



Kent Academic Repository

Melhem, Muntaser J., Iqbal, A., Darwish, T.K. and Seitanidi, M. May (2022) *Corruptive translation to global HRM practices: Performance appraisal and wasta logic in global PSFs operating in the Middle East*. [Conference item] (Unpublished)

Downloaded from

<https://kar.kent.ac.uk/115079/> The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from

This document version

Author's Accepted Manuscript

DOI for this version

Licence for this version

UNSPECIFIED

Additional information

Versions of research works

Versions of Record

If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts

If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in **Title of Journal**, Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries

If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our [Take Down policy](https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies) (available from <https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies>).

Corruptive translation to global HRM practices: Performance appraisal and *wasta* logic in global PSFs operating in the Middle East

Abstract

This article aims to examine how professional services firms (PSFs) in the Middle East reproduce the performance appraisal practice throughout navigating the logics of professional, bureaucratic, and community (e.g., informal connections). In this paper, we report on an in-depth case study of professional service firms by exploring how professionals balance between these logics by coupling institutional logics with a routine dynamics theory. The results show a more corrupt version of performance appraisal that is dominantly invoked by the logic of *wasta* at both the macro and the micro-levels to alleviate the psychological and physical effort associated with navigating competing institutionalized logics. At the micro-level, two versions of performance appraisal are enacted and each is informed by different institutional configurations. The enactment of both versions created a contaminated ethical environment through which actors rich with informal connections become able to pursue their self-interested goals regardless professionalism and bureaucracy. This study contributes to HRM and institutional theory on the workings of *wasta* logic in professional service firms operating in non-Western contexts.

Keywords: PSFs; Institutional logics; community logic; *wasta*; Middle East; performance appraisal; routine dynamics; Dark side of HRM

Corruptive translation to global HRM practices: Performance appraisal and *wasta* logic in global PSFs operating in the Middle East

1. Introduction

Professional Services Firms (PSFs – hereafter) widely adopt some sort of formal performance appraisal to manage and control employees' performance. However, much of employees' development and control are achieved by informal means. PSFs primarily rely on the knowledge and skills of employees to increase organizational performance and therefore managing employees' performance becomes the utmost priority since their survival is sensitive to reputation and service quality (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). To this end, the performance of PSFs is determined by its professionals (Swat, 2015), and therefore, despite achieving development and control informally, it is argued that HRM plays a significant role in creating and maintaining a competitive advantage for PSF (Alvehus, 2018; Kinni and Swart, 2012).

DeNisi et al. (2021) concluded recently that we need to examine performance appraisal for global companies, and understand how they work in different national contexts. In this study, we turn our attention to global PSFs operating in the Middle East as they face multiple difficulties and cultural constraints. Conceptualized in terms of institutional logics, research has shown that PSFs often adopt a hybrid of (conflicting) institutional logics, mainly professional and bureaucratic logics such as professional partnerships (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006), hybrid professionalism (Kirkpatrick & Noordegraaf, 2015), and organizational professionalism (Faulconbridge and Musio, 2008), which enables them to “balance pressures of commercial success with professional integrity” (Suddaby et al., 2008: 898). However, these forms of organizations originated in the West to navigate multiple logics that are unique to the Western context (See Thornton et al., 2012; Friedland and Alford, 1991 for dominant Western logics). In the Middle Eastern context, however, the informal regional community logic of *wasta* is prominent and is yet another logic that PSFs need to navigate.

Wasta, likened to favouritism, cronyism, and nepotism (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993), dominates the majority of social exchanges in the Middle East and plays an important role in shaping the rules of the HRM practices in general and performance appraisal practice in particular. Prior studies shows that

wasta co-evolves with recruiting, developing, appraising employees as well as progressing their careers (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Yahiaoui, et al., 2021; Harbi et al., 2017). Yet its influence on PSFs and their performance appraising practices remain undiscovered. Moreover, research on international performance appraisal in general is still limited and calls are still circulating to advance our understanding on the topic (DeNisi et al., 2021; Kang and Shen, 2016), in particular, within the institutional context of the Middle East (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Mellahi et al., 2011; Mellahi et al., 2007). With these insights, this paper advances the following question: How do professionals navigate professional, bureaucratic, and community logics throughout the enactment of performance appraisal in global subsidiaries in the Middle East?

The paper adopts a single case study design and couples the institutional logics perspective with routine dynamics theory to examine how Middle Eastern professionals navigate multiple logics at the micro-level (Powell and Rerup, 2016). We interviewed 30 non-managerial employees in four global PSFs subsidiaries operating in a single country in the Arabian Peninsula where *wasta* is salient. By examining how professionals navigate multiple logics throughout the enactment of performance appraisal at the micro-level, the study yields several valuable insights.

First, the findings reveal that the dominance of institutional logics in general is not static and shifts over time. While the professional/HRM hybrid logic dominated at early stages of employment, over time, actors started to enact two sets of performance appraising routines and each invokes different multiple institutional configurations simultaneously based on how well employees are connected. The first set consists of a hybrid of community/bureaucratic logics that is invoked when the subject actors are not well-connected (weak *wasta*) whereas the second set consists of a hybrid of community/professional logics that actors rich in *wasta* invoke. Second, the study finds that the regional community logic of *wasta* in the Middle East does not just compete for primacy, but it further enable actors to completely disjoin between the professional and bureaucratic logics, which are highly institutionalized in PSFs. By doing so, this study uncovers how Middle Eastern professionals translate and transform performance appraisal to become a corrupt process that discriminates between employees based on the richness of their connections. Third, the findings show that at the micro and macro levels, the community logic of

wasta plays a central role in creating an immoral and ethically contaminated environment for PSFs operating in the Middle East where commercial success is more important than professional integrity.

With these findings, we advance the international performance appraisal literature with a micro-level nuanced understanding on how Middle Eastern professionals navigate conflicting professional, bureaucratic, and community logics in PSFs operating in the region. We tap into the dark side of human resource management by showing how performance appraisal evolved to a more corrupt version that disadvantages some employees over others. Furthermore, this study contributes a micro-level perspective to performance appraisal as a temporally ordered process, which provides a more complete picture on the success and failure of managing employees' performance (DeNisi et al., 2021). Additionally, the findings contribute to institutional theory. For example, an understanding on the institutional complexity associated with non-Western contexts the Middle East, and to what extent the Middle Eastern community logic of *wasta* can help actors (organizations and employees) alleviate the psychological effort associated with navigating the moral and ethical maze of formal institutionalized logics. Therefore, we shed light on the dysfunctional institutional complementarity between multiple institutional logics in the Middle East.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the relevant institutional logics literature in which we discuss the competing institutional spheres in PSFs, regionally located in the Middle East. It then introduces routine dynamics perspective and its relevance in institutional research. Section 3 details the methods, Section 4 presents the findings, and Section 5 discusses the findings in relation to the relevant institutional literature.

2. Literature review

2.1 International performance appraisal in non-Western contexts

Research has clearly shown that one of the most cultural bound and difficult to adopt practices within the HRM bundle in the Middle East is performance appraisal (Jentjens and Yang, 2021; Yahiaoui et al., 2021). This is not surprising since the performance appraisal process requires frequent interactions

between managers and employees and that the process design allows a big room for supervisors' discretion to play out throughout its actual conduct (Murphy, 2020).

As such, most studies that examined how performance appraisal is adopted in non-Western contexts relied on insights from institutional theory. At the core of these insights is the inconclusive debate around the convergence or divergence of HRM practices around the world (DeNisi et al., 2021), which relies on DiMaggio and Powell's (1983:1991) tradition to institutional analysis that is rooted in isomorphism and structural similarities. Such studies uncovered very important insights such as the influence of local socio-cultural values (Yahiaoui et al., 2021), informal institutions (Horak and Yang, 2017), societal trust (Jentjens and Yang, 2021), ownership structure (Gu and Nolan, 2017), and corporate culture (Vo and Stantion, 2011) on how performance appraisal is adopted in host contexts and its success or failure.

As important as they are, these insights primarily rely on the global-local discourse to explain why performance appraisal fails or succeeds to institutionalize in host contexts. A view that favours structural similarity and overlooks actors' mindful agency in the adoption process. However, much of these insights are used to explain macro-level adoption behaviours, nonetheless, performance appraisal in general and its international scholarship in particular focus more at macro-level adoption behaviours (i.e., faithful, hybridized, ceremonial, see Ansari et al., 2014), and stop "short of studying how logics are actually used on the ground" (McPherson and Sauder, 2013: 166). With this respect, we lack a clear understanding on how organizational actors translate multiple logics into actions throughout the enactment of performance appraisal process, and how such actions at the micro-level reproduce and transform the process. Most of the attention was given to the global-local discourse in dictating PA adoption behaviour in non-Western contexts than to how activities at the micro-level associated with this discourse affect process reproduction. Therefore, we need to pay more attention to HRM activities that play out at the micro-level to unpack how employees in general mediate complex institutional demands throughout the enactment of HRM practices in organizations.

2.2 The plurality of conflicting logics for PSFs in the Middle East

Institutional logics refer to the cultural norms and rules that shape organizational practices (Smets et al., 2015). They are usually adopted to demonstrate the influence of complex institutional configurations, by means of logics, on organizational practices, structures, and strategies (Thornton et al., 2012). Within this view, there are always multiple logics that are invoked by actors throughout engaging with organizational activities, and these logics compete for primacy and dominance on the interinstitutional arena (Ibid). Logics are majorly depicted by the vocabulary of motives, frames, and scripts that actors invoke to act in specific situations (Friedland and Alford, 1991). This perspective further recognises actors not as passive receptors to practices, but as active and valuable in reproducing and transforming institutions at the micro-level (Thornton et al., 2012).

2.2.1 Professional, bureaucratic, and community logic of *wasta*

As indicated earlier, in addition to professional and bureaucratic logics, global PSFs in the Middle East are susceptible to an informal logic that dominates social and organizational reality in the region i.e., the regional community logic of *wasta*. This paper focuses on professional, bureaucratic, community logics because they are highly involved in shaping HRM activities for global PSFs operating in the Middle East.

PSFs such as accounting, architecture, or law firms traditionally adopt a professional logic in their business conduct (Suddaby et al., 2008). This professional logic creates value for these firms by capitalising solely on knowledge workers who possess client-specific expertise and skills (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2004). PSFs are characterised by having decentralized structures that places less emphasise on aligning and developing employees' performances through formal bureaucratic channels (Alvehus, 2018) as well as adopting a 'keep them on the edge' kind of control mechanisms by implementing career progression and promoting style that takes a tournament form and relies on up-or-out criteria (Alvesson et al., 2015). Freidson (2001) maintains that measuring employees' performance in PSFs is highly subjective and is based on professional interests and judgements. To this end, Alvehus (2018: 33) argues, "[s]uch professional logic has been characterised as a belief in autonomous

professional, informal, and collegial relations; merit-based authority; and professionally determined standards of performance.” Therefore, it is often the case that the most salient logic that PSFs invoke is the professional logic (Thornton et al., 2012).

At the same time, PSFs adopt different forms of bureaucratic management and structures such as the adoption of formal best-practice performance appraisal (Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006). PSFs cannot deny the significant role that HRM bureaucracy plays on managing and improving employees’ performances because at the end, HRM practices are needed for “the recruitment and development of professional personnel and is thought to play a critical role in developing knowledge and shaping employee norms” in PSFs (Alvehus, 2018: 33). Although each organization adopts a slightly different version of performance appraisal (DeNisi et al., 2021), most formal performance appraisal practices are rooted in Weberian Bureaucracy tradition that requires a dyadic interaction between different hierarchal roles, bound by a formal authority structure (Biddle, 1979). In fact, it could be argued that the whole administrative purpose of performance appraisal is rooted in the bureaucratic tradition since it involves walking throughout formal procedures that are established to exert control over employees and maintain aligned behaviours with organizational strategies.

2.2.2 Defining the regional community logic of wasta.

The community logic has only been recognised recently as an important, yet overlooked, part within the interinstitutional systems (Thornton et al., 2012). Several contributions to the institutional literature have highlighted the important role of community in understanding organizations and institutions (e.g., Thornton et al., 2012; Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007). Communities include those aggregates of individuals who share the same profession, geographical region, cause, and more recently, the same platform such as virtual communities (Mutch, 2021; Thornton et al., 2012). In this study, we define the Middle Eastern community as a geographically bounded area around the eastern Mediterranean basin and composed of aggregates of people from Arabian ethnicity who share cultural norms and values that are rooted in Islamic teachings (Haak-Saheem and Darwish, 2021; Mellahi et al., 2007).

In this study, we will particularly focus on one norm that is shared at least on a high level among different non-Western contexts and collectivist cultures –and that is, attaining ends informally by means of informal relationships. Several studies that examined performance appraisal from an institutional perspective highlighted the influence of such dominant and strong cultural norms (e.g., the Chinese *guanxi*, Gu and Nolan, 2017; the South Korean *yongo* and *jul ties*, Horak and Yang, 2019; and the Middle Eastern *wasta*, Yahiaoui et al., 2021) on shaping practice adoption and internalization. In this paper, we operationalize the role of *wasta* as a logic that is dominant in everyday social transactions in the Middle East.

Wasta is defined as having “the use of power, relationships and networking to hire people for high position, resolve conflicts or obtain benefits” (Yahiaoui, 2015; 1674). *Wasta* is one of the most salient cultural norms in the Middle East that is interwoven in Middle Eastern social reality, and is highly salient in politics, legal systems, intertribal transactions (Al-Ramahi, 2008), and in organizations (Branine and Pollard, 2010). From this perspective, *wasta* is also internalized deeply in the structure of HRM systems in the Middle East. Research on PA in the region provides valuable insights on *wasta*’s role in rendering regularity to organizational behaviours, and on how its application extends beyond the boundaries of formal organizing. For instance, Alharbi et al. (2017) show how *wasta* enables organizational actors to accrue reciprocal favours from their superiors by sharing blood ties or by simply running superior’s personal errands. Yahiaoui et al. (2021) shows how managers use *wasta* to communicate negative appraisals to employees and how *wasta* is further used to provide extended periods for critical employees to ‘ameliorate’ their performances. Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) show how *wasta* influences career advancement and mentoring activities in Middle Eastern organizations. In general, these studies reflect on how individual actors pursue their career progression by navigating through yet another conflicting logic, i.e., the *wasta* logic.

Based on these insights, it could be argued that *wasta* can override bureaucracy. However, beyond these insights in general, the influence of *wasta* on HRM practices and professionalism remain largely under-researched. With this respect, it becomes important to examine how *wasta* co-evolves with performance

appraisal in the Middle East and should be placed at the centre of analysing Middle Eastern HRM practice instead of positioning its influence on the periphery of these practices.

Therefore, we adopt from organization theory and turn our attention to performance appraisal at the micro-level i.e., the performance appraising routine. To do so, we consider routines, as micro-level material structures that carry macro-level institutional information into the micro-level (Scott, 2014; Thornton et al., 2012). We rely on the theory of routine dynamics because of its unique power in explaining how phenomena unfolds, evolves, and terminates over time (Salvato and Rerup, 2018). Having its roots in practice and process theorizing, routines are suitable to examine how actors reproduce organizations and practices at the micro-level.

2.3 Navigating multiple logics by enacting organizational routines

Routines are at the heart of institutions since “institutions are *transmitted* by various types of *carriers*, including symbolic systems, relational systems, *routines* and artifacts.” (Scott, 2001: 48, italics added). In the past, organizational routines were used to be portrayed as inert and were likened to standard operating procedures (Feldman and Pentland, 2003), which somehow subscribes to the current conceptualization of routines in the institutional literature. Recent advances, however, show how organizational routines are dynamic and they require the effortful accomplishment by actors, therefore, routine dynamics scholars place actors’ agency at the centre of routine enactment (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). Organizational routines are defined as a recognizable repetitive pattern of interdependent actions that are enacted by individuals over time (Feldman and Pentland, 2003).

They consist of two interrelated aspects that interact recursively and they are the ostensive aspect, which refers to what actors understand about the practice or the abstract idea of the practice, and the performative aspect, which refers to the specific actions, taken by specific individuals in specific times and places (Ibid). The basic idea of the recursion between them is that understandings of what the routine ought to accomplish guide actions, and actions enacted in the concrete situations update our understandings of the routines we enact (Dittrich and Seidl, 2018). Over time, and as different actors engage in multiple recursions between the ostensive and the performative aspects, routines simply

change and evolve. This perspective resonates with one of the most important institutional logics perspectives that recognizes actors' partial autonomy from both organizations and institutions (Thornton et al., 2012).

Rooted in March and Simon's Carnegie school, one of the most important assumptions about organizational routines is that they act as a truce between routine participants throughout the accomplishment of multiple and competing organizational goals (Salvato and Rerup, 2018). This assumption recognizes that conflict exists between routine participants in almost every social transaction by individuals at different organizational levels and departments (Nelson and Winter, 1982). However, by having a commonly shared recognisable pattern of interdependent actions to accomplish tasks, participants majorly agree to disagree and carry out the accomplishment of organizational goals by relying on the recognizable pattern (Powell and Rerup, 2016; Feldman and Pentland, 2003). This perspective on organizational routines shows the ability of organizational actors to use routines to balance between conflicting goals.

To illustrate, D'Adderio (2014) examined the transfer of a manufacturing routine between different countries which needed balancing between the goals of replicating the routine exactly as being enacted in the home country while simultaneously allowing room for innovation and flexibility in the host country. To balance between the conflicting pressures of exact replication and innovation, routine participants altered foregrounding between patterns of exact replications and patterns of innovations and enacted the routine in what the author calls "selective performances." Selectively performing one routine over the other enabled actors to navigate between these two conflicting goals and accomplish the manufacturing routine effectively. Later, Salvato and Rerup (2018) took this concept much further to show how routines can be used to accomplish multiple conflicting goals of efficiency and innovation simultaneously for the product development routine by uncovering an ecology of actions (splicing, activating, and repressing) that allows routine participants to enact the competing organizational goals of efficiency and innovation flexibly. Although these studies highlight organizational routine's ability to balance between organizational goals, this perspective could be scaled up to understand how routines are used to balance between multiple and conflicting logics (Powell and Rerup, 2016). Since practice

theorists reject the distinction between micro and macro phenomena in the reproduction of the social reality of practices (Nicolini, 2012).

More recent efforts from practice and process scholars aimed at laying the groundwork on how to examine institutional phenomena from a routine's perspective, which is under the umbrella of 'the microfoundations of institutions' (Thornton et al., 2012). The basic notion of the micro-foundation of institutions is to recognize the mutual constitution of actors and institutions in the organizational field (Powell and Rerup, 2016; Thornton et al., 2012). Powell and Rerup (2016) write that "we might be able to understand stability and change in higher-level structures [i.e., institutions] by tracing lower-level micro-actions taken to accomplish routines" (p.37). From this perspective, routines can be a source for professionals not just to accomplish organizational goals but also to manage conflicting institutional logics that shape the practices they are enacting. This could be further investigated by understanding the dominant performance appraisal action patterns that actors understand and enact at the micro-level, and how this understanding and enactment help actors navigate competing professionalism, bureaucracy, and regional community logic of *wasta* in global PSFs operating in the Middle East.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study context

This paper adopts an embedded case study design to closely examine the performance appraisal routine in the chosen organizations (Eisenhardt, 1989). Case study as a research design is very suitable to examine contextualized phenomena such as the one investigated in this study (Eisenhardt 1989), and is widely adopted by international performance appraisal scholars. The case study involves four multinational professional accounting subsidiaries operating in a single country in the Arabian Peninsula (the name of the country and the companies are not discussed to protect the anonymity of participants and their organizations). The headquarters of these organizations are in Europe and they adopt a standardized global performance appraisal best practice across their worldwide subsidiaries. Combined, globally, these companies employ over a million professional and operate in more than 100 countries. The industry is highly institutionalized and subject to rules, professional, and ethical code of conducts from external professional bodies. Most importantly, in parallel to their professional conduct,

external professional bodies further institutionalized some aspects of the performance appraisal process in industry practices to maintain service quality and professional integrity. We focused on a single department that consist of employees who provide financial services to clients and constantly enact performance appraising routines. In these subsidiaries, performance appraisal is designed to ensure employee development through formal and informal on-job coaching and frequent performance feedback. Furthermore, the information provided throughout the performance appraisal process is used for administrative and career progression decisions such as salary increase, sanctions, and promotions. All of which is managed on a global and centralized performance appraisal software to ensure transparency and accuracy in the process.

3.2 Data collection

Interviews. We interviewed 30 non-managerial professionals at varying levels (Junior, semi-senior, and senior levels). The semi-structured interview was designed to obtain interviewees perceptions, understandings, and actions over time for the performance appraisal process and included questions about the direct influence of *wasta* logic on process performativity. Additionally, probing participants for more details was done whenever necessary. The interview questions allowed us to explore how competing logics influenced important aspect of the performance appraisal processes such as employee development, remuneration, and career progression. The interviews were conducted between August and September 2019 and were concluded when new information ceased to be generated (Yahiaoui et al., 2021). Although the PSFs are global, all interviews were conducted with home country nationals since, when inquired, participants affirmed their companies do not employ expatriates. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, the mother language of the professionals, and they were translated and transcribed verbatim.

Documentary data. We further consulted three categories of documentary data. First, we reviewed the annual global reports of the companies chronologically from 2005 to 2020 to better understand the activities these companies are engaging with and to trace changes in the global HRM policy. Similarly, we conducted a review for the HRM policies, changes, announcements, and press releases that are publicly available on the websites of these companies and their associated social media over the same

period. The second category includes reviewing companies' professional and ethical code of conducts for the same period as well as those established by industry formal professional bodies to trace the professional and bureaucratic logic. Moreover, we reviewed several context specific books and local press releases involved with *wasta* in order to trace the dominance of *wasta* logic in social exchanges. The third category involved reviewing documents related to the performance appraisal process that included its rules, standard operating procedures, and a brief walk through in the feedback and rating templates. These documentary data provided textual data and were used to corroborate employees' accounts on the performance appraisal process, and the logics actors navigate throughout enacting the process. Furthermore, they revealed new details that were not available in the interviews.

Table (1): Data structure

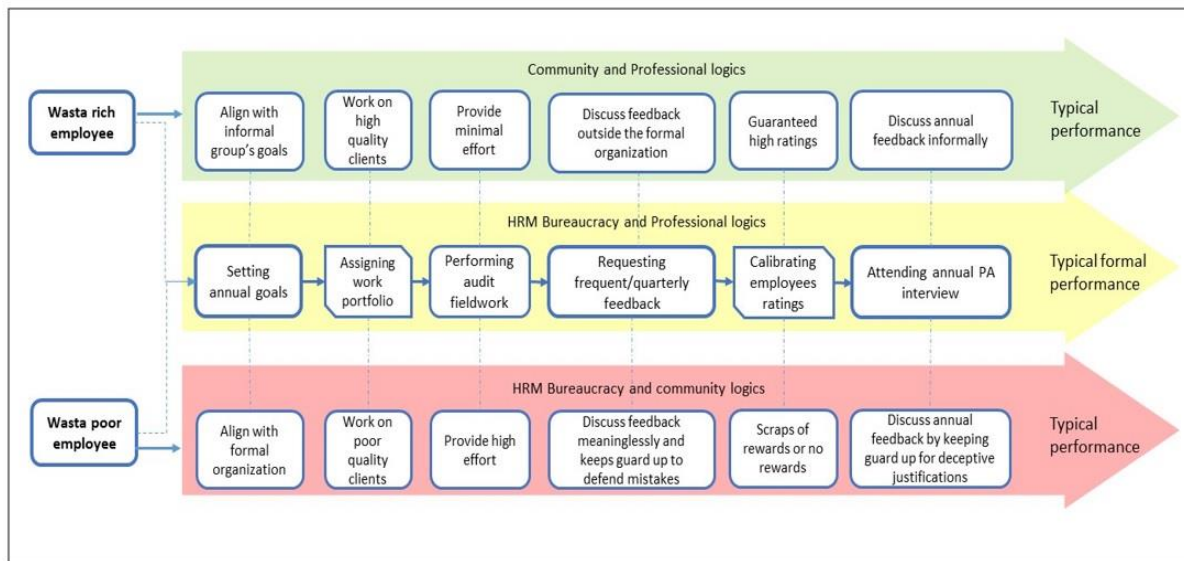
Empirical observations	Theoretical observations	Theoretical constructs
Family related <i>wasta</i> . Client related <i>wasta</i> . Region related <i>wasta</i> .	Determinants of rich symbolic capital	<i>wasta</i> rich employees invoke community and professional logics in their PA reproduction.
Performance feedback is provided informally. Development, training opportunities, and support are plentiful. Annual interview is conducted outside the formal organization. High quality client portfolio. Employees align their goals with the informal group. Employees receive the highest rewards. Employees have more career progression opportunities.	PA pattern for employees rich in <i>wasta</i> connections / corrupt translation to professional and community logics	
Preferential PA is achieved through <i>wasta</i> connections. <i>wasta</i> is deeply structured in performance appraisal. <i>wasta</i> is deeply structured in employee recruitment. <i>wasta</i> is mobilized at all levels to recruit clients. Employees with <i>wasta</i> enjoy unconditional power and authority. <i>wasta</i> overrides PA formal procedures. <i>wasta</i> advances employees professional goals unethically. Organizations use <i>wasta</i> to gain more market share.	<i>wasta</i> shapes organizational rules / the community logic of <i>wasta</i>	Salience of community logic of <i>wasta</i>
Employees avoid work and mistakes. Employees performance feedback is conducted against them. Justifications for annual employees performance are deceptive. Low quality client portfolio. Employees align their goals with the company. Employees receive the lowest rewards. Employees find it difficult to progress with their careers. There is no formal or informal support or development for employees.	PA pattern for employees with no <i>wasta</i> / corrupt translation to bureaucratic and community logics in PA	<i>wasta</i> poor employees navigate community and bureaucratic logics in their PA reproduction.
Low quality work for clients. Breach in professional code of conduct. Breach in ethical code of conduct. HQ quality surveillance failure. Performance appraisal bureaucratic procedures are replicated for show. The HR department role is inactive and overridden by upper management.	Unethical and immoral process environment	Inoperable formal professional and bureaucratic logics

3.3 Analytical approach

The data were analysed abductively and organized in an NVivo 12 database, which enabled us to index, search, code, theorize, and recode data as patterns and themes emerged (Smets et al., 2015). First, the analysis began by temporally bracketing (Langley, 1999) performance appraisal main events described by the study participants to identify routines and identify process boundaries (see Figure 1) and they

are: establishing annual plan, assigning employees work portfolio, performing fieldwork, monitoring employees, requesting frequent/quarterly performance feedback, calibrating employees' ratings, and attending annual performance appraisal interview. Each micro-process is a routine that is embedded in a software artifact and requires face-to-face interaction between employees and managers (see Table 2).

Figure (1): The influence of multiple logics on reproducing performance appraising routines



We began by openly coding the data, we identified actors involved in the process (e.g., employees, managers, councillors, human resource personnel), artifacts used by participants to accomplish routines (e.g., feedback system, forms, emails, mobile phone, managers office), and participants actions and understanding. As well as identifying participants' expressions that relate to their professional identity. Then we focused on *wasta* and extracted 131 events (73 directly related to performance appraisal) that involved the use and influence of *wasta* and traced each event to the micro-level routine it influences.

To make sense of the data, we drew visual maps for the process for each participant and started clustering *wasta* events and participants understandings and actions e.g., we clustered 'lack of performance feedback' and 'submitting deviant feedback' under performance feedback. Next, we created a visual map for performance appraisal that includes all first order empirical observations. By focusing on similarities and differences between actors' understanding and patterns of actions. By doing so, we only kept the stable and repetitive patterns that "are oriented according to the same practice"

(Jarzabkowski et al., 2017: 238). This stage resulted in identifying two performance appraisal routines that are enacted by different groups of actors. Mapping the process visually enabled us to categories actors into two groups, rich and poor *wasta* professionals as participants in each group drew from similar patterns to performance appraising routines. Therefore, we were able to abstract first order codes in second order constructs.

Finally, to understand the interplay between micro-level enactment and macro-level logics, we focused on the vocabularies of motives (cultural, professional, bureaucratic) that actors invoke for each of the processes over time to understand the influence of logics on enacting two sets of performance appraising routines and vice versa. In this step, we plugged in the dominant logics that actors invoke onto the visual maps and for the two processes over time and noticed a distinctive set of institutional configurations that each process invokes. Thereby, abstracting second order constructs into high order aggregate dimensions as presented in Table (1).

Table (2): Focal micro-level routines action patterns

Employees performance appraisal routines			
	Identifying goals and objectives	Requesting performance feedback	Attending annual PA interview
Objective	Align employees goals with formal organizational strategic goals	Motivate, enhance, direct employees, and ensure alignment with formal organizational goals	• Discuss annual performance, motivate, enhance, and direct employees. • Discuss annual rating and rewards.
Actors	Employees and managers		
Artifacts	Software artifact – company system		
Action pattern	1. Meet with manager for discussion. 2. Set goals through software artifact. 3. Submit form to manager. 4. Receive acceptance or amendment request 5. Mutually agree	1. Finish fieldwork audit for a specific client. 2. Write a detailed description of performance using PF form on software artifact 3. Submit feedback to supervisor. 4. Receive feedback associated with a rating 5. Accept or reject.	1. Receive and read the ratings letter. 2. Revise system approved feedback requests. 3. Set up a meeting with manager. 4. Discuss annual feedback and associated rating. 5. Negotiate in case of unfair rating. 6. Accept or reject.

4. Findings

4.1 The dominance of the professional/HRM bureaucracy hybrid logics

When employees join the companies and although all employees in our sample admitted to using *wasta* to join the company, the dominant logic that influences the performance appraisal process is the hybrid

professional/HRM bureaucratic logic. At the beginning of their careers, employees express that *wasta* was not seen in the organization. “*Junior level employees do not need to use wasta yet because they do not have their own portfolios, they are assigned on multiple projects to learn and perform specific tasks*” (Senior level- P. 24). Employees perceive proper development that was expressed in terms of on-job-training. This is only true for junior positions because their work and effort is confined to one or two specific areas in the project.

“Work is much easier and development is more visible in junior levels. Back then, we only had specific areas to work on and it was easier to ask the senior questions whenever we were stuck doing a task. Your job is to learn when you are in a junior level. (Senior level - P. 2)

Therefore, it is easier for managers to trace junior employees’ contributions to projects by using simpler descriptions. Our participants indicate that they conformed to the bureaucratic HRM procedures in action and at that time, they perceived them as effective. For example, participants established their annual goals sincerely in alignment with organizational strategic goals. Furthermore, they indicate receiving performance feedback that is aligned with their level of expectations. Finally, the majority indicate receiving fair ratings at the end of the appraising period.

“When I first started with the company, I followed the process of performance appraisal by the book. I established goals, I spent time completing feedback forms, and I used to sit with my manager and talk about my performance...things were going great, you would feel that you are actually a professional in a global company.” (Senior level - P. 22)

“At the beginning of the year, I sat briefly with my manager to establish my annual goals ... I also request performance feedback using the company system and I meet with my manager.” (Junior level – P. 15)

However, some employees who received ratings below their expectations indicated that exercising their appeal rights brought negative repercussions and were not considered seriously by the management.

“I appealed the final rating I received to the management and I escalated my appeal further to the regional office after no one took it seriously here but by doing so, hell door broke loose.”

(Junior level - P. 27)

At this stage, employees are navigating the hybrid logic of professionalism and HRM bureaucracy where the majority are satisfied with their professional autonomy which is supported by a bureaucratic HRM structure that aims to improve organizational performance by advancing employees' development and career progression goals as well as protecting fairness in process application, process outcome, and interactions among members.

4.2 The dominance of the informal regional community logic

As employees progress to upper positions, the boundaries between employees' levels and positions become blurred and unclear and the reality of the dominant logic of *wasta* begins to sink in. For instance, some senior level employees indicated doing the work of junior levels and managers.

“when you get promoted to a senior level, you get a lot of responsibilities and they are majorly beyond your formal job descriptions. This is where *wasta* becomes important to lessen the workload you have.” (Senior level - P. 7)

Overtime, employees find themselves segregated into two distinctive groups: powerful employees and powerless employees. Employees further perceive that this power distinction extend to managers as well.

“You must know something, in terms of employees, there are informal groups in the organization and some are powerful while others are not. By the end of my first year, I swear that I thought these groups were mafias. I was constantly being asked to which group I belong and they even have informal names to each group. It is ridiculous.” (Senior level - P. 21)

“You have managers who are really powerful and others who are not and each have a group of unchanging employees in their groups.” (Senior level - P. 26)

Here, while participants were reflecting on what makes a powerful employee, they attributed it to the strength of *wasta* the employee possesses regardless expertise and qualifications. In fact, the study participants indicated that powerful employees are unqualified to receive organizational rewards and some powerful employees themselves admit providing minimal levels of effort. For instance, this *wasta* rich senior level employee jokingly question his entitlement to rewards after providing minimal levels of effort.

“For instance, in my third year, I did not provide a fraction of performance compared to my previous years. Since my father is client to the company, I established a personal relationship with my direct manager and he started asking favours and I started asking favours as well. This is why I provide the least amount of effort and receive high rewards.” (Senior level - P. 21)

Power in these organizations is derived from client recruitment (market logic), blood ties (family logic), and governmental dealings (state logic). Powerful employees have many benefits and one of the most important is that they get the highest rewards regardless the effort they provide. To this end, *wasta* can bring different varying competing logics to organizations.

“Listen, if you do not have a strong *wasta* in the company then you are just a common. The maximum you can get is a ‘met expectations’ rating and this influences promotions, bonuses, and salary increments. If you are related to the partner or a powerful manager, if you were able to recruit a client for the company, or if you were connected to a well-known governmental figure, then you are powerful and you can do whatever you’d like.” (Senior level - P. 18)

This unnatural arrangement pressured for a split in the logics that inform the performance appraisal routine in a way that the logic that informs appraising powerful employees is informed by a hybrid professional/*wasta* logic and appraising powerless employees’ performance is informed by community/HRM bureaucracy logic. The effect of this split in logics can be traced overall performance appraisal microlevel routines for each group as the following.

The typical pattern of actions for powerful employees is informal and involves establishing a meaningless annual plan that is aligned with strategic organizational goals while employees' actual goals are aligned with the goals of the informal group they belong to.

“for example, it is common for employees in the powerful groups to engage in social drinking.

I am a practicing Muslim so I do not drink but the problem is that without doing that and aligning with their goals and values, you will never get to belong. I know many employees who changed their values just to advance their professional and personal goals.” (P. 21)

“they look for the similarity effect, this is what matters. There must be harmony in so many aspects such as social status, religion, hobbies, and interests” (P. 30)

“*Wasta* is a very complex concept in this company because it is very specific, you need to have to be from the same region, share the same religion, similar social statuses, etc... these are considered the most important goals and factors that must be aligned with. For example, me and my managers share the same Christian religion, but because I come from a different region I became an outcast.” (junior P. 27)

The alignment of informal goals guarantees employees with the least amount work and the highest levels of employee training, development, and career progression. In fact, participants from both groups expressed that the actual appraising process is conducted in social outings and the actual enactment of formal bureaucratized performance appraisal routines are window-dressing and less diligent. “*the formal process is just for show, we go out together and we blend business in our personal conversations*” (P. 21). Powerful employees can exercise their right to voice and appeal effortlessly. In most cases, exercising formal rights is not necessary since voice become part of the informal relationship and appeal is majorly unneeded as rewards are granted informally and unquestionably. In the rare cases where feedback or rewards are severely below expectations, powerful employees can mobilize their *wasta* to formally voice their concerns and exercise a successful appeal.

“I know two employees who were able to use their *wasta* to appeal a rating. They received an unfair met expectations rating and they used their *wasta* to correct this. Partners revised their

deliverables and decided to overturn the manager decision and they were both promoted.” (P.

19)

The most distinctive perk powerful employees receive can be traced to client portfolio allocation process. Employees with strong *wasta* can mobilize their power to receive the best quality large clients portfolio that requires very minimal levels of effort and their portfolio consists further of clients with global reach. In participants words “the best and the easiest clients.” This particularism in client allocation privileges powerful employees with the luxury of time, exposure to global market, and networking with industry leaders. Therefore, this pattern of actions resonate with a more professional/*wasta* logic where employees can advance their professional goals and personal goals with the absence of the HRM bureaucracy logic. For instance, this *wasta* rich employee explains how portfolio allocation happen.

“In our line of work, we classify clients as good or bad depending on client size, nationality, and the amount of work that needs to be done. This highly influence the appraising process because these are everything for performance evaluation. I get good large sized clients and some are overseas so you get international exposure...I spend four, six or seven months working for one client and this gives me time to learn and network unlike other employees who must complete a project every week. (P. 18)

On the other hand, the typical pattern of actions for powerless employees is more ingrained in corrupt bureaucratic procedures and their established goals must be meaningful. They tiptoe throughout their professional careers because they are being monitored harshly by managers. For instance, they perceive that managers are actively looking for mistakes or that managers can ruin employees’ reputation with one word.

“Managers only look for any mistake that you would do when you work with a client or when you are in the office. They only focus on mistakes whatever minor they were. They like to make mountains out of molehills.” (Semi senior – P.14)

“If the manager did not like a less powerful employee, he will sabotage the employee by spreading false rumours about his performance” (Senior level – P. 1)

Powerless employees corroborate these mistake mining and sabotage actions when they attend their frequent and annual performance feedback meetings, as although on paper they majorly receive satisfactory performance feedback, they are only communicated weaknesses during face-to-face meetings as explained by this senior level employee. “*Managers never say ‘thank you’ or reflect on any positive thing you did. They only focus on weaknesses during frequent feedback meetings. It is like you have never done any good work!*” (P. 26). In some employees’ words, this is a defensive managerial tactic that is employed to serve two purposes. First, it reduces the number of rewards deserving employees from competing over predetermined rewards. Second, it acts as a shock absorbent that managers use throughout the process to shield their vague and deceptive justifications. By doing so, they protect the harmony in the other logic (professional/*wasta*) that informally depletes the performance appraising process reserve of formal rewards and development opportunities.

“In general, rewards are reserved and predetermined and they need to be open for powerful employees. As many of them are unqualified, managers become inclined to make the rest of us feel like we made many mistakes to make us perceive that we are not eligible for promotions or outstanding ratings so that they justify why we lost these benefits.” (Senior level – P. 16)

Powerless employees are unable to voice their concerns or exercise their appealing rights fearing future repercussions. The only way to remain employed and preserve the status quo of the situation is by accepting the performance feedback or performance appraisal outcomes obediently against employees will.

“When I received an unfair rating in my second and third year, I appealed just for the sake of it and received unrealistic justifications. I didn’t go through the process formally because if you do that then you are finished. They will make your life harder in the company and will push you to resign” (Junior level - P. 8)

Powerless employees receive the worst portfolios that are not financially significant to the company's bottom line, and they consist of clients that are characterised for being small, complex, and time consuming. Therefore, powerless employees provide significantly more effort than powerful employees do. One of the main differences here is that powerless employees receive a large number of dirty (low quality) projects to be completed over a short period of time whereas powerful employees receive few high-quality projects to be completed over longer periods of time. For instance, participants indicate that work on the best quality clients can be easily performed error free by replicating previous work templates. On the other hand, work that involves worst quality clients is burdensome to the point that employees do clients work for them to be able to do their own work. To this end, powerless employees become exhausted from work overload and there is more potential for mistakes when workload is high and employees are mentally exhausted. Simultaneously, this also creates a stock of mistakes that managers can choose from to justify the loss of reward "*the more you work the more mistakes you make*" (Junior – P. 23).

"I get work and projects thrown at me left and right and I have no support, no team, and no guidance. Sometimes I work on two or three engagements during the same week. It becomes tiring. How are you going to gain experience like that? how are you going to learn? You become like a donkey worker because you are working but you don't understand what you are working on. Most of the times, the quality of my deliverables is inferior but no one cares because the projects I am working on are not financially lucrative." (P. 14)

This distribution of work influences how the split in competing logics is operationalized and made possible in actual enactment. As a result, the most important influence of the *wasta* logic on the process of performance appraisal is creating a micro capitalist community within the organizations that divides employees based on the richness of their symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1992; 1977) and each adhering to different logics. Employees who possess strong *wasta* are considered rich in their symbolic capital and therefore they became the bourgeoisie class in the organizations where they receive the highest rewards by doing the least amount of effort. By relying (and likening) on Marx and Engels (1848) definition to bourgeoisie and proletariats to portray class conflict, powerful employees control the means for

relationships informally in a symbolic capitalist social order, and these means are woven within the infrastructure of organizational and institutional practices in the Middle East. On the other hand, employees whose *wasta* is weak or absent are considered poor in symbolic capital and therefore they became more of a modern proletariat class whose high level of effort is needed to take on the majority of low-quality projects with minimal to no returns or rewards.

5. Discussion – Institutional logics: From micro to macro

This study extends the conversation on how multiple institutional logics influence HRM practices. In particular, how the enactment of global best practice performance appraisal routines in global PSFs operating in the Middle East allows organizational actors to balance between competing institutional logics. By including the competing community logic of *wasta* and by adopting a routine dynamics perspective to unpack how the enactment of the performance appraisal routine balances between multiple and competing institutional logics, this study advances our understanding on how *wasta* logic can segregate professional and bureaucratic logics in global PSFs operating in the Middle East. With our findings, we further show how over time multiple logics can be foregrounded and backgrounded by organizational actors. For instance, when employees join the company, the dominant logic is the hybrid HRM/professional logic and as employees progress in organizational levels, the *wasta* logic become more visible as it disjoins the professional/HRM logics according to groups of actors. For powerful employees, the HRM logic becomes largely absent and rejected as their version primarily invokes professional/*wasta* hybrid logic, and less powerful employees navigate a more corruptive version of the HRM bureaucratic/*wasta* logic.

These findings contrast with recent findings on how multiple logics influence performance appraisal in global PSFs. Alvehus (2018) examined the influence of professional and HRM bureaucratic logic in global PSFs operating in Sweden and concluded that although “hybridity between conflicting logics may appear on an organizational level...a single logic dominates in everyday work” (p. 31). The findings of our study, however, contrast with Alvehus (2018) findings as by including the informal regional community logic of *wasta* we were able to show how multiple logics can dominate everyday work in global PSFs subsidiaries at the microlevel and how each can be navigated separately. This study

sheds light on the importance of the regional community logic to global PSFs because of its power to dominate other institutional orders at the microlevel, which in our case, requires a new social order to maintain the stability and harmony for the new corrupt practice. More importantly, this brings back our attention to conceptualizing institutional logics in terms of Swidler's (1986) cultural tool kit that can be mobilized by organizations to advance organizational goals and help in organizational survival (McPherson and Sauder, 2013).

On a more macrolevel, this study advances our understanding on the importance and primacy of the *wasta* logic as a tool for global PSFs operating in the Middle East. In particular, our findings indicate that by foregrounding informal regional community logic, actors can alleviate the psychological and physical efforts associated with navigating multiple institutional configurations. By mobilizing the *wasta* logic, actors (organizations and individuals) relief themselves from navigating through different competing logics with different sources of authority such as market logic (e.g., by recruiting clients informally to maximise profits) and state logic (e.g., bypass length government bureaucratic procedures) (Thornton et al., 2012) with more aggressive orientation towards commercial success than professional integrity. By showing how the two groups of employees invoke the *wasta* logic, Our findings contribute to institutional logics on the double hermeneutics of the Middle Eastern *wasta* logic as a group use it in terms of means (and therefore as a tool) and the other as an end (and therefore as prescription). With these findings, this study shows that the influence of *wasta* and the institutional environment are more dynamic than previously acknowledged. Although in this case we elaborated on the primacy of Middle Eastern *wasta* logic in transforming organizational ongoing activities of PSFs, the findings could also be extendable to international performance appraisal in collectivist contexts, since they at a higher level, these cultures share a logic that is similar to *wasta* (e.g., Horak and Yang, 2019; Gu and Nolan, 2017; Vu and Stanton, 2011).

Overall, the study shows that importance of examining institutions at the micro-level because of the rich and finely grained understanding it can offer to the field. Our findings indicate how *wasta* logic is used on both macro and micro-levels to relief the effortful navigation of competing logics. At the macro-level, the regional community logic enables global PSFs to maximise profits in collectivist cultures and

emerging markets by bypassing ethical morality and state bureaucracy. At the micro-level, actors harnessed *wasta* logic to reproduce a corruptive and discriminatory version of the practice leading to the formation of a symbolic micro-capitalist community with different classes, each enact a practice invoked by different institutional configurations.

With these findings, we also contribute to the scholarship on negative and dysfunctional institutional complementarity. More recently, Wood and Schnyder (2020) criticised the current state of affairs for the emerging markets comparative capitalism literature for how scholars are overlooking “comparative disadvantages that may result from seemingly dysfunctional combinations of institutions, and to the extent to which such dysfunctional systems may persist” (p. 3). It is worth noting that the home (where PSFs are headquartered) and host countries (where subsidiaries are) share colonial roots where the host country was colonized by the home country for brief period of time, and as such, the associated practices are often resisted since they are seen in terms of perpetuating the consumption of Western values that are rooted in the colonial past (Klein et al., 1998). To this end, Global PSFs face challenges related to legitimacy and acceptance when they expand into the Middle East. In this context, the international business literature posits that *wasta* is a primary mode of entry for MNEs in the Middle East as explained by Mellahi et al., (2011: 408):

“One of the fundamental decisions an MNE makes when entering the Middle Eastern market are the selection of local partners...affiliation with powerful business groups or political actors [i.e., *wasta*] is a *sine qua non* for successful operations in the region.”

By examining the seemingly dysfunctional combinations of the professional/HRM/regional community logics in the Middle East, we were able to uncover a more backstage role to *wasta* and these configurations that influenced the transformation of the organizational social order from a decentralized professional hierarchy to a dual-class micro capitalist community that feeds on symbolic capital. By showing how the regional community *wasta* logic can be used to disjoin between professional integrity and commercial success, and how powerful actors can use *wasta* logic to advance their professional goals, this study turns our attention to a concept that is largely overlooked in comparative capitalism

and that is –neo-colonialism that becomes perpetuated by the expansion of global firms (Boussebaa et al., 2012).

The findings highlight how the logic of *wasta* is deeply rooted across all organizational levels. In addition to transforming performance appraisal at the micro-level, and to advance individuals professional goals unethically, the findings show that *wasta* was also used to advance commercial success as it was heavily mobilized across all levels with the sole purpose of recruiting clients with minimal regard to the moral and ethical repercussions that are associated with this aggressive market competition between these firms. This study shows how post-colonial capitalism perpetuates in emerging markets in modern times and therefore reflects on the contaminated ethical environment global PSFs can harness and create to exploit resources from developing countries and emerging markets (Mellahi et al. 2011; Mellahi et al., 2007). By taking advantage of this immoral and ethically contaminated environment, Global PSFs in the Middle East become more able to advance their market capitalism goals via elite actors without having to navigate between the competing interinstitutional logics. Therefore, this findings of the study further uncovers a dark side for “the preferential treatment, and access to scarce and highly valuable political resources” (Mellahi et al., 2011: 408) that MNEs enjoy by being affiliated with powerful local partners.

References

- Al-Ramahi, A., 2008. *Wasta* in Jordan: a distinct feature of (and benefit for) Middle Eastern society. *Arab Law Quarterly*, pp.35-62.
- Alvehus, J., 2018. Conflicting logics? The role of HRM in a professional service firm. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 28(1), pp.31-44.
- Alvesson, M. and Kärreman, D., 2004. Interfaces of control. Technocratic and socio-ideological control in a global management consultancy firm. *Accounting, organizations, and society*, 29(3-4), pp.423-444.
- Alvesson, M., Kärreman, D. and Sullivan, K., 2015. Professional service firms and identity. *The Oxford handbook of professional service firms*, pp.403-424.
- Ansari, S., Reinecke, J. and Spaan, A., 2014. How are practices made to vary? Managing practice adaptation in a multinational corporation. *Organization Studies*, 35(9), pp.1313-1341.
- Bourdieu, P., 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (No. 16). Cambridge university press.
- Bourdieu, P., 1990. *The logic of practice*: Stanford University Press.
- Branine, M. and Pollard, D., 2010. Human resource management with Islamic management principles: A dialectic for a reverse diffusion in management. *Personnel Review*.
- Budhwar, P. and Mellahi, K., 2007. Introduction: human resource management in the Middle East. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(1), pp.2-10.
- Cunningham, R., Sarayrah, Y.K. and Sarayrah, Y., 1993. *Wasta: The hidden force in Middle Eastern society*. Praeger Pub Text.
- D'Adderio, L., 2014. The replication dilemma unravelled: How organizations enact multiple goals in routine transfer. *Organization Science*, 25(5), pp.1325-1350.
- DeNisi, A., Murphy, K., Varma, A. and Budhwar, P., 2021. Performance management systems and multinational enterprises: Where we are and where we should go. *Human Resource Management*, 60(5), pp.707-713.
- DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W., 1991. Introduction to the new institutionalism in organization studies. *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*.
- DiMaggio, P.J. and Powell, W.W., 1983. The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American sociological review*, pp.147-160.
- Dittrich, K. and Seidl, D., 2018. Emerging intentionality in routine dynamics: A pragmatist view. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(1), pp.111-138.
- Eisenhardt, K.M., 1989. Building theories from case study research. *Academy of management review*, 14(4), pp.532-550.
- Faulconbridge, J. and Muzio, D., 2008. Organizational professionalism in globalizing law firms. *Work, employment, and society*, 22(1), pp.7-25.
- Feldman, M.S., and Pentland, B.T., 2003. Reconceptualizing organizational routines as a source of flexibility and change. *Administrative science quarterly*, 48(1), pp.94-118.
- Freidson, E., 2001. *Professionalism, the third logic: On the practice of knowledge*. University of Chicago press.
- Friedland, R., 1991. Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices, and institutional contradictions. *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*, pp.232-263.

- Gehman, J., Glaser, V.L., Eisenhardt, K.M., Gioia, D., Langley, A., and Corley, K.G., 2018. Finding theory–method fit: A comparison of three qualitative approaches to theory building. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 27(3), pp.284-300.
- Greenwood, R. and Suddaby, R., 2006. Institutional entrepreneurship in mature fields: The big five accounting firms. *Academy of Management journal*, 49(1), pp.27-48.
- Gu, F. and Nolan, J., 2017. Performance appraisal in Western and local banks in China: The influence of firm ownership on the perceived importance of guanxi. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(10), pp.1433-1453.
- Haak-Saheem, W. and Darwish, T.K., 2021. human resource management in the Middle East.
- Harbi, S.A., Thursfield, D. and Bright, D., 2017. Culture, Wasta and perceptions of performance appraisal in Saudi Arabia. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(19), pp.2792-2810.
- Horak, S. and Yang, I., 2019. Whither seniority? Career progression and performance orientation in South Korea. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 30(9), pp.1419-1447.
- Jarzabkowski, P., Lê, J. and Spee, P., 2017. Taking a strong process approach to analyzing qualitative process data. *The SAGE handbook of process organization studies*, pp.237-253.
- Jentjens, S. and Yang, I., 2021. What do we have faith in?—a comparative study on trust and performance appraisal practices in French and German MNE-subsidaries. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, pp.1-28.
- Kang, H. and Shen, J., 2016. International performance appraisal practices and approaches of South Korean MNEs in China. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(3), pp.291-310.
- Kinnie, N. and Swart, J., 2012. Committed to whom? Professional knowledge worker commitment in cross-boundary organisations. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 22(1), pp.21-38.
- Kirkpatrick, I. and Noordegraaf, M., 2015. Hybrid professionalism: the re-shaping of occupational and organisational logics. *The Oxford handbook on professional service firms*, pp.92-112.
- Langley, A., 1999. Strategies for theorizing from process data. *Academy of Management review*, 24(4), pp.691-710.
- Lawrence, T., Suddaby, R. and Leca, B., 2011. Institutional work: Refocusing institutional studies of organization. *Journal of management inquiry*, 20(1), pp.52-58.
- Marquis, C. and Lounsbury, M., 2007. Vive la résistance: Competing logics and the consolidation of US community banking. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(4), pp.799-820.
- Marx, K. and Engels, F., 1848. THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO. *Selected Works bu Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Neu York: International Publishers*, 1363.
- McPherson, C.M. and Sauder, M., 2013. Logics in action: Managing institutional complexity in a drug court. *Administrative science quarterly*, 58(2), pp.165-196.
- Mellahi, K., Demirbag, M. and Riddle, L., 2011. Multinationals in the Middle East: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of World Business*, 46(4), pp.406-410.
- Murphy, K.R., 2020. Performance evaluation will not die, but it should. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 30(1), pp.13-31.
- Mutch, A., 2021. Challenging Community: Logic or Context?. *Organization Theory*, 2(2), p.26317877211004602.

- Nicolini, D., 2012. *Practice theory, work, and organization: An introduction*. OUP Oxford.
- Powell, W.W. and Rerup, C., 2017. Opening the black box: The microfoundations of institutions. *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism*, 2, pp.311-337.
- Rasche, A. and Chia, R., 2009. Researching strategy practices: a genealogical social theory perspective. *Organization studies*, 30(7), pp.713-734.
- Salvato, C. and Rerup, C., 2018. Routine regulation: Balancing conflicting goals in organizational routines. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 63(1), pp.170-209.
- Scott, W.R., 2001. *Institutions and Organizations* 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks.
- Scott, W.R., 2014. *Institutions and organizations: Ideas, interests, and identities*. Sage publications.
- Smets, M., Jarzabkowski, P., Burke, G.T. and Spee, P., 2015. Reinsurance trading in Lloyd's of London: Balancing conflicting-yet-complementary logics in practice. *Academy of management journal*, 58(3), pp.932-970.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J., 1998. *Basics of qualitative research techniques* (pp. 1-312). Thousand oaks, CA: Sage publications.
- Suddaby, R., Greenwood, R. and Wilderom, C., 2008. Introduction to the Journal of Organizational Behavior's special issue on professional service firms: where organization theory and organizational behavior might meet. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(8), pp.989-994.
- Swidler, A., 1986. Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American sociological review*, pp.273-286.
- Thornton, P.H., Ocasio, W. and Lounsbury, M., 2012. *The institutional logics perspective: A new approach to culture, structure, and process*. Oxford University Press on Demand.
- Tlaiss, H. and Kauser, S., 2011. The importance of *wasta* in the career success of Middle Eastern managers. *Journal of European Industrial Training*.
- Vo, A. and Stanton, P., 2011. The transfer of HRM policies and practices to a transitional business system: The case of performance management practices in the US and Japanese MNEs operating in Vietnam. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22(17), pp.3513-3527.
- Winter, S.G. and Nelson, R.R., 1982. An evolutionary theory of economic change. *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership Historical Research Reference in Entrepreneurship*.
- Wood, G. and Schnyder, G., 2021. Intro: Comparative capitalism research in emerging markets—A new generation. *New Political Economy*, 26(4), pp.509-513.
- Yahiaoui, D., Nakhle, S.F. and Farndale, E., 2021. Culture and performance appraisal in multinational enterprises: Implementing French headquarters' practices in Middle East and North Africa subsidiaries. *Human Resource Management*.