oman are influenced by four main areas or dimensions – leadership, HRM practices, the change management approach and people. Below is a brief elaboration of each influencer:

1. Decision makers and change agents:

This included the board members, their facilitating support for change and the inhibiting role of their low competency levels and interferences in how change unfolded and was managed. Top managers, their support, competency levels and assumptions on how to manage change and people, their interests and motives, political behaviour and resistance all emerged as influencers. Managerial resistance in M3 was addressed by the early identification and removal of resisting managers from key positions and involving them as advisors to the CEO in the change process. In M2, resisting managers were removed from key positions and appointed as advisors. Others were offered early retirement packages because they were too many. The consultants’ role emerged as an influencer as they were experts with consultative power. But when the top managers heavily relied on them like in Cluster I, employees resented it and felt that their involvement in workshops led by consultants was ‘a show to pretend that the company cared’. When

consultants were used as facilitators only and both managers and non-managers took the lead in planning and implementing the changes like in Cluster II, their role was seen as facilitating. Overall, it was observed that consultants did not have knowledge of the societal culture and they didn't give any training to top managers on how to implement the change plans or on how to handle people's issues.

Among all, CEO's leadership style played the most influential role. Change leadership facilitated the change process when it was relationship-oriented, inspirational and when the leaders capitalised on patriotism – "let's do this for Oman!". This passion for helping the country was evident in what the CFO in M3 said about the CEO - "*Satisfaction is seeing that you are able to add value to your own country and contribute to the economy and future generation of this country*"

2. The change management/implementation approach:

Three main aspects of the change process emerged as main influencers under this dimension – planning (including planning on evaluating the change and sustaining it), communicating and involving. Planning included making preparations for the people side of change early on, identifying the needed HR reforms and the kind of change interventions to introduce before, during and after the structural changes. Decisions involved are how and when to announce the change, how, how often and to what extent to communicate, how to gain support for the change, what change management approach to use (fast or slow, top-down, bottom-up or a combination), what post-change people and work integration plans to formulate and implement, how to handle resistance and avoid resignations of talented employees, how and when to evaluate the process among others. Communication, transparency and involvement emerged as major facilitators. Formal, centrally controlled, regular and transparent communication via staff portals was more helpful than when CEOs relied on cascading information orally via managers in the chain of command. This later approach was a major obstacle. It was observed that how, how much and how often organisations communicated was determined by the CEO's assumptions on how to manage people and organisations for change. The same applied on employee involvement. It was observed that organisations that communicated formally and regularly with employees also involved their employees more in the planning and implementation of the changes. These two, communication and involvement, seemed to go hand in hand to a large extent. The change management and implementation approach used emerged as a main influencer under this dimension. It was identified that the CEO's leadership style and their assumptions of how to manage people and organisations for change determined what approach would be used. Two different approaches emerged, a

top-down approach and a combination of a top-down and bottom-up approach. The later was more successful because it was associated with less resistance (complaints, resignations, strikes, rejection of new structure) and better financial performance of the firms.

3. Peoples' needs:

Peoples' needs, their competencies, values, expectations and support for the change also emerged as a major influencer. It was observed that people's competencies were a facilitator as it was easier to manage change with competent people. Organisations had to spend less on training, horizontal moves were easier and there was less need to hire externally. People's needs played the most significant role in determining their reactions to change which in turn determined the speed and direction of the change processes. Their main needs were better salaries and promotions. They also showed a strong need for representative job descriptions, transparent recruitment and selection, quick training on new jobs and having clear career paths and good work environments. To gain their support, people needed to see a legitimate reason for change, a clear vision, a leader that they can see and relate to, they needed information on the change, transparency and clarity in their jobs and career paths and they needed better jobs and salaries in any career moves made. The Omani culture emerged as a facilitator. Omanis were described as friendly, optimistic, patriotic, quick to adapt to change, prefer a family-like work culture and like using humour at work. These characteristics were seen as facilitators. Two very influential techniques emerged and helped win support for change, i.e., announcing that there will be no job losses and no salary reductions – "no one will be disadvantaged" and using a patriotic rhetoric – "we need to do this for Oman". But, it emerged that employees actively use social comparisons and perceive inequities as a result of unmet promises and their own expectations. The promise that "No one will be disadvantaged" inspired employees at first but backfired later on because employees' equity calculations went beyond what managers had thought. They compared themselves with others whom they believed were similar to them. People compared before, during and after the changes. All in all, it was very clear that Omani employees highly valued job security (promise of no job or salary loss), work clarity (clear job descriptions and roles), career paths (a road to the future, again related to job security and future orientation), promotions (better salaries and positions) and good work environments (modern work place; friendly; respects employees' rights and privacy; transparent; fair). They prefer friendly managers who are visible, easy to reach to and relate to, use humour and are good listeners and problem solvers. They

like managerial styles that use open door policy, participatory approaches and encourage family-like work cultures.

4. HRM practices:

Specific HR practices emerged as more influencing during SCs. In this regard, a proactive role of the department was associated with lower resistance and better organisational performance. Internal recruitment and selection via panel interviews with internal and external members were identified as facilitators because they offered job opportunities and added fairness to the change. Designing clear and representative job descriptions that employees agree with facilitated change. Short, brief descriptions designed behind closed doors were rejected. Introducing salary adjustments before the restructuring rather than after was another facilitator. Offering quick training to employees and managers in new positions offered clarity and a feeling of security in the new job and thus facilitated the change process. Providing clear career paths once an employee joined a new job also added clarity and a feeling of security that there is a future and growth in the job. Not offering these or offering them very late inhibited the process with complaints, rejections, resignations and low morale. Introducing a culture change program quickly after the reorganisation emerged as a major facilitator under this dimension too.

All in all, it was concluded from the cross-case analysis around ‘the influencers’ that there are four broad dimensions that work as facilitators and inhibitors of SC processes in GBs in Oman. Whether a dimension will be a facilitator or not will depend on whether it is used or not, how it is used and when. The next chapter discusses these influencers taking into consideration related theories and studies.

6.6 What Do the Three Key Findings Tell Us and Where Do They Lead Us To?

The case analysis showed the emergence of two contrasting clusters that demonstrated variations in employee resistance and financial performance of the businesses due to variations in three organisational characteristics - the way the leaders led, how the change was implemented and managed, and the role played by the HR departments.

The clusters pointed out to a possible association between outcomes of SC processes and three main contextual influencers – behaviours of the leaders (CEOs), change management and implementation approach and HRM practices. See figure 6.5.

It was observed that when leaders were visible and actively involved in the change, when the change was implemented using a combination of top-down and bottom-up approach and when HR departments were actively involved in the planning and implementation of change, there was less resistance, no corrective changes to the new structure, no delays in implementation and the financial performance of the business improved in the post-implementation phase. But, in the absence of those processes, the implementation and post-implementation phases took longer (in fact double the years) due to high resistance, rejection of the new structures, resignations including that of the CEOs and no improvement in the financial performance of the firms. Figure 6.5 below demonstrates the three main contextual influencers of SC outcomes in GB outcomes.

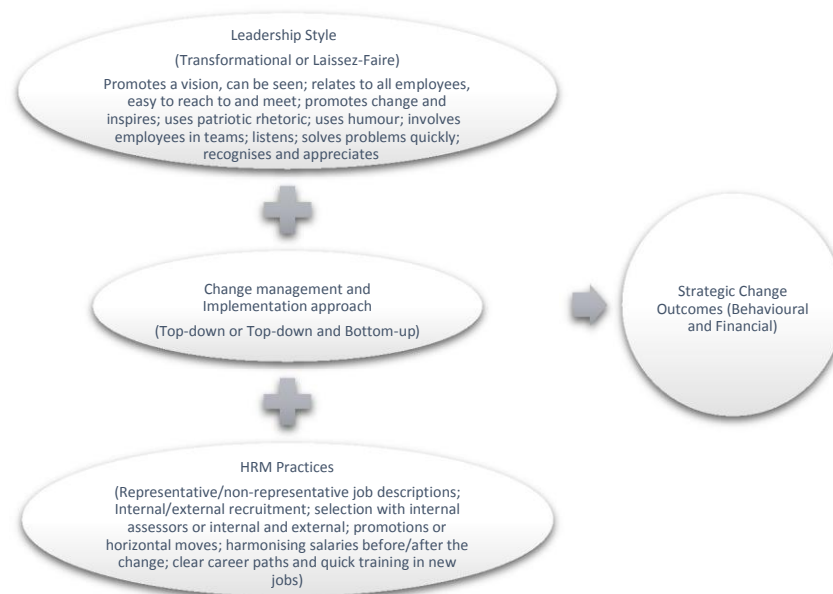


Figure 6.5: The emerging association between outcomes of SC processes and three main influencers; Source: Developed from analysing interview data

Interestingly, there is one unique case that clearly illuminated the relationships between the main influencers and the performance outcomes. M2, as explained earlier in section 6.2 on pages 149-152, holds characteristics of cases in Clusters I and II. It can be placed in cluster 1 because the change began with a centralised planning approach. Like in R1 and R2, this case had deliberate lack of communication and employee involvement during planning and implementation. Similarly, the HR department was reactive only to the demands of the top managers and there was heavy reliance on consultants. Also, like in R1 and R2, implementation in M2 was fully delegated to the concerned top managers in their work groups with no specific guidelines, indicating a laissez-faire leadership style. There was no regular follow up or evaluation of how the change was implemented and the CEO intervened only when serious matters were reported. However, when the new structure was put in place in M2, many managers and non-managers rejected it strongly. Several top and

middle managers and competent employees resigned. The board intervened and had to replace the powerful CEO who had long tenure in the public sector with the subsidiary's CEO who was younger and led with a very different style. This change in power marked the turning point of the case because what followed in the change process hold the characteristics of cases in Cluster II. With a new CEO in who used a very different leadership style and who highly involved employees in change-related matters, and with the HR department playing a proactive role in the corrective restructuring and in sustaining and institutionalising the change, the behavioural and financial outcomes of M2 changed and became similar to the outcomes observed in Cluster II cases.

This variation in outcomes that happened after the leadership style, change management and implementation approach and HRM role changed in M2 indicated the existence of a factor or a contingency that moderated the effect of the three influencers (leadership, change management and HRM) on organisational performance. 'People' emerged as a main change influencer and the cases showed that fits and misfits between the three factors and people caused variations in the outcomes of SC processes. Hence, there seems to be a coherence and fit relationship between a specific kind of a leadership style and people, a specific kind of change management approach and people, and a specific kind of HRM and people that together lead to positive outcomes during SC in GBs of Oman.

The patterns observed turned the researcher's attention to uncovering three possible fit-performance relationships - The behavioural and financial outcomes of SC processes are contingent upon:

1. Leadership and people fit,
2. Change management and people fit, and
3. HRM and people fit

In other words, people moderated the effect of leadership behaviours (style), change management approach and HRM practices on organisational performance. Hence,

When the leadership style, change management approach and the HRM practices fit people, SC processes achieve better performance i.e. resistance will be low, the new structure will be accepted, implementation will not take longer than expected and the financial performance of the firm will improve.

Figure 6.6 illustrates this relationship.

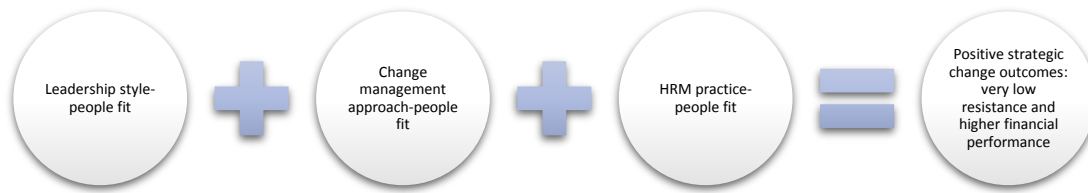


Figure 6.6: A conceptualisation of the fit-performance relationship
Source: Developed from interview data

All the evidence in the cases point to this relationship. But are ‘people’ really a contingency of leadership behaviours, change management approach and HRM practices? What do we need to do to prove that it is a contingency factor? According to Donaldson (2001, p. 89), “Whether a factor is a contingency of organisation depends on whether aligning the organisational characteristic and the contingency produces higher performance”. In this case, the organisational characteristics are the leadership style, the change management approach used and the HRM practices. We, so far, have evidence from the variations observed in the two clusters that when the three organisational characteristics (leadership, change management, and HRM) fit with ‘people’, higher performance or effectiveness is produced in SC processes. But, this is not sufficient because for ‘people’ to be established as a contingency of leadership style, change management approach and HRM “an underlying fit model has to be specified theoretically” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 91). In other words, we need theories and evidence about why the specific set of leadership behaviours, the change management approach and the HRM practices used fit and satisfy the needs of people (i.e., Omani employees) and lead to the positive behavioural and financial outcomes observed. This is what the following chapter sets out to prove. Based on this argument, we can say that the study’s fourth finding suggests that:

SC processes in GBs of Oman can be planned and managed in an orderly manner and achieve better performance (positive behavioural and financial outcomes) if there is, among other conditions, leadership-people fit, change management-people fit and HRM-people fit

The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the relevant literature and demonstrate that the fit posited is empirically valid and supported by theory.

6.7 Chapter Summary

This exploratory process study of five different SC processes in five GBs of Oman resulted in four key findings that address the research questions on forces, process and influencers of SC processes. The key findings are:

1. The external environment is a predominant force of rational reactive adaptation in GBs of Oman
2. SC processes in GBs of Oman unfold in a pattern of six phases and combine the assumptions of planned and emergent change.
3. People, leadership style, change management approach and HRM are main influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman.
4. SC processes in GBs of Oman can be planned and managed in an orderly manner and achieve high performance (positive behavioural and financial outcomes) if there is, among other conditions, leadership-people fit, change management-people fit and HRM-people fit

The following table 6.2 presents a summary of the research questions, answers and key findings.

Table 6.2: Summary of key findings and corresponding research questions

Research Question	Key Finding
Research Question 1: What makes GBs undergo SC?	<p>Answer to Research Question 1: GBs undergo SCs in Oman due to six forces</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changed government strategy and expectations 2. Entrance of a new major competitor 3. Financial crisis and financial concern/ financial performance 4. Structural and people issues that impede performance and inhibit growth (including career stagnation) 5. Major changes in power (New CEO, chairman, minister) 6. CEO choice/ambition <p>Key Finding1: The external environment is a predominant force of rational reactive adaptation in GBs of Oman. Even when change seems to be initiated by a force within the organisation, a deeper analysis of the force shows that the need to change was environmentally driven.</p>
Research Questions 2 How SC processes unfold?	<p>Answer to Research Question 2: SC processes unfold in six general phases</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Antecedents, main forces and emergence of a felt need 2. Negotiating and deciding to change 3. Announcing and planning 4. Implementing and moving 5. Institutionalising the change 6. Changing incrementally <p>There are four main aspects of the SC process that were identified as most important by change managers and recipients</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leading the change 2. Communicating the change and involving employees 3. Planning and controlling the implementation 4. Integrating people and work after restructuring: role clarity and a new culture <p>Key Finding 2: SC processes in GBs of Oman unfold in a pattern of six phases which combine the assumptions of both the planned and emergent approaches to change.</p>
Research Question 3: What contextual factors influence SC processes in GBs in Oman?	<p>Answer to Research Question 3: The study found that people's needs, the competencies and behaviours of decision makers and change agents, change management approach and HRM practices are the four main influencers of SC processes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People's needs: The top needs identified are the need for job security, the need for better jobs and higher salaries, the need to be informed and consulted, clear job descriptions, quick training on new job, and clear career paths and promotion criteria 2. Decision makers and change agents: The CEO's leadership style and change management competency emerged as the most influential one The board members' competencies and degree of interference The change managers' change management competency, support for change and political behaviour The degree of reliance on external consultants and the consultants' awareness of local culture and people and process aspects of change 3. Change management and implementation approach Top-down, centralised planning and implementation and reactive HR departments or a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches and proactive HR departments 4. HRM practices: The most influential HRM role is a proactive role. The effective practices are existence of clear and representative job descriptions during recruitment and placement, the use of internal recruitment to give employees better job opportunities, the use of selection panels with external interviewers, offering quick job-related training on the new job, the presence of clear career paths and promotion criteria in new jobs, not making changes to the salary structure after change implementation but before and the existence of an appropriate work culture (family-like) The level of the HR department's ability in addressing employees' job-related and change-related enquiries and its ability in handling complaints, resignations and work strikes were all identified as influential factors too <p>Key Finding 3: People's needs, leadership style, change management approach and HRM practices are the main influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman. People's needs moderate the effect of the influencers on organisational performance.</p> <p>Key Finding 4: SC processes in GBs of Oman can be planned and managed in an orderly manner and achieve high performance (positive behavioural and financial outcomes) if there is, among other conditions, leadership-people fit, change management-people fit and HRM-people fit</p>

Source: Developed for the study from analysing interviews and documents

The next chapter offers theoretical evidence on each major finding and provides support from the literature on why the specific set of leadership behaviours (i.e. style), change management approach and HRM practices fit and satisfy the needs of Omani employees and lead to the positive behavioural and financial outcomes observed.

Chapter 7 - Discussion

7.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the key findings of the study in relation to existing research, provide rationale for the findings, identify the contribution of the study and make recommendations for theory, research and practice where appropriate. First, each key finding is discussed in relation to relevant research. Then, the identified fit-performance relationships are highlighted. After that a process framework of SC in GBs of Oman is offered. The chapter ends with a summary of the discussion.

To recap, this study was conducted to explore the forces, phases and influencers of SC processes that occurred in five GBs operating in five different industries in Oman during 2007-2015. The aim of the study is to advance our understanding of SC processes and develop a new process framework of SC in GBs of Oman that highlights the forces, phases and influencers of SC. To achieve this aim, three main objectives were set:

1. To identify the main forces of SC in GBs of Oman,
2. To highlight the main phases of SC processes in GBs of Oman
3. To identify the main influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman.

Three main research questions were examined to address these objectives and achieve the overall aim of the study. The cross-case analysis led to three answers:

1. What makes GBs undergo SCs in Oman?

The study found that GBs undergo SCs in Oman due to six forces: changed government strategy and expectations (e.g., growth), entrance of a new major competitor, financial concerns, structural and people issues that impede performance and inhibit growth (e.g., career stagnation); major changes in power (New CEO, chairman, minister); and the CEO's choice to pursue change.

2. How do SC processes unfold in GBs in Oman?

The study identified that SC processes unfold in six general phases: antecedents, main forces and emergence of a felt need; negotiating and deciding to change; announcing and planning; implementing and moving; sustaining the change and; changing incrementally.

3. What situational factors influence SC processes in GBs of Oman?

The study found four main influencers: people's needs; leadership style; the change management approach and HRM practices.

Analysis of the above answers led to four key findings:

1. The external environment is a predominant force of rational reactive adaptation in GBs of Oman.
2. SC processes in GBs of Oman unfold in a general pattern made up of six phases and combine the assumptions of planned and emergent change.
3. People's needs, leadership style, change management approach and HRM are the main influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman. People's needs moderate the effect of the influencers on organisational performance.
4. SC processes in GBs of Oman can be planned and managed in an orderly manner and achieve high performance (positive behavioural and financial outcomes) if there is, among other conditions, leadership-people fit, change management-people fit and HRM-people fit.

The next section discusses each finding in relation to existing research.

7.1 Key Finding 1: The External Environment is a Predominant Force of Rational Reactive Adaptation in GBs of Oman.

The cross-case analysis concluded that even when change seems to be initiated by a force within the organisation (i.e., financial concerns, structural inefficiencies and people issues, career stagnation, major changes in power and CEO choice), a deeper analysis of the internal forces using abduction (CR mode of logical inference) helped uncover the events and mechanisms in the larger external environment that triggered the internal force of change proving that the need to change was always environmentally driven. Hence, the internal organisational forces, whether they emerged from the individual (the CEO or Chairman) or the group (e.g. the top management team or from non-managers on the issue of career stagnation) or the organisational structure (e.g. structural inefficiencies), were all responses to changes in the larger external environment that the organisations interact with. As such, it was concluded that the external environment is a predominant force of rational reactive adaptation in GBs of Oman.

7.1.1 Cross-Links with the OC Literature

The finding that the external environment is a predominant force of SC and all internal forces, including CEO choice, are in fact responses to changes in the external environment supports a core assumption of the structural contingency theory. As per the contingency theory, "Organisations are seen as adapting over time to fit their changing contingencies so that effectiveness is maintained" (Donaldson, 2001, p. 2). Organisations are viewed as open systems interacting with their environments and organisational changes are seen as

“structural responses to specific contingencies” (Demers, 2007, p. 8). The study showed that changes in the socio-economic context and government strategies and expectations led to major restructurings in five GBs in Oman. Hence, all the structural changes in this study were concluded as deliberate and reactive adaptations to the external environment. This finding is in line with the arguments of major contingency theorists like Burns & Stalker (1961), Chandler (1962), Woodward (1965), Galbraith (1973), Pugh & Hinings (1976), Van de Ven & Drazin (1985) and Pennings (1992).

As for strategic choice, which was identified as one of the internal forces of change, the study offered support for Donaldson’s (1996, p. 51-51) argument that “there is no real strategic choice ... [because]...contingencies determine structure and thus pre-determine strategic choice”. By supporting Donaldson’s (1996) argument, the study proves that Child’s (1972) strategic choice does not apply on GBs in Oman. Hence, Nadler’s (1983) argument that ‘organisations transform and change largely as a result of external forces rather than an internal desire or need to change’ is more valid as it reflects what happened in these businesses.

7.2 Key Finding II: SC Processes Unfold in Six Phases Combining the Assumptions of Planned and Emergent Change

The cross-case analysis concluded that SCs in GBs unfold in a similar pattern made up of six general phases. The pre-implementation phases meet the assumptions of planned change whereas the implementation phases demonstrate emergence making the pattern of changing neither purely linear nor purely non-linear. Hence, it was found that the pattern combines the assumptions of both planned and emergent change. But, the study found that stability (equilibrium) can be achieved in these change processes when managers address the main influencers, make them coherent and fit people’s needs. This is because, as the reader will see in the coming sections, people’s needs pre-determine what the most effective leadership style, change management approach and HRM practices are.

7.2.1 Cross-Links with the OC Literature

This finding has three insights:

1. First, it shows for the first time how SC processes unfold in GBs of Oman, a context that is very different from the dominant western context of SC studies and models of OC and change management. By doing so, it helped address one of the gaps in the OC literature. Demers (2007, p. 166) pointed out in her comprehensive review and synthesis of OC theories that “most empirical studies so far don’t really model the micro-organisational level, and, as a result, treat the internal change process as a black box”. Several other researchers highlighted the need to

investigate the sequence of change (Huy, 2001; Liguori, 2012; Rindova, Ferrier & Wiltbank, 2010). Major process researchers pointed out to the lack of knowledge on the sequence of changes and also the modifications that occur during a change process whether it is incremental or episodic (Pettigrew et al., 2001; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). Hence, identifying a general pattern of the process, specifying the sequence of events and highlighting the modifications that occur is a significant contribution to the literature because, as mentioned earlier, there are only few studies that take into account the intra-organisational workings of change (e.g. Carley & Lee, 1998; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Brown & Eisenhardt, 1998).

2. Secondly, besides depicting the sequence of events and advancing our understanding of the inner workings of SC, this finding showed that the six-phases fit well within Lewin's (1947) three-step model. This observation confirms the finding of Elrod and Tippet (2002, p. 273) who after reviewing several change models concluded that "Models of the change process, as perceived by diverse and seemingly unrelated disciplines follow Lewin's three phase model of change". Several other researchers support this view too (e.g. Burnes, 2004, 1998; Carnall, 2003; Zell, 2003). The six phases identified also fit within Bullock and Batten's (1985) four-phase model. This model is "the most comprehensive attempt to elaborate upon Lewin's work" and it was based on an assessment and integration of more than 30 models of planned change (Burnes, 2014, p. 347). The study thus supports Cummings and Huse's (1989) view that Bullock and Batten's model can be applied to a wide variety of change situations. See table 7.1 to see how the six phases of SC identified in this study fall under Lewin's (1947) three-steps model of refreezing, moving and freezing and Bullock and Batten's (1985) four-phases model of exploration, planning, action and integration. Fitting within Lewin's (1947) and Bullock and Batten's (1985) models prove that in stable environments like Oman, large-scale changes can be planned, organised, led and controlled using planned change models. This, in fact, supports the view of emergent researchers who oppose planned change but also admit that it is the dynamic and uncertain nature of the external environment and the resulting messy and untidy nature of change that makes planned change inappropriate (e.g. Wilson, 1992; Buchanan & Storey, 1997).

Table 7.1: The six phases of change residing within Lewin's three-step model and Bullock and Batten's four-phase model

Lewin's Three Steps (1947)	Bullock & Batten's Four Phases (1985)	The Six Phases in the study
<p>Unfreezing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify forces that restrain people from changing (Weick & Quinn, 1999). 2. "the equilibrium (the forces of inertia) need to be destabilised (unfrozen) before old behaviour can be discarded (unlearned) and new behaviour successfully adopted" (Burnes, 2014, p. 343). 3. Three processes can help achieve unfreezing: disconfirming the validity of the status quo, inducing guilt or survival anxiety and creating psychological safety (Schein, 1996) 	<p>Exploration, Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In exploration, "an organisation has to explore and decide whether it wants to change and if so commit resources to planning" (Burnes, 2014, p. 348). The processes involved are becoming aware of the need to change and searching for outside assistance like bringing in a consultant to help in planning and implementing (Burnes, 2014) 2. The planning phase, "involves understanding the organisation's problem" (Burnes, 2014, p. 348). The processes involved are diagnosing the problem, setting goals, formulating the plans and persuading key decision makers (Burnes, 2014) 	<p>Phases 1, 2 and 3 Emergence of Main Forces and Felt Need Negotiation and Decision Making Announcing and Internal Planning</p> <p>These three phases fit well with Lewin's Refreezing and even better with Bullock and Batten's Exploration and Planning phases. In all the five cases, a felt need emerged either at the board level or internally. Then the need for change was communicated at the board. After that, consultants were brought in to help in diagnosing (feasibility studies) and planning. When the change was initiated internally, the CEO persuaded all key decision makers. Planning included outlining the new management structure. The decision to change was made, the new top management team was organised and the change was announced to all the staff along with the new management structure.</p> <p>In Cluster I, planning was centralised at the top level only (CEOs, division managers and HODs). But, in Cluster II, employee teams were set up to participate in designing the new organisational structure. This involved intensive workshops designed to inform and involve employees.</p>
<p>Moving</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unfreezing is not an end, it "creates motivation to learn but does not necessarily control or predict the direction of learning" (Schein, 1996, p. 32) 2. "take into account all forces at work and identify and evaluate, on a trial and error basis all the available options" (Lewin, 1947 in Burnes, 2014, p. 343) 	<p>Action</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This phase is about putting the plans into action. The processes involved include "establishing appropriate arrangements to manage the change process and gaining support for the actions to be taken and evaluating the implementation activities and feeding back the results so that any necessary adjustments or refinements can be made" (Burnes, 2014, p. 348). 	<p>Phase 4 Implementing and Moving</p> <p>In the five cases, this phase included implementing the new structure. In Cluster II, the teams that collaborated to plan the new structure worked together to put the plans into action. Unlike in Cluster I where implementation was fully delegated to division managers without guidelines and change was implemented simultaneously across divisions, implementation unfolded in a function-by-function basis in cluster II. Implementation was handled like a project with a project manager, timelines, deadlines etc. and there were regular feedback sessions in team settings and corrective actions were taken quickly. These organisations learnt from the staged implementation and ensured consistency in how they did the change.</p>
<p>Refreeze</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "stabilise the group at a new quasi-stationary equilibrium in order to ensure that the new behaviours are relatively safe from regression" (Burnes, 2014, p. 343) 2. Requires changes in organisational culture, norms, policies and practices (Cummings & Huse, 1989) 	<p>Integration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "This state commences once the changes have been successfully implemented. It is concerned with consolidating and stabilising the change" (Burnes, 2014, p. 348). The processes involved are focused on reinforcing the new desirable behaviours by feedback, the reward system. It also involves reducing reliance on consultants and training managers and employees to control and improve the situation by themselves (Burnes, 2014). 	<p>Phases 5 and 6 Sustaining the Change and Changing Incrementally</p> <p>These are the post implementation phases that started after the majority of employees were in new positions and staffing ended. In cluster I, these phases were chaotic with various forms of resistance. There was no regular feedback. The reward systems were changed but people resisted them. Managers were not trained and employees did not show the new behaviours. In cluster II, the post-implementation phases were planned for early and the organisations unrolled culture changes and focused on satisfying employees needs and making them happy via various HR reforms like new employee rewards and recognition schemes, higher education scholarships etc.</p>

Source: Developed for the study from Burnes (2014), Cumming and Huse (1989), Schein (1996) and interview data

3. Besides portraying a more linear and planned nature of change, the finding showed that the five change processes combined planned and emergent change assumptions. Linearity, as mentioned earlier, was observed in the pre-implementation phases and in cases where managers had knowledge about the actions and practices that fit people and their needs. Nonlinearity was observed in the implementation phases and in cases where managers were not aware of people's needs and what actions and practices could help satisfy the needs or did not believe that people's needs had to be considered in planning and implementing SC. According to Lewin's (1947) and Bullock and Batten's (1985) models, the emergence of people issues is related to what extent the change agents involved people in the planning phases and to what extent these managers understood the restraining and driving forces of change.

Hence, the finding suggests that a single SC process that unfolds over five years and beyond can combine both planned and emergent features. This is in line with Beer and Nohria's (2000) observation that while organisations seem to fit the emergent model, there are periods when they go through rapid planned change initiatives. The study showed that planned change occurs first and then emergence appears when people resist after realising how change impacts them. This trend was observed when people were not involved in planning. When resistance emerged during implementation, managers either let people take the lead and decide what they wanted like the new job titles and positions that were allowed to emerge in R2 or managers allow emergence within strict planned boundaries like in R1 where people went on strike twice and demanded the resignation of the CEO but he continued serving the business and made only minor changes via limited employee involvement. This means that these two types of change were seen to happen either sequentially like in the separation approach to managing dualities (e.g. Kanter et al., 1992) or emergence was allowed to take place within planned boundaries like in the integration approach (Beer & Nohria, 2002; Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Hence, unlike those who debate and call for an either-or view of change, this finding supports Burnes (2004) balanced argument that "planned and emergent changes are not competitors, with each one seeking to show that it is better than the other. Nor are they mutually exclusive or incapable of being used in combination. Rather they are allies, each one appropriate to particular change situations but neither appropriate for all change situations" (p. 899). Figure 7.1 shows where the change is more planned and where it is more emergent in the pattern identified.

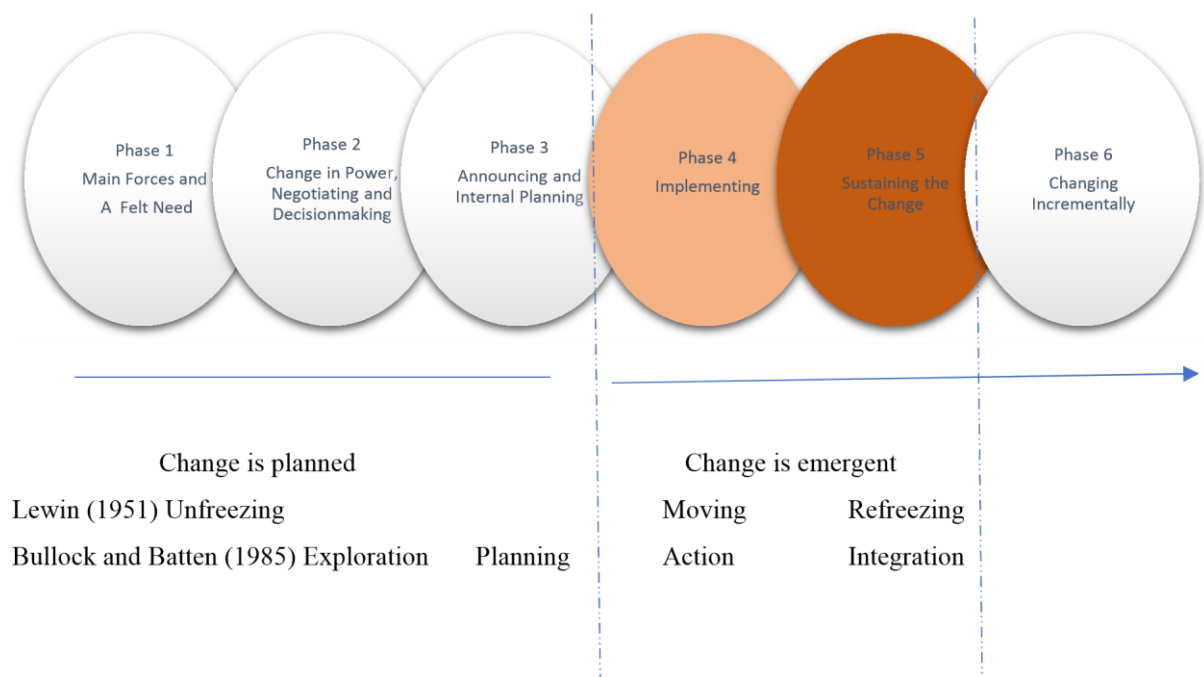


Figure 7.1: Six phases of SC processes - combining planned and emergent nature
Source: Developed for the study from interview data

When taking a closer look at the process, it was noticed that the first three phases (Antecedents, main forces and emergence of a felt need; Negotiating and deciding to change; Announcing and planning) demonstrated the assumptions of the planned approach to change. The phases unfolded in a linear, stable and predictable manner as the managers had wanted. This supports what Pasmore (2011, p. 272) said, “Prior to the implementation phase, change is still a theoretical construct; no one knows exactly how it will play out or feel, or what it might affect. Once implementation begins, change becomes tangible and its consequences clearer”. These are the pre-implementation phases, i.e. the strategy formulation phases where until there, people were not moved to new jobs and their rewards were not changed. This observation supports the dominant view in the strategy literature that strategy implementation is a lot more complex and challenging than strategy formulation and many managers know more about planning than about implementing plans (Hrebiniak, 2013). The study offers support for David’s (2013) view that the implementation phase is more challenging because it involves the whole organisation rather than few individuals only like during planning, it requires motivation and leadership skills rather than simply the analytical skills needed in planning, it is an operational process rather than an intellectual process and it requires the ability to address various forces as they emerge. It was noticed that when implementation started, characteristics of emergent change emerged. Change could no longer unfold according to plans. Managers could no longer exercise the strong control they had because they became uncertain. All employees became actors in the change process and change unfolded in an unpredictable manner with

emerging people issues. Instead of implementing pre-set plans, managers had to respond to various forms of resistance. As Pasmore (2011, p. 272) explained, “People who might not have had an opinion about the favourability of the effort quickly form one, often influenced by peers or direct supervisors. Rumours begin to circulate about what is really at stake, and people begin to take sides depending upon who stands to gain or lose”. The study proved that emergence begins in planned change when people realise that the new order doesn’t satisfy their needs. This is caused by managers not considering people’s needs and expectations during planning and implementation. We saw how people opposed change that didn’t satisfy their needs after they understood the impact of the new structures on their jobs and rewards in R1, R2 and M2. In those situations, change became bottom-up rather than top-down fitting more with the assumptions of emergence and complexity rather than planned change. This observation supports the arguments of Goodwin (1994) and Stacey, Griffin and Shaw (2002). During that period, the study found that employees rejected top-down styles of management, supporting the findings of Tattenbaum (1998), Boje (2000) and Stacey et al. (2002). The rejection of top-down styles and a shift to a bottom-up approach is evident in the words of a senior manager who recalled what M2 employees said to the CEO in a strike:

“people here can impose a new structure. They told the CEO this is not your call. We have been here longer than you and you cannot just move us around. And when top managers don’t allow the needed flexibility and rule-breaking in such times, people go to their connections at higher levels!”.

The result was that new structures emerged from the bottom rather than the top. As one manager in the HR department said in R2:

“We have an awkward situation here. There are two structures. One is the official structure and the other is the structure that people in departments created ... Yes, employees and their HODs! We in HR have a problem handling this but the chairman and the board allowed it. It helped calm people down because all of a sudden everybody got up resisting the structure ... So about 30% of the jobs and job titles here were created by the people!”

Top managers and the boards allowed the flexibility needed clearly reflecting Bechtold’s (1997, p. 198) argument that managers should alter their management assumptions during change and recognise that “people need the freedom to own their own power...”. Stability was regained only when people’s needs were satisfied. For example, when the new CEO took over in M2, it was observed that stability was regained only when people’s needs were satisfied via a change in leadership behaviours, change management approach and HRM practices. The ability to bring back order by changing certain factors proves what Stacey & Mowles (2016, p. 297-298) said about emergence. They argued that:

“emergence is in no way a matter of chance, because what emerges does so precisely because of what all the agents are doing or not doing. There is nothing mysterious about emergence This explanation of emergence challenges the equating of emergence with chance ... it supports the call for an activity-based perspective on strategic management which focuses attention on the micro, local interactions of people in the organisation”.

What happened in M2 when the main influencers changed reflects what Stacey and Mowles (2016) said and also proves what Burnes (2014, p. 161) emphasised - “within chaos, a hidden order maybe concealed beneath what looks completely random”. The study found that “there is nothing mysterious about emergence” as Stacey and Mowles (2016, p.297) said and there is a hidden order or a mechanism that lies in the relationships and coherence between people, leadership, change management and HR practices. The next section discusses these relationships.

Hence, the six phases and the way they unfolded showed that we can neither say that the whole SC process is planned or emergent. But, we can confidently say that in stable environments where managers know what the main influencers are and how they relate to each other and satisfy people’s needs, change can be managed in a more predictable and linear manner. This is because the case for emergent change and pure bottom-up approaches in planning and implementing change:

“is based on the view that the pace of environmental change is so rapid and complex that it is impossible for a small number of senior managers effectively to identify, plan and implement the necessary organisational responses. The responsibility of organisational change is therefore of necessity becoming more devolved”. (Burnes, 2014, p. 374).

As indicated above, Oman does not have a rapidly changing environment and that is why the assumptions of planned change are more applicable to its SC processes. This study supports the view that “it is the uncertainty of the environment that makes planned change inappropriate and emergent change more pertinent” (Burnes, 2014, p. 373). Adding to this view, the study showed that it is not only uncertainty in the external environment that makes planned change fail but also uncertainty in the internal environment i.e. top management uncertainty on the appropriate ways to lead and manage people for change. When managers are uncertain about people’s needs and expectations, this uncertainty can lead to using inappropriate change management plans and people management processes and in turn make planned change inappropriate. People will then oppose change mainly because they are not led and managed in a way that satisfies their needs and meets their expectations. What this emphasises is - for a SC process to be managed in a planned orderly manner, managers need to have a deep understanding of the sources of inertia that can block change and those forces that can facilitate change (Burnes, 1996). This is exactly what Lewin (1947) suggested doing in the unfreezing step i.e. before ‘moving’ – destabilise the equilibrium by ensuring that the driving forces are more than the restraining forces. Doing

this requires a deep understanding of the strategy, structure, people and culture of organisations (Dawson, 2003; Pettigrew, 1992) and focusing “attention on the micro, local interactions of people” (Stacey & Mowles, 2016, p. 298).

All in all, this finding showed that SC processes in GBs of Oman unfold in six phases and combine features of both planned and emergent change. The pre-implementation phases are more linear but when implementation starts, emergence and non-linearity begin due to the existence of misfits in the main change influencers and people. The degree of messiness and unpredictability of the implementation phase and beyond depends on the extent to which the main influencers match with people. In contrast to the debate of whether change is planned and linear or emergent and non-linear from start to finish and in contrary to the general belief that large-scale change cannot be managed in a planned way, this study has provided empirical evidence that in stable environments, large scale change can unfold in a planned orderly manner if managers know the main influencers and in the case of Oman if the change leadership style, change management approach, HRM practices and people fit.

The following sections discuss the four main influencers of SC processes that determine how change processes unfold (i.e. in a planned or emergent way) and what outcomes are observed.

7.3 Key Finding III: People’s Needs, Leadership Style, Change Management Approach and HRM are the Main Influencers of SC Processes and People’s Needs Moderate the Effect of the Influencers on Organisational Performance.

The cross-case analysis identified that leadership behaviours, the change management approach used, HRM practices and people have the greatest influence on SC processes and its outcomes. The finding suggested that people’s needs and their expectations moderated the effect of the remaining three influencers on organisational performance. This finding also indicated the existence of a fit-performance relationship between the three influencers, people and organisational performance.

7.3.1 Cross-Link to the OC Literature

1. Peoples’ Needs

This study showed that employees’ needs at work are a main influencer of SC processes in GBs of Oman. Similar to what Larson (2014) reported, it was observed across the cases that when employees’ needs are satisfied, behavioural outcomes like turnover will decrease and performance will increase at the individual and group levels. The study supports the ‘many theories of leadership, job design, pay and performance that

are based on the belief that satisfied employees are more effective in their work' (Shipton et al., 2006). When employees' needs were not met, the number of enquiries and complaints increased, resignations (including the CEOs and other managers) and collective actions increased, SC processes took longer than expected and organisations experienced lower than intended performance. In fact, there is an agreement in the OC literature among researchers and consultants that people can be a leading cause of failure during change (Bovey & Hede, 2001; McKinsey, 2008). This was clearly seen in Cluster I cases where people's needs were not addressed in planning and negative behavioural outcomes and lower financial performance resulted during and after implementation.

The study identified the following as the top needs of Omani employees:

1. Need for job security
2. Need for better jobs (promotion) and higher salaries
3. The need to be informed and consulted
4. Need for clear and representative job descriptions
5. Need for quick training, clear career paths and promotion criteria in new jobs.

These findings are supported by recent research on Omani employees. A recent youth survey conducted after 2011 by NCSI (2015) in Oman found that the two top priorities of Omani youth (workers and job seekers) are job security, better jobs and salaries. Similarly, a study on Muscat Municipality managers found that rewards are a main demotivator for managers (Analoui, Ahmed & Kakabadse, 2010). Another study on Oman (Al Maqbali, 2017) found that "the lack for opportunity for promotion and advancement had the most negative impact on extrinsic job satisfaction". Besides the evidence from the national survey and the two studies, researchers proved decades back that pay and promotion opportunities are two of the six job dimensions of job satisfaction (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969) and when these needs are satisfied, productivity will increase, and if not, then turnover could be an option. When employees in the five cases didn't get the positions and the pay they expected and when they found that there were no promotion opportunities available they resisted the change by complaining, psychologically withdrawing from the job, striking and resigning.

The top needs of Omani employees identified in this study are also supported by employees' needs in the career establishment and advancement stages (Hall, 1976; 2002) and by the characteristics of the Millennials. As mentioned in the research context, Omanis below the age of 25 make up 50% of the population (Oxford Business Group, 2016) and every year, there is an increasing influx of younger generations of

Omanis born in the 80s and 90s joining the private and government sectors. By end of July, 2017, the number of registered young Omani job seekers reached to 50,388 (NCSI, 2017). Among these, 48% were between 25-29 years and only 2,138 were 40 years and above. The government is targeting to have 95% Omanis in the public sector and 75% Omanis in the private sector by the end of 2020. The current figures are far from the aspired ones but looking at the yearly numbers of young job-seekers and the strict Omanisation targets, more and more foreigners and older Omani employees are going to be replaced by the younger generations. This means that the Millennials will soon be the majority in Omani workplaces and their needs, values and expectations mentioned in studies like Broadbridge, Maxwell and Ogden (2007), Martin (2005), Armour (2005), Patota, Schwartz and Schwartz (2007) and D'Amato and Herzfeldt (2008) will be dominant in workplaces. This also means that the majority of employees will be in their career establishment (ages 21-26) or career advancement stages (26-40) where the main career issues and concerns are around exploring alternative jobs, learning and developing skills (establishment stage) and seeking opportunities for advancement, visibility and long-term options for those in their advancement stage (Cummings & Worley, 2015, pp. 481-483). This is evident in the current trends in Oman due to the high number of college graduates and the focus on Omanisation.

This finding has also shed light on the needs of the new generations of Omani employees that are filling Omani work places. As Smith (2016, p. 241) said, we are facing changing expectations in the workforces and “it is how we adapt our own management style to get the most out of these generations that count”. Hence, in times of change, it is imperative that people’s needs remain satisfied to avoid negative behavioural outcomes. That explains why all the major change management models and steps on how to achieve change successfully address people issues.

The study showed that when the three influencers did not satisfy people’s needs, the change processes witnessed high resistance and low financial performance. The implementation and post-implementation were troubled with high resistance, rejection of the new structure, resignations including that of the CEO, longer than expected implementation phases and lower than expected business performance. When the influencers satisfied people, there was lower resistance, no corrective changes to the new structure, no delays in implementation and the financial performance of the business improved in the post-implementation phase. This emphasises what Benjamin and Mabey (1993, p. 181) said, “While the primary stimulus for change remains those forces in the external environment, the primary motivator for how change is accomplished resides with the people within the organisation”.

The finding further proves that people determine what the best approach to lead and manage change is. In other words, the choice of leadership behaviours, change management approach and HRM practices is pre-determined by people's needs. This is in line with contingency thinking and its argument against strategic choice (e.g. Donaldson, 1996; 2001). If managers impose their preferred people management practices without trying to match them with people's needs, beliefs, values and expectations (a contingency), they will face misfits, undesirable behavioural outcomes and low performance. Decreased performance, according to Donaldson's (2001) arguments is what motivates managers to look for and use the behaviours and practices that fit the contingency (i.e. people, in this study). By doing so, managers gradually move to a situation of fit which in turn gradually increases performance. This was seen in all the five cases. These transitions were noticed in Cluster I cases where managers had to change their behaviours and introduce HR reforms to fit people's needs. This supports Donaldson's (2001) argument that the contingency theory of change is not a static theory but rather a dynamic theory that shows how organisations continuously move from misfits to fit.

Discussion of the next three influencers satisfies the condition of qualifying 'people's needs' as their contingency. According to the contingency theory of organisations,

"whether a factor is a contingency of organisation depends on whether aligning the structure [or characteristic of the structure] and the contingency produces higher performance ... Demonstrating that a cause is a contingency involves showing that the fit posited by the theory is empirically valid, that is, that fit affects performance"
Donaldson (2001, p. 89)

The fits discussed hereafter show how they affected both behavioural and financial outcomes in the five case organisations. Evidence is offered from the five cases and support is highlighted from previous research. Therefore, the theoretical and empirical evidence offered in the next sections prove that when the three main influencers are used in a way that fit people needs in SC, resistance will be low and the financial performance of the firm will improve.

2. Leadership Behaviours and Change Management Approach

Two of the main findings of the study are related to the significant influence that decision makers and change agents have on SC processes. These include the competencies and behaviours of the CEO, the top managers (i.e. the change managers in various divisions and departments) and the board members. This group of individuals determines the leadership and change management approaches used. The finding in general, supports Finkelstein, Hambrick and Cannella (2009) who showed the influential role of strategic leadership (including boards) on organisations. It also supports the findings of several researchers who highlighted the fundamental role top

managers play in SC (Balogun & Hope-Hailey, 2008; Cummings & Worley, 2008; Armenakis, Bernerth, Pitts & Walker, 2007; Fernandez & Rainey, 2006; Weick & Quinn, 1999).

Among the decision makers and change agents, the CEO's leadership behaviours (i.e. style) emerged as the top influencer of SC processes across all the five cases. This supports the findings of Rajasekar (2014, p. 174) in the Omani service sector, "leadership is considered to be the most effective factor in ensuring successful implementation, followed by organizational culture and the organizational structure". According to the researcher, "The leadership style in a given organization influences how the chosen strategies will be implemented. Organizational structure, delegation of responsibilities, freedom of managers to make decisions, and the incentives and rewards systems will all be influenced by the leadership style in a particular organisation." p. 171). Judge (2011) and Kotter (1995) also identified leadership as one of the most important factors for successful change. The finding suggested that the CEO's leadership behaviour determined how the other managers behaved. The change managers followed the CEO's preferred leadership and change management style. The leadership style also determined the involvement of HR, whether communication will be regular and employees will be involved or not and the length of the implementation phases. This supports the empirical evidence that shows subordinates tend to follow their immediate superior's style (Hammer & Turk, 1987) and leadership style affects how organisational members function (Tims, Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2011). The finding supports previous studies which suggest that change leaders are very influential as they can organise their subordinates, create a sense of direction and role model most appropriate behaviours needed for change (Geller, 2003; Northouse, 2007). Also, the finding is in line with Berson and Avolia's (2004) that the way leaders at upper levels behave influence the way leaders at the lower levels share information about a new strategy. It was observed that when the CEO centralised planning, used limited communication, demonstrated laissez-faire style during implementation, the change management approach used by other managers across levels was also top-down and limited information was shared but when the CEO showed participative, consultative behaviours similar to those in transformational leadership, the change management approach displayed by other managers included more communication, employee involvement and use of bottom-up approaches. This supports Holten and Brenner's (2015) finding that transformational leadership is positively related to the engagement of managers in OC.

This finding also identified for the first time two contrasting leadership styles and change management approaches used by CEOs of GBs in Oman. The change leaders in Cluster I used laissez-faire and a top-down change management approach while those in Cluster II and the second CEO in M2 demonstrated more participative, team-oriented transformational leadership behaviours and used bottom-up approaches. See the representative quotes below that clearly describe two very different leadership styles and change management approaches:

“The CEO used to have walk arounds very often. He used to walk around and talk to people. He was very visible and worked on building relations with them. You see here, relationships are very important. He talked about how the change would help them and the country. That inspired them and they trusted him. That’s very important if you want people to follow you. One thing that he did and was very helpful was he role modelled the behaviours that he wanted to see in people. He was consistent in demonstrating specific behaviours and he made sure he talked about them. People followed. So that was very effective”

HOD describing M1 CEO

“This change was not managed well. There was no good communication. We were just going with the flow. There was no employee engagement ... It was believed that consulting is time consuming ... people often do not agree ... we had a problem to fix and people would not have arrived to the right decision. Also, there was no leadership, we never saw the CEO! I don’t think it was taken seriously ... The HR department were just receiving instructions and this was part of the corporate culture that time. People just followed. There was no change management team. This was created very late in HR after the new CEO took over. So, the whole thing was not executed well”

Manager on how change was managed by first CEO in M2

One senior manager described the style of the new CEO in M2 during the corrective restructuring and staffing, she said:

“The new CEO was seen as more successful, he had better abilities and personal attributes. He was like an ambassador of our new identity. He told stories, sold expectations and dreams. He knew how to inspire people and make them believe and follow him. The previous CEO was not a PR person. He was hardly seen. But the new CEO was very different from the previous CEO. Dr [omitted] promoted the change. He was always there. He justified it. You know he used to say we are one now, together we can do this for Oman! That was a powerful message. You know how much people love this country ... during and after the change his door was always open for employees. I mean, if you had an issue and went to him, you would find his door open and he would welcome you and listen. Yes, he was a great listener. He then quickly followed up and solved the problem. He didn’t listen to fool you that he cared, no. Sometimes he would solve your problem while you are there. That took a lot of his time you know, you can imagine. But, it helped a lot. Listening and giving. He was a giver.”

A non-manager described the young CEO in M3 as visible, charming and inspirational. She said,

“The parent company CEO, the one who resigned, he was kind of a very formal person. He didn’t show any interest in building relationships with employees. People didn’t really like him. It was cold and very formal kind of place here. But the new CEO when he moved here, the culture changed. He brought the subsidiary’s culture here. It took time but people changed. It became more of a family like environment, a relaxed place but professional too. He met employees, laughed and shared jokes. He said this is for Oman. This is for the country and the future generation. It really moved us. We all wanted to contribute. So, yeah, he was friendly. He inspired people. He listened a lot and solved problems. We felt that he cared. Without him, I think this change would have taken longer. But thank God”

From the descriptions offered, M1 and M3 CEOs and the second CEO of M2 showed behaviours close to the transformational leadership style (Bass, 1985). In this style change leaders articulate a vision and create a sense of identification with it, they role model the required behaviours, influence the staff emotionally by inspiring and empowering them (e.g. let’s do this for Oman and the future generations!), encourage creativity and gather and implement ideas (e.g. the 500 million Omani Riyals gained from staff ideas on how to cut costs in M1), and pays attention to individual concerns and needs (Bass, 1999). All these behaviours were demonstrated by Cluster II CEOs and the second CEO in M2.

Besides contributing to the literature with two contrasting leadership styles and change management approaches used by Omani CEOs, it was observed that when managers used laissez-faire and top-down implementation in Cluster I, resistance increased and the financial performance of the firm decreased. The new structures failed and underwent changes made by the people. In one of the cases, the CEO was replaced and, in another case, employees went on strike and demanded the resignation of the CEO. This supports what Higgs and Rowland (2000) and Judge (2011) warned - organisation change can fail mainly due to poor change management and lack of change leadership practices. Similar to previous works, this study supports that laissez-faire is an ineffective leadership style for organisational change (Lutz Allen, Smith & Da Silva, 2013; Long & Mao, 2008; Bass, 1985) and transformational leadership is associated with successful change implementation (Wright, Moynihan & Pandey, 2012; Oreg, Vakola & Armenakis, 2011; Bass & Riggio, 2006)

Besides contributing to the literature with two contrasting leadership styles used by Omani CEOs during SC, this study also found that the change management strategy used determines whether followers will accept or reject the change. This is similar to the finding of Kavanagh and Ashkanasy (2006). The study proved that the top-down approach in SC implementation leads to resistance and rejections similar to Rajasekar

(2014), Guth and MacMillan (1986) and that delays in implementation can affect the performance of the organisation (Van der Mass, 2008). Also, the finding offered support for the participative, consultative and bottom-up change management approach which resulted in very low resistance and better financial performance of the firm. This is in line with the findings of Guth and McMillan (1986), Al-Kandi et al. (2013), Brenes et al. (2008) and Beer and Eisenstat (2000).

In addition, the effectiveness of transformational leadership and bottom-up approaches also support previous studies on the preferred leadership and management approaches in the Omani context. This is line with Pettigrew and Whipp's (1991, p. 165) view that "leadership requires action appropriate to its context" and situational leadership (Fiedler, 1967; Adair, 1973; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977) that suggests the most effective leadership style will depend on the situational factors like people, task and organisational context. Al-Araimi (2012) demonstrated that Sultan Qaboos exhibits behaviours of transformational leadership. Top managers in GBs of Oman are expected to follow this leadership style too. In Cluster I, when top managers didn't follow this style, high resistance and low organisational performance resulted. Al-Araima (2012) also found that Omani managers in civil service organisations use both transformational and transactional leadership styles. The preference for this style was also confirmed by Al Maqbali (2017) in her study on nursing institutes in Oman. She found that the transformational leadership style was the preferred style to ensure faculty satisfaction and maintain productivity levels but deans also used a transactional leadership style for specific tasks. Also, in a study of factors which constitute effective parameters of managerial effectiveness in the Omani public sector, one of the major findings was the need to foster transformational leadership at the organisational and team levels (Analoui, Ahmed & Kakabadse, 2010). The finding also supports researchers who pointed that leaders in collectivist cultures are more likely to exhibit transformational leadership behaviours (Sheikh, Newman & Al Azzeh, 2013; Jung & Yammarino, 2001; Bass, 1996).

The identified preference for transformational leadership style in Oman's GBs supports Common's (2011) observation too that "the Omani organizational culture is more participative and consultative than it first appears, taking it closer to Western theorization ..." (p. 224). It is believed that this preference for the transformational leadership style comes from the long-time tradition of 'Shura' in Oman which Al Jahwari and Budhwar (2016, p. 90) stressed that "Among all other aspects of the Omani culture, 'Shura' stands out as an influential component in the lives of the Omanis". Also, this finding supports empirical studies that suggest leadership styles that focus on participation and involvement are more effective in Middle Eastern societies

(Yousef, 2000) and that team-oriented, transformational and charismatic leadership are desired in Arabic cultures (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002; Abdallah & Al-Homoud, 2001). Therefore, the support offered in the literature on the transformational leadership and organisational change, the recent studies and the patterns observed in the five cases pointed to a fit between transformational leadership behaviours and the needs of Omani employees during times of change. The proof of this fit is the higher performance that was observed in this study when transformational leadership behaviours were demonstrated and the low performance when the laissez-faire style was used. The changes in leadership styles and change management approaches that are associated with changes in behavioural and financial outcomes indicated a general causal model of fit-performance. See Figure 7.1 for an illustration. It is not possible to claim that leadership behaviours or the change management approach 'alone' led to the observed behavioural and financial outcomes across the five cases. This is because as Wood (2005, p. 1103) explained, "each individual element can be seen to permeate and melt into one another without dissolving into independent parts". Stemming from the process and CR perspectives, this study does not believe in the impact of single independent parts (i.e., a leadership behaviour, style or a management approach on its own) but rather in the synergistic effect of the main influencers on organisational performance. Also, similarly, in the process perspective (Pettigrew, 1997) which often adopts CR, processes and structures are seen to gain causal powers when they interact with each other (Edwards et al., 2014). See figure 7.2 for an illustration.

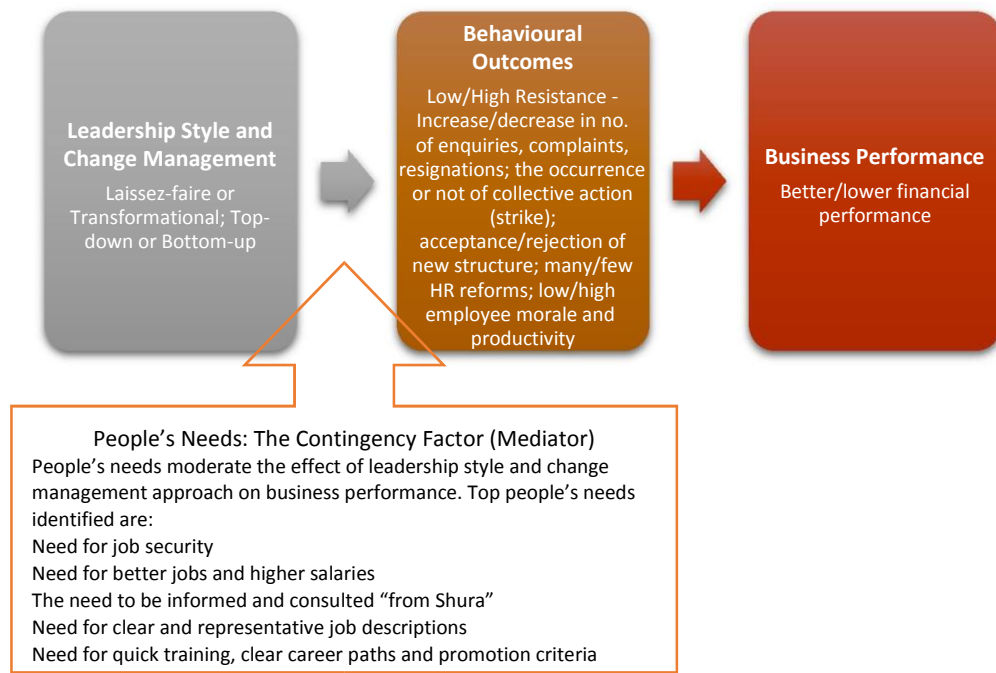


Figure 7.2: The general causal model of leadership style and change management-performance relationship during SC; Source: Adapted from Crawshaw, Budhwar and Davis (2017, p. 44).

When the researcher searched for an explanation for the use of laissez-faire, the study offered evidence for why Cluster I CEOs used this style. All of the CEOs were senior government officials with long tenure in the public sector and a repertoire of knowledge on how to manage in the public sector. Researchers argue that industries develop shared recipes (Spender, 1989) and managers with long tenure tend to adhere to these recipes most (Geletkanycz & Hambrick, 1997). Hence, these change leaders in Cluster I, including the first CEO in M2 led and managed with behaviours that worked in the public sector - "centralisation, top-down management, overemphasis on control and managerial decision making" (Analoui, Ahmed & Kakabadse, 2010, p. 69). Centralisation is a norm in the public sector because "public-sector organisations are traditionally exposed to demands for compliance with a broad range of public concerns for they are held accountable through their board of directors" (Pugh et al., 1969 in Donaldson, 2001, p. 67). That is why these features were clear during the planning phase. It is widely known that top managers in the Omani public sector "do not delegate enough and therefore in their absence major decisions could not be made" (Analoui, Ahmed & Kakabadse, 2010, p. 69). But, surprisingly, these same leaders in Cluster I cases with public sector backgrounds fully delegated change implementation to their subordinate managers. The intriguing question is what made them change their authoritarian style to a complete delegative leaderless style during change implementation? One reason could be implementing SC involves making decisions

that have high stakes (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992, p. 17) and big consequences. These decisions are different from the operational and tactical decisions that rely upon managers' past experience (Cohen & Bacdayan, 1994). Hence, it is believed that change leaders in Cluster I adopted the laissez-faire leadership style (also known as the delegative style) in implementing change out of fear of carrying the responsibility of failure alone. This is evident in what R1's CEO in cluster I emphasised, "we are all responsible for this, no one person did this, we are all in it". A senior manager criticised this CEO's tendency to rely on others including the board and his tendency to avoid making decisions on his own. He said,

"Our CEO doesn't use his powers, he always goes back to the board even for the smallest thing. There are things that he is supposed to decide on and just inform the board that this is in my domain and I believe this is what needs to be done. But he doesn't do that. On the other hand, he is more concerned with the mundane operational issues rather than the strategic issues." Senior manager on R1 CEO

The second reason for adopting a laissez-fair style could be lack of change competency, i.e., these CEOs may have lacked the knowledge, skills or experience to implement large-scale change or were just not sure how change should be implemented and so they delegated it. For example, one of the CEO's admitted when asked about what he had learnt from the SC, he said: "I learnt a lot from this change. It is all about people, all about people". In Cluster II, change managers in M1 mentioned that they had experienced major organisational changes in the competitive oil and gas sector and implementing mergers and integrations was not new to them. In M3 too, being the last case that occurred, managers talked about how they benefited from learning from the mistakes of other major restructurings that occurred in the country during that period. A third reason could be related to age, education and work experience of these managers (Finkelstein, Hambrick & Cannella, 2009). Cluster I managers were older and had different qualifications from Cluster II managers. A recent study on the relationship between the full range of leadership styles and employee's creative performance in civil service organisations in Oman found that characteristics of Oman managers (age, qualifications and experience) have a slight effect on managers' perceptions of transformation leadership behaviours (Al-Araimi, 2012). A fourth reason that explains why Cluster I change leaders adopted the laissez faire style in the implementation is simply because they mistakenly trusted their subordinates (the division heads/GMs) and believed that they were the best people to implement change in their work groups. One CEO in Cluster I clearly explained this view:

“When I delegated to them [i.e. The GMs] the responsibility to do this and they accepted it, it was under the impression that they would do the job well. But, not all of our top managers are competent. There were too many issues. Some of the GMs had their own interests and agendas. They were more interested in increasing the number of staff under them. They came up with unrealistic numbers and just couldn’t meet the requirements. We spent long-long hours in meetings discussing and arguing. A lot of time was wasted. You see, I believe in democracy but when the job can’t get done, you have to sometime become a dictator”

3. HRM Practices

The cross-case analysis identified specific HR practices as more effective during SCs. A proactive role of the department where the HR managers were actively involved in the planning and implementation of the change was associated with lower resistance and better organisational performance. This supports the roles of ‘change maker’ (Storey, 1992) and ‘strategic partner’ (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005). Practices that emerged as most effective were found to be linked to the top needs of Omani employees. Besides assuring employees of no job losses and no salary reductions before the change, which satisfies the need for job security, employees highly valued:

- a. Internal recruitment because it offered them better jobs. This is linked to their need for better jobs and salaries (NCSI, 2015).
- b. Selection via panel interviews with internal and external members was highly valued because it added fairness. This was valued because it reduced the chances of winning a job through nepotism and Wasta. This is related to employees’ need for job security.
- c. Designing clear and representative job descriptions that employees agree with and having these ready during recruitment along with the new salary details rather than having brief descriptions designed by the HR department or not having any during recruitment. This can also be linked to employees need for job security.
- d. Introducing salary adjustments before the restructuring rather than after was not faced with high resistance like when salaries were harmonised after moving employees to new jobs. This is linked to employees’ need for better salaries (NCSI, 2015).
- e. Offering quick training to employees and managers in new positions, clear career paths and promotion criteria gave clarity, a feeling of security and a future in the new job. These are linked to job security needs as well.

This finding offers support to the strategic HRM literature which focuses on the role of contingencies in moderating the effect of various HR practices on organisational performance (e.g. Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, Andrade & Drake, 2009). People and their needs were identified as the main contingency of

HRM practices. Not offering the identified HR practices or offering them at the wrong time and /or in the wrong way inhibited the change processes with various forms of resistance (complaints, strikes, resignations) and eventually led to low organisational performance. In general, employees resist change because they fear they might lose something valuable; they misunderstand the change; they have a different assessment of the change and they can't tolerate change (Kotter & Schlesinger, 2008). According to Crawshaw, Budhwar and Davis (2017), these reasons can be resolved by communicating a vision, a rationale, informing people what they will gain and by involving them in planning and implementing the change. All these practices were used in Cluster II cases where resistance was very low.

This finding has provided empirical evidence that Omani employees are a main influencer of SC processes in GBs of Oman. The identified needs of these employees are similar to the top needs identified in previous studies on Omani workers (NCIS, 2015; Analoui, Ahmed & Kakabadse, 2010; Al Maqbali, 2017), the needs of employees in the career establishment and advancement stages (Hall, 1976; 2002; Cummings & Worley, 2015) and the needs and values of the Millennials also commonly known as Generation Y (Broadbridge et al., 2007; Martin, 2005; Armour, 2005). Hence, managers are urged to incorporate people's needs, values and expectations in the HRM practices of job analysis, recruitment and selection, promotion, compensation, training and career development otherwise they will face increased complaints, grievances, collective actions, resignations and low organisational performance. The finding urges the government and private business owners to train managers on how to best lead and manage the new generations of employees.

The study also identified the most influential HR practices during SC that affect behavioural outcomes and the financial performance of the firm. This finding supports the findings of Rhee, Xiaofei & Choonghyun (2014) who identified recruitment, training, participation and compensation as most significant to organisational performance. Likewise, the study supports the work of Subramaniam, Shamsudin & Ibrahim (2011) who found compensation, job security and training and development positively relate to organisational performance. In addition, similar to Avey, Nimnicht, & Pigeon (2010), the study demonstrated that when employees have a career development plan, their optimism is increased and they perform better in their job. In addition, we saw that many employees resigned due to lack of a satisfying salary, lack of promotion or career paths. This is in line with Byars and Leslie's (2011) argument that a good career

development program can reduce turnover. Highlighting the links between people's needs, HR practices and outcomes addressed the 'black box' (Boselie, Dietz & Boon, 2005) gap in the HRM-performance literature by showing how HR practices influence the financial performance of the changed organisations. This lends support to the mediating model (Pauwwe & Richardson, 1997) which emphasises that "HR practices influence HR outcomes, which in turn influence business performance" (Crawshaw, Budhwar & Davis, 2017, p. 44). Many HRM-Performance studies consider 'turnover' as an important HR outcome and an indicator of organisational performance (Wood & de Menezes, 2008) besides Return on Assets and Return on Equity (Delery & Doty, 1996; Darwish et al., 2013). Cluster I cases experienced high voluntary turnover which was reported as one of the main inhibitors of the change processes and identified as an important indicator of financial performance.

Figure 7.3 illustrates the identified relationships between HRM practices and organisational performance. It demonstrates a causal link from HRM practices to HR outcomes and financial performance. People's needs are seen as the main moderator between the HRM practices that lead to HRM outcomes which in turn affect business performance.

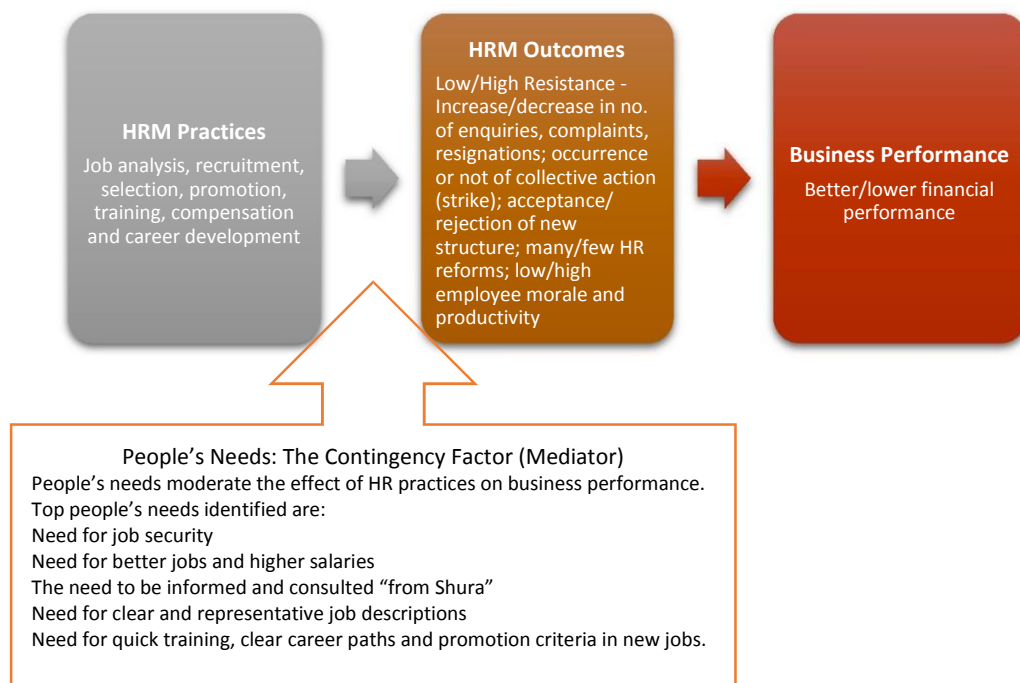


Figure 7.3: The general causal model of the HRM-performance relationship during SC
Source: Adapted from Crawshaw, Budhwar and Davis (2017, p. 44).

Stemming from the process and CR perspectives, it is not possible to assume that any single HRM practice on its own led to the behavioural and financial outcomes observed because an element gains causal power when it interacts with other elements and processes. As Elder-Vass (2010, p. 23) explained, “it is the relation amongst the parts of an entity that gives that entity as a whole the ability to have a particular ... causal impact”. Hence, the study supports the idea of the combined effect of various HR practices on performance (Huselid, 1995; Macky & Boxall, 2007). Future researchers are advised to examine the effects of the different HRM practices identified in this study on organisational performance and to explore the internal fit of these practices and see how they complement each other and lead to better organisational performance (Huselid, 1995). Also, researchers are recommended to adopt a process ontology when investigating these HR practices because the literature lacks information on how HRM practices are implemented (Monks et al., 2013). As for organisations in Oman, they can facilitate meeting their Omanisation quotas and retain Omani employees if they design career development programs that are linked to their strategies. Taking into consideration that Omani employees have a high need for clear career paths and the government’s emphasis on Omanisation, organisations should focus on managing the careers of their employees with clear personal development plans to increase their retention and effectiveness at work.

After discussing the fit-performance relationships identified, the next section discusses the last key finding and then works towards building a process model of SC.

7.4 Key Finding IV: SC Processes - Planned and Implemented in an Orderly Manner to Achieve High Performance via Leadership, Change Management, HRM and People Fit

Stemming from the central argument of Pettigrew’s contextualist approach to change - “context and action are inseparable” (2000, p. 243) and the contingency theory of organisations and the empirical evidence offered in this study along with the support of previous relevant works, we can argue that people and their top needs are the contingency of three main influencers of SC in GBs of Oman. When the leadership style, change management approach and HRM practices fit people, higher business performance is observed than when there is a misfit. When the transformational leadership is used along with a team-oriented bottom-up management approach and proactive HRM practices, lower resistance and higher business performance will be observed whereas when a laissez-faire style is used with, centralised planning, top-down management approaches and reactive HRM practices, higher resistance and lower business performance results. Top managers in the three cases that used transformational leadership, bottom-up approaches

and proactive HRM practices expressed the outcomes and business performance in the post-change period as:

“We made very good money in the first 2-3 years ... Once we completed, we made a big celebration that first year because we made very good profits. Our cost savings alone from creative employees’ ideas were RO 500 million ...” Interim CEO and Senior Advisor to CEO in M1

“This merger is a success. We are a totally new business now. The ambience, spirit are different. It’s a modern workplace where people are happy. Our salaries have increased several times and our profits have been going up. I mean even our competitor’s staff are applying to work for us.” M2 CEO

“We completed our first year and this is our second year and things are going on very well, people wise and financially. It’s very good. We learnt a lot from stories of those who changed before us. We are very satisfied with the outcomes” M3 top manager.

As for the two cases, R1 and R2, where laissez-faire, top-down approach and reactive HRM practices were used, top managers expressed their disappointment in the outcomes and the business performance. Below is a trail of quotes that represent the lingering undesirable outcomes in one of the cases:

“There was an increase in staff turnover because they were disappointed ... Many talented people left for better salaries ... People are not delivering as they should. It is a problem with their attitude towards work ... We are assessing competency levels and offering a lot of courses to change people’s behaviours but I don’t think it is that effective until now ... I am not happy with the top managers, there are conflicts and disagreements between them. When some ideas are challenged, it becomes personal conflict. It shouldn’t be like this. I am trying to change it” R1 CEO

“HR evaluates staff satisfaction every two years. I think we didn’t do it last year because staff were very depressed. We know why, it’s because their hopes and expectations were not met ... Last year, we lost many talented people to other organisations. Now, we are losing employees to other departments or divisions. Turnover is an issue here ... We still haven’t achieved what we wanted. The interfaces between divisions, the team working and so forth. The divisions are not cooperating; they are fighting and pulling against each other. Everybody would like to have everything in his division. The CEO is spending a lot of time addressing these issues when we should be really working together and not competing and fighting” R1 General Manager

“There are many resignations. In the past, when someone resigned, it was news. We would be surprised and ask why. Now, resigning is a norm. you will find three to four staff resigning every month. It is a big waste because they got trained and qualified and then they leave. It hurts us to see that the best people are leaving. HR doesn’t even know how to convince them to stay” R1 Non-manager

The theoretical and empirical evidence offered in the previous section followed Donaldson’s (2001) guidelines on how to qualify a factor as a contingency and how to prove fit-performance relationships. Seeing the same associations repeating in M2 after the new CEO joined offered compelling evidence on the existence of a fit-performance relationship between the three main influencers and people, the behavioural outcomes and

the financial performance of the businesses. It was concluded that emergence comes from misfits. As such we concluded that 'SC processes can be planned and implemented in an orderly manner and achieve high performance if there is leadership, change management, HRM and people fit.

7.5 Towards a Holistic Contingency Framework of SC Processes in GBs of Oman

Based on key arguments and empirical findings of the study, a process framework of SC is developed. The aim of the proposed framework is to present a broad view of why and how SC processes unfold in GBs of Oman. The new knowledge will help advance our understanding of this complex phenomenon in an important but under-researched region, the Arabian Gulf. The framework is based on the process and contingency perspectives and portrays in a rare holistic manner why and how SC processes occur and what outcomes they produce. It is the first SC process framework for Oman and the Arab Gulf region too (see Figure 7.4). Stemming from the contingency perspective and the key empirical findings of the process study, the framework assumes a dominant role of the external environment in bringing about change to organisations. It sees change processes combining features of linearity in the pre-implementation (i.e. strategy formulation) phases and temporary non-linearity in the implementation phases. It is believed that stability and order can be regained when the external environment is stable and managers are aware of the main influencers of the change process and ensure that these fit people's needs. People and their needs are seen as the contingency factor that moderates the effect of the main influencers of the SC process on behavioural outcomes (resistance) and in turn the overall business performance. Misfits between the main influencers and people lead to high resistance and low business performance. Based on the explanation offered by Donaldson (2001) and the findings of the study, the framework views the structural contingency theory as a dynamic theory of change. The reason is the study proved that misfits lead to performance decreases which motivate managers to seek ways to improve performance and thus alter the way they lead and manage people and processes until a fit is achieved and performance gradually increases. The framework demonstrates fit-performance relationships which are a necessity if the SC process is to achieve low resistance and better financial performance. The factors identified in this study and included in the framework should not be viewed as a definitive list. As Okumus (1999), Van der Maas (2008) and Pettigrew (2012) urged that factors in strategy implementation frameworks should only be taken into consideration. Knowledge of these factors can make managers more aware of the possibilities and more informed and confident in their decisions.

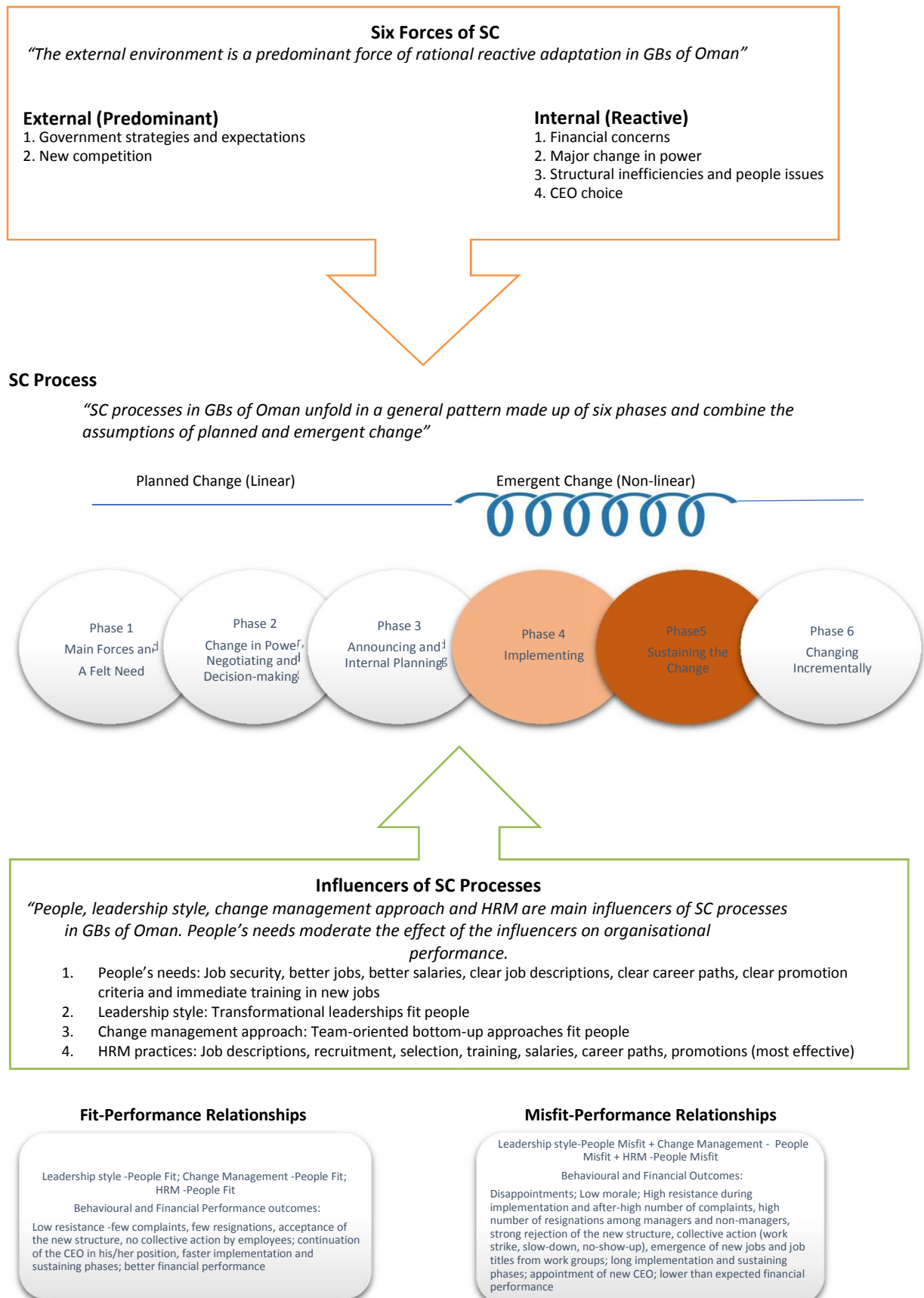


Figure 7.4: Process-oriented contingency framework of forces, influencers and phases of SC; Source: Developed for the study from interview data

7.5.1 Characteristics of the Framework and its Contributions

A number of literature reviews exist on strategy implementation frameworks and the most popular among these are Van der Maas (2008), Pettigrew (2012), Li et al. (2008) and Okumus (2001, 2003). This section is based on the recent review of Siddique and Shadbolt (2016) that investigated a number of strategy implementation frameworks and recommendations chronologically since the earliest ones of the 1980s. The review showed that there is no agreed-upon or dominant strategy implementation framework.

After comparing the proposed framework against those in the literature, it was concluded that this framework is unique for six reasons:

- First, similar to majority of previous researchers, this framework categorised its factors according to Pettigrew's content, context, process and outcome (Okumus, 1999). The proposed framework includes forces of change, phases and influencers. Outcomes emerged as part of the sequence of events. Likewise, Schmelzer and Olsen (1994) included context and process, planning and design in Hrebiniak and Joyce (1984) and realisers and enablers in Miller (1990).
- Second, unlike the majority of frameworks that focus on single factors, this framework makes a unique contribution to the OC and Strategy literature because it presents a holistic view of an empirically derived SC process. Pettigrew (2012) emphasised the usefulness of a more holistic view – “no single factor is sufficient to explain variability in performance” (Pettigrew, 2012, p. 1311). As Burnes argued, “Merely looking at individual parts of processes cannot provide a complete explanation of the whole” (Burnes, 2012, p. 60). “Any change, to be really understood, therefore, has to be viewed holistically and contextually as well as retrospectively” (Mintzberg & Westley, 1999, p. 42). According to Pettigrew (1990, p. 268), “Theoretically sound and practically useful research on change should explore the contexts, content and process of change together with their interconnections through time”.
- Third, the other unique contribution is this framework is almost all frameworks focus on internal variables only and “there is not a single FW (i.e. framework) that included factors covering the whole SI process (i.e. from initiation to outcome) and which also included all possible context influences (i.e. on an external, organisational and individual level)”. The proposed framework presents a process view of change from the beginning to end and within the process it opened the black box and shed light on the hidden mechanisms that lead to observable behavioural and financial outcomes. This study met the guidelines of Pettigrew, (1990, 2012), Mintzberg and Westley (1999) and Burnes (2012) as mentioned in

the previous point. The framework presented stands as a unique one among what currently exists.

- Fourth, it was noticed that unlike ‘the dominant view in the literature that strategy implementation is a separate phase’ (Van der Mass, 2008), this study showed that formulating a strategy and implementing it are highly interconnected. This is in line with the view of the process school (like Mintzberg, 1990; Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991; Miller, 1997; Noble, 1999; Van der Maas, 2008).
- Fifth, the process framework developed in this study focuses on the human-side of change. This is a useful contribution because the strategy implementation literature has limited frameworks that focus on the individual. Siddique and Shadbolt (2016) identified only five frameworks out of the seventeen they reviewed that include people factors. Hence, the framework presented contributes valuable insights on the fundamental role of the human side of change during change implementation
- Sixth, this study contributes to the OC and strategy literature with a framework that links the most influencing factors of the change process with people’s needs and process outcomes. Despite their importance, the strategy implementation literature lacks studies that include outcome factors in their analysis and models. Siddique and Shadbolt (2016) found only one framework that looks at outcomes, Bryson and Bromiley (1993). They categorised their factors as context, process and outcomes. Pettigrew (2012) mentioned earlier that rarely did any studies link outcomes in their analysis of strategy implementation. This framework emphasises the role of people and shows how they can affect the behavioural and financial outcomes of SC processes.

It is obvious from the above points that the proposed framework is a valuable contribution to the OC and Strategy literatures. The next section, summarises the discussion offered in this chapter.

7.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the key findings of the study in relation to existing research to provide rationale for the findings and identify the contribution of the study. Each key finding was discussed in relation to relevant research. Then, the identified fit-performance relationships were proved where ‘people and their needs’ was the contingency factor. After that, a new process framework of SC in GBs of Oman was developed and its uniqueness was highlighted in comparison to the available strategy implementation frameworks since the 80s when they first appeared. The framework attempted to portray the most important factors in the external environment and in the organisation, their relationships and how they affect SC processes outcomes and overall business performance.

The next chapter concludes the study.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion, Contributions and the Way Forward

“In retrospect, the history looks more focused, more efficient and more insightful at every step than it does at the time it was lived. To the extent that history repeats itself, this streamlined account should help people be more efficient and more decisive in the future. Even if people exaggerate the similarity between the streamlined past and the disorderly present, this very exaggeration may make them more confident. Confidence, you will recall, is a crucial determinant of environmental enactment”

(Weick, 1995, p. 184)

8.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to conclude the thesis by demonstrating the significance of the study, the importance of its contributions to the OC and Strategy literatures and the utility and efficacy of its practical and policy implications. The chapter starts with a recap of the study’s purpose, aim, objectives, research questions and key findings. Then the contributions of the study to the OC and Strategy literatures are highlighted. After that, implications for practice and policy are offered. The chapter then reflects on the limitations of the research and recommends the way forward for future researchers. Concluding remarks are offered at the end on the overall study emphasising its originality and significance.

8.1 Recap of the Study

This study was conducted to explore the forces, phases and influencers of SC processes that occurred in five GBs operating in five different industries in Oman during 2007-2015. The aim of the study was to advance our understanding of SC processes and develop a new process framework of SC in GBs of Oman that captures the forces, phases and influencers of SC processes. To achieve this aim, three main objectives were set:

1. To identify the main forces of SC in GBs of Oman
2. To highlight the main phases of SC processes in GBs of Oman
3. To identify the main influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman

Three main research questions were asked to meet the objectives and achieve the overall aim of the study:

1. What makes GBs undergo SC in Oman?
2. How do SC processes unfold in GBs of Oman?
3. What factors influence SC processes in GBs of Oman?

To answer these questions, a qualitative multiple case study design (Yin, 2014) was adopted to conduct an in-depth exploratory study of SC processes in five different GBs operating in five different industries in Oman. Five cases of recent (2007-2015) mergers, integrations and restructurings were purposefully selected. All cases were from the population of 67 GBs in Oman. Primary data was collected via 42 face-to-face semi-structured interviews during December 2014 and May 2015. All the 42 interviewees were full-time managers and non-managers from all levels and four-five divisions who had experienced the changes from the beginning to the end. Half of the participants were managers and the other half were non-managers. All interviews were tape-recorded and ran for 1-2 hours in employees' offices. Several documents and email exchanges were used too. Each interview was transcribed and data was analysed manually using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) and various coding methods (Saldana 2016; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

The three main research questions were examined to address the research objectives and achieve the overall aim of the study. The cross-case analysis led to three answers and four key findings.

1. *What makes GBs undergo SCs in Oman?*

The study found that GBs undergo SCs in Oman due to six forces: changed government strategy and expectations, entrance of a new major competitor; financial concerns, structural and people issues that impede performance and inhibit growth; major changes in power (New CEO, chairman, minister); and CEO's choice

2. *How do SC processes unfold in GBs in Oman?*

The study identified that SC processes unfold in six general phases: antecedents, main forces and emergence of a felt need; negotiating and deciding to change; announcing and planning; implementing and moving; sustaining the change and changing incrementally.

3. *What factors influence SC processes in GBs of Oman?*

The study found four main influencers: people's needs; leadership style; the change management approach and HRM practices.

A deeper analysis of the answers and the variations identified in the contrasting clusters led to the emergence of four key findings:

1. The external environment is a predominant force of rational reactive adaptation in GBs of Oman.
2. SC processes in GBs of Oman unfold in a general pattern made up of six phases and combine the assumptions of planned and emergent change.

3. People, leadership style, change management approach and HRM are main influencers of SC processes in GBs of Oman. People's needs moderate the effect of the other influencers on organisational performance (i.e., behavioural and financial outcomes).
4. SC processes in GBs of Oman can be planned and managed in an orderly manner and achieve high performance (positive behavioural and financial outcomes) if there is, among other conditions, leadership-people fit, change management-people fit and HRM-people fit.

8.2 Contributions to the OC, Strategy, Leadership and HRM Literatures

This study offers support for the Contingency Theory and CR and presents contributions to the OC, Strategy, Leadership and HRM literatures:

1. The study offered support for the contingency theory of organisations by challenging two of its major criticisms – exaggerating environmental determinism over human agency and staticity i.e. overlooking the process that leads to outcomes and the continuous changes in the external environment.

First, the study defied Child's (1972) classical criticism of environmental determinism by offering empirical support for the predominance of the external environment (Donaldson, 1996, 2001) thus supporting the validity of environmental determinism rather than strategic choice. The study showed that all the forces of SC identified across five different GBs are environmentally determined. It showed that what appeared on the surface as 'CEO's choice to change' was in fact triggered by changes in the external contingencies and a reactive need to improve performance. Similar to what Donaldson (1996) emphasized, the study proved that there is no such thing as a purely proactive and free strategic choice. All choices made by managers are adaptive i.e. reactive and driven by changes in external contingencies. This contribution is important because it emphasises the dominant role the external environment plays on organisations and the fundamental role that managers play in achieving stability, restoring and improving the performance of organisations through their decisions.

Second, this study offered empirical evidence that the contingency theory is dynamic and not static. The contingency perspective helped answer why and how organisations change from fit to misfits to bring back performance to the desired levels. "Empirical research on contingency theory has been primarily cross-sectional and static, investigating strategic fit at a single point in time by testing single bivariate relationship dimensions of environment-structure fit" (Poole &

Van de Ven, 2004, p. 128). Likewise, Demers (2007, p. 11) also said, “as an organisational theory, it [i.e. the contingency theory] is a theory of fit ... rather than a theory or process”. Even Rajagopalan and Spreitzer (1997, p. 55) said in their exhaustive review that rational adaptation theories see “managerial actions and cognitions as a black box”. However, unlike what the researchers said and similar to the findings of Donaldson (2001), this study offered evidence that the contingency theory is a dynamic theory that shows why and how organisations adapt over time to restore performance. The study also proved that the contingency theory is a process theory that helped uncover the black box. It offered evidence on the forces (why), influencers and process (how) of SC in five different GBs. It also helped show variations in the outcomes of SC when the main influencers varied. All in all, the study showed that by adapting to its contingencies, each GB studied moved from “... misfit into fit, which raise[d] its performance, which [fed] back to increase its contingencies [from the surplus resources] that create[d] misfit again and so on.” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 248). This view partly explains why the top managers in all cases said there is no end to change and why the last phase of all the SC processes studied was a phase of continuous incremental changes.

Both contributions are important because they emphasise the need for continuously scanning, understanding and reacting to changes in the external environment if organisations are to remain stable and effective. Also, the contributions recognise that “The mechanisms leading to success or failure are viewed as fundamentally linked with decisions made by the firm’s actors in response to environmental changes” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 129).

2. The study has also made a methodological contribution to the area of research philosophy. It proved the usefulness of the stratified ontology of CR (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989) and the paradigm’s mode of logical reasoning (abduction) in identifying and explaining the real forces of SC processes.

Many researchers have supported the use of CR as a philosophical underpinning for organizational research (Fleetwood & Ackroyd, 2004; Mingers, 2000; Tsoukas, 1989 among others). However, one of the criticisms of using CR in research is the existing gap between the philosophical and the practical aspects of the paradigm (Sawyer, 2000; Archer, 1998 among others). The importance of clarifying the links between the philosophical and practical aspects of any research paradigm should not be overlooked if the paradigm is to survive and help us reach to better theory and practice. This study has offered a response to this need. It was by using the stratified ontology of CR and its logic of reasoning that the researcher managed to see how all the forces of SC were in fact triggered by events and mechanisms in the larger external environment. For example, when traced back to their origin, the

internal forces of SC like CEO's choice and complaints over career stagnation were found to be triggered by changes in the external environment. CEOs' decisions for major changes in the absence of direct and compelling external forces were found to have originated from forces that lie beyond the cognitive and sociological boundaries of the CEOs and beyond the immediate external environment of the government businesses they led. These indirect forces were the new government expectations and strategies for growth. Going backwards to what caused changes in government expectations and strategies, it was found that these too were triggered by events like the fall in oil prices due to OPEC's decision to increase oil production in mid-2014 which is linked to the political turmoil in major oil producing countries like Libya and before that Iraq and also the continuing trade sanctions on Iran.

Besides the external origin of CEO choice, complaints over career stagnation, another internal force of SC, was not only caused by employee's needs but actually emerged from social, economic and political changes outside the GBs. These include the increased influx of Millennials into workplaces whose values and needs are different from previous generations and the ripple effects of the 2011-2012 political upheavals. Hence, by adopting a stratified ontology and abductive reasoning, the researcher managed to identify the real forces of SC processes, highlight associations and offer explanations. By doing so, the study demonstrated the usefulness of using a CR perspective in identifying and explaining causalities. As a result, it contributed towards closing the gap between the philosophical and practical aspects of the research paradigm. The researcher doesn't claim that this contribution has filled the entire gap but considers it an important starting point. The more the links between the philosophy and practice of CR are clarified and empirically proved, compelling logical arguments for using a CR philosophy for investigating change processes can be presented which can then lead to better OC theory and practice.

3. This study also contributed to both the OC and Leadership literatures by identifying the most effective leadership behaviours (i.e. style) to use during SC. Several studies have discussed leadership and management styles of Arab managers (Muna, 1980; Younis, 1993; Attiyah, 1993; Weir, 2001; Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002; Abdallah & Al-Homoud, 2001; Sheikh, Newman & Al-Azzeh, 2013; Analoui, Ahmed & Kakabadse, 2010 among others). However, no research so far has explored the effective leadership behaviours of SC in GBs in the Arabian Gulf countries in general and in Oman in particular. It is crucial to identify the most effective leadership behaviours in SC because several researchers have found that change leaders and their behaviours play a fundamental role in the success or

failure of change processes (Nadler & Tushman, 1994; Kotter, 1995; Thomas & Sanders, 1997; Weick & Quinn, 1999; Armenakis et al., 2007; Finkelstein, Hambrick & Cannella, 2009; Tims et al., 2010; Judge, 2011 among others).

This study found that among other factors of SC, CEO leadership behaviour is a top influencer of SC processes. This supports the findings of many previous researchers like Higgs and Rowland (2000) and Judge (2011) who warned that OC can fail mainly due to poor change management and lack of leadership practices. Rajasekar (2014, p. 174) also made a similar conclusion in a study on the factors affecting effective strategy implementation in the Omani service sector - “leadership is considered to be the most effective factor in ensuring successful implementation ...”.

Besides identifying CEO leadership behaviour as a top influencer of SC, the study also identified two contrasting leadership styles used by Omani CEOs and their outcomes across multiple cases. Similar to the findings of Bass (1985), Long and Mao (2008) and Lutz Allen et al. (2013) among others, it was observed that *laissez-faire* is an ineffective leadership style for SC in Oman. CEOs who used this style along with a top-down implementation approach faced very high resistance, rejection of the new organisational structures, collective actions, resignations, corrective actions, implementation delays, demands for CEO resignation and lower financial performance of the firm. Also, similar to the findings of Eisenbach et al. (1999), Bass and Riggio (2006), Oreg et al. (2011) and Wright et al. (2012) among others, it was observed that transformational leadership is associated with successful SC implementation also in Oman. CEOs who used this style along with a participative, consultative bottom-up approach experienced very low to no resistance, acceptance of the new structures, relatively faster implementation phases (almost half the time) and better financial performance of the firm.

This is a valuable context-specific contribution that can help ensure successful implementation of SC processes in GBs of Oman and in the neighbouring countries too. Major change projects are planned for improving GBs of Oman and those of the neighbouring countries and training top managers on transformational leadership style can help ensure better behavioural and financial outcomes.

4. This study contributed to the HRM literature by shedding light on the role of HR departments and their links to SC outcomes. The study identified for the first time the effective role of a highly involved and proactive HRM department during SC and the HRM practices that together can ensure better behavioural and financial outcomes of the firm. By highlighting the links between people’s needs, specific HRM practices and organisational performance, the study addressed the “black box” gap (Boselie et al., 2005) in the HRM-Performance literature. It was observed

across multiple cases of SC that HRM practices influence organisational performance thus supporting the mediating model (Pauuwe & Richardson, 1997) which emphasises that “HR practices influence HR outcomes, which in turn influence business performance” (Crawshaw et al., 2017, p. 44). Similar to Storey’s (1992) ‘change makers’ and Ulrich and Brockbank’s (2005) ‘strategic partner’ roles, the study found that when HR departments were proactive in addressing people’s needs and highly involved in planning and implementing the new strategy, SC was associated with very low or no resistance, very low turnover, a shorter implementation phase and better financial performance of the firm.

The HRM practices that emerged as most effective during SC are: assuring employees of no job loss and no salary deductions, adjusting salaries before restructuring, designing and issuing clear and representative job descriptions with job advertisements, conducting internal recruitment first, selecting employees via panel interviews with internal and external interviewers and offering quick training, clear promotion criteria and career paths in new jobs. These practices are in line with the findings of several researchers like Nimnicht and Pigeon (2010), Byars and Leslie (2011), Subramaniam et al. (2011) and Rhee et al. (2014) who found that various HRM practices influence turnover, individual and organisational performance.

This is a context-specific contribution to both the OC and SHRM literatures and it supports the idea of the combined effect of various HRM practices on organisational performance (Huselid, 1995; Macky & Boxall, 2007). The contribution indicates the importance of identifying people’s needs during change, implementing need-satisfying HR practices and ensuring that HR departments play a more strategic role.

5. The study also contributed to the field of Strategy with the first SC process framework from the Arab Gulf region if not the Arab Middle Eastern region too (see figure 7.4). The study responds to the need for understanding how other organisations in other countries develop and implement strategies (Okumus, 2003). A very high majority of OC studies and in particular SC studies are on western countries thus learning how the process initiates and unfolds in other countries can provide new insights and help advance the field further. The contribution is unique not only because the SC process framework is the first from the Arab Gulf context but also because of its uniqueness. For details on the uniqueness of the framework, please see section 7.5.1 in the Discussion chapter on pages 201-202. The framework presents the much-needed holistic view of SC. Unlike the majority of frameworks that focus on single factors, this framework shows a more comprehensive SC process starting from antecedents of change and main forces,

passing through the process of change, its main influencers and ending with the outcomes of change. This contribution is very important because gaining a holistic view of a change process helps offer more accurate descriptions of what actually happens and reasons for any variations that occur in outcomes. As Pettigrew (2012, p. 1311) clarified, “no single factor is sufficient to explain variability in performance”.

6. Last but not least and related to the previous contribution, this study contributed to the OC literature by shedding light on the hidden mechanisms that lead to specific behavioural and financial outcomes. The OC field doesn't offer information on how the outcomes of a change process vary with changes in different elements of the organisation (Amis et al., 2004). Rarely did any studies link outcomes in their analysis of strategy implementation (Pettigrew, 2012). In fact, Siddique and Shadbolt (2016) found only one framework out of the seventeen they reviewed that looks at outcomes (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993).

This study contributed empirical evidence on what SC outcomes are observed, what factors influence the change process and its outcomes and what variations happen to the outcomes when the main influencers change i.e. when the leadership style, change management approach and HRM practices change. Using the contingency perspective, it was found that when there is people-leadership fit, people-change management fit and people-HRM fit, organisations will experience better behavioural and financial outcomes from SC processes. Situations of misfits will result in high resistance (increased complaints, rejection of the new order, collective actions and resignations), longer implementation phases and lower financial performance of the firms. The more we know about SC outcomes, what factors can influence the outcomes and the hidden mechanisms, the better we will become at managing SC and ensuring its success.

8.3 Implications for Practice: Applications of the Study for Government, Policy Makers, CEOs and other Top Managers

“Change, like life, is something that is much easier to understand in retrospect than at the time it is being undertaken. It is more difficult to tell someone what they should do in the future than what they should have done in the past”

(Burnes & Randall, 2016, p. 267)

1. Top managers and other members of the strategic leadership team are urged to focus on increasing their environmental awareness and develop their understanding of how changes in the socio-economic and political contexts can affect the business and force it to adapt. With the external environment as the predominant force of change, the study argues that a key competence for managers

is the ability to scan the external environment and understand the impact it can have on organisations and what actions managers should take to adapt their organisations appropriately (Burnes, 2014; Carnall, 2003; Hayes 2002; MacCalman & Paton, 1992). Better knowledge of the external environment will make managers better at anticipating and planning for structural adaptations thus avoiding misfits, performance losses and increasing their ability to make the right managerial decisions (Donaldson, 1996). The study urges CEOs of GBs of Oman to keep their eye on changes in the social, economic and political contexts and the reactive changes in government strategies and expectations as these have proved to be the predominant forces of major structural adaptations in the Omani context. Being in a region with a huge youth bulge, a generation that is aware of its ability to cause change, a region of changing political scenarios and economic decisions, this implication is very relevant. In Oman for example, the increasing trade relations with Iran and more recently with Qatar and the illness of the Sultan who doesn't have an appointed heir are all facts pregnant with new major forces of change. Hence, similar to Pettigrew and Whipp's (1993) argument, this study suggests that GBs in Oman need to become open learning systems "with strategy development and change emerging from the way the company as a whole acquires, interprets and processes information about its environment" (Burnes, 2014, p. 374).

2. Managers need to be aware that the planned change assumptions of Lewin (1947) and Bullock and Batten (1985) are not out-dated and can be used successfully in modern days if the external environment is stable and managers involve people early and identify their top needs, know what the main change influencers are and ensure that they act and use practices that satisfy people's needs.
3. Top managers in Oman need to be aware that SC processes combine planned and emergent changes. One is more likely to find planned changes in stable environments where managers have knowledge of people's needs and the main change influencers and use these appropriately to satisfy the needs. Emergent change will be seen in situations of external uncertainties and where managers are uncertain about the main internal influencers, what their people's needs are and do not involve people in the planning and implementation phases. Chaos will emerge if people are not involved in planning and their needs are not satisfied via the various actions taken and practices used. But, stability can be regained in a SC process that is disrupted by resistance if managers find out what actions and practices have the biggest influence on people and how these practices support each other and satisfy people.

4. In proving that transformational leadership behaviours and the bottom-up management approach are most effective and that laissez-faire and the top-down approach are most ineffective in times of SC in GBs of Oman, the study has provided a clear guideline for CEOs and other top managers of GBs on how to lead and manage future change processes in Oman.
5. Since transformational leadership emerged as an effective leadership style during SC and since 'this leadership style is 'trainable' (Barling & Kelloway, 2000), the government of Oman is urged to train its top managers and CEOs to develop their leadership skills and help them become better at leading and managing future SCs in GBs using this style.
6. Managers are urged not to follow ready-made recipes on how to implement SCs but rather to adopt a diagnostic, context-specific and process-oriented view of change. process, context-specific view and seek to identify the factors that can account for the success and failure of their change efforts. The framework offered in this study is the first of its kind in the Arab Gulf region and the Arab Middle Eastern region. It gives managers the opportunity to view the various environmental and organisational factors that cause and influence SC processes and their outcomes. The process pattern offered gives managers a valuable insight into how SC processes unfold and how variations occur in behavioural and financial outcomes of the firm.
7. This study is timely and of direct practical relevance to the government of Oman. In the absence of localised context-specific knowledge on managing change in the Arab Middle Eastern region in general and the Arabian Gulf region in particular, this study offers the Ministry of Finance and other concerned parties, a description and analysis of how recent SCs occurred. The study raises their attention to what can make GBs undergo major change, how they change, what factors shape their processes and determine their outcomes and most importantly how to ensure better financial performance. This knowledge can have direct impact as it is applicable and can assist multi-billion Omani Riyals GBs to become efficient and profitable through SC and thus help achieve Oman's diversification goal of reduced reliance on oil revenues.

8.4 Recommendations for Research

1. Researchers are urged to adopt a contextualist, CR and process approach (Pettigrew, 1997) when exploring, describing or explaining SCs due to the complex, dynamic and interconnected nature of the context and the phenomenon.

- a. When exploring, describing and explaining SC, researchers are advised to follow a contextualist approach. Pettigrew (1985, 1997) urged that organisations need to be studied in their contexts taking into consideration the constraints and opportunities offered by the environment and the relationships of these to the interests of the people who work within these organisations. Not taking into consideration the contextual factors can limit the researcher's findings to what is known within the organisation from the point of view of the people.
 - b. The interconnectedness between individuals, groups, organisations and the larger external environment demonstrated in this study urge OC researchers to use the process approach (Pettigrew, 1997) and its open-systems view. This is because "Systems exist within a hierarchy of other systems. They contain subsystems and exist within some wider system. All are interconnected" (Stickland, 1998, p. 14).
 - c. Also, when seeking the real forces of OC, researchers are advised to use CR's stratified ontology where reality is not limited only to the empirical world, i.e., to what we observe and experience but also lies in the events that caused the observed and experienced and, in the mechanisms, and structures that lie behind the events. This view forces researchers to search for what is beyond the observed and to view observations and experiences as only symptoms of deeper underlying causal mechanisms. Knowing these will help discover the hidden rules that govern what happens, why and how. Based on this ontology and the use of abduction, it is possible to move from the empirical to the real world and identify the events (Edwards et al., 2014) and their mechanisms.
2. To gain a holistic understanding of how SC processes unfold, researchers are urged to explore multiple change processes from start to finish using the process approach where the context and the larger external environment are seen as part of the process. Also, future researchers who will opt for a multiple case study approach to exploring whole SC processes need to pay particular attention to the fact that "Process studies take time seriously" (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas & Van de Ven, 2013, p. 1) because they consist of complex and messy data. Hence, sufficient time needs to be dedicated to the analysis, interpretation and writing of the study.
3. Researchers are advised not to see planned and emergent changes as either- or views because as Burnes (2014) argued and as this study proved, they are not exclusive types and they can be found in one change process. Hence, "a new

comprehensive understanding of change is needed to equip organisational actors sufficiently to respond to the challenges of the 21st century organizations where planned and emergent change coexists.” (Leibhart & Garcia-Lorenzo, 2010). To gain a full picture of the change, “requires appreciation of both planned change and emergent change and their interactions with each other” (Tarandach & Bartunek, 2009, p. 29).

4. This study offers future researchers in Oman and the Arab Gulf countries the opportunity to validate the six phases of changing by testing their generalisability. “[W]ith a process method, generalisation depends on versatility: ‘the degree to which it can encompass a broad domain of developmental patterns without modification of its essential character’ (Poole et al., 2000, p. 43). A versatile process explanation can ‘stretch’ or ‘shrink’ to fit specific cases that may differ in their tempo and time span.” (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005, p. 1384).

8.5 Scope, Delimitations and Weaknesses

The way this study was designed and the methodological choices made determined the scope and delimitations which in turn affected the transferability of the study’s findings. Seven factors were identified and elaborated in the Methodology chapter, section 4.6 on pages 107-108. These are choice of the research problem, questions and aim of the study, choice of the geographical location, the time period of the cases, choice of the multiple case study design, the process approach and the contingency theory. All of these affected the generalisability (transferability) of the study’s findings. Stemming from a process and CR perspective, it is believed that “contextualism and generalisation do not match” (Sminia, 2009, p. 106). But, this can be overcome when using multiple cases and when polar cases are compared. Pettigrew (1997) advised that this approach can help identify generative mechanisms that can be generalised to other similar situations. This study followed Pettigrew’s advice and offered compelling evidence on the inner workings of five SC processes in GBs of Oman.

During and after conducting the study, the following five limitations were found:

1. Lack of access to change-related company documents

The first limitation realised was lack of access to company documents on the changes. This made the interviews the main source of information. Although the interviews were detailed, interviewees were interested and engaged and the researcher managed to ask all the questions she had. Having company documents on the change programs like copies of progress reports, emails and minutes of

meetings would have offered more inside information that would confirm or contradict or explain and complement narratives from the interviews. The documents relied on are those that are in the public domain i.e. company websites and annual reports. The issue with these is they “may not be an accurate representation of how different actors perceive the situations in which they are involved” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 550). Newspaper articles that mentioned the changes were useful only in building timelines because they confirmed dates of positive major events like the decision to integrate companies and the appointment of new CEOs. During those years, mass media outputs often did not mention what went wrong because of their concern to maintain the reputation and credibility of decision makers and GBs during a time of nation-wide collective demands for reforms in workplaces, regional political upheavals and regional disputes. Future researchers are advised to include in their invitation letters and email exchanges with potential interviewees, requests for relevant documents to be collected by the researcher from the interviewees on the interview day. This will give the employees sufficient time to collect documents and increase the chances that the researcher will get these.

2. Lack of time needed to do the study

The second limitation that was discovered was lack of additional time needed to complete the dense process research. This study was initially planned as an ambitious mixed methods investigation that would first explore five cases of SC qualitatively and then statistically test the generalisability of the case study findings on a large sample. Hence, the aim was to build a theory and test it. However, due to the multiple demands the researcher faced as a mother and the only carer for a sick husband, the study took longer than expected. Analysis of the rich process data of five cases was the longest part of the study followed by identifying the right theory. Hence, the study had to be reduced to the qualitative phase only to fit it within the limited time of a PhD program. The limitation seen retrospectively is the inability to statistically prove the cause-effect relationships between the contingency factors identified (i.e. the forces and influencers) with the change processes. Also, there was insufficient time to conduct an event sequence analysis to statistically prove the sequence of phases in the general pattern identified qualitatively. Future researchers are advised to plan realistically how many cases they can analyse as sole researchers. Also, the sequence of events will be more compelling if proved quantitatively using event sequence analysis. In addition, pursuing a mixed methods approach (the exploratory sequential design) along with Eisenhardt's (1989) method on building theories from multiple case studies will offer stronger evidence for the relationships identified.

3. The number of cases included in the study

The study covered five core GBs of Oman out of the population of 67 businesses. The intention was to study eight of the most important GBs in six different industries but two businesses rejected to participate. Both businesses were the only ones among the eight that were led by foreign CEOs and participation in the study was rejected by the CEOs. Out of the six remaining businesses, insufficient data was gathered from one business due to lack of commitment and lack of interest from the chief officers and general managers. Hence, only five cases were included in the study. But after completing the study, it was obvious that conducting a process study on more than five cases would have been extremely challenging for a sole researcher. Hence, five cases were manageable taking into consideration the time the researcher had to do the study. It is argued that 4-10 cases are sufficient to generate compelling findings and build a theory (Eisenhardt, 1989).

4. The number of interviewees in each organisation

It was not possible to meet more than eight employees in each organisation due to time limitations. Also, it was not possible to meet managers and non-managers for more than two hours due to their busy schedules. However, the time given was sufficient as most interviewees did not have any further information to share by the end of each interview. The number of interviews was sufficient also because by the fourth and fifth interview in each organisation, no new information came out from the subsequent interviews. It was a clear indication that the saturation point was reached. Future researchers are advised to collect data from across levels and from all groups in organisations to gain a fuller and more realistic picture of what happened, how and why. While doing so, they should keep their eye on the saturation point.

5. Inability to meet three out of the five CEOs and board members

The fifth limitation is the inability to meet some of the CEOs of the case organisations and all the board members. Due to lack of time, it was not possible to meet some CEOs as they were tied to prior commitments. Also, it was not possible to meet the non-executive board members because they were either not known to many in the organisations or their contact details were not available. The board members could have given additional information about the context of GBs and future directions, the internal dynamics of board meetings and the level of control the boards have on SC processes. Future researchers are advised to invite CEOs earlier than other organisational members as it is not easy to get a meeting with them. Involving board members is useful since research has proved their influence on SC and organisational performance.

8.6 Conclusion of the Study

“there is order in the world ... a sense of union or harmony that grows out of the natural clustering of elements, whether they be stars, ants or the characteristics of organisations.”

(Mintzberg, 1979, p.300)

Just like how no one can predict what will happen tomorrow, no one can predict what emerges in a major change process. But, as Mintzberg explained in his quote above, there is order in how the world functions. Just like how we can learn from history and plan ahead in many fields based on an understanding of how and why processes happen, what influences them and how the inner workings relate to the outcomes, we can also learn from this case study what can work and what will most likely not work in similar contexts and situations. The study shed light on a complex process, identified the environmental and organisational factors that cause and shape it and opened the black box for the first time in the region to see the inner workings of SC process and the associations of its most influential factors and how they relate to outcomes. The patterns that emerged across different cases of SC were not occasional exceptions but rather indicated the existence of underlying generative mechanisms that account for variations in different outcomes that we experience and observe in SC processes. We learnt about the forces of change, the phases, influencers and how they interact and lead to specific outcomes. This study clearly showed us that GBs in Oman undergo SC for adaptation and growth. The three top influencers of SC processes are leadership style, change management approach and HRM practices and all of these are moderated by people and their needs which in turn determine low performance in cases of misfits and high organisational performance when in fit with the main influencers.

We saw that several contextual factors interplay and define the environments of GBs in Oman. We learnt that GBs are forced to adapt and grow due to changing government strategies and expectations, change in competition and change in the internal organisational environment. We saw that SC can occur due to internal forces too but we discovered with the help of the stratified ontology of CR and abduction that all internal forces of SC are in their origin environmentally driven and this includes CEO's choice. We also now know how SCs in GBs unfold and that a single change process can combine both planned and emergent features of OC thus emphasising the important role of both types of change and the need to know how to manage the duality.

We found that when people are not involved in planning and their needs are not catered for, they will rise, resist, involve unions, demand the resignation of CEOs and many will leave. In all cases, either the CEO is then changed or the existing CEO makes major changes to

the structure. In planning, we saw that content consultants are necessary partners as they bring their international experience, knowledge and technical skills into the designing of new structures. However, it was obvious in the cases studied that businesses that heavily rely on consultants in the design phase will face many people issues during and after implementation and corrective changes will have to be made to the approved structures later on. This was evident in three of the five cases that heavily relied on consultants and did not involve employees in the planning and implementation stages. Content consultants do not have people and process knowledge. Hence, what these consultants design on paper with top managers behind closed doors (i.e. away from the lower level managers who will have to implement the plans and the employees who will be affected by them) will often not work. Businesses should involve managers from all levels and employees from all work groups to ensure that the right organisational designs are put in place and that implementation will be smooth and lead to better performance.

As far as implementation is concerned, we learnt that transformational leadership behaviours, a team-oriented, participative and consultative approach and a proactive HR department are more effective than top-down planning and implementation with laissez-faire leadership and a reactive HR department. Plans fail if they don't integrate people's needs. We saw that the cases which involved employees during planning and implementation and addressed their needs had relatively less people issues and took about half the time needed to plan and implement the new structures i.e. 18-20 months rather than 40-42 months. The team-oriented, participative and consultative approach to implementing SC was also associated with very low turnover and better post-change financial outcomes.

At a time when Oman and other Arab Gulf countries are embarking on various strategic changes in their government sectors and a time when the influx of Millennials into workplaces has been increasing, ready-made recipes of change, prescriptive models and content consultants who are neither aware of nor sensitive to the people-side of the context, cannot ensure successful leadership and management of large-scale changes. At least for the Omani context, there is now a process-oriented framework that captures the what and how of SC and presents insights derived from a deep understanding of practice. The patterns and relationships identified in this study can help decision makers and change agents gain a more rounded and contextual understanding of the phenomenon. A better understanding of the forces of SC, sequence of events and their inner workings, the main influencers and how they relate to the outcomes can enable managers and government boards to act in more informed and confident ways in future SC processes.

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APPENDIX 1

The Omani Context: Culture and Society

The Omani Culture

The Omani societal culture is not yet fully studied (Common, 2011; Al-Araimi, 2012; Al Jahwari & Budhwar) neither by scholars like Hofstede (1980;1993;2001) nor in projects like the GLOBE (House et al., 2004). It is often assumed that the cultural values of the Omani society fall within the Arab Middle Eastern cluster (Hofstede, 1980;1993;2001). Similar to countries like Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, it is assumed that Oman too scores high in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism and low on masculinity. The dominant belief in the literature is that these scorings are a determinant of people's behaviours. For example, in a high-power distance culture, it is expected that employees will accept unequal distribution of power and expect managers to make decisions and give directions (Ringov & Zollo, 2007). Also, employees are less likely to prefer participation in decision making and will avoid disagreeing with their seniors (Hofstede, 1984). Based on the assumption of high uncertainty avoidance, it is expected, for example, that employees will seek career stability and longer-term employment opportunities. Also, managers will focus on rules and procedures rather than an attitude of tolerance for ambiguity (Dickson, Castano & Magomaeva, 2012). As for high collectivism, employees are expected, for example, to prefer maintaining harmony in their work groups and family and tribal relationships can become the main influential factor in people management decisions (Mellahi & Wood, 2001). As for the nurturing feminine culture, it is expected, for example, that employees will seek collaborations and solve conflicts through negotiations and that managers will be more considerate to their subordinates and adopt more consultative approaches with them (Dickson et al., 2012). We cannot be sure that these assumptions apply on the Omani society until the culture is studied comprehensively.

Several researchers believe that the Omani societal culture is different. For example, Jones and Ridout (2013) believe that Oman has always been made up of 'different cultures' or a 'different culture' as Wilkinson (1981) said. Researchers have pointed out to factors that indicate the prevalence of a relatively different societal culture among its neighbours (Jones & Ridout, 2013; Common, 2011; Albarwani & Albeely, 2007; Cecil, 2006; Pridham, 1987). Due to its strategic location, centuries of seafaring, international trade, immigration to and from Oman, the peaceful existence of three main Islamic sects, Ibadism, Sunism and Shiasm, instead of two and the resulting 'ethnic groups and native languages' (Peterson, 2004), the Omani society has always exercised 'cultural pluralism' (Barth, 1983). This cultural pluralism is believed by researchers to have formed a 'distinctive culture' based on an ideology of politeness demonstrated in placing others before oneself, tolerance, a strong commitment to anti-sectarianism, the practice of 'Shura' and a preference to avoid open expressions of differences, criticism and disapprovals (Barth, 1983; Jones & Ridout 2013). It is believed that the people of Oman have a "a widely shared, open-minded and outward looking cultural disposition" (Neal, 2010, p. 255). The researcher also pointed to the wide spread use of humour among Omanis. Omanis have also been described as having a "deeper tradition of tolerance for differing ideas" (Cecil, 2006, p. 66) among others in the Arab Gulf region. The Sultan himself, an Omani, was described in similar lines in terms of tolerance and avoidance of differences. Grappo (2015), a former US ambassador to Oman and a diplomat with nearly 40 years of experience, described Qaboos's way in dealing with

others as “a friend to all ... and an enemy to none” (p. 9). Ibadhism, one of the main Islamic sects in Oman is practiced only in Oman among the Arab Gulf neighbours who are majority Sunnis and Shias. This has been the official sect of the Sultanate of Oman dating back to the mid-eighth century (Peterson, 1978) and ‘is known for its conservatism and tolerance ... aversion to political violence [and] agreeable disagreement with friends and peaceful compromise with enemies ...’ (Lefebvre, 2010). The descriptions of the Omani culture and its people when considered in conjunction with the cultural dimensions of other Arab Middle Eastern countries seem to indicate the existence of a collectivist feminine culture that shows tolerance for differences, politeness and a preference for participative consultation.

Since culture is ‘the manner in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas’ (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998), it will be interesting, for example, to see if whether change managers in Omani organisations show transformational leadership behaviours and use some form of a bottom-up pattern like the Omani ‘shura’ consultative style during organisational change or not. This is because, “Among all other aspects of the Omani culture, ‘Shura’ stands out as an influential component in the lives of the Omanis” (Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016, p. 90). Also, researchers have pointed that leaders in collectivist cultures are more likely to exhibit transformational leadership behaviours which tend to have a stronger effect than in an individualistic culture (Jung & Yammarino, 2001; Bass, 1996).

A deeper understanding of the Omani societal culture can help answer the question how organisations change and explain why they change the way they do.

The Omani Society

Oman is made up of 11 governates which consist of states, cities, towns and villages. “Locals in each state share a common [sub-]culture, dialect and traditional clothing” (Al Jahwari & Budhwar, 2016, p. 87). Oman has a total of 4,608,835 million people (NCSI, 22 August, 2017). Omanis and expatriates make up 54.60% and 45.40% respectively. The population has been increasing at a fast rate (see the table below). Between 2015 and 2040, Oman’s population is expected to increase by 2.4 million (NCSI, 2015). Like other countries in the Middle East, Oman has an increasing youth bulge - 45.1% of Omanis are less than 20 years and only 6% are in their 60s and above (NCSI, 2017). The Omani woman gives birth to an average of 4 children during her lifetime and the average size of the Omani family is 7.8 individuals. It is estimated that with the current fertility and fatality rates, the population of Omanis is expected to double in 25 to 30 years. The two main challenges facing the government of Oman are providing jobs for the growing numbers of young job-seekers and diversifying away from relying on oil resources

End of Year	Total Population	Omani	Expatriates
2013	3.855 million	2.17	1.68
2014	3.993 million	2.26	1.73
2015	4.159 million	2.34	1.81
2016	4.550 million	2.46	2.08
22 Aug 2017	4.608 million	2.517 (54.6%)	2.091 (45.4%)

Total population in Oman from 2013-2017; Source: NCSI (2017), www.ncsi.gov.om

The Paradox of Increasing numbers of Expatriates and Local Job-Seekers

Muscat, the capital city is where a majority of the expat community lives and works. Omanis make up only 39% of the population in the capital city while expatriates 61%. (NCSI, 2017). By the end of 2016, Omanis made up 84% of public sector employees and only 12% of the private sector workforce. The total number of Omanis in the private sector was 209, 620 (12.35% of the private sector) while expatriates had reached to 1,697,671 million. Oman's expatriates are dominated by immigrants from three Asian countries – Indians (669,882), Bangladeshis (590, 170) and Pakistanis (220, 112) (NCSI, 2017). The visibly higher number of expatriates in Muscat coupled with the increasing number of locals seeking jobs recently led to complaints and pressing calls from Omanis to decrease the number of expatriates in the country.

The total number of registered Omani job seekers by the end of 2016 from all the 11 governorates of Oman reached to 43,858 (NCSI, 2017). Among these, 35, 183 were looking for their first jobs. By end of July, 2017, the number reached to 50, 388 and among these, only 2, 138 were 40 years and above. In other words, a staggering 95.7% of the Omani job seekers are young Omanis between the ages of 18-40 i.e. born between 1975-1999. Among the 50, 388 job seekers, 48% were between 25-29 years i.e. born between 1988-1992. Most of these are young Omanis with university degrees. According to Al-Barwani et al. (2009, p. 416), “the annual number of college and university graduates already exceeds the annual number of jobs available in Oman”. By end of 2016, the number of fresh graduates from various colleges and universities seeking jobs was 35,183 out of the total 43,858 pool of job seekers.

To solve this problem, the government reacted by putting more pressure on businesses to reduce their dependence on foreign labour. Besides Omanisation (a workforce localisation strategy), one of the most recent legislation in this area is the July 2014 two years visa ban for all expatriates who leave Oman. This was done to reduce the number of expatriates and offer opportunities to the young local job-seekers. The high number of expatriates, the sensitivities it causes amongst the jobless nationals and the government pressure on businesses are believed to be one of the key factors that cause and shape change in Oman. This is explained in the next section. The demands of young Omani job seekers led to major changes in Oman after the unprecedented 2011-2012 nationwide demonstrations and work strikes across Oman.

New Generation of Young Omani Employees

As mention earlier, Oman has a young population. Youth in the age group of 15-29 constituted 30% of the population in 2015 (NCSI, 2015). According to Oxford Business Group (2016), Omanis below the age of 25 make up 50% of the Omani population. The ‘youth bulge’ is a region-wide phenomenon. “The percentage of the population under the age of 25 [in the Arabian Gulf countries] – ranges from 25% in Qatar to 50% in Oman. In the UAE it stands at 34%, while it is 35% in Bahrain, 40% in Kuwait and 46% in Saudi Arabia” (Oxford Business Group, 2016). In their report “Meeting the Needs of the Youth in Oman”, Oxford Business Group (2016) mentioned that,

The World Economic Forum has warned that the region as a whole is facing a critical period in which the current demographic structure can either turned into a “youth dividend” or a “youth liability”. Much of the global literature on youth focuses on the potential for conflict and instability. Given the fallout from the Arab Spring and the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, this remains a major concern for regional governments.

This concern has created a sense of urgency in Oman. By end of July, 2017, the number of registered young Omani job seekers reached to 50,388 (NCSI, 2017). Among these, 48% were between 25-29 years and only 2,138 were 40 years and above. Youth also form a high majority in the government sector with Omanisation percentages ranging between 70-90% (NCSI, 2017). In addition, the influx of younger generations of Omanis born in the 80s and 90s whose values, expectations and behaviours are remarkably different from government employees who joined work since the 1970s and 80s has led to increasing demands for better jobs, higher salaries, career growth and more transparency.

One of the reason for these demands is that most of the new Omani employees and job seekers are between 18-29 years of age and belong to the Millennials or Generation Y. Born between the 80s and 90s, Millennials form the “largest demographic bulge since the baby boomers” (Aschoff, 2006, p. 1). A generation is “an age cohort that shares unique formative years’ experiences and teachings (roughly the first 20 to 23 years of their lives) and thus develop unique core values and attitudes that are different from other generations” (Underwood, 2007, p.43). How they are brought up, their peers, the influence of media and the popular culture at their times together work to shape the characteristics of a generation (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Economic and political events that take place during their critical development stages shape their views, attitudes and behaviours about work (Dittmann, 2005). Although each generation has a unique set of characteristics, some major events can affect all generations that experience it and make them develop similar characteristics in relation to those events (Patota, Schwartz & Schwartz, 2007). In Oman, the growing size of this generation and the low number of older generations makes this the fastest growing generation of the workforce.

Managers should be aware of the values, attitudes and priorities of this generation if they are to manage them effectively and bring the best out of them. According to Patota, Schwartz and Schwartz (2007), Millennials like accountability, technology, diversity and working collaboratively. Their general values for life are moralism, confidence, positivity and environmental consciousness. Their work-related values are passion, work-life balance, leisure and security. They are known for communicating informally via texting, and for their loyalty or disloyalty and for heavily relying on technology in their daily lifestyle among other characteristics. Studies show that Millennials highly value opportunities to continue their education (D’Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Also, studies show that this group has a very clear idea of what they want (p. 32).

In Oman, Millennials are more educated than past generations. This is evident in the increasing numbers of school and college graduates and the numbers entering schools and higher education institutions every year. According to the NCSI (2015), Omani youth’s top work needs are job security and better salaries (NCSI, 2015). Also, they use technology on a daily basis and are attached to different gadgets wherever they go. They are connected to social media on a daily basis. Tweeter and WhatsApp have become the most preferred tools for getting updated on what is going on in the country and the world. This generation also shows intolerance for unethical practices (i.e. it values moralism). They openly express disappointments with decision makers and expose mistakes and unethical practices of senior government officials in social media. Whistleblowing via social media tools has become a norm in Oman especially after the outbreak of the 2011-2012 demonstrations. Due to lack of trust and felt inequities mainly due to *wasta* in the public sector and a general preference of hiring foreigners in the private sector and the undocumented wide wage gap between locals and foreigners, the new generation of employees’ also demands transparency, more information and involvement in decisions that impact their lives. Unlike previous generations, today’s youth in Oman have less trust in decision makers, they are more aware of their rights, of how decision makers should perform due to their connectedness to the world. They are also more confident and optimistic. When their demands are not met, they take collective action and/or easily change jobs and relationships thus displaying the disloyalty that Millennials are known for.

Another explanation of the increasing demands for jobs and better salaries is that a very high majority of the job seekers and new employees are in their establishment (21-26) or advancement (26-40 years) stages where the main career issues and concerns are around exploring alternative jobs, learning and developing skills (establishment stage ages 21-26) and seeking opportunities for advancement, visibility and long-term options (advancement stage 26-40 years old) (Cummings & Worley, 2015, pp. 481-483; Hall, 1976). Hence, if majority of employees are in these two stages, this means that the majority will be concerned about finding the right job opportunity, getting trained, performing as expected and seeking career advancement. These priorities and characteristics of the new generation put pressure on organisations to focus on offering job opportunities, better salaries, career planning and development and focus on satisfying employees' needs if they want to retain them.

Two insights come from this review of the Millennials in Oman:

First, the wide spread practices and behaviours among Omani youth do not fit with the assumption of high-power distance where employees are expected to be fearful of expressing disagreement or criticism with their seniors. Perhaps these characteristics are indicating that the new generations don't really demonstrate the assumed scores of high-power distance in Hofstede's Arab Middle Eastern cluster (Hofstede, 2001). It is worth questioning here if Oman is witnessing a culture change? We can never tell, unless a study of the values, beliefs and attitudes of Omanis of different age groups are studied and compared.

Second, many of the needs, demands, expectations and attitudes of the new generation defy and challenge the long-time assumptions of older managers on how to successfully manage people and organisations. Hence, we see the emergence of a growing clash in Oman between the older generation of managers holding senior positions and using the command and control management styles and the new generations of employees that prefer working collaboratively and have different needs, values and expectations. These employees are a challenge for the older organisational leaders and managers because they reject many of the traditional assumptions of managing people and organisations like high centralisation and lack of involvement manifested in closed-door policies, secrecy and top-down communication.

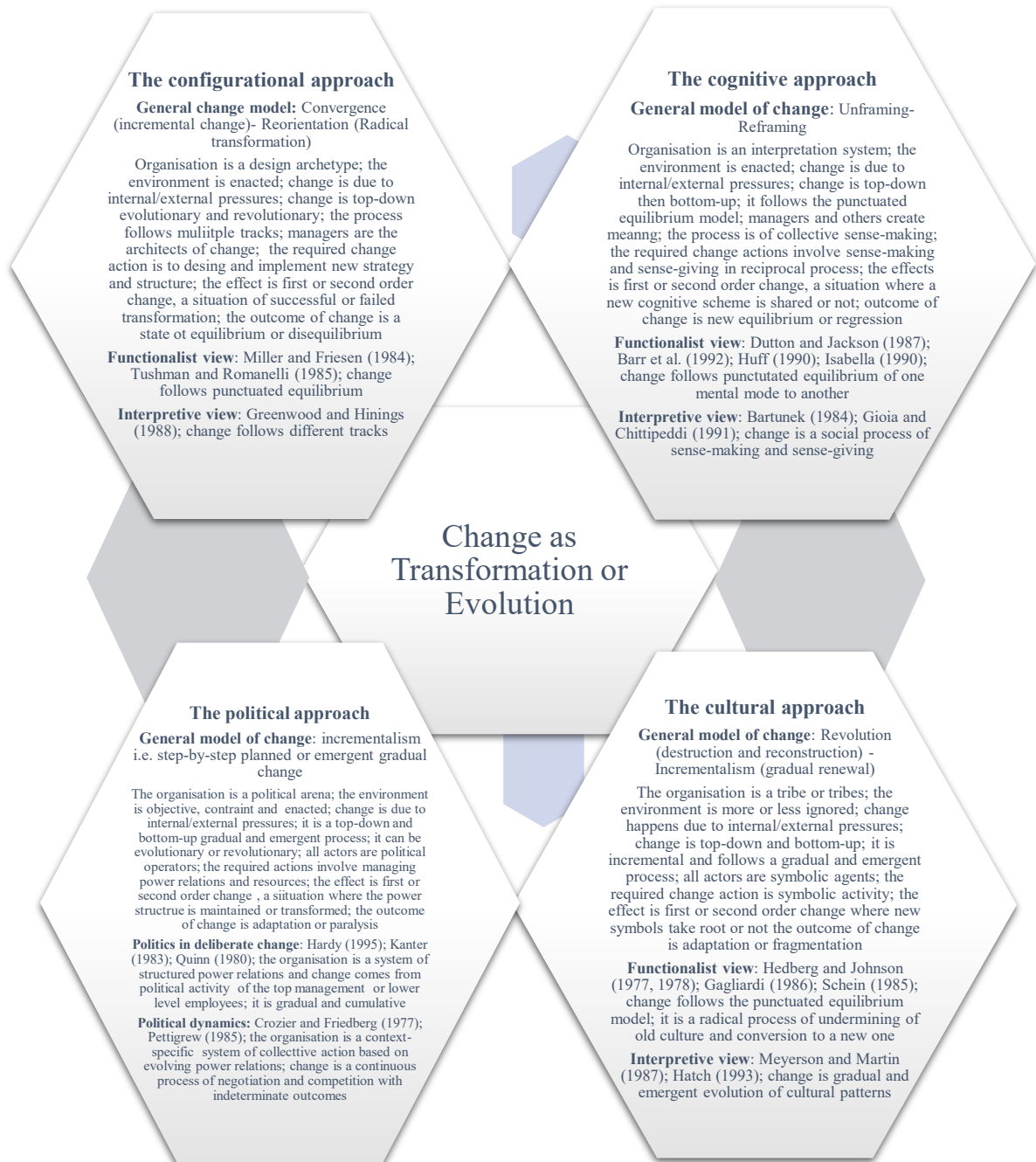
Understanding the influence of the changes in the socio-cultural environment in Oman can help answer the questions why organisations change in Oman, how they implement the changes and what facilitates and inhibits their processes.

APPENDIX 2

Comparison of Change Theories

This appendix presents a comparison of change theories based on the extensive reviews of Demers (2007) and Poole and Van de Ven (2004). First, a comparison of adaption, selection and imitation theories is presented. This is followed by a comparison of transformation and evolution theories. Then, the natural evolution and social dynamics theories of change are compared. The researcher read and compared all the theories mentioned in this appendix before opting for the contingency theory after data analysis.







APPENDIX 3

Criticism of the Contingency Theory

Although it was seen as a better approach to ‘the one best way’ (Child & Kieser, 1981), the contingency approach has its share of criticism. The criticisms challenging this approach are:

First, the contingency theory is criticised for overestimating the role of the environment and downplaying the role of human agency. According to Poole and Van de Ven (2004, p. 129), “Contingency theory is sometimes criticised for focusing solely on reactive adaptation ignoring the opportunity that firms may have to influence their environment”. The theory emphasises the role of the environment and assumes it to be “deterministic and immutable” (Rajagopalan & Spreitzer, 1997, p. 56). It helps researchers answer the question “what kind of change is appropriate to fit this organisation better to the changing environmental and contextual factors” and “that is why the types of change discussed in the contingency approach are therefore mainly structural responses to specific contingencies” (Demers, 2007, pp. 8-10). This view of the predominance of the external environment is strongly challenged by mainly European scholars and proponents of human agency (Demers, 2007). For example, Child (1972) and Crozier and Friedberg (1980) reject the idea that organisational members have no control over the environment. Child (1972, p. 3) believes that “strategic choice extends to the context within the organisation and is operating, to the standards of performance ... and to the design of the organisation’s structure itself”. Donaldson (1985, 1996, 2001) critically examined the logic of strategic choice and argued that empirical evidence shows that changes that managers make are situationally determined and that studies support the validity of environmental determinism rather than a proactive free choice. Managers are seen as responding to changes in external contingencies to achieve stability and restore performance. Hence, in the contingency approach, it is agreed that managers play a very important role in determining effectiveness of organisations i.e. “The mechanisms leading to success or failure are viewed as fundamentally linked with decisions made by the firm’s actors in response to environmental changes” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 129). However, there is no such thing as a purely proactive and free strategic choice. All adaptive choices made by managers are seen as reactive and driven by changes in external contingencies.

Second, the contingency theory is criticised for being a static theory i.e. it doesn’t consider the process that leads to the outcomes and it doesn’t consider the continuous changes in the external environment (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Drazin & Van de Ven, 1985). “Empirical research on contingency theory has been primarily cross-sectional and static, investigating strategic fit at a single point in time by testing single bivariate relationship dimensions of environment-structure fit” (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004, p. 128). Likewise, Demers (2007, p. 11) said, “as an organisational theory, it [i.e. the contingency theory] is a theory of fit ... rather than a theory or process”. Even Rajagopalan and Spreitzer (1997, p. 55) said in their exhaustive review that rational adaptation theories see “managerial actions and cognitions as a black box”. In other words, the process isn’t studied, only the outcomes are measured. To address this criticism, first, one must recognise the fact that the contingency theory was developed during a time when jobs, organisations and external environments were relatively stable and simpler than today (Donaldson, 2001; Gresov, Drazin & Van de Ven, 1989). That explains why ‘limited support for the theory was found in jobs and

environments that are more complex and that change more frequently' (Schoonhoven, 1981). But, unlike what critics of the contingency theory say, the contingency theory deals with organisational change; it shows why and how organisations adapt over time to restore performance. Donaldson (2001, p. 9) argued that "It contains a theory that is dynamic, which is supported by studies of organisations changing over time". By adapting to its contingencies, "the organisation moves from misfit into fit, which raises its performance, which feeds back to increase its contingencies [from the surplus resources] that create misfit again and so on." (Donaldson, 2001, p. 248). The researcher gave an example of the changing process in goal-setting theory. When people achieve a goal i.e. a fit, performance increases but this increased performance motivates them to set new targets that are different from the previous ones thus creating a new situation of 'misfit' again (Wood & Locke, 1990). This, according to Donaldson is analogous to the fits and misfits that organisations experience. In addition, researchers like Priem (1992, 1994) studied contingency adaptation processes. The researcher looked at adaptation in top managers' individual strategic management decision making processes and firm performance. Katou (2011) is another example. She explained the changing process by describing the mechanisms through which HRM policies improve organisational performance. Moreover, the study reported in this thesis can be taken as another example - it looks at 'how' SC processes unfold from a contingency perspective and how the main influencers of SC affect behavioural and financial performance outcomes. Hence, the contingency theory is a dynamic theory that explains why and how organisations change from fit to misfits to bring back performance to the desired levels. When viewed in this way, "it becomes a more rounded theory of organisational performance and organisational change" (Donaldson, 2001, p. 271).

The third criticism is on the linear fit-performance relationship line that is seen as a line of iso-performance i.e. there is equal performance at all points of fit along the line. Many contingency studies identified a line of fit where the relationship between fit and performance is always positive (Donaldson, 2001). The studies found that "for each level of the contingency variable there is a level of the organisational structure variable that is the fit i.e., yields the highest performance" (p. 187). For example, Child (1975, p. 21, Figure 1) found that there was a linear line of fit between size and bureaucracy structure which resulted in higher performance and firms that deviated from this line were in misfit and experienced lower performance. To address this criticism, Donaldson (2001) challenges it with a question of "why an organisation should move from one fit to another" if the performance is equal at each point of fit? (p. 271). He argued that the fit line is a line of hetero-performance where "the fits to higher levels of the contingency variable produce higher performances than the fits to lower levels of the contingency variable. Thus, organisational performance increases as the organisation goes along the fit line" (p. 271).

A fourth criticism of the contingency theory is 'it is unclear how managers know what exact characteristics fit the different contingencies' (Donaldson, 2001, p. 270). The contingency theory believes that managers often wouldn't change their organisations until they are in a misfit and organisational performance is low (Chandler, 1962). This misfit can be one that occurred or one that is projected and very likely to occur if nothing is done. But, "organisations in misfit will only rarely, and to a degree with luck, move into full fit. They will much more typically move toward fit, but attain only quasi-fit" (Donaldson, 2001, p. 259) and improve performance. To address this criticism, first we need to recognise that the contingency theory agrees that managers will not always know what exact characteristics fit their contingencies and it offers two reasons. First, some organisational characteristics are abstract and not actionable (Pfeffer, 1997) and managers will not know exactly which

level of the organisational characteristic is needed to move into fit with a contingency (Donaldson, 2001). Second, even when they know, their knowledge is never complete (bounded rationality) and they are faced with situational constraints. Thus, their solutions are always satisficing (Simon, 1976). Hence, it is more realistic to say that organisations move only into quasi-fit rather than full fit (Donaldson, 2001, p. 271). In fact, “The management of an organisation does not need to know exactly what fit is, but only has to know the correct direction” and from experience “managers know the direction in which to move their organisation but not the amount of movement required” (p. 271). The direction can be inferred “by extrapolating from past decisions” or from trial and error, which Donaldson considers unlikely and undesirable due to the risks involved (p. 260).

APPENDIX 4

Meeting the Core Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Core characteristics of qualitative research by major writers	Description	How this study meets this characteristic
Natural setting	Data is collected in the place where participants experience the issue of problem	Data was collected in five organisations where the phenomenon of interest occurred. Both managers and non-managers were met face-to-face in their offices
Researcher is a key instrument	The researcher is the primary instrument in data collection either in directly interviewing participants, observing behaviour and examining documents	The researcher did not rely on any instrument to collect data. I personally met participants and collected data via face-face interviews and documents
Multiple sources of data	Researchers typically gather multiple forms of data rather than rely on a single source	The researcher relied on interviews, documents, and follow-up emails and phone conversations.
Participants' meanings	The researcher focuses on learning the participants' meanings rather than their own or that of the literature	The researcher asked participants about their experiences, beliefs and opinions.
Emergent design	The initial plan for the research cannot be tightly prescribed and some or all phases of the process may change after the researcher enters the field	The initial plan was to conduct a mixed methods study in order to build a theory qualitatively and then test it via a quantitative questionnaire survey. But, interviewing, and analysing the interviews and processes took longer than planned and expected. This led to reducing the study to the qualitative phase only.
Reflexivity	The researcher reflects how their role in the study and their personal background, culture and experiences could have shaped their interpretations. See Creswell (2014, pp. 187-189) for guidelines on what to write	I reflected how my belief system influenced the way I view change processes and my preference for a critical realist paradigm, how my involvement in the interviewing as a local female Management lecturer from the largest government university could have facilitated entrance into organisations, affected the interviewees' responses, how my conceptual 'bird's-eye' view of things around me pushed me for studying change at the broadest level, how my strong belief in the influence of social culture and the contingency approach and my contextualist view pushed for a context-specific investigation, how my previous knowledge of Organisation Behaviour and OC facilitated my analysis and interpretation influenced the study, how my husband became a victim of OC and how his medical condition made me empathise and show interest in the personal stories of the participants
Holistic account	Qualitative researchers develop a complex picture of the problem or issue, reporting multiple perspectives and identifying the many factors involved	I investigated change processes from the broadest level looking at how external and internal factors could have caused them, I drew change processes on time lines and showed the sequence of events and identified factors that shaped and influenced the processes

Source: Table created from Creswell's (2014, pp. 185-213) guidelines

APPENDIX 5 Case Study Protocol

EXPLORING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PROCESSES

“Towards an Understanding of the Forces, Phases and Influencers of Strategic Change Processes in the Omani Context”

The purpose of this protocol is to guide the researcher during the interviews, ensure consistency by giving direction and focus during the interviewing process. The main interview questions will be derived from a-c and influenced by d-f:

- a. The aim of the study
- b. The research questions
- c. The conceptual and analytical frameworks of the study
- d. General theories underpinning the study
- e. The philosophical stances of my research: critical realism
- f. Documents related to each change process

The Aim of the Study

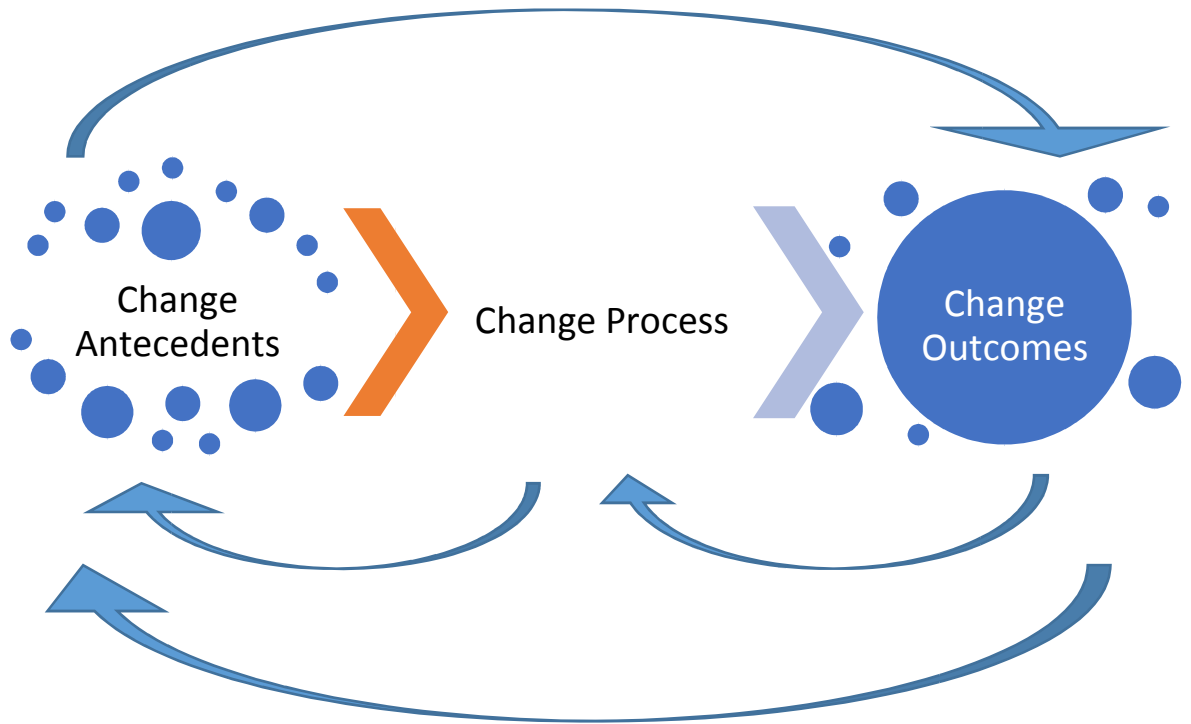
To develop an explanatory model/process theory of organisation-wide change for the Omani context

The Main Research Questions (these were the initial questions in 2014)

1. *What factors cause organisation-wide change in large organisations in Oman?*
2. *How do organisation-wide change processes unfold in large organisations in Oman?*
3. *Why do organisation-wide change processes unfold in certain ways in large organisations in Oman?*
4. *What are the outcomes of organisation-wide change processes in large organisations in Oman?*
5. *How do the patterns in the change processes relate to variations in the observed outcomes?*

The Conceptual Framework for the Study

This framework “... provides both a boundary and a focus for data collection and analysis... [and gives] a sense of direction and some sense of control over the study” (Bazeley 2013, p. 43). The chart shows organisation-wide change occurring in an open-system via the input-process-output model. The change phenomenon is broken into three parts: change antecedents, change process and change outcomes. The arrows show the interactive and iterative nature of change. Each arrow represents an assumption I hold about how the three parts relate to each other.



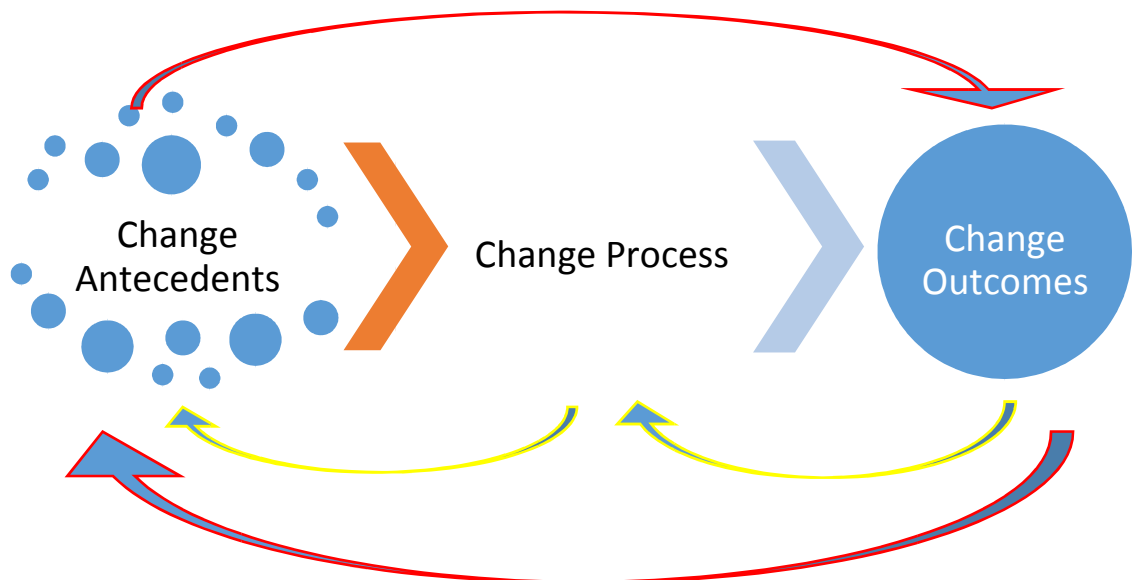
Definitions of the main concepts in the framework

Change Antecedents: The direct, indirect, internal and external causes of change

Change Process: The sequence of events of how change occurs in time

Change Outcomes: The direct, indirect, internal, external, intended, unanticipated and short/long term effects of the change process

What the arrows assume:



The orange and blue arrows in the middle of the chart from Change Antecedents to Process and then Outcomes show the generally assumed progression of change processes.

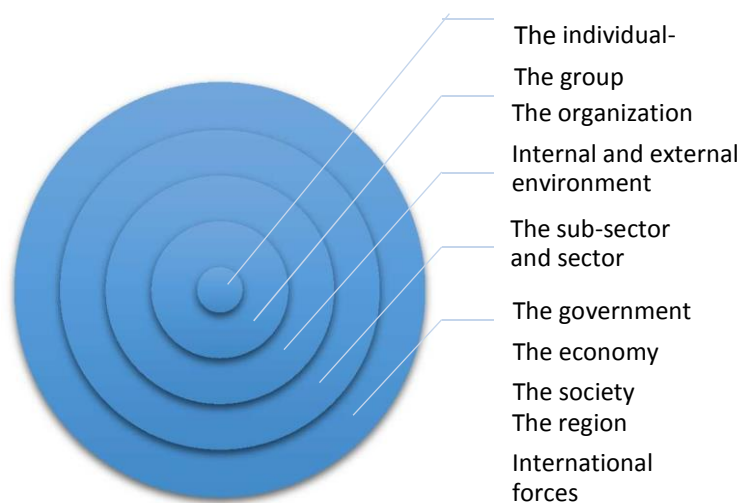
The long top arrow from Change Antecedents to Change Outcomes show that some antecedents lead to early outcomes in the change process which could cause dissatisfaction with the current status quo and motivate a reaction.

The yellow arrow from Change Outcomes to Change Process shows that certain outcomes could cause reactions in the way change is implemented. These outcomes could indicate a need to change by showing signs of failure in the way things are done or show early signs of success and thus emphasize the effectiveness of the implementation.

The arrow from Change Process to Change Antecedents shows that what happens during implementation could weaken, diminish or intensify the forces of some antecedents and at times create new antecedent(s). For example, not following a particular government regulation or making errors and delays could lead to a warning or a penalty thus intensifying the impact of 'governmental forces' among other antecedents. Here, the warning itself becomes a new antecedent that would create a sense of urgency in implementation or even change its direction.

The long bottom arrow from Change Outcomes to Change Antecedents shows that the outcomes of any change process could act as new antecedents (as mentioned earlier) for the same process or future processes.

The Analytical Framework for the Study



A frame of reference based on Pettigrew et al. (2001) description of the 'field of interaction'.

The interview questions will be guided by the view that OC occurs within a complex network or nested arrangement of contextual layers, structures and human action that are in a continuous state of action and reaction. In other words, organizational change is a process within an amalgam of other processes. This nested arrangement is made up of multiple contextual layers and one event in one layer can influence or lead to another. Also, people's interpretation of these events determines their actions and thus help shape the change process. This complex holistic view of change was described by Pettigrew et al. (2001) and is the adopted frame of reference/analytical framework for the study.

Employing this view means ‘change explanations are no longer pared down to the relationships between independent and dependant variables but instead are viewed as an interaction between context and action’ (Pettigrew et al., 2001). Also, change is viewed as a whole from multiple levels – organisational, departmental/group and individual (i.e. macro and micro). The intention thus in the interviewing process will be to move toward a more holistic explanation of the change where human action, events and structures from all contextual levels in Oman are seen to have a direct and/or indirect effect on how the change processes unfold and their outcomes.

Main Parts of the Interview

I have divided the 60-90 min interviewing process into 4 main segments. Majority of the questions will be seeking narratives and perspectives of participants on the change processes they experienced. Each interview question will contribute directly to one or more of the research questions. The questions will progressively lead the participant into a full consideration of my variables of interest (antecedents of change, events and states/episodes of the change, main actors, critical incidents, the outcomes of the change and the underlying mechanisms). As with qualitative research, the semi-structured interview protocol is designed to be cumulative and iterative. Below are the main segments of the interview:

1. The Opening Segment: Building Rapport and Searching for Change Antecedents

I will start this segment with a statement of the purpose of the research, an expression of gratitude for the participant’s involvement and a reminder of the involved research ethics and their rights

If the consent form is not yet signed, I will ask the interviewees to do so before the interview starts. I will ensure that the participant understands their rights.

If permission is given to audiotape the interview, I will turn on the recording device when I start

I will start with broad, easy and non-threatening questions on why the organisations changed which will address sub-question 1 ‘what are the causes of organisation-wide change processes...?’

The questions will address various layers of the context as depicted in the analytical framework

When necessary, I will probe for clarification and depth

I will take note of statements that I know will be relevant to questions later in the interview and will return to these for greater exploration and depth

If participants don’t elaborate or discuss as expected, I plan to use tools and resources like photographs, newspapers headings and other archival materials to help them recall events and give details

2. The Second Segment: Exploring and Explaining the Change Process from Planning to Implementation

This segment focuses on sub-questions 2 and 3 ‘how organisations change?’ and ‘why organisations change the way they do?’

This will be the longest part of the interview as it will focus on the change process from planning to implementation and the explanations

I will try to identify the nature of the planning and decision-making processes involved and how and when the change started from the perspective of each interviewee

I will ask questions related to communicating the change, building commitment and overcoming resistance

This part will also focus on exploring major events, critical incidents and episodes of the change processes.

3. The Third Segment: Identifying the End and Outcomes

This segment will address sub-questions 4 and 5 ‘what are the outcomes of organisation-wide change processes?’ and ‘How do the patterns in the change processes relate to variations in the observed outcomes?’

I will move to this segment once I am clear about the participant’s change narrative and attached meanings to it

The focus here will be to find out when each change process ended and how

I will also explore the change outcomes from the perspective of each interviewee along with their explanation of why they think the outcome occurred

4. The Closing Segment

Here, the questions will vary in each interview. For example, I will return to a story, a metaphor or a phrase that needs further exploration

I will explore contradictions in the participant’s narratives

I will ask the participant for additional thoughts and final points

I will thank the participant and emphasize the significance of their contribution to the research. Again, in the end, I will assure them of their privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and give them my contact details for any additional thoughts they might want to share with me later.

After each interview, I plan to fill out the participant demographic sheet.

Also, I will take notes of my initial observations and meanings attached to the overall process. I also plan to listen to each interview recording at the end of each day to capture the main themes that emerged.

APPENDIX 6

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (60-120 minutes face-to-face interview)

Date:

Organisation name/location:

Organisation number:

Interviewee:

Interviewee number:

Interview start:

Finish time:

Opening Script

Hello X, I would like to thank you for giving me your time and for accepting to be interviewed. First of all, could you please confirm that you have understood and signed the consent form and have agreed that this interview is audiotaped?

As you know, this interview is part of a research study conducted at Aston Business School in Birmingham, UK. The study seeks to find out the factors that cause and shape organisation-wide change processes and their outcomes in large organisations in Oman. You are invited because you are one of those who experienced an organisation-wide change process in a large organisation. I am interested in knowing your personal views so there will be no right or wrong answers. The interview will take 60-120 minutes but you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time or choose not to answer certain questions or request that certain information you share should not be published.

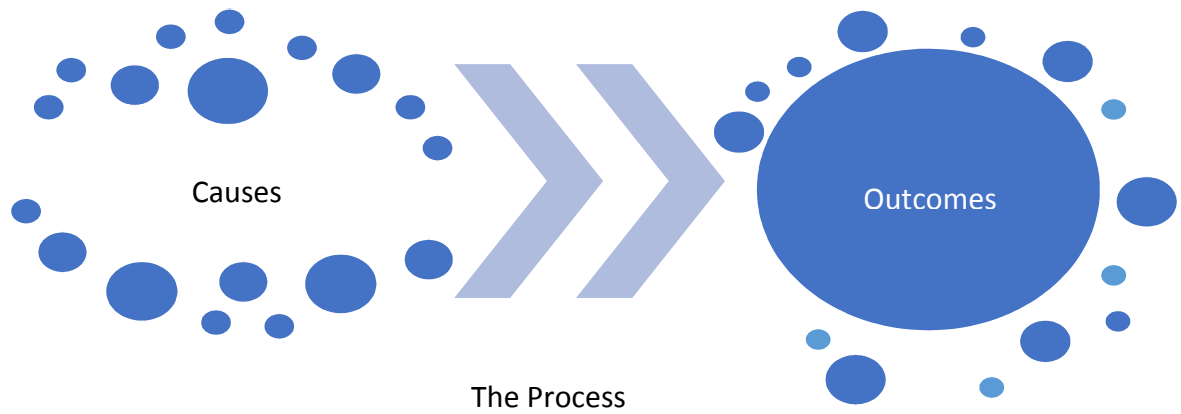
I would like to assure you that all the information you will share will be kept confidential for the duration of the study and only the researcher (myself) and my supervisor in the UK will have access to the information. I also assure you that neither your name, your gender, age and nationality nor your job title, your organisation and the sector will be mentioned to anybody else. Also, neither your managers nor your colleagues and individuals in other organisations will know what you will share with me today. The published information will be anonymised. I will use pseudonyms like A1 and B1 when referring to individuals and their organisations.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we can start?

Thank you.

First, I would like to show you a flow chart which will guide our interview today. [Show the input process-output model of organisation change – the conceptual model of the study without the arrows]. We will first talk about the causes of change, then move into the process and after that the outcomes.

See the flow chart on the next page



Research Question 1	Categories to Consider
<p>“CHANGE ANTECEDENTS”</p> <p>What are the main antecedents/causes of organisation-wide change processes in large organisations in Oman?</p>	<p>External factors like economic changes, government laws and regulations, industrial factors, competition, social trends, demographic and regional factors.</p> <p>Internal factors like implementing strategy, new management, new managerial plans, organisational performance and internal conflict</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Interview Questions and Probes</p> <p>I would like to start with the causes of change. Could you please tell me what you believe made your organisation decide to change in 20XX? In other words, what was happening inside and/or outside the organisation that made your organisation think about changing?</p> <p>So, let us list the causes you mentioned ...</p> <p>Was there a particular event/factor that you consider a main cause?</p> <p>Could you tell me how that event/those events affected your organisation?</p> <p>So, you believe that ... were the main causes of change? (Purpose: seeking confirmation)</p> <p>Could you please take a look at this list of other possible causes and tick the ones you feel pushed your organisation to change. (Purpose: to help them recall other possible causes) <i>External factors like economic changes, government laws and regulations, industrial factors, competition, social trends, demographic and regional factors. Internal factors like implementing a strategy, new management, new managerial plans, organisational performance and internal conflict</i></p> <p>Could you tell me more about these options that you ticked?</p> <p>Now, among the options you selected, could you please rank the most important causes of change (Purpose: to identify the most influential antecedents)</p> <p>Is there anything else you would like to add about the causes of the change?</p>	

Research Questions 2 & 3	Categories to Consider
<p>“CHANGE PROCESS”</p> <p>How do organisation-wide change processes unfold in large Omani organisations?</p> <p>“SHAPERS OF THE CHANGE PROCESS”</p> <p>Why did the change process unfold in this way?</p>	<p>Starting point, planning the change, announcing the change, communicating the change, addressing employees’ concerns and resistance, providing change information and resources, major events, implementation stages/episodes and critical incidents</p> <p>Organisational capability, time, strategy, organisational structure, employees, organisational culture, managerial choice, external consultants, power and politics, organisational history and memory, competition, best practices, government advisors/laws and regulations, owners, reputation and public opinion etc.</p>
<p>Interview Questions and Probes</p> <p>Now let us move to the second part of the interview which focuses on the change process. First, I would like to go back to the time when the organisation was making the decision to change or not to change and formulating the plans on how to change. Then we will talk about how the change was implemented up to how it ended.</p>	

DECIDING FOR CHANGE (for managers only)

Could you please tell me how the decision to change was reached to?

How long did the decision-making stage take? e.g. no. of meetings or months or years

Who was consulted on whether to change or not? Why them?

Were any external consultants involved? Why were they involved? What did they do?

Were they useful? Who evaluated their work? What were the results of their work?

Were first-line managers and non-managerial employees consulted too? (Purpose: to identify top-down, bottom-up or some form of consultative style)

Why was the degree of employee involvement at that level?

So, who made the final decision to change? Why them?

What were the intended outcomes at that time?

What were the challenges faced at this stage?

Is there a document (email, company newsletter, annual report, proposal etc.) that you can share with me that lists the objectives or describes the overall project?

Do you feel that the right decisions were made? Tell me more about this.

If you could back in time, what would you have done differently? Why?

PLANNING (for managers only)

So, after the decision to change was made, who was involved in planning the change program? Why these individuals?

How long did the planning stage take? (e.g. no. of meetings/months and time between first meeting to announcing the change or start of implementation)

Probe: Is that considered a short or long period? Did the planning take longer/shorter than expected? Tell me more about it.

In these planning meetings, what issues were often discussed and what issues do you feel were not given priority? So why do you feel these issues were not discussed?

Were there plans for a fixed budget and a time frame? Tell me more about these.

Were there plans for building employee commitment and addressing resistance?

Okay, so what was the big plan on how to change? Is there a document that you can share with me regarding this big plan?

Looking back, do you feel that adequate planning was made? Why?

What were the challenges faced in this stage?

Which areas do you feel like if they were planned for, the program would have avoided certain obstacles or achieved better outcomes?

To what extent do you feel like politics and personal conflicts influenced the planning and decision-making stages? Tell me more about this.

The last question for planning. I have a list here of various areas that organisations could set plans for before changing. Could you please select all the areas that your organisation set plans for? (*Purpose: to see what the plans covered and what they didn't cover; this could have links to problems faced during implementation and variations in change outcomes*)

"Time-frame, budget, employee commitment, employee resistance, collective bargaining, etc"

I can see here that your organisation did not set plans for X, Y and Z. Why do you think that happened?

(The purpose of these questions is to identify the nature of decision making and planning. Some features of these two processes could be critical success factors. I could be able to link features of decision making and planning to variations in change outcomes across case organisations)

COMMUNICATING THE CHANGE:

Let us now move to when and how the change was announced and communicated to employees.

When did you first hear about the change? From whom?

Tell me about your experience when you first learnt that your organisation was going to change. What was your reaction then?

When was the change program officially announced? How was it announced? Why that channel was used and no other? Do you have a copy of the message to share with me?

What happened directly after the change was announced? Can you recall any particular reactions?

Can you tell me what were the main conversations and concerns among the managerial and non-managerial employees then?

Did managers communicate regularly with employees about the change?

If yes, which channels did they use? Why these channels?

Give me examples of some issues that were addressed.

If no, where did employees get answers from?

What was the role of first-line supervisors during this period?

Do you recall any problems that occurred at this stage? Tell me more about that.

IMPLEMENTATION:

So, after announcing the change, how soon did the implementation start? Why did it/didn't it take long to start implementation?

So how did the change program unfold? Tell me about the sequence of events.

Tip: let us put these events on paper ...

Were employees clear about what was going on? Give me examples.

Do you believe that everyone including yourself had the resources needed to support the change? Give me examples.

Do you remember any employees resisting the change? If yes, what were their concerns? What did they do to express themselves? How did managers react?

Can you tell me of any major obstacles faced by the organisation during implementation?
Why do you think these problems occurred?

Were the problems addressed? If yes, how and by whom? If no, why not?

Why were problems solved in that way?

Was there a sudden unexpected change in the process i.e. an incident that made managers revise their plans?
Can you tell me more about it?

Were the plans and the actual implementation ever evaluated and revised? What made managers do that? How often? Or why didn't managers do that?

Who were the most influential people during implementation? Can you tell me why them? And what they did?

How long did the implementation take? Is that longer or shorter than the planned period? Why did it take so long/didn't take long to implement the plans?

Do you feel like the process was implemented effectively or not? Tell me more.

If we could go back in time, what would you have done differently?

What or who do you think limited the organisation's ability to implement this change in the best possible way?
What or who facilitated implementing this change in the best possible way?

What do you feel was missing? Why?

Here is a list of options that could have influenced the change process. Could you please tick the options you believe influenced the process?

Organisational capability, time, strategy, structure, employees KSAOs, organisational culture, managerial choice, external consultants, power and politics, learning from mistakes (our own and others), organisational history, organisational memory, competition, best practices, government advisors, laws and regulations, Staff turnover, owners influence, reputation and public opinion etc.

Now, I would like you to rank the top 3-5 most influential factors from (1) as most influential to (3 or 5) as least influential.

Research Questions 4 & 5	Categories to Consider
<p>“CHANGE OUTCOMES” What are the outcomes of organisation-wide change processes in large organisations in Oman?</p> <p>“Process Patterns and Outcome Variations” How do the patterns in the organisation-wide change processes relate to the variations in the observed outcomes?</p>	<p>Intended outcomes at all levels (organisational, group, individual), measurements,</p> <p>Unanticipated outcomes</p> <p>Critical success factors</p>
Interview Questions and Probes	
<p>This is the last part of the interview and I would like you to share your perceptions on the outcomes of the change process we have been discussing.</p> <p>Did the change process end or do you feel like it is still continuing? Tell me more. Probe: Do you feel like the change has become part of routine work in the organisation?</p> <p>If you believe that the change ended, when did it end? Tell me how could you tell that the change had ended? In other words, what gave you that sense of closure?</p> <p>How was the end/completion of the change handled by managers? Probes: Was the end announced? Did the organisation celebrate? What gave employees a sense of closure?</p> <p>Was the change team recognised? When and how?</p> <p>Was the change evaluated? When/How often and how?</p>	
<p>Is the change being institutionalised? If yes, what is your organisation doing to institutionalise this change at the organisational, group and individual levels?</p> <p>Do you personally consider the change successful or unsuccessful? Could you tell me more?</p> <p>Based on your view, what is or are the most important/valuable outcomes of this change?</p> <p>Do you personally believe that the change program achieved all its objectives?</p> <p>Were there any unanticipated outcomes? Tell me about these.</p> <p>What were the negative outcomes? How were they handled?</p> <p>What aspects of the change process (or the way this change was handled) greatly shaped the outcomes you have observed so far?</p> <p>Do you feel like your organisation could have achieved better results than these? If yes, please tell me how?</p> <p>Now that the change is done, what do you feel is still missing? Or what are you still waiting to see? What do you hear others saying about the change? Would you like to add anything else about the outcomes of the change process?</p>	

Closing Script

Thank you very much for your time and the information that you have shared with me.

If you would like to send me any additional thoughts or make changes to what you said or raise any concerns or share a document related to the change process, please feel free to contact me via mobile phone or email. You will find my details on this card. Also, I would like to have your contact details just in case I would need clarification or even confirmation on what you shared. By giving me your phone number and email address, I will be able to send you a copy of the study's results.

Again, I assure you that you will be anonymous. Whatever I will publish will not have any descriptive references about you nor your organisation or the sector.

Thank you very much Mr X/ Ms Y for your time. I truly appreciate your help.

APPENDIX 7

The Pilot Test (Testing Interview Questions)

I assessed the utility of the interview questions by piloting them in two sessions with two top managers from two different organisations that recently experienced organisation-wide change. I assessed the phrasing of the questions, their order, their usefulness, the overall structure of the interview and the time needed:

Phrasing of the questions:

The questions were very clear to all. The managers understood exactly what they were asked about.

Order of questions:

Because the interview questions were asked according to the order of the research questions, there was a good flow into the topic. However, after the first interview, I managed to cancel a whole section of explanatory questions and replaced them with probes for clarifications and depth in another section.

Overall structure:

The structure was logical with a good flow as it was built around the conceptual framework of the study. The interviewees were shown a copy of the conceptual model and were thus aware of the flow of questions. Both the introduction and final sections were clear and to the point.

Time Needed:

After cancelling a whole section, I managed to reduce the interview time by 30 minutes. The second interview took 70 minutes while the first one took about 90 minutes. This helped me allocate a realistic period for interviews (60-90 minutes).

APPENDIX 8



Invitation to the Study

Dear sir/madam,

My name is Misida Al Jahwari, a Management lecturer from Sultan Qaboos University in Oman and a full-time PhD student of Aston University in the UK. I am writing to invite you to participate in a study on large organisations in Oman that have recently experienced organisation-wide change processes. The title of the study is "Exploring Organisation-Wide Change: Toward a Process Theory of Change for the Omani Context".

Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. I will be grateful if you could take the time to read the below information and the enclosed Participant Information Sheet.

The study you are invited to participate in is funded by Sultan Qaboos University and conducted at Aston University. It will investigate for the first time what makes large organisations change in Oman, how they change, why they change the way they do and what kind of outcomes they experience. The study will be conducted in two phases: phase one will include 8 large Omani organisations that underwent recent changes in different sectors and phase two will involve a big sample of large organisations in Oman.

If you participate in this research, you will receive a report on your change process and a copy of the published results. Your participation will contribute in building our understanding of the nature of organisation-wide change processes in the Omani context. We currently do not have any context-specific research or guidelines that suit the Omani context in the area of Organisational Change and many large organisations resort to popular models and solutions that assume universality and overlook contextual differences. Your participation will offer valuable insights and lead the way to generating useful guidelines for all large organisations in Oman. This could help improve the outcomes of future change programs and the overall performance of firms including yours.

With regards to handling the information that I will get from your organisation, I assure you that all the information you will share will be kept confidential during the study and will be anonymised in the final report. No organisation or individual will be mentioned or referred to when the findings will be eventually shared and published. All collected data (in paper and audio format) will be destroyed upon the completion of the PhD study according to Aston Business School recommendations for 'Data Collection, Storage and Analysis'. Please be assured that this research is conducted in strict accordance with the

Aston University Research Ethics Committee. If you will have any concerns, at any point in time, about your participation and the way this study will be conducted, please contact the Secretary of the Aston Business School Research Ethics Committee on j.g.walter@aston.ac.uk or +44 (0) 121 204 4869.

If you agree to participate in this research, I kindly request you to read the Participant Information Sheet and sign the Consent Form. I will collect the signed and dated Consent Form from you before the 60-90 minutes face-to-face interviews. The questions I will ask concern your personal views about what made your company change, how it changed, why it changed the way it did and what the change outcomes were.

To further discuss this research and the nature of your involvement in person, please feel free to contact me on +968 92444777/94220015 or aljahmas@aston.ac.uk

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this invitation letter. Your participation is highly needed and I am looking forward to meeting you!

Yours sincerely,

Misida Ahmed Al Jahwari
Lecturer & Doctoral Researcher
WOP Group
Aston Business School
Aston University

APPENDIX 9



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

You are being invited to take part in a research study involving large organisations in Oman. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully

1. Study title

Exploring Organisation-Wide Change: Toward a Process Theory of Change for the Omani Context

2. What is the purpose of the study?

This study seeks to explore what makes large organisations change in Oman, how they change, why they change the way they do and what outcomes they experience. The aim is to develop a process model/theory of organisational-wide change for the Omani context. Your personal views and opinions will help shape the findings of this study. The process model/theory will help improve our understanding of organisational change in non-western contexts. This is highly needed as organisations in Oman and the region have been undergoing major changes in the absence of context-specific theories and guidelines. We hope the findings will help offer practical guidelines specific to large organisations in Oman.

3. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is funded by Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and is conducted as part of a PhD programme by a lecturer from SQU's College of Economics and Political Science studying in Aston Business School, Aston University.

4. Why I have been invited to participate?

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a member of a large Omani organisation which has undergone an organisation-wide change process. We plan to involve 8-10 employees from your organisation. A total of 64-80 employees from 8 large organisations in Oman will be recruited into the first phase of the study.

5. Do I have to take part?

Taking part is voluntary and if you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form as proof that you were informed and agreed to participate in the study. Then, you will be requested to sit for a 60-90 minutes face-to-face interview with the researcher.

7. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Your risks are minimum for several reasons:

Your participation is voluntary

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by Aston University Research Ethics Committee

Your managers (will) have approved the conduct of this study and so your participation will not violate any internal policy

You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any explanations

You can request that certain information is excluded from the study

Your confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in all stages of the study. Neither your name nor your gender, nationality, job title, department/work group and organisation will be mentioned in the study. Also, neither your managers nor your colleagues will have access to the information that you share.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will not directly benefit from taking part in the study but your views and opinions will help shape useful insights for successful organisational change in Oman which we hope will improve change management processes in the future.

9. Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

Yes, all information will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be kept securely for the duration of the PhD study and only the researcher and the PhD supervisor will have access to it. All the audio tapes and papers will be destroyed after two years (i.e. by the end of 2016). Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured in data collection, storage, sharing and publication of the research. No organisation/individual names will be mentioned to any third parties. This includes the owners, managers and colleagues in your organisation. In other words, no one will know who shared what with me.

10. What should I do if I want to take part?

If you agree to take part, we shall arrange a suitable time and place for a 60-90 minutes face-face interview. On the interview day, I will ask you to sign a consent form as proof that you have understood what is involved in the study and agreed to participate.

11. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be written in a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management in Aston University. The research will also be published in international journals but no participating organisations and individuals will be identified in the publications.

12. Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by Aston University Research Ethics Committee.

13. Who can I contact if I have any concerns?

Should you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact the Secretary of the University Ethics Committee on j.g.walter@aston.ac.uk or telephone 0121 204 4869.

APPENDIX 10



CONSENT FORM (to be filled and signed by each participant)

Exploring Organisation-Wide Change: Towards a Process Theory of Change for the Omani Context

Research Conducted by Misida Al Jahwari

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You are filling this form because you have decided to participate in the study. Please tick the box beside each statement that you agree with:

I agree to take part in the study	<input type="checkbox"/>
I confirm that I have read and understood the information for the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been told who is funding, conducting and supervising this research	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been told what I should do if I want to take part	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given the contact details of the Secretary of Aston Business School Research Ethics Committee should I have any concerns about the study and my participation	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been informed about the data collection method, what I will be asked to do and for how long I will be involved	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been informed how confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured in data collection, storage and publication of the findings	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been informed what will happen to the results of the research	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree that the data gathered in this study may be stored, after it has been anonymised, and may be shared, published or used for future research	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to be interviewed by the researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to the interview being audio recorded	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the physical data (audio and paper) will be destroyed upon completion of the research programme	<input type="checkbox"/>

I agree to the use of my anonymised quotes in the study and future publications

☐

I would like to receive a copy of the published research

☐

I understand that this research has been reviewed and approved by Aston University Research Ethics Committee and thus will be conducted with high ethical standards

☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

APPENDIX 11

R2 Case Analysis “A Restructuring for Managing an Expanded Government Facility and for Addressing Career Stagnation”

This appendix presents the case description and within-case analysis for R2. The change is described around the three main issues - the forces, phases and influencers of SC in GBs of Oman. Results of the analysis are based on the eight 60-180 minutes interviews conducted in the case organisation. Below is a reminder of the case and interviewees' profiles

Case	Ownership	Years of Operation	No. of Employees	Type of Change	No. and type of interviewees
R2	100% Govt	10-15	500-1000	Restructuring for an expansion and career stagnation	8 employees (4 managers and 4 non-managers): 2 general managers 1 senior manager 1 supervisor 4 non-managers from 4 divisions including an HR specialist

Research Issue 1: Forces of Change

What makes GBs undergo SCs in Oman?

This question looks at the external and internal conditions that caused the restructuring.

This is a case of a major restructuring in a government organisation that was responsible for operating multiple government facilities. One of these facilities was undergoing a major expansion. The expansion included the construction of a multi-billion Omani Riyals project which was in progress for more than five years before R2 occurred. The case organisation was expected to prepare its staff to operate the new facility once it was ready. Like all other GBs, the organisation was expected to improve its efficiency, grow, hire more locals, generate more profits, become self-funded and increase its contribution to the economy. Internally, managers and non-managers were frustrated by years of lack of promotions and salary increases. With the near completion of the new facility, the government appointed a powerful chairman to oversee the business. The need for preparing the company to operate the new facility turned into a decision and an action after the new chairman was appointed. He and the board members soon decided that the company had to undergo a major restructuring, add several new work areas, train existing talents and hire new talents if it were to operate the new facility effectively. The existing CEO was informed and he supported the decision. See the following trail of quotes from managers and managers on why the company restructured. All managers and nonmanagers believed that the company restructured to address career stagnation but also in order to expand and operate the new government facility. They also agreed that the appointment of a new chairman directly triggered the decision to change.

“The idea came from the chairman. He saw that the requirements of the new and the three or four other facilities could not be met with our previous structure, teams and number of staff ... this change happened so that we can prepare for the new facility” GM 1

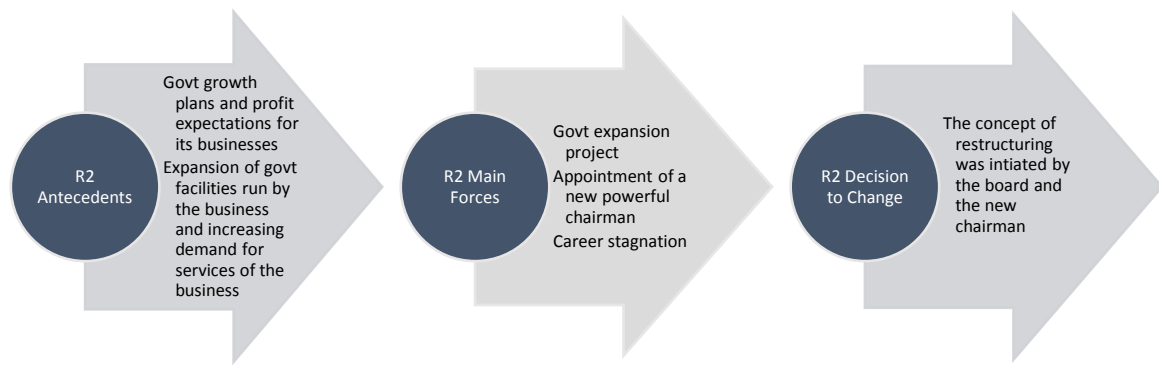
““The early beginnings of the change that we are talking about started during the 2011 demonstrations ... The government reacted wisely. The need of the hour was to contain the whole situation by raising salaries and creating jobs but in that process people’s expectation’s rose to a completely different level. They have this attitude of being entitled rather than work towards the entitlement. Here, people were not happy with their salaries. It all started with this money issue which continues as of today ... You see, human beings compare. But if you compare you end up in despair. Generally speaking, one is never satisfied. Employees look at company X and company Y and what benefits they give. I think this led to a need to revisit issues and restructure. I think employee satisfaction here comes from the work environment and salary. People saw that there is no growth plan that they can look at, our top line remained stagnant for various reasons and they were getting stuck in one position. They wanted better titles, better perks and salaries. The issue escalated after the so—called Arab Spring. They demanded better jobs and salaries regardless of whether they were capable or ready or trained, whether they have the relevant qualifications or not. They didn’t look at that. So, the restructuring got triggered by these disgruntled dissatisfied employees and reorganising was seen as solution ... [But] The restructuring is also related to Oman’s vision. This sector is very influential for the economy and the government wants to increase the contribution of the sector to the GDP. Even if the employees did not complain about salaries and promotions, this company would have restructured to prepare itself for the new facility. But employees accelerated the process because of their collective actions and demands. That’s how I see it.” GM 2

“This change can be seen as part of the strategic initiatives of the country to increase the contribution of this sector to the GDP ... it’s part of achieving Oman’s vision ... But the main cause is we have this major modern facility coming up and there will be a totally different way of working, very much IT driven. Our way of work since the 70s and our structure had to change to bring in new teams and skills that could operate the facility” Senior manager

“The change happened because of the board. We had to change to achieve the government strategy and vision. They are expanding many things here. We have to prepare ourselves to move to a new facility that is a lot bigger and more advanced than what we have here and that is why we restructured” Supervisor Hence R2 was caused by three internal and external forces:

1. Government expansion project
2. Career stagnation
3. Appointment of a powerful chairman

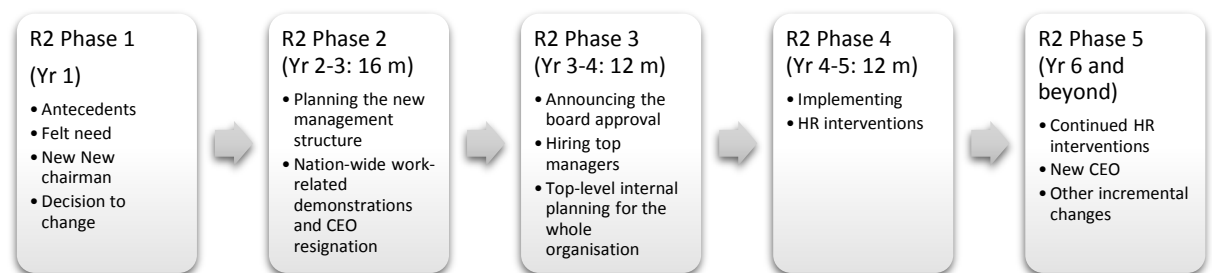
To sum up, based on the interviews, there was a consensus agreement among managers at all levels and non-managers that R2 occurred specifically to prepare the business for operating a new and bigger facility. But, career stagnation was a long-time issue among non-managers and it was seen as one of the main forces that triggered the change too. Despite the existence of a felt need to change, the concept of a major restructuring became a reality only after a new chairman was appointed. Hence, the chairman was a main force of change. The following figure summaries the antecedents, main triggers and decision to change.



Research Issue 2: Phases of Change

How do SC processes unfold in GBs?

The stories narrated by the managers and non-managers together helped create a sequence of events that showed how the change process unfolded in the organisation. Each interview either confirmed or complemented events that had occurred. There were no contradictions in the sequence of events reported across the eight interviews. The analysis identified 5 major change phases. The figure below offers a brief phase-by-phase process description



Phases of the restructuring process in R2; Source: Developed for the study from interview data

Phase 1 Antecedents, Felt Need, New Chairman and Decision to Change (Year 1)

As mentioned in the previous section, this company had both external and internal forces of change (board decision to expand after the appointment of a new chairman, complaints over long time career stagnation). The company was operating multiple government entities and one of these was undergoing a major expansion. The expansion included the construction of a multi-billion Omani Riyals facility which was in progress for more than five years before R2 occurred. The company was expected to prepare its staff to operate the new facility once it was ready. Like all other GBs, this government business was expected to improve its efficiency, grow, hire more locals, generate more profits, become self-funded and increase its contribution to the economy. Internally, managers and non-managers were frustrated by years of lack of promotions and salary increases. Career stagnation was the simmering issue. With the near completion of the new facility, the

government appointed a new powerful chairman to oversee the business. The need for preparing the company to operate the new facility turned into a decision and action soon after the new chairman was appointed. He and the board members decided that the company had to undergo a major restructuring, add new work areas, train existing talents and hire new talents if it were to operate the new facility effectively. The existing CEO was informed and he supported the decision.

Phase 2 Planning the New Management Structure, Nation-Wide Work-Related Demonstrations and CEO Resignation (Years 2-3, 16 months)

Planning the new structure began with determining the new management team. The process took 16 months. It involved the chairman, the CEO, the board, the general managers and consultants. No non-managers were involved. This phase coincided with the 2011 nation-wide demonstrations in Oman. Thousands of job-seekers demanded work opportunities and employees of many large organisations resorted to various forms of collective actions. They demanded better positions and salaries and making decision makers accountable. Soon after the demonstrations and work strikes, the CEO of the business resigned. An interim CEO was appointed but he remained with very limited powers. All major issues were handled by the chairman.

Phase 3 Announcing the Board Approval, Top-Level Internal Planning for the Whole Organisation, Implementing and People Issues (Years 3-4)

The new management structure was approved and announced after a year and some months. New general managers were hired mainly from the government sector. The GMs were asked to do HR planning for their divisions. They had to determine the number and type of staff needed in their work areas to serve the new facility. HR helped in assigning new job titles to existing employees. External consultants were involved and working with all groups i.e. top managers, HR and nonmanagers. All the planning was done behind closed doors without consulting employees. Once the plans were ready, the chairman finalised the other requirements.

Phase 4 Implementing and HR Interventions (Years 4-5)

There was no official organisation-wide announcement of a restructuring. It was left to the GMs to announce the change to their staff. Employees were informed that they would be assigned to new jobs and would have to undergo training so that they can be prepared to perform in their new roles once the new facility became ready.

They were given new job titles without position descriptions or salary information. The ambiguity led to many enquiries. The HR department reacted to employees' demands and prepared the needed job descriptions without involving employees. Job analysis and job design were based on a search of what employees in similar positions perform worldwide.

The new job descriptions were given and staff were trained for their new roles. However, despite having the new titles and completing training on the new positions, all trainees were required to continue performing their old roles until they moved to the new facility. This phase had many complaints and resignations. First, employees complained about the new job titles that were assigned to them without job descriptions. Training motivated employees but once they successfully completed training, the waiting seemed endless. Hence, employees complained about delays in completing the new facility. Third, staff were not happy that despite being given new job titles and having completed their training, they still had to perform their old jobs and get their old salaries. Due to delays in the new facility, employees did not get opportunities to apply what they had learnt and managers complained that the new skills and knowledge were getting forgotten with the passage of time. Training and re-training costed the business a lot of money. The increasing training expenses frustrated top managers who were expected to improve the company's efficiency and generate profits. This phase coincided with the government's decision to raise the minimum wage for Omanis and increase all salaries. This comforted many disgruntled employees.

During implementation of the new structure, an unexpected phenomenon occurred. Departments added new positions and job titles according to their own needs. This led to the emergence of a structure that was different from the approved one. According to the HR department, more than 35% of the positions that exist in the real structure are not in the official organisational chart. Surprisingly, the board did not stop this process. They saw it as a natural way of rectifying things internally until self-sufficiency and stability would be achieved. But HR saw the emergence of new titles and positions somewhat problematic.

By the fourth year after announcing the restructuring, HR included the new positions in the structure and reported to the board that the restructuring was done and completion was approved. Hence, from a project stand point, this change was done and dusted by year 4. There was a big change in the number and size of departments and number of managers in the organisation. As one GM said, "We were only four or five senior managers. Now, we are almost fifteen. This is because new specialisations and work groups have been added". However, the end was never announced and neither managers nor non-managers had a clear idea of whether the restructuring had ended or not. Many had lost track of the change but they believed that it was continuing due to staffing, unresolved complaints and new HR interventions. One manager said,

"We are a continuously changing organization. I believe this structure will change further once we move to the new facility. The actual requirements will force us to tweak things here and there. So, I cannot say it is the end for the structure or there will be any end. We still have many positions to fill and there will be more changes to come. We have plans to

expand further so with that we will need new sections, departments and divisions. I see that this organization will continue to adapt itself at least for next five years, that is by 2020”

Phase 5 Continued HR Interventions, New CEO and other Incremental Changes (Years 5-6 and beyond)

HR interventions continued in years five, six and beyond to help address the unresolved HR issues that led to complaints and resignations. Many employees complained and several resigned due to delays in moving to the new expanded facility and due to lack of promotions and salary grades.

Some employees resorted to slow-downs and no-show ups to put pressure on the company.

By years five and six of the restructuring, staffing was still in progress and other incremental changes were implemented. For example, new KPIs (key performance indicators) were introduced and plans were formulated to reorganise departments. Neither the new facility was ready to function and nor the company was ready to operate it as more staff were still needed. But recruitment for certain positions was postponed until it became clear when the government facility would open. Career stagnation, one of the main internal issues, was not resolved and top managers were frustrated by the delays of the new facility.

In year six, a new CEO was appointed and both managers and non-managers were happy that among other actions, the CEO was going to reorganise departments as per the felt needs. HR continued its initiatives to sustain the change. Besides implementing regular meetings, workshops, staff competitions, and field trips, they also evaluated jobs to put the right people in the right places and to improve salaries. They also brought motivational guest speakers, recognised best performers and rewarded best ideas.

Change has not stopped in this organisation and both managers and non-managers are still waiting to move to the new facility, to perform their new roles, gain their new salaries and make improvements in the structure and work processes as and when required. It is estimated by the top managers that change will continue for at least the next five years.

4.5.3 Research Issue 3: Influencers of Change

What situational factors influence SC processes in GBs of Oman?

This question was addressed using two sub-questions:

1. *What facilitates SC processes in GBs of Oman?*
2. *What inhibits SC processes in GBs of Oman?*

Nine factors were seen by the interviewees as facilitators to change in R2. For a quick view of the facilitators and quotes that represent the shared experience and view on each facilitator, please see the following table.

Facilitators	Representative quotes
Role of the chairman	<p><i>"The chairman had a major influence on this change" GM1</i></p> <p><i>"The chairman was central. He is almost seen as a fatherly figure. He is an older person and everyone wants to get his approval that he did this and he did that" Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"Any complaints and concerns were handled by the direct managers but many employees went to the chairman directly to solve their issues. Many of the issues got fixed quickly by the chairman like 80-85% of them. But other issues needed time because they required making changes to the approved structure. Supervisor</i></p> <p><i>"We went to the chairman after we saw that managers could not help us. He was very quick at solving problems and addressing issues. He never said I cannot see you or your complaint is silly no matter how small it was" Non-manager 1</i></p>
The new CEO	<p><i>"Our new CEO was a GM and he experienced it all. So, I think he will give all the unresolved issues a priority. These issues if they remain unresolved, they will escalate in the future" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"We have hope in the new CEO. He is a local, a very experienced individual and he is powerful. So, I think what we have now got is a true leader. If things don't happen because there is no political will, he has the capability to make them happen. He is a significant player in different large companies, a very significant player. He can make his voice heard in the board something that a foreign CEO would not be able to do. I am sure he is someone who will drive this organisation to its logical conclusion that we are all waiting for ... I saw his vision and his agenda yesterday and correcting the new structure is one of them. He is going to relook at things with much sharper eyes and he asked every general manager for support. It is too early but the signs are that things are going to change to the better" GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"We had an acting CEO for about five years but he didn't have any powers. Just recently, we got a new Omani CEO. He is going to address many of the pending issues. So, this situation is about to bring us another change now." Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"I am pleased that the new CEO wants to reorganise some sections and departments. He wants a whole team to work with him on this in order to follow up on all issues like absence of career paths and grading structure. Employees approached him immediately after he took over because they couldn't see a future for them in the organisation. For example, the accountants went to him and asked what comes next after this position, we only have a manager above us. We can't have a career here." Supervisor</i></p>
Role of the consultant	<p><i>"Consultants designed the new structure because they have the expertise and knowledge in the area. They know how similar facilities are organised in the world and how they function" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"The situation necessitated a restructuring. Consultants were brought in to make us ready for the transfer and operations of the new facility. So, this whole thing was highly driven by the consultants. They said, hang on, this current structure will not work. It will not prepare you and get you ready for the transfer to the new facility. You won't be able to run the new facility with this structure" Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"The consultants met some employees, sat with them, listened to them. They went around the company ..." Non-manager 3</i></p>
Low resistance and positive expectations for change	<p><i>"Very few people resisted this change" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"People expected better positions and salaries when they heard about the restructuring. So, there wasn't really any resistance that is worth mentioning" Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"We were told there will be new and better positions. So, we were hoping that after years of waiting we will get something better. So, people were excited and waiting" Non-manager 4</i></p>
HRM interventions: New job descriptions, training opportunities and new salaries	<p><i>"Training is compulsory here. If they conclude through training needs analysis that you need training then a program will be assigned to you. At least two or three programs are given in a year to each employee. These are both on-the-job and off-the-job training programs. Some employees are taken to similar organisations overseas to see and learn. These are live environments and so they learn how others perform their tasks. There are a lot of initiatives in terms of making sure that everyone is equipped with the required skill sets. The new facility is highly technology oriented and so the strategy is that everyone is trained and becomes aligned with the mission. Level A service is the kind of aspiration the government has in terms of service delivery at the new facility" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"The organisation has significantly increased pay scales from 2011 and onwards and that helped a lot ..." GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"Every employee in this organisation has the right to go to two training programs at least every year. You can do on the job training, or you can go training abroad or even get a college degree. People were sent to different facilities around the world like in Munich and Turkey and we learnt how work is distributed and coordinated. That was very helpful. I also got my master's degree for my new job but I am not practicing it now. I am doing something else. It's a complicated situation, I know but will get there" Supervisor</i></p>
	<p><i>"The new job descriptions at least made it clear to us what the new jobs will be about. There were not there. So, having these at least gave us a picture of what we will be doing" Non-manager 3</i></p>
The Omani' culture: friendly, optimistic, hospitable and quick adaptation	<p><i>"I think the Omani culture has helped. People embrace change easily here because they are friendly, polite, giving and very hospitable. Because of that they are amenable ..." GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"Nobody likes change. But I think people here accept change fairly well" Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"We always have hope that good things will happen" Non-manager 1</i></p>

Table continued on next page

The ability of departments to add new jobs and titles	<p><i>"What happened is that people migrated to their own structures. Departments decided to go ahead with what worked for them. So, we have an odd system where we have an agreed structure which the board approved and the structure that the people wanted. The board said okay, we will go ahead with what you have agreed ..." Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"After people were given new job titles, some employees went to the chairman because they felt they deserved better positions than the ones assigned to them. But, there were no positions available for them in the new structure. So, departments ended up creating positions based on their own needs. HR didn't like this but the board approved it later. It is strange, isn't? But it helped people calm down." Supervisor</i></p>
External recruitment/New hirers accepted and supported the change	<p><i>"Injecting new people from different industries was very helpful. That was a very good move by the chairman. It brought us talents and outlooks that we didn't have" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"We have a lot of new staff. Last year we recruited 400 people and we are moving from 800 to 3000 employees by the time we shift to the new facility. The new people accept the change. They come in new positions and just get along. It is the existing staff mainly who have issues, the ones who have been with us since the beginning" Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"By hiring externally and bringing in new people, we are enabling this organisation to change. These new employees come and they adopt the culture. They support the change unlike the existing employees especially the old timers. It's difficult to take them with you because they pull you back. They are either not happy with the change or they want things in their way. But these new guys they are just following the change" Supervisor</i></p> <p><i>"It is easy for the new staff to accept the change. Majority of them support it because they lost nothing. They came and saw it ..." Non-manager 3</i></p>
Increased caution over managing people	<p><i>"Very few people resisted this change because they expected good things from it. But, many people didn't get what they expected and that annoyed them ... Somewhere along the line they are struggling because of perhaps their aspirations for better quality of life and they have found striking as their new weapon ... We are trying our best because it's the right thing to do and because we are cautious. You see, employees strike at the drop of a hat! But, I think people have hope in the new CEO. So, that is comforting them." GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"What happened affected us in how we manage the staff. We became more aware of the fact that people have a voice and they could make themselves heard. We have become very cautious of not having a strike here. We are a lot more cautious about how we handle people" Senior manager</i></p>

As for the second sub-question, fourteen factors were reported as inhibitors of change. For quotes that represent the shared experience and view on each inhibitor, please see the following table.

Inhibitor	Representative quotes
Absence of change leadership – lack of a vision and unity of direction	<p><i>"People were not informed or updated enough on this restructuring. What happens is they come to work, do whatever they have been told and leave. So, it is more about where I have reached rather than where the company is going to. There is no feeling of shared objectives, focus is missing ... We need unity of direction. Discipline, as we speak, is a bit missing too. But, I think the new CEO is going to bring in all these to make a difference" GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"There is no proper leadership here, no unity. So many new faces, departments are working in silos and nothing gets driven by the GMs. They are all trying to build their own empires. Where is the alignment? To what direction? I can't see it" Senior manager</i></p>
Lack of post-change people integration	<p><i>"The whole problem here now is the merging of two streams of employees, the existing employees and the new employees, that has still not happened very nicely. It is like those tectonic plates that move and we get earthquakes. We keep on getting shockwaves from time to time ... We have people who have industry knowledge and are experts now and new employees all from outside the organisation who have no industry exposure at all. Staffing will end because we must fill all the remaining jobs. In the new environment, new dynamics will emerge, people will have issues and conflicts will be resolved. Our staff will need time to become familiar with the place and how things will work there. I suppose after the new facility is opened, it will take us 2 or even 4 years to settle, by 2020 perhaps. So, I suppose this whole change will end by 2020" GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"There are many new people here and it will take time for them to understand the older employees and get along. These things take time you know. But the company can do something. The old employees are more like experts now and they know this place very well. But many have their own bitterness from this change. They were expecting something and didn't get it. The new employees are fresh and motivated but also still not sure about many things. They have to learn a lot. How do you connect these two groups together and make them work like a team? That's what is needed here." Supervisor</i></p>
Board interference, politics and incompetence - making changes with the consultant without discussing with the GMs	<p><i>"The board has to be there; they are the policy makers. But, our boards here don't only do that. They interfere in our work even in our operational decisions. They interfere in those too. They do that because they have a ministerial mentality. They love power ... They wasted a lot of time, brought many people to hire and slowed us down a lot ... The politics of our board made consultants change what they had agreed with the general managers. The consultant met the board after meeting GMs and made the final changes to the plans and agreements without re-discussing these with the GMs. This caused misunderstandings later. So, the worst enemy today of government businesses are the government board members. They are out of context. We get a lot of resistance from board members who are from the government sector. They bring back those outdated management practices that they are familiar with and want to make these businesses function like rigid bureaucracies. There is no way the government will be able to make these changes successful if the board deals with these businesses in the same way they deal with ministries. I believe the board members are our biggest problem. I believe if we get rid of them, we will be more efficient. We will function like a profit-oriented organisation. Otherwise, let the board of directors run the company instead of us." GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"The government board of directors have a very different mindset. They interfered a lot with a lot of politics into the what and how of everything we did. This made us struggle and slowed us down" GM 2</i></p>
Incompetent and highly political GMs (management styles and change management)	<p><i>"Most GMs accepted the restructuring because they were newly hired. But some GMs felt that they lost lot of their power from the restructuring. One reason is their titles changed from directors to GMs and they were not happy with that ... You see most of our GMs come from the public sector. They bring their old ideas on how to manage. You know how ministries are. What we are trying to do here is totally different. The government wants these companies to become competitive and become profit-oriented and what are these GMs doing? These GMs are bringing the old bureaucratic ideas here. They are very very political and things like sharing knowledge and involving people is not their cup of tea" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"There is too much politics in this company. It is not really about making changes but rather about looking good. It should be about the company and how we can best do it. We have a lot of top managers here who try to show off and build their own case. They focus on what would make them look good rather than what is best for the company ... The consultants drove this change forward and the GMs held it back. We could have done it in a different manner ... If I were to do this again, I probably would need a new team of senior managers. People who really understand the business and organisational change. People who are there for the company and not for their own personal glory. I say this because we have senior managers who don't understand the business and how to manage change ... If things will go wrong, I blame the competency level of the decision makers. This whole change and the new facility we are preparing ourselves for is in the hands of the government and who they appoint and depend on. Any faults or delays is theirs to blame" Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"The GMs have their doors closed. So, no open-door policy. It is not easy to meet them. They seem to be so busy and you have to make an appointment to meet them. I don't believe that they are that busy, it's just their management style. They don't like updating employees. They keep all the information to themselves. It's their source of power or maybe they just believe that it's none of our business to know. What to do?" Supervisor</i></p>
Ineffective planning and management	<p><i>"Planning took 15-16 months but they didn't involve others. Then they were in hurry to implement it. They caused clashes in responsibilities and reporting lines. Implementation then took a year because of the problems that came up. These issues are not resolved until today ... This restructuring was not handled like a project with clear plans, roles, a timeline and deadlines. There were no milestones either. It was handled loosely like a government project with a government budget and view of time" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"It could have been planned and managed better as a proper project. Better preparation for all possible contingencies, clear roles and responsibilities, clear action plans, deadlines, follow-ups and controls and so forth. You know like a proper professional project." GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"To tell you the truth, it wasn't managed well at all and that kind of tells you something about their planning." Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"I don't think the whole process was planned well. They say when you fail to plan, you plan to fail and a bit of that happened here. They should have engaged employees early to plan the new structure. If they did that they would have heard what is important from the employees' side, what they expect and things like that. They would have planned better and avoided all those complaints and resignations. Departments wouldn't have added new jobs or created any new titles for themselves. But look at the mess, the issues that we had!" Supervisor</i></p>

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Lack of communication and transparency	<p><i>"There was no formal announcement. Only the GMs and above knew and they had to spread the message and implement. So, what happened was that every division got a somewhat different message on the restructuring. I mean there was no one message sent to all ... People were worried all along. There was a lot of uncertainty. For a week or so, employees flooded the HR department with questions. But even HR was not clear about the change. This is because only one person from HR was involved in the planning meetings with GMs. So, HR was in the dark too and that is why people eventually went to the chairman" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"It was announced in 2011 when the big organisation chart was ready. It was inducted through the different general managers and they were made responsible to percolate down to all employees. But the whole process was not effective. There were mixed messages. That is why you still have employees who fail to understand why these changes happened and why some benefited and some didn't. In their minds, they see that they haven't benefited and that feeling of dissatisfaction still goes on until today ..." GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"People did not know what was going on. There were not many rumours but nobody really knew what was happening. You see, it was never announced at once to all the staff. We depended on senior managers to communicate with their staff. But our GMs don't communicate as required. Many employees come to us [i.e. HR] and we tell them your GM knows about this. So, lack of communication is a major problem here but mind you, it is deliberate. We do know that GMs don't communicate enough but somehow, we don't do anything about it. So overall, we were not good at communicating with the staff. We did it very badly ... The restructuring is done. The end wasn't announced but again we don't announce anything to the staff, so ... It is considered finished because there is no end, there is no follow up. There are still a lot of complaints about the new job titles but they have just been ignored. So, by default, you know that it is done and nothing will be addressed."</i> Senior manager</p> <p><i>"GMs were updated and they sat with the managers below them and told them what was going to happen and how. But, this information was not shared to all staff. In our portal we used to be updated on who is new to the organisation, some sort of welcoming messages for new employees. That's it. The company wasn't telling us that we are changing for this reason and we are doing this and that. No, there were no updates on the change for us" Supervisor</i></p> <p><i>"Nobody was clear about anything. The managers weren't saying much. You would hear, maybe, I don't know, they didn't tell us, find out by yourself and things like that. So, no, there was no good communication" Non-manager 3</i></p>
Lack of employee involvement and attention to people's issues	<p><i>"The chairman discussed the restructuring with GMs only and what was discussed was to remain confidential. Initially, no other managers below GMs were involved. So, the whole planning was kept between two or three top levels only and the final say came from the board. Also, many changes were made to the plan without consulting the GMs and that backfired later when they were asked to implement the structure. It could have been done better ... The whole thing was then put in the hands of GMs. They did not represent their divisions well. I wish there was more involvement from the beginning ... They have basically been ignoring people and it made people disgruntled, the existing staff mainly"</i> GM1</p> <p><i>"They just decided on it and did it. They planned and suddenly imposed it on people ... We have been very bad at engaging people; we are still not good at it ... The structure was done by the consultants, the GMs and the board behind closed doors. It was never announced to the staff. It was just given to the GMs to work on it. We [i.e. HR department] worked with them in preparing the job descriptions and the GMs signed them. Staff were still not involved. Even allocating staff to new positions was done behind closed doors. We had our HR representative and they spoke to the departments. It was kind of an overnight thing. So, all that happened and then we said, okay guys, it's done! But when people came to implement it, it was new to them and it led to screaming and shouting ... It was clear that even the GMs were not engaged enough because when it came to implement, they suddenly didn't like it and debated against it. So suddenly, everybody got up and said, we don't like the new job titles and we don't like this and that and so forth ... What resulted at the end was sort of a structure of what the top level wanted and people at the bottom wanted ... There were many complaints and there is a process here for complaints. I personally complained but nothing happens. Ignoring complaints is done intentionally here. It is a strategy to avoid escalation of things. We just pretend that problems don't exist and there you go. It is done and dusted, get on with it! We like to think that it was the better way to handle things. We were mindful of the Arab Spring, you see" Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>"Lower management and their subordinates did not have any role in these changes. The GMs gave their inputs to the consultants and then the consultant designed the structure and the board approved it. Then they told the GMs to implement it. So, it was all done by them. They didn't know what people wanted and when they were implementing, people were not happy. There were so many complaints. Some could be addressed but others no. People do still complain and to some extent they know that complaining will not make any difference and there is this you either put up with it or you get another job kind of feeling" Supervisor</i></p> <p><i>"The restructuring raised people's expectations. People felt that this change is going to get them something more than what they are getting. I had that feeling too. But top managers didn't involve people so they didn't really know what people were thinking and what they were waiting for. People expected better jobs and higher salaries. Well, the reality is different, I mean what happened. It puts you off but you learn that change does not always mean a better position or monetary change" Non-manager 2</i></p>

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<p>Career stagnation and resignations/Turnover</p>	<p><i>"We still have unresolved issues specially with the older staff. They feel that they haven't received their rights. They got stuck in jobs with the same salaries for years and when the company decided to restructure and add new and better jobs, they believed they should benefit from them. But many of them did not really benefit from the changes. They had this expectation that the organisation is getting better positions and so I too shall get a better position. So many complained, some got what they wanted and some didn't. Some left and some remained and their issues are not solved until today"</i> GM 1.</p> <p><i>"There is a lot of attrition to the retention of these people. These people get trained, the company spends a lot of money and they leave. Not only in Oman, they join regional organisations. A lot of poaching takes place. Our neighbours, if they want trained people whom they don't have to spend a lot of money on, they just have to poach the guy. They say how much are you getting? I am getting 2000 Omani Riyals. Okay, here is 3000 and come. So, people move. The movement of labour is not controlled, it is easy. So, this is the thing. There is no sense of belongingness. That culture is missing and it is a challenge country wide. I suppose all organisations are going through the same issue. So, turnover is an issue here"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"We have unhappy employees here. Some resign, some strike and stay. Strikes are illegal in this sector but employees have done slow-downs and no show-ups ... About ten talented employees left. It's not a high number but we lost them. The ones who knew that they could not get a better deal elsewhere stayed. We didn't lose any GMs although some were not happy with their new titles ..."</i> Senior manager</p> <p><i>"Most of the people who complained and resigned were old timers, people who have been here for more than ten years. But there were new hirers too. They joined the organisation and they were not satisfied with the way things were done and the way departments were structured. You want to move forward in your position and when you see that there are no opportunities for growth, you leave. So, we have lost quite a lot. The CEO says it's not that bad in the industry. But we are losing experienced people and that is affecting us financially"</i> Supervisor</p> <p><i>"Most of the employees kept their jobs and their salaries did not change. That is why they were not happy and left. They had expected something better. They are always still complaining about their situation. They say, nothing changes for us. Others got better opportunities. It is just the newly hired and those that were sent for training and returned that got better positions and salaries. They got better positions but the rest did not benefit from this change"</i> Non-manager 2</p>
<p>New facility project delays</p>	<p><i>"People are disturbed. They have new titles and new job descriptions but they are still performing their old jobs and getting their old salaries. They were told that once you move to the new facility and perform the new role, your salary package is going to be significantly different. But this was not communicated well and it became a big issue today. This doesn't give them hope, it frustrates them. They say you promised me this position with this new salary, this is my new job description, you have trained me, the delays are not caused by me so why I am not getting paid accordingly until today. They have waited for long you know."</i> GM 1</p> <p><i>"In 2007, we were told that we would move to the new facility by 2009. But in 2007, the cyclone caused delays. The whole project design underwent change and the process took time. So, what is happening? The project time is slipping, we have been recruiting since 2012 and onwards and we have been training and paying more salaries. So, the restructuring is done but the staffing isn't done. There are many unfilled positions. Those positions are not filled not because the company doesn't want to fill them but because the new facility project keeps on getting delayed from the government side ... Maybe we will move in 2017 but money has been lost, people have been waiting for years, training is lost because people can't implement what they learnt and they quickly forget. People are getting frustrated too and some are leaving us"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"Implementation was phased because of the project delays. At first, we had two years to recruit and train staff and then move to the new facility. But, there were delays. So, we had to slow down. Then, we had four years to prepare ourselves for the new facility. So, we still haven't filled many positions because we don't need them today but they are in the new structure ... Causes of the delay was bad planning but I also see that project engineering and project management as main causes."</i> Supervisor</p> <p><i>"I applied for a job, I got it, I got trained, I finished my training, and we have been waiting for years now. Every year they say it will be ready next year or after two years and like that. It has taken too long and we are still waiting"</i> Non-manager 1</p>
<p>HR issues: Problems with homing (job titles and job descriptions) Problems with external recruitment (no work experience, Wasta and overstaffing)</p>	<p><i>"The homing process took too long. It had a lot of grievances. A general letter was sent out to staff telling them that they will be moved with no details of when and to which position. This made people worried. What will my new job be? What will my job title be? Will my salary change? Am I going to report to the same manager? Then people were moved to new positions by managers. People were not happy because they didn't know what they had to do. So, later on, another letter was sent out to them detailing the new job description, the new manager and things like that. It wasn't done in a nice way. No, it was a bit chaotic really. We lost track of how things were implemented. It was fast in changing the management structure and bringing new managers. It was very fast. They decided today and the next day it was done. But it was very slow and chaotic with a lot of grievances when they started implementing the levels down mainly because of this homing process. Then came hiring from outside the company. The best thing they did was bring in new blood but the top people overstaffed this place. The numbers they came up with was too much. The previous management would have never accepted this number. Whether it is politics or they want to reduce the numbers of job-seekers in the country, I don't know. I am 100% sure if it was a private company, they would have never agreed to do that"</i> GM 1</p> <p><i>"When recruitment for the new positions started it was intended to be done externally, to tap the general market in the country. So, they announced the job externally. Then somewhere along the line I think some quarters of both management and perhaps the board felt that we must support our own people first and induct them into better positions. So, the new jobs were announced internally and those who felt they could do them applied irrespective of the fact that they had the knowledge or experience. The requirement of relevant work experience was removed to facilitate the process. As for the homing process, they just found out who they felt would fit in a job. People were fit into jobs whether they met the criteria or not. In some departments, people are in positions that they are still not qualified for. All this caused a lot of disgruntled employees. So, these two processes were all loosely done and when things are unstructured, you get wasta. Arabs see it as a social obligation towards your group and if you don't do it then you are not loyal. So that's how the whole thing happens and that is how performances are compromised. You cannot demand much from your group as you could from another individual who is not from your group. This is a big challenge here. So, the whole process was structured this way which was not very healthy. It created a lot of friction. As a result, there is this simmering discontent that keeps simmering. I feel it can be a time bomb and one day it may explode I suppose."</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"It was done quiet badly. The GMs decided on what kind of employees and how many of them were needed and HR worked to see where everybody would fit. GMs informed their staff that people would be moved. So, we migrated people into new jobs but they could not actually deliver. That was quite messy. It was not done well. It was a painful process. We had to home people from existing titles to the new ones that are needed for the new facility. Most people were disappointed because the new titles were rather blind and people felt the titles didn't reflect what they did. Also, people didn't feel that the new titles benefited them. In the beginning, people didn't get job descriptions. We didn't have a policy that said you have to have a job description. People asked what we are supposed to do. So, later on we decided to give people job descriptions. But still there were complaints. Then, departments added their own jobs. There are departments that are operating on a totally different structure to what was agreed. 30% of our staff have jobs titles that don't explain what they do, they just do what their line managers say. We realised what a mess it was. When it came to hiring new people, we knew that we don't have locals with relevant work experience. So, to facilitate hiring Omanis, we were told to remove relevant work experience as a requirement. The need to achieve Omanisation was the reason. So, we hired many fresh graduates and trained them. But, they removed the work experience requirement also to facilitate bringing in people through the back door ... Another problem was that salaries did not change like what people had expected. New salaries were only given to those who joined the new positions and the existing employees that got trained and promoted. So, it was bad. People compared and felt it was unfair. They complained, some got what they wanted, many didn't and some others resigned. Overall, it was not done well. Poor change management"</i> Senior manager</p> <p><i>"People expected that the restructuring would adjust their salaries but it didn't happen. I think that was never the intention of restructuring but people expected it and top managers never cared to know in the first place ..."</i> Supervisor</p> <p><i>"I was not happy with the job title they gave me. They surprised me with it. Just a title without a job description! Imagine? But, then they prepared job descriptions and when I read mine I told them this is not what I was doing and it is not what I want to do. Anyway, I accepted it then and got trained. It is clear to me now. The good thing you know here my sister is they train you, on the job, you can even go and get a college degree here or abroad. My friends went abroad and came back. We really appreciate that. But, we have another problem. You tell me if this is fair or not? We have people who are doing similar jobs but get paid differently. Really, why? There is no answer."</i> Non-manager 4</p>

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Inhibitor	Representative quotes
Characteristics of new generation of employees	<p><i>"You see Misida, these new groups of employees, they don't think like us. They are different. Many are young, connected, fun-loving, ambitious and want things fast. They want good jobs, higher salaries, good work environment to live the life they dream of and if they don't like something, I mean the good ones, they leave you. They have no problem to do that. Now, some of the top people don't think like that. They don't pay attention to these things or don't consider them. So, then you have plans and decisions that contradict with the reality of these new employees ... There is a generation gap, yes."</i> GM 1</p> <p><i>"When I came in here in XXX, I had no industry experience. But I quickly learnt because I wanted to learn. This attitude of inquisitiveness or learning I find is missing in the younger generation. So, they exist but don't really exist. This is how I see it. I blame individuals because it is really their attitude and this sense of being entitled that I see across even outside the company is growing. This is a very big concern. Another problem here is people don't take training seriously. They see it as an opportunity to travel around the world. It's quite a challenge."</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"Employees have changed now, it's not like before. They are not like employees of the 70s and 80s. But, many people in the top even in the government they still think in old ways if you know what I mean."</i> Supervisor</p> <p><i>"We all want good jobs, don't you? I mean a good salary to live a good life. Everything is expensive now. You can't achieve your dreams without money. Getting stuck in one job is like stopping your life from advancement. The talented employees leave. You know all the big companies are competing for talented Omanis so it is easy for them. But some like to stay, they like the work environment here or they want stability or they can't find another job. They all have ambitions, they all want something better as time goes"</i> Non-manager 2</p>
Low competency levels of many managers and non-managers employees	<p><i>"We don't have sufficient managers or non-managers with the right set of experience or knowledge here. They bring in managers from the public sector who have no idea about the industry and we have to keep on hiring fresh graduates just to give them jobs. That is a very expensive strategy. It takes time and performance suffers"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"Many of our employees are not qualified for their jobs. They were hired to be trained and made qualified. They need time to learn and master their work."</i> Supervisor</p>
Lack of evaluation and learning	<p><i>"No evaluation whatsoever took place here. If they evaluated they would have got a lot of feedback from the staff and even the managers. That would have prompted them to solve issues. But there was nothing like that. Whatever was there was there"</i> GM 1</p> <p><i>"There is no intention to learn here. I don't think we want to learn a lesson. We don't have that assessment of what went wrong and how could we do it better next time ... so we never evaluated it. We went to the board and we said its done, we have restructured. The board agreed and that is it. We just did it and we considered it successful and tick! That was it! There are a lot of complaints and they have just been ignored. So, by default you know that it is done and nothing will be followed up and addressed ... It could have been done properly but there was no accountability, no evaluation and no intention to learn and improve and it seems that nobody among them realises that this is the case"</i> Senior manager</p> <p><i>"Our senior managers meet every week to discuss the issues they face. But, I have never heard of any evaluation of the change process or the structure. The only evaluation they did was finding out if they needed to hire now or in the next year, in two years or after we move to the new facility?"</i> Supervisor</p>
Heavy reliance on consultants	<p><i>The structure was done by the consultants because they had the expertise and knowledge of how bigger facilities are run effectively. It got buying from the board and then was given to the GMs to implement ... The unfortunate part is the GMs were not very involved in developing the new structure and the whole thing was planned by a company that is not Omani oriented. They were unaware of the Omani culture ..."</i> GM 1</p> <p><i>"When a consultant walks in, he doesn't know your business. I am not opposing consultancy but I feel that if certain tasks are done by qualified employees within the organisation then they will be faster, properly structured and tailor-made for the organisation because this person understands all the internal and external realities ... Unfortunately, in this part of the world, there is a lot of reliance on consultants. There are qualified locals and expats but the thinking is that it will be better if it comes from a consultant. This is a wrong assumption. If some studies are done by internal experts, they will get better results. But that thinking is missing and a lot of money has been spent on consultants, a lot of management time taken by the consultants and all have gone to waste. A lot of little projects are going on now and they are done by consultants but they are just a waste, a lot of waste"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"The consultants did the structure; the GMs only gave their inputs"</i> Senior manager</p>

R2 Summary and Concluding Remarks

The within-case analysis of R1 showed that there were three main forces that led to the restructuring and the change process passed through five phases and there were nine facilitators and fourteen inhibitors. The facilitators and inhibitors were categorised under three main areas. Please see the table for a summary of R2 findings.

R2 Forces	R2 Phases	R2 Facilitators	R2 Inhibitors
Government expansion project Career stagnation New chairman	Antecedents, New Chairman and decision to change Planning the New Management Structure, Nation-Wide Work-Related Demonstrations and CEO resignation Announcing the Board Approval, Hiring Top Managers, Top -Level Internal Planning for the Whole Organisation Implementing and HR Interventions HR Interventions, New CEO and Incremental Changes	Decision makers and change agents: Role of the chairman The new CEO Role of the consultant People and HRM: Low resistance and positive expectations for change The Omani' culture: friendly, optimistic, hospitable and quick adaptation New job descriptions, training opportunities and new salaries External recruitment: New hirers accepted and supported the change Change Management: Increased caution over managing people The ability of departments to add new jobs and titles	Decision makers and change agents: Absence of change leadership – lack of a vision and unity of direction Board interference, politics and incompetence - making changes with the consultant without discussing with the GMs Incompetent and highly political GMs (management styles and change management) Heavy reliance on consultants People and HRM: Career stagnation, resignations Characteristics of new generation of employees Low competency of many managers and non-managers Problems with homing (job titles and job descriptions) Problems with external recruitment (no work experience, Wasta and overstaffing) Change management: Ineffective planning and management Lack of communication and transparency Lack of employee involvement and attention to people's issues New facility project delays Lack of evaluation and learning Lack of post-change people integration

All in all, the analysis of R2 showed that despite the new structure was put in place, this change had various unresolved issues:

1. The old and the new employees were not integrated after the change
2. Career stagnation, that was identified as one of the main causes of the change, was not resolved
3. The company became overstaffed
4. There were many resignations among the old staff and the new due to lack of career paths
5. Employees resorted once to slow-downs and no-show ups after the restructuring

APPENDIX 12

Cluster I Cases: Quotes, Codes and Themes

The purpose of this appendix is to offer the reader supporting data on the major codes and themes identified in cluster I cases. Due to word limit restrictions in theses, it was not possible to attach all the manual coding work that was done on each interview and each case. With R2 described and analysed in detail in appendix “R2 Case Analysis-A Restructuring for Managing an Expanded Government Facility and for Addressing Career Stagnation”, the following tables present quotes, codes and themes of R1 and M3 on the forces and influencers of change in each case.

Forces of change in R1:

Interview Quotes	Code/Theme	Researcher's Interpretive Summary
<p><i>“When I joined the company, I found people questioning and complaining why some departments were in some divisions and why support functions were not separate from core functions. I also found that in some divisions, both HODs and Senior managers were reporting to GMs and some were reporting directly to the CEO. There were also differences in numbers of staff and distribution of the workload and many frustrations and conflicts between support and core functions...” The CEO</i></p> <p><i>“We restructured to properly distribute the workload and put the right people in the right places ... So, at first, we wanted to reorganise to address our structural and people issues but we had to revise our plan and restructure for growth and expansion.” General manager 1</i></p> <p><i>“I would say, the main cause of this change was our need to address inefficiencies in the structure. But when the growth plan came, it pushed us to revise the structure further and prepare for an expansion ... the government's return on investment was low because we didn't have the right infrastructure to generate a high income and internally we had issues. Our staff were expensive because they had to be trained and qualified for their jobs. But we had to find ways to breakeven” General manager 2</i></p> <p><i>“We had to reorganise due to our growth plan ... But [also] there was no smooth flow of people and people could not progress; they stagnated in their jobs. This, I believe is another main reason” Senior manager 1</i></p> <p><i>“The company restructured to grow and to bring efficiency and profitability ... Also, there were no career paths, no growth, no promotions, no salary increases. Employees kept on saying that they have been in their jobs for too long and they needed promotions” Senior manager 2</i></p> <p><i>“The cause was really that people stagnated and something had to be done. We didn't have any career paths. It is still a company-wide issue. You hear this in all divisions and departments ... It is a simmering issue here. People stagnated for years and something had to be done ... Many employees left the company because they could not move to higher positions. Others have been waiting and hoping” Supervisor</i></p> <p><i>“I think it was about people capability and their advancement.” Non-manager 1</i></p> <p><i>“I don't know why they did the restructuring. We were just told that there would be new positions and better opportunities so we looked forward to it” Non-manager 2.</i></p> <p><i>“I am really not sure why the company restructured. They never told us why. It has been about three years and we still haven't even seen the whole structure. So, I don't know.” Non-manager 3</i></p> <p><i>“I am not sure why they restructured. It could be because they wanted to offer better opportunities to the youth.” Non-manager 4</i></p>	<p>New CEO</p> <p>Problems with the organisational structure</p> <p>Problems with the structure</p> <p>Problems with the structure</p> <p>People issues</p> <p>Government expansion plan</p> <p>Growth plan</p> <p>Problems with the structure</p> <p>People stagnated in jobs</p> <p>People stagnated in jobs</p>	<p>These quotes together show that the company underwent a major restructuring due to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problems in its structure 2. Many complaints around career stagnation 3. Government plan to expand the business 4. New CEO

Change Facilitators in R1

Major codes/Themes	Representative Quotes
New CEO	<p><i>"There was a need yes, but this change wouldn't have happened if the CEO had not listened to the GMs. He was open to change and he wanted to improve the company. So, the willingness was there from him. HR was doing small reorganisations every year so this CEO when he came he said no, we need to do a major restructuring and fine tune as we go. So, he talked to the board and they agreed."</i> GM 1</p> <p><i>"I believe the CEO felt that we had to change the company and he wanted to do this. There were many complaints ..."</i> Non-manager 1</p>
A felt internal need	<p><i>"When I joined the company, I found the structure was not solid and people were questioning and complaining. ... We had many structural inefficiencies ... We had to correct the structure ... The government was also pressuring us to breakeven and generate profits"</i> CEO</p> <p><i>"When I joined, I felt that the structure was not suitable for operating efficiently. Every day we had to modify something. We had to change it to have clear core and support functions and ensure cooperation and teamworking ..."</i> GM 2</p>
Government and board support	<p><i>"The board helped us. They never slowed us down. They just wanted to see a structure that would work, that would deliver the company's goals. They also wanted to make sure about the financial implications and they were also looking not to upset people while doing this"</i> CEO</p> <p><i>"The board was always supporting us in this"</i> GM 2</p>
Role of the consultant	<p><i>"The consultant brought their experience on structuring in different sectors. They brought us the best practices. We had terms of agreements and people had wish lists. GMs worked closely with the consultant and some of them couldn't face issues and they used the consultant and me to say no to their HoDs. Some managers wanted the bigger piece of the cake. They wanted so many people to report to them. The consultant did an excellent job pushing back and saying no to these unrealistic demands"</i> CEO</p> <p><i>"The consultants were patient and listened to everybody. They met people at all levels even non-managers. They did not impose a structure"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"The consultant engaged people and did their job on time"</i> Senior manager 1</p>
Promise of no job loss or salary deduction	<p><i>"The CEO instructed that no one should be negatively affected by the change"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"The good thing was that it was promised but also automatically known that no one would lose their job and that assured people"</i> Senior manager 1</p>
Employee expectations and motivation	<p><i>"Everybody thought that they were going to be promoted. They were excited and motivated. That was their mental frame."</i> Senior manager 1</p> <p><i>"People were expecting something better and they are still expecting"</i> supervisor 1</p>
Very low resistance	<p><i>"People don't like change especially when you move them horizontally. But resistance was very low."</i> CEO</p> <p><i>"Resistance was there. There are always people saying no. But it wasn't a major issue"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"People did not resist this change. There were some complaints but nothing major"</i> Senior manager 1</p>
Internal recruitment	<p><i>"We were fully transparent in staffing"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"People are motivated by our internal recruitment, it gave them opportunities"</i> Senior manager 1</p> <p><i>"It was a good thing because it gave us a chance to move to better jobs. We saw it as an opportunity"</i> Non-manager 3</p>
Training and development opportunities	<p><i>"We have an excellent reputation in developing people. We spend a lot of money on that. Our people are well trained and the market outside is increasingly looking for talented locals"</i> GM 1</p> <p><i>"We encourage and financially support each employee to get qualifications. Competency is key if you want to get promoted. This gave people means and opportunities"</i> Senior manager 1</p> <p><i>"The good thing here is they train you for your job. Every employee can get training. This is a very good thing."</i> Non-manager 2</p>
People's humour, hope and quick adaptation	<p><i>"Since the time they announced the decision to restructure until today, that is more than three or about four years, we haven't been shown the whole organisation chart. We joke about it nowadays. You know the Omani culture. When others ask about your position, you say 'I am still waiting for the new structure'. Ha ha ha! You see, people adapted quickly. They are optimistic. I think today many don't want to move. They prefer to wait"</i> Supervisor 1</p> <p><i>"After all that happened, people still have hope here ... We laugh at each other when someone says I am still waiting to see the new structure!"</i> Non-manager 1</p> <p><i>"We are disturbed but we remain positive. We still hope for the better. We really like the company's work environment but as I said, one cannot wait forever. I truly hope for the better"</i> Non-manager 3</p> <p><i>"We trust our direct manager and the work environment is like a family. We know each other and cooperate. But many people are not happy. I have hope that good changes will happen"</i> Non-manager 4</p>

Change Inhibitors in R1

Major codes/Themes	Representative quotes
Lack of change leadership – lack of a vision and direction	<p><i>“I told GMs you are responsible for your division. Follow what you feel will work. The way I work is through delegation. I delegate authorities and responsibilities to people. I don't want to make it too centralised. I think each GM should be fully responsible and not just propose. Once we agree then you are fully responsible to deliver and that was my expectation. That is why I was not getting involved. But democracy doesn't work all the times. You have to be a dictator a times to get things moving” CEO</i></p> <p><i>“GMs should work more and more together towards the company's goals. The CEO spends a lot of time on details to make people work together but I think this idea is still missing. His ways are not creating that unity that he wants. Everybody wants to have everything in their division and that is not the right way. We are related and we have to support and complete each other not compete with each other. This is an area that needs to be stressed. It is still not well understood. The training centre should design programs on how to achieve this” GM 2</i></p> <p><i>“Our leader focuses more on operational mundane issues rather than the strategic level issues. Look at the companies that changed and succeeded. It is mainly because of leadership. We lack that here ... We have the structure, the processes, people are working but if the leader cannot support all this then you have a big problem” Senior manager 2</i></p> <p><i>“The leadership is not proper” Supervisor 1</i></p> <p><i>“I believe everything was in the hands of the general managers. The CEO was not leading this change. The GMs had full control and every GM did it their way. This is how I saw it” Non-manager 2</i></p>
CEO's personality and management style	<p><i>“I don't think there was a single person who made the decision to change; we were all in this” CEO</i></p> <p><i>“The CEO doesn't use his powers. He doesn't like making decisions by himself. He likes going back to the board for opinion. He should use his powers.” Senior manager 2</i></p>
Incompetent board members	<p><i>“Our decision making was very slow because we have incompetent people at the top” GM 2</i></p> <p><i>“We don't have an effective governance structure. People who make it to the board as decision makers are not competent enough. That is one of the most unfortunate things we face. Board members must be competent to make the right decisions. They must be trained and qualified otherwise they slow these companies down” Senior manager 1</i></p>
Incompetent and very political GMs (change managers)	<p><i>“Not all members of the leadership team have the same competency level. Also, there are conflicts and disagreements between them. When some ideas are challenged, it becomes personal conflict. It shouldn't be like this. I am trying to change it” CEO</i></p> <p><i>“We have two groups that are not communicating due to interferences and work conflicts. The CEO spends a lot of time trying to address these conflicts. Majority of our meeting time goes to arguments. This is an area that GMs need to solve and the company needs to address” GM 2</i></p> <p><i>“We have a lot of politics here due to incompetent GMs coming from the government sector. It is a bit demotivating. They suddenly stop all that you do. They break rules and are too political but they are an exception. When you employ incompetent decision makers through Wasta, you end up with people whose priority is to hire their nieces and nephews and cover up for others ... These people at the top are out of context. They have a different set of assumptions on how to manage and they like reminding you about their power rather than talk about the real issues we face. My advice is do not rely on incompetent GMs to implement major change. They get too political and frustrate everyone” Senior manager 1</i></p> <p><i>“The top level has problems. You see, some of our GMs are incompetent. They took too long to justify why they needed so many new employees in their divisions. They were challenged by HR and the CEO. They simply couldn't do it. So, we actually don't have a cohesive top management team. One is we have incompetent people at the top. Two, there is a lot of infighting. The GMs and other managers have many disagreements and conflicts” Senior manager 2</i></p>
Ineffective planning	<p><i>“I told GMs to follow what you feel will work and we fine-tuned as we moved. ... we anticipated that people would have expectations. We did mention these in different discussions with GMs and whoever we were meeting with. But we didn't talk to people at the lower levels about their expectations. It was left to the GMs to sort out these expectations ... it was also expected that the HR consultant would advise and train GMs on the how to manage the people side. I think ... I think they have done it to a certain extent” CEO</i></p> <p><i>“Planning and implementation slowed us due to conflicts and people's issues”. GM 1</i></p> <p><i>“Change is not about planning and implementing structures and policies. Change is about people, how they think and behave. We have got people issues here but no plans!” Senior manager 1</i></p> <p><i>“This change was not planned well or not even managed well. I mean we didn't even have a change management team or some specific project team. Every GM was doing things in their own way” Senior manager 2</i></p> <p><i>“They didn't manage this change well. Maybe because they didn't talk to people. They wanted to do it all by themselves. Yes, we don't have their knowledge and skills but we could have given ideas about our level. We could have told them what is important to us or what we think will work” Non-manager 2</i></p>

<p>Table continued...</p> <p>Lack of communication and transparency</p>	<p><i>"I don't think we thought about centralising communication. The thinking was that each GM would be fully responsible for his/her division. So, I cannot give you one specific date because there were different communications that said we are going through a restructuring. Nothing remains hidden you see. It went from GMs to senior managers to heads to supervisors and the rest of the staff. So, there was always passing of information and GMs have their monthly meetings with their staff so there should be information sharing in there too. We did not get everybody in one room to say we are going to restructure. I don't think that happened. We did not get involved in that kind of communication. But there were emails sent by managers to their staff. So, there was no formal announcement to everyone but people got the message. They had different levels of information on the restructuring. This is what I am aware of ... I don't know what the GMs face. You see, not everything comes to me. They don't report everything"</i> CEO</p> <p><i>"This is how we communicated. When we discussed anything at the managerial level in our monthly meetings, we requested the managers to cascade this to the staff below them so that everyone would be aware. So, from the executive team, GMs would tell their senior managers who would tell their HODs, heads to supervisors, supervisors to technicians and so on. This is how we communicated besides the weekly meetings divisions they have with their GMs and the general messages shared in the portal"</i> GM 1</p> <p><i>"We were not communicating with the people. This change was like a confidential project which top managers were not supposed to talk about"</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"The restructuring was not shared due to an outdated HRIS. Each manager announced it within their departments."</i> Senior Manager 1</p> <p><i>"Regular communication to the rest of the company was missing. We could have done much better in terms of updating people. Our boss has got a completely wrong understanding of what effective communication is. Getting together, showing up for meetings and visiting facilities is not communication. Employees want to talk and be listened to. They want to know what, why, why not, how, when, what if. Our portal messages, yearly get-togethers, weekly meetings with GMs and top management visits are all not achieving communication"</i> Senior manager 2</p> <p><i>"There were a lot of unanswered questions and many rumours spread. There were a lot of gossips and stories in the corridors. When we had problems or concerns, we first went to our managers. If they couldn't address them or did not address them, we went up to HR. But, one of the bad things here is our HR department. They are not clear ... People even went to GMs. But, there is a lot of ambiguity with the top. Nothing clear comes from them"</i> Supervisor 1</p> <p><i>"There is no transparency here. How could they design a new structure without our knowledge?!"</i> Non-manager 1</p> <p><i>"The company didn't inform us about the restructuring in an official way. They did it internally through managers ... Managers sent us emails and told us that we will restructure and jobs will change. They said people would get opportunities to grow, to move from one level to another. That's what they said."</i> Non-manager 2</p> <p><i>"It has been more than THREE years and we haven't seen the new structure. There was a time when the company used to send us the new structure in the portal. We could all see it and we could plan for our progression. The vacancies and their requirements were clear. Now, there is nothing like that. Nothing is clear."</i> Non-manager 4</p>
<p>Lack of employee involvement</p>	<p><i>"Well, I don't know at what point people were involved. The board said please make sure that your people are involved. But, I personally feel that you don't need to involve everybody if there is no impact on them. People should not be involved in everything. You just create turbulence, that's what I believe. If you involve them they will slow you down and take advantage. They will bring obstacles rather than support. So not all people were involved. People whose jobs were not affected, they were not involved. But it was up to the GMs to what extent they wanted to do this. They were the focal points and they involved their senior managers and some HODs. So, people who got affected, they were fully involved but I don't know if GMs involved the last person on the floor level"</i> CEO</p> <p><i>"It was planned not to involve those who would not be affected by the change."</i> GM 2</p> <p><i>"HR created working committees of managers from each division to meet the consultant. The whole point was that these managers would cascade the information downwards"</i> Senior manager 1</p> <p><i>"People were involved in company-wide meetings once a year. But people's concerns were addressed in weekly/monthly meetings with their division managers"</i> Senior manager 2</p> <p><i>"It was good that the change was left between managers and their subordinates but managers never involved staff in planning the restructuring. Some GMs and HoDs don't want to involve their staff just to show that they are fully aware of their work areas and can control everything. But, even when it happens, the inputs that managers take from us, they don't consider it. It is obvious."</i> Supervisor 1</p>
<p>Lack of concurrent and feedback control and overall evaluation</p>	<p><i>"We haven't evaluated the change. That exercise needs to be done at some point. Your question has made me think about that"</i> CEO</p> <p><i>"This change hasn't been evaluated. We cannot be sure of the actual outcomes of all that we have done so far."</i> Senior manager 1</p> <p><i>"The question of evaluating the change never came up from top managers"</i> Senior manager 2</p>

<p>Table continued</p> <p>Very slow</p>	<p><i>"We wanted to do this faster but it took longer. There are so many factors that slowed us. It is difficult to pinpoint one. People's expectations and we didn't have a team dedicated to the restructuring. HR was doing it but they were also doing other work. We should have done this in six to nine months but we had a lot of arguments with GMs and other managers on adding staff ... Some heads and GMs could not justify objectively why they needed more staff. They had to prove it on paper and that was a challenge to them. Some wanted more staff just to have less work ... There were a lot of issues with managers. The board did not slow us ... Like any board, they were looking for a couple of things. One is okay this will deliver. The structure, will it deliver the company's goals? So that's one. They were also looking not to upset people while doing this. They also wanted to make sure that there were no financial implications. They didn't want to incur huge costs. So, we had to go back and re-plan a couple of times to minimise cost and get approval from the board. So, we took long because we had a lot of arguments on additional staff ... Implementation was too long also" CEO</i></p> <p><i>"Staff number was the main issue that slowed us down. Every GM wanted more staff. The CEO had to interfere just to control the numbers of staff. The planning sessions were too long. It took time for the consultant to finalise the plan" GM2</i></p> <p><i>"While we were planning, there was a change in the board. The chairman changed and majority of the members. It was bad luck for us because all of a sudden you have a new team. They said oh we don't know what you are doing, we need to know exactly what this is and so forth. But it also gave us a chance to be more aware of why we were doing this" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"The second level of restructuring took long because of so many reasons. The internal disagreements, the additional 100 staff that we hired to help the government reduce unemployment after the 2011 demonstrations. So, we brought them in while planning and then there is the change in board members and the government expansion decision" Senior manager 1</i></p> <p><i>"People waited for very long ... I think over here, there is no sense of urgency. We are sort of cushioned" Senior manager 2</i></p> <p><i>"There was a very long gap between announcing the structure for the first time and implementing it." Supervisor 1</i></p> <p><i>"When we asked our managers why the delays, they told us the board has not agreed on some things and we need to revise our plans. They have been procrastinating. This is procrastination for YEARS. We asked the GMs too and they say we too are waiting for an answer" Non-manager 1</i></p>
<p>People's work attitudes and unmet expectations</p>	<p><i>"We knew people had expectations and we discussed these with the GMs and managers but not the people themselves. It was left to the GMs to sort out those expectations" CEO</i></p> <p><i>"People are not delivering as they should. It is a problem with their attitude towards work. They come to work not to work but to chat and spend time with others. They are too relaxed like as if they have nothing to get done and they expect a salary just for showing up. We are assessing competency levels and offering a lot of courses to change people's behaviours but I don't think it is that effective until now" CEO</i></p> <p><i>"HR evaluates staff satisfaction every two years. I think we didn't do this last year because staff were very depressed because their hopes and expectations were not met" GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"Managers knew about people's expectations and we addressed these in the yearly get-together meeting. It was after announcing the new management structure" Senior manager 2</i></p> <p><i>"The new generation of employees is very different. They are very ambitious, impatient and not loyal. They change jobs frequently and they highly value salaries and job titles. It is a worldwide phenomenon and we can see it here. That is why we have a promotion problem – it is so important to them. This is something we need to work on – how we can attract and retain them ... People here think of training as traveling abroad and career growth as a move to a higher position. We want them to develop themselves locally and become experts in what they do. We want them to grow horizontally. But that is not what they want or expect. They believe they must be promoted based on how many years they have been on the job and not based on their competencies. It is about developing oneself and progression and growth based on competencies and not years of service" Senior manager 1</i></p> <p><i>"Some managers gave people false hopes and expectations for promotions and better salary grades. They said you might get promoted and get a better salary grade. People waited and they waited for very long but their expectations were not met so they resigned" Supervisor 1</i></p> <p><i>What we don't like about the restructuring is we can't see a career path. So, there is no growth. There is no clarity about the future, where you will be, what you will get. You can't become a senior in your area and you can't get promoted until the person leaves. Even if they leave, you have to compete with internal and external candidates for the position. This happens even if you were acting for that position and you did well. Then there is the issue of salary increases. So, still there are too many things that need to be solved here. Employees are not happy but they have a good sense of humour and that helps them" Non-manager 2</i></p>

Table continued on next page

Career stagnation	<p><i>"We have a turnover problem because people cannot move to higher positions" GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"If you look at the structure, you will find that majority of the people are at the bottom and the chances of moving upwards are very few. It is like a pyramid. When staff see that they don't have opportunities for growth, they apply to work outside and they quickly get jobs. We have opportunities for horizontal moves but people don't see these as attractive" GM 1</i></p> <p><i>"Employees say they have been in their jobs for too long and need promotions. They say they thought the structure would help them" Senior manager 1</i></p> <p><i>People have been in the same jobs for almost ten years with no opportunity to grow. You either transfer to another department or remain in your position. ... You would get stuck in your position until the position became vacant or until a new position is created ... Talented people left. A very bright employee left our department and then four others followed him. The GMs keep on saying soon you will get what you want. But, we haven't seen anything so far." Supervisor 1</i></p> <p><i>"It took too long and it isn't clear until today. We haven't seen anything We want to know what jobs are available. There are employees whose grades are stopped. Many employees got their bachelors' degrees and others got their masters but no change in grades! Until when? There is no career progression! Career paths are not there!" Non-manager 4</i></p>
Social comparisons and perceived inequities	<p><i>"Some people are not happy because of comparisons. She got promoted and I didn't. Others have company benefits as number one. It is all about personal gains. People compare and put that in an equation and that was demotivating them. It makes them feel worse off and unhappy." CEO</i></p> <p><i>"Everybody here compares. When something happens, we remember in the past it wasn't like this. We see what happened to our colleagues and what happened to us. We see what is happening in other divisions and departments. Also, we talk about our friends who left. Are they happier? What have they got? This is normal. People compare" Non-manager 2</i></p>
High voluntary turnover (resignations)	<p><i>"There was an increase in staff turnover because they were disappointed. But also, there is a lot of competition in the market for qualified staff. Many talented people left for better salaries" CEO</i></p> <p><i>"Last year, we lost many talented people to other organisations. Now, we are losing employees to other departments or divisions. Turnover is an issue here" GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"Many people resigned because of the long waiting and they didn't get what they expected" Senior manager 2</i></p> <p><i>"Several people have resigned so far due to the delays and lack of career growth. When our staff see that they have the qualification but don't have the opportunity for growth they apply elsewhere and quickly get jobs" Senior Manager 1</i></p> <p><i>"There are many resignations. In the past, when someone resigned, it was news. We would be surprised and ask why. Now, resigning is a norm. you will find three to four staff resigning every month. It is a big waste because they got trained and qualified and then they leave. It hurts us to see that the best is leaving. HR doesn't even know how to convince them to stay" Non-manager 2</i></p> <p><i>"We have waited for too long. We are stuck in our jobs. All that they do is increase our tasks time after time without any additional pay. As a result, resignations are a norm and we have lost many talented employees." Non-manager 4</i></p>
Role of the consultant	<p><i>"The HR consultants were supposed to advise and train GMs on how to handle the people side. I think they did it to a certain extent" CEO</i></p> <p><i>"The consultant took very long to finalise their work" GM 2</i></p> <p><i>"The consultant came without any knowledge of our culture. We had to guide them on what would work and what would not" Senior manager 1</i></p> <p><i>"Consultants met some of the employees. But when you see the results of their work you know that they didn't take the concerns and suggestions into consideration. There is a big difference between what they recommended and what we wanted and said. We didn't see anything that we had suggested" Non-manager 2</i></p>

The next tables, present the quotes and codes of M2 around forces and influencers of change.

Forces of Change in M2

Major Code/Theme	Interview Quotes
Entrance of a new competitor	<i>"They did this for competition. The main concern was our market share. The competitor was going to take our market share and so we needed to prepare"</i> non-manager
	<i>"This merger happened based on competitive and strategic reasons. We were facing new competition and we had very powerful individuals who were pushing for this change at the top levels"</i> Senior manager
	<i>"a new competitor was going to enter the market. They were going to compete with this in all areas. The top managers wanted to have one single unified organisation that can provide all the services under one roof rather than via two separate organisations"</i> General Manager
	<i>"they decided to merge the two businesses because their competitor was going to compete with them in all area. That was the main reason"</i> Senior manager
	<i>"We had to do this and prepare for competition. But in a way, all the government businesses have been changing too..."</i> Senior manager
	<i>"The main cause of the merger is the competitor. They became a threat to both the parent company and the subsidiary"</i> CEO

Change Facilitators in M2

Major code/Theme	Interview Quotes
New CEO during the merger and his leadership style Government and board strong support for change Role of the consultant	<i>"the whole secret of this change is about having an inspiring visionary leader"</i> Senior manager <i>"the leadership made this merger a success. People got over the challenges very quickly"</i> Non-manager <i>"As you know this is a very very important business for the government. The change got strong support from the government and the board..."</i> GM <i>Involving the consultant was good. It brought different views. We needed to contain this..."</i> Senior manager
A felt internal need within the parent company to merge and compete Selection: External members in panel interviews added fairness to the selection process Job descriptions: Post-merger job descriptions added clarity to work roles Salaries: Post-merger and post-strike salaries and benefits increased calmed employees Employees' patriotism and doing it for the country People's friendliness, humour and quick adaptation Post-merger employees' felt need to learn and master new jobs	<i>"there was a need at the very top level. They really felt it that we had to work and compete as an integrated service provider not as two separate companies"</i> GM <i>"when we went for interviews and saw panels of individuals form different departments, that made the process feel fair, not biased"</i> Non-manager <i>"you know when you move to a new job, you kind of feel lost. You don't have sufficient information about the job, right? You don't know if you'll be able to do it well or not. You worry especially if there is no position description. After the merger, they gave us our job descriptions. Jobs are so much clearer."</i> Team leader <i>"There was so much agitation. People had waited for so long and got angry. But, the salary increases really really helped calm them down"</i> Senior manager <i>"people adapted very quickly to this change. There is fun at work. We have friendly talks and you know Omanis, we enjoy chatting and laughing. So, they quickly adapted. I think it's the culture here in Oman. But also, I think it's the effect our Sultan has on us. He's our role model. We all work hard toward one goal and we know we are doing this for our country. That helped..."</i> Non-manager <i>"People wanted to learn. They felt the need and they had the willingness and that helped a lot"</i> Senior manager
Assurance of no job loss or salary reduction before the merger Better communication, unity of direction and employee engagement after the merger with the new CEO Moving to a new building signalled a new beginning for employees	<i>"when you know you are not going to lose anything, that gives you comfort first and then confidence to stay"</i> Non-manager <i>"the engagement program after the merger was so active. They brought in motivational speakers. It just created energy and a sense of unity and purpose"</i> Senior manager <i>"we had this talk of we took over you, we are the winners and like that. Some people felt they were the losers. But when we moved to this building and the CEO kept on saying we are one, we are one. It quickly made us focus on the new order of things. The new building was a new beginning to be honest."</i>

Change Inhibitors in M2

Major Code/Theme	Interview Quotes
<p>First CEO lack of change leadership</p> <p>Board members' interference and view of time</p> <p>Too much politics, personal interests and connections at senior levels led to lack of trust in selection</p>	<p><i>"the first CEO was hardly ever seen. It was like he wasn't there. Everything was done behind closed doors with the top people only."</i></p> <p><i>"we have a problem with the boards here, believe me. They are out of context and too political. They interfere a lot in what we do. This isn't how it should be"</i></p> <p><i>"when the change started, the environment was very political. People used their connections. If you had Wasta then you'd get lucky. This made many employees distrust the interviewing process"</i></p>
<p>Too many resignations among vice presidents, middle managers and talented non-managers</p> <p>Post-merger instability in departments due to frequent replacements in HODs</p> <p>Many post-merger reward and promotion related complaints - salaries, grades, pensions and unclear promotion criteria for non-managers; many remain unresolved</p> <p>Culture: Post-merger clash between two very different cultures and the notion of a winner and a loser</p> <p>Salary: The post-merger pay structure came too late and was disappointing</p>	<p><i>"many people left. Many top managers left, I mean at the VP level. When they couldn't see a place for themselves in the new structure, they left. We lost many talented capable people. Even GMs, many resigned. They resigned even before they implemented the merger. Those who feared change, those who were resisting and those who believed they were not going to get the positions they wanted" Senior manager</i></p> <p><i>One of the bad things that happened here is the new salaries. We had to wait and wait for the new salaries and when they were announced, it was total disappointment. There were so many complaints. People were not happy about their grades, their pension ... people even complained that there were no promotion criteria to management positions. So many of these issues still remain"</i></p> <p><i>"It was not easy to make people who were so different work together. They clashed. One company is new, young and very talented. Ours was 40 years old filled with people of public sector background. We needed time to create awareness, accountability and sense of responsibility."</i></p>
<p>Ineffective planning: Lack of scenario planning and lack of planning for the people side</p> <p>Deliberate lack of communication, transparency and employee involvement with first CEO (not to waste time)</p> <p>Lack of vision and direction with first CEO</p> <p>Rejection of structure and major revisions caused delays and resignations</p>	<p><i>"they failed in planning. You know why? They didn't have a vision. We didn't feel that there was a leader navigating this big organisation to a change... in their planning, they didn't consider people's needs. What is important to people? I don't think they asked what if things don't go as planned"</i></p> <p><i>"This was purely top-down. We were not involved. Actually, they decided not to involve people from the bottom so that they could do this quickly. So, it was planned not to communicate a lot with employees and not to involve them. But it backfired later on and people issues are lingering until today"</i></p> <p><i>"when people decided that they didn't want the structure, that was it. The structure collapsed. There were so many complaints that went up to the board level and even higher. All these issues took time and caused delays. Delays and many many resignations." Non-manager</i></p>

Cluster I Facilitators

Major facilitators	R1	R2	M2
Decision makers and change agents	<p>New CEO</p> <p>Government and board support</p> <p>Role of the consultant</p>	<p>The new CEO</p> <p>Role of the chairman</p> <p>Role of the consultant</p>	<p>New CEO during the merger and his leadership style</p> <p>Government and board strong support for change</p> <p>Role of the consultant</p>
People and HRM	<p>A felt internal need</p> <p>Employee expectations and motivation</p> <p>Very low resistance</p> <p>Internal recruitment gave existing employees opportunities</p> <p>Training and development opportunities</p> <p>People's humour, hope and quick adaptation</p>	<p>Low resistance and positive expectations for change</p> <p>New job descriptions, training opportunities and new salaries</p> <p>External recruitment: New hirers accepted and supported the change</p> <p>The Omani' culture: friendly, optimistic, hospitable and quick adaptation</p>	<p>A felt internal need within the parent company to merge and compete</p> <p>Selection: External members in panel interviews added fairness to the selection process</p> <p>Job descriptions: Post-merger job descriptions added clarity to work roles</p> <p>Salaries: Post-merger and post-strike salaries and benefits increased calmed employees</p> <p>Employees' patriotism and doing it for the country</p> <p>People's friendliness, humour and quick adaptation</p> <p>Post-merger employees' felt need to learn and master new jobs</p>
Aspects of the change management process	<p>Promise of no job loss or salary deduction (the business was already in a new building)</p>	<p>Knowing that nobody would lose their job or salary</p> <p>Increased caution over managing people</p> <p>The ability of departments to add new jobs and titles Facilitators (will move to the new government facility)</p>	<p>Assurance of no job loss or salary reduction before the merger</p> <p>Better communication, unity of direction and employee engagement after the merger with the new CEO</p> <p>Moving to a new building signalled a new beginning for employees</p>

Cluster I Inhibitors

Major inhibitors	R1	R2	M2
Decision makers and change agents	<p>Lack of change leadership – lack of a vision and direction; CEO's personality and management style</p> <p>Incompetent board members</p> <p>Incompetent and very political GMs (change managers)</p> <p>Role of the consultant</p>	<p>Absence of change leadership – lack of a vision and unity of direction</p> <p>Board interference, politics and incompetence - making changes with the consultant without discussing with the GMs</p> <p>Incompetent and highly political GMs (management styles and change management)</p> <p>Heavy reliance on consultants</p>	<p>First CEO lack of change leadership</p> <p>Board members' interference and view of time</p> <p>Too much politics, personal interests and connections at senior levels led to lack of trust in selection</p>
People and HRM	<p>People's attitudes towards work, promotion, training and unmet expectations</p> <p>Social comparisons and perceived inequities</p> <p>Career stagnation</p> <p>High voluntary turnover (resignations)</p>	<p>Characteristics of new generation of employee and their attitudes</p> <p>Career stagnation</p> <p>Resignations</p> <p>Low competency levels of many managers and non-managers</p> <p>Problems with homing (job titles and job descriptions)</p> <p>Problems with external recruitment (no work experience, Wasta and overstaffing)</p>	<p>Too many resignations among vice presidents, middle managers and talented non-managers</p> <p>Post-merger instability in departments due to frequent replacements in HODs</p> <p>Many post-merger reward and promotion related complaints - salaries, grades, pensions and unclear promotion criteria for non-managers; many remain unresolved</p> <p>Culture: Post-merger clash between two very different cultures and the notion of a winner and a loser</p> <p>Salary: The post-merger pay structure came too late and was disappointing</p>
Aspects of the change management process	<p>Ineffective planning</p> <p>Lack of communication and transparency</p> <p>Lack of employee involvement</p> <p>Very slow planning and implementation</p> <p>Lack of control (standards, follow-up, evaluation, corrective action, feedback)</p>	<p>Ineffective planning and management</p> <p>Lack of communication and transparency</p> <p>Lack of employee involvement and attention to people's issues</p> <p>New facility project delays</p> <p>Rejection of new structure and major revisions</p> <p>Lack of evaluation and learning</p> <p>Lack of post-change people integration</p>	<p>Ineffective planning: Lack of scenario planning and lack of planning for the people side</p> <p>Deliberate lack of communication, transparency and employee involvement with first CEO (not to waste time)</p> <p>Lack of vision and direction with first CEO</p> <p>Rejection of structure and major revisions caused delays and resignations</p>

APPENDIX 13

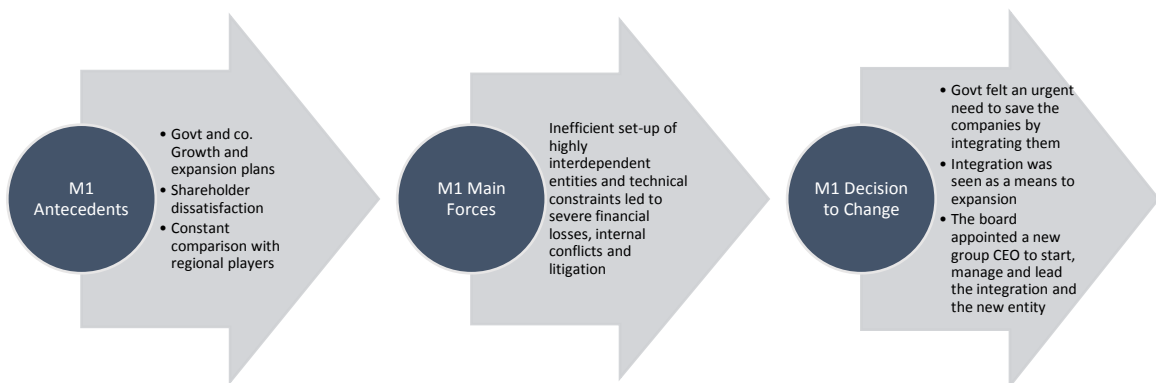
M1 Case Analysis “A Case of Unplanned Change Due to an Unprecedented Financial Crisis and Severe Interorganisational Conflicts”

As mentioned earlier in the overview, M1 is a case of a major unplanned change that occurred between three interdependent GBs due to conflicts and a financial crisis. This section analyses and describes the case around the three main research issues, forces of change, phases of change, and influencers. The section ends with a summary of the case findings.

Forces of Change in M1

This section presents the findings of M1 to the first research question in the form of a description around what made the government business change and a diagram that summarises the antecedents and main forces to the decision to change.

Research Question 1: What makes GBs in Oman undergo SC processes?



M1's antecedents, main forces and change decision
Source: Developed for the study from interview data

This change occurred between three highly interdependent GBs. The companies had contracts and depended on each other in production, manufacturing and selling. However, a wrong set-up among the three partners led to many inefficiencies. There were technical constraints that limited the production capabilities of the supplier and disabled it from meeting the required product specifications of the other companies. This led to contractual violations, financial losses and interorganisational conflicts. Temporary shut-downs for maintenance was also another problem that led to delays and conflicts among the three businesses. The technical constraints, unmet product specifications and delays led to major

financial losses and litigation in an international court. One of the businesses incurred major losses and went bankrupt. The government quickly intervened by imposing an integration to save the three companies. Besides being one of the main sources of income for the government, the three companies were also facing pressures from constant comparisons with their regional counterparts both locally and internationally. There was a need not to be seen less than the regional counterparts. In addition, the three companies had growth plans to expand but the financial losses and conflicts constrained the growth ambition. The government decided to integrate the three companies to take control of the whole process of producing the raw materials, manufacturing and selling. This move would unite the interests of the three companies, solve the interorganisational conflicts, resolve the court case and help them achieve their growth strategy.

All in all, the analysis identified two main internal forces that triggered the change:

1. An unprecedented decline in financial performance and a financial crisis (the bankruptcy)
2. Severe internal conflicts and litigation among highly interdependent GBs due to a wrong set-up, technical constraints and delays

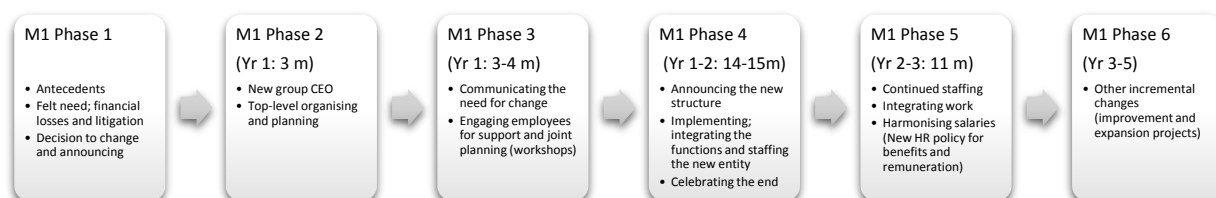
These two main forces were sufficient to make the board intervene and impose a decision to integrate the three businesses. However, it was understood that the main forces were also catalysed by the government's reliance on revenues from the three entities, its expectations for increased efficiency, profits and becoming self-funded, the need for these companies to be seen not less than their regional counterparts and the pre-existing growth strategies of the three entities.

Phases of SC Processes in M1: Description and Analysis

This section presents M1 findings to the second research question - *How do SC processes unfold in GBs of Oman?* The answer is illustrated in a flow chart and supported by a phase-by-phase process description of how the business changed. The description is followed by an analysis. The stories narrated by the managers and non-managers together helped create a sequence of events that showed how the change process unfolded. Each interview either confirmed or complemented events that had occurred. There were no contradictions in the sequence of events reported across interviews within in each case. The analysis identified 6 major phases in the change process

Phase-by-Phase Process Description

The following is a process description written around six phases that were identified in the way the integration unfolded. The phases are depicted in the following figure. The phase-by-phase process description includes an analysis that highlights the important incidents of the process.



Change Process of M1

Phase 1: Antecedents, Financial Losses, Litigation, Deciding to Change and Announcing

An inefficient set-up between three highly interdependent GBs, technical constraints and frequent shut-downs, led to overspending, financial losses, conflicts and litigation. The businesses were major contributors to the national economy and they faced constant comparison with larger regional players. The government had growth and profitability expectations for the three businesses. Also, there was a shared ambition among the owners, board members and top managers to see a bigger and better company. As one top manager said, “we needed a company that would proudly represent the nation”. But, the overspending, losses and accumulating fines between contracting partners increased until one of the businesses became bankrupt. To save the three entities, the government board of directors made an urgent top-down decision to integrate them, unite their financial interests, get rid of the conflicts, resolve the court case and help them grow.

Phase 2 New group CEO, Top-Level Organising and Planning

This phase ran for three months, from January to March (year one of the integration). The government informed the three CEOs about the decision to unite the businesses and appointed a new group CEO from the energy sector to initiate and lead the integration. The three boards merged and discussions were headed by the new group CEO. Consultants were called in and the main decision to be made was whether the three businesses should fully integrate and create a new entity or to integrate the management teams only. The debates led to the decision to vertically integrate the three entities and have full control of the whole supply chain. After this decision, the group CEO created an executive team and appointed a function heads for the new entity. A change management team was created too. This was a

top-level cross-functional team of internal and external experts who would oversee the integration and lead the new company. The executive team and the change management team jointly discussed how to reorganise the three businesses and function as one entity, what name to give the integrated entity, when to announce the integration and how to win the support of employees.

Phase 3 Communicating the Change, the Need to Change, Planning and Engaging

This phase ran for 3-4 months, from March to June in the first year of the integration. The integration was officially announced to employees of the three companies via an official email which stated the type of change and introduced the new CEO and the new executive team. The email stated that the change management team would oversee the change process and employees were assured both in writing and orally of no job losses and salary deductions. The promise assured many employees of job security and helped them calm down. During this phase, the executive team headed by the new CEO toured the three companies to talk to employees and answer their questions. Then, the change management team along with the consultants ran extensive employee engagement workshops starting from April of that year. The workshops rolled out on a function by function basis. The purpose of the workshops was to inform and involve employees in the what, why, when and how of the major change. Questions and issues of concern were raised and addressed and employees were asked about their opinions on various aspects of the change. According to managers, this was the most extensive employee engagement program they had experienced. Employees on the other hand had two reactions to the workshops. First, because the workshops were not compulsory, many didn't attend them. Those who attended didn't believe that their suggestions would be taken into consideration. Second, employees felt that there were too many workshops and information overload.

Phase 4 Integrating Functions and Staffing the New Entity

This phase ran for 14-15 months, starting from June year one to August year two. The new structure was jointly designed by cross-functional teams of managers and employees from across the three companies. The new organisational chart for each function was released and shared with employees. The functions were integrated and staffed according to a schedule. The smaller and more important functions integrated first and the larger ones last. By August year two, all functions were integrated. Managers did concurrent control, progress was discussed on a daily basis in teams, corrective was taken as and when needed, lessons were discussed and learnt along the way. Staffing the new entity had three problems. To staff the integrated functions, job vacancies and early retirement packages for the older employees were advertised internally. Positions were announced via email and employees were requested to apply for a maximum of five jobs. One of the main

problems during recruitment is many employees felt that the position descriptions used were too complicated and not representative of the jobs. Employees were not sure what jobs they were applying for; the job information did not help give a realistic preview of the jobs posted. Second, although employees were assured of no job losses or salary deductions, when they were told that everybody had to apply for a maximum of five jobs in the new entity, they got shocked. Employees did not think that their jobs would be open for applications and that if they wanted to remain, they had to undergo a selection process and compete with other internal applicants. This situation violated the initial assurance of 'no jobs to be lost'. Many employees were worried and experienced joblessness. The frustration can be seen in the words of one employee who echoed the general reaction at that time, "I felt that they snatched my job away from me. I was performing well so why couldn't they just let me continue in this position? It was unfair, very unfair". But, the more competent and ambitious employees felt that it was an opportunity to get better positions within their specialisations or change their departments.

All applications for new jobs were sent online and the short-listed employees underwent panel interviews. The interviews consisted of external recruiters and HoDs of the concerned departments. Employees felt that the inclusion of external members in the interviewing process added a lot of fairness to the selection process. Those who passed the interviews were informed about the selection decision by phone and email and were quickly placed in new jobs.

The third issue that emerged is the issue to relocating employees to another city. There were many jobs that were based in another city and employees had to move as soon as possible. The location of the jobs was known to employees during staffing as this bit of information was included in the job advertisements. However, when it was time to move, the re-location caused a lot of resistance especially among single women, married women who had partners working in another city and male employees with dependent parents or who were looking after their school-going siblings.

Relocating employees was seen as an unnecessary step that violated social cultural values. Employees felt that moving female employees away was not only against the culture but also against religious values. Thus, many of the affected employees resigned but those who remained agreed to relocate. Staffing (internal recruitment) continued until July year three and by that time all internal employees were in new positions.

In June year two, the new brand name of the integrated business was launched. By August year two, all functions were integrated and a high percentage of Omani employees were in more complex jobs. During this phase the company celebrated the end. Several managers and nonmanagers were recognised and awarded for their commitment and contributions to the change process. The celebration marked the end as one top manager said, "we said, we are integrated, we are one now!". Celebrating the end gave a psychological closure to the

change but it also unexpectedly led to a lost momentum that was noticed across the company. Line managers felt it but had no solution.

Phase 5 Continued Staffing, Integrating Work and Harmonising Salaries

This is the post-merger phase i.e. after August year two. While staffing was continuing, HoDs and their subordinates were facing ambiguity in their new work processes. They were left to create their new work processes on their own. Both HoDs and non-managers complained of lack of company support and lack of training. In fact, all workshops stopped after the end of the integration and there was no post-change support given to employees or line managers. Managers were leading new and larger departments with many new employees. They were strangers to many and some were new to their work areas. They needed to learn on their own and find ways to gain the trust of their new subordinates.

In March year three, an unexpected incident occurred. The new HR policy for benefits and remuneration came into effect. This change caused an emotional upheaval in the company. Many employees were not expecting it and they didn't like the new salaries and grades. The main reason was people felt they were underpaid because the new grades and salaries were based on the already rejected job descriptions that were used during recruitment. Employees had complained that the job descriptions did not reflect the real skills, duties and responsibilities involved. Consequently, the company experienced high resistance and many complaints. Employees involved the union up to the board level and there was a looming threat to go on strike. According to one manager, "It was a bad year. There were too many grievances and morale decreased so much. We were facing bad market conditions too. So, internally, morale was low and externally the markets were bad. We ended up with decreased financial performance". In June year 3 i.e. after staffing, celebrating the end, and introducing the new salaries, the consultants left and responsibility of managing the change within departments became the sole responsibility of the department managers.

Phase 6 Incremental Changes: Building up on the Change

Change continued in the integrated entity for two more years but in the form of enhancement and improvement projects and HR reforms that were intended to make employees happy. In years four and five, multiple improvement and expansion projects worth US \$7 billion were rolled out. The aim of the projects was to transform the company by 2018-2020. Other small changes that built on the change were the launch of a new intranet, new policies and procedures and a new code of conduct for all employees. During this period, SAP was introduced and the work processes of the three entities were officially integrated. The HR department introduced several programs like scholarships for employees without college degrees, a program on empowering women and moving them to senior positions via training and qualifications and recognition and reward schemes for employees who perform beyond their work and show commitment to the new company.

Due to these incremental changes, many employees felt that the company cared a lot about its staff and that working there was a privilege.

Change is continuing in this company. As one manager said, “the integration needs two to three years to mature. Maybe we will be in a better position to judge this change by 2018”.

Influencers of the Change Process in M1

This section presents the aspects that influenced the integration. These were identified around the second research question - *What situational factors facilitate and inhibit SC processes in GBs of Oman?*

The question explored what contextual factors facilitated and inhibited the change process. The stories narrated by the managers and non-managers together helped identify the factors that helped and restrained the change process. The analysis identified a total of 12 facilitators and 13 inhibitors. See the following table for details.

M1 Facilitators and Inhibitors

Dimensions/Areas	M1 Facilitators	M1 Inhibitors
Decision makers and change agents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A powerful and visionary new CEO 2. Strong government and board support 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managers who opposed the change became political 2. Top managers seen as not keeping their promises
People and HRM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A felt internal need 2. Promise of no job loss or salary deduction 3. Managing employee expectation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making all jobs open for applications; the feeling of being jobless 2. Brief and complicated job descriptions were used during recruitment 3. Announcing a new salary structure after staffing 4. Salary grades were based on job descriptions perceived as oversimplified and unrepresentative 5. Social comparisons and perceived inequities 6. Relocating employees to another city with short notice and with employees' not believing that there was a need to relocate 7. Too many resignations
Change Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning done by a small cross-functional team of internal and external experts from the three companies 2. Transparency and regular and clear communication 3. Clear roles and deadlines during planning and implementation 4. Extensive employee engagement in designing the new structure 5. Instilling a new culture 6. Recognising and rewarding contributors 7. Celebrating achievements and milestones along the way 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Too much communication and too many workshops to attend 2. Lack of post-merger support for employees and HODs "feeling of being left on their own and lack of role clarity" 3. Instability within departments due to frequent changes in department managers 4. Employees' expectations not managed well

Within-Case Analysis and Major Themes of M1

The purpose of this analysis is to improve our understanding of how the process unfolded by highlighting the main themes that emerged from the case. In doing so, events that had a great impact on the change process and the decisions and actions that worked and didn't work are highlighted.

M1 was caused by severe financial losses and interorganisational conflicts among three interdependent government entities. The change unfolded in six phases. It was led by a new CEO using a participative consultative approach with collaborative cross-functional teams. The CEO led with a transformational leadership style. The pre-implementation phases went as planned and the implementation was stable too. However, the post-implementation phase got troubled due with emerging people issues. Once employees were in new jobs, the organisation marked the end of the change through a celebration that recognised the contributors and announced the huge financial success of the company. But change did not really end there. A new salary structure was introduced in just a few months after the celebration and it caused an emotional upheaval among employees. Several HR reforms were also rolled out to address the emerging people issues and sustain the change. The organisation also embarked on several growth and enhancement projects that built on the new order. These projects are continuing until 2020 and managers expect more to come. Below is an analysis of each phase:

Phase 1

This phase showed that a financial crisis and severe conflicts between highly interdependent partners caused by structural and technical issues can lead to an unplanned board-imposed major integration that unites the interests of the businesses and resolves the issues.

Phase 2

This phase highlighted a significant issue in the early stages of a major change – change in power. We saw that for major change to happen, a major change in power needed to happen or vice versa i.e. when a major change in power happens, change will happen. In the case of M1, change was imposed by the board on three conflicting interdependent businesses. It was imperative to bring in a neutral leader from outside the three conflicting businesses to lead the change rather than a top manager from any of the three businesses who would be seen as biased. An outsider would have no political networks within the three businesses and he/she would not take sides. He would have a fresh look at the situation and lead the change without any preferences for any organisation. This neutral disinterested stance is more likely to help the leader gain the trust and support of all conflicting sides. The change

in power also occurred at the executive level after the CEO moved in. The first step he did after merging the three boards was to reorganise the top level before planning. This move confirms the idea that for change to happen a major change in power needs to occur.

Phase 3

This phase demonstrated the role of three fundamental practices 1) leading change, 2) communicating the need for change and 3) involving employees in planning. The new CEO made himself visible to all staff as the change leader. He ensured that he would be seen and known. He toured the three companies, attended meetings and had friendly one-to-one chats with employees. His visibility and conversations helped create his identity as the change leader, build a relationship with employees and promote the vision that they should all be moving towards. The workshops led by the consultants and other members of the change management team were for sharing information on the what, why, how and when of the change. The workshops also helped address employees' questions and concerns and enabled joint planning sessions. However, two issues emerged. First, employees did not believe that their opinions were needed in planning because the company had international consultants. As one employee said, "these workshops were a show, just to show that they care about us. They brought Western experts, why would they need to know our opinions?!". This negatively impacted employee participation. Second, due to the number and length of the workshops, employees felt that there was overcommunication and eventually lost interest in attending. We learn from this that when international consultants run workshops instead of managers, employees can lose trust in the intentions of the workshops. "They brought consultants, why would they need our opinions on how to change?", as one employee questioned. We also learn that, employees need communication but too much communication can backfire and lead to lost interest and decreased participation.

Phase 4

This is the implementation phase. We saw that this was the longest and the most challenging phase. Implementation and controlling were done on a function by function basis. The approach was very beneficial as it allowed the smaller and more important functions to integrate first and dedicating sufficient time and resources to one function at a time. It also allowed the executive team, change management team and project managers to jointly follow the progress of the change, discuss the challenges, set solutions, take quick corrective action and learn from mistakes. If all functions started changing simultaneously like the cases in cluster I, controlling the change processes in each work group would have been difficult and the result would have been discrepancies in what was said and done by managers in each work group. Also, learning wouldn't have been possible. This phase also

showed the crucial rule of HRM in implementing change. Major reorganisations happen through recruitment, selection and placing employees in new positions. The clarity and representativeness of new job descriptions and the existence of external interviewers in the selection process emerged as important determinants of fairness. Also, losing ones' job and having to apply for new jobs was a bad experience for many employees and it violated the promise of job security that was made when the change was first announced. In addition, relocating employees to another city was the main source of resistance in this phase. Many employees resigned due to relocation. The end of this phase witnessed a celebration of the change. It gave a closure and marked an end. Thus, employees expected no further changes after the event.

Phases 5 and 6

We learn two issues from the post-implementation phases. First, there is no end to change; a major change will be followed by incremental changes to sustain it and improve the new order. We saw that the organisation quickly built on the change by embarking on improvement projects. These projects sent the message that we are done with the major change and now we need to enhance ourselves in this new order. As such, we learn that there is no end to change and any major change will be followed by a period of incremental improvements until the desired new state of equilibrium is achieved. Second, we learnt that after marking and celebrating the end of a major change, do not shake the boat; focus on addressing people and work issues like role ambiguity, new work processes and training line managers and their subordinates. We saw that when employees are given a psychological closure for the change via a celebration, they expect no further alterations to be made. They prepare themselves for stability; for a new state of equilibrium. We saw that after the celebration, employees turned their attention to understanding the new work processes. HoDs too focused on managing their departments and understanding their roles. We saw a need for overcoming role ambiguity both in employees and their line managers. However, in the midst of expectations and pursuance of a new stability, the organisation mistakenly surprised employees with a new salary structure. This was neither expected nor appreciated. The change in rewards was resisted because the job evaluation done for the new salary structure was based on already rejected job descriptions. This resulted in comparisons, perceptions of injustice, resistance, involvement of the union and resignations. All in all, if we can conclude one lesson from post-implementation phases then that will be, senior managers should focus on clarifying roles and work processes, training employees and their direct managers and stabilising departments.

Summary of M1

To sum up, the analysis of M1 resulted in clear findings.

Forces of Change

We learnt from the analysis that M1 is an unprecedented case of an unplanned major change (an integration) that was imposed by the board on three interdependent GBs.

The change was triggered by:

1. An unprecedented decline in financial performance
2. Severe internal conflicts and litigation among highly interdependent GBs due to a wrong set-up, technical constraints and delays
3. Pre-existing growth plans and government expectations for more revenues

Phases of Change

Six phases of change were identified in M1 based on details of eight change process timelines that were carefully developed from each interview. The stories of four managers and four non-managers on how M1 unfolded together helped build the six-phase process that captured the right sequence of all major events and critical incidents discussed by the interviewees. It was observed that in phases 1-3 the nature of the change process was a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches and the process unfolded in a linear manner. However, the implementation and postimplementation phases were quite messy with people issues and they took a bit longer than expected. The main factor that triggered resistance was the unexpected introduction of new salaries and salary grades in the post-implementation phase. These were neither expected nor satisfying to employees.

Change Influencers

Analysis of interviewees' experiences on what helped the change and what inhibited it resulted in 12 situational facilitators and 13 inhibitors all relating to the CEO and other managers, people's needs and expectations, the role of the HR department and the change management approach used.

APPENDIX 14

Cluster II Cases M1 and M3: Quotes, Codes and Themes

The purpose of this appendix is to offer the reader supporting data on the major codes and themes identified in cluster II. Due to word limit restrictions in theses, it was not possible to attach all the coding work that was done on each interview and each case. Since the first case in this cluster is described and analysed in detail in appendix “M1 Case Analysis”, the following tables present quotes, codes and themes of forces and influencer of change identified in the second case, M3.

Forces of change in M3

Code/Theme	Supporting Quotes	Researcher's Interpretive Summary (How the code/theme relates to the main issues of the study)
Subsidiary CEO desire/ambition	<i>“it was the CEO of the smaller company that saw value in integrating the management and operations of the two businesses. He initiated this and pushed for it until it was accepted. It was first rejected and shelved for two years by the previous board. But when the govt reshuffle happened and a new minister and board moved in, he raised the proposal again and got it approved” Top manager</i>	These quotes altogether indicate the main force of change for this case which addresses the first research question. M3 happened because of the subsidiary CEO's desire to meet government expectations of becoming self-funded and maximising revenues. The change in minister and board members (i.e. change in power) enabled the SC as well.
Some rivalry between the two businesses	<i>“there was some competition. We were not eating each other's shares but we were both international companies dealing with international clients. It wasn't a major issue but something that was bothering them” Manager</i> <i>“there was no conflict and no direct competition between us. It's just that international clients were causing the competition between us. A client could get two different deals from us and that hurt the government.” Top manager</i>	
Government expectations	<i>“there were a lot of duplications specially in terms of manpower and the government saw great value in integrating the two companies. There is already the expectation that all businesses should breakeven and become self-funded...” Top manager</i>	

Change Facilitators in M3

Code/Theme	Supporting Quotes	Researcher's Interpretive Summary (How the code/theme relates to the main issues of the study)
Govt, shareholders, CEO and top management support Role of the CEO Role of the consultant	<p><i>"... the tremendous support we got from the govt, our shareholders all was very helpful" Top manager</i></p> <p><i>"The CEO was always there. He was very visible. He used to answer all the questions by himself" Non-manager.</i></p> <p><i>"Consultants are helpful and they did facilitate this change but we relied more on our internal talents. Having the right people is very useful" Top manager</i></p> <p><i>"The CEO's leadership style is one of the main causes of success here" GM</i></p>	These codes come under 'decisionmakers and change agents'. The codes along with the other in this column address the question on influencers of change
Communication and transparency Early engagement and involving staff from all departments in planning and implementing the change Learning from others on how to change Using the work stream model Moving to a new building	<p><i>"Employees were always informed early and updated in regular meetings by the CEO himself. We had open conversations and these were very useful because we realised that no one can be 100% satisfied" non-manager</i></p> <p><i>"Involving people from the beginning and updating them regularly helped this change. Using the work stream model further supported employee involvement. We created joint work streams to avoid the feeling of being taken over by the bigger organisation ...we learnt a lot from previous cases. Many lessons were learnt from their mistakes" Top manager</i></p> <p><i>"We had a hotline and regular updates so no one was ever shocked by any news or situation. For example, before moving to our new offices with employees of the other company, we had joint meetings to get to know each other first" Non-manager</i></p> <p><i>"Moving to a new building marked a new beginning. We left the past behind and were ready to forge ahead. That's the kind of feeling it gave" Top manager</i></p>	All these codes can be categorised under 'change management'
Addressing HR issues early Omani culture and employee patriotism	<p><i>"We are 95% Omanis here; we are serving our country. The more we support this, the better it is for Oman" Non-manager</i></p> <p><i>"We had to look at the bigger picture. This was for Oman and we emphasised on that message" Top manager</i></p> <p><i>"there were some sensitivities first but it's the friendly culture that we have in Oman that helped all become friends" Non-manager</i></p> <p><i>"they did surveys and interviews with employees to know what their needs and concerns are before, during and after the integration and they took action. That helped a lot" Non-manager</i></p> <p><i>"We anticipated all possible people problems, questions that we could be asked and complaints and we prepared solutions and answers for these in advance. This proactive step helped us a lot" Top manager.</i></p> <p><i>"Managers responded very professionally to employees. They focused on the benefit of the change for the individual employee and for the country. This did wonders!" Non-manager</i></p>	All these codes can be grouped under 'people and HRM'

Change Inhibitors in M3

Code/Theme	Supporting Quotes	Researcher's Interpretive Summary (How the code/theme relates to the main issues of the study)
<p>Clash of two cultures</p> <p>No plan on how to integrate people and create a new culture</p> <p>Staff separated on two floors due to insufficient space</p> <p>Some managers and non-managers opposed the change</p> <p>Many comparisons and felt inequity</p> <p>Some staff opposed the new open plan offices</p> <p>Complaints due to absence of career paths and loss of promotion years in new positions</p>	<p><i>"the biggest challenge we faced was dealing with employees from the other company. They had a very different mindset and way of handling things." Non-manager</i></p> <p><i>"Work culture was a main concern for us. We were putting employees with two very different work cultures together. There was the small family culture and then there was the larger organisation with a very formal culture and too many conflicts. I had suggested looking into how to integrate people but wasn't listened." Top manager</i></p> <p><i>"There were many comparisons. Employees do this a lot. If you compare, you'll despair. But people can't help it." GM</i></p> <p><i>"I remember when the staff moved in here, a good number didn't like the open plan offices. They wanted to have closed offices. This was an issue and then we have the issue of our staff being physically dispersed on two floors. This affects work flow somehow but soon we shall get the middle floor"</i></p> <p><i>"We did have some people issues. With the changes, people lost their promotion years and that frustrated many. Employees were also very surprised to learn that they didn't have any career development plans in their new positions. Rather than keeping quiet, managers should have said we are working on this ... " Supervisor</i></p>	<p>All these codes can go under people and HRM</p>
<p>Conducting the ERP and integration simultaneously</p>	<p><i>"if there is one thing that we shouldn't have done along with the integration then it is the ERP project. This itself is a major change project and we added an integration to it. But, we juggled these well. Not to be repeated though!" GM</i></p>	<p>This can be placed under 'change management'</p>

Cluster II Facilitators

Major facilitators	M1	M3
Decision makers and change agents	<p>Strong government and board support</p> <p>Role of the CEO</p>	<p>Govt, shareholders, CEO and top management support</p> <p>Role of the CEO</p> <p>Role of the consultant</p>
People and HRM	<p>A felt internal need</p> <p>Promise of no job loss or salary reduction</p>	<p>Addressing HR issues early</p> <p>Omani culture and employee patriotism</p>
Aspects of the change management process	<p>Transparency and regular communication</p> <p>Extensive employee engagement in designing the new structure</p> <p>Building a new culture</p> <p>Planning done by a small-cross functional team of internal and external experts</p> <p>Celebrating achievements, recognising and rewarding contributors</p>	<p>Communication and transparency</p> <p>Early engagement and involving staff from all departments in planning and implementing the change</p> <p>Learning from others on how to change</p> <p>Using the work stream model</p> <p>Moving to a new building</p>

Cluster II Inhibitors

Major Inhibitors	M1	M3
Decision makers and change agents	Managers who are too political and who do not keep their promises	
People and HRM	<p>The feeling of being jobless</p> <p>The use of brief and unrepresentative job descriptions in recruitment and job evaluation for pay purposes</p> <p>Many comparisons</p> <p>Pay related complaints</p> <p>Resignations</p>	<p>Clash of two cultures</p> <p>No plan on how to integrate people and create a new culture</p> <p>Staff separated on two floors due to insufficient space</p> <p>Some managers and non-managers opposed the change</p> <p>Many comparisons and felt inequity</p> <p>Some staff opposed the new open plan offices</p> <p>Complaints due to absence of career paths and loss of promotion years in new positions</p>
Aspects of the change management process	<p>Too much communication and too many workshops to attend</p> <p>Lack of post-change support for HoDs</p> <p>Frequent changes in department heads</p>	Conducting the ERP and integration simultaneously

The End